



Draft South East and Tablelands Regional Plan 2041



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Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Planning and Environment acknowledges that the South East and Tablelands region is on Aboriginal land. We acknowledge that this region encompasses the Traditional lands of the Wiradjuri, Ngunnawal, Ngarigo, Tharawal, Gundungurra, Dharug, Yuin and Bidwell nations.¹

Aboriginal people are the first peoples of Australia. Until the arrival of settlers, the economy was sustainable, threatened only by natural hazards which were met with resilience gained from generations of life on Country. The Aboriginal economy was tied to the land which provided spiritual, cultural and physical sustenance.

Colonisation forcefully dispossessed Aboriginal people of their land, displaced communities, and damaged Country.

This land always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

Under this regional plan, we seek to establish meaningful and collaborative relationships with Aboriginal people. We will seek to shift our focus to a Country-centred approach, respecting, recognising and empowering Aboriginal knowledge in planning processes at a strategic level.

We show our respect for Elders past, present and future through thoughtful and collaborative approaches to our work, seeking to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to providing places in which Aboriginal people are included socially, culturally and economically.

As we refine and implement the regional plan, we commit to helping support the health and wellbeing of Country by valuing, respecting, and being guided by Aboriginal people, who know that if we care for Country – it will care for us.

We acknowledge that further work is required under this regional plan to inform how we care for Country and ensure Aboriginal people, hold a strong voice in shaping the future for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this document may contain images or names of deceased persons.

Image on front cover: Valley Fresh Cherries & Stonefruits, Young.
Credit: Destination NSW.

Image on this page: Ngaran Ngaran Culture Awareness, Narooma
Credit: Destination NSW

Artwork (below left) by Nikita Ridgeway.

Contents

Minister's foreword	5
About the plan	6
A vision for the region in 2041	14
Plan on a page	17

Part 1

The region as a place	18
-----------------------	----

Part 2

Achieving the vision	32
----------------------	----

Theme 1: Recognising Country, people, and place	34
---	----

Objective 1: Build capacity for shared knowledge about Aboriginal culture in land use planning	35
--	----

Objective 2: Strengthen Aboriginal self-determination	38
---	----

Objective 3: Support diverse, vibrant and socially active communities	40
---	----

Objective 4: Preserve the heritage and character of the region's towns and villages	42
---	----

Theme 2: Enhancing sustainable and resilient environments	44
---	----

Objective 5: Protect important environmental assets	45
---	----

Objective 6: Enhance biodiversity, habitats and the connections between them	49
--	----

Objective 7: Build resilient places and communities	54
---	----

Objective 8: Plan for a net zero region by 2050	57
---	----

Objective 9: Secure water resources	60
---	----

Objective 10: Manage the role and operation of extractive industries	63
--	----

Theme 3: Leveraging diverse economic identities	66
---	----

Objective 11: Realise economic benefits from a connected regional economy	67
---	----

Objective 12: Promote a year-round visitor economy	69
--	----

Objective 13: Promote innovation and sustainability in agriculture and aquaculture industries	72
---	----

Objective 14: Support the development of a circular economy	77
---	----

Objective 15: Promote business and employment opportunities in strategic locations	79
--	----

Objective 16: Support industries to integrate operations and digital solutions	84
--	----

Theme 4: Planning for fit for purpose housing and services	85
--	----

Objective 17: Plan for a supply of housing in appropriate locations	86
---	----

Objective 18: Plan for more affordable, low-cost and social housing	90
---	----

Objective 19: Improve the quality, resilience and sustainability of housing	93
---	----

Objective 20: Manage rural living	95
---	----

Objective 21: Provide efficient access to infrastructure and services	97
---	----

Theme 5: Supporting a connected and active region	101
---	-----

Objective 22: Strengthen cross-border connectivity and infrastructure coordination	102
--	-----

Objective 23: Enhance strategic transport links	104
---	-----

Objective 24: Plan for walkable centres	106
---	-----

Objective 25: Adapt infrastructure to meet future needs	108
---	-----

Part 3

Implementation	110
----------------	-----

Glossary	125
----------	-----

References	127
------------	-----

Minister's foreword

The South East and Tablelands region comprises a rich tapestry of diverse landscapes, from the stunning unspoilt coastline, to the spectacular high country of the Australian Alps and rolling green hinterlands in between.

Residents, workers, and visitors value the region for its rural and environmental character, encapsulated by the coastal and heritage towns that dot the countryside. This setting, coupled with access to the ACT's world-class hospitality and cultural institutions, attract people to this amazing place.

The *draft South East and Tablelands Regional Plan 2041* is the 20-year strategic planning blueprint to ensure the dynamic and vibrant region's ongoing prosperity.

The plan sets the land use planning framework, vision and direction for future needs for housing, jobs, infrastructure, a healthy environment and connected communities.

This plan is focused on collaboration between the NSW Government, councils and the ACT Government, including the way the region's strategic centres will support future growth. Underpinning this plan is a need to work smarter – using change and targeted investment to diversify industries, create a renewable energy future and provide housing for a growing resident and visitor population.

We also need to look to influence housing affordability and supply in the region by coordinating investment across levels of government and providing smarter, more efficient and reliable connections that bring residents and visitors closer to jobs, essential goods and services, and the natural environment.

Major challenges in recent years have included drought, bushfire, flood and the COVID 19 pandemic. Households, communities, business and leaders in this region are on a journey together supported by Government to improve resilience to future natural hazards and climate change. This will be achieved through better prepared people, culture and communities; caring for healthy Country; climate ready land use planning and infrastructure; diverse and resilient economies; and

the collaborative leadership that has emerged from these disasters, leveraging continual improvement and regional investment for a better future.

Strategic planning is vital to this ambition and essential for the region's planning to adapt to changing needs and circumstances – this is why we're conducting the first 5 year review and update of the regional plan to reset priorities through to 2041.

Since we released the first regional plan in July 2017, we've worked closely with councils, stakeholders, and the community on the plan's priorities; our review identifies new areas of focus.

We recognise the importance of Aboriginal people, and the need to do more to ensure greater equity and recognition so that Aboriginal communities can achieve their aspirations for Country.

We also recognise the importance of innovation in sustainable agriculture and energy use in the regional economy. Strengthening the regional economy requires integration in land use and transport planning, which is being explored with Transport for NSW as it prepares its regional transport plan.

This plan builds on our ambition for a more collaborative, connected and resilient region, for all who live, work, play and visit the South East and Tablelands.

The Hon. Anthony Roberts

*Minister for Planning
Minister for Homes*



About the plan

A regional plan for the South East and Tablelands

A new awakening has elevated the importance of how people care and connect to Country, community and place. This requires creative thinking to tackle the issues that shape how people in the South East and Tablelands region live, work and play.

The drought, floods, bushfires and COVID-19 pandemic will have lasting impacts on the economy, infrastructure, social systems, natural environment and wellbeing of people and communities across the region – impacts that require a new approach.

The draft *South East and Tablelands Regional Plan 2041* (plan) provides the land use planning framework for the South East and Tablelands region, Australia’s most geographically diverse natural environment. In balancing the rich environmental values of this land, we recognise the need for an adaptive and considered approach to growth and change.

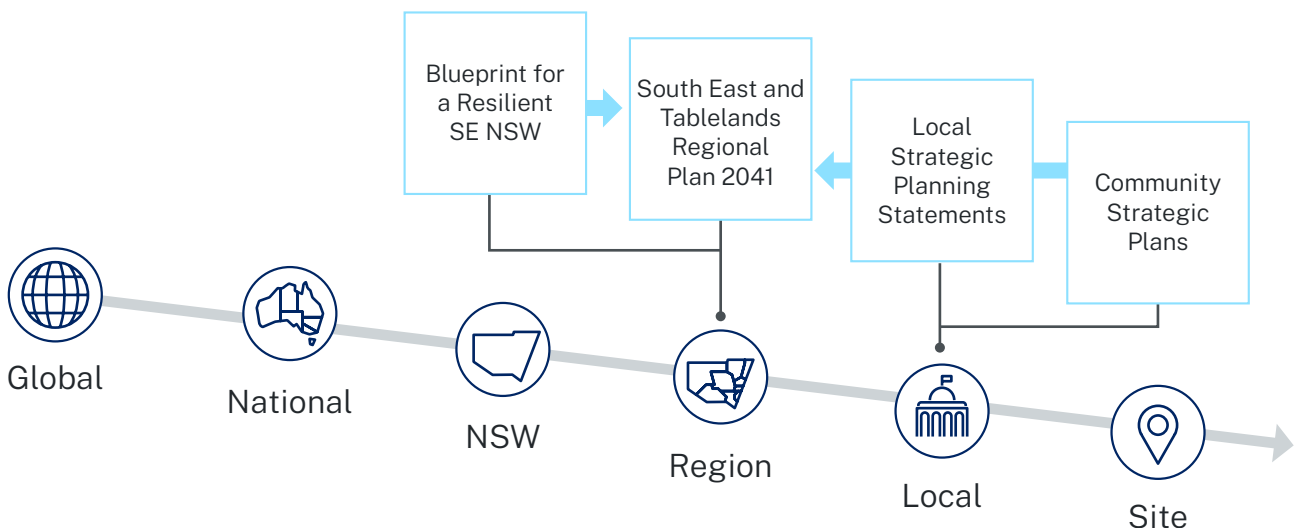
The plan includes actions that recognise, support and empower Aboriginal people. These actions provide a foundation for building resilience and realising the benefits of working together in reaching the vision for the region. Meaningful engagement and a collaborative approach to planning and decision making will achieve sustainable and equitable outcomes over the plan’s 20-year horizon and beyond.

We have prepared this plan in accordance with the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act), which requires reviews of regional plans at least every 5 years. It applies to the 9 local government areas (LGAs) of Bega Valley, Eurobodalla, Goulburn Mulwaree, Hilltops, Queanbeyan–Palerang, Snowy Monaro, Upper Lachlan, Wingecarribee and Yass Valley. While not considered under the remit of this plan, the ACT also sits within the regional plan boundary due to Canberra’s influence across the Region.

The plan provides a long-term vision for the region, supported by objectives and actions that will shape the region’s many places. It commits State and local governments and key stakeholders to see it through.

We’ve drawn from key policy documents, including each council’s local strategic planning statements and the Canberra Region Joint Organisation’s *Blueprint for a Resilient South East NSW*, acknowledging common interests without duplicating aspects of land use planning. This plan applies to strategic planning and local plans undertaken by the NSW Government, local councils and other organisations.

Figure 1: Strategic planning line of sight



Reviewing the 2036 Regional Plan

Collaborative planning

The role of the Department of Planning and Environment (the department) is to lead regional planning for the South East and Tablelands region, and promote orderly development by aligning infrastructure decision-making with land use planning.

The regional plan uses a framework of strategies and actions to implement the plan. This requires all relevant stakeholders, including the department, councils and state agencies to work collaboratively on the strategic planning that will enable consistent, transparent and fair decision-making.

A collaborative planning model identifies priorities for the region and its network of strategic centres. This approach intends to support knowledge sharing across different LGAs, on the planning issues relevant to their geographic location. This leverages established spatial and social relationships to promote productivity and target investment to support a growing population.

Undertaking the review

Since the release of the *South East and Tablelands Regional Plan 2036* in 2017, the NSW Government has worked with councils, stakeholders and the community on key priority actions, including:

- preparation of several policies and guidelines, including the *local housing strategy guidelines*, the *Urban Design Guidelines for Regional NSW* and *NSW South Coast Marine Tourism Strategy 2019*
- improved access for councils to regional biodiversity corridor data and high environmental values land data
- commencement of a review and mapping of state significant agricultural land
- development of draft regional water strategies for catchments in the region, exhibited in 2022
- coordination of planning and infrastructure to enable housing development in Parkwood and South Jerrabomberra
- ongoing development of a cross border land and housing monitor with the ACT Government

We have also seen amendments to planning legislation that elevate the importance of strategic planning at a regional and local level. This includes the release of local strategic planning statements and other local strategies.

During our review, we consulted with councils, state agencies and industry to reset the direction and priorities for the region. Early engagement identified potential benefits in exploring several topics and challenges that strategic planning for the region needs to address. Consequently, technical studies analysed:

- **sustainability and collaboration opportunities** for the region, focusing on climate change, greenhouse gas emissions, energy, water, transport and waste.
- opportunities and challenges for **agritourism and value-added** agriculture.

