



SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

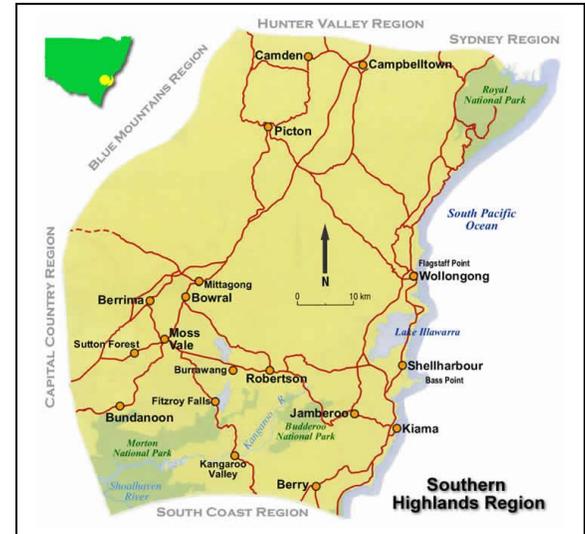
This information is intended as a guide only. Please check websites.

Location:

The Southern Highlands is a region south west of Sydney and quite close (45 – 60 minutes by car) to the outer suburbs of Sydney. It is an area managed by Wingecarribee Shire Council.

The main towns in the region are Mittagong, Bowral, Moss Vale, Bundanoon and Robertson. There are also a number of small villages set in a rural environment.

It is on the major route between Sydney and Melbourne (the M5 and Hume Highway) and is about 2 hours from Canberra, the national capital.



Overview:

The proximity of the Southern Highlands to Sydney, plus its cool temperate climate and vibrant cultural life has attracted many people to live in this region as they can commute to Sydney for work. The region also attracts day trippers and holiday makers from Sydney and Canberra, drawn there by its spectacular natural scenery, beautiful gardens and historic towns such as Berrima. Other tourist attractions include galleries, cafes and restaurants, bush walks, caves and wineries.

The various towns in the Southern Highlands each have their own character and special events. As the towns are quite close to each other, people can live in one town and easily visit the others.

Because of its proximity to South West Sydney, there is the possibility for people on SHEV visas to live in the Southern Highlands and commute to work or study in an area such as Campbelltown which is 45 minutes by car and 1 hour by train. It is also easy to get back to Sydney to see family and friends and participate in cultural or religious celebrations.

Who lives there:

The region is home to about 48,000 people and the population is increasing. Most people are Australian born and/or of European ancestry. There are smaller groups from indigenous and other backgrounds. Families and older people make up the majority of the population.

How to get there:

Mittagong, the 'gateway' to the Southern Highlands is 110 kilometres from central Sydney (60km from Campbelltown). The main ways to get to the town in the region are by car (via the M5 and Hume Highway) and train.

It takes approximately 1 hour 20 minutes to drive from central Sydney to Mittagong, 1 hour 30 minutes to drive to Bowral and 1 hour 45 minutes to drive to Moss Vale.

Trains run approximately every hour from Sydney. Full fares one way from Sydney to Mittagong range from \$5.95 to \$8.50 and concession fares from \$2.97 to \$4.25).

Employment:

Finding employment on the Southern Highlands is not very easy but there are some industries worth exploring. These include the following:

- Retail trade including shops, cafes, restaurants
- Accommodation and tourist outlets
- Health care including aged care
- Manufacturing including skilled and semi-skilled occupations
- Construction and building services including general, skilled and semi-skilled labour
- Agricultural enterprises (vineyards, niche food production, cattle both meat and dairy) requiring general and semi-skilled labour
- Education and training.

There are also opportunities for people interested in starting small businesses.

Local support groups 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:

- Southern Highlands News (local paper): www.southernhighlandsnews.com.au
- Seek: www.seek.com.au/jobs/

And a number of local employment agencies:

- Campbell Page Shop: 1B Boolwey St, Bowral. Phone 02 4868 7000
- Highland Recruitment: The Acre, Suite B, Level 1, 391-397 Bong Bong St, Bowral. Phone 02 4861 5525
- MBC Employment Services: 1 Boolwey St, Bowral. Phone 02 4861 5191
- Flexiforce Australia: 2 Valetta St. Moss Vale. Phone 02 4869 5505
- Mission Australia: 290 - 298 Argyle St Moss Vale 02 4869 8100
- Think Recruitment: 427 Argyle St, Moss Vale. Phone 0421 189 697
- Transition to Work: Disability provider Essential Employment & Training Shop. 6 Beaumont Garden, 60 Bowral Rd Mittagong Phone 024872 4122

Education and training:

For adults:

- TAFE in Moss Vale has a wide range of courses including human services, hospitality, financial, trades, business, computer, environment and animal care.
- TAFE is the Adult Migrant Education Program provider.
- The University of Wollongong has a campus in Moss Vale offering Arts, Business, Teaching, Commerce and Teaching degrees. The main campus is at Wollongong about 1 hour away.

