



NORTHERN
MIDLANDS
COUNCIL

Northern Midlands, Tasmania Economic & Community Profile



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1. INTRODUCTION

The Northern Midlands is one of the largest and most diverse municipal areas in Tasmania. It covers an area of 5,130 square kms, extending from Liffey Bluff in the west to Mt St John in the east (150kms) and from Relbia in the north to Tooms Lake in the south (95 kms). It ranges from mountainous country on its eastern and western boundaries, to extensive grazing lands renowned for fine wool production and the rich agricultural river flats of the Esk, Lake and Macquarie Rivers. The Midland Highway which connects Hobart and Launceston bisects the Northern Midlands.

Launceston Airport is situated in the Northern Midlands. Council has developed the Launceston Airport TRANSLink precinct, a large, high-quality industrial, business and transport precinct, adjacent to the airport. Over 80 companies have already identified and taken advantage of TRANSLink's strategic geographic location, its user-friendly planning scheme and highly competitive rating and fees schedule. In 2023 Council is commencing a feasibility study for an Intermodal facility in the precinct.

The Northern Midlands is a prime location for further business developments. Factors that assist with attracting new businesses include the geographic location of the area in the heart of the State, the proximity to Launceston and its workforce, the airport and adjacent TRANSLink precinct, a pro-active Council, and quality lifestyle. The Northern Midlands is a key component of the Heritage Highway Touring Route and tourism is a significant contributor to the Northern Midlands' economy.

2. DEMOGRAPHICS

2.1 POPULATION

Population by census years in towns and localities

Area	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016	2021
Longford	2,601	2,829	2,827	3,027	3,053	3,863	4,268
Perth	1,573	1,863	1,984	2,239	2,411	2,965	3,472
Evandale	772	1,033	1,057	1,059	1,086	1,345	1,265
Campbell Town	820	816	755	772	781	996	823
Cressy	616	637	648	670	676	1,111	1,149
Ross	282	275	266	272	271	404	410
Other	4,580	3,918	3,890	4,052	3,950	2,138	2,358
Total	11,244	11,371	11,427	12,091	12,228	12,822	13,745

Source: ABS census

2.2 AGE

Towns by Age Brackets, 2021

Town	% aged 0-4yrs	% aged 5-14yrs	% aged 15-24yrs	% aged 25-54yrs	% aged 55-64yrs	% aged 65 & over	Median age
Longford	5.1	11.1	10.3	33.2	13.7	26.8	47
Perth	6.7	12.4	10.8	37.5	13.6	19	39
Evandale	4.1	8.4	8.7	30.1	18.7	29.6	53
Campbell Town	4.1	9.4	8.8	29.5	15	33.1	53
Cressy	6.7	13.2	11	41.6	12.9	14.7	38
Ross	3.9	6.8	7	26.8	19.3	36.5	56
Municipal wide average	5.5	11.3	10.1	34.4	14.9	23.7	46
Australia wide average	5.8	12.4	11.9	40.7	11.9	17.2	38

2.3 INDIGENOUS STATUS

At the 2021 census, 3.2% of the Northern Midlands population reported being of indigenous origin, compared to the state average of 5.4% and national average of 3.2%.

2.4 BIRTHPLACE AND LANGUAGE

The percentage of Northern Midlands residents stating they were Australian born in 2021 was 84.5%, compared to the state average of 79.1% and national average of 66.9%.

3.5% of residents were born in England, 1.1% in New Zealand, 0.3% in Scotland, 0.5% in the Netherlands, and 0.3% in the Philippines.

English is the only language spoken at home in 92.4% of Northern Midlands households, compared to 72% Australia wide.

2.5. MARITAL STATUS: POPULATION AGED OVER 15 YEARS, 2021

Marital status	Northern Midlands	Australian averages
Married	48.1	46.5
Never married	31.8	36.5
Separated or divorced	13.7	12
Widowed	6.3	5

2.6 FAMILY COMPOSITION 2021

Location	% couples with children	% couples without children	1 parent families
Northern Midlands	35.7	47.8	15.2
Tasmania	36.8	44.5	17.3
Australia	43.7	38.8	15.9

3. QUALITY OF LIFE

3.1 LIFESTYLE

Northern Midlands residents enjoy a high-quality lifestyle, with many choosing to live the rural life in or near the area's historic towns and villages, whilst being close enough to the city of Launceston to access and enjoy the urban services, educational facilities and workplaces.

