



# MAYORAL MEMO - 30 AUGUST 2023

I am disappointed.

On 17 May this year, in Mayoral Memo 71, I wrote an article about incredibly exciting news from the State Government. In that article, I wrote about a journey that I saw had started in November 2012 with a Decentralisation Taskforce and the concept of a CATO.

It culminated in the announcement by the current government that the final designs had been approved by the Western Regional Planning Panel for a Workplace Hub in Dubbo. It was announced that the government building at 37-39 Carrington Avenue would be demolished and replaced with a five-storey building. This would have 6,700 square metres of floor space where 700 government employees would be consolidated from 26 tenancies across Dubbo and be situated in one modern A-grade 5 Star Green Star rated building.

This would deliver an accommodation standard for regional public servants that would be consistent with metro government locations.

Construction on the \$48.1 million building would start in the middle of this year and it would be completed by the end of next year.

This made so much sense. During COVID-19, employees from many different industries worked from home and found they could be more productive and save significant commute time. Furthermore, people employed in the Sydney CBD found that if they could work from home that was a one-hour commute away, surely they could work from home if they were five hours away. Or work from an office that was five hours away. Subsequently regional NSW was a huge beneficiary. Even better, the cost of renting office space in the centre of Sydney would easily be ten times more expensive than equivalent office space in Dubbo. So the government has cheaper office space and happier employees and regional economies receive an additional boost.

Except they won't.

After making the announcement in May that the plans were approved and they would start building by the middle of the year, another announcement has just been made.

According to the same government that made the announcement three months ago, changes in market conditions and escalating building industry costs have prompted a rethink on how best to deliver the hub in the current inflationary climate.

The government has decided to investigate the redevelopment of the existing building on the site rather than proceed with a new build.

It was only earlier this month that I was attending a Regional Cities NSW

(RCNSW) meeting where we congratulated the government on the Workplace Hub concept and we wanted to see them rolled out across more of the members of RCNSW.

I will send a letter to Minister Moriarty and Minister Kamper telling them of the disappointment for regional communities but, of course, we can't tell the State Government what to do. The ultimate decision will be made by the State Government on their building.

**Councillor Mathew Dickerson**

**Mayor of Dubbo Regional Council**

Last Edited: 29 Aug 2023