

LANDMARK POSTCODE

2830



Macquarie River, Dubbo.

Story: Sheryl Allen

LOCATION: Dubbo
5 hours northwest of Sydney

POPULATION: 40,000

INDUSTRIES: Retail, health, manufacturing, transport, tourism

CLIMATE: Temperate
Summer: 17.9°C – 33.0°C
Winter: 2.6°C – 15.2°C
Rainfall: 583mm

Dubbo is a bustling regional city located in the geographical heart of New South Wales, where the Newell, Mitchell and Golden Highways intersect.

With agriculture as its backbone, Dubbo's vast regional shopping and services catchment takes in some of the nation's oldest rural settlements, around a third of the state and more than 130,000 people.

The local economy is dynamic, buoyed by the activity of over 3,500 businesses. Many are small, locally owned enterprises taking advantage of the many service and trading opportunities offered in this developing economy.

The scale of Dubbo's catchment also supports larger businesses – several vibrant retail precincts reflect a pleasing mix of boutique specialty shops and iconic drawcards like Target, Myer, Harris Scarfe, Big W, Bunnings, Woolworths and more.

A similar mix is evident in the manufacturing sector with small and mid-sized specialists thriving alongside bigger players.

Fletcher International is a sizable sheep processor and exporter headquartered in Dubbo. Producing 100 per cent Halal meat, the company exports to over 90 countries and, at peak times, employs three shifts at its local facility.

The Dubbo Regional Livestock Markets is one of Australia's largest and busiest regional livestock selling centres. With several sales a week and some renowned seasonal sales, the complex is an employment and economic booster. In the last financial year throughput included more than 1.5 million sheep and 165,000 cattle for a total of \$230+ million.

Dubbo's leading employment sector is health. The Dubbo Base Hospital and a range of other providers deliver comprehensive health care right across the region.

Education is also significant with several tertiary institutions located here and a wide choice of secondary and primary schools.

Dubbo's heritage is in its pastoral identity, an early wheatbelt town that grew from a village to a town to a centre to a city.

"Traditionally it was all about wheat and then wool but producers now see prime lamb as very viable," said Landmark's Malcolm White. "We're also seeing a trend for exotic sheep breeds, such as the drought tolerant South African Dorper."

"In the 16 years I've been selling land here, the price has more than doubled. There was a major jump from 2003. Even as prices have generally come back over the past 18-24 months, well-maintained and well-located properties have fared OK."

According to Malcolm, there's a lot of good feeling in the bush. "We've experienced a tremendous uplift in the season since Christmas. Many surrounding districts have already had their annual rainfall. There's good feed cover and the outlook for winter crops is promising. With further rains to reassure the market, we expect to see prices on the rise again."

Tourism is also ticking along with visitors coming to soak up history at the Old Dubbo Gaol, get arty at the Western Plains Cultural Centre or get close to nature at the open-range Taronga Western Plains Zoo.

Then there are the wineries, top-class restaurants, parks and infrastructure that make Dubbo the full package.

Warm climate. Affordable property. Opportunity aplenty. It's no wonder Dubbo is known as a place of "smiles".

CONTACT:

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PROPERTY GUIDE:

Residential: median house price \$245,000

Rural: good farming country with heavier soils \$800 per acre

Rural: specialty farming properties \$1,000 per acre