DUBBO REGIONAL COUNCIL

REGIONAL ECONOMIC RECOVERY STRATEGY

For more information on data contained in this profile,
please contact Dubbo Regional Council at ecdev@dubbo.nsw.gov.au

DUBBO REGIONAL COUNCIL | DUBBO REGION

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MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

2020 has been a year that no one could have predicted and locally the Dubbo Region's Economy has been affected by many different factors arising from the COVID-19 Pandemic. Compulsory Industry closures, reduced discretionary spending, changing consumer habits including increased online purchasing and bulk-buying have all affected the dynamics of the local business environment. Different industries have been impacted in different ways; some of our businesses in the Dubbo region have had to deal with supply chain restraints due to restrictions on borders, while others have had to deal with issues such as a shortage in the supply of skills and labour due to increased government financial assistance. Others are seeing opportunities arise from border closures, and the increased consumer push to buy local – and trying to maintain customer expectations of product and service whilst remaining COVID-safe and compliant.

The real short-term and long-term impacts on the local economy are yet to formally realised and understood, however, it is clear parts of our local economy are being majorly affected and Council needs to be flexible and responsive in provision of activities that could provide relief and support to our local community and see us all through what is shaping up to be the first Australian recession in 30 years.

I would like to thank those members who gave their time to support the development of this Strategy through their involvement in the Dubbo Regional Economic Recovery Taskforce. Through consultation with these representative industry groups, this Strategy has delivered the actions that will see the Dubbo Region recover strong and resilient.

Mayor of the Dubbo Region
Councillor Ben Shields

INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES

Adam Wells
-
Real Estate Institute - Orana
-
REAL ESTATE
REPRESENTATIVE

Ben Thompson
-
Dubbo Chamber of Commerce
-
RETAIL
REPRESENTATIVE

James McKechnie
-
Charles Sturt University
-
TERTIARY EDUCATION
REPRESENTATIVE

Jessica Gough
-
Wellington Business Chamber
-
WELLINGTON BUSINESS
REPRESENTATIVE

Kerrie Anne Nichols
-
Dubbo Chamber of Commerce
-
HOSPITALITY
REPRESENTATIVE

Lucy White
-
Destination Network Outback & Country
-
TOURISM INDUSTRY
REPRESENTATIVE

Matt Wright
-
Dubbo Chamber of Commerce
-
DUBBO BUSINESS
REPRESENTATIVE

Megan Dixon
-
Regional Development Australia - Orana
-
SERVICE CENTRE
REPRESENTATIVE

Steve Hinks
-
Taronga Western Plains Zoo
-
TOURISM OPERATIONS
REPRESENTATIVE

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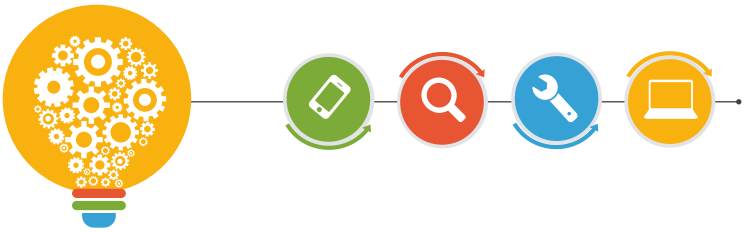
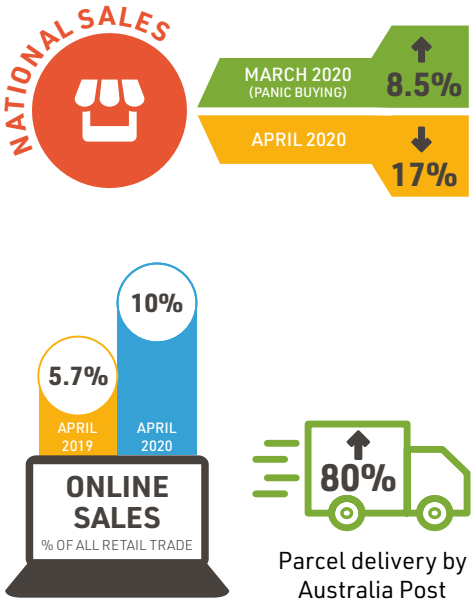
COVID-19 Economic Impact Report – Dubbo Region

IN BRIEF

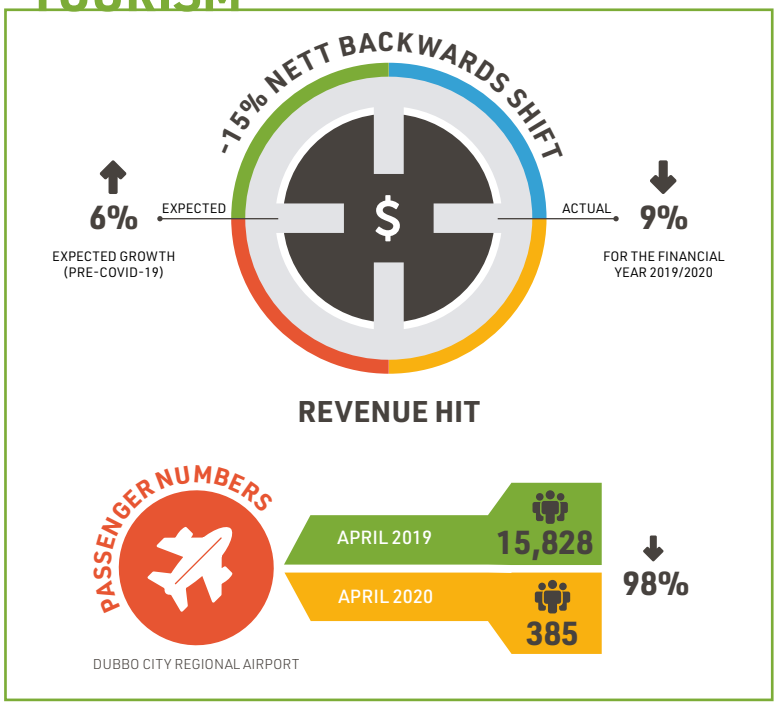


70%
OF BUSINESSES
have had to change
the way they operate

RETAIL



TOURISM

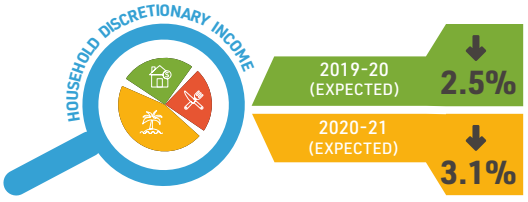


EMPLOYMENT

6 out of the top **10**

employing industries in the Dubbo Region were largely not directly affected by a change in demand for employment or compulsory closures

drop in job advertisements in April and May for the Dubbo Region



Rising unemployment and unstable employment security is expected to cause households to save more and reduce spending on discretionary items, such as holidays.

