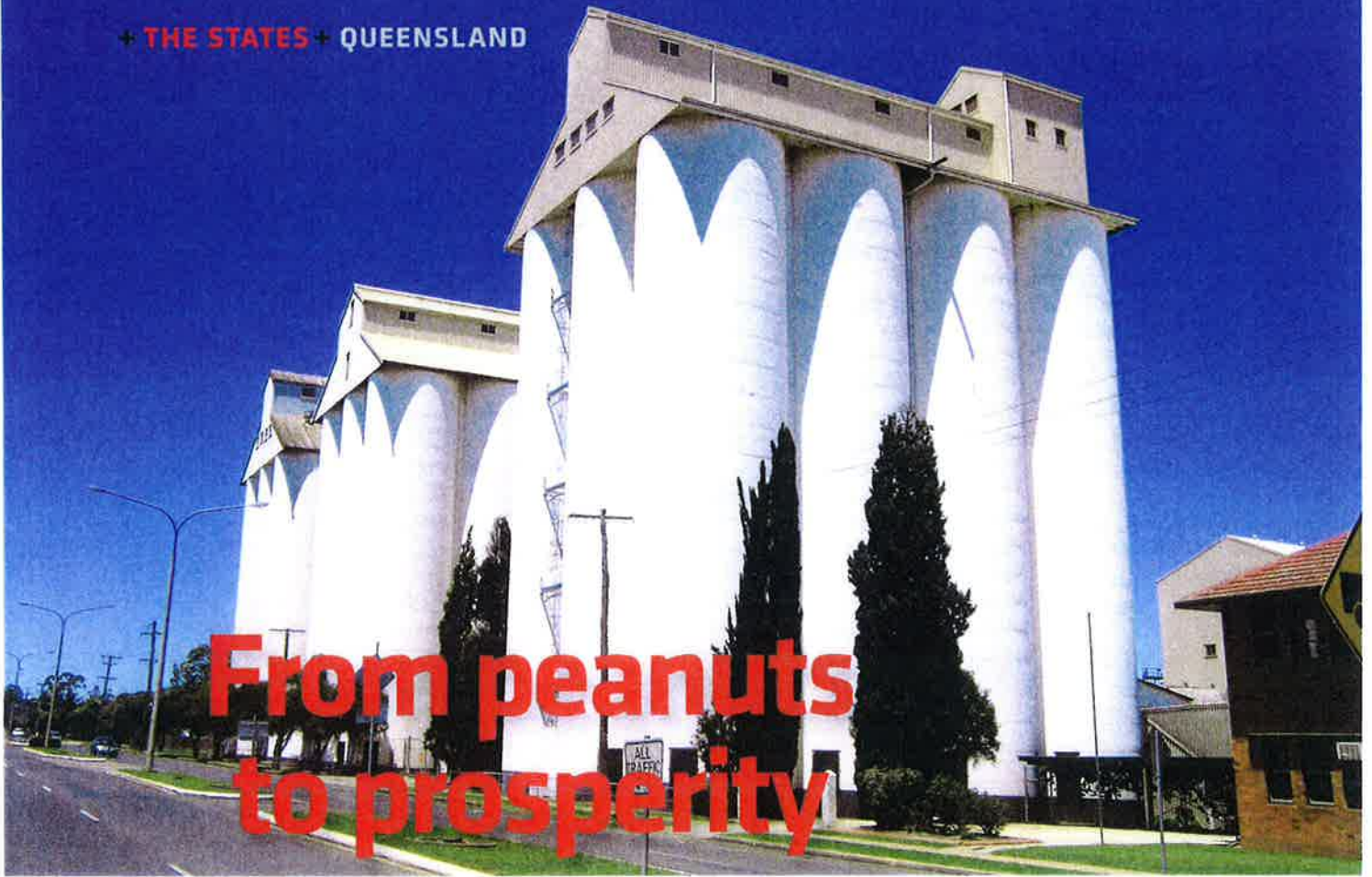


You'd be nuts to miss this investment opportunity in Kingaroy!

# Queensland's "BOOM BOOM BOOM" town delivers investors the Best Property spot in Australia in 2009.



ARTICLE: AUSTRALIAN PROPERTY INVESTOR  
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## Planned projects in the Kingaroy area are expected to contribute to already existent growth. VANESSA DE GROOT

**THE** name Kingaroy is claimed to come from the Aboriginal word for 'little red ant'. Flourishing in the area, the insect even appears on the old Kingaroy shire coat of arms.

But in terms of strength and size the town of Kingaroy defies its namesake.

As the regional centre of the South Burnett, Kingaroy is the largest town in the area and a number of major communities feed into it including Murgon, Wondai and Nanango.

It has more than adequate facilities including schools, public and private hospitals, clubs, a library, art gallery, museums, a cinema, aquatic complex and restaurants including fast food outlets.

As the commercial centre of the area it also provides good shopping amenity – unlike many towns of its size Kingaroy has its own indoor shopping centre with tenants like Big W.

Kingaroy has been experiencing steady growth over the years and is set to become an even stronger centre, with some labelling it a 'boom town'.

As the population increases the town is starting to see more investment, with several big national retailers setting up shop and residential developments under way.

On top of that, mining and infrastructure projects slated for the area are expected to contribute to even more growth and activity, especially with the creation of more jobs.

