

NEW ENGLAND AND THE NORTHWEST SLOPES



NEW ENGLAND is the northern inland region of New South Wales bordering southern Queensland, straddling the Great Dividing Range and sloping westwards to the plains as far as the Barwon River. Its geographical character is widely varied with diverse topography, including some of Australia's highest mountain peaks rising above its eastern plateau, which averages 1000–1200 metres above sea level, its vast escarpment on its eastern border dividing it from the coastal plain and the broken ranges descending on the west to the inland plains drained by the Namoi, Gwydir and Macintyre rivers. Its climate ranges from winter snowfalls on the tableland to summer heat of over 40°C on the plains with annual rainfall averaging from 1000 mm on the mountains to 700 mm on the plains. The varied geology of New England explains its range of mineral resources which include gold, coal, asbestos, antimony, tin, molybdenum, copper, manganese, diamonds and sapphires.

Aboriginal occupation of the New England region dates back at least 8000 years. Territorial divisions were recognised by Aboriginal people whose migratory movements were controlled by seasonal and climatic changes that affected food sources. Trading of tools was carried out between the tableland area and the coast, as well as inland towards the plains. Gatherings for ceremonial occasions also contributed to a mobile lifestyle. At the time of European occupation in the 1830s there might have been up to 600 Aborigines on the tableland and about 4000 on the **Liverpool Plains**.

European exploration of New England began in the winter of 1818 when the surveyor-general John Oxley crossed the region from west to east, crossing the Warrumbungle Ranges and **Liverpool Plains** and climbing up to the New England Plateau. With great difficulty he skirted the gorge country, struggled through rainforests, and eventually reached the mouth of the Hastings River where it empties into the Pacific Ocean. Oxley was followed in 1827 by the botanist Allan Cunningham, sent by Governor Darling to explore the interior. This time Cunningham crossed New England from south to north, skirting the highland country as he traversed the slopes through the sites of **Barraba**, **Bingara** and **Warialda**, north and east to the Condamine River and Darling Downs.

During the 1830s New England was occupied by men droving cattle or sheep up the mountain ranges from the Hunter River onto the tableland and down the Namoi and Gwydir river systems. When in 1833 the Australian Agricultural Company took up its land grant on some 200 000 hectares at the Peel River (see Tamworth) and at Warrah (see Quirindi) on the **Liverpool Plains** some existing stockowners were displaced. Among the earliest speculators established on land grants in the Hunter valley who sent surplus stock beyond the boundaries were H.C. Sempill who, in 1832, occupied the upper Apsley River area near **Walcha**; the Dumaresq brothers, who established runs near **Armidale** in 1834–35; and Alexander Macdougall and Alexander Campbell who, in 1835, moved further on to **Guyra**.

By 1838 New England was firmly occupied by stock and stockmen who disrupted the existing Aboriginal way of life, interfering with their water and food supplies. Provocation and retaliation by two culturally different peoples led to incidents of murder, culminating in the notorious Myall Creek massacre (see Bingara). Governor Gipps acted to establish law and order beyond the boundaries with the proclamation of pastoral districts. These included New England, under the control of Commissioner G.J. Macdonald.

Pastoral settlement expanded, villages grew up around settlement sites and communication

links were extended from New England to neighbouring regions. Surveyors were sent to mark out village reserves and roads and to survey county divisions. The nuclei of towns soon included sites for courthouses, police stations and paddocks, churches, cemeteries and inns.

Gold was discovered in New England during the 1840s but not until the 1850s were there rushes to Hanging Rock and the Peel Valley (see Tamworth), to Rocky River near Uralla and the upper Bingara. Numerous small centres attracted miners seeking alluvial gold and mining continued throughout the nineteenth century, changing to deep-lead company mining at Hillgrove from the 1880s. Tin mining at Emmaville and Tingha was carried on intermittently from the 1870s.

