

# Bringing Services to the Australian Bush

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# Regional Australia

- Aging communities
- High unemployment – moving to the city
- Minimal health services
- Poor telecommunications outside metropolitan
- Loss of government offices and services
- Closure of banks
- Decline in farm production – drought

# Background

- The Australian Government has committed up to \$70 million from the sale of 16 per cent of Telstra to put services back/introduce new services into smaller rural towns.
- Rural Transaction Centers (RTC) Program provided start-up funding to help regional towns establish their own unique community center to provide range of services:
  - Financial services
  - Post, Phone, Fax, Internet
  - Medicare claims
  - Health services
  - Centrelink – social security and unemployment
  - Facilities for visiting professionals
  - Printing, Secretarial services
  - Tourism, involvement in employment schemes
  - Insurance, taxation
  - Federal, State and Local Government services

# Warracknabeal

- 2,600 population; 340 k to Melbourne
- 18 years as a “neighborhood house”
- 3 years as a “community enterprise center”
- Centrelink – federal government services
- Dept of Education funding – adult education
- “Serving the needs of an aging and under-employed community.”
- A quiet town.

# Warracknabeal Post Office



# Meet Raelene



# \$4 per hour Internet access



# Centrelink and other services



# Donald

- 1,700 population; 282 k to Melbourne
- Similar structure as Warracknabeal; additional funding from state and federal government grant has made it possible to build a new facility
- Small business development and support
- Provides level of technology no one else can.
- “The nerve center of the town.”
- “Can do” (anything) mentality; lot going on.