In conjunction with Transport for NSW, we engaged with members of the region's Aboriginal communities to inform this review and Transport for NSW's first South East and Tablelands Regional Transport Plan. Preparing these plans concurrently has allowed us to create a multimodal and integrated vision for land use and transport planning in the region.

The regional plan also aligns with the draft Lachlan, Murray, Murrumbidgee and South Coast regional water strategies, which provide long-term roadmaps to a resilient and sustainable water future, along with the *NSW State Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2042*.

Together, transport, water and land use planning set a coordinated 20-year vision to manage growth and change for the South East and Tablelands Region, in the context of social, economic and environmental matters.

Drivers of change

Some of the biggest changes and challenges are not unique to the region. COVID-19 has affected the movement of people to, from and within the region, with consequences on the availability of workers, the mix and magnitude of visitation and wide-ranging effects on migration, commerce, construction, education and recreation. Any longer term effects are yet to be determined.

Climate change remains the planet's biggest challenge. The *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Sixth Assessment Report* confirmed global surface temperature will continue to increase until at least the mid-century under all emissions scenarios considered. Global warming of 1.5°C and 2°C will be exceeded during the 21st century unless deep reductions in carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gas emissions occur in the coming decades.² The NSW Government's *South East and Tablelands climate change snapshot* (Figures 2 and 3²) shows the projected impact of climate change on the region for the near (2030) and far (2070) future. The Plan supports the NSW Government's objectives to reach net zero emissions by 2050 as well as to make NSW more resilient to a changing climate.

Specific to the region, we are focused on several drivers of change, opportunities and relevant policies:

- an increase in government investigations and policy-based projects:
 - providing affordable housing for a growing population in regional NSW
 - planning for jobs close to where people live, with a focus on key and temporary worker housing
 - recognising and integrating Aboriginal culture and heritage into planning practice
 - infrastructure and policy responses to improve community resilience to natural hazards

- the need to protect the region's environmental significance and values
- the influence of Canberra on the region's jobs and housing, and the importance of collaboration between the NSW and ACT governments
- the need for strategic guidance on the growth and enhancement of local and strategic centres, in addition to the planning of the Snowy Mountains Special Activation Precinct (SAP) and South Jerrabomberra Regional Job Precinct.
- the prominence and diversification of agriculture and growth in health care and social assistance, energy and tourism sectors
- the need for solutions to challenges in water security, waste management and better physical connectivity with Canberra and Sydney
- the need for a coordinated approach to infrastructure provision that leverages resources and collaboration across state agencies

Snowy Mountains Special Activation Precinct

In November 2019, the NSW Government announced the Snowy Mountains as a Special Activation Precinct (SAP).

A SAP is a dedicated area in a regional location identified by the NSW Government to become a thriving business hub, by bringing together planning and investment to focus on growing jobs and economic activity.

The Snowy Mountains SAP focuses on ways to increase year round tourism to grow the regional economy, create year-round employment opportunities, and attract more visitors to the region from Australia and around the world.

Figure 2: Projected temperature and rainfall changes in the South East and Tablelands Region³

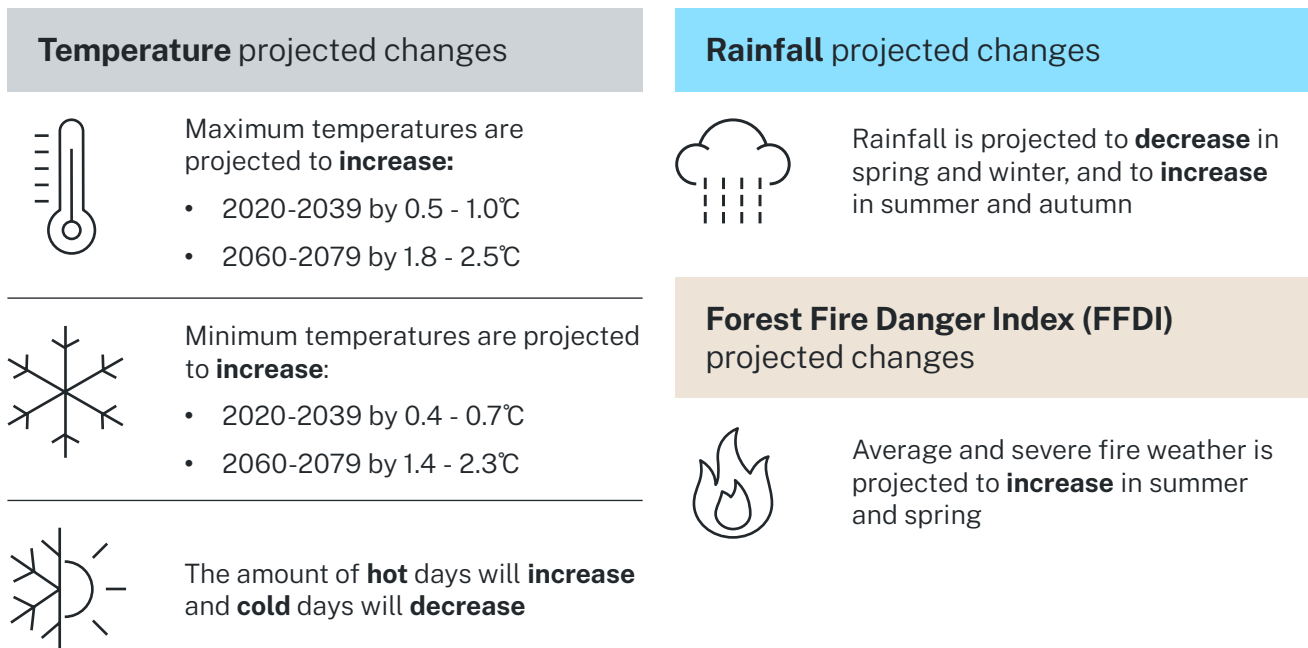
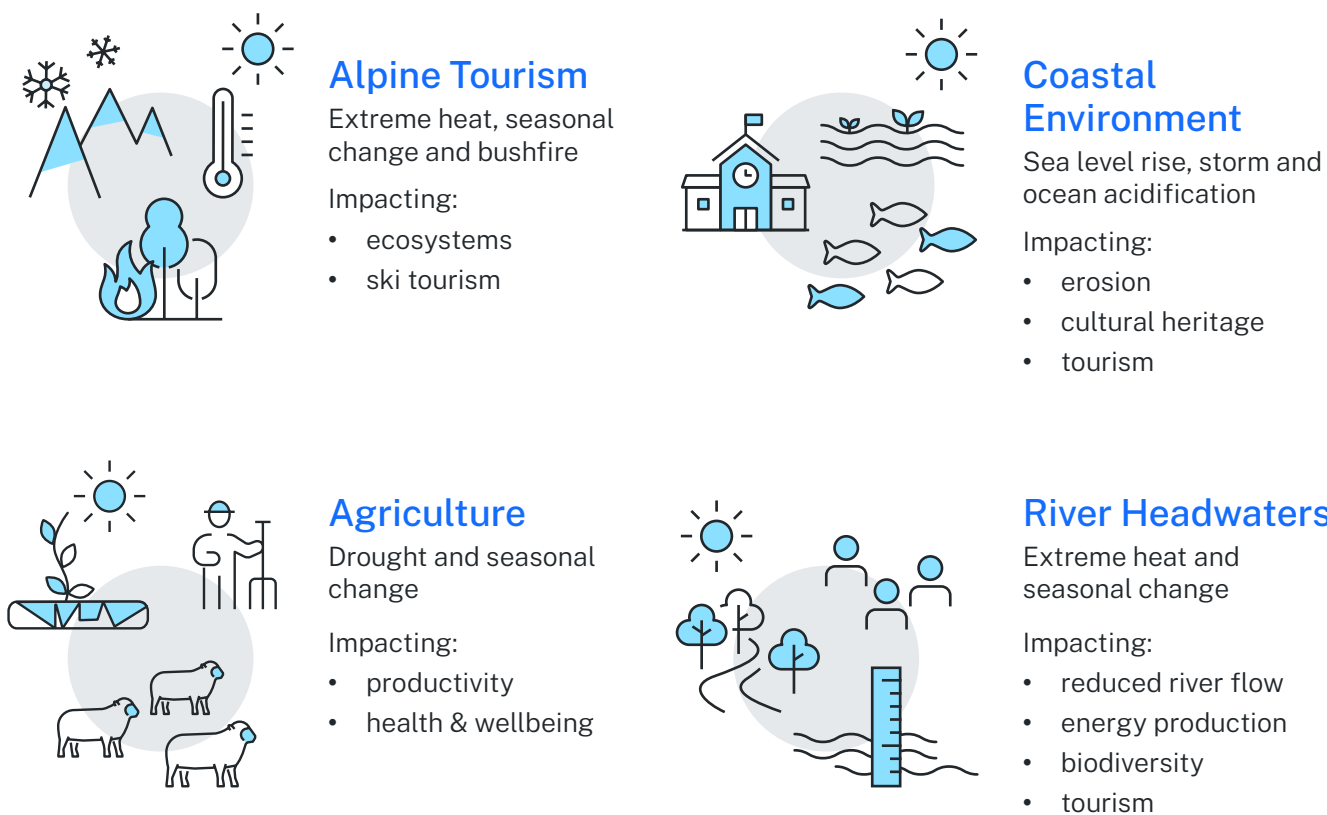


Figure 3: Regional Impacts (Extract from Adapt NSW's South East and Tablelands climate change snapshot)



Data is based on NARCLIM 1.0 (2014) projections. Regional climate change impacts are used to highlight how the region may be affected by climate change, and impacts are not limited to the examples provided.

Blueprint for a Resilient South East NSW

It has been recognised that the region is already experiencing the impacts of climate change and a new approach is needed to reduce the impacts of future events and climatic changes, including for land use planning.

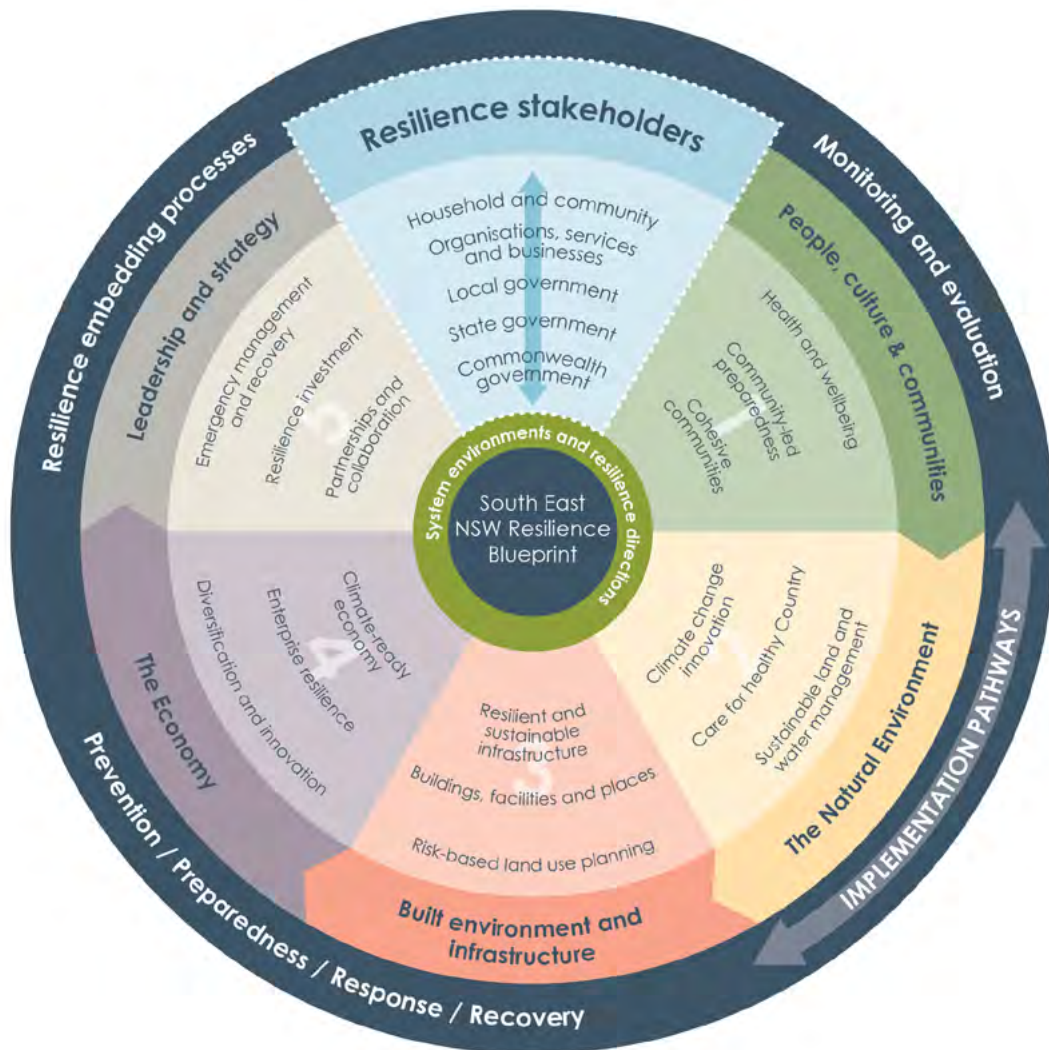
Led by local government and supported by NSW and Commonwealth Governments, the *Blueprint for a Resilient South East NSW* project has consulted with over 2,000 individuals, organisations, businesses, young people, Aboriginal community members and government representatives to identify key resilience themes across 5 'systems' for the region (Figure 4).

