



MAYORAL MEMO - 17 AUGUST 2022

We are approaching the fifty-ninth anniversary of Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech. While I admit it does not hold quite the same worldwide significance, it is twelve years since former Councillor Peter Bartley announced to his fellow Councillors that he also had a dream. A dream where Dubbo had a festival to rival the Tamworth Country Music Festival in size and recognition. That is a tall order. That event started as a small dinner in 1973 as the Australasian Country Music Awards run by the local radio station in Tamworth. It now attracts over 40,000 people to Tamworth over the ten days of the event and injects over \$52 million into the local economy. Forbes magazine rates it as number eight of the 'World's Coolest Music Festivals'.

There was some community debate at the time about the need for a festival in Dubbo. Sure, when you look at other festivals, such as the Tamworth Country Music Festival; Splendour in the Grass; Groovin the Moo or the Parkes Elvis Festival, for a short period of time each year there is a large swelling of the population and every accommodation and hospitality business does a booming trade. What isn't there to like about that for a community? On the flip side, many other Local

Government Areas (LGAs) wish they had what we have. Our Zoo attracts 300,000 people every year but, more importantly, that visitation is spread out over the year.

Back to Peter. He wanted to have his cake and eat it too. We have the Zoo but why can't we have a great festival as well?

A committee was formed, John Walkom was elected as the Chairperson and the dream turned in to DREAM. Dubbo Regional Entertainment Arts and Music. Now in its tenth year, DREAM will attract over 20,000 people to a variety of events including the Lantern Parade on 22 October and Zoocoustic on 16 October. With Wellington now a part of the LGA, the Fong Lees Lane event is also part of DREAM and it will be held on 21 October. Many festivals across the nation are based around music. Sporting events attract people as well but with an increasing focus on culture in our community, the original focus for the DREAM committee was all about having an arts-based festival. A variety of events have fallen under the DREAM banner since the first event in 2012, including dance performances; themed dinners; art exhibitions; music and theatre. The central theme is always about creativity and the arts. Events like DREAM have the potential to change the perception of Dubbo. Many people in metropolitan areas don't realise the wonderful cultural and arts scene that exists in a location such as Dubbo.

Tell me the favourite event you have seen at a DREAM festival at mayor@dubbo.nsw.gov.au

Councillor Mathew Dickerson
Mayor of Dubbo Regional Council

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