# Donald Post Office



# Meet “Soapy”



# It started here



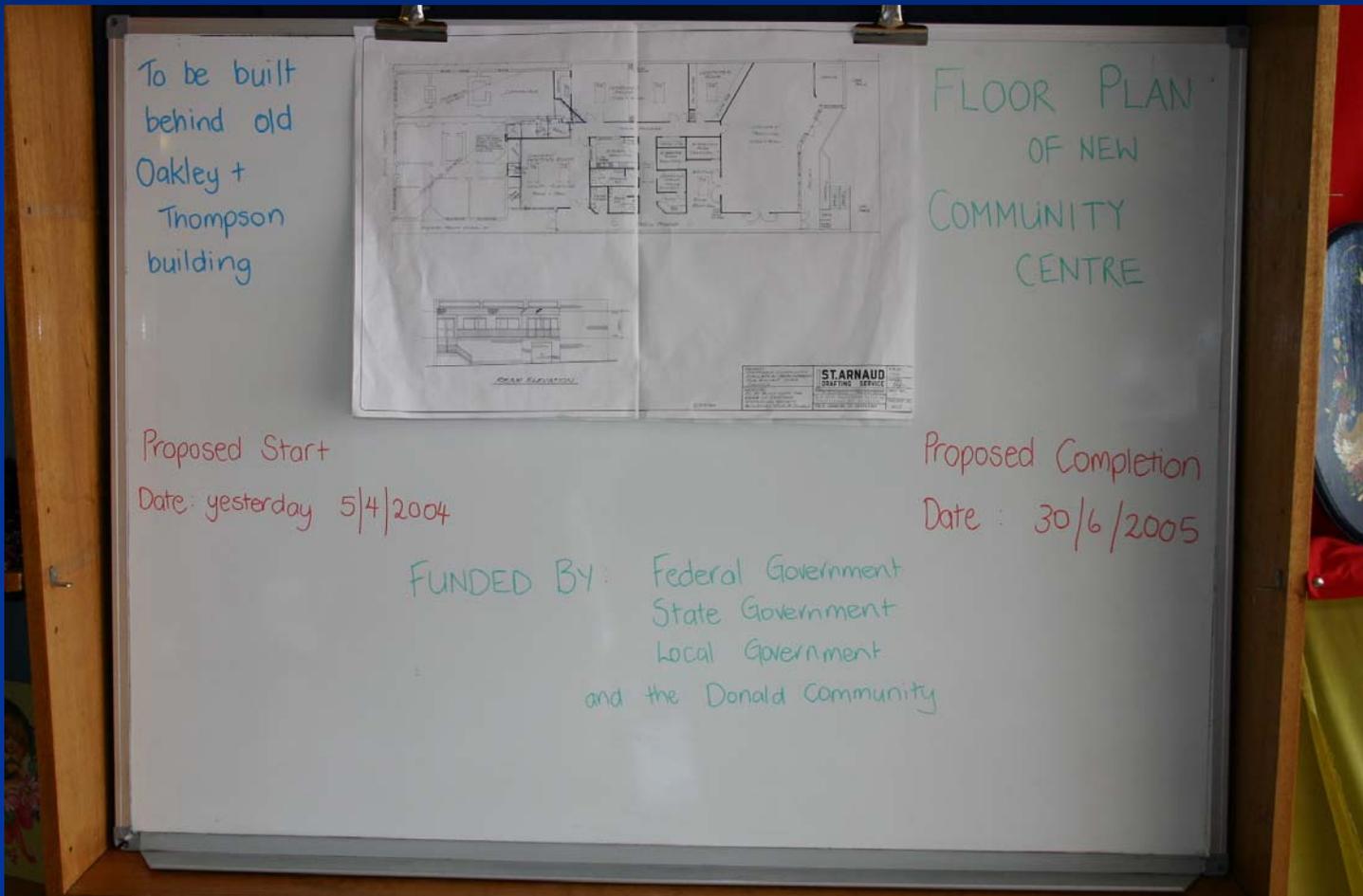
# Center of town; center of everything



# \$3 per hour Internet



# Soon to have new building



# St Arnaud

- 2,500 population; 244 k to Melbourne
- 2 centers and some competition; very different business models
- Started as a business support center; in future will become incubator for micro-enterprises
- Struggling financially and not benefiting from multi-agency funding
- “Still trying to understand what they mean to the community.”