These five 'systems' were developed in alignment with the five themes of the regional plan.

The Blueprint is informed by a regional disaster risk assessment and identifies priority actions to inform asset management and service delivery across buildings, infrastructure, economy, environment, culture, health and wellbeing, and communities.

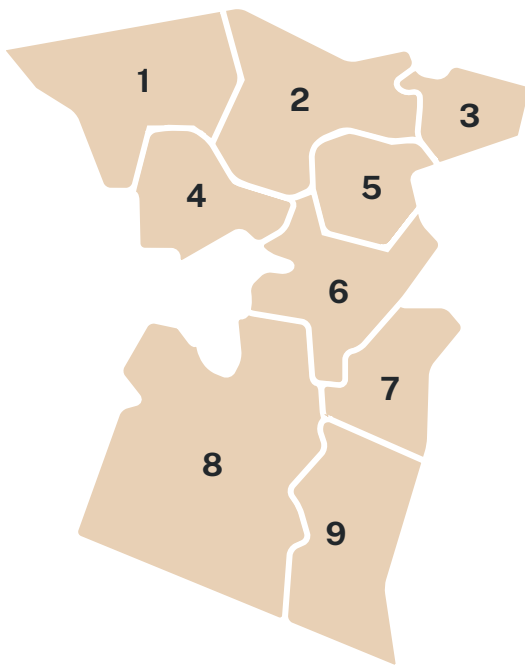
Both documents work together to influence the next generation of Council local strategic planning documents and community strategic plans.

Figure 4: Themes of the Blueprint for a Resilient South East NSW (CRJO, 2022)



A growing population

With an estimated resident population of over 285,000 (approximately 740,000 including the ACT⁴) in 2021, the South East and Tablelands Region is expected to grow by 1% annually and cater for more retirees as people relocate from neighbouring communities, including the ACT for lifestyle and affordability reasons. Growth is likely to be focused on peri-urban commuting distances to both Sydney, Canberra, and the south coast.



LGA	Projected additional residents by 2041 ⁵
1 Hilltops	557
2 Upper Lachlan Shire	1,369
3 Wingecarribee	18,649
4 Yass Valley	3,242
5 Goulburn–Mulwaree	8,396
6 Queanbeyan–Palerang Regional	20,715
7 Eurobodalla	6,222
8 Snowy Monaro Regional	2,810
9 Bega Valley	1,493

Note: Population projections in this regional plan have been generated from the department’s Population Projections (www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Research-and-Demography/Population-projections) in 2022 and are subject to change over the life of the regional plan.

Functional economic regions

The South East and Tablelands comprises of several functional economic regions (FER) as defined by Regional Economic Development Strategies. FERs comprise of one or more LGAs in regional NSW and create smaller economies with strong economic links. They provide an important context to how the region operates and an understanding of the specialisations and industry sectors that drive economic growth.

FERs located within the region and across NSW can be found at mapresources.dpc.nsw.gov.au/static/fer.html

We have considered how each FER operates within itself and the relationships with their neighbours to understand economic interactions, with the aim of growing regional competitive advantages.

Relationships with Canberra

Canberra is intrinsically linked to the South East and Tablelands through transport connections, educational institutions, tertiary health services and employment. The region supports Canberra’s sustainable growth by providing space for a greater diversity of housing, experiences and opportunities beyond the city’s limits.

Collaboration between the ACT and NSW governments is underpinned by the ACT and NSW Memorandum of Understanding for Regional Collaboration (MoU), first signed in 2011 and re-committed to in 2016 and 2020. The memorandum strengthens collaboration between the 2 jurisdictions to improve outcomes and service delivery to the broader ‘Canberra Region’.

We take a region-wide and cross border approach to environmental protection, economic investment, infrastructure delivery, servicing provision and housing development to facilitate sustainable growth and optimise economic prospects.



95,000

people work within the South East and Tablelands Region⁶



On top of this, an additional

25,000+

people travel into the ACT for work⁶

The regional plan includes a vision for 2041, supported by:

Parts

1

The region as a place

A focus on place, framing an understanding of Country, the region's LGAs and their strategic centres.

page
18

2

Achieving the vision

Five interconnected themes, including objectives that guide strategies, which set policy positions for strategic planning projects, processes and programs to align to, and actions to implement the vision at a regional level.

page
44

3

Implementation

A focus on the implementation of actions, including the governance and monitoring framework to provide oversight, guidance and reporting for the next 5 years.

page
110

Each part includes different elements as follows:

Objectives

Identifies high level goals to implement the vision to 2041, including supporting initiatives that may be explored and support the vision. Each objective contains strategies (which are the matters for strategic alignment), and actions (which aids the strategic implementation of the plan).



Strategic Alignment

Strategies identify the planning matters for consideration (i.e., policy positions) set at a regional level, which guide strategic planning (including local strategic planning statements), local plans (including local environmental plans (LEPs) and development control plans (DCPs)) or state agency planning. Strategic planning and local plans also includes planning proposals, for the purposes of local planning directions under Section 9.1 of the EP&A Act.



Strategic implementation

Actions describe initiatives led by the department, that support the implementation of the plan. Each action is collaborative in nature, will require leadership and ongoing engagement from the department, organisation or council and include place based and policy related investigations (projects).

These actions will be delivered over the next 5 years and their timing will be determined by the Coordination and Monitoring Committee and Aboriginal Engagement Network (See Part 3).

Supporting initiatives include projects, policy investigations or research that may be planned, in progress or not yet developed, that the department considers are aligned with the Plan. The department has not identified these initiatives to be completed as part of the plans implementation in the next 5 years, but outlines its support for their completion by others, where identified by organisational priorities.



Reporting and measurement

Each theme includes 'potential indicators' which are measures that could indicate the success of the plan's actions on delivering positive outcomes for the community. These indicators are a starting point and will be developed further by State and local government, as part of delivering specific State, regional, subregional and local planning programs. The department will be responsible for reporting on all actions.





A vision for the region in 2041

By 2041, the South East and Tablelands will be recognised as a region of collaboration and innovation, demonstrated through increased investment in tourism, renewable energy generation, sustainable agriculture and smart manufacturing. Country is widely recognised, with Aboriginal people providing valued strategic input into the region's future. The provision of quality, safe and fit for purpose housing, infrastructure and services attracts and retains people within our communities, with the natural environment being embedded at the heart of planning and decision-making.

The region is home to the nation's capital and Australia's most geographically diverse natural environment

The South East and Tablelands Region is valued as a place where people can live, work, and play throughout their lives.

By 2041, it is home to just over 350,000 residents (almost 940,000 residents including the ACT). People are attracted to the region's cities, historic towns and villages. The region's landscape - ranging from Australia's highest peaks, to rural and bush covered plains, hinterland areas and dramatic coastlines - offer residents and visitors a diversity of lifestyle opportunities.

Productive agricultural land and natural resources are the foundations of the region's economy, which continues to diversify through growth in the tertiary education, health, waste, energy, tourism and transport sectors.

A borderless and connected region brings opportunity

The region's network of strategic centres and clusters are well connected to Canberra and Sydney. Advances in information technology have created smart work opportunities, connecting people physically and digitally.

Canberra is the region's Metropolitan City and a significant driver of growth. The unified 'Canberra Region' is home to a strong and secure economy, and a valued and protected environment. Easier and more convenient connections to and from Canberra give residents better access to a wider range of services, jobs and recreational opportunities.

The expansion of Greater Sydney's 'Western Parkland City' and associated transport and commercial infrastructure creates new connections and opportunities for the region's north and the Sydney to Canberra corridor. Sectors like tourism and agriculture benefit from export access to global markets through Canberra Airport, Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport and the Ports of Eden and Port Kembla.

Each town offers a unique identity, cultural and heritage attributes. These places shape local experiences that inspire exploration and provoke adventure in the region's natural assets. The Snowy Mountains SAP, for example, is a premier tourist destination all year round.



Peaches in Young
Credit: Destination NSW

The region will be at the forefront of innovation in sustainable practices

The South East and Tablelands Region's varied and distinct landscapes foster a disaster resilient and low carbon visitor economy, agricultural sector and renewable energy platform. Climate ready communities embrace the region's opportunities and potential for collaboration and innovation, where agriculture and aquaculture has created an internationally renowned, high quality clean and green product.

Adapting to, and tackling the impacts of climate change sees the application of innovative mitigation measures to manage and use water, protect waterways, biodiversity and wildlife corridors, and harness renewable energy. Preparing and acting strategically to the management of natural hazards has reduced the risk of exposure and improved in building community resilience and capabilities. A sustainable circular economy drives the region towards a net zero future, built upon low-emissions transport initiatives and increased local and regional collaboration.

A tailored approach to growth brings many benefits

New housing and jobs are located to make the best use of infrastructure and services, while considering natural hazards, catering for long term residents and those who relocate from major population centres.

People have access to a greater range of affordable housing types that suit the growing and ageing population. Planning for housing focuses on user needs and sets targets for different housing types and tenures. This includes social, affordable, temporary and low cost housing.

The integration and delivery of transport infrastructure and land use planning is supported by coordinated approaches and collaborative relationships between NSW and ACT governments.

As communities grow, this is balanced against measures to enhance the value and protection of a natural environment that enriches lifestyles, sustains the region's water supply and protects biodiversity and productive agricultural land. Strategic planning ensures the enhancement and quality of waterways, flora and fauna, tree canopy and water infiltration.

Aboriginal culture and engagement is embedded in strategic planning

Planning for the region embeds a meaningful recognition of, and connections to Country. Land use planning practice increases cultural awareness in the community and empowers Aboriginal leadership in decision-making.

Aboriginal knowledge and culture is incorporated into planning and place design, ensuring the region's residents and visitors benefit from an increased historical and cultural connection to Country and sense of place.

Engagement, knowledge sharing and partnership with Aboriginal communities contributes to effective relationships between local Aboriginal knowledge holders, Local Aboriginal Land Councils, State agencies and councils. The economic potential of Aboriginal land holdings are realised through a better understanding of Aboriginal places, culture, and heritage.

