



MAYORAL MEMO-21 SEPTEMBER 2022

I bumped in to a fellow Mayor at a horse race meeting recently. He was having a few hours away from his mayoral duties and told me he liked to unwind from the pressures and responsibility of being a Councillor and throw caution to the wind with a few five-dollar bets. He found it liberating to spend his own money with no one to answer to if the bet he placed was unsuccessful. He further explained that, when spending Council money, he was more careful than spending his own money. He has to answer to all the residents in his LGA for every dollar that is spent.

I know exactly how he feels.

On Dubbo Regional Council we have seventy per cent of our Councillors who make their primary income from their own small business. Small business owners usually have a few traits in common but a common theme is that they are typically risk takers. That is not to say that small business owners take wild uneducated risks. They will typically seek advice from experts, analyse data and then make decisions that do not involve guaranteed outcomes. If the outcome involves the loss of

money, small business owners will typically chalk it up to experience or accept that you win some and you lose some. As long as you win more than you lose, you are in front.

This is the complete opposite of the attitude by most Councillors. Just as the Mayor I bumped in to felt, I know that Councillors feel the burden that it is *your* money we are spending when we make decisions on Council. When making financial decisions on Council, I personally picture an imaginary person struggling to pay their rates. Would they be happy with me taking a tiny percentage of their rates money and spending it in a certain way? Small business owners on Council need to curb some of their natural risk-taking traits and be more conservative in their approach to spending.

This is not an advertisement for small business owners as Councillors because a good Council has a variety of people with a range of backgrounds to ensure different views are brought to the table. For example, it may well be the risk-averse Councillors who help dampen some of the enthusiasm for risk shown by other Councillors.

Ultimately, it is all about the team. Over the next two weeks we have grand finals in AFL and NRL. When you look at the winning teams, they will be the ones that combine their talents in an unselfish way for the best outcome for the team. Ask any player. Would you prefer to score three tries in a losing grand final team or be a part of the premiership winning team? They will answer without hesitation.

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Councillor Mathew Dickerson
Mayor of Dubbo Regional Council

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