

Regions enter exciting new era of plenty

the outback

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OUTBACK South Australia is on the cusp of becoming one of the fastest-growing inland regions in Australia.

After years of decline, confidence is high that good times are returning to SA's Far North with a series of exciting developments.

Mining, defence, space technology and tourism promise considerable growth, with expectations the population will start rising after years of decline.

Northern Regional Development Board chief executive, Jerry Johnson, said 6000 new jobs and \$8 billion in investments are expected by 2013 in the Northern region that comprises 80 per cent of the state.

"We are in the throes of a mining boom with a restructuring of the popula-

tion and core industries," Mr Johnson said.

"Port Augusta has morphed from being a major railway and power-producing centre to being a more broadly based regional service centre for the Flinders Ranges and the Outback."

As well, Regional Health SA is now to be based there while it will also be home to the new Australian Technical College, Spencer Gulf and Outback.

"The value of the mining developments will be huge to Port Augusta, Port Pirie and Whyalla and they are co-operating to maximise the benefits," Mr Johnson said, adding that land values were starting to rise because housing had become a big issue in all three regional cities.

The resources boom involving various companies already had reversed the

region's decline in which some towns had disappeared and others had to reinvent themselves after the demise of the railways.

"The development of Oxiana's Prominent Hill mine in the Far North has become huge overnight and it is a forerunner of what we can expect when the (expansion) decision is made on Olympic Dam in 2008-09," Mr Johnson said.

"They are spending \$500 million on the pre-feasibility study alone."

Mr Johnson said the mining boom has seen a large number of service companies become interested in establishing themselves in the state's north.

"As a result, the new Eureka Estate industrial estate is going in at Port Augusta while the Flinders View Business Park has

opened at the Adelaide side of town," he said.

The region also was anticipating a major expansion of the defence sector with the Cultana training area between Port Augusta and Whyalla trebling in size.

"Combined with the new armoured battalion coming to SA, we expect a massive amount to be spent on defence," Mr Johnson said.

Optimism was also high about the start of Kistler's

\$100 million space-vehicle launching site at Woomera with 100 people living there, creating industrial activity.

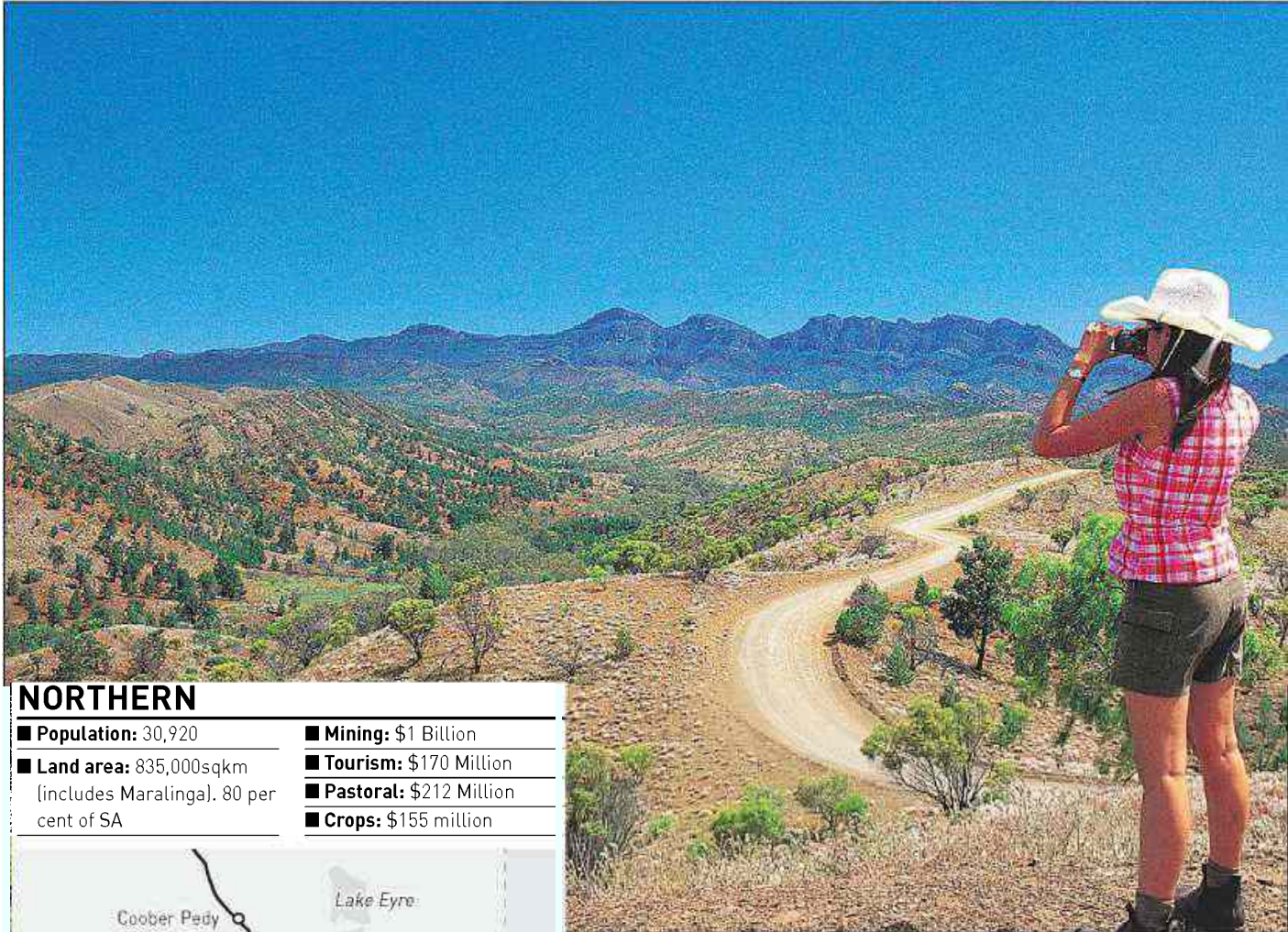
Meanwhile, the development of the Steamtown Heritage Museum at Peterborough is expected to become a significant rail heritage centre when it opens in the next few months.

"Peterborough is the most substantial community between Broken Hill and Adelaide and the area will benefit

a lot if we can stop people there," Mr Johnson said.

"In the Flinders Ranges, we have the Geotourism interpretation program that is fairly exciting because it will bring the region together."

Mr Johnson said Port Augusta was now seen as a tourism destination with people staying overnight with the Oasis Apartments and redevelopment of the foreshore playing a part.



NORTHERN

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ■ Population: 30,920 | ■ Mining: \$1 Billion |
| ■ Land area: 835,000sqkm
(includes Maralinga). 80 per cent of SA | ■ Tourism: \$170 Million |
| | ■ Pastoral: \$212 Million |
| | ■ Crops: \$155 million |



BREATHTAKING: The popular Razorback Lookout in the Flinders Ranges