The population first attracted to New England by mining sought land to settle on as mineral finds diminished. Under the principle of selection before survey established by the Robertson selection acts of the 1860s, small farmers and large stockowners benefited by gaining title to rural land. The second half of the nineteenth century saw the growth of the wool industry, consolidation of settlement and organisation of town communities with commercial, educational, religious, social and recreational facilities.

Communication networks of roads, then railways, extended along the routes taken by the early European settlers. The Great North Road climbed the Liverpool Range from **Murrurundi** and straggled north to **Tamworth** where northbound traffic climbed the Moonbi Range onto the tableland towards Queensland or diverted west along the foothills and down the rivers. Controversy over the route to be taken for the northern railway in the 1870s was resolved by the premier, Henry Parkes, who directed it through **Armidale**, **Glen Innes** and his electorate of **Tenterfield**. In 1878 the railway reached Tamworth, in 1883 Armidale, and the link to **Brisbane** was completed in 1888.

New England's economy was dominated by sheep and cattle farming throughout the nineteenth century. Poor soils and unpredictable frosts and rainfall caused the failure of the subsistence farmer, particularly when railways brought cheap flour into the region. In the years of good wool prices in the 1870s and 1880s considerable fortunes were made by some of the surviving early settlers. Low wool prices and droughts in the 1890s affected wool-growers, but the region seems to have suffered less than most other parts of the state.

The major towns in the region were focal points for a growing dissatisfaction with **Sydney** and the agitation of various 'separation' movements by the 1890s constituted a general view that the virtues and economic contribution of country areas were not understood or adequately considered by the distant and parasitic metropolis. In 1915 separatist agitators on the North Coast led by Dr Earle Page united with those from New England and their campaign rapidly gathered momentum from 1918 and became known as the New State Movement. The new state movement, seemed likely to be successful in the early 1920s but was thwarted by the Cohen Royal Commission inquiry in 1925. A referendum in 1967 throughout the proposed new state area resulted in most northern and North Coast areas voting 'yes', to separation from NSW, but being defeated by a large 'no' from the **Newcastle** region.

Elementary schools under various government systems existed in the major towns from the 1850s and increasingly extended to other communities. Small privately owned schools were established from the 1860s and **Armidale** became a centre for such schools, with several boarding schools, some with church patronage, from the 1870s. Armidale was confirmed in 1928 as a strong educational centre when Drummond, the local Country party member and minister for education, established a teachers' training college, the first in Australia outside a capital city. In 1938 the New State Movement achieved a tangible result when the New England University College began as a branch of Sydney University. In 1954 this college became the autonomous University of New England which soon launched innovations in university education with a faculty of rural science and a program of external studies. The teachers' college in 1971 became the Armidale College of Advanced Education.

Since the 1920s better roads and the growth of car and truck ownership have contributed



Houses outside Tenterfield, 1984. Tenterfield is the centre of a cattle district, which also produces wool, tobacco and fruit. Photograph by Gunther Deichmann.

WELDON TRANNIES

to the decline of small villages and towns while confirming the importance of the major towns. After World War II these towns grew rapidly: **Tamworth** to 33 000 and **Armidale** to 22 000 in 1985, with the total New England population about 180 000.

