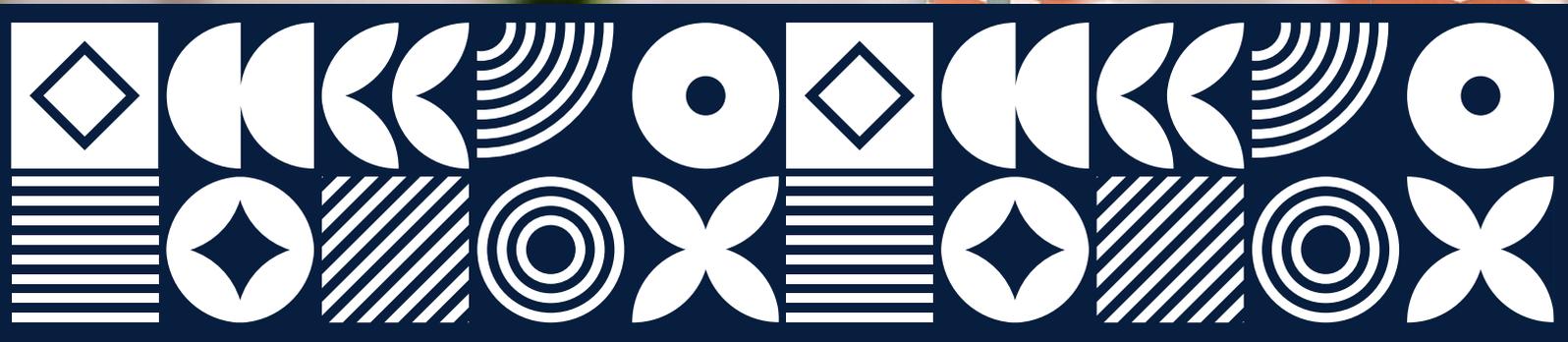


Welcome to the Orana region

Updated 2025



Acknowledgement of **Country**

Regional Development Australia (RDA) Orana acknowledges the First Nations peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Australia. The RDA Orana region covers, in whole or in part, the traditional lands of 14 nations of Aboriginal Australia. We respect and celebrate the inherent strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and their commitment to the land, waters and their communities. We pay our respect to all Aboriginal people in the Orana region.



Welcome to **the Orana Region**

Orana means 'welcome' in the Wiradjuri language; whose people were the first inhabitants of the area. Our communities provide the perfect combination of relaxed country living and exciting new opportunities and attractions.

Here in the Orana region, the skies are blue, and the people are friendly.

The region comprises quaint townships full of history and beauty covering an area of 199,000 square kilometres across the central and north western parts of New South Wales – extending from the hilly western slopes of the Warrumbungle Ranges in the east, to the flat plains of Cobar and Bourke in the west, and north to the Queensland border.

One of the region's main assets is our people. The population of more than 125,000 people are welcoming to new residents. You'll be able to create new connections while still being close to friends and family, enjoy an enriched lifestyle, be rewarded with great job opportunities and take advantage of affordable living. Whether you seek to make your mark in business, cheer for your children on the soccer field, or enjoy social days out at the races, the region can provide all of these opportunities and more.

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Welcome **from us**



Dear new resident,

On behalf of Regional Development Australia Orana, it's a privilege to welcome you to our vibrant region. The Orana is defined by its people, places and resilient communities.

As you embark on your journey here, know that our organisation, with the Welcome Experience Orana, the Vault Talent Bank, the Jobs Board Orana, councils and local partners, are dedicated to supporting your transition and helping you thrive.

The Welcome Experience Orana is ready to advise and connect you with resources, events, and networks to help you integrate and achieve your goals.

Whether you are seeking employment, pursuing a business venture, or settling your family, we are committed to making your move as rewarding as possible.

We encourage you to explore all that the Orana offers and to participate in our community initiatives, your presence is an essential part of our region's future.

I would like to acknowledge that migrants have made and continue to make meaningful contribution to the economic and social vitality of the Orana region, helping to address chronic labour market shortages and increasing enterprise and innovation in regional communities.

In the Orana regional context, migrant labour supports key sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, health and services, enabling local enterprises to maintain operations, expand and innovate rather than be constrained by staffing shortages.

The longer-term presence of migrant workers also helps build local entrepreneurship, cross cultural business ties and community capacity, which is an asset for regional growth and diversification.

RDA Orana works across 12 local government areas, including Bogan, Bourke, Brewarrina, Cobar, Coonamble, Dubbo Regional, Gilgandra, Mid-Western Regional, Narromine, Walgett, Warren and Warrumbungle.

No matter which of these regions you call home, or plan to, our team is here to support you. Please visit our website to see our range of initiatives designed for the entire Orana region.

If you have any questions or need support, please don't hesitate to reach out to our team at admin@rdaorana.org.au or call 0498 851 488, we're here to help you succeed in the Orana region.

Justine Campbell

Chief Executive Officer
Regional Development Australia Orana
www.rdaorana.org.au



About RDA Orana

Regional Development Australia (RDA) Orana is an incorporated, not-for-profit association and registered charity, led by a regional board of industry and government representatives.

We support economic and social development across the Orana region by building partnerships and working with all governments and agencies to respond to local priorities and needs.

Using well developed capabilities, we assist in identifying, developing and supporting strategic projects that encourage regional economic and social growth.

The organisation works with 12 local government stakeholders along with the state and federal government to gather local insights, data and intelligence that contribute to evidence-based decision-making.



125,327

people call the Orana home

15.5%

are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander



4 offices

we are in Dubbo, Bourke, Walgett & Wilcannia

494

Orana DAMA positions endorsed since 2019



54,887

jobs in the region



12

local government areas



\$27B

annual economic output

Top industries - employment

- Health care and social assistance
- Education and training
- Agriculture, forestry and fishing
- Retail trade
- Construction

Total area of the region is

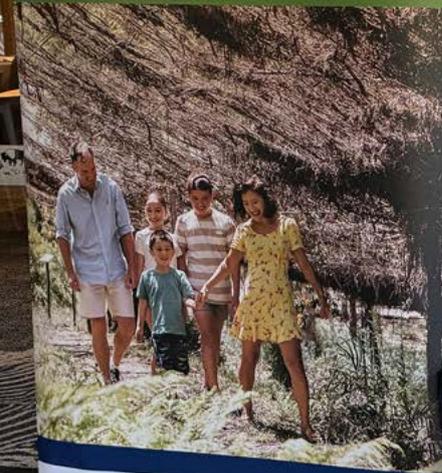
190,000 km2 or 25 %

of NSW



We help connect people to their new communities

Find out how The Welcome Experience can help you.



The Welcome Experience is funded by the NSW Government



The Welcome Experience Orana

The Welcome Experience Orana is a free service supporting essential workers and their families who are considering moving or have made the move to regional Australia.

As the official host for the Orana region, RDA Orana works directly with essential workers across Bourke, Walgett, Wellington, Dubbo, and surrounding areas. Our Local Connectors provide personalised support to ensure newcomers have the resources they need to build lasting relationships and contribute to their new community.

Through The Welcome Experience Orana, new essential workers are matched with local resources and community connections to ensure a smoother transition. By connecting new residents with the local community, whether it's finding housing, joining local clubs, or securing job opportunities for partners, we aim to help them feel at home faster. When workers feel integrated and supported in their new environment, they're more likely to stay in regional communities longer, contributing to sustained growth and stronger, more resilient communities.

If you're an essential worker considering relocating to the Orana region, or if you're already here and need support, don't hesitate to reach out to our team. We're here to help you make the most of your move and ensure you feel at home in your new community.

Contact your Local Connector today to get started on your journey!



The Orana DAMA

RDA Orana holds the only Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA) in NSW (from 2019) covering 60% of the state and includes five RDA regions: Orana, Central West, Southern NSW, Murray and Riverina across 53 local government areas.

There are a total of 129 occupations currently under the Orana DAMA.

Some of these occupations are eligible for temporary skilled migration income threshold (TSMIT), English, qualifications and age concessions.

All occupations are eligible for a permanent residency pathway.

The geographical expansion under Orana into the Central West, Southern NSW, Murray and Riverina RDA's has been successfully implemented through the Orana DAMA hub-and-spoke delivery model, through the RDA network.

RDA Orana strongly encourages employers to offer positions to Australians first, wherever possible. The Orana DAMA gives local employers a way to bring onboard overseas workers who are highly skilled in specified industries, where no local workers are available to fill the role. The RDA Orana DAMA isn't about promoting migrant employment instead of local employment. The RDA Orana DAMA is simply there to supplement the local workforce in response to the skills shortages in the area.

For more information, visit: rdaorana.org.au/migration/dama or phone 0429 874 435.





Housing

Short term accommodation

Check newspaper classified advertisements, real estate agents or reputable websites to find rental or shared accommodation. Sometimes, house sitting opportunities also become available if you are willing to look after someone's pets and property in exchange for accommodation.

- www.flatmates.com.au
- www.airbnb.com.au
- www.couchsurfing.com
- www.trustedhousesitters.com

Serviced apartments

Towns in the Orana region have both short and long-term serviced apartments and B&Bs. Some of these are managed by real estate agents, and some by the owners themselves.

Share accommodation

Community organisations such as ORISCON in the Dubbo area may help in determining the availability of shared accommodation. These are generally suited to short stays rather than permanent solutions and are most suited to singles.

Hotels/motels

Most of the towns in the Orana region have hotels and motels that are suitable for singles, couples, or families for short term stays. Rates are variable and some will have basic cooking facilities, along with shared bathrooms in some instances.

