



NO JOB QUITE LIKE BEING MAYOR

It is certainly a challenging and extremely rewarding job being Mayor, but you go into a job like this knowing and expecting that, and wanting to always put the community first when doing the job. Then there is the political side of the role. The Mayor is primarily responsible for keeping the elected Council harmonious and working together while at the same time delicately pushing the region's agenda to other levels of government and the corporate sector.

As a Mayor, you are responsible for overseeing the ultimate success of Council's delivery of critical services and infrastructure, such as: the water works, sewage systems, road network, showgrounds, saleyards, airports, libraries, community halls, civic centres, theatres, parks, sporting fields and facilities, footpaths and many other amenities. All this while making sure Council's planning rules are applied, business throughout the region is being supported and encouraged to grow and develop, and Council budgets are kept realistic and well out of the red. Thankfully, Council employs a dedicated group of professionals with diverse skills and experience who work hard and give me great support and the confidence that Council is very much working for you and your communities.

There are other challenges that come up as well. There is the geographical issues like representing the City of Dubbo, Wellington, Geurie, Mumbil, Stuart Town, Euchareena, Wongaroon, Ballimore, Brocklehurst and Mogrigny, Eumungerie and all that's in between throughout our great region. The tyranny of distance is significantly bigger now we are an amalgamated Council but as Mayor, it's critical I still know and understand what affects residents and business, and what Council can do to assist. Meet the Mayor visits and community meetings are giving me a wealth of knowledge and understanding about our region's issues and I thank those who've previously participated in such meet and greets, while also encouraging more of you to come along.

As Mayor, more often than not you can help people, sometimes you can't. For me the most frustrating part of being Mayor is having to deal with the fallout from issues that are outside of Council's control but ultimately affect our local people and their way of life. This can include the far end of the scale pressures and frustrations of things like the impact of the drought on our outlying areas and its rippled effect on our communities and their economic and mental wellbeing, through to issues such as the state government's pressure on us to staff and operate our village tips and waste transfer stations and manage the huge impact that has on budgets that could otherwise be spent elsewhere in those particular areas.

The role of Mayor often means being placed in the wider public spotlight. Sometimes the attention is welcome, like when I was able to greet the Royals on their visit to our region visit last year. Other times it is being surrounded in controversy like when you are pushing for a better deal for your community and the issue becomes public. Either way, there is always a little voice at the back of your head saying, 'don't stuff it up, you're here to do the best for the community you've been elected to serve and represent'.

With all the challenges given to me as the first Mayor of this newly merged Dubbo and Wellington council area, I also have a couple of things that make it easier. The ten Dubbo Regional Councillors are the most harmonious bunch in memory. Balancing the political agendas of ten Councillors can often be like herding cats, but it is always in the best interests of the region for Councillors to work for a common cause – you! A united team working together has certainly

made my job a lot easier while the whole region is better for it, and for this, I thank you for your support of Council.

I'm also incredibly lucky to have a management crew who are some of the most experienced and enthusiastic local government professionals in NSW, and in many respects, Australia. We have the right mix of continuing local experience while at the same time having a set of new faces with new ideas and the skills to deliver.

There is certainly no other job quite like being a Mayor.

Last Edited: 26 Jul 2019

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