



BUSINESS IN REGIONAL NSW > NSW Regions

Northern Rivers

i

Population: 283,544
Area: 20,895 sq km

Major centres:

- Ballina
- Grafton
- Lismore
- Tweed Heads.

The Northern Rivers Region provides a combination of dynamic manufacturing and horticultural industries, a spectacular natural environment and an unsurpassed quality of life offering an excellent place in which to invest and live.

The region's population is increasing at a rate of about 1.2 per cent per annum. Major employment sectors include retail, tourism, health and community services, manufacturing, education, business services and agriculture. Industry sectors such as education, media and creative industries, horticulture, residential development, forestry, meat and dairy, aquaculture and age care are emerging as areas with strong growth prospects.

Major sectors:

- tourism
- agribusiness and forestry
- health and community services
- building/construction
- manufacturing
- biotechnology
- multimedia and creative industries
- education and research.

The Northern Rivers region provides a combination of dynamic manufacturing and horticultural industries, a spectacular natural environment and an unsurpassed quality of life offering an excellent place in which to invest and live.

The region, located in the north east of NSW, contains three major river systems – the Tweed, Richmond and Clarence – and backs onto the Great Dividing Range.

MAJOR COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES

- highly skilled workforce
- strong transport links
- high quality lifestyle
- diverse educational facilities
- skills base spanning industries as diverse as education and manufacturing.



INDUSTRIES

Agriculture

The major agricultural commodities produced in the Northern Rivers include dairy, tropical fruits, cattle, poultry, plantation forests, soya bean, sugar cane and aquaculture.

In recent years, many new and niche agricultural operations have emerged in the region. Coffee, bush tucker and hydroponics are all showing great export potential.

The agricultural industry is supported by numerous research stations and facilities which are pursuing innovative new research into the development of alternative crops and their economic potential.

Biotechnology

Research conducted at Southern Cross University has especially benefited the burgeoning natural medicine industry. Expertise in phytochemistry, bioprospecting, plant genetics and clinical trials are a strong platform for the growth of the biotechnology industry in the Northern Rivers.

Manufacturing

The Northern Rivers is a manufacturing hub. Industries as diverse as food, beverages and timber are represented in the region. There is a high level of value adding based on the strong primary industry base of the region.

Tourism

The Northern Rivers is a key tourism destination, with the second highest level of international

tourists in NSW. The region contains stunning national parks such as Mount Warning, as well as long stretches of unspoilt coastlines and significant World Heritage rainforest reserves.

The region encompasses tourist icons such as Byron Bay and Nimbin. The hinterland areas of the Northern Rivers have some significant rainforest reserves which can be accessed through the Rainforest Way. The Rainforest Way comprises a series of loops and trails that tourists can access by road. The region's remnant ancient shield volcano has recently been included as one of Australia's eight iconic national landscapes. Branded as "Australia's Green Cauldron" the region will feature prominently in Australia's international tourism destination marketing.

The Northern Rivers is home to many artists, an active theatrical community and many popular festivals including the East Coast Blues and Roots Music Festival, Byron Bay Writers Festival, Splendour in the Grass and the International Science, Theological and Philosophy Festival.

Creative Industries

The region has a strong skill base in creative and knowledge based sectors. It boasts more documentary makers than anywhere else in Australia other than Sydney and Melbourne. It also has strong proactive industry associations supporting the development of the creative industries.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Transport

Northern Rivers has strong transport and economic links to both NSW and south east Queensland and is well serviced by the Ballina and Gold Coast Airports, the Pacific Motorway and the interstate rail network.

Gas

The Northern Rivers has an emerging gas industry. The region has the largest coal seam methane gas reserve in NSW.

Major educational facilities

Well developed educational facilities with two campuses of Southern Cross University, nine TAFE campuses, the School of Audio Engineering (SAE) at Byron Bay and nearly thirty other cultural educational institutions with specialist training in the arts, crafts, theatre and film.

LABOUR

The Northern Rivers has a strong mix of trade skills, tertiary and professional skills, including:

- building/construction
- manufacturing
- agriculture
- multimedia
- service industries, especially hospitality
- research and development

For more information

Lismore Office

Level 3, Rous Water Building, 218 Molesworth Street
PO Box 146, Lismore NSW 2480
Tel: +61 2 6622 4011 | Fax: +61 2 6621 4609


Tweed Heads Office

Ground Floor, 145 Wharf Street
PO Box 851, Tweed Heads NSW 2485
Tel: +61 2 5599 3344 | Fax: +61 2 5599 3354

[Northern Rivers Regional Development Board](#)

+61 2 6622 4011

Related publications

 [NSW Regional Profile - Northern Rivers Region](#)