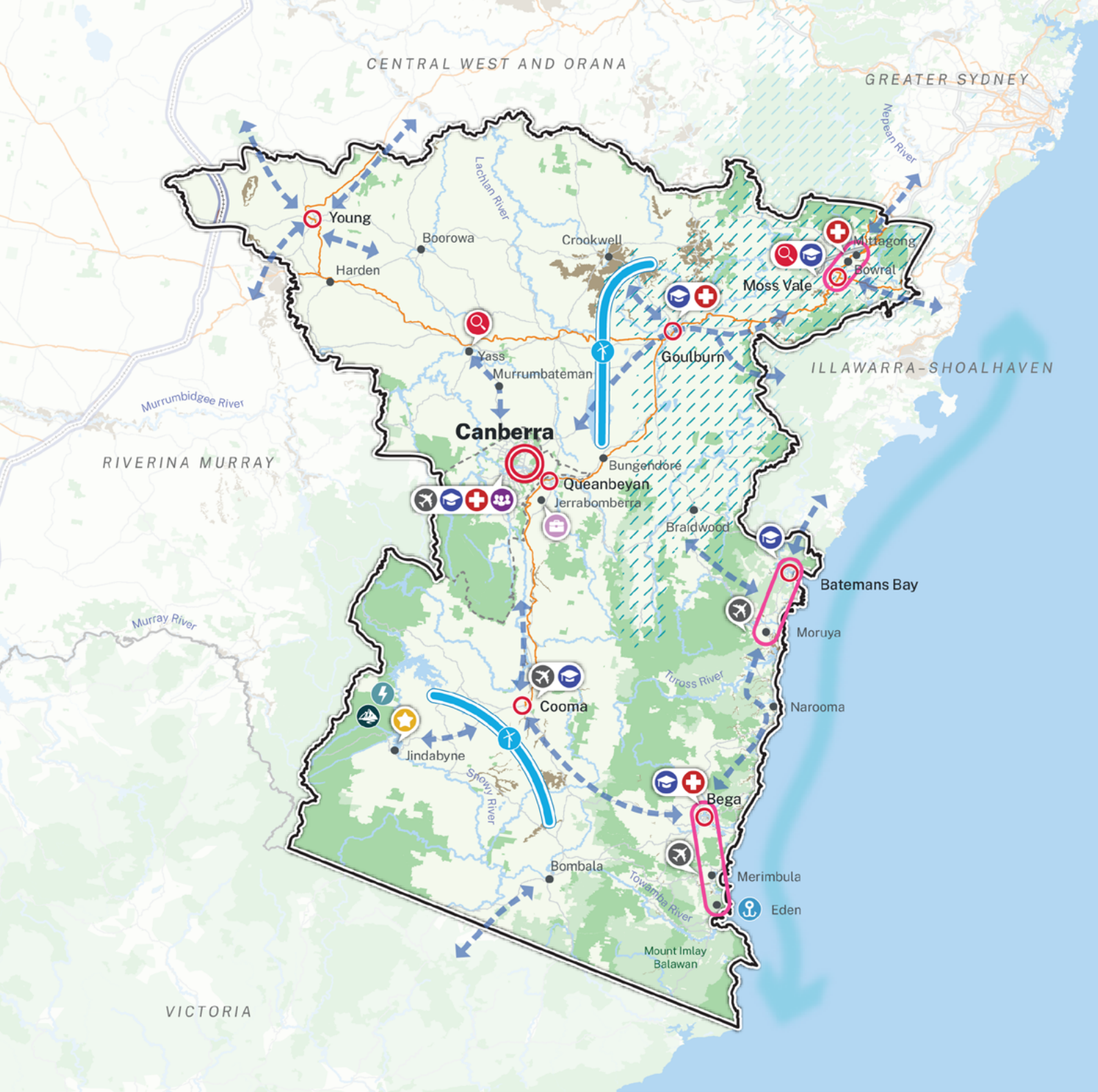


Figure 5: Snapshot of South East and Tablelands



- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Regional boundary | Under strategic investigation | Snowy Hydro | Strengthen connections |
| Australian Capital Territory boundary | Regional job precinct | Commonwealth public service | Blue highway |
| Metropolitan city | Regional airport | Potential renewable energy corridor | Sydney drinking water catchment |
| Strategic centre | Tertiary education | Railway | State significant agricultural land |
| Centre | Base and regional hospital | Inland rail alignment | National park and reserve |
| Strategic cluster | Port | Highway | State forest |
| Special Activation Precinct | Snowy Mountains | Road | Water body |

Plan on a page

Theme 1 Recognising Country, people, and place

- Objective 1:** Build capacity for shared knowledge about Aboriginal culture in land use planning
- Objective 2:** Strengthen Aboriginal self-determination
- Objective 3:** Support diverse, vibrant and socially active communities
- Objective 4:** Preserve the heritage and character of the region's towns and villages

Theme 2 Enhancing sustainable and resilient environments

- Objective 5:** Protect important environmental assets
- Objective 6:** Enhance biodiversity, habitats and the connections between them
- Objective 7:** Build resilient places and communities
- Objective 8:** Plan for a net zero region by 2050
- Objective 9:** Secure water resources
- Objective 10:** Manage the role and operation of extractive industries

Theme 3 Leveraging diverse economic identities

- Objective 11:** Realise economic benefits from a connected regional economy
- Objective 12:** Promote a year-round visitor economy
- Objective 13:** Promote innovation and sustainability in agriculture and aquaculture industries
- Objective 14:** Support the development of a circular economy
- Objective 15:** Promote business and employment opportunities in strategic locations
- Objective 16:** Support industries to integrate operations and digital solutions

Theme 4 Planning for fit for purpose housing and services

- Objective 17:** Plan for a supply of housing in appropriate locations
- Objective 18:** Plan for more affordable, low-cost and social housing
- Objective 19:** Improve the quality, resilience and sustainability of housing
- Objective 20:** Manage rural living
- Objective 21:** Provide efficient access to infrastructure and services

Theme 5 Supporting a connected and active region

- Objective 22:** Strengthen cross-border connectivity and infrastructure coordination
- Objective 23:** Enhance strategic transport links
- Objective 24:** Plan for walkable centres
- Objective 25:** Adapt infrastructure to meet future needs

PART

1

The region as a place





Hinterland, Tilba

PART

1

The region as a place

As a large region – approximately 5.67 million ha – the South East and Tablelands contains diverse urban, rural and natural landscapes and characteristics. It's because of this that planning for the region requires an understanding of the complexities that exist at a regional, subregional, and a local, centre-based level. The region comprises of several FERs, each of which pulls together the strengths and uniqueness of different local government areas. Through their respective Regional Economic Development Strategies, we can better understand how each local government area's key industries and local economies, contribute to the success of the region.

In undertaking strategic planning in accordance with this regional plan, we seek to apply a place-based approach to:

- meaningfully recognise Country as a basis for strategic planning
- identify the spatial elements and planning priorities in state and local strategic plans
- identify how strategic centres (and clusters) will grow according to the regional plan objectives
- frame how actions are implemented under the objectives
- inform other plans and programs, including local strategic planning statements, local plans and place strategies, to prioritise and coordinate the planning and provision of infrastructure and services.

Understanding Country

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Studies (2022) defines Country as “the term often used by Aboriginal peoples to describe the lands, waterways and seas to which they are connected. The term contains complex ideas about law, place, custom, language, spiritual belief, cultural practice, material sustenance, family and identity.”¹

Understanding Country means to understand the influence of culture as part of a community or an individual. It forms an identity, reinforcing the relationship people have with Country and its influence on the health and wellbeing of each.

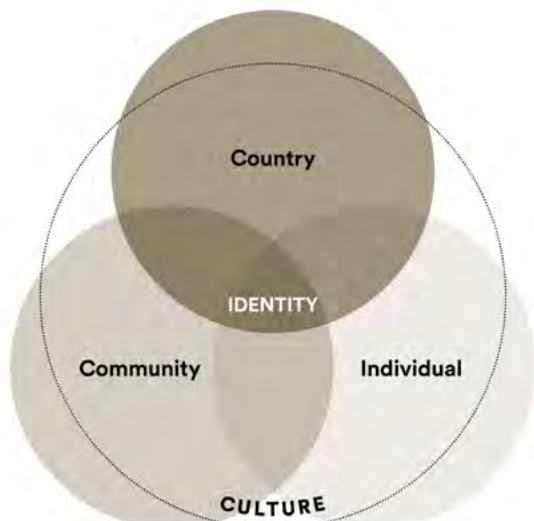
Country is living, constantly changing and always evolving. There are many different ecosystems across different realms of Country and include both living and non-living elements.¹

The draft *Connecting with Country* framework can inform the planning, design and delivery of built environment projects in NSW. The work is initially informed by the experiences and knowledges of Aboriginal people who work on, and are from Country, in and around the Sydney basin.

The ambition of *Connecting with Country* is that everyone who is involved in delivering government projects will adopt the commitment: to help support the health and wellbeing of Country by valuing, respecting, and being guided by Aboriginal people, who know that if we care for Country – it will care for us.⁸ We adopt this commitment in undertaking strategic planning in this region.

Understanding the region as a place is to acknowledge that the region comprises of many Aboriginal lands and includes a complex interrelationship between culture and identity. The region encompasses the lands of the Wiradjuri, Ngunnawal, Ngarigo, Tharawal, Gundungurra, Dharug, Yuin and Bidwell nations.

Figure 6: Interrelationships between Country, community and individuals



Queanbeyan Public Art Walk
Credit: Destination NSW

Local governments and their centres

We recognise that local strategic planning statements set the local priorities for each LGA, where formerly identified as local government narratives in the 2036 regional plan. This section provides an overview of the local government areas across the region, whilst considering their place as part of their FER.

Under this plan, we also consider strategic centres and clusters as significant locations requiring further investigation, tailored planning responses, activation and or specific infrastructure investments –as demonstrated through nominated priorities for success. The region’s strategic centres and clusters will be subject to more detailed strategies that integrate the draft *Connecting with Country Framework, Movement and Place Framework, Better Placed, Greener Places Framework* and *Public Spaces Charter*.

The Capital subregion

The NSW Government considers the LGAs of Goulburn Mulwaree, Yass Valley and Queanbeyan–Palerang, and parts of Upper Lachlan and Snowy Monaro LGAs to form part of the ‘capital’ sub region. Whilst distinct from one another, considerations of the cross border context, particularly from an infrastructure and service planning perspective needs to be a focus as the region grows.

Planning for this sub-region also needs to consider how these areas interact with the ACT, in particular its planning framework (the ACT Planning strategy).

The *ACT Planning Strategy* (2018) sets a strategic vision for planning in the ACT and provides the framework for a range of actions that will allow the city to respond to change locally, regionally and globally.⁷

The strategy acknowledges that continued coordination with the surrounding LGAs is an important aspect to support Canberra’s role as a Metropolitan City and to help promote a liveable and productive region. We will continue close working relationships with the ACT Government to align infrastructure and planning approaches across each jurisdiction.

The ACT Government is reviewing and reforming ACT’s planning system in a holistic way to deliver better outcomes for communities, development, the environment, and people across Canberra. The project includes a major review of the Territory Plan, and a refreshed Planning Strategy that will incorporate progress made on key Government priorities, such as achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions in the ACT by 2045, providing increased housing choice and affordability, and delivering improved and integrated public transport and active travel.



Queanbeyan, NSW
Credit: Destination NSW

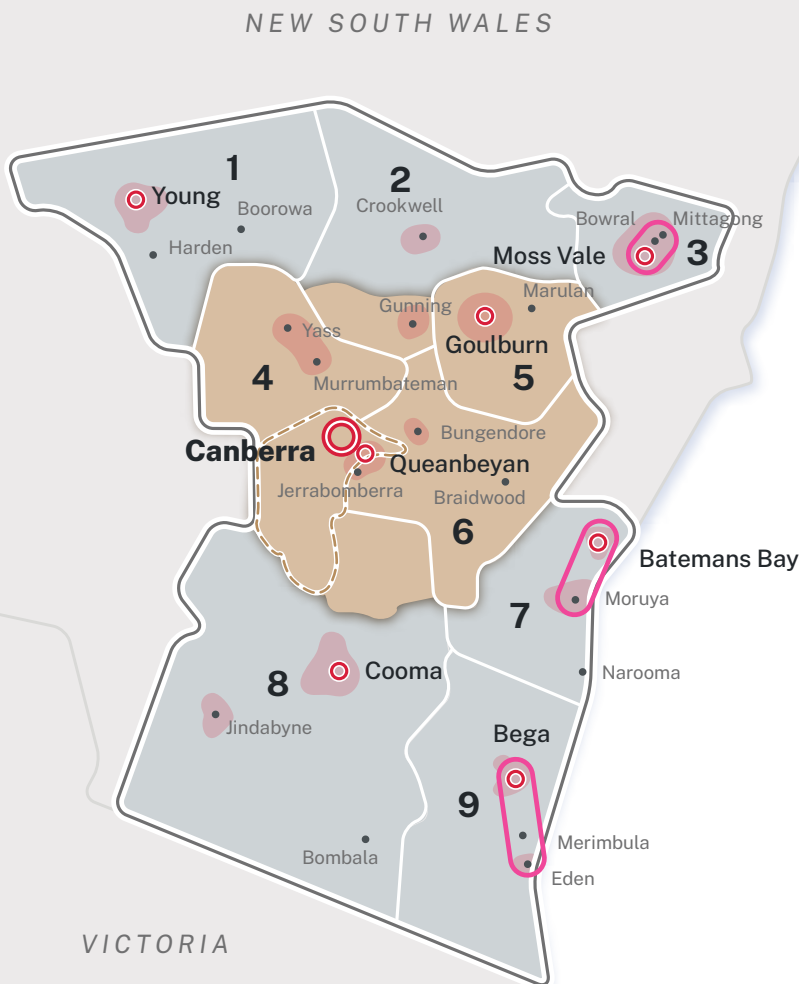


Figure 7: Growth investigations

- LGA
- 1 Hilltops
 - 2 Upper Lachlan Shire
 - 3 Wingecarribee
 - 4 Yass Valley
 - 5 Goulburn–Mulwaree
 - 6 Queanbeyan–Palering Regional
 - 7 Eurobodalla
 - 8 Snowy Monaro Regional
 - 9 Bega Valley
- Regional boundary
 - State boundary
 - Australian Capital Territory
 - LGA boundary
 - Capital subregion

Metropolitan city

The highest order centre in the region.