Kingaroy's proximity to Queensland's capital, Brisbane, as well as other highly populated centres like the Sunshine Coast, is one of its greatest assets. It's only about two hours' drive from Brisbane, Toowoomba, Maryborough and Gympie.

There's plenty of employment in Kingaroy, according to South Burnett Mayor David Carter. Lots of different industries exist in the area – the two main ones being agriculture and mining – and he says consequently the unemployment rate is quite low.

Agriculture has always been the driving industry in the region and Kingaroy itself is famous for being the peanut farming capital of Australia, with the nation's largest peanut processing plant located in the town.

As well as peanuts, Kingaroy is also a big producer of navy beans and since the early 1990s it has developed into one of two major hubs of the South Burnett's wine industry.

A number of vineyards have been established in the region, on the Great Dividing Range north of the Darling Downs in Queensland, and the success of the wine

industry has enabled South Burnett, including Kingaroy, to increasingly attract tourists.

Mining is another big industry in the town, with coal supplies for the Tarong and Tarong North power stations coming from a mine near Kingaroy.

Another main area of employment is the abattoir.

Kingaroy has gained notoriety for being the home town of the late Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, the former premier of Queensland and many famous sportspeople have also originated from the town including former Australian cricketer Matthew Hayden.

### GROWTH AND EXPANSION

Carter says Kingaroy's population has been growing at around 1.5 per cent every year over the past five or six years.

He says a lot of people are relocating to the area from the Sunshine Coast and Brisbane, a trend he notes can be largely attributed to housing affordability.

"The prices here are pretty good – I think a lot of people can sell their property on the coast and move here and have some cash left over and live pretty comfortably," he says.

Particularly this year Carter has noticed more families moving into the area.

He says that's probably partly to do with the grants for first homeowners because they can find cheaper homes to buy in Kingaroy, but it's also to do with lifestyle.

"They're looking for a better place to bring

up their children, somewhere more family friendly."

According to Troy Schulz of Ray White Kingaroy one of the major drawcards of the town is that it's around two hours from Toowoomba, the north side of Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast. He says people who want to visit family or do business in those areas can do the round trip in a day.

"As soon as you get more than two hours away people just aren't really interested (in those areas). You have to do overnight trips if you need to do anything."

While Kingaroy already has more than adequate facilities for a town of its size, the commercial component is growing to provide for the increasing population.

While there are good shopping areas in Murgon and Nanango, Carter says Kingaroy is seen as the major commercial centre in the region and it draws people from Chinchilla, Dalby and Gayndah.

The town is already seen as the region's central shopping district and that will be cemented with national retailers continuing to establish themselves in the area. Schulz says he's optimistic about Kingaroy's future due to the "big players" coming to town.

"The likes of big business are investing in Kingaroy and that's instilling a lot of confidence with local buyers and people coming up here," he says.

Harvey Norman has recently opened a store in Kingaroy, on the edge of town close to a big Mitre 10 complex completed in 2007.

Meanwhile, discount retailer Aldi owns land in Kingaroy and has development approval, but hasn't started building yet.

Carter says there are also a couple of other big retailers planning on opening stores in Kingaroy, including Target Country. He believes the opening of these stores will draw

**FACT FILE**

	MEDIAN FEB 09 (\$,000)	MEDIAN FEB 08 (\$,000)	12-MONTH GROWTH	MEDIAN RENT (\$)
Kingaroy (H)	250	220	14%	240
Kingaroy (U)	220	219.5	0.2%	N/A

Source: APM; H = houses, U = units



a lot more people to the area and it's a sign the town is growing and expanding strongly.

"The growth in population has added to that desire for some of the bigger retailers to come into the area," he says.

"A lot of those stores don't come unless the population is at a certain amount."

Carter notes the presence of the big retailers is having an impact on the popularity of Kingaroy.

"It's making a difference - people are coming and seeing this as a regional centre and it's drawing people from further away to come and shop. It's exciting at the moment to see the development and what's happening, it's quite good for the town and the South Burnett regional area."

There are plans to build a new motel and convention centre in Kingaroy and Carter

says council is pushing for the Kingaroy hospital to be upgraded, which he says is necessary to service the growing population.

In addition to commercial development in Kingaroy, Carter says there are a lot of developers doing subdivisions and building houses.

"Even though the economy has slowed they're still managing to sell all the houses they build, as soon as they get on the market they can move them."

**POWER PROJECTS IN THE PIPELINE**

In addition to development in Kingaroy, there are also several mining and infrastructure projects planned or under way for the area that are expected to contribute to growth. A new mine will be developed at Kunioon to supply coal to the power stations in the area, an underground coal gasification (UCG) project has begun and there are plans for a wind farm to be built in the future.

All three projects, along with other existing industries in Kingaroy, are expected to maintain current employment as well as creating more.

Tarong Energy is working towards constructing a new 2000-hectare mine at Kunioon, around 12 kilometres south of Kingaroy, in time to succeed the Meandu Mine when it's no longer commercially viable.

The \$500 million Kunioon Mine will supply the Tarong and Tarong North power stations for around 25 years.

It's expected to come online in 2011 and, according to Tarong Energy, will create hundreds of new jobs through construction and employment when it's up and running.

Effectively the Kunioon Coal Project will secure the long-term future of the power stations, which have the capacity to deliver 25 per cent of Queensland's energy needs.



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