



MAYORAL MEMO - 14 SEPTEMBER 2022

I am on a quest. A quest for accuracy in our language. It may be a quest with no hope for victory but I will continue to try regardless. There are some interesting habits that society seems to have allowed in to our daily language and, some may say it is only the pedants that are worried, but I believe we need to strive for accuracy in our language.

One of those habits is the use of the word unique. I often hear people say that something is “pretty unique” or “very unique”. Unique is not the same as grey – there are not 100 shades. Unique is binary. It is incorrect to use a modifier or qualify just how unique something is.

With that off my chest, last Saturday morning we had our latest Community Leaders' Breakfast. This is unique in our nation. This first started approximately ten years ago and, despite a gap of a few years, is back and more popular than ever. There is nowhere else in our nation that I can find three levels of government that are prepared to stand side by side in an open forum on a regular basis. My thanks to Hon Mark Coulton MP, Hon Andrew Gee MP, Hon. Dugald Saunders, MP and my fellow Councillors for continuing this process.

We alternate this gathering between Dubbo and Wellington and it was Wellington's turn last Saturday. It was a cold and drizzly morning but we still had residents who came to talk to the three levels of government.

One of the reasons that there is great strength in all three levels standing beside each other is that it makes it very difficult to 'pass the buck' to another level of government. In our society, there are logically items that are the primary responsibility of different levels of government. Centrelink question? Speak with the federal representative. Need to know more about policing? The state government is your place to go. What about a Development Application for that new house? Have a chat to a Councillor. Then there are items that cross over. Roads are a hot topic at the moment. Different designated roads typically fall under local and state government but various road infrastructure can be funded by all three levels. Health and education are primarily state responsibilities but the federal government does provide some funding. These nuances can be discussed in greater detail when all three levels stand together.

The second reason that I think there is such strength in these gatherings is the opportunity. On any given event, we might have fifty to ninety people stop to ask a question but every person had the *opportunity* to walk up in an open and transparent environment and talk to the elected leaders. This happens approximately every three months.

And that is unique!

Councillor Mathew Dickerson
Mayor of Dubbo Regional Council

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