

Considering the country?



Health Professionals Guide to Country WA

Living in Country WA



LIVING IN COUNTRY WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Country Western Australia

Population: 519,016

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT REGIONS OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Some of the highlights...

- The relaxed and friendly lifestyle.
- Enjoying a strong sense of community.
- Experience our rich and diverse cultural heritage
- A 'can do' and optimistic local spirit.
- The fantastic recreational experiences on offer including camping, fishing and four-wheel driving.
- Meet new friends - for life.
- Get into a whole new social scene.
- Explore the great state of WA.

Western Australia is the largest state in Australia, accounting for approximately one third of the Australian continent. It covers 2,525,500 square kilometres. The United Kingdom would fit over 10 times into Western Australia. Despite the huge size, the population is less than 2.0 million, 80% of which live in and around Perth (approx. 1.5 million).

Country Western Australia encompasses one-third of Australia's land area. Its half million people represent only 2.7 % of Australia's and 27 % of the State's population. Basically, country WA is very vast, with a very dispersed and unique population.

COUNTRY REGIONS

Country Western Australia is used to describe nine regions: Kimberley, Pilbara, Gascoyne, Midwest, Wheatbelt, Goldfields, Great Southern, Peel and SouthWest. There is great diversity between the nine regions, with variety between their individual economic, social and environmental challenges and opportunities - no two regions are the same.

WA Country Health Service incorporates 8 of the nine country regions of Western Australia: Kimberley; Pilbara Gascoyne; Midwest Murchison; Goldfields South East; Wheatbelt; SouthWest, and Great Southern.

Kimberley

Major Centres	Resident Population	Distance From Perth
Broome	15,242	2230km
Kununurra	5,220	3206km
Derby	3,661	2383km
Halls Creek	1,266	2846km
Whyndam	787	3216km
Fitzroy Crossing	1,448	2558km

Pilbara

Major Centres	Population	Distance From Perth
Karratha	10,730	1537km
Port Hedland	12,697	1638km



Newman	3515	1186km
Tom Price	3,094	1458km

Midwest

Major Centres	Population	Distance From Perth
Geraldton	25,324	427km
Dongara	2,199	362km
Kalbarri	2,123	592km
Morawa	622	373km
Meekathara	948	765km
Mullewa	532	452km
Carnarvon	7,189	904km
Exmouth	3,027	1263km

Goldfields

Major Centres	Population	Distance From Perth
Kalgoorlie	28,196	595km
Leonora	1,072	830km
Laverton	440	954km
Norseman	1,058	721km
Esperance	9,365	730km
Ravensthorpe	348	540km

Wheatbelt

Major Centres	Population	Distance From Perth
Northam	6,137	97km
Moora	1,711	174km
Merredin	2,803	259km
Narrogin	4,424	192km
Southern Cross	890	369km
York	2,015	96km

Great Southern

Major Centres	Population	Distance From
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		Perth
Albany	22,256	540km
Katanning	3,676	297km
Denmark	2,433	414km
Mt Barker	1,723	359km
Kojonup	1,127	256km
Gnowangerup	673	356km

South West

Major Centres	Population	Distance From Perth
Bunbury	45, 153	179km
Collie	6, 946	202km
Busselton	13, 863	228km
Manjimup	4,387	301km
Margaret River	3,629	274km

*** Populations describe number of residents in the town (rather than the shire). Figures based on 2001 Census.*

CLIMATE

The climate of country WA is varied, ranging from chilly winters in Albany to balmy

summer nights on Cable Beach in Broome. The below table provides a summary of the average temperatures across country WA.

Useful Links & Information
 Bureau of Meteorology:
www.bom.gov.au/weather/wa/
 Comprehensive climate information

Area	Summer		Winter	
	Max	Min	Max	Min
Kimberley	34	25	30	15
Pilbara	40	29	29	14
Gascoyne	36	21	25	12
Midwest	34	18	22	10
Goldfields	32	17	17	5
Wheatbelt	31	19	19	8
Great Southern	25	13	16	7
South West	28	13	17	8



Childs play, country style...