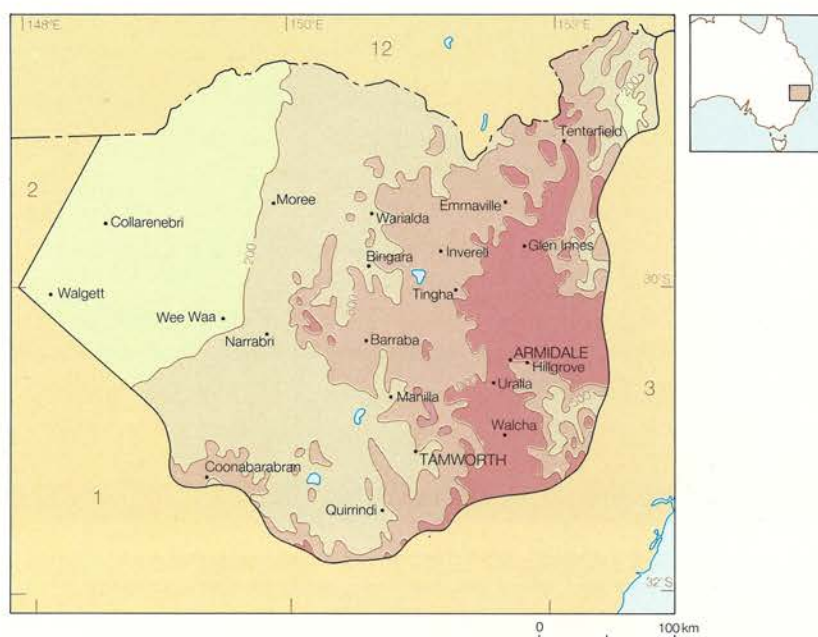
The rural economy on the tablelands continues to be dominated by sheep and cattle. Productivity was increased fourfold in the postwar period as aerial topdressing with superphosphate became standard practice after its introduction in 1950 on a **Walcha** property — the first time aeroplanes had been used for this purpose in Australia.

Despite closer settlement schemes and subdivision of larger properties, greater stock numbers have been managed by fewer people. Devastating droughts in the mid-1960s and early 1980s have reduced the profitability of many properties to marginal levels. In 1984 about 10 000 properties produced about 14 million sheep and 12 million cattle. New England superfine wool is recognised as among the best in the world. On the slopes and plains wheat and cotton production has increased enormously, as well as crops such as sorghum, tobacco and oil seeds. Irrigation from Keepit, Copeton and Pindari dams, new large machines and the application of chemicals have contributed to this development. Forests bordering the tablelands supply large quantities of building materials and wood chips. Flour milling, stock feeds and intensive poultry production and a variety of small-scale manufacturing firms in the large towns give some diversity to the economy of the region.

Jillian Oppenheimer

SUGGESTED READING

- T. Barker, *Armidale*, Sydney 1980.
 R. Milliss, *City on the Peel: a history of Tamworth and district 1818–1976*, Sydney 1980.
 R.B. Walker, *Old New England: a history of the Northern Tablelands of New South Wales 1818–1900*, Sydney 1966.
 E. Wiedmann, *World of its own: Inverell's early years 1827–1920*, Inverell 1981.

**ARMIDALE**

[30°50'S 151°39'E]

Popn: 556 (1851), 2187 (1881), 6794 (1933), 12875 (1961), 19 711 (1976), 18 922 (1981). Named by the lands commissioner Macdonald after clan chief's castle Armadale, in Scotland. Saumarez and Tilbuster, the first pastoral stations in district, taken up by Henry and William Dumaresq in 1834–35: Saumarez home-stead (Nat T, RNE) built in 1888, St Nicholas's Church (RNE) built in 1863–64. Village estab in 1839 when Macdonald sent to control settlement of district. Post office opened in 1841. The Travellers' Rest, first inn, estab in 1843; first store in 1845. Steam mill, first in NSW beyond the settled districts, opened here in 1846. Town surveyed in 1848, gazetted in 1849. Petty sessions estab in 1848. Discovery of gold at Rocky R (see Uralla) to south in 1856 led to growth of town. Roseneath (RNE) built in 1854. *Armidale Express* newspaper first appeared in 1856. Courthouse (RNE) built in 1860. Incorporated as municipality in 1863. School of Arts and Mechanics' Inst (RNE, Nat T, now museum) opened in 1863. Tannery and boot factory important employer 1866–98. St Peter's Anglican cathedral, designed by John Horbury Hunt, built 1871–78. Present post office (RNE) built in 1880, town hall (RNE) 1882–84. Town developed as educational centre with opening of St Ursula's (1882), Ladies' College (1887), Armidale School (1894) and New England Girls' School (1895). Rlwy from Sydney opened in 1883. Proclaimed a city in 1885. Gas street lighting provided in 1885; water supply piped from Dumaresq Dam in 1895. St Mary's Roman Catholic cathedral built in 1911–12 to replace earlier church built 1870–72. Electric light connected in 1922. Teachers' college (RNE) built in 1928–29 on site of 1850s gaol closed in 1920. University College estab in 1938; became Univ of New England in 1954, first in Aust outside of the

capital cities. University administrative centre in Booloominbah (RNE) designed by John Horbury Hunt and built 1883–88. Airport opened in 1940.