The Region managed to sustain very low levels of unemployment over a long period of time, considerably below the State and National average. This has also created an economic growth barrier, namely severe skills and labour shortages. With the significant construction pipeline in the Region, construction related opportunities will be in abundance.

$5.7B

TOTAL VALUE IN CAPITAL WORKS PROJECTS

ESTIMATED UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

MARCH 2020	APRIL 2020
2.30%*	3.90%*

* Estimation/economic modelling conducted by Economic Development Team at Dubbo Regional Council, June 2020

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REGIONAL ECONOMIC RECOVERY STRATEGY 2020/21

OVERALL OBJECTIVE

The Dubbo Region responds to economic challenges and opportunities as a result of COVID-19 and rebounds quickly as a strong, resilient economy.

How this will be achieved...

DESTINATION MARKETING AND VISITOR ATTRACTION

Vision for success: Offset the challenges and embrace the opportunities presented to the domestic travel market from COVID-19

OBJECTIVES

1.1	Increase the total visitor spend in the Dubbo Region, measured off an average of the previous two year spend for the FY 20/21
1.2	Increase visitor attraction in the Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) market, empowering locals to be part of the attraction campaigns, lifting Regional pride in the destination's offering and celebrating 'home town heroes'
1.3	Support Tourism attraction visitation, accommodation and hospitality industry in delivery of PR activity and marketing campaigns to both locals and targeted visitor markets
1.4	Build brand recognition and visitation consideration in targeted markets through targeted PR activities

DUBBO REGION BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND ATTRACTION

Vision for success: Offset the challenges and embrace the opportunities of COVID-19 to position the Dubbo Region as a centre for job enabling infrastructure and proactive business development

OBJECTIVES

2.1	Position the Dubbo Region as a preferred destination for identified industries that grow regional capacity and employment
2.2	Attract and develop industry enabling infrastructure through strategic plans and policy that are aligned to best support provision of grant related funding and partnerships
2.3	Industry value add opportunities are explored and acted upon for major projects to maximise local procurement and employment

DUBBO REGION PURCHASING BEHAVIOUR FROM CONSUMERS AND FROM BUSINESS TO BUSINESS

Vision for success: Offset the challenges and embrace the opportunities of COVID-19 retail landscapes to secure local purchasing practises within the business to business supply chains of the Dubbo Region and enhance the buy local behaviours of Dubbo Region's residential and service area communities

OBJECTIVES

3.1	Secure commitment from Council and large scale private business to support local supply chains through local procurement
3.2	Engage and educate business on the ways that they can attain work from Council and large government packages available within the region
3.3	Engage local community and regional service community of the Dubbo Region to commit to buying locally

JOB RECOVERY AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Vision for success: Offset predicted recessional impact economic impact of COVID-19 on Dubbo Region's economy, through continued low levels of unemployment and strong skills development that supports future identified industry growth and focus on labour force impacted by COVID-19

OBJECTIVES

4.1	Support affected industries with low recruitment engagement, high recruitment fatigue to attract people back into the job market.
4.2	Review training and workforce upskill opportunities for local business and labour force to diversify
4.3	Leverage opportunities presented by COVID relating to space and infection rates to attract skilled workers to relocate themselves and their families to our region to minimise/avoid FIFO

INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT

Vision for success: Strong and capable businesses and Industry which maximise and embrace the opportunities presented from COVID-19 and infrastructure investment now and in the future

OBJECTIVES

5.1	Increase local industries capability and capacity to maximise local participation in major infrastructure projects
5.2	Support industry alliances to facilitate industry collaboration and cooperation between businesses in the region to create a competitive advantage
5.3	Secure commitment from Council to support capacity building and skill development through procurement policies focused on cultivating Dubbo first
5.4	Address skills gaps through the attraction of in demand skills from outside the LGA as new residents to the Dubbo Region

CBD ACTIVATION AND RE-IGNITION

Vision for success: The Dubbo Region CBDs react to impacts, opportunities and restrictions of COVID-19 to create a safe, full and viable mix of business and commercial entities that employ people and attract spending

OBJECTIVES

6.1	Offset the decrease in foot traffic and restrictions on indoor crowds as an impact of COVID-19 by responsibly encouraging local spend within the CBD's through innovative programs and communication
6.2	Develop Infrastructure to Support Existing CBD businesses and attract new operators in new COVID-Safe regulations
6.3	Maintain commercial viability of the Dubbo and Wellington CBD's through the attraction and retention of major national stores that employ local people

How outcomes will be reported...

Monthly updates: Informal report

Measurements: Quarterly data

Activity outcomes

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DESTINATION MARKETING AND VISITOR ATTRACTION

What do we know about tourism and visitation in the current COVID-19 climate?

People planning their holidays are looking for...

Safety

Hygiene and cleanliness

Wide open spaces

Disconnection from screens, reconnection with friends and family

Explore their own communities before heading too far from home (local cafes and eating out high on the list!)

Bookable products and packaging

Research shows that people are currently considering domestic holidays to...

The coast; bushfire is still more impactful in visitors' minds than the drought and with drive the preferred transport it's less travel time for large populations – BUT, it can be seen as crowded and therefore unsafe.

