



# MAYORAL MEMO - 17 JANUARY 2024

In September last year, the NSW Government announced a \$350 million boost to the NSW Regional Development Trust Fund and a review of the Regional Development Act 2004. The news was greeted with cautious excitement by those of us in regional NSW. As with so many major announcements, minimal information is available initially and the devil is always in the detail. To find out more about those details and to see how we might shape those details, I met with the Department of Regional NSW in December last year and this week I was part of a working group formed within Regional Cities NSW to discuss the review further.

After the September announcement, the government set out a timeline including public consultation for the review of the Regional Development Act 2004. The government believes that this review will make significant strides to strengthen the commitment of the government to regional development.

The Regional Development Act, established in 2004, has been helpful for regional investment and growth. However, the changing dynamics of

regional communities necessitate an update to this legislation.

Dubbo has the potential to significantly gain from this reinvigorated focus. The review process promises a more contemporary and relevant investment framework, aligning with the evolving needs of our region. The Act's modernisation is expected to enhance sustainable development, service delivery, and the overall quality of life for our residents.

Our community has experienced considerable changes recently, particularly with altered migration patterns and an increase in remote working. These shifts present new challenges – which I see as opportunities. We need updated infrastructure and services to support our expanding population. The review of the Regional Development Act offers an excellent opportunity for Dubbo to articulate its specific needs and priorities.

The Regional Development Advisory Council, with its broad spectrum of expertise, is a promising development. This Council will be instrumental in ensuring that the perspectives of regional communities are considered in state-level decision-making. Their role in guiding investment decisions will significantly impact our region.

Dubbo's growth, particularly in the context of the NSW economy, cannot be overstated. Our region contributes significantly to the state's Gross State Product through key industries. The review presents an opportunity to further amplify our contribution, especially in sectors where we have competitive advantages.

Addressing the challenges of housing and skilled labour shortages are high on our agenda. The Act's review must consider these factors to

ensure holistic development in our region. We look forward to strategies that will bolster our housing market, attract and retain skilled workers, and streamline our supply chains.

The review of the Regional Development Act 2004 presents a significant opportunity for Dubbo. This is our chance to influence policies and investments that will shape our future. We have a robust and dynamic community; with the right support and investment, our potential is limitless.

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

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