

## **LIVING IN THE HUNTER**

### **REAL ESTATE**

The Hunter is experiencing continued growth in residential real estate, especially in the harbour and inner city urban renewal precincts as well as around Maitland with its new residential estates. However, owning a home is still very achievable, with Hunter residents enjoying high rates of home ownership. Whether looking for lake or ocean views, a rural retreat, a house in a new estate or established housing in one of the major metropolitan areas, the Hunter has something for everyone and every budget.

### **HEALTH AND MEDICAL SERVICES**

The Hunter has one of the most advanced health and medical systems in New South Wales, administered by the Hunter New England Health. The major hospitals for the Hunter Region include John Hunter Hospital, John Hunter Children's Hospital, Calvary Mater Newcastle and Royal Newcastle Centre along with two mental health hospitals: the James Fletcher Hospital and Morisset Hospital.

These hospitals support district health services and community hospitals throughout the Region. In addition, a further 20 private hospitals enhance the health services available to the community.

The Health Service works in partnership with the NSW Ambulance Service and the Hunter Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service to safely bring people to the facility that best serves their needs. These services operate across the whole region.

### **EDUCATION**

The Region has an excellent private and public school system with primary and high schools spread throughout. Public schooling is well covered, with all residential areas served by infant, primary and strategically located high schools. Merewether High School is one of 17 fully selective high schools in New South Wales providing an educationally enriched environment for high-achieving, academically gifted students.

There is a variety of high quality private schools with a history of success. These include:

- Hunter Valley Grammar School - East Maitland
- Newcastle Grammar School - Newcastle
- Scone Grammar School - Scone
- Bishop Tyrrell Anglican College - Fletcher
- Macquarie College - Wallsend
- St Phillips Christian College – Campuses at Waratah, Salamander Bay and Cessnock
- Avondale College - Cooranbong

The Catholic Diocese of Maitland provides educational services throughout the Region. The diocese extends from Lake Macquarie to Taree and as far inland as Merriwa and Murrurundi with primary schools, high schools and colleges in all main towns.

Major Catholic schools include:

- St Francis Xavier - Hamilton
- St Pius X - Adamstown
- St Catherine's Catholic College - Singleton
- All Saints College - Maitland

The University of Newcastle is one of Australia's leading universities. Ranked in the top 10 universities for research and with an international reputation for progressive

teaching and learning, its 28,000 students benefit from the latest in teaching practices and technology.

TAFE NSW Hunter Institute is the largest regional provider of education and training in Australia. It offers more than 500 courses to around 55,000 students across 15 campuses throughout the Region, with the main college being in Newcastle.

## **SHOPPING**

Anything you can buy in the cities, you can buy in the Hunter. Retail complex shopping is conveniently located across the Region.

In the larger centres of Newcastle and Lake Macquarie, Westfield Shoppingtown at Kotara and Charlestown Square and Maitland's Stockland Greenhills shopping centres feature major retail outlets including David Jones, Myer, Kmart, Target, Coles and Woolworths, catering to the shopper's every wish.

A number of major shopping projects are planned for the Region, including a \$500 million redevelopment in the Newcastle CBD. A \$350 million expansion of Charlestown Square is also underway.

Boutique shopping is available in suburbs across the Region and 24-hour supermarket shopping is available in many Hunter locations.

All major furniture and electrical discount stores are represented in the region.

## **Sporting Recreation**

Almost every sport imaginable can be played in the Hunter, with top-class sporting facilities throughout the Region available for the player or spectator regardless of age.

Sporting teams at all levels from junior to adult compete across the Region in sports such as cricket, football, netball, basketball, rugby league, rugby union, AFL and hockey. Sailing is enjoyed on all the waterways, whether racing or cruising, and there is an exceptional choice of world-class golf courses.

The Region's strong sporting background is highlighted by the Newcastle Knights in the National Rugby League and the Newcastle Jets in the National A-League – very successful teams and each with a very strong fan base. The women's Jets team in the new Westfield W-League is also attracting a growing following.