Regional escapes are still ahead of a City escape, 33% of potential visitors are considering inland regional holidays looking for space and less people (Source: University of QLD April 2020).

The Great Big Adventures 2018 marketing campaign research shows that families who spend more time in the Region (3-5 days) have a better experience and are more likely to come back and share their experience, than those who stay only 1 to 2 days.

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High yield visitors who get value from Dubbo Region product promise...

Families:
Traditionally the highest yield market for visitation to the Dubbo Region. Mum has typically been considered the key decision maker for family holidays, with kids and partners providing pester power and reinforcement for decision making.

Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR):
The largest demographic of this segment is over 55, and whilst do not spend as much on accommodation, they spend on experiences, food and entertainment. The most popular travel times are December and January with a minor peak around Easter (Source: Tourism Research Australia).

Over 55s:
Burgeoning market as more Baby Boomers are retiring with a larger disposable income and a healthy appetite for travel.

Surrounding Region:
Typically regional neighbours spend the most money annually and regional visitation has great value to the market as a whole. They may be spending on household and professional services during some of their visits to the Region, getting them to stay as a tourist is a great opportunity.

Geographic insight:
The largest high population destination for inward spend in the Dubbo Region is currently Newcastle.

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When do visitors currently come to the Dubbo Region?

School holidays

Long weekends

What are the opportunities for the Dubbo Region?

Reconnection
to our service area

Leveraging local
disposable income spend

Corporate events
research shows people want the corporate connection - but still space

Attraction of VFR markets,
"invite your mates out"

Media mix push digital
Research shows massive increase in time spent researching online

Reconnection to existing geo-targets:
Including service centre and typical visitation markets, i.e. Newcastle, Canberra, "welcome back!"

Talk to some new markets:
Wagga Wagga, Northern Sydney
"Your adventure awaits in the Dubbo Region"

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What are visitation challenges?

The coast remains as a **key competitor**

Conversion from consideration to actual visitation research from Great Big Adventures 2018 campaign shows great cut through and relevant messaging with good consideration for visitation and recognition, but intention was lower

Sydney and Canberra markets are typically a **high spend market** to communicate with and market to

Considerations for the Dubbo Region...

The Great Big Adventure Pass presents an attractive option for instant conversion. The Pass is a multi-ticket with a 20% discount to Taronga Western Plains Zoo, Old Dubbo Gaol, the Royal Flying Doctor Visitor Experience and the Wellington Caves (unavailable as part of the Pass due to COVID-19 restrictions as at 31/07/20). The Pass was created and is managed by the 4 partnering attractions with Dubbo Regional Council driving marketing engagement and development. Passes are currently available for purchase via the website only.

There exists a long standing strategic partnership between Dubbo Regional Council and surrounding Councils in the 'Great Western Plains', namely Narromine, Gilgandra, Warrumbungles, Coonamble and Warren. This partnership was designed as a hub and spoke model, capitalising on the geographic location of **Dubbo and the Great Western Plains** counterparts, all of which are situated between 35 minutes to 1 hour 50 minutes' drive of Dubbo via major highways and well maintained roads. Using collaborative marketing to draw visitors into Dubbo as the anchor location and Taronga Western Plains Zoo as the hero attraction and then extend their stay in the neighbouring Council areas.

Dubbo Regional Council's marketing strategy is underpinned by the **Destination Partnership Program** which is ordinarily an 18-month program giving local businesses, accommodation operators and attractions the opportunity to be included in strategic and targeted marketing campaigns reaching the visitor, event and new resident markets. The Partnership Program was designed so that Partners receive scaled benefits commensurate to their investment in the Program and destination marketing, allowing both small and large operators to participate and benefit and providing support to businesses who support overall destination marketing. It was decided in May 2020 in response to COVID-19 to extend the current Program by 6 months to ensure there is ample time to promote partnering businesses when they need it most.

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DESTINATION MARKETING AND VISITOR ATTRACTION

Vision for success: Offset the challenges and embrace the opportunities presented to the domestic travel market from COVID-19

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1.4	Build brand recognition and visitation consideration in targeted markets through targeted PR activities

OBJECTIVE	ACTION		MEASURE	TIMING	RESPONSIBLE
1.1	1.1.1	Leverage multiple night stays in the Region through development and marketing of multi-night partnership packages with Great Western Plains Partners capitalising on the opportunity and increased attractiveness of travel post COVID-19 to Regional NSW	Tourism Market Report - Accommodation	March 2021	• Dubbo Regional Council • Great Western Plains Partners • Destination Network Country and Outback • Destination New South Wales
	1.1.2	Marketing of Great Big Adventure Pass (GBAP) as a conversion and commitment tool for Dubbo Region Visitation to promote packaged Regional experiences as an alternative for holiday makers who traditionally chose destinations which now have safety concerns/perceptions due to crowds	Sales of GBAP Tourism Market Report - Tourism Operations Engagement of local businesses to promote sales and utilise the GBAP for market focused competitions and rewards	June 2020 – July 2021	• Great Big Adventure Pass Partners • Dubbo Regional Council • Destination Network Country and Outback • Destination New South Wales
	1.1.3	Lobby and advocate for commitment from the State and Federal Government and their agencies for specific support to Regional marketing for destination activity to boost industry post COVID-19, Drought and Bushfire impacts	Communications between offices recorded. Seek grant funding where available to fund collaborative destination marketing opportunities.	Ongoing	• Combined development and delivery responsibilities across all members and organisations of the Taskforce
1.2	1.2.1	Creation and delivery of focused VFR marketing to people that live in Regional areas that are traditionally spending in the Region to leverage longer and tourism focused stays	Change in spending measured through Spendmapp Data	Term 4 marketing for off peak spend and Christmas consideration	• Dubbo Regional Council to develop and deliver
	1.2.2	Creation and delivery of locally focused VFR marketing, encouraging local people and industry to invite their friends and family to stay in the Dubbo Region capitalising on perceived safety of home stays and connection to family post COVID-19	Change in spending measured through Spendmapp Data Local conversion tool (My Dubbo Region Card) uptake (MyDubbo MyShout) Survey by Chamber of Commerce to local businesses (local heroes)	In market September 2020 and June 2021	• Dubbo Regional Council to support, actions delivered through Dubbo Chamber of Commerce and Wellington Business Chamber
1.3	1.3.1	Supporting visitation, accommodation and hospitality through at least four public relations activities delivered to target markets through mainstream media	Audience reach measurement	June 2020 – July 2021	• Dubbo Regional Council • Taronga Western Plains Zoo • Destination Network Country and Outback • Destination New South Wales
	1.3.2	Leverage local business networks and personalities for locally focused PR to help build morale of local business working alongside COVID-19 restrictions	Audience reach measurement and content engagement	In market December – May	• Dubbo Chamber of Commerce • Wellington Business Chamber
1.4	1.4.1	Support Dubbo Region brand recognition through at least four public relations activities delivered to target markets through mainstream media from within the Region	Audience reach measurement	June 2020 – July 2021	• Dubbo Regional Council • Taronga Western Plains Zoo • Destination Network Country and Outback • Destination New South Wales
	1.4.2	Leverage niche visitation experiences that have developed and increased in popularity as an outcome of COVID-19 related perceptions such as cycling, to communicate specifically with new target markets via targeted PR channels	Dubbo Region to feature in two additional targeted channels leveraging itinerary activities specifically tailored to niche markets	June 2020 – July 2021	• Dubbo Regional Council • Destination Network Country and Outback • Destination New South Wales