# St Arnaud Post Office



# Small but soon to expand



# \$4 per hour Internet



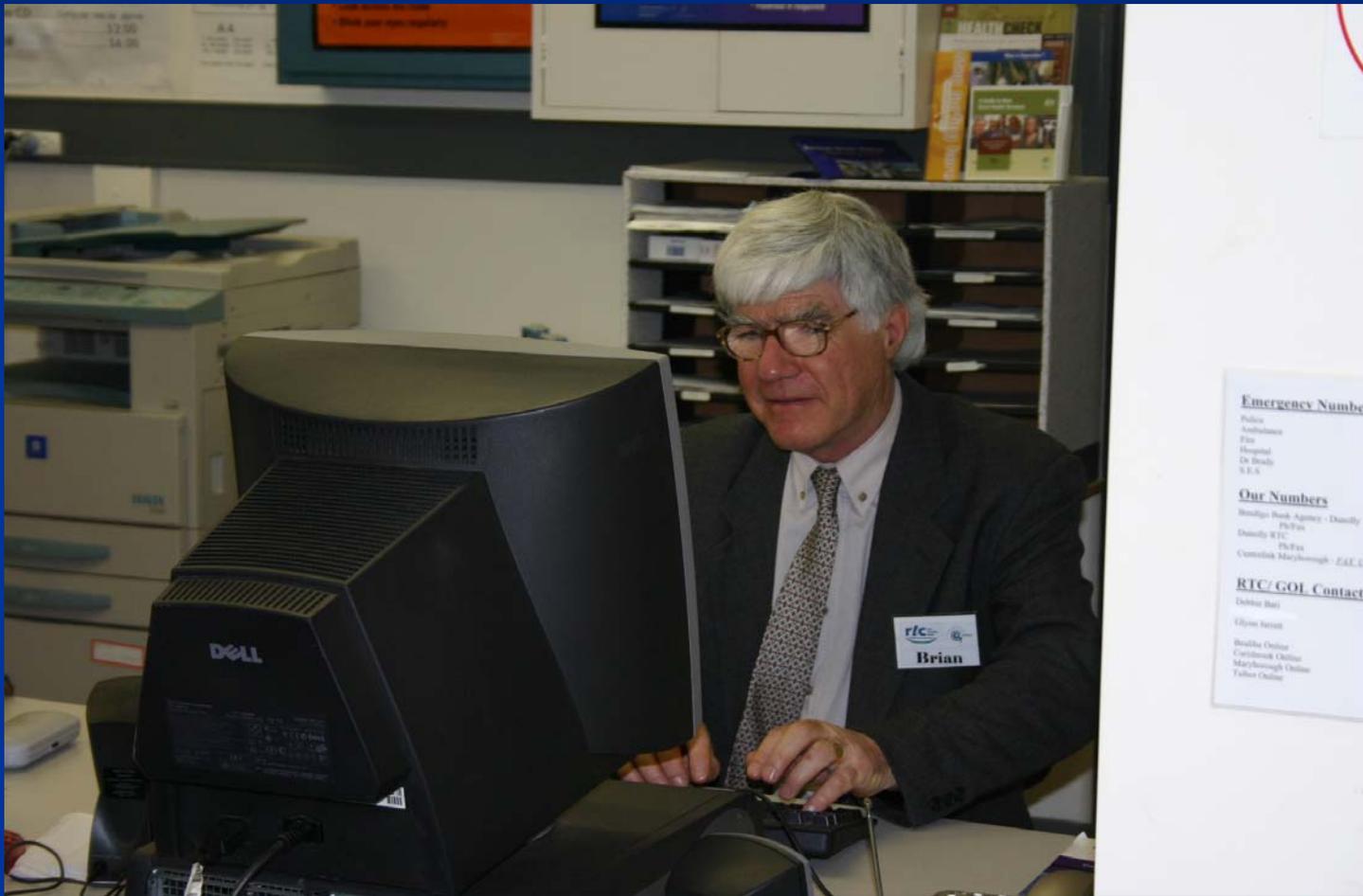
# Dunolly

- 600 population; 188 k to Melbourne
- 3 years ago town all but dead
- Town desperately needed a bank
- Became a Rural Transaction Center and now has partnership with the Bendigo Bank
- “The Bank that Saved Dunolly”

# Dunolly Post Office



# Meet Brian



# and his ladies



# Here's the bank that saved the town



# Medicare kiosk



# Schedule of fees



Schedule of Fees	
<b>Computer / Internet</b>	
Hourly rate.....	\$2.00
Minimum charge .....	\$1.00
<b>Other Charges</b>	
Black Printing - Text .....	20 cents per page
Black Printing - <b>Graphics</b> *.....	\$1.00 per page
Colour Printing-Text.....	\$1.00 per page
Colour Printing- <b>Graphics</b> *... ..	\$4.00 per full page \$2.00 per half page
<small>* Art work, Pictures, and Photos etc standard A4-size 80 GSM paper included in all above printing cost</small>	
Floppy diskettes.....	\$1.00
<b>CD burning</b>	
To copy to your own CD.....	Computer rate as above
To purchase CD_R .....	\$2.00
To purchase CD_RW .....	\$4.00

# Looking down the street



# Interested in gold digging?



# Key success factors

- Champion to get it started and to keep it going
- Community support critical to success
- On-going government funding a necessity; best approach is multi-agency
- E-mail is the killer app
- Internet for general interest; no e-commerce yet
- Computers on their own useless
- Each town/center has a unique personality

# Lessons Learned

- Keep politics out of it
- Need on-going government funding
- Ensure everyone in the community is behind it, “nay-sayers” can spell disaster
- Without the “right stuff” and compatible personalities, centers have little chance of success
- A group of Telecenters in close proximity that work to support each other