



Southern Highlands Destination Strategy 2020-2030

Background Report

Report prepared for



November 2020



lucid

/'lu:sid/

adjective

1. expressed clearly; easy to understand

2. bright or luminous



Document Control

Job Name: Southern Highlands Destination Strategy

Client: Wingecarribee Shire Council

Client Contact: Jan Campbell

Version Control

Version	Date	Authorisation
Draft v1	31/1/20	MC
Draft v2	23/2/20	MC
Final Draft	26/6/20	MC
Final	11/11/20	MC

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Lucid Economics Pty Ltd (Lucid Economics) was engaged to deliver the Southern Highlands Destination Strategy on behalf of the Wingecarribee Shire Council.

Population

Population growth in the Southern Highlands has accelerated in recent years, peaking at 1.8% in 2016, up from a recent low of 0.7% in 2012. Population growth has been broadly in line with the NSW average in recent years, having been below the NSW average for the majority of the decade prior.

The Southern Highlands has an older population than the NSW median, with the ageing of the local population forecast to continue out to the year 2041.

Economy

The Southern Highlands Gross Regional Product (GRP) was \$2.9 billion in 2018-19, up 3.2% from the previous year (Figure 3.1). The council's economy has grown broadly in line with the New South Wales average over the past five (2.9% per annum in Southern Highlands, compared to 2.8% across NSW) and ten (2.4% per annum for both Southern Highlands and NSW) years.

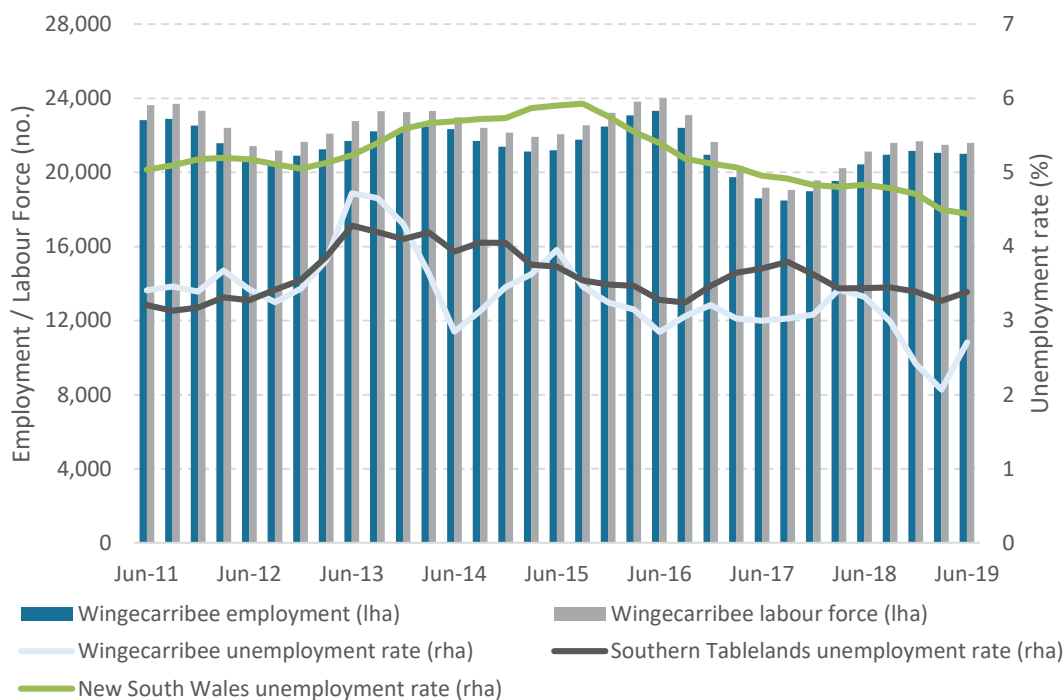
The largest industries by Industry Value-Add (IVA) in the Southern Highlands in 2018-19 were:

- Construction
- Manufacturing
- Health care and social assistance
- Retail trade
- Education and training

Labour Force

The Southern Highlands unemployment rate was 2.7% in June quarter 2019. The region's unemployment rate has trended lower over the past six years, however total employment and labour force has actually declined over this period. With population growing at around 1.5% per annum since 2013, this suggests a sharp decline in the region's participation rate in recent years. The ageing of the region's population over the past decade would also be placing downward pressure on the region's participation rate.

Figure E.1. Labour Force and Unemployment Rates

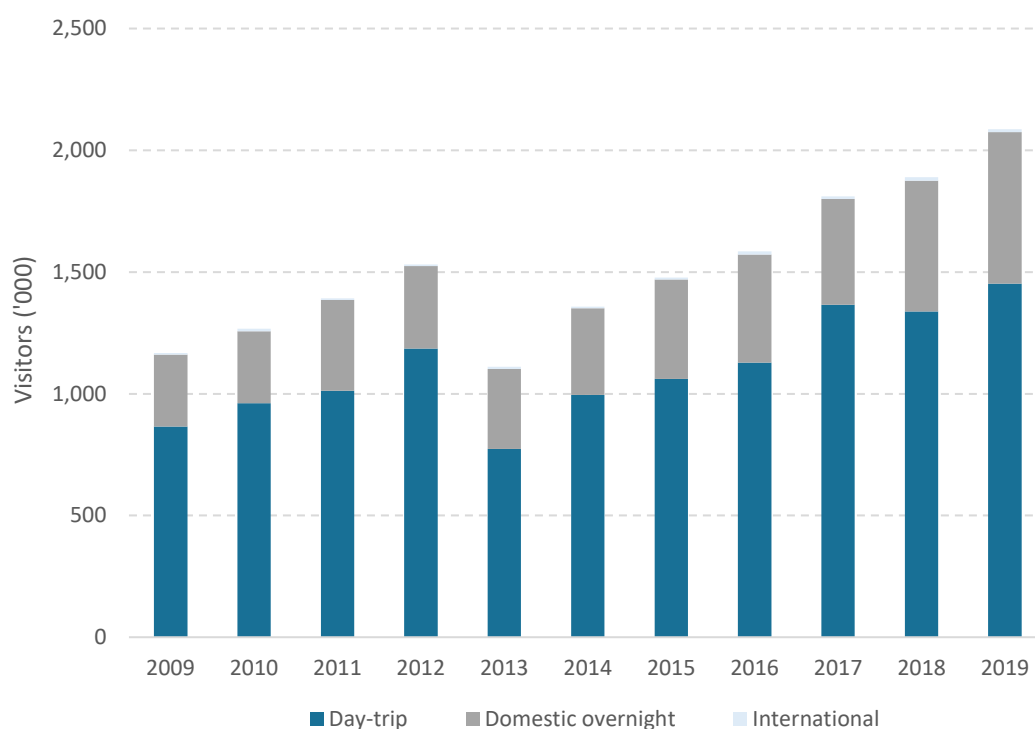


Source: DJSB (2019).

Tourism

Tourism is a key industry in the region, both in terms of industry value-add and employment. Visitation has risen by more than 50% since 2014, with the growth in visitor numbers primarily driven by strong growth in domestic visitation. The region is dominated by domestic visitors, with day-trip visitors accounting for 70% of total visitation in 2019, while domestic overnight visitors accounted for 30% of total visitation over the period. International visitors represent less than 1% of total visitors to the area.

Figure E.2. Visitors by Type, Southern Highlands



Source: TRA (2020).

Key Risks

There are a number of risks that the current structure of the economy and existing trends provide:

- **Changing Demographics:** the population of the Southern Highlands is aging rapidly. By 2041, every second person living in the region will be aged 55+, which will dramatically change the structure of local expenditure patterns, particularly as the working age is set for a net decline during the period.
- **Growing Role of Tourism:** tourism has grown rapidly over the recent past, adding considerable value to the economy and somewhat offsetting the changing demographic structure and its impact on the economy. Tourism is a volatile industry that is often impacted by a myriad of factors that are beyond the control of the local industry.
- **Weakness in Significant Economic Drivers:** many traditional economic drivers, such as manufacturing, have been in decline in recent years and the structure of the local economy has become more geared towards population driven industries such as construction, education, healthcare and retail. While these sectors have been growing and providing value to the local economy, the lack of locally based economic drivers could present potential future issues for the economy, leaving it susceptible to future shocks.

Key Opportunities

The analysis has highlighted a number of future growth opportunities:

- **Tourism:** expansion of existing markets and deepening of diversity around the year.
- **Professional Business Services:** leveraging the attraction of the area and proximity to Sydney as well as changing workplace trends to attract professional business services (i.e. lawyers, financial planners, finance investors, financial services, insurance, engineering, etc.).

- **Creative Industries:** leveraging the area’s beauty and attraction for residents, increase the local creative industries (i.e. arts, culture, services, architecture, design, etc.).
- **Agriculture and Food/Beverage:** leveraging local agricultural crops and future expansion potential, expand locally grown and produced food and beverage products, including augmenting existing wine offer with spirits and beer.

Additional opportunities, including large, heavy industry based in the Moss Vale Enterprise Precinct may also emerge through this strategy planning process.

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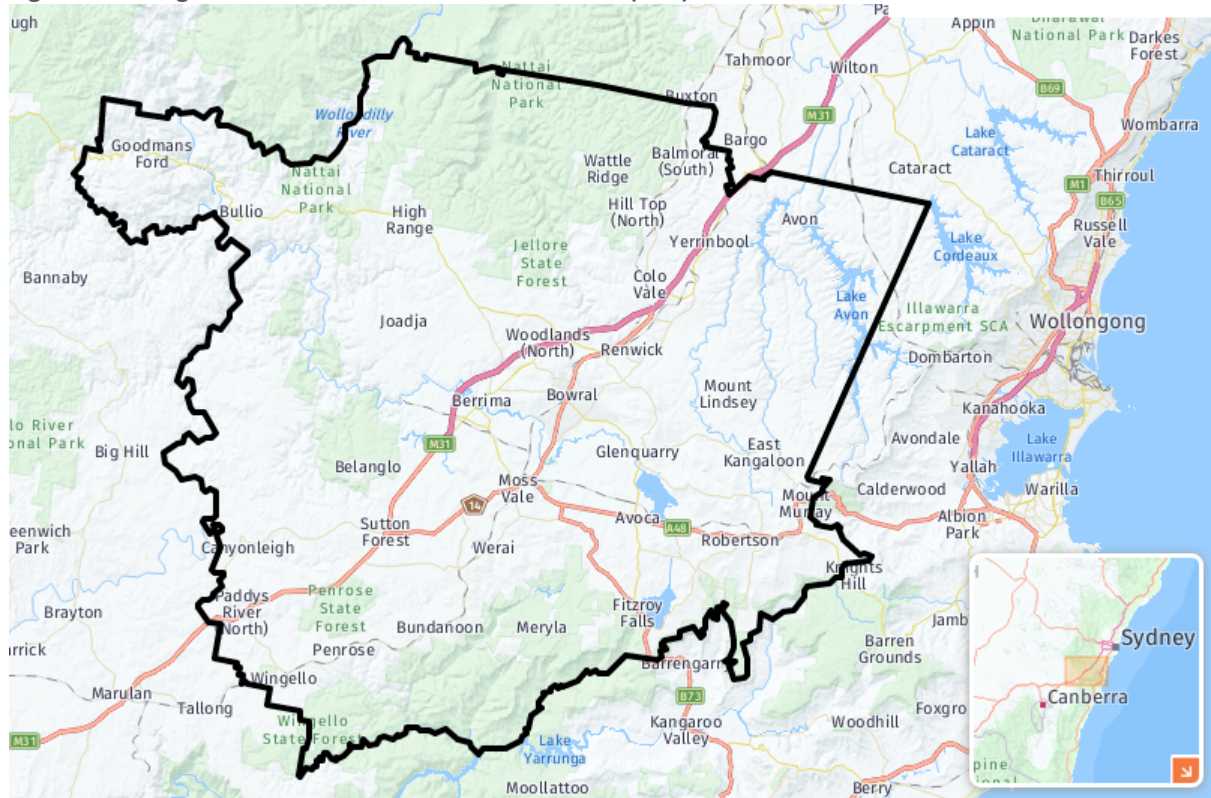
1. Introduction

Lucid Economics Pty Ltd (Lucid Economics) was engaged to deliver the Southern Highlands Destination Strategy on behalf of the Wingecarribee Shire Council.

The Southern Highlands region is located approximately 1.5 hours' drive from Sydney and Canberra, directly inland from Wollongong. The area is mainly rural, with the towns of Mittagong, Bowral and Moss Vale and main villages including Robertson and Bundanoon and Berrima.

The Southern Highlands region encompasses all of the Wingecarribee Shire Council area, which consists of 2,700 square kilometres. The region is an important water catchment area for the Macarthur and Illawarra regions, as well as metropolitan Sydney, with the Avon and Nepean Dams in the area.

Figure 1.1. Wingecarribee Shire Local Government Area (LGA)



Source: Economy.ID (2018).

This report provides an in-depth analysis of the local economy and its tourism sector. It will be used as a basis for the consultation and strategy development phase of the project.

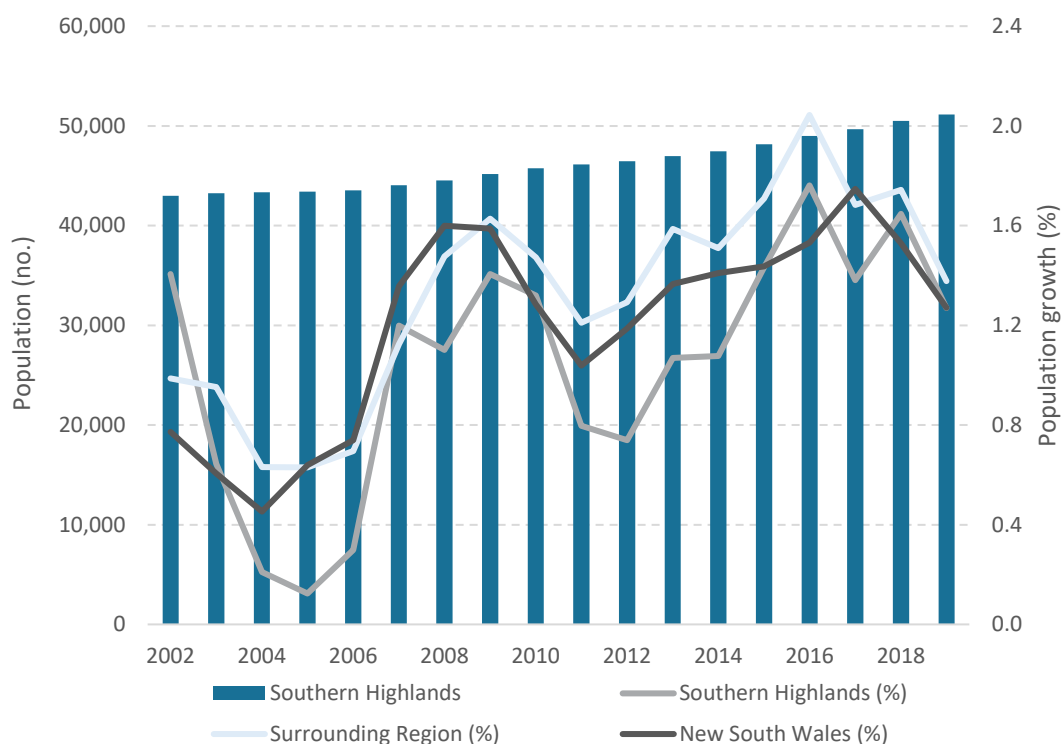
2. Population and Demographics

2.1 Population

The Southern Highlands had an estimated resident population of just over 51,000 in 2019 (Figure 2.1). Population growth in the region has accelerated in recent years, peaking at 1.8% in 2016, up from a recent low of 0.7% in 2012. The recent acceleration in population growth may likely be related to the more affordable housing in the Southern Highlands at a time when strong price growth in Sydney was creating the temptation for many Sydney residents to leverage the high property prices to transition to an alternative lifestyle.

The Southern Highlands population growth has been broadly in line with the New South Wales (NSW) average in recent years, having been below the NSW average for the majority of the decade prior. However, despite the recent acceleration in population in the Southern Highlands, the region's population growth has remained in line with but below the broader regional average, which includes the Shire of Wollondilly and the Shire of Goulburn Mulwaree.