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND ATTRACTION

What do we know about business and industry in the current COVID-19 climate?

Australian consumers are...

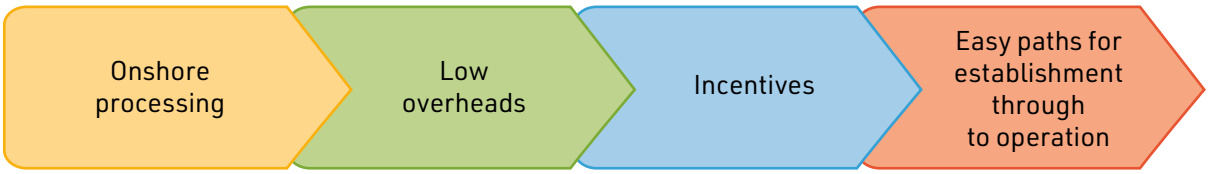
Preferring Australian made products

Consumer conscious wanting to know the story of where their money is going

Not interested in celebrity endorsement – they want authentic experiences from real people

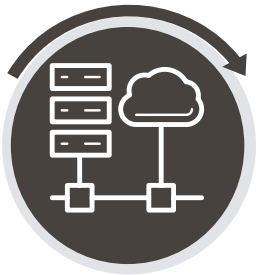
Wanting reliability of consumables, food supply and affordability

Australian businesses are looking for...



The Dubbo Region can offer advantages for business through...

Decentralisation



Digital connectivity
(Gig State Project)

Transport connectivity
(road, rail and air)

Low overheads

Stable power source
(Central West Renewable Energy Zone / Green energy farms / trans-grid substation)

Skilled workforce

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The Dubbo Region has strong supply chain advantages with..

What are the opportunities for the Dubbo Region?

Increase in online spending and market expansion

Biggest export currently is manufacturing

Leverage opportunities from Government to compete with NSW SAP and LAP developments

Leverage Council owned **industrial land development**

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What are the challenges in the Dubbo Region?

Close proximity of Special Activation Precinct (SAP) developments

Low unemployment can be seen as lack of ready workforce

Competitive nature of business with Regional Relocation Incentives from State Government being regionally agnostic

Lack of regional business identity focused on industry, opportunity for the Dubbo Region to be a point of difference to other NSW regional locations

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DUBBO REGION BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND ATTRACTION

Vision for success: Offset the challenges and embrace the opportunities of COVID-19 to position the Dubbo Region as a centre for job enabling infrastructure and proactive business development

OBJECTIVES

2.1	Position the Dubbo Region as a preferred destination for identified industries that grow regional capacity and employment
2.2	Attract and develop industry enabling infrastructure through strategic plans and policy that are aligned to best support provision of grant related funding and partnerships
2.3	Industry value add opportunities are explored and acted upon for major projects to maximise local procurement and employment

OBJECTIVE	ACTION		MEASURE	TIMING	RESPONSIBLE
2.1	2.1.1	Undertake market research to determine clear target industries best suited to Dubbo Region in the wake of opportunities presented by COVID-19 international restrictions	Industry analysis conducted that identifies suitable industries that may be best suited for the Dubbo Region	December 2020	• Dubbo Regional Council • NSW Government Department of Regional NSW (Invest in Regional NSW) • Regional Development Australia - Orana
	2.1.2	Develop and distribute a Dubbo Region Economic Prospectus with clear market focus for attracting identified industries	Digital prospectus developed and distribution collated Launch to include the backing report regarding gap analysis	Launch January 2021	• Dubbo Regional Council • NSW Government Department of Regional NSW
2.2	2.2.1	Support the priority projects identified for grant funding with the development of small 'go to' business case studies to leverage political discussions between agencies on the benefits of Dubbo Region Projects	Determinations made by Council's Executive Leadership Team and Regional Development Australia – Orana Board on priority projects for advancement of the Region Creation of 'go to' business case studies priority infrastructure projects across short term (1-2 years) and long term (3-5 years) implementation with distribution to appropriate agencies made to leverage opportunities for funding as they are presented	June 2021	• Dubbo Regional Council • Regional Development Australia – Orana
	2.2.2	Support local community and business operations to proactively apply for grants that can offset challenges or take advantages of opportunities which have been a result of COVID-19 impacts	Allocation of Economic Development staff one day a fortnight to facilitate direct enquiries from businesses or community groups relating to grant funding or opportunities Provide support to generalised groups in a public setting engaged with funding bodies and other supporting groups to give a rounded approach to funding processes and best practise for success Investigate the possibility of grant related funding from Dubbo Regional Council to small business located within the Dubbo Regional Council Local Government Area, for example, targeted small business grants	October 2020	• Dubbo Regional Council • Regional Development Australia - Orana • State and Federal Government
2.3	2.3.1	Attract new businesses utilising the opportunities presented by Regional localities for space and lower infection rates to support the retail and business expansion of the Dubbo Region	Proactive targeting of identified businesses and companies that can add to the commercial viability of the Dubbo Region Personalised contact from staff and dispersal of investment collateral supporting Dubbo Region relocation opportunities for business and commercial property acquisition and investment Provision of information to support locally based real estate agents to proactively attract new business to Region	Dependant on travel restrictions, ongoing development and contact with quarterly reporting	• Dubbo Regional Council • Regional Development Australia - Orana • Real Estate Institute NSW • Dubbo Chamber of Commerce • Wellington Business Chamber

