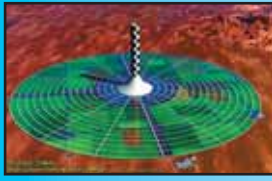


WENTWORTH SHIRE

FACT FILE six



economic & business infrastructure

The past decade has seen a dramatic growth in the economy of the Sunraysia region with increasing business opportunities for the Wentworth Shire.

Dryland agriculture has been the mainstay of the local economy, but water, as a key resource, is now shaping the region's economic future.

Current growth is largely driven by investment in irrigation-based industries, associated value-added manufacturing and the agricultural service sector.

The expansion of capital investment is contributing to a high regional growth rate, expanding the population and the numbers of small businesses to a critical mass of people and industry and sustainable levels of local development.

Key economic sectors

- Agriculture including intensive irrigated horticulture and dryland farming
- Agribusiness, contractors and services
- Manufacturing based on wineries and the food industry
- Transport and packing sheds
- Tourism
- Construction, mineral sand mining
- Government and community services



The value of agricultural production in the Wentworth Shire in 2002 (ABS) totalled \$138.3million.

Agricultural production

The value of agricultural production in 2001 (ABS) totalled:

- Wentworth Shire \$138.3million
- Sunraysia region \$663m, which is an increase of \$55m between 1997 and 2001.

The high levels of security for local irrigation water has contributed significantly to the expansion of intensive horticulture.

This expansion has been further aided by the deregulation of the water market. The result has been a flow-on effect for the downstream manufacturing, processing and service industries.

Growth

The Bureau of Transport and Regional Economics (BTRE) in 2003 note a considerable growth, 97%, in capital stock in manufacturing in Sunraysia between 1996/1997 and 2000/2001. Food and beverage capital stock made up 75% of that total.

Wentworth Shire's share of the total capital stock for manufacturing in 2000-2001 is estimated at \$47.4 million, with in excess of 75% in food and beverage capital stock, an increase estimated at \$24.8 million from the 1996/97 estimates.

The expansion of industry and the rate of growth in the Real Taxable Income for Wentworth Shire stands at 1.15% for the decade 1990/91 to 2000/01.

However, the rate of growth for the Sunraysia region was above the Australian average at 4.3% (BTRE 2003).

This growth has also been reflected in population figures for the Sunraysia region for the decade 1991/2001 that shows an 8.7% increase (ABS 2001).

Mildura is a significant regional growth centre and the key service centre for Sunraysia.

Employment

There has been a shift in the employment base away from a dependency on dryland agriculture and irrigated horticulture to the service and manufacturing sectors.

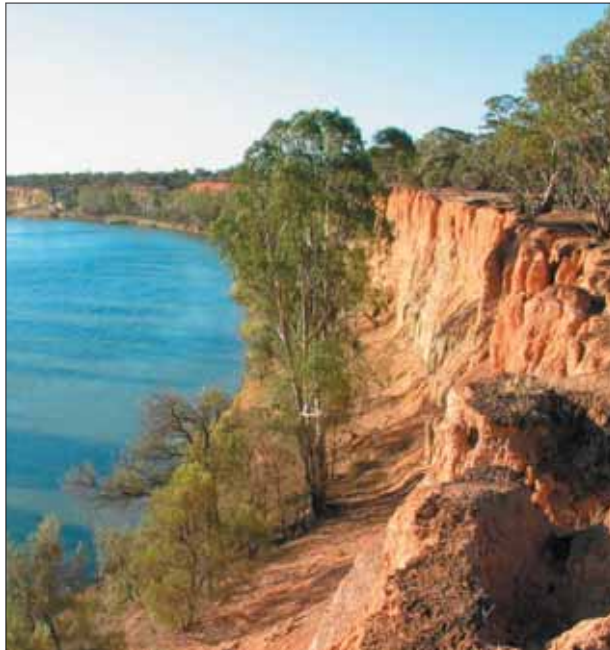
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From previous page

Major employment sectors are:

- Wineries and associated manufacturing
- Transport & packing
- Building & construction
- Hospitality

The Shire is home to a number of NSW State agencies with the Government sector employing more than 300 people.



Eco-tourism has huge potential for future development.

There is a constant demand for skilled labour as well as seasonal labourers during the peak fruit harvest periods.

Other opportunities

During 2004 a major planning study for Buronga/Gol Gol area will provide a comprehensive framework for the expansion of both the residential and industrial areas at the high growth, eastern end of the municipality.

This study is the first of a series of planning reviews for the Shire.

The second stage will be a comprehensive review of the Shire's LEP (Local Environment Plan).

The outcomes will also ensure land is set aside for the future expansion of agricultural production.

Eco and cultural tourism based on the Shire's significant natural assets is regarded as a sector with enormous growth potential, attracting both domestic and international visitors.

Development support

Businesses in the Shire have a comprehensive support network of local services and State agencies, most within 30 minutes travel by road.

A range of financial and business services including the NSW Department of State and Regional Development business adviser and the Sunraysia Area Consultative Committee small business adviser are available.

Fast broad band Internet access is now being rolled out into the densely populated village areas.

The area has strong economic and social ties to Adelaide and Melbourne. Access to higher order services in Adelaide are just five hours by road or less than one hour by air. Melbourne is seven hours by road and less than one and a half hours by air.

Air travel is offered to both centres daily.

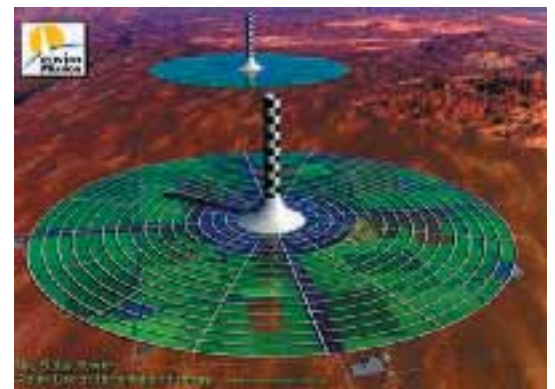
Enviromission

Feasibility studies are being undertaken by Melbourne-based Enviromission for the world's largest solar powered generating plant to be constructed in the Wentworth Shire close to Buronga.

Enviromission has committed to a site in the Shire and owns the exclusive Australian licence to the revolutionary German technology that can generate 200MW of clean, green renewable energy for about 200,000 households.

The tower complex cost, without attendant infrastructure, is estimated at \$700 million; the tower will be one kilometre high - the tallest man-made structure on Earth and will incorporate 700,000 cubic metres of concrete; the accompanying 'green house' will have a radius of 3.5 kilometres, cover about 10,000 hectares and require 38 million square metres of covering.

The project is expected to generate 2700 jobs, many of them for local laborers, during the 34-month construction phase and provide between 15 and 40 ongoing jobs.



The proposed Enviromission Solar Tower is set to transform the region with construction scheduled to begin in 2005.