



MAYORAL MEMO - 7 FEBRUARY 2024

Dubbo has a rich tapestry of culture, art, and community spirit that helps to define our vibrant city and local government area. Among the many events that have graced our community calendar is the Dubbo Regional Entertainment Arts and Music (DREAM) Festival. Since its inception in 2011, the DREAM Festival has woven a colourful thread through the fabric of our city's identity, bringing together people from all walks of life to celebrate the arts in its myriad forms.

The festival's journey began as a vision to showcase local talent and to provide a platform for artists, musicians, and performers to share their passion with the community. Over the years, DREAM has evolved into a multifaceted event, featuring an array of activities ranging from street parades and light shows to art exhibitions and live performances. This celebration has not only highlighted the incredible talent within our region but has also contributed to our cultural landscape and with the incredibly popular lantern parade, it also brings a large swathe of the community together for one event.

Like many community events worldwide, the DREAM Festival has faced

its share of challenges. At the beginning of 2020, the DREAM Festival volunteer committee advised Council that, due to the significant size of the event, the volunteers no longer had the capacity to continue to deliver the event, and proposed that Council take on the administration of the festival. Of course, we then had a pandemic which resulted in DREAM not being run in 2020 and again in 2021 and then 2022 had freak weather conditions that delayed the restart.

2023 went ahead under the guidance of Council staff and with another \$40,000 provided by Council. Now, thirteen years after the DREAM began, Council stands at a decision point for the future.

Councillors have a number of choices available to them but aligned along two main areas. Firstly, do we continue to run the DREAM Festival as an internal event or do we ask for a volunteer committee to again undertake the task of running this significant event? There is also the question of funding. Council has allocated \$40,000 to the event each year. Does Council increase this amount to help build the event or leave it the same or even reduce it – potentially to zero? Remove the funding altogether?

In contemplating this funding, Councillors must weigh the benefits of this investment in this one event against the broader fiscal responsibilities of Council and other events that could potentially be supported by this fund.

No decision has been made yet so I invite you to have a conversation with your favourite Councillor to be a part of this important decision. The DREAM Festival is a testament to what we can achieve as a community but without funds and people, a DREAM can quickly become

a nightmare.

Councillor Mathew Dickerson
Mayor of Dubbo Regional Council

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