



MAYORAL MEMO-5 OCTOBER 2022

Each time I hop in a taxi in Sydney, I like to play a little game. Call it market research if you will.

I start with the basic premise that a cabbie talks to a lot of people. The average Sydney taxi driver has 7,850 trips throughout the year with an average of 1.8 passengers per ride. That is over 14,000 people sitting in a cab for an average of 17 minutes per ride.

That is a lot of information the cab driver has access to.

Firstly, I like to find out what their passengers know about regional areas. The definition of regional is usually somewhat amusing or possibly a little frustrating. When I mention regional, I hear information about Newcastle; Wollongong; the Blue Mountains and even Adelaide! Adelaide? I am sure The Lord Mayor of Adelaide, Sandy Verschoor, would be amused to think that the oldest municipality in Australia in a city of 1.4 million people is seen by some people in Sydney as a regional location! My first conclusion is often that we need to better educate the Sydney population about what areas exist over the Blue Mountains.

Next, I like to find out why their passengers are in Sydney. Their thoughts range from job to family to lifestyle choices and perhaps complete ignorance that there is another option!

When the conversation goes in the direction of lifestyle, I like to find out what Sydney could possibly offer that a regional location could not offer. This is again where ignorance can play a part.

The lifestyle reasons put forward are often around options for sport or selection of schools or cosmopolitan choices for food and entertainment. I normally counter these with the various ways that regional locations, like Dubbo, can match many of those activities.

In further discussions, regional locations have the perception of a desert wasteland when it comes to art and culture.

That is the area where I see the greatest difference from when I was first elected to Council in 2004 to today. In that time we have undertaken two significant projects in the Western Plains Cultural Centre and the Dubbo Regional Theatre and we are well advanced in planning for the Wiradjuri Cultural Tourism Centre. Art and culture feature regularly in our events and we will again see the Archibald exhibition in Dubbo next year. The Rhino sculptures and painted Rhinos throughout our city show that people are viewing art differently in regional locations and the popularity of our current art installation in our CBD, Sky Castle by ENESS, shows that there is an appetite for this type of CBD activation. This has huge potential to create a different atmosphere throughout our CBD, in particular when you add the concept of apartment living to our CBD which will add to our vibrancy after sunset.

Councillor Mathew Dickerson
Mayor of Dubbo Regional Council

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