

Riverina

Food basket of Australia

Population: 154,663

Area: 63,521 sq km

Major towns and centres:

- Griffith
- Hay
- Leeton
- Narrandera
- Tumut
- Wagga Wagga



Region overview:

- over A\$1 billion annual agricultural and horticultural production
- Australia's largest producer of wine
- about 50 per cent of region's wine production exported
- major centre for defence

Major sectors:

- agriculture
- manufacturing and food processing
- defence
- softwood forestry/logging and wood/paper product processing
- textiles
- transport and logistics
- viticulture and winemaking
- services – tourism, education, research and development, government agencies

Spanning around 63,500 square kilometres, the Riverina region is situated west of Canberra, Australia's capital, and forms a junction between three major State capital cities: Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide.

Average maximum temperatures in the west of the region range from 14 to 33 degrees Celsius in areas such as Leeton, to 13 to 29 degrees in alpine towns such as Tumut.

Average annual rainfall is from 260mm in Hay (western Riverina) to 907 mm in Tumut (eastern Riverina).

MAJOR COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES

- availability of quality water and irrigation infrastructure – Blowering and Burrinjuck Dams have a combined storage capacity of 2,654,000 megalitres (more than five times Sydney Harbour)
- well developed telecommunications infrastructure
- reticulated natural gas and electricity widely available
- culturally diverse population
- good transport infrastructure with most major highway and rail corridors crossing the region
- international reputation for food and fibre manufacturing

INDUSTRIES

Agribusiness

Riverina agriculture is signified by an unmatched diversity in produce. This diversity is based upon dryland farming and the Murrumbidgee and Coleambally Irrigation Areas (182,000ha).

Alongside crops such as rice, maize and canola, the region boasts:

- over 25 per cent of NSW fruit and vegetable production
- 90 per cent of NSW citrus products
- 80 per cent of NSW wine/grape production
- livestock feedlots, sales and processing facilities
- nearly 20 per cent of all NSW crop production and two thirds of its total value

In a normal year total agricultural and horticultural production in the Riverina is worth more than A\$1 billion.

Forestry

Softwood plantations located in the South West Slopes centring on the town of Tumut generate over one billion dollars worth of economic activity and create employment for more than 450 people. Major companies are Hyne, Visy, Weyhauser and CHH.

Food processing and manufacturing

Food processing accounts for 20 per cent of the Gross Regional Product. This includes:

- food research
- production of vegetable, meat and fruit products
- fibre processing
- winemaking

Defence

The Riverina is a major national centre for defence. Both the Australian Army and Royal Australian Air Force maintain a strong presence in the region and play an integral role in the local economy.

The A\$200 million Royal Australian Navy Defence Communications Station makes the Riverina home to some of the most advanced communication technology in the world.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Transport

Most major highway and rail corridors cross the region. Two commercial airlines provide regular services to Sydney.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

Efficient ICT infrastructure built around the high capacity fibre optic trunk link (Sydney–Melbourne) that runs through Wagga Wagga.

Major educational facilities

- Charles Sturt University - Riverina Campus, Wagga Wagga
- Riverina Institute of TAFE

Research and development

- NSW Agriculture
 - Wagga Wagga Agricultural Institute
 - Yanco Agricultural Research Centre
- Inland Fisheries Centre
- Charles Sturt University

Major defence facilities

- The Royal Australian Navy Defence Communications Station – 25 km east of Boree Creek
- Australian Army Base Kapooka – 1st Recruit Training Battalion, Wagga Wagga
- RAAF Base – Forest Hill

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