When you decide which accommodation option suits you, call the business and negotiate a price for a long-term stay. While there are many motels in the Orana region, don't leave it to the last minute to book short stay accommodation.

Several towns in the region, especially Bourke, Cobar, Nyngan, and Narromine as well as Dubbo and Mudgee will be fully booked when there are major events.

In the mining towns of Mudgee, Cobar and Nyngan, the itinerant workforce puts significant pressure on short term accommodation options such as motels, hotels, and serviced apartments. Check the following sites for availability:

- www.wotif.com
- www.booking.com
- www.trivago.com.au
- www.hotels.com

Caravan parks

Many towns have caravan parks with vans, cabins, and camping options for short or mid-term accommodation facilities with either private or shared amenities. Check with each Council or online accommodation guides for options and more information.

Long term accommodation

Where you decide to make your home will be one of the biggest determining factors for successful settlement in the Orana region. Factors that are important to consider include: proximity to work/schools/supermarkets if you do not have a car, cost, neighbours, size of the house and length of the lease.

Renting a property

Most rental properties will be listed with a real estate agent while some may be secured privately. You may be required to pay a deposit plus four weeks' rent as a security bond. This is a payment made to the NSW State Government Rental Bond Board. This money will be refunded when your lease finishes, provided the property is left in a suitable condition. You should inspect each premises prior to signing a lease or purchase agreement and ensure all your dealings are documented in writing. More information on this process may be found at www.service.nsw.gov.au/nswgovdirectory/rental-bond-board.

As a tenant in NSW, your responsibilities include:

- filling out a condition report
- paying rent on time
- caring for the premises
- paying for any damage caused by you or your guests
- report the need for any repairs or maintenance
- not making alterations or additions without the landlord's permission
- not using the premises for illegal purposes
- not to cause or permit a nuisance
- not to interfere with the peace, comfort or privacy of neighbours
- to give correct written notice when you leave
- to leave the premises in a similar condition to when you rented them, except for normal wear and tear.

A list of your rights and responsibilities as a tenant can be found at www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au.

Employers in the smaller towns understand how difficult accommodation is to source when you first move to an area and will have contacts that may be able to help, or they may have their own staff quarters. Some government roles in remote towns provide accommodation as part of their employment package.

Buying a home

Most properties for sale are listed by real estate agents and can also be found at www.realestate.com.au or www.domain.com.au.

The cost of a home in the Orana region ranges from \$250,000 to upwards of \$1,000,000. It is advisable to seek legal and financial advice before purchasing a property. A bank or similar lender can assist with finance options while a solicitor or conveyancing firm can manage the property negotiation.

Most buyers also arrange for building and pest inspection prior to settlement to determine structural soundness. It would also be prudent to contact the local council to determine if there are any factors, such as new developments which may impact the area along with the zoning of that area.

Finance

A bank or similar lender can assist with finance options while a solicitor or conveyancing firm can manage the property negotiation. The big four banks in Australia are the Commonwealth, Westpac, NAB and ANZ. There are also credit unions and money lenders who will be able to negotiate property financing for your very first Australian home.

Cost of Living

The cost of living varies around the region with each town and city. Housing tends to be cheaper in smaller and more remote communities. You can pretty much buy everything you need in the region and we are well serviced by a variety of retailers including Big W, JB HiFi, Myer, Harvey Norman, Bunnings and Mitre 10. There is also a fantastic range of specialty stores and boutiques across the region.

The prices for fuel and groceries also tend to be more costly in these areas due to the expense associated with freight and transport. The cost of education is relative to the type of schooling chosen, with private schooling more expensive than the public system as a rule.

Availability of sporting and cultural activities is relative to each community, with larger centres generally having more access to a range of pursuits.

Banking

Opening a bank account with an Australian bank is a simple process if you're migrating, studying or working. If you reside in another country and don't intend to migrate to Australia, you'll need to speak to a local bank who has international ties with a bank in Australia. Those on a tourist or visitor visa can open an Australian bank account by visiting a local branch and providing your passport.

To open a bank account, you just go to the bank of your choice and set up an appointment. A bank teller will give you all the information you need to know to open your account. Necessary documents and information include your passport, address and phone number in Australia and a Tax File Number which needs to be obtained if you intend to work during your stay.

The two main types of accounts are everyday and savings accounts. As mentioned, the big four banks in Australia are Commonwealth, Westpac, NAB and ANZ with a range of other credit unions and banking institutions available.

Getting connected

Whether you rent or buy, you may need to connect to some household services like electricity, natural gas, phone and internet. It is recommended that you research to find the best deal in your area. Try to give your chosen provider at least a week's notice before you expect to move into your new home.

- www.iselect.com.au
- www.goswitch.com.au
- www.whistleout.com.au
- <https://www.finder.com.au/>

Once you have moved in, it might be worthwhile to consider home and contents insurance.

- www.comparethemarket.com.au
- www.canstar.com.au.

Employment

The Orana region offers many job opportunities. The top 5 industries in employment terms are health care and social assistance, agriculture, education and training, retail, construction and mining. If you want to take the next step in your career, explore a new pathway or start your own business, the region presents great opportunities.

There are many other exciting job prospects around these areas:

- automotive and engineering trades
- professionals including design, engineering, science, and transport
- sales workers
- electro-technology and telecommunications trades
- labourers including construction and farm workers
- health
- hospitality
- road and rail drivers.



A guide to finding employment in the Orana region

Get to know the area

Just by taking a stroll around the CBD, you will be able to familiarise yourself with the local layout and the types of businesses that populate the area. There might be a lot of cafes, pubs, or other retail outlets. This will also give you an idea of what kinds of jobs are on offer and if you will need to brush up on training to gain employment.

Match your skillset

Do your skills match those required to successfully secure a position? Make a note of areas where you would be able to slot into a business or where you could improve.

Make yourself a sellable product

Is your appearance clean and tidy, is your resume and qualifications up to date and do you have current references for potential employers to contact? You will be more appealing as an employee if you are friendly and presentable and have accurate contact details.

Check in with business

When you visit a business, check if the retailer is not too busy serving customers, then you can politely enquire about potential employment opportunities. If they don't have any vacancies, maybe they know someone who does.

Word of mouth

Jobs are not always advertised in the media; often it is by word of mouth or a sign in the window. Be prepared to be open-minded to following these options.

Be prepared

There will always be places that are looking for employees, where they are too busy to actively seek out staff, but they need assistance. Make sure you are open to this opportunity. Often employers appreciate someone who shows some initiative.

Join social networks

Sometimes, jobs are promoted via business circles such as LinkedIn or through the local Business Chamber. Develop a profile and make yourself known to business channels or networks.

Jobs boards

Does your adopted town have a board where employment opportunities are offered? It's a good idea to keep an eye on these, possibly even creating a post with your own details.

Adapt your resume

Whatever position you apply for, make sure your resume reflects the particular details of that job. If the position is a barista, be sure to outline any cafe and catering experience you have had.

Look online

There are numerous websites geared to finding a job. Put in your search terms and go from there. The following links are a starting point when seeking a job in our region:

- www.oranajobs.com.au
- www.seek.com.au
- <https://au.jora.com/>
- <https://au.indeed.com/>
- www.linkedin.com.



the vault talent bank

Securing highly valued **skills**,
experience and **abilities** throughout
regional NSW.

thevaulttalentbank.com.au

the Jobs board orana

Growing an Orana workforce through
collaboration, partnerships and
opportunities to engage, attract and
retain employees for the Orana.

oranajobs.com.au



Rights and responsibilities at work

In the workplace, you will need to comply with all laws, policies, procedures, rules and regulations. Be honest and fair in dealing with others and display the appropriate image of professionalism. Wear the required uniform, safety equipment or work clothes, and ensure your appearance is neat and tidy.

If there is a cultural reason to wear a certain item of clothing, discuss this with your manager to ensure that others at work are familiar with your needs.

Treat others in the organisation in a non-discriminatory manner with proper regard for their rights.

Be punctual, polite and maintain and develop the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out duties and responsibilities. Ensure that your work is completed on time and discuss workload and assistance with your manager if issues arise.

Observe health and safety policies and obligations and co-operate with all procedures and initiatives in the interests of work health and safety.

Reporting of accidents and incidents is important so that they are followed up promptly and the correct procedures maintained.

Immersing yourself in workplace culture

Aim to be a team player by using co-operation and communication to comply with the needs of your workplace. Follow directives from your supervisor and actively contribute to team discussions and meetings. Try to make your area of the workplace friendly and inviting. Show supportiveness and respect for others and where possible, participate in group bonding activities and outings.

Cultural awareness

Culture is defined as the learned and shared behaviour of a community of interacting human beings. People in the workplace all come from a range of different backgrounds and have their own cultural identity which deserves respect and consideration. Cultural competency refers to an ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures.

The 4 elements of cross-cultural communication are:

1. Awareness of one's own cultural values
2. Awareness and acceptance of cultural differences
3. Development of cultural knowledge
4. Ability to adapt to cultural context.

The best rule of thumb is to treat others as you would wish to be treated.

Taxation and superannuation

Tax File Number (TFN)

Everyone who earns an income in Australia is required to pay income tax once their pay goes above a certain amount. If you are going to work, you need to get a tax file number (TFN). Your employer will ask you to complete a Tax file number declaration, which tells them your TFN and whether you are an Australian or foreign resident for tax purposes. Your employer uses the information to work out how much tax to withhold from your wages. They should also provide your TFN to your superannuation fund so it can accept your superannuation contributions and pay the correct tax on them. You have 28 days to provide a completed tax file number declaration to your employer. If you don't, they must deduct a higher rate of tax from your pay. For more information about taxation, tax returns or to apply for a TFN, go to The Australian Taxation Office website: www.ato.gov.au.