Figure 2.1. Historical Population, Southern Highlands

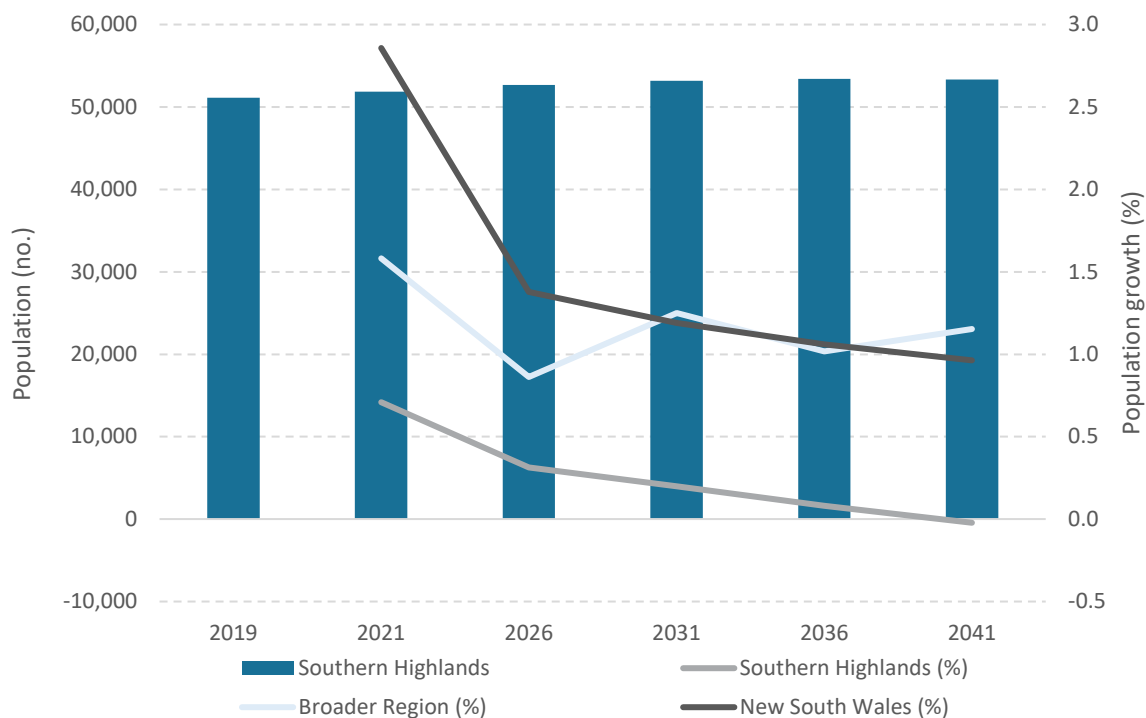


Note: ERP at 30 June of each year.

Source: ABS (2020a).

The NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment projects the Southern Highlands population growth to weaken out to the year 2041, and also be below the broader region and NSW population growth averages through to the year 2041 (Figure 2.2). By this time, the State Government expects the local population to stop growing and decrease in size.

Figure 2.2. Projected Population



Sources: ABS (2020a), NSW Government (2019), Lucid Economics.

2.2 Age

The Southern Highlands median age has been significantly higher than the Sydney and NSW medians since 2006 (Table 2.1). Further, the rate of ageing in the Southern Highlands has been significantly faster than the comparison regions.

Table 2.1. Median Age

	2006	2011	2016
Southern Highlands	42	45	47
Greater Sydney	35	36	36
New South Wales	37	38	38

Source: ABS (2017).

Consistent with the rising median age in the Southern Highlands over the past 10 years, the Southern Highlands is projected to see a significant increase in the proportion of residents aged 65 years and over in the next 20 years, moving from 25% of the total population in 2016 to 35% by 2041 (Figure 2.3). This equates to residents aged 65 years and over increasing between 2016 and 2041 by more than 6,000 residents, an increase of almost 50% over 2016 levels. Over the same period, the working age population (residents aged 15-64) is expected to decline by almost 2,000 residents.

Unabated, these trends will change the structure of the local economy, shifting expenditure patterns towards older residents (who spend less than other age cohorts).

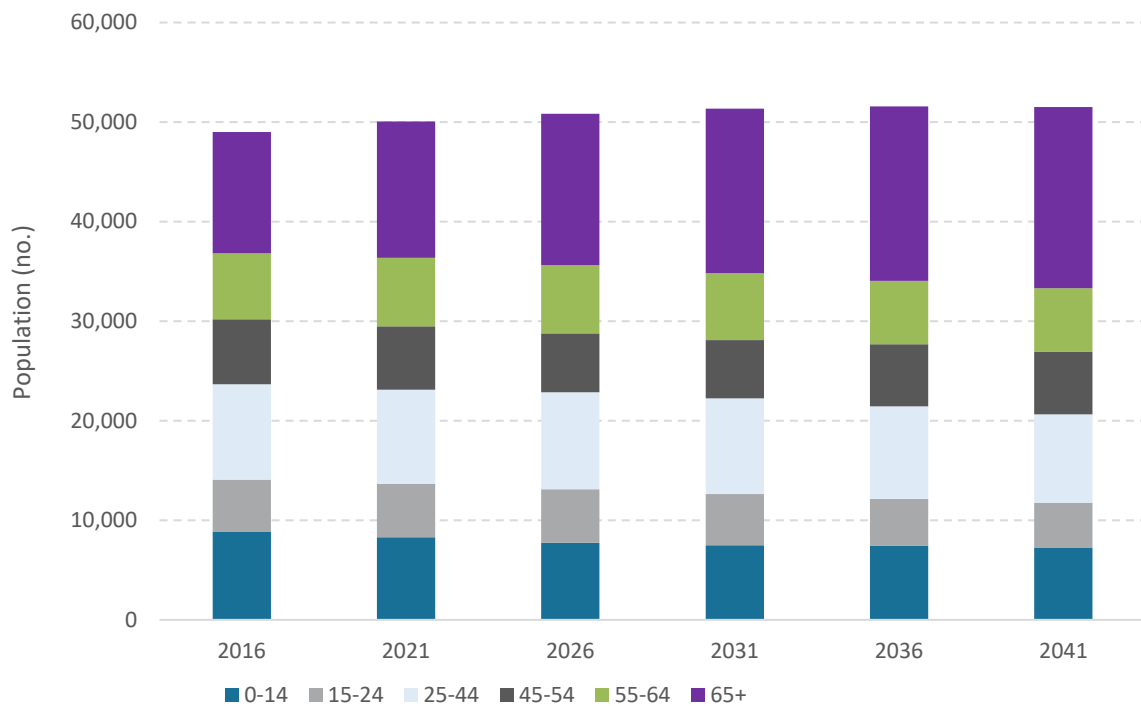
Changing Demographics Will Change the Community

The aging of the Southern Highlands population has the ability to drastically change the nature, structure and shape of the community (and the economy). Currently one out of every three people is over the age of 55. If the current trends continue, by 2041, one out of every two people (half the population) will be aged 55+.

While on the surface this trend would likely represent increasing demand for aged care services and additional future demand for infrastructure. However, the impacts would be far greater and further reaching. The expenditure profile of older residents is much lower than other cohorts, particularly the family cohorts. As such, there will be less available expenditure in the economy, which will lead to fewer shops and fewer retail options.

Furthermore, many community organisations and sporting clubs may suffer as many members are children or other young people and many of the leadership positions are held by parent volunteers. As the working age population declines in absolute terms, there will be fewer and fewer members and volunteers, which will put pressure on the viability of many community groups. Additionally, as there are fewer children in the community, the schools will likely get smaller.

Figure 2.3. Projected Age Structure, Southern Highlands



Source: NSW Government (2019).

2.3 Income

The Southern Highlands median weekly personal income has been broadly in line with the NSW average since 2006, while the region’s median weekly household income has been slightly lower than the state medians over the same period (Table 2.2).

Median household income is an important measure for standard of living and while this indicator has increased for the Southern Highlands over time, it has risen faster at the state level. While this situation is not ideal, household income levels in the Southern Highlands have increased at a faster rate than inflation, providing real income gains for residents.

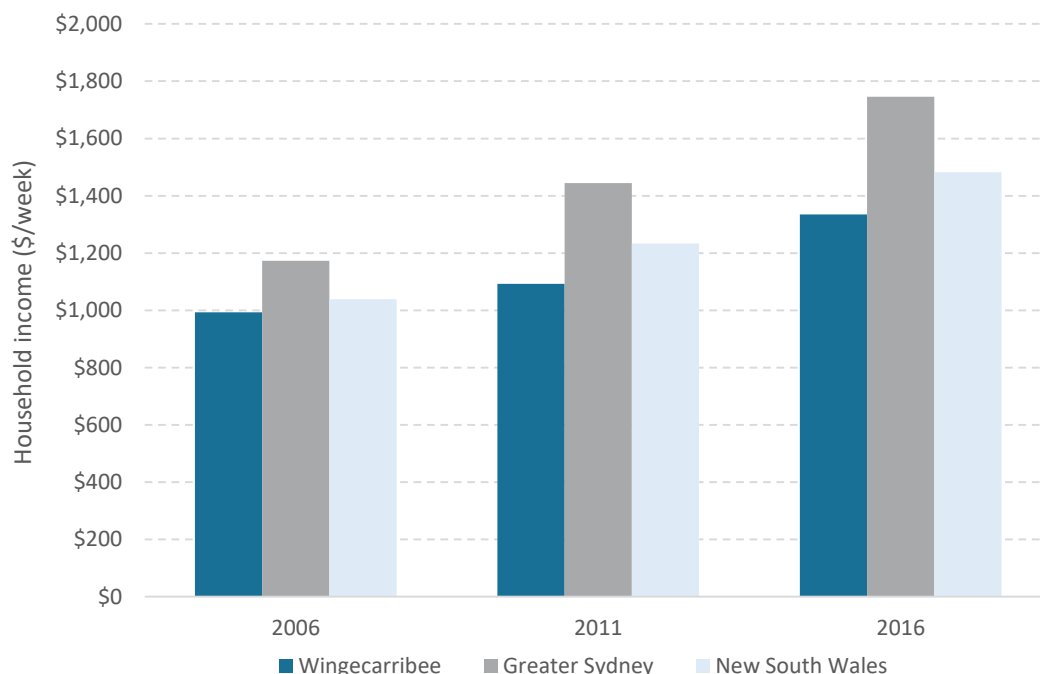
Table 2.2. Median Income

	2006	2011	2016
<i>Personal income (\$/week)</i>			
Southern Highlands	\$462	\$548	\$645
Greater Sydney	\$518	\$619	\$719
New South Wales	\$461	\$561	\$664
<i>Household income (\$/week)</i>			
Southern Highlands	\$993	\$1,093	\$1,335
Greater Sydney	\$1,173	\$1,444	\$1,746
New South Wales	\$1,039	\$1,233	\$1,482

Note: Southern Highlands median age estimates were not available from the ABS.
Sources: ABS (2017), ABS (2012), ABS (2007).

The slower growth in median income levels is likely due to the changing dynamics of the local economy, with shifts in different industries that pay varying degrees of income as well as the shifting demographics including higher proportions of older residents (who spend less in the economy).

Figure 2.4. Median Household Income

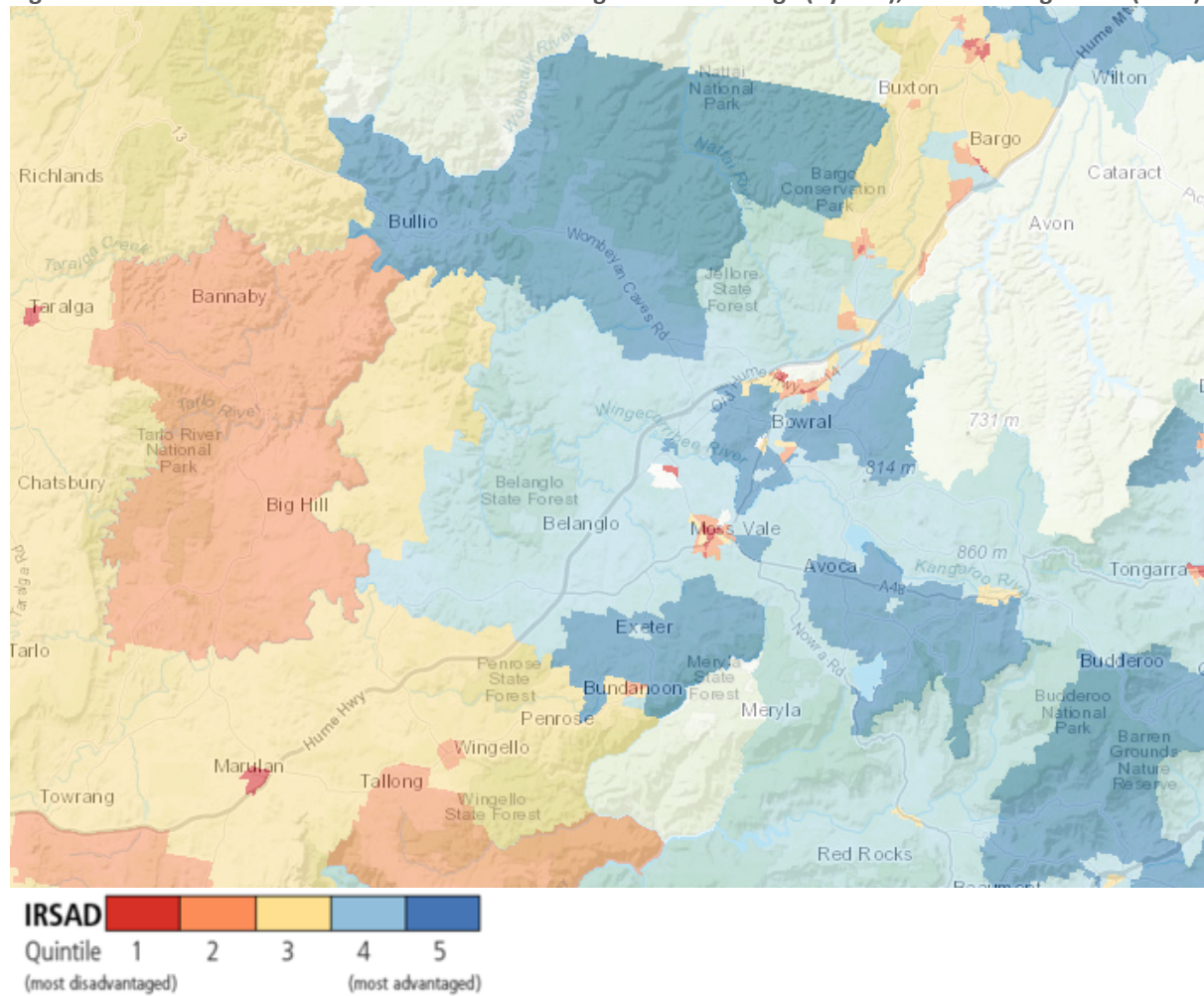


Sources: ABS (2017), ABS (2012), ABS (2007).

2.4 SEIFA

The image below (Figure 2.5) shows a high proportion of areas within the Southern Highlands in the top two quintiles of the ABS's Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage. Areas within the Council surrounding Bowral, Bullio and Exeter experience the highest levels of socio-economic advantage. However, there are areas around Moss Vale and northern Bowral which are listed in the two bottom quintiles of the index, which creates a mix of communities across the Southern Highlands.

Figure 2.5. Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage & Disadvantage (by SA1), Southern Highlands (2016)



Source: ABS (2018).

3. Economy

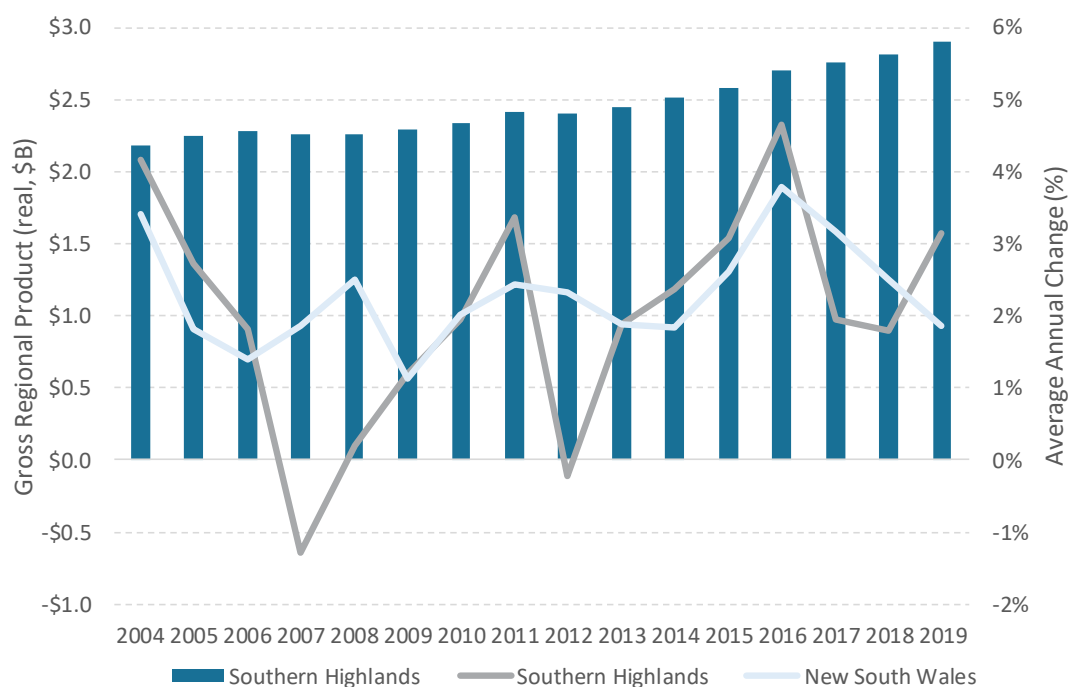
3.1 Size and Structure of the Economy

The Southern Highlands Gross Regional Product (GRP) was \$2.9 billion in 2018-19, up 3.2% from the previous year (Figure 3.1). The region’s economy has grown broadly in line with the New South Wales average over the past five year (2.9% per annum in the Southern Highlands, compared to 2.8% across NSW) and ten year (2.4% per annum for both the Southern Highlands and NSW).

