Gunnedah

Economic Development Strategy

Shire of Gunnedah
Land of Opportunity

Volume 1

Economic PROFILE

Gunnedah Shire Council
PO Box 63
Gunnedah NSW 2380

Tel: (02) 6740 2100
web: www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au

The Gunnedah *Economic Development Strategy* was adopted by the Gunnedah Shire Council at its Ordinary Meeting of Council on 19 March 2014 (Resolution Number 13.03/14).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
This document has been prepared by Jenny Rand and Associates for the Gunnedah Shire Council.

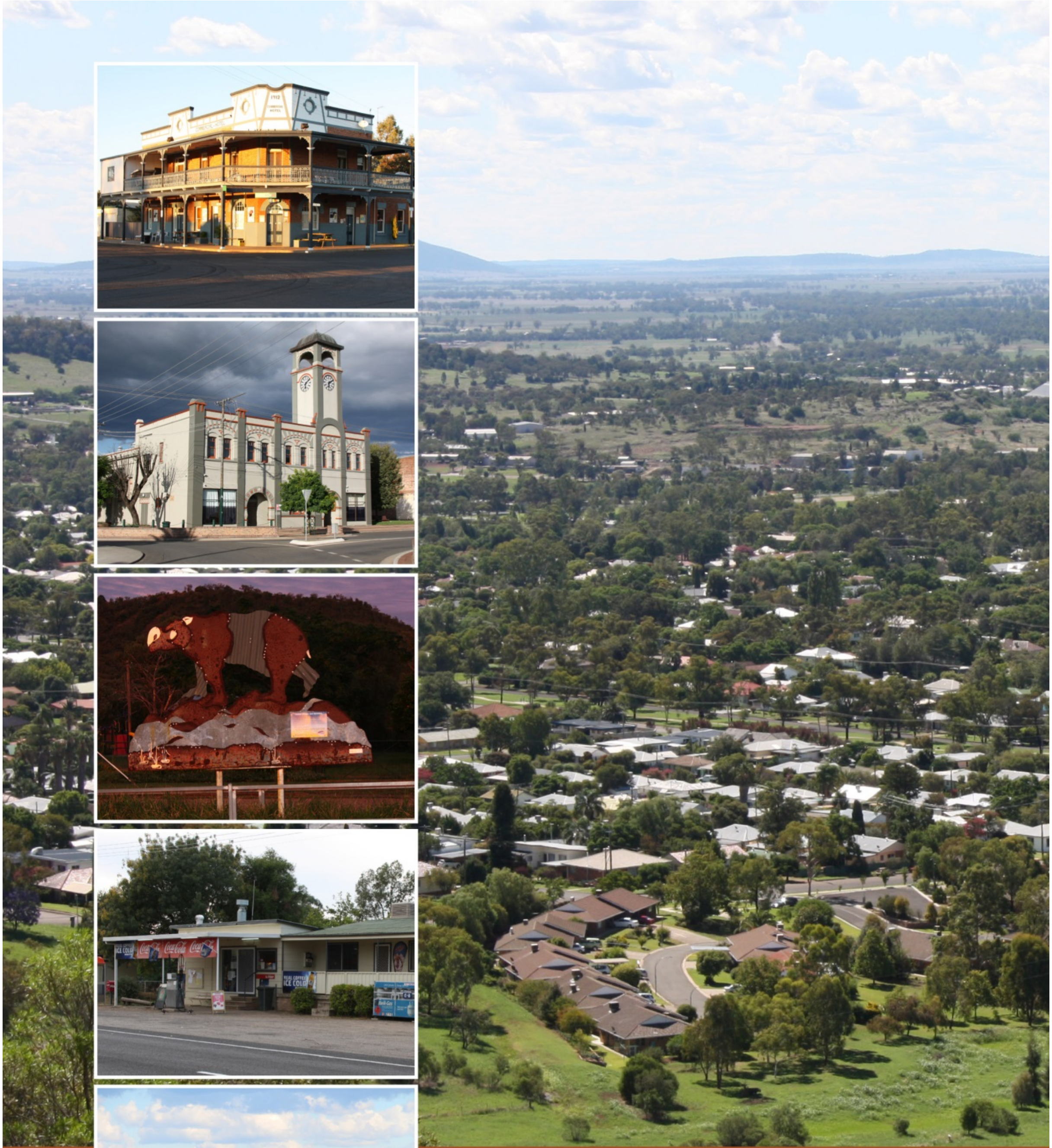
The Council wishes to thank all those people, businesses and organisations who attended consultative forums, met with the consultants and provided information for this *Economic Development Strategy* for Gunnedah Shire Council.

Prepared by

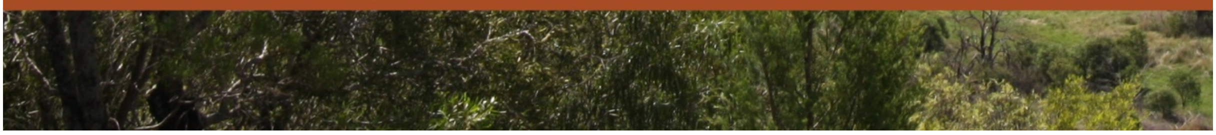
Jenny Rand & Associates and
Suzanne Lollback
Management Consultants
272 Prince Charles Parade
Kurnell NSW 2231

Tel: (02) 9668 8474
Mob: 0411 782 700
Email: jennyrand@aol.com

Contents




Part 1
Introduction
Gunnedah Shire and Regional Overview



1. INTRODUCTION

Gunnedah Shire, in the Northern Inland Region of NSW is a prosperous agricultural area with extensive coal and gas resources. Agriculture has traditionally been the primary economic driver, underpinning other sectors of the community. The strong global demand for coal and gas has resulted in the 'ramping' up of the coal and gas sectors, with the Gunnedah Basin[1] (which incorporates Liverpool Plains, Gunnedah and Narrabri Shires), identified as the 'new coal frontier'. Over the next decade there is likely to be further growth in the coal mining sector, with coal mining being a dominant industry within Gunnedah Shire and surrounding region The coal mining sector is competing with agriculture and other sectors for labour, resources and access to infrastructure.

The Shire's dependence on agriculture and mining exposes it to 'boom and bust' cycles in both sector, with the local economy intrinsically linked with performance of these sectors globally. Building a more diversified, sustainable and resilient economy is a priority for Gunnedah Shire Council. The preparation of an Economic Development Strategy is one of the actions being taken by Council as part of the foundation for stimulating and driving economic growth.

1.1 The Gunnedah Shire Economic Development Strategy

Purpose

The *Gunnedah Economic Development Strategy* provides the framework and directions for economic development within Gunnedah Shire, with the focus being on actions that can be achieved over the next 5 years. In particular the Strategy addresses:

- The current level of economic development within the Shire and the factors that have and are continuing to influence development.
- The pressures and opportunities for Gunnedah businesses arising from developments at both the Shire and regional level.
- Opportunities for Gunnedah Shire to support, capitalise on and benefit from new and emerging industries.
- Opportunities for Gunnedah Shire to diversify and strengthen its economic base in a sustainable and balanced way.
- Opportunities for Gunnedah Shire Council to promote Gunnedah Shire and attract new businesses.
- Projects within the Shire that Gunnedah Shire Council can focus on to stimulate growth.

Defining Economic Development

Economic development is the process of improving the economic wellbeing of the community, through efforts focused on strengthening local businesses, attracting investment and creating jobs.

The aim of economic development is to develop the local community into one where people wish to live, work, invest and enjoy.

[1] Gunnedah Basin refers to the underlying geology of the area, with the Gunnedah Basin being a sedimentary basin that has extensive coal and coal seam gas resources. A map of the Gunnedah Basin in provided in Section 15.1.

Structure

The *Economic Development Strategy* is presented in two volumes:

Volume 1: Economic Profile
Volume 2: Strategies and Actions

Volume 1: Economic Profile provides an assessment of:

- Gunnedah Shire - its role and position in the Northern Inland Region and its competitive advantages and disadvantages.
- Demographic and social characteristics of the Gunnedah Shire community.
- Economic indicators.
- Main economic sectors and activities within the Shire – agriculture, extractive industries, manufacturing, retailing, tourism, health and social services, education and training and public administration.
- Infrastructure and services available to support economic development – transport, utilities and business support services.

The *Economic Profile* identifies a range of opportunities to grow and diversify the economic base of the Shire well as the challenges which need to be addressed to encourage and facilitate growth. The analysis provided in the *Economic Profile* provides the rationale for the directions, strategies and action provided in Volume 2.

Volume 2: Strategies and Actions articulates the objectives and directions for economic development within Gunnedah Shire and provides the strategies and actions to achieve sustainable growth. The *Economic Development Strategy* is linked to other Plans and Strategies that have been adopted by Gunnedah Shire Council as part of its integrated planning approach.

The *Economic Development Strategy* is the starting point for encouraging economic growth within Gunnedah Shire. It will however take time, resources and commitment to implement the strategies and actions incorporated in this Strategy. To be effective, the Strategy must be a living document that is constantly evolving. The recommended actions need to be implemented and the results evaluated. Periodically the Strategy will need to be revised, building on what has been achieved, so that Gunnedah Shire can continue to move forward.

Planning Process

In preparing the *Economic Development Strategy* input was sought from Government Agencies, industry associations, local businesses and service providers, as well as the broader community. The planning process included:

- Audit of the businesses within Gunnedah Shire.
- Survey of businesses.
- Community workshops in Gunnedah, Mullaley, Curlewis, Tambar Springs, Breeza and Kelvin.
- Workshop with representatives from the Gunnedah retail and commercial sectors.
- Planning Charette, attended by a range of business and community leaders.
- Interviews with stakeholders including a range of business operators, business and industry associations, Government Agencies and service providers.

2. PLANNING CONTEXT

The *Gunnedah Shire Economic Development Strategy* is being prepared within the framework set by the NSW State Government through *NSW 2021 - A Plan to Make NSW Number One* and the resultant planning and development strategies that have been adopted for the Northern Inland Region, as well as with the directions and strategic objectives of the *Gunnedah Shire Community Strategic Plan*.

2.1 Regional Planning Framework

New England – North West Regional Action Plan

An integrated planning approach has been developed for the Region with this articulated through the *New England - North West Regional Action Plan (2012)*. This Plan recognises a number of existing regional plans and strategies including the *RDA Australian Northern Inland Regional Plan*, the *NE-NW Strategic Regional Landuse Plan* and the Catchment Management Plans for the major river systems. The planning framework is summarised in Figure 2.1 with the priorities and key directions summarised in Table 2.1.

Figure 2.1 Regional Planning Framework

Source: NSW Department of Premier & Cabinet (2012) *New England North West Regional Action Plan*

Table 2.1 Summary of Priorities and Key Directions of the New England - North West Regional Action Plan

Priority	Key Directions
1. Support sustainable economic growth	To support economic growth in New England North West, the NSW Government will: • Foster growth sectors such as value-adding industries, agriculture, agribusiness and food processing, aviation and advanced technology • Promote the region to attract new residents and businesses • Continue to build a skilled local workforce • Balance strong economic growth with sustainable management of natural resources and the protection of agricultural land.
2. Invest in regional and local infrastructure.	The NSW Government will increase investment in regional and local infrastructure through: • Provision of transport infrastructure, including upgrades to roads, and improved transport corridors and availability of services, including rail and air, to support industry expansion • Delivery of local infrastructure projects in partnership with local government to improve service delivery to the community.
3. Improve education pathways for young people.	To improve education pathways for young people, the NSW Government will: • Implement the Connected Communities program to support children and young people through school into further training, study and employment • Encourage more students to stay in school through the delivery of innovative and flexible education and training options • Improve education and employment outcomes for Aboriginal students by partnering with non-government organisations and stakeholders to deliver effective initiatives.
4. Deliver quality, integrated health services.	The NSW Government will deliver quality integrated health services in the region through: • Improved access to specialist health services • Attraction and retention of more health professionals to support increased health service delivery • Delivery of key health infrastructure to improve access to a broader range of services • Improved community awareness of mental health issues.
5. Deliver integrated and coordinated human services	The NSW Government will agree on service need and service response and build strong partnerships with local government to: • Provide more affordable housing options • Reduce homelessness • Deliver coordinated services to improve outcomes for Aboriginal communities • Deliver more community transport services.
6. Support strong, safe communities.	To address these issues the NSW Government will: • Work with the community to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour • Deliver effective crime prevention initiatives in Aboriginal communities • Implement the Coledale Action Plan to address social disadvantage.

Source: NSW Department of Premier & Cabinet (2012) New England North West Regional Action Plan

The *Regional Action Plan* recognises the impacts that the mining sector is having on regional and local economies and the need to provide infrastructure and services to capitalise on emerging opportunities as well ameliorate the negative impacts resulting from competition for resources, rising prices and costs and potential impacts on the physical environment and production systems.

Regional Development Australia – Northern Inland NSW Regional Plan 2011-2015

The priorities set by Regional Development Australia for the Northern Inland Region in the *Regional Plan 2011-2015,* are similar in content and direction to the Regional Action Plan, with these priorities being:

- Regional community regeneration and sustainable population growth
- Industry diversification, business growth and job creation
- Integrated and improved health care
- Investment in regional infrastructure and education
- Social inclusion and engaging aboriginal communities
- Environmental achievement.

RDA's vision for the Northern Inland Region is:

By 2015 the Northern Inland Region will:

- Be experiencing a period of sustained population growth in at least 75% of the population clusters, with a mix of demographics, plus advances in all public services to match population growth.
- Host at least five new or existing growing enterprises providing tangible employment outcomes.
- Have health and aged care services equivalent to the average in major cities, reaching as closely as possible to where people live in the region.
- Have enhanced road, air, communications, education and social infrastructure such that 80% of regional residents recognise improvements.
- Show advances in engagement and welfare of local Aboriginal communities and citizens against all benchmarks set by national and state agencies
- Be recognised among the top 40% of regions in environmental and sustainable resource utilisation terms.

Namoi 2030 - Regional Resource Strategy

Namoi 2030 Regional Resource Strategy aims to provide an overview of the following areas to help determine the range of co-ordinated actions and recommendations to improve short- and long-term planning for the Namoi region as it approaches 2030, and to ensure the future of the Namoi Valley is sustainable. The Namoi Region is defined as the LGAs that fall wholly or partly within the Namoi River catchment area and include Tamworth Regional, Liverpool Plains, Gunnedah, Narrabri, Walgett, Warrumbungle, Walcha and Coonamble Shires.

The Strategy addresses:

- The resource stocks in the Namoi Region to 2030, and opportunities and constraints to future utilisation.
- The qualitative environmental, social and economic impacts associated with resource utilisation in the Region.
- Infrastructure needs associated with future scenarios for the Region.
- The resources of each local government area (LGA) in the Region.
- An overview of the potential future impacts of development scenarios for the Region.

Four scenarios were evaluated in the development of the Strategy:

- Scenario 1: More of the same
- Scenario 2: Local Economic development impetus

- Scenario 3: Cruising the commodity surge
- Scenario 4: Ultimate economic opportunity *(the best of everything)*

The Strategy concluded that the two most likely scenarios that could eventuate in the Region are Scenario 2 and Scenario 3 – one by local design and commitment (Scenario 2) and one by development imposed by external forces (Scenario 3). Based on these Scenarios, the Strategy identified the following priorities for further planning and investment over the period 2010-2030.

Infrastructure Requirement 2030	Priority for Planning and Investment	
	Scenario 2	Scenario 3
Roads – new and maintenance of existing	High	High
Rail	High	High
Public Transport	Low	Low
Airports	Low	Low
Water	High	High
Energy & Utilities	Low	High
Mining & Gas Infrastructure	Low	High
Infrastructure for Agriculture, Forestry & Other Commodities	High	Medium
Telecommunications	Medium	Medium
Housing – including sewerage & domestic services	Medium	Medium-High
Education & Childcare	Medium	Medium
Health	Medium	High

The Strategy concluded that resource development in the Namoi Region presents some considerable economic opportunities. It stresses that agriculture must and will remain important to the Region during and beyond the development of coal and gas extraction. The Strategy supports the view that building local economies will remain an important factor in maintaining viable and vibrant communities within the larger Namoi Region. Key factors that exist across scenarios which require further planning and investment, include priorities associated with: water availability and future use, adequate provision of rail and road infrastructure, energy and utilities and health services. Population growth will determine much of the emphasis on the soft infrastructure elements such as education, housing and social services.

2.2 Local Planning Framework

As required by the *NSW Local Government Act 199*3, Gunnedah Shire Council delivers its services through an integrated planning approach, with the *Gunnedah Community Strategic Plan 2012-22* being the 'co-ordinating' plan that sets the vision, direction and framework for the Gunnedah Shire for the next decade.

The *Gunnedah Community Strategic Plan* recognises the strategic importance of diversifying the economic base of the Shire, for the Shire community. The Plan articulates a range of desired outcomes for 'Building the Shire's Economy' as well as engaging and supporting the community, retaining the quality of life, and protecting and enjoying Gunnedah's beautiful surrounds. Council's vision for the Shire is:

Vision

A prosperous, caring and proud community reflected in the achievements and aspirations of the people.

Strategic Objectives

The Community Strategic Plan identifies a range of outcomes being sought for the Shire over the 10 year planning period. The outcomes relevant to Economic Development are:

Table 2.2 Gunnedah Shire Community Strategic Plan – Objectives & Outcomes Relevant to Economic Development

Objectives	Outcomes
Engaging and Supporting the Community	• Community leadership encouraged and strengthened • Local coordination of funding from national, state and local sources • Funding of local facilities and services through mining royalties • Population increases through targeted promotion of the Shire identity and opportunities • Retention of our young population through increased employment and social opportunities • A well engaged community that is involved indecision making processes • Access to education and training opportunities.
Building Our Shire's Economy	• Our economic employment base diversified • Our infrastructure strategically managed • Access to our goods, services and markets • Our identity and reputation promoted to tourists • Entrepreneurs and developers contribute to local economic growth.
Retaining Our Quality of Life	• Our older residents provided with the comfort and respect they deserve • Enhanced access to essential services • Improved housing affordability • Villages are sustainable • Our younger people attracted, retained and developed • Entertainment facilities, cultural development opportunities, equipment and stimulation for community members of all ages • Recognise and support our Cultural activities.
Protecting and Enjoying Our Beautiful Surrounds	• Balance between development and environmental protection • A secure and high quality water supply • Investment in new technologies and renewable energy • Dealing with our waste • Manage our exposure and contribution to the changing climate • Enhance our Streetscapes in Gunnedah and Villages.

The *Community Strategic Plan* recognises that the Shire has a strong and diverse agricultural-based economy as well as substantial mineral resources. It also recognises that the Shire faces a number of challenges, including the 'boom and bust' cycles in the agricultural and mining sectors, the competition between these two sectors for access to land, resources and infrastructure (eg rail access for freight), competition from Tamworth and infrastructure constraints. The need to augment infrastructure (transport, sewerage, electricity etc) to accommodate growth was identified by the *Community Strategic Plan* as the most immediate challenge for the Shire.

3. GUNNEDAH SHIRE OVERVIEW

Gunnedah Shire sits at the southern end of the Nandewar Range and lies within the upper catchment area of the Namoi River. The Shire has an area of 4,992 square kilometres and is the centre of the highly productive Liverpool Plains area. The township of Gunnedah is the commercial and administrative centre of the Shire. The Shire has five small villages – Curlewis, Breeza, Carroll, Mullaley and Tambar Springs.

3.1 Location and Access

The Gunnedah Shire is located in the Northern Inland Region[2] of New South Wales, Australia, approximately 425 kilometres north-west of Sydney and 77 kilometres west of Tamworth. Gunnedah Shire shares boundaries with Tamworth Regional Council area to the north-east and east, Liverpool Plains Shire to the south, Warrumbungle Shire to the west and Narrabri Shire to the north.

Figure 3.1 Location of Gunnedah Shire

Gunnedah Shire is located at the cross-roads of the Kamilaroi and Oxley Highways. The Kamilaroi Highway connects the New England Highway at Willow Tree and the Newell Highway at Narrabri, and continues west to Bourke via Walgett. The Kamilaroi Highway is part of the National (NH37) and State (SH29) networks and is a significant freight corridor. Heavy vehicles account for around 20% of traffic on the Kamilaroi Highway. The Kamilaroi Highway is promoted as a touring route connecting the 'Great Divide to the Great Outback'.

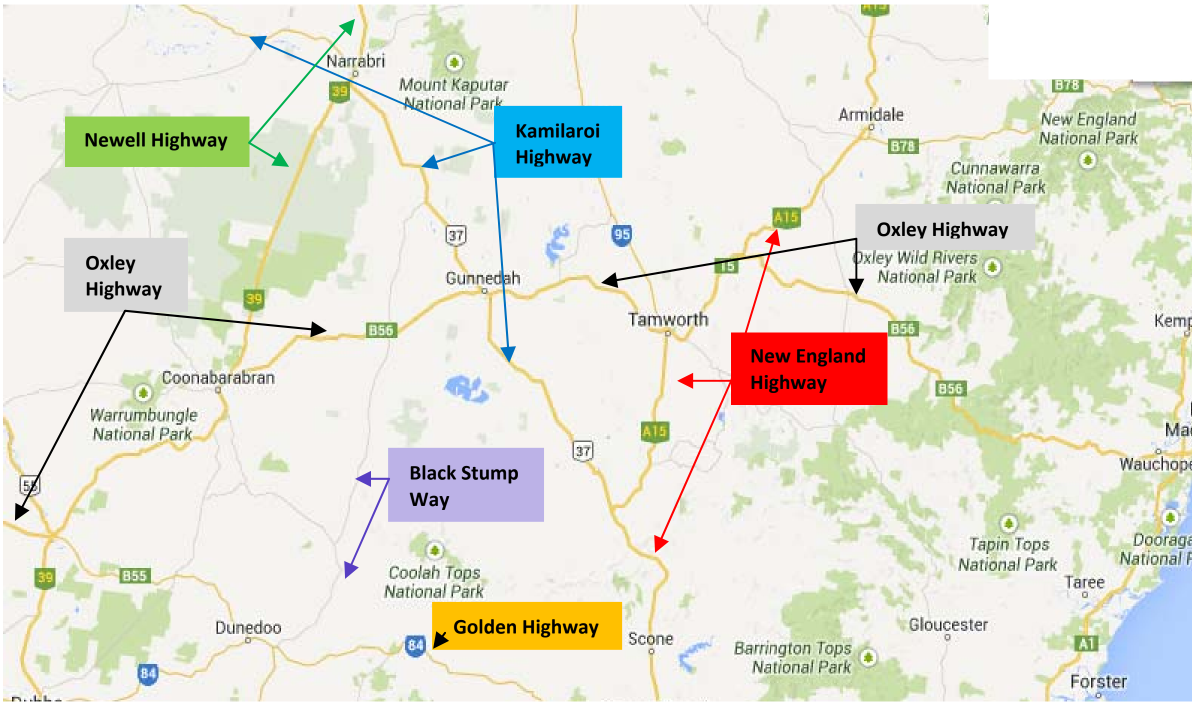
The Oxley Highway is an east-west route that connects the Pacific Highway near Port Macquarie (NSW Mid-North Coast) to the Mitchell Highway at Nevertire, via Tamworth, Gunnedah and Coonabarabran. The Oxley Highway intersects with the New England Highway in Tamworth, the Kamilaroi Highway in Gunnedah, and the

[2] The Northern Inland Region is also known as the New England – North West Region and the Northern NSW

Newell Highway at Coonabarabran. The Oxley and Newell Highway become one between Coonabarabran and Gilgandra.

The 'Black Stump Way' provides access to the south western and western area of the Shire. The Black Stump Way is a north-south route which links the Golden Highway near Dunedoo to the Oxley Highway at Mullaley, via Coolah and Tambar Springs, and then north, via Grain Valley Road to join the Kamilaroi Highway at Boggabri. To the south of the Golden Highway, the Black Stump Way links with the Castlereagh Highway to Mudgee and south to Lithgow, with links into Western Sydney by the Great Western Highway and the Bells Line of Road, and further south via the Tablelands Way to join the Hume Highway near Goulburn.

Figure 3.2 Highway & Regional Road Network – Northern Inland NSW



Source: Base Map – Google Maps

Table 3.1 Approximate Distance & Driving Time between Gunnedah & Population Centres

Population Centres	Distance	Driving Time
Sydney via Hunter Valley – New England & Kamilaroi Highways	425km	5 hours
Sydney via Blue Mountains, Castlereagh Highway & Black Stump Way	490km	6.5 hours
Brisbane	650km	7.5 hours
Newcastle	307km	3.5 hours
Dubbo	265km	2.5 hours
Tamworth	77km	50 minutes
Port Macquarie via Oxley Highway	350km	4.25 hours
Narrabri	96km	1 hour
Moree	196km	2.25 hours
Coonabarabran	106km	1.25 hours
Quirindi	83km	45 minutes

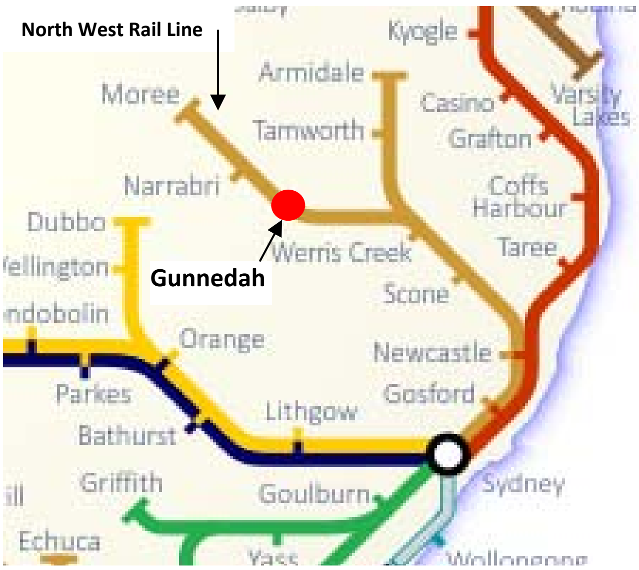
Gunnedah Shire is serviced by Tamworth Regional Airport. Qantaslink operates 5-6 return RPT[3] flights to Sydney per day, Monday to Friday, with 3 return flights on Saturdays and 4 on Sunday. Weekdays, Brindabella Airlines operates 2 return flights per day between Tamworth and Brisbane and one return flight per day on weekends. Brindabella also operates 2-3 flights per day from Narrabri to Sydney. Flights can also be chartered into Tamworth, Gunnedah and Narrabri Airports. Tamworth is the regional hub for air freight.

[3] Regular Passenger Transport (scheduled commercial flights)

The North West Rail Line traverses Gunnedah Shire. The North West Xplorer, operated by NSW TrainLink provides daily passenger rail services between Sydney and Moree via Gunnedah. The journey between Gunnedah and Sydney takes around 6.25 hours. It is possible to travel on the North West Explorer from Gunnedah to Werris Creek and change to the Northern Tablelands Explorer to access Tamworth and the main towns in the New England Region, as well services through to Queensland. The North West Rail Line carries high volumes of coal and grain freight.

Weekdays during school terms, School bus services operate between Gunnedah and Boggabri, the outlying villages and Tamworth, and between Breeza and Werris Creek.

Figure 3.3 Rail Network – Northern & Central NSW



3.2 The Physical Environment

Gunnedah Shire lies on the Liverpool Plains in the upper catchment area of the Namoi River. The Liverpool Plains covers an area of approximately 1.2 million hectares and extends from The Great Dividing Range in the east, to the Warrumbungle Range in the west, and from the Nandewar Range in the north through to the Liverpool Range in the south. The plains area south of Breeza is often referred to as the 'Breeza Plains'. Most of Gunnedah Shire also lies within the Gunnedah Basin. The Gunnedah Basin is a geological unit. It is a sedimentary basin that contains extensive coal and coal seam gas resources.

The Liverpool Plains area is flat to undulating and sits at around 260 metres above sea level. Around 85% of the area of Gunnedah Shire is flat, with slopes of less than 3%. Less than 1% of the area of the Shire has slopes in excess of 15%. Mount Surprise (805m ASL) is the highest point in the Shire, followed by King Jack Mountain (761m ASL). There are three residual ridge systems to the north and south of Gunnedah as well as a number of extrusive volcanic domes, plugs and outcrops in the Nombi area between Tambar Springs and Mullaley.

Gunnedah Shire is drained by the Namoi River and three of its headwater tributaries, the Mooki and Peel Rivers and Cox's Creek. The Mooki River rises on the Murrurundi Range and drains the south eastern area of the Shire before joining with the Namoi River just east of Gunnedah. The Peel River drains the area to the north of Gunnedah and joins the Namoi River just below Lake Keepit. Lake Keepit, on the Namoi River, is located in Gunnedah Shire, 37 kilometres north of Gunnedah. Cox's Creek drains the western half of the Shire, and flows into the Namoi River at Boggabri. The central area of the Shire to the south of Gunnedah is drained by a series of small creeks that flow into Lake Goran. Lake Goran is an ephemeral lake which, when full, covers an area of approximately 6,200 hectares. It is a known 'hot spot' for water birds.

The Gunnedah Basin has extensive coal, gas and ground water reserves. The ground water provides a water supply for a number of the towns and villages within the Basin and also supports irrigated agriculture (primarily cotton, grain crops and pasture).

The Liverpool Plains area is dominated by deep, highly fertile alluvial soils, with these soils being some of the most productive in Australia. These black soils are one of the major attributes of the Shire and under-pin the agricultural productivity and wealth of the area. There are also pockets of fertile, red volcanic soils. The views over the broad sweeping Liverpool and Breeza Plains towards the distant ranges are part of the attraction base of the Shire and are highly valued by both residents and visitors.

Most of the plains area within the Shire has been cleared and is used for agriculture. Forested areas are limited and confined primarily to the steeper ranges and volcanic outcrops. Prior to 2005, Gunnedah Shire had

10 small State Forests. A number of these Forests were reclassified as National Park, State Conservation Areas, or Aboriginal Areas under the provisions of the Brigalow and Nandewar Community Conservation Areas Act 2005 (NSW). The Forests and Reserves in the Shire are listed in Table 3.2. A number of the areas extend across the Shire boundaries into adjoining LGAs. There are also a number of Crown Reserves (eg Porcupine Hill) that are forested.

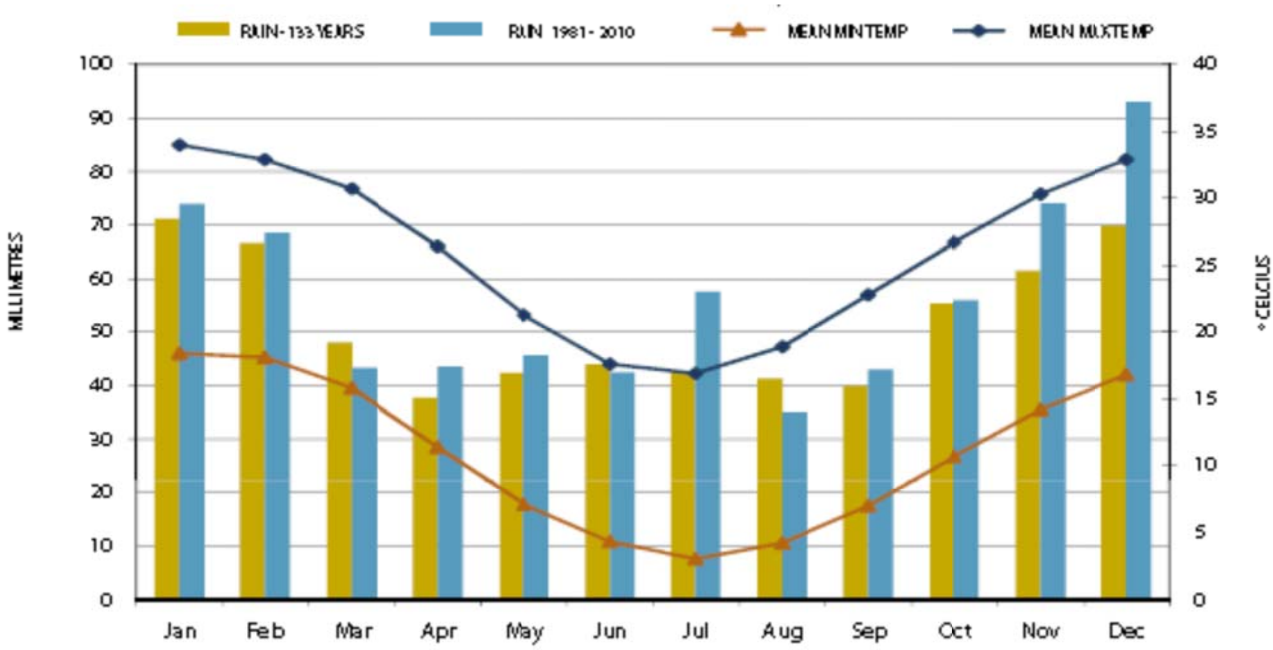
Table 3.2 National Parks, State Conservations Areas, Aboriginal Areas & State Forests, Gunnedah Shire

Type of Reserve	Name	Area (ha)
National Park	Somerton National Park	760 ha
	Dowe National Park	381 ha
State Conservation Area	Wondoba SCA	1,669 ha
	Trinkey SCA	10,229 ha
Aboriginal Area	Boonalla (formerly Kelvin State Forest)	2,267 ha
State Forest	Breeza State Forest	1,433 ha
	Black Jack State Forest	190 ha
	Goran State Forest	513 ha
	Doona State Forest	1,242 ha
	Kerringle State Forest	6,635 ha

3.3 Climate[4]

Gunnedah Shire experiences very warm to hot summers and cool to mild winters. Average maximum temperatures vary from 34°C in January to 16.9°C in July, while average minimum temperatures range from 18.4°C in January to 3°C degrees in July. Extreme temperatures, exceeding 38°C and as low as minus 5°C, have been recorded. Average annual rainfall is between 500mm and 600mm and tends to be summer dominant, mostly as storm events. The climate is conducive to cropping and grazing year-round.

Figure 3.4 Average Monthly Rainfall and Temperature



Source: Australian Bureau of Meteorology

[4] Source: *Gunnedah Discover the Facts,* Gunnedah Shire Council

3.4 History

The Traditional Custodians

The original inhabitants of Gunnedah Shire were the Gunn-e-darr people, a sub-group of the Kamilaroi 'nation'. Throughout most of the year, the group divided into smaller 'bands' and hunted and gathered over an area primarily following the Namoi and Mooki Rivers and including the areas of Gunnedah, Breeza, Kelvin, Carroll, Boggabri and Mullaley. It is believed that the bands primarily retreated to the foothills of the surrounding ranges during winter, using the caves to provide protection from the winds. Mullibah Lagoon in the Gunnedah area is believed to have been the summer camp of the Gunn-e-daar people.

Around the early to mid 1700s, the Gunn-e-darr people were lead by Cumbo Gunnerah (the 'Red Kangaroo'), a 'chief' who was considered a mighty warrior. He led a number of raiding parties into surrounding areas both in search of wives and in reprisal for territorial breaches. The fiercest battle fought, and the for which Cumbo Gunnerah earned his reputation, was the defeat of a war party from the Cassillis tribe. The war party, which numbered over 80 warriors, was defeated by a small group of warriors led by Cumbo Gunnerah. This was achieved by drawing the warriors into the 'wallaby trap' (a natural trap created by the landform and vegetation and used by the aboriginal people to trap wallabies) and ambushing them. Most of the warriors were killed, with those that fled being hunted down and killed. The story of Cumbo Gunnerah has been immortalised by Ion Idriess's book '*The Red Chief*'. The legend of the Red Chief is told on information plaques in numerous locations in Gunnedah.

In the mid 1700s a large flood along the Namoi and Mooki Rivers is believed to have decimated the aboriginal population of the region, with many dying from pneumonia.

At the time of Europeans moving into the area, it is estimated that there were between 150 to 300 people in the Gunn-e-darr group. The coming of the white settlers brought disease and conflict to the area, resulting in the death and displacement of many of the Gunn-e-darr people.

Settlement

In 1818 the explorer John Oxley moved through the Liverpool Plains area and reported small camps of Aboriginal people along the water courses. 1826 saw the establishment of stock runs in the area in the Upper Mooki River Valley. In 1827 Alan Cunningham travelled through the area, followed by the Government Surveyor, Thomas Mitchell in 1831. During the 1830s there was a strong push by new settlers into the Namoi River Valley. Land in the Gunnedah area was taken up in 1833 with John Johnston building a homestead and woolshed in the area. In the initial years of settlement Gunnedah was called 'The Woolshed' before being renamed 'Gunnedah'.

The town of Gunnedah was proclaimed in 1856. Small settlements were also established in the Carroll and Tambar Springs areas. Closer settlement occurred in the late 1860s. The Railway arrived in 1879 with a station at Gunnedah, opening up the area for the transport of passengers and agricultural products to Newcastle and Sydney. In 1909 a station was also established at Curlewis and the village proclaimed. In 1939 construction commenced on the Lake Keepit dam with this project completed in 1960. Lake Keepit was built for both flood mitigation and irrigation purposes. It has a small hydro-electric power station.

In the 1950s and 1960s the population of the Shire grew steadily in-line with the wool boom and increased cropping output as a result of increased mechanisation, availability of irrigation water and the introduction of summer crops. 1957 saw the opening of both the Gunnedah Airport and the Gunnedah Abattoir. The Abattoir operated for around 40 years and at peak production, employed around 600 people. The Namoi Valley Brickworks opened in Gunnedah in 1959.

In 1877 Coal was discovered on Black Jack Hill to the south west of Gunnedah. The Gunnedah Colliery 1 was established in 1891. The Gunnedah Colliery Company Ltd was registered in 1899 and mining at the Gunnedah Colliery continued through to the 1960s. Initially the coal was mined for the local domestic market and used by the railway, abattoir, brickworks and other local industries. Coal was also supplied to Tamworth, and used to power the regional power station. In 1968, Gollin and Company took over the Gunnedah Colliery Company Ltd and in subsequent years opened new entrances. The Gunnedah Colliery ceased operations in 2000.

A number of years after the establishment of the Gunnedah Colliery, a second mine the Preston Colliery, commenced operations. Preston Coal Company was formed in 1917 and the Preston Colliery, under a number of different names, operated until 1998. In the 1980s Rio Tinto commenced mining in the Gunnedah Shire, in the area that is now the Vickery open cut mine.

Gunnedah Shire has gone through a number of 'boom and bust' cycles in both the agriculture and mining sectors.

3.5 Land Use

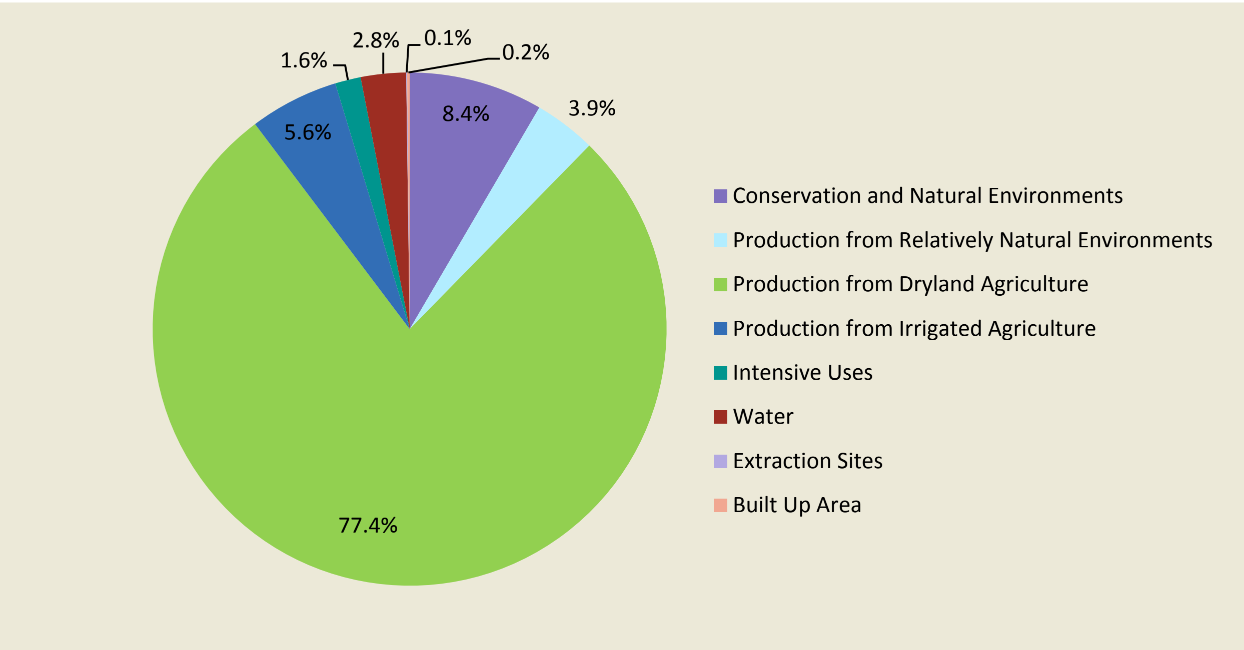
Agriculture is the primary land-use in Gunnedah Shire, accounting for 88.5% of the land area of the Shire. Dryland Agriculture accounts for 77.4% of the land area, with 5.6% of the land area being irrigated. Conservation and Natural Areas (National Park Estate and Crown Reserves) account for 8.4% of the land area. When at full capacity, Lake Keepit and Lake Goran cover an area of 14,205 hectares. The urban areas of the towns and villages account for 0.2% of the land area, while coal mining covers around 0.1% of the Shire.

Table 3.3 Land Use in Gunnedah Shire

Land Use	Area (hectares)	%
Conservation and Natural Environments	42,089.5	8.4%
Production from Relatively Natural Environments	19,482.0	3.9%
Production from Dryland Agriculture and Plantations	386,894.3	77.4%
Production from Irrigated Agriculture and Plantations	28,001.0	5.6%
Intensive Uses	8,068.0	1.6%
Water	14,204.8	2.8%
Extraction Sites	299.7	0.1%
Built Up Area	770.6	0.2%
Total Area	**499,809.9**	**100.0%**

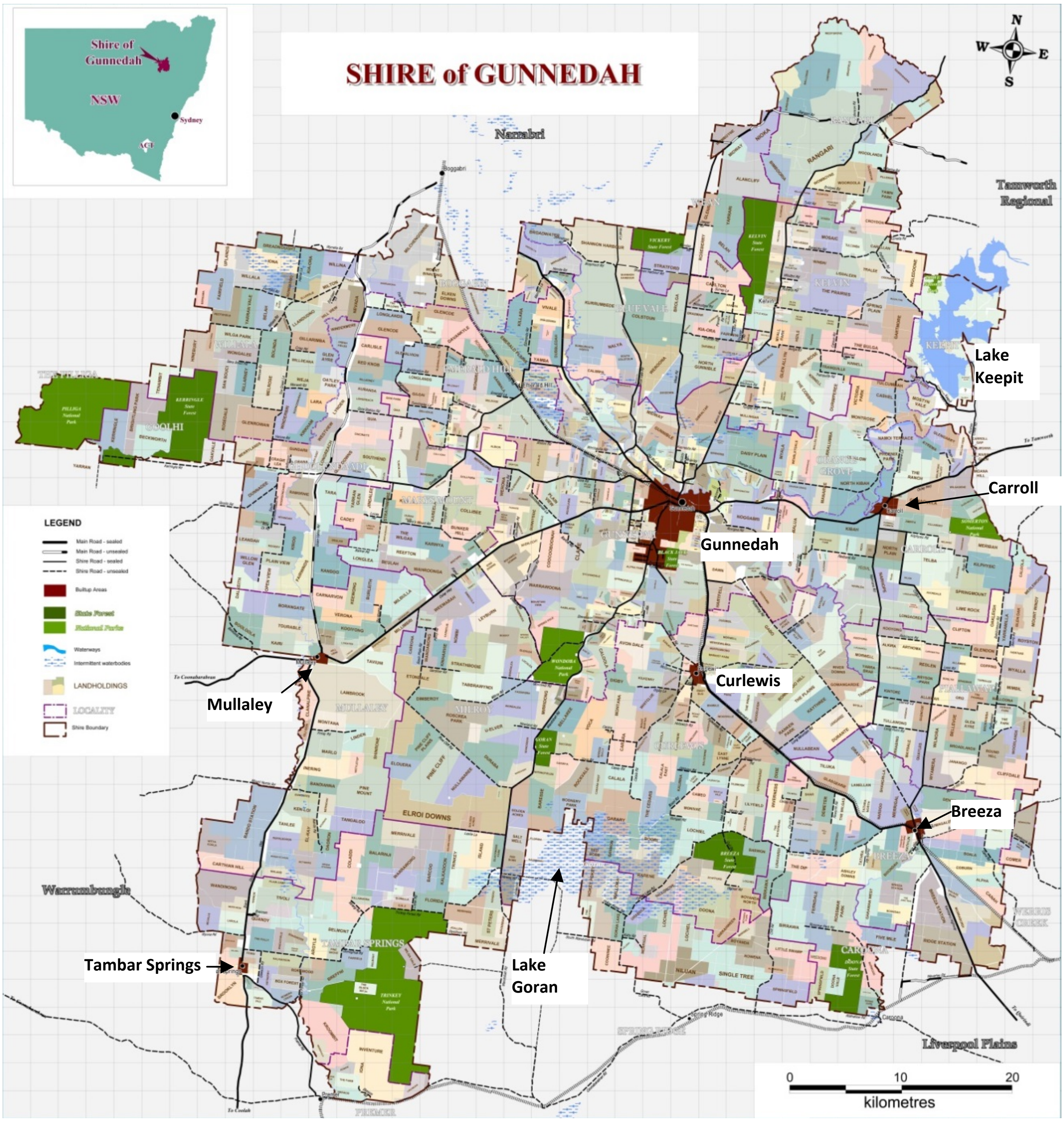
Source: http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS

Figure 3.5 Land Use Mix - Gunnedah Shire



Source: http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS

Figure 3.6 Land-Use



Source: Gunnedah Shire Council

3.6 Towns & Villages

The township of Gunnedah is the administrative, service and retail centre for Gunnedah Shire. In 2011 the Gunnedah Urban Locality had a population of 7,888 people. The town functions as a district centre and a highway service centre. Gunnedah Shopping Centre is anchored by Coles and Woolworths supermarkets, plus a number of national traders including Target Country, Harvey Norman, Best & Less and Millers. The Centre has a range of specialty shops, cafes and commercial businesses. Gunnedah has three industrial areas, with businesses primarily servicing the agricultural, mining and transport sectors. The town has six mills processing a variety of grains, legumes and oilseeds, grain silos, a silo manufacturer, a brickworks, sawmill, saleyard, leather processing plant and coal washery. It is also the home of AgQuip, the largest agricultural trade show in Australia.

There are five villages in the Shire – Curlewis, Breeza, Carroll, Mullaley and Tambar Springs. The villages are primarily service centres and meeting places for the surrounding rural areas. The businesses and facilities in each of the communities are summarised in Table 3.3. The larger villages of Curlewis, Mullaley, Carroll and Tambar Springs have general stores / post offices, with Curlewis, Mullaley and Tambar Springs also having hotels. Carroll is the closest service centre to Lake Keepit.

Table 3.4 Villages – Gunnedah Shire

Village	Distance from Gunnedah	Businesses	Facilities & Services
Curlewis	17km south Kamilaroi Highway	Curlewis General Store Post Office Commercial Hotel Grain Silo	Public School Police Station Community Hall Playground Public Toilets
Breeza	43km south east Kamilaroi Highway	Grain Silo	Community Hall Playground & Public Toilets
Carroll	20km east Oxley Highway	Carroll General Store / Fuel Carroll Cotton Gin	Picnic Area & Public Toilets
Mullaley	37km west Intersection of Oxley Highway & Black Stump Way	Post Office Hotel General Store DMI Engineering Bus Service	Public School Sports Ground
Tambar Springs	67km south west Black Stump Way	Post Office General Store Hotel Rural Supplies	Police Station Public School Community Health centre Park & Public Toilets

There are 26 rural localities within the Shire - Basin Plain, Blue Vale, Boggabri (part), Booroondarra, Burgurgate, Carroll Gap, Coocooboonah, Emerald Hill, Ghoolendaadi, Gulligan, Gunnembene/Crossing, Keepit, Kelvin (part), Kurrumbede, Marys Mount, Meermaul, Milroy, Mornington, Nea, Noggabri, Orange Grove, Piallaway, Pullaming, Rangari, Watermark and Willala.

3.7 Economic Activities

Gunnedah Shire has a relatively diverse economic base, with the primary economic activities being agriculture and coal mining. The township of Gunnedah has a significant manufacturing sector based on value-adding to primary industries. Other significant economic activities within the Shire include light industry, retailing, tourism, transport and health services sector.

Agriculture

Gunnedah LGA is situated in the centre of the one of Australia's richest agricultural regions on the Liverpool Plains in the Namoi Valley. Farms, both family and corporate, produce summer and winter crops including wheat, sorghum, barley, cotton, canola, sunflowers, faba beans, soya beans, chick peas, corn and vegetables. Wheat is most commonly grown throughout winter, with sunflowers, cotton and sorghum being the main summer crops. Olives and citrus are also grown within the Shire.

Livestock production includes cattle (primary activity), sheep and pigs. Poultry is also produced. The Gunnedah Saleyards have the second largest turnover of stock in NSW.

Ag-Quip Field Days, which attracts over 100,000 people, is a three day agricultural field day event held in August each year which brings together people and businesses involved in agriculture.

Extractive Industries

Gunnedah Shire lies within the Gunnedah Basin. The Gunnedah Basin contains around 11.3% of the estimated recoverable coal reserves in NSW.[5] There are currently three coal mines within Gunnedah Shire - Vickery South, Rocglen and Sunnyside, plus three mines just north of Boggabri in Narrabri Shire – Tarrawonga, Boggabri and Narrabri North and one at Werris Creek in Liverpool Plains Shire. Narrabri North is an underground operation with the remainder of the mines being open cut. There are four current proposals for new mines in the Gunnedah Basin of which three are in Gunnedah Shire (Bluevale-Vickery adjacent to the Vickery South Mine, and Caroona (BHP) and Watermark (Shenua) in the south-eastern corner of the Shire), and one in Narrabri Shire (Maules Creek).

Other mining activities within Gunnedah Shire include exploration for Coal Seam Gas (CGS), extraction of clay for brick and paver making, and three quarries providing aggregate and road-base materials.

Manufacturing

For a rural LGA Gunnedah Shire has a strong and diversified manufacturing base. Activities include grain milling (4 plants), production of stock feed (2 plants), cotton gin, leather processing, brick and paver production, silo manufacturing, compost production, sawmilling, engineering fabrication and furniture production.

Light Industry

The light industrial sector in Gunnedah Shire is dominated by agricultural, automotive and engineering service providers.

Retail & Services

Gunnedah is a sub-regional centre providing a range of retail, commercial, professional and personal services. Gunnedah shopping centre is anchored by Coles and Woolworths supermarkets. The town also has a number of national traders including Harvey Norman, Target Country, Millers, Best & Less, Telstra Shop, Crazy Prices and the Reject Shop.

Tourism

Gunnedah Shire has a relatively strong visitor economy. In 2011, the Shire attracted an estimated 87,000 domestic visitors who stayed one or more nights in the Shire (237,000 nights spent). These visitors spent an estimated $26 million within the Shire. In addition, the Shire services hundreds of travellers each day who are passing through enroute to other destinations. Gunnedah promotes itself as the 'Koala Capital of the World'. In addition to koalas, other attractions include Lake Keepit, the Waterways Wildlife Park, Rural Museum, and a number of galleries, lookouts and parks and reserves. The Shire has 34 commercial accommodation properties including 10 motels (213 rooms), 10 serviced apartment properties, 9 hotels and two commercial caravan parks (Gunnedah and Lake Keepit), plus powered caravan sites in the Gunnedah Showground and at Mullaley.

Transport

Gunnedah Shire has a small cluster of transport operators including heavy haulage, livestock transport and couriers.

Health & Community Services

Health and Community Services is a growth sector. Gunnedah Shire has a new Rural Health Services complex, three facilities providing aged care accommodation and a range of other service providers.

[5] Trade and Investment NSW (2013) New South Wales Coal Industry Profile.

3.8 Facilities and Services

Gunnedah Shire provides a good range of facilities and services for the local resident community. In addition Gunnedah is only 45-50 minutes' drive from Tamworth City, with Tamworth providing an extensive range of facilities and services across all sectors.

Table 3.5 Community Facilities & Services Available in Gunnedah Shire

Type	Facilities and Services
Education and Training	New England Institute of TAFE Gunnedah Community College Two Secondary Schools (Public & Catholic) Eight Primary Schools – Gunnedah (2 Public, 1 Catholic, 1Christian), public schools in Tambar Springs, Curlewis, Mullaley and Carroll. GS Kidd Memorial School – School for children with disabilities Five organisations providing vocational training Flight Training College of Equine Dentistry Driver Training Interest / Activity based tuition – music, dance, tennis
Children's Services	Pre-schools and long day care Family day care Playgroups Early Childhood Intervention Services
Library Services	Gunnedah Curlewis Branch Library (2 half days per week)
Cultural and Entertainment Facilities	Civic Complex – performances, Smithurst Theatre, Creative Art Gallery Licensed Clubs & Hotels Community halls Arts Council Gunnedah Conservatorium
Community Services	Counselling (range of services available) Community housing Community transport
Health Services	Gunnedah - 48 beds, including Emergency, Maternity, Operating Theatre Rural Health Centre General Practitioners Visiting Specialists Dental Allied and Alternative Health Services including – Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Psychologists, Podiatry, Chiropractic, Optometrist, Massage and Pathology Ambulance station
Aged Care Facilities and Services	Gunnedah Aged Care Services – 88 bed nursing home and retirement village with 48 independent living units. Alkira Nursing Home (41 beds) Yallambee Aged Accommodation (13 units) Home and Community Care Services and Transport. Meals on Wheels
Recreation and Sporting Facilities	Memorial Pool – 50m outdoor, 25m indoor and wading pool Playing Fields Netball Courts Tennis Complex Showground Golf Course Basketball Stadium PCYC Lyle Griffiths Centre Gymnasium Lake Keepit State Park – land and water-based activities Parks and Reserves including picnic facilities, playgrounds and walking trails.

3.8 Attributes and Competitive Advantages

The attributes and competitive advantages of Gunnedah Shire include:

- Prime agricultural land coupled with access to water (irrigation and ground water), which in most years, enables summer and winter crops.

- Significant high quality coal and coal seam gas resources, with Gunnedah being centrally located within the Gunnedah Basin.

- Location, with Gunnedah being 5 hours' drive of Sydney, 3.5 hours from Newcastle and less than an hour from Tamworth. The proximity to Tamworth provides Gunnedah residents with access to regional city facilities and services including retail, education, health and entertainment, as well as access to RPT air services to Sydney and Brisbane.

- Highway location, with Gunnedah being at the intersection of the Kamilaroi and Oxley Highways which provide access to both the New England and Newell Highways.

- Good rail infrastructure, with the North West line in the process of being substantially upgraded to increase capacity. The rail service provides access to the Port of Newcastle and to Sydney. Gunnedah also has a daily passenger rail service to Sydney.

- Lake Keepit. In addition to providing water for irrigation, the Lake is a significant recreational and tourism asset, providing residents with access to a large waterbody as well as bringing visitors into the Shire.

- Extensive range of facilities and services for residents including retail, health, education, community services, sporting, entertainment.

- Attractive setting, with Gunnedah and the Shire having beautiful scenery and spectacular rural views, the Namoi and Mooki Rivers, an attractive town centre, tree-lined streets and 'green-belts' created by the river corridor and sporting facilities.

- A relatively safe community with minimal social problems.

- A diverse range of engineering, metal fabrication and other businesses to support the agricultural and mining sectors.

- Large greenfield sites for industrial development.

- Gunnedah is recognised as a growing centre with population growth of 5.9% between 2006 and 2011 largely due to an increase in mining activities in the Region.

- The high profile of the AgQuip Field Days which raises the profile of Gunnedah and positions the area as a 'centre of excellence' for agriculture.

3.9 Challenges Facing Gunnedah Shire

Challenges facing Gunnedah Shire include:

- The local economy is highly dependent on agriculture and mining. Agriculture is weather dependent and also subject to fluctuations in global and domestic demand and commodity prices. Mining is also highly dependent on global markets. Fluctuations in global markets can result in 'boom and bust' cycles in Gunnedah.

- Competition between agriculture and mining for land, labour and other resources. This is resulting in conflict within the community, skills shortages in the non-mining sector, and price inflation. In some respects, Gunnedah Shire has a 'two speed' economy.

- Possible threat to agricultural production through loss of productive land, water resources and pollution from coal mining and coal seam gas exploration and production.

- Possible threat to surface and ground water supplies, for both human consumption and agriculture, from coal mining and coal seam gas exploration and production.

- Competition from Tamworth, in particular in the retail sector, with Gunnedah residents travelling to Tamworth for services and doing their shopping in Tamworth. Tamworth provides a far greater range of goods and services, often at more competitive prices than Gunnedah. Tamworth is also looking to position itself as the service centre for mining within the Region, particularly for the higher value consulting and professional services and as the preferred location for mine-workers to reside. It is also endeavouring to consolidate its role as the primary processing centre for agricultural products and activities, with the latest venture being the development of a new state-of-the-art saleyard complex.

- Increasing competition from on-line sales for the retail and wholesale sectors.

- Rail capacity constraints, with coal mining contracts for rail access displacing agricultural contracts. Narrabri is also emerging as the freight hub for agricultural products, with some products from Gunnedah going to Narrabri and being transported back through Gunnedah, increasing the freight and handling costs.

- The cost of managing the impacts of the increase in heavy vehicle traffic on the Shire's road network, with many of the roads not meeting current standards for the carriage of heavy vehicle traffic.

- Infrastructure constraints relating primarily electricity and sewerage, which are constraining the development of greenfield industrial sites.

- Competition from, and the implications of, the MAC Villages being established in Narrabri, Boggabri and Werris Creek. These villages are likely to reduce the number of mine-related visitors and workers staying in Gunnedah and may also influence relocation decisions for mine-related workers who decide to relocate to the region.

- Natural gas not being available for industrial use in Gunnedah Shire, however is available in Tamworth Regional Council area.

- Reduction in advisory services and expertise available to assist local producers and businesses.

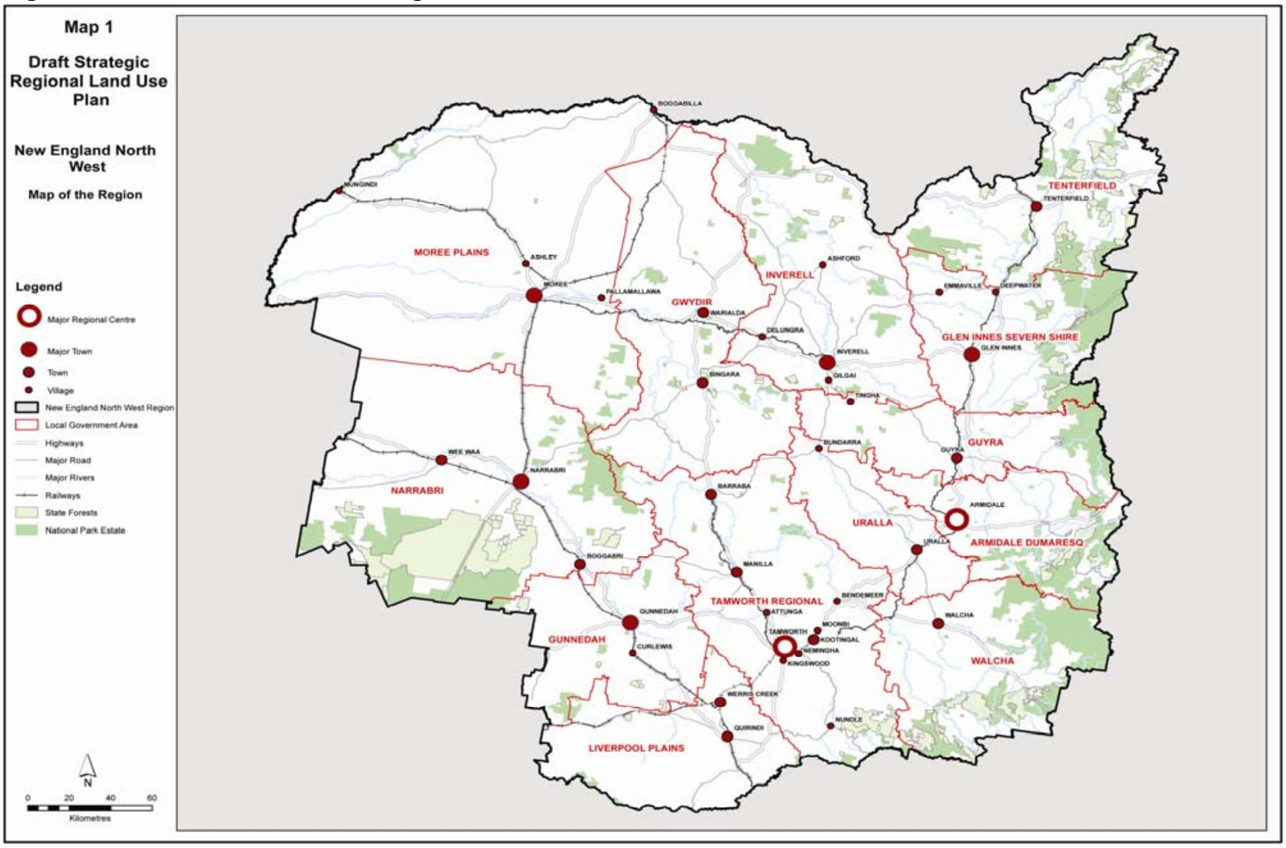
- Limited vocational training services in Gunnedah, with Gunnedah TAFE in particular, not providing the training courses needed by local producers and businesses.

4. Northern Inland Region Overview

4.1 Regional Overview

Gunnedah Shire is located in the south-western corner of the Northern Inland Region. The Region incorporates 13 Local Government Areas (LGAs) - Armidale Dumaresq, Glen Innes, Gunnedah, Guyra, Gwydir, Inverell, Liverpool Plains, Moree Plains, Narrabri, Tamworth Regional, Uralla, Tenterfield and Walcha. Warrumbungle LGA, which is in the North West Region, abuts the Gunnedah LGA to the west.

Figure 4.1 The Northern Inland Region, NSW



Source: Department of Planning and Infrastructure. *Strategic Regional Land Use Plan (New England North West)* 2012

The Region extends west from the Great Dividing Range. It is divided into three broad zones:

- **New England Tablelands -** The New England Tablelands incorporates the LGAs along the eastern edge of the region. Tourism-wise, the New England area is known for its escarpment National Parks and Wilderness Areas, four distinct seasons and tablelands scenery. The area produces some of the highest quality fine wool in the world. It is also has significant cattle and fat lamb sectors as well as a small tourism sector. Extractive industries include the mining of gold and antimony in Armidale Dumaresq LGA and sapphires in Inverell and Glen Innes Severn LGAs. Armidale is the primary service centre for this area, with other significant towns being Inverell, Glen Innes and Tenterfield.

- **North West Slopes -** The North West Slopes incorporates the central area of the Region – primarily Tamworth Regional and Gwydir LGAs and parts of Liverpool Plains, Gunnedah and Inverell Shires. The North West slopes are used primarily for grazing with some grain and pasture production in more fertile areas. Poultry and intensive livestock production is concentrated in the Tamworth Area. This zone has a concentration of large water storages – Lake Keepit, Split Rock, Copeton and Pindari Dams which are popular for camping, fishing and water sports. Tamworth is the regional centre for the Northern Inland Region.

- **North Central Plains -** The North Central Plains incorporates the floodplains of the Namoi River in Liverpool Plains and Gunnedah Shires as well as Narrabri and in Moree Plains Shires. These four LGAs incorporate some of the most productive agricultural land in Australia, with activities including grain, oil seed and legume cropping, and cotton, cattle and sheep production. Liverpool Plains, Gunnedah and Narrabri Shires lie within the Gunnedah Basin and have extensive coal and coal seam gas resources.

There are three main north-south routes through the region – The New England Highway in the east, Fossickers Way through the centre and the Newell Highway in the west. The New England and Newell Highways are both major interstate routes. The main east–west routes within the Region are the Bruxner Highway, Gwdyr Highway, State Touring Route 3, Oxley Highway and Kamilaroi Highway. Liverpool Plains, Tamworth, Walcha, Uralla, Armidale Dumaresq, Guyra, Glen Innes Severn and Tenterfield LGAs are aligned to the New England Highway. Inverell and Warialda Shires are aligned to the Gwydir Highways, with the Fossickers Way being an important secondary route. Moree Plains and Narrabri Shires are aligned to the Newell Highway, with the Gwydir and Carnarvon Highways also feeding into Moree, and the Kamilaroi Highway and STR 3 into Narrabri Shire. Gunnedah Shire sits at the cross roads of the Kamilaroi and Oxley Highways.

At the 2011 Census the estimated resident population of the Northern Inland Region was 176,526 people. From 1996 to 2011, the population of the Region increased by 0.6%. The population of the Region declined between 1996 and 2006, before recovering between 2006 and 2011 (up 2.4%). From 2006 to 2011, eight of the LGAs within the Region experienced population growth, with Gunnedah (5.9%), Uralla (5.2%), Tamworth Regional (4.5%) and Tenterfield (4.2%) LGAs having the strongest growth rates. There were five LGAs that experienced a decline in population – Glen Innes Severn (-1.4%), Gwydir (-6.5%), Liverpool Plains (-0.4%), Moree (-3.5%) and Walcha (-5.2%) Shires.

Table 4.1 Changes in Estimated Resident Population, LGAs within the Northern Inland Region, 1996-2011

LGA	Resident Population at Census				% change		% regional population 2011
	1996	2001	2006	2011	1996-2011	2006-2011	
Armidale Dumaresq	25,165	23,920	23,368	24,105	-4.2%	3.2%	13.7%
Glen Innes Severn	8,890	8,488	8,780	8,656	-2.6%	-1.4%	4.9%
Gunnedah	12,819	11,846	11,520	12,203	-4.8%	5.9%	6.9%
Guyra	4,262	4,210	4,229	4,397	3.2%	4.0%	2.5%
Gwydir	5,679	5,124	5,311	4,965	-12.6%	-6.5%	2.8%
Inverell	14,899	15,020	15,510	16,075	7.9%	3.6%	9.1%
Liverpool Plains	7,374	7,352	7,310	7,284	-1.2%	-0.4%	4.1%
Moree	15,517	15,737	14,185	13,690	-11.8%	-3.5%	7.8%
Narrabri	14,101	13,817	13,047	13,196	-6.4%	1.1%	7.5%
Tamworth Regional	51,147	52,008	53,697	56,089	9.7%	4.5%	31.8%
Tenterfield	6,529	6,363	6,534	6,811	4.3%	4.2%	3.9%
Uralla	5,871	5,728	5,734	6,034	2.8%	5.2%	3.4%
Walcha	3,208	3,102	3,187	3,021	-5.8%	-5.2%	1.7%
Northern Inland Region	**175,461**	**172,715**	**172,412**	**176,526**	**0.6%**	**2.4%**	**100.0%**

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Population Census – 1996, 2011, 2006, 2011

Within the Region, Tamworth and Armidale are the two main service centres, with both cities being part of the Evocities inland growth centres. 31.8% of the Region's population resides in Tamworth Regional LGA, with 13.7% residing in Armidale Dumaresq LGA. Population-wise, Gunnedah Shire rates 6th within the Region. Within the Region, Tamworth is the Regional City and the focal point for government, commercial and health services.

Armidale is the primary service centre for the New England Tablelands and is recognised as the education-hub of the Northern Inland Region. Education facilities include the University of New England and a number of non-Government schools that provide boarding facilities. Armidale, Narrabri and Tamworth are focal points for agricultural research within the Region.

Sitting below Tamworth and Armidale are the townships of Inverell, Moree, Narrabri and Gunnedah which function as subregional – district centres, servicing trade areas that extend beyond their LGA boundaries.

4.2 Local Government Areas Surrounding Gunnedah Shire

The LGAs surrounding Gunnedah are Tamworth Regional, Liverpool Plains Shire, Narrabri Shire and Warrumbungle Shire. For performance comparisons, Gunnedah LGA is compared to these four LGAs plus Moree Plains Shire. Moree Plains is included as it has a similar agricultural profile to Gunnedah Shire. These LGAs are hereafter referred to as the 'comparative set of LGAs'.

Tamworth Regional Local Government Area (LGA)

31.8% of the Region's population resides in the Tamworth Regional Council area with population concentrated in Tamworth City (38,735 people). Tamworth City is the second largest inland city in NSW ranking behind Wagga Wagga. Tamworth has a large retail centre incorporating 3 large enclosed shopping malls, city centre traders as well as a number of neighbour shopping centres and a diveristy of homemaker and bulky goods stores. As a regional centre, Tamworth City has a concentration of government, commercial, professional and health services, including the Tamworth Rural Referral Hospital and North West Cancer Centre.

Tamworth Regional LGA has a significant livestock sector and is one of the largest poultry producing centres in NSW. It is also emerging as an equine centre. Tamworth is the agricultural processing centre for the Region with abattoirs, poultry processing, a large wheat mill and vegetable processing facilities. A new saleyard complex has recently opened. The City has a strong and growing manufacturing, processing and light industrial base, with a concentration of agricultural, transport and construction services and value-add activities.

Tamworth City has four large industrial – business park areas – Taminda Industrial Area located close to the town centre, the Glen Artney Industrial Estate and Tamworth Airport Business Park on the Oxley Highway (Gunnedah Road) in the vicinity of the Airport and the South Tamworth Business Park. The Taminda Industrial Area is being redeveloped with a focus on light and service industries. Stage 1 of the Glen Artney Industrial Estate is developed and has a concentration of agricultural processing, transport and warehousing operations, with Stage 2 (80ha) recently released. Stage 1 of the Tamworth Airport Business Park is currently being developed. The South Tamworth Business Park has a mix of light industrial activities and home-maker and bulky goods retail outlets. Additional land is being released in this area. The availability of natural gas for industrial use, provides Tamworth City with a strong advantage over other localities in the Region. Tamworth City is likely to be the site of a large ethanol production plant.

Tamworth is emerging as a centre for aviation based industries. Tamworth Airport is one of the busiest airports in regional NSW, with frequent RPT services to Sydney and Brisbane. Other activities include the Qantaslink Dash 8 maintenance facilities, the BAE Flying School, plus a number of charter airline operators, service and maintenance providers and flight schools.

Although Tamworth LGA does not have coal or gas resources, it is positioning itself as the primary service centre for mining in the Gunnedah Basin. The existing and proposed coal mines within the Gunnedah Basin are located within 45 to 90 minutes' drive of Tamworth. There are an increasing number of mine-related visitors flying into Tamworth and hiring vehicles to visit the mines. A number of mine-related consulting and engineering firms have established operations in Tamworth.

Tamworth has an extensive range of national standard sporting facilities as well as a number of major venues including the Tamworth Regional Entertainment Centre, Australian Equine and Livestock Events Centre, Capitol Theatre and Sports Dome. It is the home of the annual Tamworth Country Music Festival which attracts over 50,000 attendees. The City also has a concentration of visitor accommodation including 53 commercial accommodation properties providing over 1000 rooms, apartments and cabins.

Due to its proximity and the range of services on offer, Tamworth is a direct competitor to Gunnedah for businesses looking to establish in the Region. The Tamworth Regional Council's *Economic Development Strategy* aims to continue to consolidate and grow its agricultural processing, value-add and services sector, as well as its aviation, health services and education, tourism and entertainment sectors.

Liverpool Plains Shire

Liverpool Plains Shire is located to the south of Gunnedah on the intersection of the New England and Kamilaroi Highways. The Shire has a very similar agricultural base to Gunnedah Shire, with livestock grazing, cereal cropping and cotton production. The Shire has two large feedlots which produce beef for both the export and domestic markets. It is also has a small, but growing equine industry.

Quirindi is the largest town in the Shire, followed by Werris Creek. Quirindi is a local service centre with a small shopping centre anchored by an IGA supermarket. It has a small industrial area which is currently being expanded, with the main activities being agricultural and mining related services. Werris Creek is a second largest town in the Shire. It is a railway town with train maintenance facilities and shunting yards. Land at Werris Creek is zoned for heavy industry.

Whitehaven Coal operates an open cut coal mine just south of Werris Creek. The BHP Caroona Coal Exploration Lease lies partly within Liverpool Plains Shire and partly in Gunnedah Shire. Werris Creek is the closest service centre to both the proposed Caroona and Shenhua Watermark coal mines. A Development Application is currently being prepared for a 1,500 room MAC Village at Werris Creek to service the mining sector.

Narrabri Shire

Narrabri Shire is located at the intersection of the Newell and Kamilaroi Highways. The Shire covers an area of 13,000 square kilometres. The Shire extends west from the Nandewar Range, with this Range marking the western edge of the Great Dividing Range. The spectacular Mt Kaputar National Park lies along the eastern edge of the Shire, with the Pilliga Forest occupying most of the south western quarter of the Shire.

Narrabri Shire has a strong agricultural base, with cotton, grain and oil seed cropping, wool and fat lamb production and cattle being the primary activities. Some of the largest multi-national agricultural companies in Australia, including Cargill, Olam (Queensland Cotton), Louis Dreyfus Commodities and Monsanto have a presence in Narrabri. Cotton production is concentrated along the Namoi River floodplain from Boggabri through to Wee Waa, with Wee Waa promoted as the 'Cotton Capital of Australia'. There are a number of cotton gins, and a large cotton seed processing facility (Cargill) located in the Shire. To the north, the Edgeroi-Bellata area lies within the 'Golden Durum Triangle' which produces some of the best 'prime hard wheat' (durum) in Australia. Narrabri Shire has three agricultural research facilities – the Australian Cotton Research Institute, Monsanto Narrabri Research Centre and the recently expanded IA Watson Grains Research Centre (University of Sydney).

Narrabri Shire is the home of the Paul Wild Observatory which houses the Australia Telescope Compact Array. The Observatory is operated by the CSIRO Astronomy and Space Science Division.

Narrabri is a major transport hub and service centre for agricultural produce, with the town having a container depot. The transport sector is poised to grow substantially if the proposed Melbourne to Brisbane inland rail line is developed.

There are three coal mines in the Shire – two open cut mines in the Boggabri area and a large underground mine at Turrawan, between Boggabri and Narrabri. A fourth mine has been approved in the Maules Creek area to the south east of Narrabri. MAC Villages have been established at Narrabri and Boggabri to provide accommodation for mine workers. The MAC has approval for 1,782 rooms with around 900-1000 rooms currently operational.

The Shire also has a growing coal seam gas (CSG) industry with the Pilliga Forest being a focal point for gas exploration. According to Santos, the CSG reserves in the Pilliga Forest have the potential to supply 25% of NSW's gas needs. There is a small CSG fired power station in the Shire. Santos has commenced construction of a $19 million water treatment plant to treat water from the gas wells, with the treated water to be re-injected into the aquifers.

Wee Waa and Boggabri are the other main towns in the Shire. The Wee Waa district is one of the largest cotton producing areas in Australia. Boggabri, on the Kamilaroi Highway, has traditionally been an agricultural area however this is shifting with the growth of the coal industry and the establishment of the MAC village. The Namoi Cotton Gin, located on the outskirts of Boggabri, services cotton growers in Narrabri, Gunnedah and Liverpool Plains Shire. For shopping, services and education, Boggabri falls within Gunnedah's catchment area.

Warrumbungle Shire

Warrumbungle Shire is located to the west of Gunnedah Shire, in the North Western Region of NSW. The town of Coonabarabran, located at the intersection of the Newell and Oxley Highways, is the main service centre of the LGA. There are two smaller towns, Coolah on the Black Stump Way and Dunedoo on the Golden and Castlereagh Highways, plus the villages of Mendoran, Binnaway and Baradine.

Agriculture and tourism are the primary economic activities within the Shire, with the main agricultural activities being beef cattle production and cereal cropping. Timber milling was formerly a major industry however this has been substantially scaled back with the transfer of large sections of the Pilliga Forest to the National Park estate.

The tourist attractions of the Shire include the Warrumbungle and Coolah Tops National Parks, the Pilliga Forest including the Sculptures in the Scrub at Dandry Gorge, and the Siding Springs Observatory.

Moree Plains Shire

Moree Plains Shire is located approximately 200km north of Gunnedah Shire. Moree Plains Shire occupies the extensive black soil flood plains of the Gwydir, Macintyre and Barwon Rivers. Like Gunnedah, the Shire has extensive ground water resources.

Moree is the main town and service centre of the Shire. Moree is located at the intersection of the Newell and Gwydir Highways and at the southern end of the Carnarvon Highway. The town has a number of large agricultural storage and processing facilities.

Moree Plains Shire is one of the most productive agricultural areas within Australia, with activities including cereal cropping, cotton and livestock grazing. Moree has the largest pecan nut farm in Australia and is also home to a growing olive industry. The town has a strong agricultural services and transport sector.

Moree Plains Shire is a popular tourist destination, being the third most visited LGA in the Northern Inland Region and the second most visited LGA along the Newell Highway corridor. The town has around 20 motels. The main attraction is the hot artesian bore baths, with the artesian spa industry undergoing significant expansion. Council has recently spent $7.5 million redeveloping the Moree Artesian Aquatic Centre. There are also a number of commercial spa operators that are upgrading and expanding their spa and accommodation facilities.

4.3 Competitive Advantages of the Northern Inland Region

The competitive advantages of the Northern Inland Region include:

- Large tracts of highly productive agricultural land, coupled with a favourable climate and access to water (large water storages, river systems and extensive ground water resources).
- World-class agricultural commodity producer – grains, cotton, cattle, fat lambs and fine wool and a world leader in livestock genetics and complementary industries.
- Expanding intensive livestock, poultry and food processing sectors and an emerging boutique food and wine sector.
- Extensive coal and coal gas seam resources in the Gunnedah Basin in the southern half of the Region, with a small coal resource in Ashford in Inverell Shire. The Region also has an emerging energy sector – gas, renewable and ethanol.
- Strong transport links to major cities and export markets – including two major interstate highways (New England and Newell) and expanding rail-freight facilities. The Region has 4 airports providing RPT services (Tamworth, Armidale, Moree and Narrabri) with Tamworth emerging as an aviation service centre and a Centre of Excellence for aviation training.
- Two centres, Tamworth and Armidale, are part of the Evo-Cities program.
- University of New England and relatively strong vocational training sector through TAFE and commercial training providers.
- Expanding service industry sectors in education, research, information and communication technology (ICT) and hospitality. There are a number of agricultural research stations within the Region as well as the CSIRO Australia Telescope in Narrabri.
- Access to advanced information and communication technology services.
- A diverse range of quality tourist attractions (including national parks including world heritage areas (gorges and wild rivers), iconic landforms and formations, hot artesian spas, river corridors and large water storage dams), activities and events.

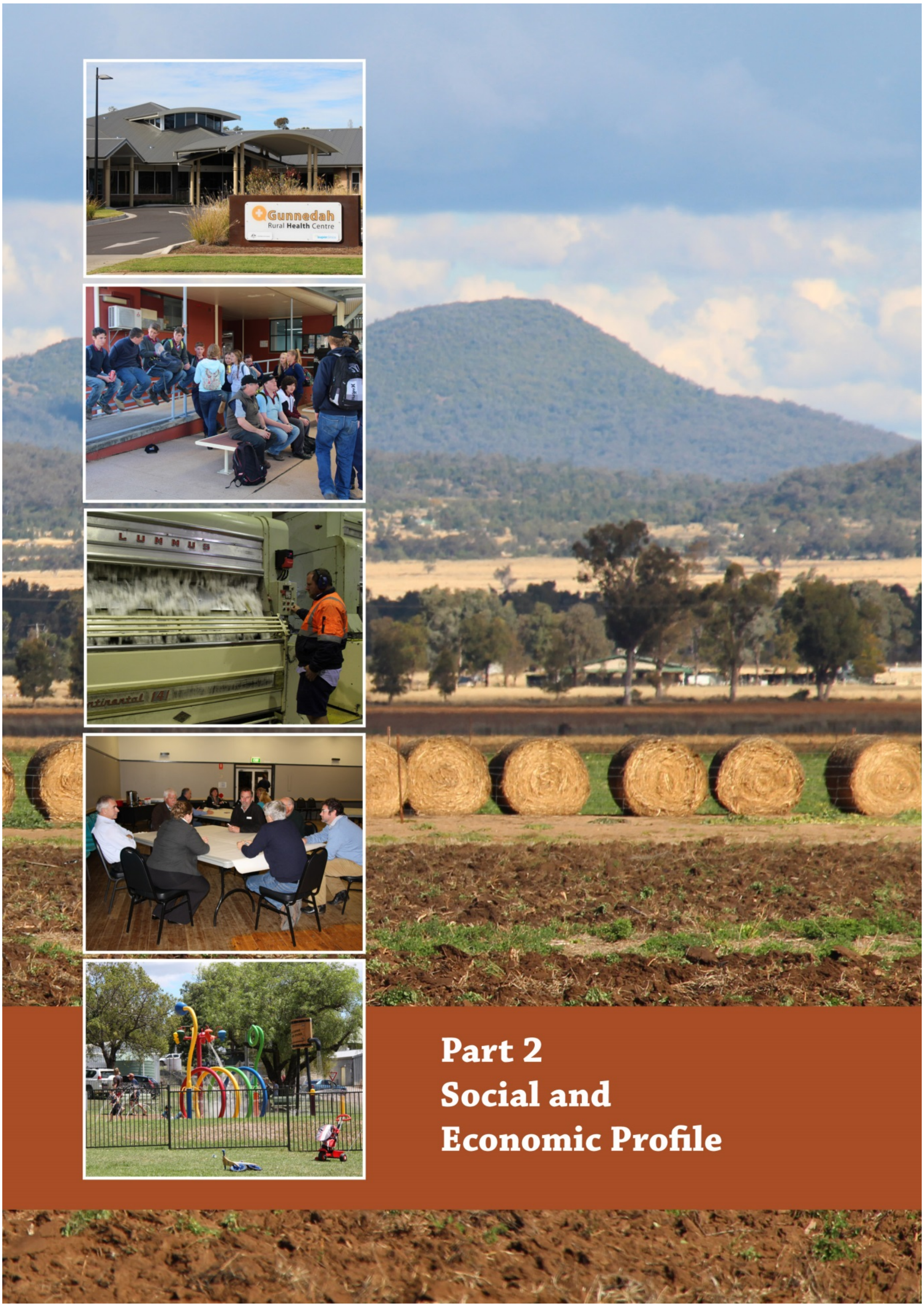
4.4 Challenges facing the Region

A number of studies undertaken for the Region[6] have identified a range of economic, social and environmental challenges facing the Region. Challenges include:

Challenges	
Economic Challenges	• Relatively narrow economic base largely dependent on agriculture and, more recently, coal mining. The Region is vulnerable to the vagaries of climate and international commodity prices. • Competition between agriculture and mining for land, resources, labour and access to infrastructure. The strong demand from the mining sector has driven up prices and wages, impacting on the viability and competitiveness of other sectors. • Unknown life span of mining and coal seam gas and the implications for land, services and

[6] Studies include the New England North West Regional Action Plan, NE-NW Strategic Regional Land Use Plan and the RDA Northern Inland Regional Plan.

Challenges	
	infrastructure provision as well as long-term future employment. • On-going viability of many of the smaller towns and villages, particularly as more services are concentrated in Tamworth and Armidale, and regional roads are sealed, improving access to the larger centres. • Ensuring that sufficient and appropriate employment lands are available in appropriate locations to provide sufficient capacity to accommodate growth in existing and emerging industries and businesses. • Structural changes within 'traditional' sectors, including increasing use of IT/Digital technologies and the introduction of robotics, which require new and different skills sets. • Increasing mechanisation of agricultural activities, replacing farm labour and requiring different skill sets. • Skilled workforce shortage, exacerbated by the mining sector. • Building the skill base to meet changing work-place needs, particularly with the reduction of TAFE services and the centralising of University services. • Sustained out-migration of significant numbers of young people (20-30 years). • High and rising energy costs for residents and businesses. • Fragmented and uncoordinated approaches to attracting new residents, businesses and tourists. LGAs within the Region are competing with each other.
Population and Housing Challenges	• Building and maintaining population, particularly in rural areas, to ensure critical mass for services and economic viability. • Differences in population growth between larger urban centres such as Tamworth which is experiencing growth and small regional towns and villages which are experiencing a decline (or little growth) in population. • Sufficient land and development opportunities to meet the needs of a changing population base including accommodating the more transient workers generated by the mining and infrastructure development activities. • Ageing of the population and the increasing demand for accommodation and services for seniors. • Providing affordable housing in an environment in which prices and rent levels are escalating due to housing shortages and building costs.
Infrastructure Challenges	• Rail infrastructure capacity constraints and increasing displacement of agricultural freight by the mining sector. • Increasing heavy vehicle traffic, allied with the declining condition of local and regional roads, and the financial implications of road maintenance for Councils. • Maintaining RPT air services in Narrabri and Moree. • Increasing the capacity of the electricity and gas networks to cater for development.
Social Challenges	• Large and growing Indigenous population requiring access to tailored education, employment and community services. • Catering for Youth – providing opportunities for inclusion, education and skills pathways, employment. • Aging communities. • Over-reliance on volunteers, many of whom are aging.
Environmental Challenges	• Protecting and managing biodiversity and conservation values. • Protecting the rural character and viable agricultural lands, in particular managing the competition between the mining and agricultural sectors. • Impact of climate change. • Impact of the carbon pricing scheme (or equivalent regulatory measures). • Long term availability of surface and ground water to service growing populations, agriculture and industry as well meet requirements for environmental flows.



