



# MAYORAL MEMO - 16 MARCH 2022

I have had lots of different business ideas over my lifetime but, after consideration of the potential for success, many of them stay as just that. An idea. One idea that I had many years ago was for a business call STAP. Solutions to All Problems. The logic was that clients would present a problem or an issue and I would have a team of experts on call that the business could assemble to solve random problems. I love the idea of solving tough problems and it seemed like a great way to do good in the world. After further consideration, I decided it may be a slight over-promise (*all* problems) and the way we would need to charge for services seemed destined for issues.

Well I never created STAP but I feel like an organisation I am involved with has somehow morphed in to just that. The general expression is that Councils deal with the three Rs – Roads, Rates and Rubbish. Whoever said that was not involved with a modern Council.

Over the last two weeks I have attended a conference and then a forum attended by many Councils from the State. The one thing that struck me that has changed in my five year and seven month absence from local

government was the community expectation of what issues a Council can solve. Or even what a Council is involved in. I do understand that we have three levels of government (some would say one too many) and, despite the three areas of responsibility, there are often areas that cross over, but it is often the case that there are so many items that Councils are responsible for that it is difficult to take on the duties of the other levels.

From a personal perspective, I have had some interesting requests from members of the public. I have been asked to make the exchange rate better as it was impacting the retirement funds of an individual; petrol prices are too dear so how can we fix that; interest rates are too low or too high; and the perennial request – my favourite business [insert your favourite business here] does not have a presence in the city, can you please tell them to come?

When I speak with Councillors across the State, the sentiment is similar.

With our Council at the moment, there is a lot of work to do to recover from the last few years. The real challenge for this new Council is to ensure we turn the ship around and make this Council progressive and efficient and take care of the basics. And for all the extras outside the responsibility of Council, we need to have good relationships with the other two levels of government and with the community to help everyone to pull in the same direction.

**Councillor Mathew Dickerson**  
**Mayor of Dubbo Regional Council**

Last Edited: 24 May 2022