However, growth in the Southern Highlands has been more volatile. The volatility is primarily based on the region’s two largest industries, construction and manufacturing, however there has also been volatility in the agricultural industry. Sub-industry analysis shows the ‘manufacturing nfd’¹ industry has been in long-term decline, however this has been partially offset by strong growth in ‘fabricated metal product manufacturing’ since 2012-13. ‘Manufacturing nfd’ likely represents the Boral Cement works in Moss Vale.

Consistent with strong growth in domestic tourism visitation in recent years (supported by the lower Australian dollar), the accommodation and food services industry has experienced strong growth.

Figure 3.1. Gross Regional Product, Southern Highlands



Source: NIEIR (2020).

The largest industries by Industry Value-Add (IVA) in the Southern Highlands in 2018-19 were:

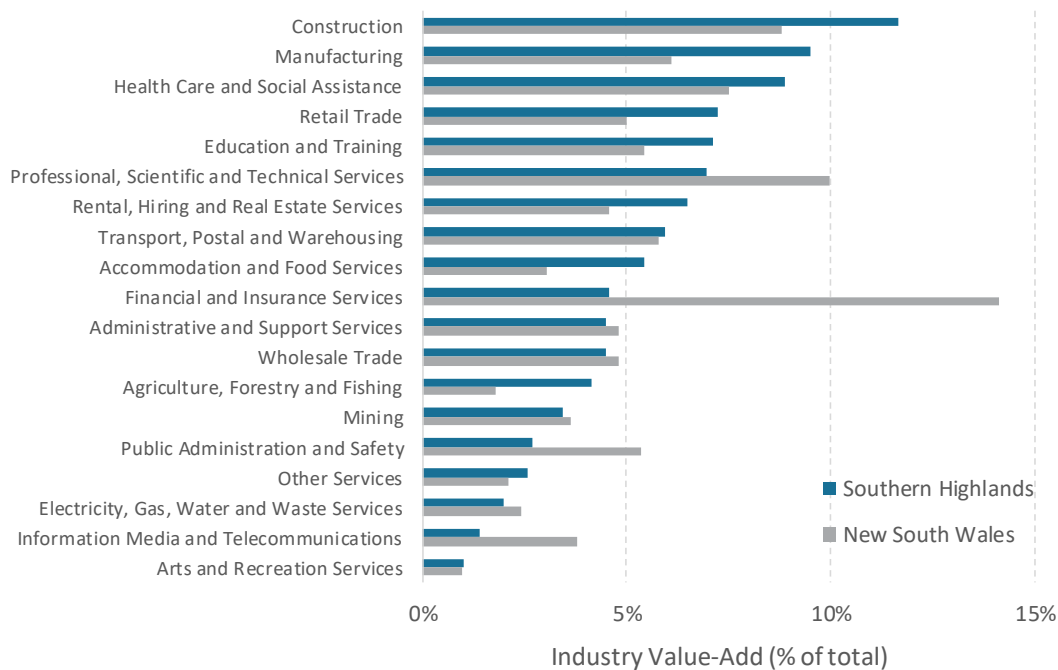
- Construction
- Manufacturing
- Health care and social assistance
- Retail trade
- Education and training

¹ Manufacturing nfd is an ABS defined industry of manufacturing not further defined.

Relative to New South Wales, the local strengths in healthcare and education demonstrate that the Southern Highlands is a strong service hub for the broader region, providing services that are required by a large population (Figure 3.2). The relative strength in retail is partly a function of being a service centre but also demonstrates the strength of tourism in the area (together with the Southern Highlands accommodation and food services industry).

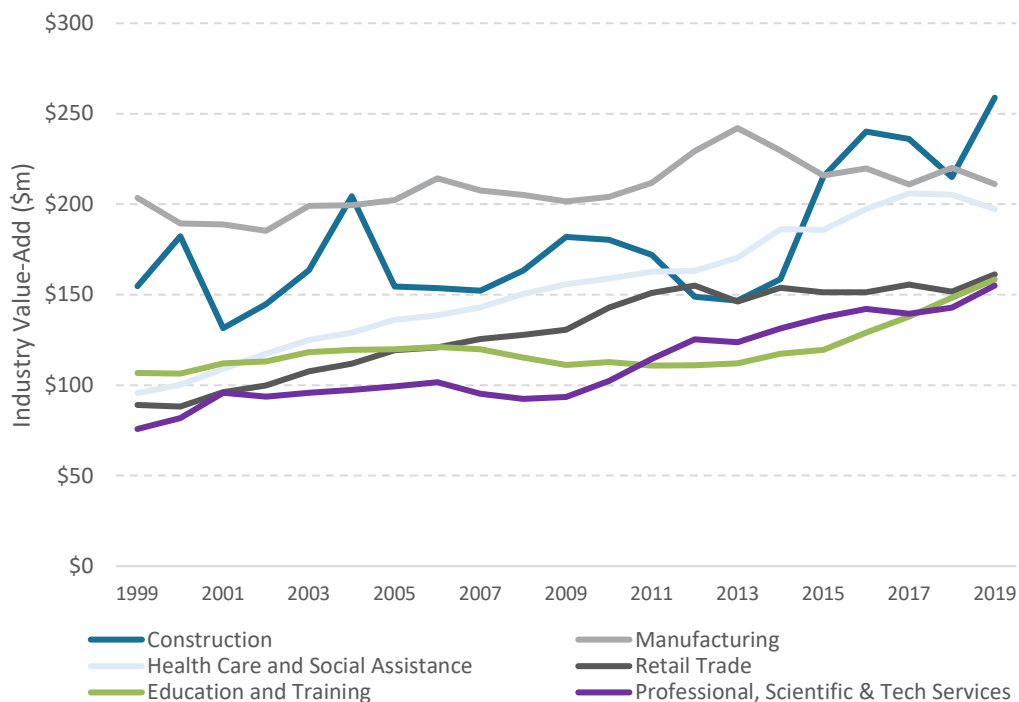
Construction is the largest sector in the Southern Highlands, which is not typical, given population growth is not overly strong (1.5% in 2018), with most growth areas around the country that have construction as the largest sector often experiencing population growth above 3%. Historical analysis also shows that the industry grew strongly from 2012-13 to 2015-16 during the housing boom in NSW. Growth in the industry has been more volatile since 2015-16, consistent with the re-adjustment in the housing market as dwelling prices fell.

Figure 3.2. Industry Value-Add, 2018-19



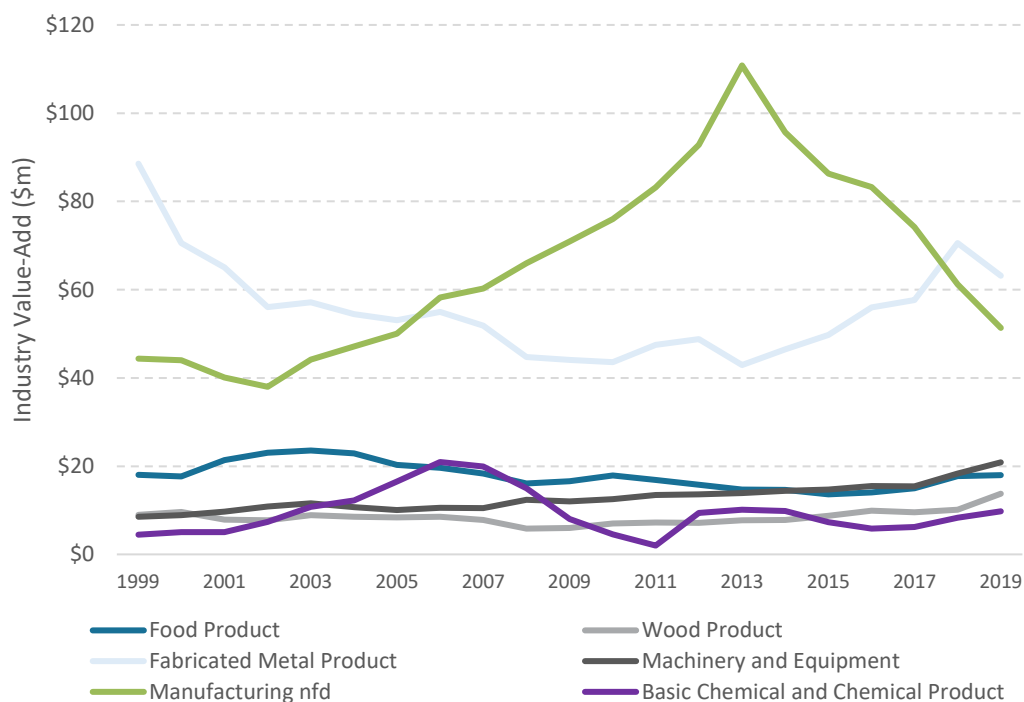
Source: NIEIR (2020).

Figure 3.3. Industry Value-Add, Top Six Industries, Southern Highlands



Source: NIEIR (2020).

Figure 3.4. Industry Value-Add by Top 5 Manufacturing Sub-Industries, Southern Highlands



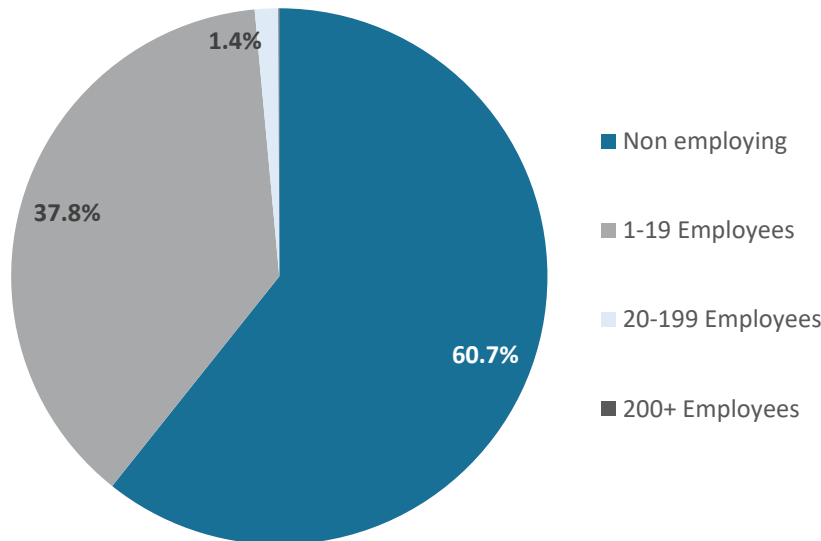
Source: NIEIR (2020).

The Southern Highlands economy is dominated by small businesses (98.6% of all businesses have 19 employees or fewer) (Figure 3.5). This structure is similar to most local economies in Australia. The top four industries by number of businesses (i.e. construction, professional services, agriculture and rental, hiring and real estate) are typical industries where there is a great number of individual traders and small businesses (Figure 3.6).

Business Counts from the ABS

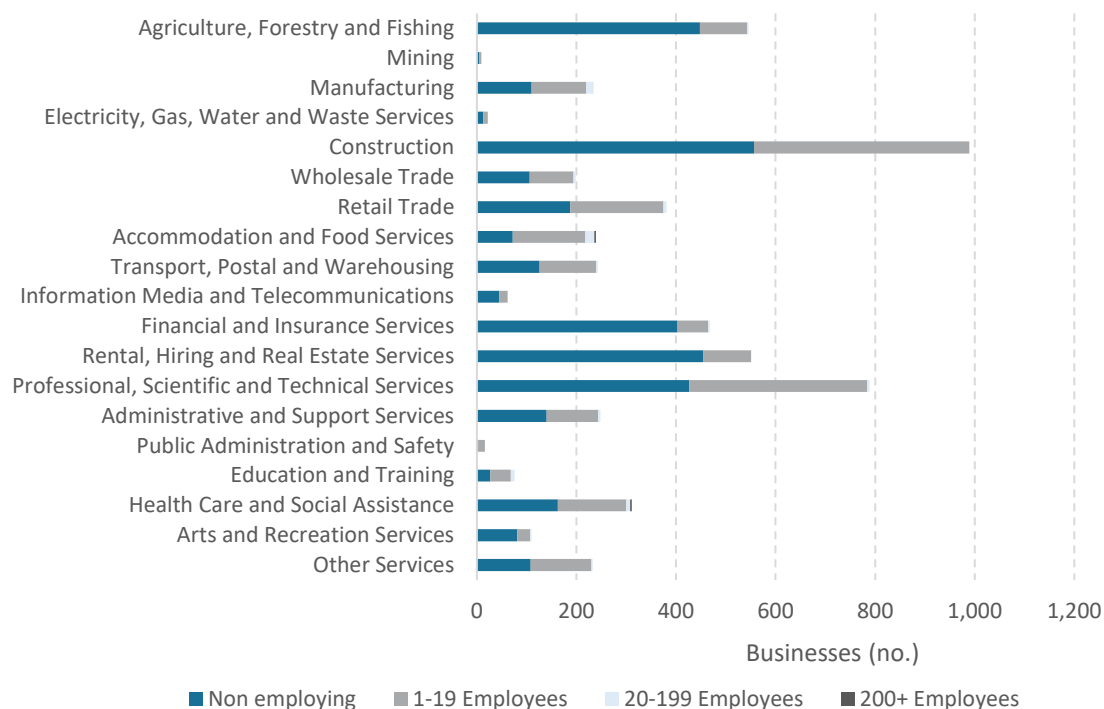
It is important to keep in mind that this data reflects the registered business address of companies (only), so larger businesses such as Coles, Woolworths and other major retail businesses may not be captured in the data. Furthermore, the ABS excludes sole traders and focuses on businesses with active ABNs that are registered for GST. This methodology usually underestimates the total number of businesses in a local economy, specifically many of the sole traders and/or home-based businesses.

Figure 3.5. Business Counts, Southern Highlands, 2019



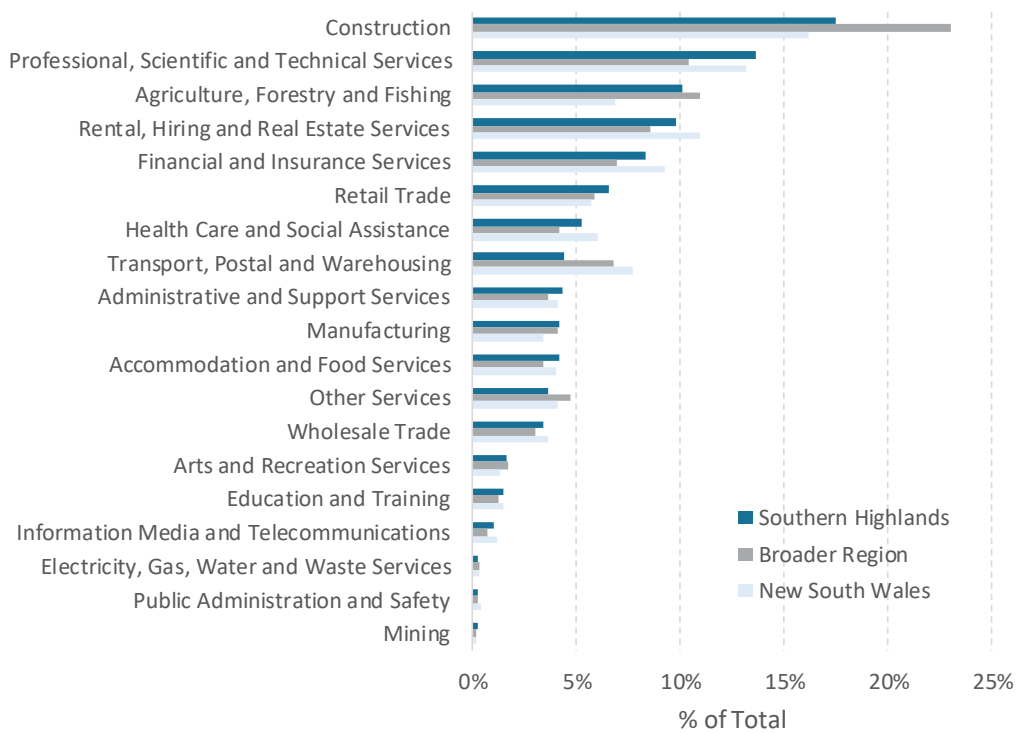
Note: Location based on registered address of businesses.
Source: ABS (2020b).

Figure 3.6. Business Counts, by Industry, Southern Highlands, 2019



Source: ABS (2020b).

Figure 3.7. Business Counts, by Industry, 2019



Note: Broader region represents Wingecarribee Shire, Wollondilly Shire and the Goulburn Mulwaree Shire.
 Source: ABS (2020b).

