

5 Rural Industries

This section of the report provides an overview of the production and value of key industries within rural areas of the Yass Valley LGA.

5.1 Agriculture

The total value of production of the agriculture sector is estimated to be approximately \$50 million per year, with the value of livestock production constituting over 50% of this (refer to Table 5.1). Data from the 2001 ABS Agricultural Census is used, as agricultural census data from 2006 has not yet been released for Local Government Areas.

The significant value of livestock products (particularly wool) reflects the large role of grazing industries in the region. Livestock slaughterings also make a significant contribution to the value of agricultural production. Smaller agricultural industries include cropping and horticultural production.

Table 5.1 Value of agricultural production in the Yass Valley LGA, 2001

Agricultural Activity	Value (\$ millions)
Livestock products	27.72
Livestock slaughterings	16.16
Cropping	4.35
Horticulture	0.45
Total Agricultural Sector	49.51

Source: ABS Agricultural Census 2001

The level of production of key agricultural commodities in the Yass Valley LGA is provided in Table 5.2. The level of cereal production is significant and is dominated by wheat production (62%). At 4,553 tonnes, wool production in the Yass Valley LGA accounted for approximately 2% of total production in NSW in 2001.

Table 5.2 Value of agricultural production in the Yass Valley LGA, 2001

Agricultural Commodity	
Stone fruit (tonnes)	20 tonnes
Eggs (dozens)	2,691 dozens
Honey	7,004 kgs
Wool	4,553 tonnes
Cereal	12,492 tonnes

Source: ABS Agricultural Census 2001

Table 5.3 provides a summary of livestock numbers in the Yass Valley LGA for 1997 and 2001. Sheep accounted for the highest level of both numbers and sales in 1997 and 2001. Pig production accounted for the largest percentage increase in both numbers and sales, being 844% and 890% between 1997 and 2001, respectively.

Table 5.3 Livestock numbers in the Yass Valley LGA, 1997 and 2001

Livestock type	1997	2001
Cattle		
Number	40,885	40,637
Sales	13,660	16,759
Sheep		
Number	867,570	1,046,957
Sales	180,347	253,907
Deer		
Number	586	1,103
Sales	241	N/A
Horses		
Number	1,079	732
Sales	75	35
Pigs		
Number	935	8,833
Sales	1,600	15,841

Source: ABS Agricultural Census 2001

Note: N/A indicates that this figure was not available from the ABS

Pasture and crop production is relatively small in value compared with livestock based industries. Importantly, the majority of pasture production is likely to be directly utilised on-farm for livestock grazing, although the value of hay produced exceeded \$1 million in 2001. Cereal grain production, in particular wheat, is the most significant cropping activity, as shown in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4 Value of crop and pasture production in the Yass Valley LGA, 2001

Crop and pasture commodity	Value (\$ millions)
Cereals	2.13
Oilseeds	0.48
Grain legumes	0.15
Pasture cut for hay	1.28

Source: ABS Agricultural Census 2001

In summary, the agriculture sector contributes close to \$50 million to the Yass Valley LGA economy each year. The majority of this is generated by wool production, but also livestock grazing.

5.2 Forestry

The Yass Valley LGA is located in the South West Slopes forestry region, which comprises approximately 130,000 ha of plantation forests on both public and private land. Approximately 90,000 ha of these forests is managed by Forests NSW.

The proportion of State Forest in the South West Slopes actually located within the Yass Valley LGA is small (approximately 6% of the total area) (Forests NSW, Hume Regional Manager 2006). A breakdown of forestry land uses is provided in Table 5.5. Plantation radiata pine (softwood) makes up the largest area of forest, at 55% of

forest area. Native timber, including contiguous areas and riparian strips, comprises a further 42% of the forest area.

Table 5.5 Yass Valley LGA forestry land uses

Forestry Land Use	Area (ha)	Percentage of total
Radiata plantation	4,060.4	55%
Native timber	3,166.4	42%
Other species	57.0	1%
Cleared/unplanted	111.3	2%
Total	7,395.1	

Source: Forests NSW Hume Regional Manager (2006)

The value of output from the forestry industry in the South West Slopes Region was estimated at \$574.5 million in 2002/03. However, only a small proportion of the industry is located within the Yass Valley LGA. Based on Forests NSW estimate of 6% of South West Slopes region forests being located in the Yass Valley LGA, the value of output attributed to the local economy is estimated at \$34.5 million.

5.3 Viticulture

Another important rural industry for the Yass Valley LGA is viticulture, both for its production values and in combination with rural tourism.