LOCAL PURCHASING BY CONSUMERS AND BUSINESS TO BUSINESS

What do we know about purchasing behaviours in this post COVID-19 climate?

People spending their own disposable income want...

Australian made products

Safety and hygiene

To understand the story behind purchasing

Easy purchasing and packaging

Value for money

Consumer spending programs in the past have taught us that...

Buy local consumer messaging doesn't work without marketing, peak spending and uploads to buy local cards which have flow on effects for the following two months occur when marketing is active

Residents are motivated to support small, the Region's local small business is doing well in retail some recording record spending periods during the COVID impacted period, big brands and national retail stores on that other hand are suffering with low foot traffic and spend

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Dubbo Region business engagement and primary research has highlighted...

Small local businesses find it difficult to navigate the process on how to engage with Council for procurement

Large scale businesses and projects do not communicate their commitments to buying locally well

Community wants to see commitment from big business and government that they are supporting the community where they operate

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3.3	Engage local community and regional service community of the Dubbo Region to commit to buying locally

OBJECTIVE	ACTION		MEASURE	TIMING	RESPONSIBLE
3.1	3.1.1	Development of Council Local Procurement Policy, implementing findings of locally conducted research to support a holistic approach of Council's local commercial spending	Implementation of Local Procurement Policy as adopted by Council Sustained media campaign to ensure clear communication of Council's commitment to purchasing locally and supporting local contractors and suppliers	July 2020 Ongoing	• Dubbo Regional Council • Dubbo Chamber of Commerce Wellington • Business Chamber
	3.1.2	Development of a commercial framework for large scale private businesses to commit to strengthen local supply chains through local procurement	Large scale businesses in the LGA contacted by the DCOC to discuss their current local procurement policies for research and recommendations DCOC with the assistance of DRC to facilitate the development of a suggested viable framework for large scale local procurement to be presented back to industry for consideration	September 2020 January 2021	• Dubbo Chamber of Commerce • Wellington Business Chamber • Dubbo Regional Council
	3.1.3	Investigate gaps in procurement through analysis of businesses engaged external to the Dubbo Regional Council Local Government Area			• Dubbo Regional Council
3.2	3.2.1	Conduct training sessions with local businesses on the procurement process for engaging with Council as a supplier	Over 60 businesses engaged in facilitated workshops Satisfaction surveys conducted on the relevance and relevance of information provided at industry workshops	October 2020	• Dubbo Regional Council • Dubbo Chamber of Commerce • Wellington Business Chamber
	3.2.2	Minimise the COVID impacts on trade related industries through supporting the engagement of local businesses to be able to engage in infrastructure delivery projects	Creation and delivery of a capability document to be able to support large scale project developments for government and private delivery	January 2021	• Dubbo Regional Council • Regional Development Australia - Orana
3.3	3.3.1	Build post COVID confidence by undertaking local PR campaigns highlighting the flow on effects of buying from the local community	Feature local businesses from Dubbo and Wellington into geographically targeted digital campaign that encouraging buying locally during the Christmas period	November – December 2020	• Dubbo Regional Council • Dubbo Chamber of Commerce • Wellington Business Chamber
	3.3.2	Implementation of specifically targeted 'Buy Local' campaigns in Dubbo and Wellington utilising the marketing and conversion tool of the MyDubbo Region Shopping Card	Encourage local spending in traditionally low spending periods post COVID stimulus through competition delivery and collaborative marketing	February 2021	• Dubbo Regional Council • Dubbo Chamber of Commerce • Wellington Business Chamber
	3.3.3	Support collaborative marketing of CBD during Christmas period through Christmas promotions and marketing delivery	Development and delivery of Regional and service centre focused marketing encouraging visitor spend in Dubbo's CBD during Christmas promotional period	November – December 2020	• Dubbo Regional Council • Dubbo Chamber of Commerce • Wellington Business Chamber

JOB RECOVERY AND SUPPORT

What do we know about the Labour force in the current COVID-19 climate?

There was a 50% drop in job advertisements between March and June 2020 for the Dubbo Region. Retail Trade, Tourism and Accommodation and Food sectors were the industries hardest hit. Many local staff have been, either stood down indefinitely (on Federal Government Job Keeper payments) or laid off. On a positive note, six out of the top ten employing industries in the Dubbo Region were largely, not directly affected by a change in demand for employment.

Tourism operators, Pubs, Clubs, Beauty Therapists, and Gymnasiums were directly impact by compulsory government imposed closures. Industries such as Health Care, Construction, Education & Training, and Manufacturing maintained stable employment and in some cases had strong demand for extra employees to keep up with demand.

The Dubbo Region labour market outlook is coming from a strong base...

The Dubbo Region has maintained significant low unemployment for a long period. This strong position has been bolstered by six out of the top ten employing industries in the Dubbo Region largely not directly affected by a change in demand for employment during the peak COVID-19 impact.