BARRABA

[30°21'S 150°37'E]

Popn: 1959 (1911), 1428 (1933), 1947 (1976), 1679 (1981). Named after one of first stations in area taken up in 1838. Allan Cunningham crossed Manilla R here on 1827 expedition to Darling Downs. Nandewar Range to north first described by Thomas Mitchell in 1832. Post office opened in 1851. Town plans approved in 1852. Municipality from 1906, incorporated in Barraba Shire in 1953. Rlwy opened in 1908. Chrysotile Corp mined asbestos at Woods Reef to east from 1972: had earlier been mined 1919–23.

BINGARA

[29°51'S 150°34'E]

Popn: 738 (1891), 1632 (1911), 1448 (1933), 1504 (1966), 1257 (1981). Name: Aborig = 'creek with red banks'. Allan Cunningham reached and named Gwydir R near here in 1827. Town founded in 1840, surveyed in 1852. Gold discov in the 1850s leading to rush, but most mines closed by c1900; the last mine, All Nations, in 1948. Became a municipality in 1889, amalgamated with shire in 1944. Aust's leading diamond field worked intermittently 1872–1909; finds included 'Star of the South', 37 000 carats. Salters Hotel (Nat T) built in the early 1860s, now museum. Courthouse (RNE) built c1890. Myall Creek station was site of massacre of 28 Aborigs in 1838: first time Europeans found guilty of murdering Aborigs, seven men hanged.

COLLARENEBRI

[29°33'S 148°36'E]

Popn: 551 (1911), 394 (1933), 602 (1981). First runs in district held from 1845. Settlement grew around the

Squatters' Arms Hotel estab at ford on upper Barwon R; benefited from increased volume of traffic after land on Narren and Bokhara rivers to northwest taken up in the 1860s. Town laid out and proclaimed and post office estab in 1867. Post office moved to Mogil Mogil further upstream, but reopened permanently at Collarenebri in the 1880s. First steamer reached here in 1879, second attempt made in 1886. School opened in 1885. Aborig reserve gazetted in 1899.

COONABARABRAN [31°16'S 149°18'E]

Popn: 163 (1871), 1923 (1933), 3001 (1981). Name taken from Aborig name of Cooleburbarun sheep station taken up by the Coxes in the late 1830s. John Oxley crossed Warrumbungles to west in 1818. First flour mill built by the mid-1850s; flour mills were important in town until the early 20th cent. Town grew up as stopover around inn at Castlereagh R crossing: surveyed in 1859, proclaimed in 1860. Courthouse (RNE) and lock-up built in 1860. Chinese bushranger Sam Poo ranged through district in 1865. Rlwy opened in 1917. Anglo-Aust telescope at Siding Spring Observatory built 1967–75 and significant discoveries have resulted.

EMMAVILLE [29°26'S 151°36'E]

Popn: 2670 (1881), 1585 (1911), 764 (1947), 897 (1954), 205 (1971), 503 (1981). Earlier known as Vegetable Creek because Chinese market gardens estab after tin discov in 1872. Other discoveries at Tent Hill in 1871 and Torrington in 1874. One of Aust's and world's main tin-mining areas in 1873, but in decline in the 1880s. Large smelting works in late 19th cent. Revival of mining in district in 1961 with large-scale open-cut mining in the 1970s.