4. Employment and Skills

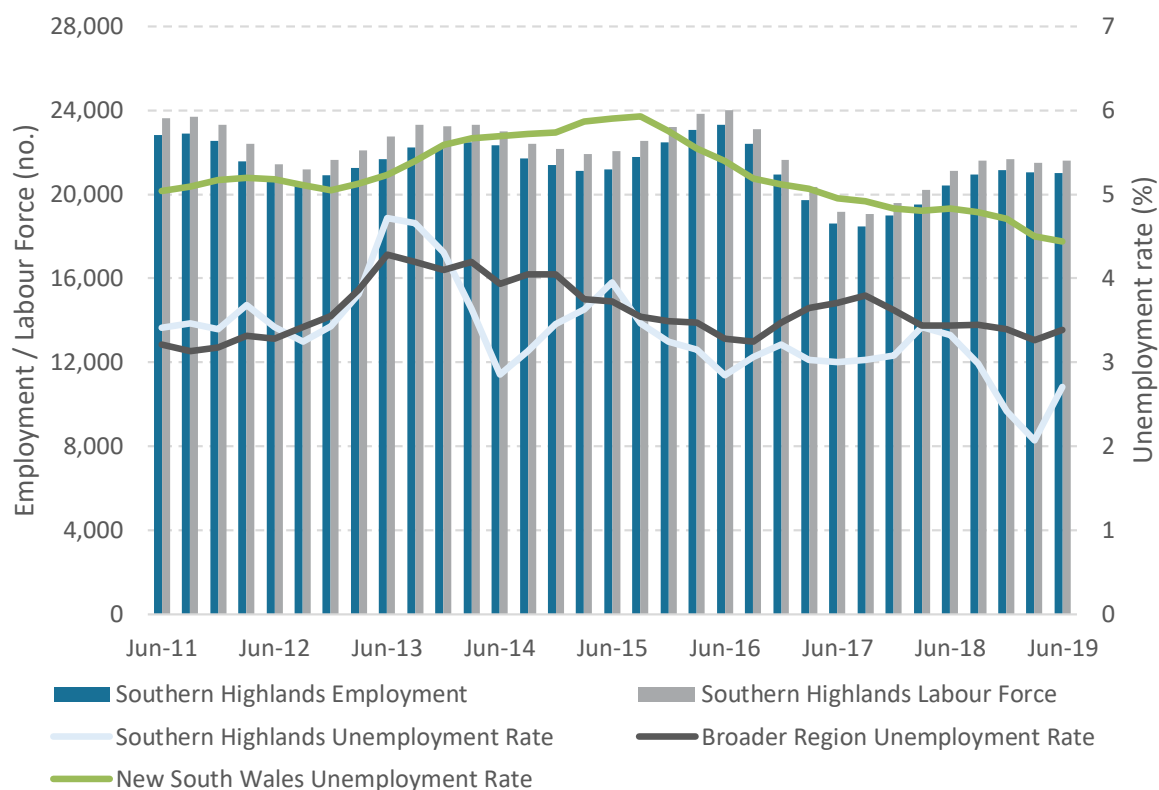
4.1 Labour Force and Unemployment

The Southern Highlands unemployment rate was 2.7% in June quarter 2019, well below the broader region (3.7%) and New South Wales (5.0%) averages. The region's unemployment rate has trended lower over the past six years, however total employment and labour force has actually declined over this period. With population growing at around 1.5% per annum since 2013, this suggests a sharp decline in the region's participation rate in recent years. The ageing of the region's population over the past decade would also be placing downward pressure on the region's participation rate.

Labour Force and Unemployment Data

These data sets are from the Department of Jobs and Small Business (DJSB) and track the number of people in the labour force (total), employed and unemployed. This data is based on place of residence, which differs from the analysis above regarding Gross Regional Product/Industry Value Add as well as the analysis below regarding employment, which focuses on data based on place of work. For the labour force survey, the definition of 'employed' includes all persons aged 15 years and over who worked for one hour or more during the reference week.

Figure 4.1. Labour Force and Unemployment Rates



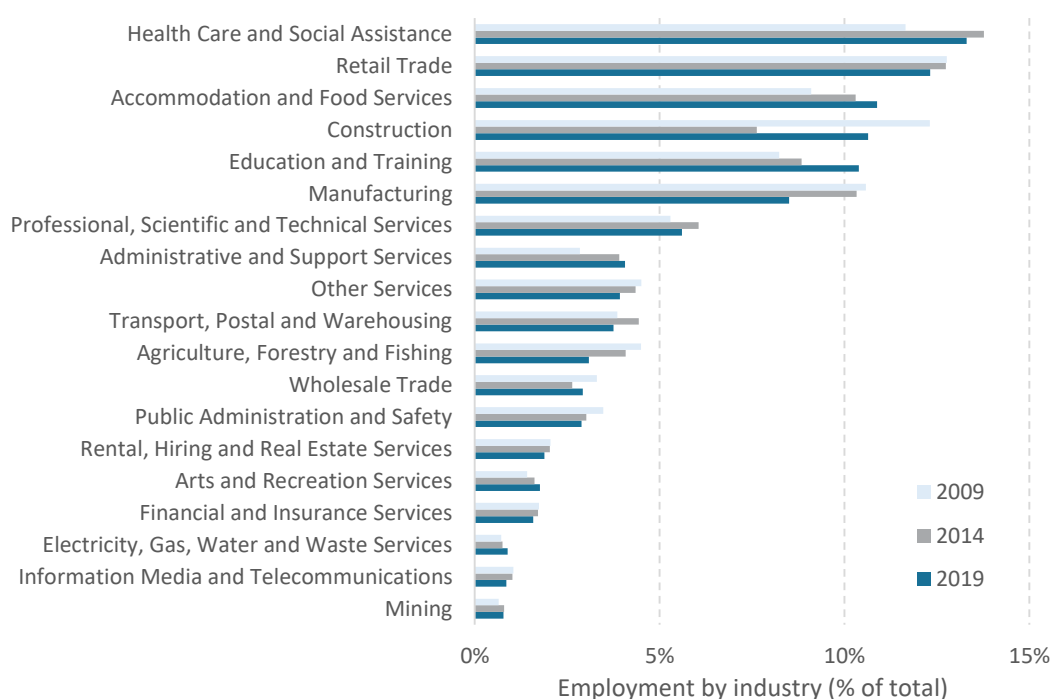
Source: DJSB (2019).

4.2 Employment

The industry make-up of the Southern Highlands has undergone significant change over the decade to 2019. The public sector is a key employer within the Southern Highlands, with the healthcare and social assistance (13.3% of total employment) and education and training (10.4%) industries two of the five leading employers in the region in 2019 (Figure 4.2). Tourism is also a key employer within the region, with retail trade comprising 12.3% of total employment and accommodation and food services comprising 10.9%. Further, these public sector industries, with the addition of the accommodation and food services industry, were the leading industries by total employment growth over both the 5-year and 10-year periods to 2019 (Figure 4.3).

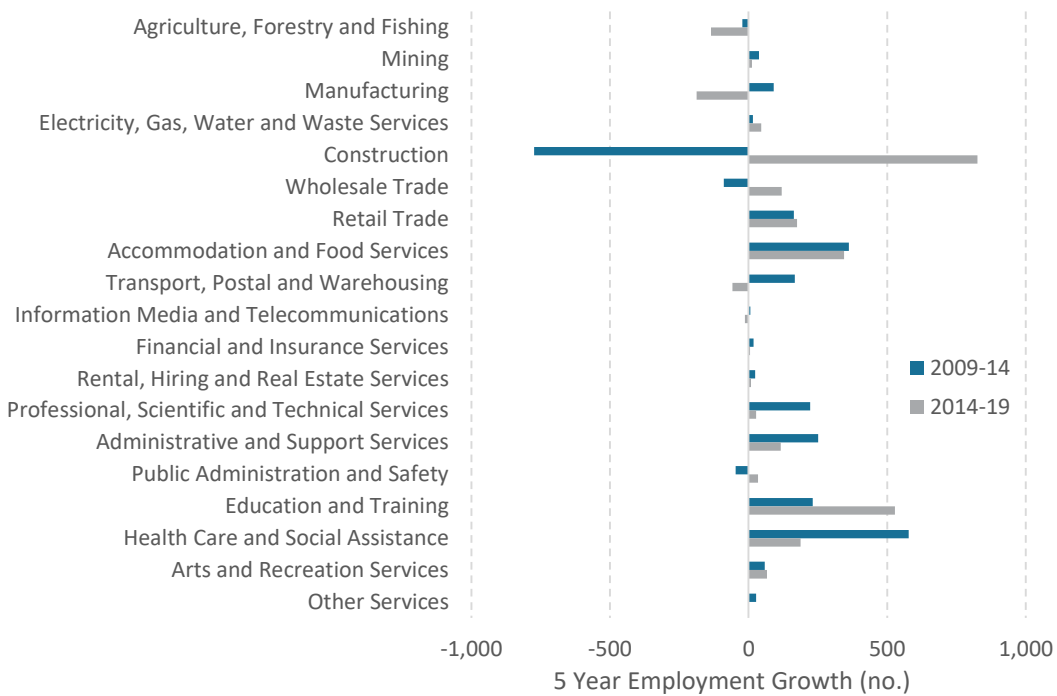
In contrast, the region's manufacturing industry has been in decline, with employment in the industry having fallen by 187 persons in the five years to 2019. This decline has meant the industry has gone from 10.3% of total employment in 2014, to accounting for 8.5% of total employment in 2019. The decline in manufacturing employment is consistent with state and national trends and the loss experienced in the Southern Highlands is relatively lower than experienced in many other regions in Australia.

Figure 4.2. Employment by Industry, Southern Highlands, 2018-19



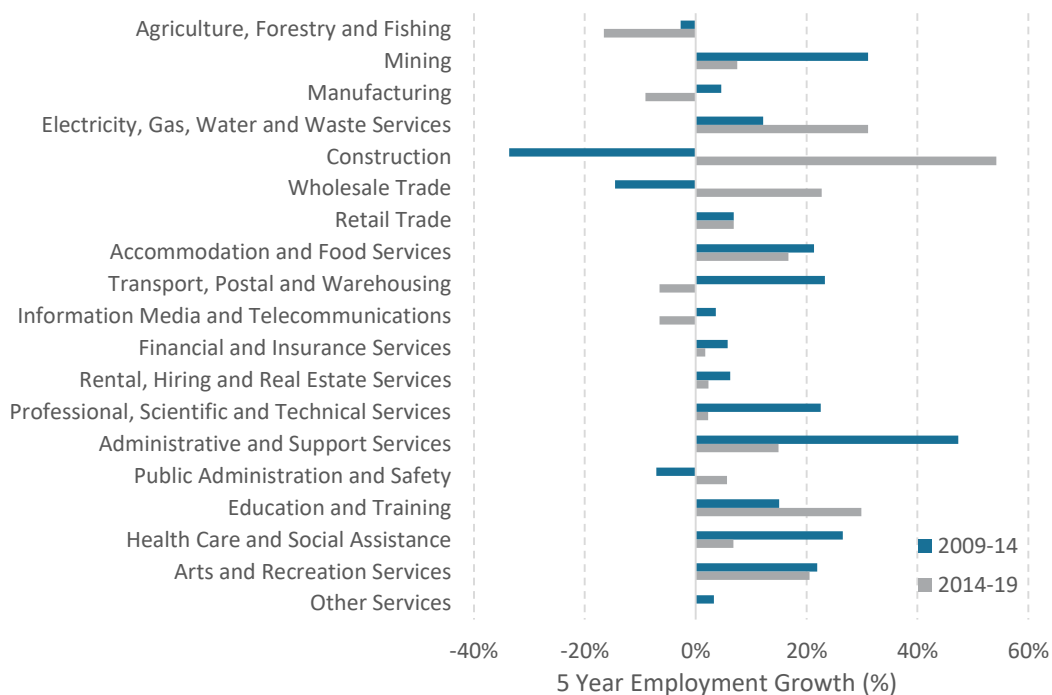
Note: Place of work data.
Sources: NIEIR (2020).

Figure 4.3. Employment growth (no.), Southern Highlands



Source: NIEIR (2020).

Figure 4.4. Employment growth (%), Southern Highlands



Source: NIEIR (2020).

4.3 Journey to Work

Analysis of journey to work data from the 2016 Census shows that 23% of local residents (4,731) leave the Southern Highlands every day to go to work, while 71% of employed residents (or 14,538) live and work in the region. With 20,599 employed residents in the region in 2016, and only 17,872 jobs in the region, this demonstrates that there are simply not enough jobs within the Southern Highlands for all the local resident workers, which means that some have to look outside the region for work. This situation represents the high quality of life in the region and that some residents choose to travel for employment for the privilege to live in the region.

Most of the local jobs in the Southern Highlands that are not filled by resident workers are occupied by residents from adjoining local government areas (Table 4.2). This is also the case in terms of the employment locations of residents leaving the shire for work. This analysis demonstrates that the resident workers still prefer to work closer to home (as opposed to traveling to Sydney), but have decided where they want to live as a priority. -

In terms of industry, there is a significant migration of workers into and out of the Southern Highlands every day for work. Construction, education and healthcare all have relatively high proportions of local resident workers who work outside of the Southern Highlands.

Table 4.1. Journey to Work, Southern Highlands, 2016

Location	Number	%
Employed residents in the area		
Live and work in the area	14,538	71%
Live in the area, but work outside	4,731	23%
No fixed place of work	1,330	6%
Total employed residents in the area	20,599	100%
Workers in the area		
Live and work in the area	14,538	81%
Work in the area, but live outside	3,334	19%
Total workers in the area	17,872	100%

Source: ABS (2017).

Table 4.2. Journey to Work, by LGA, Southern Highlands, 2016

Top 10 employment locations of resident workers by Council			Top 10 residential location of local workers by Council		
Council	No.	%	Council	No.	%
Southern Highlands	14,538	70.6%	Southern Highlands	14,538	81.3%
No Fixed Address (NSW)	1,326	6.4%	Wollondilly (A)	1,058	5.9%
Sydney (C)	663	3.2%	Wollongong (C)	417	2.3%
Campbelltown (C) (NSW)	525	2.5%	Goulburn Mulwaree (A)	387	2.2%
Wollondilly (A)	498	2.4%	Shellharbour (C)	228	1.3%
Wollongong (C)	375	1.8%	Campbelltown (C) (NSW)	163	0.9%
Camden (A)	307	1.5%	Shoalhaven (C)	161	0.9%
Goulburn Mulwaree (A)	296	1.4%	Camden (A)	148	0.8%
Liverpool (C)	275	1.3%	Kiama (A)	85	0.5%
Canterbury-Bankstown (A)	156	0.8%	Central Coast (C) (NSW)	56	0.3%

Source: ABS (2017).

Table 4.3. Journey to Work by Industry of Employment, 2016

Top 10 employment industries of resident workers who work outside the Southern Highlands		Top 10 employment industries of outside residents who work in the Southern Highlands	
Industry	%	Industry	%
Construction	16.6%	Health Care & Social Assistance	16.8%
Education & Training	10.4%	Retail Trade	12.8%
Health Care & Social Assistance	10.0%	Manufacturing	10.0%
Public Administration & Safety	8.4%	Construction	8.9%
Manufacturing	7.5%	Accommodation & Food Services	8.3%
Transport, Postal & Warehousing	7.4%	Education & Training	7.5%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	6.3%	Public Administration & Safety	5.8%
Retail Trade	5.5%	Transport, Postal & Warehousing	5.5%
Administrative & Support Services	5.2%	Other Services	4.9%
Other Services	3.8%	Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	4.6%

Source: ABS (2017).

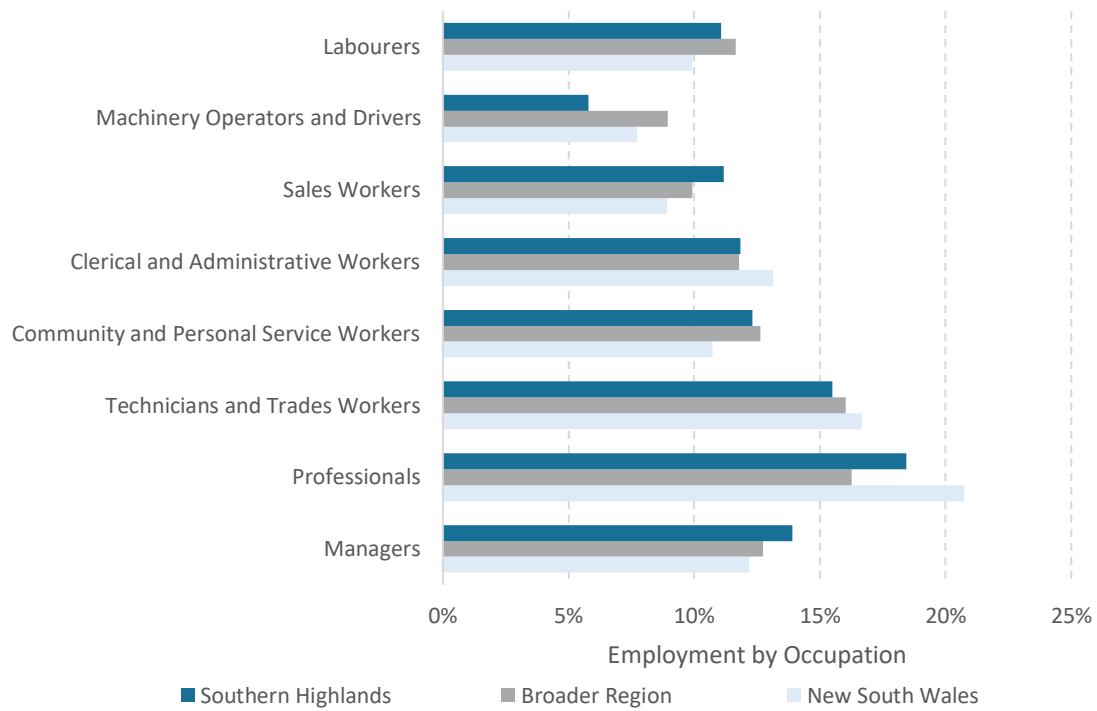
4.4 Skills

Workforce and Skills

The skills in an economy can be considered in terms of its local resident workforce (i.e. the people who reside in the area and their associated skills) as well as in terms of the local workers (i.e. the people who work locally). Because 81% of local jobs are filled by local people, these two perspectives will align to a certain degree. A shortage or surplus in any area will help to understand any existing skills gaps in the local resident workforce.