Part 2
Social and Economic Profile

5. SOCIAL & ECONOMIC PROFILE

The following Chapters provide information on:

- Population, growth trends and forecasts
- Education levels
- Labour force and employment
- Income
- Dwellings, including Building Approvals
- Socio Economic Indices (SEIFA Index)
- Health Indicators
- Number of businesses

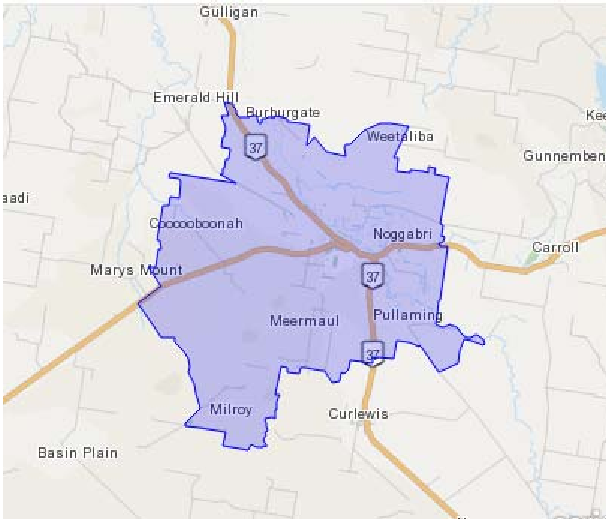
Demographic Data is taken primarily from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Census of Population and Housing, with the most recent release being for 2011. The ABS presents the Census data in a number of formats, using either 'usual place of residence' or 'place of remuneration' as the base data. As such, data tables and series may not be directly comparable. Most of the demographic information in the following chapters is taken from the Basic and Expanded Community Profiles, unless otherwise stated.

Comparisons are provided between Gunnedah Shire, the Northern Inland Region and NSW, as well as with surrounding Local Government Areas – Tamworth Regional, Liverpool Plains Shire, Narrabri Shire, Warrumbungle Shire and Moree Plains Shire. Moree Plains Shire is included as it has a similar agricultural base to Gunnedah Shire. The surrounding LGAs are referred to as the 'Comparative Set'.

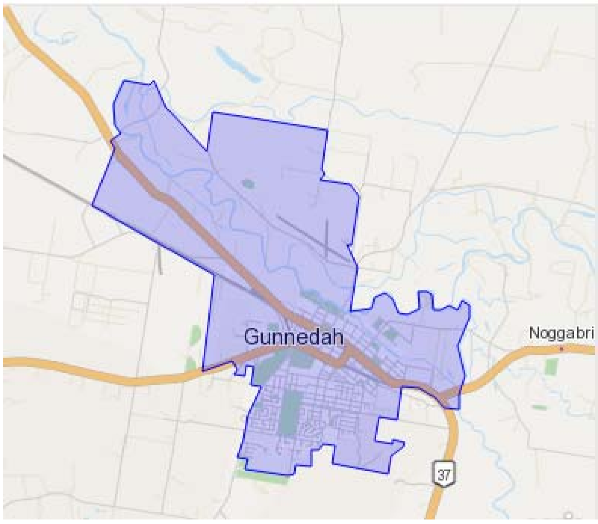
The ABS also publishes the Census data on a 'State Suburb' and 'Urban Locality' basis. Within Gunnedah Shire, State Suburb and Urban Locality data is available for Gunnedah and Curlewis. The State Suburb data for Curlewis also include Breeza. State Suburb data is also available for Tambar Springs and Carroll, with the Tambar Springs data incorporating Mullaley. The areas included in each of the data sets are shown in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1 ABS State Suburbs and Urban Localities in Gunnedah Shire

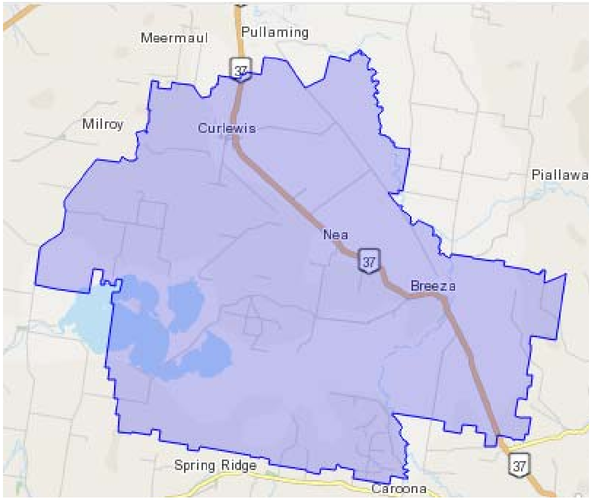
State Suburb – Gunnedah



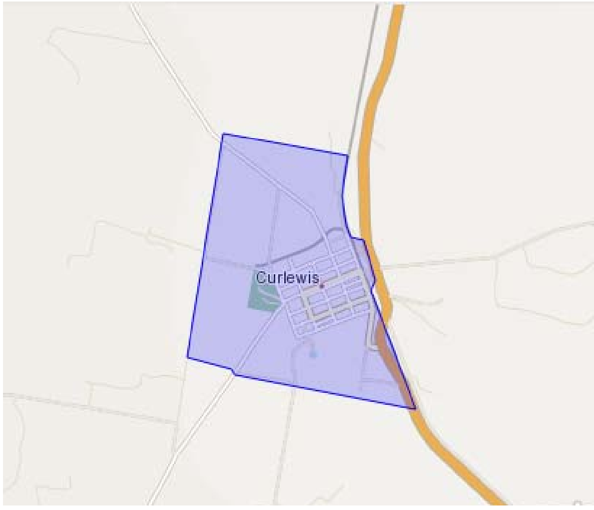
Urban Locality - Gunnedah



Curlewis – State Suburb

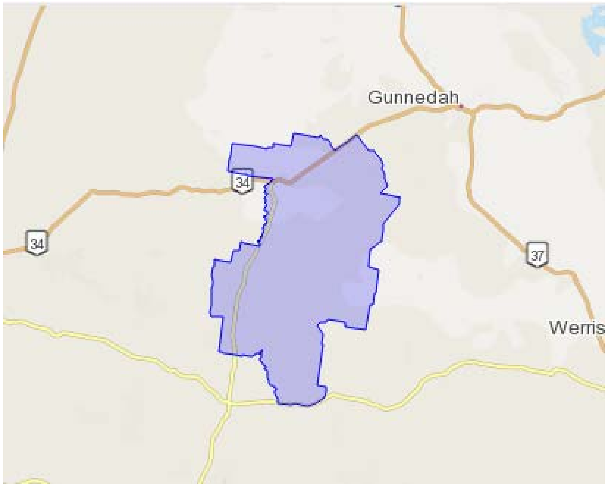


Curlewis – Urban Locality



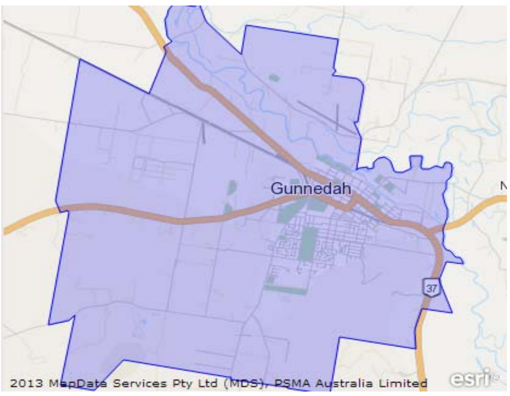
Carroll – State Suburb

Tambar Springs – State Suburb

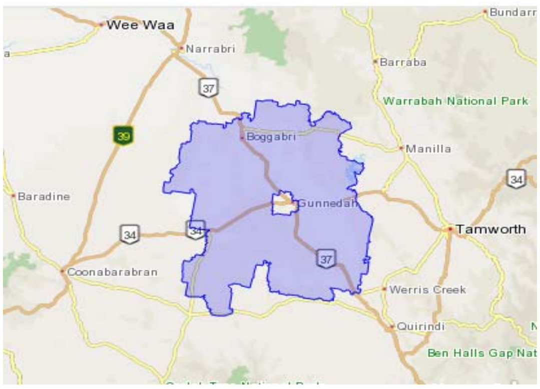


A number of the business – economic statistics published by the ABS are only available for Statistical Areas (SAL2). The two SAL2 areas that cover Gunnedah Shire are Gunnedah SAL2 and Gunnedah Region SAL2, with this region extending beyond the Gunnedah Shire boundary to include the Boggabri area.

Gunnedah SAL2



Gunnedah Region SAL2



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics / 2013 MapData Services Pty ltd – PSMA Australia Limited

6. Population

Information on population has been taken from the following sources:

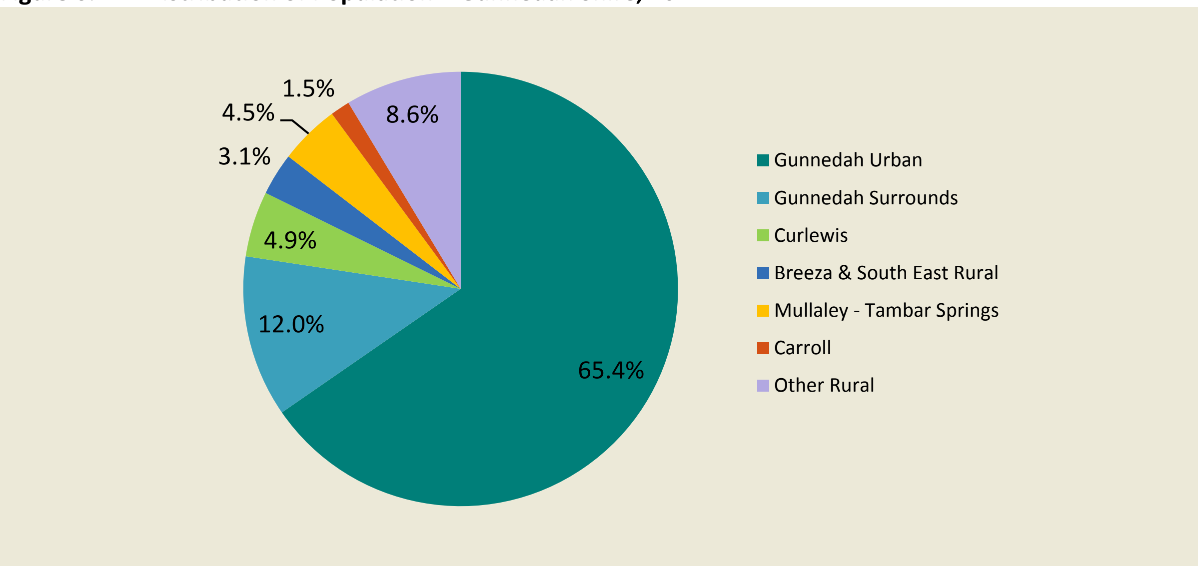
- Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing,
- Australian Bureau of Statistics, Estimated Resident Population[7] data.
- NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure – Population Projections[8].

6.1 Population

At the 2011 Census, the population of the Gunnedah LGA was 12,066 people based upon place of usual residence..

55.4% of the Shire's population (7,888 people) live within the Gunnedah urban area, with 12% (1,452 people) residing in the surrounding rural area[9]. Curlewis was the next largest settlement in the Shire with 589 people residing in the Curlewis urban area, with a further 380 people residing in Breeza and the south eastern corner of the Shire. 4.5% (540 people) of the Shire's population reside in the Mullaley-Tambar Springs area (Tambar Springs State Suburb), with 176 people living in Carroll.

Figure 6.1 Distribution of Population – Gunnedah Shire, 2011



Source: ABS Population Census, 2011

In 2011, the population was evenly split between males and females. 11.3% of the Shire's population were of Aboriginal descent. In 2011, the median age in the Shire was 40 years.

---

[7] Estimated Resident Population is the official population of an area. It adjusts for the net undercount found in the Census data, people overseas on Census night, and is updated annually based on the number or registered births, deaths and an estimate of overseas, interstate and intra-state migration.

[8] Population projections are not targets. It is important to recognise that projections reflect the outcome of certain assumptions about the future of fertility, mortality and migration – assumptions which may or may not eventuate. The projections should not be interpreted as precise predictions of the demographic future.

[9] Gunnedah State Suburb – total population of 9,340.

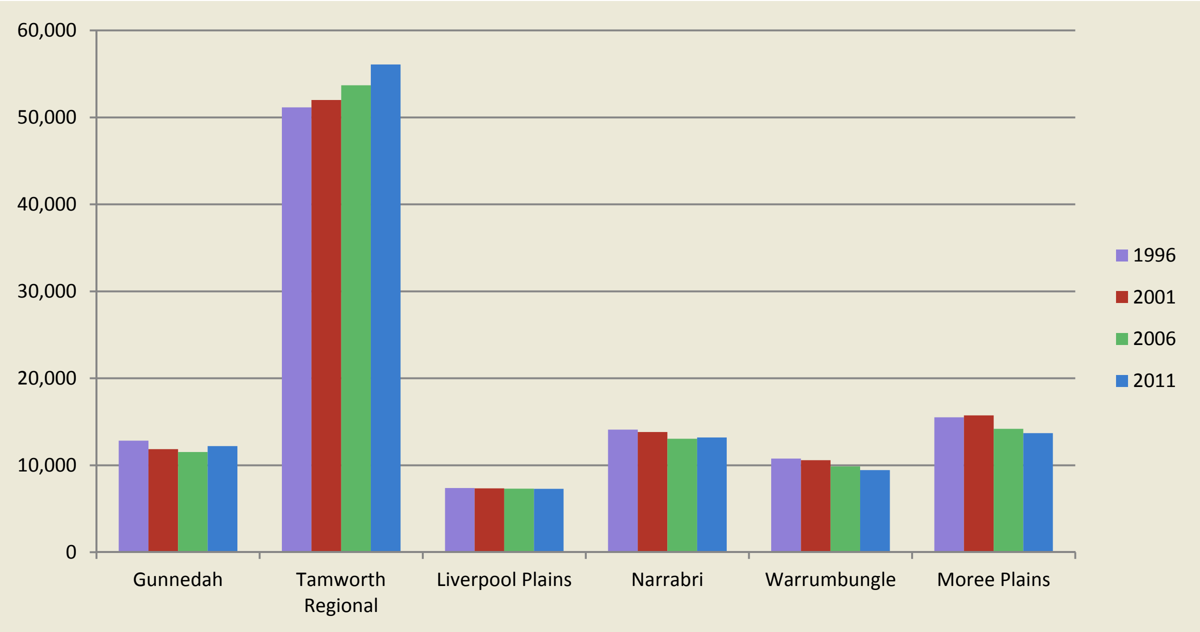
6.2 Changes in Population

From 1996 to 2006, the population of Gunnedah Shire declined by 10.1% from 12,812 to 11,513 residents, with the decline due to a combination of factors including the closure of the abattoir (1997) and the Gunnedah Colliery (2000), and the severe drought (2001-2010).

From 2006 to 2011, the population of the Shire increased by 5.9% (683 people), primarily as a result of increased exploration and mining activities.

During the period 1996-2011, the population of the Northern Inland Region increased by 0.6%, with five LGAs experiencing growth – Tamworth (9.7%), Inverell (7.9%), Tenterfield (4.3%), Guyra (3.2%) and Uralla (2.8%). Growth has been strongest over the period 2006 to 2011, with Regional population increasing by 2.4%. Eight of the LGAs experienced growth during this period – Armidale Dumaresq (3.2%), Gunnedah (5.9%), Guyra (4%), Inverell (3.6%), Narrabri (1.1%), Tamworth (4.5%), Tenterfield (4.2%) and Uralla (5.2%).

Figure 6.2 Change in Population, 1996-2011, Comparative LGAs.



6.3 Population Projections

In 2013, Planning NSW released preliminary population projections, by LGA, for the period 2011 to 2031. The projections are based on the 2011 Census, adjusted for a range of factors. From 2011 to 2031 the population of the Northern Inland Region is forecast to increase by 10.6% (19,800 people), which is equivalent to an average compound growth rate of 0.5% per annum.

Within the Region, the population growth is predicted to be concentrated in Tamworth (10,500 additional people) and Armidale (6,200 additional people), followed by Inverell (3,000), Tenterfield (1,500), Uralla (1,200) and Gunnedah (900). Liverpool Plains and Guyra Shires are each forecast to grow by 500 people. Moree Plains (-3,100), Narrabri (-1,000) and Walcha (-300) Shires are forecast to experience a decline in population. The population of Warrumbungle Shire is also forecast to decline by 400 people (-4.0%).

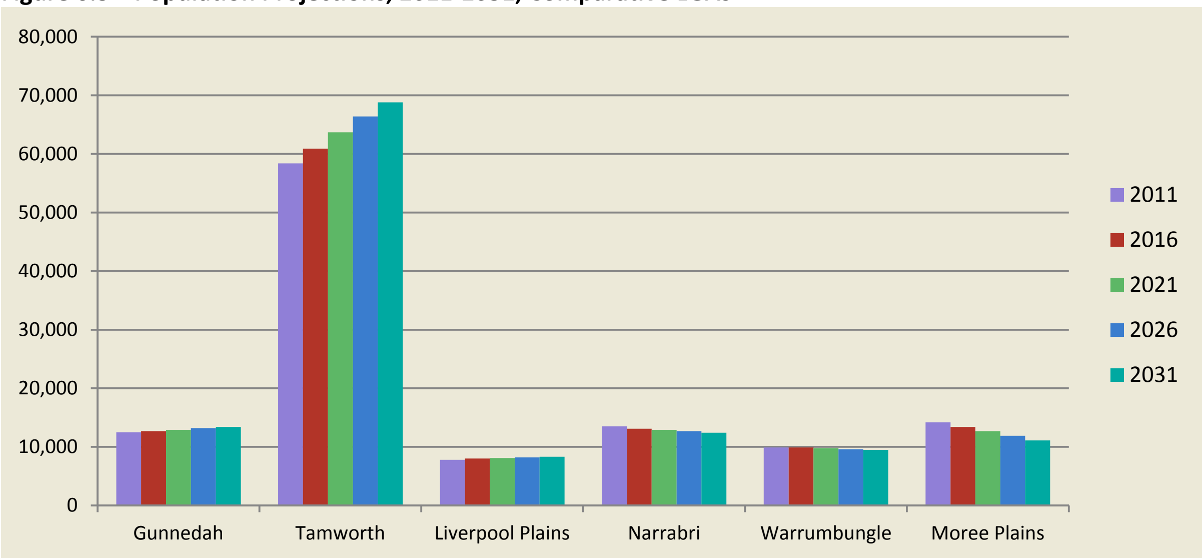
The preliminary population projections forecast that the population of Gunnedah Shire will increase by 7.2% between 2011 and 2031 (0.3% per annum compound), to 13,400 people.

Table 6.1 Preliminary Population Forecasts, Northern Inland Region and Warrumbungle Shire

LGA	Population Projections					Change 2011-2031		Growth
	2011	2016	2021	2026	2031	Persons	%	pa
Armidale Dumaresq	25,300	27,400	28,700	30,100	31,500	6,200	24.5%	1.1%
Glen Innes Severn	9,000	9,000	9,000	9,000	8,900	-100	-1.1%	-0.1%
Gunnedah	12,500	12,700	12,900	13,200	13,400	900	7.2%	0.3%
Guyra	4,500	4,700	4,800	4,900	5,000	500	11.1%	0.5%
Gwydir	5,100	5,200	5,200	5,100	5,100	0	0.0%	0.0%
Liverpool Plains	7,800	8,000	8,100	8,200	8,300	500	6.4%	0.3%
Moree Plains	14,200	13,400	12,700	11,900	11,100	-3,100	-21.8%	-1.2%
Inverell	16,600	17,400	18,100	18,900	19,600	3,000	18.1%	0.8%
Narrabri	13,500	13,100	12,900	12,700	12,400	-1,000	-8.1%	-0.4%
Tamworth Regional	58,400	60,900	63,700	66,400	68,800	10,500	17.8%	0.8%
Uralla	6,300	6,700	7,000	7,200	7,400	1,200	17.5%	0.8%
Walcha	3,100	3,000	3,000	2,900	2,800	-300	-9.7%	-0.5%
Tenterfield	7,000	7,600	7,900	8,200	8,500	1,500	21.4%	1.0%
Northern Inland	**183,300**	**189,100**	**194,000**	**198,700**	**202,800**	**19,800**	**10.6%**	**0.5%**
Warrumbungle	9,900	9,900	9,800	9,600	9,500	-400	-4.0%	-0.2%

Source: Planning NSW (2013) New South Wales State and Local Government Area Population Projections: 2013 preliminary revision

Figure 6.3 Population Projections, 2011-2031, Comparative LGAs



Source: Planning NSW (2013) New South Wales State and Local Government Area Population Projections: 2013 preliminary revision

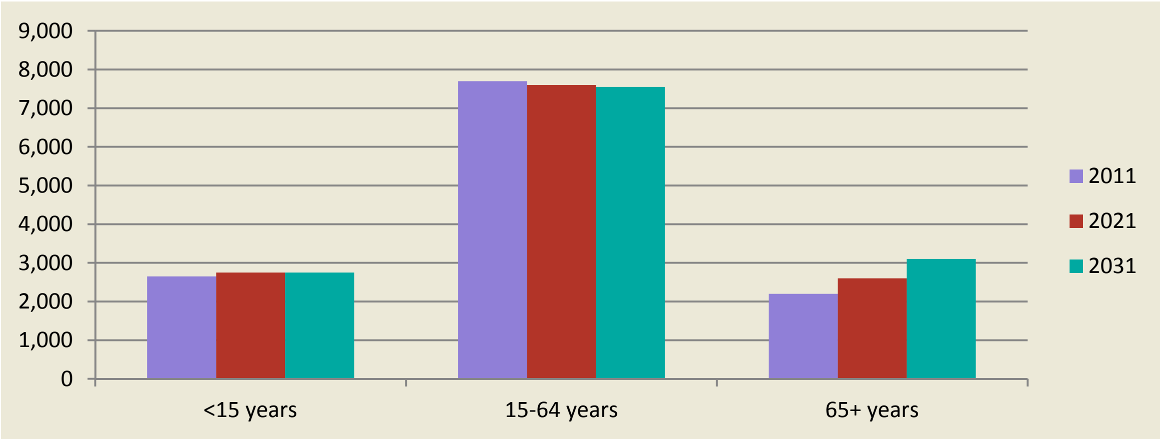
As part of the population projections, Planning NSW has released preliminary age structure forecasts. The forecast for Gunnedah Shire shows an aging population, with the number of people aged 64+ years expected to increase from 17.4% of the population on 2011 to 23.1% in 2031, an increase of 900 people (42%). The number of young people (less than 15 years) is expected to increase by 4.5% (100 people) while the number of people aged 15-64 years is expected to decline by 1.9% (150 people).

Table 6.2 Forecast Changes in the Age Structure of Gunnedah Shire, 2011 – 2031

Age Group	Number of People			% of Population			Change 2011-13	
	2011	2021	2031	2011	2021	2031	People	%
<15 years	2,650	2,750	2,750	21.1%	21.2%	20.6%	100	4.5%
15-64 years	7,700	7,600	7,550	61.5%	58.8%	56.3%	-150	-1.9%
65+ years	2,200	2,600	3,100	17.4%	20.0%	23.1%	900	42.0%

Source: Planning NSW (2013) New South Wales State and Local Government Area Population Projections: 2013 preliminary revision

Figure 6.4 Forecast Changes in the Age Structure of Gunnedah Shire, 2011 – 2031



Source: Planning NSW (2013) New South Wales State and Local Government Area Population Projections: 2013 preliminary revision

Implications of the changing age structure (aging population) include:

- Decline in the number of people aged 15-64 years will put pressure on the workforce with fewer people available to work.

- The significant increase in the number of people aged 65+ will result in an increase in demand for aged care and community services as well as a decline in spending power as people move out of the workforce.

- With the increase in the over 65+ group (no longer in the workforce) there will be a decline in spending into the community.

Gunnedah Shire Council will need to strategically plan for an ageing population. Council is likely to less income (pensioner discounts and rebates) from the 65+ year age group, while at the same time be called upon to deliver more services for this age group.

6.4 Population Mobility

The population of Gunnedah is relatively stable. From 2006 to 2011, 56.5% of residents remained at the same address, while 15.8% had moved premises but remained within Gunnedah Shire. 27.7% of residents had moved into Gunnedah Shire, with 95.7% of these residents having come from other localities within Australia and 4.3% from overseas. 79.7% of new residents came from other localities in NSW, while 11.3% came from Queensland and 4.7% came from other States. 51.8% of new residents were female, with 48.2% being male.

Table 6.3 Population Mobility – Change in Place of Residence 2006-2011

	Males	Females	Total	%
Same address as in 2006	2,423	2,462	4,885	56.5%
Moved but remained within the Shire	640	726	1,366	15.8%
Relocated from other Australian locality	791	866	1,657	19.2%
Migrated from Overseas	43	31	74	0.4%
Not Stated	328	341	669	36.6%
Origin of Residents who had Relocated to Gunnedah Shire between 2006 and 2011				
New South Wales	663	717	1,380	79.7%
Victoria	11	19	30	1.7%
Queensland	89	107	196	11.3%
South Australia	8	3	11	0.6%
Western Australia	7	7	14	0.8%
Tasmania	7	6	13	0.8%
Northern Territory	3	7	10	0.6%
Australian Capital Territory	3	0	3	0.2%
Overseas	43	31	74	4.3%
Total	**834**	**897**	**1,731**	**100.0%**

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Working Population Profile 2011

7. Education & Qualifications

7.1 Highest Level of Secondary School Achieved

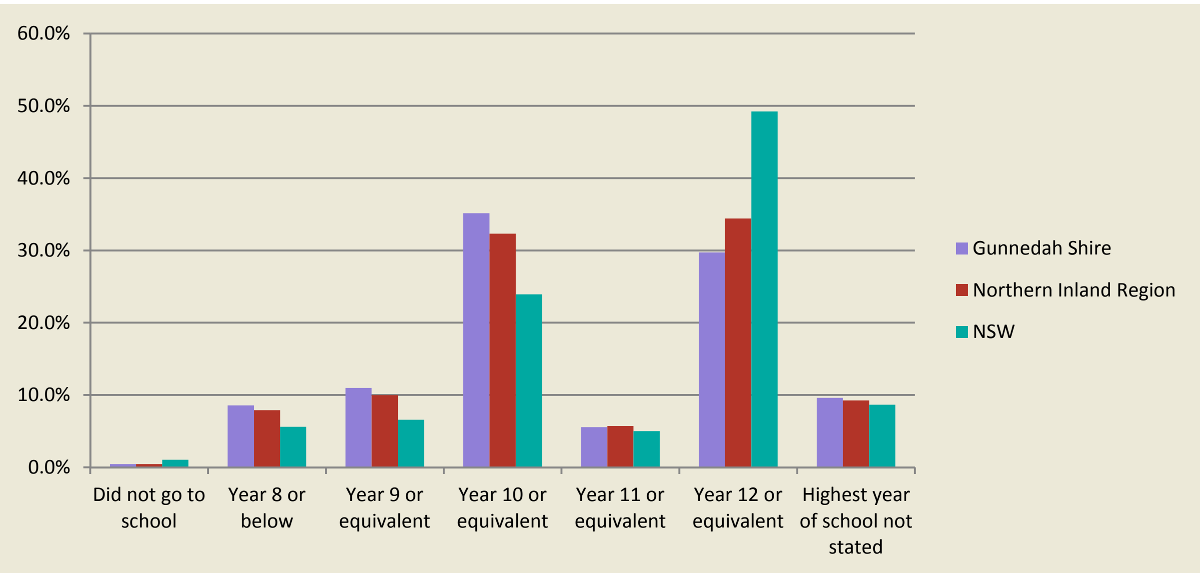
Education levels in Gunnedah Shire have traditionally been lower than the State average, with people tending to leave school in Year 10 or earlier rather than going on to complete Year 12. In 2011, 19.6% of people aged 15+ years in Gunnedah Shire had left school before Year 10, with 35.2% having left after completing Year 10. This is higher than the State average of 12.2% for Years 8-9, and 23.9% for Year 10. Only 29.7% of people aged 15+ years in Gunnedah Shire have completed Year 12 or equivalent, compared to 49.2% State-wide. From 2006 to 2011 there has been a 21% increase in the number of people (additional 468 people) completing Year 12 in Gunnedah Shire, with this possibly due to the changes in the legal age for leaving school and/or the changing demographic mix resulting from mine-related workers moving to Gunnedah Shire.

Table 7.1 Highest Level of Secondary Schooling Completed (persons aged 15+ years), 2011

Level of Schooling	Gunnedah Shire		Northern Inland	NSW
	Number	%	%	%
Did not go to school	39	0.4%	0.4%	1.0%
Year 8 or below	779	8.6%	7.9%	5.6%
Year 9 or equivalent	997	11.0%	10.0%	6.6%
Year 10 or equivalent	3,195	35.2%	32.3%	23.9%
Year 11 or equivalent	505	5.6%	5.7%	5.0%
Year 12 or equivalent	2,701	29.7%	34.4%	49.2%
Not stated	873	9.6%	9.2%	8.6%
Total	**9,089**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011.

Figure 7.1 Highest level of secondary schooling completed – Gunnedah Shire, Northern Inland Region, NSW - 2011



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011.

In relation to the comparative set of LGAs, Gunnedah Shire (19.6%) had the 3rd highest proportion of residents who had left school in Year 9 and below, ranking behind Warrumbungle (21.8%) and Liverpool Plains (21.6%) Shires. Narrabri Shire (12.2%) had the lowest proportion of resident who left school in Year 9 or below.

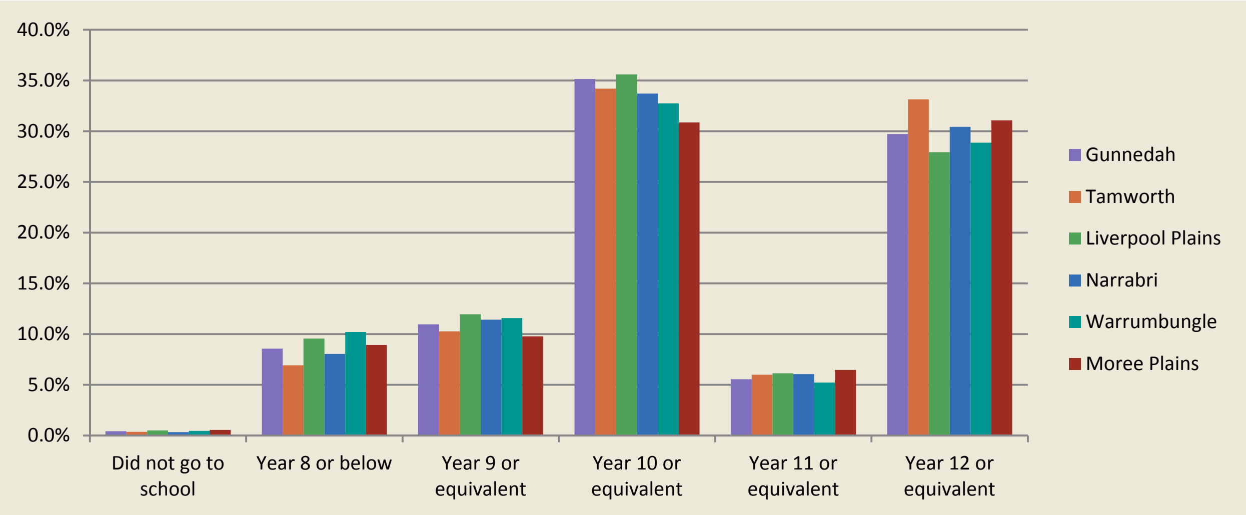
In terms of proportion of residents who left school at the end of Year 10, Gunnedah Shire is comparable to the other LGAs. Gunnedah Shire (29.7%) has the 3rd lowest proportion of residents who completed Year 12, ranking behind Tamworth (33.1%), Moree Plains (31.3%) and Narrabri (30.4%).

Table 7.2 Highest Level of Secondary School Completed – Comparative LGAs, 2011

	Gunnedah	Tamworth	Liverpool Plains	Narrabri	Warrum-bungle	Moree Plains
Did not go to School	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%	0.3%	0.5%	0.6%
Year 8 or below	8.6%	6.9%	9.6%	0.8%	10.2%	8.9%
Year 9 or equivalent	11.0%	10.3%	12.0%	11.4%	11.6%	9.8%
Year 10 or equivalent	35.2%	34.2%	35.6%	33.7%	32.7%	30.9%
Year 11 or equivalent	5.6%	6.0%	6.1%	6.1%	5.2%	6.5%
Year 12 or equivalent	29.7%	33.1%	27.9%	30.4%	28.9%	31.1%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing – Basic Community Profiles, 2011

Figure 7.2 Highest Level of Secondary School Completed – Comparative LGAs, 2011



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing – Basic Community Profiles, 2011

7.2 Youth Engagement – in Study & Work

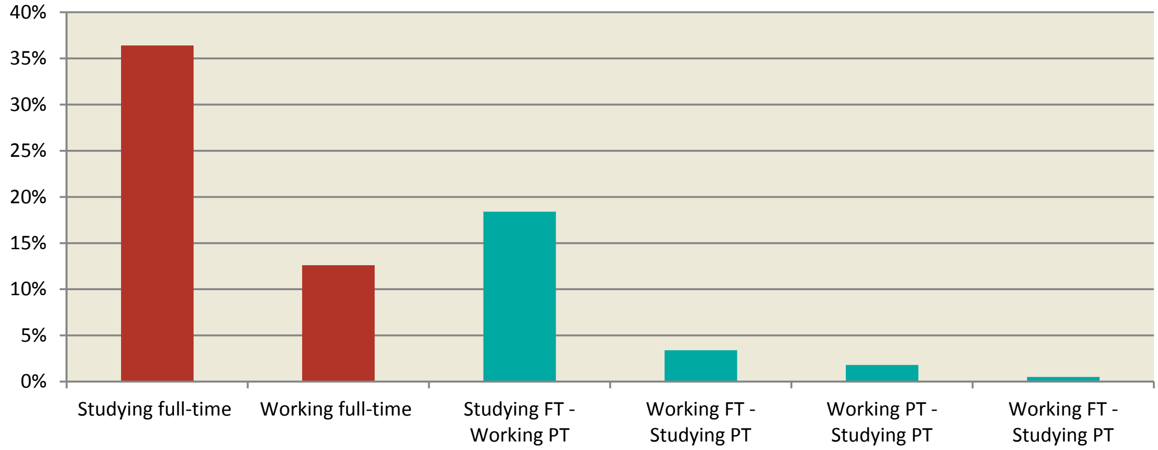
In 2011, Gunnedah Shire had 828 people aged 15 to 19 years. Within this age group, 73.1% were engaged in studying and/or work, with 36.4% engaged in full-time study and 12.6% engaged in full-time work. 24.1% were both working and studying.

Table 7.3 Engagement by Youth (aged 15-19 years) in Work and Study, Gunnedah Shire - 2011

Level of engagement with work and/or study	% people aged 15-19 years
Number of people aged 15-19 years	828
Fully engaged in work and/or study	73.1%
Studying full-time (not working)	36.4%
Working full-time (not studying)	12.6%
Working & Studying	
Studying full time and working part-time	18.4%
Working full-time and studying part-time	3.4%
Working part-time and studying part-time	1.8%
Working full-time and studying full-time	0.5%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing – Basic Community Profiles, 2011

Figure 7.3 Engagement by Youth (aged 15-19 years) in Work and Study, Gunnedah Shire, 2011

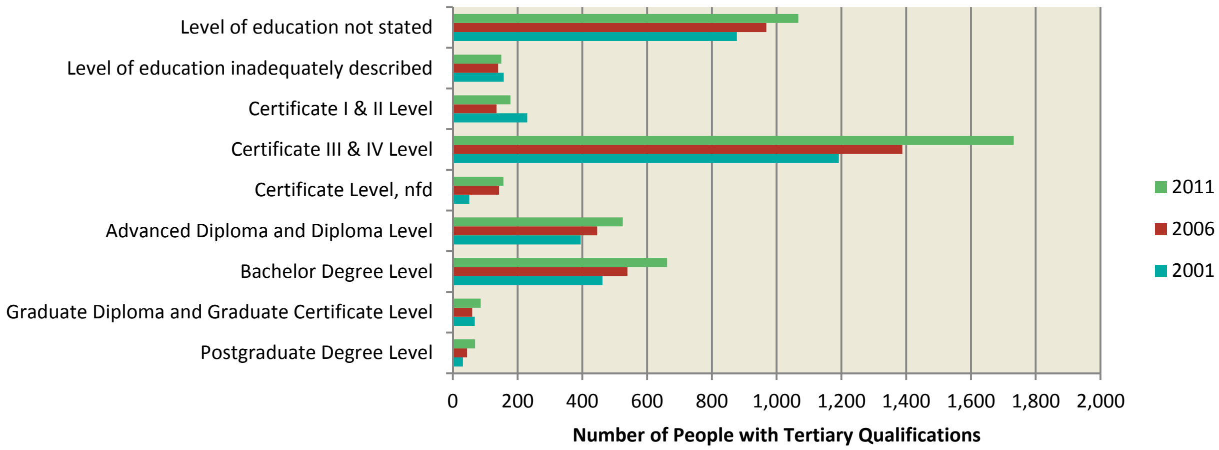


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing – Basic Community Profiles, 2011

7.3 Tertiary Qualifications

Between 2001 and 2011 there has been a significant increase (33.6%) in the number of people, aged 15 years and over, with tertiary qualifications in the Gunnedah Shire including an additional 200 people with Bachelor Degrees and an additional 540 people with Certificate III or IV qualifications. This may be indicative that many jobs now require tertiary qualifications (eg nursing and allied health) and/or the influx of mine-related workers with qualifications into the Shire.

Figure 7.4 Change in the Number of People with Tertiary Qualifications, Gunnedah Shire, 2001 to 2011



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing , Time Series 2001-2012

At the 2011 Census, 49.5% of people aged 15+ years in Gunnedah Shire had some form of tertiary qualification (Bachelor Degree or higher, Advanced Diploma or Diploma, or Vocational Certificate). In comparison to the State and Regional averages Gunnedah Shire has:

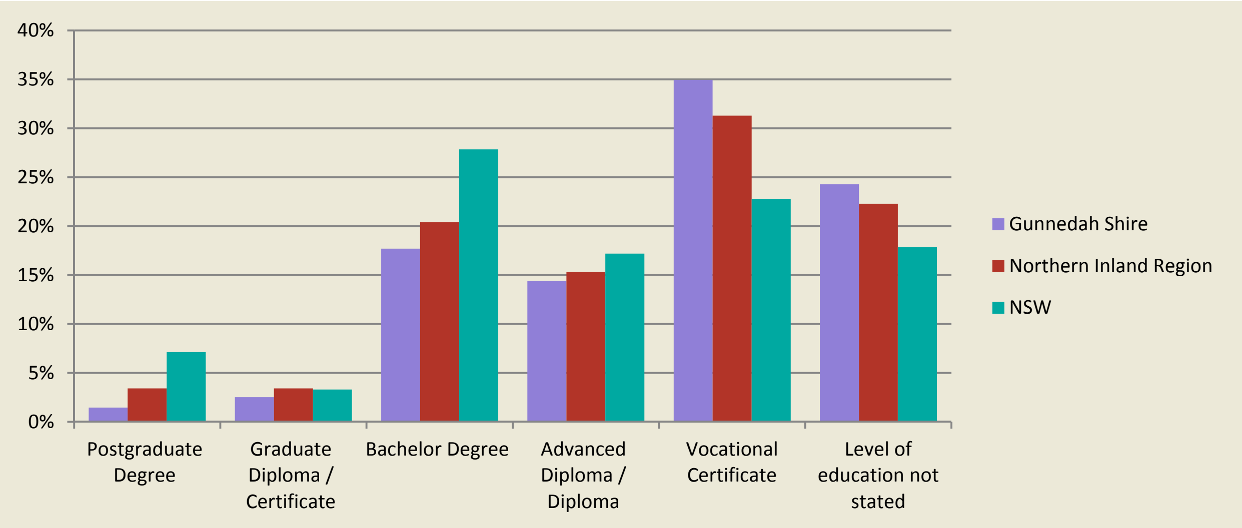
- A higher proportion of people with Vocational Certificates
- A lower proportion of people with Bachelor Degrees and Diplomas.
- A lower proportion of people with Post Graduate qualifications.

Table 7.4 Highest Tertiary Qualification Obtained – Comparison of Gunnedah Shire, Northern Inland Region & NSW, 2011 (% of people with Qualifications)

Highest Tertiary Qualification Obtained	Gunnedah Shire		Northern Inland Region	NSW
	No. Residents	% Residents		
Post Graduate Degree	60	1.3%	3.6%	7.5%
Graduate Diploma / Certificate	78	1.7%	2.4%	2.6%
Bachelor Degree	640	14.2%	16.4%	24.6%
Advanced Diploma /Diploma	504	11.2%	12.2%	14.5%
Vocational Certificate	2,012	44.7%	40.9%	30.9%
Not Stated	1,057	23.5%	21.6%	16.9%
Total	4,999	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing , Basic Community Profile, 2011.

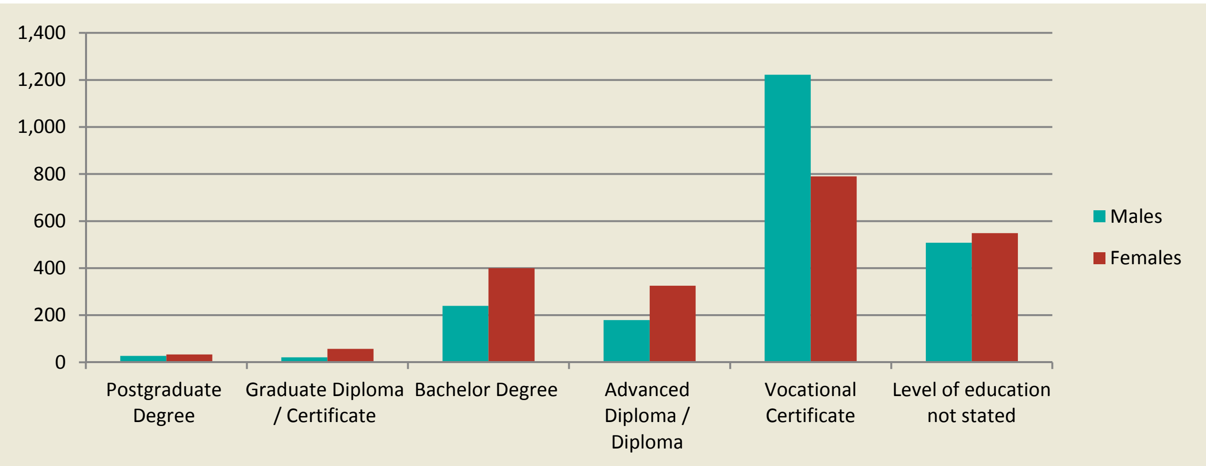
Figure 7.5 Highest Tertiary Qualification Obtained – Comparison of Gunnedah Shire, Northern Inland Region and NSW, 2011 (% of people with Qualifications)



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing , Basic Community Profile, 2011.

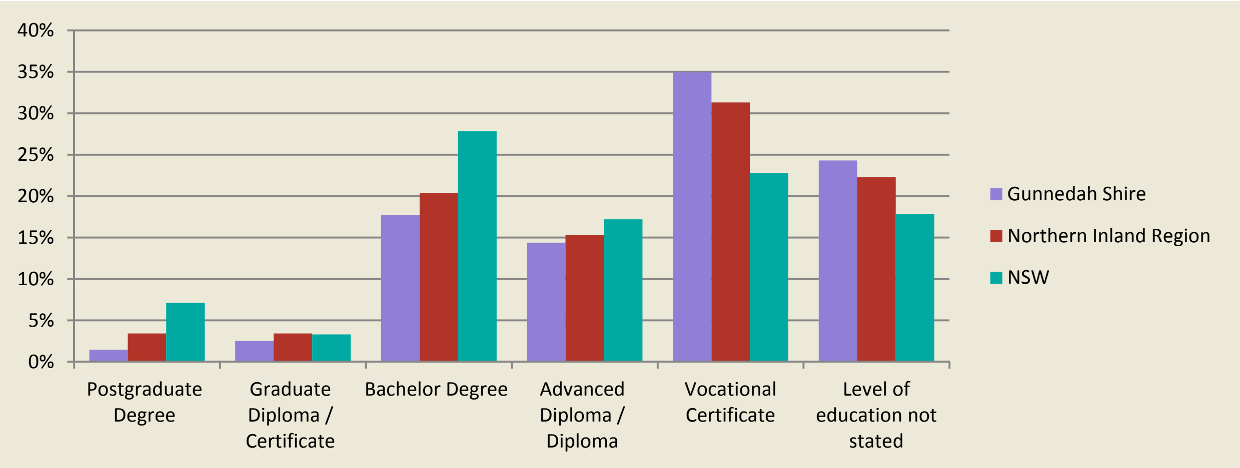
Within the Shire, females accounted for 50.2% of people with tertiary qualifications, with 21.7% of females having Bachelor or higher degrees, compared to 12.8% of males. 54.6% of males had vocational certificates, compared to 35.0% of females. The proportion of females and males with Bachelor or Higher degrees in Gunnedah Shire is below both the Regional and State averages, while the proportion of both females and males with Vocational Certificates is higher than the Regional and State averages.

Figure 7.6 Tertiary Qualifications by Sex, Gunnedah Shire, 2011 (Number of People)



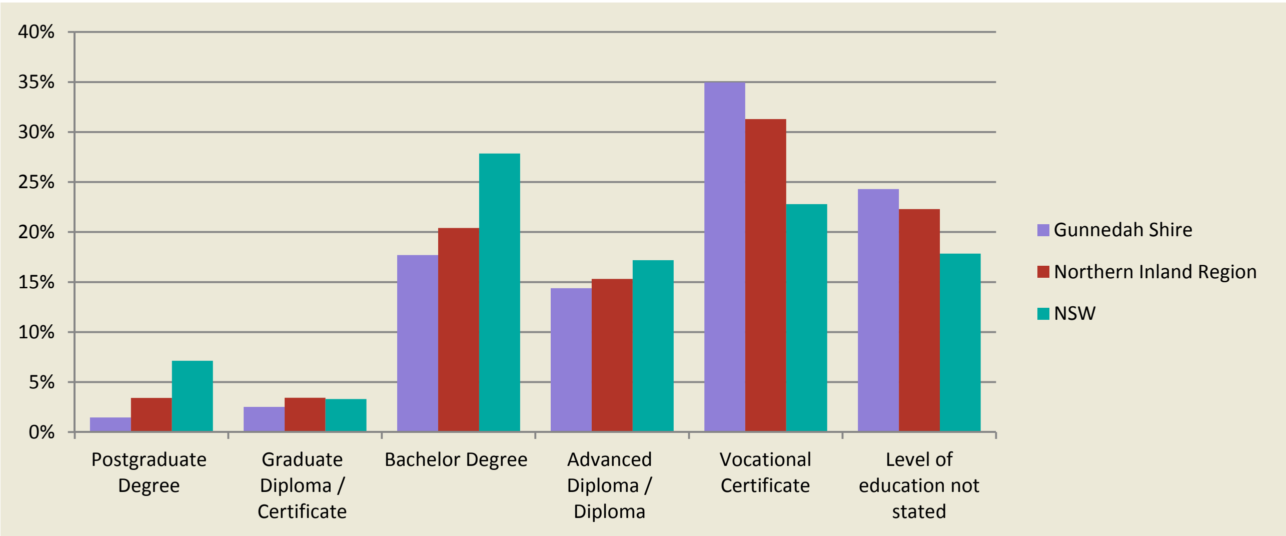
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011

Figure 7.7 Proportion of Males with Tertiary Qualifications - Gunnedah Shire, Northern Inland Region & NSW, 2011



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011

Figure 7.8 Proportion of Females with Tertiary Qualifications - Gunnedah Shire, Northern Inland Region & NSW, 2011



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011

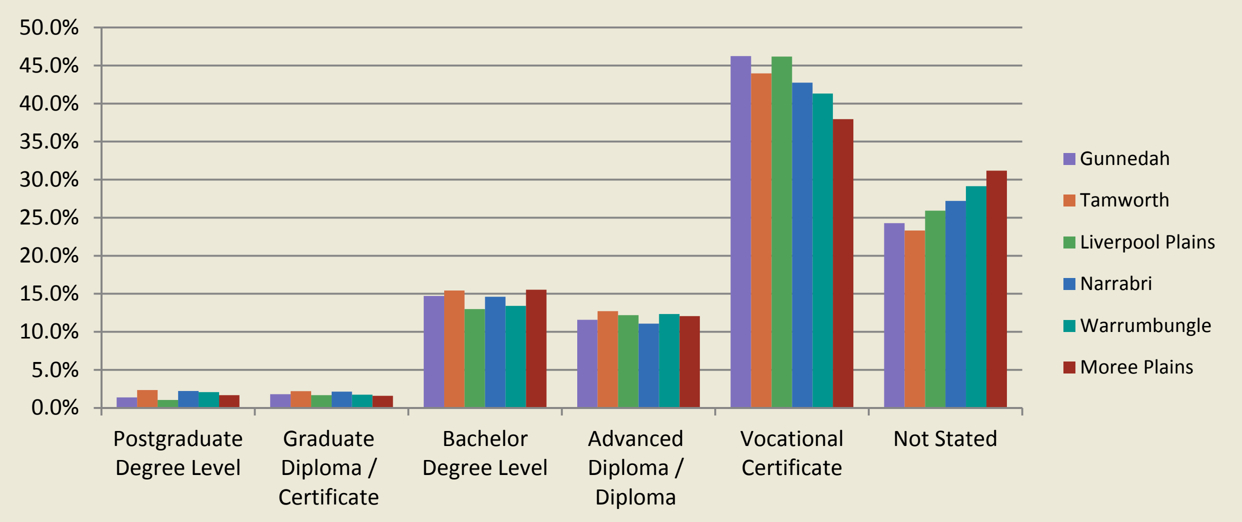
Within the comparative set of LGAs, Gunnedah and Liverpool Plains Shires had the highest proportion of residents with Vocational Certificates. Gunnedah Shire had the second lowest proportion of people with Post Graduate Qualifications. Tamworth, Narrabri and Warrumbungle Shires had the highest proportion of people with Post Graduate qualifications, largely reflecting the concentration of government and health services in Tamworth and the research institutions within Narrabri and Warrumbungle Shires.

Table 7.5 Highest Tertiary Qualification Obtained – Comparative LGAs, 2011

	Gunnedah	Tamworth	Liverpool Plains	Narrabri	Warrum-bungle	Moree Plains
Post Graduate Degree	1.4%	2.3%	1.0%	2.2%	2.2%	1.7%
Graduate Diploma / Certificate	1.8%	2.2%	1.7%	2.1%	1.7%	1.6%
Bachelor Degree	14.7%	15.4%	13.0%	14.6%	13.4%	15.5%
Advanced Diploma /Diploma	11.6%	12.7%	12.2%	11.1%	12.3%	12.1%
Vocational Certificate	46.2%	44.0%	46.2%	42.8%	41.3%	37.9%
Not Stated	24.3%	23.3%	25.9%	27.2%	29.1%	31.2%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011

Figure 7.9 Highest Tertiary Qualification Obtained – Comparative LGAs 2011

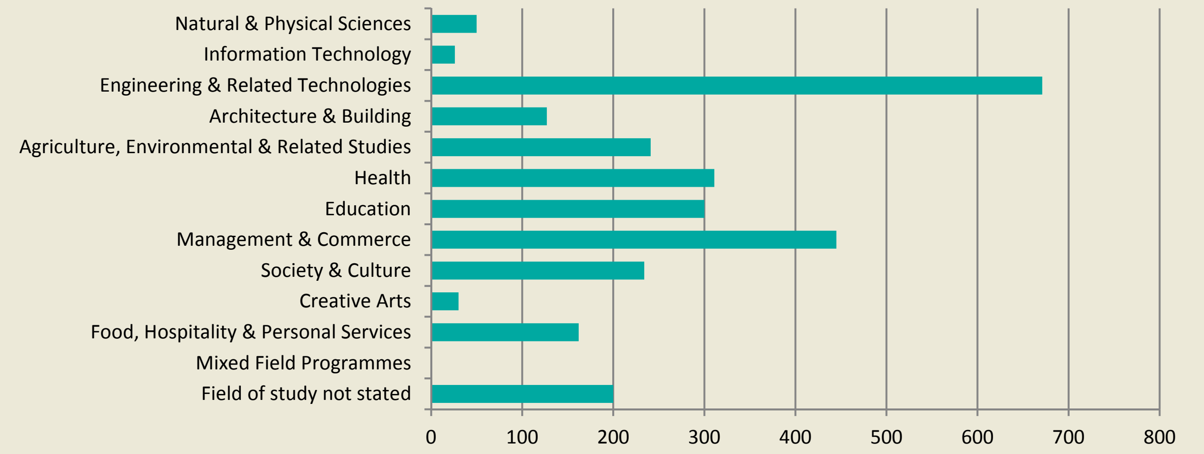


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011

7.4 Field of Tertiary Study

Gunnedah Shire has a concentration of residents with tertiary qualifications in engineering and related technologies, management and commerce, health care and education.

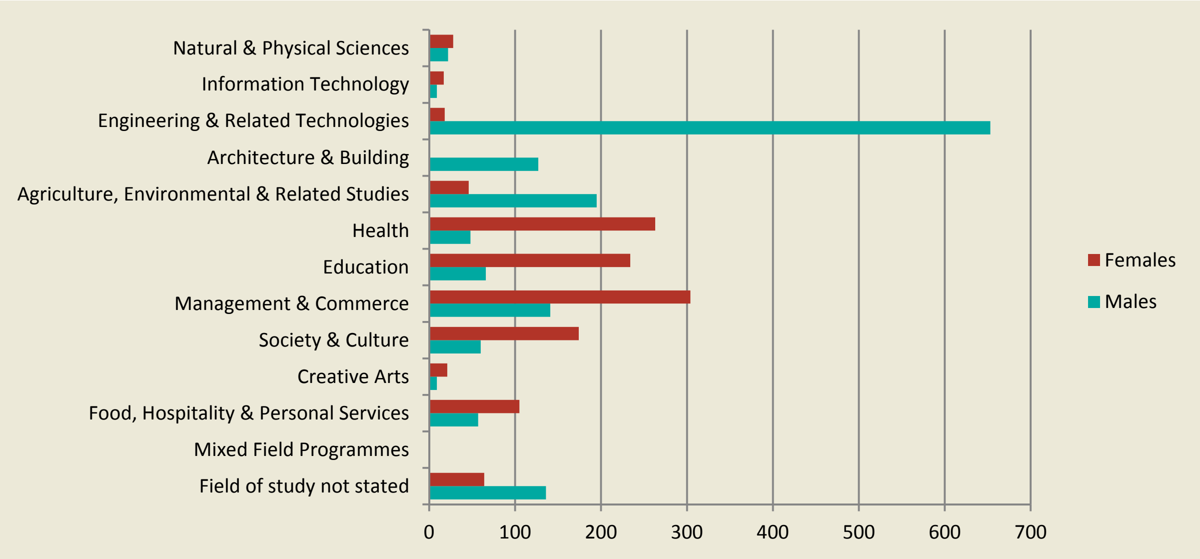
Figure 7.10 Field of Study – Number of Residents of Gunnedah Shire with Tertiary Qualifications



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011

There is a marked difference between the field of study of males and females within the Shire.

Figure 7.11 Field of Tertiary Study – Number of Males & Females in Gunnedah Shire, 2011

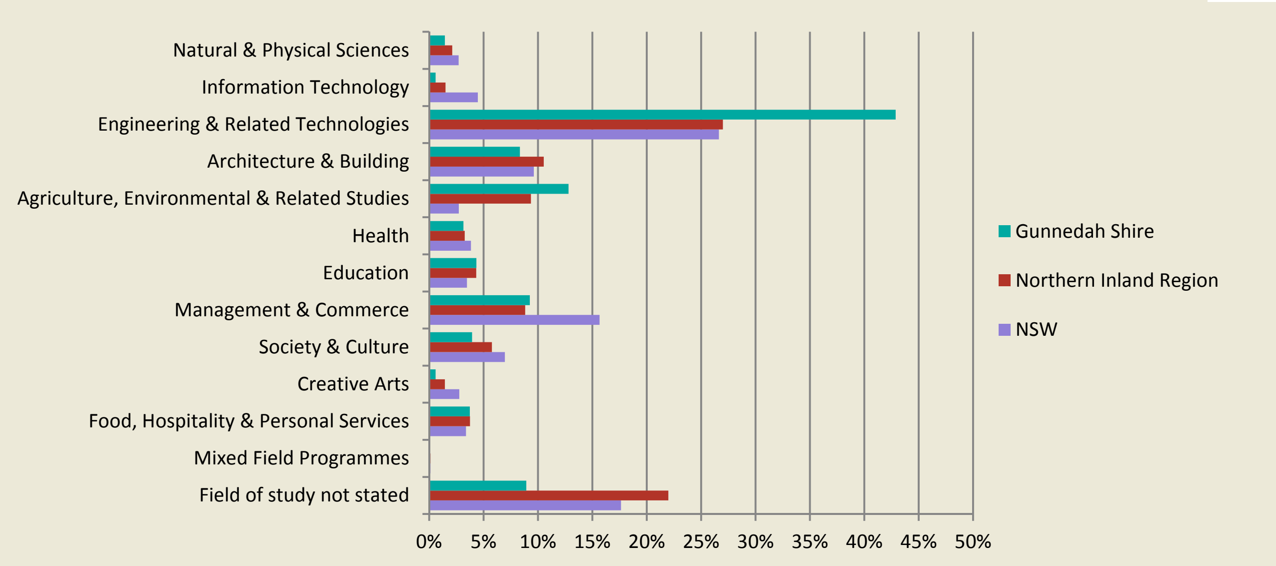


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011

Males

42.9% of males in Gunnedah Shire have qualifications in engineering and related disciplines. The next most popular fields of study were in agriculture and environmental studies (12.8%) and in management and commerce (9.3%). Compared to NSW and the Northern Inland Region, Gunnedah Shire has a significantly higher proportion of males with engineering and related technology qualifications and agricultural and environmental qualifications. The proportion of males with management and commerce qualifications is well below the State average, however is higher than the Regional average.

Figure 7.12 Field of Tertiary Study – Males – Gunnedah Shire, Northern Inland Region & NSW, 2011.

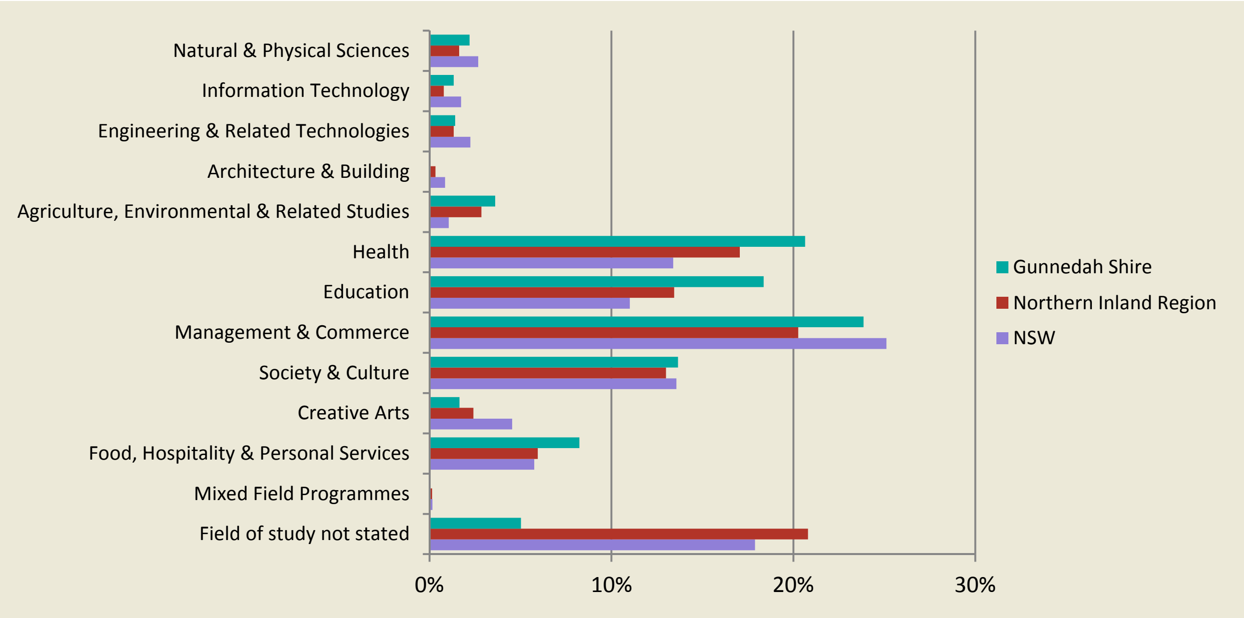


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011

Females

The main fields of tertiary study for female residents of Gunnedah Shire are management and commerce (23.9%), health care (20.6%), education (18.4%), society and culture (13.7%) and hospitality (8.2%). Although Gunnedah Shire has traditionally been an agricultural and mining area, there are very few women with qualifications in agriculture or engineering and related technologies. Gunnedah Shire has a higher proportion of female residents with health, education, hospitality and agricultural qualifications than the State and Regional averages. In relation to management and commerce, Gunnedah Shire has a higher proportion of females qualified in this area than the Regional average, but is marginally lower than the State average.

Figure 7.13 Field of Tertiary Study – Females – Gunnedah Shire, Northern Inland Region and NSW, 2011



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011

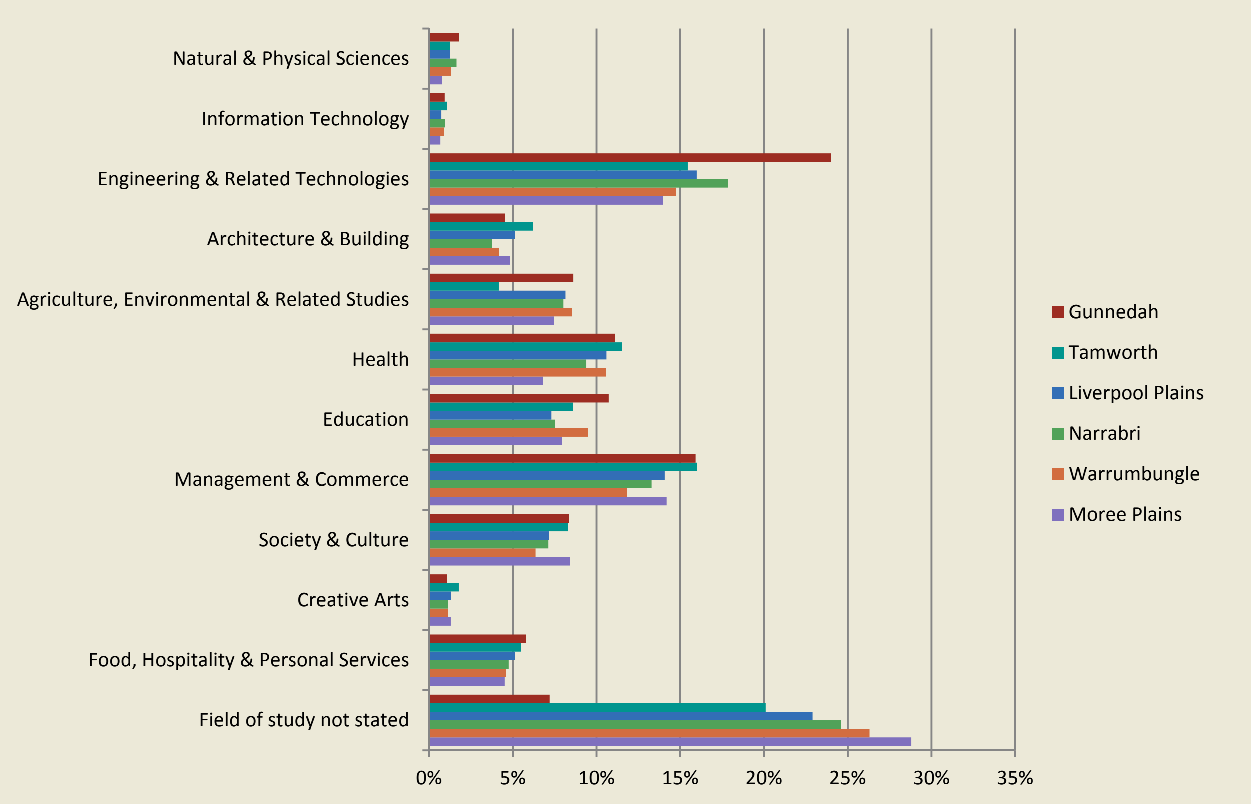
In relation to the comparative set of LGAs, Gunnedah Shire has a significantly higher proportion of residents with engineering and related technology and education qualifications. Tamworth City has a higher proportion of residents with management and commerce, health, information technology and architecture and building qualifications than the other LGAs within the comparative set.

Table 7.6 Field of Tertiary Study – Comparative Set of LGAs, 2011

	Gunnedah	Tamworth	Liverpool Plains	Narrabri	Warrum-bungle	Moree Plains
Natural & Physical Sciences	1.8%	1.3%	1.3%	1.6%	1.3%	0.8%
Information Technology	0.9%	1.1%	0.7%	0.9%	0.9%	0.7%
Engineering & Related Technologies	24.0%	15.4%	16.0%	17.9%	14.8%	14.0%
Architecture & Building	4.5%	6.2%	5.1%	3.7%	4.2%	4.8%
Agriculture, Environment & Related	8.6%	4.2%	8.1%	8.0%	8.5%	7.5%
Health	11.1%	11.5%	10.6%	9.4%	10.6%	6.8%
Education	10.7%	8.6%	7.3%	7.5%	9.5%	7.9%
Management & Commerce	15.9%	16.0%	14.1%	13.3%	11.8%	14.2%
Society & Culture	8.4%	8.3%	7.2%	7.1%	6.4%	8.4%
Creative Arts	1.1%	1.8%	1.3%	1.1%	1.1%	1.3%
Food, Hospitality, Personal Services	5.8%	5.5%	5.1%	4.7%	4.6%	4.5%
Mixed Field Programs	0.0%	0.1%	0.3%	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%
Field of Study not Specified	7.2%	20.1%	22.9%	24.6%	26.3%	28.8%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011

Figure 7.14 Field of Tertiary Study – Comparative Set of LGAs, 2011



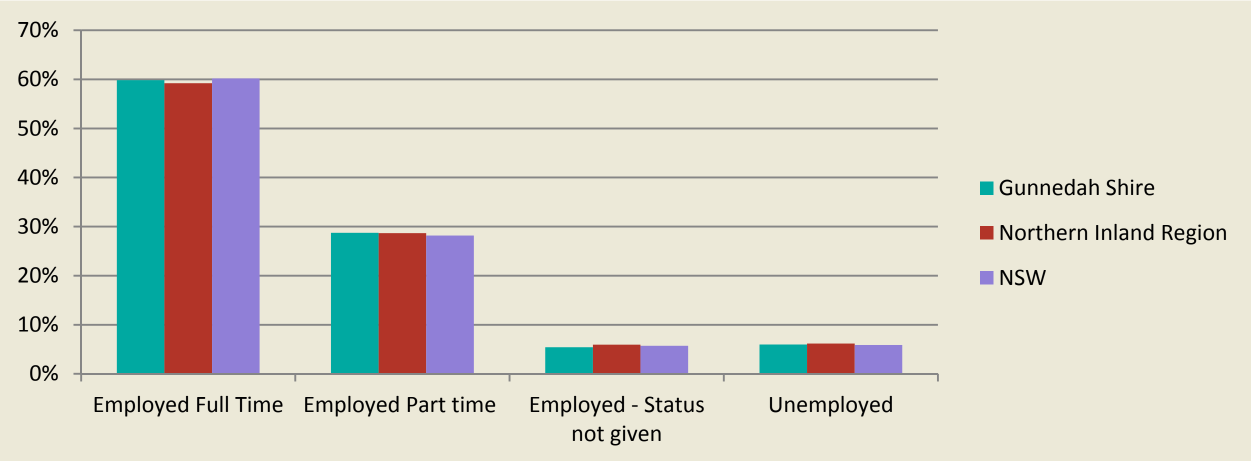
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011

8. Labour Force & Employment

8.1 Labour Force

'Labour Force' is defined as people who are employed plus those of working age who are looking for work. At the 2011 Census, Gunnedah Shire had a Labour Force of 5,559 people of which 94% (4,680 people) were employed and 6% (427) were unemployed. Of those employed, 63.7% were in full-time employment and 30.6% in part-time employment (5.8% did not specify their status). In 2011, the employment and unemployment rates in Gunnedah Shire were similar to those in the Northern Inland Region and NSW.

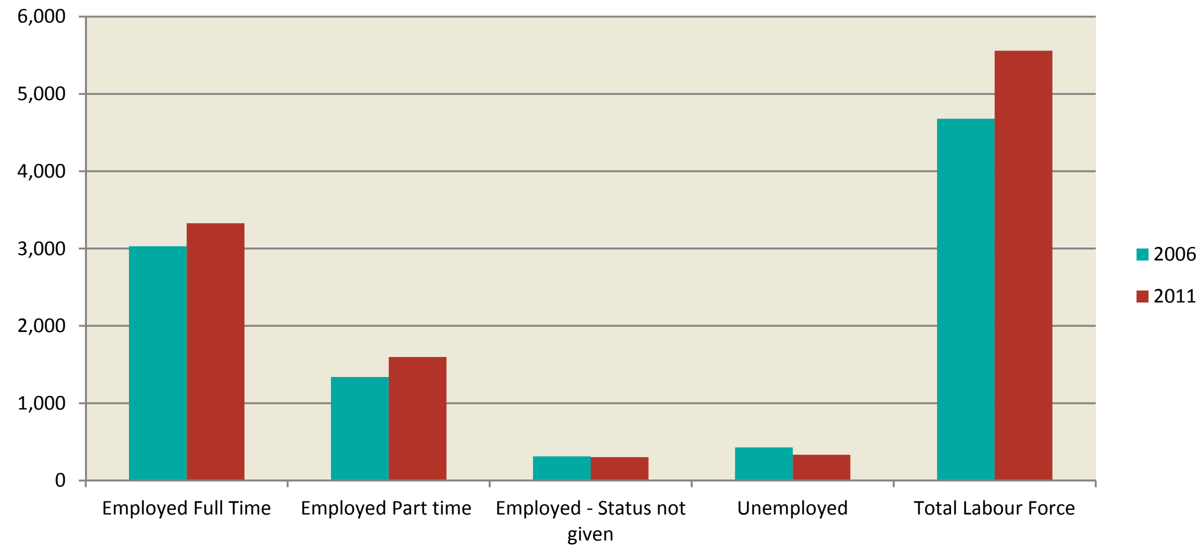
Figure 8.1 Labour Force Employment Status –Gunnedah Shire, Northern Inland Region & NSW, 2011



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011

The number of people in the Labour Force increased by 8.9% (427 people) between 2006 and 2011, while the employment rate increased from 91.6% to 94%.

Figure 8.2 Change in Labour Force & Employment Status, Gunnedah Shire, 2006-2011 (Number of People)



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011

8.2 Median Age

In 2011 the median age of workers in full-time and part-time employment in Gunnedah Shire was 44 and 42 years, respectively. The median age for full-time workers was on par with the Regional average (44 years), but higher than the State average (41 years). Within the comparative set of LGAs, the median age of workers in Tamworth and Moree Plains LGAs was lower than in Gunnedah Shire, while the median age of workers in Liverpool Plains and Warrumbungle Shires was higher than Gunnedah Shire. Narrabri Shire was on par with Gunnedah Shire.

Table 8.1: Median Age of Workers (years) - Comparative LGAs, Northern Inland Region and NSW 2011

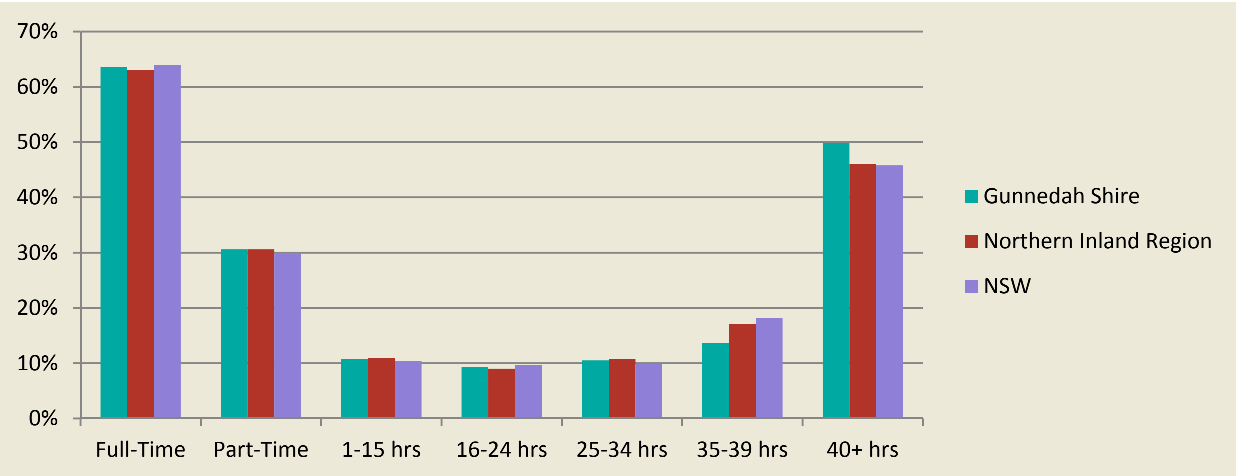
LGA	Gunnedah	Tamworth	Liverpool Plains	Narrabri	Warrum-bungle	Moree Plains	Northern Inland Region	NSW
Full-Time	44	42	46	44	47	42	44	41
Part-Time	42	42	45	43	47	42	43	40

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011

8.3 Hours Worked

In 2011, 49.9% of people employed in Gunnedah Shire worked 40 or more hours per week, with 13.75 working 35-39 hours per week. 30.6% worked part-time (less than 35 hours per week). The proportion of people in full-time and part-time work in Gunnedah Shire is similar to the Regional and State averages.

Figure 8.3 Proportion of the Labour Force in Full-Time and Part-Time Work and Hours Worked – Comparison Gunnedah Shire, Northern Inland Region and NSW, 2011



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011

8.4 Unemployment

In 2011, the unemployment rate in Gunnedah Shire was 6.0%, down from 8.4% in 2006, 9.4% in 2001 and 9.5% in 1996. The higher levels of unemployment in the period 1996-2001 resulted from the closure of four major employers - three coals mines and the abattoir. In terms of absolute numbers, there were 94 less people looking for work in 2011 than there was in 2006.

Of the unemployed people looking for work in 2011, 62.7% were looking for full-time work, with 37.3% seeking part-time employment. In 2011, males accounted for 48.6% of unemployed persons, with 79.6% seeking full-time positions. The unemployment rate for males fell from 6.9% in 2006 to 5.3% in 2011. 51.4% of unemployed people were female, with 55.6% seeking full-time work and 44.4% part-time positions. The unemployment rate for females is higher than for men, being 6.9% in 2011, down from 9% in 2006.

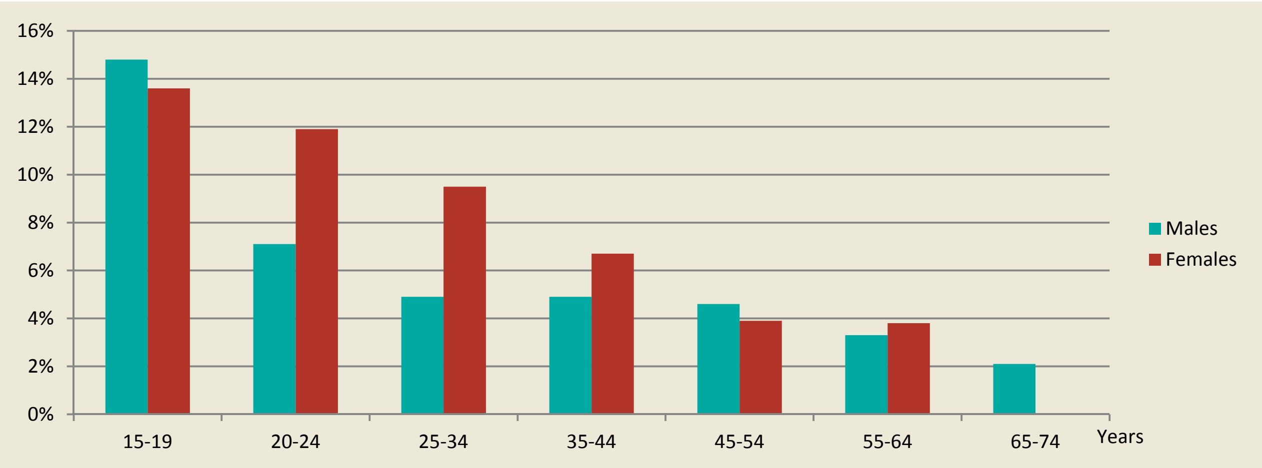
The unemployment rate for males was highest in the 15-19 years age group, with the unemployment level sitting at 14.8% in 2011. The unemployment rate is substantially lower in older age groups. For females, the unemployment levels are highest in the 15-19 year (13.6 %) and 20-24 year (11.9%) age groups.

Table 8.2 Unemployment Rate by Age Group – Gunnedah Shire, 2011

	Age Group - Years							Total
	15-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	
Males	14.8%	7.1%	4.9%	4.9%	4.6%	3.3%	2.1%	5.3%
Females	13.6%	11.9%	9.5%	6.7%	3.9%	3.8%	0.0%	6.9%
Total	14.2%	9.3%	6.9%	5.8%	4.3%	3.5%	1.4%	6.0%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011

Figure 8.4 Unemployment Rate (%) by Age Group – Gunnedah Shire, 2011



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011

In the 15-19 age group, unemployment rates in Gunnedah Shire are marginally lower than the regional and State rates. The unemployment rate for males 20-34 years was significantly lower than the Regional rate and lower than the State rate. From 35-54 years, the unemployment rate for males is on par with the Regional rate and slightly higher than the State rate. For males 55-74, the unemployment rate in Gunnedah Shire is lower than the State rate.

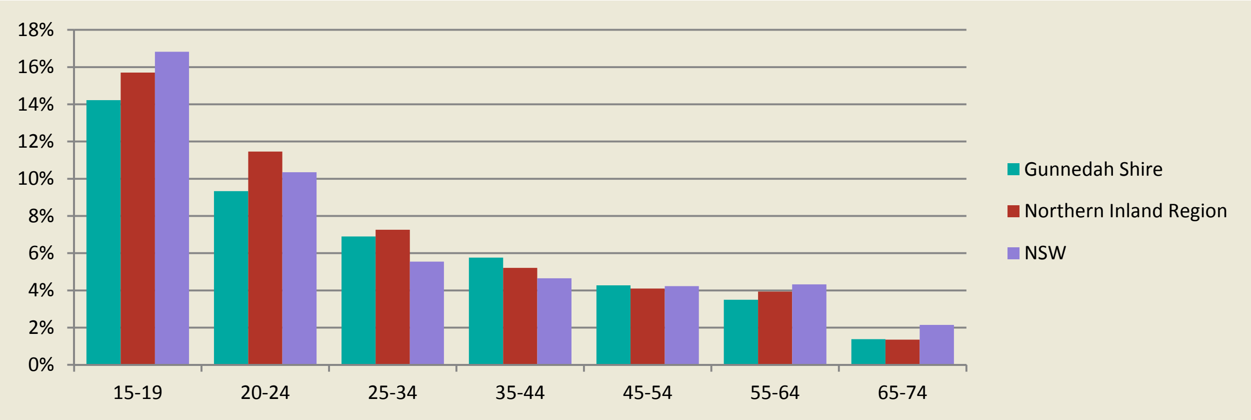
For females, the unemployment rate for 15-19 year olds is marginally lower than the State and Regional rates. For females aged 20 to 44 years and 55-64 years, the unemployment rate in Gunnedah Shire is higher than the State and Regional rates.

Table 8.3 Unemployment Rate by Age Group –Gunnedah Shire, Northern Inland Region & NSW 2011

	Age Group - Years							Total
	15-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	
Males								
Gunnedah Shire	14.8%	7.1%	4.9%	4.9%	4.6%	3.3%	2.1%	5.3%
Northern Inland	16.0%	11.6%	7.5%	4.9%	4.4%	4.6%	1.7%	6.3%
NSW	18.1%	11.2%	5.4%	4.2%	4.2%	4.9%	2.5%	5.9%
Females								
Gunnedah Shire	13.6%	11.9%	9.5%	6.7%	3.9%	3.8%	0.0%	6.9%
Northern Inland	15.4%	11.3%	7.0%	5.6%	3.8%	3.0%	0.8%	6.0%
NSW	15.5%	9.5%	5.7%	5.2%	4.3%	3.6%	1.6%	5.9%
Total								
Gunnedah Shire	14.2%	9.3%	6.9%	5.8%	4.3%	3.5%	1.4%	6.0%
Northern Inland	15.7%	11.5%	7.3%	5.2%	4.1%	3.9%	1.4%	6.2%
NSW	16.8%	10.4%	5.5%	4.7%	4.2%	4.3%	2.1%	5.9%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011

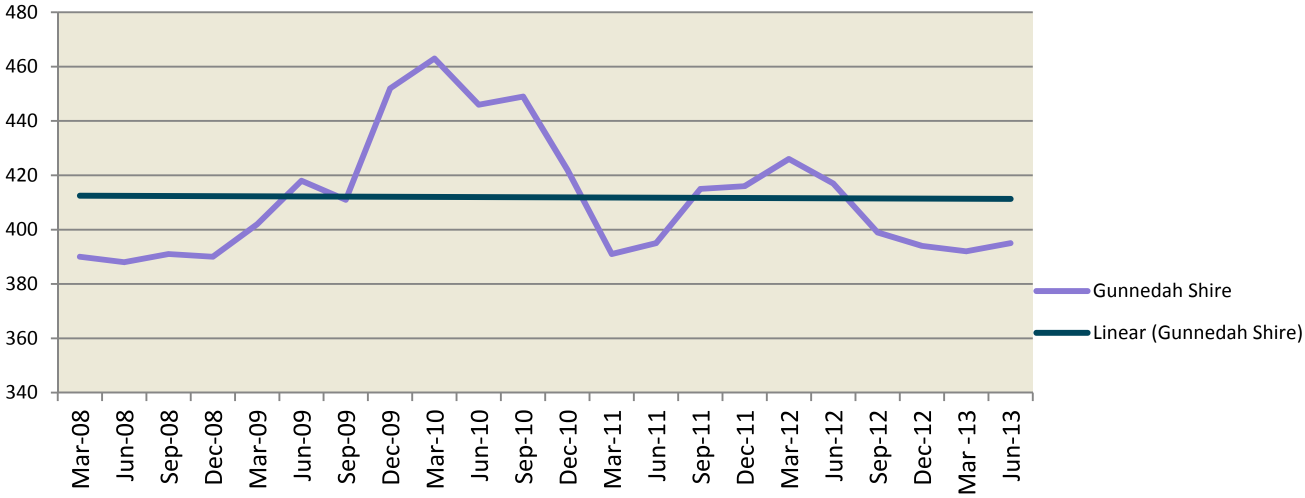
Figure 8.5 Unemployment Rates by Age Group – Gunnedah Shire, Northern Inland Region and NSW, 2011



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations publishes quarterly unemployment statistics by Local Government Areas. In June 2013, there were 395 people unemployed in Gunnedah Shire. Over the period March Quarter 2008 to June Quarter 2013, the number of unemployed people in Gunnedah Shire ranged from 388 in June Quarter 2008 to peak at 463 in the March Quarter 2010, a fluctuation of 75 people.

Figure 8.6 Number of People Unemployed in Gunnedah Shire – March Quarter 2008 – June Quarter 2013.



Source: Small Area Labour Markets Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

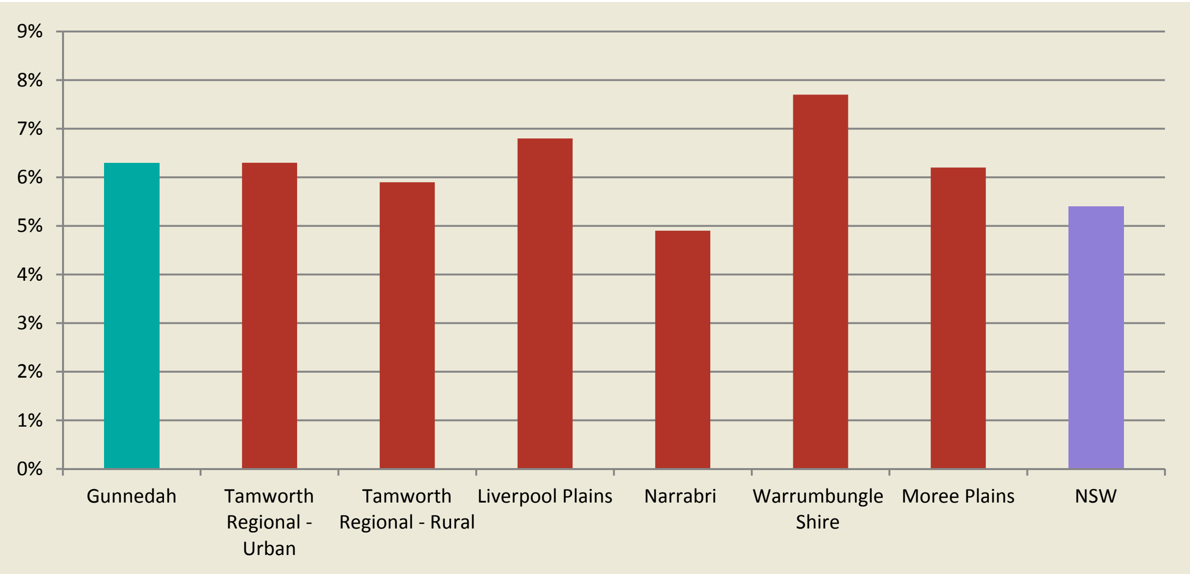
The unemployment rate in Gunnedah Shire generally sits around 1 to 1.5 percentage points above the State average, with the rate being similar to Tamworth, Liverpool Plains and Moree Plains LGAs within the comparative set of LGAs. Narrabri Shire has low unemployment with the unemployment rate being below the State average in the first 6 months of 2013. In contrast, the unemployment rate in Warrumbungle Shire is higher than other LGAs in the comparative set.

