



MAYORAL MEMO - 23 FEBRUARY 2022

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.

On 22 August 1872 the Australian Overland Telegraph line between Adelaide and Darwin was completed; the greatest engineering feat carried out in nineteenth century Australia. It was an immediate success. Within the first year of operation, 4,000 telegrams were transmitted. With communication time to Europe reduced from months to hours, Australia's isolation was lessening.

But it may never have gone ahead. With engineers concerned about termites and bushfires, they made the change from timber to wrought iron poles. 36,000 of them. And people thought they were ugly. The beautiful Australian landscape was being tarnished by these iron blights rising up across the horizon and it must be stopped!

I am sure a similar reaction occurred in Tamworth soon after 1888 when it became the first place in Australia to supply electricity to the public at large. Electricity was seen as a novelty so who would want those ugly power poles erected down their street or across the rolling hills?

And then mobile phone towers. Telecommunications companies were flooded with complaints about ugly mobile phone towers being constructed near them. Now they are flooded with complaints about those same mobile phone towers NOT being constructed near them.

And the latest to irk the visually concerned?

Wind turbines – and to a lesser extent solar panels.

And we have more than our fair share of both. This week Councillors had the opportunity to inspect another exciting part of the Renewable Energy Zone that Dubbo Regional Council sits in. Our first large scale battery project. This battery will have a capacity of 0.5GW and a storage capacity of 1GWh. In the early days, electricity supply was not reliable and power stations were closed on Sundays but we have come to expect higher levels of service so batteries such as this will help improve the efficiency and reliability of the electrical grid.

This is a complementary project to the power production in our LGA. Before too long, we will have four solar farm installations with a total capacity of 1.66GW. We also have 33 wind turbines already installed at Bodangora along with another 200 wind turbines proposed. Together they would have a total capacity of 1GW. That is almost 2.7GW of capacity in our Council area. That is enough to power approximately 1.35 million homes. To put it in context, we have 3.1 million homes in this state.

The real challenge for Council is not to convince people that these majestic wind turbines are essential for the survival of mankind on this planet but how to ensure that these devices return some ongoing money to the local economy, in particular with high-value jobs. We want more

than panel cleaners and gearbox oilers.

Tell me your thoughts on my French expression and how we create jobs
at mayor@dubbo.nsw.gov.au

Councillor Mathew Dickerson
Mayor of Dubbo Regional Council

Last Edited: 24 May 2022