Superannuation

Superannuation is money saved during your working life for you to live on when you retire. When you start working, your employer pays money towards your superannuation generally into a superannuation account of your choice.

It is compulsory for employers to pay super contributions into a superannuation fund of your choice. This amount must be of at least 12% of your wages. You can also make your own contributions into your superannuation account.

If you have worked in Australia and are now returning home, you may have superannuation money that you can claim and take with you. You can apply for this money as soon as you have left Australia. For more information on superannuation follow the link: <https://www.ato.gov.au/individuals-and-families/super-for-individuals-and-families/super>.





Health

Australia has a national health system called Medicare. This system aims to provide care across the population. It is funded by a levy on taxable income and is automatically deducted from the pay of Australian citizens.

As a temporary visa holder, you may not be eligible for Medicare until you become a permanent resident. This means that you will be responsible for your own health care costs which range from doctor's visits to hospital stays and maternity services. Routine visits to the GP are usually cost effective. However, where hospital treatment or emergency surgery is required, costs can quickly escalate.

For migrants, Australia has reciprocal health care agreements with Belgium, Finland, Italy, Malta, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Ireland, Slovenia, Sweden and the United Kingdom. These agreements are subject to variations.

The health industry is a major employer in the Orana, which has benefited from government funding and private investment. There is a range of services available in terms of emergency, chronic health care, aged care, mental health and specialist treatment.

In the larger centres such as Mudgee and Dubbo, there are private health centres, public hospitals and various other providers. The smaller centres tend to have multi-purpose health service and aged care facilities to cater for the ageing population.

Hospitals

All Local Government Areas in the Orana region have a Multi-Purpose Health Service which provides public access to emergency care as well as other services.

Nyngan, Bourke, Gilgandra, Coonabarabran, Brewarrina, Coonamble, Warren and Walgett all have an emergency department, maintenance renal dialysis and a nursing home care unit. Cobar has an emergency department and dialysis while Wellington, Gulgong, Rylstone, Narromine, Trangie, Lightning Ridge, Collarenebri, Coolah, Dunedoo and Barradine all have emergency departments and nursing facilities. Mudgee Hospital has emergency and dialysis along with oncology and obstetric services and has recently received largescale upgrades to include operating theatres and a CT Scanner.

Dubbo Hospital offers dialysis, alcohol and drug treatment, coronary and diabetes care, intensive care, emergency department, obstetrics, oncology, paediatrics, neonatal, day surgery and a psychiatric unit. Dubbo Private Hospital is a major private hospital staffed by a number of local and visiting specialists providing care for breast surgery, cardiology, dental surgery, ear, nose and throat surgery (ENT), endoscopy, gastroenterology, gynaecology, infusion services, oncology, ophthalmic surgery, orthopaedic surgery, oral maxillofacial surgery, paediatrics, sleep studies, thyroid surgery and urology.

Pharmacies

Local pharmacies also have registered health care providers and may be able to provide advice and assistance including medicine audits, vaccinations and other services.

Most towns in the Orana region have a pharmacy, including Nyngan, Bourke, Wellington, Brewarrina, Cobar, Coonamble, Dubbo, Gilgandra, Mudgee, Narromine, Warren and Coonabarabran.

Dental care

Dental services are available across the region in most of the towns while the major centres such as Dubbo have access to orthodontic and specialist work.

Opportunities

Many medical professionals are choosing to relocate to the region, including those from overseas. There are many opportunities available in the fields of nursing, medical professionals and additional care services.

Organisations include:

- Marathon Health
www.marathonhealth.com.au
- Western NSW Local Health
www.wnswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au
- Catholic Healthcare
www.catholichealthcare.com.au
- Burnside
www.uniting.org/about-us/burnside
- Centacare
www.centacare.org.au

Emergency services

The Triple Zero (000) telephone service is the quickest way to get through to the right emergency service to help you. It should be used to contact Police, Fire or Ambulance services in life threatening or emergency situations.

Other important related support services:

- Domestic and Family Violence: 1800 811 811
- Sexual Assault Helpline: 1800 010 120
- Sexual Health Services: 07 4226 4769
- Gambling Helpline: 1800 858 858
- Lifeline (Counselling services): 131 114
- Alcohol and drug information services: 1800 177 833
- NSW Poisons Information Centre: 13 11 26
- State Emergency Service (SES): For emergency assistance during a flood, storm or tsunami, call NSW SES on 132 500. For non-emergency or general enquiries, call 138 737.



Education

Australian schooling begins for children at approximately three years of age with preschool. This is not compulsory, but is strongly recommended to begin their early childhood education 2-3 days per week. A standard school day runs from 9am to 3pm with some minor variations.

The school year in Australia is divided into four terms, beginning at the end of January and running until mid-December. The end of term one usually coincides with the Easter break in April, which is followed by two-week holidays in July and October before a six-week break at the end of the year.

Children progress from preschool to Kindergarten at approximately five years of age which is followed by Primary School where they have a single teacher for the entire year. In some schools, there are also composite classes, depending on student and teacher numbers.

High School begins at age 12 and is based on a set curriculum, with each subject taught by a specialist teacher. Students generally move from class to class at the end of each subject session. From Year 8, students can choose electives alongside their compulsory subjects.

Senior high school begins in Year 11 and is composed of mainly electives alongside some compulsory subjects such as English. Subjects are governed by the NSW Board of Studies and examinations and assessments throughout the final years of school are combined to give a Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) which will be used towards further education.

The Australian Higher Education System is based around the Australian Qualifications Frameworks (AQF) which regulates the quality of tertiary qualifications across the country. www.aqf.edu.au

Public and private schooling

There is a variety of private and public education facilities and providers across the Orana region. These range from early childhood centres through to university campuses as well as government and private institutions, giving people of all ages an opportunity for educational advancement.

The scope of different educational opportunities and the convenience of location is what gives the Orana region an edge. Parents can enrol their children at good schools and universities at an affordable rate, without leaving the region. There are also excellent study options for anyone who wishes to retrain or learn new skills and information.

Public schools are fully government funded while private schools are partly government funded with the balance funded by school fees.

Public schools are generally non-denominational with small amounts of religious education provided. Private schools in the region are predominantly Christian based so enrolled children will be taught a curriculum that includes the faith of that school.

NSW public schools have defined local enrolment areas, meaning that every child is entitled to enrol in a particular school based on his or her residential address. Every public school reserves enough places within their school for students in their local enrolment area. For more information, check the Department of Education website on www.data.cese.nsw.gov.au

All schools in the Orana region have a compulsory school uniform which may be purchased from the individual school or from other retailers throughout the region.

The My School website provides some base data regarding the performance of individual schools against other factors such as attendance and completion rates. www.myschool.edu.au.

Further education options in the Orana region include vocational training through TAFE and private training providers or university qualifications through the Charles Sturt University campus in Dubbo or via distance education.



Enrolment

After doing research, plan to visit the schools in the town you wish to live in to discuss the options available with administration staff.

For all schools, the type of information you will need to provide will include:

- Birth Certificate and passport – in English.
- Visa documentation.
- Immunisation certificates – Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Whooping Cough, Polio, Chicken Pox and Tetanus are recommended for children in Australia.
- Current court orders if applicable.
- Relevant medical and/or special needs information if applicable.
- Recent reports for any assessments your child has undergone for issues that may impact their learning.
- Recent school reports if your child is to be enrolled in any class other than Kindergarten.
- Sacramental certificates if applicable.

If you decide to enrol your child/children at a public school, the NSW Department of Education provides extensive information on the NSW Education system and the requirements for the children of overseas parents at www.deinternational.nsw.edu.au/study-options/study-programs/temporary-residents.

If you decide to enrol your child in a private school, the school will be able to provide details relating to costs and requirements. The cost of private education varies from school to school. In the public system, school fees are calculated according to visa type.

In most towns in the region there will be one or more Catholic primary or primary–Year 12 schools.

Dubbo provides several options for private education for other faiths such as:

- Orana region Catholic schools come under the Bathurst Education Office or the Wilcannia Forbes Education Office (Trangie, Warren, Narromine, Mudgee, Nyngan, Cobar, Bourke, Brewarrina). www.bth.catholic.edu.au
- Macquarie Anglican Grammar School www.mags.nsw.edu.au
- Dubbo Christian School www.dubbocs.edu.au
- Burrabadine Christian Community School <https://www.burrabadineccs.nsw.edu.au/>
- Central West Leadership Academy www.theacademy.nsw.edu.au
- Dubbo West Primary and Dubbo College Delroy Campus offer a gifted and talented program for students in the public system by application and a competitive process.

Childcare

The Australian Day Care system is highly regulated in terms of who may provide care, their backgrounds and the number of children each person is able to look after at any one time.

Long day care – is the most common choice for parents with preschool aged children. Day care centres vary in their opening hours, though 7am - 6pm is a common arrangement. These centres offer combined preschool/day care programs.

Family day care – offers a home-based care program with smaller numbers and generally shorter hours available.

Preschools – offer a formal education program to ready children for formal schooling. This option is generally available from 9am-3pm during school terms only.

After school or vacation care – is provided by a number of organisations to cover any gap between school finishing and the end of the working day.

