

De Aar means "the artery" and in many senses this town is also the lifeblood of the Karoo. It is the head office of the Emthanjeni Municipality and the Pixley ka Seme District Municipality; home to many artists; there is an important weather station that can be toured by visitors, and it is still an important railway junction.

The significance of its situation on the railway line is because it is central to Gauteng, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Namibia. There are about 110km of railway lines including 29 rail tracks in the De Aar precincts.

However, "De Aar", was so named because of the many water-bearing arteries that occur underground. Unlike many other Karoo towns, it did not develop around the Dutch Reformed Church, but in fact developed because of the railway line. The first stands were sold in 1902 and the Municipality of De Aar was established in 1904.

De Aar has the largest abattoir in the Southern Hemisphere and supplies all the major centers throughout the entire country with the famous "Karoo" lamb and mutton. Apart from meat production, the sheep farms around De Aar are also major suppliers of wool. All the water used in the town comes from boreholes - which is why the town is known for its large number of windmills.

The town is easily accessible by tar roads and two air fields serve it - one is an all-weather runway that can accommodate any type of aircraft and it's only 52km away from the national bus route.