Table 8.4 Unemployment Rates (%) – Comparative LGAs – June Quarter 2011 to June Quarter 2013

LGA	2011			2012				2013	
	Jun	Sep	Dec	Mar	Jun	Sep	Dec	Mar	Jun
Gunnedah	6.2	6.6	6.6	6.8	6.7	6.5	6.4	6.3	6.3
Tamworth – Urban	5.9	6.3	6.3	6.4	6.4	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3
Tamworth – Rural	5.7	6.0	5.9	6.0	6.0	5.9	6.0	6.0	5.9
Liverpool Plains	6.3	6.7	6.6	6.7	6.6	6.5	6.6	6.7	6.8
Narrabri	5.4	5.5	5.4	5.3	5.2	5.1	5.2	5.1	4.9
Warrumbungle	7.8	8.3	8.2	8.4	8.5	8.4	8.3	8.0	7.7
Moree Plains	6.1	6.5	6.5	6.7	6.7	6.5	6.5	6.4	6.2
NSW	5.1	5.2	5.2	5.4	5.0	4.9	5.0	5.7	5.4

Source: Small Area Labour Markets Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

Figure 8.7 Unemployment Rate (%), Comparative LGAs & NSW, June Quarter, 2013



Source: Small Area Labour Markets Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

8.5 Employment by Industry

Information on employment by industry sector is available for the period 2001-2011. Between 2001 and 2006, changes were made in the definitions for a number of the sectors relating to professional, scientific and technical and administration and support services. As such the 2001 data is not comparable in these categories. The trend data is given in Table 8.5.

In 2011, 16.9% of the workforce of Gunnedah Shire was engaged in Agricultural - Forestry activities. Since 2001, the number of people employed in the Agricultural sector has declined by 9.9%. The decline was largely attributed to the drought and the movement of employees into the mining sector. From 2006 to 2011 the number of people employed in the Agricultural sector increased by 3.9%.

Employment in the Retail sector ranks second, accounting for 9.9% of the Gunnedah workforce. Since 2001 the number of people working in the Retail sector has declined by 197 people, or 27.7%. From 2006 to 2011 there was a 7.7% increase in the number of people working in retail (34 additional people). 9.4% of the workforce is engaged in the Health Care and Social Assistance sector. From 2006 to 2011 this sector grew by 14.2%.

The ramping up of coal mining and gas exploration within the Gunnedah Basin has seen employment in the Mining sector increase from 43 people in 2001, to 118 in 2006 to 390 people in 2011 – a growth rate of 807% over the ten year period. Over the 130+ years of coal mining in the area, Gunnedah Shire has experienced a number of 'boom' and 'bust' cycles, with significant fluctuations in employment in the Mining sector.

Employment in the manufacturing sector increased between 2001 and 2006 and then declined over the next 5 years as workers moved out of manufacturing into the mining sector. The numbers of people working in the Accommodation and Food Services, Construction and Transport sectors have shown sustained growth over the 10 year period from 2001, increasing by 97.8%, 40.4% and 37.4% respectively.

Table 8.5 Changes in Employment by Industry, Gunnedah Shire, 2001-2012

Industry Sector	Number of People			Change Over Time		
	2001	2006	2011	2001-11	2001-11	2006-11
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	981	851	884	- 97	-9.9%	3.9%
Mining	43	118	390	347	807.0%	230.5%
Manufacturing	382	421	368	-14	-3.7%	-12.6%
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	20	44	66	46	230.0%	50.0%
Construction	193	220	271	78	40.4%	23.2%
Wholesale trade	242	146	139	-103	-42.6%	-4.8%
Retail trade	712	481	515	-197	-27.7%	7.1%
Accommodation and food services	181	308	358	177	97.8%	16.2%
Transport, postal and warehousing	182	221	250	68	37.4%	13.1%
Information media & telecommunications	50	45	28	-22	-44.0%	-37.8%
Financial and insurance services	83	64	66	-17	-20.5%	3.1%
Rental, hiring and real estate services	288	67	63	-225	-78.1%	-6.0%
Professional, scientific & technical services	-	163	167	167	-	2.5%
Administrative and support services	166	74	109	-57	-34.3%	47.3%
Public administration and safety	-	273	260	260	-	-4.8%
Education and training	350	354	403	53	15.1%	13.8%
Health care and social assistance	461	430	491	30	6.5%	14.2%
Arts and recreation services	38	35	35	-3	-7.9%	0.0%
Other services	158	219	228	70	44.3%	4.1%
Not stated	133	147	135	2	1.5%	-8.2%

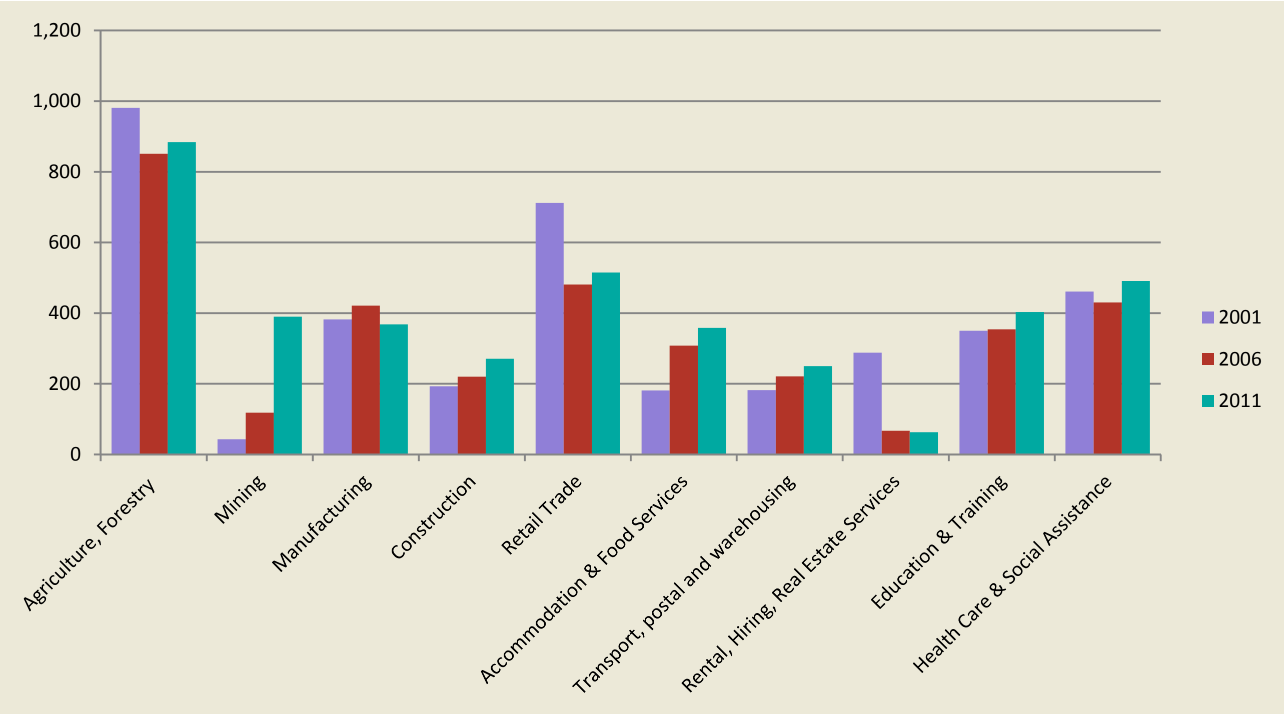
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011

Table 8.6 Percentage of the Labour Force Employed by Industry Sector – Gunnedah Shire 2001-2011

Industry Sector	2001	2006	2011
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	21.0%	18.2%	16.9%
Mining	0.9%	2.5%	7.5%
Manufacturing	8.2%	9.0%	7.0%
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	0.4%	0.9%	1.3%
Construction	4.1%	4.7%	5.2%
Wholesale trade	5.2%	3.1%	2.7%
Retail trade	15.3%	10.3%	9.9%
Accommodation and food services	3.9%	6.6%	6.9%
Transport, postal and warehousing	3.9%	4.7%	4.8%
Information media & telecommunications	1.1%	1.0%	0.5%
Financial and insurance services	1.8%	1.4%	1.3%
Rental, hiring and real estate services	6.2%	1.4%	1.2%
Professional, scientific & technical services	-	3.5%	3.2%
Administrative and support services	3.6%	1.6%	2.1%
Public administration and safety	-	5.8%	5.0%
Education and training	7.5%	7.6%	7.7%
Health care and social assistance	9.9%	9.2%	9.4%
Arts and recreation services	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%
Other services	3.4%	4.7%	4.4%
Not stated	2.9%	3.1%	2.6%

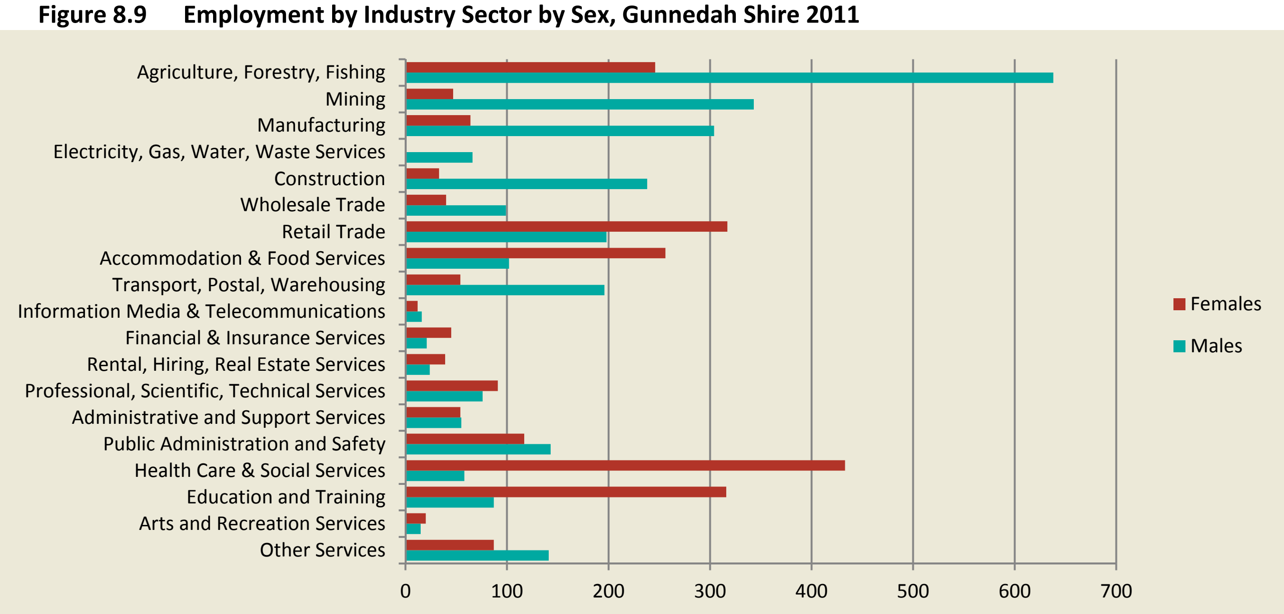
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011

Figure 8.8 Change in Number of People Employed by Industry Sector - Main Sectors, Gunnedah Shire 2001-2011



Males are primarily employed in the Agricultural, Mining, Manufacturing, Construction and Transport sectors, while the Retail, Accommodation - Food Services, Health Care - Social Services and Education - Training sectors are major employers of females.

Figure 8.9 Employment by Industry Sector by Sex, Gunnedah Shire 2011



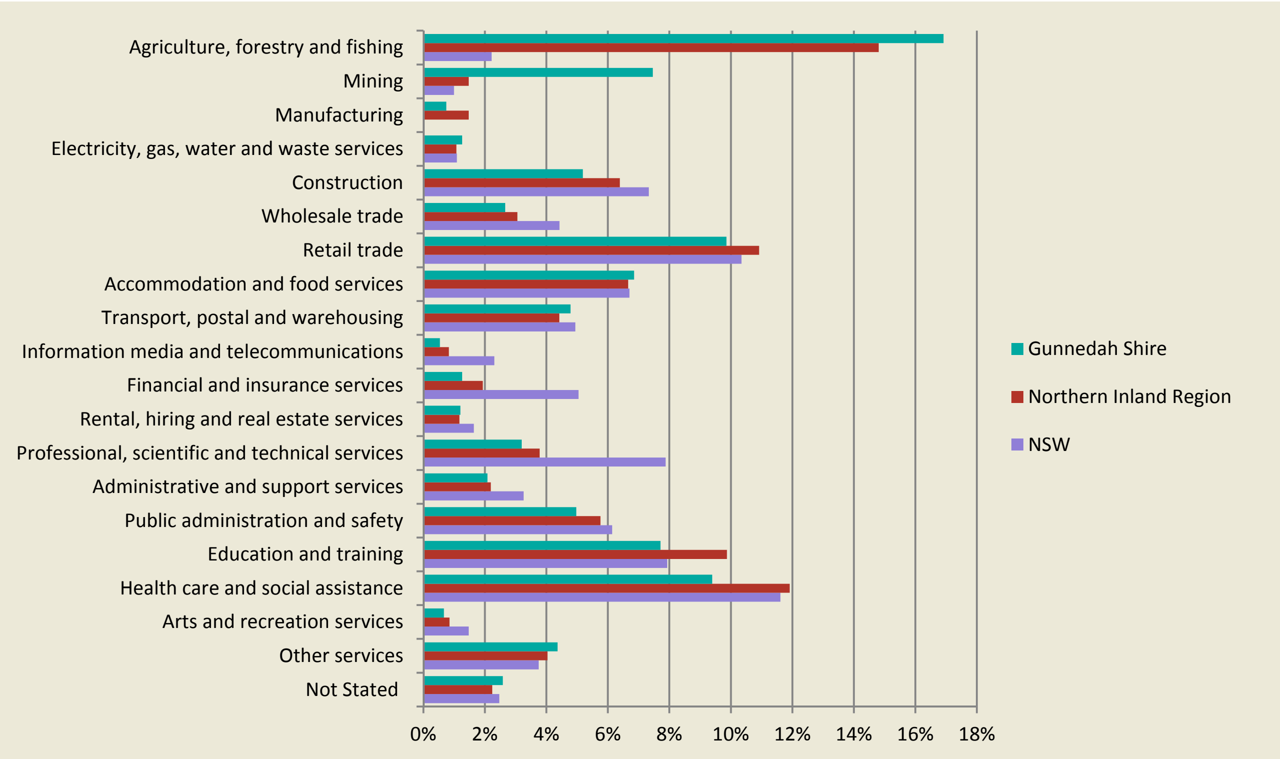
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011

The Retail and Accommodation - Food Services sectors are the primary employers of people aged 15-19 years. A number of the traditional sectors (Agriculture - Forestry, Construction, Transport, Public Administration and Health Care - Social Services), have an aging workforce, with this most pronounced in the Agricultural - Forestry sector. The Mining and Manufacturing sectors have a younger workforce, primarily employing people aged 24 to 44 years.

The Accommodation - Food Sector is the largest employer of part-time staff with 49% of employees in this sector working less than 35 hours per week. Other sectors that provide significant levels of part–time work are Administration and Support (37.5% of employees), Health Care - Social Services (32.8%) and Retail (29%). There are very few part-time jobs in the Mining (3.2%), Agriculture (11.4%) and Manufacturing (11.7%) sectors. The majority of people employed in the Mining (76.7%), Agriculture - Forestry (65.1%), Rental Hiring and Real Estate (56.5%), Transport (54.1%), and Construction (51.1%) sectors worked more than 40 hours per week.

In comparison to the Northern Inland Region and NSW, Gunnedah Shire has a higher proportion of people employed in the Agriculture and Forestry and Mining Sectors. Within the Northern Inland Region 35% of people employed in the Mining Sector reside in Gunnedah with 20.4% residing in Narrabri Shire, 17.4% in Tamworth Regional and 7.6% in Liverpool Plains Shire. These figures indicate that Tamworth is attracting mining related service businesses and/or people are residing in Tamworth and travelling to the mines in Gunnedah, Liverpool Plains and Narrabri Shires.

Figure 8.10 Employment by Industry Sector (% of workforce) – Gunnedah Shire, Northern Inland Region & NSW, 2011



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011

8.6 Employment Projections by Sector

The Federal Department of Education, Employment and Work Place Relations has prepared Employment Projections by Industry for the period 2012 to 2017 for Australia. In terms of number of jobs, the strongest growth sectors are expected to be Health and Social Assistance (177,800 additional positions), Retail (109,100 additional positions), Construction (100,200 additional positions) and Accommodation and Food Services (66,800 additional positions). The number of people employed in Agriculture is forecast to decline by 4.2% (loss of 13,500 positions), while the number of positions in the Manufacturing sector is forecast to increase by only 1.5% (14,200 additional positions), with Mining increasing by 4.3% (11,500 additional positions).

Table 8.7 Employment Projections by Industry Sector, 2012-2017, Australia

Industry	Employment 2012	Employment Projections	% Change 2012 - 2017	Forecast Employment 2017
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	322,500	-13,500	-4.2%	308,900
Mining	269,700	11,500	4.3%	281,300
Manufacturing	967,100	14,200	1.5%	981,400
Electricity, Gas, Water & Waste Services	149,100	3,300	2.2%	152,300
Construction	995,300	100,200	10.1%	1,095,500
Wholesale Trade	423,600	15,500	3.7%	439,100
Retail Trade	1,220,500	109,100	8.5%	1,329,600
Accommodation and Food Services	786,200	66,800	8.5%	853,000
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	583,500	41,600	7.1%	625,100
Information, Media and Telecommunications	299,100	9,600	9.6%	228,600
Finance and Insurance	421,400	16,100	3.8%	437,500
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate	197,700	11,100	5.6%	208,800
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	913,800	62,800	6.9%	976,600
Administration and Support Services	397,100	26,100	6.6%	423,300
Public Administration and Safety	687,300	43,200	6.3%	730,500
Education and Training	897,000	65,500	7.2%	962,000
Health and Social Assistance	1,369,900	177,800	13.0%	1,547,700
Arts and Recreation Services	217,900	21,800	10.0%	239,700
Other Services	451,300	38,500	8.5%	489,800

Source: DEEWR (2013) Employment Projections by Industry

8.7 Occupation

'Occupation' refers to the types of positions held by people in employment. From 2006 to 2011 the number of people in employment in Gunnedah Shire increased by 545 (11.6%). The greatest increases have been in the number of machinery operators and drivers (203 people), technicians and trades (92 people), professionals (83 people) and community and personal services (81 people).

In 2011 the main occupations in Gunnedah Shire were managers (19.3%), labourers (13.3%), technicians and trades (12.7%), and professionals (12.7%). 59.2% of managers work in the Agriculture - Forestry Sector. Labourers are employed primarily in the Agricultural (19% of labourers), Accommodation (17.2%) and Manufacturing sectors (15.9%), while technicians and trades are employed primary in the Construction (17.3% of trades people), Manufacturing (14.4%) and Mining (10.1%) sectors. 35.7% of machinery operators and drivers are employed in the Mining Sector, with 21.1% in the Transport sector and 10.9% in Agriculture and Forestry. Professional people are primarily employed in the Education and Training (37% of professionals), Health Care - Community Services (22.7%) and Professional and Scientific (11.5%) sectors.

Table 8.8 Change in Occupations – Gunnedah Shire, 2006-2011

Occupation	2006		2011		Change 2006-2011	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Managers	1,024	21.9%	1,006	19.3%	-18	-1.5%
Professionals	581	12.4%	662	12.7%	81	13.9%
Technicians & Trades	573	12.2%	665	12.7%	92	16.1%
Community / Personal Services	385	8.2%	468	9.0%	83	21.6%
Clerical / Administrative	502	10.7%	540	10.3%	38	7.6%
Sales	388	8.3%	460	8.8%	72	18.6%
Machinery Operators / Drivers	447	9.6%	650	12.4%	203	45.5%
Labourers	711	15.2%	693	13.3%	-18	-2.5%
Not Stated	69	1.5%	81	1.6%	12	17.4%
Total	**4,680**	**100.0%**	**5,225**	**100.0%**	**545**	**11.6%**

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011

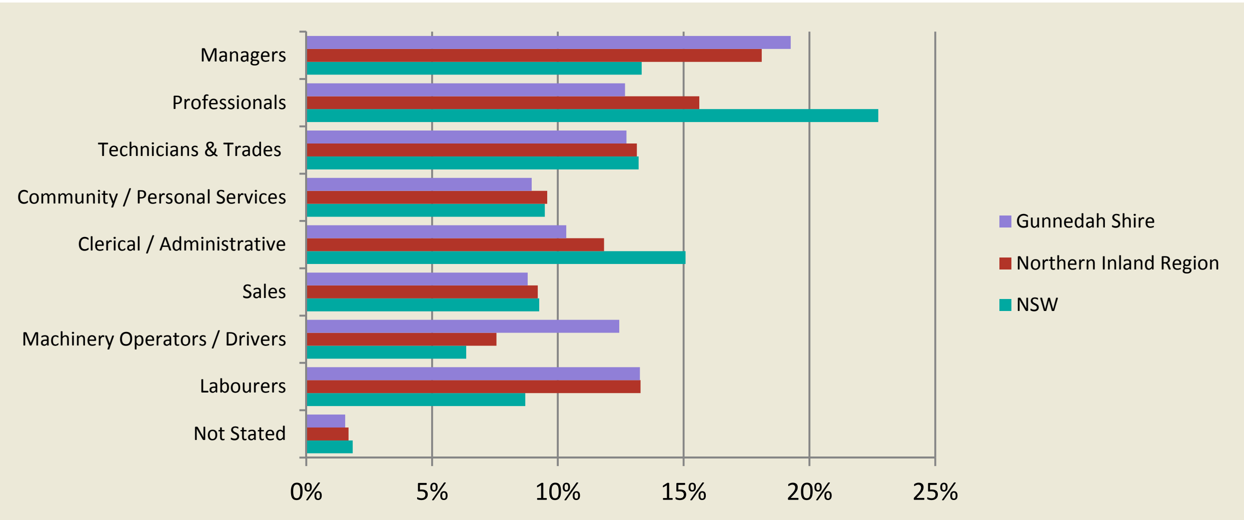
Table 8.9 Occupation by Industry Sector

Occupation	Major Employers – Industry Sectors (as % of occupation)		
Managers	Agriculture (59.2%)	Accommodation (7.6%)	Retail Trade (7.5%)
Professionals	Education/Training (37%)	Health Care (22.7%)	Professional (11.5%)
Technicians / Trades	Construction (17.3%)	Manufacturing (14.4%)	Mining (10.1%)
Service Providers	Health Care (48.1%)	Education (17.9%)	Accommodation (14.5%)
Clerical / Administrative	Public Admin (14.6%)	Professional (10.4%)	Agriculture (7.4%)
Sales	Retail (59.1%)	Wholesale (10.7%)	Real Estate (8.3%)
Machinery Operators	Mining (35.7%)	Transport (21.1%)	Agriculture (10.9%)
Labourers	Agriculture (19.0%)	Accommodation (15.2%)	Manufacturing (15.9%)

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011

In comparison to the Northern Inland Region and to NSW, Gunnedah Shire has a higher proportion of the labour force working as Machinery Operators and Drivers and Managers. The proportion of Labourers is on par with the Regional average, while for all other occupations, Gunnedah Shire is below the State and Regional average.

Figure 8.11 Occupation – Comparison of Gunnedah Shire, Northern Inland Region and NSW, 2011



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011

Within the comparative set of LGAs, the occupation mix of Gunnedah Shire is very similar to that of Narrabri Shire, with Narrabri Shire having marginally more technicians and trades people and marginally less labourers. Tamworth LGAs has a higher proportion of 'white collar' occupations than the other LGAs within the comparative set.

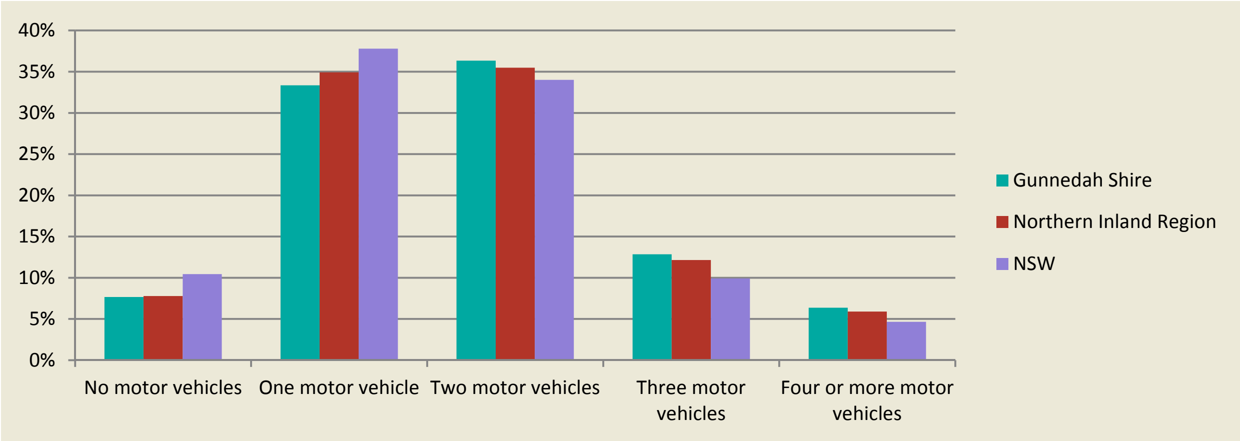
8.8 Journey to Work & Car Ownership

With limited public transport, workers in Gunnedah Shire are dependent on vehicles to travel to work. At the date of Census, 69% of people in the workforce in Gunnedah Shire travelled by car to work, either as a driver of passenger. 2.5% travelled by truck and 0.6% by motorbike. 5.2% walked, with 0.3% catching a bus and 0.3% catching a taxi. 9.1% of people worked at home while 9.3% of people did not go to work. This breakdown is very similar to the Northern Inland Region.

With limited availability of public transport and the need to travel to work, often outside of the urban areas, car ownership influences the ability to work.

In 2011, 88.9% of households in Gunnedah Shire had at least one vehicle, with 7.7% of households having no vehicles (3.4% not stated). Car ownership within the Shire is higher than the average for NSW (86.4% of households with cars and 10.4% with no car) and on par with the Northern Inland Region (88.5% of households with a car and 7.8% with no car). 55.6% of households in Gunnedah Shire had 2 or more cars.

Figure 8.12 Car Ownership – Comparison of Gunnedah Shire, Northern Inland Region & NSW, 2011



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011

8.9 Income

The 2011 Census provides information on average weekly income for individuals and households. This information is summarised below. .

Individual Income

The amount of income an individual receives is linked to a number of factors including employment status, age (as for instance students and retirees often receive a lower income), qualifications and type of employment.

In 2011 the median individual weekly income in Gunnedah Shire was $485, which was $6 per week higher than the Northern Inland Regional average of $479, but $76 lower than the NSW average of $561. In 2011, the Minimum Weekly Wage in Australia was $589.30[10], while the average weekly wage in NSW and Australia was $1,339.50 and $1,322.60 respectively.

In 2011, 53.0% of individuals in Gunnedah Shire earned less than $600 per week (approximates the minimum weekly wage). Gunnedah Shire was below the average for the Northern Inland Region (54.1% earning less than the minimum weekly wage), but higher than the NSW average (48.2%). Gunnedah Shire (12.9%) also has a lower proportion of people earning over $1,250 per week than the State average (18.4%).

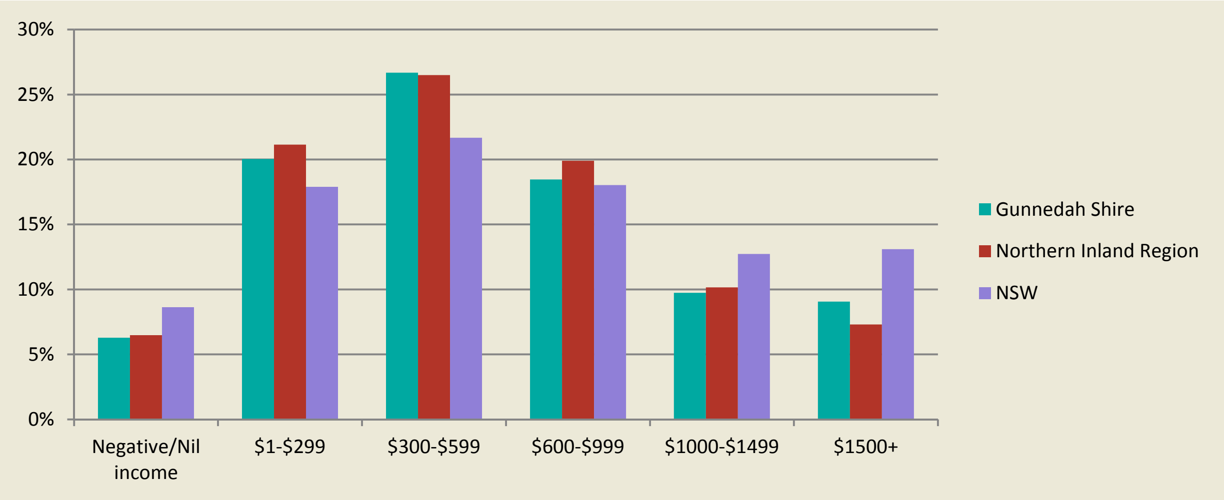
Table 8.10 Weekly Individual Gross Income, Comparison Gunnedah Shire, Northern Inland Region & NSW, 2011 (% of wage earners)

Weekly Individual Gross Income	Gunnedah Shire		Northern Inland Region (%)	NSW (%)
	No. People	%		
Negative/Nil income	598	6.3%	6.5%	8.6%
$1-$199	731	7.7%	7.8%	7.3%
$200-$299	1,175	12.4%	13.4%	10.6%
$300-$399	1,235	13.0%	12.6%	10.2%
$400-$599	1,303	13.7%	13.9%	11.5%
$600-$799	1,061	11.2%	12.0%	10.1%
$800-$999	695	7.3%	7.9%	7.9%
$1,000-$1,249	561	5.9%	6.3%	7.5%
$1,250-$1,499	366	3.8%	3.8%	5.3%
$1,500-$1,999	460	4.8%	4.4%	6.5%
$2,000 or more	402	4.2%	2.9%	6.6%
Not Stated	926	9.7%	8.5%	8.0%

[10] Fair Work Ombudsman

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011

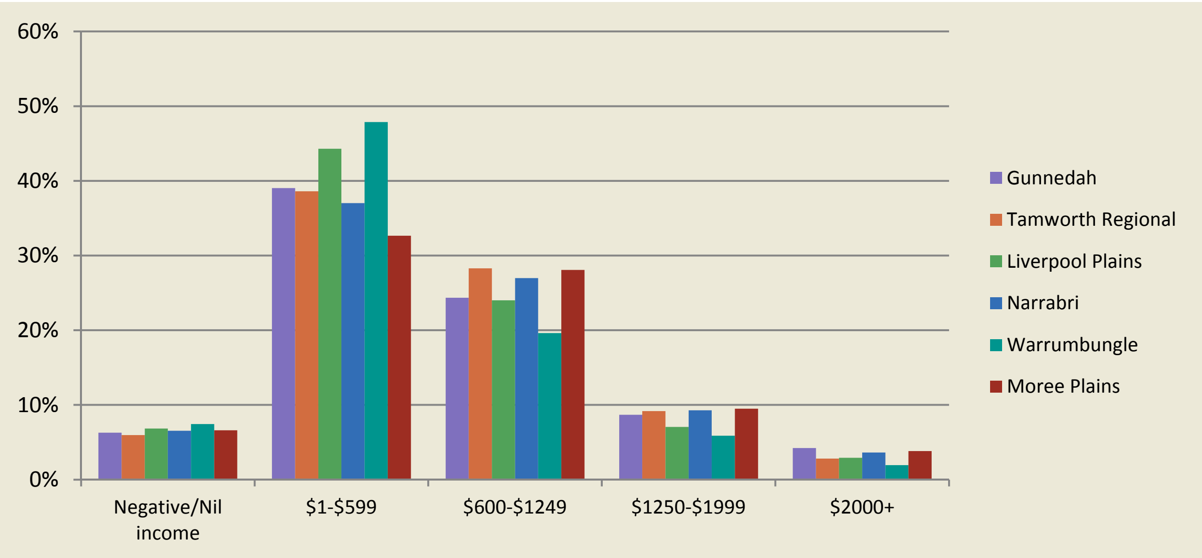
Figure 8.13 Weekly Individual Gross Income, Comparison Gunnedah Shire, Northern Inland Region and NSW, 2011 (% of wage earners)



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011

In relation to the comparative set of LGAs, Gunnedah Shire had more low income earners (<$600 per week) than Tamworth, Narrabri and Moree Plains LGAs. These three LGAs had more middle income earners ($600-$1,999 per week) than Gunnedah Shire. Gunnedah Shire however had the highest proportion of people earning over $2,000 week than the other LGAs within the comparative set of LGAs.

Figure 8.14 Weekly Individual Gross Income, 2011 – Comparative Set of LGAs



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011

Household Income

In 2011 the median weekly household income in the Northern Inland Region and NSW was $902 and $1,237 respectively. By comparison, the median weekly household income in Gunnedah Shire was $937 exceeding the Regional median by $35, but being below the State median by $300.

In 2011, 28.3% of households in Gunnedah Shire were low income households, earning less than $600 per week. This was higher than the State average (21.7%) but marginally lower than the Regional average (28.5%). The proportion of households in Gunnedah Shire with incomes over $2,000 per week (16.7%) was higher than the Regional average (14.5%), but lower than the State average (21.7%).

In relation to the comparative set of LGAs, Gunnedah Shire has a higher proportion of low income households than Tamworth, Narrabri and Moree Plains LGAs. The proportion of households in Gunnedah Shire earning more than $2,000 per week is on par with these three LGAs. Over 50% of the households in Warrumbungle and Liverpool Plains Shire are low income, with income of less than $1,000 per week.

Table 8.11 Weekly Household Income, Comparison Gunnedah Shire, Northern Inland Region & NSW, 2011

Weekly Household Income	Gunnedah Shire		Northern Inland Region %	Regional NSW %
	Households	%		
Negative/Nil income	48	1.1%	1.4%	1.4%
$1-$199	81	1.8%	2.0%	1.6%
$200-$299	157	3.5%	3.7%	2.8%
$300-$399	405	9.0%	8.7%	6.5%
$400-$599	580	12.9%	12.8%	9.4%
$600-$799	458	10.2%	11.0%	8.3%
$800-$999	382	8.5%	9.2%	7.6%
$1,000-$1,249	310	6.9%	8.3%	7.5%
$1,250-$1,499	346	7.7%	7.3%	6.9%
$1,500-$1,999	464	10.3%	9.7%	10.9%
$2,000-$2,499	259	5.8%	6.1%	7.8%
$2,500-$2,999	247	5.5%	4.0%	7.9%
$3,000-$3,499	149	3.3%	2.4%	4.7%
$3,500-$3,999	33	0.7%	0.8%	2.3%
$4,000 or more	63	1.4%	1.2%	4.0%
Partial income stated	322	7.2%	7.7%	7.7%
All incomes not stated	182	4.1%	3.8%	2.7%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011

Figure 8.15 Weekly Household Income, Comparison Gunnedah Shire, Northern Inland Region & NSW, 2011

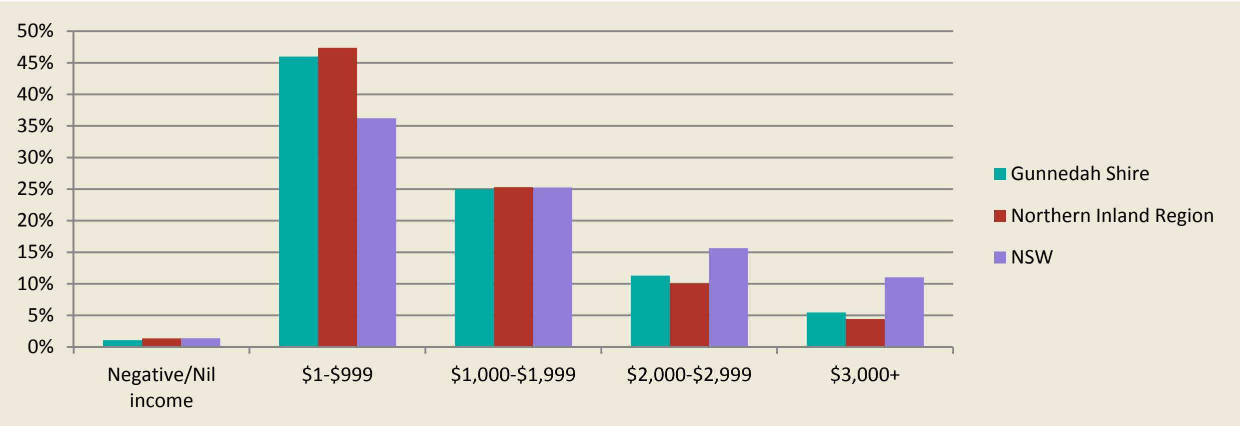
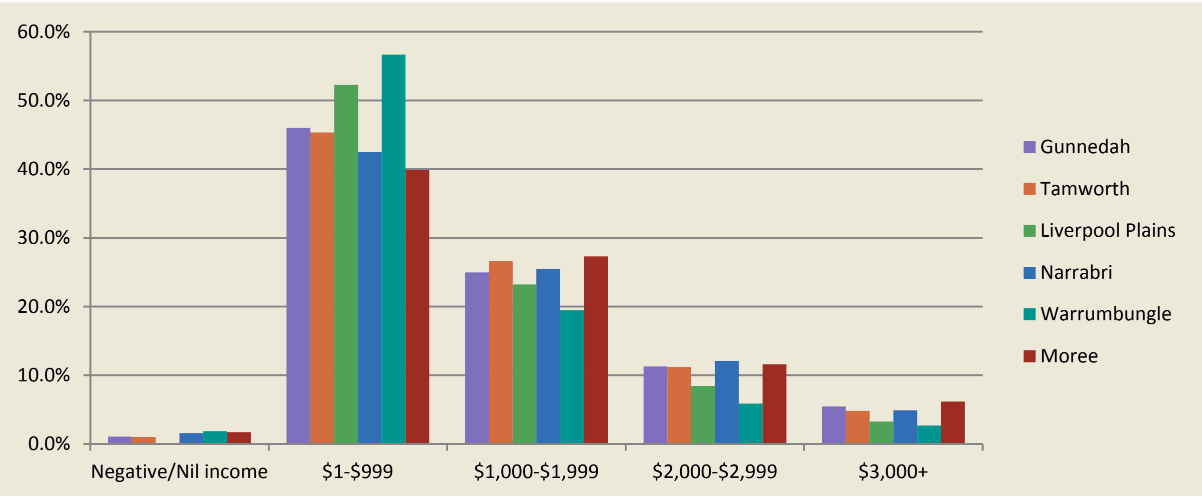


Figure 8.16 Household Weekly Income – Comparative LGAs, 2011



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011

9. Dwellings

9.1 Number and Type of Dwellings

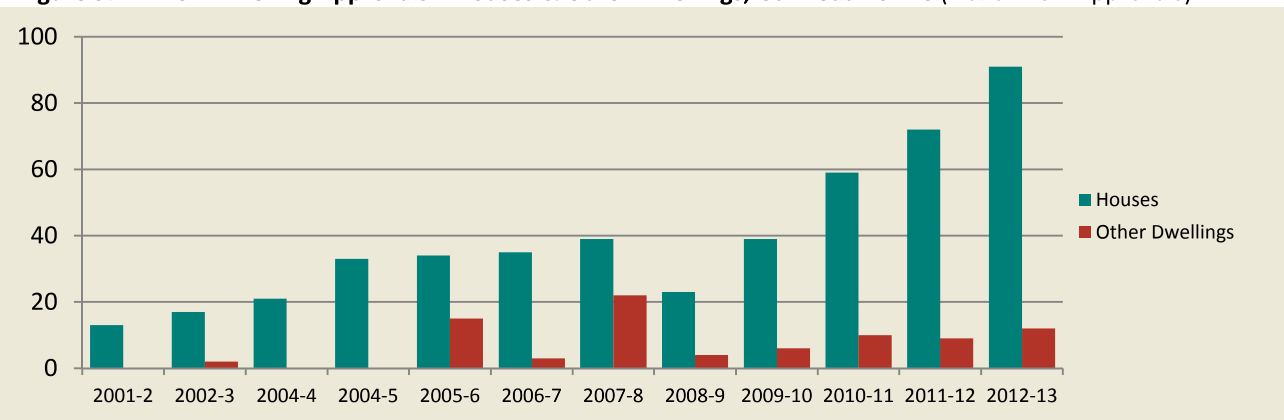
In 2011 there were 4,975 private dwellings in Gunnedah Shire of which 4,487 were occupied and 488 were unoccupied. Of the occupied dwellings, 89.3% were detached houses, 2.8% were semi-detached or town houses, 6.7% were flats and apartments and 0.1% were other dwellings.

9.2 Building Approvals

Residential building approvals are compiled by the Australian Bureau of Statistics from approvals issued by Councils and other principal certifying authorities. The data counts the number of dwelling units approved, ie a single permit for a block of 50 apartments would count as 50 new dwellings. Approvals are divided into 'house' and 'other' dwellings with other dwellings including townhouses and apartments. Building approvals are used as an indicator of the general level of residential development, economic activity, employment and investment. The issue of an approval does not necessarily translate into a new dwelling.

In the financial year 2012-13, there were 103 new residential buildings approved to be built in Gunnedah Shire plus renovations to two existing properties. Of the new properties, 91 were houses and 12 were townhouses and/or apartments. In 2012-13, Gunnedah Shire accounted for 16.5% of dwelling approvals in the Northern Island Region, ranking second to Tamworth in terms of number of dwelling approvals within the Region. The impacts of the growth in the coal mining sector are evident in the Building Approval figures.

Figure 9.1 New Dwelling Approvals – Houses & Other Dwellings, Gunnedah Shire (No. of New Approvals)



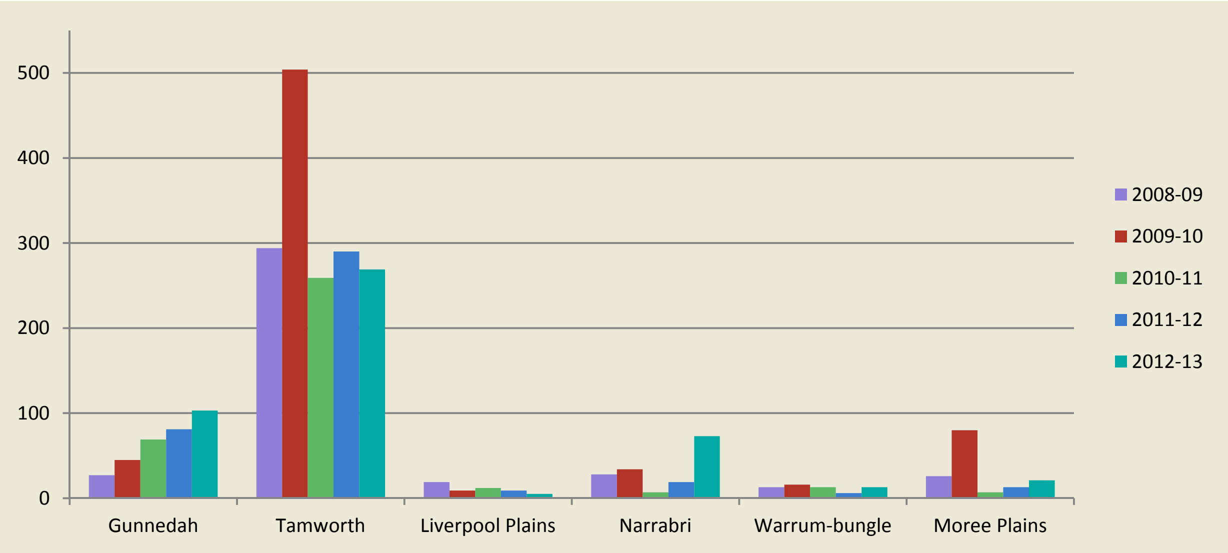
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Building Approvals, Australia (8731.0).

Table 9.1 New Residential Building Approvals, Comparative LGAs & Northern Inland Region (No. Approvals)

	Gunnedah	Tamworth	Liverpool Plains	Narrabri	Warrum-bungle	Moree	Northern Inland Region	Gunnedah as % of NI Region
2012-13	103	269	5	73	13	21	625	16.5%
2011-12	81	290	9	19	6	13	568	14.3%
2010-11	69	259	12	7	13	7	616	11.2%
2009-10	45	504	9	34	16	80	1085	4.1%
2008-09	27	294	19	28	13	26	632	3.5%
2007-08	61	331	33	58	14	19	776	9.7%
2006-07	38	395	1	24	6	61	799	4.8%
2005-06	49	353	16	33	16	41	908	5.4%
2004-05	33	374	23	17	17	28	804	4.1%
2003-04	21	298	10	22	14	19	661	3.2%
2002-03	19	288	9	34	16	30	562	3.4%
2001-02	13	265	6	30	15	62	534	2.4%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Building Approvals, Australia (8731.0).

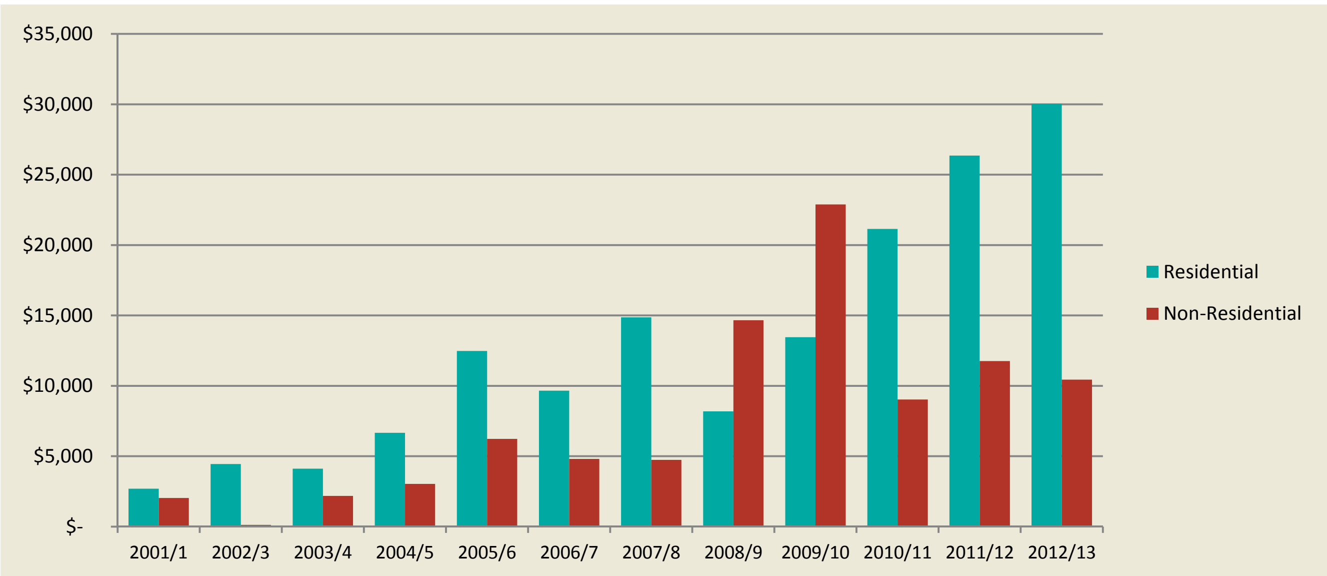
Figure 9.2 Building Approvals – New Dwellings - Comparative Set of LGAs (Number of Approvals)



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Building Approvals, Australia (8731.0).

In 2012/13 the total value of building approved in Gunnedah Shire was $40.478 million of which $30.039m was residential construction (new dwellings and renovations to existing dwellings), and $10.438m was non-residential construction. Over the past decade there has been strong and sustained growth in the value of buildings approved within the Shire.

Figure 9.3 Value of Residential & Non-Residential Construction, Gunnedah Shire, 2001/2 - 2012/13 ($'000)



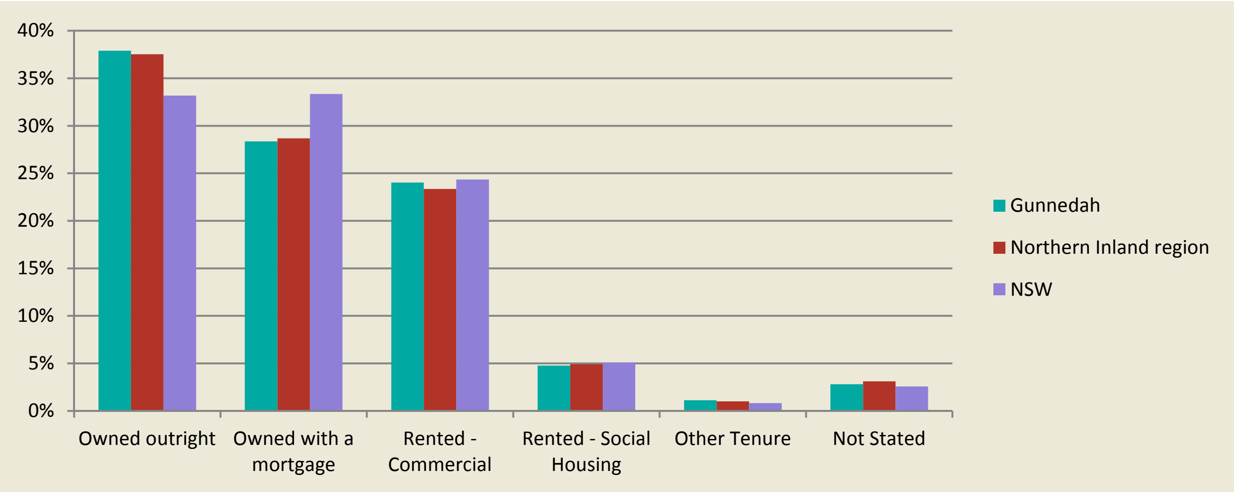
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Building Approvals, Australia (8731.0).

9.3 Tenure

In 2011, 66.3% of dwellings in Gunnedah Shire were owned outright or being paid off (mortgage). The proportion of properties owned outright (37.9%) was on par with the Northern Inland Region (37.5%) and above NSW (33.2%). From 2006 to 2011, the number of houses owned outright has remained constant, while the number of households with mortgages has increased by 9%.

28.8% of properties were rented, with 4.8% of these properties being social housing. The proportion of social housing properties in Gunnedah Shire is marginally lower than the Regional and State proportions, 4.9% and 5.1% respectively. The number of commercially rented properties increased by 7.9% between 2006 and 2011, while the number of social housing properties declined marginally.

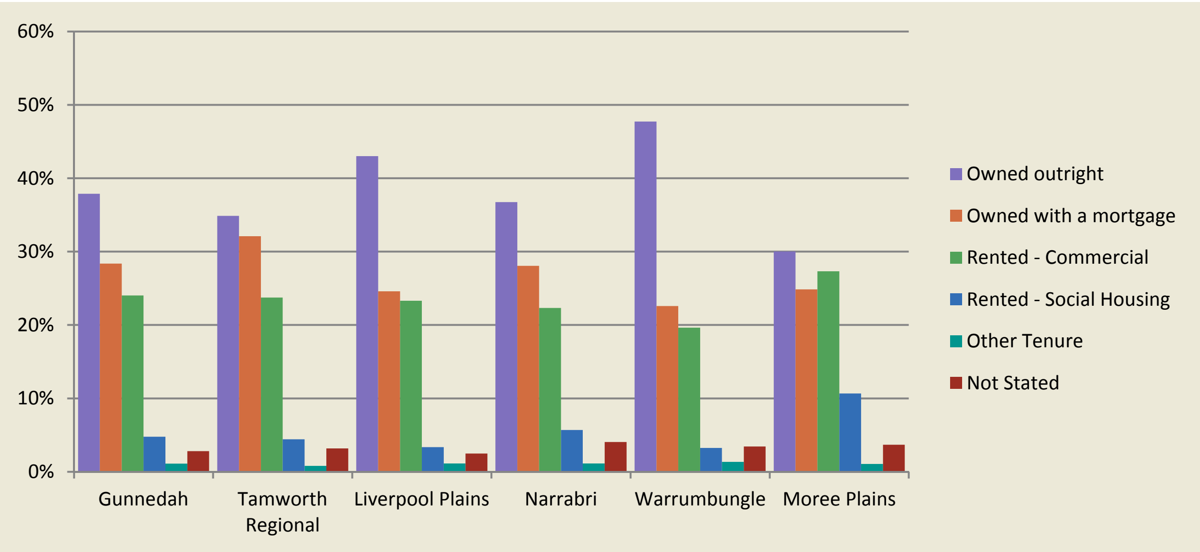
Figure 9.4 Housing Tenure, Gunnedah Shire, Northern Inland Region & NSW, 2011 (% of Dwellings)



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

In 2011, within the comparative set of LGAs, Warrumbungle and Liverpool Plains Shires had the highest proportion of outright ownership, reflecting the lower house prices in these LGAs. Tamworth, Gunnedah and Narrabri Shires has a similar proportion of households with mortgages. Moree had the highest proportion of rental properties, 38%, with 10.7% of rental properties being social housing.

Figure 9.5 Dwelling Tenure – Comparative LGAs, 2011 (% of dwellings)

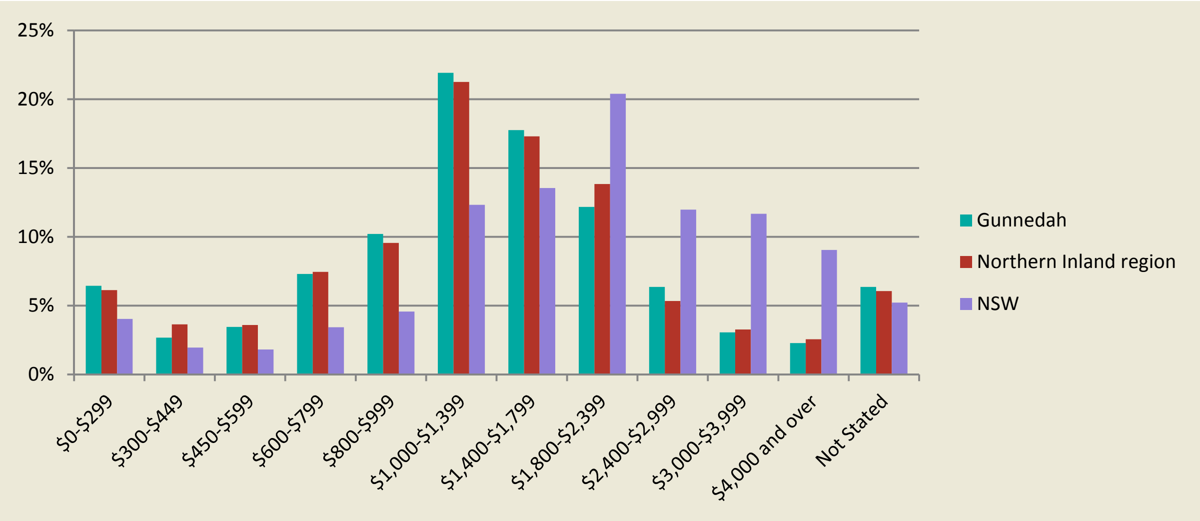


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011

9.4 Mortgage Repayments

In 2011 the median monthly mortgage in Gunnedah Shire was $1,300 which was on par with Northern Inland Region, but considerably lower than the State median of $1,993. 30.1 % of households with mortgages in Gunnedah Shire are paying less than $1,000 per month (NSW 15.8%), with 51.8% paying between $1000 and $2400 per month (NSW 46.3%) and 11.7% paying over $2400 per month (NSW 32.7%).

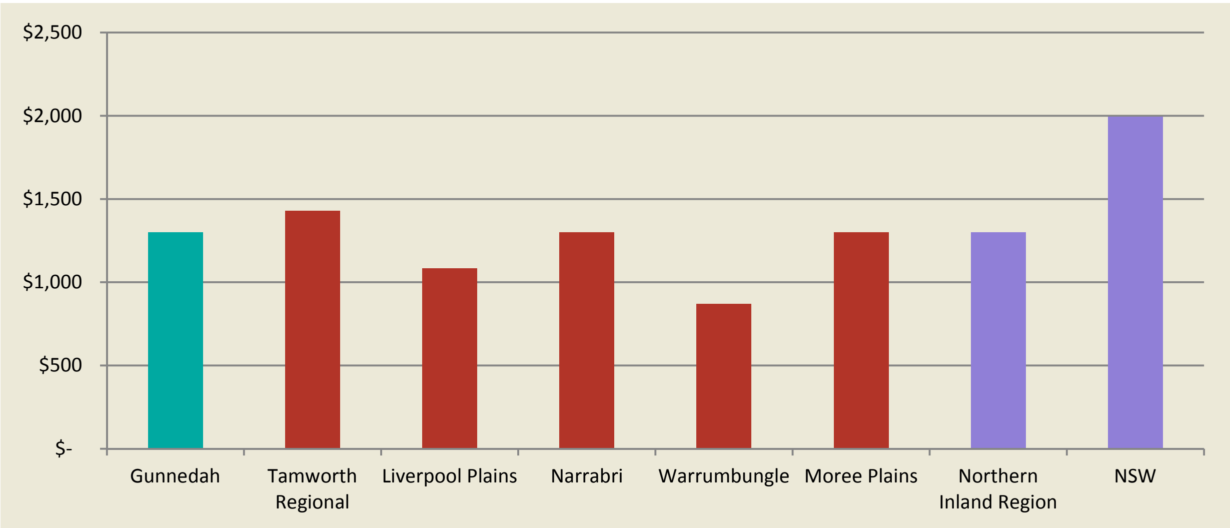
Figure 9.6 Monthly Mortgage Payments, Gunnedah Shire, Northern Inland Region & NSW, 2011
(% of households with a mortgage)



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011

The median monthly mortgage payment in Gunnedah Shire ($1,300) was exactly the same as in Narrabri and Moree Plains Shires but lower than in Tamworth Regional ($1,430 per month) and higher than in Liverpool Plains ($1,083) and Warrumbungle ($870) Shires.

Figure 9.7 Comparison of Median Monthly Mortgage, Comparative LGA's, Northern Inland Region and NSW, 2011



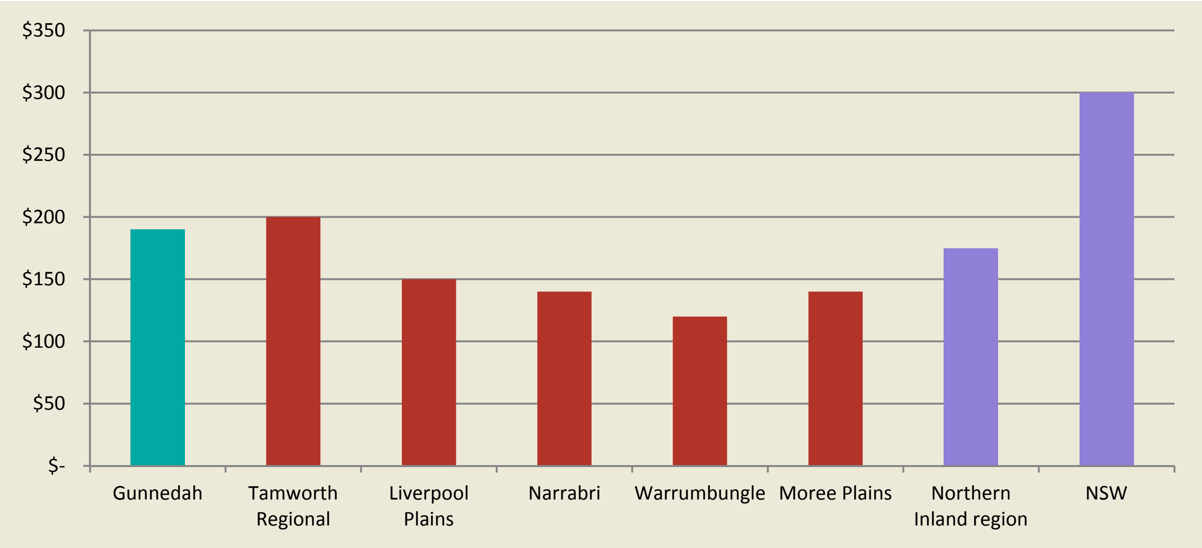
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011

9.5 Rent

In 2011 the median rent for dwellings in Gunnedah Shire was $190 per week, which was $15 higher than the median rent paid in the Northern Inland Region and $110 per week lower than the median weekly rent in NSW. Median rent in Tamworth Regional was $10 per week higher than Gunnedah, while median rents in the other comparative LGAs were $40 to $70 lower per week than in Gunnedah Shire.

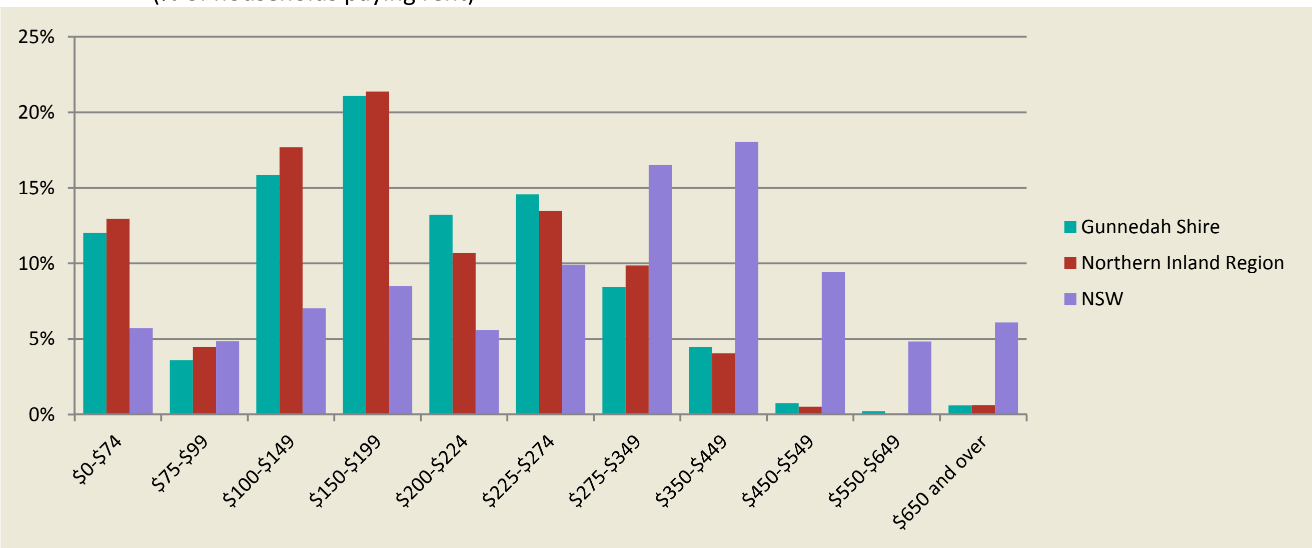
52.5% of households in Gunnedah Shire were paying less than $200 per week rent (NSW 26.1%), with 27.8% paying between $200 and $275 per week (NSW 15.1%) and 14.5% paying over $275 per week (NSW 54.9%).

Figure 9.8 Comparison of Median Weekly Household Rent, Comparative LGAs, Northern Inland Region & NSW, 2011



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011

Figure 9.9 Weekly Household Rent, Comparison of Gunnedah Shire, Northern Inland Region & NSW, 2011 (% of households paying rent)

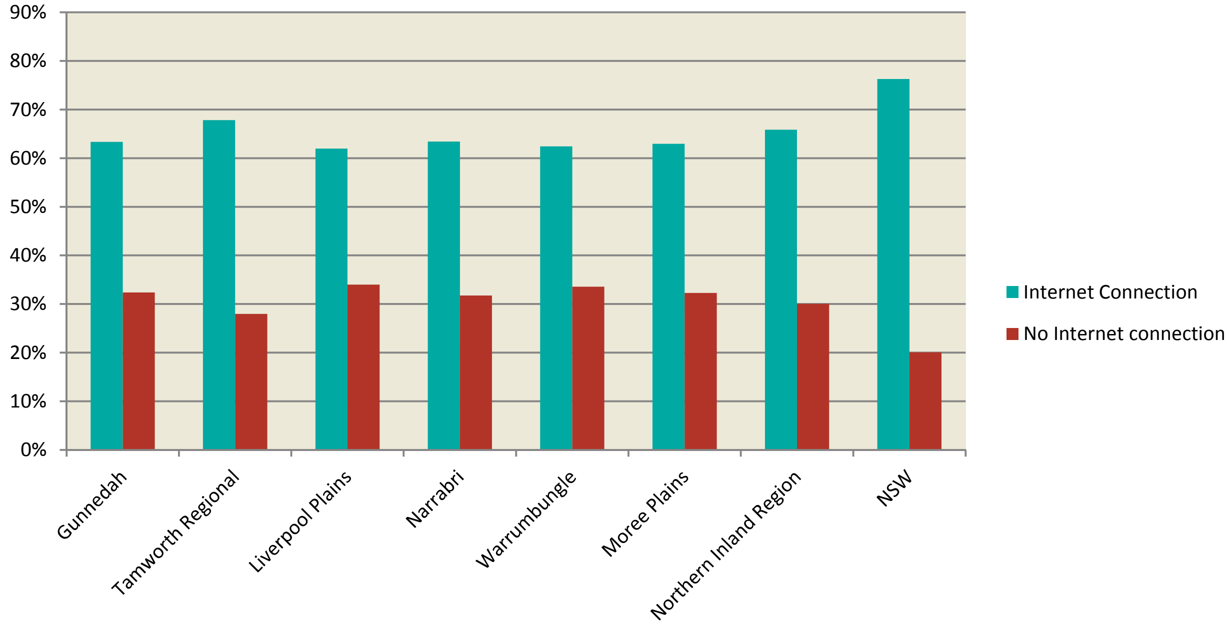


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011

9.6 Internet Connection

In 2011, 63.4% of households in Gunnedah Shire had an internet connection, with 32.4% having no connection. Of the households with internet, 88.7% had broadband. The proportions of households with an internet connection Gunnedah Shire was lower than the Regional (65.9%) and State (76.3%) averages. The connection rate in Gunnedah Shire was below Tamworth (67.8%) but comparable to other LGAs within the comparative set.

Figure 9.10 Internet Connections, Comparative LGAs, Northern Inland Region and NSW, 2011



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, 2011

10. Socio-Economic Indices for Areas (SEIFA)

10.1 Overview

Following each Population Census, the Australian Bureau of Statistics produces SEIFA Indices. SEIFA broadly defines relative socio-economic advantage/disadvantage in terms of people's access to material and social resources and their ability to participate in society.

Scores: A **low** score indicates greater disadvantage while a **high** score indicates high advantage in comparison to other localities.

Ranks: All LGAs are ordered from the lowest to the highest score for both NSW and Australia. The area with the lowest score is given a rank of 1; the area with the highest score is given the highest rank – 153 for NSW and 565 for Australia.

Comparisons: It should be noted that comparisons cannot be made between Census periods as different variables may have been used depending upon the Census data collected.

Further information relating to how these Indices are constructed can be found on the Australian Bureau of Statistics website: www.abs.gov.au.

There are four Indexes:

- **Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage -** The Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD) is a general socio-economic index that summarises a range of information, such as low income, low educational attainment, unemployment, unskilled jobs, low levels of English proficiency, single parent families, rents, etc. Unlike the other indexes, this Index only includes measures of relative disadvantage.

- **Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage -** The Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD) summarises information about the economic and social conditions of people and households within an area, including both relative advantage and disadvantage measures. Variables used include income, home and car ownership, educational levels, skilled employment, type of work, rent payments, etc.

- **Index of Economic Resources -** The Index of Economic Resources (IER) focuses on the financial aspects of relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage, by summarising variables (such as home ownership and household income) related to income and wealth. This Index excludes education and occupation variables because they are not direct measures of economic resources. It also misses some assets such as savings or equities which, although relevant, are not included as this information was not collected in the 2011 Census.

- **Index of Education and Occupation -** The Index of Education and Occupation (IEO) is designed to reflect the educational and occupational level of communities. The education variables in this Index show either the level of qualification achieved or whether further education is being undertaken. The occupation variables classify the workforce into the major groups and skill levels of the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) and the unemployed. This Index does not include any income variables.

10.2 Comparison of Indices – Gunnedah and surrounding LGAs

In all four Indices, Gunnedah Shire and the comparative set of LGAs sit within the lower 50% of LGAs in NSW.

Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage

Gunnedah Shire is ranked 47 out of 153 LGAs in NSW. This places the Shire in the lower 33% of NSW LGAs in terms of socio-economic disadvantage.

Liverpool Plains, Moree Plains and Warrumbungle Shires are placed in the lowest 15% of NSW, with a higher level of socio-economic disadvantage than Gunnedah Shire. Of the comparative set of LGAs, Tamworth Regional has the lowest level of socio-economic disadvantage, (69/153), followed by Narrabri Shire (58/153).

Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage

Gunnedah Shire is ranked 43 out of 153 LGAs in NSW. This places the Shire in the lower 33% of NSW LGAs in terms of the Index of Socio-Economic Disadvantage and Advantage.

Liverpool Plains, Moree Plains and Warrumbungle Shires are placed in the lower 15% of NSW with Tamworth Regional being the highest ranked at 69, followed by Narrabri Shire at 54.

Index of Economic Resources

In the Index of Resources, Gunnedah Shire (59/153) sits second behind Tamworth Regional (76/153) and marginally ahead of Narrabri Shire (55/153). This places Gunnedah Shire in the lower 40% of NSW LGAs in terms of the index of Economic Resources.

Moree Plains and Warrumbungle Shires are placed in the lower 10% of NSW, with Liverpool Plains being in the lower 25%.

Index of Education and Occupation

Gunnedah Shire scores poorly in the Index of Education and Occupation, being ranked 21 out of 153 LGAs in NSW. This places the Shire in the lower 15% of NSW LGAs in terms of the Index of Education and Employment. Within the comparative set of LGAs, Gunnedah Shire sits below Warrumbungle Shire (68/153), Tamworth Regional (51/153), Moree Plains Shire (38/153) and Narrabri Shire (37/153). Liverpool Plains Shire (10/153) is placed in the lower 8% of NSW.

Table 10.1 Gunnedah LGA in comparison to other surrounding LGAs for all four SEIFA indices

Local Government Areas	Population	Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage			Index of Relative Socio Economic Advantage and Disadvantage			Index of Economic Resources			Index of Education and Employment		
		Score	NSW Rank/153	Australia Rank/565	Score	NSW Rank/153	Australia Rank/565	Score	NSW Rank/153	Australia Rank/565	Score	NSW Rank/153	Australia Rank/565
Gunnedah	12079	947	47	165	936	43	164	968	59	202	919	21	109
Tamworth Regional	56340	960	69	224	949	69	229	974	76	239	935	51	185
Liverpool Plains	7490	921	19	92	913	19	93	957	36	147	908	10	73
Narrabri	12944	953	58	196	940	54	186	966	55	194	928	37	152
Warrumbungle	9590	911	13	80	910	15	85	937	16	95	947	68	238
Moree Plains	13415	915	15	84	917	23	103	929	10	81	929	38	153

Note: There are 153 Local Government Areas in NSW and 565 Local Government Areas in Australia.
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics. SEIFA Indices.

Table 10.2 Gunnedah LGA localities comparison for all four SEIFA indices

State Suburb	Population	Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage			Index of Relative Socio Economic Advantage and Disadvantage			Index of Economic Resources			Index of Education and Employment		
		Score	NSW Rank/2567	Percentile	Score	NSW Rank/2567	Percentile	Score	NSW Rank/2567	Percentile	Score	NSW Rank/2567	Percentile
Gunnedah	9,351	939	551	3	926	516	3	956	587	3	900	351	2
Carroll	178	819	87	1	802	50	1	889	150	1	808	27	1
Curlewis	969	929	463	2	916	431	2	980	839	4	902	371	2
Tambar Springs	543	941	573	3	954	781	4	975	780	4	1026	1696	7

Note: There are 2,567 State Suburbs in NSW.
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics. SEIFA Indices.

10.3 Comparison of Indices – Localities within Gunnedah Shire

Each of the Indices is available at the State Suburb level for four localities within Gunnedah Shire:

- Gunnedah – which includes the town of Gunnedah and the outlying areas of Milroy, Mary's Mount, Emerald Hill, Meermaul, Pullaming, Noggabri and Weetaliba.
- Carroll – village area and immediate surrounds.
- Curlewis – includes the villages of Curlewis and Breeza and the south eastern corner of the Shire.
- Tambar Springs – includes the villages of Tambar Springs and Mullaley and the south western corner of the Shire.

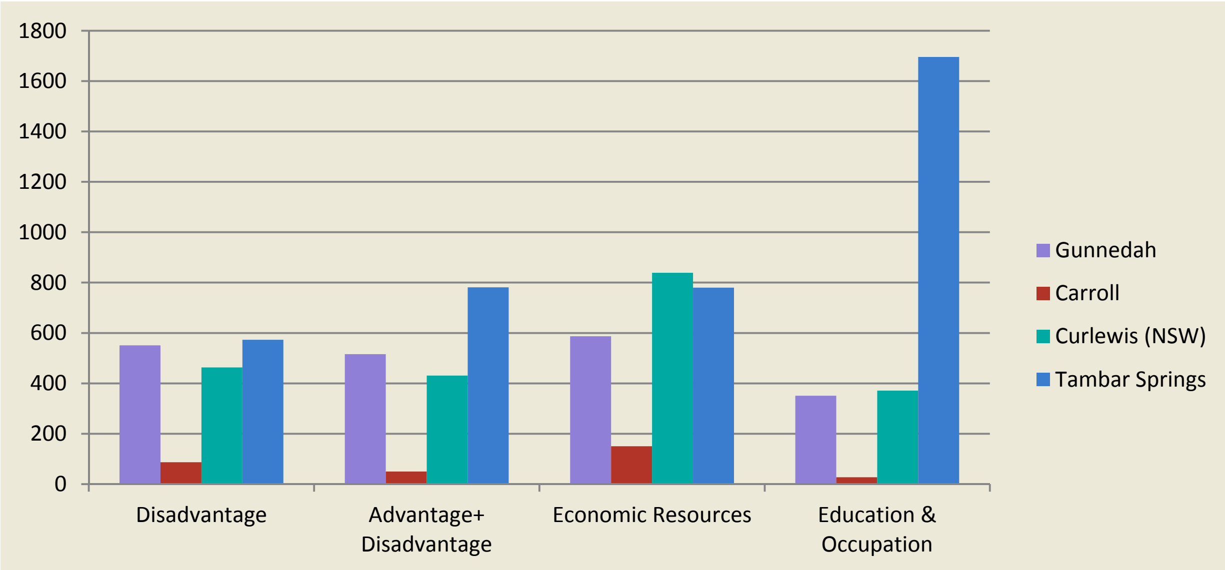
Within the Shire, Carroll is the most disadvantaged area, ranking in the lowest 10% of NSW in all indices.

The Tambar Springs – Mullaley Area has the highest rankings within the Shire, ranking within the lower 30% of the State for the Indices of Socio-Economic Disadvantage and Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage, the lower 40% of the State for the Index of Economic Resources and in the top 30% of the State for the Index of Education and Occupation.

Gunnedah ranks within the lower 30% of the State for the Indices of Socio-Economic Disadvantage, Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage and Economic Resources and in the lower 20% of the State for Education and Occupation.

The Curlewis Area ranks within the lower 20% of the State for the Indices of Socio-Economic Disadvantage, Socio-Economic Advantage and Education and Occupation and in the lower 40% of the State for the Index of Economic Resources.

Figure 10.1 SEIFA Indices for State Suburbs in Gunnedah Shire – Ranking within NSW (ranking out of 2567 suburbs)



11. Health Indicators

The following Table provides a summary of key health indicators taken from the 2013 Social Health Atlas of Australia. For most of the health indicators, particularly chronic disease and premature mortality, Gunnedah Shire has a higher incidence of risk and disease than the average for NSW and Regional NSW. Poor health is a significant constraint to workforce participation.

The number of residential aged care places in Gunnedah Shire is below both the State and Regional NSW averages. The number of people receiving HACC support in Gunnedah Shire is marginally above the State average but below the average for Regional NSW.

As discussed in Section 6, the population of Gunnedah Shire is aging, with the population projections forecasting an additional 900 people aged 65+ years by 2031. Further aged care place will be needed in Gunnedah.

Table 11.1 Health & Related Indicators – Comparison of Gunnedah Shire to NSW and Regional NSW

Health Indicators	Gunnedah Shire	NSW	Regional NSW
Persons aged 18 years and over who delayed medical consultation because they could not afford it, rate/100	14.1	11.1	13.1
Persons aged 18 years and over who delayed purchasing prescribed medication because they could not afford it, rate/100	10.7	8.0	9.8
Total fertility rate, 2005-07	2.53	1.8	1.92
Low birth weight babies 2006-08, %	7.4	6.2	6.5
Smoking during pregnancy, %	30.8	13	22
Children fully immunised at 12<15 months, 2008, % -	96.0	91.4	91.6
Infant deaths, 2006-2010, Rate/1000 live births	8.3	4.7	5.9
Chronic disease, 2007-08, age-standardised rate/100 - Type 2 diabetes	3.8	3.5	3.7
Chronic disease, 2007-08, age-standardised rate/100 - High cholesterol	5.9	5.5	5.7
Chronic disease, 2007-08, age-standardised rate/100 - Circulatory system diseases	16.0	14.7	15.9
Chronic disease, 2007-08, age-standardised rate/100 - Respiratory system diseases	24.1	25.4	25.7
Chronic disease, 2007-08, age-standardised rate/100 - Musculoskeletal system	33.0	29.8	31.7
Chronic disease, 2007-08, age-standardised rate/100 – Arthritis	17.1	14.9	16.1
Current smokers 18+ years, 2007-08, rate/100	25.6	19.9	23.0
Alcohol consumption at high risk levels 18+ years, 2007-08, rate/100	7.1	5.7	7.7
Obese persons 18+ years, 2007-08, rate/100	23.7	19.0	20.8
Premature mortality 0>74 years (2003-07), ratio	120	100	111
Premature mortality – all cancers 0>74 years, (2003-07), ratio	106	101	108
Premature mortality Circulatory system diseases 0>74 years, 2003-07, ratio	113	105	117
Premature mortality Respiratory system diseases, 0>74 years, 2003-07, ratio	190	106	122
Private Health insurance, 15+yrs, 2007-08, rate/100	34.9	48.0	40.6
HACC, Total clients, rate per 1,000, 2010/11	37.7	36	41
Total residential aged care places – high and low level, 2011, rate/1000	83.0	87.9	87.5

Source: Social Health Atlas of Australia 2013[11]

11 http://www.publichealth.gov.au/interactive_mapping/2012/aust_multiple_2012/nsw/atlas.html

12. Businesses

12.1 Business Numbers

As part of the National Regional Profile, the ABS publishes annual data (YE June) on the number of businesses, new business entries and business exits, by LGA and Region. In 2011, there were 1,277 businesses in Gunnedah Shire. Of these 58.2% (744 businesses) were located in the State Suburb of Gunnedah (township of Gunnedah and immediate surrounds), with the remainder being spread throughout the Shire. 63.7% of the businesses within the Shire employed no staff, 20.4% employed 1-4 staff, with 15.9% employing 5 or more staff.

From 2007 to 2011 the total number of businesses in Gunnedah Shire increased by 0.7% (9 businesses). During this period, there were 562 new business entries and 555 business exits. Over the 5 year period there was a 5.2% increase (40 businesses) in the number of sole traders, and a 13.4% increase (24 businesses) employing 5 or more staff, and a 17.5% decrease (loss of 55 businesses), employing 1-4 staff (note these businesses could have moved between categories by increasing or decreasing staff, or ceased trading).

In Year End (YE) June 2011, there were 744 businesses in the township of Gunnedah. Of these, 57.8% (430 businesses) had no employees, while 21.1% (157 businesses) had 1-4 employees, with the same number of businesses having 5+ employees. From 2007 to 2011, there was a net loss of 4 businesses from the town, with the number of sole traders increasing by 3.9% (16 businesses), and the number of businesses employing 5 or more employees increasing by 26.6% (33 businesses), while the number of businesses employing 1-4 people declined by 25.2% (53 businesses). From 2007 to 2011, there were 350 new business entries in the town, and 354 business exits.

In the remainder of the Shire (villages and rural areas) there were 533 businesses in YE June 2011, of which 72% had no employees, 19.3% employed 1-4 staff and 15.9% employed 5+ people. From 2007 to 2011 the number of businesses in the remainder of the Shire increased by 13 businesses (16.7%), with the increase being in non-employing businesses (up 24 businesses, 6.7%). The number of businesses employing staff decreased by 11 businesses. From 2007 to 2011 there were 212 new business entries and 201 business exits.

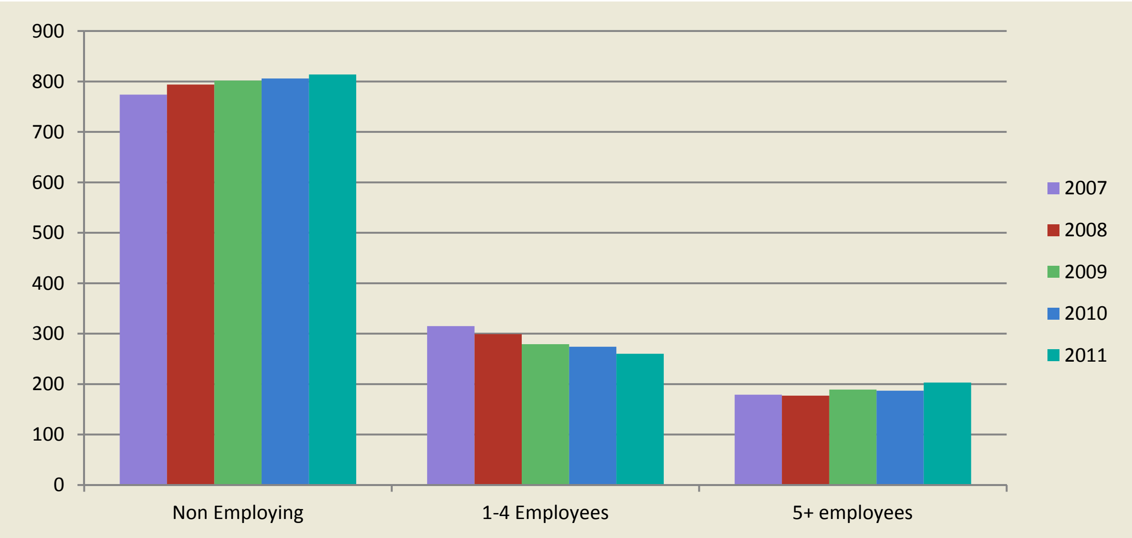
Table 12.1 Number of Businesses by Number of Employees, Gunnedah Shire, Gunnedah Township and Villages – Rural Areas, 2007 – 2011 (YE June)

	Number of Businesses (YE June)					Change 2007-2011	
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	No.	%
Gunnedah Shire (Total)							
No Employees	774	794	802	806	814	40	5.2%
1-4 Employees	315	299	279	274	260	-55	-17.5%
5 or more Employees	179	177	189	187	203	24	13.4%
Total number of businesses	1 268	1 270	1 270	1 267	1 277	9	0.7%
Township of Gunnedah							
No Employees	414	430	437	431	430	16	3.9%
1-4 Employees	210	191	165	156	157	-53	-25.2%
5 or more Employees	124	128	146	142	157	28	26.6%
Total number of businesses	748	749	748	729	744	-4	-0.5%
Township as a % of the Shire							
No Employees	53.5%	54.2%	54.5%	53.5%	52.8%		
1-4 Employees	66.7%	63.9%	59.1%	56.9%	60.4%		
5 or more Employees	69.3%	72.3%	77.2%	75.9%	77.3%		
Total number of businesses	59.0%	59.0%	58.9%	57.5%	58.3%		
Villages & Rural Areas							
No Employees	360	364	365	375	384	24	6.7%
1-4 Employees	105	108	114	118	103	-2	-1.9%
5 or more Employees	55	49	43	45	46	-9	-16.4%
Total number of businesses	520	521	522	538	533	13	6.7%
Villages & Rural Areas as % of the Shire							
No Employees	46.5%	45.8%	45.5%	46.5%	47.2%		

	Number of Businesses (YE June)					Change 2007-2011	
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	No.	%
1-4 Employees	33.3%	36.1%	40.9%	43.1%	39.6%		
5 or more Employees	30.7%	27.7%	22.8%	24.1%	22.7%		
Total number of businesses	41.0%	41.0%	41.1%	42.5%	41.7%		

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013) National Regional Profile – Gunnedah LGA

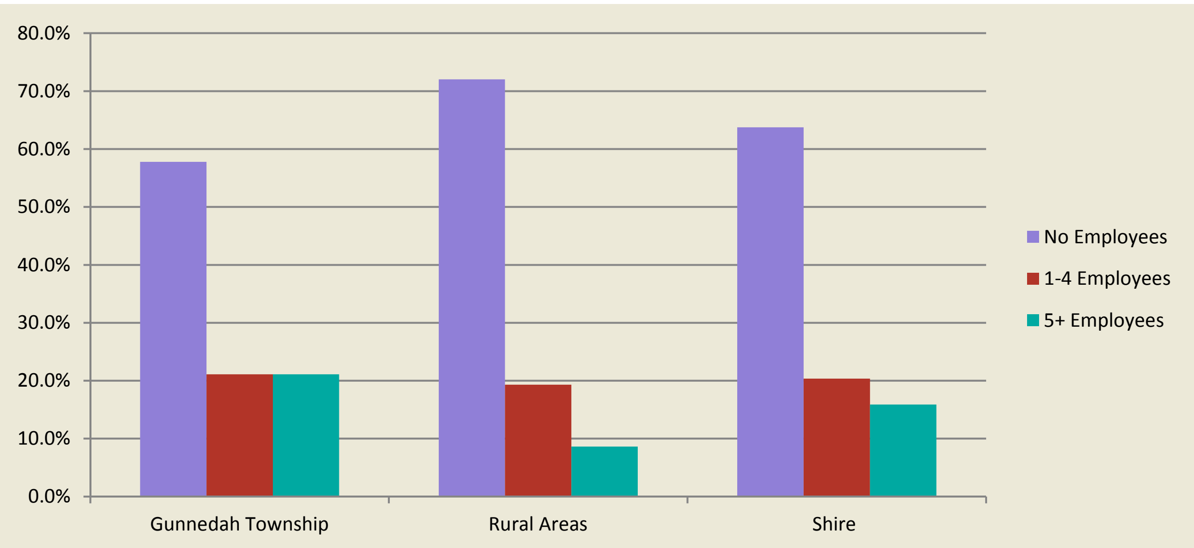
Figure 12.1 Number of Businesses by Number of Employees, Gunnedah Shire, 2007 – 2011 (YE June)



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013) National Regional Profile – Gunnedah LGA

72% of businesses in the Villages and Rural Area employ no staff, compared to 57.8% within the township of Gunnedah. In contrast, 21.2% of businesses within Gunnedah employ 5+ staff, compared to only 8.6% of businesses in the Villages and Rural Area.