The education system in NSW is regularly upgraded to keep improving the standard of learning for students. Educators are working to enhance outcomes for all students, to improve teaching quality, to innovate for the future and to work more effectively. Key components are learning for the future, multicultural education, rural and distance education, cross- curricular, preschool, literacy and numeracy, career learning and vocational training.



Essential tasks before travelling to Australia

Planning your move to regional Australia requires careful preparation. Complete these tasks before departure to ensure a smoother settlement experience in the Orana region.

Financial preparation

Proof of funds and initial capital

Recommended minimum funds:

- 3–6 months of living expenses (approximately \$15,000–\$25,000 for individuals, \$25,000–\$40,000 for families).
- Additional funds for bond payments (typically 4–6 weeks rent as security deposit).
- Emergency fund of \$5,000–\$10,000 for unexpected costs.

Important considerations for the Orana region:

- Remote areas may have limited banking facilities.
- Seasonal employment variations can affect income stability.
- Transport costs between towns can be significant.
- Some services may require upfront payments.

Banking arrangements from overseas

Before travelling:

- Research major Australian banks (Commonwealth, Westpac, ANZ, NAB) and their international services.
- Some banks allow account opening from overseas with appropriate visa documentation.
- Consider banks with branches in regional NSW (not all banks have extensive rural networks).
- Investigate credit unions and regional banks that may better serve rural communities.

Documentation typically required:

- Valid passport with Australian visa.
- Proof of overseas address.
- Employment letter or contract (if applicable).
- Initial deposit (varies by institution).

Money transfer options:

- International bank transfers (typically 3–5 business days).
- Online money transfer services (Wise, Remitly, Western Union).
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash.
- Notify your home country bank of your move to prevent account freezing.

Documentation and legal requirements

Essential documents to organise

Bring certified copies and originals:

- Birth certificates for all family members.
- Marriage certificate (if applicable).
- Educational qualifications and transcripts.
- Professional licences and certifications.
- Employment references and contracts.
- Medical records and prescription details.
- Driver's licence with International Driving Permit.
- Police clearance certificates.

Document authentication:

- Have documents translated by NAATI-certified translators before departure.
- Obtain apostille authentication where required.
- Scan and store digital copies securely online.

Visa compliance understanding

Before departure, ensure you understand:

- Work rights and restrictions under your visa.
- Reporting obligations to Department of Home Affairs.
- Regional living requirements (particularly for DAMA visa holders).
- Pathway to permanent residency (if applicable)
- Family member rights and obligations.

Resources for visa information:

- Department of Home Affairs website: <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/>.
- Your nominated employer (for DAMA visas).
- Migration agent (if you have one).

Professional and skills recognition

Qualifications assessment

Complete before travelling:

- Skills assessment through relevant assessing authority.
- Professional registration applications (for regulated occupations).
- English language testing (IELTS, PTE, OET) if required.
- Continuing professional development requirements research.

For the Orana region specifically:

- Research professional bodies with rural/regional focus.
- Investigate mentoring programmes for international professionals.
- Understand any additional requirements for rural practice.

Employment Preparation

Before departure:

- Convert CV to Australian format.
- Research industry standards and expectations.
- Connect with professional networks online.
- Understand Australian workplace culture and rights.



Health and insurance arrangements

Health preparations

Before travelling:

- Comprehensive health check and dental examination.
- Obtain full vaccination records and have them certified.
- Secure prescription medications for initial period (with doctor's letter).
- Arrange health insurance coverage from day one.

Medicare eligibility:

- Check if your visa provides Medicare access.
- Research reciprocal health agreements (if from eligible countries).
- If not Medicare-eligible, arrange comprehensive private health insurance.

Insurance requirements

Essential coverage:

- Health insurance (if not Medicare-eligible).
- Travel insurance for journey to Australia.
- Consider income protection insurance.
- Vehicle insurance (once you acquire transport).

Regional living preparation

Understanding rural Australian life

Research and prepare for:

- Extreme weather conditions (bushfires, floods, heatwaves).
- Limited public transport options.
- Distances between services and towns.
- Seasonal employment patterns in agriculture and mining.
- Internet and mobile phone coverage limitations.

Emergency Preparedness Planning

Before arrival, research:

- Emergency services contacts and procedures.
- Bushfire risk and evacuation plans for your intended area.
- Flood risk areas and emergency protocols.
- Emergency supply recommendations for remote living.

Pre-Arrival Checklist

3–6 Months Before Departure

- Begin skills assessment and professional registration processes.
- Research and apply for bank accounts from overseas.
- Organise document translation and authentication.
- Arrange comprehensive health and dental check-ups.
- Research health insurance options.

1–3 Months Before Departure

- Finalise banking arrangements and initial fund transfers.
- Secure health insurance coverage.
- Organise International Driving Permit.
- Research accommodation options and make temporary bookings.
- Connect with professional networks and regional contacts.

2–4 Weeks Before Departure

- Confirm all visa conditions and obligations.
- Organise travel insurance.
- Notify relevant authorities of departure from home country.
- Arrange initial accommodation in Australia.
- Pack essential documents in carry-on luggage.

Week of Departure

- Confirm banking access and notify banks of travel.
- Ensure emergency contact information is updated.
- Verify accommodation arrangements.
- Check visa and passport validity.
- Pack medications and health records.

Important Disclaimers

Financial advice: This information provides general guidance only. Consider seeking professional financial advice for your specific circumstances.



Checklist for new Australian residents



Apply for a tax file number

Do this as soon as possible. In Australia, if you do not provide your employer with a Tax File Number (TFN), you will be charged the maximum tax rate. Visit: ato.gov.au/tfn or call 1300 720 092.



Set up your MyGov account and enrol with Medicare

MyGov is a secure website and application that provides access to a range of Australian Government services in one place. Visit: <https://my.gov.au/>.



Private health insurance

It is a good idea to purchase private health insurance to cover some costs or partly subsidise costs for your treatment as a patient in public and private hospitals. Visit privatehealth.gov.au.



Find a family doctor

A 'family doctor' will get to know your family and their health needs and be your first contact for medical matters. The doctors are known as General Practitioners or GPs. Visit: healthdirect.gov.au.



Open a bank account

In Australia, payments from an employer are usually paid directly into a bank account. Most workplaces will require you to have a bank account before you can commence work. Visit: <https://www.finder.com.au/bank-accounts>.



Apply for a drivers license

To drive in Australia you must have a registered vehicle and a valid driver's license. In NSW these are issued at Service NSW Centres. Visit: service.nsw.gov.au/services.



Find employment

Have an up to date CV or resume (including a local address), tax file number and superannuation fund. Access a guide to finding employment in the Orana on page 13.



Enrol your child/ children in a school

Under Australian law schooling becomes compulsory at age six years. There are both private and public school types in Australia. Visit: education.nsw.gov.au/school-finder and privateschoolsdirectory.com.au.



Develop your family's English speaking skills

Most workplaces and educational institutions will expect you to be able to speak English. If you or your family members are not confident in speaking English, there are English language classes available in the region to assist. Visit: tafensw.edu.au/programs/adult-migrant-english-program and ccsd.org.au/family/migrant-support.

Migrant Support Service



NSW
Settlement
Partnership



This a **FREE** service for people who have migrated from Non-English speaking backgrounds and have been in Australia for less than 5 years.

We provide connections to help:

- English language
- Employment
- Housing
- Health & wellbeing
- Justice needs
- Education & training
- Government services
- Family support
- Social support

Khaled Taleb
Migrant Support Officer

📞 0483 330 502

✉️ khaledt@dnc.org.au



Useful links

Apply for a drivers license

<https://service.nsw.gov.au/services>

Apply for a tax file number

<https://ato.gov.au/tfn>

Bourke new resident information

<https://thewesternherald.com.au/single-post/you-re-always-welcome-at-bourke>

Develop your family's English speaking skills

<https://tafensw.edu.au/programs/adult-migrant-english-program>

<https://ccsd.org.au/family/migrant-support>

Dubbo new resident night

<https://dubboregion.com.au/events/welcome-home-new-resident-night>

Enrol your child/children in a school

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/school-finder>

<https://privateschoolsdirectory.com.au>

Find a family doctor

<https://healthdirect.gov.au>

Find employment

Guide to finding employment in the Orana on page 13.

Home Affairs Settlement Guide

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/settling-in-australia/settle-in-australia/overview>

Immunisation records organisation and transfer to Australian Immunisation Registry

<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/overseas-immunisations?context=22436>

Infoxchange Service Seeker – electronic community services directory

<https://www.serviceseeker.com.au/#services/servicetypes/2830>

Information on the Orana DAMA

<https://rdaorana.org.au/migration/dama>

MIA information on migrating to Australia

<https://mia.org.au/Web/Web/Public-Resources/Migrating-to-Australia.aspx?hkey=ca083508-a010-4551-a8bc-71a81dd6b1b7>

MIA information on studying in Australia

<https://mia.org.au/Web/Web/Public-Resources/Studying-in-Australia.aspx?hkey=eb76859f-db8c-41ae-a8dd-0fd1461c0023>

Migration Institute of Australia (MIA)

<https://mia.org.au/>

Multicultural Services Directory

<https://www.orange.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Multicultural-Services-Directory.pdf>

Multicultural Services | Government Agency: Multicultural NSW

<https://multicultural.nsw.gov.au/>

MyGov account and enrol with Medicare

<https://my.gov.au/>

Open a bank account

<https://www.finder.com.au/bank-accounts/foreigners-open-a-bank-account-in-australia>

Orana Jobs Board

<https://oranajobs.com.au/>

Private health insurance

<https://privatehealth.gov.au>

SBS Settlement Guide

<https://sbs.com.au/language/english/en/settlement-guide-language-list>

Skills Assessment Information

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/working-in-australia/skills-assessment>

- The skills assessment must clearly, state the date of the assessment.