The area has a number of excellent recreational areas and sporting facilities, and in particular, is renowned for its trout fishing rivers and lakes.

3.2 HOUSING

Dwelling characteristics: occupied private dwellings 2021

Dwelling type	Northern Midlands	Australian average
Separate house	90.4	72.3
Semi-detached house	2.3	12.6
Unit/flat	6.2	14.2

Tenure type: occupied private dwellings 2021

Town	% fully owned	% being purchased	% rented
Longford	38.8	32.1	25
Perth	33.4	46.5	17.9
Evandale	51.4	29.2	16
Campbell Town	46.7	27.7	22.1
Cressy	32.3	34	24.8
Ross	51.9	17.3	19.5
Northern Midlands average	40.5	33.8	20.5
Australian average	31	35	30.6

House sales data 2012 – 2021

	2012		2016		2021	
	Median price	No. sales	Median price	No. sales	Median price	No. sales
Evandale	290,000	13	281,500	20	575,000	21
Campbell Town	160,000	8	165,000	14	330,500	24
Cressy	292,000	2	225,000	16	380,000	12
Perth	278,000	37	317,000	70	515,000	42
Longford	276,000	38	280,000	71	480,000	68

Stats provided by Real Estate Institute of Tasmania – from actual sales by REIT members

Household type: Occupied private dwellings 2021

Town	Family household (%)	Lone person household (%)	Group household (%)
Longford	67.4	29.9	2.7
Perth	72.9	26.2	1.0
Evandale	70.6	27.4	2.0
Campbell Town	58.5	37.8	3.4
Cressy	69.1	27.4	3.5
Ross	65.4	34.6	0.0
Northern Midlands average	69.4	28.5	2.1
Australian average	70.5	25.6	3.9

Median monthly mortgage repayments, weekly rents and weekly and individual incomes by communities 2021

Community	Mthly mortgage repayment (\$)	Weekly rent (\$)	Median household weekly income (\$)
Longford	1,300	285	1,212
Perth	1,317	273	1,449
Evandale	1,300	300	1,228
Cressy	1,200	250	1,300
Campbell Town	867	225	788
Ross	867	250	915
Northern Midlands average	1,300	250	1,037
Australian average	1,863	375	1,746

3.3 HOUSEHOLD INCOME 2021

Household income	Northern Midlands	Tasmania	Australia
Less than \$650 gross weekly income	21.7%	21.1%	16.5%
More than \$3,000 gross weekly income	11.5%	15%	24.3%

4. ECONOMY

4.1. CLIMATE

(source: Antarctic Climate and Ecosystems Cooperative Research Centre, using material from the technical reports of the Climate Futures for Tasmania project)

The Northern Midlands experiences a relatively temperate, maritime climate. However, as the midlands are inland, the municipality experiences wider temperature variations than coastal locations, including cold overnight temperatures and frosts during winter.

The municipality receives some of the lowest average annual rainfalls of any area in Tasmania (generally <600 mm), with no significant seasonal cycle. There is slightly higher average annual rainfall in the west where the midlands borders the Great Western Tiers and also in the east around Lake Leake. There has been a decline in average rainfall and a lack of very wet years in the municipality since the mid-1970s, and this decline has been strongest in autumn. This decline was exacerbated by the 'big dry' drought of 1995-2009. Recent years have seen conditions close to average.

4.2 EMPLOYMENT

The 2021 census recorded 5,917 Northern Midlands residents aged 15 years and over as employed; 56.2% employed full time (working more than 35 hours/week), 33.6% employed part time and 4.2% unemployed. The census recorded a state unemployment rate of 5.9% compared to the national rate of 5.1%.

4.3 OCCUPATION

Of the employed Northern Midlands residents recorded at the 2021 census:

- 15.6% stated they were managers,
- 15.6% technicians and trades workers,
- 14% labourers,
- 10.8% clerical and administrative workers,
- 12.6% professionals,
- 9% sales workers,
- 11.4% community and personal service workers,
- 9% machinery operators and drivers.