ECONOMY

One impressive measure of the importance of the country regions to the state of WA is its significant contribution to exports; collectively the country contribute 22% of the nation's and 82% of the states exports.

Our major industries include: pastoralism, agriculture (crop, wool, livestock) mining (minerals, gas and petroleum), horticulture, aquaculture, and fishing. The tourism industry has also grown rapidly and is no one of the largest contributors to regional economy.

REGION & TOWN INFORMATION

Useful Links & Information

Regional Development Commissions
 Kimberley www.kdc.wa.gov.au
 Pilbara www.pdc.wa.gov.au
 Gascoyne www.gdc.wa.gov.au
 Midwest www.mwdc.wa.gov.au
 Wheatbelt www.wheatbelt.wa.gov.au
 Goldfields Esperance www.gedc.wa.gov.au
 Great Southern www.gsdc.wa.gov.au
 South West www.swdc.wa.gov.au

Council/Shire Websites
www.dlgrd.wa.gov.au/localGovt/localGovtContacts

Other
 Online WA www.onlinewa.com.au
 Western Australian Government www.wa.gov.au

The World Wide Web is a wonderful source of information about areas within country WA. Two

very useful resources are the Country Development Commission's websites and local shire/council websites.

MAPS & STREET DIRECTORIES

Detailed maps of WA can be found on the Department of Local Government and Regional Development website. It is recommended

Useful Links & Information

UBD (Country Road Atlas)
www.ubd.com.au

Department of Local Government and Regional Development: Maps
www.dlgrd.wa.gov.au/statisticInfo/regionMaps.asp.

Where Is? Online Street Directory
www.wherewis.com

Australian Street Directory
www.street-directory.com.au

that before you visit a new community that you access a copy street directory and map of the community to give you a better perspective of the town's location. A range of maps are available for sale or downloadable from the Internet.

PEOPLE & POPULATION

Country WA has a population of over 500,000 people. It includes both regional centres and smaller towns, offering dynamic multicultural communities with a relaxed, friendly lifestyle. Country WA is sparsely populated. Outside of the



metropolitan area, the largest towns are just over 30,000 people in size.

Area	2003 Resident Population
*Kimberley	35,748
*Pilbara	39,282
*Midwest	50,064
*Gascoyne	9,854
*Goldfields	53,661
*Great Southern	53,738
*Wheatbelt	70,132
*South West	140,846
Peel	91,853
TOTAL	545,185

**Denotes areas within WACHS catchment.*

Population based on Census 2001 estimated population (2005).

Approximately 82% of country people live in a town, with just 9% on a rural property, and 9% in some other situation (e.g. mine site). Most country people are not born in their current locality. They are from other country areas, the city or from overseas. The regional Western Australian population is highly mobile. This can offer benefits in that you will find many people in the community just like you - new to a town and looking for friends and activities. It is quite amazing how quickly you can make friends (for life) in the country.

GETTING THERE

Train & Bus

TransWA is the primary rail and bus network. Greyhound offers further bus

Useful Links and Information
TransWA http://www.transwa.wa.gov.au/
Greyhound www.greyhound.com.au

services. Bus services are available between Perth and most country towns. Rail services are available between Perth and Kalgoorlie (The Prospector)

Car

Cars are the primary mode of travel within country WA. Main Roads (WA) provide excellent resources to assist you in planning travel via car, including the Online Distance Book (maps, routes and recommended stops) on the Department of Main Roads website.

Driving in the country is quite different from metropolitan driving. You need to consider factors such as hazards (weather, wildlife), fatigue and road conditions (typically single lane gravel roads).

Further Information and Links
Department of Main Roads www.mainroads.wa.gov.au Click, Region and then Touring WA.

Air

Air travel is offered by a number of providers including:

Further Information and Links
Qantas www.qantas.com.au
Sky West www.skywest.com.au
Virgin Blue www.virginblue.com.au

Qantas: Offers flights from Perth to Newman, Paraburdoo, Port Hedland, Karratha, Broome, Kununurra and Kalgoorlie.

SkyWest: Offers flights from Perth to Kalgoorlie, Esperance, Albany, Geraldton, Kalbarri, Monkey Mia, Carnarvon, Exmouth, Port Hedland, Kununurra and Broome.