GLEN INNES [29°44'S 151°55'E]

Popn: 288 (1861), 4030 (1911), 6052 (1981). Named after Archibald Innes, soldier and pioneer, by A. Mosman who had run on which town estab. Also known in early yrs as the Beardies and as Furracabad. District opened for cattle in the 1830s by stockmen Chandler and Duval; stations taken up in 1838–39. Town laid out

in 1851. Post office opened in 1854. In 1858 petty sessions moved here from Wellingrove; township estab in 1849 but overtaken by Glen Innes. First flour mill opened in the 1850s, last mill closed in 1929. Pastures Protection Board, first govt department in town, estab in 1864. Holy Trinity Church built 1867–76. Became a municipality in 1872. Former hospital (now museum) opened in 1874. Courthouse (RNE) built 1873–75; town hall (RNE) 1875–89. Rlwy opened in 1884. Boot factory opened in 1885, closed in 1967. Butter factory opened in 1899, a second in 1910. Dept of Agric research station opened in 1903. First country Boy Scout pack in Aust estab here in 1912. Some 15 timber mills in district in the 1920s, reforestation with softwoods from 1929. Some land in district resumed for soldier settlement after World War II. Commercial sapphire mining began in 1959.

HILLGROVE [30°34'S 151°55'E]

Popn: 2274 (1901), 1777 (1911), 241 (1933), 140 (1961). Antimony discov near Gara Falls in 1853 and at Hillgrove in 1866: large-scale mining began in 1880–81. Rich gold veins discov in 1887. Gold town of about 3000 people in 1889, largest output in NSW: 15.6m g produced over 20 yrs (1890–1910), half from Bakers Creek mine. Town declined from the 1890s, although the two main mines worked until the 1920s. Renewed antimony mining in area in the 1970s–80s.

INVERELL [29°45'S 151°07'E]

Popn: 177 (1861), 1212 (1881), 5131 (1911), 9712 (1971), 9432 (1976), 9734 (1981). Named by Alexander Campbell from Scottish Gaelic *inver-ell* = 'meeting place of swans'. Peter MacIntyre sent Campbell to explore New England in 1835: latter took up Byron for Macintyre and Inverell for himself c1836. Town grew from Ross family's store estab in 1853 to serve local settlers. Town site surveyed in 1858. Selectors took up land in district in the 1860s. Aust's first tin mine opened here in 1871. Became a municipality in 1872, amalgamated with shire in 1979. Courthouse (RNE) built in 1886. Branch rlwy from Moree opened in 1901. Pioneer village opened in 1970 includes Grove homestead of 1840. Diamonds discov at Copes Creek in 1875 and worked at Copeton 1883–1922. Copeton Reservoir on Gwydir R near township completed in 1976.

LIVERPOOL PLAINS [31°00'S 150°00'E]

Pastoral area north of Liverpool Range; named after Earl of Liverpool (British prime minister) by John Oxley when exploring area in 1818. Allan Cunningham reached area from Bathurst in 1823; other routes estab by Henry Danger in 1824 and by others later. First squatter was William Cox at Binnea in 1826. Aust Agric Co granted large area of land in district in 1831, forcing out illegal squatters there. Bushranger Capt Thunderbolt (Frederick Ward) active in area in the late 1860s.

MANILLA [30°44'S 150°43'E]

Popn: 888 (1901), 1972 (1954), 1703 (1971), 1884 (1981). Name: Aborig *muneela* = 'winding rivers'. Formerly



The Glen Innes Town Hall, erected 1875–89. Its foundation stone was laid by Sir Henry Parkes. Photograph by Adrian Young, 1985.

known as 'the Junction'. First runs taken up c1832. Settlement founded in 1853 when first store built. Post office named after Manilla R when opened in 1856. Town laid out in 1860–61. First hotel opened in 1863. Store swept away and 4 drowned in 1864 flood. Land selection in district began in 1869, first wheat grown in 1872; large-scale selection followed in the 1880s. Mail coach service began in 1872; telegraph service in 1878. Courthouse built in 1885–86. Rlwy opened in 1899. Proclaimed a municipality in 1901. Keepit Reservoir on upper Namoi R to southwest completed in 1960.