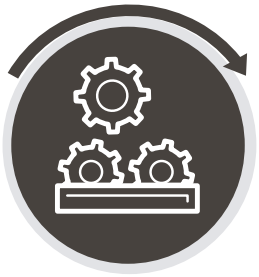
Since the restrictions started easing, employers are becoming more certain about the future and intended to rehire staff they had previously stood down or let go. There is a high potential for further market volatility and a dent to consumer and employer confidence due to the fluid onset of a second wave of the pandemic across NSW, which has been a consequence of the situation in Melbourne/Victoria. The JobKeeper Payment scheme and other government support are crucial to their survival during this period. However, employers also had concerns about:

The need to balance staff numbers and hours carefully to manage current workloads and costs

The need for continued government support

Staff health including mental health

Lower demand for products and services, lower turnover and emerging cash flow problems



For some, difficulties securing stock and supply chain problems

Challenges due to closed borders and travel restrictions

Difficulties placing new apprentices/those in training

Significant infrastructure investment in the Dubbo Region will support the Region through substantial employment, with projections highlighting strong demand for skilled labour on these major projects, including Regional Rail Project, Destination Dubbo Developments, major highway upgrades, Dubbo Hospital redevelopment project.

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What are the Dubbo Region's opportunities?

Changes to education models; could lead to more flexible learning or centres of excellence

Provide central space for large scale industry recruitment (retail and hospitality)

Engagement of university to be more focused on the engagement with the community where it operates, relationships and community presence

A number of large-scale and large-value projects, both private and government driven, in the Dubbo Region infrastructure pipeline provide a great opportunity for local business to be engaged

Big infrastructure and government projects upcoming provide a great opportunity for local business to be engaged

Engaging university or tertiary gap year students for shorter contract periods and low skilled work

Engagement of industry as a whole for recruitment, rather than individual businesses undergoing the task alone

Numerous tertiary institutions are in the Dubbo Region, opportunity to establish new partnerships and/or strengthen existing partnerships

Dubbo Regional Council to be a leader in local procurement with the recent adoption of Dubbo Regional Council's Local Procurement Policy

What are the challenges in the Dubbo Region?

Construction industry slowing down in residential builds, however, the Australian Government's Job-builder program may help to stabilise the sector

Difficult to get loans for a large portion of even full-time employed people

Changes to the tertiary education models could cause changes for training and development

Businesses need assistance in recruitment don't have the time or money to engage (Trades, Retail, and Hospitality)

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Current industry pressures in the COVID-19 climate...

The Dubbo Regional economy has performed strongly over recent years, with evidence that parts of the economy are operating at close to full capacity. With a large pipeline of significant infrastructure and construction projects planned for the region and low levels of unemployment, it is expected that some industry sectors will suffer from a shortage of skilled staff over the next few years, unless strategies are put in place to support economic growth. Investment and employment projections have highlighted strong demand for labour relating to specific types of projects such as construction, energy, mining, road and rail.

The Dubbo Region skills demand will increase...

Industry feedback has highlighted skills shortages across a range of skills; for instance plant operator, truck driver, electrician, diesel mechanic, metal fabrication trades and engineer shortages are highlighted due to the significant infrastructure projects, with the future demand likely to remain high.
A key finding is that low unemployment is hampering the ability of businesses to find relevantly skilled staff. The number of employment aged individuals (15 – 64 years of age) is falling and growth in the construction and related sectors will make this shortage worse.

Key Skill Shortage...

SKILL	CURRENT SHORTAGE	FUTURE DEMAND
Diesel Mechanic	✓	✓
Electrician	✓	✓
Engineers	✓	✓
Metal Fabrication Trades	✓	✓
Plant Operators	✓	✓
Semi-Skilled Workers		✓
Truck Drivers	✓	✓
Site Supervisors & Foreman	✓	
Contract Management Capacity	✓	
Joinery & Shop Fitting	✓	
Tilers & Bricklayers	✓	

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What are the opportunities for the Dubbo Region?

Dubbo Regional Council to lead connectivity into large scale projects requires manual follow up and local push to government and large scale contractors

Skills attraction

New industry development with relevance to existing experience in the business community, for example, rail.

Pipeline of infrastructure works that can support skills attraction for longer periods

Connectivity from school into work/ industry through established relationships increasing participation in work experience for secondary school students, traineeship programs and apprenticeships

Regional collaboration based on drive time to work, showing capacity of offering for life and work choices

What are the challenges in the Dubbo Region?

Large scale regional development looking for skilled workers

Part qualification training for upskilling business and workers

Residential build slows, does that free business up for commercial build?

Construction largest growing sector traditionally with sole traders leaving an existing business to start up on their own

Low unemployment means lack of ready workforce for new upcoming projects (lull from COVID may impact this)

Risk of FIFO for projects that could have ongoing skills demands in the Region

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JOB RECOVERY AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Vision for success: Offset predicted recessional impact economic impact of COVID-19 on Dubbo Region's economy, through continued low levels of unemployment and strong skills development that supports future identified industry growth and focus on labour force impacted by COVID-19

OBJECTIVES

4.1	Support affected industries with low recruitment engagement, high recruitment fatigue to attract people back into the job market.
4.2	Review training and workforce upskill opportunities for local business and labour force to diversify
4.3	Leverage opportunities presented by COVID relating to space and infection rates to attract skilled workers to relocate themselves and their families to our region to minimise/avoid FIFO