Figure 12.2 Comparison of the Proportion of Businesses by Number of Employees – Gunnedah Township, Villages and Rural Area and Gunnedah Shire, YE June 2011.



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013) National Regional Profile – Gunnedah LGA

12.2 Business Entries

From 2007 to 2011 there were a total of 562 business entries in Gunnedah Shire (average of 141 businesses per year). Of these 68.5% employed no staff, 23.7% employed 1-4 staff and 7.8% employed 5 or more staff. 87.5% of business entries were located in the township of Gunnedah, with 66% of these businesses employing no staff, 23.7% employing 1-4 staff and 10.7% employing 5+ staff.

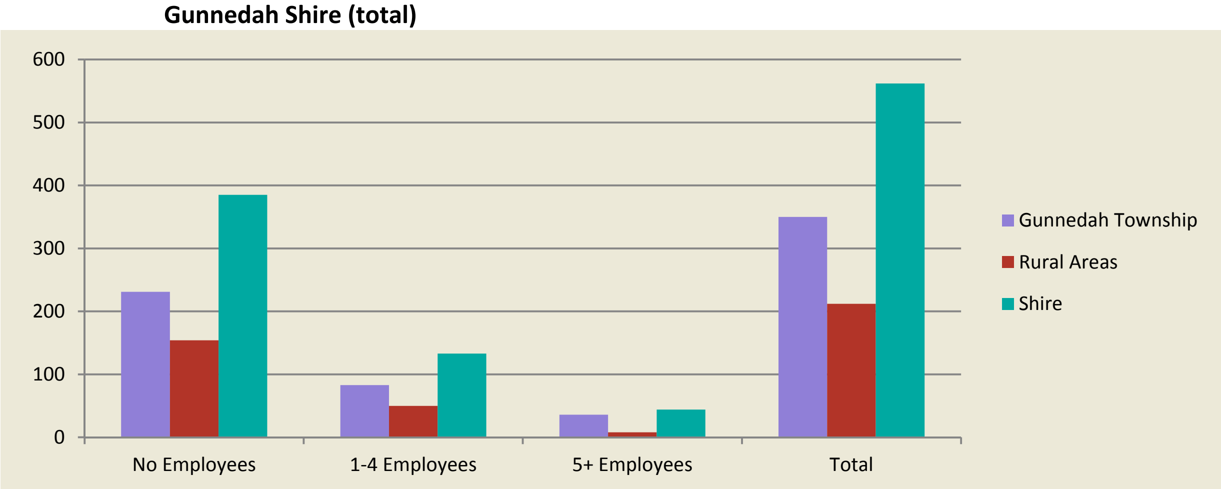
There were 212 business entries in the Villages and Rural Area, of which 72.6% employed no staff, 23.6% employed 1-4 staff and 3.8% employed 5+ staff.

Table 12.2 Number of businesses entries at 30 June 2007 – 2011

	Number of New Business Entries				2007-2011		
	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total New	Average / Year	% of Total
Gunnedah Shire (Total)							
No Employees	103	102	92	88	385	96	68.5%
1-4 Employees	36	30	32	35	133	33	23.7%
5 or more Employees	13	10	9	12	44	11	7.8%
Total number of businesses	152	142	133	135	562	141	100.0%
Township of Gunnedah							
No Employees	65	62	48	56	231	57	66.0%
1-4 Employees	23	17	19	24	83	20	23.7%
5 or more Employees	11	8	7	10	36	9	10.3%
Total number of businesses	99	87	74	90	350	87	100.0%
Township as a % of the Shire							
No Employees	63.1%	60.8%	52.2%	63.6%	60.0%		
1-4 Employees	63.9%	56.7%	59.4%	68.6%	62.4%		
5 or more Employees	84.6%	80.0%	77.8%	83.3%	81.8%		
Total number of businesses	65.1%	61.3%	55.6%	66.7%	62.3%		
Villages & Rural Areas							
No Employees	38	40	44	32	154	39	72.6%
1-4 Employees	13	13	13	11	50	13	23.6%
5 or more Employees	2	2	2	2	8	2	3.8%
Total number of businesses	53	55	59	45	212	53	100.0%
Villages & Rural Areas as % of the Shire							
No Employees	36.9%	39.2%	47.8%	36.4%	40.0%		
1-4 Employees	36.1%	43.3%	40.6%	31.4%	37.6%		
5 or more Employees	15.4%	20.0%	22.2%	16.7%	18.2%		
Total Number of businesses	34.9%	38.7%	44.4%	33.3%	37.7%		

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013) National Regional Profile – Gunnedah LGA

Figure 12.3 Total Number of Businesses Entries 2007-2011, Gunnedah Township, Villages & Rural Areas, Gunnedah Shire (total)



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013) National Regional Profile – Gunnedah LGA

12.3 Business Exits

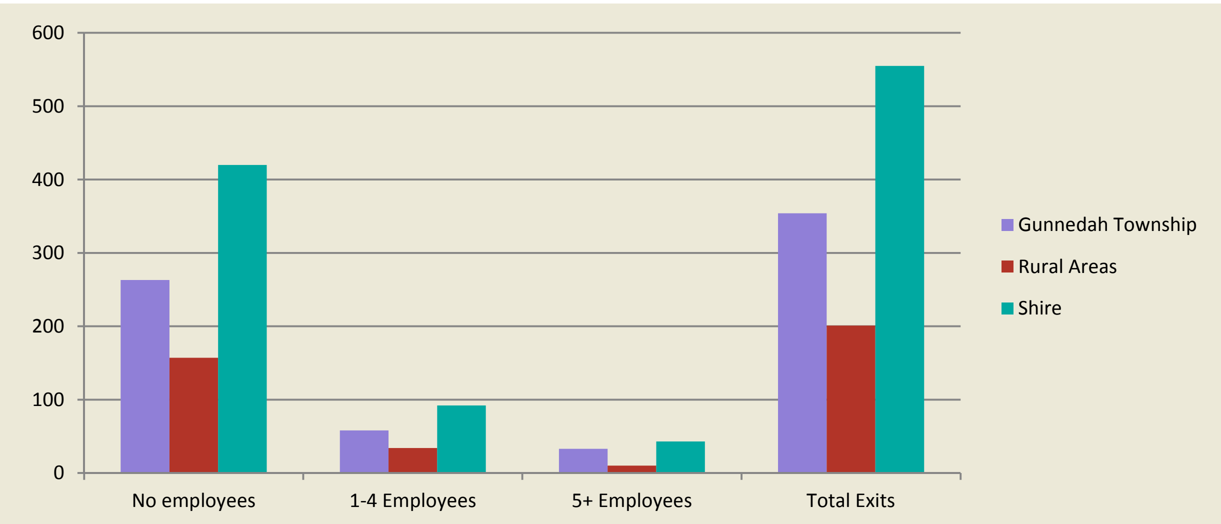
From 2007 to 2011, there were 555 business exits within the Shire. 63.8% of business exits (354) were businesses based in Gunnedah township, with 36.2% (201 businesses) based in the Villages and Rural Area. 75.7% of businesses that exited, employed no staff, with 16.4% employing 1-4 staff and 7.7% employing 5+ staff.

Table 12.3 Number of businesses exits at 30 June 2007 - 2011

	Number of New Business Entries				2007-2011		
	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total New	Average / Year	% of Total
Gunnedah Shire (Total)							
No Employees	110	104	105	101	420	105	75.7%
1-4 Employees	30	29	17	16	92	23	16.6%
5 or more Employees	10	8	16	9	43	11	7.7%
Total number of businesses	150	141	138	126	555	139	100.0%
Township of Gunnedah							
No Employees	69	66	66	62	263	66	74.3%
1-4 Employees	23	16	13	6	58	15	16.4%
5 or more Employees	6	6	14	7	33	8	9.3%
Total number of businesses	98	88	93	75	354	89	100.0%
Township as a % of the Shire							
No Employees	62.7%	63.5%	62.9%	61.4%	62.6%		
1-4 Employees	76.7%	55.2%	76.5%	37.5%	63.0%		
5 or more Employees	60.0%	75.0%	87.5%	77.8%	76.7%		
Total number of businesses	65.3%	62.4%	67.4%	59.5%	63.8%		
Villages & Rural Areas							
No Employees	41	38	39	39	157	39	78.1%
1-4 Employees	7	13	4	10	34	9	16.9%
5 or more Employees	4	2	2	2	10	3	5.0%
Total number of businesses	52	53	45	51	201	50	100.0%
Villages & Rural Areas as % of the Shire							
No Employees	37.3%	36.5%	37.1%	38.6%	37.4%		
1-4 Employees	23.3%	44.8%	23.5%	62.5%	37.0%		
5 or more Employees	40.0%	25.0%	12.5%	22.2%	23.3%		
Total Number of businesses	34.7%	37.6%	32.6%	40.5%	36.2%		

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013) National Regional Profile – Gunnedah LGA

Figure 12.4 Number of businesses exits at 30 June 2007 - 2011



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013) National Regional Profile – Gunnedah LGA

12.4 Comparison to other LGAs

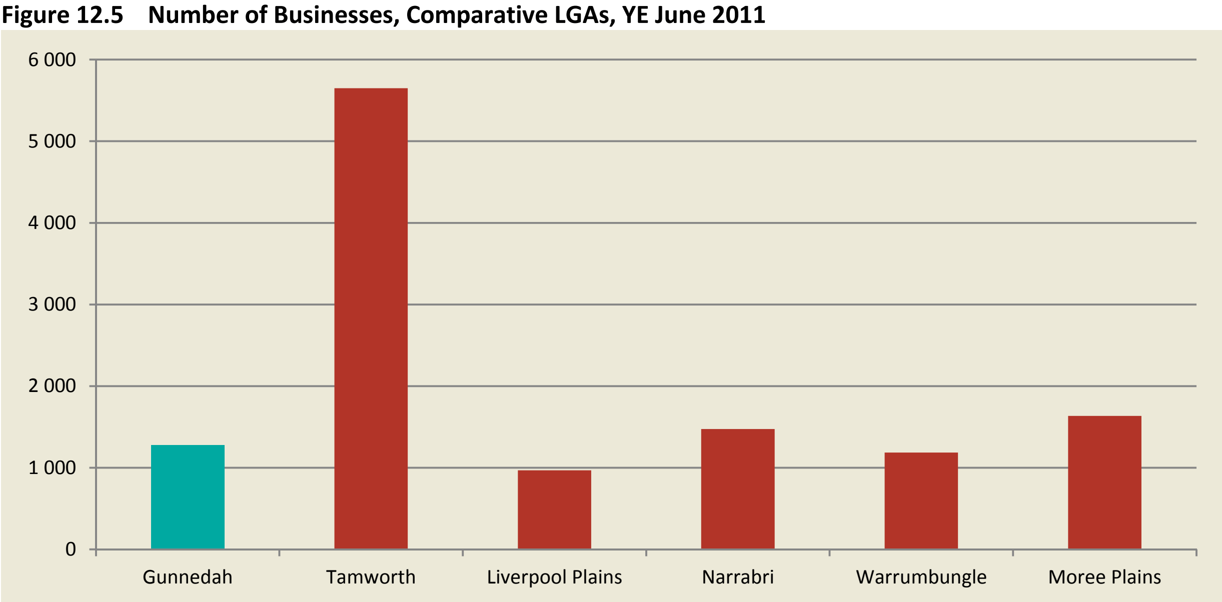
In YE June 2011, 6.5% of businesses in the Northern Inland Region were located in Gunnedah Shire. Gunnedah Shire's share of regional businesses has remained constant since 2007 (6.4%). Gunnedah Shire has 105 businesses per 1000 residents, which is lower than the Regional average (112/1000). Gunnedah Shire also has a lower proportion of businesses employing 5+ people.

Table 12.4 Number of businesses by employment - Gunnedah compared to other LGAs

Locality	No Businesses by Employment			Total	As % of Northern Inland Region				Business / 1000 persons
	0	1-4	5+		0	1-4	5+	Total	
Gunnedah	814	269	203	1277	6.6%	5.8%	6.5%	6.5%	105
Tamworth	3448	1261	941	5650	28.1%	28.2%	30.2%	28.5%	101
Liverpool Plains	645	209	115	969	5.3%	4.7%	3.7%	4.9%	133
Narrabri	893	330	251	1474	7.3%	7.4%	8.1%	7.4%	112
Moree Plains	998	363	274	1635	8.1%	8.1%	8.8%	8.3%	119
Northern Inland	**12251**	**4464**	**3117**	**19796**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**112**
Warrumbungle	719	300	168	1187					120

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013) National Regional Profile – Gunnedah LGA

Figure 12.5 Number of Businesses, Comparative LGAs, YE June 2011



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013) National Regional Profile – Gunnedah LGA

From 2007 to 2011, the number of businesses within the Northern Inland Region declined by 0.4%. In terms of the comparative set of LGAs, Gunnedah Shire (0.7%) was the only LGA to show an increase in the number of businesses. The ratio of business entries to exits in Gunnedah Shire (1:0.98) is more favourable than other LGAs within the comparative set and the Regional average (1:1.01). Businesses with no employees have a less favourable entry to exit ratio than larger businesses. This indicates the need to provide services to support new business start-ups within both Gunnedah Shire and the Northern Inland Region.

Table 12.5 Change in the Number of Businesses and Business Entry and Exit, Comparative LGAs.

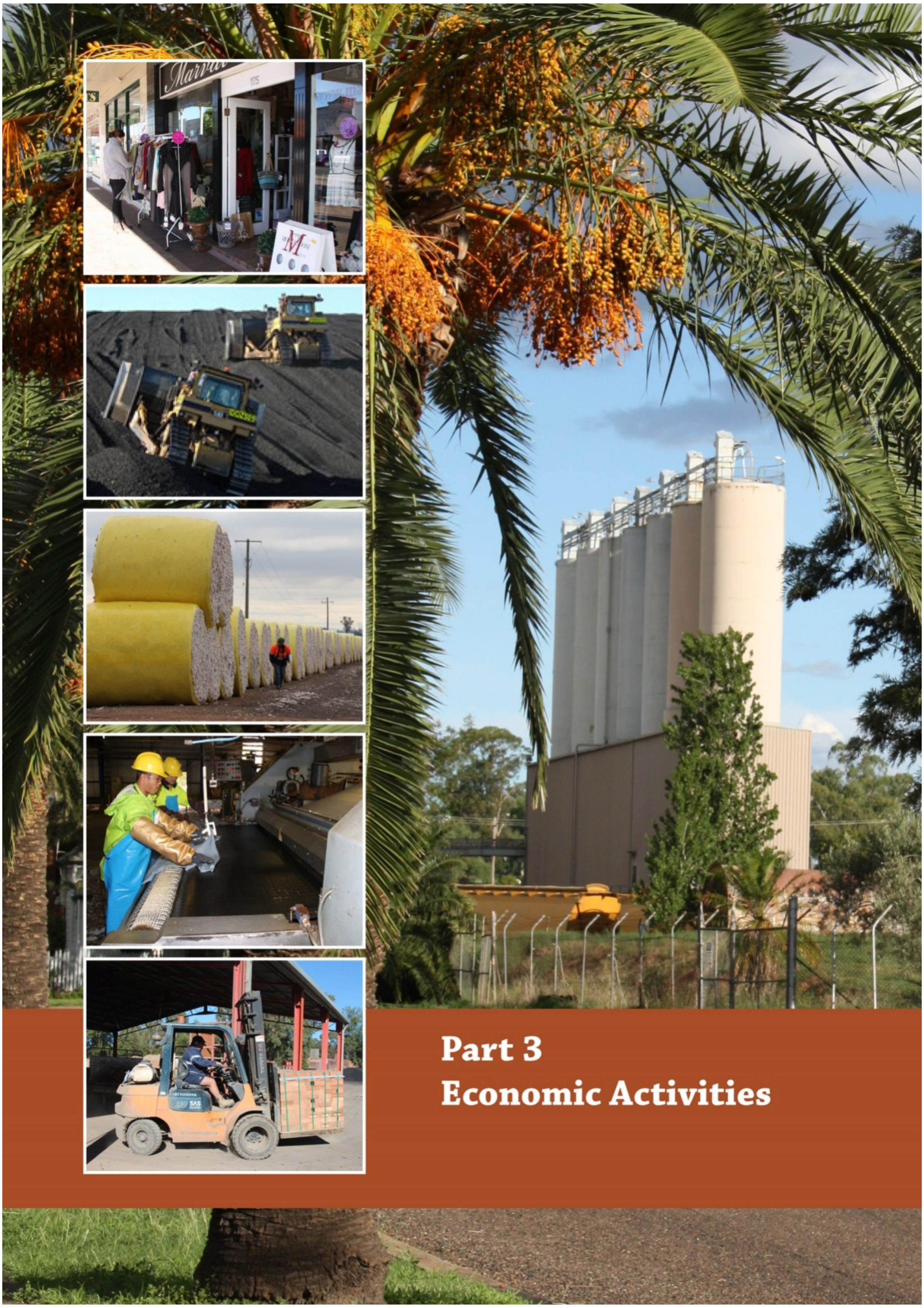
Localities	Businesses - % change 2007-2011	Total Business 2007-2011		As % of Northern Inland Region		Ratio Entry : Exit
		Entries	Exits	Entries	Exits	
Gunnedah	0.7%	562	555	6.8%	6.7%	1 : 0.98
Tamworth	-0.5%	2508	2535	30.5%	30.5%	1 : 1.01
Liverpool Plains	-2.2%	382	405	4.6%	4.9%	1 : 1.06
Narrabri	-0.4%	569	578	6.9%	7.0%	1 : 1.02
Moree Plains	-0.4%	689	695	8.4%	8.4%	1 : 1.01
Northern Inland	**-0.4%**	**8232**	**8314**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**1 : 1.01**
Warrumbungle	-0.1%	434	447			1 : 1.03

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013) National Regional Profile – Gunnedah LGA

Table 12.6 Comparison of Entry to Exit Ratios, Gunnedah Shire and Northern Inland Region (Number of Entries : Number of Exits, 2007-2011)

	Business Entry to Business Exit Ratio	
	Gunnedah Shire	Northern Inland Region
No Employees	1 : 1.09	1 : 1.12
1-4 Employees	1 : 0.69	1 : 0.68
5+ Employees	1 : 0.98	1 : 1.14

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013) National Regional Profile – Gunnedah LGA



Part 3
Economic Activities

13. ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES – GUNNEDAH SHIRE

13.1 Structure

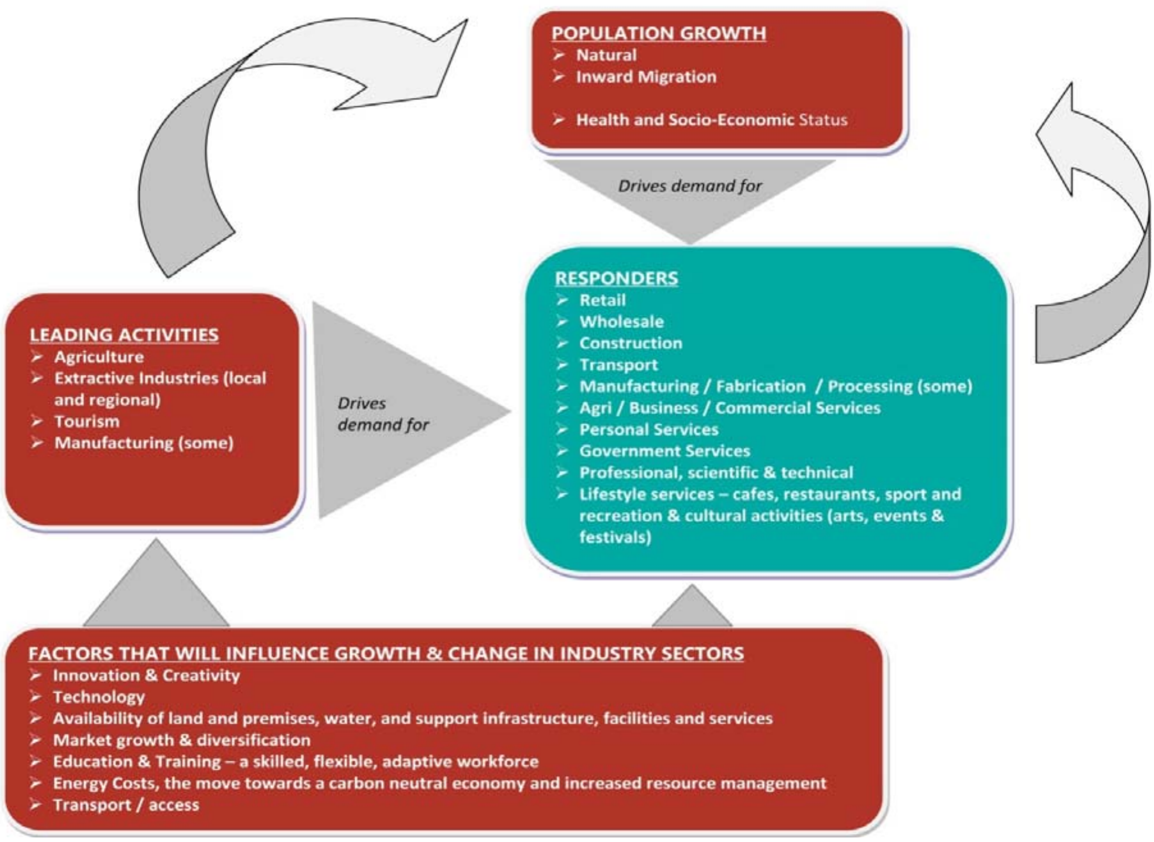
Gunnedah Shire has a diverse economic base. The dominant activities are agriculture and mining, with the Shire also having strong retail, health care and social assistance, tourism and hospitality, construction and education and training sectors.

The economic activities within the Shire can be broadly divided into 'Leading Economic Activities' and 'Responders'. The Leading Economic Activities are those that 'drive' the local economy, bringing 'new' dollars into the community. These activities are primarily agriculture, extractive industries (mining), tourism and some manufacturing activities. These activities are intrinsically linked with the regional, national and global economies and as such their performance is subjected to a range of external factors that are largely outside of the control of the individual businesses and the local community.

'Responders' are the activities that support and are dependent on the performance of the Leading Economic Activities. Within Gunnedah Shire, the 'Responders' are primarily the retail, construction and service sectors. Population, socio economic characteristics and health status also stimulate demand for a broad range of goods and services.

In addition, there are a number of factors that will influence change and growth in economic activities across all sectors. These factors include innovation and creativity; changing technologies; availability of land, premises and support infrastructure, facilities and services; the changing marketplace and consumer trends; education and training; the shift towards a carbon neutral economy and an increased focus on resource management.

Figure 13.1 Relationships and Linkages – Gunnedah Shire Economy



13.2 Economic Activities

The Australian Bureau of Statistics publishes information on the number of businesses by type of industry, by both employment and turnover, as at June 30 2011. This information is published by Statistical Area Level 2. There are two Level 2 areas covering Gunnedah Shire – Gunnedah SAL2 which incorporates Gunnedah and immediate surrounds, and Gunnedah Region SAL2 which includes the rural areas and villages and extends outside of Gunnedah Shire to also include the Boggabri Area. The data is drawn from the Australian Taxation Office and only includes businesses that have an ABN and have lodged one or more GST notices in the past 5 quarters. As such not all economic activities / enterprises are necessarily included. The data is discussed in terms of Gunnedah township (Gunnedah SAL2), the rural areas and villages (Gunnedah Regional SAL2) and total Gunnedah area (Both SALs combined – Gunnedah Shire + Boggabri).

The characteristics are:

- There were 1,468 businesses were identified across 20 sectors. Of these, 50.5% (742 businesses) were located in Gunnedah township

- Within the total area, agriculture accounted for the majority of businesses (42.4%) followed by the construction (10.2%), rental and real estate (8.7%) retail (5.1%) and transport (5%) sectors. 76.8% of agricultural businesses are located in the rural area. Within the township and immediate surrounds, agriculture businesses dominate (18.5%), followed by construction (14.3%), rental, hiring and real estate (10.6%), retail (7.7%) and professional, scientific and technical services (4.6%).

- In terms of employment and turnover, the majority of businesses in Gunnedah Shire are very small to small.

- 65.9% of businesses employed no staff. 19.6% employed between 1 and 4 staff, 12.5% employed 5-19 staff and 2% employed 20-199 staff. No businesses employed over 200 staff.

- 28.6% of businesses (420 businesses) had a turnover of less than $50,000 per annum. Only 4.7% of businesses (69 businesses) had a turnover in excess of $2 million per annum. Businesses with a turnover in excess of $2million were primarily in the agricultural, construction, retail and manufacturing sectors.

The largest economic / employment sectors within the Shire (Agriculture, Extractive Industries, Manufacturing, Construction, Tourism, Retailing & Wholesaling, Health Care and Social Assistance and Education and Training), are discussed in the following Chapters.

Table 13.1 Number of Businesses by Staff Employed, Total Gunnedah Area, 2011 (Includes only Businesses that have an ABN and lodge a BAS)

Industry Sector	Total Businesses		No. Businesses by No. Staff Employed					% of Businesses by No. Staff Employed					
	No.	%	0	1-4	4-19	20-199	200+	0	1-4	5-19	20-199	200+	Total
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	623	42.4%	452	107	55	9	0	72.6%	17.2%	8.8%	1.45		100.0%
Mining	6	0.4%	6	0	0	0	0	100.0%					100.0%
Manufacturing	49	3.3%	28	6	12	3	0	57.1%	12.2%	24.5%	6.1%		100.0%
Electricity, Gas, Water & Waste	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-					100.0%
Construction	150	10.2%	93	42	15	0	0	62.0%	28.0%	10.0%			100.0%
Wholesale Trade	36	2.5%	24	3	9	0	0	66.7%	8.3%	25.0%			100.0%
Retail Trade	75	5.1%	37	16	16	6	0	49.3%	21.3%	21.3%	8.0%		100.0%
Accommodation & Food	41	2.8%	9	13	19	0	0	22.0%	31.7%	46.3%			100.0%
Transport, Postal, Warehousing	74	5.0%	43	20	11	0	0	58.1%	27.0%	14.9%			100.0%
Information, Telecommunications	3	0.2%	3	0	0	0	0	100.0%					100.0%
Financial & Insurance Services	47	3.2%	38	6	3	0	0	80.9%	12.8%	6.4%			100.0%
Rental, Hiring & Real Estate	128	8.7%	107	9	9	3	0	83.6%	7.0%	7.0%	2.3%		100.0%
Professional, Scientific , Technical	67	4.6%	36	20	11	0	0	53.7%	29.9%	16.4%			100.0%
Administrative & Support Services	22	1.5%	16	3	3	0	0	72.7%	13.6%	13.6%			100.0%
Public Administration & Safety	3	0.2%	0	3	0	0	0	-	100.0%				100.0%
Education & Training	12	0.8%	9	3	0	0	0	75.0%	25.5%				100.0%
Health Care & Social Assistance	27	1.8%	15	7	5	0	0	55.6%	25.9%	18.5%			100.0%
Arts and Recreation Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-					100.0%
Other Services	73	5.0%	23	29	15	6	0	31.5%	39.7%	20.5%	8.2%		100.0%
Not Classified 1	32	2.2%	29	0	0	3	0	90.6%					100.0%
Total	1468	100.0%	968	287	183	30	0	65.9%			9.4%		
As % of Total			65.9%	19.6%	12.5%	2.0%							

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics – Number of Businesses by Employment Groups – Gunnedah SAL2 and Gunnedah Region SAL2

Table 13.2 Number of Businesses by Turnover, Gunnedah Shire, 2011 (Includes only Businesses that have an ABN and lodge a BAS)

Industry Sector	Total Business	No. Businesses by Turnover						% of Businesses by Turnover					
		Zero to $50k	$50k to less than $100k	$100k to less than $200K	$200k to less than $500k	$500k to less than $2m	$2m or more	Zero to $50k	$50k to less than $100k	$100k to less than $200K	$200k to less than $500k	$500k to less than $2m	$2m or more
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	623	200	84	98	106	105	30	32.1%	13.5%	15.7%	17.0%	16.9%	4.8%
Mining	6	0	0	0	3	3	0				50.0%	50.0%	
Manufacturing	49	12	5	11	9	6	6	24.5%	10.2%	22.4%	18.4%	12.2%	12.2%
Electricity, Gas, Water & Waste	0	0	0	0	0	0	0						
Construction	150	32	26	29	39	21	3	21.3%	17.3%	19.3%	26.0%	14.0%	2.0%
Wholesale Trade	36	11	3	7	3	9	3	30.6%	8.3%	19.45	8.3%	25.0%	8.3%
Retail Trade	75	10	7	12	20	14	12	13.3%	9.3%	16.0%	26.7%	18.7%	16.0%
Accommodation & Food	41	6	6	6	11	9	3	14.6%	14.6%	14.6%	26.8%	22.0%	7.3%
Transport, Postal, Warehousing	74	8	18	16	18	11	3	10.8%	24.3%	21.6%	24.3%	14.9%	4.1%
Information, Telecommunications	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	100.0%					
Financial & Insurance Services	47	20	14	7	6	0	0	42.4%	29.8%	14.9%	12.8%		
Rental, Hiring & Real Estate	128	48	19	19	20	19	3	37.5%	14.8%	14.8%	15.6%	14.8%	2.3%
Professional, Scientific , Technical	67	29	11	6	10	11	0	43.3%	16.4%	9.0%	14.9%	16.4%	
Administrative & Support Services	22	6	3	7	6	0	0	27.3%	13.6%	31.8%	27.3%		
Public Administration & Safety	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	100.0%					
Education & Training	12	6	0	6	0	0	0	50.0%					
Health Care & Social Assistance	27	9	3	6	0	9	0	33.3%	11.1%	22.2%		33.3%	
Arts and Recreation Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0						
Other Services	73	10	11	16	19	14	3	13.7%	15.1%	21.9%	26.0%	19.2%	4.1%
Not Classified [1]	32	7	19	3	0	0	3	21.0%	59.4%	9.4%			9.4%
Total	**1648**	**420**	**229**	**249**	**270**	**231**	**69**	28.6%	15.6%	17.0%	18.4%	15.7%	4.7%
As % of Total		**28.6%**	**15.6%**	**17.0%**	**18.4%**	**15.7%**	**4.7%**						

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Businesses by Industry Division by Statistical Area Level 2 by Turnover, June 2011

13.3 Villages & Rural Localities

In 2013, Gunnedah Shire Council undertook an audit of businesses within the Shire. The audit does not include Agricultural producers (farmers). Businesses located in the villages and rural areas within the Shire are listed following. A number of the businesses in the villages and rural areas are home-based.

Locality	Business / Enterprise
Carroll	Carroll Cotton Company Pty Limited Footstool Earthmoving Pty Ltd Carroll Store
Curlewis	Commercial Hotel Allwest Cleaning Allan Syphers Fencing Lumsden's Landscaping Curlewis General Store Hubbard Transport Lightfoot Removals
Currabubula	Tony Sims Contract Harvesting
Kelvin	Namoi Spraying Service Moore’s Electrical Contracting Noel Storey Engineers, Machines & Tooling
Mary’s Mount	The Cottage – Farm Stay Accommodation
Milroy	Brad Smith Building Contractor Janelle Smith Massage Therapy
Mullaley	Tahlee Consulting Services - Agricultural Advisors Pursehouse Rural Pty. Ltd. Mullaley Bus Service North West Hobby Supplies Suede Design - Graphic Designers DMI Engineering Mullaley Post Office Hotel Mullaley Post Office Lively Linseed – Linseed Health Food Products
Piallaway	Middlebrook Air Operations Pty Ltd ROX-OFF Stone Picking
Rangari	G & B Ward Earthmoving
Tambar Springs	Tamba Industrial Tambar Springs Bus Service Tambar Springs CTC Tambar Springs Bottle Shop & General Store Post Office Royal Hotel Tambar Springs

14. AGRICULTURE

14.1 Sector Overview

At the 2011 Agricultural Census[12] there were 135,654 agricultural producers in Australia. The gross value of production was $46,687 billion, with cropping accounting for 54.5% and livestock (for meat) and livestock products (eg wool, milk etc) accounting for 29.5% and 15.6% respectively of gross value. In 2011/12, the Agricultural sector contributed around 2.1% to Gross Domestic Product and employed 310,000 people.[13]

The performance of the Agricultural sector is closely linked with weather and climate patterns, world commodity prices and the value of the Australian dollar. Globally, food security is becoming a priority issue, with global demand for food expected to increase by 77% by 2050[14]. Growth will be concentrated in Asia, where demand is expected to double by 2050. China and India are expected to account for 40% and 13% respectively, of the increase in global demand for food. Geographically, Australia is well positioned to sell into the Asian market, however increased competition from emerging food producers (eg Brazil, Balkans), the relatively higher costs of production in Australia and emerging transport infrastructure constraints may limit Australia's ability to capitalise on emerging global markets.

In addition to volatile commodity prices and the impact of the high Australian dollar, the Agricultural sector in Australia is facing a number of significant challenges. The National Farmers Association in its 'Blue Print for Australian Agriculture, 2013-2020' has identified the actions required to improve the productivity, quality, profitability and sustainably of Australian agriculture, to enable the sector to capitalise on emerging market opportunities. These actions include:

- Increasing the investment in Research, Development and Extension services, improving access to new technologies and encouraging the wide-spread adoption of best practice.
- Improving and upgrading critical infrastructure, in particular the transport infrastructure. The 'forced' shift from rail to road transport for bulk goods is a major cost impost that is eroding Australia's competitiveness. The increasing preference by some major markets, including China, for containerisation rather than bulk transport also has implications for transport and storage infrastructure.
- Facilitating better access to capital.
- Reducing compliance and 'red tape' costs. The cumulative impacts of regulation are imposing significant cost and time constraints on farmers.
- Building 'Brand Australia'.
- Improving tools for coping with volatility of commodity prices, terms of trade and the high Australian dollar.
- Improving Australia's access to high value global markets by addressing impediments to trade, including removing 'trade distorting policies'.
- Building and maintaining a flexible and skilled workforce - addressing the labour shortages within the sector, changing skills needs, exploring alternative labour models and with finding alternatives to labour.
- Improving security of access to natural resources, coupled with improved environmental sustainability and the introduction of policies that encourage and reward environmental stewardship.
- Preparing for the impact of climate variability and extreme climatic events.

[12] Australian Bureau of Statistics Agricultural Census, 2011, Agricultural Commodities.
[13] Australian Government Key Facts Australian Industry, 2011-2012.
[14] Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Science – Outlook Conference, 2013

- Managing the risk of domestic diseases and pests.

Trends

Across-the-board trends in the Agricultural sector include:

- Increased mechanisation and application of labour saving technology (eg driver-less tractors).
- Increased innovation – in resource management, genetic engineering, production techniques, and in distribution, sales and marketing.
- Greater focus on 'traceability' – with consumers increasing wanting to know where their food has come from and what is in it.
- Increased use of digital technology in the field – use of smart phones, tablets etc to track, monitor and communicate.
- Increasing dominance of the two major supermarket chains in the domestic market, with the supermarkets entering into direct contracts with both growers and processers (eg abattoirs).
- Decline in Marketing Boards and an increase in producer-based marketing.

14.2 Gunnedah Shire – Overview[15]

Agriculture is the dominant landuse and economic activity in Gunnedah Shire. The Shire incorporates some of the most productive agricultural land in Australia, with large areas of the Shire classified as being Strategic Agricultural Land of State significance[16].

Agriculture occupies approximately 85% of the land area of the Shire. Around 77.6% of the Shire is used for dryland cropping and livestock production, with 5.6% being irrigated and 1.6% in intensive production[17]. Most of the agricultural properties are involved in mixed farming, which helps to spread financial risk and improve land management.

At the 2011 Agricultural Census, Gunnedah Shire had 581 rural producers, with the gross value of agricultural production being $195.3 million[18]. This equated to 7.8% of the gross value of agricultural production in the Northern Inland Region and 1.7% of the gross value of production in NSW.

In 2011, cropping was the dominant agricultural activity, having a gross value of $152.2 million, and accounting for 77.9% of the total gross value of agricultural production within the Shire. Livestock (including poultry) for slaughter

Southern Plains (Liverpool Plains & Gunnedah LGAs)

The Southern Plains area has the highest agricultural productivity in NSW, with an exclusive combination of volcanic soils, rainfall reliability, climate (sunshine hours, moderate temperature and protection from hot westerly weather) and availability of surface and groundwater.

The black earth and chernozem soils found in the Liverpool Plains are classified as some of the most fertile in Australia. These fertile soil types are rare in Australia, making up less than 1 per cent of the nation's surface area (0.7%). The major concentrations are found in the Liverpool Plains and the Darling Downs and central highlands of Queensland.

- *NSW Government (2012) New England North West Strategic Regional Land Use Plan*

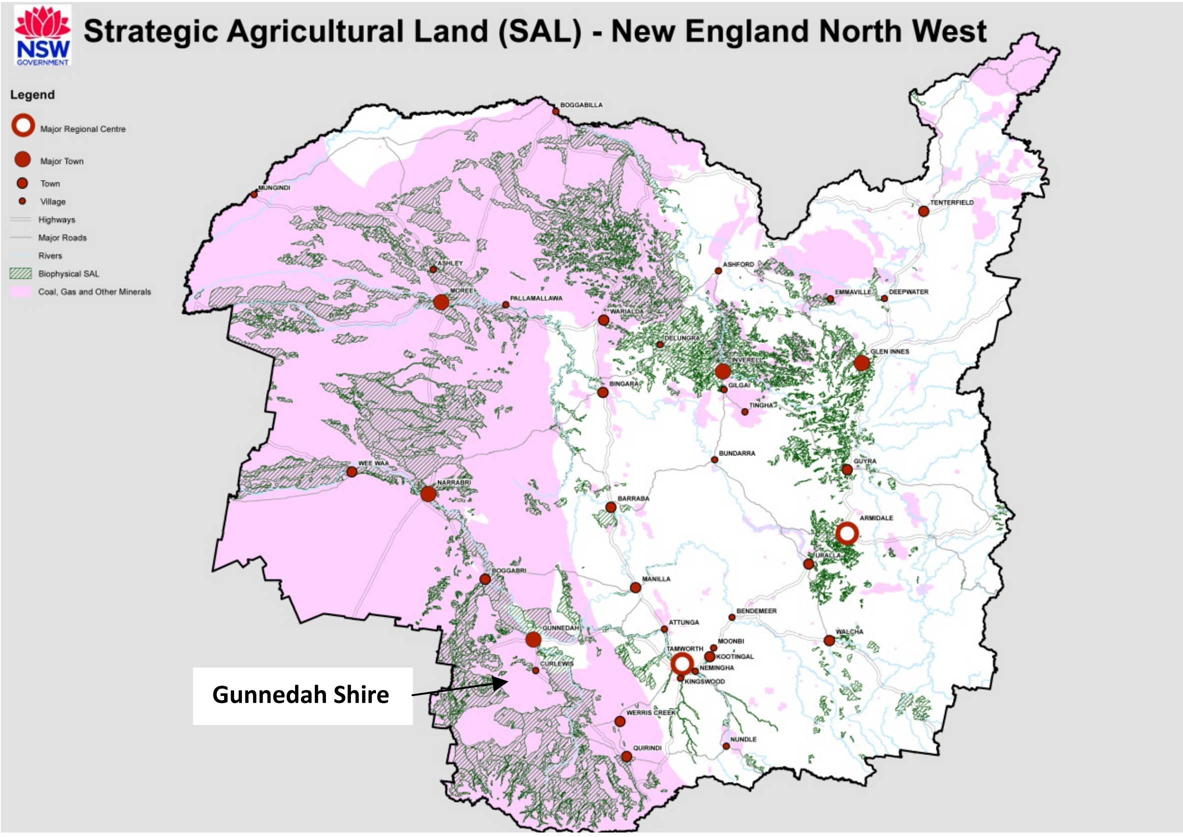
---

[15] Unless otherwise stated, information in this section is taken from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Agricultural Census, 2011.
[16] State of New South Wales through the Department of Planning and Infrastructure (2012) New England North West Strategic Regional Land Use Plan
[17] Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011) National Economic Profile – Gunnedah Shire
[18] Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011) Agricultural Census, Commodities and Value of Commodities, NSW, New England North West & Gunnedah LGA.

(meat production) had a gross value of $40.7 million (20.8% of gross value of production) while livestock products (wool, dairy, eggs etc) generated $2.4 million and accounted for 1.3% of the gross value of total production.

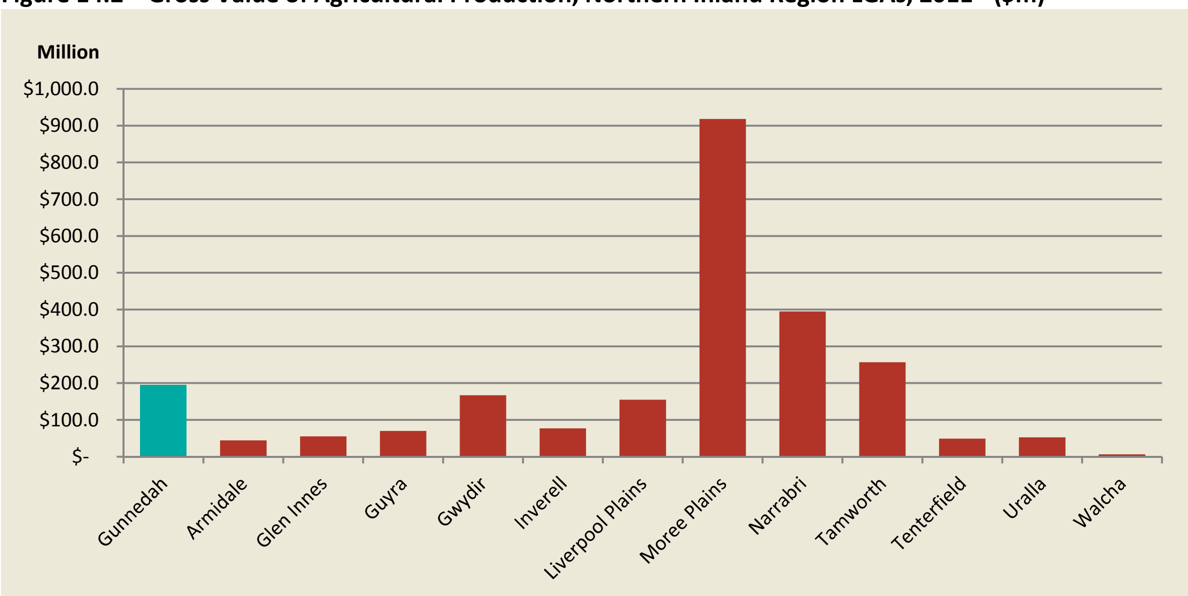
Within the Northern Inland Region, Gunnedah Shire ranked fourth behind Moree Plains Shire ($918.2 million), Narrabri Shire ($394.6 million) and Tamworth Regional LGA ($256.7 million), in terms of gross value of agricultural production.

Figure 14.1 Strategic Agricultural Land



Source: Department Planning and Infrastructure, Strategic Regional Land Use Plan (New England North West)

Figure 14.2 Gross Value of Agricultural Production, Northern Inland Region LGAs, 2011 - ($m)

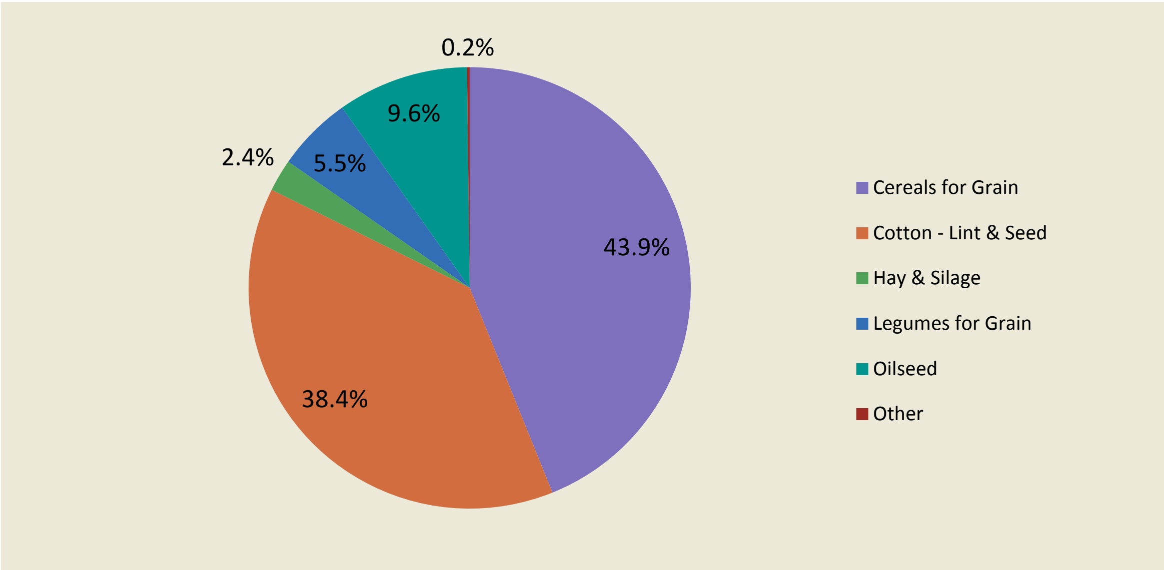


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics - Agricultural Census – 2011 – Value of Agricultural Commodities by LGA.

14.3 Cropping

Cropping incorporates broad-acre farming (cereal, cotton, legumes, oilseeds), intensive farming and orchards and plantations. Within the Shire, the main crops are grain (primarily wheat and sorghum) and cotton, with minor crops including other grains, legumes and oilseeds. The Shire also has a small number of citrus and olive producers, and a vegetable producer and a cut flower producer (Chrysanthemum grower at Carroll). In 2011, cereal produced for grain had a gross value of $66.8 million (43.9% of the gross value of cropping) with wheat ($33.8 million) and sorghum ($18.7 million) being the main income earners. The gross value of cotton production was $58.5 million, accounting for 38.4% of the gross value of cropping. Legumes for grain contributed $8.4 million (5.5% of gross value), with oilseed production generating $14.6m (9.6%).

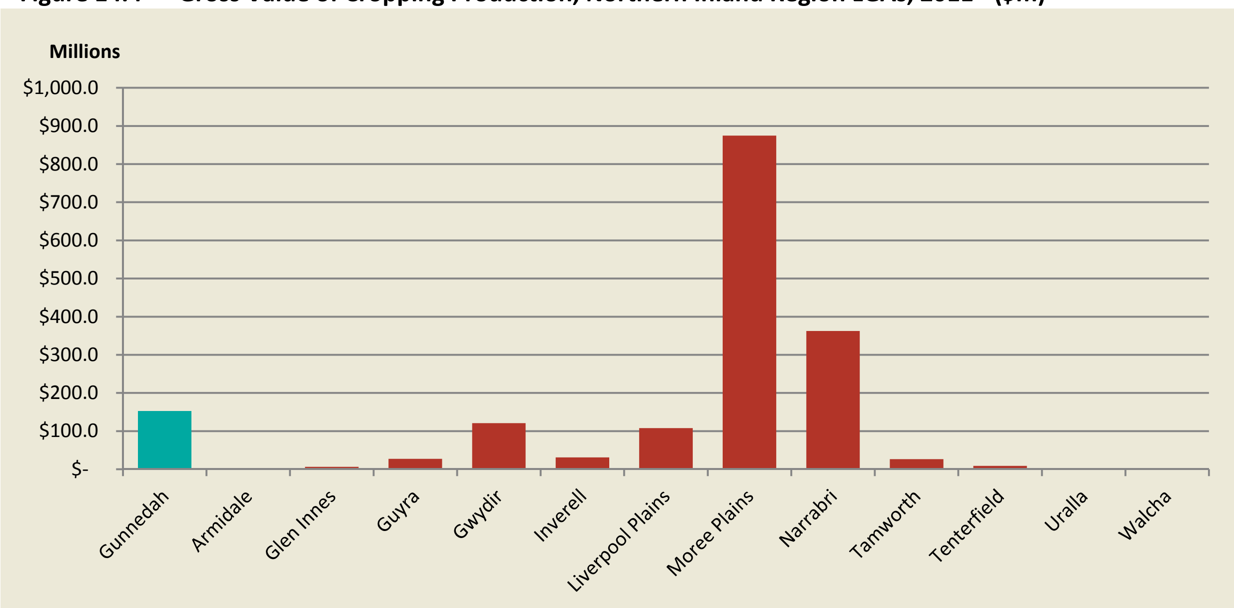
Figure 14.3 Contribution to Total Gross Value of Crops Produced ($152.2 million) – Gunnedah Shire



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Agricultural Census 2011

Within the Northern Inland Region, Gunnedah Shire ($152.2m) rates third in terms of gross value of crop production, sitting behind Moree Plains Shire ($847.7m) and Narrabri Shire ($362.7m).

Figure 14.4 Gross Value of Cropping Production, Northern Inland Region LGAs, 2011 - ($m)



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Agricultural Census 2011

Table 14.1 Cropping Production, Gunnedah Shire - 2011

	Number of Enterprises	Area (ha)	Production Tonnes (T)	Total Value $million	% of Region	
					Production	Value
Broadacre – Cereal Crops						
For Grain						
Wheat	174	47,660	141,021	$33.8	8.1%	8.1%
Oats	73	3,757	3,463	$ 0.7	14.5%	14.6%
Barley	104	14,382	37,226	$ 8.0	8.3%	8.3%
Sorghum	93	24,897	87,076	$18.7	12.5%	12.5%
Maize	21	2,872	15,085	$ 4.3	24.8%	25.0%
Triticale	8	630	1,490	$ 0.2	16.6%	13.3%
Other	10	1,642	1,466	$ 0.4	8.6%	9.5%
Total – Grain	**260**	**95,840**	**287,456**	**$66.0**	**9.6%**	**9.5%**
Not for Grain	110	**9,211**	np	np		
Total Cereal Crops	**318**	**105,051**	np	np		
Hay & Silage						
Clean Pasture Seed	2	44	1,948	np	1.1%	
Hay & Silage	107	4,407	17,667	$ 3.6	9.7%	9.8%
Cotton						
Irrigated	41	11,563				
Cotton Seed			53,584		7.5%	
Lint			20,275		7.4%	
Dryland	43	8,470				
Cotton Seed			14,165		6.8%	
Lint			5,568		7.0%	
Total Cotton	**60**	**20,003**		**$58.5**		**7.3%**
Cotton Seed			**67,749**		**7.4%**	
Lint			**25,843**		**7.3%**	
Legumes for Grain						
Chickpeas	56	7,372	5,010	$ 2.0	3.1%	3.1%
Faba Beans	9	947	2,680	$ 0.7	7.5%	8.0%
Mung Beans	50	9,698	5,595	$ 5.6	31.2%	30.9%
Other Field Beans	2	208	117	$ 0.1	6.2%	0.8%
Field Peas	2	50	30	np	2.8%	-
Lupins	4	117	328	$ 0.1	36.5%	33.3%
Total Legumes	Np	**18,392**	**13,760**	**$8.4**	**8.0%**	**9.1%**
Oilseeds						
Canola	62	12,457	22,028	$11.1	41.5%	41.4%
Soybeans	6	1,016	2,003	$ 1.0	14.9%	21.3%
Sunflower	16	4,013	4,304	$ 2.5	14.9%	14.7%
Other	13	1,621	np	np	np	np
Total Oilseeds	Np	**19,107**	**>28,335**	**$14.6**	**30.9%**	**29.9%**
Orchards – Fruit, Nuts, Olives (Total 9 producers, 105ha)						
Fruit		**Trees**	**Kilograms**			
Citrus	5	41,003	276,617	$ 0.1		33.3%
Stone	6	13	130	np		
Pome	2	6	np	np		
Olives	6	3,467	5,963	np		
Nuts						
Pecans	1	3,585				
Pistachios	1	474				
Total Nuts	**4**	**4,006**				
Other						
Cut flowers	1	1ha		$ 0.1		4.3%
Vegetables	1	np		np		np

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Agricultural Census 2011

The majority of farming enterprises in Gunnedah Shire are mixed farms, with the crops produced determined by the climate / weather, expected availability of water, market demand and commodity prices.

Cereals, Oilseeds & Legumes

Broadacre cereal, oilseed and legume crops produced in Gunnedah Shire are used primarily for food for human consumption and stock, equine and poultry feed. Gunnedah has a small number of certified organic producers. Major Storage silos are located throughout the Shire and surrounding region, with this infrastructure owned by Grain Corp. Grain Corp purchases around 30% of the grain and oilseeds produced within the region, down from 60% in the past. Farmers are increasingly investing in on-farm storage to improve their control over their product and reduce silage and transport costs.

Gunnedah has four mills producing food products for human consumption - Namoi Flour Mills, Gunnedah Maize Mill, Whole Grain Milling Company (organic) and Paradise Feeds (sunflowers) that draw grain and oilseeds from Gunnedah Shire and other localities. Gunnedah also has two stock feed Mills – Pryde's Easifeed and Omega Feeds (part of Paradise Farms) that use both local and externally produced grains, oilseeds and legumes and produce for the domestic and international market. Continuity of supply is an on-going challenge for the mills. The Chinese market for grain is opening up, with sorghum exports to China commencing this year (2013).

Cotton

Cotton has made a strong resurgence in the Liverpool Plains area, with an increase in both irrigated and dryland production. This has been facilitated by genetic modification, with cotton plants producing higher yields, being insect resistant and requiring less water. Cotton yields per hectare are reported to have increased by around 30%. Around 90% of cotton produced in the Shire is processed at the Cotton Gin in Carroll, with the remainder primarily going to the Namoi Cotton Gin at Boggabri, and a very small proportion to Auscott at Wee Waa. Carroll Cotton has experienced significant growth, with production increasing from 27,000 bales to 65,000 bales in 2011 and 90,000 bales in 2012. There is a prime opportunity to expand the gin. Carroll Cotton is also exploring options to utilise the gin for processing non-cotton products.

Most of the cotton lint produced is exported. It is trucked to Brisbane and Sydney or sent to Wee Waa and containerised. Cotton seed is used for a variety of purposes including, cotton seed oil (processed by Cargill in Narrabri), commercial stock feed (sold to the stock feed mills and feedlots) and for on-farm stock.

Citrus

There are just over 40,000 citrus trees in Gunnedah Shire, the majority of which are oranges. Oranges grown in the Shire are contracted to a juicing plant in Warwick which supplies the two supermarket chains. Within Gunnedah Shire, oranges are harvested in summer, (as opposed to winter in most areas of Australia), enabling the juicing plant to operate year-round, rather than seasonally.

Olives

According to the Agricultural Census, Gunnedah Shire has 6 olive growers with around 3,500 trees, producing just under 6,000 kilograms of olives. The olive growers within the Shire are small producers, with the three largest producers being Namoi Gold, Isaac Grove and Delvan Grove. Namoi Gold has a small processing plant and crushes around 50 tonnes of olives per year. The processing plant crushes for around 40 growers drawn from across the Northern Inland Region and Warrumbungle and Gilgandra Shires. Trash produced from the crushing is used primarily for mulch, however can be mixed with molasses and used as stock feed during drought. Crushing infrastructure in the Northern Inland Region is limited. There are a number of plants in Moree Plains Shire, however they have a minimum tonnage of olives that they will accept, with the production from most of the olive growers in the Region being well below this tonnage. The processing plant in Inverell has closed, while the plant in Upper Hunter has changed ownership and introduced minimum tonnages. Bottling and labelling is generally undertaken by individual producers. Some of the olive oil produced in

Gunnedah Shire is award winning. Most of the oil produced is sold domestically through fresh food markets, on-line and direct to specialty food shops, with a small proportion being exported.

Although olive trees were brought to Australia with the early settlers, it was not until the 1990s that commercial olive groves were established on mass. The development of the industry was driven by a number of factors including growing domestic demand arising primarily from strong interest in Mediterranean food, and as an import replacement crop for both olives and olive oil. In more recent years, the realisation of the health benefits of olive oils has resulted in a significant increase in demand. In 2002 Australia's olive oil production was less than 1 million litres with production having increased to over 16 million litres in 2011. This represents less than 1% of world production of olive oil. Based on current plantings (35,000 hectares), production is expected to continue to increase in 2013 and 2014 and then plateau to just under 25 million litres by 2015[19]. 95% of the oil produced in Australia is very high quality Extra Virgin Olive Oil[20].

Australia's consumption of olive oil has increased from 5,700 tonnes in 1983 to 17,200 tonnes in 1993 to an estimated 45,000 tonnes in 2010/11, an increase of 790% in just over two decades. Australia currently consumes more than three times its own annual production and is the largest consumer of olive oil per capita outside of the Mediterranean[21]. The Australian market is largely price driven, buying the lower priced imported oils, rather than the higher priced Australian oils. This is changing with consumers becoming more discerning about the differences in the grades of oils and their resultant health benefits. Australian oils are being increasingly exported and are in high demand internationally.

As a new producer, Australia's processing plants use the most up-to-date technology in the world, resulting in very high quality oil ('extra virgin') being produced. As such Australian oils have been able to command a premium price internationally. Australia also has a competitive advantage in that its seasons are the reverse of the northern hemisphere and as such it provides fresh oil during the European off-season.

The challenges currently facing the olive industry include:

- Competition from imported lower cost oils for the domestic market, with the oils coming into Australia from the European Union being subsidised.
- Differences in naming and labelling standards between imported and domestic oils, with many of the imported oils being blended and/or chemically stripped of anti-oxidants and nutrients.
- Larger Australian producers (eg Cobram Estate Olive Oil) supplying the major supermarket chains at prices well below the production costs for smaller Australian producers.
- The high price of the Australian dollar which is impacting on exports and reducing the price of imported oils and table olives.
- The dominance of small lifestyle producers with higher cost structures. Smaller olive groves are unlikely to be sustainable long term.

Within Australia, Victoria is the largest producer of olive oil (10.8 million litres) followed by Western Australia (2.8 million litres) and South Australia (1.95 million litres), with NSW ranking 4th. In NSW the largest areas of olive production are in the Riverina, Hunter and Northern Inland regions. Within the Northern Inland Region, production is concentrated in Moree Plains, Narrabri and Inverell Shires, with Moree having two very large producers.

[19] Information in this section is based on Australian Olive Association statistics.
[20] Victorian Department of Primary Industries – *Victorian Olive Oil Industry Overview*
[21] Boundary Bend Limited, *Olive Producers, Prospectus*

Table 14.2 Olive Production – Major Regions NSW

Region	Producers		Trees		Production - Olives		Value	
	Number	% NSW	Number	% NSW	Tonnes	% NSW	Millions	% NSW
Riverina	24	7.5%	215042	23.7%	2415.8	32.6%	$4.5	32.6%
Hunter	69	21.6%	176862	19.5%	2417.6	32.6%	$3.1	22.5%
Northern Inland	45	14.1%	138457	15.3%	1654.7	22.3%	$2.9	21.0%
NSW	**320**	100.0%	**906795**	100.0%	**7415.8**	100.0%	**$13.8**	100.0%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Agricultural Census 2011

Table 14.3 Olive Production – Northern Inland NSW

LGA	Producers		Trees		Production - Olives		Value	
	Number	% region	Number	% region	Tonnes	% region	Millions	% region
Moree Plains	2	4.4%	80301	58.0%	1115.0	67.4%	$2.1	72.4%
Narrabri	5	11.1%	23870	17.2%	363.8	22.0%	$0.7	24.1%
Inverell	7	15.6%	9140	6.6%	32.8	2.0%	np	
Tamworth	7	15.6%	5833	4.2%	15.1	0.9%	np	
Liverpool Plains	10	22.2%	5807	4.2%	21.7	1.3%	np	
Gwydir	2	4.4%	5581	4.0%	17.9	1.1%	np	
Gunnedah	6	13.3%	3467	2.5%	6.0	0.4%	np	
Glen Innes	2	4.4%	1153	0.8%	4.3	0.3%	np	
Walcha	1	2.2%	1080	0.8%	np		np	
Northern Inland	45	100.0%	138457	100.0%	1654.7	100.0%	$2.9	

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Agricultural Census 2011

Vegetable Production

At the 2011 Census there was one small vegetable producer in the Shire. The number of producers in Gunnedah Shire tends to vary depending on the yield from other crops. Intensive vegetable production was identified during the Community Consultation as a possible opportunity for Gunnedah Shire. The feasibility of vegetable production in the Shire has been assessed in the past. One of the main constraints was the lack of a vegetable processing plant in the Shire. A vegetable processing plant has now been established in Tamworth, which may change the economics of production and distribution.

Vegetable production is one of the fastest growing agricultural activities in Australia. Annually there are around 3.4 million tonnes of vegetables produced, with these having a Gross Product Value of over $3 billion. NSW accounts for 15% of vegetable production. 61% of vegetables are grown for the domestic fresh food market (36% to wholesalers, 25% to retailers and 2% direct to customers), with 32% going to processing plants and 5% exported. Vegetable production is forecast to increase over the next decade in-line with population growth (17% to 2020) and changing household demand (10% growth forecast above the 17%).

Trends in vegetable production include:

- Displacement of traditional market gardens from urban fringes as a result of urbanisation. Some activities are relocating to nearby locations and continuing to operate as small enterprises, while others are being taken up by larger producers on a far larger scale in more remote locations (eg Riverina, Central West).

- Increase in protective cropping (greenhouses) particularly on marginal land in close proximity to major population centres – protective cropping currently accounts for 20% of vegetable and cut flower production, and has grown between 4% and 6% per annum over the past 5 years. While capital intensive to establish, production is consistent in both yield and standard (not weather or climate dependent and pests and most variables can be controlled). The footprint for protective cropping is small, and there is minimal impact on the physical environment. Farms operate with closed water systems and can utilise grey water. Protective cropping is also labour intensive compared to other forms of agriculture. The minimum land area needed is around 20ha, with most enterprises using between 40-100ha.[22]

[22] Advice from Department of Primary Industries

- Precision agriculture – combined use of GPS, sensors (soil, water, plant, weather etc), satellite imagery and other information to enable growers to precisely evaluate optimum sowing density, fertiliser and water use etc.

- Changing consumer demand as people become more health conscious and interested in accessing fresh, locally produced (100 mile concept) quality produce, including organic produce. This is impacting on the two major supermarket chains which are now looking to purchase primarily Australian grown produce.

14.4 Livestock

Livestock production includes cattle, sheep, goat and other animal production for meat, poultry for meat & eggs, as well as horses.

At the 2011 Agricultural Census, the total value of livestock production (excluding poultry and eggs) for meat and livestock products (milk, wool) was $29.8million and $2.4million respectively. The value of poultry production for meat was $10.9 million.

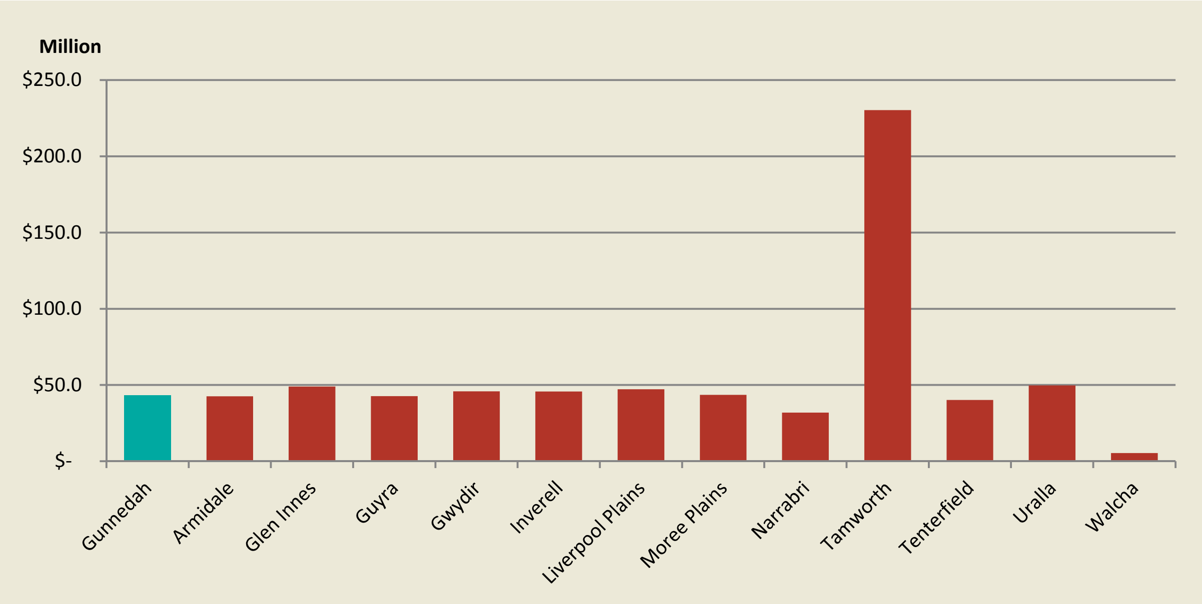
Within the Northern Inland Region, Tamworth Regional LGA accounts for 32.1% of the gross value of livestock production, with poultry production accounting for 35% of the gross value. Gunnedah Shire ranks 8th within the Region, however there is only $6.6 million separating 2nd and 8th position.

Table 14.4 Livestock Production, Gunnedah Shire - 2011

	Number of Enterprises	No Beasts	Production	Total Value $million	% of Region	
					Production	Value
Livestock (excluding poultry & horses)						
Dairy	8	245	Milk	$ 0.1	2.4%	0.7%
Beef (meat)	359	98,804	Meat	$25.9	6.1%	5.9%
Sheep	120	68,310	Meat	$ 1.6	2.0%	2.3%
			Wool	$ 2.4	-	2.7%
Pigs	15	6,269	Meat	$ 2.1	23.4%	22.8%
Goats	20	3,855	Meat	$ 0.1	12.2%	16.7%
Poultry						
Layers (eggs)	8	81	716 dozen eggs	np	np	np
Poultry (meat)	1	600,000		$10.9	10.4%	8.3%
Poultry (other)	4	152		np	np	np
Horses						
Stud	35	280				
Other	150	647				

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Agricultural Census 2011

Figure 14.5 Gross Value of Livestock Production (including poultry & livestock products), Northern Inland Region LGAs, 2011 - ($ million)



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Agricultural Census 2011

Cattle

In 2011 there were 416 cattle producers within Gunnedah Shire[23]. The bulk of production was beef cattle for breeding and slaughter, with the Shire having 98,804 head of beef cattle. The total value of beef cattle slaughtered was $25.6 million. There are 8 properties that have dairy cattle, with a total of 245 dairy cows in the Shire. The total value of milk production was $100,000.

The beef cattle sector is the largest single agricultural producer in Australia, with the value of on-farm production estimated to be $7.9 billion and an off-farm meat value of $11.6 million[24]. Australia-wide, there are an estimated 28.7 million head of cattle of which 34% are grain-fed. 66% of beef and veal produced is exported. Beef and live cattle exports are valued at $4.69 billion per annum and account for approximately 12% of the value of total Australian farm exports. Australian beef is exported to over 100 countries, with the largest markets being Japan, the United States and Korea. The outlook for the beef cattle market is positive however cattle prices are currently low. Growth in population and income world-wide is driving increased meat consumption, with strong growth in the export market. Locally, population growth is also resulting in increased consumption.

The beef livestock sector comprises producers, feedlots, processors, retailers and exporters who supply red meat to the domestic and international markets. There are two large feedlots, Caroona (35,000 head of cattle), and Killara (20,000 head) in Liverpool Plains Shire that draw stock from Gunnedah Shire. These feedlots currently have contracts in place with the major supermarket chains and are focused on 'finishing' rather than growing stock.

Support services and facilities to support the beef cattle production include grain / feed producers and mills, supplement producers, rural services and contractors (eg fencing, yards), saleyards, stock transport, stock and station agents, veterinary services, abattoirs, packaging, refrigerated transport, exporters etc. A significant proportion of grain, silage, legume crops and cotton seed produced in Gunnedah Shire is used for stock feed.

The Gunnedah Regional Saleyards is one of the largest saleyards in NSW. The saleyard is licensed for 5,000 head, and sells over 120,000 beasts per year. The saleyard has recently been significantly upgraded. A new saleyard, the Tamworth Regional Livestock Exchange (TRLX), has recently opened in Tamworth. The TRLX is a state-of-the-art, covered facility with a capacity of 5,500 head. TRLX competes directly with the Gunnedah

[23] Statistics in this paragraph are taken from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Agricultural Census, 2011
[24] Statistics in this paragraph are taken from Meat & Livestock Australia – Cattle – Australia's Beef Industry.

saleyards. Gunnedah has the advantage of road train access and draws cattle from the north western region as well as southern Queensland. Tamworth is seeking approval for road train access which, if successful, will further increase its competitiveness.

Export licensed abattoirs that draw cattle from Gunnedah Shire include Tamworth (Cargill), Ipswich, Queensland (AMH), and Scone (Primo Australia).

Sheep

In 2011 there were 120 sheep producers and 68,310 sheep in the Shire. The total value of meat production was $1.6 million, with the total value of wool production being $2.4 million.

The Australian sheep industry has undergone significant change over the last 2 decades, with changes accelerating over the last 5 years. Changes have included[25]:

- Significant decrease in the number of sheep in Australia (down from 170 million in 1990 to 73.1 million in 2011), with numbers continuing to fall. The number of sheep producers across Australia has also declined.
- There has been a shift in production from a wool focus to a meat focus, with far more cross-bred sheep.
- The gross value of meat is now equivalent to the gross value of wool.
- The diameter of the wool being produced has fallen over the last 15 years.

Reasons for the decline in the sheep industry include the contraction of the global and domestic demand for wool due to competition from other fibres and changes in consumer spending (partially due to GFC), the increase in demand for live sheep and meat exports, the lower yield from sheep compared to other commodities, and difficulties attracting labour. There has also been a shift in production with expansion of the sheep industry in Western Australia and a contraction in other States, with Western Australia producing sheep for live export primarily into the Middle East.

Australia is one of the world's leading producers of lamb and mutton, the largest exporter of mutton and live sheep, and the second largest exporter of lamb[26]. In 2011-12, Australia exported 49% of all lamb and 97.5% of all mutton produced with the Middle East being Australia's largest market for lamb (25%) and mutton exports (48%). The value of total lamb exports in 2011-12 was $1.094 million and mutton exports $401 million, with live sheep exports valued at $345 million.

The future of sheep production in Gunnedah Shire will be primarily influenced by market factors. Opportunities to grow the sector appear limited.

Pigs / Pork

Pig production in Gunnedah Shire is a contracting economic activity. In 2002, the Gunnedah-Tamworth-Boggabri area was the second largest pig producing area in NSW, responsible for 15% of pig production. In 2002 there were 11,036 breeding sows and gilts in the Northern Inland Region, the majority of which were in the Tamworth-Gunnedah Area. In 2011, the number of sows and gilts was 3,752, a decline of 196.3%. Over the past decade, the number of pig producers in Gunnedah Shire has contracted significantly. In first half of the decade, Gunnedah has around 35-40 pig producers, producing 500+ pigs per week for slaughter. At peak production there were 2,000 pigs per fortnight going through the pig sale yards in Gunnedah. At the 2011 Census there were 15 pig producers and 6,269 pigs (857 sows and gilts) in the Shire. There is one reasonably large operation, Leon's Pork, with the remainder being small, boutique piggeries. In 2011, the total value of pork meat production was $2.1 million. Since 2011, the number of producers has declined further with only 6-

[25] Sheep CRC Transferring Wool, Meat and the Sheep that Produce Them – The Declining Flock.
[26] Meat & Livestock Australia – Sheep – Australia's Sheepmeat Industry.

7 producers left in the Shire. With the exception of Leon's Pork, the remaining producers are very small operations, producing between 5 and 20 pigs per week.

The pig industry has been contracting Australia-wide. From 2005/6 to 2009/10 the number of breeding sows declined by 6.4% per annum while the number of pigs slaughtered fell by 4% per annum. Over the same period, consumption of pork in Australia increased by 20%, with imports increasing from 31% of pork consumed to over 50% of pork and 80-90% of bacon.

The decline in the pig industry is attributed to a number of factors including changes in import regulations enabling pork and pork products to be imported into Australia, higher production costs in Australia, re-structuring of the domestic market with Coles and Woolworths controlling the sector and a significant reduction in abattoirs prepared to kill pigs due to 'religious' pressures. The abattoirs at Tamworth no longer accept pigs, while the abattoir at Coonabarabran has recently closed. The closest abattoirs to Gunnedah licensed for pigs are near Kempsey on the NSW North Coast, Wollondilly in Sydney and Kingaroy in Queensland, with the future of the Wollondilly and Kingaroy plants uncertain due to urban encroachment. More recently, the cost of feed during the drought and rising electricity costs have also forced producers out of the industry.

Globally, the demand for pork is increasing substantially with most of the growth being in the Asian market. There are a number of countries growing their pork sectors (eg Denmark, Canada, United States) to service the Asian market, with these countries subsidising and protecting their pig industries. With high production costs in Australia, coupled with the high Australian dollar, Australian pig producers are not competitive in the global market.

With the growing focus on 'fresh' and 'locally produced' food there is very strong demand from both independent butchers and the restaurant trade in Sydney, the Hunter and Northern Inland Region for locally produced, quality pork. Pigs produced in Gunnedah are mainly processed at Kempsey and then sold to butchers and restaurants in Tamworth. Production in Gunnedah is not fully meeting the demand in Tamworth. There is also significant opportunity to sell direct to the restaurant trade in the Hunter Valley (Pokolbin and Newcastle areas) or to the Wollondilly abattoir for the Sydney restaurant trade or to provide suckling pigs for the Asian export trade. The transport of pigs from Gunnedah to Kempsey for slaughter has both cost and 'ethical' implications, with the transport time (7 hours on the truck) not being ideal.

With significant advances in technology, particularly waste water treatment, it would be possible to have a small, boutique slaughterhouse and packing operation in Gunnedah to process locally produced pigs. Logically, the slaughterhouse should be located on-site at Leon's Pork (no transport costs and higher quality meat due to minimum stress on the pigs), with the effluent being processed on site. Effluent from the piggery is currently used on-site for irrigation water to grow lucerne hay and fodder crops which are being used both in-house for pig feed and also sold locally for horse and stockfeed.

Goats

In 2011 there were 20 goat producers in the Shire, with a total 3,855 goats. Meat production was valued at $0.1 million.

Goat farming is a growth industry both in Australia and globally. Goats are farmed for meat, milk production and fibre, with goats for meat production being the fastest growing sector.

Australia is the world's largest exporter of goat meat with the meat exported in a number of forms – live goats (generally air-freighted to the Middle East), fresh and frozen carcasses and processed and packaged meat products. In 2011/12 goat meat exports were valued at $114 million with live exports valued at $9.65 million[27]. The global demand for goat meat significantly exceeds supply, with Australian farm-bred meat goats attracting a premium price in the European, Asian and Middle Eastern markets. Domestically, demand also significantly exceeds supply particularly for halal killed meat. Goat meat is sold as Capretto (milk fed kids – usually cooked whole) and Chevon, with strong demand both types. Issues with continuity of supply are the major constraint to growing the industry.

[27] Meat & Livestock Australia – Goats – Australia's Goat Meat Industry

Dairy goats are farmed for the production of milk, a significant proportion of which is used in the production of specialty cheeses. Two breeds of goats are bred for fibre production – the angora goat which produces mohair and the cashmere goat which produces cashmere. The global demand for cashmere significantly exceeds supply. The demand for mohair wool fell significantly in the 1990's however has recovered and is reported to be growing strongly.

Goats can be farmed on land used by beef cattle and also on less productive land, including hilly and weed infested areas. Goats consume around 80% woody shrubs and 20% pastures. Goats are ideally suited to small holdings in marginal country, with stocking rates being considerably higher than cattle (5-7 goats = 1 cow).

The infrastructure to support the goat industry in NSW is relatively limited. The closest abattoirs to Gunnedah that are licensed to process goat meat for domestic and export markets appear to be Kurri Meats, in Kurri Kurri and Top Cut meats at Sandgate in Newcastle. Ausgoat in Glen Innes will also buy goats from producers.

While there are opportunities for increased goat production, there are far higher yielding activities that can be undertaken on the land available within Gunnedah Shire.

Horses

In 2011, there were 927 horses in the Shire, of which 280 were stud horses, and the remainder used for recreational and farm activities.

The equine industry in Australia is a growth sector. The industry is extremely diverse and includes working horses (stock horses), racing (thoroughbred, trotting, pacing), competition and sporting associations (eg camp drafting, polo and polocrosse, show-jumping, dressage), working horses and breed associations, riding and pony clubs, and recreational and pleasure riding.

Economic activities include breeding, agistment, training and tuition, racing and other sporting events, marketing and selling, with flow-on benefits to a range of other activities including tourism, farm produce and veterinarian sectors.

Within NSW the Hunter Region is widely recognised for its equine activities, with the Upper Hunter (Scone) positioned as the 'Horse Capital of Australia'. The Region is known both for its thoroughbred studs and it's working and sporting horses, including Australian Stock Horses and Quarter Horses. With the development of AELEC, Tamworth is also emerging as an equine centre.

Thoroughbred Industry[28]

The Hunter Valley is Australia's largest producer, supplier and exporter of thoroughbred horses. The area is the second largest producer of thoroughbreds in the world, ranking behind the State of Kentucky in the USA. It is also one of three centres of Thoroughbred Breeding Excellence in the world, alongside Kentucky and Newmarket in the UK. The Hunter Valley produces approximately half of all thoroughbreds born in Australia each year and is responsible for over 70% in volume and 80-90% in value of Australian thoroughbred exports. It generates over $100 million in yearling sales annually.

There are over 100 thoroughbred studs in the Hunter Valley, the majority of which are located in the Upper Hunter sub-region, centred on Scone (within 2 hours of Gunnedah). 60% of these studs export horses. Annually, the industry in the Hunter contributes an estimated $5 billion to the Australian economy and $2.4 billion to the NSW economy and employs around 1,065 people (direct employment). There has been over $1 billion invested in the industry within the Hunter over the past decade. The industry within the Hunter has reached the critical mass needed for long term sustainability.

---

[28] Information on the thoroughbred industry is taken from Buchan Consulting (2011) *Upper Hunter Diversification Project* and the Hunter Thoroughbred Breeders Association website and 10 Point Plan.

The outlook for the thoroughbred industry is positive. The Asian Racing Market is growing strongly, with the Hunter Valley recognised as a respected supplier of thoroughbred horses. Over the past decade there has been a significant increase in the number of thoroughbred horses exported to Hong Kong (increase of 84%), Singapore (increase of 180%) and Malaysia (increase of 557%)[29]. Within the next 2-3 years, China is expected to legalise gambling on horse racing. This will open up a very significant market for the Thoroughbred industry.

The main threat to the industry is the continued expansion of coal mining, with increased dust levels and threats to water supply being major concerns. The State Government has moved to protect the equine industry from mining in the Upper Hunter LGA.

As it has become difficult to secure quality land in the Upper Hunter, the thoroughbred industry is looking at land 'over the range'. Liverpool Plains Shire has received a number of enquiries from thoroughbred studs looking to establish in the Liverpool Plains area. Most of the lucerne production in Liverpool Plains Shire is now going into pellets for the Upper Hunter horse studs, with supply not meeting demand. The stock feed mills in Gunnedah are also supplying the studs in the Hunter Valley.

Other Equine Industry Activities

Other equine industry activities in the Hunter Valley include specialist breed stud farms (including stock horses, quarter horses, haflingers, Arabians, warmbloods and miniature horses), agistment and spelling, horse and rider training, recreational and competitive riding and equestrian events.

The establishment of the Australian Equine and Livestock Events Centre (AELEC) in Tamworth is resulting in a significant increase in investment in competition and sporting horses in Tamworth (8 registered studs) and the surrounding area. AELEC is currently building an international standard Cross Country Course, and will be hosting two international eventing events per year. Tamworth Council estimates that the equine industry and associated events is worth an estimated $45 million to the Tamworth economy.

A major equine veterinarian hospital specializing in impregnating quarter horse mares, has been established in the Quirindi area. Coonamble Shire to the west of Gunnedah is developing its equine industry with the development of a large covered arena and an increase in horse and livestock events. Narrabri Shire is also seeing growth in horse ownership and horse sports.

Within Gunnedah Shire there are a number of small scale horse breeders as well as 2-3 operators exploring options for establishing studs and/or stabling-agistment complexes in the Kelvin-Gunnedah area. Gunnedah also has a College of Equine Dentistry as well as equine specialists attached to the stock feed mills.

As the equine industry develops, there will be increased demand for feed from within the Hunter Valley and surrounding region as well as from Asian markets. Location and reputation-wide, the stock feed mills in Gunnedah are very well positioned to service demand from the Hunter and surrounding region, and also to growth their export markets. Access to and security of supply of grain, legumes and oilseeds may however restrict the ability of the Mills to increase production.

Poultry

In 2011, there were 13 poultry producers in Gunnedah Shire of which 8 were producing eggs or breeders and 5 were producing layers for meat production. Only producer ('Woodleigh' at Curlewis) is of commercial size with this property being a breeder farm for the Baiada Group and having around 600,000 chickens. The gross value of poultry meat produced in the Shire was $10.9 million.

Within Australia and globally, the poultry industry is a strong growth sector. The two main arms of the industry are egg production and chicken meat (broiler) production, with minor activities including the production of ducks, turkeys, geese and game birds.

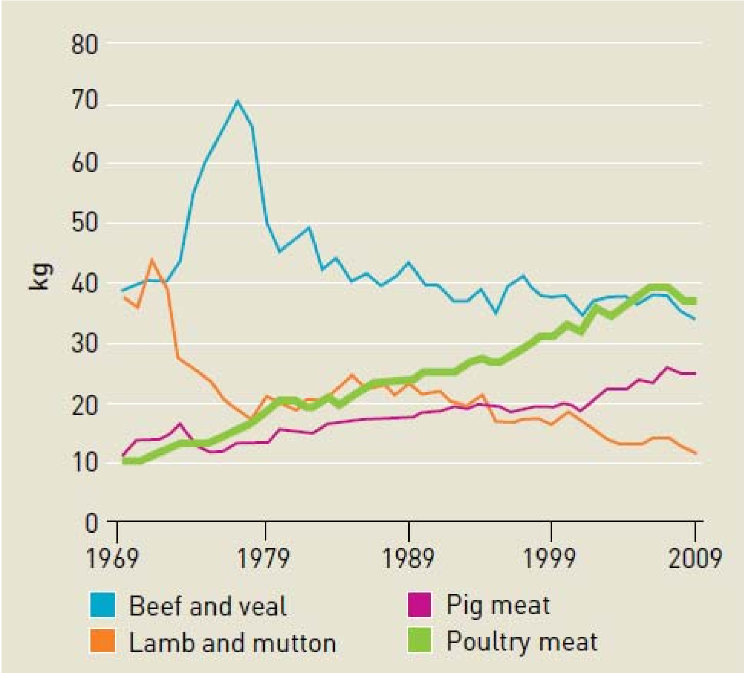
---

[29] Thoroughbred Breeders of the Hunter Association, 2010, *10 Point Plan of Action to Restore Balance, Certainty and Sustainability to the Hunter Valley*.

Australia-wide, commercial egg farms produce around 392 million eggs per year of which 55% are cage eggs, 34% free range and 9% barn produced. The value of eggs sold in Australia is $523.5 million per annum.

Over the past two decades, production of chicken meat in Australia has increased by 165%. Per capita consumption of poultry meat in Australia has increased from 10.5 kilograms per person per year in 1969-70 to 43.9kg in 2010-11[30].

Figure 14.6 Australian per capita Meat Consumption.



Source: ABARES (2010)

The chicken meat (broiler) industry, now produces around 500 million birds per annum, 32% of which are produced in NSW. Australia-wide there are around 800 commercial production farmers, of which 80% are contract growers. NSW has 270 growers[31], of which 85% are contract producers. Chicken meat is the third largest agricultural commodity produced in NSW, with a gross value of $686 million in 2010.

Just over 70% of chicken meat is produced by two main companies, Baiada[32] and Ingham Enterprises[33]. There are five medium sized producers (Red Lea and Cordina in NSW), each with between 1% and 3% of the market, and a multitude of small, specialty producers. Only 4% of chicken meat is exported with this going primarily to South Africa (33%), Hong Kong (21%) and the Philippines (18%). High domestic demand and higher cost structures compared to other producing countries, are the main factors mitigating against growing the export market.

The poultry industry is strongly vertically integrated with the major companies owning:

- Feed mills
- Breeding farms – produce fertile eggs
- Hatcheries – produce day old chickens
- Growing farms – chickens for eggs and chickens for meat
- Processing Plants
- Transport fleets

These activities need to be located in close proximity to each other to reduce stress on the chickens. Traditionally, the poultry industry has sought locations close to major markets (eg capital cities) however due to rising land and utility costs in these areas and urban encroachment, the locational dynamics are changing.

In NSW the poultry industry was concentrated in Sydney, however it is being displaced by urban development. Tamworth, Griffith (the Riverina), Central Coast (Mangrove Mountain) and the Lower Hunter are now the main centres of production, with large scale production increasingly concentrated around Tamworth and Griffith. The Northern Inland Region is the State's major producer of both eggs and chicken meat, accounting for 9.9% of the total value of the State's egg production and 17.9% of meat production. Within the Northern Inland

[30] Australian Chicken Meat Federation (2011) The Australian Chicken Meat Industry: An Industry Profile.
[31] NSW Department of Primary industries (2012) Best Practice Management for Meat Chicken Production in New South Wales
[32] Baiada acquired Bartter Enterprises (Steggles) in 2009 and continues to produce under the Steggles brand.
[33] Australian Chicken Meat Federation (2011) The Australian Chicken Meat Industry: An Industry Profile.

Region, poultry production and processing is concentrated in Tamworth, with Tamworth producing 68.3% of Region's eggs and 89.2% of the chicken meat. Baiada has growing farms in Gunnedah Shire (1) and Tamworth as well as a processing plant and a retail factory outlet in Tamworth. Redlea Chickens also has a processing plant in Tamworth.