MOREE

[29°28'S 149°52'E]

Popn: 295 (1881), 3161 (1911), 6795 (1961), 10 459 (1981). Name: Aborig = 'waterhole' or 'rising sun', name of station taken up in 1848. Allan Cunningham passed through district in 1827–28, Thomas Mitchell in 1832. Village estab in 1852 when the Brands opened store and hotel. Town surveyed in 1859; proclaimed and named in 1862. Courthouse (RNE) built in 1885. Became a municipality in 1890. Mineralised artesian water baths opened in 1895, used by rheumatism sufferers. Rlwy opened in 1897. Artesian bores tapped for agric from the 1890s. Brewery opened c1900. Severe floods in 1910 and 1955. First baby health centre in rural NSW opened here in 1925. Much of central town area rebuilt after fire of 1928. First commercial pecan nut farm in Aust estab on Gwydir R in 1966. Aust's first Overseas Telecommunications Commission earth receiving station opened nearby in 1968. Important cotton growing centre since the 1960s. Large Aborig community since the 1950s: racial unrest has surfaced periodically.

NARRABRI

[30°19'S 149°47'E]

Popn including Narrabri West: 313 (1871), 1977 (1891) 4689 (1911), 2911 (1933), 5423 (1961), 7296 (1981). Name: Aborig *nurraburai*, meaning uncertain. District sighted by John Oxley in 1818. Escapee George Clarke lived with Aborigs in district 1826–31; Thomas Mitchell explored district in 1832 to check Clarke's reports. Narrabri run taken up in 1832. Town site at road junction recommended by surveyor in 1848, town proclaimed in 1860. Post office opened in 1861. Commercial Hotel opened in the 1860s. Hospital estab in 1864. Coach service began in 1865. Newspaper estab in 1873. Steam flour mill operated 1881–85; a second from 1900. Rlwy opened to Narrabri West in 1882 and town spread towards station. Municipality of Narrabri proclaimed in 1883, that of Narrabri West in 1895. Rlwy reached Narrabri itself in 1897 and Narrabri West declined. Narrabri West absorbed into shire in 1937, Narrabri in 1981. Edgeroi soldier settlement scheme and irrigation after World War II led to prosperity for district. Severe flood in 1955, after which the unaffected Narrabri West area again became important. Cotton growing introduced c1960, processing plant estab in 1968, town prosperity followed. Solar observatory with radio helioscope estab at Culgoora by CSIRO in 1967, the world's first; ionospheric prediction service estab in 1978. Mount Kaputar Nat Pk formed in 1959 from reserve estab in 1925, extended in 1955.

QUIRINDI

[31°30'S 150°42'E]

Popn: 278 (1881), 2752 (1911), 2589 (1933), 2955 (1976), 2851 (1981). Name from Aborig *kuwherindi*. Squatters in district in the late 1820s; Quirindi station taken up in 1830. Warrah run taken up by Aust Agric Co in 1833–34. Town proclaimed in 1856. First selector in district in 1862–63. Wallabadah had been more important centre until Quirindi received rlwy in 1877: former declined, latter grew as result. Municipality from 1890. First polo cup competition in Aust estab here in 1899, though game played in district since the 1880s. Saleyards opened in 1915. First country racing club in Aust founded at Wallabadah in 1852; soldier settlement there after World War II.

TAMWORTH

[31°05'S 150°56'E]

Popn: 254 (1851), 1511 (1871), 7607 (1911), 18 984 (1961), 29 657 (1981). Named after town in Staffordshire, England. Earlier known as 'the Peel'.

Early years John Oxley crossed Peel R nearby in 1818. Peel estate of Aust Agric Co estab in 1833 for sheep grazing; Goonoo Goonoo became its regional headquarters in 1841; acquired by its Peel River Land and Mineral Co subsidiary in 1853: complex of buildings (RNE) includes post office–store, woolshed, and chapel. Tamworth was an early company station, grew into a village by 1839; became a town in 1850 after 1849 survey. Police lock-up built and postmaster appointed in 1840. Town prospered with gold finds to south in 1851. School opened in 1851; hospital in 1856; St Paul's Anglican church in 1860. First newspaper published in 1859. Private town at West Tamworth surveyed for Aust Agric Co in 1860. Town growth limited because large pastoral interests prevented small farmers settling and thus boosting rural popn dependent on town. Dummying used to maintain position after Robertson land act passed in 1861. Bridge over Peel R opened in 1861.

