

# Agriculture

The Swan Hill region is known as the heart of Australia's food bowl and is home to one of the most productive and diverse agricultural sectors in Australia. A major attribute of the region is the ability to grow a variety of agricultural products, assisted by skilled workforce, favourable climate, rich fertile soil, diverse farm land and modern irrigation infrastructure.

## Major agriculture products and commodities include:

**Irrigated horticultural** – stonefruit, vegetables, nuts (almonds and pistachios), olives, citrus, grapes, pasture hay and rice.

**Broadacre cropping** – grain including wheat, barley and vetch.

**Livestock** – cattle and sheep.

## Fast facts of the agriculture sector in the Swan Hill region

Number of jobs	1,442
Percentage of total regional employment	18%
Total output	\$344m
Percentage of total regional output	16.9%
Value of annual regional export	\$285m
Percentage of total regional exports	40.9%

(Source: remplan 2011)

## Current Key Indicators

The Swan Hill region currently boasts the biggest almond farms in the Southern Hemisphere, the largest Australian concentration of fresh stonefruit, pistachios and table grapes and after Sunraysia, the second largest wine grape production region in Victoria.

The municipality has a reputation for the production of consistent yields of quality grains and growing high-quality disease-free fruit, vegetables and nuts.

According to Australian Bureau of Statistics - *Value of Agricultural Commodities Produce 2010-2011*, the total value of agricultural output in Swan Hill Rural City was \$602 million, an increase from \$343 million in 2005-2006<sup>1</sup>.

The largest commodity produced was cereal crops, which accounted for 27.3% of Swan Hill Rural City's total agricultural output in value terms<sup>1</sup>.

*"More Swan Hill Rural City residents work in agriculture, forestry and fishing than any other industry."*<sup>1</sup>

## Future

The unbundling of water rights from land parcels has seen the region become a net importer of water, particularly in the north-west region of the municipality. Combining these facets with initiatives such as the Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project, advancements in transport and logistics infrastructure, and the potential of reticulated natural gas into the region, it is anticipated that a new range of business and industry investments will be generated in the agricultural sector.

## Regions competitive advantages

The region's competitive advantages include:

- The ability to grow a variety of agricultural products, both dryland and irrigated
- The ability to service fresh food markets at both ends of the season
- Well-developed transport, packing and logistics infrastructure
- A committed and stable workforce
- Direct access to both domestic and international fresh produce markets
- Centrally located within the Murray Basin food bowl
- Easy access to major capital cities and seaports

1. economy.id



## More information

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## Swan Hill region economic profile (Source: economy.id)

Population SHRCC (2012)	20,972	Local jobs	10,173	Unemployment rate (15+)	4.6%
Gross regional product	\$0.89b	Local business	2,516	Median price home	\$213,183