- **Area:** Canberra
- **Growth characteristics:** Refer to the ACT Planning Strategy 2018

Strategic centres

Well-serviced centres with opportunities for new housing and employment growth. Each strategic centre has unique characteristics, localised economies and communities that influence change and growth as a 'place'.

- **Areas:** Young, Goulburn, Queanbeyan, Cooma, Bega, Moss Vale, Batemans Bay
- **Growth Characteristics:** Health, heritage, Medium density housing, employment, mixed uses, education

Strategic cluster

Strategic clusters recognise that a strategic centre and its function and capacity for growth is inherently linked to the operation and evolution of one or more local centres. This may mean that the distribution of services, jobs and housing is interconnected between each centre and requires coordinated strategic planning and investment to manage change.

- **Areas:** Southern Highlands (Moss Vale, Bowral and Mittagong), Batemans Bay (Bateman's Bay and Moruya), and Bega (Bega, Merimbula and Eden).
- **Growth Characteristics:** Health, heritage, Medium density housing, employment, mixed uses, education

Local centres

Provides services such as shopping, dining, health and personal services to meet the daily and weekly needs of the local community. They are smaller than the metropolitan, regional, and strategic centres.

- **Areas:** Boorowa, Harden, Crookwell, Gunning, Murrumbateman, Bungendore, Marulan, Braidwood, Bombala, Jindabyne, Narooma, Eden, Merimbula
- **Growth Characteristics:** Low density housing, heritage, everyday goods and services

Strategic investigations

Strategic Investigations are areas identified in the regional plan which require greater focus and play a critical role in ensuring the region achieves its vision for 2041. These investigations may relate to housing and employment growth, environmental protection and opportunities to strengthen local services and amenities. The areas identified are often identified as a focus in the plans actions throughout Part 2.

Hilltops

Located on the traditional lands of the Wiradjuri and Ngunnawal nations, Hilltops LGA is a well-connected agricultural area. With strong road and rail connections into major regional and metropolitan centres, its strategic centre of Young is just one and a half hours from Canberra and under 4 hours from Sydney (car-based trip).

Hilltops' inclusion as part of the 'South West Slopes' FER, reinforces the importance of strong relationships with its neighbouring LGAs to the west-situated outside of the region. This means that priorities to support and grow agriculture and food production, as well as the visitor economy are to be considered in this context. Agriculture in particular is a core driver of the local economy and is Hilltops' biggest employer, contributing to \$338m towards the states Gross Value Production. Strategic planning is to consider how the region's network of roads, rail and airports can be leveraged to improve productivity and liveability for its residents and workforce.

Young – Strategic Centre

Young provides local retail, commercial, health and community services, generating approximately 43% of the total revenue of all businesses and organisations within the Hilltops LGA. It is increasingly welcoming growth in manufacturing, construction, transport and other associated services.

With strong economic and physical connections into the adjacent Riverina-Murray Region to the south west, and Central West and Orana Region to the north, Young sits on a key route for goods and services to and from the South East and Tablelands region.

Young's major road and rail linkages will continue to transport agricultural harvests from western NSW to international markets via Canberra Airport and the Port of Port Kembla, and local agricultural products for the fresh food markets of Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne.

Strategic freight corridors need to be identified, protected and funded, to support reduced end-to-end costs as part of a viable agricultural industry. This should also be considered in the context of Young's proximity to the inland rail corridor.

As a centre for the agricultural industry, planning for Young's growth as a strategic centre should consider the physical transition of retail, business and housing to surrounding rural land. This includes travel distances to higher order services such as health and regional recreational facilities, from housing on the edge of the centre.



Population

18,629

Expected to grow to
19,186 by 2041⁵

Priorities for Young

- Protect productive agricultural land and rural industries from incompatible land uses.
- Grow rural industries by enhancing farm-to-market opportunities, that leverage each town's strategic freight and transport infrastructure.
- Encourage business diversification, value add and growth agriculture and tourism.
- Plan for housing and employment alongside the supply of water and energy, including renewable energy sources, and upgrades to transport infrastructure.
- Protect and improve key strategic transport corridors, including the interface with the strategic centre.

Upper Lachlan

Located on the traditional lands of the Dharug, Ngunnawal, Gundungurra and Wiradjuri nations, Upper Lachlan LGA is characterised by its position on the Great Dividing Range, traversed by the Abercrombie, Wollondilly and Lachlan Rivers. Most people live in Crookwell and Gunning, however, villages like Collector, Taralga, Breadalbane, Bigga and Laggan are becoming popular for residents who can work remotely.

As part of the Southern Tablelands FER, agriculture is the primary employment and economic driver, contributing to 38% of total employment in the LGA and complements activities occurring in Goulburn–Mulwaree and Yass Valley LGAs. Relationships to industries in the south presents strong opportunities to leverage and grow transport, access and logistics based services across inter-regional networks through Canberra, Bathurst (via Hilltops), and Western Sydney (via Wingecarribee). When coupled with strong growth in the renewable energy sector, Upper Lachlan can provide a strong northern anchor to a diversified regional economy.

Crookwell and Gunning – Important local centres

Crookwell serves as the primary service centre of the LGA, divided into a mix of commercial, industrial and residential uses. The existing urban footprint contains land which can be redeveloped to support an increased commercial core, supported by health and education services. Reinforcing the heritage character of the centre, whilst promoting housing diversity and growth will continue to be a priority.

Gunning is identified under Council's LSPS as an area for growth and is located approximately 45 minutes from Canberra. The centre provides a sound southern anchor to the LGA and has the capacity to leverage its good existing transport connections to the road and rail network via an existing railway station and northbound and southbound interchanges on the Hume Highway.

Further investigations will be required to evaluate the centres hierarchy of the LGA, including the role and function of each centre in supporting their local communities.



Population

8,330

Expected to grow to
9,699 by 2041⁵

Priorities for Crookwell and Gunning

- Ensuring the growth in each centre does not undermine the viability, investment and role they provide for their immediate communities.
- Improve transport access to nearby strategic centres to expand the communities access to essential goods and services.
- Provide a strategic approach to planning for each areas growth, in line with a shared vision drawn from community engagement.

Wingecarribee

With excellent road and rail connections, Wingecarribee LGA is well positioned as both Western Sydney and the Illawarra Shoalhaven region grow. Situated on the traditional lands of the Gundungurra and Tharawal nations, Wingecarribee LGA is expected to grow by over 18,000 people by 2041.⁵ This requires planning for affordable and development ready land to enable growth to accommodate approximately 9,544 new homes.⁵

The LGA's network of towns and villages attract visitors to the area from surrounding regions. Acting as a specialised FER, investment in cultural assets and boutique offerings will continue to drive a strong visitor economy. The LGA's position relative to Greater Sydney and the Illawarra Shoalhaven region will reinforce its role as a gateway to inter-regional markets. Prioritisation of value added agriculture, and local manufacturing opportunities is needed to generate additional local jobs and draw in resources and logistical connections to Canberra and Sydney.

Moss Vale–Bowral–Mittagong - Southern Highlands Strategic Cluster

The 2036 regional plan recognised Moss Vale as a strategic centre; with the maturing of regional and local planning priorities, we see Wingecarribee LGA's 3 main towns of Mittagong, Bowral and Moss Vale as a cluster that will be pivotal to the area's future.

The towns' different, yet interrelated functions draw people and investment to the cluster. Its diverse economy is driven by the health, tourism, education, manufacturing, agriculture, construction and professional industry sectors. The proximity to Sydney, Canberra and Wollongong is a strong base for economic development, while the rural landscape, natural areas and numerous vibrant towns and villages, support the visitor economy.

Planning needs to aim to diversify the local economy, alongside efforts to improve housing choice and affordability so that current and aspiring residents live near employment and services. This includes planning for medium density housing around each centre and in the identified greenfield residential areas of Moss Vale. Planning should consider the 3 towns as distinct settlements, rather than a continuous urban form.



Population

52,320

Expected to grow to
70,969 by 2041⁵

Priorities for the strategic cluster

- Investigate funding for infrastructure, and utilities to unlock and fulfil the economic potential of the Southern Highlands Innovation Park.
- Investigate multi-modal transport solutions to improve connectivity within and between the town centres of the Southern Highlands strategic cluster.
- Investigate new greenfield and infill housing opportunities, including more diverse and affordable housing products near centres, while considering environmental and servicing aspects.
- Consider local character and heritage, environmental assets, natural hazards (including flooding and bushfire), and climate change, when planning for growth.
- Support upgrading of essential infrastructure, such as Sewage Treatment Plants, to accommodate current and expected future urban growth while protecting water quality.

Goulburn–Mulwaree

Situated on the lands of two major language groups - Gundungurra and Ngunnawal, Goulburn–Mulwaree is recognised as a significant place for several Aboriginal communities, as highlighted through its Aboriginal cultural heritage study. The area is desirable for new residents due to relative affordability of housing, agricultural character and easy access to the Sydney, Canberra, South Coast and the Snowy Mountains.

Forming part of the Southern Tablelands FER, there exist strong economic connections with Yass Valley and Upper Lachlan. Providing a diverse range of employment sectors, such as health care and social assistance, retail, trade, public administration and agriculture, the LGA will continue to provide a favourable option for growth as a strategic midpoint in the Sydney to Canberra corridor. Supporting resident and employment growth is to be coupled with liveability and leveraging investment and planning for health facilities, education and skills retention in agricultural practice.

Goulburn - Strategic Centre

Located on the Hume Highway between Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne, Goulburn is recognised as 'Australia's first inland city'.

Recent public investment has upgraded the Goulburn Base Hospital and funded a new performing arts facility, regional indoor sports and leisure centre, and more than 30km of walking and cycling infrastructure around residential and urban areas.

Goulburn strategic centre is forecast to cater for most of the LGAs population growth. With this, there exists opportunities to provide more diverse housing types, infill development and revitalisation of the centres public domain and heritage assets.

Goulburn's strategic location will provide for further intermodal opportunities that will capitalise on the proximity of the Goulburn, Western Sydney and Canberra Airports, the Hume and Federal Highways, as well as the Main Southern Railway Line. Improved connectivity through to the coast via an upgraded east-west route from Goulburn to Nowra will also add opportunities for freight, tourism, start-up businesses and industries throughout the region.

With demand for employment land, planned new employment land offers development potential. However, the relatively high cost of water and sewer servicing is seen as a financial disincentive to investment. Securing several large industries could trigger upgrades and stimulate investment.



Population

31,808

Expected to grow to
40,204 by 2041⁵

Priorities for Goulburn

- Secure funding for essential infrastructure and servicing to fulfil the economic potential of new residential and employment land in and around Goulburn.
- Support Council's efforts to realise a more diverse and affordable housing supply, consistent with Goulburn's heritage character.
- Reduce heavy vehicle movements in Goulburn and Marulan CBDs through Hume Highway access upgrades
- Encourage and incentivise emerging technologies, supply chain and manufacturing industries to relocate to Goulburn and its surrounds.
- Help to grow the arts, cultural and tourism sectors to bring activity to the strategic centre.

Queanbeyan–Palerang

Located on the land of the Ngambri, Ngarigu, Ngunnawal and Walbunja Aboriginal people, Queanbeyan–Palerang LGA is home to modern urban centres, historic towns and villages, productive rural landscapes, and high-quality natural environments.

With a specialised FER and its proximity to the ACT, employment in public administration, defence, transport, professional, scientific, and technical services, creates differences from other LGAs in the region. The strong influence of Canberra is to be leveraged in providing complementary economic activities and specialisations to provide jobs close to where people live, improve digital capabilities of the workforce and improve the economic and social offerings of town centres. Supporting future change requires close consideration of water security and the differing character of rural and suburban communities.

