



BUSINESS IN REGIONAL NSW > NSW Regions

Illawarra

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Population: 417,901
Area: 8,524 sq km

Major 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 industry sectors:

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

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

The region has a generally warm and humid climate, with heaviest rainfall occurring in summer and autumn. Temperatures range from 18 to 26 degrees Celsius in summer, and in winter, from nine to 16 degrees.

Located an hour south of Sydney's international airport, the Illawarra boasts an exceptional physical geography. Two hundred and forty-two kilometres of breathtaking coastline and a long coastal plain surround the region's 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
- 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 and rail freight corridors
- 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, historical villages and events. The recently opened sea bridge at Coledale forms part of the spectacular Grand Pacific Drive that links Sydney to the Illawarra.

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, R&D and quality assurance.

Technology

The Illawarra has a reputation as a home for exciting new technologies in areas as diverse as ICT and advanced manufacturing/engineering.

The region has a reputation as a centre for innovative research and development. This is led by the University of Wollongong and its Innovation Campus that has a leading 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 and Technologies

INFRASTRUCTURE

Transport

The Port of Port Kembla is a multi-purpose port and a link to export markets for southern and south western New South Wales (NSW). The maximum dimension (LOA) for ships entering Port Kembla Harbour is 300 metres 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.

The Port has commenced work on a \$140 million upgrade that will increase its capacity to five general purpose berths and provide 15,000 square metres of undercover storage.

Major education facilities:

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

LABOUR

The Kiama, Wollongong and Shellharbour combined labour force is approximately 130,000 (Small Area Labour Markets Australia June 2006) and the Illawarra region labour force is 181,000. However, there is a wider area, the Greater Illawarra Labour Market, which is defined as the area which is 35 minutes or less drive from Wollongong city. The Greater Illawarra Labour Market includes southern Sydney suburbs such as Sutherland and Hurstville and expands the labour force to 1,300,000.

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. Coupled with these skills 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.

For more information

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[Wollongong Innovation Campus](#)

[University of Wollongong Research Strengths](#)

Related publications

 [NSW Regional Profile - Illawarra Region](#)