

Dubbo City - Moving Online and Moving Ahead

See: <http://www.dubbo.com.au/dubbo/>

Located in the heart of New South Wales, Dubbo City draws much of its strength from its position as the major service centre of the Orana and Far Western regions of New South Wales, expanding its catchment population from 38,000 local residents to an estimated 130,000 regionally.

Statistical overview

In the 2001 Census there were two Statistical Local Areas (SLA) covering Dubbo. In aggregate, 22 per cent of Dubbo's population used the Internet at home and 29 per cent from any site during Census week. Internet use in Dubbo was similar to levels for regional New South Wales as a

Internet use in Dubbo, 2001 Census			
	Total Population	Internet use	
		At home	From Any Site
Dubbo (C) – Pt A	34,187	21%	29%
Dubbo (C) – Pt B	3,467	23%	30%
Total	37,654	22%	29%
Regional New South Wales			
Wales	2,338,246	22%	30%
New South Wales	6,372,214	28%	36%

whole, but was significantly below levels for the State in total. Dubbo had a younger age profile and a higher income profile than for regional New South Wales in total and Dubbo also had a higher proportion of Indigenous people.

Background

Agriculture is the mainstay of the regional economy, accounting for around 20 per cent of all employment in the Orana Region. The main commodities are cotton, wool, cattle and sheep.

Dubbo has a remarkable variety of restaurants, attractions, accommodation and entertainment. It is the home of the world famous Western Plains Zoo and tourism brings in excess of \$78 million per year to the city, attracting 545,000 visitors annually.

Dubbo City is a hub for cultural activity in Western NSW, with participants in a wide range of arts events. The Dubbo Arts and Cultural Advisory Council is the umbrella organisation for over 30 visual and performing arts groups. The council also acts as an entrepreneur in bringing a diverse range of artists to the city.

Dubbo Online

In 2001 a group of strategically minded community and business leaders in Dubbo got together to put their city online.

The [Dubbo City Online](http://www.dubbo.com.au/dubbo/)¹ project was initiated by the Dubbo City Development Corporation (DCDC), the Dubbo Chamber of Commerce and Industry and other consortium members, including KNet Technology and IT Web Consultants.

¹ <http://www.dubbo.com.au/dubbo/>

The project was assisted by a \$22,000 grant under the Australian Government [*Information Technology On-Line \(ITOL\) Program*](#)², administered by the National Office for the Information Economy (NOIE).

The project was constructed along the lines of a previously established, well-respected local website. When community and business organisations saw the need for enhancement, they got together to map which services, businesses and information would be accessible online.

Developers of Dubbo City Online made the commitment to offer e-commerce to Dubbo-based businesses from \$450 per year. It now has an online business directory, with individual businesses opting to adopt an e-commerce facility through the website.

The project was justified as a joint effort. Cost savings were made for individual businesses by sharing the expense of software, hardware and maintenance between many companies. The website is also a portal for community and arts activities.

All businesses in Dubbo City and the surrounding region that already have e-commerce facilities are eligible to be listed for free. For businesses outside Dubbo, the Central Economic Zone (CEZ) Heartland Project covers 30 inland regional council areas, including Dubbo City.

Heartland – Online Marketplace

[*Heartland*](#)³ is an online marketplace for regional business, products and communities in NSW. The CEZ decided to bring the Heartland e-commerce portal into the markets of Western NSW, with \$275,000 in funding from the Australian Government *Networking the Nation* program. After two solutions did not work out, the entire website was successfully re-designed and re-developed utilising the skill base in the region. Bos Web Management designed the layout and front end and integrated the powerful e-commerce software driving the site. This was also developed within the region by KNet Technology and customised for Heartland. Marketing assistance has also been provided from within the Central Economic Zone by local firm Bloody Good Marketing.

The CEZ wanted to deliver to Western NSW an online market place that would be cost effective for sellers and easy to use for buyers and sellers alike. In addition it will enable businesses in the region to harness the power of the Internet and take advantage of any growth in Internet usage in marketing and developing their business.

Utilising locally developed KNet software, e-commerce opportunities have been offered to 1,800 local businesses. It combines many small and medium businesses' products and services into a single facility. Regionally based users can search for a specific requirement without having to move around several sites.

² http://www.noie.gov.au/projects/ebusiness/developing/ITOL/Round_5/index.htm

³ <http://www.heartland.com.au>

Community Access to ICT

The Gordon Estate is a NSW Department of Housing area in West Dubbo. Its residents are low-income families and as such have limited computer and Internet access opportunities in their homes.

[Dubbo's Community Technology Centre \(CTC\)](http://www.dubbowest.ctc.nsw.gov.au)⁴ is located in the Estate and offers a very important service by providing computer and Internet access to the local community. Its facilities include:

- computers with Internet access and application software such as MS Office;
- computer training for the community; and
- photocopying and faxing facilities.

⁴ <http://www.dubbowest.ctc.nsw.gov.au>