



# MAYORAL MEMO - 21 JUNE 2023

Along with most of the 537 Councils in the nation, I represented Dubbo Regional Council at the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) National General Assembly (NGA) in Canberra last week. This is an annual event focused on strengthening the relationship between local governments and the Federal Government for a sustainable future and is a critical platform for Australia's local governments to explore innovative solutions. The theme for 2023 was “Our Communities, Our Future”.

I am an advocate of conferences in any industry with typically two major outcomes. Firstly, I had the chance to listen to presentations by politicians and industry advocates that will have a direct impact on residents in our LGA and then I also took the opportunity to further converse with many speakers one-on-one. Discussions with three politicians in particular were of significance for the future of our community.

I discussed the Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) with the Hon Chris Bowen MP, Minister for Climate Change and Energy, to see how our local initiatives may align with actions at the Federal level to help deliver the REZ for the State Government. I also didn't miss the opportunity to mention the concept of the Renewables Education and Activities Centre

(REAC) which I want to see developed in the Wellington area.

I also had a discussion with both the Hon Catherine King MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government and the Hon Kristy McBain MP, Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories to ensure they are both aware of some of our challenges with roads and infrastructure and the financial sustainability of local government.

In addition, I watched a presentation by Saul Griffith, a renewable energy advocate, and spoke to him afterwards. With the huge opportunity afforded by our REZ, it was fascinating to see the economic data that Saul wrapped around his solution for our future electrification. DRC can be a leader across the nation in implementing some of these innovative ideas.

The second major outcome I find from attending any industry conference is the opportunity to exchange ideas, best practices and solutions to common challenges, fostering collaboration and unity among industry players. With Mayors from across the nation in one spot, there was always an opportunity to share concepts and learn from each other. The value of these morning tea and lunch time conversations cannot be underestimated. Why reinvent the wheel when someone else may have addressed a similar problem?

Attendance by Councillors and staff at different conferences such as the NGA allows the participants in local governments across the nation to stay at the forefront of policy changes and new initiatives, thereby enhancing our capacity to serve our communities. It offers a platform for community leaders to hear our concerns, advocate for our communities and draw from the collective wisdom of our peers.

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