Activities that support the poultry sector include feed producers, breeders, egg packaging, equipment suppliers (growing and packaging), veterinarian services, vaccines and medicines, building and construction and research and development. A number of the grain producers in Gunnedah Shire produce grain for poultry feedmills. An increasing amount of sorghum is being used to produce chicken pellets. Gunnedah Timbers sells sawdust to the poultry farms within Gunnedah and Tamworth LGAs.

Facilitating further growth of the poultry industry / poultry processing is a core strategy in the Economic Development Strategy for Tamworth Regional LGA. Baiada is actively looking for new producers. The main locational requirements are proximity to the processing plant (location in Tamworth and adjoining LGAs) and access to plentiful water, with water used both to cool the chickens and for cleaning. There are opportunities for Gunnedah Shire in terms of poultry production sheds and increasing demand for feed and sawdust.

14.5 Services to Support Agriculture

There are a diverse range of services available in Gunnedah Shire to support the agricultural sector, with these services including:

- Agricultural spraying / aerial spraying
- Consultants – advisory, farm planning, environmental, soils, financial
- Contract harvesting
- Fencing
- Stone picking
- Farm Machinery – sales and service
- Silos and storage
- Irrigation & plumbing
- Engineering & fabrication
- Veterinary
- Stock & Station Agents
- Grain Merchants
- Wool Buyers
- Saleyards
- Transport
- General business services – legal, financial, IT etc.
- Labour hire
- Feed mills & suppliers

Services that were identified as not available but needed in Gunnedah are:

- Grain drying facility
- Seed clean plant – eg for linseed, mung beans etc (seed is being sent to Forbes and Young).
- Bar code printing
- Slaughterhouse and packing facilities for pigs

In the agricultural machinery sector it is becoming increasingly difficult for small operators to compete in sales, parts and repairs. Equipment is increasingly being sold with warranties and services agreements in place. Machinery is often fitted with technology that tracks and sends performance data to the manufacturer for diagnostics and action.

AgQuip is a significant event for a number of the agricultural producers and suppliers within the Shire, with the opportunity to showcase and sell products and services.

14.6 Challenges Facing the Agricultural Sector in Gunnedah Shire

Challenges faced by the Agricultural sector in Gunnedah Shire include:

- Global economic factors – fluctuations in the Australian dollar, trade regulations and policies and competition from overseas producers (many of whom are subsidised) for access to global markets and competition for imports.

- Threats to production from coal mining and gas exploration and production in the Shire. Issues relate to:

    - Potential damage to ground and surface water which under-pin the viability of production.
    - Dust pollution – which has the potential to impact very significantly on crop production, particularly cotton and grain.
    - Signficant increases in land prices, with the coal companies paying well in excess to the agricultural value of the land.
    - Loss of productive land and agricultural activities which has impacts on the long term viability of supply and service chains.

- Access to water – the introduction of the water sharing plans has been a major challenge for the agricultural sector, resulting is significant structural and work practice changes.

- Diffulties in sourcing labour, skilled contractors and trades, particularly seasonal labour. The agricultural sector cannot compete with salaries paid by the mining sector with a net loss of farm workers. In addition, farming is now a 'science' with farm workers needing higher level skills than in the past, including technological and computer skills. Agricultural training programs in secondary schools, TAFE and at Univeristy level have been scaled back, with the number of students being trained being far less than the sector requires. There is increasing use of workers brought in from overseas, particularly for seasonal work, on various work permits and visas.

- Difficulties in accessing rail transport. The coal companies have locked in long term contracts for both rail stock (trains) and rail time. Agricultural produce is increasingly being moved by truck which increases transport and handling costs, or sent to Narrabri Shire for containerisation and then shipped by train back through Gunnedah – again a cost impost for producers.

  The ARTC Hunter Valley Rail Corridor Strategy makes provision for seven daily non-coal freight trains on the North West line (Newcastle to Narrabri). According to the Strategic Regional Landuse Plan, non-coal freight and passenger trains currently average 4.7 movements per day. In addition, the non-coal freight trains are significantly shorter than the 1,328m trains approved for the route, providing opportunities for increased train size. While the Regional Landuse Plan concludes that there appears to be sufficient capacity on the line for non-coal trains, it does not take into consideration the seasonality of the agricultural sector and the significant fluctuation in demand for rail access nor the capability of the rail infrastructure at the grain silos to accommodate longer trains and/or larger wagons.

- Increasing energy costs – both electricity and fuel.

- Difficulty in accessing goods and services – traditional service businesses in Gunnedah (eg engineering, welding automotive and equipment repairs) have become more focussed on servicing the mining sector which has the resources to pay for 'immediate' attention. Agricultural producers are increasing taking their business out of the Shire to Quirindi and Tamworth which are still rural focussed.

- Restrictions on road trains coming east of the Gunnedah Saleyards. Road trains servicing the cotton and citrus industries are parking on the western side of Gunnedah and dropping a 'trailer' and making multiple trips to the producers, then reconnecting the trailers to transport product out of the Shire. This is increasing the number of truck movements within the Shire and is inefficient and increasing transport costs. Transport cost-wise producers to the east of Gunnedah are less competitve than producers located in the west of the Shire and in Narrabri and Moree Plains Shires.

- Significant scaling back of investment in research and development within the sector and agronomy and other farm services. Farmers are not receiving the same of level of support and access to 'best practice' management systems as they have had in the past.

14.7 Strategic Considerations – Agriculture

Consideration	Comment
Protection of land and water assets	Ensure that productive agricultural land and water resources are protected from the direct and indirect impacts of mining and gas exploration and production and that water rights and allocations are retained and protected.
Attracting and retaining skilled agricultural workers	The agricultural sector is facing competition from the mining sector for access to labour, with the agricultural sector not able to meet the salaries offered by the mining sector. Labour shortages are being further compounded by the changes in skills needed (more scientific, technology and IT based) and the reduction in the tertiary courses offered and places available to study agriculture. This issue needs to be addressed on a number of fronts including: • Encouraging secondary school students to consider agriculture and take up traineeships and apprenticeships in the sector. In 2012 the NSW Government introduced 'AgCAPS' school-based traineeships as a pilot program within the Region. The program enables students to complete Certificate II in Agriculture as part of the subject of Primary Industries and undertake paid work within the Agrifood industry sector. The program was introduced into Gunnedah High School in 2013, however was only taken up by one student.[34] There are other rural based traineeships also on offer within the Region, however there has been no take-up of these. Opportunities to raise the profile of, and increase the attractiveness of these programs need to be explored between producers, TAFE and the high schools. • Exploring opportunities to train workers with skills that are transferable between the mining, farming and other sectors such as manufacturing and construction. This should be addressed as part of the development of the course content for the proposed Trades Training Centre. • Working with farmers to develop strategies, incentives etc to offer attractive alternatives to the mine employment conditions, to recruit and retain staff. • Exploring opportunities to bring in temporary and permanent overseas workers. For temporary workers, explore possibilities for farmers to work together to move workers from one farm to the next, with the farmers sharing the costs of visas etc.
Access to research and development, and up-skilling farm owners	Long term sustainability, increases in productivity and enhanced financial performance will be driven by adoption of best practice principles and innovation. Farmers need access to information, support, tools and skills now to adopt best practice land management and farming principles and to understand and capitalise

[34] NSW Government – School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships in NSW (2013)

Consideration	Comment
	on the increasingly diversified and complex market opportunities.
Transport bottle-necks and increasing costs	The Gunnedah Rail Bridge overpass and the upgrading of the Gunnedah Goods Yards will help to reduce one of the bottlenecks on the North West Rail line. Closure of the Marquis Street level crossing would also increase operational efficiency, improve rail access to the Namoi Flour Mill and reduce risks to the public. Planning studies undertaken into rail capacity may not have factored in the significant seasonal fluctuations in demand in the agricultural sector nor assessed the capacity of the rail infrastructure at the grain silos to accommodate longer trains and/or larger wagons. This is an issue that needs to be assessed at a regional / State level. Seeking special consideration to allow road train access to the east of Gunnedah (possibly restricted to harvest time for specific crops) would increase Gunnedah's competitiveness and reduce transport costs and truck movements on local roads.
Trend to containerisation	A number of global markets (eg China) are moving towards containers rather than bulk delivery. Produce from Gunnedah is currently being transported to Narrabri where it is being containerised and then transported by train back through Gunnedah to Ports in Newcastle and Sydney. The opportunity to establish a container terminal in Gunnedah should be explored.
Processing and Value Adding	Gunnedah Shire has a number of plants (Mills, Cotton Gin, Olive Crushing) that process agricultural products. These plants provide both a market for local produce as well as employment. Plans to expand production should be encouraged and supported by Council. Opportunities to value-add to local products (eg slaughtering and packaging of pig meat) or provide services that are currently not available in the Shire (eg seed cleaning plant, grain drying plant, bar code printing) should also be investigated, and where feasible, supported.
Rising Energy Costs	A number of farmers in the Shire are trialling alternative energy sources (eg CSG, solar) to power vehicles and equipment (eg pumps, monitoring systems, cool rooms etc). Farming applications should be taken into consideration in negotiating access to gas supplies.
Consumer preferences for fresh food / local produce / quality products	While Gunnedah has a number of specialty food producers, there is a low level of awareness of these producers in the market place. Currently Gunnedah Shire only has one producer listed in the Food and Wine Directory produced by RDA Northern Inland / Trade and Investment NSW. Other opportunities to showcase local produce and products (eg through the Visitors Information Centre, at travel trade shows etc) should also be explored. Development / diversification options that were examined and 'dismissed' in the past may become increasingly viable due to changes in consumer preferences and/or access to infrastructure (eg vegetable processing plant in Tamworth).
Trend towards on-line purchasing of rural supplies	The trend towards on-line purchasing of rural supplies could have significant ramifications for both the wholesale and retail (farmers not coming into town) sectors in Gunnedah. Retailer and wholesaler business 'models' need to be re-assessed to address trends and to ensure that the businesses and the services they provide remain 'relevant' to the agricultural community.

15. EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES

Mining activity within Gunnedah Shire incorporates:

- Coal Mining
- Exploration for Coal Seam Gas
- Gravel / road base extraction
- Clay extraction for brick and tile manufacturing

In 2011 there were 390 residents in Gunnedah Shire employed in the Mining sector.

15.1 Coal Mining

Industry Overview[35]

Australia is the fourth largest producer of coal in the world, accounting for around 30% of the world coal trade. In 2011 Australia was the world's largest exporter of metallurgical coal and the second largest exporter of thermal coal. Australia has the 5th largest black coal resources in the world.

In 2010-11 Australia produced 345 million tonnes (Mt) of black coal, with 283Mt exported to world markets. Combined, NSW and Queensland produced 90% of Australia's export coal. In 2010-11 the value of Australia's coal exports was $43.7 billion. The majority of Australia's coal is exported to the Asian region. In 2011, Australia's top four export markets for metallurgical coal were Japan (40.8 Mt), India (28.9 Mt), Republic of Korea (16.5 Mt) and China (13.7 Mt). Australia's top four export markets for thermal coal were Japan (65.4 Mt), the Republic of Korea (29.5 Mt), China (19.9Mt) and Taiwan (19.1 Mt).

At current production rates, Australia's economic, demonstrated resources of black coal are estimated to have a life of nearly 100 years. Production is however being ramped up and is expected to reach 486Mt by 2016-17. Over the medium term, total Australian metallurgical and thermal coal exports are forecast to increase by nearly 72 per cent from 283 Mt in 2010–11 to 486 Mt in 2016–17.

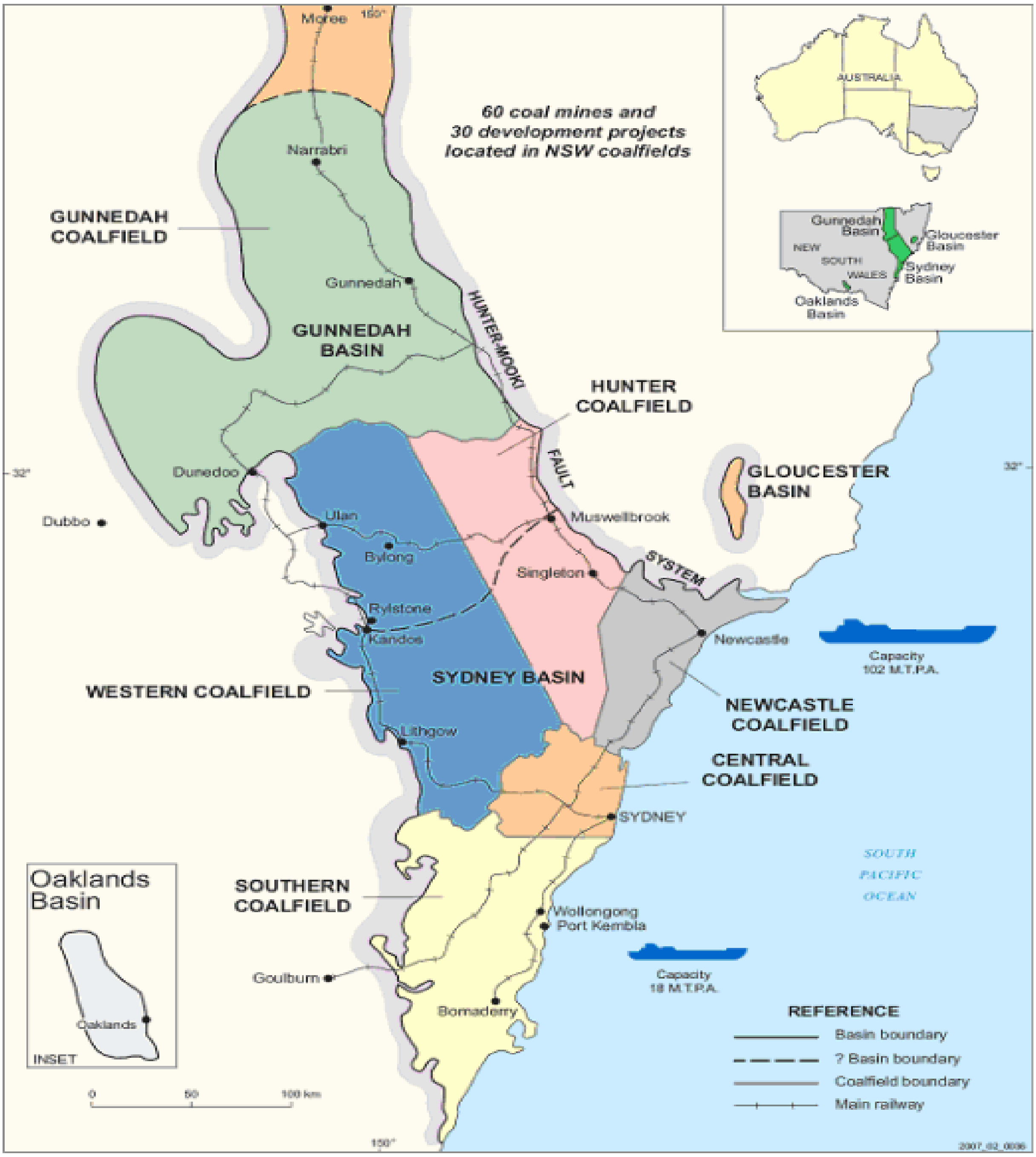
In 2010/11 NSW produced 204.852Mt of raw coal of which 156.951Mt was saleable. 77.6% of saleable coal in NSW was exported (121.801Mt) of which approximately 79.4% was thermal coal and 20.6% was metallurgical coal[36]. The State's major coal reserves are located in the Sydney-Gunnedah Basin, which extends for 500 kilometres from Sydney through to Narrabri. There are five major coalfields within the Basin: Hunter, Newcastle, Southern, Western and Gunnedah. Gunnedah Shire is located within the Mullaley sub-basin of the Gunnedah Coalfield.

In 2010/11 there were around 46,200 people directly employed in coal extraction Australia-wide, with 21,126 people employed in NSW. Research has indicated that the broader coal economy (ie related services and industries) has a workforce that is approximately 3.1 higher than the coal extraction workforce. Australia-wide employment in the broader coal economy is estimated at 170,000 while in NSW it is estimated that 59,200 people are employed in the coal economy[37].

---

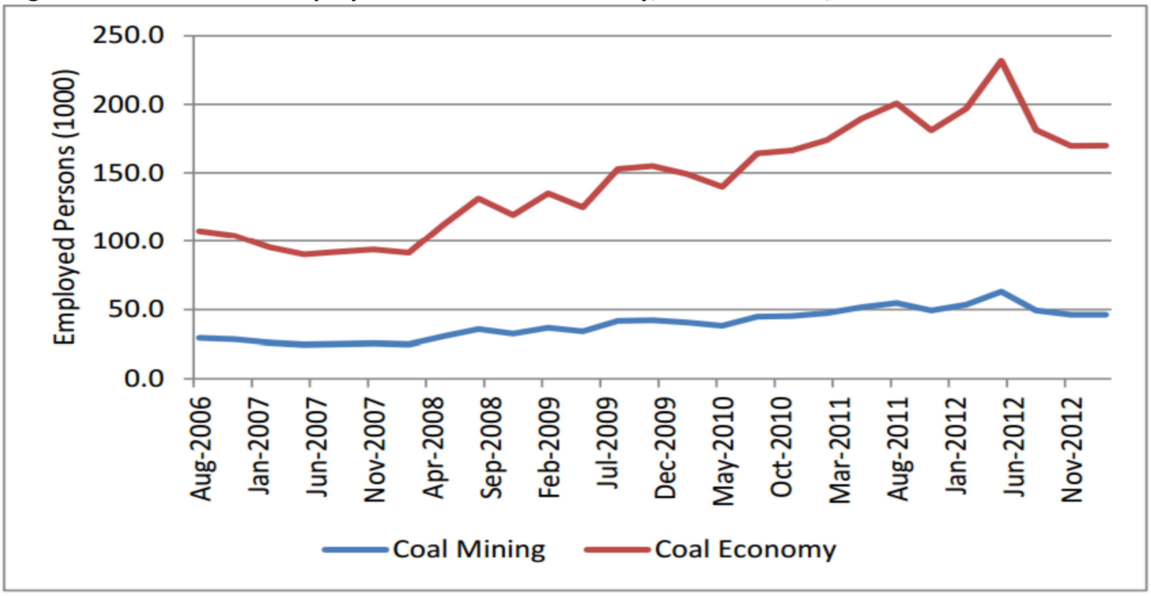
[35] http://www.ret.gov.au/resources/mining/australian_mineral_commodities/coal/Pages/australia_coal_industry.aspx
[36] Trade and Investment NSW, Division of Resources and Energy (2013) New South Wales Coal Industry Profile
[37] Davidson S and de Silva A (2013) The Australian Coal Industry – Adding Value to the Australian Economy

Figure 15.1 NSW Coal Fields



Source: Trade and Investment NSW, Division of Resources and Energy (2013) New South Wales Coal Industry Profile

Figure 15.2 Estimated Employment in the Coal Economy, Australia-wide, 2006-2012



Source: Davidson S and de Silva A (2013) The Australian Coal Industry – Adding Value to the Australian Economy using data from ABS Cat. 6291.0.55.003

The coal sector has very strong linkages to other sectors within the economy. Research into the value of the coal industry within Australia found that for every $100 increase in coal output there was a $17.81 increase in the output of the top ten industries that service the coal sector.

Table 15.1 Top Ten Industries Stimulated as a Result of a $100 Increase in Coal Output.

Sector	Increase in Output per $100 increase in Coal Output
Exploration and Mining Support Services	$ 5.299
Construction Services	$ 1.472
Coal Mining	$ 1.466
Finance	$ 1.355
Petroleum and Coal Product Manufacturing	$ 1.325
Rail Transport	$ 1.258
Non-Residential Property Operators and Real Estate Services	$ 1.252
Wholesale Trade	$ 1.220
Transport Support Services and Storage	$ 1.106
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	$ 1.071
Rental and Hiring Services (except Real Estate)	$ 0.985
Total Top Ten Industries	**$17.809**

Source: Davidson S and de Silva A (2013) The Australian Coal Industry – Adding Value to the Australian Economy using data from ABS Cat. 6291.0.55.003

As an export industry, coal mining is subject to world economic factors, with the industry being cyclical. The contraction of the major world economies as a result of the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) in 2009, has resulted in a reduction in the demand for coal. In addition, the high value of the Australian dollar has increased the price of Australian coal. There has also been a substantial increase in the amount of coal being exported from other countries, particularly the Americas.[38] The price for Australian coal peaked in January 2011, at USD$141.94 per metric tonne (mt)[39]. In August 2013, the price was USD$82.46/mt, a fall of 41.9%. Falling prices have resulted in a contraction of the coal mining sector with mining companies suspending marginal operations, postponing expansion plans and reducing costs, primarily by laying off contractors and some staff. The coal price is expected to stabilise around current levels, while demand for coal is expected to increase as the world economy recovers and manufacturing is ramped up.[40]

[38] Reserve Bank of Australia – Statement on Monetary Policy, February 2013.
[39] www.ycharts.com
[40] Reserve Bank of Australia – Statement on Monetary Policy, February 2013.

Capacity constraints with rail and coal loading infrastructure has been an issue for the coal sector, particularly in the Gunnedah Basin. The expansion and upgrading of the rail network and port infrastructure is continuing despite the contraction in the industry.

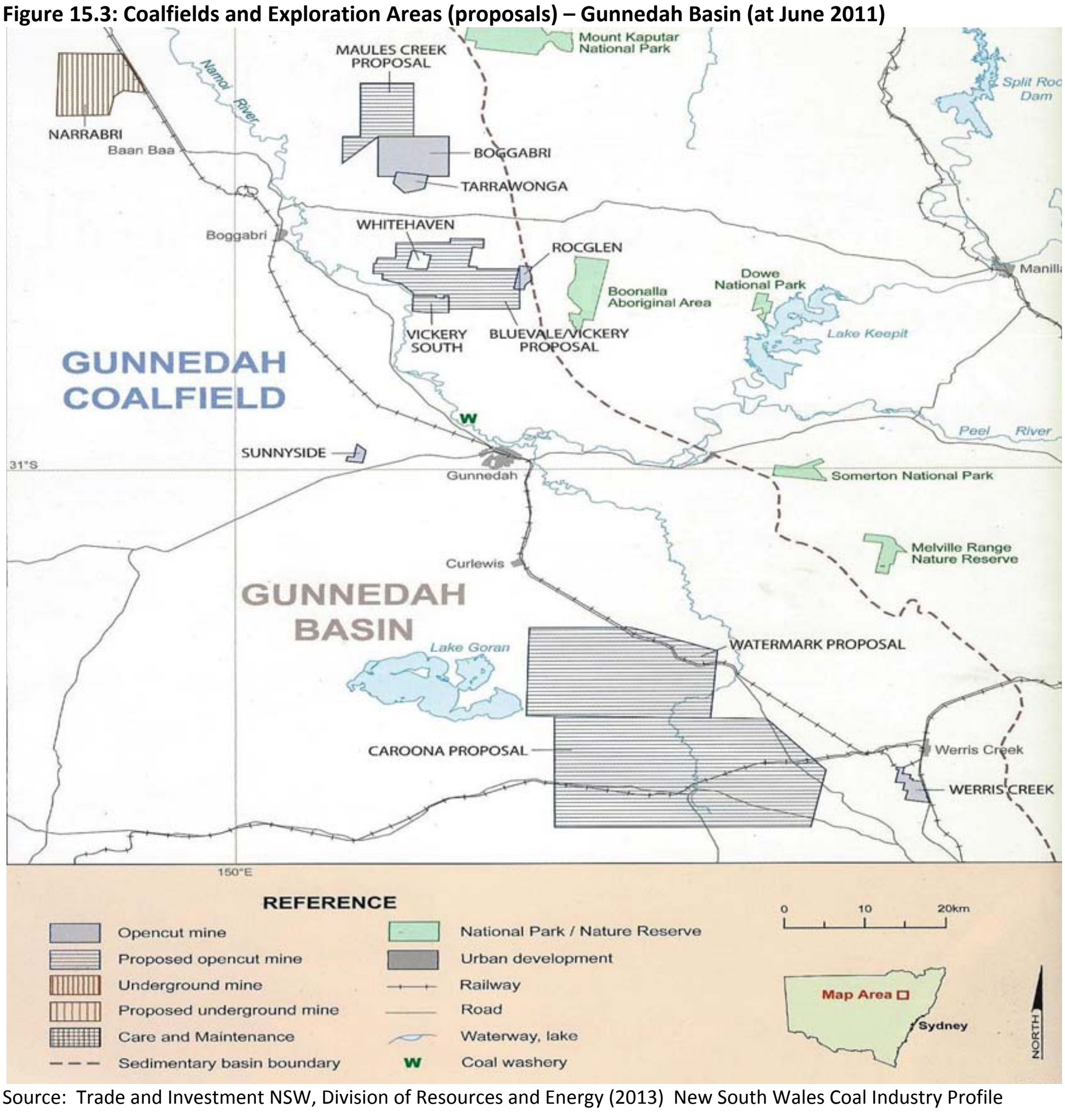
Gunnedah Basin

The Gunnedah Basin is referred to as the 'New Frontier' for coal mining in NSW. In June 2011, the estimated coal resource in the Gunnedah Basin was 2,054.6Mt, equating to 11.3% of coal reserves in NSW.

Coal mining has occurred on a small scale in the Basin for more than 135 years, with activity focussed on Gunnedah. Mining virtually ceased in 2000 with the closure of the Gunnedah Colliery however with increasing coal prices, was ramped back-up. Mining operations commenced at Werris Creek in 2005, followed by the Tarrawonga and Boggabri Mines in 2006, Rocglen and Sunnyside in 2008, and the Narrabri North Underground Mine in 2010. Approval has recently been granted for mining at Maules Creek, just south of Narrabri. The Maules Creek area is one of the largest coal reserves remaining in NSW.

Coal exploration licenses have also been granted to BHP Billiton (Caroona EL) and to China Shenhua Energy Coal (Watermark EL). Whitehaven is also in the process of seeking approval for the Victory South project, and has started the process to gain approval to extend the Tarrawonga Mine.

Figure 15.3: Coalfields and Exploration Areas (proposals) – Gunnedah Basin (at June 2011)



Source: Trade and Investment NSW, Division of Resources and Energy (2013) New South Wales Coal Industry Profile

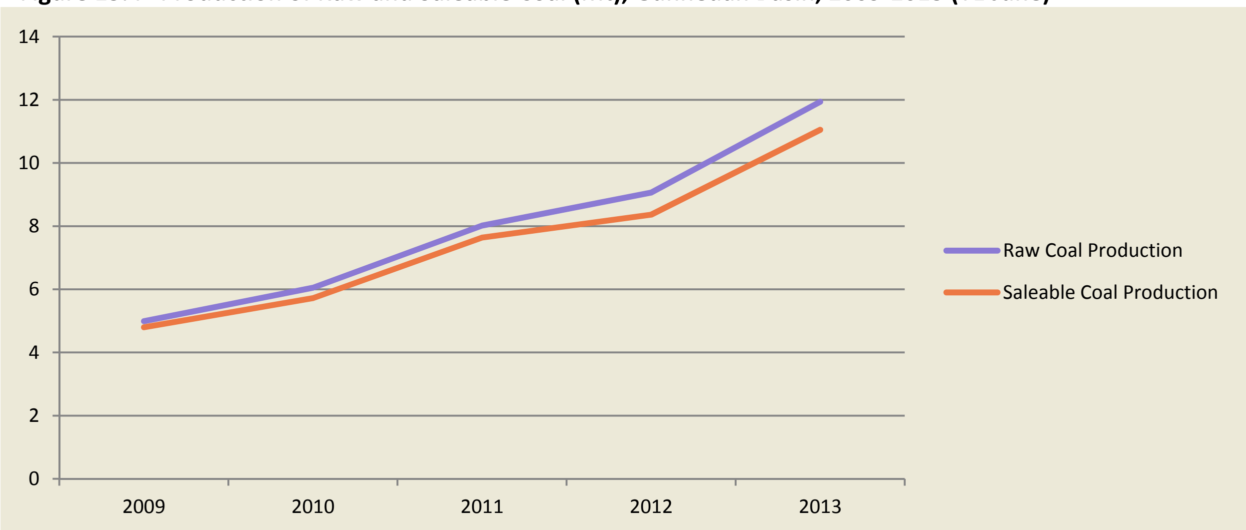
Production

Boggabri Coal (Idemitsu) operates the Boggabri Colliery, with Whitehaven operating the remainder of the collieries within the Basin. Whitehaven will also operate the Maules Creek Mine. Whitehaven employs around 550 people, the majority of whom are based in the Gunnedah Basin.

In 2010/11, 8.02Mt of raw coal was extracted from the Gunnedah Basin, producing 7.64Mt of saleable coal. (Table 15.2). Trade & Investment NSW has yet to release the 2011/12 and 2012/13 production statistics. Production over this period can be estimated by adding together the quarterly production statistics released by Whitehaven, and information provided on the Idemitsu – Boggabri Coal website. Estimated production of raw coal in 2011/12 was 9.063Mt, up 13% on 2010/11, with a further increase to 11.939Mt in 2012/13. Over the same period, saleable coal production is estimated to have increased to 8.365Mt in 2011/12 and to 11.052Mt in 2012/13, annual growth rates of 9.5% and 32.1% respectively.

Over the next few years, production in the existing mines is expected to increase by 6.6Mt to 18.5Mt (55% increase on 2012/13 production estimates). In addition, the Maules Creek Mine has approval to produce 13Mt per annum bringing the total production to around 31.5Mt per annum (163.8% increase on 2012/13 production estimates). Production would be further increased if the Caroona and/or Watermark mines proceed. Shenhua is proposing to produce 10Mt per annum, with production planned to commence in 2015. The Rocglen Mine is expected to cease production in 2016, with employees likely to be transferred to other Whitehaven operations.

Figure 15.4 Production of Raw and Saleable Coal (Mt), Gunnedah Basin, 2009-2013 (YE June)



Source: 2009-2011 Production Figures taken from Trade and Investment NSW, Division of Resources and Energy (2013) New South Wales Coal Industry Profile.
2012-2013 Production Figures estimated from – Whitehaven Coal, Quarterly Reports and Idemitsu Australia website.

Table 15.2 Coal Resources Production Gunnedah Basin

Mine / Proposal	Operator / Proponent	Reserves Mt	Raw Production Mt				Saleable Production Mt				Planned Production per annum
			2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	% change 8/9 – 10/11	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	% change 8/9 – 10/11	
Operating Mines											
Boggabri OC	Idemitsu Australia	135.0	1.44	1.81	2.87	99.3%	1.44	1.81	2.87	99.3%	4.3Mt (2013) 6.5Mt
Narrabri UG	Whitehaven	133.4			0.23	-			0.23	-	6Mt
Rocglen OC	Whitehaven	13.0	0.51	1.02	1.17	129.4%	0.46	0.89	0.9	95.7%	-
Sunnyside OC	Whitehaven	27.7	0.03	0.27	0.30	900.0%	0.03	0.24	0.28	833.3%	1Mt
Tarrawonga OC	Whitehaven	47.6	1.69	1.62	1.64	-3.0%	1.58	1.44	1.56	-1.3%	3Mt
Werris Creek OC	Whitehaven	29.1	1.11	1.33	1.80	62.2%	1.11	1.33	1.80	62.2%	2Mt
Canyon OC	Whitehaven	0.21	0.01			-	0.18	0.01		-	-
Approved											
Maules Creek	Whitehaven	678.0									13Mt
Proposals											
Bluevale / Vickery	Whitehaven	138.7									
Vickery South	Whitehaven	58.5									
Caroona	BHP Billiton	na									10Mt
Watermark	Shenhua	932.0									
Total		**2054.6**	**4.99**	**6.05**	**8.02**	**60.7%**	**4.80**	**5.72**	**7.64**	**59.2%**	

Source: Trade and Investment NSW, Division of Resources and Energy (2013) New South Wales Coal Industry Profile
MT = Million tonnes

Employment

In 2011 the mining operations in the Gunnedah Basin employed around 877 people, either directly or through on-site contractors[41]. At the 2011 Census, there were 390 people resident in Gunnedah Shire employed in the mining sector, the majority of whom were likely to be employed in the coal mines.

From 2007 to 2011, employment increased by 211%, with most of the growth being in 2010 and 2011. With the decrease in coal prices in 2012 and 2013, the mining companies reduced their staff levels, primarily by laying-off contractors.

Table 15.3 Employment in Coal Mining Operations, Gunnedah Basin, 2007-2011.

Mine	Operator	Employment – Direct & Contractors				
		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Boggabri OC	Idemitsu	102	94	103	159	225
Narrabri UG	Whitehaven				38	249
Rocglen OC	Whitehaven			50	58	75
Sunnyside OC	Whitehaven			10	17	27
Tarrawonga OC	Whitehaven	43	48	56	92	115
Werris Creek OC	Whitehaven	86	112	89	148	151
Canyon OC	Whitehaven	51				
Processing Plant	Whitehaven		71	48	36	35
Total Employment		**282**	**325**	**356**	**548**	**877**
% change pa			15.2%	9.5%	53.9%	60.0%

Trade and Investment NSW, Division of Resources and Energy (2013) New South Wales Coal Industry Profile.
OC=Open Cut, UG=Underground

The Maules Creek Mine is expected to employ 340 people during the construction phase and around 470 people when fully operational. The operation will have both an open cut and underground component, requiring specialist skills and expertise for the underground mining. Most of the construction workers are expected to be accommodated in the MAC Villages in Narrabri and Boggabri. Narrabri is the closest town to Maules Creek and is likely to attract the mine-workers who relocate to the Region.

Shenhau estimates that the Watermark project, would employ 600 fulltime equivalent positions during the construction phase and a similar number when the mine becomes operational. Construction is programmed to commence in 2014 (dependent on approvals), with the first coal being extracted in 2015.

BHP Billiton (Caroona) is at the mine design and Environmental Impact Assessment phase and is around 5 years away from being in a position to commence construction. The construction workforce is expected to fluctuate between 600 to 800 people over a 2-3 year time frame. The operational workforce is likely to be in the order of 250-350 people.

For both the Watermark and Caroona projects, construction and operational employees (in the short-term) are likely to be accommodated in the MAC Village being established at Werris Creek. Gunnedah Shire will be competing with Tamworth and Liverpool Plains Shires in attracting workers who are looking to relocate permanently to the area.

Challenges Facing the Coal Sector

Challenges facing the coal mining sector in the Gunnedah Basin include:

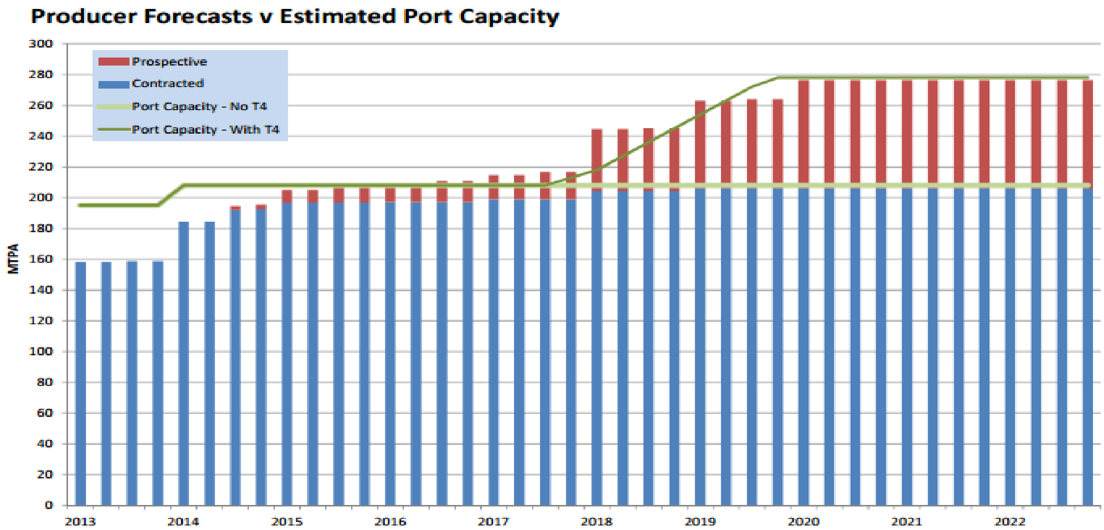
- The industry is subject to global demand and prices which influences production rates and creates the 'boom and bust' cycles. The significant decline in the coal price has resulted in the mining companies streamlining their staffing and retrenching workers and contractors.

[41] Trade and Investment NSW, Division of Resources and Energy (2013) New South Wales Coal Industry Profile.

- Transport infrastructure capacity constraints – growth in production is restricted by capacity constraints on the rail network and at the Port of Newcastle. One of the main constraints in the rail infrastructure is the Gunnedah Goods Yard. ARTC is proposing to upgrade the Goods Yard by 2015 which will increase the efficiency and the capacity of the North West Rail-line.

  Planning for the development of Terminal Four in the Port of Newcastle is underway, with the proposal being to build facilities within the capacity to handle 70Mt coal per annum, with the option to expand to 120Mtpa when required.

Figure 15.5 Forecast Volume at Newcastle Port compared to estimated Port Capacity (MTpa)



Source: ARTC Hunter Valley Corridor Capacity Study 2013-2022

- Access to professional, technical, trades and other skilled workers – this will be exacerbated as the Maules Creek, Watermark and Caroona Projects come on-line. Gunnedah TAFE does not offer the automotive and trades courses required by the mining sector. While courses are available at the TAFEs in Tamworth and Muswellbrook, sending staff to these TAFEs has productivity, cost and WHS implications for employers. The Trades Training Centre proposed for the Region will assist in addressing labour issues.

- Conflict and opposition from sections of the community to mining, particularly the potential impacts on agricultural productivity and groundwater resources. The level of acceptance / opposition is one of the factors that will be taken into consideration by mine-related workers and businesses considering moving to the Region.

- Lack of high speed broad-band access in rural / remote areas within the Gunnedah Basin and specialist IT services locally.

15.2 Coal Seam Gas

Industry Overview[42]

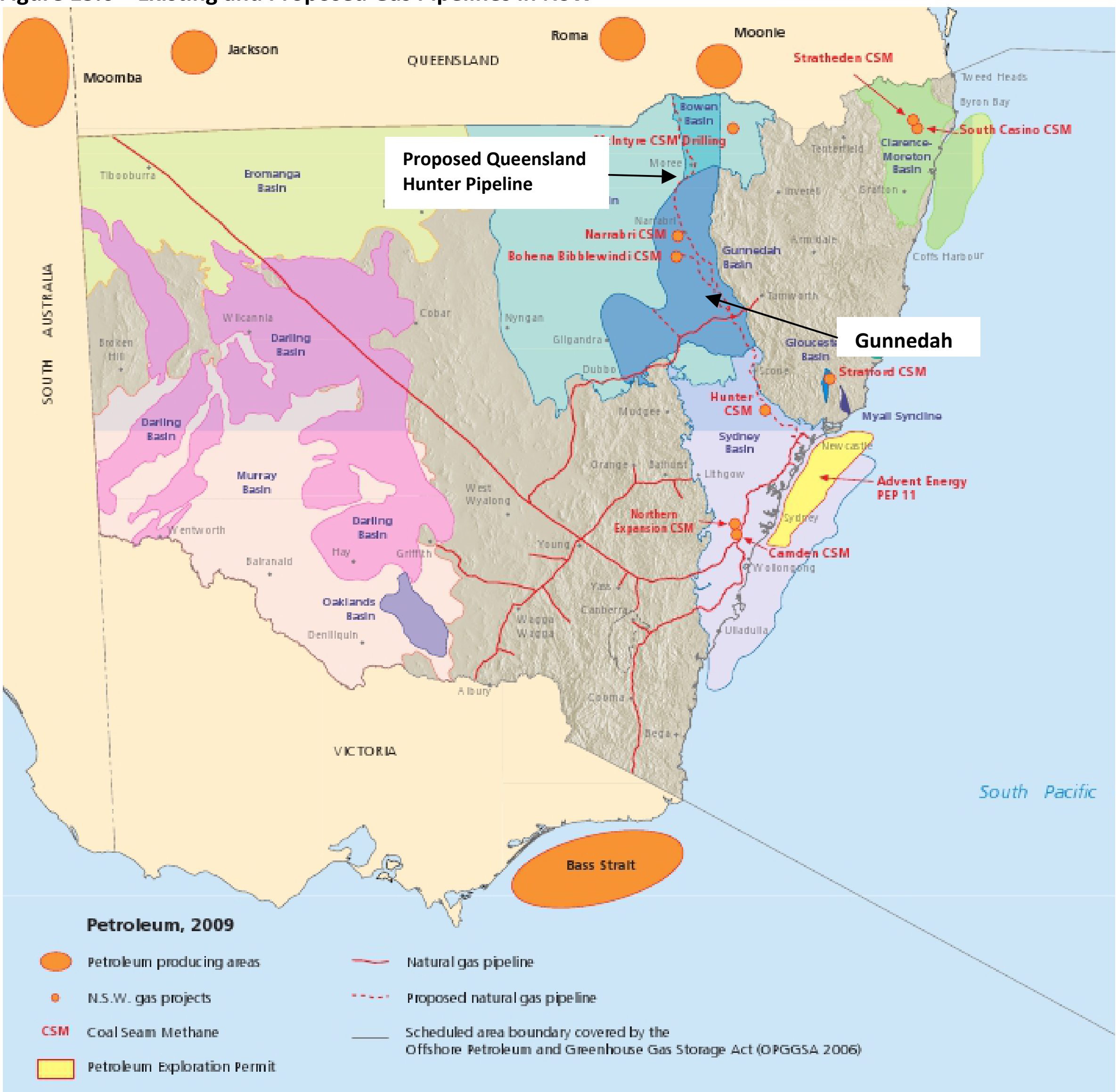
The Coal Seam Gas (CSG) industry incorporates the exploration, production and delivery of natural gas extracted from coal seams. CSG occurs naturally within coal seams, generally at depths of 200-1000 metres below the earth's surface. The gas consists primarily of methane (CH_4) and is extracted through drilling processes.

[42] Information in this Section is taken primarily from the Coal Seam Gas Fact Sheets produced by Trade & Investment NSW Division of Resources and Energy.

Within Australia, the major CSG resources are found in Queensland's Bowen and Surat Basins, in NSW in the Gunnedah, Gloucester and Sydney basins, and on the NSW-Queensland border in the Clarence-Moreton Basin. The commercial exploration and production of Coal Seam Gas (CSG) in Australia began in 1996. Today CSG accounts for around 30% of gas consumed in Australia.

NSW is a major consumer of gas, with gas piped to more than 1.1 million homes and businesses. CSG is also used to generate electricity in gas-fired power stations as a low emission alternative to coal. NSW is part of the eastern Australian gas network, which links the CSG and natural gas production areas in Queensland, Victoria and South Australia. 95% of gas consumed in NSW is piped from interstate, with 5% supplied from a CSG operation in Camden on the outskirts of Sydney. NSW's gas supply contracts with interstate suppliers start to expire in 2014, after which time NSW could experience gas shortages.

Figure 15.6 Existing and Proposed Gas Pipelines in NSW



Source: NSW Government (2009) Atlas of NSW

Gunnedah Basin

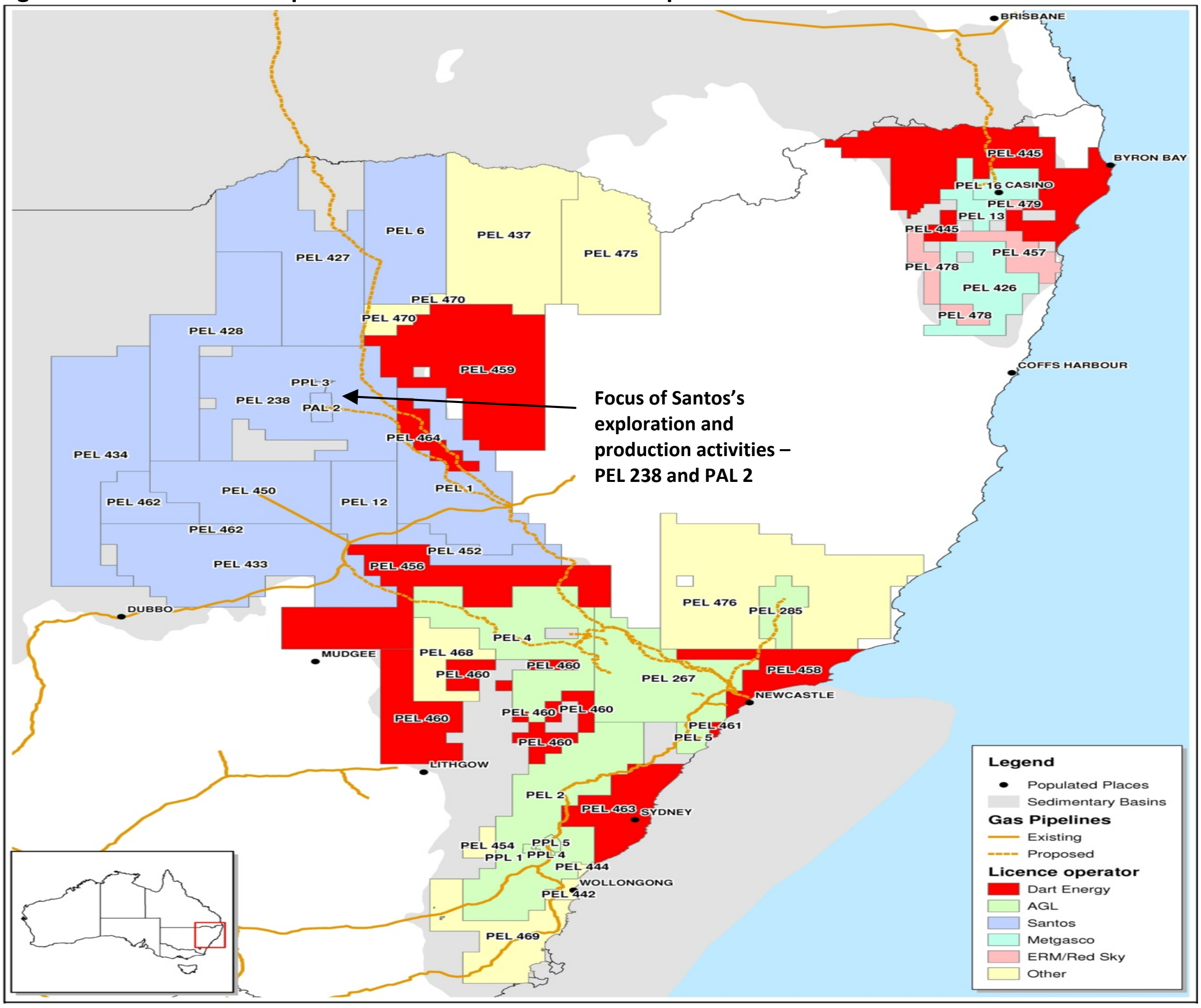
Over the past decade, CSG exploration and production has been ramped up significantly in NSW. The focus is primarily on the Gunnedah Basin with a small production plant and gas fired power station already in place in the Pilliga Forest. Should the construction of the Queensland to Hunter gas pipeline proceed, it will help to secure NSW's gas supply and also provide infrastructure for the delivery of NSW produced CSG to the Hunter Valley and Sydney Region. The proposed route passes through Gunnedah Shire, and is located just north of the Namoi River at Gunnedah.

Within the Northern Inland Region, Tamworth City is the only area that has reticulated natural gas with this provided via a pipeline from Dubbo. The pipeline passes through Gunnedah Shire (Breeza area) however there is no connection to the township of Gunnedah. Narrabri Shire has a small gas-driven power station utilising the gas supplies from the Coonarah area in the Pilliga.

Most of Gunnedah Shire lies within Petroleum (Gas) Exploration Licence (EL) areas (see Figure__). Within the Northern Inland Region, Santos is the major license holder, with the lease areas covering 55,000 square kilometres including most of Gunnedah Shire, the Pilliga Forest to the west, and north to the Queensland border. Santos is currently focusing its activities on the Pilliga Forest between Narrabri and Coonabarabran in PEL 238 and PAL 2. Santos is looking to transport gas to the Port of Newcastle for export. Santos has established offices in both Narrabri and Gunnedah.

Dart Energy has two PELs that extend into Gunnedah Shire. In April 2013 Dart Energy announced that it was suspending its exploration activities in NSW as a result of uncertainty regarding Government policy on CSG production.

Figure 15.7 Petroleum Exploration Licence Areas for CSU Exploration.



Source: DART Energy

CSU exploration in Gunnedah Shire has met with considerable opposition from residents, with the key concern being potential damage to the ground water resources, particularly under the Liverpool Plains.

A number of sectors and businesses in Gunnedah Shire have expressed a desire for access to reticulated gas, including the use of gas for farm vehicles and machinery, metal fabrication and forging, drying processes, manufacturing, heating, cooking etc.

Natural gas exploration and production is not labour intensive and will not generate significant employment opportunities for Gunnedah Shire.

15.3 Gravel & Road Base Extraction

There are currently three commercial quarries operating in Gunnedah Shire producing road base and aggregate:

- Mary's Mount Blue Metal Quarry operated by Gunnedah Quarry Products / Mackellar Excavations
- C&S Crushing and Screening
- Hanson Quarry, Gunnedah

Aggregate resources in the Shire are limited. In the past, aggregate has been extracted on an intermittent basis from the former State Forest areas. This resource is no longer available from the Forests that have been transferred to the NPWS.

With the upgrading of the North Western Railway line and coal mine developments in the area, the demand for aggregate has increased significantly. Local production of aggregate is not keeping pace with demand, with aggregate having to be brought into the Shire from the Daracon Ardglen Quarry, just north of Murrurundi.

There are a number of larger projects proposed for the Shire and surrounding region that will require access to stone and aggregate. These projects include the Gunnedah rail bridge and associated roadworks, the expansion of the Gunnedah Rail Yard and other rail projects, the construction of the Maules Creek, Watermark and Caroona Mines (if they proceed) and associated rail and road works, and the raising of the height of the dam wall at Lake Keepit. The development of residential and industrial estates will also increase the demand for aggregate.

15.4 Clay Extraction

Namoi Valley Bricks operates a clay quarry in Gunnedah, with the clay used to produce bricks and pavers.

15.5 Services to Support Mining

To date, the coal sector in Gunnedah Shire has largely been serviced by companies based in the Hunter Region. While some companies have established a presence in the area (including Monadelphous, Daracon, Toll Resources and Coates Hire), the scale of the mining has not been sufficient to warrant major investment, as has occurred in the Singleton and Muswellbrook areas.

Gunnedah Shire already has a range of businesses supplying and servicing the mining industry, including:

- Technical, engineering and equipment suppliers and services - include drilling services, concrete supplies, mechanical and electrical maintenance, engineering services, fabrication, irrigation supplies and specialist equipment / parts suppliers.
- Consulting services –soils, engineering, environmental, land management, coal processing, surveyors.
- Earth moving contractors, civil engineering and construction.
- Tradesmen – primarily electrical, automotive and plumbing trades.

- Equipment Hire (including crane hire) and repairs.
- Transport / haulage
- Employment, labour supply and training organisations.

Demand for services will however increase in-line with increased production. Mining equipment is generally purchased with warranties and service agreements in place. For major contracts, the mining companies are likely to continue to use the larger established companies that have the scale and depth to bring in additional staff from other operations (nationally or internationally) if needed at short notice and/or have the capital and capacity to stock parts. The small size of many of the local businesses, particularly the engineering and fabrication suppliers, is a constraint to securing contracts.

The relocation of service providers to the Region will be dependent in part on the service agreement (particularly response times) with the mining companies. Gunnedah Shire will be competing with Tamworth, Liverpool Plains and Narrabri Shires for businesses looking to relocate.

15.6 Strategic Considerations – Mining

Consideration	Comment
Encouraging mine and mine-related workers to relocate to Gunnedah Shire	Gunnedah is an attractive town with a good range of facilities. It is ideally suited to families with young children. Lake Keepit is also a significant attribute that can be promoted. The Shire will however be competing with surrounding LGAs, in particular Tamworth. Factors that will be taken into consideration by people considering relocating include: • Housing affordability (to rent and buy), quality and availability. • Cost of living. • Attractiveness of the environment and setting. • Facilities and services available, with medical / health, entertainment, recreation and sporting facilities (and choice of sports) being significant factors. • The quality and reputation of the schools. This is particularly important for families with high-school aged children. Access to TAFE and University facilities is also important for some families. • Access to child care. • Safety, social problems and issues. • Proximity to family and friends. Those who have close ties within Queensland are more likely to relocate to the north of the mines, while those with close ties to the Hunter / Sydney are more likely to relocate to the south of the mines. • Employment opportunities and career paths for partners and older children. • Travel time and road conditions. • Likely ‘acceptance’ by the local community. Experience in other areas has shown that family / lifestyle considerations tend to come before proximity to work considerations. Many of the workers coming into the area are likely to stay at the MAC Villages in the short-term. Workers based in the MAC Village in Werris Creek are more likely to gravitate towards Tamworth, while those located at the Village in Narrabri are likely to gravitate to Narrabri as they become familiar with the town and develop friendships etc. The strongest opportunity for Gunnedah lies with the workers that are located in the MAC Village at Boggabri. While Boggabri is ideal for families with young children, it does not have the services and facilities that are often looked for. Being the service centre for Boggabri, Gunnedah needs to be ‘cultivating’ relationships with the workers staying in Boggabri.

Consideration	Comment
	The sealing of Rangari Road (Boggabri – Manilla – Tamworth) could potentially impact on travel dynamics, with workers possibly by-passing Gunnedah.
Awareness of Gunnedah	Gunnedah (through Agquip) has a high profile amongst the rural community. The Gunnedah Basin also has a profile for coal and coal seam gas. Overall however Gunnedah has a low profile in the broader market place. Recent market research undertaken by the Inland NSW Regional Tourism Organisation, found that unprompted awareness of Gunnedah was very low (close to zero) while prompted awareness in the eastern states was only 23%. In contrast, Tamworth (through the Country Music Festival) had a very high level of awareness in the market place. Raising the profile and awareness of Gunnedah should be part of any strategy to attract new residents and businesses to Gunnedah. Participants of the Planning Charette undertaken as part of the preparation of this Economic Development Strategy, identified the need to more effectively market and promote the Shire to potential residents and businesses, with the following attributes identified as marketable 'assets': • Lake Keepit – access to water and watersports – Gunnedah's recreational playground. • Good primary and secondary schools with access to Tamworth for tertiary education (TAFE, University campus). • Attractive environment – beautiful views. • Small town – friendly community, safe for children. • Close to Tamworth without being Tamworth. • Good recreation and sporting facilities. • Good attractions in the hinterland – Escarpment, Warrumbungle, Coolah Tops and Mt Kaputar National Parks, Glenbawn / Copeton /Split Rock Dams, Pilliga Scrub, historic towns and villages. • Easily accessible from the Hunter Region. • Minimal travel times to work – can walk / cycle to shops, schools etc. • Ease of parking • Most things are in town – 2 modern supermarkets. • Cinema and growing arts and cultural sector. • New houses coming on-line at similar prices to Tamworth. • Cafes, restaurants, hotels and licensed clubs.
Competiveness of local firms to compete for service and supply contracts.	While Gunnedah has a diversity of businesses and skills that could potentially supply services to the mining sector, these businesses are often perceived as too small and lacking the staff and/or capital resource needed to secure mining contracts. For larger contracts, a number of firms may need to establish a 'consortium' to bid for work. The 'HunterNet' model in the Hunter Valley has been very successful in securing mine-related work for smaller firms based in the Hunter. The BHP-Mitsubishi Alliance (BMA) in Central Queensland has introduced a procurement policy that benefits local firms and could potentially provide a 'model' for Gunnedah.
Encouraging mine-related service firms to relocate to Gunnedah – availability of serviced industrial land and support services.	Gunnedah Shire will be competing with Tamworth, Narrabri and Liverpool Plains for business investment. Tamworth is developing two large industrial estates on the Gunnedah Road in very close proximity to the Airport. Tamworth also has reticulated natural gas available, which is ideal for metal fabrication and foundry type businesses. A number of equipment supply, consulting and engineering firms servicing the mining industry have already established a presence in Tamworth, rather than Gunnedah, due to the larger catchment area and availability of air

Consideration	Comment
	services. Narrabri Shire has industrial land available in both Narrabri and Boggabri, while Liverpool Plains Shire has industrial land available in Quirindi and Werris Creek, with further land releases proposed. The industrial land in both Shires is serviced. In contrast, the supply of fully serviced industrial land in Gunnedah is limited.
Managing conflict between mining and other activities	Consideration of the impacts of mining, both positive and negative, on the community, the economy and the environment (natural and agricultural) is important to minimise conflict within the community. To attract new residents and investment, Gunnedah needs to remain a welcoming community.
Building resilience to boom-bust cycles.	Global demand and the global financial position influence production rates and levels of employment within the mining sector can lead to boom-bust cycles. Finding ways to make the community more resilient to these cycles needs to be explored.
Training locally for mining and related service industries	Providing training locally supports the entry of young people into the industry. Continued advocacy for the Trades Training Centre to be located in Gunnedah is required.
Increasing demand for road base and aggregate.	With the increased demand from both the rail, mining and construction sectors there may be opportunities to increase production from local resources and/or use by-products from the coal mining.
Provision of reticulated natural gas.	Access to gas would provide Gunnedah Shire with a strong advantage in attracting industry and increase the Shire's ability to compete more effectively with Tamworth. Should the Queensland – Hunter Gas Pipeline proceed, Gunnedah Shire needs to tap into the pipeline to service Gunnedah. Alternatively, given the CSG reserves in the area surrounding Gunnedah, the opportunity to extract gas for local consumption should be explored.
Improving road and rail infrastructure	With increased mining activities there is a need to improve both rail and road infrastructure. The upgrading of the Gunnedah Goods Yard will remove one of the bottle-necks on the North West Rail Line. Improvements to regional and local roads will be needed to cater for increased traffic volumes.

16. MANUFACTURING

Manufacturing is the process of converting raw materials, components, or parts into finished goods (products) that meet a customer's expectations or specifications. Manufacturing covers a myriad of inputs, processes and products and embraces production of thousands of different types of goods. The number and complexity of the processes involved in production varies and includes[43]:

- Primary product manufacturing – eg cheese making, grain milling, production of pig iron.
- Simply transformed manufacturing – eg basic metal extrusion.
- Moderately transformed manufacturing – eg sheet metal into pipes.
- Elaborately transformed manufacturing – eg glassware and ceramic products, pre-fabricated buildings, medicines etc.

Manufacturing can occur in a range of environments – home, shop, plant and factory. The level of mechanisation involved varies from highly mechanised production lines using robotics, to simple mechanical activities such as soft drink bottling, through to hand-made items such as jewellery.

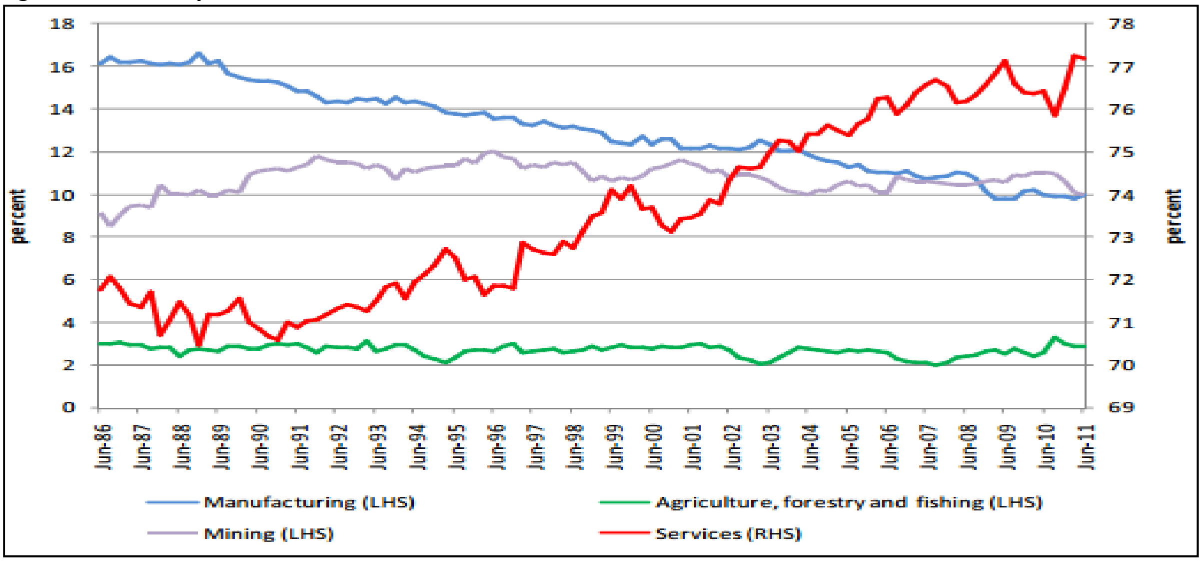
16.1 Manufacturing Sector - Overview

Performance

Within Australia, manufacturing is a diverse and vibrant industry that plays a significant role in the economy. In 2010-11 manufacturing accounted for 10% of gross value-add of total Australian industries. The Manufacturing Industry employs close to one million people. It also accounts for one third of Australian exports and is a major driver of innovation in industry – being responsible for around 25% of research and development among businesses.

From 2001 to 2011, the value of manufacturing in Australia has shown sustained growth of 0.8% per annum (average annual compound growth rate), however the growth rate has been well below other sectors – Agriculture (3.6% pa), Services (3.5% pa) and Mining (2.1% pa). Since 1986, the Manufacturing Sector's share of total industry Gross Value Added (GVA) has declined from 16% in the June Quarter 1986 to 10% in the June Quarter 2011.

Figure 16.1: Industry Gross Value Added, June Quarter 1986 to June Quarter 2011



Source: Future Manufacturing Industry Innovation Council (2011) *Trends in Manufacturing to 2020 - A Foresighting Discussion Paper* – data from ABS Cat.No. 5206.0

43 Paraphrased from the definition of 'Manufacturing' used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

From June 2011 to August 2013, the Manufacturing sector contracted, with a slight recovery in September 2013 due to a fall in the value of the Australian dollar. Most of the growth in the Manufacturing sector has been in food processing, with other sub-sectors remaining static or contracting.[44]

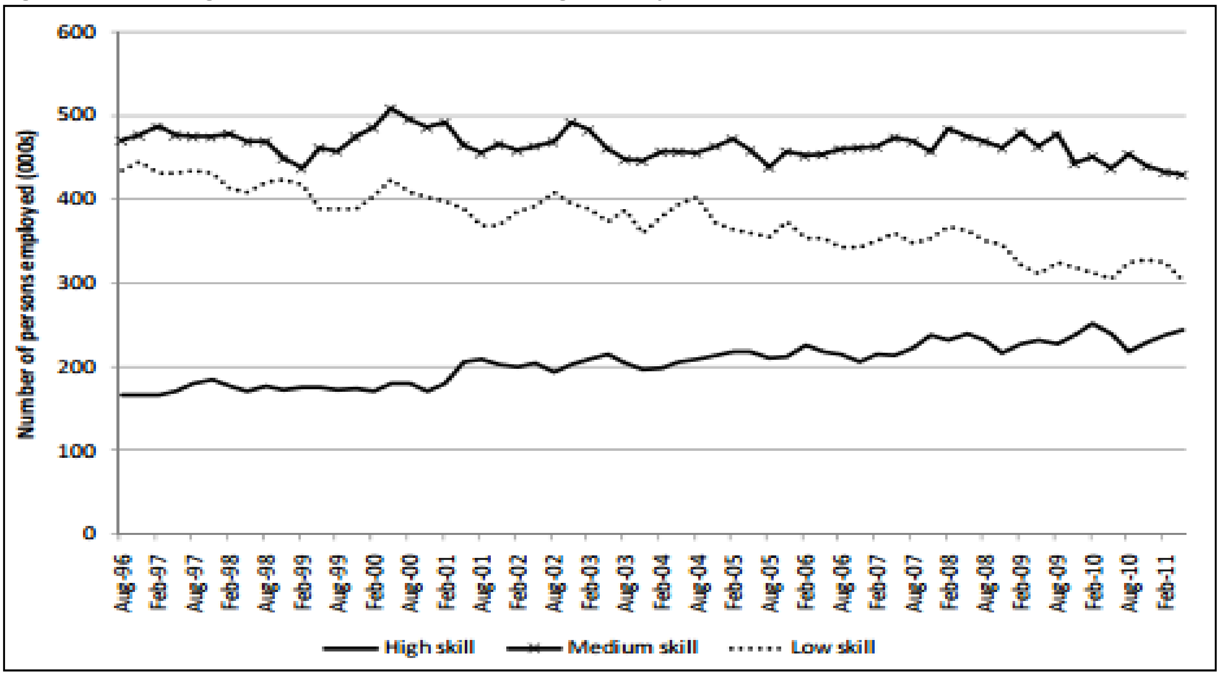
Factors contributing to the contraction of the Manufacturing sector include weak global demand, the softening of the Australian economy, high energy costs, strong Australian dollar which is increasing competition from imported goods, downward pressure on selling prices and increasing wage costs.

Employment & Skills

The Manufacturing sector employs close to one million people, accounting for 8.5% of the Australian workforce. From 2001 to September 2011, the number of people employed in the Manufacturing sector has decreased by 86,300 people, a decline of 0.9% per annum (compound). The decline is attributed to a range of factors including movement of production offshore to take advantage of cheaper labour, increased capital investment and increased labour productivity. Over the 10 year period, 2001-11, the 'food, beverage, tobacco products' and 'primary metal and metal products' are the only sectors within the Manufacturing sector that have experienced growth in employment.

Within the Manufacturing sector there has been a shift in employee skill levels, with a marked decline in lower skilled workers (machinery operators, drivers, labourers etc) and an increase in high skilled workers (managers, professionals, scientists, etc). The number of medium skilled workers (trades people, technician, administrative, clerical, services) is also trending down, but at slower rate than unskilled labour. This has implications for Gunnedah Shire, which primarily has a large low and medium skilled manufacturing workforce.

Figure 16.2 Changes in Skill Levels, Manufacturing Industry, 1996-2011



Source: Future Manufacturing Industry Innovation Council, 2011, *Trends in Manufacturing to 2020 - A Foresighting Discussion Paper* – data from ABS Cat.No. 6291.055.003

The employment outlook is for the continued creation of highly skilled jobs as Australian manufacturers seek to increase productivity and remain competitive. Manufacturers are increasingly investing in capital equipment that embodies information and communication technologies and enables computer-aided design, computer integrated manufacturing and digital additive manufacturing. As firms package value-added services

[44] Australian Industry Group Performance of Manufacturing Index.

with their manufacturing solutions, highly skilled service jobs are also being created. Increasingly, jobs in the manufacturing sector are requiring tertiary qualifications.

Challenges facing the Manufacturing Sector

Challenges facing the Australian Manufacturing sector include:

- Small size of the Australian domestic market and, over the past few years, the softening of this market.
- Globalisation and global trends including the rise of developing nations such as Brazil, Russia, China and India generating both growth in demand and increased competition, growing scarcity of resources, climate change and the move to low carbon production etc.
- Globally - cheaper products, shorter product life cycles, faster business imitations and saturated markets.
- Strong Australian dollar, increasing the relative price of Australian exports and decreasing the relative costs of imported goods.
- Increasing energy costs.
- Requirements for low carbon production and the impact of the Carbon Pricing Scheme (or equivalent).
- Rapidly changing technology – production, information and communications. To remain competitive manufacturers need to be technologically sophisticated and able to adapt quickly to change. This requires investment in both technology and skills.
- The growing scarcity of resources combined with the growing emphasis on environmental sustainability and low carbon production, are resulting in the emergence of 'Sixth Wave' innovations including biomimicry, green chemistry and green nanotechnology, whole system design, industrial ecology, greater resource productivity, sustainable energy and satellite technologies.

Looking Forward

The Future Manufacturing Industry Innovation Council advises that to remain competitive in an increasingly global market, Australian manufacturers need to:

- Recognise that to succeed in the high value-add, low volume products in which Australian manufacturing is likely to have a competitive advantage, they must bundle products and services to sell solutions, rather than simply tangible products.
- Have the willingness and absorptive capacity to embrace the latest technological and business process innovations that provide competitive advantage.
- Have ready access to knowledge and world class capabilities that allow innovation and rapid adaption to changing market needs, tapping into innovative practices and building sustainable and profitable partnerships both domestically and globally.
- Operate with high efficiency and productivity, allowing optimisation of the use of capital – human, intellectual and material.
- Have resilience in a low carbon and resource-constrained economy through resource efficiency.

- Have the ability to maximise leverage from strong and sustainable partnerships through local and global supply chains.

- Secure supply of resource inputs and skills, by direct acquisition, partnering or engaging in global supply chains.
- Harness technology and business process innovation that provides differentiation and competitive advantage. The continued evolution of information and communication technology (ITC), such as cloud computing and 3D printing, provides opportunities for enhancing firm productivity, marketing and product and service delivery.

- Have the capability to design, develop, make and sell products and services that are in demand.

- Possess the organisational flexibility to rapidly adapt to changing market needs – including changing their mix of skills and production technologies.

- Seek markets in the developing countries, both by partnering with these companies in global supply chains, and by meeting demands from their growing middle classes for niche and bespoke consumer products.

16.2 Manufacturing in Gunnedah Shire

Gunnedah Shire has a relatively strong and diverse manufacturing base, with most of the businesses having been operating for more than a decade within the Shire. In 2011, the manufacturing sector in Gunnedah Shire was the 7th largest employer, with 7% of the Shire's workforce (368 people) employed in the sector. From 2001 to 2006 employment in the sector increased by 10.2% (39 people), to become the 4th largest employer in the Shire (9% of the local workforce). From 2006 to 2011 the number of Shire resident employed in the sector fell by 12.6% (53 people), with workers moving out of manufacturing into the mining sector.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics provides counts of Australian businesses by Industry Sector by Statistical Areas (Level 2). Data is published for the Gunnedah SAL2 (Gunnedah town and surrounding area) and the Gunnedah Region SAL2, which excludes the town of Gunnedah, but includes all the rural areas as well as Boggabri (see Section 13). In 2012, the ABS identified 49 manufacturing businesses in the combined area, of which 36 (73.5%) were located in the township of Gunnedah. Of these businesses, 28 (57.1%) employed no staff, with six (12.2%) employing 1-4 staff, twelve (24.5%) employing 5-19 staff and three (6.1%) employing more than 20 staff. Twelve (24.5%) of the manufacturing businesses were very small operations, turning over less than $50,000 pa. There were six (12.2%) manufacturing businesses that turned over $0-5m to $2million and another six that turned over in excess of $2 million.

Comparative data is available for Tamworth, Narrabri/Narrabri Region, Moree/Moree Region, Coonabarabran and Quirindi SAL2, but not for the Northern Inland Region. The SAL2 data does not correspond directly to LGA boundaries. Tamworth has a concentration of manufacturing businesses (217 businesses), including 16 businesses that employ more than 20 staff as well as 16 businesses with a turnover in excess of $2 million per annum. Gunnedah has slightly more manufacturing businesses than Narrabri (44) and significantly more than Moree (29), Quirindi (12) and Coonabarabran (27). Within the Northern Inland Region, Gunnedah Shire ranks third behind Tamworth (217) and Inverell (58) in terms of number of manufacturing businesses. Narrabri ranks 4th with Armidale, Tenterfield and Glen Innes each having 30 manufacturing businesses.

Table 16.1 Number of Manufacturing Businesses, by Employment Range – Gunnedah & Comparative Areas (SALs)

Statistical Area (SAL2)	No. Businesses					As % of businesses
	0 staff	1-4 staff	5-19 staff	20+ staff	Total Staff	
Gunnedah	21	6	6	3	36	73.5%
Gunnedah Region	7	0	6	0	13	26.5%
Total	**28**	**6**	**12**	**3**	**49**	
As % of Total	57.1%	12.2%	24.5%	6.1%	100.0%	
Comparative Areas (SAL2)						
Tamworth (SALs combined)	91	65	45	16	217	
	41.9%	30.0%	20.7%	7.4%	100.0%	
Quirindi	12	0	0	0	12	
	100.0%				100.0%	
Narrabri / Narrabri Region	18	9	14	3	44	
	40.9%	20.5%	31.8%	6.8%	100.0%	
Coonabarabran	12	6	6	3	27	
	44.4%	22.2%	2.2%	11.1%	100.0%	
Moree / Moree Region	19	3	7	0	29	
	65.5%	10.3%	24.1%	0	100.0%	

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Businesses by Industry Division by Statistical Area Level 2 by Employment Size Ranges, June 2012

Table 16.2 Number of Manufacturing Businesses, by Turnover Range Gunnedah & Comparative Areas (SALs)

Statistical Area (SAL2)	Number of Businesses by Turnover						Total
	Zero to $50k	$50k to less than $100k	$100k to less than $200K	$200k to less than $500k	$500k to less than $2m	$2m or more	
Gunnedah	8	5	8	6	3	6	36
Gunnedah Region	4	-	3	3	3	-	13
Total	**12**	**5**	**11**	**9**	**6**	**6**	**49**
As % of Total	24.5%	10.2%	22.4%	18.4%	12.2%	12.2%	
Comparative Areas (SAL2)#							
Tamworth	22.1%	14.3%	15.2%	19.4%	21.7%	7.4%	
Quirindi	50.0%	25.0%	25.0%				
Narrabri	20.5%	6.8%	27.3%	13.6%	18.2%	13.6%	
Coonabarabran	25.9%	18.5%	11.1%	22.2%	11.1%	11.1%	
Moree	24.1%	27.6%	10.3%	13.8%	13.8%	10.3%	

Australian Bureau of Statistics Businesses by Industry Division by Statistical Area Level 2 by Turnover Size Ranges, June 2012

Tamworth incorporates 4 SAL2 areas, while Narrabri and Moree each include 2 SALS areas.

Manufacturing activities within Gunnedah Shire include:

Table 16.3 Manufacturers in Gunnedah Shire

Manufacturer	Products & Activities
Paradise Farms / Omega Feeds	Australia's largest producer of sunflower kernels for the food industry. By-products are processed for stock, equine and bird seed, with the equine products marketed under the brand name – Omega Feeds.
Pryde's Easifeed	Horse feeds and supplements – products distributed nationally and internationally (New Zealand).
Gunnedah Maize Mill	Milling of corn sourced both locally and from interstate for the food industry, with by-products sold for stock and poultry feed.
Namoi Flour Mills – part of the Manildra Group	Milling of wheat to produce floor, wheat and bran products and semolina for food production, with by-products used for stockfeed production.
Whole Grain Milling Company	Specialty producer – stoneground organic flour, brans etc – sold to bakeries and wholesalers. Certified biodynamic and organic.
Carroll Cotton Company	Ginning of cotton into cotton lint and cotton seed. Cotton seed is sold locally and also exported. Most of the lint is exported, while the 'trash' is used for compost.
Gunnedah Leather Processors	Part of the AI Topper company – processes cattle hides to produce 'wetblue' leather which is primarily exported. By-products include irrigation effluent which is being used to grow crops for stockfeed and hair which goes into the production of

Manufacturer	Products & Activities
	fertilisers. The tannery is also looking recycle chromium.
Namoi Valley Brickworks	Production of dry-pressed bricks and pavers from local clays. Specialty production and architectural bricks. Showrooms in Gunnedah and Sydney with stockists in 20 localities in NSW and Victoria. Some product exported.
Gunnedah Timber	Milling of Australian Cypress to produce timber for flooring, joinery, weatherboards, decking, framing and trusses. By-products used for landscaping with sawdust also supplied to the equine and poultry industries.
Namoi Gold	Olive crushing – production of olive oil and olive soaps, plus drought feed for cattle.
HE Silos	Fabrication & installation of silos (4-500 tonne), feed bins and stock feeders.
Gunnedah Industries	Design and manufacture of waste collection systems, grain storage facilities, oil filter crushers and cotton module builders.
Universal Composts	Production of mulch for use in playground and horse arena surfaces and landscaping, plus soil conditioners.
Gunnedah Pine Furniture	Joinery - custom-made furniture, kitchens and laundries.
Mooki Woodworks	Custom-made furniture, and survey pegs and pallets for industry
Ross Sign Co.	Design, manufacture and installation of a range of sign types.
Michael Rowland Signs	Design, manufacture and installation of a range of sign types.
DMI Engineering	Custom design and manufacture of header tow hitches and modifications header table auger and platform front rebuilds milling and machining plasma cutting rebuilds and repairing of all agricultural earthmoving and road transport machinery
Prime Engineering	Supply, manufacture and installation of high volume water pumping equipment
Gibson Engineering	Design, manufacture and installation of equipment for scientific, environmental and agricultural monitoring – soil sampling, greenhouse gas chambers, laboratory equipment, silage sampling.
Stripes Engineering	Fabrication of stainless steel, aluminium and galvanised products, plus repair, installation and maintenance services
Sanson Sprayed Coatings	Metal Fabrication and repairs
Jeff King Engineering	Metal fabrication
Woodland Engineering	Metal fabrication
MacDougall Welding Works	Metal fabrication
Lightfoot & Co	Monument Masons
Gunnedah Hot Bread Shop	Bakery
Boral	Concrete batching and products
Provincial Printery	Printed products
Allmar Embroidery	Embroidered and printed products
Howzat Upholstery & Canvas	Upholstery, Canvas products

Source: Gunnedah Shire Council Business Directory

Grain and Seed Milling & Processing

The Shire has a concentration of grain milling operations producing both grain products for the food industry and stock feed. These operations source their raw materials locally and from other localities in NSW and interstate and sell products nationally and internationally. Gunnedah is an ideal location for these activities with attributes including proximity to locally produced raw materials, central location within NSW and access to road and rail transport services. Market opportunities for the food and stock feed products produced within the Shire are expanding both nationally and internationally. The ability of the milling businesses to increase production is however limited by access to raw materials (grain, corn, legumes and oilseeds etc), labour and rail services for bulk transport. Within the Shire, there is a need for a Grain Drying Facility and a Seed Cleaning Plant.

Engineering and Metal Fabrication

Gunnedah Shire also has a concentration of engineering firms providing metal fabrication services primarily for the agricultural, mining and transport sectors. A number of the engineering firms are vertically and horizontally integrated providing design, manufacture and installation services, combined with repair and maintenance services and contracts, consulting services and wholesale / retail of related products.

Brick and Paver Production

Gunnedah has one of few remaining independent brickworks and producers of dry-pressed, load bearing bricks within Australia. Using traditional techniques, Namoi Valley Bricks produces a quality product that is ideal for heritage restoration projects and is well known amongst architects. The ability of the company to expand operations is limited by access to labour – both sourcing and retaining staff due to the competition from the mining sector. The company is currently trialling robotics on its production line, with the view to automating other processes if the trial is successful. This will shift the skill levels required from labourers and factory hands, to operators, enabling the company to employ a wider range of people, including women.

Sawmilling

Gunnedah has one of the few remaining sawmills in Inland NSW, with the mill specialising in production of building timbers from Australian Cypress Pine. As a result of the Brigalow Forest Agreements in 2005 and the resultant transfer of most of State Forests in the region to the National Parks estate, access to suitable timber is a major issue for the mill. The current sawlogs supply contract with the Forestry Corporation of NSW expires in 2025. Access to labour is also a major issue, with workers leaving the industry to move into the mining sector. The mill was mechanised in 2005 to reduce dependency on labour.

Leather Processing

Gunnedah Leather Processing is another major manufacturer, employing around 70 people, 25 of whom are overseas workers on 417 and 457 visas. The Plant is part of the Al Topper Group, which is one of three leather production operations remaining in Australia. The Company processes cattle hides, producing wetblue hides (raw leather). Around 99% of the product is exported to Asia (China, Thailand and Vietnam), Europe (Italy, Germany and Spain) and occasionally South Africa and Mexico and is used for manufacture of car seats (50%), shoes (30%), furniture (19%) and sporting goods (1%). Access to local labour, the rising costs of electricity, and the encroachment from rural residential development are issues for the plant. Effluent is being used grow stock feed and that is potential to expand this activity.

Cotton Ginning

Carroll Cotton is the only independent cotton gin in Australia. The plant has a capacity of 40,000 bales per annum with the operators looking to expand the operation to 100,000+ bales per year through investment in a new plant. The plant produces lint (cotton fibre), cotton seed and trash. The lint is retained by the growers. Cotton seed is sold to local feedlots for stock feed (50%), as well as sold domestically and internationally for cotton seed oil production. Trash is used for fertiliser and composting. As cotton production is seasonal and weather dependent, the Gin operator is looking at options for processing other crops.

16.3 Strategic Considerations - Manufacturing

Consideration	Comment
Sourcing and retaining skilled labour.	In light of the competition from the mining sector, a number of manufacturers have put expansion plans on hold, due to labour constraints. Companies have also scaled back apprenticeship and training programs as the companies have been paying to train staff, with the staff then leaving to move into the mining sector as soon as they have qualifications and experience. Initiatives that have been put in place to address labour issues include increased mechanisation, introduction of robotics, offering favourable and flexible working hours (as opposed to the long mining shifts) and use of casual labour, bringing in overseas workers on work visas.
Access to vocational training.	TAFE has significantly reduced the range of vocational training courses offered locally and no longer offers evening courses. In some trades, courses are only available at a few campuses across NSW (primarily Sydney). The cost of travel and

Consideration	Comment
	loss of productivity with staff being off-site are another factor impacting on the willingness of manufacturing businesses to offer apprenticeships and traineeships and ongoing training for staff. The proposed Trades Training Centre could offer training programs that address some of the skills shortages within the manufacturing sector.
Increasing energy costs.	Both electricity and bottled gas have increased substantially in price. Availability of reticulated natural gas would increase the viability of a number of manufacturers and facilitate expansion of activities.
Improving access to rail transport for raw materials and finished products.	Producers (grain and cotton) are competing with the coal companies for access to rail services, with the coal companies entering into long term contracts for train services and track time. Increasingly, agricultural products are being transported by truck either to Narrabri for containerisation or direct to ports for export or to domestic markets. This is increasing production costs. With the significant increase in containerisation for exporting, the feasibility of establish a container terminal in Gunnedah should be explored.
Reducing restrictions on truck size in Gunnedah.	With road trains not permitted to the east of Gunnedah, road trains are coming into the Shire, parking in Gunnedah and then uncoupling their loads and then making numerous trips to load / unload. This adds to production and shipping costs as well as increased truck movements within the Shire. Options to provide road train access to the east of the town need to be explored.
Securing access to raw materials for processing.	Access to raw materials (eg. clay, grain, corn, legumes, oilseeds, timber etc) is vital to the sustainability of some of the processing industries in Gunnedah. Agricultural production is cyclical which has implications for agricultural processing industries. Planning controls need to protect access to raw material (eg aggregate, clay). There may also be a need for Council to support local producers in negotiating with Government agencies to secure on-going access to resources (eg sawlogs).
Accessing technical expertise through global networks.	Access to technical expertise, particularly in the area of robotics. Robotic applications are an emerging sector in Australia, with the expertise not being readily available to set-up and service the industry. Within Australia expertise is concentrated in Victoria and South Australia, or has to be brought in from Asia, which is a major cost impost for manufacturers. Opportunities may exist for linking into technical networks.
Improving business networks that build local capacity to grow business collectively.	Limited opportunities for mentoring and networking within the Shire – with business owners becoming increasingly 'isolated' and not gaining access to contacts, new ideas etc. Business owners indicated a need for strong networks (eg an effective chamber), improved communication and exchange of ideas, access to mentoring and help in sourcing leads and writing tenders.
Production of feed for stock, horses and poultry.	The increase in feedlots and poultry farms within surrounding LGAs and the growth in the equine industries in Tamworth and the Hunter Valley is resulting in strong and growing demand for stock feed. There is also a strong and expanding export market for quality horse feed, with the growth in the thoroughbred industries in Asia is creating export opportunities for specialised horse feed and supplements. Increased production is dependent in part on access to grains, oilseeds and legumes.
Support for business expansion.	Support the expansion of local manufactures who are looking to diversify and/or expand – including Gunnedah Leather Processors, Carroll Cotton and Leon's Pork (processing).

Consideration	Comment
Advocate for increased access to natural timber resources.	Providing political support (advocacy / lobbying) for increased access to suitable timber supplies and the extension of the sawlog contract beyond 2025, to ensure the ongoing viability of Gunnedah Timber.
Securing labour and training.	Addressing the shortage of labour and training is essential for the future of Gunnedah.

Gunnedah has a diverse range of manufacturing businesses including brick production, cotton ginning, maize milling, silo production, compost production and timber milling. (Namoi Valley Brickworks, Carroll Cotton, Gunnedah Maize Mill, HE Silos, Universal Compost and Gunnedah Timbers.

17. CONSTRUCTION

17.1 Industry Overview

The construction industry engages in four broad areas of activity:

- Residential building – houses, townhouses, apartments etc.
- Non-residential building – retail, commercial, industrial, tourism etc.
- Engineering construction – road, railways, utility infrastructure, mines etc.
- Related trades and support services – including site preparation services, building structure services (eg concreting, brick laying), trade installation services (eg plumbing, electrical, building completion services (eg painting, glazing) and other services (eg landscaping).

Construction is undertaken by both the private and public sectors. The private sector operates in all four areas of activity, with a major role in residential and non-residential building activity. The public sector has a major role in initiating and undertaking engineering construction, with all or part of projects contracted to private sector companies. In addition it has a role in non-residential building activity, primarily through building hospitals and schools.

In Australia, the construction industry employs over 1.033 million people and contributes more than $102 billion to the Australian economy.[45] Employment is concentrated in the construction services sector (695,100 people), building construction (230,500 people) and heavy and engineering construction (70,200 people). The performance of the construction sector is strongly linked to Government policy and the performance of the Australian economy. The industry is cyclical, with performance influenced by Government expenditure on building and infrastructure projects, availability of credit, interest rates and investor sentiment. Activities such as architecture, engineering, real estate sales and property management are closely linked to the construction industry.

Over the past decade, the performance of the construction sector in the Northern Inland Region has been strongly linked with the resources sector. The rapid growth in the coal mining sector has resulted in a significant increase in major engineering construction projects within the Region, with projects including mine development, rail infrastructure projects and the upgrading of the Kamilaroi and Oxley Highways. Most of the construction companies and workforce involved in these projects have been brought into the area, primarily from the Hunter Valley.