The Southern Highlands had a significantly lower proportion of professionals and machinery operators and drivers working in the area than the New South Wales average in 2016. However, the region had a higher proportion of sales workers and managers than both the Southern Tablelands and New South Wales comparison regions. It is worth noting that by place of residence, the Southern Highlands has a comparable proportion of professionals to the New South Wales average, indicating that a large share of the professionals living within the Southern Highlands work outside of the region. These statistics demonstrate the quality of life and amenity in the area that attracts residents, who are happy to tolerate the journey in order to facilitate living in the region.

Figure 4.5. Employment by Occupation (Place of Work), 2016



Source: ABS (2017).

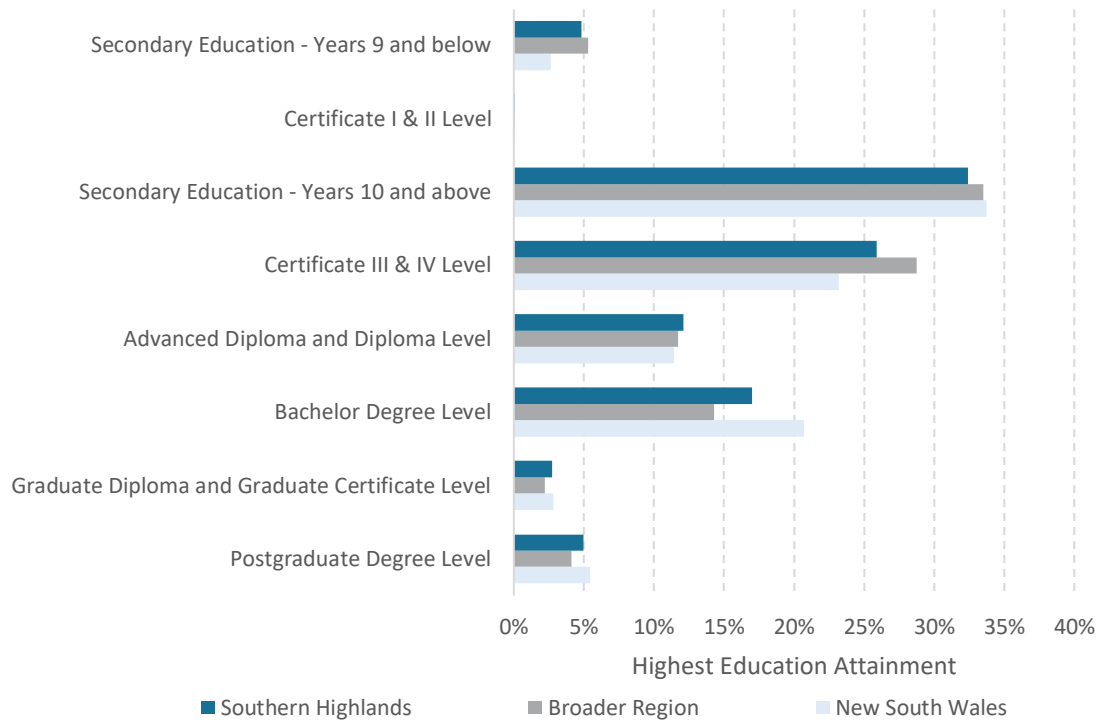
Figure 4.6. Employment by Occupation (Place of Residence), 2016



Source: ABS (2017).

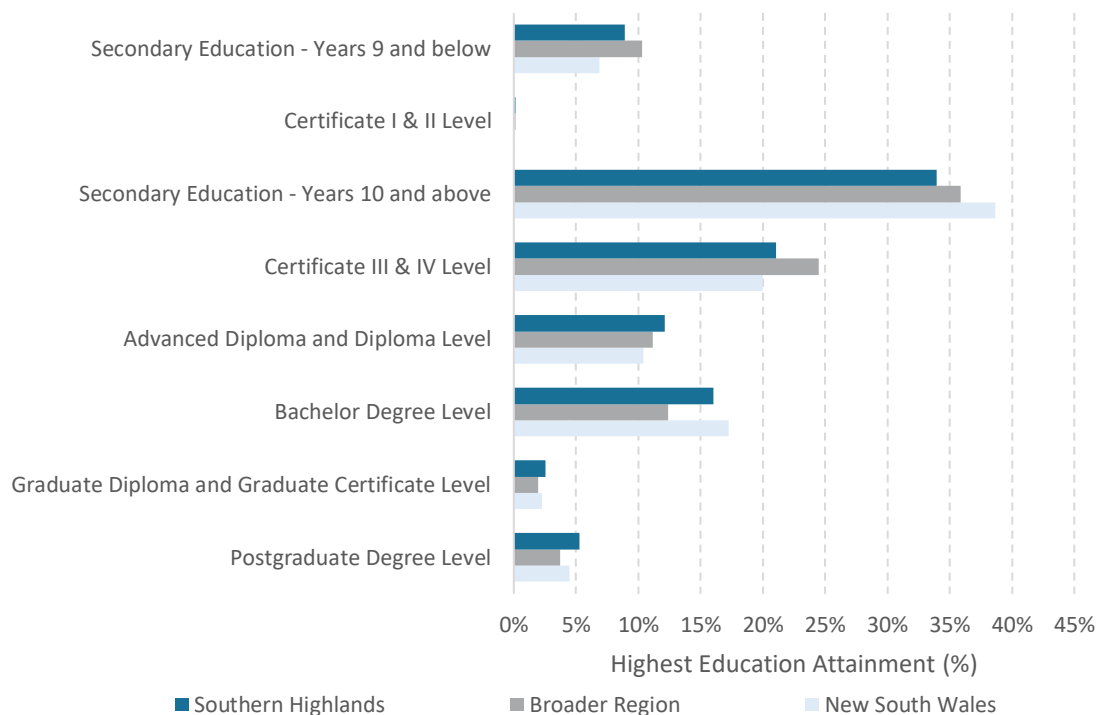
The Southern Highlands has a higher proportion of residents listing 'Secondary Education – years 9 and below', 'Certificate III & IV Level' and 'Advanced Diploma and Diploma level' as their highest education attainment in 2016 compared to New South Wales. However, the region also has a comparable proportion of residents with 'Bachelor Degree level' and 'Postgraduate Degree level' qualifications to New South Wales.

Figure 4.7. Highest Education Attainment, 2016



Note: Place of work data.
Source: ABS (2017).

Figure 4.8. Highest Education Attainment, 2016



Note: Place of usual residence data.
Source: ABS (2017).

4.5 Value of Employment

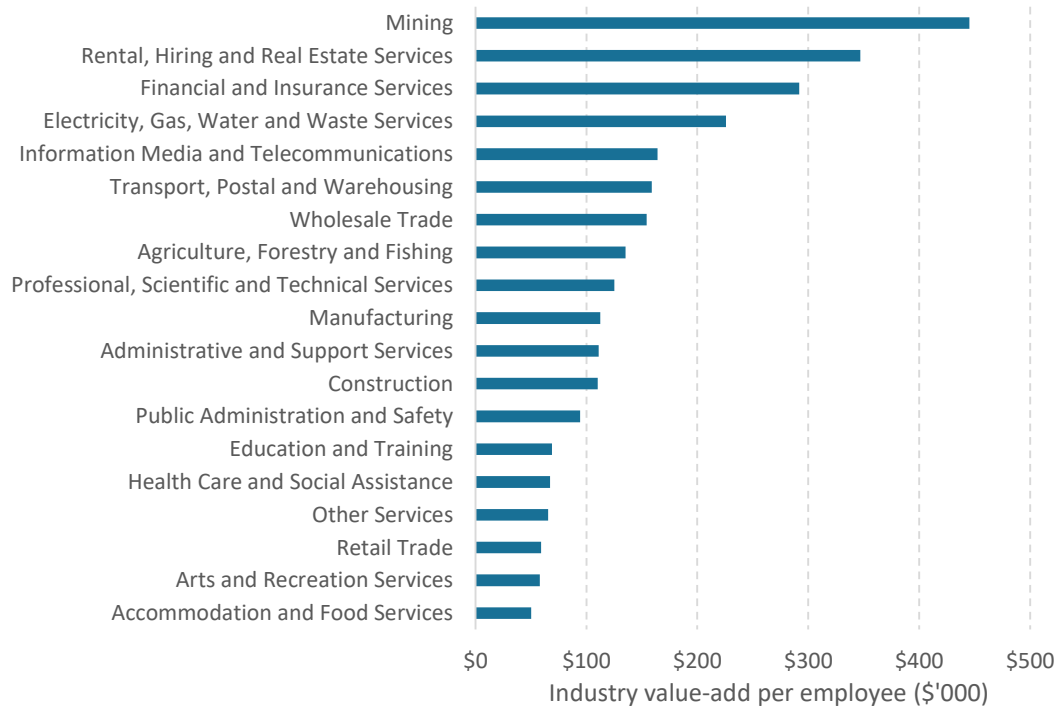
Different industries contribute varying degrees of value to the local economy based on a variety of factors including supply chains, price of goods sold and overall position in the economy. As highlighted below, mining, rental, hiring and real estate services and financial services are amongst the highest value-adding industries in the local economy. Retail trade, arts and recreation as well as accommodation and food services are amongst the lowest value-adding sectors in the local economy. It should be noted that retail trade, and accommodation and food services are most closely linked with the tourism sector.

High Value-Adding Jobs

In terms of economic development, growing high value-adding jobs will have greater benefits to the overall economy than increases in low value-adding jobs. The core difference is related to the relevant supply chains of these industries as well as the wages that are often paid across those industries. High value-adding jobs will provide a greater ability for workers to spend more in the local economy, which will create a greater flow-on benefit locally. Additionally, businesses that have more local supply chains (or the opportunity for them) will have the ability to support additional businesses, creating more value in the local economy.

Because one job may offer greater value than another, this does not mean that lower value-adding jobs are not important. These jobs often provide employment for youth and offer an entry point into the workforce for many residents. Rather, understanding the value of employment should guide the balance of effort and resources in terms of various industry development and investment attraction activities.

Figure 4.9. Industry Value-Add per Employee, Southern Highlands, 2018-19



Source: NIEIR (2020).

5. Tourism

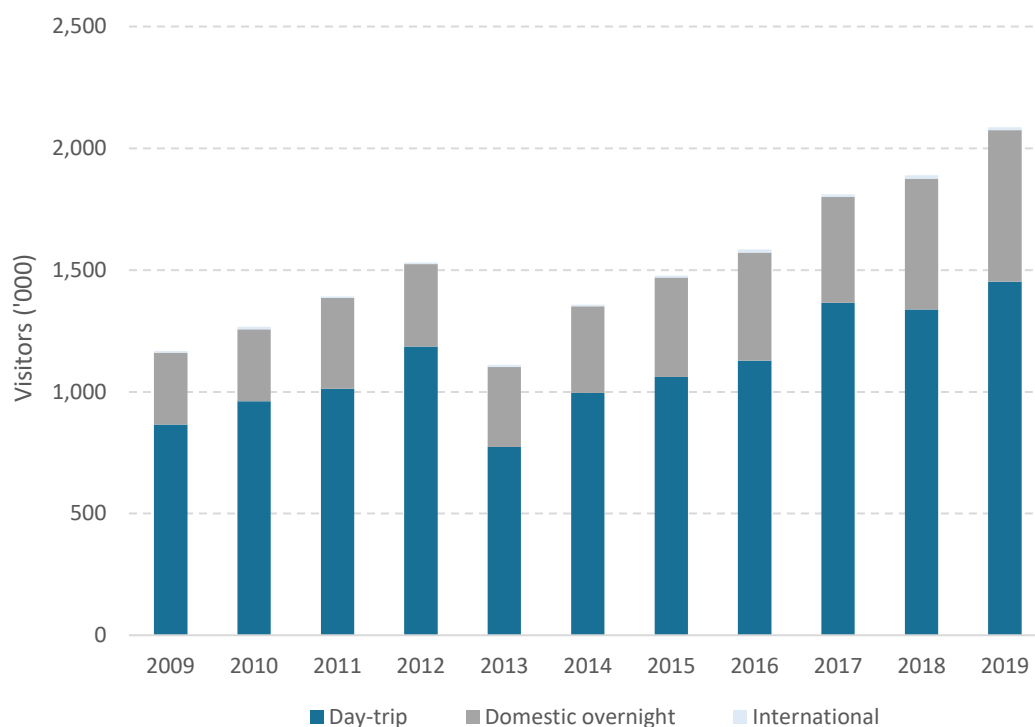
5.1 Visitation

Tourism visitation to the Southern Highlands was estimated to be just under 2.1 million in the year ending December 2019, which is in line with the volume of visitors to Byron Bay. Visitation (both visitors and visitor nights) to the region has risen by over 50% since 2014, with the growth in visitor numbers primarily driven by strong growth in domestic visitation. The region is dominated by domestic visitors, with day-trip visitors accounting for 70% of total visitation in 2019, while domestic overnight visitors accounted for 30% of total visitation over the period. International visitors are less than 1% of all visitors to the region.

Visitation to the region is primarily for holiday and leisure purposes (51% of total). While all visitor types have grown strongly since 2014, business visitation to the region has more grown the most over the past five years.

The majority of visitors to the region come from Sydney (62% in the year to December 2019) and 'other NSW' (30%), consistent with day-trip visitors being the primary visitor type to the region. Increasing interstate and international visitation is an area of opportunity for the region, with these visitor types typically having the highest average trip spend.

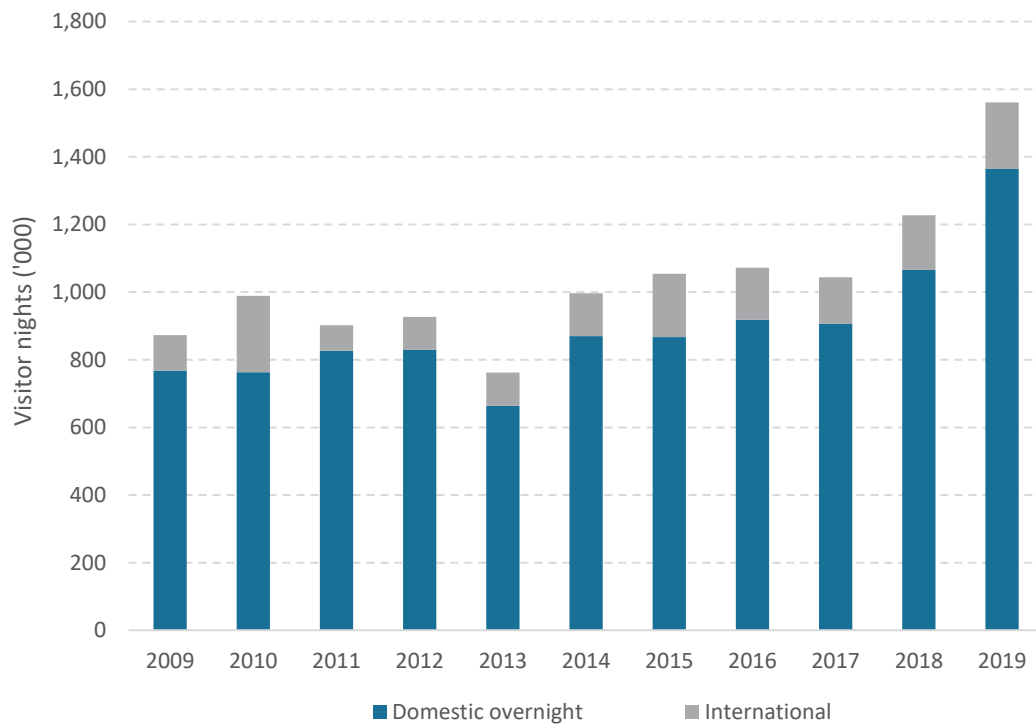
Figure 5.1. Visitors by Type, Southern Highlands



Note: Year Ending December.

