



ARMIDALE

This information is intended as a guide only. Please check websites.

Location:

Armidale is an inland city in north eastern NSW in an area called New England.

It is situated on the main inland route between Sydney and Brisbane. It is 476km from Sydney and 460km from Brisbane.

Armidale is 112km north of another major inland city, Tamworth. The closest coast city is Coffs Harbour, 190km to the east.



Overview:

Armidale is the main administrative centre for the region and also has a large university that contributes to the character of the city. It is also an agricultural centre surrounded by farms.

Armidale is both a beautiful city in its own right (especially in spring and autumn) and is also close to many areas of natural beauty including national parks, gorges and waterfalls.

Armidale has been a Refugee Welcome Zone since 2005 and is very keen to welcome refugees. This reflects the community's spirit.

Who lives there:

Armidale and the surrounding district has approximately 37,000 residents. The Armidale Regional Council area also includes the small nearby town of Guyra.

Like most regional cities, the majority of the population is of Australian or European origin but there are smaller communities of people from many parts of the world including Lebanon, Iran, Iraq, Sri Lanka, Nepal, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Rwanda. It has been estimated that if the University of New England staff and overseas students are included there are people from 80 different countries living in Armidale.

How to get there:

You can get to Armidale by car, train, bus and plane.

It is approximately 6 hours drive from Sydney (5½ hours from Brisbane) via the New England Highway.

There is a daily train service to Sydney. From Sydney it takes just over 8 hours and costs between \$48 and \$92 one way depending on whether a concession card is used and the class of travel.

The bus from Sydney to Armidale takes about 9 hours costs about \$105 on way. There is also a bus to Brisbane.

There are several flights between Sydney and Armidale each day. They take about 1 hour 20 minutes and one way prices start at \$134. There are also flights to Brisbane (\$160 one way).

Employment:

The major employers in the city are those linked to:

- education: the university, TAFE college, schools and pre-schools;
- retail: shops and suppliers;
- health care and social assistance;
- tourism: accommodation and food services;
- public administration;
- scientific, agricultural and technical services.

Aged care and child care facilities in Armidale employ many migrants and there are good opportunities for people with relevant Certificates (these can be obtained from TAFE).

Unskilled work is also easy to find.

There is a hydroponic tomato farm (Costas) in a town called Guyra 37km from Armidale that has said that it is keen to employ refugees. Shared car travel to and from Armidale is privately arranged.

Local support agencies are willing to help refugees find employment. 'Word of mouth' is a very effective way to get a job.

There are also websites you can look at to find employment:

- Armidale Express (local paper): www.armidaleexpress.com.au/jobs/
- Seek: www.seek.com.au/jobs/in-Armidale

And a number of local employment agencies:

- Jobs Australia: 104 Beardy Street. Phone 02 6772 5788. www.speediestaffsolutions.com.au
- Best Employment: 215 Beardy Street. Phone 02 6771 3795. Email armidale@best.com.au
- Job Link Plus: 116 Rusden Street. Phone 02 6738 7800. Email Armidale@joblinkplus.com.au

You might also like to make contact with:

Refugee Talent: specialises in linking refugees and employers (www.refugeetalent.com)

Thrive Refugee Enterprise: supports refugees to establish small businesses and provides access to micro-finance (www.thriverefugeeenterprise.org.au).

Education and training:

For adults:

- New England TAFE (Armidale campus) offers English (AMEP) classes. The hours are usually adjustable according to need. More teachers are available and employed as necessary.
- TAFE also offers a large range of courses at TAFE, including aged care, child care and social work, all of which have employment opportunities.

- The University of New England (UNE) has programs for assisting students to prepare for university studies and while enrolled in courses. UNE is a small, caring, multicultural campus that offers a wide range of more than 180 professional courses.
- Less formal English learning assistance is offered to adults by several voluntary groups including at the Multicultural Hub: 115 Butler Street.

For children:

- Preschools, primary and secondary schools have been supporting refugees for many years. Some teachers have received additional training re assisting refugees.
- There is an after-school 'Homework Centre' for primary and secondary students assisting them on a one-to-one basis.

Accommodation:

The median weekly cost of renting a one bedroom apartment is \$175 per week and \$240 for a 2 bedroom unit. Median weekly rent for a 3 bedroom house is \$340 and \$403 for a 4 bedroom house. There is a good supply of rental accommodation.

Websites you can look at to find rental accommodation include:

Domain: www.domain.com.au/rent/armidale-nsw-2350

Realestate.com.au: www.realestate.com.au/rent/in-armidale,+nsw+2350/list-1

Ray White: www.raywhitearmidale.com/rent/property/

Short term budget accommodation options include caravans and cabins at the following:

- Armidale Tourist Park (cabins): Phone 02 6772 6470. www.armidaletouristpark.com.au
- Armidale Acres Caravan Park (slightly out of town on New England Highway). Phone 02 6771 1281.
- Highlander Van Village. Phone 02 67724768.

Furnished hostel accommodation is sometimes available at Smith House, 100 Barney Street (ph. 02 6772 0652). The cost is approximately \$165 per week. This is popular with university students as well as those working at the Costa Tomato Farm.

