



## PLENTY TO CONSIDER FOR WELLINGTON RESIDENTS HEADING TO POLLS

With the State Election on Saturday, Wellington residents are faced with a choice on the direction of their community for generations to come.

We all know that the amalgamation of Dubbo City and Wellington councils was controversial. We know that the bulk of the residents of both Wellington and Dubbo were against the merger.

Since that time a lot of the community, including myself, have come to see the benefits of the merger and particularly the positive improvements within the local government sector in Wellington.

On Saturday we finally get a say on the direction of our community.

To me the question is simple. Do we want to keep on track, further investments, new facilities and improvements to Wellington? Or do we want to turn back the clock and vote for a candidate that is seeking to settle old scores?

In my view, it would be a big disservice to Wellington to vote into office someone who is seeking revenge for the merger, no matter how charming the candidate is or how much money is spent on advertising his campaign.

To be clear, Wellington needs to be above vengeance politics. We are on the right track. There are no doubts that there are a number of monumental challenges that Wellington faces that need urgent attention. A 24-hour police station and a significant increase in roads funding are certainly at the top of that list.

But we also must be realistic with ourselves on what candidates, particularly those seeking to settle old scores, are able to achieve. Both the Nationals and Labor candidates will have direct access to their Ministers if their party forms Government. The others simply don't have this ability - no matter how much they chant they can work with the governing party.

I urge Wellington residents to reject turning back the clock. Even before the election has been held, the Independent candidate and former Mayor of Dubbo City has been awfully hard to get in contact with, and has been vocal in his criticisms in many decisions of the new Dubbo Regional Council.

Indeed, major decisions that this Council has taken including staffing, contracts and even trying to grow our airport have been questioned by the former Dubbo Mayor. The independent candidate even ran paid social media advertising campaigns attacking the wisdom of council decisions - even when the said issue was unanimously agreed on by all 10 Councillors.

As the Mayor of the new regional Council, I can assure the community that your new Council has been working vigorously to grow Wellington and make it an even better place to live.

I was particularly heartened to gain the support of the Nationals and Labor candidates in their pledge to work with me to address the closure of the Bellhaven. I have received no such offer from the Independent candidate.

We need community leaders, whether it be Local, State or Federal to work together for our region. This election is certainly one where we all must work for a common goal.

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