



MAYORAL MEMO-9 AUGUST 2023

An essential component of the employment framework in our contemporary society is the Job Description (JD). This document delineates the primary responsibilities and duties for a specific position within an organisation, acting as a guide for both employer and employee. It ensures that both parties have a transparent understanding of what the role entails and can be altered by mutual consent. Typically, it's a tool used in performance evaluations.

Unlike traditional employer-employee roles, Councillors and Mayors across the State operate without a standard JD. Most community members possess their perception of these roles and judge performance on a four-year rolling basis through elections.

While lacking a conventional JD, we have something akin to it in the form of the Local Government Act 1993. This act contains 106 words describing the role of a Councillor (Section 232) and 234 words outlining the Mayor's role (Section 226). I regularly refer to this Act for good reason; it serves not only as a pseudo job description but also defines the boundaries and powers of the 128 Councils across the State.

Although individual opinions vary on what Council should do, the Act specifically outlines the responsibilities.

Part (m) of Section 226 states that one role of the mayor is “to represent the council on regional organisations and at inter-governmental forums at regional, State and Commonwealth level.” As you read this, I am at Parliament House in Canberra engaging with three Ministers and advisers to others. Last week I spent three days at Parliament House in Sydney meeting with six Ministers in addition to advisers. With 128 Councils in NSW and 537 Councils in Australia, it is often difficult to gain access to a Minister but Dubbo is a part of larger external organisations which helps keep the doors open. Last week it was Regional Cities NSW and this week it is Regional Capitals Australia. Thankfully the days are long gone that a Mayor knocked on the door of a Minister and walked out with a promise of a few million in funding. With the distribution of public funds, we all hope for a more transparent and thorough process. What these meetings do enable is a greater understanding of the direction of a department which helps with alignment of plans and also the ability to seize opportunities.

I remember when we received \$3.47 million in funding from the Federal Government for Barden Park Athletics Centre. With \$1.27 million from the State and \$575,000 from Council, our initial application for funding from the Federal Government was rejected. After I visited Simon Crean's office, we were able to tweak our application for round two of the funding process and we were successful with the application.

With new governments to work with at both State and Federal level, building these relationships with Ministers has never been more important.

Councillor Mathew Dickerson
Mayor of Dubbo Regional Council
Last Edited: 08 Aug 2023