Virgin: Offers flights from Perth to Broome.

Regional airlines include Skippers (www.skippers.com.au) and NorthWest Regional Airlines (www.northwestregional.com.au)

Visit WA's major attractions...



GETTING AROUND

Most larger communities have taxi and bus services (although bus time tables tend to be quite infrequent). Small communities can be without public transport facilities or taxi services. If you are not taking your own transport, this can make getting around the community a little more difficult. Before you go out to a community, look in to:

- The distance of your accommodation from your work site and other facilities, such as supermarkets.
- Local transport facilities, such as buses and taxis.
- Alternative transport, such as bike hire, which is often a cheap option worth thinking about.

Further Information and Links
Telstra www.telstra.com.au
Optus www.optus.net.au
Vodafone www.vodafone.com.au

car license renewal. Postage between the metropolitan and the country areas typically takes two days. For more remote sites, delivery time is longer. Always check the mail delivery times before sending mail.

Telephones & Mobiles

All country communities have access to land or satellite phones. Mobile phone coverage will be specific to your local carrier, with some carriers not having reception in all countries communities. It is recommended you check mobile phone coverage for service before moving to a new community.

Internet Access

In recent years there has been significant improvement in Internet access. The roll out of broadband to country WA means people now have faster and more reliable access to the Internet. Many towns also have public access through Internet Cafes, local libraries or through local Telecentre.

POST & COMMUNICATION

Australia Post

Further Information and Links
Australia Post
www.auspost.com.au

Most country communities have a local post office. Australia post provides

comprehensive information about postal rates, postcodes and delivery times. A range of services is available at the local post offices including bill pay,

Newspapers & Magazines

The West Australian newspaper is the main daily newspaper in WA, printed from Monday to Saturday. The Sunday Times is the main Sunday paper. Both papers are available in most country towns. Delivery times vary between towns (depending on the distance from Perth). Most country communities also have a local newspaper (see www.nla.gov.au/npapers)



Radio and TV

Four television stations

Useful Information and Links
TV Guide www.ebroadcast.com.au

operate in country WA: GWN, WIN, ABC and SBS. Most communities have access to local AM and FM stations. Triple J (JJJ) is available in many country towns.

EDUCATION

Child Care

Child care facilities are available in most larger country towns. For child care services visit the Yellow Pages (www.yellowpages.com.au) under 'Child Care'. Care for Kids (www.careforkids.com.au) also provides a listing of childcare facilities in country WA.

Primary and Secondary Schools

Primary and high schools are located across country WA.

The Department of Education and Training provides a

Useful Information and Links
Department of Education & Training www.eddept.wa.edu.au/schoolinfo/
Associations of Independent Schools WA http://www.ais.wa.edu.au/

comprehensive profile of all public primary and secondary schools. Private primary and high schools are also available.

TAFE

TAFE Colleges are based across a number of country communities.

Useful Information and Links
Great Southern www.gstafe.wa.gov.au
Kimberley www.kimtafe.wa.edu.au
Pilbara www.pilbaratafe.wa.edu.au
Central West www.centralwest.wa.edu.au
Goldfields South East www.kalg.curtin.edu.au/vtec
Wheatbelt www.cyoc.wa.edu.au
Southwest http://www.swdc.wa.gov.au

University

WA has four principal universities, some with country campus: Curtin University of Technology (Perth, Geraldton, Kalgoorlie, Esperance, Karratha); University of Western Australia (Perth); Murdoch University (Perth); Edith Cowan University (Perth); and Notre Dame University (Perth, Broome).

Useful Information and Links
Curtin University www.curtin.edu.au
University of WA www.uwa.edu.au
Murdoch University www.murdoch.edu.au
Edith Cowan University www.ecu.edu.au
Notre Dame University www.nd.edu.au

Country campuses are typically partnership campuses, and offer a reduced range of courses. All WA universities offer a range of courses/units available via flexible delivery (e.g. distance learning, e-modules, intensive).