The NSW Jobs Connect Information for employers

<https://study.nsw.gov.au/industry/nsw-jobs-connect/>

The NSW Jobs Connect Information for international students

<https://study.nsw.gov.au/current-students/nsw-jobs-connect/>

The Reality of Migrating to Australia (video)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IIFgNbi7KLg>

The Vault Talent Bank

<https://rdaorana.org.au/projects/the-vault-talent-bank>

The Welcome Experience

<https://rdaorana.org.au/projects/the-welcome-experience>

Transcultural Mental Health Centre: Specialist Services for Migrants and Refugees

<https://www.dhi.health.nsw.gov.au/transcultural-mental-health-centre-tmhc/health-professionals/cross-cultural-mental-health-care-a-resource-kit-for-gps-and-health-professionals/specialist#Migrant%20organisations>

Transport NSW

<https://transportnsw.info/>

Understanding the Australian medical system

https://mcusercontent.com/7c1c49b9463b0d4df3fcd5d8d/files/4e455c01-d929-b647-0751-26d83cc71cf5/Australian_Medical_System_2023.pdf

Understanding visa conditions and compliance requirements

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/already-have-a-visa/check-visa-details-and-conditions/check-conditions-online>

Visas, immigration and citizenship enquiries

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/help-support/contact-us/overview>

Workforce Australia

<https://workforceaustralia.gov.au/individuals/jobs/>

Industry profile

The Orana region has a diverse industry base, rich history, unique geography and many beautiful natural assets. It is rich in resources, with a highly productive agricultural sector providing food, wine and fibre to global markets. From black opals to fine red wines, renewable energy and tourism, there are many opportunities for lifestyle and investment.

Diversity is the driver of the region's economic strength. Bogan and Cobar shires are dominated by mining, Bourke and Brewarrina by agriculture, education and public administration, Coonamble, Gilgandra, Narromine, Walgett, Warren and Warrumbungle Shires are predominantly agricultural, Mid-Western LGA is known for coal mining, and Dubbo for health and community, finance and insurance and education.

High-level commercial, residential, cultural and industrial services are in Dubbo, Orana's only regional city. Other smaller towns and villages rely primarily on agribusiness and are also reliant on the services and facilities provided in Dubbo.



Agriculture

The agricultural industry in Orana forms the backbone of the local community. Agricultural production is diverse and includes irrigated cotton, grains, cereals, as well as extensive areas of dryland cropping and livestock grazing including beef, sheep and wool.

The industry supports an extensive value chain including major livestock centres in Dubbo, transport, logistics and intermodal transport hubs, cotton gins, canneries, packing and processing. The region includes the Macquarie irrigation area that supports significant cotton, export lucerne and horticulture industries.

Agriculture	Industry total
Employment	6,397
Output	\$3,551,183,442
Wages and salaries	\$200,230,522

Construction

The construction industry is a significant driver of economic activity in Australia and forms the nation's third largest industry. With the presence of new businesses, regional investment and population expansion, there is a strong demand for additional infrastructure and services in regional areas.

This has extended to renewable energy and housing construction to accommodate increasing needs in the Orana region. The Orana's booming construction industry both boosts the economy and drives further growth.

Construction	Industry total
Employment	4,655
Output	\$2,989,462,220
Wages and salaries	\$470,868,878

Education

The education sector in the Orana region has experienced a steady growth and is the fourth largest employer.

This growth can be attributed to increasing population that has resulted in development of more educational and training infrastructure.

Education	Industry total
Employment	5,422
Output	\$894,290,785
Wages and salaries	\$574,178,879

Healthcare

Health care and social assistance services are in increasing demand across regional Australia, including the Orana region. These services are important for the wellbeing and quality of life of people and support the region's economic development. Roles in the health care and social assistance sector are a mix of private and public jobs.

Traditionally the public sector provided the foundation of health services in the region; the private sector is increasingly playing a role in both health care and social assistance, particularly in response to changing consumer expectations.

Healthcare	Industry total
Employment	8,444
Output	\$1,530,979,976
Wages and salaries	\$901,986,151



For listings of current projects and opportunities in the region head to our website.
www.rdaorana.org.au

Mining

Mineral deposits are rich in the Orana region and it is home to a thriving mining sector. Coal is the largest export earner for the mining industry in the Orana region, followed by non-ferrous metals such as gold, silver and copper.

Rare earths such as zirconium, scandium and niobium are growing in demand through their use in high-tech products such as pacemakers, smartphones, wind turbines, and electric car batteries.

Mining	Industry total
Employment	3,992
Output	\$9,375,509,338
Wages and salaries	\$895,918,957

Tourism

The tourism sector is currently a solid contributor to the Orana region's economy, particularly in terms of employment.

The Orana region is a popular tourist destination and visitation is a mix of holiday, business and visiting relatives and friends.

Tourism	Industry total
Employment	3,739
Output	\$605,876,488
Wages and salaries	\$163,659,388

Transport

Transport is another strong sector, with the Orana region linked by road, rail and air connections. The transport industry provides a service to primary industries in the region such as mining and agriculture, which support freight movers with their products. The industry also supports secondary industries such as manufacturing.

Transport	Industry total
Employment	1,819
Output	\$700,922,585
Wages and salaries	\$157,621,331

Driving in **Australia**

Australians drive on the left-hand side of the road and use the metric system to measure distance and speed. Standard vehicles are right-hand drive and feature either manual or automatic transmissions.

The Orana region covers 25% of NSW and includes some isolated and remote communities so driving in this area can be a hazardous task. Some of the issues to watch out for include unsealed roads, changing conditions and wildlife on the road. Many accidents occur at night due to driver fatigue, and the presence of native animals which become more active in the evenings. The road network varies greatly in type, surface and the provision of services so there are often very long distances between towns with access to fuel, water and food.



Country road driving

Some of the common characteristics shared by crashes in rural and remote areas include:

- High travel speeds.
- Long travelling distances.
- Varied and unfamiliar road environments (i.e. unsealed roads, mud, creeks).
- Variation in vehicle type (i.e. agricultural vehicles (tractors) moving slowly).
- Driver fatigue and monotony.
- Driver inexperience.
- Restricted visibility by other vehicles, vegetation, or extreme weather events.
- Road surface such as corrugation.

Animal Collisions

Factors which may increase the risk of an animal collision:

- Driving at dawn, dusk, or night-time (when animals typically come out to graze).
- Speed zones of 100 km/h or greater, which do not allow for reaction times.
- Curved roads with reduced visibility.
- Roadsides with vegetation that attracts animals for grazing.

Consider:

- Minimising driving at dawn and dusk.
- Look out for wildlife road signs and slow down.
- Avoid swerving. Hold to a straight line even if it takes you directly into the animal. If you swerve it is likely to cause a catastrophic accident.

Unsealed roads

- Be mindful of the weather. Dry weather can create dusty conditions and limit your visibility, while wet weather can make roads muddy, slippery and boggy.
- Slow down. Dust or thick vegetation may disguise an oncoming vehicle, potholes, loose gravel or slippery mud patches.
- Turn on your headlights where visibility is poor. Consider stopping if you can't see the road in front of you.

Country road driving recommendations

- Plan your route carefully and in detail.
- Allow adequate travel time to avoid the urge to exceed safe travel speeds.
- Obey the road rules. Always respect the speed limit.
- Be alert for wildlife, livestock and pedestrians, especially at dawn and dusk.
- Ensure there is someone who you can check in with along the journey i.e. when you start, finish and along the way.
- Be mindful of isolation in remote areas. Ensure you have sufficient water, check phone coverage, print emergency and assistance numbers.
- Ensure your vehicle is roadworthy and well-maintained.
- Watch for weather conditions. Some parts of our district have foggy, very icy (slippery) road conditions and sometimes snow during winter. Black Ice is very dangerous on the road. Avoid driving first thing in the morning.

Fuel /EV charging stations

The majority of cars in Australia run on unleaded petrol (ULP). Some vehicles (especially 4WDs and trucks) use diesel fuel. Even on major regional roads, service stations and roadhouses may close overnight.

If you are planning a long drive at night, make sure you plan ahead and know when and where you are going to get fuel. Almost all service stations are self-serve.

There are a growing number of EV charging stations located throughout the Orana region.

The NSW Government is actively expanding the EV charging network, particularly in regional areas, with a focus on fast and ultra-fast charging.

For a listing of EV charging stations in the region visit: www.transport.nsw.gov.au/projects/electric-vehicles/charging-an-electric-vehicle/nsw-electric-vehicle-charging-map.

Licencing

As of July 2023 NSW overseas licence holders with temporary visas such as to study or work in Australia; must convert their overseas licence to a NSW licence within six (6) months of their arrival if they wish to continue driving.

Foreigners with an English language driver's licence can drive for three months and then apply for an Australian licence. If your licence is not in English, you need to get an international driving permit or carry an English translation.

If you become a permanent Australian resident or hold a permanent visa under the Commonwealth *Migration Act 1958*, and you intend to stay in NSW, you are not considered to be a visitor. If you do not hold permanent Australian residency, but will be in NSW for more than three months, you can apply for a Temporary Overseas Visitor licence.

Find out more about driving in NSW as a visitor from another state or country: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/driving-boating-and-transport/driver-and-rider-licences/visiting-or-moving-to-nsw>.