The region's advantages in terms of wine production are due to its "crisp winters followed by hot summers, mild autumn days and low fertility soils perfect for producing wines with intense fruit characters that have gathered awards and medals at many NSW wine shows (Yass Valley Visitors Guide, 2004). There are currently no figures for the value of viticultural production in the Yass Valley LGA.

A survey completed by Canberra District Wines in 2002 indicated that there were 528 hectares of grapes planted in the Canberra Region (Yass Valley Visitors Guide, 2004). Approximately 270 hectares (51%) of these plantings were located around the Murrumbateman district.

Wine production in the region has been increasing in recent years, with the primary varieties being Chardonnay, Riesling, Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz and Pinot Noir (Canberra District Wines 2006).

Viticulture also contributes to the rural tourism to the Yass Valley LGA. Research from the Australian Capital Tourism shows that in 2006, the ACT region welcomed 1,000,000 domestic overnight visitors for food and wine tourism. As the majority of the region's wineries and vineyards are located in the Yass Valley LGA, it is reasonable to assume that a large proportion of these visitors visit the Yass Valley LGA.

5.4 Rural tourism

Yass Valley LGA is located in the Capital Region, which includes the Local Government Areas surrounding the ACT, It is identified as one of Australia's most economically powerful regions.

Tourism in the Capital Region is based extensively around its agricultural industries and rural landscapes. The wine industry and its associated wineries with cellar door sales is a significant attraction. Burrinjuck Dam and the Wee Jasper area provide opportunities for water sports and other outdoors activities.

Australian Capital Tourism has extensive information on food and wine tourism in the ACT and surrounding region including the fact that about 1 million people per year are domestic overnight visitors who participate in food and wine tourism (Australian Capital Tourism, 2006). The proximity of the Yass Valley LGA to Canberra means that the region would benefit from these tourists.

5.5 Wind farming

Wind farming is an emerging industry for the Yass Valley LGA. Developers of wind farms have noted that the Yass Valley LGA is ideally suited to wind farming due to the local conditions which are favourable to the development of wind farms, including:

- Excellent average wind speeds;
- Close proximity to multiple grid connection options and the NSW electricity load; and
- Proximity to regional centres with industry capability.

Yass Valley LGA currently has one approved wind farm (up to 15 wind turbines) located at Conroys Gap (17km west of the town of Yass) which was approved under Part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. A number of other wind farms in the north and western part of the LGA are currently under investigation or seeking approval.

The Sydney to Canberra Corridor Strategy recognises the potential of wind farming in the region as a new source of economic activity that helps to offset and improve the productivity of traditional farming activities. The Strategy also recognises the challenge of balancing scenic and cultural landscape values with the potential economic benefits for rural areas and the much wider reaching environmental benefits.

An ongoing issue for the Yass Valley LGA will be how to balance the impact of wind farming with the amenity of residents.

5.6 Land use conflicts

The ongoing success of rural industries within the Yass Valley LGA is dependent upon the minimisation of land use conflicts. With any of the above industries, their continued successful operation will depend on the management of any conflict with neighbouring land uses. There are a number of potential land use conflicts that could occur, including between:

- residential use and agriculture (such as spray drift which is incompatible with high density residential development);
- different agricultural enterprises (e.g. organic versus non-organic); and

- agricultural enterprises and sensitive environments such as waterways, native habitats, wetlands, schools and public places.

The types of conflict include those listed in Table . Various strategies can be adopted that address land use conflict, including:

- restricting development in agricultural areas;
- establishment of buffer areas;
- establishing 'right to farm' conditions;
- strategic use of integrated development plans; an
- consideration of development and transport routes.

Table 5.6 Typical rural land use conflicts

<i>Type of conflict</i>	<i>Description</i>
Noise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dogs, livestock • farming equipment, pumps, spray machines, transport • ancillary equipment associated with on- farm processing
Odour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agricultural fertilisers and chemicals • intensive animal industries • application of effluent to pasture
Health concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • chemicals • spray drift • smoke
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access • pumping • quantity • run-off
Smoke and ash	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • burning of pasture, stubble or "fubbish"
Visual amenity intrusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hail netting • polyhouses
Nuisance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stray dogs • vandalism • trespass • noxious and environmental weeds

5.7 Issues arising

The issues from this section relevant to planning in the Yass Valley LGA include:

- Agriculture is a significant industry in the Yass Valley LGA.
- the recent employment growth in the accommodation cafes and restaurants sector, and the construction and manufacturing sectors may provide alternatives to the more traditional employment base.
- The high percentage of 'rural lifestylers' with off farm employment in Canberra may give rise to increasing land use conflict.
- Some rural industries, such as intensive agriculture and rural tourism, have different requirements to extensive agriculture, and these requirements need to be considered. Flexibility in planning controls to allow for a range of rural tourism development.