

Case Study: Koonwarra, VIC

www.koonwarra.vic.au

Type of Location: Rural town in South Gippsland, approximately 1 hr 30 mins from Melbourne.

Population: ~300



Major Industries: In the surrounding area economic development is strong in the industries of dairying, horticulture, forestry, fishing, boutique food and wine, retail trade, manufacturing and tourism.

Applicant Organisation: Koonwarra Sustainable Community Centre

Synopsis: Koonwarra bills itself as a "Small town with a big heart" and with the launch of www.koonwarra.vic.au, they've certainly proved that community is high priority in South Gippsland, Victoria. In establishing a web site for the Koonwarra Sustainable Communities Centre, the organisers were quick to incorporate the Community Geographic Domain Name initiative in creating a community site as well.

As one of the test sites for the auCD initiative, Koonwarra has successfully integrated their resources and created a site that both serves the community and highlights its position as the first "Waste Wise Village" in Australia. Since its launch the website has provided a communication tool for the towns new community fire plan whilst also continuing to provide essential information to visitors about local business and tourism attractions.

What they say:

Starting out

"I would highly recommend auCD to other towns who wish to create a web site. For me it has been a huge learning curve and one I have enjoyed, the personnel of .auCD have always been extremely helpful and friendly and a pleasure to deal with."

"The concept of the site was quickly accepted and appreciated by the businesses and community groups in town and all were willing to become involved"

Benefits to local business, tourism and the community

"Being able to include information about the Country Fire Authority and Department of Sustainability and Environment sites has further demonstrated that the Koonwarra site is a valuable community resource, and a trusted local voice."

"Our businesses normally receive the highest number of visits, when our town features in the Melbourne newspapers visits to our site increases and it's my feeling that people from outside the area access these business pages."

"Our new business 'The Outside Bit' had over 70 hits in their first month. They feel it was a great help to them as they received a lot of visits from Melbourne people passing through."

"I feel people do check us out of they are thinking of visiting and with Easter approaching it seems people are looking for accommodation as the Koonwarra Cottages page had 74 visits alone."

"Our wildlife carer continues to attract interest and from this story we have been approached by a person publishing a book on wildlife carers to feature her in the book, using our story and photos!"

Helen Guy, Koonwarra Sustainable Community Centre