LIFESTYLE

People in country WA feel safe, have a strong affinity with their location and are generally happy with community facilities (particularly sports). Country people are perceived as very friendly and thrive on community spirit.

THINGS TO DO

Useful Information and Links
Department of Education and Training: School Terms and Public Holidays http://www.eddept.wa.edu.au/termdates/

Public and School Holidays

There are 10 public holidays in Western Australia; New Years Day, Australia Day, Labour Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Anzac Day, Foundation Day, Queens Birthday, Christmas Day and Boxing Day. Some country towns also celebrate the Queens Birthday on alternative dates, to coincide with local events of significance.



What are you doing on the weekend?

Field Days, Shows and Fairs

Local community shows or fairs are events not to be missed event. In fact many of these events have become iconic of the Australian culture (e.g Dowerin Field Day, Ord Valley Muster etc.). Local shire websites usually include a calendar of community events. A small snap shot of the diversity of country fairs include:

Kimberley

Derby Rodeo	August
Boab Festival	July
Halls Creek Agricultural Show	July
The Ord Valley Muster	May
Top of the West Festival	September
Opera Under the Stairs	August
Stair Case to the Moon	April

Pilbara Gascoyne

Karratha Festival	June
Dampier Fishing Classic	August
Cossack Fair and Regatta	June
Port Headland Festival	January
Tropical Festival (Carnarvon)	May
Fremantle to Carnarvon Yachting Classic	May

Midwest Murchison

Batavia Coast Fishing Classic	April
Festival of Geraldton (Sunshine Festival)	October
Morawa Music Spectacular	October
Perenjori Agricultural Show	September
Mingenew Expo	September
Northampton Airing of the Quits	October
Qfest (Cue)	October

Goldfields South East

Kalgoorlie - Boulder Community Fair	March
Diggers and Dealers Forum	July
World 2 Up Championship	September
Goldfields Mining Expo	November
Coolgardie Day	September
Agricultural Show with Esperance Shears	October
Sailboard Classic (Esperance)	December

Wheatbelt

Pingelly Art and Tulip Festival	August
Eisteddfod Music Festival (Narrogin)	July
Across the Lake Regatta	January
Kellerberrin Agricultural Show	September
Vintage Fair and Country Festival (Merredin)	Sept-Oct
Central Wheatbelt Games	May
Moondyne Colonial & Convict Festival	August
Avon Descent Festival	April
Camel Races (Northam)	November
Country Music Festival	

Great Southern

Great Southern Wine Festival	February
Winter Festival	August
Mount Barker Mardi Gras	January
Wildflower Festival	September

SouthWest

Vintage Blues Festival	January
Leeuwin Concert	February
Margaret River Pro (Surfing)	March
Quit Forrest Rally	May

Visit the Calendar of Events at

www.westernaustralia.com for a full list of events.



THINGS TO SEE

Living in a country community puts you that one step closer to some of the amazing travel opportunities in country WA. You can dive with the whale sharks, walk amongst the tree tops of ancient trees, sleep under canopy of stars in the desert, explore the gorges and wilderness areas, or live it up in a sea side resort. Living in country WA can be a truly amazing Australian outback experience.

Kimberley

- Cable Beach
- Dampier Peninsula
- Beagle Bay
- Buccaneer Archipelago
- Bungle Bungle Range
- Horizontal Waterfalls
- Bell Gorge
- Geikie Gorge National Park
- Lake Argyle
- Mitchell Plateau

Pilbara

- Karujini National Park
- Ophthalmia Range
- Historic Cossack
- Millstream-Chichester & Cape Range National Park
- Mount Augustus National Park

Gascoyne

- Ningaloo Reef
- Monkey Mia, Sharks Bay & Coral Bay
- Dampier Archipelago

Midwest

- Badgingarra National Park
- Kalbarri National Park (Nature's Window, Hawk's Head, Loop & Z-Bend)
- Geraldton Maritime Museum
- Murchison River Gorge
- Wildflower Way
- Batavia Coast

Goldfields

- Lake Ballard
 - Broad Arrow, Kookyne, Ora Banda & Gwalia
 - Two Up School & Super Pit
 - Hannans Tourist Mine
 - Recherche Archipelago
 - Great Ocean Drive
 - Cape Le Grand & Frenchman's Peak
 - Windarra Heritage Trail
-