For children:

- There is a range of good public and private preschools, primary and secondary schools.

- Because of the lack of cultural diversity in the region, schools are not as used to working with children from different backgrounds as those in larger centres, however many are interested in welcoming students from diverse backgrounds.

Accommodation:

Because it is a popular and growing area, accommodation is not plentiful but there are some options.

Share accommodation can be found on sites such as www.gumtree.com.au. Prices start at \$120 per week.

The median weekly cost of renting a two bedroom apartment in Mittagong is \$300 per week. One and three bedroom apartments are rare.

The median cost of renting a two bedroom house in Mittagong is \$380 per week, 3 bedroom is \$475 per week and 4 bedroom is \$580 per week.

Rents in Bowral are likely to be more expensive than Mittagong. Rents in other towns and villages in the region tend to be cheaper.

Websites you can look at to find rental accommodation include:

Domain: www.domain.com.au/rent/mittagong-nsw-2575

Realestate.com.au: www.realestate.com.au/rent/in-mittagong,+nsw+2575/list-1

Argyle Housing manages low income housing and Pathways assists people with special housing needs.

Short term accommodation options can be found via Stayz: www.stayz.com.au. There are also caravans and cabins at two local caravan parks:

Mittagong Caravan Park: www.mittagongcaravanpark.com.au

Moss Vale Village Caravan Park: www.mossvalevillagecaravanpark.com.au.

If you want to come to the region to look around, it is best to avoid school holidays.

Health Services:

The region's main hospitals (collocated public and private hospitals) are in Bowral: 97 – 103 Bowral St. The public hospital's phone is 02 4861 0200.

The Community Health Centre that serves the region is also in Bowral: 20 Bendooley St, phone 02 4861 8000.

The region has a range of community support services run by non-government organisations.

Many people from the Southern Highlands go to Sydney for specialist health care, including trauma counselling from STARTTS.

Places of worship:

There are many faith communities in the region. Most are Christian but there are 2 Buddhist monasteries in Bundanoon and elsewhere in the region there is a Baha'i group, a Jewish group and a Brahma Kumaris Centre that hold local meetings.

Local transport:

Local buses run throughout the region and many of the main towns are on the train line. Public transport is limited, particularly at weekends and in the evenings. Community Transport takes people to medical appointments for a fee.

Sport and recreation:

There are many sport and recreation facilities in the region for swimming, ball games, athletics, gymnastics, dancing, music and art and there are exhibition and performance spaces.

Good places to get information about what is available in the local area are:

Local Libraries (the main library is in Bowral and there are branches in Mittagong and Moss Vale). See www.librar.wsc.nsw.gov.au.

Destination Southern Highlands: www.southern-highlands.com.au.

The Wingecarribee Council – Arts News: email: arts.info@wsc.nsw.gov.au.

Shopping and food:

The main towns in the region have large supermarkets and specialty stores. People tend to travel to Sydney suburbs for items not available locally. Both Liverpool and Campbelltown which are closest to the Southern Highlands have many stores selling food, clothing and other goods from all over the world.

Where to get more information:

Local Libraries (the main library is in Bowral and there are branches in Mittagong and Moss Vale). See www.library.wsc.nsw.gov.au

Destination Southern Highlands: www.southern-highlands.com.au. Phone 02 6771 3888

Stafford Cottage (Community Information Centre): 22 Bendooley St Bowral. 02 4862 1122

Wingecarribee Shire Council in Moss Vale Phone: 024868 0888

Who can help you:

Rural Australians for Refugees is a voluntary group working toward assisting people with SHEVs or TPVs to relocate in the Southern Highlands. There are volunteers who are willing to offer support and who are working to get a network of services available in the area.

Initial contact can be made through Rob Byrnes robert.byrnes@iec.com.au or Francine francinebart@gmail.com.

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