Queanbeyan - Strategic Centre

Queanbeyan and its surrounds comprise one of the most populated areas in regional NSW. Situated south-east of the ACT, with connections to the south coast and alpine areas, Queanbeyan is a 20-minute drive from Canberra's CBD and 10km from Canberra Airport.

Queanbeyan offers higher order health, education and employment opportunities. Despite this, many people travel to the ACT for these purposes, particularly for employment and tertiary education.

Queanbeyan is transforming into a modern and dynamic city that offers distinct and attractive experiences. Rejuvenation of the CBD will be underpinned by best practice placemaking and place management, with development controls developed to reduce future flood risk. Economic planning can guide investment to increase visitation, retail activity and the night-time economy.

Progressive development of the Googong and South Jerrabomberra urban release areas must not compromise the primacy of Queanbeyan, and in particular the Queanbeyan CBD, as the LGA's commercial, community and cultural hub.



Population

62,836

Expected to grow to
83,550 by 2041⁵

Priorities for Queanbeyan

- Work with the ACT Government to improve road and active transport connectivity and integrate public transport.
- Invest and introduce programs to support the ongoing revitalisation of the Queanbeyan CBD through a focus on a 24 hour economy.
- Monitor the supply of residential and employment lands.
- Balance the need for employment and rural lands with the demand for housing.

Yass Valley

Yass Valley LGA, the land of the Ngunnawal people, has a proud heritage, a modern food and wine scene, and a thriving arts culture. Its historic buildings, Burrinjuck Dam and cool climate wineries attract many visitors. Yass, Murrumbateman and the cross border development at Parkwood will continue to accommodate most growth to 2041. The availability of water and the need to avoid growth in high flood hazard areas will continue to influence the amount and location of additional urban development.

As part of the 'Southern Tablelands' FER, the area consists of predominantly productive rural lands and rural residential properties. Promoting agricultural infrastructure and improving transport connections will be critical in leveraging opportunities across the region. Similarly, most residents are likely to continue to travel to Canberra for higher order services, health and tertiary education. Providing alternative opportunities for essential services will be critical for how the community grows, which is contingent on resolving water security issues.

Yass - Under strategic (centre) investigation

Yass is strategically located off the Hume Highway and is a 45-minute drive from the northern suburbs of Canberra. Residents can access an established commercial core, hospital, medical and emergency services, primary and high schools, as well as a TAFE. Many people travel to the ACT for work, higher order services, health and tertiary education.

While proximity to the ACT could constrain Yass's commercial core and local service industry in the short term, the continued desire for housing and lifestyle opportunities outside the ACT could see Yass become a strategic centre in the long term. Consideration of the direction for Yass should also consider the role of Murrumbateman, and opportunities to enable residential and economic growth.

However, strategic planning to identify additional land for housing must resolve key constraints such as water security, and health and education infrastructure.



Population

17,442

Expected to grow to
20,684 by 2041⁵

Priorities for Yass

- Resolve key infrastructure and servicing constraints such as water security, quality and management
- Reinforce the hierarchy of settlements through new housing and employment growth where identified in local plans
- Ensure the diversification of industries and employment opportunities support the communities access to essential goods and services
- Maximise opportunities for tourism and cultural experiences, with new opportunities enhanced by walking and cycling connections

Bega Valley

Bega Valley LGA is located centrally between Sydney and Melbourne, and is less than 3 hours from Canberra (car based trip). The rich culture and heritage of the Yuin people is embedded in the area's landscapes, trees, hills and waterways of the Bega Valley Shire. Most residents live in a network of idyllic coastal and inland towns including Bega, Merimbula, Pambula, Bermagui, Tathra and Eden. Whilst the population is only projected to increase slightly, there is a need to cater for seasonal fluctuations and increase housing diversity as the population ages.

Forming part of the Far South Coast FER, health, manufacturing, retail, public administration, and education sectors drive economic growth, along with established infrastructure, including Merimbula Airport, the Port of Eden and South East Regional Hospital. Connections with neighbouring Eurobodalla LGA are critical to cater for a seasonal influx of visitors, which heavily influences the regional economy.

Bega-Merimbula-Eden – Bega Strategic Cluster

The 2036 regional plan identified Bega as the strategic centre for the Bega Valley LGA. However, nearby strategic assets in the local centres of Merimbula (Merimbula Airport) and Eden (Port of Eden), strategically reinforce the three centres as a cluster to strengthen the economic productivity of the far south coast.

Bega, as the strategic centre, services its surrounds to provide health, education, government, retail, industrial and other important services to the community. Being home to the South East Regional Hospital, the University of Wollongong and Bega TAFE, the centre offers a competitive advantage for research and innovation in existing agricultural and manufacturing industries.

As a cluster, connections between the three centres support the broader region's rich agricultural and aquaculture industries, and vibrant tourism industry. This includes the popular tourist route from Sydney to Melbourne via the scenic south coast and Princes Highway.

Strengthening the connections between each centre and across the region will continue to grow and attract new residents and tourist numbers. This is supported by continued investment by the NSW Government in areas such as the Port of Eden, which serves as a multi-purpose port for import and exports and a destination for cruise passengers.

A relative patchwork of developed and undeveloped industrial land may encourage ongoing economic development, so long as land constraints, potential land use conflict, and land tenure are resolved.



Population

34,730

Expected to grow to
36,223 by 2041⁵

Priorities for the strategic cluster

- Understanding the constraints and availability of developable residential and employment lands.
- Investigating opportunities for the re-purpose of NSW Government and Council owned land assets.
- Supporting the Bega Valley Innovation Hub to continue to deliver sustainable, innovative business towards a circular economy.
- Identifying and implementing strategies to activate and support the viability of key infrastructure such as the Port of Eden and Merimbula Airport.
- Addressing the availability of visitor accommodation and rental housing.
- Ensuring the cluster and its strategic transport connections are resilient to climate change, including bush fires, coastal hazards and flooding.

Eurobodalla

With a rich Aboriginal history on the traditional lands of the Yuin nation, Eurobodalla is known for its rugged rocky headlands, beaches, and rivers. Its population is clustered across a series of coastal and inland towns, focused on Bateman's Bay, Moruya and Narooma.

While traditional fishing, dairy and forestry sectors remain, the economy is now driven by tourism, retail, property, health services, aquaculture and an emerging niche agriculture sector. Its relationship with Bega Valley as a FER, highlight the need to grow the region's tourism sector and overall lifestyle appeal as proximity to Sydney and Canberra places the LGA within reach of visitors, particularly during the busy summer holiday period. However, improving the reliability of infrastructure and telecommunications, and providing accommodation for seasonal workforces remain a priority.

Batemans Bay Strategic Cluster

The 2036 regional plan identified Batemans Bay as a strategic centre; however, investment in nearby Moruya requires strategic thinking about how each centre interacts. Batemans Bay remains the commercial, retail, tourist and service centre within Eurobodalla, but investment in the new \$260m Eurobodalla Regional Hospital, and a \$15m emergency management centre in Moruya will influence growth on the coast. Further, the future Moruya Bypass will reduce CBD traffic and bring opportunities for redevelopment.

We now consider the 2 centres as a strategic cluster that includes a 25km corridor, incorporating the tourist destination of Mogo and the North Moruya Industrial Area. This cluster provides a mix of service and economic activity to support residential and tourist towns.

While Moruya offers significant greenfield development potential alongside access to the future bypass and the new Eurobodalla Regional Hospital, any growth potential needs to be considered alongside environmental assets, exposure to coastal and flood hazards, and the viability of Batemans Bay.

Batemans Bay has a limited supply of future commercial and industrial land. The focus on higher density and infill housing opportunities will continue, particularly around the CBD. However, infrastructure upgrades are required.



Population

39,179

Expected to grow to **45,402** by 2041⁵

Priorities for the strategic cluster

- Collaborate with Council to plan for and capitalise on future land use opportunities.
- Investigate opportunities to re-purpose of NSW Government and Council owned assets.
- Investigate opportunities for employment and residential land around Batemans Bay to cater for new and innovative business.
- Invest in regionally significant public open space and urban environments, such as the Bateman's Bay waterfront.
- Invest and introduce programs to improve public amenity in each CBD, with a focus on a 24 hour economy.

Snowy Monaro

Home to the Ngarigo people, the Snowy Monaro LGA contains diverse environmentally significant lands, nestled between the Snowy Mountains and Victorian border to the south, the southern coastal LGAs of NSW to the east and the ACT to the north. The network of centres and towns, including Cooma, Jindabyne, Berridale and Bombala, offer a range of unique lifestyle opportunities.

As part of its own FER, the tourism and hospitality sectors are key to the regional economy, particularly through Jindabyne and the Kosciuszko National Park. A diversifying agriculture sector and ongoing investment in the Snowy 2.0 project will continue to support a vibrant community. The collection of industries requires coordinated planning to improve options for seasonal changes in housing and employment, and road infrastructure between the LGA and its neighbours – including to Snowy Valleys LGA to the west, as well as to the Port of Eden and Canberra Airport.

Cooma Strategic Centre

Cooma Strategic Centre is the gateway to the Snowy Mountains and provides the business, retail and essential services that support an all-year round visitor economy, productive agricultural land and energy generating activities for the Snowy Mountains region.

On Cooma's doorstep, the expansion of the Snowy Mountains Hydro Electric Scheme is driving demand for industrial land. However, topography and land ownership challenge the development of large floor plate retail facilities.

Planning and investment in and around Jindabyne as part of the Snowy Mountains SAP, will benefit Cooma and grow Jindabyne as a residential and tourist hub. This will increase demand for residential, business and health services, skills training and other support sectors in Cooma.

Upgrades to Cooma Hospital, Monaro high school and the planned investment in the Cooma Sports Hub will build on existing social services.

As the regional economy grows, particularly from a tourism perspective, Cooma will need to strategically adapt to ensure land uses and transport networks reinforce connections to the coastal southern strategic centres and Canberra. Providing incentives to invest in and revitalise Cooma will enable its transformation as a hub for domestic and international visitors.



Population

21,035

Expected to grow to **23,845** by 2041⁵

Priorities for Cooma

- Plan for additional employment lands to support economic development such as industrial land and investigation areas in Polo Flat.
- Stimulate the rate of development, diversity and availability of housing and temporary accommodation within Cooma and surrounding villages.
- Analyse and capitalise on the Snowy Hydro 2.0 project and Snowy Mountains SAP to grow an all-year tourism destination.
- Strengthen transport networks within and between key destinations, including Canberra Airport, and strategic centres.

PART

2

Achieving the vision





Queanbeyan River, Queanbeyan. Credit: Destination NSW

PART

2

Achieving the vision

The regional plan integrates the key elements of place and the aspirations of stakeholders around key themes, to assist with the classification of core focus areas such as sustainability, economics or placemaking. We have drawn these themes from the vision to 2041, informed by stakeholder engagement, a review of the 2036 regional plan, and the key local and state policies.

The themes are:

- Recognising Country, people and place
- Enhancing sustainable and resilient environments
- Leveraging diverse economic identities
- Planning for fit for purpose housing and services
- Supporting a connected and active region.

Each theme contains objectives, strategies and actions drawing from the spatial and place elements as defined in Part 1.

Recognising Country, people, and place

Potential indicator(s):

- Increased opportunities for involvement of Aboriginal people, communities and organisations in strategic land use planning and decision making
- Improved assessment timeframes in processing land claims.