4.4 INDUSTRY OF EMPLOYMENT

At the 2021 census, the most common industries of employment of the employed Northern Midlands residents were:

- 3.2% sheep farming specialised,
- 3.2% aged care residential services,
- 3.1% supermarket and grocery stores,
- 2.6% other social assistance services,
- 4.3% hospitals

4.5 BUILDING ACTIVITY IN THE NORTHERN MIDLANDS 2012-2021

Specific data	2012/13	2016/17	2020/2021
Building applicants	271	174	275
Dwellings	51	45	135
Industrial/ commercial	23	19	35
Add. Dwellings & outbuildings	197	110	105
Total Value	\$24.94M	\$27.41M	\$76.3M

5. INDUSTRY & BUSINESS

5.1 TOURISM

Tasmania has a national and international reputation as a touring holiday destination given the state's magnificent wilderness, spectacular natural landscape, rich cultural heritage and fine wine and food. The Northern Midlands Council is committed to working with local tourism operators, Visit Northern Tasmania and Tourism Tasmania to ensure the Northern Midlands receives its fair share of the tourism dollar.

To facilitate tourism developments and promotion of the local industry, the Northern Midlands Council collaborates with the Southern Midlands Council and Brighton Council to fund the Heritage Highway Tourism Region Association Inc. This Association works to develop and promote the Heritage Highway Region as a 'must see' tourist destination.

One of the key challenges for the Northern Midlands is to encourage the many visitors travelling the Midland Highway to stop and savour the beauty and attractions of the area, rather than treating the highway merely as a means of getting between Hobart and Launceston.

In 2021 Council secured \$353,030 through the Australian Government's Recovery for Regional Tourism Program to undertake the REASSIGN Heritage Interpretation Project, a starting point to building the Northern Midlands into Australia's best interpreted region presenting Aboriginal, colonial and agricultural history in new and vibrant ways. REASSIGN tells the stories of Tasmania's Midlands using a range of digital techniques to deliver surprising, compelling and thought-provoking outcomes.

5.2 AGRICULTURE

The 2016 census reported the sheep farming specialised sector was one of the main employers of Northern Midlands' residents. In addition to this direct on-farm employment, agriculture also contributes to employment in the industry sector, with poppy processing company TPI Enterprises at Cressy, Swift Australia Abattoir at Longford, Tasmanian Quality Meats Abattoir at Cressy, Ingham's egg production, chicken rearing and feed pellet processing near Longford and Tasmanian Feedlot P/L at Powranna all being major employers.

The size and number of berry farms across the Northern Midlands is steadily increasing. These employ in excess of 600 overseas workers each year.

The Northern Midlands is one of the most important agricultural areas in Northern Tasmania. During 2020/2021, the total value of agriculture in the Northern Midlands was \$297.8 million. Livestock and livestock products were of biggest value to the Northern Midlands, followed by vegetables for human consumption and cereal crops.

5.3 TRANSLINK INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND LOGISTICS PRECINCT

The TRANSLink precinct, adjacent to Launceston Airport, is the industrial, commercial and logistics jewel in the Northern Midlands crown. The precinct has grown from a small nucleus of low-key business developments in the late 1980s to a thriving business estate, currently home base for more than 80 businesses (not including the businesses at Launceston Airport).

These businesses are engaged in a diverse array of activities including freight, transport and couriers, civil construction and contractors, car rentals, food wholesalers and distributors, engineering and related services, and support services such as a service station and café.

Major businesses in the precinct include Statewide Independent Wholesalers, Haywards Steel Fabrication and Construction, Roberts Wool Office and Store, Vos Construction and Joinery, Tas Freight, SRT Logistics, Avis Rent A Car and Baker Civil Contracting.

A further 120 hectares in the adjacent primary industry zone to the south-east can allow expansion of the precinct in forthcoming years, including the development of an intermodal facility.

6. TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE

Transport is a solid contributor to the Northern Midlands economy.

6.1 LAUNCESTON AIRPORT

Launceston Airport is situated in the Northern Midlands, and is marketed as 'The Gateway to Northern Tasmania.' More than 278,000 people passed through the airport in the first quarter of 2022/2023, representing 90% of pre-COVID traffic for the same quarter in 2019, and a 2,000% increase on that quarter in 2020.

6.2 BELL BAY PORT

Bell Bay Port is located close to the mouth of the Tamar River, approximately 60kms north of Launceston. The port has a deep harbour, and ready access to road and rail networks.

The facility is a major port for domestic and international bulk goods as well as container services.

6.3 ROADS AND RAIL

The Northern Midlands is bisected by the main highway between Hobart and Launceston. The Launceston Airport and adjacent TRANSLink commercial and industrial precinct have easy access to the State's major arterial roads and are centrally located within the State.

A narrow-gauge rail network connects the State to its centres and ports.