



MAYORAL MEMO - 13 APRIL 2022

I do enjoy my poetry and, in particular, some poets that lived many years ago such as Banjo Paterson and Henry Lawson. Today, though, I want to go back in time before these great poets. Two millennia ago the Roman poet Ovid wrote “*Fertilior seges est alienis semper in agris*” which is the first written reference to what we now express as the grass always being greener on the other side of the fence.

I spent last weekend in Melbourne attending the Australian Formula 1 Grand Prix. On Sunday at the track I attended as part of a crowd of 128,294 people. From the outside, that looks fantastic. For a city with a population of 5 million, adding that many people should be a huge economic boost to the city – especially coming out of COVID-19 restrictions.

From my own experiences and in casual conversations with vendors and attendees, it wasn't as great as it sounds. Outside the track the physical infrastructure was strained to the limit. The public transport system had delays of over 30 minutes and a taxi was a rare sighting. When visiting a café the greeting was typically “we have a 40-minute wait.” It wasn't even worth trying to find a restaurant and the supermarkets were closing early due to lack of stock. At the track the

consumption of alcohol was accidentally limited by 100-metre-long queues but even food stalls had 50 metre lines and mobile networks couldn't cope with the number of photos being posted to social media. All of this and it costs the Victorian government in the order of \$60 million to host the Grand Prix.

Scale it down to our environment and for many years people have told me it would be great if Dubbo could have something like the Tamworth Country Music Festival which runs for ten days each January or the Bathurst 1000 race which runs over the long weekend in October. They are both great events for their cities but when I talk to residents of these cities they tell me that they wished they had a tourist attraction like the Taronga Western Plains Zoo. With approximately 250,000 visitors each year it adds incredible value to our local economy and gives us the ability to try and feed other attractions with the guaranteed visitors to the region. Make no mistake – having a major event for a region can inject funds and also highlight a city or region to a wider television audience but given the choice, I would take the visitors spread across the entire year. It doesn't mean you can't have a bit of both though. We already have the full year visitation so what can we add to our mix to add the variable injections?

Tell me your idea for an attraction event for the region
at mayor@dubbo.nsw.gov.au

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Mayor of Dubbo Regional Council

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