There has also been significant growth in construction activity in the residential and non-residential sectors with this focused largely on Tamworth, Gunnedah and, to a lesser extent, Narrabri. The main non-residential construction projects in Tamworth have included the redevelopment and expansion of the Tamworth Rural Referral Hospital and North West Cancer Centre, the development of the Livestock Exchange and the development of industrial premises. Major projects in Narrabri have included the redevelopment of the Narrabri Hospital and new industrial premises.

17.2 Gunnedah Shire

The construction industry is a significant contributor to the economy of Gunnedah Shire, with the sector having expanded significantly in recent years. Over the past decade (2003/4 – 2012/3), the total value of building approvals in Gunnedah Shire was $236.76 million of which 62.1% was residential construction ($146.98m) and 37.9% was non-residential construction ($89.783m)[46]. In 2012/13, the construction value of building approvals in Gunnedah Shire was $40.478 million of which 74.2% was for residential construction. This represented 16.5% of the value of Development Approvals in the Northern Inland Region. (Note: The

[45] Australian Bureau of Statistics, Year Book 2012
[46] Statistics in this paragraph taken from Australian Bureau of Statistics – Building Approvals, Gunnedah LGA

figures do not include engineering construction). Major non-residential projects have included the redevelopment of the Gunnedah Hospital, Coles and Woolworths supermarkets, saleyard upgrade, and new motels, retail/commercial and industrial premises. In addition there has been significant investment in engineering construction in opening of mines and coal processing and loading facilities, rail and highway infrastructure. In the past 4 years (2009/10-2012/13) there have been 312 residential dwellings approved in the Shire.

At the 2011 Census, there were 271 residents in Gunnedah Shire employed in the construction sector (5.2% of the workforce). From 2001 to 2011, the number of people employed in the construction sector increased by 40.4% (78 additional people).

The ABS provides counts of Australian businesses by Industry Sector by Statistical Areas (Level 2). Data is published for the Gunnedah SAL2 (Gunnedah town and surrounding area) and the Gunnedah Region SAL2, which excludes the town of Gunnedah, but includes all the rural areas as well Boggabri. In 2012, the ABS identified 150 construction businesses in the combined area, of which 106 (70.7%) were located in the township of Gunnedah.

The construction sector is comprised primarily of small businesses with 62% being sole traders (employed no staff), 28% employing 1-4 people, and 10% employing 5-19 people. There were no businesses employing more than 20 people.

Comparative data is available for Tamworth, Narrabri/Narrabri Region, Moree/Moree Region, Coonabarabran and Quirindi SAL2, but not for the Northern Inland Region. The SAL2 data does not correspond directly to LGA boundaries. Tamworth has a concentration of construction businesses, include 20 businesses that employ more than 20 staff. Gunnedah and Narrabri have the same number of businesses, with Narrabri having 3 businesses that employ more than 20 staff.

Table 17.1 Number of Construction Businesses, by Employment Range – Gunnedah & Comparative Areas (SALs)

Statistical Area (SAL2)	No. Businesses					As % of businesses
	0 staff	1-4 staff	5-19 staff	20+ staff	Total Staff	
Gunnedah	66	28	12	0	106	70.7%
Gunnedah Region	27	14	3	0	44	29.3%
Total	**93**	**42**	**15**	**0**	**150**	
As % of Total	62.0%	28.0%	10.0%	0.0%	100.0%	
Comparative Areas (SAL2)						
Tamworth (SALs combined)	507	232	95	20	854	
	59.4%	27.2%	11.1%	2.3%		
Quirindi	59	23	6	0	88	
	67.0%	26.1%	6.8%	0.0%		
Narrabri / Narrabri Region	93	42	13	3	151	
	61.6%	27.8%	8.6%	2.0%		
Coonabarabran	62	30	6	0	98	
	63.3%	30.6%	6.1%	0.0%		
Moree / Moree Region	93	68	31	3	195	
	47.7%	34.9%	15.9%	1.5%		

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Businesses by Industry Division by Statistical Area Level 2 by Employment Size Ranges, June 2012

In terms of turnover, there is a significant spread with 32 businesses earning less than $50,000 per year, through to 3 businesses turning over more than $2million per year, with the majority of businesses turning over $200,000-$500,000 per year.

Table 17.2 Number of Construction Businesses, by Turnover Range – Gunnedah & Comparative Areas

Statistical Area (SAL2)	Number of Businesses by Turnover						Total
	Zero to $50k	$50k to less than $100k	$100k to less than $200K	$200k to less than $500k	$500k to less than $2m	$2m or more	
Gunnedah	26	23	19	20	15	3	106
Gunnedah Region	6	3	10	19	6	0	44
Total	**32**	**26**	**29**	**39**	**21**	**3**	**150**
As % of Total	21.3%	17.3%	19.3%	26.0%	14.0%	2.0%	
Comparative Areas (SAL 2)							
Tamworth	19.1%	21.9%	21.4%	20.0%	12.1%	5.5%	854
Quirindi	14.8%	29.5%	19.3%	29.5%	6.8%	0.0%	88
Narrabri	10.6%	19.2%	21.9%	31.8%	14.6%	2.0%	151
Coonabarabran	25.5%	25.5%	19.4%	14.3%	9.2%	6.1%	98
Moree	22.1%	9.7%	23.1%	21.5%	19.0%	4.6%	165

Australian Bureau of Statistics Businesses by Industry Division by Statistical Area Level 2 by Turnover Size Ranges, June 2012

Based on the Business Audit undertaken by Gunnedah Shire Council the main construction trades present in the Shire are builders (11), earth movers / excavation (13), electricians / electrical contractors (9), plumbers (8) and painters (6). Other trades / specialists included brick layers, carpenters, concreters, plasterers, tilers, fencers, flooring, air-conditioning and security. There are also a number of home handyman and garden maintenance businesses.

Table 17.3 Construction Businesses in Gunnedah Shire

Construction Activity	Services & Trades based in Gunnedah Shire
Design and Assessment	Consultant Engineers, Surveyors, Drafting Service, Kitchen Design
Site Preparation	Excavation, Earth Moving
Building and Construction	Construction / Building companies, Brick Layers, Concrete Batching, Concreters, Engineering Fabrication, Steel Frames, Flooring, Building & Garden Supplies, Equipment Hire, Fencing.
Trade Installation	Plumbers, Tilers, Carpenters, Cabinet Makers, Electricians, Plasterers, Painters, Carpet Layers, Kitchen installers, Security Systems Installers, Telecommunications / IT Installers, Air-Conditioning Installation, Lock Smiths,

Gunnedah Shire has one large construction company – the Daracon Group. Daracon is a Hunter Valley based company which operates aggregate quarries and provides a range of services across all construction sectors. The Group is currently involved in developing residential estates in Gunnedah and offers house and land packages. Daracon has its own suppliers and trades people (primarily from the Hunter Valley), and Gunnedah businesses advise that it has been difficult to secure supply contracts with the company. There are also a number of building companies in Tamworth that offer home construction 'packages' that are supplying into the Gunnedah area. Most of the larger building supply businesses / wholesalers are also based in Tamworth.

The rapid expansion of mining, plus associated commercial and infrastructure projects has resulted in construction businesses and trades people focussing on the mining, engineering and non-residential construction areas. Locally, it has become difficult to source builders and trades people for residential projects, particularly for repairs and minor alterations. In addition, local builders and tradespeople have been reluctant to take on staff and apprentices, as employees were leaving as soon as they are trained to move across into the mining sector. There is currently only 1 student at Gunnedah High School undertaking a construction-based apprenticeship (Electrician Certificate III) and one student undertaking an engineering based traineeship (Engineering General Certificate II).

17.3 Strategic Considerations – Construction

Consideration	Comment
Increasing resilience to mining cycles.	The recent contraction of the mining sector has resulted in contractors, including construction businesses being laid off. This is resulting in the trades people moving back into residential and non-residential construction activities. Ideally these businesses should be able to 'tackle' the back-log of smaller building projects within the Shire. Whether this is realised will depend on local consumer sentiment, whether resident will be willing to spend money with uncertainty created by the 'lay-offs'. The mining sector is already starting to 'ramp' back up, and trades people are likely to move back into this sector. There may be opportunity for some form of 'Job's Board' where residents can list the building / repair projects that they need trades for – with the Board generating leads for construction businesses and trades people.
Securing contracts for local trades and services providers	In the engineering construction sector, there are a number of larger projects on the horizon including: • Gunnedah railway bridge and associated road works (2014/15). • Improvements to the Gunnedah rail yards and on-going rail upgrades. • Raising the dam wall at Lake Keepit. • Construction of the Maules Creek Mine, possibly followed by the Watermark and Caroona Mines, plus associated rail and road infrastructure. Small construction businesses and service providers in Gunnedah Shire may need assistance to secure contracts for the larger projects. This may require operators to form consortiums to bid for the work. Local businesses also need assistance in sourcing leads, and preparing tender documentation.
Demand for Aggregate	The engineering construction projects listed above, will require access to aggregate and road base materials, providing opportunities for local producers.
Sourcing and retaining skilled labour.	In light of the competition for staff and skills from the mining sector, construction businesses have significantly scaled back apprenticeship and training programs. While the High Schools are offering vocational training in construction trades, there are very few high students taking up construction based apprenticeships and traineeships. With the back-log of residential small building, renovation and repair projects, creative solutions, such as harnessing the skills of semi retirees / retirees or the touring caravan market.

18. TOURISM (VISITOR ECONOMY)

18.1 Industry Overview

Tourism is a very complex and fragmented activity that impacts on most sectors of the economy. It involves the consumption of a range of local goods and services by a person visiting an area. The tourism sector is now referred to as the 'Visitor Economy'. Destination NSW defines the 'Visitor Economy' as encompassing the direct and indirect (via the supply chain) contributions to the economy resulting from a person travelling outside of their usual environment combined with the impact of capital investment and collective Government expenditure relating to the provision of goods and services used by visitors.

The Visitor Economy is a wider and more inclusive concept than tourism, embracing the total visitor experience. It is more than just the individual experiences and businesses (such as accommodation and attractions) that cater primarily to visitors. It also includes the broad business environment (direct and indirect service providers), the culture, heritage and lifestyle of the area, and the physical environment and is concerned with creating and maintaining a sense of place, delivering good customer service and communicating clear messages about the destination.

Within Australia the tourism sector is a significant stimulator of economic growth. In 2012, domestic and international visitors combined spent an estimated $95.675 billion[47]. The sector accounts for around 5.2% of GDP[48] (direct + indirect) and employs 532,000 people directly and a further 393,400 people indirectly (combined around 7.9% of Australia's workforce). The sector contributes $27.501 billion in export earnings (around 8%). Tourism and education services are Australia's two largest services export sectors.

In 2012, Australia attracted 6.2 million international visitors, up 5% on 2011. Australia's main source markets are New Zealand (1,191,000 visitors in 2011/12), United Kingdom (597,000 visitors), China (583,000 visitors), United States of America (464,000 visitors) and Malaysia (320,000 visitors)[49]. The Tourism Forecasting Committee forecasts that International visitor arrivals to Australia will increase by 3.5% per annum to reach 8.4 million visitors by 2021-12. Outbound travel from Asia is expected to drive this growth, with China, Malaysia, Singapore and India being the main growth markets. Growth is also expected out of New Zealand and the USA. The United Kingdom and the European markets are expected to remain 'soft' due primarily to the economic conditions in Europe.

In recent years, the domestic market has been relatively stagnant. In 2012 however, domestic travel increased with a 4% increase in both the number of overnight trips made (75 billion) and visitor nights (282 billion). The number of day trips made in 2012 (174 billion) was up 8% on 2011. Overnight domestic visitation is forecast to grow by 1% per annum over the next decade to reach 307.4 billion visitor nights in 2021-22.

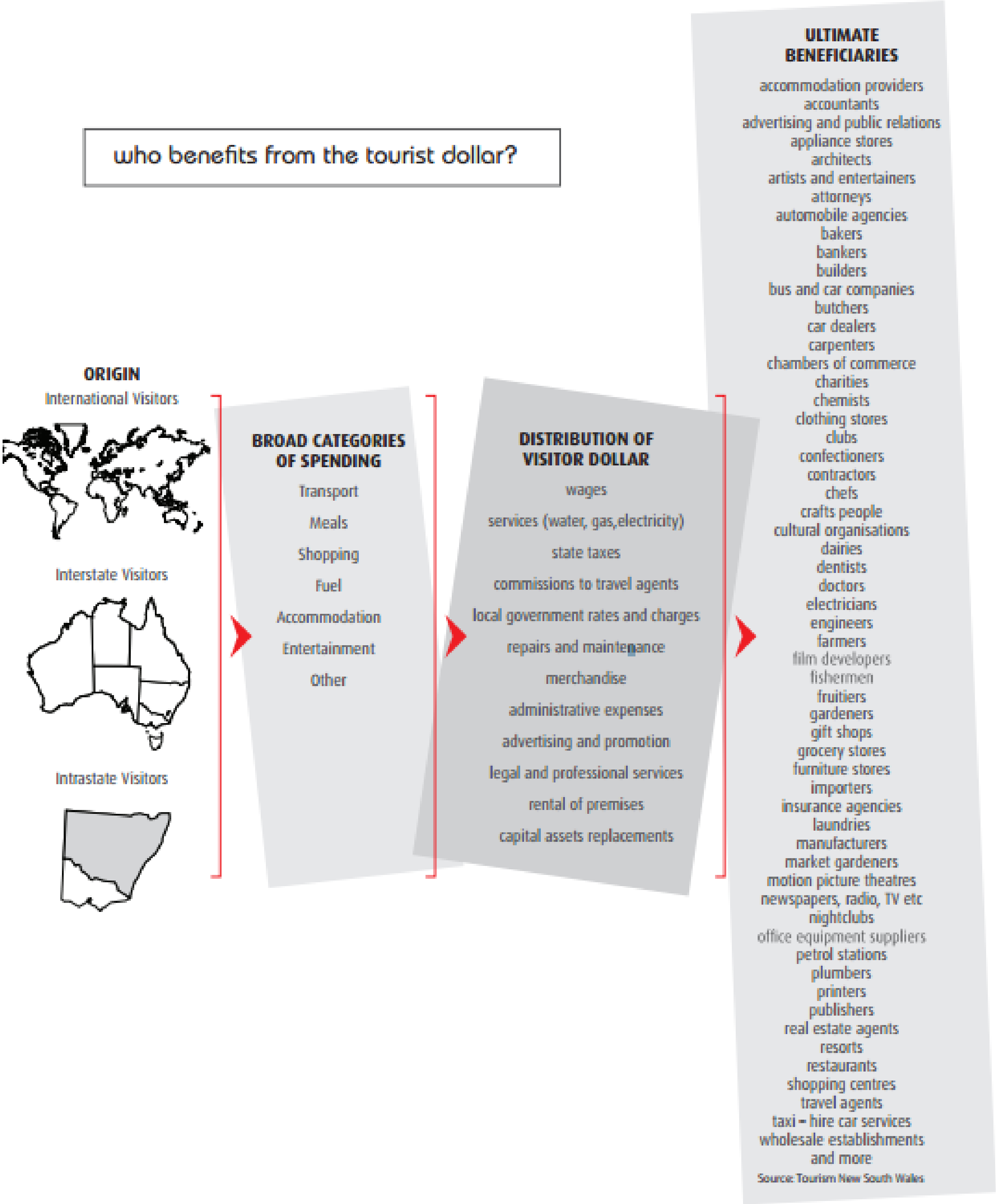
Both Tourism Australia and Destination NSW have introduced medium to long term strategies to facilitate structural changes in the industry that will build both domestic and international visitation. Destination NSW has set a target of doubling visitor expenditure in NSW by 2020. One of the key strategies involves 'reinvigorating' regional areas by encouraging investment in product, infrastructure and market development. This is being coordinated through the development and implementation of Destination Management Plans (DMP). The Inland NSW Regional Tourism Organisation is currently preparing the Inland NSW Regional DMP, with Gunnedah clustered with Tamworth and the Liverpool Plains area. LGAs are being encouraged to prepare DMPs to support the Regional DMP. Having a DMP in place is now a pre-requisite to accessing tourism funding at State and National level.

Tourism brings 'new' dollars into the local economy with these 'new' dollars having a multiplier effect, filtering through to most sectors of the local economy (Figure 18.1). Research undertaken by Tourism Research Australia in conjunction with the Australian Bureau of Statistics has found that the value created by tourism expenditure exceeds that of other major economic activities, with every dollar spent by the tourism sector

[47] Tourism Research Australia (2013) 2012 Tourism Industry Performance Scorecard
[48] Tourism Research Australia (2012) Tourism Industry Facts and Figures.
[49] Tourism Research Australia (2013) – Tourism Forecasting Committee – Forecast Issue 1, 2013

generating an additional $0.90 in value-add. In contrast the value-add spend for retail is $0.70, mining is $0.60 and health care and social assistance is $0.50.

Figure 18.1   The Flow of Tourism Expenditure through the Economy



Source: Destination NSW

18.2 Visitation to the Northern Inland Region[50]

Travel within the Region tends to be concentrated north-south along the New England Highway in the east and Newell Highway in the west. The main east-west routes are the Kamilaroi, Oxley and Gwydir Highways.

Destination NSW publish profiles of visitation to the Region, with the most recent statistics being for the year ending 31st March 2013. In the YE March 2013, the Northern Inland Tourism Region attracted 1.394 million domestic and 31,700 international visitors who stayed one of more nights in the Region. In addition, the Region attracted 1.42 million day trippers. Visitation figures for the period YE March 2001 to YE March 2013 are given in Table 18.1.

In YE March 2013, total visitors to the Region spent in the order of $749 million. Domestic overnight visitors spent on average $115 per night, down 12.7% on YE March 2012. The average expenditure of domestic day visitors was $150 per visit, up 6.3% on YE March 2012, while the average expenditure by international overnight visitors was $55 per night, up 4.7% on YE March 2012.

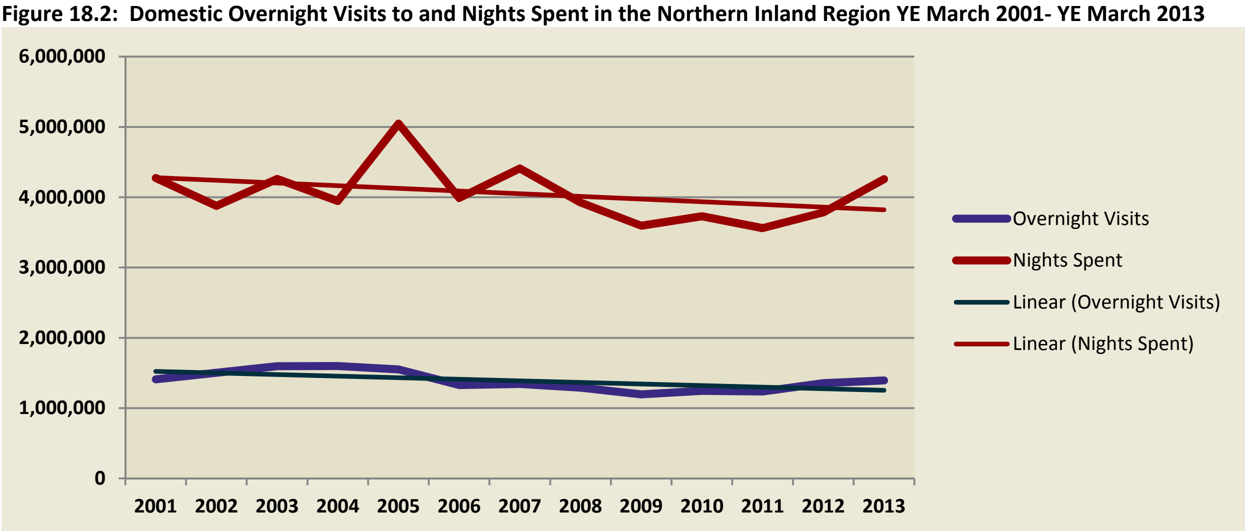
Unless stated otherwise, all years given in the following section, are for the YE March in the year specified.

Domestic Overnight Visitation

Visits & Nights

In YE March 2013, the Northern Inland Region attracted 1.394 million domestic visitors who spent 4.258 million nights in the Region. This represents 5.6% of total domestic overnight visits made in NSW and 5.1% of nights spent in NSW by domestic visitors. From 2001 to 2013, the number of overnight visitors and nights spent in the Region has fluctuated significantly, with the overall trend being down.

Figure 18.2: Domestic Overnight Visits to and Nights Spent in the Northern Inland Region YE March 2001- YE March 2013



Source: Destination NSW – Travel to the New England North West Region – Time Series Data YE Mar 2001-YE Mar 2013

In 2013 the average length of stay was 3.1 nights, which is marginally lower than the State average of 3.4 nights.

[50] The Northern Inland Region corresponds to the New England – North West Tourism Region, which is part of the larger Inland NSW marketing region.

Table 18.1 Visitation to the Northern Inland Region, YE March 2001-2013

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	% change 2001-13
Domestic Overnight Visitors														
Visits – Number ('000)	1,410	1,504	1,599	1,550	1,327	1,343	1,343	1,291	1,195	1,245	1,237	1,355	1,394	-1.1%
% change pa		6.7%	6.3%	-3.1%	-14.4%	1.2%	0.0%	-3.9%	-7.4%	4.2%	-0.64%	9.5%	2.9%	
Nights – Number ('000)	4,272	3,877	4,260	3,946	5,046	3,989	4,409	3,926	3,595	3,730	3,561	3,784	4,258	-0.3%
% change pa		-9.3%	9.9%	-7.4%	27.9%	-21.0%	10.5%	-11.0%	-8.4%	3.8%	-4.5%	6.3%	12.5%	
Domestic Day Trippers														
Visits – Number ('000)	1,608	1,811	2,056	2,298	1,798	1,846	2,047	1,900	1,637	1,833	2,001	1,870	1,420	-11.7%
% change pa		12.6%	13.5%	11.8%	-21.8%	2.7%	10.9%	-7.2%	-13.8%	12.0%	9.2%	6.6%	-24.1%	
International Overnight Visitors#														
Visits – Number ('000)	62.7	87.5	55.3	68.0	72.2	48.5	57.5	50.8	44.6	48.0	34.4	40.3	31.7	-49.4%
% change pa		39.6%	-36.8%	23.0%	6.2%	-32.8%	18.6%	-11.7%	-12.2%	7.6%	-28.3%	17.2%	-21.2	
Nights – Number ('000)	557.0	849.6	258.5	538.9	659.6	369.4	679.4	380.4	484.4	563.2	558.7	639.0	855.7	53.6%
% change pa		52.5%	-69.6%	108.5%	22.4%	-44.0%	83.9%	-44.0%	27.3%	16.3%	-0.8%	14.4%	33.9%	

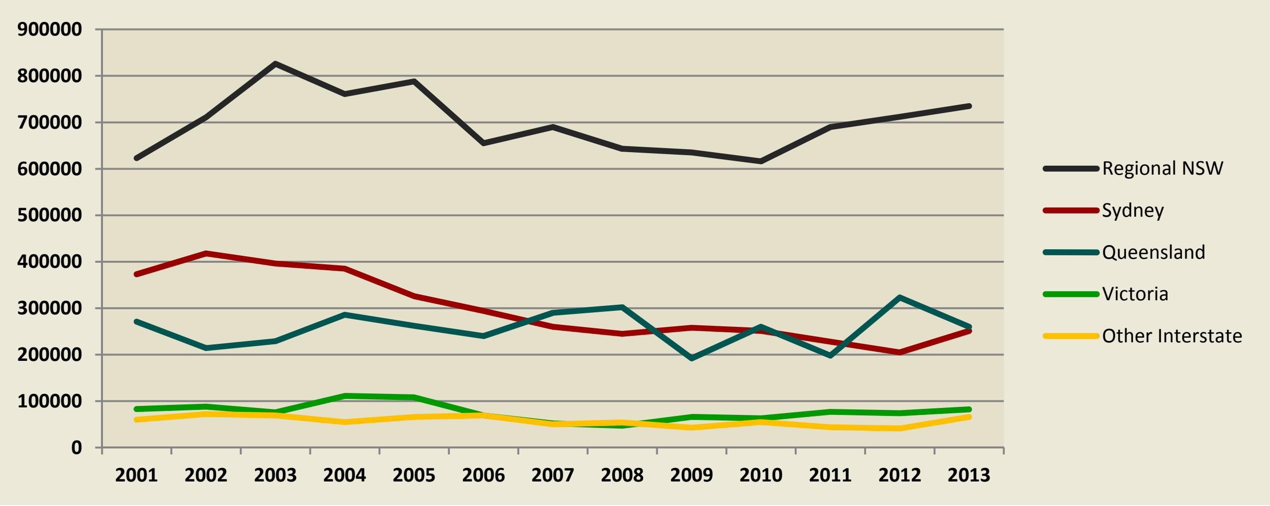
Visitor Numbers are very small and may not be statistically valid.

Source: Destination NSW – Travel to the New England North West Region – Time Series Data YE Mar 2001-YE Mar 2013

Origin of Visitors

In 2013, 70.8% of visitors to the Northern Inland Region were from NSW, with 52.7% being from Regional NSW and 18% from Sydney. 29.2% of visitors were from interstate, primarily from Queensland (18.7%) and Victoria (5.9%). Since 2001, Queensland is the only source market that has been trending up, with the other source markets either relatively static or trending down. The Regional NSW market declined from 2003 to 2010, with growth in each year from 2010 to 2013. The Sydney market declined from 2002 to 2012 with a 22.4% increase in visitation between 2012 and 2013. While the Queensland market has been trending upwards, it has fluctuated quite significantly. From 2011 to 2012 the number of Queenslanders visiting the Region increased by 63.1%, only to decline by 19.5% in the 12 months to March 2013.

Figure 18.3 Place of Residence of Domestic Overnight Visitors to the Northern Inland Region. Number of Visitors, YE March 2001-2013

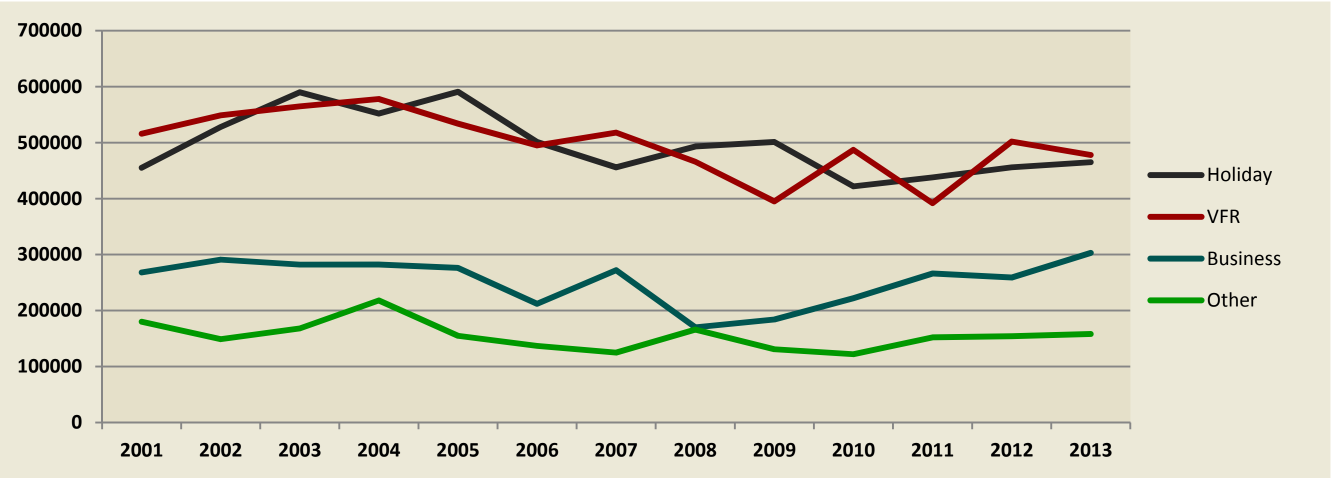


Source: Destination NSW – Travel to the New England North West Region – Time Series Data YE Mar 2001-YE Mar 2013

Purpose of Visit

In YE March 2013, 34.3% of visitors to the Northern Inland Region were visiting friends and relatives (VFR), 33.4% were holiday and leisure travellers, 21.7% were business travellers and 11.3% were travelling for other reasons. The number of business travellers to the Region has been increasing since 2008, which may be due in part to the rapid growth of the coal and gas sectors during this period.

Figure 18.4 Domestic Overnight Visitors to the Northern Inland Region – Purpose of Visit. Number of Visitors YE March 2001- 2013

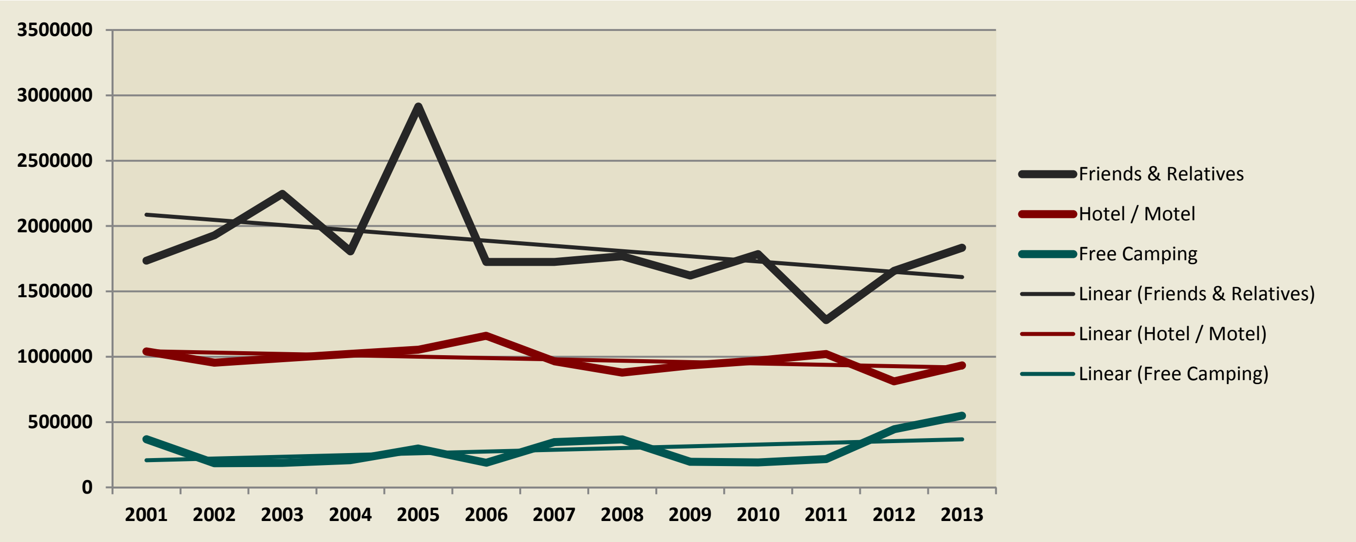


Source: Destination NSW – Travel to the New England North West Region – Time Series Data YE Mar 2001-YE Mar 2013

Accommodation Used

In YE March 2013, 43.1% of visitor nights spent in the Region (1.834 million) were spent in the homes of friends and relatives. The next most popular form of accommodation was hotels and standard motels (21.9% of nights – 934,000 nights), followed by 'free' camping (12.9% of nights – 549,000 nights). From 2001 to 2013 the number of nights spent with friends and relatives and in hotels and standard motels has been trending down, while the number of nights spent 'free' camping has been trending up. In the past 12 months (2012-13), there has been an increase in nights spent in all types of accommodation.

Figure 18.5 Accommodation used by Domestic Overnight Visitors. Number of Nights, YE March 2001-2013



Source: Destination NSW – Travel to the New England North West Region – Time Series Data YE Mar 2001-YE Mar 2013

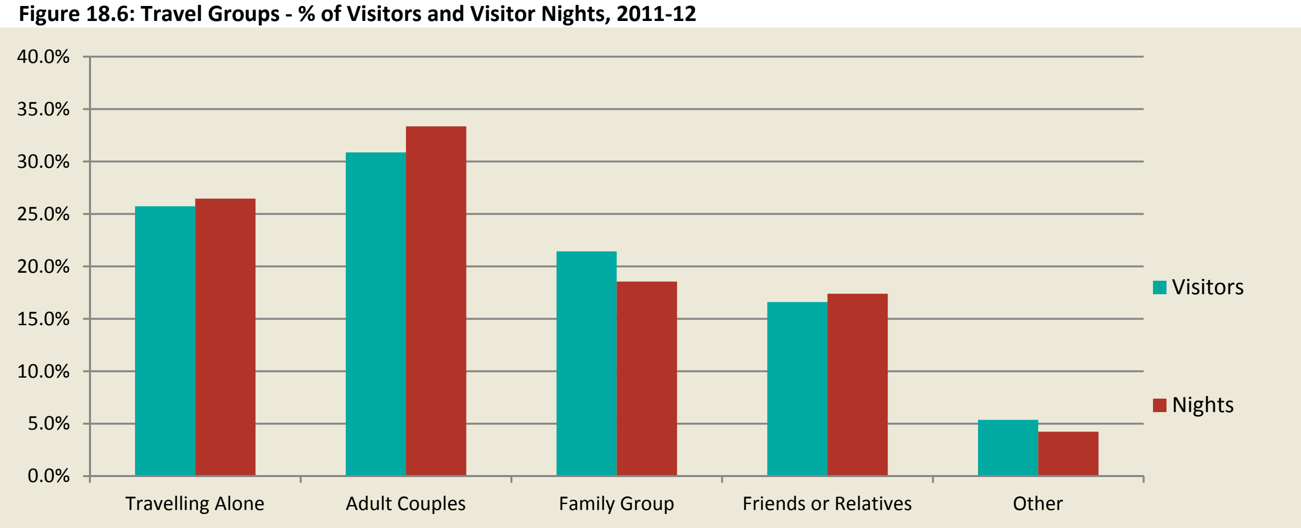
Travel to the Region

The majority of visitors (82%) travel to the Northern Inland Region by car. Around 9.2% of visitors arrive in the Region by train (128,842 visitors), with 4.0% arriving by air (55,474 visitors).

Travel Groups

According to the NE-NW Regional Profile, published by Tourism Research Australia for 2011-12, 31% of visitors were travelling as adult couples, with 26% travelling alone, 19% as part of family groups and 17% with friends and relatives. Adult couples had a slightly longer length of stay (3.09 nights) than other travel groups.

Figure 18.6: Travel Groups - % of Visitors and Visitor Nights, 2011-12

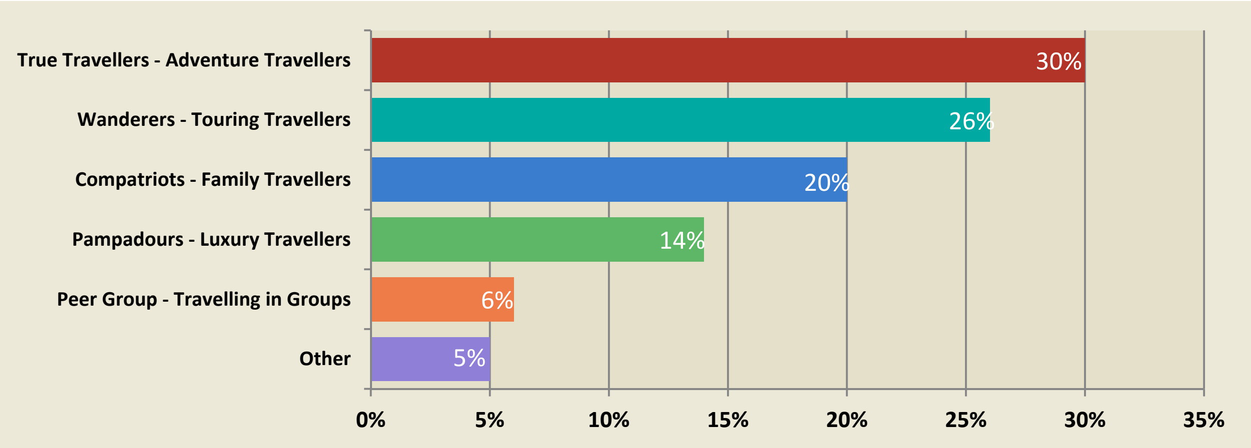


Source: Tourism Research Australia – Regional Profile, NE-NW Region NSW, Financial Year 2011-2012.

Travel Mindsets

Destination NSW segments the domestic holiday and leisure travel market on the basis of travel mindsets. Data is available for 'Country NSW' which incorporates 5 tourism regions – Capital Country, Central NSW, Northern Inland, The Murray and Riverina plus the Upper Hunter Region. The data is the average of 2012 and 2013 survey responses. The primary market segments visiting Country NSW are 'True Travellers' (30% of visitors), followed by 'Wanderers' (26%) and Compatriots (20%).

Figure 18.7 Australian Travel Mindsets – Country NSW - 2YE March 2013.



Source: Destination NSW – Travel to the New England North West Region – YE march 2013.

Research undertaken by the NE-NW Regional Tourism Organisation in 2004 identified 'Wanderers' and 'Compatriots' as the main markets for the Northern Inland Region. Wanderers are essentially the retiree market (also known as the touring market and grey nomads), while Compatriots correspond to the family market. The main findings of this research relevant to Gunnedah Shire were:

- With the aging population there is likely to be an increase in the Wanderer market.
- There is a trend towards nature-based tourism.
- Self-contained accommodation is becoming increasingly popular particularly in the Wanderer and Compatriot markets.
- The types of travellers who have visited or are likely to visit the Region are those who show a strong tendency to be passionate about specific issues, in particular:
  - Nature - bird watching, bush walking, fishing.
  - Creative and visual arts
  - Education
  - Technology
- Food and agriculture are significant reasons in the choice to visit, with visitors looking for local produce on menus.
- Factors likely to influence the decision to visit the Region include:
  - Water, particularly waterfalls and areas that allow water-based activities
  - Night skies
  - Seasons - particularly the changing colours, with Spring and Autumn the preferred times to travel
  - History and heritage
  - Opportunities for discovery and outdoor activities
  - Agriculture and produce

Based on discussions with operators, Gunnedah Shire primarily attracts the Wanderers and Compatriot markets, followed by True Travellers and Peer Group Travellers. The Shire has no product for the Pampadour market.

Towns Visited & Experiences

According to the NE-NW Regional Profile, published by Tourism Research Australia for 2011-12, the three most visited towns in the Region were Tamworth (409,000 visitors), Armidale (225,000 visitors) and Moree (123,000 visitors).

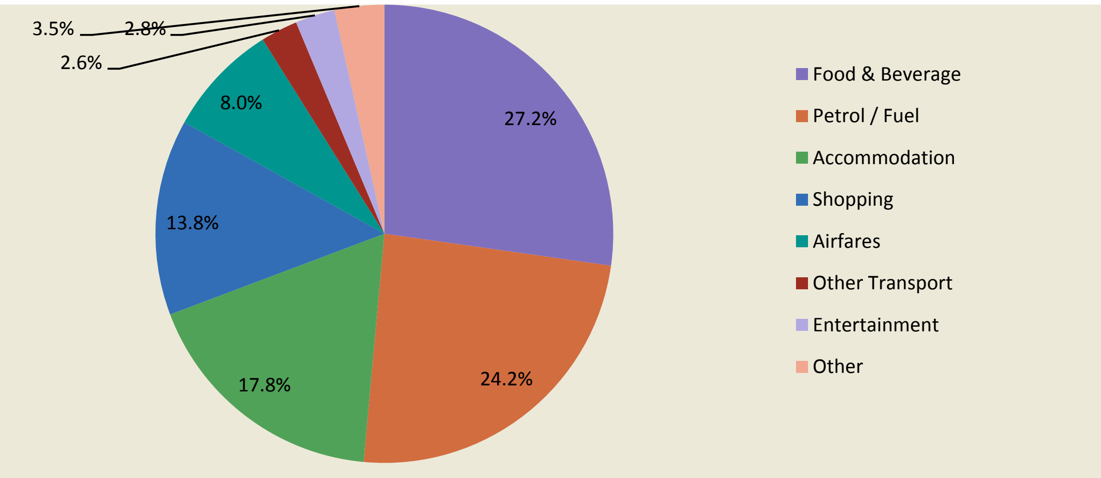
The most popular experiences were food and wine - 48% of visitors (635,000), nature based - 13% of visitors (173,000) and cultural and heritage – 10% (139,000).

Expenditure

In YE March 2013, domestic overnight visitors spent on average $115 per night within the Northern Inland Region. According to the TRC profile for the Region for 2011-12, the expenditure breakdown was:

- Food & Beverage 27.2%
- Petrol / Fuel 24.2%
- Accommodation 17.8%
- Shopping 13.8%
- Airfares 8.0%
- Other Transport 2.6%
- Entertainment 2.8%
- Other 3.5%

Figure 18.8 Expenditure Breakdown – Domestic Overnight Visitors

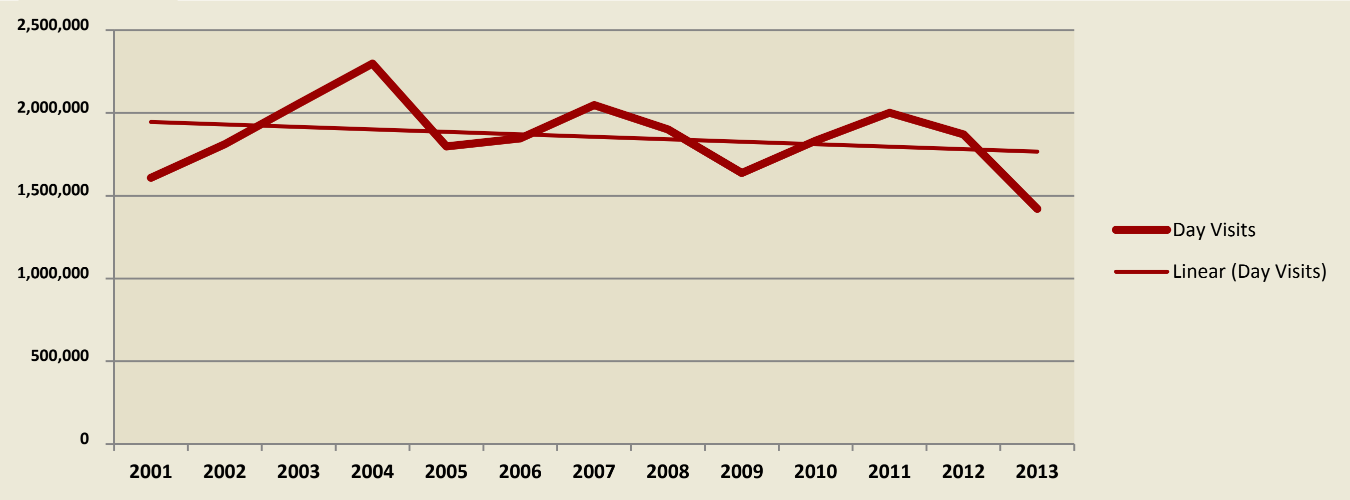


Source: TRC New England North West – Regional Profile

Daytrips by the Domestic Market

In YE March 2013, the Northern Inland Region attracted 1.420 million domestic day-trippers. The number of day trippers was down 24.1% on the YE March 2012. The majority of the day trips were generated internally within the Region.

Figure 18.9 Domestic Day Visits to the Northern Inland Region. YE March 2001- YE March 2013



Source: Destination NSW – Travel to the New England North West Region – Time Series Data YE Mar 2001-YE Mar 2013

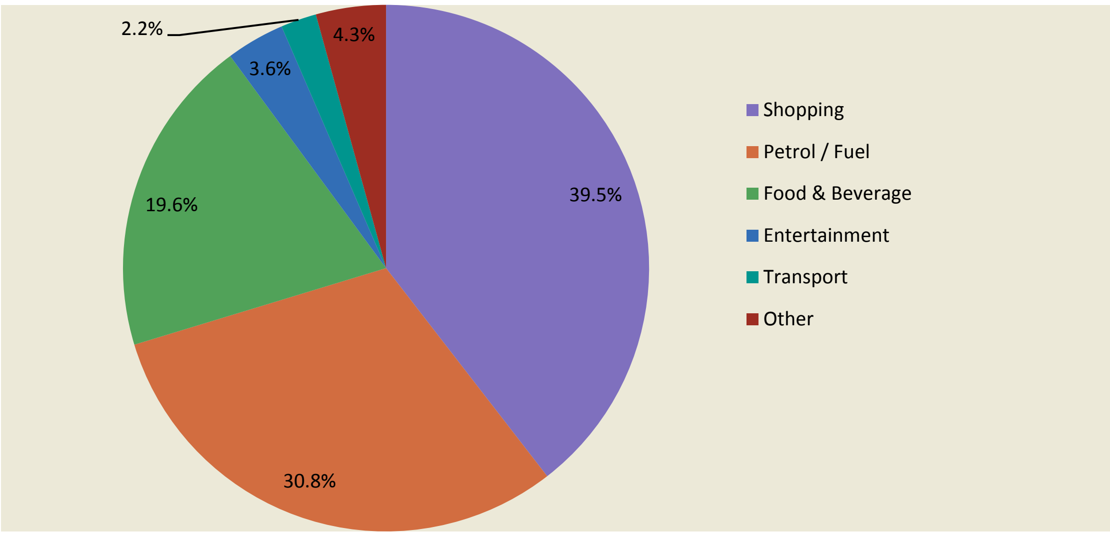
37.7% of daytrips were made for holiday and leisure purposes (includes trips made for shopping and sporting activities). Visiting friends and relatives accounted for 16.8% of trips with health-related travel accounting for 16.6% of trips. From 2001 to 2013, holiday and leisure has remained the primary purpose for travel, with this sector showing significant fluctuations in the number of trips made.

The main activities undertaken by day trippers were dining out (35.5%), shopping for pleasure (34%), visiting friends and relatives (20.6%), general sightseeing (4.9%) and picnics – barbeques (3.9%).

In YE March 2013 daytrip visitors spent on average $150 per person per trip. The expenditure breakdown was:

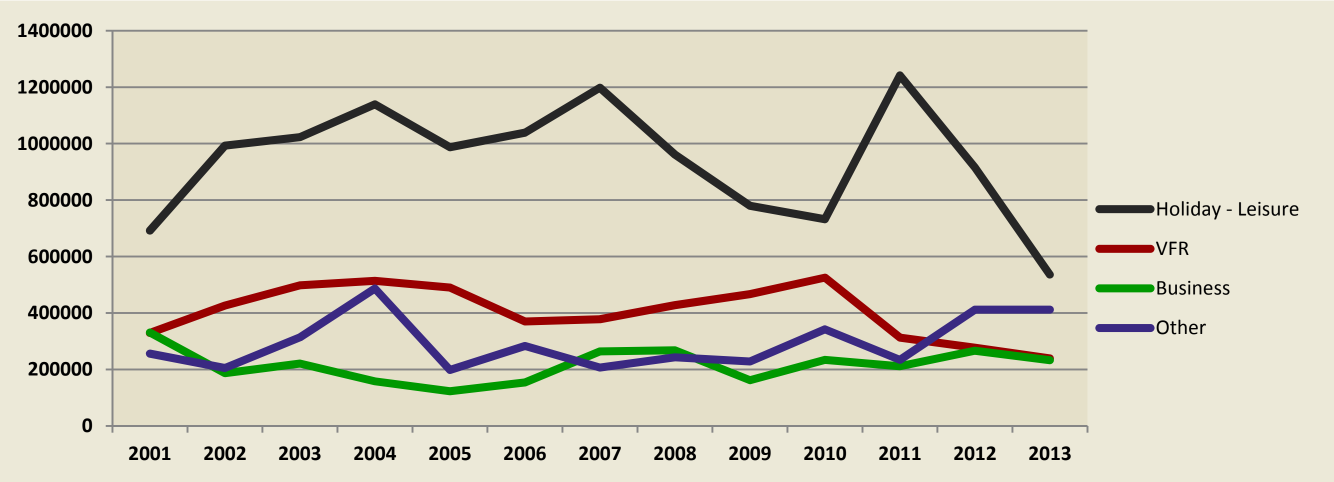
- Shopping 39.5%
- Petrol / Fuel 30.8%
- Food & Beverage 19.6%
- Entertainment 3.6%
- Transport 2.2%
- Other 4.3%

Figure 18.10 Expenditure Breakdown – Domestic Day Trippers



Source: TRC New England North West – Regional Profile

Figure 18.11 Domestic Day Visitors - Main Purpose of Trip. Number of Trips, YE March 2001-2013



Source: Destination NSW – Travel to the New England North West Region – Time Series Data YE Mar 2001-YE Mar 2013

International Overnight Travel

In YE March 2013 the Northern Inland Region was visited by 31,700 international visitors, down 21.2% on visitation in 2012. International visitors spent 856,000 nights in the Region.

The majority of international visitors to the Region were from the United Kingdom (17.9%), USA (13.5%) and New Zealand (12.2%). Visitors from other 'western' countries accounted for 29.7% of visitors, while Asia accounted for 23.7% of visitors, with Indonesia being the main market (6.9%).

44.5% of international visitors travelled to the region for holiday/pleasure purposes, with 33.1% visiting friends and relatives and 9.9% coming into the area for employment. International visitors were more likely to stay in rented accommodation (28.8% of nights) and with friends and relatives (24.2%).

It is estimated that international overnight visitors spent on average $54 per person per night in the Region.

Implications and Opportunities for Gunnedah Shire

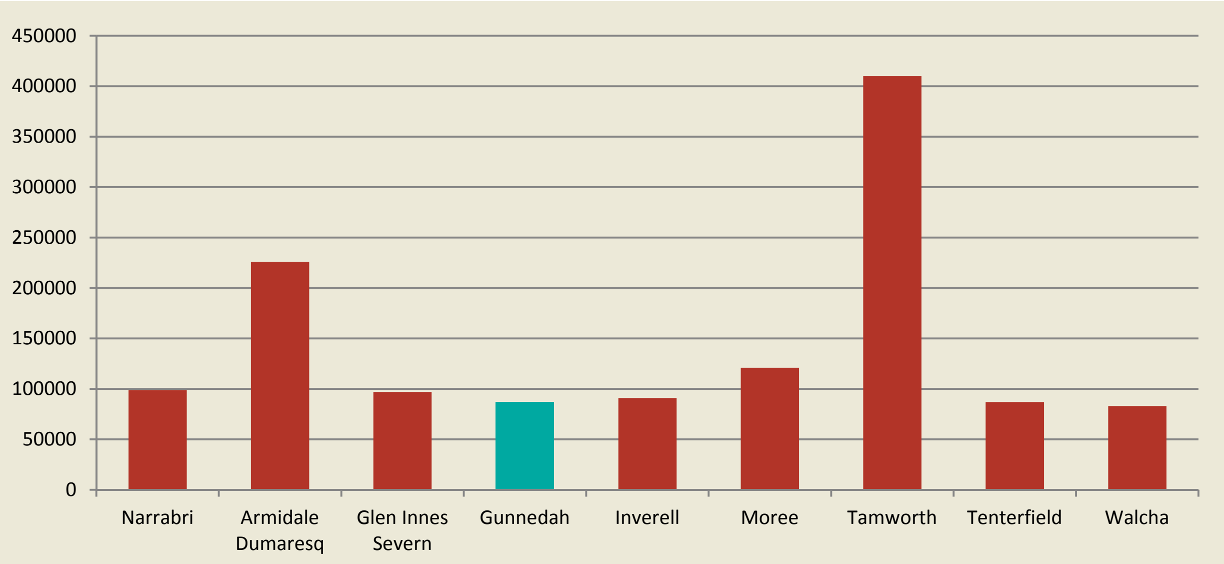
- Regional NSW followed by Queensland and then Sydney are the main source of visitors to the Region.
- The Region has a large VFR market, providing the opportunity to put in place local and regional promotions to encourage residents to show their visitors around the local area.
- The VFR market tends to rely on word of mouth recommendations from their host rather than seek out VICs. The challenge lies in educating and motivating the host community.
- Food and wine and nature-based experiences are popular with both the domestic and international overnight markets, with 'shopping for pleasure' being popular in all markets. These opportunities need to be further developed and promoted in Gunnedah Shire.
- There is an increasing number of travellers 'free' camping within the Region. Gunnedah Shire needs to continue to provide localities to cater for this market segment.
- True Travellers, Wanderers and Compatriots are the primary markets for the Region. Gunnedah Shire's product base fits best with the Wanderers market, with Lake Keepit ideal for both the Wanderer and Compatriot markets.

18.3 Visitation within the New England North West Region

In 2011, Destination NSW published visitor profiles for selected LGAs in NSW. These profiles are based on 3-4 year average figures taken from the National and International Visitor Surveys. As sample sizes are small, the data should be regarded as indicative only. Data is available for 9 of the LGAs within the Region, with data not published for Guyra, Liverpool Plains, Uralla and Gwydir Shires.

Within the Region, Tamworth Regional LGA is the most visited destination averaging 410,000 domestic overnight visitors per year. Armidale Dumaresq LGA ranked second (226,000 visitors) followed by Moree Plains Shire (121,000 visitors), and Narrabri Shire (99,000 visitors). Gunnedah Shire (87,000) ranked equal 7th with Tenterfield.

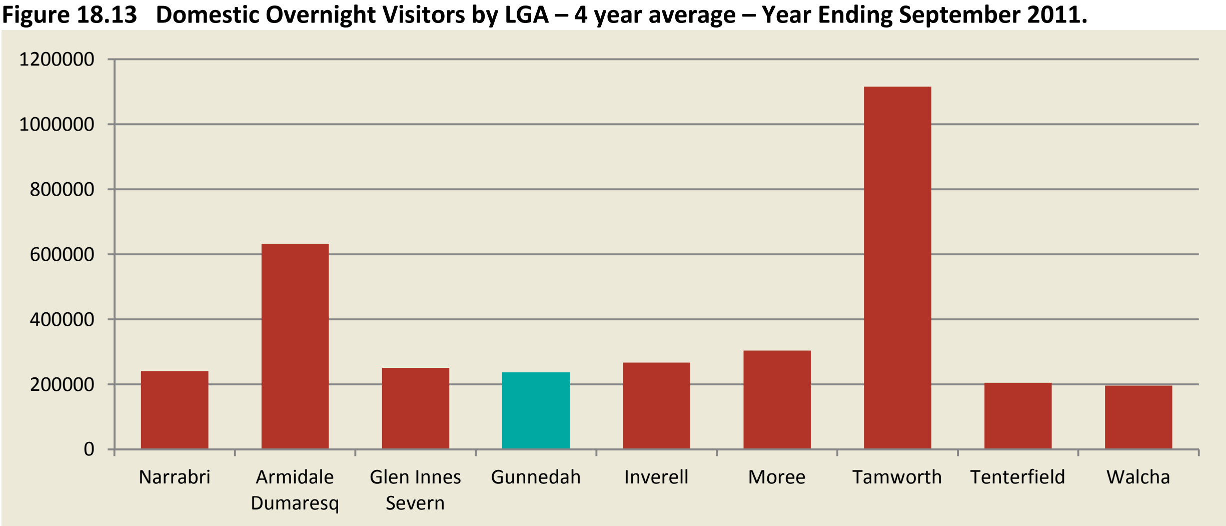
Figure 18.12 Domestic Overnight Visitors by LGA – 4 year average – Year Ending September 2011



Source: Destination NSW – Local Government Area Visitor Profiles, 2011

Visitors spend on average 1.116 million nights per annum in Tamworth Regional LGA, with Armidale Dumaresq ranking second (632,000 nights), followed by Moree Plains (351,000 nights), Inverell (267,000 nights), Glen Innes Severn (251,000 nights), Narrabri (241,000 nights) and Gunnedah (235,000 nights) Shires.

Figure 18.13 Domestic Overnight Visitors by LGA – 4 year average – Year Ending September 2011.

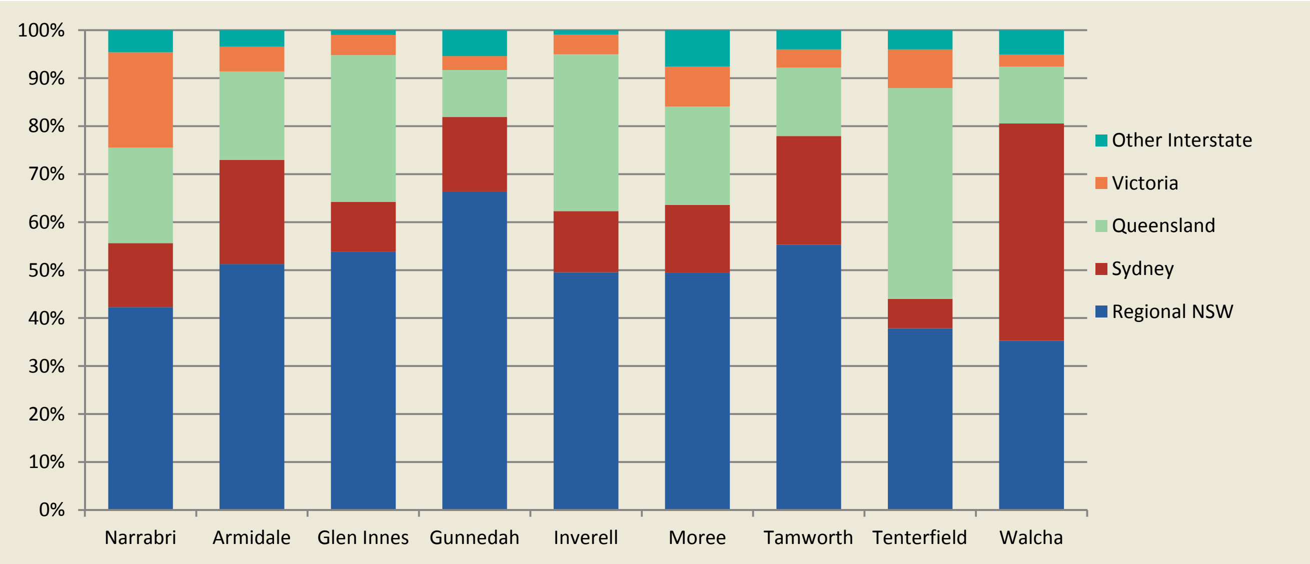


Source: Destination NSW – Local Government Area Visitor Profiles, 2011

Visitor Characteristics are summarised in Table 18.2.

Within the Region, Gunnedah Shire attracts the highest proportion of visitors from Regional NSW.

Figure 18.14 Place of Residence of Domestic Overnight Visitors – Selected LGAs Northern Inland Region YE September 2011



Source: Destination NSW – Local Government Area Visitor Profiles, 2011

In comparison to the other eight LGAs for which data is available within the Region, Gunnedah Shire has:

- A high proportion of business and work related travellers, ranking second to Narrabri. This probably reflects the growth in the mining sector that has occurred in the Gunnedah Basin. As a result of the strong business and work related travel market, Gunnedah Shire also has a relatively high proportion of visitors who are travelling alone, in the family formation lifestyle stage (youngest child less than 15 years of age) and aged 35-44 years.

- The highest proportion of intrastate visitors and the lowest proportion of interstate visitors, reflecting Gunnedah's position off the main interstate Highways.

- One of the highest rates of travellers staying in caravan parks.

- A relatively lower proportion of people aged 65+ years than most other locations within the Region, indicating that Gunnedah may not be effectively tapping into the market that is the best 'fit' for the Shire's products.

- The second highest proportion of people travelling with friends and relatives, ranking behind Inverell. Both Gunnedah and Inverell have large State Parks on dams, and the higher proportions may reflect family and social groups visiting these facilities.

Table 18.2 Visitation Profiles – Domestic Overnight Visitors, Selected LGAs – NE-NW Region – 4 year average – Year Ending September 2011

	Gunnedah	Armidale	Glen Innes	Inverell	Moree	Narrabri	Tamworth	Tenterfield	Walcha
Domestic Overnight									
Visits	87,000	226,000	97,000	91,000	121,000	99,000	410,000	87,000	83,000
Nights	235,000	632,000	251,000	267,000	304,000	241,000	1,116,000	205,000	196,000
Av Stay - nights	2.7	2.8	2.6	3.0	2.5	2.4	2.7	2.4	2.4
Domestic Day Trips									
Trips	Np	255,000	np	122,000	np	np	586,000	np	238,000
International Overnight									
Visits	Np	10,000	2,000	2,000	4,000	np	9,000	np	14,000
Nights		197,000	9,000	41,000	46,000		99,000		77,000
Origin									
Intrastate	81.9%	73.0%	64.2%	62.4%	63.6%	55.9%	77.9%	43.8%	80.5%
Interstate	18.1%	27.0%	35.8%	37.6%	36.4%	44.1%	22.1%	56.2%	19.5%
Regional NSW	66.45	51.2%	53.8%	49.4%	49.5%	42.5%	55.4%	38.0%	35.4%
Sydney	15.5%	21.7%	10.4%	12.7%	14.1%	13.4%	22.7%	6.1%	45.4%
Queensland	9.8%	18.4%	30.6%	32.6%	20.5%	20.0%	14.3%	44.1%	11.9%
Victoria	2.9%	5.2%	4.2%	4.1%	8.3%	20.0%	3.8%	8.1%	2.5%
Purpose									
Holiday / Leisure	26.4%	35.0%	45.3%	48.4%	39.4%	28.2%	32.1%	49.2%	53.1%
VFR	35.8%	35.6%	25.7%	35.1%	26.3%	32.2%	33.9%	24.8%	34.5%
Business	26.6%	13.9%	17.2%	11.3%	22.8%	31.5%	23.0%	12.4%	9.4%
Other	8.3%	14.4%	10.6%	5.0%	9.5%	8.1%	10.3%	11.3%	3.0%
Accommodation									
Motel, Hotel, Resort	24.0%	26.4%	15.5%	12.5%	31.9%	31.9%	27.6%	31.4%	18.8%
Rented House / Apt	-	5.2%	-	-	-	-	3.4%	-	15.0%
Caravan Park	17.8%	9.8%	11.8%	14.9%	21.3%	13.2%	9.2%	11.9%	9.9%
Friends or Relatives	39.9%	44.4%	41.7%	49.3%	33.2%	39.9%	50.0%	23.4%	36.7%
Free Camping	8.0%	4.5%	17.4%	7.8%	7.3%	5.7%	4.0%	22.0%	-
Guesthouse / B&B	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9.4%
5 Main Activities Undertaken									
Eat Out / Restaurants	38.3%	49.3%	42.9%	41.6%	43.1%	35.8%	45.7%	30.8%	42.7%
Sightseeing	13.4%	20.2%	20.9%	24.9%	18.4%	18.6%	15.3%	19.3%	25.0%

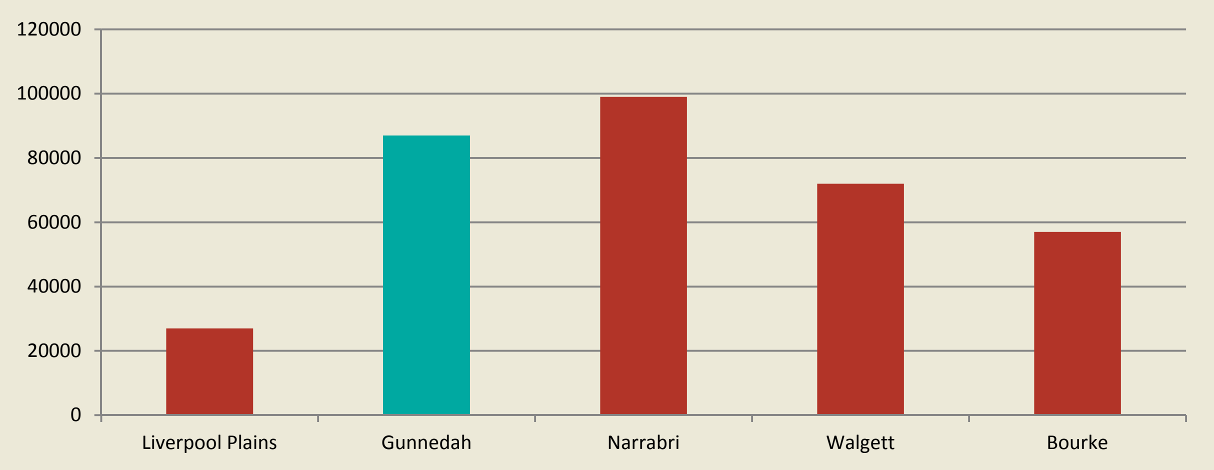
	Gunnedah	Armidale	Glen Innes	Inverell	Moree	Narrabri	Tamworth	Tenterfield	Walcha
Visiting Friends or Relatives	37.7%	44.9%	31.4%	41.0%	26.4%	25.3%	43.8%	21.3%	40.5%
Shopping for Pleasure	11.3%	20.6%	-	16.3%	8.2%	-	18.4%	-	-
Pubs, Clubs & Discos	23.1%	15.0%	16.6%	19.4%	15.4%	-	21.3%	13.6%	-
Bush Walking	-	-	16.1%	-	-	-	-	17.4%	-
National Parks / State Forests	-	-	-	-	-	14.1%	-	-	34.4%
						7.6%			25.0%
Age Group									
15-24 years	8.0%	10.5%	10.0%	17.1%	8.1%	9.1%	12.0%	3.5%	29.4%
25-34 years	15.2%	12.2%	9.5%	11.9%	7.5%	7.4%	14.6%	7.2%	12.1%
35-44 years	24.6%	15.9%	22.2%	19.3%	15.7%	32.5%	21.1%	27.7%	18.5%
45-54 years	21.8%	19.8%	14.3%	11.3%	15.3%	10.1%	18.6%	17.3%	13.0%
55-64 years	12.9%	19.0%	22.2%	17.1%	26.7%	20.0%	16.9%	13.3%	13.0%
65+ years	17.5%	22.1%	21.2%	23.2%	26.1%	20.6%	16.9%	31.0%	14.3%
Life Cycle Stage									
Single, 15-44 years	6.9%	14.8%	13.8%	15.5%	9.9%	8.4%	17.7%	5.2%	26.7%
Couples, 15-44 years	15.5%	6.4%	14.0%	11.3%	5.0%	9.1%	10.5%	6.6%	13.3%
Parents, Youngest Child <15	30.1%	25.5%	18.0%	29.5%	21.2%	34.2%	26.0%	31.2%	25.1%
Parents, Youngest Child 15+	7.4%	10.4%	5.0%	4.1%	7.0%	5.6%	9.2%	6.1%	7.9%
Working Aged 45+	15.2%	16.3%	19.8%	10.5%	22.8%	12.4%	14.7%	15.0%	9.1%
Non Working Aged 45+	25.8%	26.6%	28.9%	28.2%	34.0%	30.2%	22.5%	35.6%	18.2%
Travel Party									
Alone	22.6%	23.0%	16.9%	17.9%	24.6%	35.3%	29.8%	14.4%	17.9%
Adult Couple	27.8%	34.8%	33.9%	27.9%	34.8%	27.4%	27.8%	43.1%	26.7%
Family	24.1%	28.1%	30.1%	25.7%	24.0%	19.8%	24.7%	29.8%	39.4%
Friends / Relatives	16.6%	6.8%	14.5%	21.3%	11.0%	8.4%	11.0%	10.7%	9.4%
Business Associates	6.6%	3.8%	1.2%	4.1%	3.5%	7.9%	4.9%	np	np
Other	2.4%	3.7%	3.4%	3.1%	2.1%	11.2%	1.8%	np	np

Source: Destination NSW – Local Government Area Visitor Profiles, 2011

Kamilaroi Highway

Of the six LGAs along the Kamilaroi Highway, Gunnedah Shire has the 2nd highest level of domestic visitation, ranking behind Narrabri. As each of the Shires have two or more highways 'feeding' into them it is not possible to isolate statistics for Kamilaroi Highway travellers. Tourism Managers along the Highway report that the number of Highway travellers has increased substantially over the past 2-3 years, with most of the growth being in the touring caravan and motorhome markets. For the first 8 months of 2013, the Liverpool Plains VIC at Willow Tree recorded 962 travel parties[51] who were specifically touring on the Kamilaroi Highway.

Figure 18.15 Domestic Overnight Visitors to LGA's along the Kamilaroi Highway - YE September 2011.



Source: Destination NSW – Local Government Area Visitor Profiles, 2011

18.4 Gunnedah Shire

The assessment of the current status of the tourism sector in Gunnedah provided in the Draft Destination Management Plan (DMP) prepared by Inland NSW Regional Tourism Organisation for the Northern Inland cluster is:

> *'Gunnedah is moderately well known compared to most destinations across Inland. It is not a destination hub like Tamworth, but it is certainly a strong secondary town. A quarter of Australians have heard of it, rising to two fifths of those who live in NSW, and it is relatively strong in consideration in metro NSW making this a good target market. Its conversion to visitation once known is also fairly strong, perhaps due to its presence on a route corridor. It has above average recognition for its pioneer history and as a place where Australians can reconnect with their past, however despite its self-proclaimed title of "The koala capital of the World', it is not widely recognised as a base for nature activities. Short-term growth can be built by giving the visiting friends and relatives market a reason to stay longer or come more often. Over the longer term, Gunnedah needs to work with other towns in the region to build a network that can generate mutual advantage'.*

Visitation

Destination NSW estimated that in YE September 2011, Gunnedah Shire attracted 87,000 domestic visitors, with these visitors staying 235,000 nights in the Shire and spending in the order of $26 million during their stay. Estimates are not available for the number of day visitors and highway travellers who stop in the town, nor for expenditure from these visitors.

Based on the LGA Profile, the main characteristics of domestic overnight visitors to Gunnedah Shire are:

---

[51] People travelling together – eg a couple or a family, were counted as one travel party.

- 81.9% of visitors to the Shire were from NSW with 15.5% being from Sydney and 66.4% from Regional NSW. Interstate visitors account for 18.1% of visitors, with the majority of interstate visitors being from Queensland (9.8%) and Victoria (2.9%).

- Visitors from Sydney had the longest length of stay in the Shire (3.14 nights), followed by visitors from Queensland (2.67 nights) and Regional NSW (2.64 nights).

- The majority of visitors to the Shire were visiting friends and relatives (VFR market - 35.8%), followed by business travellers (26.6%) and leisure travellers (26.4%).

- Business travellers had the longest length of stay in the Shire (3.65 nights), followed by the VFR market (2.97 nights) and leisure travellers (2.04 nights).

- 89.3% of visitors to Gunnedah Shire travel by car, with 3.6% travelling in a campervan or motorhome.

- The main activities undertaken by visitors to the Shire were dining at restaurants (38.3%), visiting friends and relatives (37.7%), visiting hotels and clubs (23.1%), sight-seeing (13.4%) and shopping for pleasure (11.3%). The proportion of people dining, shopping and sight-seeing is well below the State averages for these activities (56.3% / 26.3% / 26.6%, respectively).

- 46.4% of visitors to the Shire are aged 35-54 years, reflecting the dominance of work-related travel, with the next largest age group being 65+ years (17.5%) – the retiree market, which is generally a touring market.

- 27.8% of visitors were travelling as adult couples, with 16.6% travelling with other adults. 24.1% were travelling with children, while 22.6% were alone and 6.6% with business associates.

Based on discussions with the Gunnedah Tourism Manager and information provided at the Community Workshops, the markets attracted to Gunnedah Shire include:

Primary Markets	Secondary & Minor Markets	Activity Based Markets
Business & work-related travellers	Families / family groups	Golfers
People visiting friends & relatives	Touring caravans & motorhomes	Anglers
Highway travellers	Conference & meeting delegates	Boating / sailing enthusiasts
	Event attendees	Cyclists
	Coach tours	Aviation based – learn to fly, gliding
	Overflow from adjoining LGAs (eg during the Country Music Festival)	Race-goers (horse racing)
		Campers
		Horse sports
		Sporting teams
		Motorsport

Business and work-related travel is concentrated from Monday to Thursday nights from February through to November. ‘Touring’ traffic peaks in spring and autumn, while visitation from families is concentrated in school holiday periods, and summer weekends (Lake Keepit).

The Oxley Highway primarily carries regional traffic accessing Tamworth, and long-haul interstate traffic moving between the Newell and New England Highways. The Kamilaroi Highway mainly attracts touring traffic, often travelling between Sydney/Hunter and Narrabri to join the Newell Highway, or further west to Lightning Ridge and/or Bourke.

Employment

At the 2011 Census, the 'Accommodation and Food Services' sector was the seventh largest employer in Gunnedah Shire employing 358 people or 6.9% of the local workforce. According to Tourism Research Australia (TRA), the accommodation and food services sector accounts for 28% of total employment in the Tourism sector.

From 2001 to 2011 the number of people employed in the accommodation and food services sector in Gunnedah Shire increased by 97.8%, with 177 additional people working in the accommodation and food sector. Within the Shire, the Accommodation and Food Services sector is a significant employer of young people (aged 15-19 years). In addition, tourism generates employment across other sectors including retail and wholesale trade, professional and technical services, construction, rental and real estate and arts and recreation services. According to TRA, for every one person directly employed in the tourism sector, there are 0.71 persons indirectly employed.[52]

Attractions & Activities

Gunnedah Shire has a relatively limited attraction base, with very few of the attractions having strong 'pulling power'. Lake Keepit State Park is the main attraction and activity centre within the Shire. Activities at the Lake are however dependent on water levels, with visitation having been impacted significantly during the most recent drought. The Shire promotes itself as the 'Koala Capital of the World' however the koala experience is limited and has also been impacted on by the drought. A number of the attractions in Gunnedah (eg Bindea Walking Track, Wallaby Trap area, Porcupine Lookout and the Riverside reserves) are 'tired' and not well presented or maintained. The other main focus in Gunnedah Shire is the poetry of Dorothea McKellar, with interpretative material in various locations within Gunnedah.

While Lake Keepit and the Wildlife Park appeal to families, most of the other attractions are more likely to appeal to the retiree (Wanderers) market.
The Shire has a good program of events which help to drive visitation, particularly on weekends. AgQuip is one of the largest events in Australia, bringing over 100,000 visitors into the Shire. The Santos North West Cycle Tour is a high profile event that generated national and international coverage of Gunnedah in the cycling media. The main attractions, activities and events held in the LGA are summarised following:

Primary Attractions	Supporting Attractions	Activities	Events
Lake Keepit State Park	Koalas	**Town & Villages**	Ag Quip
Scenery	Waterways Wildlife Park	Golf	Santos North West Tour
	Cumbo Gunnerah Gallery &	Walking tracks & tours	Porchetta Festival
	Keeping Place	Shopping	Week of Speed
	Dorothea McKellar	Dining	
	Rural Museum	Fishing	National Tomato Concert
	Water Tower Museum	Learn to Fly	Gunnedah Show
	Creative Arts Centre	Bowls	Dog Shows
	Plains of Plenty Gallery	Cinema / Entertainment	Bird Expo
	McDonagh's Model Trains		Swap Meets
	Porcupine Hill Lookout	**Lake Keepit**	Two Rivers Arts Festival
	Pensioner's Hill Lookout &	Boating & Sailing	Rodeo & Campdraft
	Sculptures	Watersports	Gold Cup Raceday / Wean
	Bindea Walking Track	Fishing	Picnic Races
	Poets Drive	Camping	Eisteddfod
	Town & Scenic Drives	Golf	Sundowner Road Race
	Parks & Reserves	Gliding	Keepit Kool Regatta
	Boonalla Aboriginal Area	BMX	Monthly Markets
	Diprotodon – Tambar	Tennis & Volleyball	Vintage Car Rally
	Springs	Bushwalking	
	Ben Hall - Breeza		

[52] Tourism Research Australia Tourism Satellite Account 2011-2012

Opportunities for Gunnedah Shire

There is potential to do far more with the 'raw' assets available in the Shire, including:

- Namoi River corridor – for the River to become a feature for the town, with a quality riverside picnic area, riverside walking tracks, fishing sports, interpretation etc. Cushan's Reserve in particular has the setting to be a significant attraction, however the area is poorly maintained and presented.

- Rich Aboriginal Heritage – parts of the 'story' have been told at Porcupine Lookout, the Wallaby Trap, Red Chief Memorial, Pensioner's Hill Sculpture of the Red Chief and the Cumbo Gunnerah Gallery & Keeping Place, with another facet added with the recent addition of the Boonalla Aboriginal Area at Kelvin. Opportunities to build the Aboriginal product in the Shire are discussed in the Kamilaroi Highway Aboriginal Product Scoping Study.

- The National Parks, State Conservation Areas and State Forests within the Shire and possibly Lake Goran – these areas may have potential to attract special interest and activity based markets and/or as locations for holding events.

- Further development of scenic drives – For example, with the opening of the Boonalla Aboriginal Area there is a potential loop through Kelvin, to Dripping Rock, Barbers Lagoon, Gins Leap, to Boggabri and returning to Gunnedah via Gulligal Lagoon. The rural scenery (patchwork of colour) is a major asset at various times of the year and there is potential to provide viewing areas along the main access roads into the Shire. Over time, more can be done to 'celebrate' the colours of the area through arts and cultural based activities.

- Coach tours – incorporating some of the local industries into coach tour itineraries.

- Further development of trails – eg fishing, bird, Aboriginal Heritage, harvesting etc. The concept of a River Trail with interrelated activity-based strands, has been suggested for the Kamilaroi Highway corridor.

- Becoming part of the attraction base of Tamworth – positioning Gunnedah Shire as a day trip destination for residents of and visitors staying in Tamworth.

Accommodation

Existing Supply of Accommodation

The accommodation base of Gunnedah Shire includes:

- Motels – 10 motels (213 rooms) all located in Gunnedah. There are three 4 star motels (60 rooms), two 3.5 star motels (40 rooms) and five 3 star properties (113 rooms). A number of the motels in Gunnedah are tired and dated.

- Serviced apartments – 10 properties providing a mix of one, two and three bedroom apartments. The properties range from 3 to 4 star in standard, with most of the properties being relatively new and well appointed.

- Pub Hotel accommodation – 9 hotels, 6 of which are located in Gunnedah, with the hotels in Tambar Springs, Mullaley and Curlewis also providing accommodation. The hotel accommodation is basic, with most properties having shared bathrooms.

- Caravan Park & Camping – there is one small caravan park in Gunnedah (3.5 star), plus caravan and camping facilities at the Gunnedah Showground and at Lake Keepit. An RV Friendly camping area is provided in

South Street, Gunnedah. The Mullaley Post Office Hotel also provides a number of powered caravan sites and three on-site cabins.

- Farm stay cottages – located at Mary's Mountain and the Nandewar Ranges.

- One Bed & Breakfast property – Roseneath Manor in Gunnedah.

Gunnedah Shire has a shortage of accommodation, particularly higher standard motels and self contained accommodation. With strong demand from mine-related, construction and infrastructure workers, accommodation in Gunnedah is often at, or close to, capacity from Monday to Thursday night. Occupancy rates on Friday and Saturday nights are generally low, and dependent on work schedules and events being held in the area. Accommodation starts to fill again on Sunday nights as workers come back to Gunnedah. Many of the serviced apartments and hotel rooms are booked on a semi permanent basis, often for months at a time. The strong demand from the business and work-related travel markets has displaced the leisure travel markets. 58.5% of the motel room stock is three star standard, with these properties being dated and tired, not meeting the changing needs and expectations of the marketplace, particularly leisure travellers.

Proposed Additions to the Supply

A development application has been submitted to Council for the development of a 35 room motel on the Kamilaroi Highway on the eastern edge of Gunnedah.

Performance of the Motel Sector

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) publishes monthly performance statistics on a Local Government Area (LGA) basis for hotels, motels, guesthouses that have more than 15 rooms with ensuite facilities. Data for Gunnedah Shire is available from 2000. Performance data is also available for the larger LGAs within the Northern Inland Region.

Annual performance data for 2000 to 2012 is summarised in Table 18.3. In 2000, 5 establishments (113 rooms) were surveyed, with the number of establishments increasing in 2003 to 6 establishments. Between 2006 and 2012, the number of rooms increased by 14 to 138 in 2012.

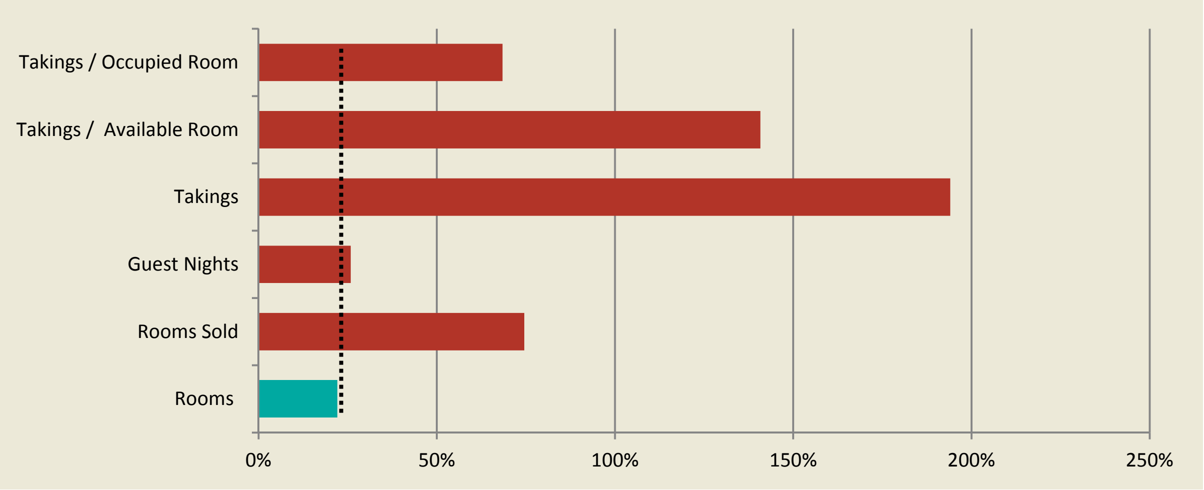
Table 18.3 Performance of Motels, 15+ rooms –Gunnedah Shire, 2000 -2012

Year	Est	Rms	Rooms Sold	Av. Occ	Guest Nights	Guest Arrivals	Length of Stay	Takings '000	Average Rate per	
									Occupied Room	Available Room
2000	5	113	18114	43.9%	32670	27046	1.21	1023	$ 56.48	$ 24.80
2001	5	113	17613	42.8%	33522	27372	1.22	1078	$ 61.20	$ 26.21
2002	5	113	19318	47.0%	33561	26259	1.28	1175	$ 60.82	$ 28.57
2003	6	124	20258	44.8%	33994	25240	1.35	1370	$ 67.63	$ 30.28
2004	6	128	21181	45.5%	37412	29681	1.26	1456	$ 68.74	$ 31.25
2005	6	128	21928	46.9%	38029	30188	1.26	1633	$ 74.47	$ 34.95
2006	6	128	25561	54.7%	45999	30617	1.50	1994	$ 78.00	$ 42.67
2007	6	128	29793	63.8%	42277	27482	1.54	2168	$ 72.77	$ 46.40
2008	6	128	23698	50.7%	39453	26992	1.46	2223	$ 93.81	$ 47.58
2009	6	130	27998	59.0%	42601	23691	1.8	2406	$ 85.93	$ 50.71
2010	6	136	30751	61.9%	41947	28833	1.80	2811	$ 91.41	$ 56.63
2011	6	139	34703	68.4%	46021	24296	1.90	3179	$ 91.61	$ 62.66
2012	6	138	31620	62.8%	41116	24428	1.70	3008	$ 95.13	$ 59.72
Change 2000-2012	20%	22.1%	74.6%		25.9%	-9.7%	40.7%	194.0%	68.4%	140.8%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics: Tourist Accommodation NSW 8635.1.40.001

From 2000 to 2012 the number of rooms surveyed increased by 22.1%. Over the same period the number of rooms sold increased by 74.6%, indicating strong growth in the market. During the same period takings increased by 190%, with the average rate achieved per available room increasing by 140.8% and per occupied room by 68.4%. The strong growth in takings and room rates was due to the high occupancy rates (strong demand), enabling the properties to charge premiums.

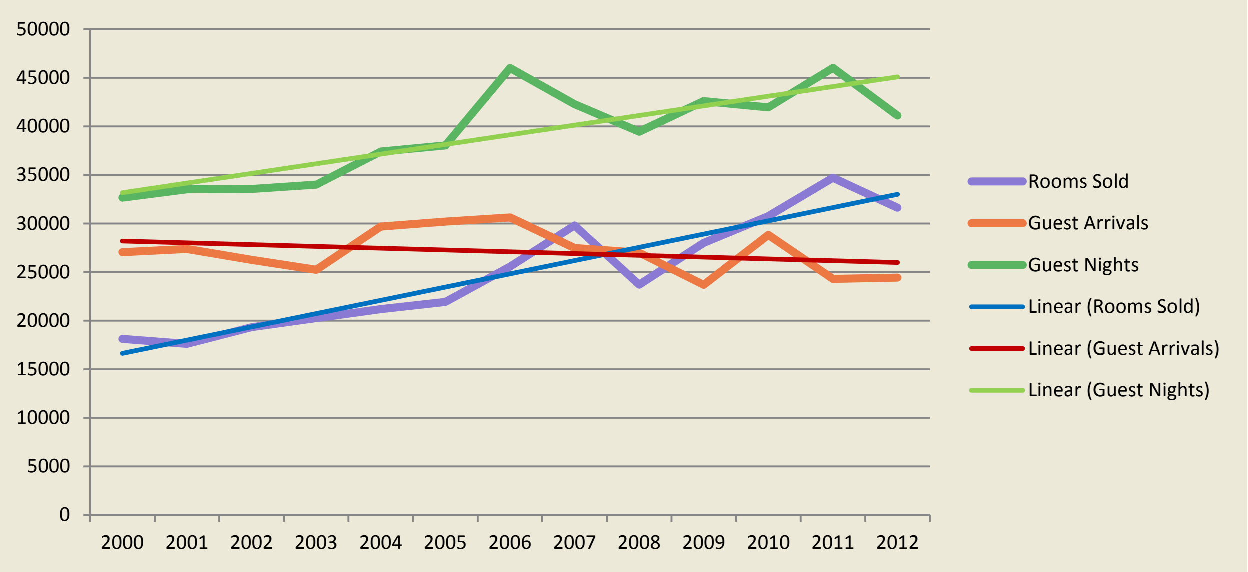
Figure18.16 Comparison of Growth Rates in Performance Indicators – % change 2000-2012



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics: Tourist Accommodation NSW 8635.1.40.001

Since 2000, the number of Rooms Sold and Guest Nights spent in Gunnedah Shire has been trending up, with the strongest growth occurring in 2005-06 and 2010-11. In 2012, the number of rooms sold and guest nights spent in the area declined by 8.9% and 10.7% respectively. The number of guest arrivals increased between 2000 and 2006, then declined, recovered marginally in 2010, then declined in 2011, with a slight increase (0.5%) between 2011 and 2012. The downturn in rooms sold and guest nights in 2012 appears to reflect the contraction of the economy and the mining sector. The opening of the MAC Village in Narrabri may have also had an impact on mine-related travellers. Contracts are in place between the mining companies and the MAC Village (pre-purchased rooms) and the mining companies could be putting their workers and contractors working in the mines north of Boggabri into the Village.

