

# Illawarra

## Centre for technology, industry and tourism

**Population:** 417,901

**Area:** 8,524 sq km

### Major cities and centres:

- Bowral (Southern Highlands)
- Kiama
- Nowra (Shoalhaven)
- Shellharbour
- Wollongong



### Region overview:

- recognised centre for information and communications technology (ICT) research and development
- leading producer of steel and steel products in South East Asian region
- Gross Regional Product – A\$12 billion
- home to one of Australia's top universities – University of Wollongong

### Major sectors:

- ICT, business and financial services
- steel production
- engineering/manufacturing
- mining
- defence/aviation
- education
- tourism

The Illawarra is a unique region that blends a stable industrial background, including steel production and export, with a dynamic new role as an information communication and technology (ICT) and education hub.

Located one hour south of Sydney's international airport, the Illawarra boasts an exceptional physical geography, 242 kilometres of breathtaking coastline and a long coastal plain along its eastern boundary. To the west, the Illawarra is characterised by the rich agricultural soils and rolling hills of the Southern Highlands.

This divide between the coastal plain and highlands is clearly defined by the sharp rise of the Illawarra Escarpment, which offers spectacular views of the region.

### COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES

- highly skilled and motivated workforce
- relatively low staff turnover rates
- broad range of industrial and commercial property options
- affordable commercial rent
- location and lifestyle
- one hour south of Sydney international airport
- located within major road/rail freight corridors
- regional airport at Albion Park
- Port Kembla port for sea freight options

### INDUSTRIES

The Illawarra is an industrial powerhouse. Its diversified economic base combines longstanding steel making, coal mining and agricultural industries with more recent manufacturing, engineering and tourism activities. The area also has extensive research and development capabilities for industry.

#### Mining

The region has a wealth of natural resources including coal and blue metal. Coal mining is a major economic activity within the area.

#### Steel

The Illawarra is the leading producer of steel and steel products, slab and plate as well as coated and welding products, in the South East Asian region.

#### Tourism

The Illawarra has a thriving tourism industry that attracts 2.2 million visitors a year to its natural attractions, historic villages and events. The spectacular Grand Pacific Drive links Sydney to the Illawarra. The recently opened Illawarra Fly Treetop Walk is a must-see attraction.

### **Advanced Manufacturing/Engineering**

The Illawarra has a growing number of world class manufacturers. With expertise in advanced CAD/CAM and CNC technologies, the local engineering sector has the capabilities to tackle even the most complex projects.

From fabricated metal products to medical devices, Illawarra companies are recognised leaders in design, engineering, research and development and quality assurance.

### **Technology**

The Illawarra is home to exciting new technologies in areas as diverse as ICT and advanced manufacturing/engineering.

### **RESEARCH**

The region has a reputation as a centre for innovative research and development. This is led by the University of Wollongong (UOW) which has a international profile in a range of key research fields including:

- Information Technology Research Institute
- CRC for Smart Internet Technology
- Intelligent Polymer Research Institute
- ARC Centre of Excellence for Electromaterials
- Engineering Materials Institute
- Engineering Manufacturing
- CRC for Intelligent Manufacturing Systems
- Bluescope Steel Metallurgy Centre
- CRC for Welded Structures
- CRC for Railway Engineering & Technologies.

The recently opened Innovation Campus in Wollongong provides opportunities for businesses to undertake collaborative research activities with the University of Wollongong and other Innovation Campus tenants.

### **INFRASTRUCTURE**

#### **Transport**

Port Kembla is a multi-purpose port and a link to export markets for southern and south western New South Wales (NSW). The maximum length (LOA) for ships entering Port Kembla Harbour is 300 length or greater with harbour master approval. Major facilities at Port Kembla include a coal loader, grain terminal, and a new multi-purpose berth with associated ship loaders and rail access to both the inner and outer harbours. The Port can also handle the movement of bulk liquids. A recent \$140 million upgrade has increased its capacity to five general purpose berths and now provides 15,000 square metres of undercover storage.

### **Major education facilities**

- University of Wollongong
- TAFE Illawarra
- Internationally renowned private schools

### **LABOUR**

The combined labour force of Kiama, Wollongong and Shellharbour is approximately 130,000 (Small Area Labour Markets Australia June 2006) and the Illawarra region labour force is 181,000. The Greater Illawarra Labour Market (35 minutes or less drive from Wollongong city) includes southern Sydney suburbs such as Sutherland and Hurstville and expands the labour force to around 1.3 million.

The region's manufacturing and engineering workforce has a national reputation for excellence. Members of the workforce continually update their skills through technical education programs and are much sought after by manufacturing businesses throughout Australia. These are increasing numbers of students entering the workforce who are qualified in informatics and business management.

### **Multilingual**

The Wollongong area and its extended labour market have a highly multilingual population. The Greater Illawarra Labour Market includes a population of about 60,000 people who speak key Asian languages.

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University of Wollongong Research Strengths  
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