



# Central Region

## Regional Profile

The Central Region is the geographical centre of Australia. These are desert lands covering 546 046 square kilometres, 40% of the Northern Territory. Petermann, Sandover, Tanami plus five Alice Springs Town localities are the statistical areas.

Alice Springs is the largest service and population centre in the region. A significant percentage of the region's population live in outlying communities, Yulara and rural areas. Yulara is a purpose built town to cater for the large number of tourists who principally visit Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park.

The region supports a range of industries including tourism, pastoral, horticulture, mining, construction, retail, and community and government services. Cultural Indigenous-based tourism is a key driver of the regional economy. The area is also endowed with pastoral and mineral resources.

## Society

### Population

In June 2005, the region was home to an estimated 39 068 people, accounting for 19% of the Northern Territory population. In the year to June 2005, the region's population increased by 1.0%.

In 2001, Indigenous people represented 37% of the Central Region population. The population of the region is expected to rise to about 44 365 by 2021, based on medium growth predictions by the ABS.



## Central Region Key Facts 2005

Area		546 046 km <sup>2</sup>
Population		39 068
Labour force	- Region	19 839
	- Alice Springs	15 921
Unemployment rate	- Region	8.7%
	- Alice Springs	5.2%
Tourist visitor numbers:		617 000
Number of businesses:		2971
Mining value 2004-05:		\$379m
Agricultural value 2004-05:		\$65m

## Local Government

In addition to the Alice Springs Town Council, there are 7 Community Government Councils and 13 Incorporated Associations. The latter administer a number of local communities and primarily service Indigenous people. In 2004-05 local government expenditure in the region was \$65.4 million with \$63.3 million revenue generated.

## Economy

### Employment

In 2005 the region had an estimated 19 839 people in the labour force, including Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) employment, and an 8.7% unemployment rate. In 2005, 5.2% of the labour force in Alice Springs town was unemployed. The unemployment rate in the non-urban regions was four times greater.

In 2001 the key employing sectors in the region were tourism (accommodation, cafes and restaurants and cultural and recreational services), retail trade, government administration and defence and health and community services.



# Northern Territory Regional Snapshots

## Income and Prices

In 2002-03, the average wage and salary income for the Central Region (\$36 542) was 4% below the Territory average. In December 2005 Alice Springs had the lowest price in the Territory for an average basket of goods. Grocery prices were on average 4% cheaper than in Darwin.

## Number of Businesses

In 2001, the region had 2971 registered business entities (estimated at 1071 public and 1843 private). Most were located in Alice Springs. The majority (61%) were small businesses with turnover of less than \$100 000 per year in the property and business services, construction related, retail and tourism-related business sectors.

## Construction and Building

In 2004-05 the value of new residential buildings was \$33m for 110 buildings approved in the region. The value of non-residential building approvals was \$36m. The region has a public housing stock of 860 dwellings, 16% of the Territory total.

## Real Estate

In the December Quarter 2005, the average house sale price in Alice Springs was \$280 000, up 12% on the previous year. The average unit sale price was \$200 000, up 11%. In the December Quarter 2005, the vacancy rate for rental properties in Alice Springs was 3.7%.

## Tourism

During 2005, the Central Region, a major tourism centre in the NT, attracted 617 000 overnight visitors. This was a 2% increase on the previous year. In 2005, accommodation takings for the Alice Springs Tourism Region were \$38 million, 21% of the Territory total.

## Agriculture

In 2004-05, the value of agricultural production from the Central Region was estimated at \$65m. This represented 16% of total Territory agricultural production. Pastoral production contributed \$56m, horticulture \$9m and field crops \$0.3m.

## Mining

In 2004-05, production of minerals and petroleum in the Central Region was valued at \$379m, a 17% increase over the previous year. This represented 21% of Territory onshore mining production value, and was mainly from gold. The region produced more than 95% of the Territory's gold.

## Roads

In 2004-05 the region had a total of 7691 km of roadways, 35% of total roadways in the Territory. One-fifth (1647 km) of roadways within the region are sealed. In 2003-04, the region received 28% (\$19.7m) of Territory spending on roads.

## Wellbeing

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### Education

In 2005, there were 41 government schools and 9 non-government schools operating in the region. There were 7652 students enrolled in primary and secondary schools and 5103 students enrolled in vocational education and training courses (20% of the Territory total). A total of 223 students were enrolled in higher education courses, 9% of the Territory total.

### Welfare

In 2003, 102 people per 1000 received Centrelink's Newstart allowance for jobseekers, higher than the Territory average of 72. A slightly higher rate of people received the youth allowance, and a lower rate received rental assistance than elsewhere in the Territory.

### Health

The region's public hospital is located in Alice Springs. In 2004-05, of the 13 987 public hospital separations, Indigenous people accounted for 65% despite comprising only 37% of the population. Hospital separations longer than one day accounted for nearly 57% of all non-Indigenous separations compared to 81% of all Indigenous separations. Indigenous people were greatly over-represented in most causes of death categories, particularly diabetes and diseases of the digestive system.

### Law and Public Safety

In 2005, total crime in the region was reported at 285 offences per 1000 persons, higher than the overall Territory rate of 215. Sexual assaults and related offences were reported at 1 per 1000 persons, unlawful entry with intent/burglary at 16 per 1000 persons, both similar to the Territory average.

## For Further Information

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**Contact:** Please contact the Department of Business, Economic and Regional Development, Economic Development Division, for further information.

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