Public transport

The scope and availability of public transport varies across the Orana region. Most areas are accessible by coach services, including Dubbo, Wellington, Walgett, Mudgee, Warrumbungles, Bourke, Narromine, Cobar, Brewarrina, Nyngan, Gilgandra, Coonamble and Warren. Taxis are available in Dubbo, Wellington, Narromine, Gilgandra, Cobar, Bourke and Mudgee.

Flights can be made from Cobar, Nyngan, Dubbo, Mudgee, Bourke, Gilgandra, Walgett and Narromine. These range from chartered to commercial services.

For more on public transport please see www.transportnsw.info/regional.

Safety

Australia has a consistent set of road rules with four main target areas of enforcement: speeding, drink driving, not wearing a seat belt and mobile phone use while driving. There are often double demerit periods operating during busy times.

Australia has a consistent set of road rules with four main target areas of enforcement: speeding, drink driving, not wearing a seat belt and mobile phone use while driving. There are often double demerit periods operating during busy times.

Seat belts must be worn by all vehicle occupants. Children and babies must be restrained in an approved safety harness, capsule or booster seat. Seat belt laws are strictly enforced, and the onus is on the driver to ensure all passengers are buckled up. Passengers 16 and over not wearing a seat belt will be fined along with the driver if caught.

Mobile phone use is an offence while driving. Please ensure you have a hands-free kit installed in your vehicle to avoid being fined.

Accidents

If you have an accident while driving, it is important to notify emergency services by calling triple zero (000). The police will need to be advised in order to deal with any legal aspects of the accident such as insurance claims and who was at fault. If someone is injured, you will need to call an ambulance.

The driver of any vehicle involved in an accident is legally required to stop and render assistance to others. There are penalties for leaving an accident scene. Anyone rendering first aid in good faith in Australia is protected by law and not at risk of legal action.

If you are visiting from overseas, or you've recently moved here permanently, make sure that you are driving legally and safely.

For all information relating to obtaining a driver's licence or checking your overseas licence go to <https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/services/driver-and-rider-licences>.

You will also use this website to register your vehicle.

Lifestyle and **culture**

Community festivals

The Orana region has a range of events celebrating bush life, our literary history and rich cultural fabric.

These include The Man from Ironbark Festival at Stuart Town, celebrating the work of Banjo Patterson, the Henry Lawson Festival at Gulgong, Flavours of Mudgee, the Cob Loaf Festival in Wellington and Beers to the Bush in Dubbo.

The Festival of the Miner's Ghost in Cobar, Gilgandra's Coo-ee Festival, the Potch Queen Festival in Lightning Ridge and StarFest in Coonabarabran also showcase industry and community.

Cultural experiences

While Orana is well-known for being a sports-loving region, there is also a broad range of cultural events and experiences which have shaped our identity. Many home-grown festivals and events have drawn inspiration from the produce and history of our region.

Events held in the region include food and wine festivals and markets, music and dance festivals and agricultural community events.

Each local area has its own character and their events often reflect that heritage.





Agricultural shows

Agricultural shows have a long history and are a pivotal aspect of country life in many communities, signifying the essence of rural living. They are an annual event where farmers showcase their livestock and produce and there are also displays of art, craft, flowers and baking. Champion entries are eligible for the annual Sydney Royal Easter Show. For more information, visit www.agshowsnsw.org.au/shows

- Baradine, Binnaway, Mendooran, Mudgee, Rylstone Kandos, Coonabarabran, Dunedoo Shows are held in February and March each year
- Coonamble, Cobar, Bourke, Mudgee, Walgett, Wellington, Dubbo, Nyngan, Gulargambone, Gilgandra Shows are held in May and June each year
- Narromine Show is held in August
- Tooraweenah Show is held in October

There are other agricultural events across the region such as the Nyngan Ag Expo and Mudgee Small Farm field days showcasing industry and primary production.

Major livestock shows are held at Dubbo Showground, enabling breeders to showcase their animals and sell them to commercial producers. Dog Trials are another event that has evolved from the skills needed to work livestock. Many agricultural shows incorporate dog trials into their program and other major independent events are held each year, including Geurie in October and Coolah in May.

Art galleries and museums

Museums celebrating our heritage, natural resources and scientific endeavours are found in the form of the Great Cobar Heritage Centre, Railway Museum and Shearers Museum in Nyngan, Back o' Bourke Exhibition Centre, Australian Opal Centre in Lightning Ridge and Siding Springs Observatory near Coonabarabran.

Western Plains Cultural Centre in Dubbo hosts both permanent and travelling exhibitions, including the annual Waste to Art and Archibald Prize. There are a number of smaller private galleries such as the Garling Gallery in Wongarbron, Outback Arts in Coonamble, Back o' Bourke Gallery in Bourke, Soul Food in Narromine, Eris Fleming in Wellington, Lynn and Tim Winters at Stuart Town, John Murray in Lightning Ridge, Pandora Gallery in Coolah, Red Earth Gallery and Bill O'Shea in Dubbo, Sculptures in the Garden, Stony Creek Studio, Artisan on Lewis, Brett Niven Ceramics and The Gables to name a few in Mudgee. Dunedoo hosts Art Unlimited each year and Wellington has an annual Arts and Sculpture Festival. Gulargambone also hosted the Pave the Way to Gular Arts Festival which included painted shopfronts and window installations.

Outdoor art trails exist across the Orana region including Silo Art on grain storage facilities in Coonamble and Gulargambone and public murals in Dubbo, Gilgandra, Lightning Ridge, Brewarrina and Mendooran. There are also the Animals on Bikes trails between Molong and Dubbo which features roadside sculptures.



Music, literature and dance

Eisteddfods are a popular introduction to music, drama and dance in the region, with Mudgee, Wellington, Dubbo and Gulgong all hosting annual events.

Dubbo Regional Theatre and Convention Centre, a purposebuilt facility in the heart of the city, boasts a range of concerts, plays, musicals, dance presentations and comedy nights held throughout the year.

Other musical events in the region include Rock the Racecourse and the Hartwood Music Festival at Coolah, Cobar Mardi Gras, Under Western Skies Dubbo, Dolly Festival Narromine, and the Mudgee Festival of Dance.

Macquarie Conservatorium has an annual concert series and Opera at Dundullimal, Dubbo.

The Red Hot Summer tour and Day on the Green are also regular outdoor concerts in Dubbo and Mudgee.

Sporting life

Most towns in the Orana region have a common sporting precinct with a variety of sports on offer. The major sports in the region are football (soccer, touch, rugby league, Australian Rules and rugby union), netball, tennis, swimming, cycling, squash, basketball, athletics, lawn bowls, gliding, frisbee, darts and snooker, golf and hockey. Water sports are also popular with skiing, canoeing, kayaking, boating and recreational fishing.

Some activities require licencing or insurance so please be aware of what is needed before commencing a new hobby. Local councils are often a good source of information in terms of getting started.

Several major sporting events are held regularly across the region, bringing large numbers of participants. These include athletics carnivals, football and basketball tournaments, horse race meetings, rodeos and camp drafting, fishing competitions and equestrian events. Each town has regular picnic race meetings which generally have a good family atmosphere.

Motorsports are also popular including go-carting, speedway, drag racing and motocross. Dubbo also hosts a range of annual running events, such as the Dubbo Stampede and Macquarie Mud Run as well as a weekly parkrun. Other towns such as Cobar, Bourke and Wellington, also have a regular parkrun.

Cultural heritage

The Orana region has many beautiful areas to be explored including hilly outcrops, underground caves, vast plains and natural waterways.

The first inhabitants of the region were the Wiradjuri nation, along with the smaller nations of Kamilaroi, Wailwan and Wongaibon. There are many sites of Aboriginal significance across the Orana region including the Fish Traps and Dennawan near Brewarrina, Mt Drysdale and Mt Grenfell near Cobar, Terramungamine at Dubbo, Byrock Rock Holes, Bourke, and Moordale Wells, Walgett.

Beautiful national park areas include Piliga, Goonoo, Gundabooka, Macquarie Marshes, Culgoa and the Warrumbungles. It is well worth the journey to visit some of these spectacular areas. Their remoteness and extreme weather also lends itself to potentially dangerous situations. Take extreme care, carry plenty of water, make sure your vehicle is roadworthy and tell someone where you're going if you plan to visit these areas.

Libraries

Libraries are an important community resource. Libraries are a space to search for information, borrow books, view newspapers and magazines and find out about community events.

Macquarie Regional Library (MRL) encompasses the local governments of Dubbo Regional, Narromine and Warrumbungle Shire. It serves a population of over 65,000 and covers an area of more than 25,000 square kilometres. To find the locations of the 10 MRL branches, visit: <https://www.mrl.nsw.gov.au/about-us/locations>.

Mid-Western Regional Council Library has branches located at Mudgee, Gulgong, Rylstone and Kandos, and a Mobile Library service operating within the region: <https://www.midwestern.nsw.gov.au/Community/Libraries>.

North-Western Library has four branches located at Bogan, Coonamble, Gilgandra, and Warren: <https://www.northwesternlibrary.com.au/>

"Big Sky Library" is a partnership between Moree, Walgett and Brewarrina Shire Councils: <https://bigsky.spydus.com/cgi-bin/spydus.exe/MSGTRNGEN/WPAC/GOURLIBRARY>

Library services include:

- Free public computer access and Wi-Fi
- Printing, photocopying, scanning
- Children's activities
- Book clubs
- Reading areas
- Community information
- Free digital library
- DVD collections
- Guest speaker events
- Meeting rooms available for hire.





