



MAYORAL MEMO - 1 JUNE 2022

Winston Churchill, in a 1948 speech to the House of Commons, stated: “Those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it.” It is a fine line. I am a fan of looking forward and always seeing how we can progress – whether that be in business or in sport or our personal lives or, most importantly, in Council. Here is the problem though – to look to the future you need to be aware of the past. Think about decisions you make in your daily life. You are constantly using the past to inform your future decisions. Which way did you drive to work today? Your past experience informed you of the best way to travel to take the shortest route and avoid traffic. When you want to order a takeaway meal, without realising it, you run through a catalogue of previous takeaway meals – taste, price, health value – and make a decision on what you are going to eat tonight based on those past experiences.

Do I need to sample every takeaway meal to know what I want to order tonight?

Otto von Bismarck, the first ever Chancellor of the unified Germany, famously said: “Only a fool learns from his own mistakes. The wise

man learns from the mistakes of others.”

And that was the main reason for creating what I hope will be an annual luncheon this week. We invited all former Councillors from Wellington Shire Council, Dubbo City Council and Dubbo Regional Council to a lunch to hear from these former leaders of our region. With twenty people in the room, the vintage went right back to the seventies when Councillors were Aldermen and the Council had the Local Government Act of 1919 to work under. In the room there was over 170 years of Council experience and the people in the room are still very connected with the community they previously served.

It was a great opportunity to hear from these past leaders and also to recognise that we are where we are today with thanks to the leaders that have come before us. Isaac Newton would often explain some of his brilliant breakthroughs by saying “If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.”

Researchers have shown that learning from experience (both ours and others) actually changes the circuitry in our brains so we can categorise the things we are looking at today and respond appropriately. After our luncheon this week, I am sure there was some rewiring of the brains of current Councillors and I believe better decision making is helped by listening to these former leaders. Current leaders still have to make decisions based on the current circumstances, but it costs nothing to listen!

Tell me the experiences you have that Councillors need to listen to at mayor@dubbo.nsw.gov.au

Councillor Mathew Dickerson

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