OBJECTIVE	ACTION		MEASURE	TIMING	RESPONSIBLE
4.1	4.1.1	Development of a dedicated Dubbo Region jobs board to support the development of a platform to assists with recruitment needs of business and assist with attraction opportunity and recruitment fatigue	Business and industry engagement in development of platform Job board developed and in market by October 2020 Over 30 job seekers tracked and connected with local businesses Satisfaction surveys conducted on recruitment process of both candidates and businesses	October 2020	• Dubbo Regional Council
	4.1.2	Take advantage of the opportunity arising from gap year students having to stay in Australia through development of employment and work experience programs with local schools to develop a local talent pool to support local industry	Business and industry engagement in platform. Number of local schools and students engagement in programs	November 2020	• Dubbo Regional Council • Education sector
4.2	4.2.1	Creation of education collateral to assist training providers and schools to maximise the retention of skills in our region and employment opportunities for our regions youth to retain gap year students and school leavers	Business and industry engagement in partnerships Survey from schools and industry on effectiveness	February 2021	• Dubbo Regional Council • Education sector
	4.2.2	Leverage local business networks and Industry to develop targeted skill development workshops to engage local students into local industry with focus on COVID impacted industries and those with recruitment difficulties	Positive business and industry engagement in training / workshops Survey from schools and industry on effectiveness	February 2021	• Dubbo Regional Council • Dubbo Chamber of Commerce • Wellington Chamber of Commerce • Regional Development Australia – Orana
4.3	4.3.1	Create skill specific relocation campaigns, to attract skilled workers leveraging post COVID-19 related benefits of space and flexibility	Successful EDM deliveries and click through stats	Ongoing	• Dubbo Regional Council
	4.3.2	Address COVID recruitment fatigue through creation of workshops to assist businesses respond to recruitment and on boarding process for new recruits	Positive business and industry engagement in workshops delivered by February 2021 Survey from DCOC effectiveness	February 2021	• Regional Development Australia – Orana

INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT

Vision for success: Strong and capable businesses and Industry which maximise and embrace the opportunities presented from COVID-19 and infrastructure investment now and in the future

OBJECTIVES

5.1	Increase local industries capability and capacity to maximise local participation in major infrastructure projects
5.2	Support industry alliances to facilitate industry collaboration and cooperation between businesses in the region to create a competitive advantage
5.3	Secure commitment from Council to support capacity building and skill development through procurement policies focused on cultivating Dubbo first
5.4	Address skills gaps through the attraction of in demand skills from outside the LGA as new residents to the Dubbo Region

OBJECTIVE	ACTION		MEASURE	TIMING	RESPONSIBLE
5.1	5.1.1	Develop a targeted Industry Capability resource that highlights the regions capacity of targeted industries as COVID-19 tightens travel restrictions	Resource developed and distribution collated	January 2020	• Dubbo Regional Council • Regional Development Australia - Orana
	5.1.2	Develop and implement training or business development programs that focus on Increasing Skills and capacity of targeted industries impacted by the changes related to COVID-19 restrictions	Business and industry engagement in program delivery	November 2020 and March 2021	• Dubbo Regional Council • Dubbo Chamber of Commerce • Wellington Business Chamber • Regional Development Australia - Orana
5.2	5.2.1	Support newly identified industries which have been impacted by COVID (Hospitality, Tourism) to attract and maintain and develop staff	Support hospitality and tourism through morale boosting activities and ongoing professional development including additional training in customer service and reward programs delivered through DCOC and WBC	February 2021	• Dubbo Regional Council • Dubbo Chamber of Commerce • Wellington Business Chamber
	5.2.2	Utilise local population to sustain skills in COVID impacted industries locally and connect industry people directly with young labour markets	Engage local industry leaders with schools as mentors and trainers to ensure experience is relevant to industry requirements and students have personal connection to aspire too	September 2020; and April 2021	• Dubbo Regional Council • Education Sector • Dubbo Chamber of Commerce • Wellington Business Chamber
5.3	5.3.1	Support local recovery directly through the review of procurement policies which incorporate tender evaluation criteria and/or incentive arrangements which give bidders credit for demonstrably developing local employees through education and skills development	Implementation of new procurement policy for DRC and measure through percentage growth of Regional business spend and participation	July 2021	• Dubbo Regional Council
	5.3.2	Engage local business in Council related works through the development of a simple guidelines document of "best practice" for procurement methods to support local industries	Development of resource and industry feedback Number of local suppliers in procurement pool for DRC works	February 2021	• Dubbo Regional Council

Continued overleaf.

INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT (CONT.)

OBJECTIVE	ACTION		MEASURE	TIMING	RESPONSIBLE
5.4	5.4.1	Engage businesses impacted by skills shortages in existing skills attraction platform	Growth in businesses uploading jobs to DubboJobs platform	Ongoing, quarterly reporting	• Dubbo Regional Council • Dubbo Chamber of Commerce • Wellington Business Chamber
	5.4.2	Targeted skills attraction to identified skills gaps expanded to include particularly impacted industries of COVID	Outcomes of each identified skills requirement attracted through DubboSkills platform registrations	Ongoing, quarterly reporting	• Dubbo Regional Council • Dubbo Chamber of Commerce • Wellington Business Chamber • Regional Development Australia - Orana
	5.4.3	Support local recruitment of skilled employees to COVID-19 impacted industries through connecting potential re-locators with industries in a more seamless way	Develop a platform that connects registered people identified through the Dubbo Skills Platform, through to employers with a more automated vetting system to ensure specific requirements such as experience are identified to limit impacts to recruitment fatigue	October 2020	• Dubbo Regional Council • Dubbo Chamber of Commerce • Wellington Business Chamber • Regional Development Australia - Orana
	5.4.4	Invest in mainstream marketing to attract new skilled workers to Dubbo Region as an alternate to crowded, populated areas, responding to public COVID-19 related health and lifestyle concerns	Redevelopment of the marketing image library to be more reflective of the diverse family makeups in the Dubbo Region Investigate the value of a wide mainstream media advertising campaign for the Dubbo Region Increase PR activity focusing on the main attraction of skilled professionals and their families/partners gaining employment in varying industries	Sept 2020 – March 2021	• Dubbo Regional Council
	5.4.5	Lobby State Government for support related to relocation incentives and services to improve Regional liveability and connectivity	Ensure connectivity remains for vital transportation links including air, rail and road connections Extend connectivity network through support of new air routes Lobby governments for financial incentives to relocation people to regional areas	Ongoing	• Dubbo Regional Council • Dubbo Chamber of Commerce • Wellington Business Chamber • Regional Development Australia - Orana

ECONOMIC COVID-19 RECOVERY - CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICTS – DUBBO & WELLINGTON

What do we know about the CBD's and the trading environment in the current COVID-19 climate?