Connecting and **contributing** **to community**

Volunteering in the Orana region

Getting involved in your community is a fantastic way to settle in, meet new people, and make a meaningful contribution. Volunteering is a powerful way to integrate and connect with your new community. Volunteering helps you adapt to life in a new community and expands your social, peer and support networks.

Volunteering offers a unique pathway to understanding Australian society, building connections, and developing new skills. You can gain practical skills, such as navigating local networks, and obtaining valuable work experience. Volunteering service is well regarded on your curriculum vitae.

There is a diverse array of volunteer opportunities, catering to various interests, skills, and availability. You can support vulnerable community members with services, volunteer at a local op shop, help children learn to read in a reading program or support a sporting club. Groups are always looking for people with skills, so be sure to share any experience you have running, fundraising and managing organisations.

By choosing to volunteer in your community, you are not only contributing to the well-being of your new community but also actively shaping your own journey of integration and connection. It's an opportunity to learn, share, build friendships, and feel truly at home.

To find out more about volunteering through community directories, connecting with the local council, attending events held by volunteer organisations or connecting with organisations like Volunteer in Dubbo Region. Many local councils have community service staff who can provide information on local groups and volunteering initiatives.

High-level commercial, residential, cultural and industrial services are in Dubbo, Orana's only regional city. Other smaller towns and villages rely primarily on agribusiness and are also reliant on the services and facilities provided in Dubbo.

Emergency and **natural disasters**

Triple zero – police, fire or ambulance

The triple zero (000) service is the quickest way to get the right emergency service to help you. You can contact Police, Fire or Ambulance in life threatening or emergency situations.

Natural hazards

You can find current information about local emergencies on Hazards Near Me. The app shows information provided from emergency services on bush fires, floods, tsunamis and advice on what to do to stay safe.

Fire

There are three levels of Bush Fire Alerts:

Advice. A fire but no immediate danger. Stay up to date in case the situation changes.

Watch And Act. There is a threat. Conditions are changing and you need to start taking action now to protect you and your family.

Emergency Warning. The highest level of Bush Fire Alert. You may be in danger and need to take action NOW! Any delay puts your life at risk.

Develop an emergency plan and monitor closely the alert levels.

Storm

Storms can often cause the electricity to stop working as well. As well as using your home emergency plan, make sure you have charges torches and candles should the power go out.

Flood

- Never drive, ride or walk through floodwater.
- Stack possessions on tables, placing electrical items on top.
- Listen to your local radio station for information, updates and advice.
- Keep in contact with your neighbours.
- Be prepared to evacuate if advised by emergency services.

Transportation

Unfortunately public transportation is not widespread in regional Australia. People tend to get places in their own car or taxi.

Transport NSW have a website with an easy to use tool that helps to find out how to get from one place to another. Transport NSW: <https://transportnsw.info/>.



Dangerous animals **in our region**

Snakes - a protected species

There are an average of 87 snake bites per year.

- Where you might see them: bushwalking, long grass, piles of rocks, piles of wood.
- Snakes are very shy so will likely slither away before you see them.
- Be aware of your footing especially in long grass.
- Wear heavy boots and long pants when bushwalking.
- See a snake? Stand still, the snake will likely slither away.
- Do not provoke (ie with a stick).
- Call a snake catcher to remove.

Spiders

Since 1979 there have been no deaths from spider bites and less than 100 presentations in hospital in a year.

Venomous spiders in Australia:

- Funnel Web Spider: unlikely in our region.
- Redback Spider: found in logs, under rocks, flowerpots or garden sheds.
- Be aware in the spider's environment.
- Remove spider webs.
- A surface insecticide spray twice a year will help control Redbacks.

Horses

- Horse riding is a common leisure activity in rural NSW.
- Wear an approved helmet and make sure your instructor has the horse under control at all times.
- Only ride at reputable riding schools.

Dogs

- Where you'll find dogs in the region: on farms, in back yards, sometimes out on the street in urban areas.
- Be aware of dogs on the street.
- Warning signs: forward-leaning stance, stiff body, direct stare and raised hair along it's back.
- Don't stare at the dog, move slowly away, be upright in your stance. Dogs sense fear.

Kangaroos

- Where you'll see them: on the side of roads, and in rural areas.
- Always be on the lookout for animals near the road.
- Avoid driving at dawn and dusk, take extra care at these times.
- Use high beam lights at night (when no cars coming your way).
- If you see an animal slow down to a crawl as they can move in unpredictably onto your path.

Cows

- In the Orana region you will find cows on farms and sometimes on the road.
- Don't enter a farm unless you are with the owner.
- Immediately slow down as soon as you see a cow, even if on the side of the road.

Magpies

Thousands of people are swooped by Magpies as they protect their nests when raising young in the Spring time. Hundreds receive minor injuries.

- Where you'll find them: In gum trees where they have their nests, often in urban areas.
- They swoop down to people walking or on bikes, sometimes drawing blood from piercing with their beak.
- If you are swooped while cycling, get off of your bicycle, as many accidents come from cyclists fall off during an attack.
- Wear sun glasses and with large wide-brimmed hat to protect your head and eyes.
- Face the magpie they tend to attack from behind so facing them should avert an attack.

Local government

In Australia, we have three levels of government; Federal, State, and Local governments. Across the Orana, there are 12 local government areas. Local governments are often referred to as councils.

They work towards running communities as smoothly and efficiently as possible, providing necessary services for a safe and healthy life. Local councils manage public assets and infrastructure and also offer a wide variety of services to your community. For example, councils are responsible for:

- local roads, footpaths, cycle ways, street signage and lighting
- waste management, including rubbish collection and recycling
- parking
- recreational facilities such as parks, sports fields and swimming pools
- cultural facilities, including libraries, art galleries and museums
- pet control.

Some councils have information packs and special events to welcome new arrivals to the region. For more information about the 12 local government areas in the Orana region see the following section.





Bogan shire

Best known as 'home to the Big Bogan', the Shire offers the best of town and country. Bogan shire is in the region's north west, and serviced by Nyngan which sits at the junction of the Mitchell and Barrier highways on the Bogan River.

Mining and agricultural production, including livestock grazing and large-scale cropping, are primary economic drivers. The farming community is very close-knit, and the townspeople enjoy comfortable country living alongside the beauty of the bush.

There are numerous outdoor recreational activities in the region that include water sports such as boating, skiing and canoeing, athletics, sports, dancing among other things. There is also a shared pathway alongside the Bogan River which is popular with cyclists, walkers and joggers.

Attractions:

- Iroquois 1022 helicopter in Vanges Park, Nyngan
- Mid-State Shearing Shed
- Nyngan and District Museum
- The Big Bogan
- The Macquarie Marshes

Top industries for employment:

- Agriculture
- Mining
- Education



Population
2,467



Local businesses
449



Local jobs
1,640 (3%)



Climate
3-45 °C



Median rent
\$270 p/w



Median property \$
\$245,000



Bourke **shire**

Bourke is popularly known as the 'Gateway to the Real Outback.' Traditionally a wool growing area, Bourke was once the biggest wool railhead in the world.

Today, cotton has taken over as the major industry. Bourke also boasts a thriving horticultural sector which produces grapes, citrus, fruit plums, apricots and melons as well as a variety of vegetable crops.

Alternative native crops such as peanuts, jojoba and the unique Napunya honey are also produced in the area. A state of the art small livestock abattoir is on the market offering investment potential for the Bourke district. On-farm employment and service industries are mainstays in the area while professional jobs are available in the areas of social services, education, environment and agriculture.

Attractions:

- Back o' Bourke Exhibition Centre
- Cruise on the Darling River aboard a paddle steamer
- Gundabooka and Toorale National Parks
- Mt Oxley
- Nancy Bird Air Terminal
- Wharf precinct

Top industries for employment:

- Healthcare
- Public Administration
- Education



Population
2,340



Local businesses
333



Local jobs
1,010 (1.8%)



Climate
4-40 °C



Median rent
\$475 p/w



Median property \$
\$323,250



Brewarrina **shire**

Situated on the banks of the Barwon River, and home to the Kamilaroi Highway, Brewarrina is steeped in history and has plenty of natural and man-made attractions.

Brewarrina is strongly grounded to its indigenous heritage and was once one of the great inter-tribal meeting points for Aboriginal people in Eastern Australia. More than half of the population in the region identify as Aboriginal.

Agriculture and wool production remain viable sectors today. These days, there is a friendly and relaxed lifestyle, access to national park land and recreation areas including good boating, fishing and camping spots.

Attractions:

- Aboriginal Cultural Centre
- Cobb & Co trails
- Culgoa National Park
- Four Mile Skiing Reserve
- Narran Lakes
- Ochre Bed Pits
- The National Heritage-listed Brewarrina Fish Traps

Top industries for employment:

- Agriculture
- Healthcare
- Education



Population
1,356



Local businesses
129



Local jobs
442 (0.8%)



Climate
4-40 °C



Median rent
\$250 p/w



Median property \$
\$145,000



Cobar shire

Commonly referred to as 'The jewel of Outback', Cobar is bounded to the North by Bourke Shire, in the South by Carrathool Shire, the west by Central Darling Shire and the East by Bogan Shire.

Cobar is friendly and welcoming and offers a range of cultural and recreational activities for residents. The Shire's prosperity is built around the thriving mining - copper, lead, silver, zinc, gold - and pastoral industries, which are strongly supported by a wide range of attractions and activities that make it a major tourist destination.

