



# MAYORAL MEMO - 13 SEPTEMBER 2023

Status quo.

There's a certain comfort in the familiar, akin to wrapping oneself in a warm blanket on a rainy Sunday afternoon to watch a classic movie. The status quo often serves as a refuge, safeguarding us within the parameters of established practices. For public organisations, often subject to public scrutiny, preserving the status quo can be a means to avoid controversy and criticism.

I am pleased to say that the current cohort of Dubbo Regional Councillors has consistently demonstrated the willingness to challenge established norms and make bold and courageous decisions. To drive progress and foster a thriving community, it is often necessary to venture beyond the comfort zone of existing frameworks.

Margaret Mead once articulated, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." This Council has embodied this ethos, making innovative decisions that I believe will have a long-lasting impact.

For example, our decision to conduct the 2023 Australia Day ceremony in Wellington as a twilight event seemed controversial at first but the

Federal Government subsequently made changes to the Citizenship Ceremonies Code and now many Councils across Australia will be changing the timing of their ceremony in 2024. Similarly, Dubbo Regional Council's initiative to be the first government body at any level to 3D print public infrastructure has garnered national attention and is now being discussed at ministerial levels as a potential solution for the country's housing crisis.

We considered the electrification of our Council light vehicle fleet. Contrary to popular misconceptions that electric vehicles are a drain on ratepayer funds, our comprehensive report clearly demonstrated that the total cost of ownership for an electric vehicle is, in fact, more economical than that for an internal combustion engine vehicle. With staff now driving Teslas, we needed to rely on our data to ensure the public understood our decision-making process. A recent dialogue with a Federal Government minister confirmed that the Federal Government has a target of 75 per cent electric fleet purchases by 2025, reinforcing our forward-thinking approach.

In the governance domain, we altered the dynamics of our Standing Committee meetings. Previously, certain decisions made at these meetings held the same weight as a Council resolution. We updated this protocol so that Standing Committees make recommendations to the Council, allowing for an additional fortnight-long period of further public consultation and feedback.

I invite our community to engage with Councillors in relation to agenda items for our committee meetings this week. Feedback is invaluable as we continue to make choices that, while challenging the status quo, will serve the best interest of all residents.

Challenging the status quo is not simply a change for the sake of change, but a thoughtful journey toward building a community that thrives on innovation and sustainable growth.

**Councillor Mathew Dickerson**

**Mayor of Dubbo Regional Council**

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