



Farmhouse near Gunnedah.

Story: Sheryl Allen

LOCATION:	Gunnedah 6 hours north of Sydney
POPULATION:	9,000
INDUSTRIES:	Agriculture, mining
CLIMATE:	Temperate Summer: 18.3°C – 34.0°C Winter: 3.0°C – 16.9°C Avg annual rainfall: 617mm

In which Australian town are you most likely to spot a koala in the main street? In Gunnedah, NSW – the self-proclaimed “Koala Capital of Australia”.

Gunnedah is a proudly-Australian country town, occupying an enviable inland location in the Namoi Valley, almost midway between Brisbane and Sydney and just 75km from Tamworth Airport.

It’s the commercial centre for a shire population of approximately 13,000 and a region renowned for its prosperous farming and grazing country – a mix of magnificent black self-cracking soils on the plains, and basalt and sandstone mixed farming land on the undulations.

The district’s quintessential outback scenery is said to have inspired some of the work of poet Dorothea Mackellar whose family once owned four properties in the region.

The vista is certainly diverse with many volcanic plugs (islands) protruding from the landscape, interspersed among the curtain of surrounding hills.

Agriculture is Gunnedah’s prime industry, thanks to a climate that has been especially

kind over the past five years. Record crops were grown in 2007/2008 with average district yields including wheat around 5.5 tonnes per hectare (or better) and dryland sorghum around 4.5 tonnes per hectare.

“And, of course, the good farmers do even better than that,” laughs Landmark’s Sam Rees. “Barley, oats, canola, chick peas, soy beans and sunflowers are also grown and cotton has been very successful under irrigation. Corn is popular with returns of 15-plus tonnes per hectare.”

The Ag-Quip Field Days which attract more than 100,000 visitors to Gunnedah each August confirm its agricultural focus.

The Gunnedah Saleyards has ranked in the top two NSW facilities for through-put of cattle over the last few years. Favourable seasons for pasture growth and the introduction of subtropical grass varieties have maintained good stocking rates.

“The rural property market has grown significantly over the last five years, with strong attention from local and outside interests,” comments Sam. “The reliable climate is a big drawcard, with the drought having had little impact here at all.”

Rich seams of coal have been mined around Gunnedah for many years. Positive economic conditions and the demands of fast-emerging countries such as China have driven expansion of mining activities, bringing excellent flow-on to the local economy.

“Gunnedah’s population and residential property market have boomed on the back of

mining,” explains Sam. “The retail sector is strong with no vacant shops in the main street. Although we’ve seen a little levelling out of late, it compares very favourably with surrounding towns.”

“Council has approved 350 new housing lots for development and there’s some re-zoning in the pipeline for more lifestyle properties on the town fringes.”

Gunnedah is complete with excellent services in health, education, commerce and finance, and an active cultural and arts community. A vibrant manufacturing industry means diverse job opportunities and few country towns can boast a calendar of local and regional sporting events to rival Gunnedah’s. From show jumping to football to bowls, there are top-class facilities and enthusiastic clubs aplenty.

Sam sums it up best: “Gunnedah is the best country town in NSW by a country mile”.

CONTACT:

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PROPERTY GUIDE:

Residential: 3-bedroom timber home \$220,000

3-bedroom brick home \$280,000 – \$320,000

Larger acreage: Heavy black soil dryland farming country \$1,800 – \$2,000 per acre