

NEW SOUTH WALES

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Introduction

New South Wales is in the south-east part of the Australian continent and is the most populous (5.6 million) and heavily industrialised State in Australia, with a highly urbanised population.

Its capital is Sydney, Australia's largest city (population 3.7 million) and one of the world's great seaports. It is also an important international finance centre. The total area of the State is 802,000 km² or 10.4 per cent of Australia's total area and includes Lord Howe, a small island in the Pacific Ocean.

Sydney will host the 2000 Olympics.

Physical features

Natural features divide the State into four main zones extending from north to south.

1. Seaboard and coastal lowlands with a 1460 km coastline broken by few inlets of varying sizes.
2. Tablelands formed by the Great Dividing Range and comprising an almost unbroken series of plateau varying in width from 50 km to 160 km and forming the main watershed where the coastal rivers and those which flow inland originate. The Snowy Mountains region has the highest peak on the continent, Mount Kosciusko, which is 2228m.
3. Western slopes which is a fertile, undulating region with rich plains along rivers flowing inland and some rugged areas. Generally regular and adequate

rainfall has led to extensive cultivation.

4. Western plains comprising almost two-thirds of the State. The soil is fertile, but poor rainfall and limited river water and high temperatures seldom enable it to realise its agricultural or pastoral potential.

There are two distinct groups of rivers - the short, fast-flowing coastal streams which drain about one-sixth of the state but carry more than two-thirds of its water; and the inland rivers, part of the Murray-Darling system. The main rivers are the Hawkesbury, Hunter, Macleay, Clarence, Murrumbidgee, Lachlan, Macquarie-Bogan, Namoi, Gwydir and Castlereagh.

Climate

New South Wales lies in the temperate zone and the climate is generally free from extremes of heat and cold. The greatest heat is usually experienced in the north-west; a shade temperature of more than 51°C has been recorded at Bourke. The coldest region is the Snowy Mountains, where winter frosts and snow are experienced over long periods. Rainfall varies widely over the state, gradually diminishing to an annual average of 180 mm in the far north-west.

Government

The State Government is made up of the Crown, represented by the Governor, and the Parliament, consisting of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly. The Legislative Assembly, or Lower House, consists of 99 members elected for a maximum of four years by universal adult suffrage. The Legislative Council, or Upper House, has 42 members. The term of of-

fice of 21 members expires at each election, at which 21 members are elected.

Economy

The bases of the State's economy are agricultural and pastoral industries, a broadly based manufacturing sector, ample stocks of coal and highly developed service industries.

New South Wales's rich agriculture and mining sectors form the mainstay of its export-earning ability, accounting for almost 50 per cent of export income. The State's resource-based industries are coal, metallic and industrial minerals, minerals processing, chemicals, pulp and paper, processed food and agricultural products.

New South Wales generates more than 35 per cent of Australia's goods and services and sends more than 60 per cent of its exports to Asia - a larger amount than any other Australian State. It attracts more than a third of all foreign investment into the country.

Rural industry

Main primary industries are beef cattle, wool, wheat, hay, lucerne, oats, rice, maize, fruit, vegetables, fishing including oyster farming, and forestry including wood chipping.

The coastal region is mostly used for mixed farming, including dairying and timber. In the warmer northern section, sugar and bananas are grown, mainly in the Tweed, Richmond and Clarence river areas. Beef cattle are grazed

extensively on the ranges, and large quantities of butter and milk are processed at cooperative factories along the coast.

The world's finest wools are grown on the tablelands as well as lamb and beef. There are pockets of agriculture in areas of rich volcanic loams. The western slopes is a major area for fine-wool sheep, beef cattle and wheat. In the north, lambs, pigs and fodder crops are produced, particularly in the Namoi Valley and around Inverell. A cotton industry is centred on Wee Waa. On the central slopes are many orchards; the main crops are cherries, apples and pears. Bathurst and Cowra have a vegetable canning industry. In addition to sheep, cattle and wheat, the south-western slopes produce fodder crops, notably at Gundagai and Wagga Wagga.

The eastern part of the western plains is the main wool and wheat area of the State. In the Riverina district of the central plains lies a large area irrigated from the Murrumbidgee River, where farmers produce orchard crops, grapes, rice, lambs and hay. The western plains form a semi-arid area where raising sheep for wool is the only significant industry, apart from the lead-zinc mining at Broken Hill. Orchards and vineyards lie along the Murray River.

Minerals

The mainstay of the State's mineral production is the huge basin of high-quality black coal under the central coast and Blue Mountains area. Coal is mined extensively in the Hunter River Valley, the Illawarra coast south of Sydney and around Lithgow. Production in 1992 was 85 million tonnes of product coal. Other important minerals are lead and zinc concentrates mined

at Broken Hill, and mineral sands (rutile and zircon) from the beach areas of the central and north coast.

Secondary industry

New South Wales leads Australia in manufacturing production. Its chief manufactures include machinery, electrical goods (including radio, television and other communications equipment), basic metal products, chemicals and fertilisers, processed food and beverages. The State manufactured 4764 million tonnes of raw steel, including casting in 1990-91.

Overseas trade

New South Wales is Australia's largest trading State. In 1992-93, imports were worth \$26.4 billion and exports \$13.2 billion. The main imports were office machines and automatic data processing equipment, road vehicles, petroleum and petroleum products, telecommunication and sound recording equipment, and electrical machinery and appliances. The main exports were coal and coke, cereals and cereal preparations, textile fibres, petroleum and petroleum products, and iron and steel. Major export markets were Japan, New Zealand, the United States and the Republic of Korea.

Transport

The main public transport services are owned and operated by the State Government. All railways except for a few short lines maintained by industrial undertakings are administered by the State Rail Authority. There are 13 906

km of railway line open for traffic. Most of the bus services in Sydney and Newcastle are operated by the State Transit Authority, but in other centres mainly by private enterprise. Heavy road haulage is conducted by private operators. Major port and harbour facilities are under government control and are administered through the Maritime Services Board.

Education

Attendance at school is compulsory for children between six and 15. In public schools, education is free.

Source: DFAT