Objective 1

Build capacity for shared knowledge about Aboriginal culture in land use planning

Objective 2

Strengthen Aboriginal self-determination

Objective 3

Support diverse, vibrant and socially active communities

Objective 4

Preserve the heritage and character of the region's towns and villages

OBJECTIVE 1:

Build capacity for shared knowledge about Aboriginal culture in land use planning

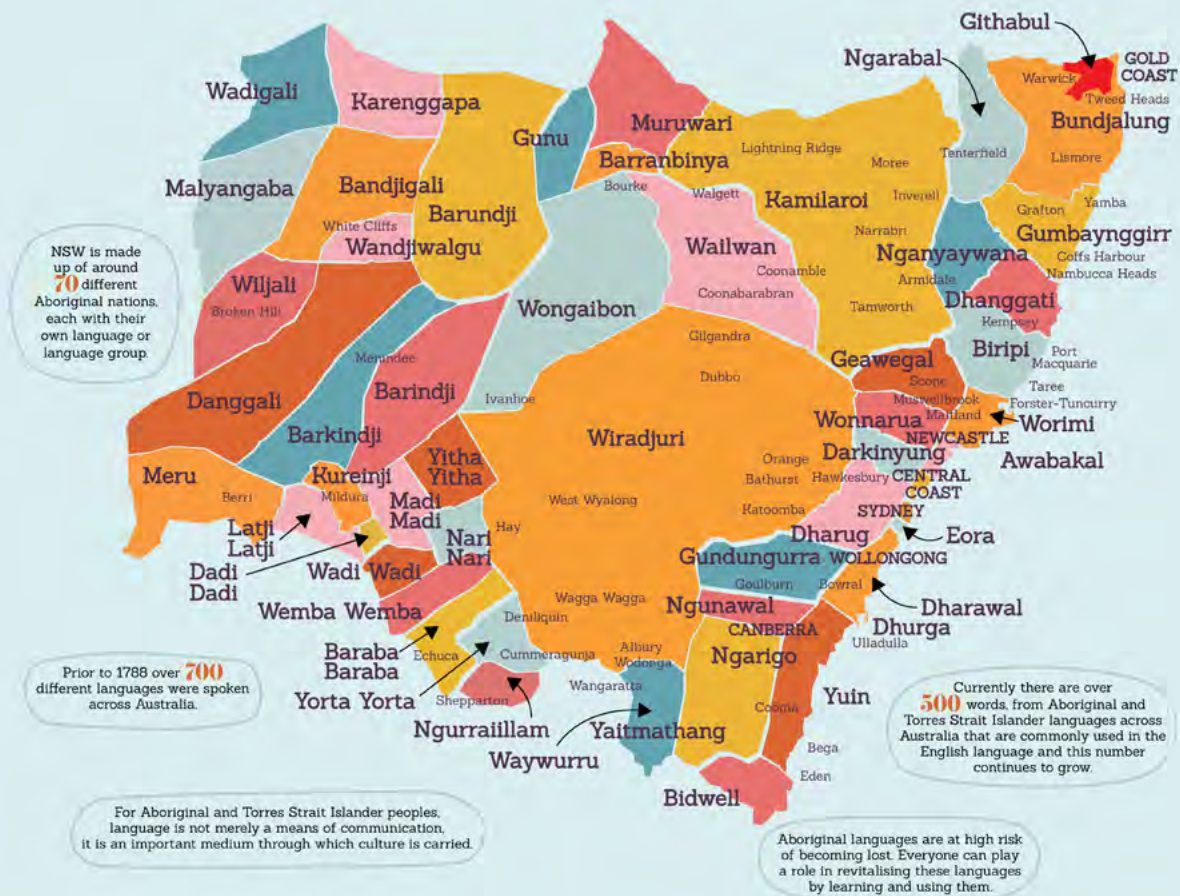


Figure 8: Aboriginal Nations/Languages in NSW & ACT⁹ (Source: Reconciliation NSW, 2022)

Relationships between Aboriginal culture and land use planning practice are growing. Regional planning provides a unique opportunity to explore at a foundational strategic level, how land use planning can look to set the overarching approach to make meaningful impact in the way decisions are made about land.

Starting with Country

Elders and other traditional knowledge holders possess information about Country that can potentially inform land use planning in the context of sensitively working in partnership with Aboriginal people.

Ongoing and targeted engagement with the whole Aboriginal community will enable the capacity

for shared knowledge about Aboriginal culture in strategic planning. This includes engaging with elders, traditional custodians, Local Aboriginal Land Councils, prescribed body corporates (PBC) and other local knowledge holders. The appropriate people must represent and speak for Country in land use planning, through relationships built on trust and commitment throughout project life cycles.

Country has many meanings for the different lands. Identifying the key narratives highlights the ways to protect the significance of Country and will help conserve sensitive sites, as well as give Aboriginal people access to their homelands to continue their cultural practices.

Working in partnership with Aboriginal people

Working in partnership with Aboriginal people through a process of co-design in early stages of projects and strategies, will help to build trusting relationships, facilitate the exchange of knowledge and information, and better enable Aboriginal people to achieve their aspirations for their land.

It is important for those engaging with Aboriginal people to be aware of and apply appropriate cultural protocols. Guidance such as the *Aboriginal Affairs NSW Aboriginal Cultural and Intellectual Property Protocol* provide a starting point for building open, respectful and meaningful relationships.

We have started working with Local Aboriginal Land Councils across NSW to provide information about the planning system and how it affects land owned by land councils. This process will help land councils to achieve their aspirations for their land.

It is acknowledged that Aboriginal organisations, such as Local Aboriginal Land Councils and registered

Aboriginal organisations may not and at different times have the resources to participate actively in strategic planning.

Depending on the aspirations and preferences of Aboriginal communities and organisations in particular locations, the department can bring together state agencies and councils to collaborate with Aboriginal people to achieve better land use outcomes. This could include Community Land and Business Plans, which describe the aims of a Local Aboriginal Land Council and strategies to achieve those aims.

The relationships between Aboriginal communities and councils enable the aspirations of Aboriginal people for their land and facilitate informed decision-making. Memorandums of Understanding are one mechanism for helping to establish these partnerships. For example, Bega Valley Shire Council has a memorandum of understanding with the Eden, Bega and Merrimans Local Aboriginal Land Councils to shape how Council works with Aboriginal communities.

Ngaran Ngaran Culture Awareness, Narooma
Credit: Destination NSW



Camel Rock, Bermagui



Supporting initiatives:



Work with Local Aboriginal Land Councils, local Aboriginal knowledge holders, PBCs and councils to better reflect their aspirations by:

- involving Local Aboriginal Land Councils, PBCs and knowledge holders in strategic planning
- supporting and partnering with Aboriginal communities to identify opportunities to activate land, including through biodiversity offsets
- identifying where land returned to Local Aboriginal Land Councils has suboptimal planning controls and facilitating amendment
- supporting a better understanding of the planning system
- promoting opportunities for cultural awareness training for all involved in planning
- incorporating Aboriginal knowledge into planning considerations and decisions.

Initiate Memorandums of Understanding between the NSW Government, local councils, Local Aboriginal Land Councils and other registered Aboriginal organisations to promote greater collaboration on local and regional matters.

Strategy 1.1



Demonstrate greater engagement with identified Aboriginal knowledge holders in state and local strategic plans, including community participation plans and through formalised agreements.

Strategy 1.2



Identify, conserve and enhance Aboriginal cultural heritage values through strategic planning and local plans as informed by collaboration with traditional knowledge holders and the community.

Strategy 1.3



Strategic planning and local plans which involve the preparation of advice and direction from Aboriginal communities are to demonstrate how local knowledge holders have been appropriately involved in their preparation and the development of recommendations.

Action 1



Establish cultural narratives for the region that identify and recognise key Aboriginal stakeholders and provide the key features, themes and significance of Country to Aboriginal communities.

Action 2



Identify potential barriers, bespoke processes, and opportunities to improve ongoing engagement and collaboration with Aboriginal communities in strategic land use planning.

OBJECTIVE 2:

Strengthen Aboriginal self-determination



Kosciuszko National Park, Snowy Mountains.
Credit: Ben Coope

Local Decision Making is an initiative of OCHRE¹⁰ (Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility, Empowerment), the NSW Government's policy framework for working with Aboriginal communities. It represents a commitment to work in genuine partnership with Aboriginal people to support strong communities through education, economic development and culture.

Local decision making is underpinned by the principle of self-determination and aims to ensure that Aboriginal communities have a genuine voice in determining what and how services are delivered to their communities. Aboriginal regional alliances negotiate on behalf of Aboriginal communities with the NSW Government about the design and delivery of services to their communities.

Where a regional alliance operates within a planning region, it is recognised as a key stakeholder to land use planning. The Illawarra Wingecarribee Aboriginal Alliance Corporation partly exists within the South East and Tablelands Region.

We will continue to work with the NSW Aboriginal Land Council as a peak representative body for

Aboriginal land rights, including work to reduce inappropriate land use zoning applying to land owned by Local Aboriginal Land Councils.

Aboriginal land claim processes

In addition to native title rights, the system of Aboriginal land rights in NSW is defined in the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983*.

The long title of the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983* states, "It is accepted that as a result of past Government decisions the amount of land set aside for Aboriginal persons has been progressively reduced without compensation..."

The *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983* established the network of Local Aboriginal Land Councils and empowered them to claim, acquire and utilise land as an economic base for Aboriginal communities in NSW.

Successfully claiming the ownership of land is an essential precursor to land councils making use

of the planning system. Engagement in this process is limited to Local Aboriginal Land Councils and opportunities exist to better support how traditional custodians, elders, PBCs and local Aboriginal knowledge holders interact and make use of the planning system and its associated frameworks.

Sharing information about planning constraints and opportunities that affect land (whether it is under claim or owned by Local Aboriginal Land Councils or by Aboriginal community groups and registered Aboriginal organisations), will enable better decision-making. This can contribute to Closing the Gap target 15 – that by 2030, there is a 15% increase in Australia’s landmass subject to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders’ legal rights or interests¹¹.

Similarly, there are improvements to the Aboriginal land claims process that can be explored to realise social, environmental and economic outcomes for Aboriginal people – particularly at the point in time where land is transferred to Local Aboriginal Land Councils. This may include reviewing the appropriateness of the planning controls which apply to land as part of this process and may be completed by activating the Development Delivery Plan pathway, set under the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Planning Systems) 2021* (Planning Systems SEPP) – see next section.

We will continue to work with Crown Lands to improve the Aboriginal land claims process.

Work will also continue to better align the planning system, and approaches to biodiversity conservation (including water and landscape management), to enable better land use outcomes for Aboriginal people. This includes through applying dual-naming to places in NSW, to give prominence to Aboriginal place names alongside non-Aboriginal names. This helps to recognise the significance of Aboriginal culture, and contributes to the process of reconciliation.

Development opportunities for Aboriginal owned land

Chapter 3 ‘Aboriginal Land’, under the Planning Systems SEPP, is part of a refreshed set of planning measures that respond to the long-recognised disconnect between the Aboriginal land rights system and the NSW Planning system. Chapter 3 opens up alternative planning pathways that could advance the development of their land and ensure ongoing protection of Country.

Ongoing work with various land councils has included assistance with the preparation of development delivery plans that allow for the independent review of planning (rezoning) proposals for identified Aboriginal land. We will continue to monitor the new planning measures and continue to work with land councils on development delivery plans.

It is acknowledged that this pathway is limited to land owned by Local Aboriginal Land Councils, which establishes barriers for registered Aboriginal corporations that sit alongside Land Councils. The department will continue to investigate how this process can be better utilised or expanded to include other registered Aboriginal corporations or groups.

Information about the planning system will continue to be provided to Aboriginal communities, organisations and Land Councils through the development of planning analysis reports and training sessions. We will also look to make it easier to find updated information about land on the NSW Planning Portal.

Supporting initiatives:



- Apply dual-naming of places to promote and acknowledge Aboriginal place names.
- Increase the availability and simplicity of planning information to inform decision making about Aboriginal land claims and in undertaking strategic planning.

Strategy 2.1



Prioritise the processing of unresolved Aboriginal land claims on Crown land.

Strategy 2.2



Demonstrate alignment with, and where possible, expand the application of Chapter 3 of the Planning Systems SEPP.

Action 3



Work with the Department of Premier and Cabinet and Crown Lands to develop a coordinated interagency program for land claim processes, including the completion of development delivery plans as part of the land claim process.

OBJECTIVE 3:**Support diverse, vibrant and socially active communities**

Local market, Goulburn

A sense of belonging and shared values can lift and unite people in challenging times, as we have seen during the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters.

Meeting and gathering places, pedestrian prioritised streets, events, festivals and cultural infrastructure all enable a sense of belonging as driven by placemaking. These environments are driven by a high quality public domain that promote social gathering and engagement.

The NSW planning system can be utilised to respond to community needs by enabling appropriate land uses and ensuring flexibility that allows for adaptation, re-use and creativity.

Arts and culture

The region is home to an array of arts events and cultural drawcards. Many celebrate the role of agriculture, including the annual National Cherry Festival in Young, which was reinvented in 2021 in response to COVID-19 limitations with street

performers, buskers and buildings lit up in vibrant colours. This is testament to the high regard of the arts and special events. Other natural and agricultural focused festivals include the Boorowa Irish Woolfest, Boorowa Running of the Sheep, Tulip Time Bowral, Goulburn Lilac Festival, Yass Wine Fest, Narooma Oyster Festival and Robertson Potato Festival.