Consolidation First mayor, Phillip Gidley King, parliamentarian and superintendent of Peel River Co, took office in 1876 on creation of borough. Three flour mills were operating by the 1870s reflecting some change to grain farming. Rlwy from Newcastle opened in 1878. Royal Standard Brewery opened in 1879, largest outside Sydney in 1914, closed in 1921. Hospital main block (RNE) built in 1883. Post office (RNE) built c1886. In 1888 had first municipally controlled electric street lighting in Southern Hemisphere. Rush for land in district when number of large leases expired in 1890. Water reticulation scheme built in 1898. Fielder Flour Co took over Phoenix Mill in 1900 and became important employer. Co-operative dairy factory estab in 1901. Peel River Co land gradually given up in response to public pressure during first decade of 20th cent: land resumed cut into 234 farms in most important land resumption in NSW. Also other resumptions of large holdings, as well as soldier settlement after World War I. First high school opened in 1919. Tamworth became centre of New State movement in northern NSW in the early 1920s. First electrically powered flour mill in NSW opened here by Fielders in 1924. Aerodrome opened in 1932.



Saturday morning shopping in Tamworth, 1953. The men talk while the women shop. In 1953, the motor car had not yet replaced the pushbike as the chief mode of transport. Pix, August 1953.

MAGAZINE PROMOTIONS

Technical college and municipal abattoirs estab in 1938; agric high school in 1939. Army training camp and RAAF flying school during World War II.

Provincial city Proclaimed a city in 1946. Headquarters for East-West Airlines estab here in 1947; new airport complex opened in 1954–56. Egg packing plant opened in 1948—district has remained one of largest egg-producing areas in NSW. Bad floods in 1955. Peel River Co reabsorbed into parent Aust Agric Co in 1959 and head office of latter transferred here from Newcastle. Australasian country music awards held here annually since 1973. Tamworth Base Hospital enlarged in 1973. City now firmly estab as administrative and commercial ‘capital’ of New England region with considerable growth in the 1960s–70s.

TENTERFIELD [29°02’S 152°02’E]

Popn: 133 (1856), 2724 (1911), 3563 (1976), 3402 (1981). District settled by Europeans in the 1830s; first official grazing licence in district granted to R.R. Mackenzie in 1842. Tenterfield station taken up by Mackenzie in 1844 and named by his friend Stuart Donaldson, first NSW premier (in 1856), after relative’s home in Scotland. Station later held by Donaldson; homestead built for him in 1856. Town gazetted in 1851 on Tenterfield run. Thomas Mitchell and Donaldson fought inconclusive duel with pistols here in 1851, last known duel in Aust.

Gold discov at Drake in 1858 and in following few yrs at Pretty Gully and Tooloom, all in upper Clarence valley to east. Alluvial tin mined in district in the 1870s. Mining led to town prosperity. Became a municipality in 1871. Gaol and police station built in 1874, post office in 1881, courthouse in 1882 (all RNE). Rlwy opened in 1886. Claimed as birthplace of federation as the NSW premier Henry Parkes delivered speech here in 1889 that led to intercolonial conferences and, eventually, federation. Meat chilling works estab c1890.

TINGHA [29°58’S 151°13’E]

Popn: 2424 (1881), 1063 (1961), 259 (1971), 886 (1981). Tin discov in 1870, became largest tin-producing district in NSW with fields employing 6000 men at peak. Large Chinese popn. Private town estab in 1885. New dredges brought in this century to rework old ground; still some mining in 1980s, including tin dredge on Copes Creek.

