



EVEN MORE VISITORS EXPECTED AT UPGRADED OLD DUBBO GAOL

For decades, the Old Dubbo Gaol (ODG) has been a popular tourist destination in the heart of Dubbo, and it's about to be even more popular, following the completion of major upgrades to the heritage site. In addition to being a major tourist destination, attracting more than 50,000 visitors a year, the Old Dubbo Gaol provides education opportunities to more than 3,000 students from across NSW, ACT, Victoria, and QLD each year.

“The Old Dubbo Gaol refurbishment project has been designed to create an improved visitor experience with enhancements to the State Heritage Listed buildings, including the replacement and refurbishment of a large majority of the exhibitions. Many of these exhibitions required replacement as they haven't been replaced for more than 20 years,” said Mayor of the Dubbo Region, Councillor Ben Shields.

The upgrades also include enhancements to displays, and utilising more modern technology to tell the stories of the lives of the inmates at the ODG. The upgrades will strengthen the visitor experience to meet current and future needs of visitors. The total project cost is \$1.39 million,

with \$809,725 funded by Dubbo Regional Council (DRC) and a further \$600,000 from the NSW Government's Regional Cultural Fund.

"The Old Dubbo Gaol is one of the most culturally significant heritage sites in regional NSW. Listed on the State Heritage Register, it holds artefacts of national significance within its collection of more than 600 items, and I am delighted this project has been supported through the NSW Government's Regional Cultural Fund," said NSW Minister for the Arts, Don Harwin, who helped unveil the latest upgrades.

Some of those artefacts include the largest collection of Hangman Ropes in Australia, and the original Hangman's Gallows. The upgrades will preserve these historically significant items, with new display cabinets allowing even more artefacts to be displayed to the public.

"Council conducted research with visitors to the Old Dubbo Gaol, and they told us that they enjoy the site, but felt there is a disconnect between the out-dated exhibitions and our audience. These latest upgrades include interpretive works that will engage and communicate with a broad audience of differing ages, interests, nationalities, and educational levels," said Councillor Shields.

As a result of these upgrades, the ODG is expected to see a 10% increase in visitation, providing an additional \$1.063 million to the local economy each year. It will also allow for the creation of three additional jobs. DRC was also able to engage local contractor Omni Constructions to complete the upgrades.

Member for Dubbo Dugald Saunders said it's important to continue investing in the Dubbo Region's tourism attractions. "The Old Dubbo

Gaol is one of the premier and most unique tourist attractions we have in Dubbo, and I am proud that the NSW Government has provided significant investment to make this as good as it can possibly be. These upgrades allow the Gaol to move with the times when it comes to tourism offerings, while maintaining the heritage feel that befits a site of such historical significance to the city,” said Mr Saunders.

Stage Two of the Old Dubbo Gaol redevelopment is currently in development, which includes upgrades to signage and the entry to the Gaol.

Image caption: Member for Dubbo Dugald Saunders, Arts Minister Don Harwin, and Mayor Ben Shields.



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