



# MAYORAL MEMO - 30 NOVEMBER 2022

In July 2010 my wife and I flew to Sydney from Dubbo then spent fourteen hours on a flight to Johannesburg before driving for another six hours to Kruger National Park. All up over 26 hours door to door to arrive at the famous African location. It was a wonderful experience with perhaps just a hint of adventure as the guides told you not to walk alone in the compound without a gun-toting attendant beside you lest a leopard liked the look of you for dinner. It added just a touch of danger to the adventure, and although I was quite certain there was some hyperbole involved, I made sure I had a guide with me at all times!

There are two problems with this adventure. It is a long way to go and it is expensive.

If only we had this type of experience in our own backyard...or better.

Wish no more.

In a fantastic example of how Local Government can partner with other levels of government for great community outcomes, Dubbo Regional

Council has partnered with Taronga Western Plains Zoo to support the development of a business case and then make a submission to the Regional Tourism Activation Fund. The result is \$20 million from the State Government combined with \$10 million from the Zoo to build a Serengeti Plains Visitor Experience and Eco-Accommodation Tourism and Conference Centre. This will be built on the current Zoo grounds but with a new entrance from Camp Road.

Dubbo is incredibly fortunate to have the Zoo as part of our economy. Over 300,000 people visit the Zoo each year. This drops approximately 1,000 people a day, every day, in our city. The challenge for the city from there is to hold on to those 1,000 people for as long as we can. The more options we can provide for visitors, the more likely it is that they will stay for extra days. Each person who stays for one night in our city injects over \$200 in to our economy. Imagine if we could just get each visitor to the Zoo to stay one extra night in the city. That would inject a further \$60 million in to our economy!

More options for accommodation and restaurants and conferences – such as that provided by the Serengeti Plains Visitor Experience – will attract more people and help further boost our economy. Tourist activities along Camp Road will also be boosted by having the entrance to this area come in from that new entrance.

Not only is this all good for our economy, it means that people that don't have the time or money to travel to Kruger can have a similar experience right here – without the fear of death hanging over your head! I can hardly wait to welcome visitors from South Africa as well!

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

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