Figure 18.17: Change in Guest Arrivals, Guest Nights and Rooms Sold –Gunnedah Motels, 2000-2012

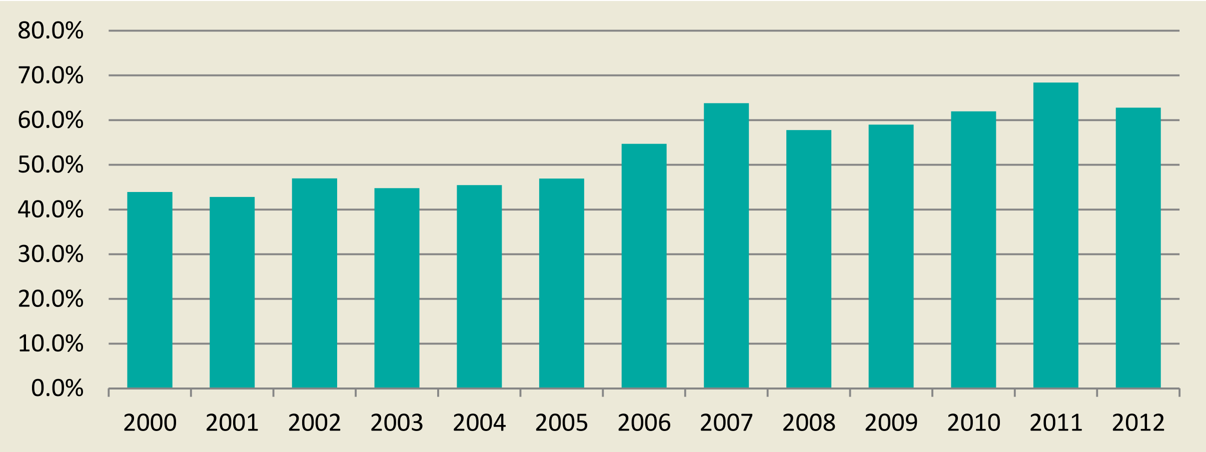


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics: Tourist Accommodation NSW 8635.1.40.001

Occupancy Rates

Occupancy rates in Gunnedah Shire have been trending up since 2000. From 2005 to 2007 rates increased significantly, from 46.9% in 2005 to 63.8% in 2007 (16.9 percentage points). This growth in occupancy corresponds to the construction and opening of a number of coal mines in the Region, combined with a number of major building (eg Hospital) and infrastructure projects (eg rail improvements) in Gunnedah. In 2008 occupancy rates fell, indicative of the transition from mine construction to mine operations. Occupancy rates increased from 2008 to peak at 68.4% in 2011, before declining to 62.8% in 2012.

Figure 18.18 Change in Average Annual Occupancy –Gunnedah Motels, 2000-2012



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics: Tourist Accommodation NSW 8635.1.40.001

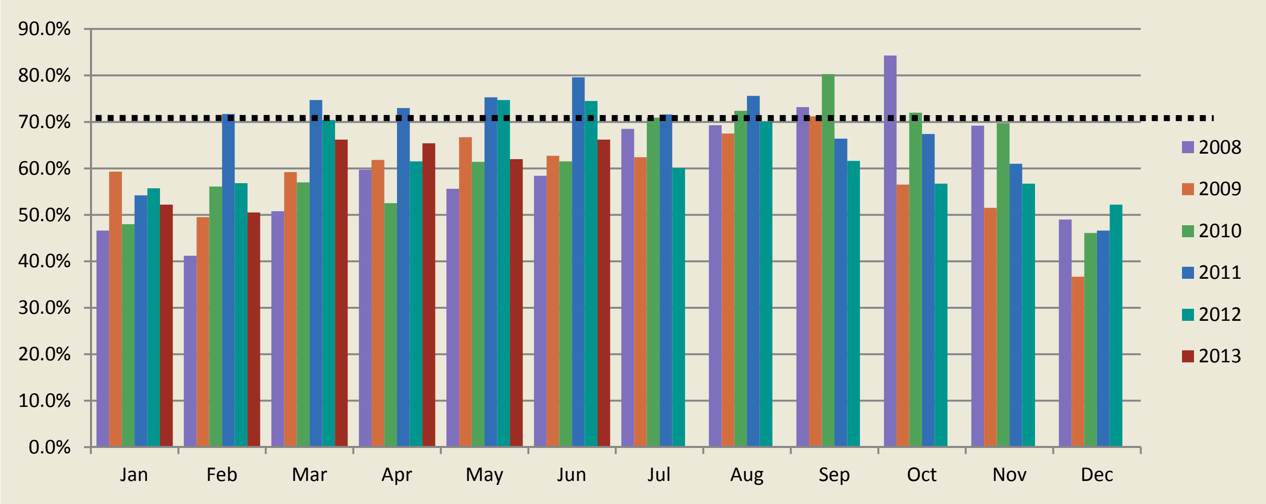
Average monthly occupancy rates for the period 2008 to the June of 2013 are given in Table 18.4. Occupancy rates in excess of 70% are indicative of properties being at or close to capacity 3-4 nights per week, during which time the Shire is probably 'turning away' business. In 2011, occupancy rates exceeded 70% in 7 months. In five of the first 6 months of 2013, the monthly occupancy rate was lower than the corresponding rates in 2012.

Table 18.4 Average Monthly Occupancy Rates –Gunnedah Motels, 2008-June Quarter 2013

Month	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013 ytd
January	46.6%	59.3%	48.0%	54.2%	55.7%	52.2%
February	41.2%	49.5%	56.1%	71.7%	56.8%	50.5%
March	50.8%	59.2%	57.0%	74.7%	70.4%	66.2%
April	59.7%	61.8%	52.5%	73.0%	61.5%	65.4%
May	55.6%	66.7%	61.4%	75.3%	74.7%	62.0%
June	58.4%	62.7%	61.5%	79.6%	74.5%	66.2%
July	68.5%	62.4%	70.9%	71.6%	60.1%	
August	69.3%	67.5%	72.4%	75.6%	70.1%	
September	73.2%	71.2%	80.3%	66.4%	61.6%	
October	84.3%	56.5%	72.0%	67.4%	56.7%	
November	69.2%	51.5%	69.7%	61.0%	56.7%	
December	49.0%	36.7%	46.1%	46.6%	52.2%	
Year	**57.8%**	**59.0%**	**61.9%**	**68.4%**	**62.8%**	

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics: Tourist Accommodation NSW 8635.1.40.001

Figure 18.19 Comparison Monthly Occupancy Rates (%), Gunnedah Motels, 2008 - June Qtr 2013

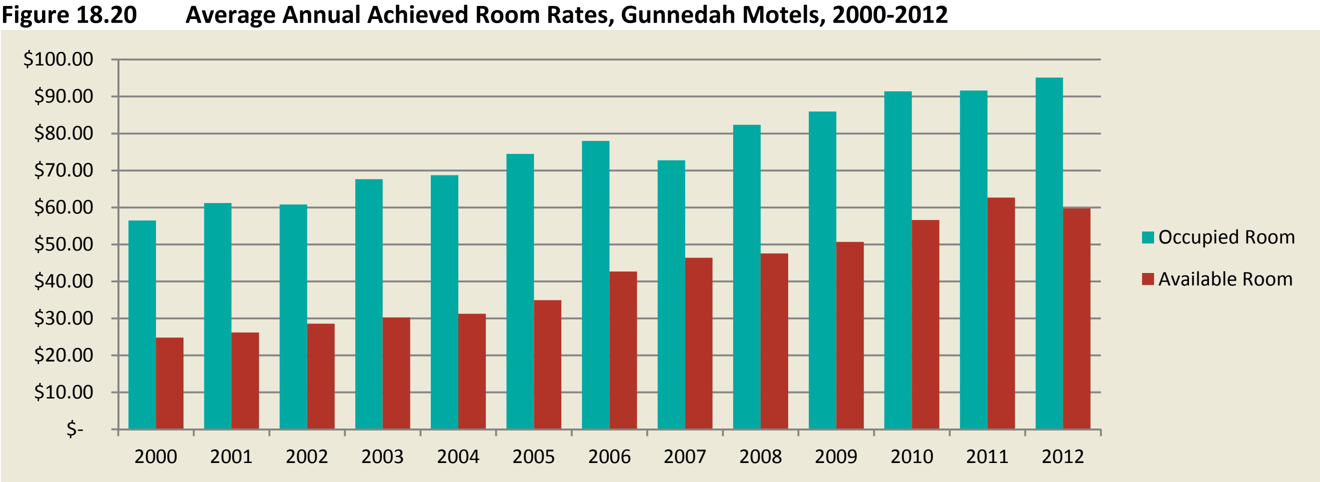


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics: Tourist Accommodation NSW 8635.1.40.001

Average Room Rates

The average rates achieved per available room and per occupied room have increased by 140.8% and 68.4% respectively since 2000. In 2012, the rates per available and per occupied rooms were $59.73 and $95.14, respectively. The room rates in the first half of 2013 are higher than for the same period in 2012.

Figure 18.20 Average Annual Achieved Room Rates, Gunnedah Motels, 2000-2012



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics: Tourist Accommodation NSW 8635.1.40.001

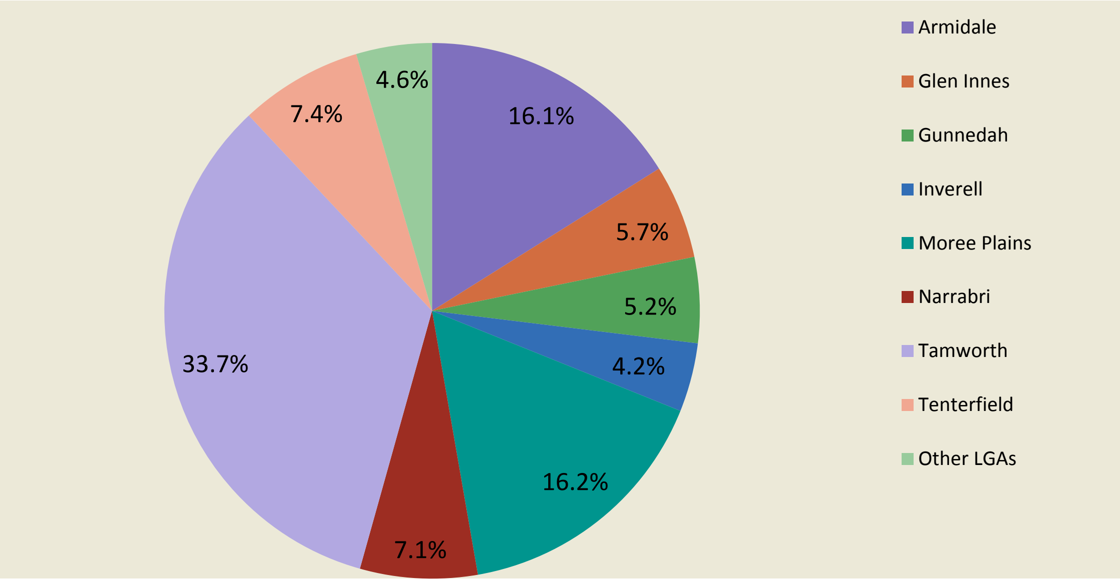
Comparison – Performance of Motels in Gunnedah Shire to the Northern Inland Region

ABS data is available for eight of the thirteen LGAs within the Northern Inland Region. In 2012, Gunnedah Shire (138 rooms) accounted for 5.2% of motel rooms[53] within the Region, ranking 7th in the Region.

In 2012 Gunnedah Shire achieved marginally more than its market share of rooms sold within the Region, but lower than market share on all other indicators.

[53] Performance data relates only to properties with 15 or more ensuite rooms.

Figure 18.21 Distribution of Motel Rooms – Northern Inland Region



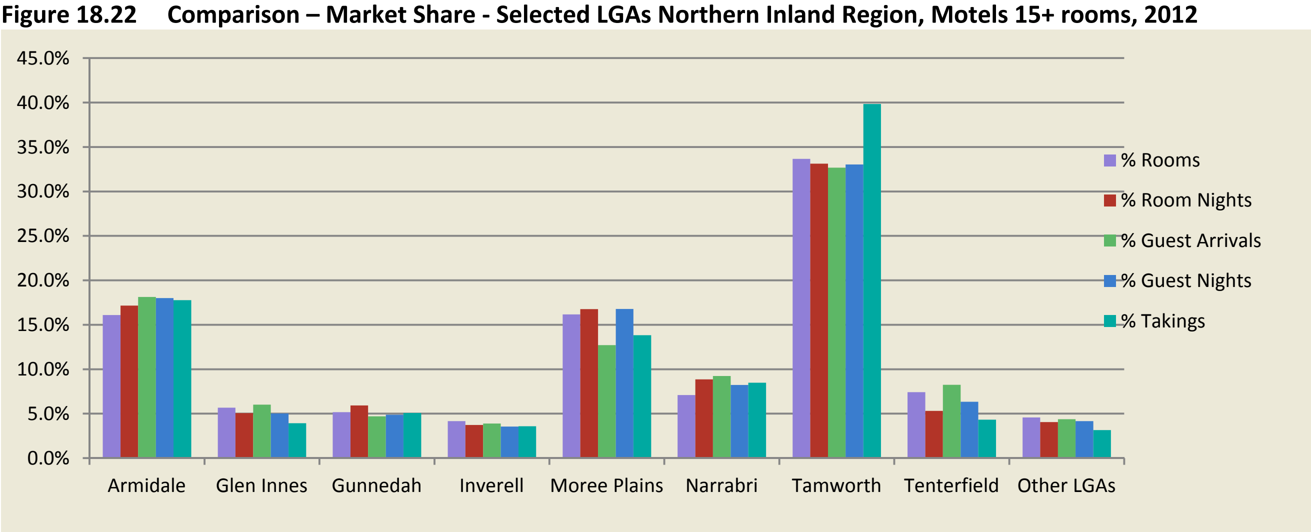
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics: Tourist Accommodation NSW 8635.1.40.001

Table 18.5 Comparison – Market Share - Selected LGAs Northern Inland Region, Motels 15+ rooms, 2012

LGA	Rooms	Rooms Sold	Guest Arrivals	Guest Nights	Takings
Total Region	**2,659**	**532,799**	**518,971**	**843,182**	**$59,323,000**
Armidale - Dumaresq	16.1%	17.2%	18.1%	18.0%	17.8%
Glen Innes - Severn	5.7%	5.1%	6.0%	5.0%	3.9%
Gunnedah	**5.2%**	**5.9%**	**4.7%**	**4.9%**	**5.1%**
Inverell	4.2%	3.7%	3.9%	3.5%	3.6%
Moree Plains	16.2%	16.8%	12.7%	16.8%	13.8%
Narrabri	7.1%	8.9%	9.2%	8.2%	8.5%
Tamworth	33.7%	33.1%	32.7%	33.0%	39.8%
Tenterfield	7.4%	5.3%	8.2%	6.3%	4.3%
Other LGAs	4.6%	4.1%	4.4%	4.2%	3.2%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics: Tourist Accommodation NSW 8635.1.40.001

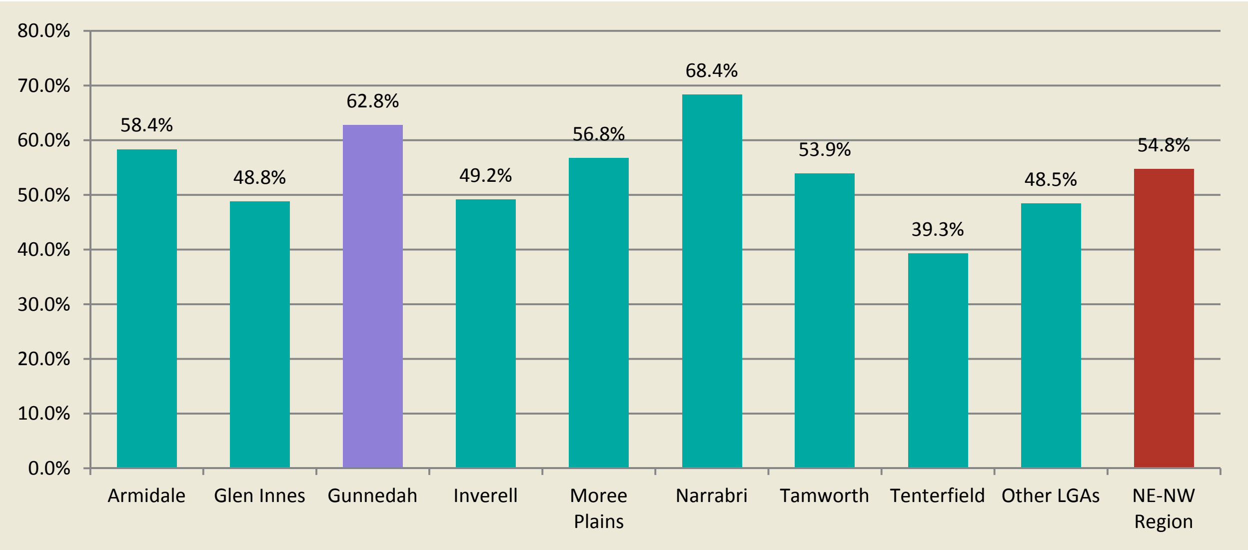
Figure 18.22 Comparison – Market Share - Selected LGAs Northern Inland Region, Motels 15+ rooms, 2012



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics: Tourist Accommodation NSW 8635.1.40.001

In 2012, Gunnedah Shire (62.8%) achieved the second highest occupancy rate within the Northern Inland Region, 8 percentage points higher than the Regional average. Narrabri Shire achieved the highest occupancy rate (68.4%).

Figure 18.23 Comparison – Average Annual Occupancy Rate, 2012 – Selected LGAs Northern Inland Region



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics: Tourist Accommodation NSW 8635.1.40.001

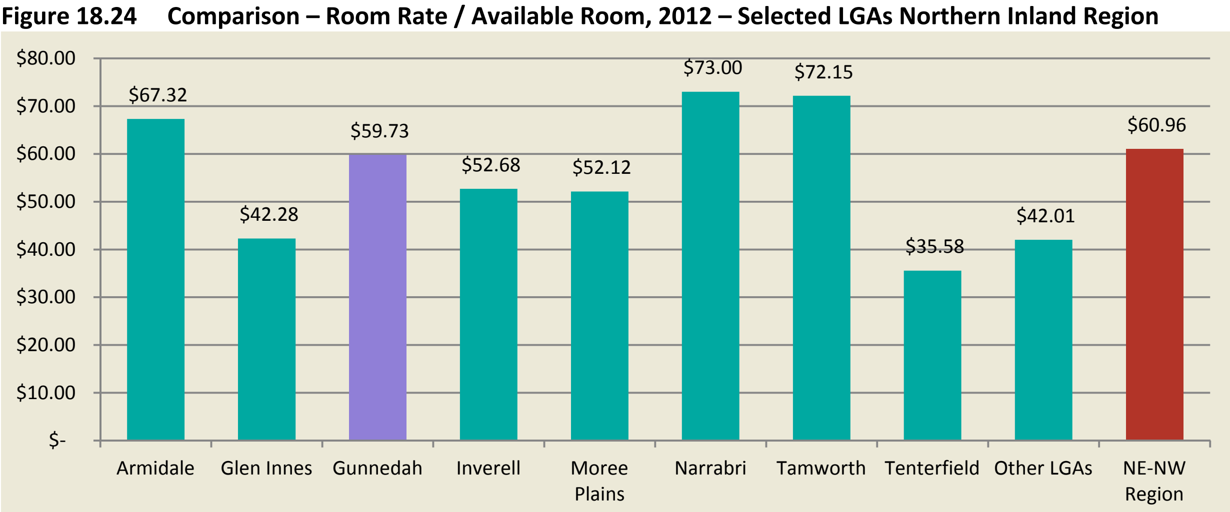
Gunnedah Shire achieved the 4th highest average room rate per available room ($59.73), ranking behind Narrabri ($73), Tamworth ($72.15) and Armidale ($67.32). The rate achieved in Gunnedah Shire was marginally below the Regional average ($60.96). In terms of average rate per occupied room, Gunnedah Shire ranked 5th ($95.14), behind Tamworth ($133.89), Armidale ($115.36), Inverell ($107.14) and Narrabri ($106.74). Both Tamworth and Armidale have large 4 and 4.5 star motel properties, with the 4.5 star properties having significantly higher tariffs.

Table 18.6 Comparison of Occupancy and Room Rates, 2012 - Selected LGAs Northern Inland Region

LGA	Occupancy	Achieved Rate per	
		Available Room	Occupied Room
Armidale - Dumaresq	58.4%	$67.32	$115.36
Glen Innes - Severn	48.8%	$42.28	$ 86.60
Gunnedah	**62.8%**	**$59.73**	**$ 95.14**
Inverell	49.2%	$52.68	$107.14
Moree Plains	56.8%	$52.12	$ 91.78
Narrabri	68.4%	$73.00	$106.74
Tamworth	53.9%	$72.15	$133.89
Tenterfield	39.3%	$35.58	$ 90.56
Other LGAs	48.5%	$42.01	$ 86.67
Region	**54.8%**	**$60.96**	**$111.34**

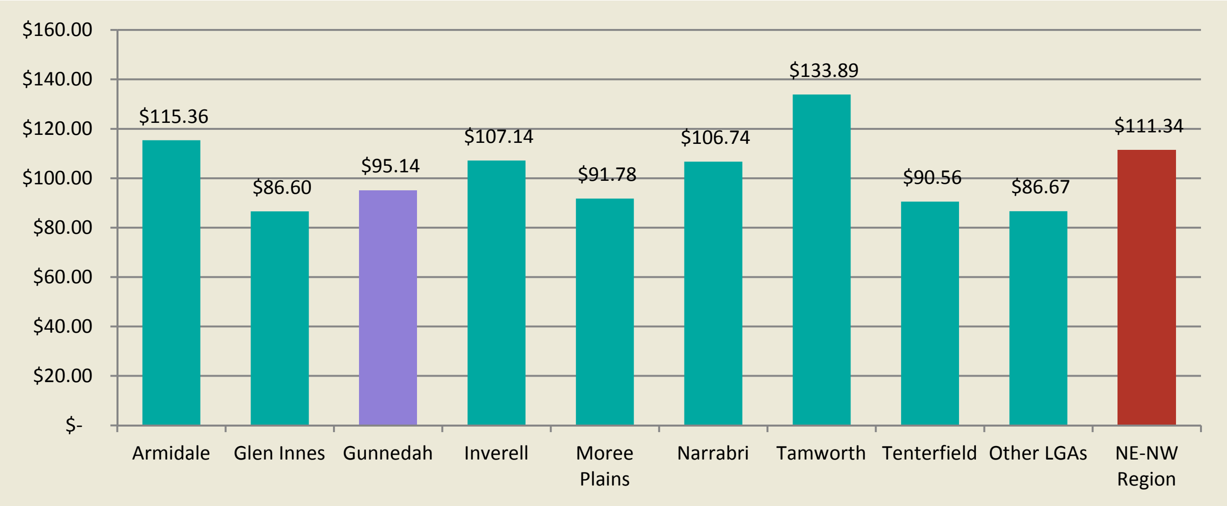
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics: Tourist Accommodation NSW 8635.1.40.001

Figure 18.24 Comparison – Room Rate / Available Room, 2012 – Selected LGAs Northern Inland Region



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics: Tourist Accommodation NSW 8635.1.40.001

Figure 18.25 Comparison –Room Rate / Occupied Room, 2012 – Selected LGAs Northern Inland Region



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics: Tourist Accommodation NSW 8635.1.40.001

Food Services

The food services sector within Gunnedah has expanded significantly over the past 5 years. Eateries include:

- Restaurants (10) – a number of which are part of motels. Gunnedah has 4 Chinese, 1 Thai and 1 Indian restaurant.
- Cafes & Coffee Shops (6) – including a number of contemporary style eateries.
- Fastfood and Takeaways (11) – including 4 national/multinational traders.
- Hotels (9) – providing a range of meals.
- Licensed Clubs (2)

Information Services

Information services to support visitation include:

- The Gunnedah Visitor Information Centre (VIC) – located just off the Oxley Highway on the southern side of Gunnedah. While the VIC is a good facility with parking available for caravans and long rigs, it is not highly visible to passing traffic. Its location does not encourage visitors to park at the Centre and walk into town. It is also not well placed for travellers arriving in town on the Kamilaroi Highway. The construction of the bridge over the railway line at the western end of town will change traffic flows on the Oxley Highway, with eastbound travellers by-passing the VIC.

- Information boards / directories in Gunnedah and the villages.

- VisitGunnedah website – the website is relatively comprehensive and has been designed to be accessed from smart phones and tablets.

- Information and promotional material including the official Gunnedah Visitors Guide.

- Directional and promotional signage. The signage needs to be updated.

18.5 Strategic Considerations - Tourism

Consideration	Comment
Destination Management Plans (DMP)	A DMP is required to access State and Federal tourism funding programs, with the DMP also being taken into consideration in funding allocations for infrastructure and other activities, and for recreation and arts based funding programs. Once the Regional DMP is adopted, Gunnedah Shire may need to prepare a Shire-wide DMP to identify and document the future directions for tourism in the Shire and the projects and activities that will help to build visitation locally and regionally and deliver on the goals and objectives of the Regional DMP.
Market Development - Target Markets for Gunnedah Shire	In market development Gunnedah Shire should focus on: • Touring / Highway traveller markets • Touring Caravan and Motorhome (RV) markets • Regional residents – for events, day trips and visiting friends & relatives (VFR) • Wanderers for Gunnedah and the villages and Compatriots and Wanderers for Lake Keepit. • Building the event market. • Building leisure travel from the corporate / work related travel market. • Special interest and activity-based markets. True Travellers, Wanderers and Compatriots are the primary markets for the Northern Inland Region. Gunnedah Shire's product and attraction base fits best with the Wanderers market, with Lake Keepit ideal for both the Wanderer and Compatriot markets. The Region has a large VFR market, providing the opportunity to put in place local and regional promotions to encourage residents to show their visitors around the local area and bring them to events in the Shire. The VFR market tends to rely on word of mouth recommendations from their host rather than seek out VICs. The challenge lies in educating and motivating the host community. There is an increasing number of travellers 'free' camping within the Region. Gunnedah Shire needs to continue to provide localities to cater for this market segment as well as designated and signposted caravan/long rig parking areas at strategic locations within the Gunnedah Town Centre. The free camping market is also an ideal 'fit' with some of the villages. Opportunities to increase expenditure in the town from work-related travellers and encourage these workers to return to the Shire as leisure travellers (eg visiting Lake Keepit on weekends) with family and/or friends. Events provide the opportunity to increase visitation, showcase the Shire and its products and generate publicity for the area. The Shire has a range of attractions, assets and facilities that can be used to further develop and grow visitation by special interest and activity based markets.
Positioning of the Shire	Given the limited 'koala' experience, the positioning and branding of the Shire needs to be reviewed.
Improving, diversifying and expanding the attraction base of the Shire	A number of the attractions and facilities in the Shire are tied and dated and need to be improved. There is potential to do far more with the 'raw' assets available in the Shire,

Consideration	Comment
	including: • Namoi River corridor – for the River to become a feature for the town, with a quality riverside picnic area, riverside walking tracks, fishing sports, interpretation etc. Cushan's Reserve in particular has the setting to be a significant attraction, however the area is poorly maintained and presented. • Rich Aboriginal Heritage – parts of the 'story' have been told at Porcupine Lookout, the Wallaby Trap, Red Chief Memorial, Pensioner's Hill Sculpture of the Red Chief and the Cumbo Gunnerah Gallery & Keeping Place, with another facet added with the recent addition of the Boonalla Aboriginal Area at Boonalla. Opportunities to build the Aboriginal product in the Shire are discussed in the Kamilaroi Highway Aboriginal Product Scoping Study. • The National Parks, State Conservation Areas and State Forests within the Shire and possibly Lake Goran – these areas may have potential to attract special interest and activity based markets and/or as locations for holding events. • Further development of scenic drives – For example, with the opening of the Boonalla Aboriginal Area there is a potential loop through Kelvin, to Dripping Rock, Barbers Lagoon, Gins Leap, to Boggabri and returning to Gunnedah via Gulligal Lagoon. The rural scenery (patchwork of colour) is a major asset at various times of the year and there is potential to provide viewing areas along the main access roads into the Shire. Over time, more can be done to 'celebrate' the colours of the area through arts and cultural based activities. • Coach tours – incorporating some of the local industries into coach tour itineraries. • Capitalising more effectively on the shopping and dining opportunities available in Gunnedah as well as showcasing locally produced products.
Responding to competition in the accommodation sector.	With the ramping-up of the coal mining, the accommodation sector in Gunnedah Shire has been performing well, with high midweek occupancy rates. The high demand has resulted in the properties being able to charge a premium, particularly for the three star rooms. The motel performance figures clearly show the impacts of major construction projects, the shift between mine construction and mine operations as well as the impact of the contraction of the mining sector in 2012. The opening of the MAC Village in Narrabri may have also impacted on the 2012 performance figures. Work-related travellers have replaced leisure travel and other markets midweek. The first stage of the Boggabri MAC Village (500 rooms) will be operational by the end of 2013, with a further 290 rooms coming on-line in 2014. The Werris Creek MAC Village is expected to be operational by 2015. Both of these villages are located closer to the mining areas than to Gunnedah. The mining companies have also contracted to use the MAC Villages. This is likely to have a significant impact on the accommodation sector in Gunnedah Shire. Occupancy and room rates are likely to fall. The new motel coming on-line will also impact on performance, taking market share from other properties. Accommodation operators will need to work with the Gunnedah Shire Tourism Unit to re-build the markets that have been displaced in recent years and diversify and grow the market base of the Shire. Accommodation properties will also need to be far more responsive to meeting market needs and expectations and also

Consideration	Comment
	improve their on-line presence, including providing real-time on-line booking facilities.
Upgrading accommodation.	Consumer research into demand for, and use of, motel accommodation has found that the market is becoming increasingly sophisticated and demanding and less tolerant of tired and dated accommodation. Three star properties are finding it increasingly difficult to attract the non-work related travel market. More than half the motel properties in Gunnedah require major refurbishment.
Information Services – engaging with travellers at the trip planning stage and during their visit to the Shire.	Digital technology is the main portal for seeking information at the trip planning stage and on-route, with the Visit Gunnedah website being the main promotional tool. While continuing to deliver information via traditional practices, Gunnedah Shire and individual operators need to significantly improve their web presence, particularly on third party websites, with accommodation operators also needing to provide real-time, on-line direct booking facilities. The Shire needs to incorporate social media, data base development and digital marketing into their communication, market development and promotional strategies. Effective directional, motivational and facility signage is needed throughout the Shire. Opportunities to display information on Gunnedah Shire in the MAC villages in the surrounding areas needs to be explored.
Location and function of the Visitor Information Centre	With the changes in traffic flow on the Oxley Highway as a result of the proposed rail bridge and the increasing volume of touring traffic on the Kamilaroi Highway, the location of the Gunnedah VIC needs to reviewed. Access, visibility and adequate parking for caravans and long rigs (eg cars with boat trailers) are key locational requirements for the new centre.
Strategic Partnerships and Alliances	With very limited resources, Gunnedah Shire needs to be working closely with adjoining LGAs, highway / touring route marketing groups and the regional tourism organisations in developing and products and experiences, building visitation and marketing and promoting the area.
Raising the Profile of Gunnedah	Tourism is plays a very significant role in economic development – providing opportunities to showcase the Shire and its products, and to create awareness through marketing and promotion. The Gunnedah VIC has a significant role to play in introducing visitors to the Shire, show-casing local produce and activities, and welcoming visitors to the area. It is often the first point of contact for people looking to relocate to and/or invest in the area. The gateway / introductory function of the VIC needs to be recognised and strengthened.

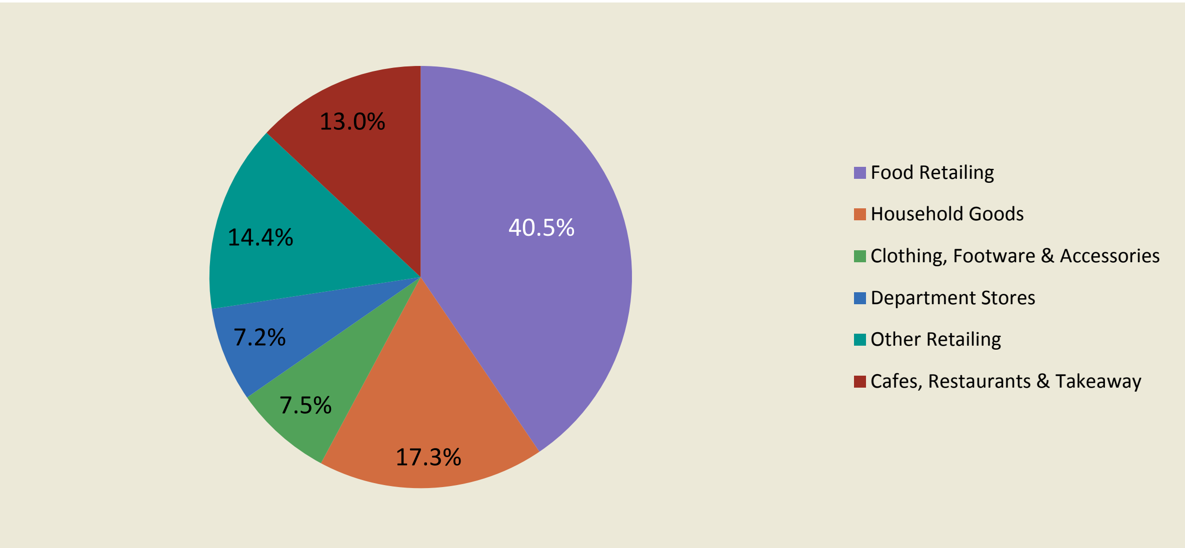
19. RETAIL & WHOLESALE

19.1 Overview

In the Year End March 2013, the retail sector in Australia turned over an estimated $226.65 billion, of which 34.5% was generated by NSW retailers.[54] This sector accounts for around 4.1% of GDP and 10.1% of employment.

Food retailing is by far the largest sector, accounting for 40.5% of retail sales. This is followed by household items (17.3%). Cafes, restaurants and takeaway food account for 13% of sales, while clothing, footware and accessories account for 7.5% of sales. Online sales account for around 5.5% of all turnover.

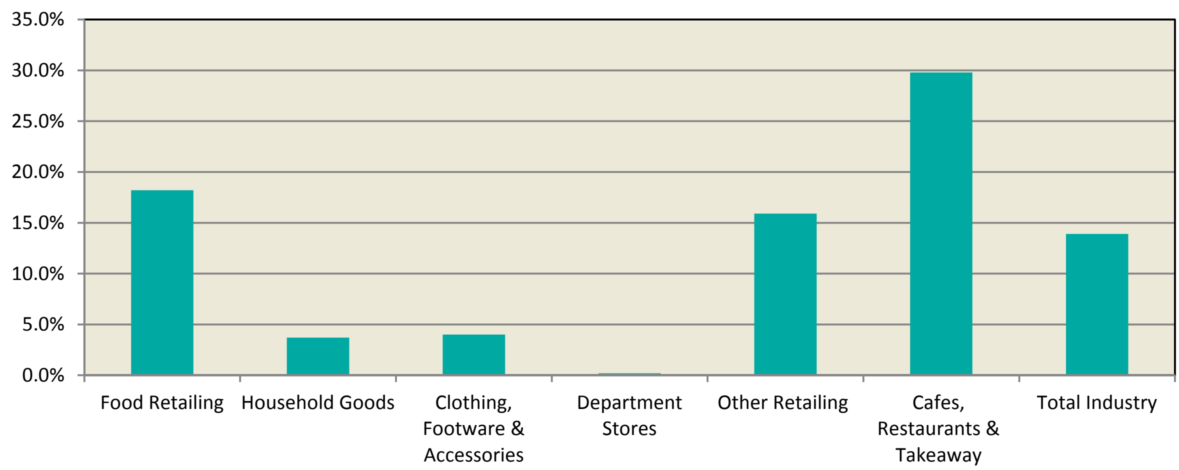
Figure 19.1 Retail Sales by Sector, Australia, Year End March 2013



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013) Analysis by Industry – Retail Trade Australia, March 2013 Catalogue 8501

Over the 5 years to March 2013, there has been strong growth in sales in both the cafe-restaurant-takeaway sector (up 29.8%) and in food retailing (up 18.2%). In contrast there has been virtually no growth in department store sales (up only 0.2%) and limited growth in the household goods (up 3.7%) and clothing-footware-accessories (up 4%).

Figure 19.2 Change in Retail Sales (%) by Sector, Year End March 2008-Year End March 2013



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013) Analysis by Industry – Retail Trade Australia, March 2013 Catalogue 8501

---

[54] Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013) Analysis by Industry – Retail Trade Australia, March 2013 Catalogue 8501.

In inland regional areas, the prolonged drought (2003-2010) had a profound impact on the performance of retail businesses with businesses cutting costs by reducing staff, service and/or stock levels with some stores also closing. Expansion strategies by the two major supermarket chains into district centres (towns of 7,000-12,000) has also had a significant impact on local businesses.

Australia-wide, the Global Financial Crisis impacted significantly on the retail sector. In 2010 and 2011, consumer confidence was low and retailers failed to maintain sales levels on a per capita basis. Sales recovered marginally in 2012, primarily due to interest rate cuts and less volatility in consumer confidence. The collapse of a number of high profile retail companies, particularly in the fashion and household electronics categories, impacted on consumer confidence in the latter part of 2012.

The further contraction of the resources sector in early 2013 and flow on impacts, has resulted in a weak labour market. With uncertainty regarding employment and low income growth, consumers are continuing to moderate their expenditure. The March 2013 retail sales figures show only a marginal increase in sales in the food (up 0.8%) and cafes-restaurants-takeaway foods (up 0.2%) sectors, with decreases in all other sectors.[55]

According to Colliers International Research and Forecast Report into the Australian Retail Market (2013), super and major regional shopping centres are experiencing significant falls in returns, primarily due to the poor performance of department stores and the clothing-footware-accessory retailers. In contrast, neighbourhood shopping centres, anchored by supermarkets, are performing well, primarily as a result of steady growth in food retailing.

Structural Changes in the Sectors

Retailing and wholesaling are undergoing significant structural change, with the blurring of functions of and distinction between the wholesale and retail sectors. The changes are arising from a combination of factors including:

- Competition from on-line sales. While on-line sales currently account for only 5.5% of retail sales, on-line sales increased by 23% in 2012, and are forecast to reach 17-21% of total sales by 2016.[56].

- Impact of technology – internet, smart phones, tablets and the growth in social media, apps etc. This is changing the way consumers source information, search and compare products and purchase goods and services. The internet allows consumers to shop globally.

- Under-mining of the traditional 'intermediary' role of retailers with wholesalers by-passing retailers and selling direct to consumers via the internet.

- Increased competition from international retailers and wholesalers. 31 of the top 250 retail companies in the world have already established operations in Australia, with 4 of these companies having major expansion plans over the next 3-5 years. In addition, 3 other companies are about to enter the Australian market with other companies also 'looking'.[57] The move of global companies into the Australian market is due to a number of factors including:

  - Relative strength of the Australian economy compared to the stalled domestic economies in America and Europe.
  - Australia is a relatively easy place to establish operations – Australia has an advanced economy and a stable political and legislative structure.
  - Australia is strategically located for retailers to expand into Asia.
  - The propensity of Australians to purchase products on-line from overseas – making global retailers aware of the potential of the Australian market and providing them with a ready market for store outlets in Australia.

[55] Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013) Analysis by Industry – Retail Trade Australia, March 2013 Catalogue 8501.
[56] Deloitte (2013) Global Powers of Retailing 2013 Retail Beyond
[57] Deloitte (2013) Global Powers of Retailing 2013 Retail Beyond

Global retailers have economies of scale that can bring lower priced products as well as a greater range of products into Australia. These companies often have a stronger customer service focus (both in-store and on-line) than Australian retailers and understand the importance of building 'relationships' with customers.

Large overseas wholesalers are also entering the global market to supplement earnings to counteract their slow domestic economies.

- Changes in consumer behaviour – consumers are increasingly looking for 'experiences' – with increased expenditure on activities, entertainment and dining, and decreased expenditure on 'material' items. Consumers are becoming more sophisticated and demanding and far less tolerant of inefficient and/or low quality service.

Retailers and wholesalers are responding to these changes by:

- Becoming 'multi-channel' outlets. Retail stores are no longer the single point of contact with customers. Rather they are becoming one of a number of points of contact, sitting alongside wholesalers and a range of digital mediums – internet, apps, social networking sites etc. Consumers are seeking a 'seamless' experience across all channels. Allied to this is the move to relationship or data base marketing where the retailers communicate directly with customers via digital and social media channels. Most of the larger retail chains now have multi-channel strategies in place.

- Becoming increasingly vertically integrated, controlling the whole of the supply chain. This provides the opportunity to sell on-line direct from the warehouse and also through retail outlets.

- Changing how they market, with an emphasis on data base development and direct, relationship marketing, capitalising on all aspects of digital technology and social media to communicate directly with customers.

- Rationalising their 'store' presence and location/s and closing stores in under-performing centres. Retailers are also seeking more favourable lease terms, particularly in the major shopping complexes. Some retailers are also relocating out of the shopping malls back onto the 'high' street or into business parks and light industrial areas, alongside wholesalers.

  Shopping centre owners / managers are responding to these changes by investing in improving the presentation of their centres, providing or enlarging food courts and dining opportunities, and changing the retail mix to increase the food, entertainment and 'experiences' (such as cinemas, hairdressing, day spas, masseurs etc) on offer.

- Becoming more technologically efficient – adopting practices such as self-checkout, fast pay, paywave etc.

Wholesalers are increasingly realising that the only reason for existence comes from adding value by increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the entire marketing channel. As such they are focusing increasingly on building value-adding customer relationships by increasing the services they provide to retailers, with these services including retail price labelling, cooperative advertising, marketing and management information reports, accounting services, online transactions etc.

19.2 Gunnedah Shire - Retailing

Retailing in Gunnedah Shire is concentrated in the township of Gunnedah, with the larger villages each having a general store and/or post office.

In 2011, 9.9% of Gunnedah Shire residents in the workforce were employed in the retail sector (515 people). The number of people employed in the retail sector has fallen by 27.7% since 2001, with a net loss of 197 people. Employment in the retail sector contracted significantly between 2001 and 2006 (down 32.4%, 231 people) with employment recovering (up 7.1% / 34 additional employees) between 2006 and 2011. The performance of the retail sector is very closely tied with the performance of the agricultural sector, and to a lesser extent, to the performance of the mining sector. Uncertainty and/or contractions in either sector translates almost immediately to a contraction in retail expenditure.

The ABS provides counts of Australian businesses by Industry Sector by Statistical Areas (Level 2). Data is published for the Gunnedah SAL2 (Gunnedah town and surrounding area) and the Gunnedah Region SAL2, which excludes the town of Gunnedah, but includes all the rural areas as well Boggabri. In 2012, the ABS identified 75 retail businesses in the combined area, of which 57 (76%) were located in the township of Gunnedah.

The retail sector is comprised primarily of small businesses with 49.3% being sole traders (employed no staff), 21.3% employing 1-4 people, 21.3% employing 5-19 people and 8% (3 businesses) employing between 20 and 200 staff .

Comparative data is available for Tamworth, Narrabri/Narrabri Region, Moree/Moree Region, Coonabarabran and Quirindi SAL2, but not for the Northern Inland Region. The SAL2 data does not correspond directly to LGA boundaries. As the regional centre, Tamworth has a concentration of retail businesses (347 businesses) Armidale ranks second (216 businesses) followed by Inverell (154 businesses), then Glen Innes (77 businesses) and Gunnedah (75 businesses).

Table 19.1 Number of Retail Businesses, by Employment Range – Gunnedah & Comparative Areas (SALs)

Statistical Area (SAL2)	No. Businesses					As % of businesses
	0 staff	1-4 staff	5-19 staff	20+ staff	Total Staff	
Gunnedah	25	16	10	6	57	76%
Gunnedah Region	12	0	6	0	18	24%
Total	**37**	**16**	**16**	**6**	**75**	
As % of Total	49.3%	21.3%	21.3%	8.0%	100.0%	
Comparative Areas						
Tamworth (SALs combined)	125	104	97	21	347	
	36.0%	30.0%	28.0%	6.1%	100.0%	
Quirindi	16	9	15	3	43	
	37.2%	20.9%	34.9%	7.0%	100.0%	
Narrabri / Narrabri Region	12	17	27	4	60	
	20.0%	28.3%	45.0%	6.7%	100.0%	
Coonabarabran	19	19	11	3	52	
	36.5%	36.5%	21.2%	5.8%	100.0%	
Moree / Moree Region	34	23	18	5	80	
	42.5%	28.8%	22.5%	6.3%	100.0%	

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Businesses by Industry Division by Statistical Area Level 2 by Employment Size Ranges, June 2012

In terms of turnover, the majority of retail businesses (26.7%) in the Gunnedah area turned over between $200,000 and $500,000 per annum, with 13.3% of retail businesses (10 businesses) turning over less than $50,000 per year and 16.3% (12 businesses) turning over in excess of $2 million per year.

Table 19.2 Number of Retail Businesses, by Turnover Range – Gunnedah & Comparative Areas (SALs)

Statistical Area (SAL2)	Number of Businesses by Turnover						Total
	Zero to $50k	$50k to less than $100k	$100k to less than $200K	$200k to less than $500k	$500k to less than $2m	$2m or more	
Gunnedah	7	4	9	14	14	9	57
Gunnedah Region	3	3	3	6	0	3	18
Total	10	7	12	20	14	12	75
As % of Total	13.3%	9.3%	16.0%	26.7%	18.7%	16.0%	100.0%
Comparative Areas							
Tamworth	15.0%	11.8%	13.3%	19.3%	26.2%	14.4%	347
Quirindi	14.0%	14.0%	14.0%	23.3%	18.6%	16.3%	43
Narrabri	5.0%	0.0%	10.0%	25.0%	41.7%	18.3%	60
Coonabarabran	5.8%	5.8%	21.2%	28.8%	26.9%	11.5%	52
Moree	21.3%	10.0%	8.8%	18.8%	26.3%	15.0%	80

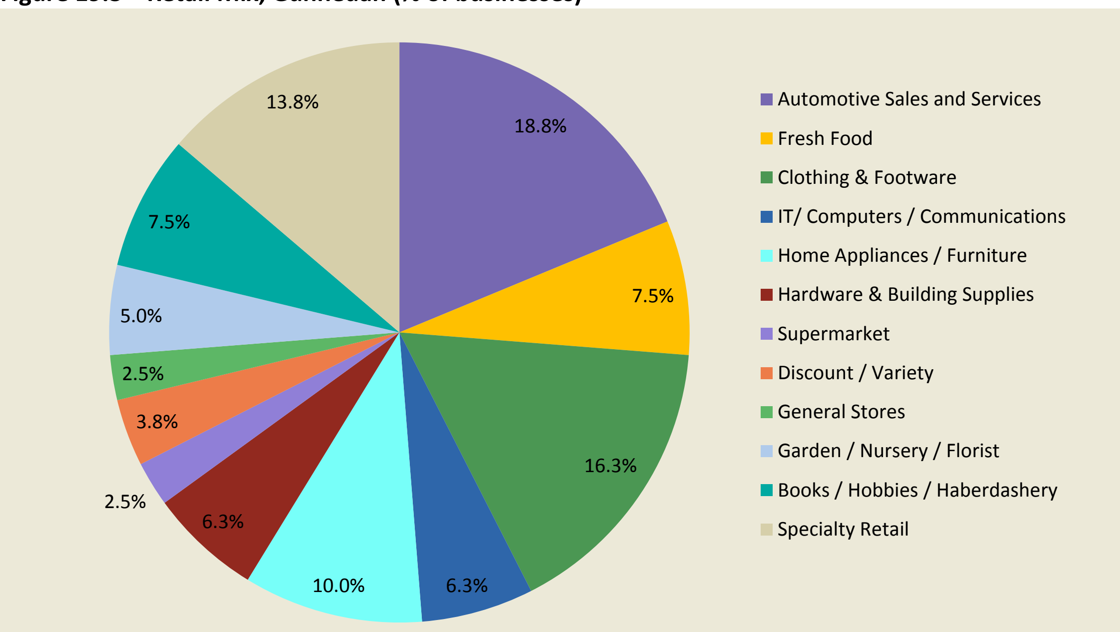
Australian Bureau of Statistics Businesses by Industry Division by Statistical Area Level 2 by Turnover Size Ranges, June 2012

Gunnedah town centre is a sub-regional shopping centre and is the main shopping precinct within the Shire. The Centre primarily services the Gunnedah Shire, the Boggabri area and rural localities to the south-west including the Premer and Coolah areas. It also draws some patronage from residents from the surrounding region. Gunnedah is also a highway service centre for through traffic on the Kamilaroi and Oxley Highways. Businesses in Mullaley, Tambar Springs, Curlweis and Carroll service both the local community and passing travellers.

The Gunnedah town centre was established as a strip centre along Conadilly Street, with the main retail core located between Elgin and Rosemary Streets. Retailing extends into the cross streets (focused on Marquis Street). Retail premises are also located in Barber Street. Gunnedah shopping centre is anchored by Coles and Woolworths supermarkets. The town has a number of national traders including Target Country, Best & Less Harvey Norman (recently established), Crazy Prices, Reject Shop, Millers, Telstra Shop, Mitre 10, Home Hardware, Wayne's World, Liquorland and CRT.

The Business Audit undertaken by Gunnedah Shire Council (April 2013), identified 80 retail businesses in Gunnedah, the majority of which were located in the town centre – Barber Street precincts. Automotive sales, parts and services accounted for 18.8% of retail businesses, followed by clothing and footware (16.3%) and speciality retail outlets (eg newsagent, pharmacy, jeweller etc) – 13.8%).

Figure 19.3 Retail Mix, Gunnedah (% of businesses)



Source: Gunnedah Shire Council, Business Audit (April 2013)

The Community Consultation Workshops undertaken as part of this study identified a significant level of out-shopping occurring in Gunnedah Shire. Most residents in Gunnedah and the villages and rural areas close to Gunnedah undertake most of their grocery and convenience goods shopping in Gunnedah. Residents located in the outlying areas of the Shire shop partly in Gunnedah and partly in nearby towns – Coonabarabran, Coolah, Manilla, Quirindi, Werris Creek and Tamworth, with shopping often combined with accessing medical services in surrounding centres. Most higher-order comparison goods shopping is undertaken in Tamworth. Gunnedah retailers advised that Gunnedah attracts some patronage from regional residents, particularly residents travelling through Gunnedah en-route to other locations (eg, residents from the Coolah area will visit Tamworth and stop on their way home to do their grocery shopping in Gunnedah). Some Tamworth residents also shop in Gunnedah as part of a 'day out'.

The Community and Retail Consultation Workshops and Planning Charette identified the key strengths and attributes of the Gunnedah town centre as:

- Compact town centre – very easy to access and walk around.
- Generally easy to find a parking spot, with no parking meters.
- Attractive town centre – with the landscaping and Wosley Park.
- Most goods and services are available locally, with some businesses prepared to order merchandise in for customers.
- Residents are very supportive of the town, with a strong 'buy local' ethos.
- Growing cafe / dining scene and lifestyle / specialty shops – offers something different to the shopping malls which are dominated by national traders.
- Relatively diverse economy compared to towns of a similar size, which helps to off-set sector-specific cyclical fluctuations (spreads risk).
- Safe town centre – very limited anti-social behaviour.

Challenges facing the retail sector in Gunnedah include:

- Competition from Tamworth.
- High rent for commercial and retail premises, with the rent not reducing when markets contract.
- Aging business owners, most with no succession plans.
- Difficult to sell businesses as financial institutions are reluctant to provide loan funds.
- Commercial activities are occupying prime street-front retail space, creating 'dead spots' in the shopping centre.
- Very few businesses open Saturday afternoon and Sundays.
- Increased competition from on-line sales – residents are not coming into town as often.

The Community Workshops identified the following gaps in retailing in Gunnedah:

- Lack of a discount department store – eg Big W, K Mart, a full-line Target store.
- 24 hour petrol station / truck stop.
- Large hardware (Bunnings, Masters) with extended trading hours, seven days per week.

19.3 Gunnedah Shire – Wholesaling

In 2012, the Australian Bureau of Statistics identified 36 wholesale businesses in the combined Gunnedah – Gunnedah Region SAL2 areas. Of these, 23 (63.9%) were located in the Gunnedah and 13 (30.1%) in the surrounding villages and rural areas. 66.7% of businesses employed no staff, with 8.3% employing 1-4 staff, and 25% employing 5-19 staff. Within the Northern Inland Region, Gunnedah Shire ranked 6th in terms of number of wholesale businesses behind Tamworth (156), Armidale (84), Inverell (76) and Moree (48). Tamworth is a regional distribution centre and has a concentration of large wholesalers, including the Woolworths Distribution Centre.

Table 19.3 Number of Wholesale Businesses, by Employment Range – Gunnedah & Comparative Areas

Statistical Area (SAL2)	No. Businesses 0 staff	1-4 staff	5-19 staff	20+ staff	Total Staff	As % of businesses
Gunnedah	14	0	9	0	23	63.9%
Gunnedah Region	10	3	0	0	13	30.1%
Total	24	3	9	0	36	
As % of Total	66.7%	8.3%	25.0%	0.0%	100.0%	
Comparative Areas						
Tamworth (SALs combined)	83	38	24	11	156	
	53.2%	24.4%	15.4%	7.1%	100.0%	
Quirindi	6	3	3	0	12	
	50.0%	25.0%	25.0%	0.0%	100.0%	
Narrabri / Narrabri Region	9	9	6	3	27	
	33.3%	33.3%	22.2%	11.1%	100.0%	
Coonabarabran	13	3	3	0	19	
	68.4%	15.8%	15.8%	0.0%	100.0%	
Moree / Moree Region	14	17	12	5	48	
	29.2%	35.4%	25.0%	10.4%	100.0%	

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Businesses by Industry Division by Statistical Area Level 2 by Employment Size Ranges, June 2012

The majority of wholesalers in Gunnedah Shire are small businesses, with 30.6% turning over less than $50,000 per year. Only 3 wholesalers turned over in excess of $2million per year.

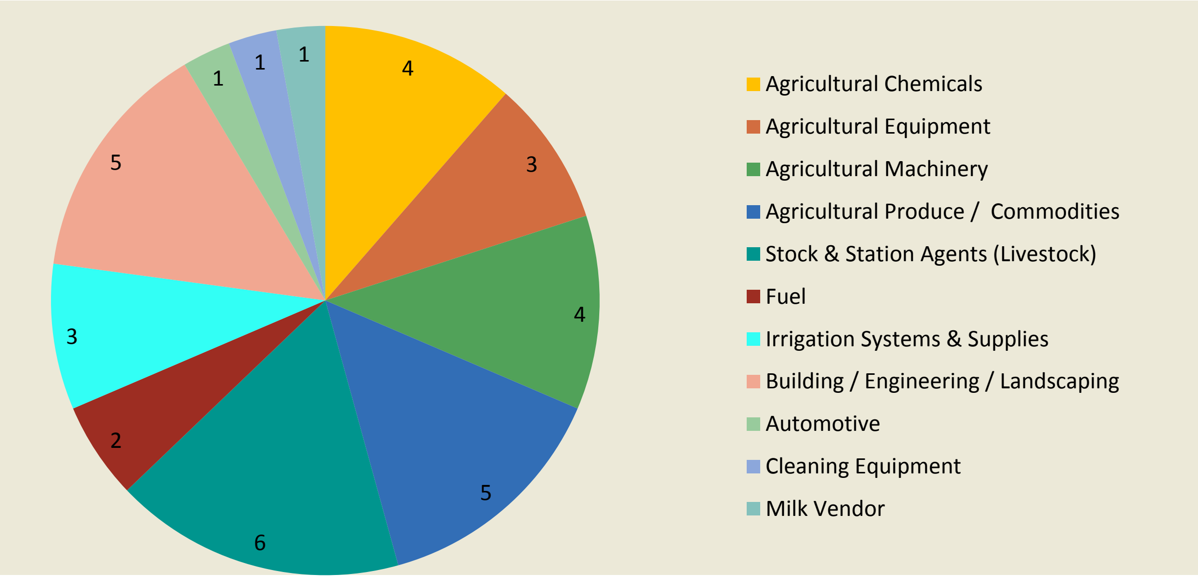
Table 19.4 Number of Wholesale Businesses, by Turnover Range – Gunnedah & Comparative Areas

Statistical Area (SAL2)	Number of Businesses by Turnover: Zero to $50k	$50k to less than $100k	$100k to less than $200K	$200k to less than $500k	$500k to less than $2m	$2m or more	Total
Gunnedah	8	3	3	0	6	3	23
Gunnedah Region	3	0	4	3	3	0	13
Total	11	3	7	3	9	3	36
As % of Total	30.6%	8.3%	19.4%	8.3%	25.0%	8.3%	100.0%
Comparative Areas							
Tamworth	20.5%	9.6%	12.8%	16.0%	25.0%	16.0%	156
Quirindi	25.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	12
Narrabri	11.1%	11.1%	0.0%	22.2%	33.3%	22.2%	27
Coonabarabran	31.6%	0.0%	36.8%	15.8%	15.8%	0.0%	19
Moree	22.9%	12.5%	6.3%	0.0%	35.4%	22.9%	48

Australian Bureau of Statistics Businesses by Industry Division by Statistical Area Level 2 by Turnover Size Ranges, June 2012

The Business Audit undertaken by Gunnedah Shire Council (April 2013) identified 36 wholesalers within the Shire. Of these 69.4% provided services primarily for the Agricultural sector.

Figure 19.4 Mix of Wholesale Businesses, Gunnedah Shire (Number of Businesses)



Source: Gunnedah Shire Council, Business Audit (April 2013)

19.4 Strategic Considerations – Retail & Wholesaling

Consideration	Comment
Compact town centre	The compact town centre was perceived as being a significant attribute of the town, with customers being able to park and walk. Planning strategies should continue to consolidate and support the centre rather than allow retail development in outlying areas. Development with the town centre should look to continue to activate street frontages and strengthen pedestrian links from adjoining off-street car parks into the main street.
Presentation of the town centre	The attractiveness of the shopping centre and the ability to socialise and interact is part of the retail experience. Council needs to continue to improve the public domain and to work with the Chamber to encourage business operators and property owners to improve the presentation of buildings and businesses. Streetscape improvements need to be extended west along Conadilly Street to Warrabungle Street to the town centre entry point that will be created by the new bridge over the railway line. An attractive streetscape will help to draw travellers into the town centre rather than taking the by-pass.
Changes in traffic flow patterns	The potential impacts of the proposed railway bridge of traffic flows in and around the town centre needs to be assessed and strategies (eg landscaping, signage) put in place to encourage travellers into the town centre.
Encouraging caravans and long rigs to stop in Gunnedah	There are an increasing number of caravans, motor homes and long rigs (car and boat trailers) passing through Gunnedah. Angle parking is a deterrent to these travellers stopping in town. Designated and signposted parallel / long rig parking spaces, close to the supermarkets / town centre need to be provided to encourage travellers to stop in town.
Raising the profile of Gunnedah as a shopping and dining destination	Through the Chamber, there may be opportunities to put in place marketing and promotional strategies for the town centre, including coordinating the advertising undertaken by individual businesses to raise the profile of the town and to keep 'Gunnedah' in the regional media. Gunnedah is well placed to attract shopping visits from residents of Tamworth City – capitalising on points of difference.

Consideration	Comment
Encourage residents to shop locally.	There is a role for the Chamber and the business community in developing 'shop' local campaigns and incentives, promoting the attributes of shopping in Gunnedah rather than travelling to other centres. There is opportunity to further develop and promote the business directory on the Council's website, with residents encouraged to use the directory to source goods and services locally. There is also a need for some form of directory / listing that promotes the businesses / services trading on Saturday afternoon and on Sundays.
Competition with on-line shopping	The increasing propensity to shop on-line has major implications for the long term viability of retail and wholesale businesses. If effectively used, the on-line environment can provide opportunities for local businesses to access wide markets, communicate / develop relationships with customers, and reduce operating costs. Retailers and wholesalers in Gunnedah Shire need access to information and training to provide them with the skills needed to develop and incorporate digital opportunities / on-line sales into their business model and practices.
Remaining relevant	With the competition (both price and convenience) of on-line sales, it is becoming increasingly important for retailers and wholesalers to develop strong relationships with their clients through the provision of quality and innovative customer service.
Supplier and Service Agreements	Opportunities for local businesses to become preferred suppliers for the major companies servicing the mining industry and farm equipment need to be explored. Changes in digital technology, such as 3D printing may provide opportunities for local businesses to be able to supply parts, etc, on demand.

20. HEALTH CARE & SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

20.1 Overview

The Australian Bureau of Statistics defines Health Care and Social Assistance[58] as units engaged in the following:

Services	Facilities & Programs
Hospitals	Hospitals
Medical & Other Health Care	Medical Services, Pathology and Diagnostic Imaging Services, Allied Health Services, Other Health Care Services
Residential Care	Accommodation for the aged, aged care hostel, nursing home, residential care for the aged, children's home, community mental health hostel, crisis care accommodation, home for the disadvantaged, hospice, residential refuge, respite residential care operation
Social Assistance	Child care, adoption service, adult day care centre operation, aged care assistance service, alcoholics anonymous, disabilities assistance, marriage guidance, operation of soup kitchen (including mobile), welfare counselling, youth welfare

The Australian Government estimates that there are now (2013), 1.388 million people employed in the sector, with the sector accounting for 12% of the Australian workforce. From 2006 to 2011, employment in the sector increased by 22% (211,000 people) with the fastest growing employment areas being hospitals (57,100 additional staff, 18% increase), residential care services, (42,000 additional staff, 30% increase), allied health (32,500 additional staff) and child care (25,000 additional staff, 34% increase).

The Health Care and Social Services Sector has been growing at 4.6% per annum over the past 7 years, with growth forecast to continue at around 3.5% per annum to 2016-17. The Australian Government forecasts that for the five years to 2016/2017[59], an additional 177,800 workers will be needed in the Health Care and Social Services Sector with the requirements by occupation type including:

- Health Diagnostics and Therapy Professionals – 20,400 additional positions – 14.2% growth
- Medical Practitioners and Nurses – 27,500 additional positions – 7.6% growth
- Health and Welfare Support Workers – 16,100 additional positions – 13.4% growth
- Carers and Aides – 57,200 additional positions – 13.6% growth – the main positions of which will be in Aged and Disabled Care (31,300 positions – 27% growth) and Child Care (15,500 positions, 13% growth).

Factors contributing to this strong projected growth include Australia's aging population, the expected impact of the National Disability Scheme and increasing demand for childcare, community and home-based care services. Within the Health Care Sector there has been a shift to treat chronic disorders and undertake palliative care within the community rather than in hospitals and other institutions. There is also a strong move to 'aging in place' with this facilitated through an increase in home-based support services. The roll-out of the National Broadband Network, will also enable a greater range of services to be provided 'remotely' including diagnostic and monitoring services within both local medical centres and home environments.

In NSW health services are delivered through regional Health Service Boards.

Social services are delivered through a number of Government Agencies such as the Department of Human Services (eg. Centrelink, Medicare and Child Support) and the Department of Education, Employment and

[58] http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/1115A5D117F9B7ABCA25711F00146E48?opendocument
[59] Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relationships – Skills Info – Occupation Projections to 2017.

Workplace Relations (eg Job Services Australia). Councils, Churches and a number of not-for-profit community groups also deliver a range of services.

Services include:
- Child care
- Adoption
- Adult day care centre
- Aged care assistance
- Alcohol and drug programs
- Disabilities assistance
- Marriage guidance
- Operation of soup kitchens (including mobile)
- Welfare counselling
- Youth welfare
- Family support
- Emergency care and support

Most of these services are delivered at the local community level.

20.2 Health Services – Northern Inland Region

Health Services in the Northern Inland Region are delivered by Hunter New England Local Health District (HNE Health), one of 15 local health districts across New South Wales. HNE Health provides a large range of public health services to the Hunter, New England and Lower North Coast regions, with these services including:

- 3 Tertiary Referral Hospitals - John Hunter, John Hunter Children's and Calvary Mater Hospitals, Newcastle.
- 4 Rural Referral Hospitals – Maitland, Tamworth, Armidale and Taree
- 12 District Hospitals – including Gunnedah Hospital
- 9 Community Hospitals
- 11 Multipurpose Centres
- 62 Community Health Services
- 3 Mental health facilities and 5 inpatient mental health services
- 3 residential aged care facilities.

HNE Health employs 15,500 people.

Within the Region, specialist medical services are concentrated at the Tamworth Rural Referral Hospital. The Hospital has 282 beds and is serviced by 64 consulting specialists. The Hospital also offers an extensive range of allied health services.

The North West Cancer Centre is located within the Hospital complex, and offers state-of-the art facilities for cancer treatment. Work has recently commenced on the construction of a new Acute Services building and refurbishment of a number of existing buildings within the Hospital complex ($220 million project). The new facilities are programmed to come on-line in 2015.

The New England North West Regional Action Plan has Health Care as one of its core strategies, with the priority being to 'deliver quality integrated health services' with improved access to health services, including local access to general practitioners and regional access to specialist care, in conjunction with increased community awareness about health and lifestyle. The Plan states that:

.

'The NSW Government will deliver quality integrated health services in the Region through:

- Improved access to specialist health services.
- Attraction and retention of more health professionals to support increased health service delivery.
- Delivery of key health infrastructure to improve access to a broader range of services.
- Improved community awareness of mental health issues.'

20.3 Gunnedah Shire

Within Gunnedah Shire the main service areas are health care, aged care and child care. At the 2011 Census, there were 491 people in Gunnedah Shire employed in the Health Care and Social Assistance sector, with this sector ranking 2nd to Agriculture. From 2001 to 2011, employment in this sector has increased by 6.5% (30 people).

Health Care

The Gunnedah Health Services Campus has recently been substantially upgraded and incorporates:

- Gunnedah District Hospital – 48 beds, with services including emergency, paediatric, medical, surgical, maternity, palliative care and community health.
- Gunnedah Community Health Service – range of allied health services.
- Gunnedah Rural Health Centre GP Superclinic.

In addition there are a number of allied health service providers, dental practices (2), massage and alternative health care (eg naturopath, reflexology) practitioners within the Shire. Specialist medical, dental and allied health services are available in Tamworth and Newcastle. There is a significant shortage of dental services in the Shire, with the dental practices having long waiting lists.

Health care services are concentrated in Gunnedah, with no resident services in the villages. Like most inland rural areas, the Shire has struggled to attract and retain doctors, dentists, nurses and health care professionals. Difficulties in securing appointments to see doctors and dentists, as well as the frequent changes in medical staff, is resulting in residents accessing services outside of the Shire, primarily in Manilla, Coonabarabran, Coolah and Quirindi for GP services and Tamworth for Specialist services. Out-shopping from Gunnedah Shire is strongly linked to residents travelling out of the Shire to access medical and dental services.

As discussed in Chapter 11, for most of the health indicators, particularly chronic disease and premature mortality, Gunnedah Shire has a higher incidence of risk and disease than the average for NSW and Regional NSW. This, plus the aging of the population indicates a need to continue to improve health services within the Shire.

Availability of and access to health care services will be one of factors taken into consideration by people looking to relocate to the Region. The access to maternity and paediatric services at Gunnedah Hospital is an advantage in targeting young families.

Aged Care

Aged care facilities and services in Gunnedah Shire include:

- Gunnedah Aged Care Services (GACS) – 88 bed nursing home incorporating 58 high care beds, 14 hostel beds and 16 dementia beds, plus a retirement village with 48 independent living units.
- Alkira Aged Care – 41 bed nursing home – located adjacent to the Gunnedah District Hospital.
- Yallambee Aged Accommodation (13 units) – volunteer operated.
- Home and Community Care Services and Transport
- Meals on Wheels

GACS is proposing to redevelop and expand its high care facilities and provide 10 additional independent living units. The demand for Independent Living Units in Gunnedah is well in excess of supply, with 86 people on the waiting list (August 2013). The shared rooms in the nursing homes within the Shire are not meeting market needs with people increasingly wanting their own room with ensuite facilities.

The number of residential aged care places (beds) in Gunnedah Shire is below both the State and Regional NSW averages, with Gunnedah Shire having 83 beds / 1000 people compared to the State and Regional NSW averages of 87.9/1000 and 87.5/1000 respectively. The number of people in Gunnedah Shire receiving HACC support (37.7/1000) is marginally above the State average (36/1000) but below the average for Regional NSW (41/1000).

The population of Gunnedah Shire is aging, with the population projections forecasting an additional 900 people aged 65+ years by 2031. Further aged care places are needed in Gunnedah.

Gunnedah Aged Care Services (GACS) is one of the larger employers in the Shire, employing 119 staff, the majority of whom are permanent part-time. Both GACS and Alkira find it difficult to attract and retain care staff, particularly registered nurses. In addition, the majority of nursing and aged care training programs are located in Newcastle and Sydney with travel being a major time and cost impost for the aged care facilities. The average age of nurses in Gunnedah is 54 years, with nursing shortages likely to be exacerbated as older nurses leave the workforce. Alkira is currently using 5 skilled migrant workers (VISA program). GACS has not brought in nurses and staff from overseas, however has hired people from non-English speaking backgrounds. Both providers have found that there are no support services in Gunnedah to assist people assimilate into the community.

Increasing operating costs, including electricity, is also impacting on the viability of the aged care facilities.

Child Care Services

Child care services in Gunnedah Shire include:

- Goodstart Early Learning, Gunnedah
- Gunnedah Central Playgroup
- Gunnedah Family & Children's Services
- Gunnedah Family Day Care
- Gunnedah Supported Playgroup
- Mary Ranken Child Care Centre
- Winanga-Li Child Care Centre

An under-supply of child care places was identified in the Community Workshops as an issue within the Shire, with the supply of places not keeping pace with population growth. Access to child care is generally a requirement for young families looking to relocate to the area.

20.4 Strategic Considerations – Health Care & Social Assistance

Consideration	Comment
Under-supply of services	Gunnedah Shire has an under-supply of health care services, and aged care and child care places. In particular, there is a very long waiting list for independent living units for the elderly as well as waiting lists for childcare.
The demand for health and aged care services will increase substantially over the next 20 years	With poor health indicators and an aging population, the demand for health care services in Gunnedah Shire will increase substantially over the next 20 years. Aged care facilities currently available in the nursing homes are not consistent with changing needs and expectations within the marketplace. Opportunities to meet future demand need to be identified and incorporated into planning and service delivery strategies at both the regional and local level.
Access to skilled staff	The Hospital and Aged Care facilities within the Shire find it difficult to attract and retain workers, in particular registered nurses. Facilities may face severe staff shortages as nurses retire out of the workforce. Using Agency staff, other than on a very short term basis, is not financially sustainable. Consideration may need to be given to bringing in workers from overseas. Facilities and services will be needed in Gunnedah to support these workers.
Increasing Energy Costs	Aged care facilities within the Shire are not energy efficient, with rising energy prices being a major cost imposition. Consideration needs to be given to how costs can be reduced. Access to natural gas for kitchens, laundries and heating would help to reduce costs.
Access to child care places.	Gunnedah Shire will struggle to attract new residents, particularly younger couples and families if it cannot guarantee child care places.

21. EDUCATION & TRAINING

21.1 Overview

The Education and Training Sector as described by the Australian Bureau of Statistics[60] includes:

- Preschool Education
- School Education
- Tertiary Education
- Community and other education including both vocational and non-vocational instruction in sporting and physical recreation activities, arts, dance, drama and music, driving schools, flying schools, University of the Third Age etc.

The Education and Training industry sector contains services provided directly by Federal, State and Local Governments, Churches and other organisations including the private sector and community groups.

The Education and Training Sector is one of the sectors identified by the Federal Department of Education, Employment and Work Place Relation as an employment growth sector. Employment in the sector is forecast to increase by 7.2% (65,500 people) over the period 2012 to 2017. School education in Australia is currently being re-structured to meet changing education needs and raise literacy and numeracy levels.

21.2 Gunnedah Shire

At the 2011 Census there were 403 people in Gunnedah Shire working in the Education and Training sector, with the sector being the 4th largest employer in the Shire. The number of residents working in the sector has increased by 15.1% since 2001 (53 additional people).

The Education and Training Sector in Gunnedah Shire includes:

- New England Institute of TAFE – Gunnedah Campus
- Gunnedah Community College
- Two Secondary Schools in Gunnedah (Public & Catholic)
- Eight Primary Schools – Gunnedah (2 Public, 1 Catholic, 1Christian), public schools in Tambar Springs, Curlewis, Mullaley and Carroll.
- Pre-schools
- GS Kidd Memorial School – School for children with disabilities
- Five organisations providing vocational training
- College of Equine Dentistry
- Flight training – Gunnedah Airport
- Driver Training
- Interest / Activity based tuition – music, dance, tennis

With the implementation of the National Plan for School Improvement, there is likely to be some growth in employment in the schools sector within the LGA. The proposed Trades Training Centre will also generate additional teaching positions.

There is one University within the Region – the University of New England, which has campuses at Armidale (main campus) and Tamworth. The University of Newcastle is also reasonably accessible to Gunnedah Shire, with the University having a medical training program in place with the Tamworth and Armidale hospitals.

[60] www.abs.gov.au

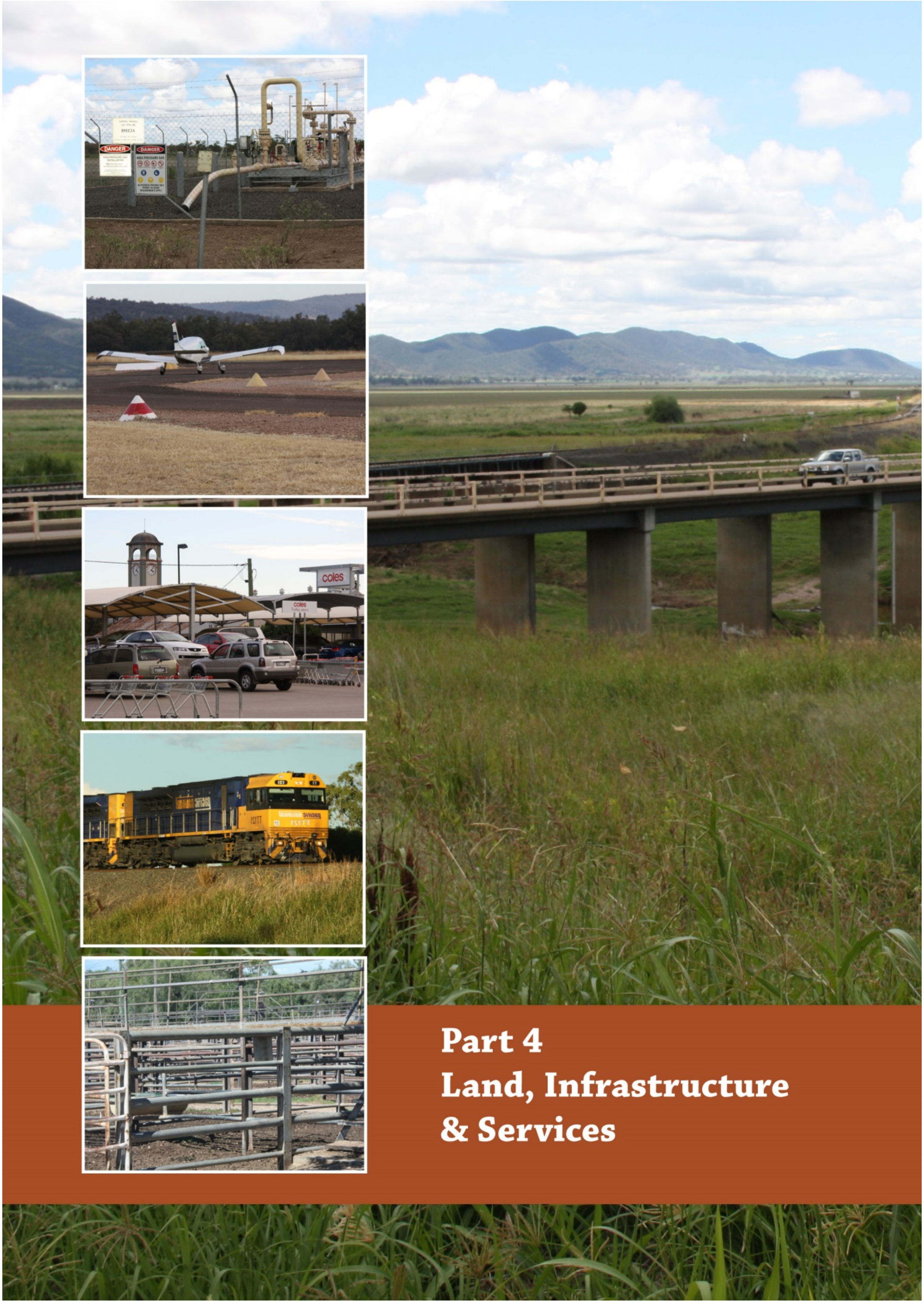
TAFE courses within the Region have been rationalised and restructured, with most of the trades courses now concentrated in Tamworth. Gunnedah TAFE offers certificate courses in a range of office and administrative skills, general workforce skills and numeracy and literacy. The only trade course offered is Engineering Certificate 1. Gunnedah TAFE has one of the most limited range of courses of all TAFEs in the Region, with the courses available being of limited relevance to the main industry sectors within the Shire – agriculture, mining, manufacturing, construction, health care, tourism/hospitality and automotive services.

In contrast, Tamworth TAFE offers a far broader range of programs across most of the skills needed in Gunnedah Shire. Quirindi TAFE offers Certificate III in Aged Care and a range of Information Technology Courses, while Coonabarabran TAFE offers similar courses to Gunnedah plus a range of Information Technology Courses. In addition to the basic courses, Narrabri TAFE offers a range of certificate courses in Information Technology, Metal Fabrication and Welding, Automotive services and Child Care services. The limited range of TAFE courses offered in Gunnedah Shire drew considerable criticism from all industry sectors.

Gunnedah High School offers a range of Vocational Education and Training Programs (VET Program) as part of the Years 11 and 12 curriculums, with these programs providing entry level skills for a range of vocations.

21.3 Strategic Considerations – Education

Consideration	Comment
Very limited range of TAFE courses on offer at Gunnedah TAFE.	There was wide-spread concern amongst business operators and employers that the courses offered at Gunnedah TAFE did not meet the needs of the local economy and that employees generally had to travel outside of the Shire to access relevant courses.
Proposed Trades Training Centre	Gunnedah is competing with Narrabri and Tamworth to secure the proposed Mining Trades Training Centre. Both Tamworth and Narrabri TAFEs has trade related courses, where as there are no trade-based courses at Gunnedah TAFE, nor courses in related skills such as Information Technology, Metal Fabrication etc. Gunnedah Shire needs to advocate strongly for the establishment of the Trades Training Centre in Gunnedah. Should Gunnedah not be selected for the Trades Training Centre, the Council, with the support of the business community, needs to advocate for an increase in the courses offered by Gunnedah TAFE, with the additional courses designed to provide the skills needed in the Shire.



Part 4
Land, Infrastructure & Services

22. AVAILABILITY OF LAND

The availability of suitable land or premises, at the 'right' price, is part of any locational decision. The amount of land available for development also has implications for the construction and related industries.

22.1 Industrial Land

Gunnedah Shire has around 407.36 hectares of land zoned for industrial activities. Of this zoned land 181.707 hectares is occupied with 225.88 hectares being 'vacant'[61]. The 'vacant' land is being used for a variety of purposes including rural activities (eg grazing), residential and storage purposes. In addition, there is 33.6 hectares of land zoned for Business Development which incorporates light industrial activities. The average price of industrial land in Gunnedah is $76 per m^2.

There are five established industrial precincts in Gunnedah, with some limited agricultural related industrial activity also found in the villages and rural areas. The industrial precincts are:

- **West End** – located at the western end of the Gunnedah town centre, bounded by the Railway line, Warrabungle Street, Bloomfield and Tempest Street. West End is a mixed use, light industrial – commercial area with activities including car sales and servicing, trade services, agricultural equipment sales and services, bulky goods and hardware retailing. This area is zoned B5 – Business Development and incorporates an area of 33.6 hectares. Land in this area is fully serviced. This area is in transition, with around half the lots still used for residential purposes. There is very little vacant land in this precinct, with future development dependent on being able to purchase and consolidate lots (predominately housing block size).

- **Warranuna Industrial Estate** – located on the western edge of the town with frontage to and access from the Oxley Highway. This Estate has an area of 79.642 hectares of which approximately 2.41 hectares is vacant land. The Estate is zoned IN1 – General Industrial, and has a mix of businesses including engineering, fabrication, building supplies, automotive services, warehouses etc. The area is hilly with most of the lots being small. There are a few industrial units in this area available for lease.

- **Quia Road Industrial Estate** (also known as North Gunnedah) – also located on the western edge of town, between the Kamilaroi Highway and the North West Rail Line. This precinct has an area of 39.88 hectares of which 7.572 hectares is vacant. The area is zoned IN1 – General Industrial. Activities include Gunnedah Timbers (sawmill), transport services and crane and equipment hire. The area has servicing constraints, with no sewer in the western part of this area (17 lots). A development application has been approved for the entire area of the vacant land.

- North West Industrial Park - Blackjack Road – the North West industrial area is located to the west of the Warranuna Estate, with the precinct bounded by Farrar Road and Quia Street to the north and Blackjack Road to the west. The precinct incorporates an area of 194.76 hectares of which 157.67 hectares is vacant. The area is zoned IN1 – General Industrial. The vacant land includes the former abattoir site (142 hectares), which has development approval for 90 industrial lots ranging in size from 6,000m^2 to 6 hectares. The abattoir buildings occupy part of the site, with these buildings being derelict and requiring demolition.

  The precinct has sufficient water supply for the first 3 stages of the development. The rising main will need to be amplified for Stage 4 and the Borethistle Reservoir brought on-line to service Stages 5-7. The precinct needs to be connected to the sewer network. The electricity supply to the precinct is at capacity and needs to be augmented.

[61] Regional Development Australia Northern Inland (2013) Industrial Land in Northern Inland NSW.

- Quia Road (West) – McDonald Road – this area is located west of the Blackjack Road Precinct, and is bounded by the North West Rail line to the north and Quia Road (west). The precinct is zoned IN3 – Heavy Industry, with industrial activities including the Whitehaven Coal Processing and Washing Plant, Gunnedah Leather (Tannery) and Prydes Feed Mill. The precinct has an area of 91.3 hectares of which 36.35 hectares is vacant and used for agriculture. The electricity supply will need to be augmented before further development can occur in this area.

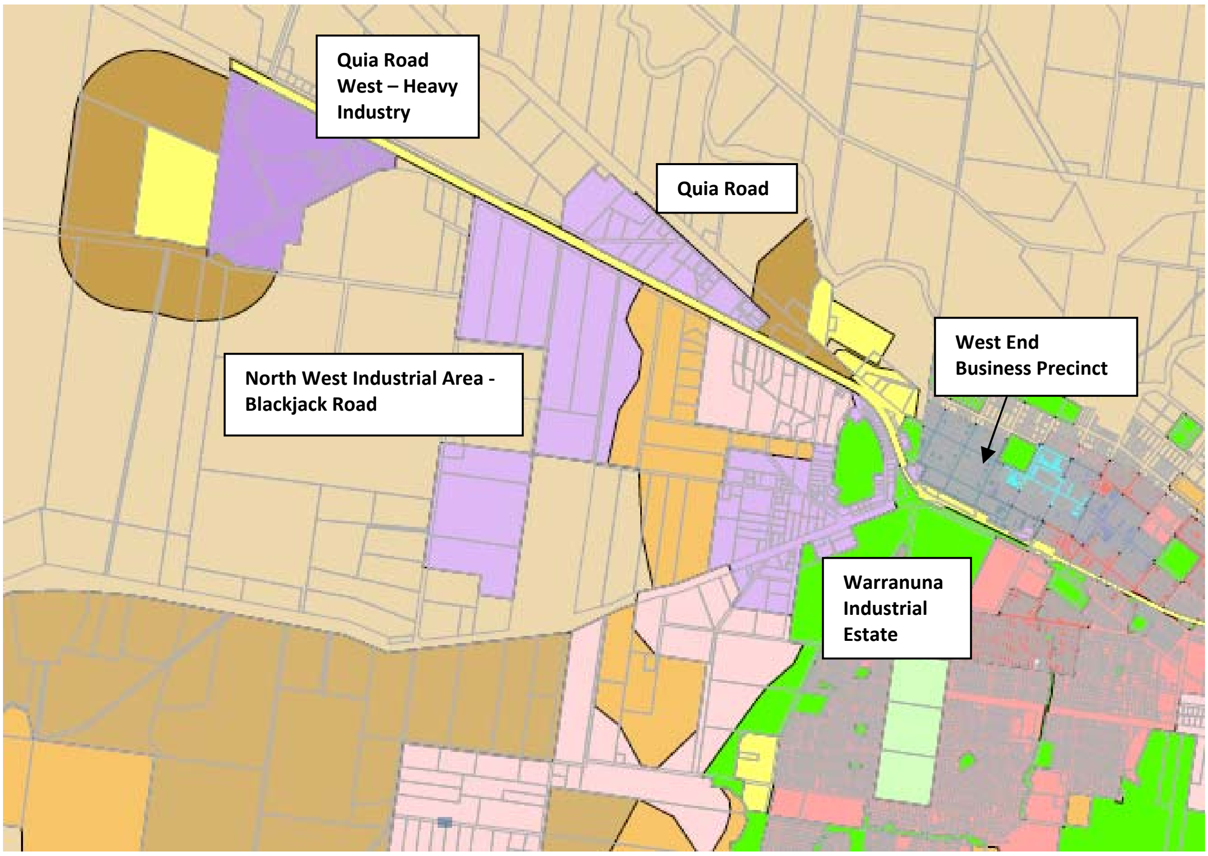
There are also a number of industrial activities on isolated lots within Gunnedah township, on rural land and within the villages. Under the provisions of the Gunnedah Shire Local Environmental Plan (2012) agricultural, livestock and timber processing industries are permitted with consent in Primary Production (RU1) and Transition (RU6) zones. General industry is permitted with consent in village areas (RU5), while light industry and high technology industries are permitted with consent in areas zoned for business activities (B4 and B5). Home-based industries are permitted across a range of rural, business, industrial and residential zonings.