The Dubbo Region's CBDs (Dubbo and Wellington) have had transformative use throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The foot traffic and uses within the CBD's have gone through definitive stages of change which has presented different opportunities and challenges throughout the Covid-19 Pandemic.

We know the current levels of people using the CBD's is high compared to the stages before the COVID-19 compulsory closures and lock downs. The COVID-19 pandemic and associated social lockdown policies have resulted in numerous businesses having to close operations. Some of these closures will be temporary, however, for others this will be a permanent closure. Those businesses undergoing a temporary closure may not have the capacity, or the demand to return to pre-COVID-19 levels of operations for quite some time.

Other operators have had a very successful period of trade, with a pivot to safe operational procedures and contact free transactions. The region is facing some challenges but also has some opportunities presented.

What are the challenges in the Dubbo Region?

Empty shopfronts

Derelict and deserted sites

CBD parking

Events restricted

Covid Christmas celebrations restricted

Underutilised areas or "dead" spaces

What are the opportunities for the Dubbo Region?

Sites primed and approved for development for attraction of new retail/businesses to the Dubbo Region

Destination Dubbo – International Ready Projects

Macquarie River CBD Masterplan development

Increased post-Covid lockdown pedestrian activity

Both Dubbo and Wellington CBD's have an abundance of good quality, available shop frontages for new businesses wishing to engage in traditional, foot traffic driven trade in the Region. Those local retailers who have had the opportunity to trade through online marketplaces have managed to sustain some level of trade, while others have had to pivot from their normal trading models and come up with innovative ways of accessing their usual markets. There have been some remarkable success stories from the resilient and adaptable local business community, including many who have started and offered a free delivery service or other who have installed contact free locker box style pick up and drop off services, so their customers could continue to safely gain access to their purchased goods.

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CBD ACTIVATION AND RE-IGNITION

Vision for success: The Dubbo Region CBDs react to impacts, opportunities and restrictions of COVID-19 to create a safe, full and viable mix of business and commercial entities that employ people and attract spending

OBJECTIVES

6.1	Offset the decrease in foot traffic and restrictions on indoor crowds as an impact of COVID-19 by responsibly encouraging local spend within the CBD's through innovative programs and communication
6.2	Develop Infrastructure to Support Existing CBD businesses and attract new operators in new COVID-Safe regulations
6.3	Maintain commercial viability of the Dubbo and Wellington CBD's through the attraction and retention of major national stores that employ local people

OBJECTIVE	ACTION		MEASURE	TIMING	RESPONSIBLE
6.1	6.1.1	Collaborate with key industry in the CBD to formulate activities relative to each Dubbo and Wellington	Organise a forum with CBD Shopfront owners and Real Estate agents either through a physical or virtual event to garner support for future activities and open communication channels	September 2020	• Dubbo Regional Council • Real Estate Institute NSW • Dubbo Chamber of Commerce • Wellington Business Chamber
	6.1.2	Produce an advertising campaign for promoting Dubbo and Wellington as the "Shopping Destination of Choice" targeted at Western and Central Western markets and leveraging from Kmart	Spendmapp data including an increase in overall spend, visitor spend and average spend per person throughout quarter following targeted marketing	December 2020	• Dubbo Regional Council
	6.1.3	Combat anti-CBD media, declining business morale in CBD's and community disengagement through celebrating and communicating approved CBD developments	Develop Stickers/Posters show casing upcoming CBD developments for display in empty shopfronts	April 2021	• Real Estate Institute of NSW
	6.1.4	Develop a COVID-Safe CBD Christmas Program including lighting and decoration initiative in partnership with local charities to provide CBD retailers with lighting and installation packages	Christmas program developed and percentage of business in the CBD measured for uptake of Christmas light activation	December 2020	• Dubbo Chamber of Commerce • Wellington Business Chamber
	6.1.5	Shop Local Promotions for advancement of #buylocalorbyelocal initiatives including myDubbo Region Shopping Card promotional campaign including investigation into stimulus spending promotions ($100 cash buys $120 card)	Uptake of myDubbo Region Shopping Cards in comparison to CY19	December 2020	• Dubbo Regional Council • Wellington Business Chamber • Dubbo Chamber of Commerce
6.2	6.2.1	Install Pedestrian (LoRaWAN based) Counters for Wellington CBD – COVID-Safe community and to monitor the impacts of store operating times and programs designed to build appropriate foot traffic	Installation of CBD hardware and monitoring of pedestrian traffic	December 2020	• Dubbo Regional Council
	6.2.2	Educate the community on the impact of online 'click and collect' purchases vs. in-store online purchases to national chain shopfronts located in the Dubbo Region	Feasibility report on short term parking options and infrastructure supportive of "Click and Collect" Promote in-store online purchasing to cement major chain viability in Region with national chain Head Office sales data Undergo PR campaign showcasing the real people who work in the major stores, their connection to the community and reiterating impactful purchasing messages, including in-store online purchases, 'click and collect', phone through purchases and traditional in-store purchasing	October 2020 – January 2021	• Dubbo Regional Council • Dubbo Chamber of Commerce • Wellington Business Chamber • Regional Development Australia - Orana
6.3	6.3.1	Identify gaps in the CBD retail landscape and proactively target potential new business for commercial viability based on the outcomes of COVID restrictions and change in peoples buying habits	Creation and delivery of a CBD prospectus for direct targeting of identified missing retailers for CBD locations	October 2020	• Dubbo Regional Council • Dubbo Chamber of Commerce • Wellington Business Chamber
	6.3.2	Proactive Sales Staff to target missing retailers into Region. Target, fund and provide flights to Dubbo for "decision makers" and take on a tour of the CBD & City	Contact, dialect and correspondence with targeted businesses	Ongoing	• Dubbo Regional Council
	6.3.3	Engage potential developments and investors into the CBD through showcasing opportunity and possibilities in vacant shop fronts	Investigate Augmented Reality Mock Ups and/or designed images for empty stores and develop a feasibility and costing for ongoing activation of shopfronts and CBD aesthetics	October 2020	• Dubbo Regional Council • Real Estate Institute NSW