



Walking the Bluff Knoll Trail, Stirling Range National Park. Image courtesy of Tourism Western Australia

**LOCATION:** Katanning  
3 hours south east of Perth

**POPULATION:** 4,500

**INDUSTRIES:** Agriculture, meat processing, retail, community services, manufacturing.

**CLIMATE:** Mediterranean.  
Summer 13.6C – 30.3C.  
Winter 5.4C – 14.4C.  
Annual rainfall 486mm.

Katanning is the heart of the Great Southern Region, one of Western Australia’s most productive agricultural areas. This pretty and historic town services a highly prized farming district devoted to sheep and cropping.

Agriculture drives the local economy – ten per cent of the population lives on the land and farms provide 20 percent of jobs.

But Katanning is no ordinary country town. It is one of the most multi-cultural communities in WA. Malays from the Cocos and Christmas Islands and, more recently, Afghan and Chinese immigrants represent 21 percent of the population. The local mosque is one of 12 different places of worship in the town.

For more than thirty years, migrants have flocked to this small town in south-western Australia to work in its abattoir. The Western Australian Meat Marketing Cooperative Ltd (WAMMCO) processing plant is one of the largest in the state, and employs about 250 people. Its chilled and frozen lamb products are

exported to more than 50 countries worldwide.

Other industries linked to agriculture include the largest sheep selling yards in rural WA, the Great Southern Agricultural Research Institute (GSARI) and a regional office of Agriculture WA.

Katanning prides itself on its self-sufficiency. It doesn’t have traffic lights but there are three primary schools, a senior high school and a TAFE campus. There is also a district hospital and medical centre with six doctors.

A \$2 million re-development of the local aquatic centre will boost already extensive sporting facilities.

Landmark’s David Jannings says Katanning is valued as a reliable and centrally located farming district.

“We are two hours from Albany port, three hours from Margaret River and a morning’s drive to Perth.

The past year has seen a spike in sales as vendors cash in on a buoyant market. Values rose from \$1,300 an acre a year ago to \$1,500 an acre.

“I’ve sold \$41.5 million worth of property in the past 12 months,” says David.

“Some people were ready to retire, others were selling up for other reasons, but there was no shortage of buyers.”

In most cases, neighbours took advantage of good conditions to extend their own holdings.

Governor James Stirling was one of the first Europeans to explore the area when he travelled from Perth to Albany in 1835. He was struck

by the richness of the soil and the quality of the grasses and by the early 1840s settlers had brought in sheep. The town itself didn’t develop until the Great Southern Railway arrived in 1889 but history has left its mark and Katanning boasts some fine examples of Victorian street architecture.

An hour south of Katanning, the Stirling Range National Park has one of the most important flora collections in the world.

There is greater variety in the Stirling Range than in the British Isles and wildflower season is a major attraction for the region’s half a million tourists.

“It’s an area with a wonderful history and a great future,” says David.

“We’re looking at another good season. There’s certainly plenty of confidence in farming.”

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**PROPERTY GUIDE:**

Residential: three bedroom home \$250,000.

Lifestyle: 60 acres with four bedroom home \$550,000.

Larger acreage: \$1,500 – \$1,650 per acre.