

SHIRE OF WEST ARTHUR COMMUNITY PROFILE 2016

The Shire of West Arthur, located in the far south west of the Wheatbelt Region of Western Australia, has an area of 2,850 square kilometres and encompasses the townsites of Darkan, Duranillin and Arthur River. Darkan is the administrative centre for the Shire of West Arthur.

The Townsite of Darkan is situated on the Coalfields Highway, 204 kilometres from Perth. Darkan can be reached by road along Albany Highway, via Williams or Arthur River, and is a comfortable 2 ½ hour drive from Perth. It is 60km from Collie, 74km from Narrogin and 115km from Bunbury.



Darkan is a quiet country town situated in a prosperous mixed farming area with a local population of approximately 250 people. Local industries include wool, sheep, timber, grain, forestry, beef, engineering and earthmoving.

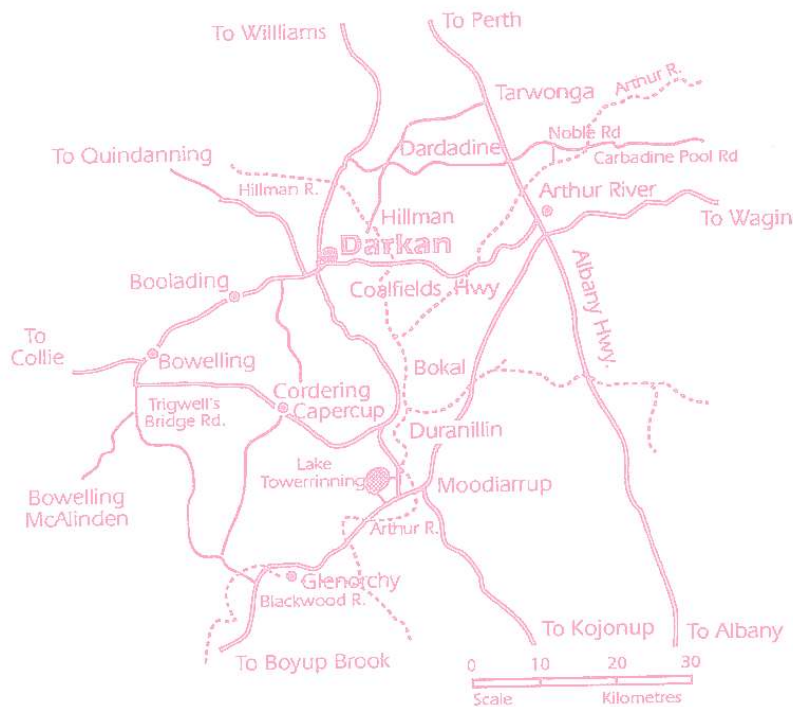
Tourism

The district has a number of tourist attractions. There are many historical buildings that have been, or are being restored. Reserves throughout the Shire offer beautiful scenery and wildflowers in season.

The Darkan Railway Reserve is a feature of the town and includes a Pioneer memorial, original rail buildings, a war memorial, bbq facilities, a youth area incorporating skating facilities, basketball court, nature playground, plus public amenities. “The Shed” is also located on the Reserve and has facilities for wood and metal work as well as being a general meeting point primarily – but not exclusively – for men.

Lake Towerrinning is used for a variety of outdoor activities such as water-skiing, swimming, sailing, canoeing and bird watching. One of the farmers on an adjoining boundary operates a camping area and the Shire maintains a public area offering a children’s playground, barbecue and picnic facilities, plus boat ramps, beach and jetties. Funding was received for the construction of a trail which is complete. This trail is used

by hikers, bike riders and horse riders, along the disused Collie to Darkan railway reserve. It is hoped that this trail may eventually link up with other towns in the Great Southern.



Services

Commercial services in Darkan include a supermarket, hairdresser, hotel, post office, roadhouse/cafe, two hardware and rural suppliers, mechanic, a bookshop/café, a Bendigo Bank agency and a National Australia Bank, which is open for 6 hours per week.

The West Arthur Health and Resource Centre has a number of medical services including visiting doctor, chiropractor, physiotherapist and nurse. Other community services based at the Centre include the Community Resource Centre, “The Bleat” community newspaper, library, Landcare Coordinator, Community Emergency Services Manager and Bendigo Bank Agency.

Darkan Primary School offers classes from Kindy to Year 7, and is well run and resourced. The local high school closed at the end of 2009 due to the low number of enrolments. A daily school bus operates between Darkan and Collie High School. Parents of high school aged children wishing to move to the district are advised to contact the Darkan Primary School on (08) 9736 1299 for advice on high school options. Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) may be available for children attending boarding school and Centrelink should be contacted for information.

In 2011 Kids Central Childcare was opened at the redeveloped Darkan Sports and Community Centre. The childcare utilises the licensed area four days a week. Kids Central takes enrolments for full day, half day, regular and casual bookings. For more information please contact Sharon at kidscentral@westarthur.wa.gov.au or phone 9736 1856.

The Shire of West Arthur is part of the Williams Police District as no permanent police station is located in the Shire. The Shire is fortunate to have a very low crime rate.

The People

The total population of the district is estimated at 900. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics data, at August 2006 the largest proportion of the population is aged between 30 and 39 years. The district has an unemployment rate of 4.1%.

Community

Community organisations are strongly supported in the Shire and include groups such as Historical Society, Volunteer Fire Brigades, St John Ambulance, Playgroup, Arts Council, Community Newspaper, Tidy Towns, and West Arthur Lions.

The Shire of West Arthur likes to acknowledge community members for their contributions to the community. An annual Australia Day event is held at Lake Towerrinning and awards are presented to Community Group of the year, Australia Day Citizen of the Year, and Young Citizen of the Year.

Sport and recreation plays a major role and there are facilities provided in Darkan and at Moodiarrup (approximately 36 kilometres south of Darkan) plus the Arthur River Country Club. Sporting facilities include a 25m heated swimming pool, grassed ovals, bowling greens, golf courses, tennis courts, and a rifle range. Hillman Sky Divers has been operating in the area for over 25 years.

Local Industry and Economy

The economy of the district is based on agriculture, including cropping and livestock farming. There are two engineering businesses based in Darkan.