



BUSINESS IN REGIONAL NSW > NSW Regions

Far West

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Population: 23,181
Area: 147,142 sq km

Major city:

- Broken Hill

Region overview:

- commodities boom driving new investment in minerals exploration
- emerging tourism industry based on proximity of Australian outback to both Sydney and Melbourne
- hot and dry climate means high quality fruit can be harvested weeks before many competitor regions
- home to large artistic community
- occupies 18.4 per cent of NSW land area

Major industry sectors:

- mining
- agriculture
- horticulture
- tourism
- retail/services

Bordering Queensland and South Australia, the Far West Region of NSW is the most sparsely populated in the State, with 18.4 per cent of its area, but only 0.4 per cent of the population.

The region is hot and dry in summer, with maximum temperatures of 32 degrees Celsius; average winter minimum temperature is 5.4 degrees.

The Far West Region has historically been the mineral powerhouse of the State. It also contains some of the State's most flourishing agricultural enterprises and large stretches of the world-famous outback.

MAJOR COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES

- significant mineral wealth
- climate that allows early harvest of produce
- good transport infrastructure
- located close to the major market of South Australia's capital city, Adelaide
- unique natural features and national parks



INDUSTRIES

The region's traditional industries, mining and wool production, continue to underpin the regional economy. Diversification is taking place through emerging industries such as goat and meat sheep production, intensive horticulture and tourism.

Mining
Efficient, large-scale mining operations centred on silver, lead and zinc form the backbone of the region's economy. Mineral sands are now being mined and processed in Broken Hill. The mining sector accounts for 20 per cent of the area's Gross Regional Product, 10 per cent of its employment and 70 per cent of its exports.

Agriculture
The agricultural sector accounts for approximately 11 per cent of the area's Gross Regional Product, 10 per cent of its employment and 20 per cent of its exports.

Traditionally, pastoral activities were solely based around activities such as wool production, but with a significant growth in irrigation in recent years the sector has been developing cotton, malting grains, grapes and stone fruits. In non-irrigation areas, pastoralists have diversified into goat and meat sheep production.

Due to the region's hot, dry climate, high quality fruits such as grapes and peaches can be harvested many weeks before competing regions.

Tourism
Tourism is an increasingly important part of the region's economy. As the closest part of the unique Australian outback to the major international gateways of Sydney and Melbourne, the Far West attracts growing numbers of visitors every year.

With stunning wetlands, red sand dunes, and an array of native wildlife, the Far West is a natural paradise.

Creative industries

The Far West attracts many artists and film-makers because of its natural features and quality of light. The region has a strong reputation as a location for feature film, television and advertisement production. Broken Hill is the home of many recognised painters, sculptors and artisans, including the well-known 'Brushmen of the Bush'.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The region is well served with excellent medical, recreational and other community facilities based at Broken Hill.

Transport

The transport infrastructure of this region includes:

- daily services from Broken Hill Airport
- sealed highways from Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide
- direct rail links to Sydney, Adelaide and Perth

Major educational facilities

- School of the Air
- Western Institute of TAFE
- University of Sydney - Department of Rural Health

LABOUR

A high proportion of the Far West's labour force comes from the mining, pastoral agriculture, tourism and horticulture industries. Managers and skilled and semi-skilled labourers are well represented.


The predominant professions are:

- mining engineers
- geologists
- horticulturists
- agronomists

For more information

Broken Hill office
Ground Floor, 32 Sulphide Street
Broken Hill NSW 2880
Tel: (08) 8087 8033 | Fax: (08) 8088 5100

Related publications

 [NSW Regional Profile - Far West Region](#)