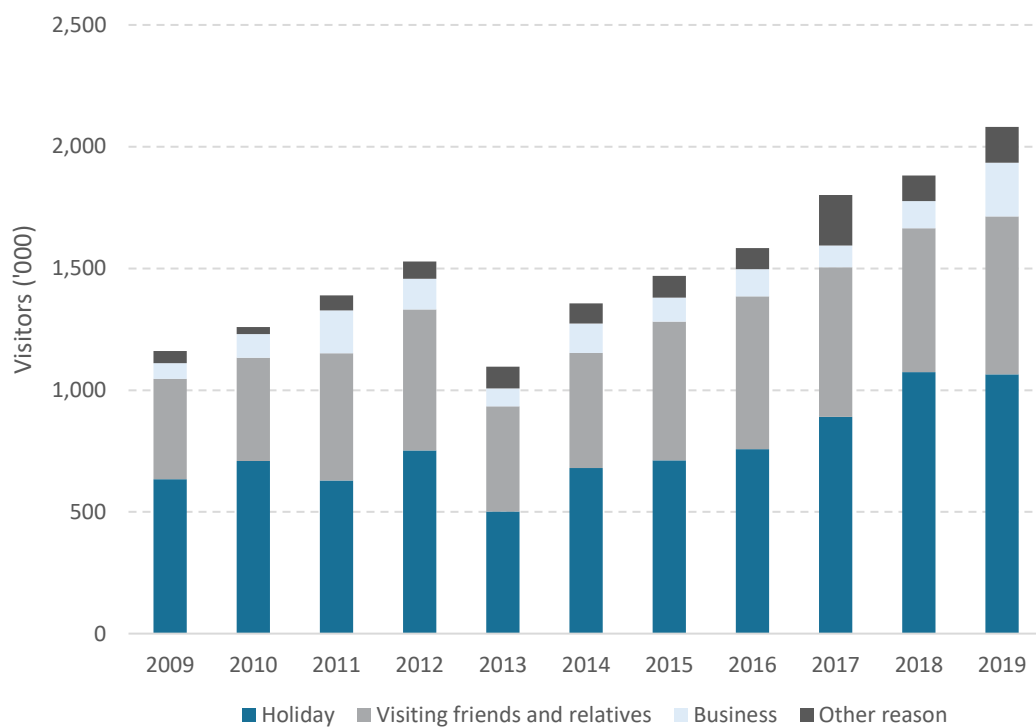
Source: TRA (2020).

Figure 5.2. Visitor Nights by Type, Southern Highlands



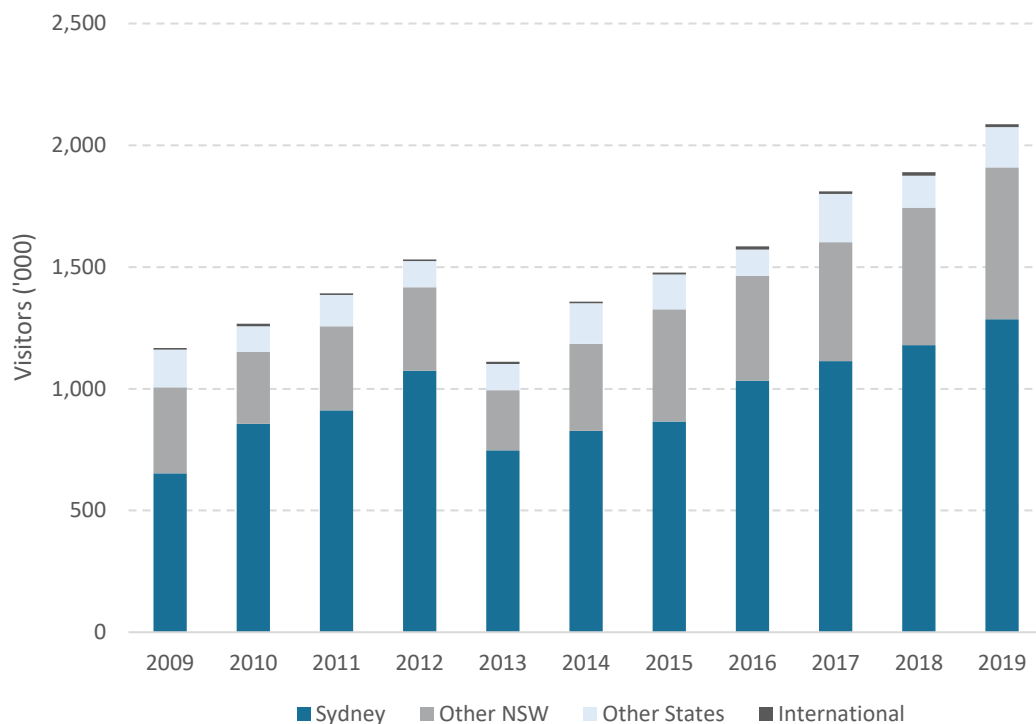
Note: Year Ending December.
Source: TRA (2020).

Figure 5.3. Visitors by Purpose of Visit, Southern Highlands



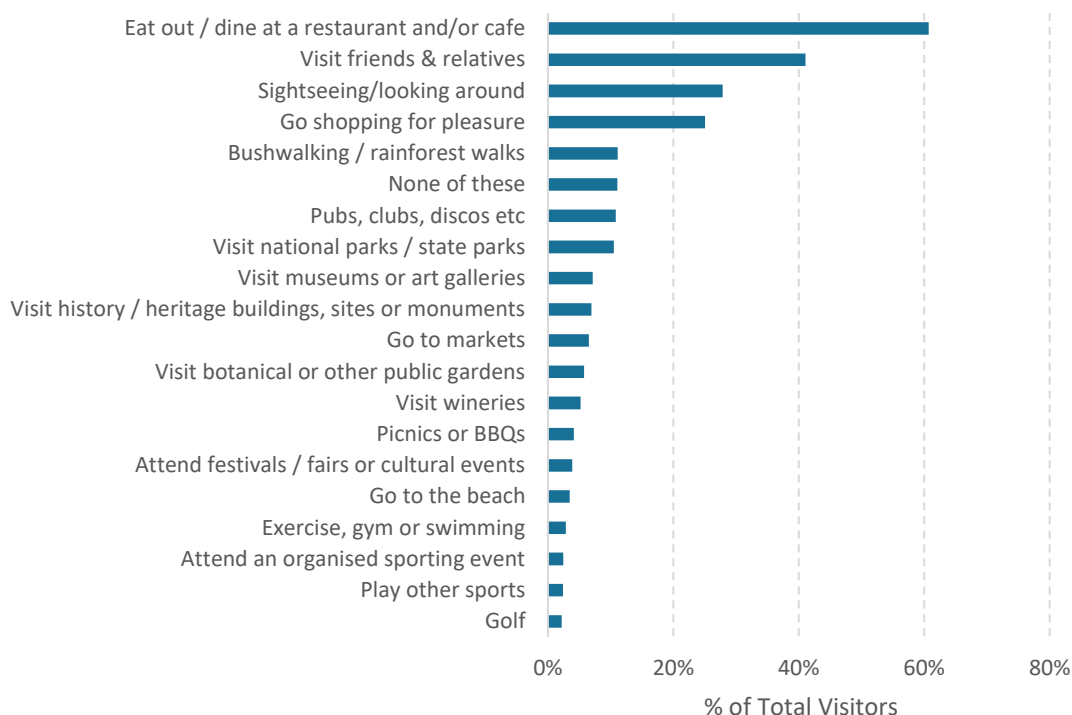
Note: Year Ending December.
Source: TRA (2020).

Figure 5.4. Visitors by Source, Southern Highlands



Note: Year Ending December.
Source: TRA (2020).

Figure 5.5. Top 20 Visitor Activities, Southern Highlands



Note: 10-year average used due to low sample sizes. Year ending December data.
Source: TRA (2020).

5.2 Accommodation Profile

There are a wide range of accommodation options in the Southern Highlands, including hotels, bed and breakfasts and caravan parks. Most accommodation options are located in Bowral and Mittagong, with both home to a number of wineries and vineyards. The Bradman Museum and International Hall of Fame in Bowral are also local tourist attractions.

Historical data shows the Southern Highlands accommodation providers on average enjoy only moderate occupancy rates and the average daily rate (ADR) had been in decline in the few years leading up to 2015-16. Combined 875 rooms were identified across the Southern Highlands.

Table 5.1: Tourist Accommodation

Financial year	Rooms	Room Nights Occupied	Occupancy (%)	Average Daily Rate (\$)	Revenue per Available Room (\$)
2013-14	421	77,707	50.6%	\$157.56	\$79.72
2014-15	626	116,549	51.0%	\$152.86	\$77.93
2015-16	623	115,341	50.6%	\$141.35	\$71.52

Note: 2013-14 data only available for Bowral and Mittagong SA2s. 2014-15 and 2015-16 includes data for Bowral, Mittagong, Moss Vale – Berrima and Southern Highlands SA2s. Only includes establishments with 15 or more rooms.

Source: ABS (2016).

Table 5.2: Accommodation Audit, Southern Highlands

Name	Location	Type	Rooms	Star Rating	Advertised Price / Night		
					Low	High	Average
Peppers Craigieburn Bowral	Bowral	Hotel	72	4	\$164	\$420	\$292
The Sebel Bowral Heritage Park	Bowral	Hotel	26	4	\$220	\$510	\$365
Gibraltar Hotel Bowral	Bowral	Hotel	76	4.5	\$196	\$374	\$285
Bowral Hotel	Bowral	B&B / Inn	10		\$149	\$206	\$178
Links House	Bowral	Hotel	17	4	\$160	\$284	\$222
Oxley Motel	Bowral	Motel	5	3	\$139	\$215	\$177
The Imperial Motel	Bowral	Motel	20	4	\$136	\$201	\$169
Milton Park Country House Hotel & Spa	Bowral	Hotel	44	5	\$333	\$556	\$445
Briars Country Lodge & Inn	Bowral	Hotel	31	4	\$132	\$286	\$209
Berida Hotel	Bowral	Hotel	42	4	\$130	\$381	\$256
Clubbe Cottage	Bowral	Specialty Lodging	2		\$241	\$260	\$251
Golfview Lodge Motel	Bowral	B&B / Inn	23		\$102	\$191	\$147

Name	Location	Type	Rooms	Star Rating	Advertised Price / Night		
					Low	High	Average
Biota Rooms	Bowral	B&B / Inn	12	3.5	\$105	\$217	\$161
Grand Mercure Apartments Heritage Park	Bowral	Specialty Lodging	26		\$321	\$624	\$473
Springs Resorts Mittagong RSL Motel	Mittagong	Hotel	71	4	\$191	\$218	\$205
Lion Rampant Hotel	Mittagong	Hotel	13		\$87	\$123	\$105
Grand Country Lodge Motel	Mittagong	Hotel	23	4	\$134	\$204	\$169
Poplars Inn Mittagong	Mittagong	Hotel	15	4	\$96	\$166	\$131
The Old Bank Hotel	Mittagong	Hotel	8	3.5	\$253	\$301	\$277
Motel Melrose	Mittagong	Motel	15	3	\$93	\$112	\$103
Fitzroy Inn	Mittagong	Inn	10	4	\$139	\$263	\$201
Bowral Road Bed and Breakfast	Mittagong	B&B / Inn	2	4	\$152	\$257	\$205
Mittagong Hotel	Mittagong	B&B / Inn	17		\$55	\$155	\$105
Berrima Bakehouse Motel	Berrima	Motel	19	3	\$131	\$241	\$186
Bendooley Estate Cottages	Berrima	Specialty Lodging	7		\$209	\$1,293	\$751
Peppers Manor House	Sutton Forest	Hotel	43	4	\$167	\$354	\$261
Eling Forest Estate	Sutton Forest	B&B / Inn	9		\$132	\$227	\$180
Hillview Heritage Hotel	Sutton Forest	B&B / Inn	8	3	\$128	\$207	\$168
Bundanoon Hotel	Bundanoon	Hotel	44	2.5	\$66	\$108	\$87
Bundanoon Country Inn Motel	Bundanoon	Motel	21	3	\$99	\$191	\$145
Bundanoon Lodge	Bundanoon	B&B / Inn	6	4	\$158	\$241	\$200
Bundanoon Guesthouse	Bundanoon	Guesthouse	16	3	\$161	\$227	\$194
Yallambee	Bundanoon	B&B / Inn	3	4	\$164	\$191	\$178
The Old Nunnery B&B Moss Vale	Moss Vale	B&B / Inn	4		\$179	\$269	\$224
The Dormie House	Moss Vale	Guesthouse	32	3	\$121	\$194	\$158
The Argyle Hotel	Moss Vale	Hotel	15		\$89	\$128	\$109
Moss Vale Village Park	Moss Vale	Caravan Park	60	3.5	\$28	\$145	\$87
Greengate Bed and Breakfast	Robertson	Inn	2		\$141	\$202	\$172
Robertson Country Motel	Robertson	B&B / Inn	6		\$90	\$138	\$114

Source: TripAdvisor (2020).

A review of the Airbnb listings in the Southern Highlands shows that there is an extensive array of Airbnb listings in the region. While average daily rates for private rooms are in line with historical data for hotel rooms in the region, average daily rates for entire homes greatly exceeds the historical rate for hotels in the region.

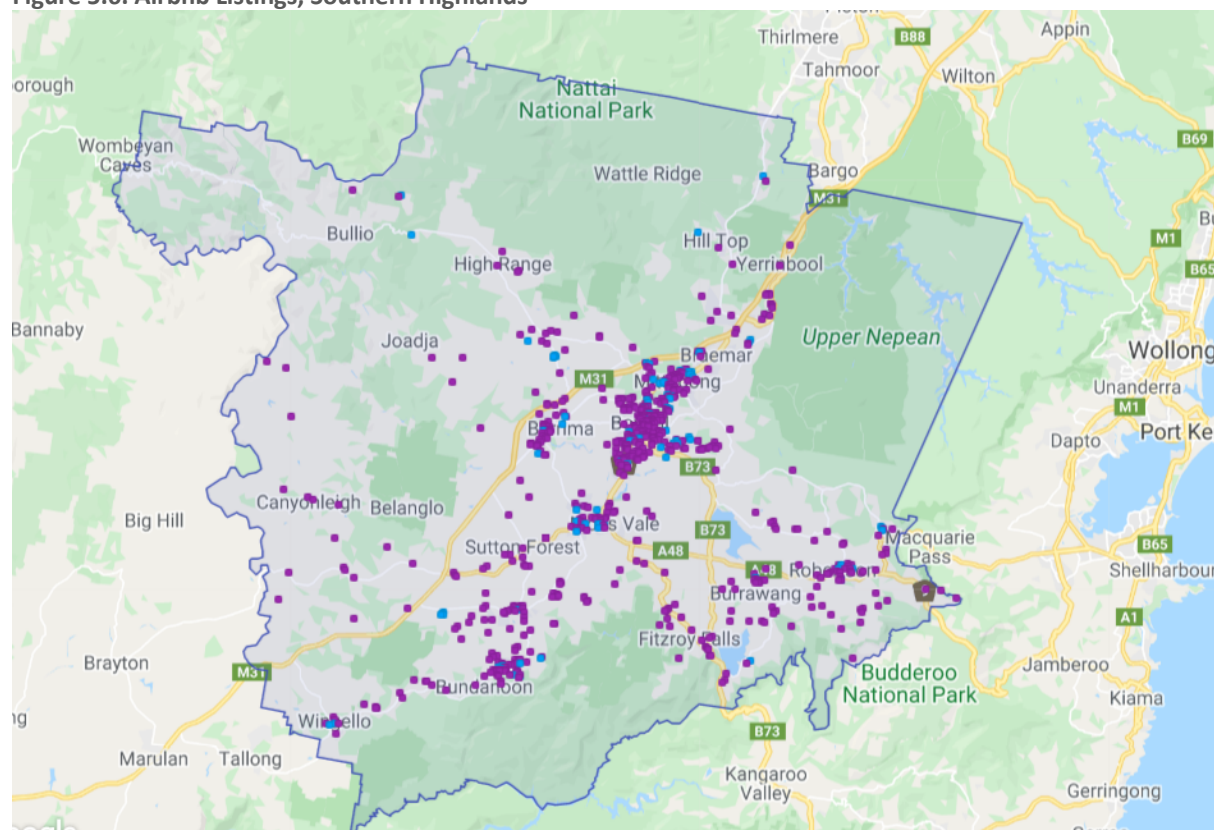
Table 5.3. Southern Highlands Airbnb Profile

	Active Listings	Listing Nights Booked	Occupancy Rate (%)	Average Daily Rate (\$)
Entire Home				
2018	410	39,020	26.1%	\$316.41
2019	608	55,336	24.9%	\$317.79
2020	683	84,019	33.7%	\$327.31
Private Room				
2018	74	7,365	27.2%	\$132.93
2019	72	7,902	30.1%	\$150.13
2020	80	10,695	36.7%	\$147.55
Total				
2018	485	46,385	26.2%	\$242.91
2019	680	63,238	25.5%	\$267.39
2020	763	94,714	34.0%	\$281.42

Note: Annual occupancy rates have been calculated by dividing listing nights booked by listing nights available (active listings in any given month X days per month, then summed for the year). As such, the occupancy rate is likely lower than what was experienced in the market.

Source: AirDNA (2020)

Figure 5.6. Airbnb Listings, Southern Highlands



Source: AirDNA (2020)

5.3 Value of Tourism

Visitation and average expenditure per trip data from Tourism Research Australia shows that an estimated total visitor expenditure of \$365.2 million in the Southern Highlands region in the year ending September 2019.

This expenditure level equates to the local tourism industry contributing an estimated \$208.4 million (\$107.0 million directly and \$101.5 million indirectly) in gross value-added (GVA) activity to the Southern Highlands economy. Tourism directly represents 5.3% of total industry value added, making it the tenth largest industry sector, in Gross Regional Product terms.