Table 22.1 Land Zoned for Industrial and Business Development Activities – Gunnedah (2013)

Precinct	Zoning	Ownership	Total Area (m^2)	Occupied (m^2)	Vacant (m^2)	Available for Development (m^2)
Industrial IN1= General Industry IN3=Heavy Industry						
Warranununa	IN1	Pvt/Council	790,642	549,993	240,649	
North West	IN1	Private	1,947,604	370,900	1,576,704	1,580,000
Quia Road	IN1	Private	398,801	323,081	75,720	75,720#
Quia Road West	IN3	Pvt/Council	913,000	549,500	0	
Other	IN1	Private	23,596	23,596	363,500	
Total Industrial			**4,073,643**	**1,817,070**	**2,256,573**	**1,655,720**

Source: Regional Development Australia Northern Inland (2013) Industrial Land in Northern Inland NSW.
A development application has been approved for this area.

Figure 22.1 Industrial Precincts– Gunnedah



Availability of Industrial Land

Approximately 165.57 hectares of industrial zoned land has been identified as available for development. Of this, 7.572 hectares is located in the Quia Road precinct. This site has development approval, however construction is yet to commence. The area needs to be connected to the sewer.

The remaining 158 hectares is located in the North West Industrial Park (Blackjack Road) precinct with 142 hectares being the former abattoir site. Of this 142 hectares, 120 is developable, with the remainder (22ha) required as an environmental buffer. The water supply to the precinct is adequate for the first three development stages, but will require augmentation for Stages 4-7. The electricity supply is at capacity and will need to be augmented before development can occur. The precinct is not sewered, which is a significant constraint to development. Development will require the demolition of the former abattoir complex including removal of asbestos. The costs of demolishing the former abattoir building, remediating the site, augmenting the electricity supply and providing sewer are deterrents to development. At this stage, it appears unlikely that this land will come on-line in the near future. As such this leaves very little land readily available for industrial development in Gunnedah.

The Commercial and Industrial Land-Use Strategy for Gunnedah Shire assessed the amount of industrial land available and required. The Strategy identified 17.8 hectares as vacant in 2011. It estimated that a further 104 hectares of land was required (15 years supply). Gunnedah can only meet this requirement if the North West Industrial Park precinct is brought on-line. With the current constraints, it may not be possible to bring the land on-line in time to take advantage of mine-related businesses looking to establish in the area.

Competitive Industrial Areas[62]

With the development of the Maules Creek, Caroona and Watermark coal mines there is likely to be an increase in the demand for industrial land from mine service companies looking to establish a presence in the Region. Gunnedah Shire will be competing with Liverpool Plains, Tamworth and Narrabri LGAs for this investment. To date, the preferred locations for mine-related companies establishing in the Region have been Tamworth and Gunnedah, with Narrabri and Liverpool Plains seeing limited investment.

The LGAs surrounding Gunnedah Shire have vacant serviced industrial land available as well as industrial land in production. The average price of industrial land in Narrabri and Tamworth is higher than in Gunnedah, while the average price of industrial land in Liverpool Plains Shire is lower. For businesses looking to service the Caroona and Watermark Mines, Quirindi and Werris Creek are located closer to the Mines than Gunnedah. Tamworth has a range of industrial units (from 135m^2 to 3,600m^2) available for sale or lease. There are very few industrial units to buy or lease in Narrabri and Liverpool Plains Shires.

Tamworth has two large industrial areas, the Taminda and Glen Artney Estates. Taminda is a large, general industrial area that has recently been expanded. Taminda has around 7,100m^2 of serviced industrial land ready for development. The Glen Artney Estate is located on the Oxley Highway (Gunnedah Road) to the west of Tamworth. The Estate is zoned for heavy industry and houses the new Tamworth Regional Livestock Exchange, a Woolworth Distribution Centre, two abattoirs, food processing plants and a range of fabrication, construction and transport businesses. The Estate has recently been expanded with 81.64 hectares of land available for development. In addition, Stage 1 (20 hectares – 33 lots) of the nearby Tamworth Airport Business Park (120 hectares) is currently being developed. An additional 80 hectares of land is also being brought on-line in the South Tamworth Business Park with this area zoned for light industry and bulky goods retailing. The average price of industrial land in Tamworth is \$234/m^2.

---

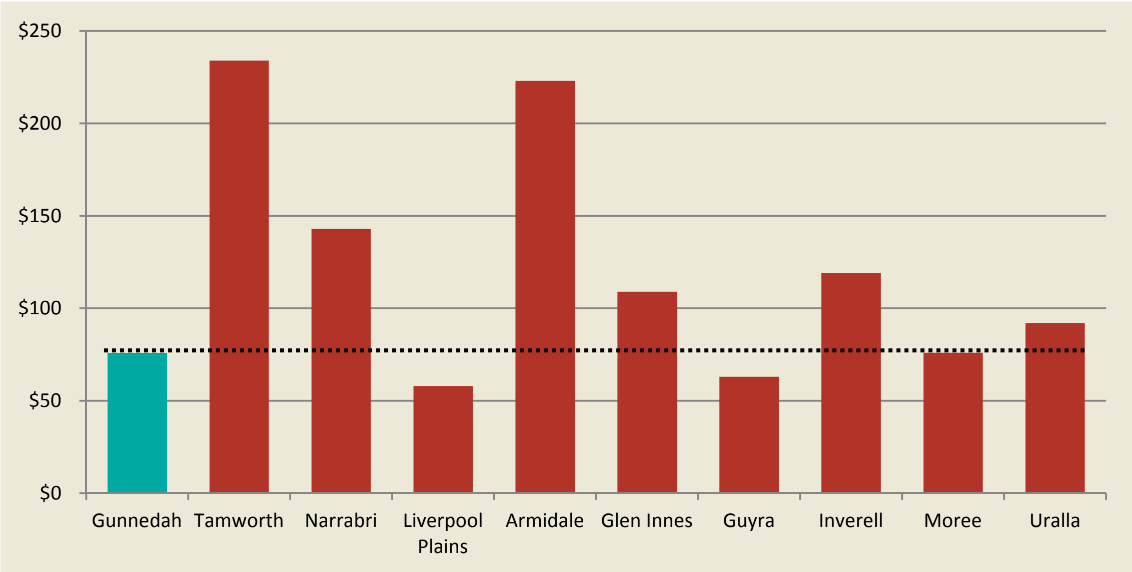
[62] Information on available land and the average price of industrial land is taken from RDA Northern Inland (2013) Industrial Land in Northern Inland NSW.

Liverpool Plains Shire has zoned industrial land available at Quirindi and Werris Creek. There is currently 16,887m^2 of serviced industrial land available in Quirindi with a further 13 hectares being brought on-line. In addition there is 6.9ha of heavy industrial land at Werris Creek. The average price of industrial land in Liverpool Plains Shire is \$58/m^2.

Narrabri Shire has industrial land in Narrabri, Boggabri and Wee Waa. Most of the vacant land industrial land in the township of Narrabri (163.96ha) is serviced land within existing industrial estates. 9.9ha of this land is owned by Narrabri Shire Council. The average price of industrial land in Narrabri is \$143/m^2.

There are 56 hectares of vacant industrial land in Boggabri. Due to interest shown by mining-related service companies, Narrabri Shire is currently undertaking planning studies in Boggabri with the view to releasing more land for both industrial and residential development, with the possibility of bringing on 20-40 new industrial lots in the short-term. Information on the average price of industrial land in Boggabri is not available.

Figure 22.2: Average Price of Industrial Land by LGA – Northern Inland Region (based on recent sales)



Source: RDA Northern Inland (2013) Industrial Land in Northern Inland NSW.

22.2 Retail & Commercial Land & Premises

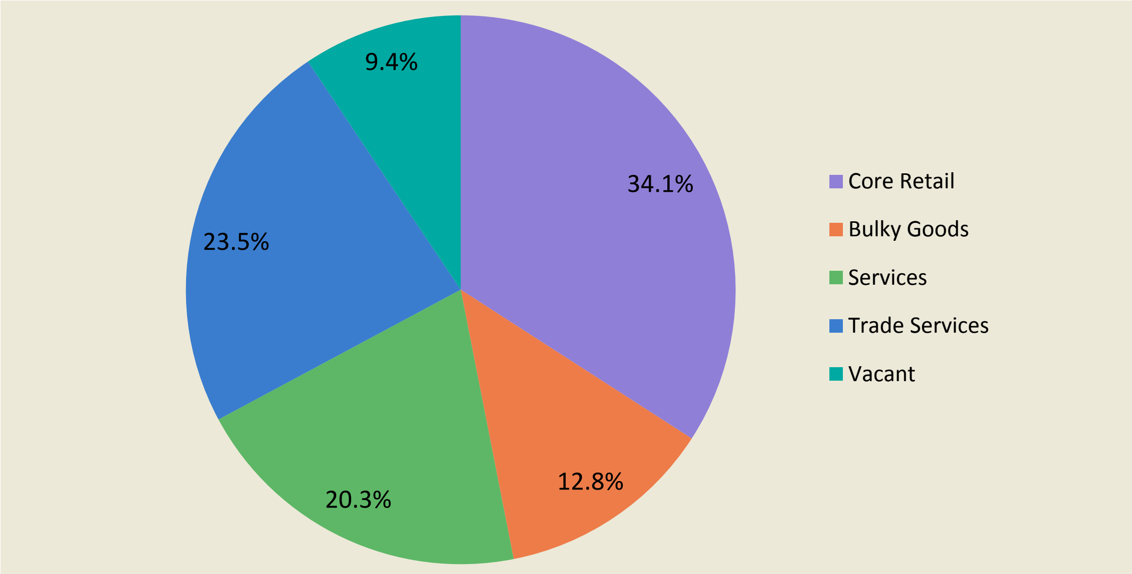
In 2008 there was approximately 46,900 square metres of retail and commercial floorspace in the township of Gunnedah, with the main activities being retail (16,000m^2), bulky goods (6,000m^2), services (9,500m^2) and trade services (11,000m^2). 4,400m^2 of floorspace was vacant[63].

According to local real estate agents, the number of vacant retail-commercial premises in Gunnedah has fallen from 25-30 properties around 5 years ago to around 10-12 properties in 2013. Most of the new tenants taking up the space have been mine-related service providers (eg consulting, training and employment companies) rather than retail tenants. A number of national traders, including Discount Department Stores, have expressed interest in Gunnedah, however have not been able to secure suitable sites or premises.

The Commercial and Industrial Land Study (2008) identified a need for 4,350m^2 of additional retail and commercial floorspace by 2015/16 and a further 15,210m^2 by 2030/31.

[63] Gunnedah Shire Council (2008) Commercial and Industrial Land Use Study

Figure 22. 3 Breakdown of Retail and Commercial Space, Gunnedah Town Centre, 2008



Source: Gunnedah Shire Council (2008) Commercial and Industrial Land Use Study

Table 22.2 Additional Retail and Commercial Floorspace Required in Gunnedah (2008 -2031)

Type of Floorspace	Additional Floorspace – Gross Leasable Area	
	2015/16	2030/31
Retail Goods	1,650	6,690
Retail Services	290	940
Total Shopfront Floorspace	1,940	7,630
Commercial, Professional, Community Services	940	2,600
Entertainment, Recreation, Sports, Accommodation	780	2,610
Building, Motor Vehicle, Construction Trades	690	2,370
Total Additional Retail and Commercial Floorspace	4,350	15,210

Source: Gunnedah Shire Council (2008) Commercial and Industrial Land Use Study

The Gunnedah LEP (2012) consolidates the retail core of Gunnedah (zoned Local Centre B2), and makes provision for bulky goods, services and light industrial activities in the area surrounding the retail core. The area to the south and east of the retail core is zoned Business – Mixed Use (B4), while the West End Precinct to the west of the retail core is zoned Business Development (B5). While there are a number of under-utilised and vacant sites in the areas zoned for Business, the majority of lots are small and will require consolidation prior to development. This will add to the development costs.

22.3 Residential Land

The Gunnedah Shire LEP zoned land in Gunnedah to provide around 1,000 additional residential lots. It also provides for increasing residential density close to the town centre and hospital precinct, allowing for the development of medium density town houses and units. Master-planned residential estates include:

- Mornington Heights – 309 lots approved – of which Stage 1 has been developed and sold off, with Stage 2 (around 40 lots) currently on the market. There are around 220 lots remaining to be progressively developed and released.

- East Gunnedah – located on the eastern edge of Gunnedah, this estate will provide around 355 lots comprising a mix of medium density, standard residential lots and larger rural-residential lots. The first stages of this subdivision are currently in production.

- Gallen Estate - East Lincoln Street – 147 residential lots have been approved with around 20 lots currently for sale.

- Kamilaroi Road – 32 large rural-residential lots.

- Bellevue Heights Estate – 10 large rural residential lots. A number have already been sold.

There is also a proposal for 48 duplex units on the corner of Pearson and George Street, with the possibility that Homes North may purchase some of these units to provide affordable housing.

According to RealEstate.com, the median house price in Gunnedah is $375,000. The median house price in Gunnedah is marginally lower than Narrabri ($380,000), but higher than both Tamworth ($310,000) and Boggabri ($157,500).

There is a reasonably wide choice of housing options and development sites in Gunnedah. Housing affordability, both to buy and rent, has been raised as an issue. House prices have increased as a result of the increase in coal mining, however the progressive release of residential land has taken some of the heat out of the market. As the MAC Villages at Boggabri and Werris Creek becomes fully operational, there may be a decrease in demand for residential rental properties from the mining sector which may also place some downward pressure on rent levels.

Within the housing sector, there is a marked under-supply of independent living units for the aged, with a waiting list of around 86 people for units at Gunnedah Aged Care Services.

22.4 Strategic Considerations – Land

Consideration	Comment
Availability of serviced industrial land	Gunnedah Shire has very limited supplies of serviced industrial land available for immediate purchase. The land that is available is highly priced and/or not adequately serviced (Quia Road – no sewer), hilly or in small lots requiring consolidation. The LGAs in the surrounding Gunnedah Shire have serviced industrial land available for businesses looking to establish in or relocate to the Region.
North West Industrial Area - Blackjack Road	Although zoned and DA approved for industrial subdivision, the North West Industrial Park precinct is constrained by lack of sewer, electricity capacity constraints and the cost of demolishing the former abattoir buildings and remediating the site. Consideration needs to be given to seeking assistance from State and/or Federal Government Departments to address some of the issues on the site so that it can be brought into production.
Availability of Industrial units	There are very few industrial units available in Gunnedah Shire for purchase or lease. The development of industrial units in the North West Industrial Park precinct should be considered a priority.
Retail & Commercial Development	There are a number of national retailers as well as mine-related service providers that have expressed interest in establishing in Gunnedah. Under the new LEP, there is sufficient land zoned for mixed use activities. The main challenge will be in consolidating sites at a price that will be economically viable to develop.
Residential development	The new LEP has provided for the development of around 1,000 additional dwellings on residential and large rural-residential lots. It also makes provision for medium density housing close to the town centre and hospital precincts. At present, the median house price in Gunnedah is higher than in Tamworth which may have implications for people looking to relocate to the region. The median rent in Gunnedah is marginally lower than Tamworth but

Consideration	Comment
	higher than the other surrounding LGAs. The opening of the MAC Villages at Boggabri and Werris Creek may result in a decline in the demand for rental housing in Gunnedah from mine and mine-related workers. This may increase the availability of rental accommodation and place some downward pressure on rent levels.
Housing Affordability	The 'tight' residential market in recent years has resulted in higher rent and sales prices in Gunnedah. Housing affordability has become an issue. This is recognised in the New England North West Regional Action Plan with the State Government looking at options within the Region.
Housing for the Aged	There is a shortage of independent living units for the 55+ age group in Gunnedah. There is currently 86 people on the waiting list for units at Gunnedah Aged Care Services.

23. TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

The ability to transport products produced in the Shire (eg agricultural products, coal, processed goods, etc), and to bring in raw materials (eg grain from other areas) is fundamental to the performance of the Gunnedah Shire economy. Transport costs and the ability to access transport services when needed play a significant role in the profitability and sustainability of economic activities and influence the competitiveness of producers in the Shire. Gunnedah Shire has a small road transport sector and is an important rail freight node for agricultural products (primarily grain and cotton) and coal. The transport infrastructure also influences relocation and investment decisions for both potential businesses and residents and plays a part in the movement of travellers (the tourism industry).

23.1 Roads

Highways

Strategically, Gunnedah Shire is well located at the cross-roads of the Oxley (SH11) and Kamilaroi Highways (SH29). Both highways provide access to the Newell and New England Highways, with these north-south highways being major interstate routes. The Kamilaroi Highway is promoted as a touring route (From the Great Divide to the Great Outback). It is also part of the National Highway Network (SH 29 / NH 37).

The Kamilaroi Highway is a designated High Mass Limit (HML) Road along most of its length, with the exception being section through Gunnedah township. The existing truck route through Gunnedah (Bloomfield Street) is a local road and is not approved for HML vehicles. Gunnedah Shire is endeavouring to have the route reclassified as a Regional Road suitable for HML vehicles.

The Oxley Highway is not designated for HML, with the constraint being the Abbott (South) Street Bridge in Gunnedah, which is not suitable for HML vehicles. The Abbott Street Bridge has been identified by the NSW Government as an obstacle to freight efficiency within the Region. As such, $16 million has been provided to build a new bridge over the railway line at the western end of the town (New Street), with Oxley Highway heavy vehicle traffic using New and Warrabungle Streets rather than South and Abbott Streets. The Bridge is due to be completed in 2015/16.

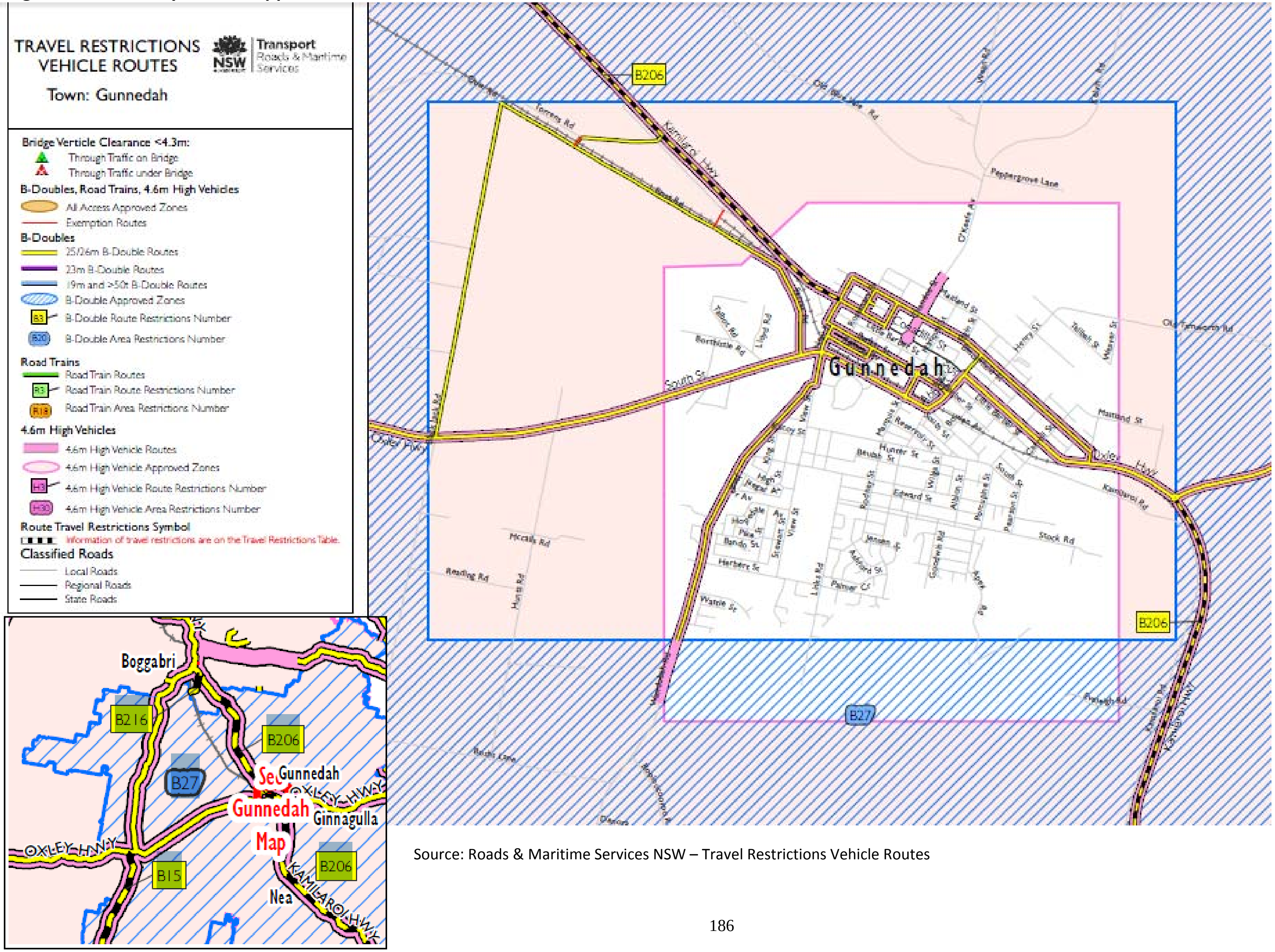
The Oxley and Kamilaroi Highways, are approved for 19 metre, 23 metre and 25 metre B-double vehicles, with some restrictions (eg Abbott Street Bridge) in place. They are also approved for vehicles up to 4.6m in height (see Figure 23.1). Cohen's Bridge and the Quia Road Underpass are the only two areas in the Shire that have restrictions on vehicle height. The Highways are not approved for non-livestock transporting road trains, B-Triples and AB Triples.

Livestock Load Scheme

Under the NSW Livestock Load Scheme, the section of the Kamilaroi Highway between Gunnedah Saleyards and Narrabri has been upgraded and reclassified as suitable for livestock transporting road trains and B-triple vehicles that are fitted with certified Road Friendly Suspension (RFS). Vehicles without RFS and AB-Triples are not permitted. The permitted vehicles cannot travel east of the Gunnedah Saleyards. For livestock transport, B Doubles can operate throughout Gunnedah Shire, utilising the local road network to pick up and deliver livestock[64]. (see Figure 23.2).

[64] The Livestock Loading Scheme Maps for 23 and 25m B-Double Routes within Gunnedah Shire are not consistent with the RMS Travel Restriction Vehicle Route Map.

Figure 23.1 Heavy Vehicle Approved Routes, Gunnedah



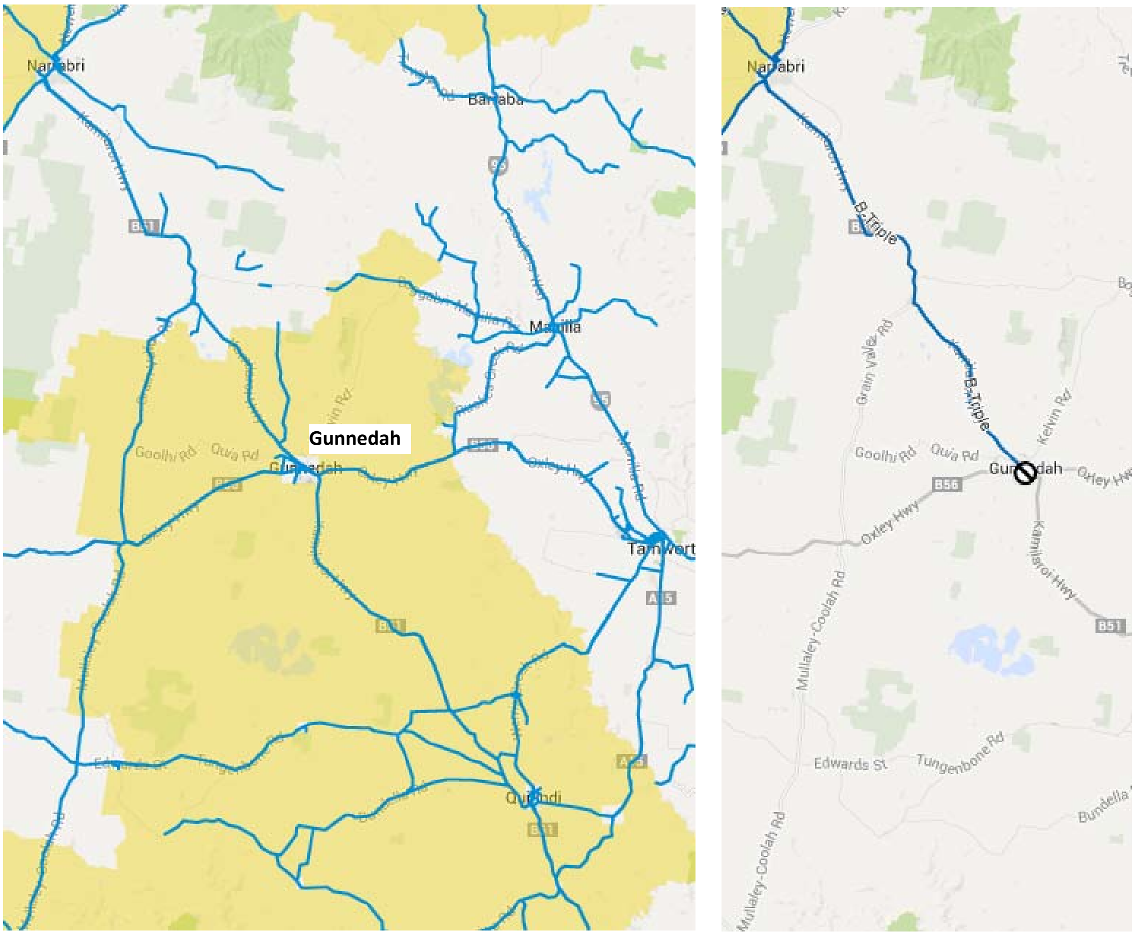
Source: Roads & Maritime Services NSW – Travel Restrictions Vehicle Routes

The restrictions on bringing non-livestock road trains in the Shire, and not being able to take livestock road trains to the east of the Gunnedah Saleyards was identified by agricultural producers and processers (eg Carroll Cotton Gin) as a significant constraint that is resulting in Gunnedah producers having less efficient transport and higher transport costs than competitive producers in Narrabri and Moree Plains Shires.

The NSW Livestock Load Scheme makes provision for accredited Scheme vehicles to use routes approved for HML vehicles, other managed State Roads and local and regional roads approved by Council for Scheme accredited vehicles. The opportunity for Gunnedah Shire to participate in this Scheme requires further investigation.

Figure 23.2 Heavy Vehicle Approved Routes – Livestock Transport – Gunnedah Shire

B-Double Routes (blue) & Approved Areas (shaded yellow) **Road Train & B Triple Route (blue)**



Source: Roads & Maritime Services - NSW Livestock Loading Scheme Map

Grain Harvest Management Scheme

In October 2013, the NSW Government introduced the Grain Harvest Management Scheme to improve the productivity and efficiency of grain transport in NSW. Under the scheme, eligible vehicles and combinations may exceed regulated total mass limits by up to 5% when delivering wheat, barley, rice, oats, canola and legumes from farms to Grain Receivers who are participating in the scheme. The trial will operate during the summer harvest season from 15 October 2013 to 31 May 2014. Following a review, the Scheme may also operate in the 2014/15 and 2015/16 seasons. Vehicles and combinations operating under the Scheme may operate on all State roads and on regional and local roads in participating Council areas, and must comply with applicable Restricted Access Vehicles (RAV) routes.

Within the Northern Inland Region, six LGAs (Gunnedah, Narrabri, Moree, Gwydir, Liverpool Plains and Inverell) are participating in the Scheme. Warrumbungle Shire is also participating. If the trial is successful, Gunnedah Shire should seek to have cotton, other grains (eg sorghum) and oilseeds included in the Scheme.

The introduction of the Livestock Load Scheme and the Grain Harvest Management Scheme have significant implications for the on-going management and maintenance of local and regional roads. A Regional Roads Strategy is needed to address the existing and on-going capacity and sustainability of the road network.

Crayboon-Boggabri Road

Figure 23.3 'Black Stump Way' – Touring Route Linkages

To the west of the Shire, the Crayboon – Boggabri Road (MR 55) is an emerging touring route. The section from Crayboon on the Golden Highway to Mullaley on the Oxley Highway is known as the Black Stump Way. Grain Valley Road (RR 7709) connects the Black Stump Way at the Oxley Highway to Boggabri.

Grain Valley Road is the main access road to the Namoi Cotton Gin at Boggabri for producers in the western half of Gunnedah and Liverpool Plains Shires.

The route from the Kamilaroi Highway at Boggabri to the Golden Highway at Crayboon is promoted as the 'Black Stump Way' touring route. Near Crayboon, the route links with the Castlereagh Highway through to Lithgow, with connections into the western areas of Sydney and further south via Goulburn to the Hume Highway and roads through to the ACT and NSW South Coast. The Black Stump Way touring route is seeing an increase in touring traffic, in particular touring caravans and motorhomes.

The Black Stump Way is fully sealed from the Golden Highway through to Mullaley. Sections of Grain Valley Road within Gunnedah Shire are unsealed. Strategically, the sealing of Grain Valley Road would facilitate the further development of the touring route and increase visitation to the western side of Gunnedah Shire, with Tambar Springs and Mullaley being direct beneficiaries. Sealing of the route would also facilitate access to the Namoi Cotton Gin and the grain silos at Boggabri for cotton and grain producers from the western areas of Gunnedah and Liverpool Plains Shires. The sealing of Grain Valley Road has been identified as a high priority in the Northern Inland Region Freight Study[65]. It has also been identified as a priority for sealing in the Gunnedah Shire Asset Management Plan.

[65] RDA Northern Inland (2012) Northern Inland Region NSW – Freight Study

Clifton Road – Carroll to Breeza

Clifton Road is a local road connecting Carroll to Breeza. Most of the road is unsealed. It provides access to the Carroll Cotton Gin for cotton producers from both Liverpool Plains and Gunnedah Shires. It is also used for the transport of livestock and a range of other agricultural products. The Carroll Cotton Gin is looking to significantly expand operations. The road is of strategic importance for the agricultural sector and has been identified in the Gunnedah Shire Asset Management Plan as requiring sealing. This road needs to be recognised in Regional Strategies and Infrastructure Plans.

Local Roads Servicing Existing and Proposed Coal Mines

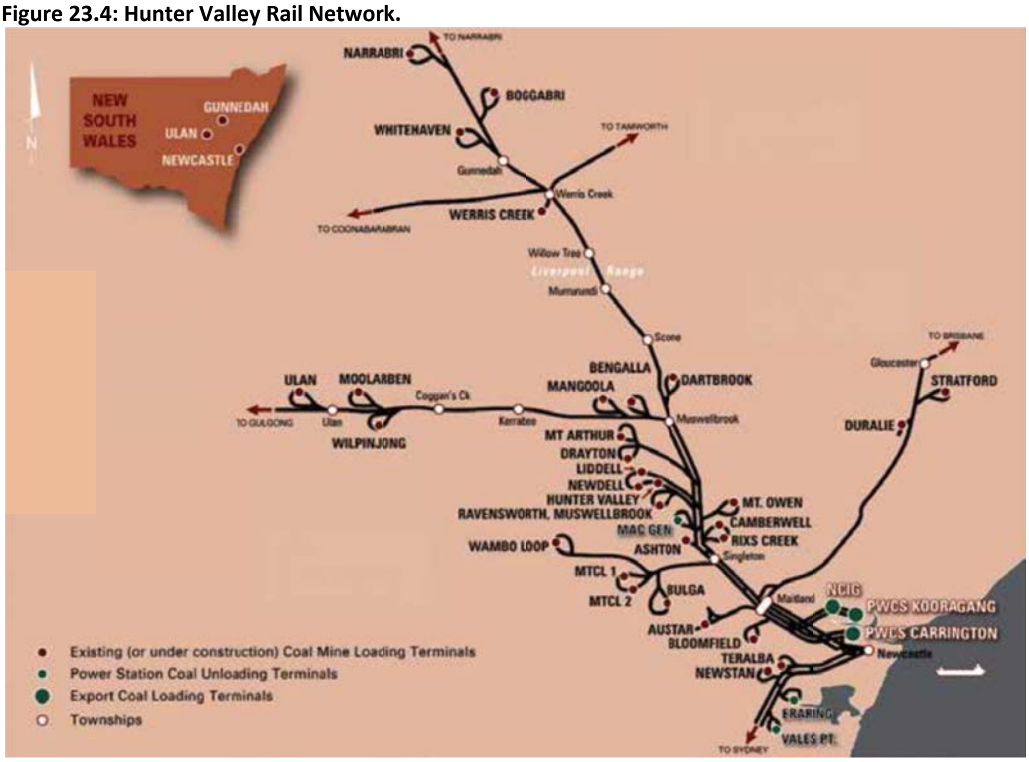
There are a number of unsealed local roads in Gunnedah Shire that are, or will, experience significant increases in traffic due to the development and operation of coal mines in the Region. Gunnedah Shire Council is negotiating with the mining companies for funding to seal and maintain these roads.

23.2 Rail

Gunnedah Shire is traversed by the North West Rail line. This line runs from Moree through to Werris Creek where it joins the Main North Line, which continues south to the Port of Newcastle with connections into the Sydney rail network. The North West Rail line forms part of the Hunter Valley Rail Network. The rail infrastructure within this network is operated by the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC), which has leased the network for 60 years, commencing in 2005. There are number of companies operating rolling stock (trains and wagons) on this network, including NSW Trainlink (passenger service) and Pacific National and Aurizon (formerly QR National) which transport coal and other freight.

NSW Trainlink operates a daily passenger service (one service in each direction) between Sydney and Moree, with Gunnedah included in this service. According to ARTC, there are currently up to 7 non-coal freight movements per day, in each direction between Scone and Moree, with freight services primarily carrying bulk and containerised grain, legumes, oilseeds, flour and cotton.

Figure 23.4: Hunter Valley Rail Network.



Source: ARTC

The rail infrastructure in the Gunnedah Basin was developed primarily for passenger services and to move agricultural produce, mainly grain and did not have the capacity to meet the demand from the coal sector. Over the past 8 years, the line between Muswellbrook and Narrabri has been substantially upgraded. As the railway was a single line, the initial priority was to establish a network of passing bays. The majority of these bays are now in place. Ultimately there will be a dual line between Muswellbrook and Narrabri. ARTC has also replaced wooden sleepers with concrete sleepers, increasing the capacity of the line from 25 tonne to 30 tonne wagons. As of 2015, 30 tonne wagons are expected to be operating on the line. Allied to this, the length of the trains is expected to increase from 72 to 82 wagons – with train lengths of up to 1,329 metres approved on the line. The introduction of 30 tonne wagons will be accompanied by a reduction in speed limits from 80km/hour down to 60km/hour for trains carrying coal and freight, with the speed limit for empty trains remaining at 80km/hour. This will have significant implications for vehicle traffic queuing at level crossings.

ARTC has identified a number of 'bottlenecks' on the North Western Line, with the Gunnedah Rail Yard identified as a significant constraint. Issues with the Yard include lack of signalling requiring the Yard to be operated manually, poor condition of the track, limited clearances, and poor condition of switch blades at critical turnouts. As such a 20km/h speed limit has been imposed on trains moving through Gunnedah. This blocks the vehicle traffic queuing at the level crossings in Gunnedah for extended periods. Due to the configuration of the Yard, trains also need to be 'stored' and then shunted manually between scheduled coal, other freight and passenger services. This has created significant problems for the Namoi Flour Mill with the Mill not being able to access its trains when required.

ARTC are about to commence work on redeveloping the Gunnedah Rail Yard to increase through-put and enable trains to move through the town at higher speeds (60km/h). The Yard is expected to be fully operational by 2015/16. The increase in rail speed through Gunnedah and the expected increase in frequency of trains has the potential to compound the current issues with rail access to the Namoi Flour Mill.

The agricultural sector in Gunnedah and Narrabri Shires are becoming increasing concerned about difficulties in gaining rail access for bulk and containerised transport of grain and cotton. Coal is now the primary commodity being transported, with ARTC having coal contracts in place for the next decade. Grain, legumes, oilseeds and cotton produced in Gunnedah Shire are increasingly being transported by road, either direct to the eastern sea-board ports or to Narrabri where it is being containerised and transported by road or rail back through Gunnedah Shire to ports in Newcastle, Sydney and Port Kembla, or road freighted to Queensland ports. This is adding significantly to production costs. There may be opportunity for a small container terminal in Gunnedah Shire.

The competition between the coal mining and agricultural sectors is identified as an issue in the New England – North West Regional Strategic Land Use Plan. The Plan notes that ARTC is providing for 7 trips in each direction per day for non-coal trains, with this use currently averaging 4.7 trips per day. In addition, the freight trains being used for transport of agricultural produce are significantly shorter than the 1,329 metre long trains permitted on the line. As such the Plan concludes that there appears to be sufficient capacity with the ability to increase the number of trips by 2.3 in each direction, as well as the carrying capacity by increasing the length of the trains. The introduction of 30 tonne wagons, may also lead to increased capacity. The Plan does not however discuss seasonal fluctuations in demand, the difficulties experienced in 'buying' track time nor assess whether the rail infrastructure at the grain silos has the capacity to accommodate longer trains and/or larger wagons. This issue needs further assessment as it has implications on a number of levels including farm profitability and sustainability, crop storage requirements and the impacts of increased truck movements on the road network.

The Federal Government has announced that it is proceeding with the development of the Inland Railway Line from Melbourne to Brisbane. This infrastructure is to be developed over the next 10 years. The preferred route for the line passes through Narrabri and Moree, with both towns nominated as freight hubs. Both towns already have large transport / freight industries, including containerisation facilities in Narrabri. The opening of this line may see more produce from Gunnedah being moved through Narrabri to Brisbane, or possibly Melbourne, for export.

23.3 Air Services

Gunnedah Shire is serviced by Tamworth Regional Airport. Qantaslink operates 5-6 return RPT[66] flights to Sydney per day, Monday to Friday, with 3 return flights on Saturdays and 4 on Sundays. Weekdays, Brindabella Airlines operates 2 return flights per day between Tamworth and Brisbane and one return flight per day on weekends. Tamworth Airport is the regional hub for air freight. Rental cars are available from Tamworth Airport.

Tamworth Airport has a cluster of aviation-based tenants including BAE Systems Flight Training Australia (government military contracts for flight training for the Australian Defence Forces, Republic of Singapore Airforce and Royal Brunei Airforce), Qantaslink (heavy maintenance base for Dash 8-Q400 and Dash 8-Q300 aircraft), Aviskills (training provider – aircraft mechanics and engineering), a number of air craft repairs (Sigma Aviation, Capital Country Aviation, Britten Norman, Aircraft Avionics), Macquarie Pilot Centre (Training and Charter), as well as CASA and Air Services Australia. A business park (120ha) is being developed adjacent to the Airport, with the park designed to attract more aviation-based businesses.

In Narrabri Shire, Brindabella Airlines operates 2-3 flights return RPT per day between Narrabri and Sydney. Flights can also be chartered into Tamworth, Gunnedah and Narrabri Airports. Most of the RPT mining-related air traffic appears to be coming through Tamworth Airport, with workers then hiring rental cars and driving to the mines. Narrabri is seeing both RPT mining-related traffic as well as an increasing number of private charter planes. Narrabri Council has recently prepared a Master Plan for the Airport with the Plan providing for lengthening and widening the runway and apron to increase capacity for larger planes, a larger terminal, a range of support activities and, potentially, hangers for private use.

Gunnedah Shire Council operates the Gunnedah Airport. The Airport is used for general aviation, and does not have RPT services. It has two runways, the main runway being 1645 metres in length, with a small cross runway (592m). The Airport is used by the Gunnedah Aero Club, the Flying Doctor / Air Ambulance Services, flight training in conjunction with the flight schools in Tamworth, as well as for recreational flying and the occasional charter flight (primarily mining and gas related). The re-introduction of RPT services is unlikely to happen given the proximity to Tamworth. As traffic into Tamworth Airport increases, there may be some opportunities for Gunnedah Airport to accommodate lower yielding activities displaced by Tamworth, and/or to work in conjunction with the air freight companies.

23.4 Freight Transport

Gunnedah Shire has a small freight transport sector which includes:

- Four heavy haulage companies.
- Four general freight and courier companies.
- Three livestock transport companies.

23.5 Public Transport

Weekdays during school terms, school bus services operate between Gunnedah - Boggabri, Gunnedah and the outlying villages and Breeza to Werris Creek. The Gunnedah-Lake Keepit school bus service connects with the Tamworth school bus service, providing a Gunnedah-Tamworth link. Gunnedah also has a taxi service, with wheel chair accessible taxis, as well as a number of coach companies that have coaches available for charter. Gunnedah also has a community transport system that operates Monday to Friday throughout the Shire.

[66] Regular Passenger Transport (scheduled commercial flights)

24.5 Strategic Considerations – Transport

Consideration	Comment
Proposed new street bridge over the railway	The new bridge will provide the Oxley Highway with the capacity to carry HML Vehicles. This may change the pattern of truck movements through the Shire, in particular more semi-trailers moving between the Newell and New England Highways. This may strengthen the need for a 24 hour fuel stop in the Gunnedah area. The bridge will also change the traffic movement for touring traffic – which has implications for the location of the Visitor Information Centre and also for encouraging traffic into the main shopping precinct, rather than by-passing the shopping centre. Caravan / Long Rig parking spaces need to be designated in the shopping centre and effectively signposted. The new bridge will also increase the number of trucks using Bloomfield Street. While Bloomfield Street is used as a truck route to by-pass the town centre, the street is a local road that is not designated for HML vehicles. Bloomfield Street needs to be re-classified as a Regional or Main Road and designated for HML vehicle use. This may require road and/or safety improvements.
Access for heavy vehicles, road trains and B triples.	The recent introduction of the Grain Harvest Management Scheme and the Livestock Load Scheme may provide the opportunity to increase the efficiency / reduce the cost of grain and livestock transport. If the Grain Harvest Scheme is successful, consideration should be given to seeking to have cotton, other grain crops and oilseeds included in the list of produce that can be transported under the regulations. The increase in heavy vehicle traffic is increasing maintenance costs on local and regional roads in Gunnedah Shire (and surrounding region). There is a need for a Regional Roads Strategy to address issues and set the direction for route development and road improvements.
Trend to containerisation	A number of overseas markets, including China, are moving away from bulk transport to containerisation. The freight strategy for NSW makes provision for a significant expansion of port facilities in Sydney, Port Kembla and Newcastle to provide container facilities, with this supported by improvements in freight rail and the development of intermodal freight hubs and container depots. Moree, Narrabri, Tamworth and Armidale have been identified as freight hubs / nodes in the Northern Inland Region. Grain and cotton from Gunnedah Shire is increasingly being transported to Narrabri for containerisation before being shipped out through Brisbane and Newcastle. Opportunities for container facilities / terminal in Gunnedah should be explored.
Competition between coal and agricultural produce for rail access	More detailed investigation is required to assess the impact of coal transportation on rail access for the transportation of agricultural products. While the preliminary assessment undertaken by the NSW Premiers Department indicates that there should be sufficient capacity within the rail network for the transport of agricultural products, the impacts of seasonality, the ability of the infrastructure at the grain silos to load longer trains and/or to move to 30 tonne wagons, has not been assessed. A regional freight study that looks at both rail and road capacity, needs to be undertaken and a strategy developed.

Consideration	Comment
Improving the efficiency of the North West Rail Line	There are a number of projects being undertaken by the ARTC that will improve the efficiency and capacity of the North West rail infrastructure. The Gunnedah Rail Yard has been identified as a major bottleneck and work is about to commence to redevelop the rail yard. When completed trains are expected to move through Gunnedah at 60km/hour, compared to the current speed of 20km/hour. This has implications for safety at level crossings. Improvements to the line will also enable the introduction of longer trains and larger wagons. With the increase in coal trains, Namoi Flour Mill is experiencing difficulties in gaining access to rail time, and storing and loading its trains. This is impacting negatively on the productivity of the Mill. The issue could potentially be compounded with the increase in train speeds, train lengths and frequency of movements. The issue needs to be investigated and resolved to ensure that the Flour Mill remains in Gunnedah.
Introduction of 30 tonne rail wagons	The proposed introduction of 30 tonne rail wagons in 2015 will be accompanied by a decrease in the speed of trains (from 80kph to 60kph) on the North West Rail Line. This will have implications for traffic queuing at level crossings in rural areas.
Development of the Melbourne – Brisbane Inland Rail Line.	The Federal government has committed to the progressive development of the Inland Railway line over the next 10 years. Narrabri and Moree are designated freight nodes on this route. The implications of the route for Gunnedah Shire need to be assessed and infrastructure put in place to take advantage of opportunities.
Boggabri to Crayboon Road (Black Stump Way – Grain Valley Road) completing the sealing of the route.	From a tourism perspective, the Black Stump Way is a strategic route that has the potential to increase the volume of touring traffic moving through the western part of the Shire. The completion of the sealing of Grain Valley Road from Mullaley to Boggabri would significantly strengthen the route. It would also improve access to the Namoi Cotton Gin and the Boggabri Grain Silos for cotton and grain producers from the western parts of Gunnedah and Liverpool Plains Shires. The sealing of this route has been identified as a high priority in both the Northern Inland Region Freight Study and the Gunnedah Council Asset Management Plan.
Sealing of Clifton Road (Carroll to Breeza)	The Clifton Road provides access to the Carroll Cotton Gin, and is important strategically in the transport of raw and processed cotton. It is also used for the transport of livestock and other agricultural products. The sealing of the route has been identified as a priority in the Gunnedah Council Asset Management Plan.
Future of Gunnedah Airport	It is highly unlikely that RPT services will be re-introduced to Gunnedah Airport. Tamworth Airport has emerged as a significant centre for aviation services, including aircraft repair and flight training. As the use of Tamworth airport increases, lower yielding activities may come under pressure, with Gunnedah Airport being a possible location for relocation. It may also be possible for Gunnedah Airport to be utilised in conjunction with air freight activities in Tamworth. The opportunities for improved facilities for recreational flying should also be explored.

24. Utilities

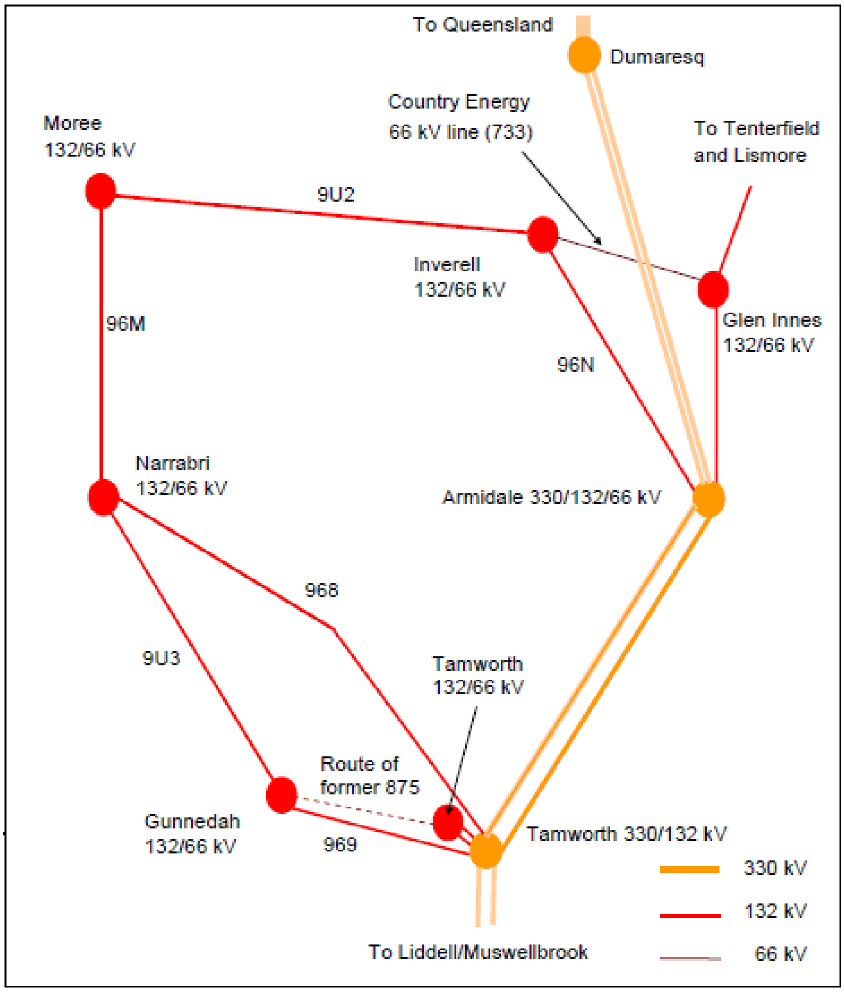
24.1 Electricity

There are three organisations involved in the provision of electricity to and within Gunnedah Shire:

- TransGrid – owns and operates the high voltage transmission lines that deliver electricity to the Shire.
- Essential Energy – Distributor – owns and operates the sub-transmission and zone-substations as well as the feeder lines.
- Origin Electricity – Energy Retailer.

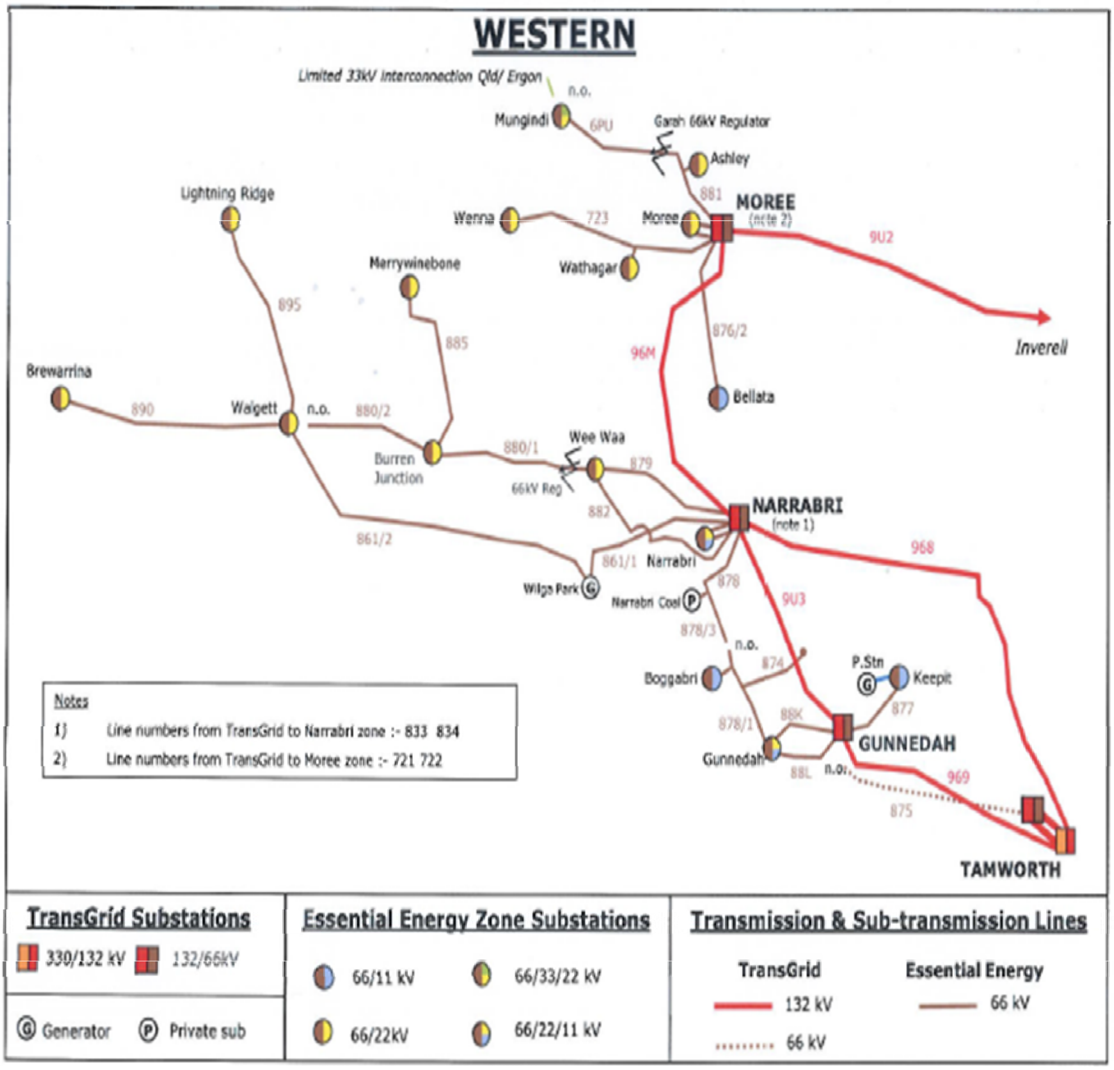
The TransGrid High Voltage Transmission Network in the Northern Inland Region is shown in Figure 24.1, with the Transgrid – Essential Energy network shown in Figure 24.2.

Figure 24.1 TransGrid High Voltage Network – Northern Inland Region



Source: TransGrid / Country Energy (2011) Development of Electricity Supply to the Gunnedah / Narrabri / Moree Area.

Figure 24.2 Electricity Distribution – North Western NSW – TransGrid & Essential Energy Infrastructure



Source: Essential Energy (2011) Electricity Network Performance Report.

In 2010/11, TransGrid and Country Energy (now Essential Energy) identified a number of issues with the electricity supply to Gunnedah, Narrabri and Moree, including issues with spot-load increases above the capacity of the line, issues with the conductors on Gunnedah line and the impact on the line of TransGrid's 330KV line between Tamworth and Armidale and the cross border transfers of electricity between NSW and Queensland. As a result a 66kV transmission line has been constructed between Tamworth and Gunnedah to improve capacity on the line. Further augmentation may be needed to accommodate spot-loads.

Transgrid and Essential Energy are also augmenting the electricity supply to the Werris Creek area in preparation for the development of the MAC Villages and the Watermark and Caroona coal mines, coal processing and rail loading facilities.

Within Gunnedah, there are issues with the capacity of the sub-transmission feeder line between the substation and the North West Industrial Park and Quia Road (west) industrial precincts with the existing line being at capacity. Gunnedah Shire Council has applied for local infrastructure support funding to upgrade the line. Augmenting the electricity supply to these industrial precincts is a critical to support the development of the North West Industrial Park and further development in the Quia Road (west) precinct.

There is a small hydro-electricity plant at Lake Keepit that supplies electricity into the grid. The plant only operates when waters are released from the Dam and generates up to 7.2 megawatts. The Keepit Power Station is connected to Gunnedah Substation by a 66kV transmission line.

There are no wind, solar or gas fired power stations within the Shire.

The increasing cost of electricity and issues with supply were identified as significant issues by Gunnedah business operators. A variety of businesses advised that access to natural gas would significantly reduce their operating costs and possibly enable expansion of their business.

24.2 Gas

Within the Northern Inland Region, Tamworth City is the only area that has reticulated natural gas with this provided via a pipeline from Dubbo. The pipeline passes through Gunnedah Shire (Breeza area) however there is no connection to the township of Gunnedah. The availability of reticulated gas provides Tamworth a significant advantage in attracting industrial development.

A number of sectors and businesses in Gunnedah Shire have expressed a desire for access to reticulated gas, including the use of gas for farm vehicles and machinery, metal fabrication and forging, drying processes, manufacturing, heating, cooking etc.

The route of the proposed Queensland – Hunter Gas pipeline passes through Gunnedah Shire, in very close proximity to Gunnedah. Should the pipeline proceed, endeavours should be made to secure access for Gunnedah. Alternatively, there are significant coal seam gas resources in Gunnedah Shire. The feasibility of tapping into these resources to service the local market could be investigated.

24.3 Water

Potable Water

Reticulated water is supplied to Gunnedah (town), Curlewis, Mullaley and Tambar Springs from a series of ground water bores. The water is chlorinated and does not require other treatment. The villages of Breeza and Carroll and rural localities rely upon rain water tanks and/ or local bores.

In 2011, Gunnedah Shire Council prepared a Strategic Business Plan for the provision of water supply services in Gunnedah Shire. The water supply system has the capacity to accommodate the forecast growth in population and dwellings. The Plan makes provision for the progressive augmentation of the water supply system to accommodate population growth and to service the industrial areas. The water supply is sufficient to service Stages 1-3 of the proposed North West Industrial Park, however will require capital works including the completion of a ring main to service Stage 4, and for the Borethistle Reservoir to come on-line to service Stages 5-7.

Irrigation Water

Gunnedah Shire lies within the upper catchment of the Namoi River. The Shire is drained by the Namoi River and its tributaries – the Mooki and Peel Rivers and Cox's Creek. There are two large reservoirs on the River – Lake Keepit in Gunnedah Shire and Split Rock Dam in Tamworth Regional LGA, built primarily for flood mitigation and to provide water for irrigation. When full, Lake Keepit has a capacity of 425,510 megalitres and covers a surface area of 4,370 hectares. A major upgrade of the Dam was completed in 2011 with further upgrades to be carried out by 2016 to raise the wall of the dam by 3.4 metres. Lake Keepit is operated in conjunction with Split Rock Dam with the two dams supplying water along much of the Namoi Valley for irrigation and town water supplies.

Extensive ground water reserves are available in high yielding aquifers under the Liverpool Plains. Ground water has been used extensively for irrigation.

Agriculture in Gunnedah Shire has traditionally been dependent on the use of irrigation water taken from both the river system and aquifers. In 2004, a Water Sharing Plan was introduced for the Namoi River which significantly reduced access to the surface flows for irrigation. In 2006 a Water Sharing plan was introduced for the ground water resources in the Upper Namoi catchment. The Plan resulted in the reduction of ground water entitlements from 301GL per annum to 122GL per annum. The agricultural community in the Upper Namoi Catchment area (including Gunnedah Shire) has had to make significant structural changes to water and land management practices.

Under the current water allocations, the water resources within the catchment are expected to be sustainable, with environmental flows maintaining the health of the river system, while the rate of ground water extraction is set to allow the aquifers to recharge.

Ongoing access to water is critical to the viability of the agricultural sector. As such it is imperative that coal mining and coal seam gas extraction in the Gunnedah Basin does not impact on the flow or quality of surface and ground water flows.

24.4 Sewerage

Within the Shire, Gunnedah and Curlewis are sewered, with the remaining villages and properties in rural areas being on septic tanks. Council has no plans to sewer the villages nor extend the sewerage system into the rural areas surrounding Gunnedah. The Gunnedah Sewerage Treatment Plant is designed for an 11,000 people, with the Curlewis system designed for 1,650 people. The sewerage treatment plants provide secondary and tertiary treatment with the treated effluent from the Gunnedah Treatment Plant (around 520ML/ year) sold to agricultural properties for irrigation purposes.

While all residential and commercial areas in Gunnedah are sewered, the western part of the Quia Road industrial area (17 lots) and the North West Industrial Park precinct are not sewered. Council's Strategic Business Plan for Sewerage Services 2011, identifies the provision of a sewer main and pumping station for North West Industrial park as a priority. The remaining lots in the Quia Road industrial area also need to be sewered. Other capital works programs identified in Council's Plan include augmentation of the Gunnedah Sewerage Treatment Plant (2015-17) and the sewer mains (2017-18) in-line with population growth. Implementation of the capital works program is funding dependent.

24.5 Telecommunications

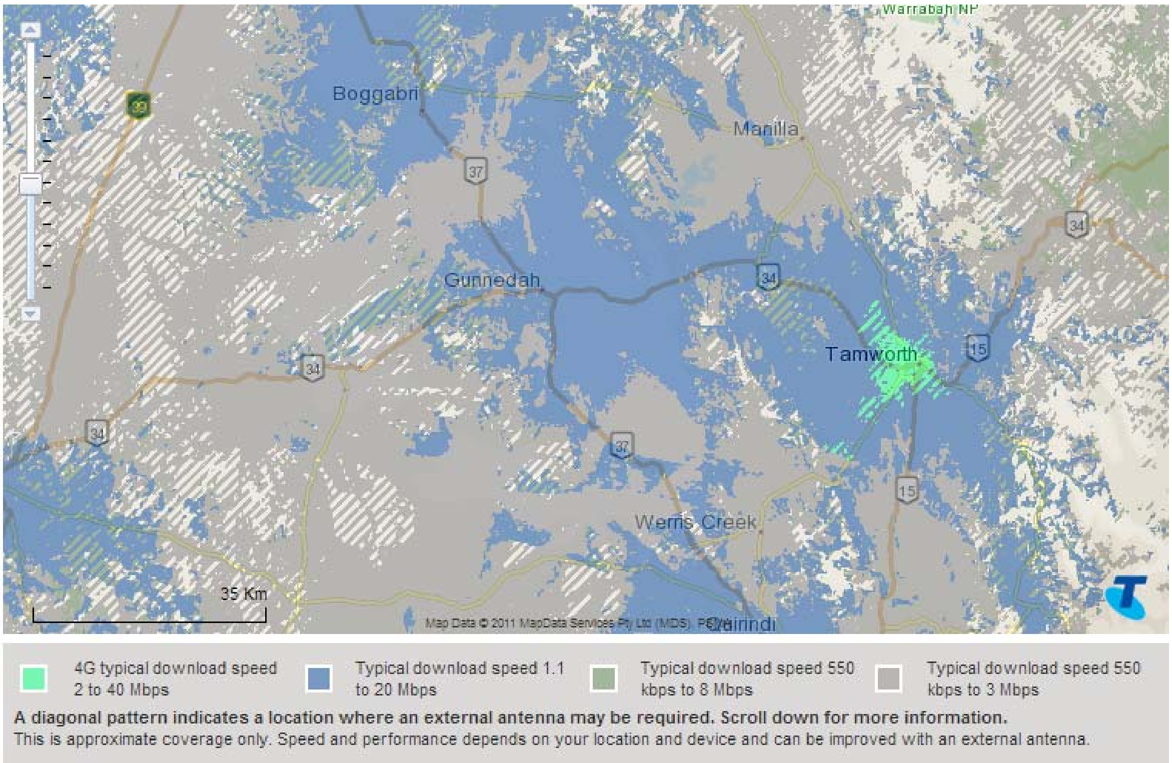
Within the Northern Inland, Region Tamworth and Armidale urban areas are the only localities to have 4G coverage. Parts of Tamworth Regional LGA have connections to the National Broadband Network (NBN). The NBN fibre optic cable roll-out in the Tamworth City area was programmed for 2013/14 but is currently on-hold pending further investigations by the Federal Government. Armidale City has NBN optic fibre connection, with the NBN currently being rolled out in the Uralla and Glen Innes Areas.

Gunnedah Shire has 3G coverage, however there is significant variation in download speeds across the Shire (see Figure 24.3). There are also localities within the Shire (eg Kelvin) where the local exchange is not suitable for fixed wireless broadband, with broadband access only available through the Telstra mobile network.

Within Gunnedah, the new residential estates have fibre optic cabling ready for connection to the NBN. The remainder of the town is expected to have fixed wireless broadband connection to the NBN within 18 months, however no date has been given for fibre optic connection. At this stage the villages within the Shire are not included on the NBN roll-out plans.

Under the original roll-out plan, Quirindi should receive the NBN within the next three years. There was no provision for the rollout of the NBN in Narrabri, Boggabri or Werris Creek within the next 3 years. Should the original plan proceed it will provide Gunnedah with a competitive advantage over these areas for businesses looking to establish in the Region. (Note: Following the 2012 election, the Federal Government has changed policies in relation to the roll-out, and timetables are likely to change).

Figure 24.4 Telstra 3G and 4G coverage maps – Gunnedah Shire and Immediate Surrounds



Source: www.telstra.com.au Coverage Maps

24.6 Waste Infrastructure

Gunnedah Shire Council provides kerbside waste collections (general waste, green waste and recyclable waste) in Gunnedah, Carroll and Curlewis. Council also operates rural waste transfer centres in each of the villages as well as the Gunnedah Waste Management Centre, with this Centre being both a recycling and land fill facility.

There are two commercial operators providing trade waste / used oil removal services. Universal Composts accepts green waste material.

24.6 Strategic Considerations – Utilities

Consideration	Comment
Electricity supply to Gunnedah	While the electricity supply to Gunnedah has been improved in recent years, there are still constraints with the system. Priority needs to be given to augmenting the electricity supply to the North West Industrial Park and the Quia (West) heavy industry precinct. There may also be a need to augment the capacity along the Oxley Highway corridor to Omega Feeds, and possibly along the Kamilaroi Highway corridor to Leon's Pork.
Demand for reticulated gas	There are a range of businesses and activities in Gunnedah that would benefit significantly from access to reticulated gas. Availability of gas would also enable Gunnedah to compete more effectively with Tamworth in attracting new businesses and industrial activities. The feasibility of providing gas to Gunnedah from the proposed Queensland – Hunter Gas Pipeline (or other pipeline – eg if Santos establishes a pipeline) needs to be assessed. Consideration could also be given to extracting CSG locally, for local consumption.
Water and sewerage services	The water and sewerage services in Gunnedah have the capacity to accommodate the expected population growth, with Council having strategic plans in place to augment the infrastructure in-line with population growth and the development of the North West Industrial Park. Implementation of these plans is funding dependent. The lack of sewerage to the western part of the Quia Road and North West Industrial Park precincts is a significant constraint to the development of these areas.
Access to water for agricultural production	Ongoing access to water for irrigation and other agricultural activities is critical to the viability of the agricultural sector. As such it is imperative that coal mining and coal seam gas extraction in the Gunnedah Basin does not impact on the flow or quality of surface and ground water.
Telecommunications	Within the Region, Tamworth and Armidale are the only areas with 4G mobile coverage, with Armidale and parts of Tamworth also being part of the NBN fibre optic network. This infrastructure provides both Tamworth and Armidale with strong competitive advantages for businesses looking to relocate to the Region, particularly those that need high speed communications. On the current NBN roll-out plan, the NBN is likely to be rolled out in Gunnedah and Quirindi before Narrabri Shire and the Werris Creek area, which may provide Gunnedah with a competitive advantage over Narrabri Shire and Werris Creek for people and businesses looking to move to the area. Given the increasing dependence of the farming community on information and communication technology as part of farming practices and sales and distribution, it is important that the rural community has access to mobile telephone coverage and high speed broadband services.

25. BUSINESS SUPPORT SERVICES

25.1 Business Support Services

There are a range of business support services available in the Northern Inland Region as well as on-line from Federal and State Government Agencies. The regional service providers are based in Tamworth and Armidale and will travel to Gunnedah Shire. The main services available are outlined below.

New England North West BEC

The NENW BEC is a community based, not-for-profit organisation that provides business planning, information, training programs and project management throughout the Region. The BEC is contracted by the State and Federal Government to deliver four programs for businesses in the Region:

- **SmallBizConnect** – this program provides advice on managing and growing small business, developing key business skills and accessing grants and other programs and resources. It also provides business benchmarks and business diagnostic tools and can assist with dispute resolution, business planning and business succession planning (exit strategies).

- **New Enterprise Incentive Scheme (NEIS)** - The NEIS Program is a Federal Government funded program designed to assist unemployed people start a small business. As part of the business start-up, NEIS provides accredited training programs and business planning support.

- **Aboriginal Enterprise Development Officer Program (AEDO**) - This program is funded by the Minister for Education and Training and administered by the NSW Department of Education and Training. The program aims to assist Aboriginal people who either wish to become self employed or who are self employed and need advice on small business start-up and/or management.

- **New England North West Small Business Advisory Service (SBAS**) – This program provides low cost business and financial management advisory services to small business. It is funded by the Federal Government.

Regional Development Australia – Northern Inland

RDA Northern Inland provides access to a range of services and programs including:

- Advice on and links to relevant State and Federal Government services and programs.
- Advice on grants available from both Government and non-government sources.
- Statistics and information on a range of topics that impact on or influence performance of business.
- Skill Migration advice and certification services for businesses looking to bring skilled migrant worker into the Region. RDANI is authorised to provide certification of applications for visas under the Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (RSMS) that leads to permanent residency in Australia. It is also authorised by the State Government to provide sponsorship to applicants under the Skilled Regional Sponsored (Provisional Visa) category.
- On-line resources.

Trade & Investment NSW – Northern Inland

Trade and Investment NSW has an office in Tamworth. The Agency provides advice and assistance to businesses in the areas of:

- Business development
- Export development and exporting
- Migration and Visas
- Grants and other assistance

- Innovation and research
- On-line resources

New England North West NSW Business Chamber

The Chamber provides advice and assistance in the areas of:

- Industrial relations, including wage rates, penalties and staff issues
- Workplace health and safety compliance
- Work place obligations.
- Marketing
- International trade

Working through the NSW Business Chamber the NENW Chamber also has a advocacy role at all levels of Government.

Gunnedah Shire Council

Gunnedah Shire Council will provide advice and assistance to businesses looking to establish in Gunnedah Shire as well as to local businesses. A Business Tool Kit is available from the Council website, with the Tool Kit providing information on the Shire. Council also produces, in both hard copy and on-line, a Business Directory, listing the businesses, services and facilities available in Gunnedah Shire. Council will also provide advice on Government assistance and funding programs and make introductions to Government service providers.

Gunnedah Chamber of Commerce

The Gunnedah Chamber of Commerce provides opportunities for business operators to network and exchange ideas.

25.2 Tertiary and Vocational Training Services

The two key tertiary training institutions within the Northern Inland Region are the University of New England and the New England – North West Institute of TAFE.

Universities

The Northern Inland Region is primarily serviced by the University of New England (UNE), the main campus of which is located in Armidale. UNE offers degree and post graduate programs in Law, Medicine, Health, Education, Business, Science and Technology, Environment and Rural Science, Arts, Humanities and Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences. The University also has a strong Distance Education Program. Gunnedah Shire is also located within 3 hours drive of the University of Newcastle which also offers an extensive range of programs.

TAFE

TAFE New England has TAFE Colleges in each of the larger towns within the Northern Inland Region. These Colleges offer a variety of programs and specialisations, with the TAFEs in Tamworth and Armidale offering a comprehensive range of training programs. The TAFE in Gunnedah offers a very limited range of courses with these courses relating mainly to business administration, numeracy and literacy and basic work place skills. The courses offered at Gunnedah TAFE do not reflect the trade, mining, agricultural, hospitality, health, aged care, child care and IT skills training needed in Gunnedah Shire.

Within the Upper Hunter Region, the Hunter Institute of TAFE has specialist Mining Skills and Automotive Training Centres at Muswellbrook TAFE and a specialist Equine Centre at Scone TAFE. These colleges lie within 2 hours of Gunnedah Shire.

TAFE New England has proposed the establishment of the Gunnedah Trades Training Centre, with the Centre to be located at the Gunnedah TAFE Campus site and service up to 200 students per day in four trade areas: Engineering, Heavy Vehicle Mechanical, Electrotechnology, and Resources and Infrastructure Operations. The proposed facility would also allow for the University of New England to provide higher degrees or pathways for Industry. The Trades Training Centre has the support of the mining companies. While the Centre was originally proposed for Gunnedah, Narrabri and Tamworth are also being considered as potential locations for the Centre.

The Institute of TAFE is working closely with Secondary Schools, including Gunnedah High School to deliver Vocational Education Training (VET) programs, which provides students with the opportunity to gain Certificate qualifications and start Apprenticeships and Traineeships as part of their Higher School Certificate studies.

Community College

The Northern Inland Community College has a College at Gunnedah as well as a range of on-line courses. The Gunnedah College offers a range of work skills and general interest courses. Work skills include First Aid, OHS Induction, Food Safety, Responsible Service of Alcohol and Responsible Conduct of Gambling, Computer Training and Broadband for Seniors. In 2014 the College will be offering Certificate III courses in Aged Care, Disability and Home and Community Care.

25.3 Employment Programs, Services and Training

The Australian Government has in place a number of employment programs that assist people to find employment and employers to recruit employees. These programs can be accessed through Job Services Australia (trading as Jobs Australia) which supports both job seekers and employers looking for staff.

For people looking for employment, a local Job Services Australia provider is the main point of contact. These providers assist job seekers with individually tailored support including advice on job search methods, career options and employment programs, as well as assistance with preparing résumés, enhancing interview techniques and undertaking skills development or professional training. Providers have access to the Employment Pathway Fund which can be used to help address vocational and non-vocational barriers to employment.

For businesses, Jobs Australia provides a free service that can help secure the right staff. Jobs Australia will work with a business to assess the type of skilled labour needed, and will work to match these needs with appropriately-trained and work-ready job seekers. There is a Jobs Australia office in Gunnedah.

Gunnedah also has a number of commercial agencies that offer employment services and training, including:

- A4e Australia
- Joblink Plus
- Peel Valley Training and Employment
- Speedie Staff Solutions
- TESA Group – provides managed workforce services, skilled labour, technical professional personnel, project management and training services to the coal mining sector.
- WorkPac Industrial – specialising in providing skilled labour for the mining, transport, manufacturing and construction sectors.

25.4 Networking & Mentoring

Over the years, Gunnedah has had various business groups, providing opportunities for local business operators to network, access information and lobby. There are also a number of agricultural networks, include the Namoi Cotton Growers Association, the NSW Farmers Federation and the Gunnedah Olive Growers Association. Currently, efforts are being made to re-invigorate the Gunnedah Chamber of Commerce as the peak business group for the Shire. An effective conduit for networking and mentoring will help to nurture and strengthen the local business community by facilitating improved communication, development of relationships, exchange of ideas and the opportunity for co-operative activities.

25.5 Commercial Services

Gunnedah Shire has a strong commercial services sector, providing a range of legal, financial, insurance, computers and IT, planning, marketing, graphic design, consulting and advisory services for local businesses. Extensive services are also available in Tamworth.

25.6 Strategic Considerations – Business Services

Consideration	Comment
Limited access to relevant training courses	In comparison to other TAFE Colleges within the Northern Inland Region, Gunnedah Shire is disadvantaged by the limited range of courses offered by the Gunnedah TAFE, with the courses available not reflecting the skills needed by the major sectors within the Gunnedah economy.
Gunnedah Trades Training Centre	Gunnedah Shire Council in conjunction with the business community needs to be lobbying strongly for the establishing of the Trades Training Centre in Gunnedah. Once operating, consideration needs to be given to expanding the course content to meet the needs of the agricultural, manufacturing and construction trades sectors, in conjunction with mining to develop a multi-skilled, adaptable workforce.
Increasing awareness of the business advisory and assistance services available in the Region	Businesses in Gunnedah Shire appear to have a limited awareness of the various programs available within the Region to assist business operators. Consideration should be given to holding a small 'expo' with service providers (Government, Employment, Training and Commercial) available to promote their products and services.
Additional training programs needed	There appears to be a significant need to work with businesses within the Shire to provide advice and assistance in: • Securing and retaining staff – development of innovative lifestyle and incentive packages that offer an attractive alternative to the high wages (but not particularly life-style friendly working conditions) offered by mining companies. • Accessing the skilled labour temporary visa and permanent migration schemes. • Planning for and managing cyclical movements in the local economy. • Application of technology.
Building strong support and communication networks within the business community	Development of strong support and communication networks would strengthen the business community within Gunnedah Shire, facilitating communication, innovation and cooperation. For example, there are a number of major mining and infrastructure projects proposed for the Gunnedah Basin area. Many local businesses are too small individually to be

Consideration	Comment
	able to secure work and contracts. There may however be opportunities to form consortiums / joint ventures to bid for work. There may also be opportunities to 'share' staff and undertake joint training of apprentices and trainees to share the training costs.
Services to Support Migrant Workers	Some local businesses and organisations are reluctant to utilise the various temporary visa and skilled worker migration schemes to access labour, as there are no programs or services locally to help these workers assimilate into the local community.

REFERENCES

AIP Australia (2013) *Gunnedah Airport Specifications*
Ausgrid (2012) *Electricity System Development Review 2012/13*
Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Science (2013) *Outlook Conference, 2013*
Australian Bureau of Statistics:
Agricultural Census, 2011
Analysis by Industry – Retail Trade Australia, March 2013 Catalogue 8501.
Building Approvals, Australia (8731.0).
Businesses by Industry Division by Statistical Area Level 2 by Employment Size Ranges, June 2012
Businesses by Industry Division by Statistical Area Level 2 by Turnover Size Ranges, June 2012
Census of Population and Housing – Basic Community Profiles, 2001, 2006, 2011
Key Facts Australian Industry, 2011-2012
National Regional Profile – Gunnedah LGA 2013
SEIFA Indices
Social Health Atlas of Australia 2013
Tourist Accommodation NSW 8635.1.40.001
Year Book 2012
Australian Chicken Meat Federation (2011) The Australian Chicken Meat Industry: An Industry Profile.
Australian Livestock Associations – *Beef Industry – Fast Facts*
Australian Pork Limited (2010) Australian Pork Strategic Plan, 2010-2015
Australian Rail Track Corporation (2010) *Melbourne-Brisbane Inland Rail Alignment Study*
Australian Rail Track Corporation LTD. (2012) *Hunter Valley Corridor 2013-2022 Capacity Strategy*
Buchan Consulting (2011) *Upper Hunter Diversification Project*
Collie Pty Ltd. (2008). *Gunnedah Shire Commercial and Industrial Land Use Strategy.*
Cotton Australia (2012) *Australian Cotton Production Statistics*
Cunningham Y & Jones P (2012) *Weaving A Future for Australia's Cotton, Catchments & Communities Cotton Catchment Communities CRC*
Davidson S and de Silva A (2013) *The Australian Coal Industry – Adding Value to the Australian Economy*
Deloitte (2013) *Global Powers of Retailing – Beyond 2013*
Department of Agriculture & Food Western Australia (2011) *A Year in Grains*
Department of Agriculture & Food WA – *Grains Program Review Maintaining Profitability in an Era of Rising Costs*
Department of Agriculture and Food WA – *Grains Program Review – Satisfying Current Markets and Establishing New Market Opportunities*
Department of Agriculture & Food WA Recent *Changes in the Australian Sheep Industry (The Disappearing Flock)*
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry (2012) *National Food Plan 2012 – Green Paper*
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forests (2009) *Australia's Farming Future – Final Market Research Report*
Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relationships (2013) *Employment Projections by Industry*
Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (2013) *Small Area Labour Markets*
Department of Infrastructure, Planning & Natural Resources (2004) *A Guide to the Water Sharing Plan for the Upper Namoi & Lower Namoi Regulated River Water Sources*
Department of Natural Resources Water Sharing Plan – *Upper & Lower Namoi Ground Water Resources*
Department of Planning & infrastructure (2012) *New England North West Strategic Regional Land Use Plan*
Department of Premier & Cabinet NSW (2012) *New England North West Regional Action Plan*
Department of Primary Industries (2013). *Agriculture Industry Action Plan.*
Department of Primary Industries (2013) *Agricultural Industry Action Plan – Issues Paper*
Department of Primary industries (2012) *Best Practice Management for Meat Chicken Production in New South Wales*
Department of Primary Industries (2011) *Upper Namoi Ground Water Source – Status Report*
Destination NSW (2011) *Local Government Area Visitor Profiles – LGAs – Northern Inland Region*
Destination NSW (2013) *Travel to the New England North West Region – Time Series Data YE Mar 2001-YE Mar 2013*
Destination NSW (2013) *Travel to the New England North West Region – YE March 2013.*
Duo (2008) *Taminda Revitalisation & Economic Development Strategy, Tamworth.*
Edge Land Planning (2009) *Liverpool Plains Shire – Growth Management Study & Strategy*
Essential Energy (2012) *Augmentation of Electricity Supply to the Quirindi Area of NSW*
Essential Energy (2010) *Electricity Network Performance Report 2010/11*
GHD (2008) *Tamworth Regional Development Strategy*
GHD (2012) *NSW Infrastructure Capacity Assessment – Energy Baseline Report*
Gillespie Economics (2012) *Watermark Coal Project EIS – Economic Impact Statement*
Gunnedah Shire Council (2001) *Gunnedah Shire & Liverpool Plains Rural Plan – Strategic Plan*
Gunnedah Shire Council (2005) *Gunnedah Shire Social Plan*
Gunnedah Shire Council (2005) *The Future of Gunnedah – A Strategic Plan 2005-2007*
Gunnedah Shire Council (2006) *Gunnedah Community Portrait, 2006*

Gunnedah Shire Council (2008) *Rural Strategy*
Gunnedah Shire Council (2008) *Gunnedah Shire Commercial & Industrial Land Strategy*
Gunnedah Shire Council (2009) *Community Profile*
Gunnedah Shire Council (2009) *Draft Open Space Strategy*
Gunnedah Shire Council (Jan 2011*) A Portrait of Gunnedah Compared with Northern NSW*
Gunnedah Shire Council (2011) *Strategic Asset Management – Planning Assumptions*
Gunnedah Shire Council (2012) *Community Strategic Plan 2012-2022*
Gunnedah Shire Council (2011) *Strategic Business Plan for Sewerage Services*
Gunnedah Shire Council (2011) *Strategic Business Plan for Water Supply Services*
Gunnedah Shire Council (2012) *Development Servicing Plan for Gunnedah Shire Council Sewerage*
Gunnedah Shire Council (2012) *Gunnedah Business & Organisations Directory*
Gunnedah Shire Council (2012) *Gunnedah Shire Local Environmental Plan*
Gunnedah Shire Council (2013) *Delivery Program 2013/14 – 2016/17*
Gunnedah Shire Council (2013) *Operational Plan 2013-14*
Gunnedah Shire Council. *Business Partner Program Information Brochure.*
Gunnedah Shire Council Gunnedah – *Discover the Facts*
Gunnedah Shire Council *Local Governments' Perspective – Resource Developments in the Gunnedah Basin*
Hunter New England Local Health District (2012) *Gunnedah Health Report 2011-2012*
Hunter New England Population Health (2011) *Gunnedah Liveable Communities Assessment – Final Report*
Hunter Thoroughbred Breeders Association *10 Point Plan – Action to Restore Balance in the Upper Hunter*
Idemitsu Australia Resources (2010) *Boggabri Coal Mine*
Inland NSW Tourism (2013) *Destination Management Plan Northern Inland Region – Gunnedah, Liverpool Plains & Tamworth LGAs*
Inspire Urban Design (2008) *Glen Artney Development Strategy, Tamworth*
Jenny Rand & Associates (2010) *Coal Mining in the Gunnedah Basin – Implications & Opportunities for Narrabri Shire*
Jenny Rand & Associates (2013) *Kamilaroi Highway Aboriginal Product Scoping Study*
Jenny Rand & Associates (2013) *Narrabri Shire Tourism Destination Management Plan*
Meat & Livestock Australia (2012) *Australia's Goat Meat Industry – Fast Facts 2012*
Meat & Livestock Australia Sheep – *Australia's Sheepmeat Industry.*
Namoi Catchment Management Authority (2010) *Namoi 2030 Regional Resource Strategy*
Namoi Catchment Management Authority (2009) *State of the Environment Report*
Narrabri Shire Council (2011) *Economic Development Strategy*
National Farmers' Federation (2013). *The Blueprint for Australian Agriculture*
National Parks & Wildlife Service (2012) *Dowe National Park – Draft Plan of Management*
National Parks & Wildlife Service (2012) *Somerton National Park – Draft Plan of Management*
National Parks & Wildlife Service (2012) *Trinkey State Conservation Area – Draft Plan of Management*
National Parks & Wildlife Service (2012) *Wondoba State Conservation Area – Draft Plan of Management*
NSW Department of Primary Industries – *The NSW Coal Industry – Fact Sheet*
NSW Government (2013) *Road Transport Act 2013, Ministerial Declaration (NSW Grain Harvest Management Scheme0*
Office of Regional Education, Skills and Jobs (2013) *Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Plan NSW- Northern Inland 2012-2014.*
Parsons Brinckerhoff Australia Pty Limited (PB), Edge Land Planning and Centre for Agricultural and Regional Economics (2009) *Namoi 2030 – regional Resource Strategy*
Peece Pty Ltd / RDA Northern Inland (2012) *Northern Inland Region of NSW – Freight Study*
Planning NSW (2013) *New South Wales State and Local Government Area Population Projections: 2013 Preliminary Revision*
Regional Coordination Branch: Department of Premier and Cabinet (2012) *New England North West Regional Action Plan*
Regional Development Australia – Northern Inland (2010) *Regional Plan 2011-2015*
Regional Development Australia – Northern Inland. (2012) *Northern inland N.S.W Food & Wine & Beverage Guide*.
Regional Development Australia – Northern Inland (2013) *Industrial Land in Northern Inland NSW*
Regional Development Australia – Northern Inland *Town Audits – Northern Inland NSW*
Reserve Bank of Australia (2013) *Statement on Monetary Policy, February 2013.*
Roads and Maritime Services NSW (2013) *New Livestock Loading Scheme for NSW – Fact Sheet, October 2013*
Roads & Maritime Services (2013) *NSW Livestock Loading Scheme B-Triple & AB Triple Operating Conditions*
Scott Barnett & Associates (2013) *Shenua Watermark – Agricultural Impact Statement*
SGS (2010) *Tamworth Regional Economic Development Strategy*
Sheep CRC *Transferring Wool, Meat and the Sheep that Produce Them*
Spencer A (2012) *Australian Pork Limited & Industry Issues Update*
Trade & Investment NSW (2012) *Minerals & Metals Availability in NSW*
Trade & Investment NSW (2013) *NSW Coal Industry Profile, 2013*
TransGrid / Country Energy (2011) *Development of Electricity Supply to the Gunnedah / Narrabri / Moree Area.*
Transport NSW (2012) *Draft NSW Freight & Ports Strategy*
Western Research Institute Ltd (2010) *Economic Impact Report – Pig Production & Pig Meat Processing in Australia*

Whitehaven Coal Mining LTD (2009). *Coal Mining Research*
Whitehaven Coal, *Quarterly Reports*