URALLA [30°57’S 151°31’E]

Popn: 254 (1871), 819 (1891), 681 (1901), 1590 (1911), 1054 (1933), 2090 (1981). First European settler was Edward Gostwyck Cory in c1832. His Gostwyck run bought in 1834 by Henry Dangar; octagonal woolshed (RNE) built in the 1870s to optimise working conditions for shearers and flow of sheep through it — in



The grave of bushranger 'Captain Thunderbolt', Frederick Ward, active on the roads between Newcastle and the Queensland border from 1864 to 1870, when he was shot at Uralla. Photograph by Reg Morrison, 1982.

WELDON TRANNIES

1890 installed one of first shearing machines. Balala homestead (RNE) built in stages during the 1840s. Salisbury Court (RNE) built in 1847. Town grew with 1850s gold strike on Rocky R, once chief goldmine in northern NSW. Village proclaimed in 1855, became a municipality in 1882, part of shire in 1948. Bushranger Capt Thunderbolt (Frederick Ward) shot in 1870 and buried in local cemetery. Rlwy opened in 1882.

WALCHA [30°59'S 151°37'E]

Popn: 355 (1861), 246 (1871), 2192 (1911), 1526 (1933), 1741 (1954), 1544 (1966), 1674 (1981). Named after Wolka, original run in area. Surveyor John Oxley camped on Apsley R here on his 1818 expedition. First European penetration of New England Tableland when H.C.Sempill sent stock to settle in 1832 at Wolka. Ohio (RNE), oldest surviving house in New England, built by Abraham Nivison in the 1840s. Road to Port Macquarie built in 1842 for wool exports. Town surveyed in 1852: flour mill, store and blacksmith's forge built about then and became nucleus of town. Anglican church built in 1862. Courthouse (RNE) built in 1878. Became a municipality in 1889, united with shire in 1955. First use of aeroplane in Aust to spread superphosphate was on Mirani in 1950, leading to higher stock numbers and productivity. Timber industry has become important in district since World War II: forestry office opened in 1962. Museum depicting wool industry opened in 1976.

WALGETT [30°01'S 148°08'E]

Popn: 375 (1881), 2284 (1971), 2157 (1981). Name: Aborig = 'river crossing'. Also known as Wingate and Warrena. Post office estab in 1851. Town laid out in 1859. Police stationed here in 1860; hotel opened same yr. First paddle-steamer reached here in 1861. Cattle hit by pleuropneumonia in the 1860s and sheep introduced as result. Cobb & Co coach service began in 1877. New courthouse, police station and post office built in 1881. Trial work on mechanised shearing largely carried out on Euroka property by F.Y. Wolseley (of later car fame) with success in 1885. Aborig reserve estab in 1889, moved to higher ground in 1895. Rlwy opened in 1908. Serious floods in 1864 and 1890: levee banks built on Barwon R in 1910, extended and strengthened in 1955.

WARIALDA [29°31'S 150°35'E]

Popn: 45 (1851), 1762 (1911), 1115 (1933), 1340 (1981). Name: Aborig = 'place of wild honey'. Town first settled in 1837, estab as original administrative centre of northwest NSW 1837-46 with mining warden and lands commissioner. Police outstation estab c1840. New pastoral district centred on Warialda estab in 1848, part of old Liverpool Plains district. Dummying rife in district after selection acts passed: land taken up by 'Anthony Trollope' and 'Napoleon III', among others. Courthouse and post office built in the 1890s. Rlwy opened in 1901.

WEE WAA [30°13'S 149°27'E]

Popn: 68 (1851), 1512 (1911), 988 (1933), 1904 (1981). Original Wee Waa run taken up in 1837. Estab by govt as administrative centre: police station and court in 1847, post office in 1849. Town site reserved in 1848, surveyed in 1849, gazetted in 1858, first land sale in 1859. Declined as functions transferred to Narrabri in the 1860s-70s. Rlwy opened in 1903. Headquarters of Namoi Shire here 1906-18, then also moved to Narrabri. First cotton in district grown in 1922: became Aust's major cotton growing district in the 1960s.



Wee Waa with the Namoi River in flood, 1974. Photograph by Reg Morrison.

WELDON TRANNIES