In terms of employment, the local tourism industry directly employs an estimated 1,565 workers, while indirectly supporting a further 623 employees (Table 5.5). Directly, it is the seventh largest employment sector behind manufacturing and in front of professional services, responsible for 7.1% of all direct jobs.

Table 5.4: Southern Highlands Tourism Metrics, Year Ending September 2019

Visitor Type	Day-Trip	Domestic Overnight	International
Visitors ('000)	1,453.0	628.0	12.5
Average Spend / Trip	\$96	\$343	\$849
Visitor Spend (\$m)	\$138.8	\$215.7	\$10.8

Source: ABS (2019b), TRA (2019), TRA (2019a), TRA (2019b).

Table 5.5: Southern Highlands Tourism Economic Contribution

Metric	Contribution
Tourist Spend (\$M)	\$365.2
Gross Value-Added (\$M)	
Direct	\$107.0
Indirect	\$101.5
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$208.4</i>
Persons Employed (no.)	
Direct	1,565
Indirect	623
<i>Total</i>	<i>2,189</i>

Source: ABS (2019b), TRA (2019), TRA (2019a), TRA (2019b).

5.4 Tourism Market Analysis

5.4.1 Experience Matrix

The Experience Matrix shown in Table 5.6 shows the intersection of the top 10 visitor activities by lifecycle group in the Southern Highlands (denoted by 'X') and the top visitor activities by lifecycle group across New South Wales (denoted by the different colours). The Matrix is helpful in showing where there may be an activity gap locally that is popular amongst a lifecycle group state-wide.

The Matrix generally shows a reasonable alignment between popular activities in the Southern Highlands and New South Wales.

However, potential gaps in the activities offered in the Southern Highlands include:

- Picnics or BBQs
- Attend an organised sporting event
- Visit wildlife parks / zoos / aquariums
- Attend theatre, concerts or other performing arts
- Exercise, gym or swimming.

The lifecycle group key for Table 5.6 is:

- A: Young single living at home
- B: Young single living alone or in shared accommodation
- C: Midlife single
- D: Young/midlife couple, no kids
- E: Parent with youngest child aged 5 or less
- F: Parent with youngest child aged 6-14
- G: Parent with youngest child aged 15+ still living at home
- H: Older working single
- I: Older non-working single
- J: Older working married person
- K: Older non-working married person

Table 5.6: Experience Matrix, Southern Highlands vs New South Wales, Year Ending December 2019

Activity	Lifecycle Groups										
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
Go to the beach					X						
Visit national parks / state parks	X	X	X	X	X	X		X			
Visit botanical or other public gardens	X	X				X				X	X
Go whale or dolphin watching											
Visit farms											
Bushwalking / rainforest walks		X	X	X	X	X		X		X	
Visit the reef											
Birdwatching											
Other outdoor activities nfd	X		X					X			
Fishing		X									
Golf							X				
Scuba diving											
Snorkelling											
Water activities / sports											
Surfing											
Snow skiing											
Cycling											
Exercise, gym or swimming		X			X				X	X	
Play other sports					X			X		X	
Attend theatre, concerts or other performing arts											
Visit museums or art galleries		X	X				X	X	X	X	
Visit art / craft workshops / studios											
Attend festivals / fairs or cultural events	X								X		X
Visit history / heritage buildings, sites or monuments	X		X		X	X	X		X		X
Experience aboriginal art / craft and cultural displays											
Visit an aboriginal site / community											
Visit amusements / theme parks											
Visit wildlife parks / zoos / aquariums											
Go on guided tours or excursions		X									X
Go to markets	X	X		X	X	X	X		X		X
Tourist trains											
Visit industrial tourist attractions / mines / breweries											
Visit wineries		X	X	X			X			X	
Charter boat / cruise / ferry											
Visit a health spa / sanctuary / well-being centre											
Visit or stay on an island											
Visit breweries or distilleries											
Visit farmgates											
Visit food markets				X							
Visit breweries											
Visit distilleries											
Visit friends & relatives	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Pubs, clubs, discos etc		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Visit casinos											
Attend an organised sporting event											
Go shopping for pleasure		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Eat out / dine at a restaurant and/or cafe	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Sightseeing/looking around	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Movies/videos											
Go on a daytrip to another place		X									
Picnics or BBQs		X			X						
Attend movies/cinema											
	Top 5 New South Wales Activity										
	Top 6-10 New South Wales Activity										
	Top 11-20 New South Wales Activity										
	Remainder of New South Wales Activity										
X	Top 10 Wingecarribee LGA Activity										

Source: TRA (2020).

5.4.2 Cluster Mapping

The following cluster maps help to understand the relative competitive advantages for the Southern Highlands in terms of the activity offerings that attract visitors to the region.

Cluster Mapping

Cluster mapping is an analytical tool to consider future tourism growth opportunities and to show the importance and growth opportunities for various visitor activities within a region. The cluster maps for the Southern Highlands show the significance and importance of general tourism activities including visiting friends and relatives, going shopping and eating out / dining at a restaurant or cafe.

Interpreting the Cluster Map

Cluster mapping is an analytical tool that can simultaneously present the size and scale of a location's competitive advantages compared with State level growth trends by visitor activity. In cluster mapping, a location's competitive advantage is viewed through activity specialisation (i.e. the relative scale of visitors participating in the activity compared to the State average). There are three main components to the cluster map:

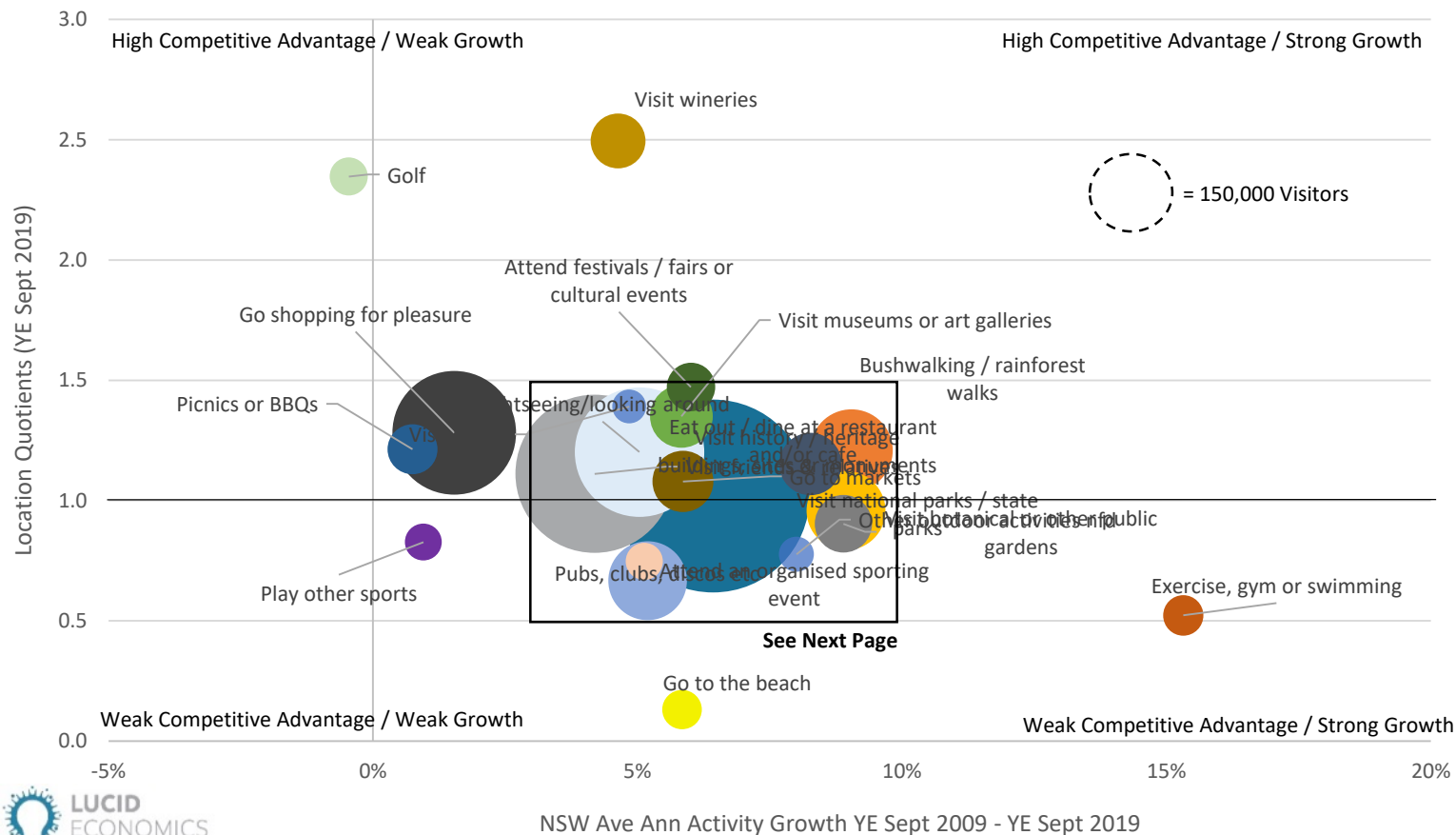
- **Location quotient:** the community's location quotients are presented along the vertical axis and these points represent the proportion of visitors participating in the activity in the region versus a comparison, in this instance New South Wales (i.e. compared with NSW, how many visitors participated in the activity during their visit; 1 = the same, 1.2 = 20% more than NSW, etc.).
- **Historical Growth:** Growth in the activity at the State level over the decade to the year ending September 2019 forms the horizontal axis and shows if the region has missed out on recent visitor growth activities.
- **The Cluster:** or the 'bubble' represents the size of local visitor activity participation, which shows the significance of the activity locally.

Overall, cluster mapping helps to identify visitor activity areas of focus for further development in the future.

The Southern Highlands recorded a location quotient above 1 for activities including visiting wineries, golf, visiting farms and attending fairs.

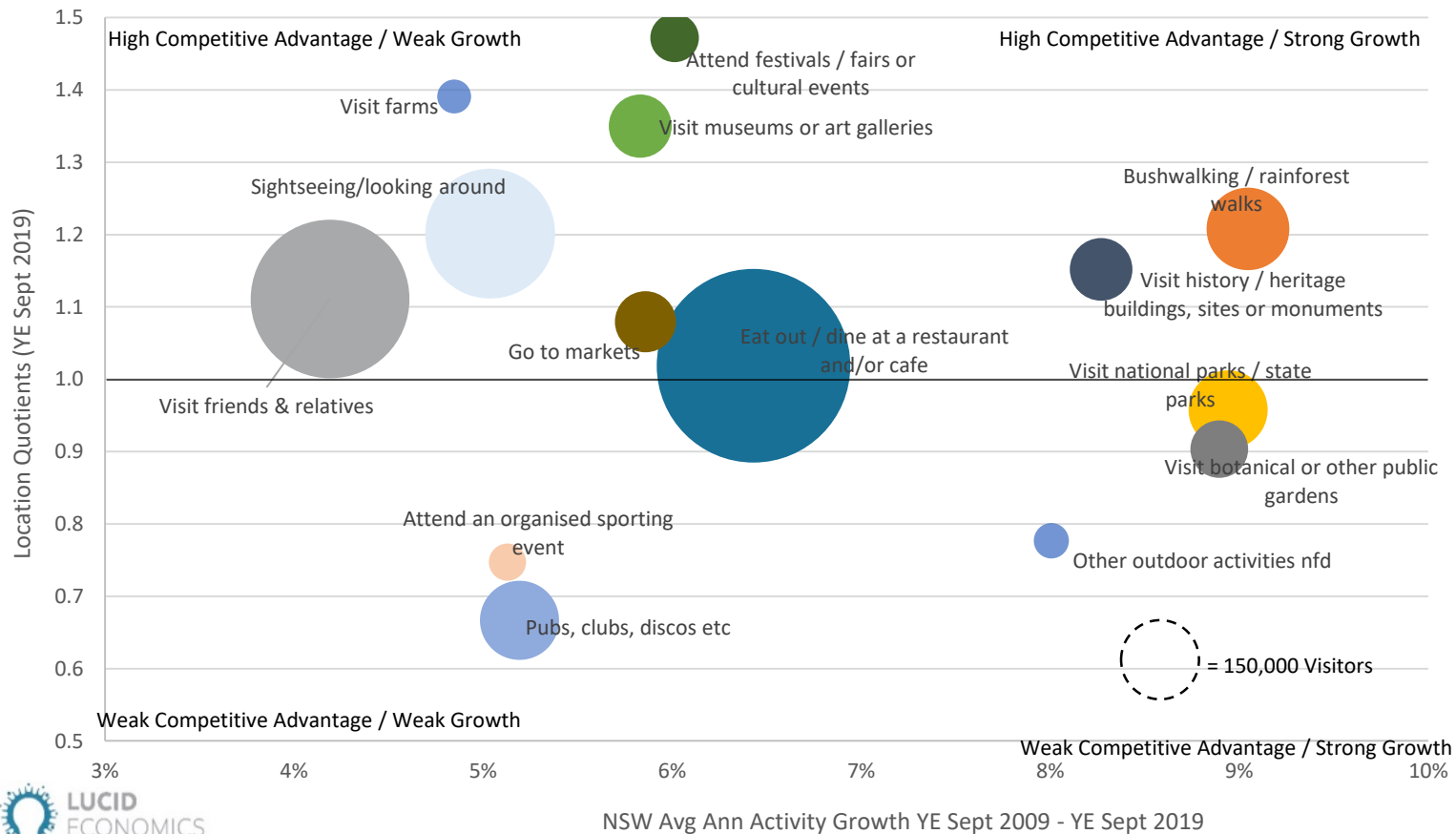
However, the analysis also highlighted location quotients of below 1 for exercise, gym or swimming, pubs, clubs or discos and attending and organised sporting event.

Figure 5.7. Tourist Visitor Top 20 Activity Cluster Map, Southern Highlands (benchmarked to New South Wales), Year Ending September 2019



Note: Location quotient calculated by proportion of the Southern Highlands visitors engaging in the activity during visit divided by proportion of New South Wales visitors engaging in the activity. A location quotient of greater than 1 indicates a greater proportion of the Southern Highlands visitors engage in the activity than the New South Wales average. 10-year average to year ending December 2019 data.
 Source: TRA (2020).

Figure 5.8. Tourist Visitor Top 20 Activity Cluster Map, Southern Highlands (benchmarked to New South Wales), Year Ending September 2019, Zoomed Section



Note: Location quotient calculated by proportion of the Southern Highlands visitors engaging in the activity during visit divided by proportion of New South Wales visitors engaging in the activity. A location quotient of greater than 1 indicates a greater proportion of the Southern Highlands visitors engage in the activity than the New South Wales average. 10-year average to 2018-19 data.
 Source: TRA (2020).

6. Agriculture

Agriculture has been a strong traditional industry in the Southern Highlands for many decades and the sector continues to make a valuable contribution to the local economy. The local agricultural sector includes beef cattle, dairy cattle, poultry and nurseries as well as a wide variety of other smaller crops.

Table 6.1: Agricultural Production, Southern Highlands (2015-16)

	Gross Value (\$m)
Beef Cattle	\$15.4
Dairy Cattle	\$14.7
Poultry	\$8.1
Nurseries	\$6.5
Other	\$4.9
Total	\$49.5

Source: ABS (2017a)

Table 6.2: Number of Agricultural Businesses, Southern Highlands (2015-16)

	Number of Businesses
Beef Cattle	147
Dairy Cattle	25
Horse Farms	23
Nurseries	13
Other	45
Total	253

Source: ABS (2017b)

7. Property

At \$765,000 in June quarter 2019, Southern Highlands median house price is by far the highest of the amongst the broader region, more than \$100,000 more than the next highest council area in the region (Wollondilly, median of \$663,000). Further, the median house price in the Southern Highlands has declined over the past year, consistent with other areas on the New South Wales over this period. The relatively high median house price demonstrates the attractiveness of the area for people choosing to make a 'tree change', often moving out of Sydney and capitalising on relatively high housing prices to purchase a lifestyle in the Southern Highlands.