Wheatbelt

- Historic town of York
 - Pinnacles Desert
 - New Norcia
 - Wildflower Way
 - Nambung National Park
 - Wave Rock
 - Hippo's Yawn Cave
 - Yanchep National Park
-

Great Southern

- Valley of the Giants
 - Porongurup & Stirling Ranges
 - Frenchman's Bay
 - Castle Rock & Bluff Knoll
 - Green's Pool & Elephant Rocks
 - Whale World
-

SouthWest

- Cape Naturalist & Cape Leeuwin
 - Blackwood River
 - Lake & Mammoth Cave
 - Surfers Point Lookout
 - Gloucester Tree
 - Coomboona Bay
 - Wine Tasting in Margaret River
 - Busselton Jetty
-

Entertainment, Culture and Special Events

Further Information and Links

WA Tourism Commission
www.westernaustralia.com

WA Window
<http://www.west-oz.com/>

Scoop Traveller
www.scooptraveller.com.au

Country towns are never short of entertainment, including touring bands, cinema and a range of cultural

events. You will also find yourself engaged in entertainment unique to community (e.g. festivals, race days, fairs etc). Entertainment is not less in the country - but it is different.

Sport and Activities

Sport is the lifeblood of rural communities and is often the key to socialising. Most rural communities, even the smallest ones, will offer a range of sporting options from football, netball, swimming, soccer, golf, lawn bowls, hockey and tennis, to the more adventurous windsurfing, ballooning, skydiving and scuba diving.

Pubs and Clubs

The Aussie pub is the cornerstone of any country WA community. No matter how small, all country towns will have a have a pub or sports club (or two). Nightclubs are not so common, mostly only available in the bigger country centres.



WA's beautiful coast is yours to explore...

Clubs & Organisations

Clubs such as Rotary and Lions are a major part of rural community

Further Information and Links

Rotary www.rotary.org.au
Lion's www.lionsclubs.org.au

life, so are volunteer organisations such as Volunteer Fire Brigade, St Johns Ambulance and State Emergency Service (SES). They can be a great way to not only get involved in the community, but also meet new people.

Eating Out

The number and type of restaurants depend on the size of the town. Most towns will have a roadhouse or a local pub. Larger towns will have a range of restaurants and cafes. Fast food outlets vary also. MacDonald's/Hungry Jacks are only found in the larger regional centres. Chicken Treat, Red Rooster and KFC are available in a great range of medium to large communities.

FACILITIES AND AMMENITIES

Costs of Living

The cost of living varies depending on location. For example in the Pilbara and Kimberley the cost of household amenities are the same as in Perth, but up to 30-40% higher for accommodation. Food

prices, especially fruit and vegetables vary significant, and increase the more remote your location. The price of petrol also rises the further you are from Perth. It is recommended you research cost of living variances by talking to a local community member before arrival.

Banks & Money

Most country towns have access to at least one bank branch and an ATM. Before arriving in your new community it is recommended you check access to branches and ATMs with your bank. The most common banks in country WA are Bankwest, ANZ, Westpac, Commonwealth, and National.

Shopping

Most country towns have at least one supermarket in the community. Target is located in Bunbury, Broome, Kununurra, Carnarvon, Geraldton, Merredin, Kalgoorlie, Esperance, Katanning, Northam, and Narrogin. Kmart is located in Albany, Kalgoorlie, and South Hedland.

Country towns don't usually have access to large department stores such as Myer, David Jones or many of the specialty clothes boutiques. However, mail order and Internet based shopping is becoming



a lot more popular - with your all your favourite brands just the Internet and post away.

Recreation

Swimming pools (especially if you live inland) and recreation facilities are available in most towns.

Refer to the local council websites to view amenities available in a community.