Surfing is a high participation sport in the Hunter because of the great selection of pristine surfing beaches. Surfest, an international surfing event attracting the world's elite surfers, occurs annually at Newcastle Beach.

Glendale Sports and Athletic Centre and the University's Forum Sports and Aquatic Centre were both utilised by visiting Olympic teams in their Sydney 2000 Olympic preparations.

The Hunter also has something to offer the outdoors lover. Superb national parks and wildlife reserves abound. Parts of the Barrington Tops National Park are world heritage listed and activities include bushwalking, eco-tourism facilities and white water rafting.

Myall Lakes National Park in the Great Lakes district is around 44,000 ha, Watagan State Forest extends for over 7,000 ha in Lake Macquarie and Blackbutt Reserve,

just 15 minutes from Newcastle CBD, showcases native flora and fauna in vast unspoiled bushland.

The Hunter's pristine beaches, Lake Macquarie (Australia's largest saltwater lake), the Hunter River and the beautiful bays of Port Stephens give residents the opportunity to relax and indulge in all kinds of water sports – sailing, waterskiing, surfing, fishing and swimming.

### **Entertainment**

There is a diverse range of entertainment available across the Hunter suitable for singles and families. Fine art collections are housed in the Newcastle Regional Gallery as well as more intimate galleries. The relocated Newcastle Museum (opening in 2009) and the new Maritime Museum have extensive collections to both educate and entertain.

Newcastle's fully restored Civic Theatre is the venue for regular local, national and international performances and the Newcastle Entertainment Centre accommodates rock concerts, exhibitions and conventions. The Conservatorium of Music regularly hosts national and international musicians and performances. Wine Country venues such as The Tempus Two Winery, the Bimbadgen Estate and the new 19,000 seat Hope Estate amphitheatre have a reputation for attracting major local and international artists.

Across the Region, numerous registered clubs provide a range of entertainment options, from a place to meet friends to concerts of all types.

The Hunter is also home to a wide range of annual festivals that attract many locals as well as an increasing number of visitors to the Region. These include Jazz in the Vineyards, Opera in the Vineyards, Newcastle Jazz Festival, Newcastle Blues Festival, Mattara Festival, Hunter Valley Steamfest, Lovedale Long Lunch, Dungog Rodeo, Timberfest, Surfest, Shakespeare Festival, Scone and Upper Hunter Horse Festival, Festival of the Fleeces, Port Stephens Whale & Environ Fest, Blue Water Country Music Festival and many others.

### **Dining out**

The Hunter's culinary delights are sure to tempt, with a vast array of dining experiences to enjoy throughout the region. Diners can choose from alfresco dining in cosmopolitan cafés, seafood restaurants by the water, quality rural establishments and much more.

There's a place to suit every taste, mood and budget. There's no better way to enjoy the local cuisine than with one of the Region's world famous wines. Vineyards stretch throughout the Region, where you'll find gourmet restaurants, world class resorts, quaint B&Bs

### **Transport**

The Hunter is easily accessible by road, rail and air. One of Australia's fastest growing airports, Newcastle Airport is just 25 minutes from the Newcastle CBD. It is serviced by Jetstar, Qantas, Virgin Blue, Brindabella Airlines, Aeropelican and Norfolk Air with direct flights to Melbourne, Brisbane, Sydney, Gold Coast, Canberra, Tamworth, Inverell and Norfolk Island. Further services are expected to be added in the near future.

A seaplane service also commenced in 2008, providing an easy link between the CBDs of Newcastle and Sydney.

Commuter rail services operate suburban passenger trains within the Hunter and link the Region to the East Coast of Australia via Cityrail and CountryLink.

### **Churches**

The Hunter has a predominantly Christian community, with 29.5% of the population Anglican, 25% Catholic, 7.6% Uniting Church and 4% Presbyterian and Reformed. Newcastle is the seat of the Anglican and Catholic Hunter bishops, with stately Christ Church Cathedral one of the Region's best known icons. Other religions, including Buddhism and Islam, are also represented in the region.