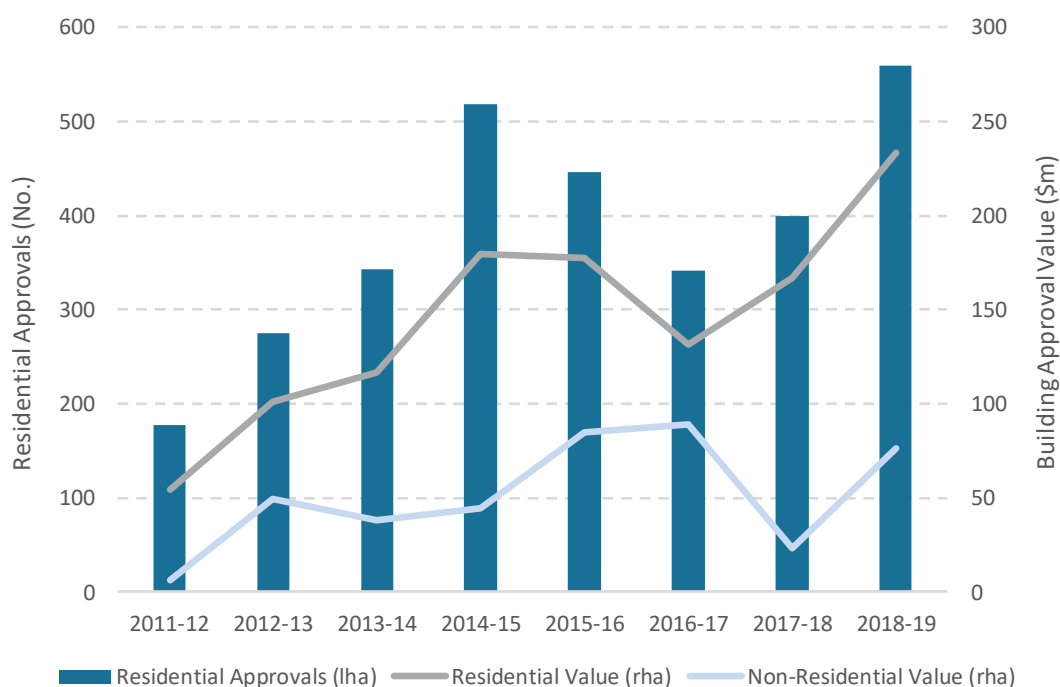
Despite falling house prices in the region in recent years, the value of residential building approvals and building activity in the Southern Highlands has risen strongly over the past two years.

Table 7.1. Median House Price by Council Area

	Jun-17	Jun-18	Jun-19
Southern Highlands	\$870,000	\$775,000	\$765,000
Wollondilly	\$766,250	\$815,000	\$663,000
Goulburn Mulwaree	\$430,000	\$445,000	\$418,000
Greater Sydney	\$1,075,000	\$950,000	\$900,000
NSW	\$700,000	\$655,000	\$650,000

Source: FACS (2020).

Figure 7.1. Building Approvals, Southern Highlands



Source: ABS (2019a).

8. Competitive Advantages and Opportunities

Identifying Competitive Advantages

Identifying and leveraging competitive advantages is important for successful economic development efforts at the local level. Competitive advantages can exist in many forms including location, natural resources, industry specialisation and/or infrastructure. This section seeks to identify the unique competitive advantages of the Southern Highlands using various analytical techniques, including:

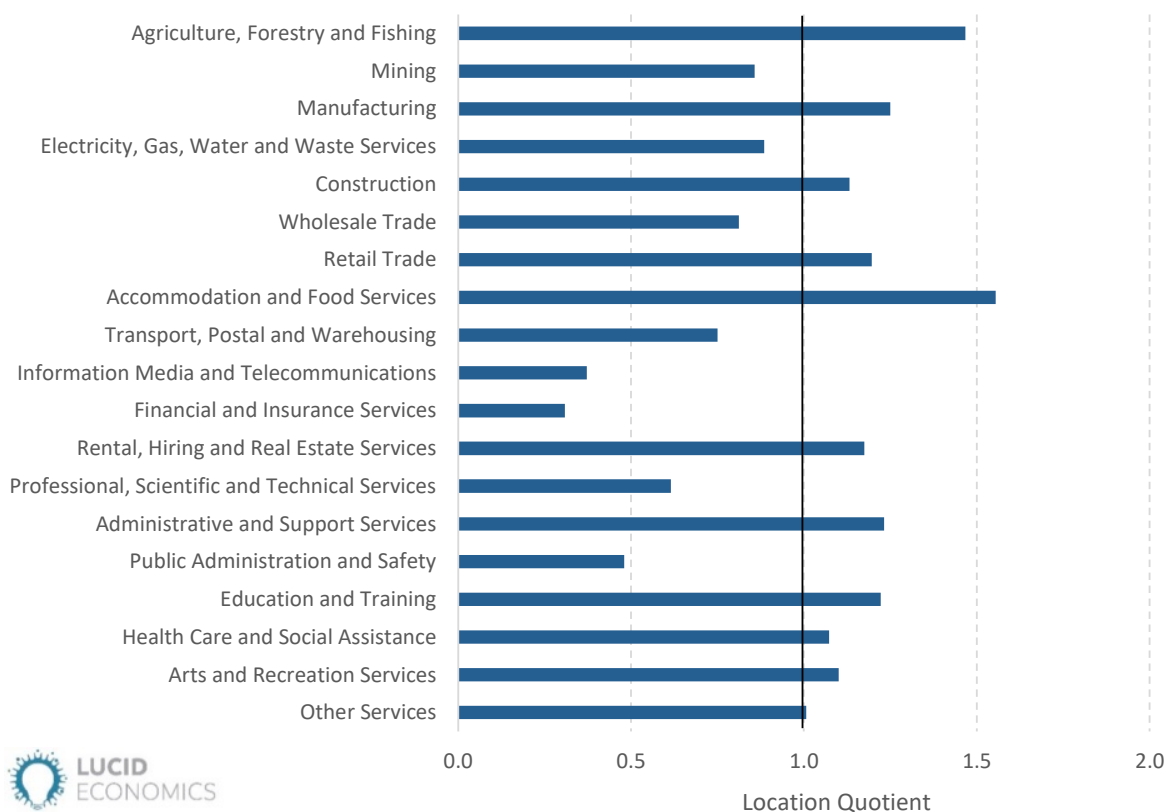
- Location quotient analysis
- Cluster mapping

This analysis will identify various industry opportunities for the Southern Highlands to be tested and verified through consultation.

The following graph shows the Southern Highlands competitive advantages by industry due to local employment specialisation. Essentially, the location quotients show the proportion of workers in individual industries with the '1' line representing parity with New South Wales. Industries showing a specialisation above the '1' line indicate areas of natural competitive advantage.

The analysis shows the natural competitive advantages for the Southern Highlands in tourism (retail/accommodation and food services), agriculture, manufacturing, construction and rental, hiring and real estate services.

Figure 8.1. Employment Location Quotients, Southern Highlands (benchmarked to New South Wales), 2018-19



Note: Place of work data.
Source: NIEIR (2020).

It is important to understand that the construction industry relies on population and other factors for growth and vitality. As such, as population (and business) grows, so too will construction, so while there is a relative competitive advantage in these sectors, it is not something that the Southern Highlands can trade on.

The following cluster maps help us to understand the relative competitive advantage against a backdrop of future expected employment growth, as well as existing local employment strengths.

Cluster Mapping

Cluster mapping is an analytical tool to consider future economic growth opportunities and to show the importance and growth opportunities for various clusters or industries within the economy. The cluster maps for the Southern Highlands (Figure 8.2 and Figure 8.3) show the significance and importance of the existing tourism (accommodation and food services and retail trade industries) and public sector industries including health care and education. The mapping also shows the growth potential of various other clusters such as the professional, scientific and technical services industry.

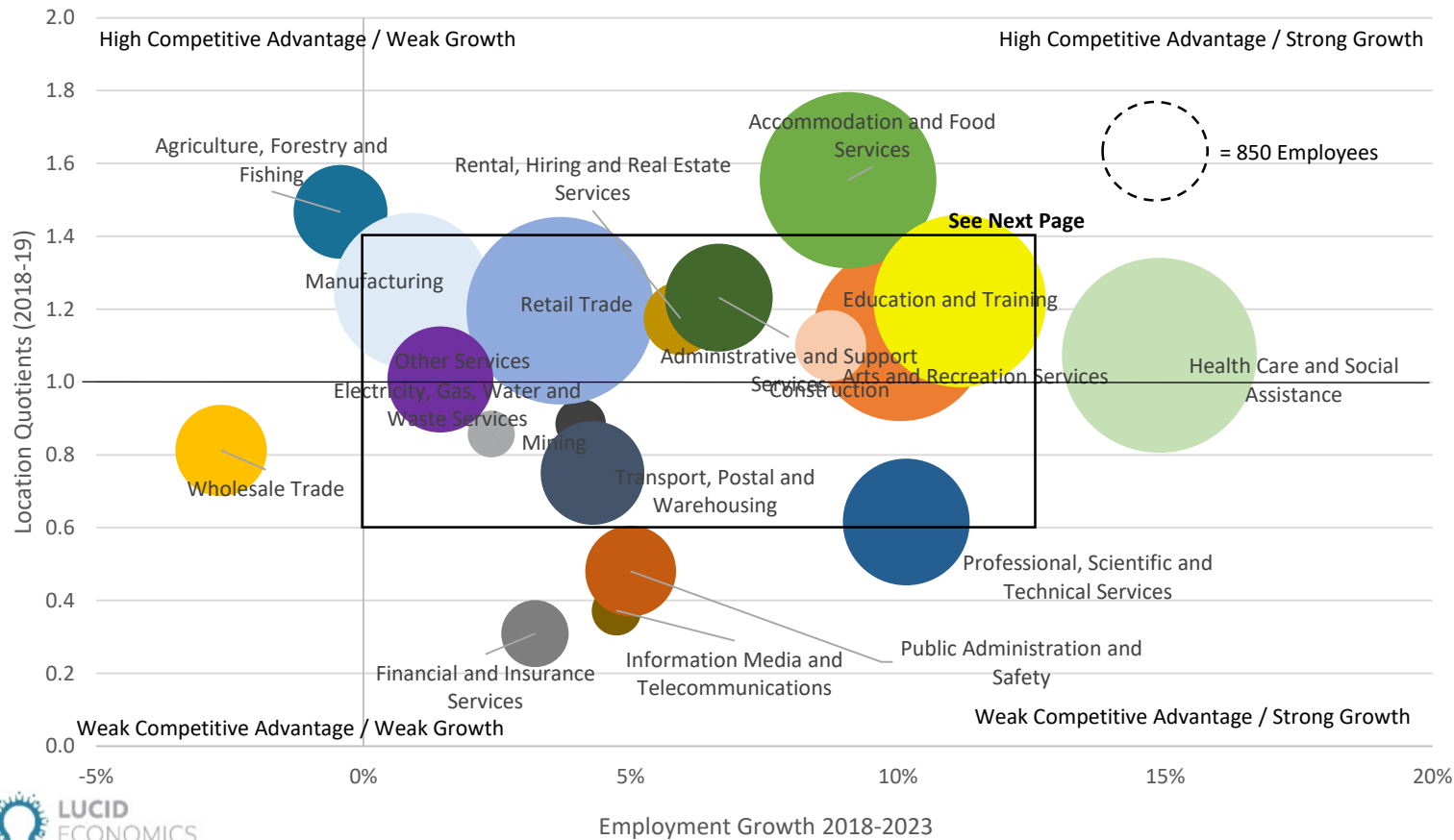
Interpreting the Cluster Map

Cluster mapping is an analytical tool that can simultaneously present the size and scale of a location's competitive advantages with future anticipated growth trends by industry. In cluster mapping, a location's competitive advantage is viewed through labour specialisation (i.e. the relative scale of employment in specific industries). There are three main components to the cluster map:

- **Location quotient:** the community's location quotients are presented along the vertical axis and these points represent the proportional employment in the community versus a comparison, in this instance New South Wales (i.e. compared with NSW, how many people are employed in the sector; 1 = the same, 1.2 = 20% more than the state, etc.).
- **Employment Growth:** future employment growth expectations per industry, from 2017 to 2023, form the horizontal axis and tell us the percentage growth expected for a sector. In this instance, projections from the Department of Jobs and Small Business have been used.
- **The Cluster:** or the 'bubble' represents the size of local employment in that given sector, which shows the significance of the sector locally.

Overall, cluster mapping helps to identify industry areas of focus for further development in the future.

Figure 8.2. Cluster Map (1-digit), Southern Highlands

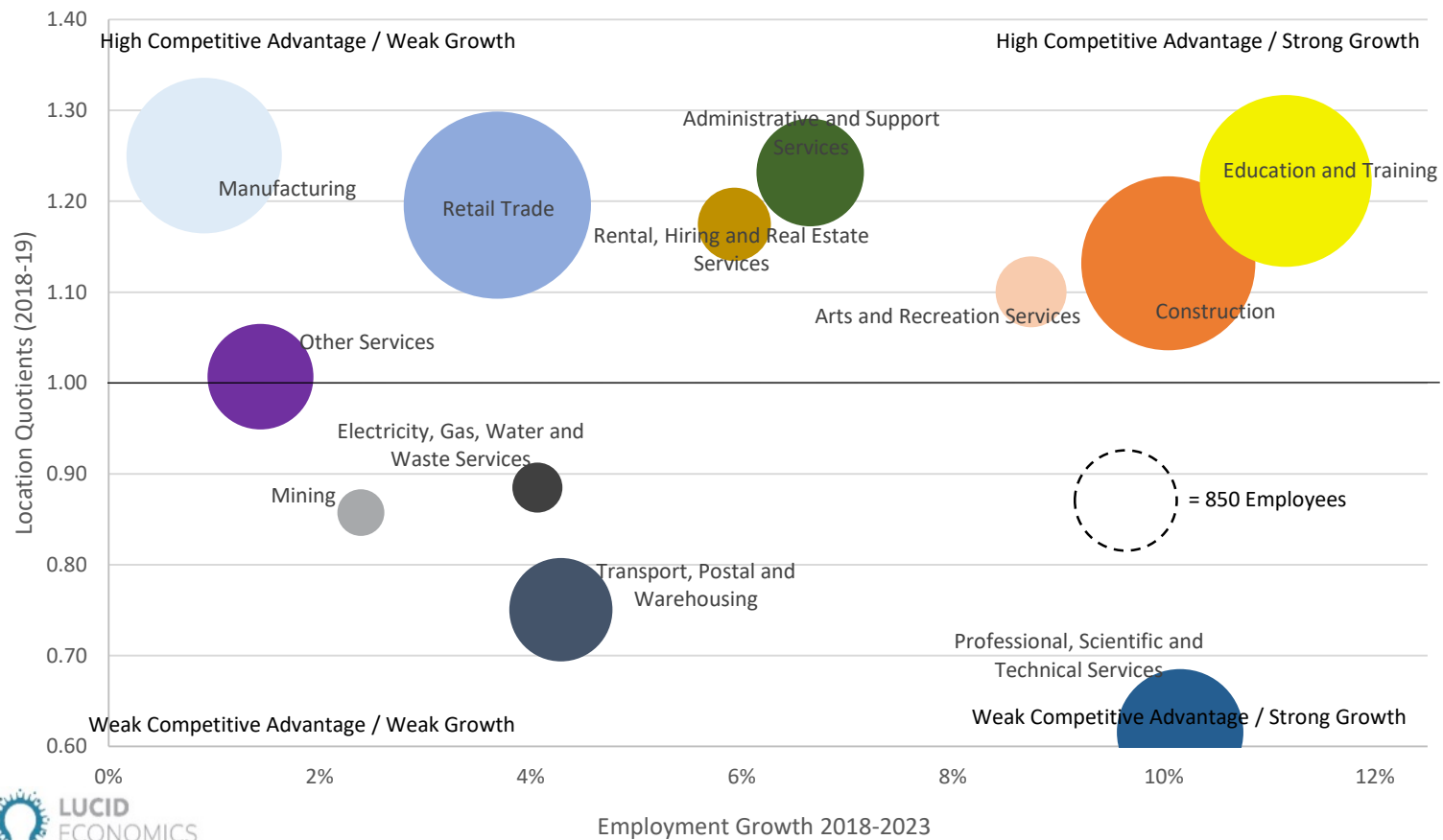


Note: Location quotient calculated by proportion of the Southern Highlands employment divided by proportion of New South Wales employment. Location quotient of greater than 1 indicates industry makes up larger proportion of the Southern Highlands employment than it does across New South Wales.

Note: Place of work data.

Sources: Economy.ID (2019), DJSB (2018).

Figure 8.3. Cluster Map (1-digit) Inset, Southern Highlands



Note: Location quotient calculated by proportion of the Southern Highlands employment divided by proportion of New South Wales employment. Location quotient of greater than 1 indicates industry makes up larger proportion of the Southern Highlands employment than it does across New South Wales.

Note: Place of work data.

Sources: Economy.ID (2019), DJSB (2018).

9. Summary

This analysis has revealed numerous elements of the local economy as well as various areas for economic expansion and diversification.

The Southern Highlands has an older population than the NSW average, with the region's population forecast to continue ageing over the next two decades. This has provided some issues for the local labour market, which has experienced falling employment in recent years while at the same time maintaining a low (and falling) unemployment rate. This indicates that the Southern Highlands participation rate has been in decline in recent years.

Key industries in the region (both in terms of industry value-add and employment) include the tourism (retail trade and accommodation and food services industries), construction, manufacturing and the public sector (primarily healthcare and education). However, growth in the construction and manufacturing industries has been volatile, with employment within the manufacturing industry declining over the past five years, while the construction industry has been impacted by a volatile dwelling price cycle in recent years. Further, these industries tend not to have the strongest industry-add per employee, with the highest value jobs generally found within the mining, rental, hiring and real estate services and financial services industries.

The local tourism industry has seen growing visitation numbers in recent years, supported by the lower Australian dollar in recent years. However, the area receives only a small proportion of total visitation from international visitors. Growing this visitor base is an area of opportunity for the council moving forward.

The increasing level of visitation (and the contribution that visitors make to the local economy) have somewhat offset the changing demographics in the area and the impact this has on the local economy.

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