There is a strong industrial network in Cobar including tradespeople, equipment hire and labour force.

Attractions:

- Centenary of Federation Walking Track
- Cobar Miners Heritage Park
- Fort Bourke Hill Lookout & New Cobar Cut Gold Mine
- Great Cobar Copper Mine
- Mt Grenfell Historic Site
- The Great Cobar Heritage Centre
- Cobar Sound Chapel

Top industries for employment:

- Agriculture
- Mining
- Healthcare



Population
4,365



Local businesses
465



Local jobs
2,367 (4.3%)



Climate
5-40°C



Median rent
\$260 p/w



Median property \$
\$195,000



Coonamble **shire**

Coonamble is a determined and dynamic township on the banks of the Castlereagh River. It lies at the heart of what is a productive agricultural region based on sustainable dryland livestock grazing and cropping industries.

The Shire's prosperity is built around its diversified agricultural income and rural industries which includes two large beef cattle feedlots. Coonamble Shire has a robust and resilient business sector comprising almost 700 small to medium enterprises. Self-employment is a good option for this area with affordable commercial premises, land availability and a supportive business community. New opportunities abound across a variety of business sectors for those with good ideas, sound skills, and a strong work ethic. Opportunities exist in aged care and the development of Coonamble's cultural and historic character.

Attractions:

- Coonamble Hall of Fame
- Macquarie Marshes in Quambone
- Museum Under the Bridge
- Outback Arts Gallery
- Riverwalk
- The smallest operational library in NSW

Top industries for employment

- Agriculture
- Healthcare
- Education



Population
3,854



Local businesses
589



Local jobs
1,408 (2.6%)



Climate
4-40°C



Median rent
\$200 p/w



Median property \$
\$103,740



Dubbo region

Dubbo has long been known as the 'hub of the west' because of its geographical location as a service centre for the Orana region. The region offers diversity and opportunity, combining the attributes of a larger centre with the familiarity and generosity of spirit typical of rural communities in western NSW.

The region's economic strength lies heavily in the diversity of industries, including a thriving retail sector and more than 4,500 registered businesses. It is also well-positioned as a transport, agriculture and mining services centre. Exploration projects are flourishing across the surrounding region and major works for significant rail infrastructure and maintenance facilities are underway. The LGA is also home to several large-scale renewable energy projects and is seeing greater integration and development of smart technology and supporting infrastructure.

Attractions:

- Dubbo Observatory
- Dundullimal Homestead
- Lake Burrendong
- Old Dubbo Gaol
- Royal Flying Doctor Visitor Experience
- Taronga Western Plains Zoo
- Wellington Caves

Top industries for employment:

- Healthcare
- Education
- Retail



Population
54,044



Local businesses
5,593



Local jobs
26,650 (48.6%)



Climate
3-38 °C



Median rent
\$390 p/w



Median property \$
\$430,000



Gilgandra **shire**

Located at the junction of the Newell, Oxley and Castlereagh Highways, Gilgandra is approximately halfway between Brisbane and Melbourne. Gilgandra is a friendly community with a great sense of civic pride.

Residents enjoy a relaxed country lifestyle with the advantage of a nearby major regional centre. Healthcare and social services have become large employers in the community and form an important part of the economy.

Potential economic growth areas include aged care, renewable energy generation and enhancing Gilgandra's cultural and historic character.

Attractions:

- Coo-ee March Memorial
- Gilgandra Native Flora Reserve
- Grandma's Dolls
- Orana Cactusworld
- Rural Museum
- Southern Cross Windmills

Top industries for employment:

- Agriculture
- Healthcare
- Education



Population
4,205



Local businesses
588



Local jobs
1,524 (2.8%)



Climate
5-33 °C



Median rent
\$210 p/w



Median property \$
\$175,000



Mid-Western **region**

The Mid-Western region offers a vibrant lifestyle and prosperous economy with real country community spirit. As a growth area, Mid-Western is popular with tourists and investors and offers lifestyle opportunities.

A key feature of the area is its diversity, with the major industries of agriculture, viticulture, tourism and mining and the emerging renewable sector. Construction, real estate, hospitality and retail are also strong employment areas.

Mudgee has some beautiful historic buildings, a vibrant café culture, market days and a thriving arts community. The surrounding area is home to a vast array of wineries nestled in the picturesque countryside. Tourism-related businesses are expected to expand, given the LGA's reputation as a food and wine destination and major events, including sports tourism. Further expansion of cultural facilities will enhance the overall visitor experience.

Attractions:

- Frog Rock
- Ganguddy
- Goulburn River National Park
- Henry Lawson's Heritage Trail and Memorial
- Hill End Heritage Centre
- Kandos Museum
- Windamere Dam

Top industries for employment:

- Mining
- Healthcare
- Retail



Population
25,563



Local businesses
2,952



Local jobs
11,716 (21.3%)



Climate
2-34°C



Median rent
\$430 p/w



Median property \$
\$540,000



Narromine **shire**

Narromine is an important rural service centre located on the Mitchell Highway and the Macquarie River at the eastern edge of the western plains of NSW. Narromine promotes itself as the 'Town of Champions' because of the large number of international sports stars who have grown up in the town.

Narromine offers a community that embraces a way of life that provides the perfect balance between work and lifestyle. Narromine Shire provides an attractive option for those seeking a better lifestyle, whether it is reduced travel time, a relaxed rural lifestyle or the ability to spend more time with their families.

Significant opportunities exist in freight and logistics, with Inland Rail planned to intersect with existing rail freight infrastructure at Narromine. Narromine is an aviation hub, with gliding and aviation related development around Narromine Aerodrome, including Skypark, a residential aviation precinct.

Attractions:

- Cobb & Co Heritage Trail
- Gin Weir
- Goobang National Park
- Narromine Iris Farm
- The Narromine Aerodrome
- The village of Trangie

Top industries for employment:

- Agriculture
- Healthcare
- Education



Population
5,785



Local businesses
939



Local jobs
2,188 (4%)



Climate
5-38 °C



Median rent
\$330 p/w



Median property \$
\$273,750



Walgett **shire**

Walgett is the rural service centre for an enormous pastoral area which stretches to the state border. The town describes itself as the 'Gateway to the Opal Fields' as it is on the road to Lightning Ridge and the Grawin, Glengarry and Sheep yard Opal Fields.

Agriculture is the primary industry in the region with a heavy reliance on dryland farming and grazing. The commercial service centre, including real estate, agricultural support, education and training, public administration, retail and health care also feature in the Walgett area, along with tourism and opal mining.

Walgett Shire has all the ingredients for a great country lifestyle – the community is friendly and relaxed, there is minimal traffic and a range of recreational and sporting activities is on offer.

Attractions:

- Aboriginal art gallery
- Artesian bore baths in Burren Junction, Lightning Ridge and Walgett
- John Murray art gallery
- Chambers of the Black Hand
- Australian Opal Centre
- Opal mines

Top industries for employment:

- Agriculture
- Healthcare
- Education



Population
6,112



Local businesses
761



Local jobs
1,011 (1.8%)



Climate
3-40 °C



Median rent
\$200 p/w



Median property \$
\$167,500



Warren **shire**

Warren is a safe and friendly rural community providing a range of services and amenities for its residents. Offering a comfortable, affordable and relaxed lifestyle, Warren provides the perfect base for family, business and social interests.

Warren Shire LGA is a rural area with land used primarily for agriculture, particularly sheep and cattle grazing; wheat, oats and cotton. The Ramsar-listed Macquarie Marshes, the most significant wetland complex in Australia, sit 110 km north of Warren.

The Warren region offers rewarding employment and investment opportunities and has a diverse business sector. Whether seeking employment or starting a business, the Warren Chamber of Commerce hosts 'Welcome to Warren' events for all new residents. This is an ideal way to meet other community members and learn more about what the region has to offer.

Attractions:

- Fishing and Canoeing
- Macquarie Park, Oxley Park, Victoria Park and Ebert Park
- Red River Gum Walk
- The Macquarie Marshes
- Tiger Bay Wetlands

Top industries for employment:

- Agriculture
- Public administration
- Retail



Population
2,708



Local businesses
449



Local jobs
1,011 (1.8%)



Climate
5-40 °C



Median rent
\$200 p/w



Median property \$
\$140,000



Warrumbungle shire

Warrumbungle Shire is located on the central western slopes and plains of NSW. Situated mid-way between Brisbane and Melbourne, 3 hours from Newcastle, 2 hours from Tamworth in the north and Dubbo in the south.

The Shire was built on agricultural pursuits, with the main industries of wool growing, beef cattle production and cereal cropping. The performance of the agricultural sector impacts directly on the local economy, with Shire businesses experiencing significant highs and lows as a result of variations in agricultural production, demand, commodity prices and weather.

Warrumbungle National Park is a popular tourist destination and home to the internationally significant Siding Spring Observatory, which has international Dark Sky status. The LGA is both the traditional land of Kamilaroi people and the Wiradjuri Nation. The area has strong Aboriginal heritage with many sacred sites. Good transport links and an abundance of natural resources provides the LGA with opportunities for economic growth.

Attractions:

- Coolah Tops National Park
- Pilliga Forest
- Pilliga Pottery
- Siding Spring Observatory
- Warrumbungle Dark Sky Park
- Warrumbungle National Park

Top industries for employment:

- Agriculture
- Healthcare
- Education



Population
9,118



Local businesses
1,234



Local jobs
3,123 (5.7%)



Climate
0-38 °C



Median rent
\$260 p/w



Median property \$
\$275,000

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