Accommodation

Rental rates and property prices in country communities vary significantly. For general guidance regarding prices visit www.reiwa.com.au

FLORA & FAUNA

WA is renowned for its diversity of plants and animals. Magnificent wildflowers begin blooming in mid-winter in the north and sweep south to end the season in mid to late summer along the cooler south coast. Country WA also harbours a range of wildlife, although care and distance does need to be exercised to protect both them and yourself. Living side by side with our wonderful fauna does come with some responsibility:

- Be alert for kangaroos and emus when driving in country areas, as they do tend to cross the road unexpectedly, especially at dusk and dawn.
- Watch out for stray sheep or cattle that may wander on the road.
- Enjoy wildlife from a distance - please don't feed them, and avoid chasing them (or letting your pets chase them).
- The North West waterways are home to the saltwater and freshwater crocodile. They are natural predators and considered very dangerous to humans. Always observe warning signs and if in doubt DO NOT swim, canoe or use small boats in estuaries, tidal rivers and deep pools.

For further information visit the Nature Base website developed the Department of Environment and Conservation (www.calm.wa.gov.au).

SETTLING INTO A COUNTRY COMMUNITY

Country WA represents a significant diversity of communities. As you can see facilities, activities, and people are unique for each town. Moving to the country is a big decision. It often involves leaving family, friends and established social networks. Not only are you starting a new job, but also you starting a new life. Before moving to the country you need to decide what country town is for you.

Research

Investigate the type of community you would like to live in. Remember you are moving to the community not only to work, but also to live in. It has to suit you in and outside of work. Ask yourself what are your basic community requirements (e.g. can you live without the beach, or access to a gym). You also need to think about how far away from your friends and family you would like to be. Do you want to go back to the city frequently? Do you need to be in driving distance from a bigger community with greater services/facilities? Spend some time researching the community.

Talk

Talk to people who live in the community. Find out first hand what it is like to be a 'local'. The local tourism centre can be extremely helpful, as can other local health professionals.

Visit

If possible try and visit the town before deciding to move. There is no better way to appreciate a community than to physically see and explore it. The cost of visiting the town is a small price to pay to ensure that the town is suitable for you.



SETTLING IN

People jokingly say that you have to be born in a town to be a local. Despite this, all rural communities are very welcoming of new people to town. Some sure fire ways to help you transition include:

1. Visit the local library and tourist centre. These centers distribute maps, newspapers, community calendars, brochures and much more.
2. Invite a close relative or friend to stay with you right after the move. The two of you can explore unfamiliar territory together, and you'll have an extra pair of hands to help unpack.
3. Remember the rule about six degrees of separation. Contact friends and relatives about their ties to your new town. Someone always will know someone who lives or who has lived in your new community. Give them a call or take them to coffee/the pub and ask them to tell you about the town.
4. Buy a map and start exploring. Seeing your new town is fun and right away gives you something in common with other people. And you'll start developing your favourite haunts—a true sign of home!
5. Join a local sports team (even if you have never played that sports before - have a go!). Many health professionals have suddenly become tennis players or soccer players on arrival to a new town.
6. Say YES to everything. As the new person in town and at work you will be invited to attend a host of activities, parties and gatherings. Even though it is uncomfortable to begin with (unless you are the extrovert social butterfly) go along and make the effort - it will be worth it in the long run.
7. Look for things in the new community that you enjoyed in your old one. If you enjoy golf, find out about your local golf facilities. If you were part of a support group, see if there is a similar group in town.
8. Go to all the local community events (even then ones you would never have considered going to before moving). Local events are an important part of the country life.
9. Buy to local newspaper. This is an easy and enjoyable way to get acquainted with a new community and to get a taste of what life is like there.
10. Become a volunteer. Community service and volunteerism may be one of the best ways to create meaningful new ties. Find opportunities through local community centers or library, your job, churches, or schools, or online. Join a club! Salsa dancing, rock climbing, chess?
11. Latch on to other newbies. Seek out other families/people who have moved recently. Chances are they will be in the same stage of getting settled, so their calendars will have as much white space as yours.

WA Country Health Service

www.wacountry.health.wa.gov.au

wachs@health.wa.gov.au

Ph: 1800 629 028 (within Australia)

Ph: +61 8 9223 8500 (outside Australia)



Department of Health
Government of Western Australia
WA Country Health Service