Health Services:

Armidale Hospital has multicultural health professional staff with many overseas doctors. The result of this is that many of the doctors at the Armidale hospital are bi-lingual.

Armidale also has a Multicultural Health Community Nurse (Phone 02 6776 1205). This is an important service which can assist refugees in the community gain access to good health care.

There are General Practitioners in Armidale who bulk bill and are able to take on new patients.

Interpreters are available through Hunter New England Health Care Interpreter Service. Ask the hospital or your doctor to organise an interpreter for you.

Staff from STARTTS (the specialist service for those who have experienced trauma) visit Armidale. Referrals and appointments can be made by phoning the STARTTS office at Coffs Harbour on 02 6650 9195.

Armidale Sanctuary Humanitarian Settlement and Northern Settlement Services (see details below) can assist to connect you to the right health service.

Places of worship:

There is one mosque in Armidale, located in Booloomindah Drive. Phone 02 6773 5151.

There are many churches of various denominations in Armidale. Details can be found at www.yellowpages.com.au/churches-temples-mosques/armidale-nsw

There is an active Buddhist community in Armidale that meets at the Armidale Community Buddhist Centre (211 Beardy Street): contact Pedro on 0478 008 840.

There is also a Baha'i community which meets regularly. Contact Amin Amini on 02 6772 7777.

If you want to make contact with people of the Hindu faith, contact Punitha LeJambre on 02 6772 1659 and if you would like to make contact with the Sikh community, phone Balwinder Singh on 0433 411 244.

Local transport:

Local and regional buses are run by Edwards Coaches: www.edwardscoaches.com.au.

Public transport is limited at weekends and in the evenings. Taxis are readily available and as distances are short this is not as expensive an option as in larger towns.

Having many students, Armidale is a bicycle-friendly town. There are two hills, North Hill and South Hill, with the town centre in-between. Possibly because of this, many people prefer to walk rather than relying on buses or bikes.

Sport and recreation:

Like most Australian regional cities, Armidale has many sporting facilities and there are teams playing pretty much every sport. www.armidale.info/sport.htm lists many of the clubs and teams.

The same website (www.armidale.info) also gives cultural groups (music, theatre), service clubs and interest groups.

Examples of such groups are the Harmony Group, African Association, Multicultural Singing Group and African Drumming. There are various other multicultural groups and organisations at UNE.

Armidale has several multicultural events such as Carnivale and the Autumn Festival. Both the Armidale Rural Australians for Refugees and the Harmony Group hold several events per year. Armidale Sanctuary Humanitarian Settlement holds the Annual Human Rights Lecture which focuses on refugees. The Armidale Regional Council hosts an annual celebration for Refugee Week.



Another good place to find out about what's happening in Armidale is Armidale War Memorial Library (182 Rusden Street). There is also free Wi-Fi in the library and computers you can use for free.

Shopping and food:

Armidale has many shops in the centre of the city and suburbs and all household needs can be purchased.

Halal (and other culturally defined) food is readily available. Restaurants and other food outlets have increased and there is no difficulty in obtaining required foods.

Who can help you:

Armidale Sanctuary Humanitarian Settlement Inc is a group of people who are experienced and dedicated to helping all refugees. They can help with many things including explaining how services work and finding furniture. Some members are former refugees and they can help with every-day interpreting. Phone 02 6775 1178 or 02 6772 2217. Address PO Box 1499, Armidale 2035.

Northern Settlement Services has an office in Armidale (141 Faulkner Street) but can only provide limited assistance to refugees holding a SHEV or TPV. Phone 02 6771 3975.

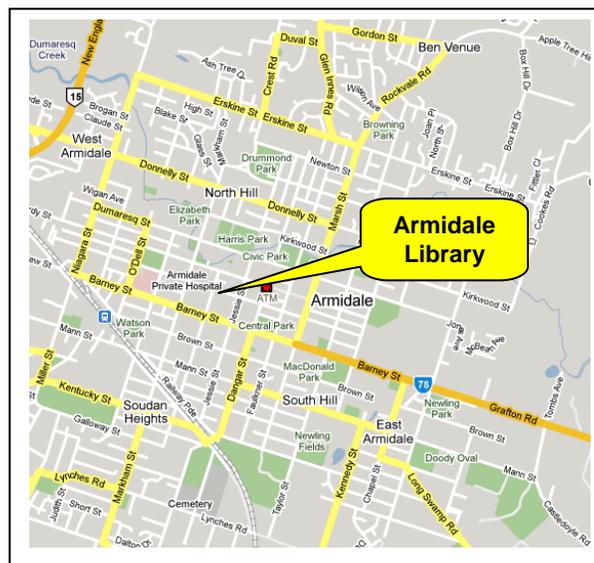
Where to get more information:

Armidale Community Directory: www.armidale.nsw.gov.au/community-directory

Armidale Visitor Information Centre: 82 Marsh Street. Phone 02 6771 3888

Armidale Regional Council: 135 Rusden Street. Phone 1300 136 833 (24 hours).
www.armidaleregional.nsw.gov/au

Evocities: www.evocities.com.au.



For general information in community languages about services available to people holding a Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (SHEV) or Temporary Protection Visa (TPV), see the DSS Fact Sheet: www.dss.gov.au/settlement-and-multicultural-affairs/programs-policy/australian-government-support