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Media Release

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The latest edition of the *IRIS Statistical Guide to the Illawarra Region* has shown that TAFE enrolments continue to plummet in the Illawarra. In 2015 there were 23,116 college enrolments, down 22.2% on 2014. The campuses which saw the largest falls include Dapto, down 95.3% to only 10 enrolments and Cooma, down 52.6% to 805. Online enrolments more than doubled to 266. In contrast, the University of Wollongong saw a 5.5% increase in the total number of students to 33,062, excluding UOW College and offshore campuses.

According to Destination NSW, there was a 26.8% boost in tourism expenditure in the year to December 2015 to \$898 million. This was driven by longer holidays for domestic tourists, with domestic visitor nights up 16.2% to 3.0 million. There was also a 10.7% increase in the number of international visitors to 62,000.

The Wollongong Statistical District saw strong growth in median purchase prices for both houses and units. The median purchase price for houses in the year to June 2015 was up 11.7% to \$525,000. WSD units saw a 9.5% rise to \$419,000. Shellharbour was the best performing LGA with median purchase price for houses up 12.9% to \$465,000 and units up 13.0% to \$395,000.

Crime was down in the Illawarra over the year to December 2015. The number of total reported crimes fell 6.3% to 16,716. There were 273 fewer liquor offences, down 30.8% on the year to December 2014. There were 282 fewer reports of theft from motor vehicles, a 10.7% decrease. Malicious damage to property was down 7.5% to 3,824. The crime with the largest increase was possession and/or use of cannabis, up 5.2% to 1,159.

A Statistical Guide to the Illawarra Region is an easy reference pamphlet containing various historical and current statistical tables on a wide variety of demographic and economic data for the Illawarra region. *IRIS Research* is a non-profit organisation that provides independent, high quality economic and market information to business and government.

Further media comment:

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