Arts and cultural infrastructure include Queanbeyan and Goulburn Performing Arts Centres, Bay Pavilions, Bradman Museum of Cricket, Basil Sellars Exhibition Centre, Eden Killer Whale Museum, theatre societies, galleries such as Ngununggula Southern Highlands Regional Gallery and South East Centre for Contemporary Art (Bega), Apma Creations Aboriginal Art Gallery in Central Tilba, as well as small artist run spaces in Cobargo, and volunteer managed schools of arts. Other festivals include Gunning Arts, Crookwell Irish Heritage, Australian Blues Music Goulburn, Southern Highlands Writers Festival and Brigadoon at Bundanoon.

Different land uses, enhancements to public spaces and temporary events can support arts and culture industries – this includes new development, which can be designed to be adapted for arts and cultural uses by equipping them with access to electricity, temporary water or public toilets and flexible layouts to enable the temporary use of spaces.

Diversified infrastructure and services

Understanding how communities utilise and interact with social infrastructure is essential to manage growth and change. Several forms of infrastructure and services that are widely recognised to support communities:

- playgrounds, libraries, heritage, information and education facilities
- busy shopfronts, street verges and community gardens
- farmers markets and local produce centres
- creative arts centres, theatres, live music and co-working spaces
- childcare, healthcare and educational facilities
- bushcare groups, outdoor gyms, sportsgrounds, aquatic centres, or community spaces.

These generate more social opportunities when they can be adapted for different uses, accessed by all community members, multipurpose and co-located with complementary services. Further opportunities exist where clustering of uses and facilities can be leveraged as a precinct.

Promoting investment in a high quality public domain and placemaking initiatives such as wayfinding and public art, pedestrianising streets to support temporary events, and planting native vegetation based on the Country you are on, can improve the utilisation of community infrastructure and add to a sense of place. Initiatives across Eurobodalla LGA such as the use of Dhurga language in wayfinding and signage and the installation of Aboriginal art is progressively building a greater meaning and understanding of place through a connection to Country.

Infrastructure and services may be lacking in different parts of the region. Building upon the analysis and priorities of Create NSW's *Cultural Infrastructure Plan 2025*, and by working with communities, councils and the NSW government can identify gaps in the network and assess how best to expand or build new facilities.

Exploring opportunities for public grant funding can support community or social infrastructure.

Supporting initiatives:

- Conduct a gap analysis of regionally significant community and cultural infrastructure and identify potential solutions and funding sources.



Strategy 3.1



Strategic planning and local plans to consider opportunities to incentivise and encourage development of arts, culture and entertainment institutions, by:

- promoting creative and artistic expression and participation with a minimum regulatory burden
- diversifying land uses, or activating of underutilised facilities
- enabling the adaptability of new development, heritage buildings and temporary use of vacant buildings for performance and creative work
- enhancing and protecting creative work and performance spaces, and related facilities
- providing initiatives to support the night-time economy
- improve the quality of the public domain for walking and cycling and increase access to public transport in strategic and local centres
- increasing street art that enhances urban areas and contributes to the attractiveness of neighbourhoods



Studio Altenberg, Braidwood
Credit: Destination NSW

OBJECTIVE 4:

Preserve the heritage and character of the region's towns and villages



Public Art Walk, Goulburn
Credit: Goulburn Mulwaree Council

The region's scenic and cultural landscapes provide unique settings for its urban areas and a strong link to its natural and historic landscapes.

Providing opportunities to conserve, interpret and acknowledge the region's heritage values, will build an understanding of history and respect for the experiences of diverse communities. Heritage identification, conservation, management and interpretation can allow heritage places and stories to be experienced by current and future generations.

Recognising non-Aboriginal heritage must be balanced with the Aboriginal cultural significance of areas – particularly where the celebration of non-Aboriginal heritage has adversely impacted connections to Country, celebration of culture, or represents trauma. Recognising and acknowledging this is an important part in moving towards reconciliation.

Heritage interpretation

The South East and Tablelands region is entrenched in heritage and cultural value, with Aboriginal people being part of the region for more than more than 60,000 years¹².

Known areas of heritage significance in the region include Lake George sand deposits; cultural landscapes between Gulaga and Biamanga

National Parks; and remnant vegetation within roadside corridors and Travelling Stock Reserves in Hilltops LGA. There are 157 identified heritage items listed on the NSW State Heritage Register¹³. There are, and are likely to be, many other cultural landscapes within the region and all upfront strategic planning and heritage studies need to consider this.

Recognition of the intangible (stories, ceremonies and events) elements of heritage and culture as it overlaps with tangible (landscapes, buildings archaeology and artefacts) heritage items can improve the understanding of the significance and value of the region's places. For example, Songlines represent important connections that link significant Aboriginal places together and highlight the connections of Aboriginal people with Country. This is highlighted through deep cultural connections to the Murrumbidgee River, which acted as a Songline for the Ngunnawal people informing ceremony, language, song, dance and art.

Councils such as Eurobodalla Shire Council have also commenced work to enable a greater demonstration of heritage interpretation. This is highlighted by the *Bateman's Bay Waterfront and Observation Point Interpretation Plan (2021)*.

Heritage is not always static, for example, the Bundian Way route between Eden and Mount Kosciuszko, which represents Aboriginal and

non-Aboriginal history. It provided safe passage between the coast and high country for Aboriginal people from Yuin, Ngarigo, Jaitmathang and Bidwell Country gathering at Turemulerrer (Twofold Bay) for spring whale migration and ceremonial places near Targangal (Mount Kosciuszko) for summer Bogong gatherings. Colonial surveyors and settlers were guided by Aboriginal people along the route and travelling stockmen went on to use the Bundian Way.

Understanding the story, significance and community values of heritage early in the planning process provides the greatest opportunity for conservation, management and activation that will address cumulative impacts on heritage.

Heritage protection

First adopted in 1979, the *Burra Charter* establishes a process to understand place and the cultural significance of heritage features¹⁴. State and local strategies related to heritage protection and conservation should draw guidance from this process and policy.

The *Heritage Act 1977*, *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* and LEPs provide a statutory framework to protect identified heritage items, areas and archaeological sites. In 2021, the NSW Government and the Legislative Assembly's Social Issues Standing Committee commenced a review of the *Heritage Act 1977*. As this occurs, opportunities to provide greater levels of protection, management and celebration of Aboriginal cultural heritage in the region, should be considered in the context and timing of Aboriginal cultural heritage legislation.

Local character

The entire town of Braidwood and its setting is of state heritage significance and was the first town to be listed in the NSW State Heritage Register. Heritage items and conservation areas such as Braidwood, provide local 'branding' for businesses and communities, and establish opportunities for a vibrant social life and storey telling.

Many town and village communities take pride in their heritage character and many are destinations for visitors due to their rural setting, high amenity and heritage buildings and places. Rural communities can maintain their rich heritage, while developing their accommodation and service capacities.

Activating strategic and local centres requires suitable built form controls and adaptive re-use opportunities for heritage items. Similarly, enhancing main streets through heritage conservation under the guide of the *Burra Charter* creates authenticity, attracts new businesses and residents, and offers tourism potential, all of which contribute to greater resilience within smaller communities.

Supporting initiatives:



- Provide greater opportunity for interpretation and activation of state and local heritage items to improve community awareness, knowledge and appreciation of the region's history.
- Consider appropriate information management; protection approaches and cultural heritage interpretation projects as part of the ACT/NSW Government Memorandum of Understanding.
- Development of masterplans for heritage items, where supported by Conservation Management Plans and that support the ongoing interpretation of cultural heritage.

Strategy 4.1



Strategic planning and local plans are to provide opportunities to protect, acknowledge, celebrate and enhance Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural heritage values by:

- engaging local Aboriginal knowledge holders and the community early in the planning process to understand heritage values
- undertaking heritage studies early to inform conservation and value add opportunities
- adaptively re-using heritage items and interpretation to create distinctive local places
- managing and monitoring the cumulative impact of development on the heritage values and character of places, including the rural landscape and character separating the region's towns and villages
- responding to new Aboriginal cultural heritage legislation and the review of the *Heritage Act 1977*

Action 4



Work with councils, Heritage NSW and local Aboriginal communities to undertake and implement heritage studies, including Aboriginal cultural heritage studies to inform local land use strategies.

Enhancing sustainable and resilient environments

Potential Indicators:

- Protect and retain habitat and control key threats to reduce the potential for further decline of threatened, endangered and critically endangered species and ecological communities
- Maintain or improve regional resilience measures identified by the *Blueprint for a Resilient South East NSW*
- Approval and construction of new renewable energy developments across the region
- Demonstrated community and council engagement and knowledge of circular economy practices.

Objective 5

Protect important environmental assets

Objective 6

Enhance biodiversity, habitats and the connections between them

Objective 7

Build resilient places and communities

Objective 8

Plan for a net zero region by 2050

Objective 9

Secure water resources

Objective 10

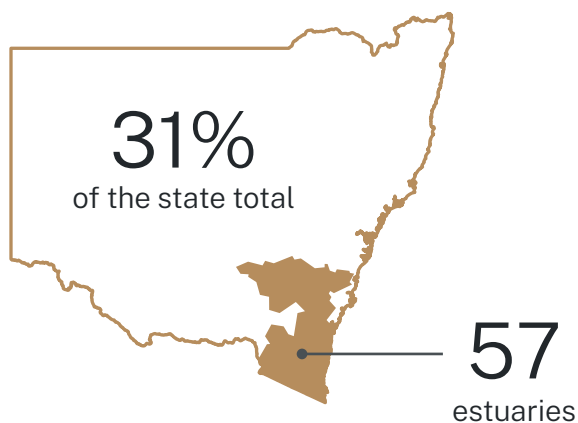
Manage the role and operation of extractive industries

OBJECTIVE 5:

Protect important environmental assets

The South East and Tablelands Region includes a variety of landscapes from the Snowy Mountains, the only wilderness coastline in NSW, rural landscapes and national parks. Home to 150 threatened plant species, 144 threatened animal species, 40 endangered ecological communities, and 14 critically endangered ecological communities, the region's planning needs to closely manage and protect the variety and layers of an interconnected ecological system.

Estuaries



Due to historical land clearing and ongoing land management activities post-colonisation, there is a relatively low proportion of native vegetation in parts of the Hilltops and Upper Lachlan LGAs, as well as in the Capital subregion. Active investment by Saving Our Species, Local Land Services, Landcare and local landholders are addressing this issue, but it will take many decades and considerable funding to increase the extent and condition of environmental assets.

The retention and careful management of native vegetation, in particular, those along roads and other movement corridors can act as a critical and cost effective action in protecting habitat for threatened, endangered and critically endangered species.

High environmental value lands

High environmental value (HEV) lands and the region's network of biodiversity corridors (Figure 9), provide diversity and habitat for flora and fauna, including significant koala populations in the Wingecarribee and Snowy Monaro LGAs. To support mapping of HEV lands, additional mapping on High Ecological Aquatic Ecosystems can be found on the SEED portal.

Avoiding the impacts on important terrestrial and aquatic habitats and on water quality is a necessary part of planning for the intensification of land uses through urban development and other activities.

Criteria for mapping HEV lands

HEV mapping aims to provide a regional scale overview for use in strategic planning and requires validation for application at the local site-specific level.

Lands mapped with potential high environmental value are identified in the Environmental Values map (Figure 9) and include, but are not limited to:

- existing conservation areas such as national parks and reserves, declared wilderness areas, marine estates, Crown reserves dedicated for environmental protection and conservation, and flora reserves.
- threatened ecological communities and key habitats, and important vegetation areas.
- important wetlands, coastal lakes and estuaries.
- sites of geological significance.

Up to date mapping and validation rules for identification of high environmental value lands can be found at www.seed.nsw.gov.au, or by contacting the department's Biodiversity Conservation Division.

56%
of the total regions
land mass is high
environmental
value

3 million
hectares are high
environmental
value (national
park and forest)

10,600km²
of National Park

3,600km²
wilderness area

Protecting the health of the region's water sources, waterways and coast

The region includes important ecosystems such as coastal dunes, lakes and lagoons, coastal wetlands, littoral rainforests, sensitive estuaries and the protected waters of the south coast. Aboriginal culture is intertwined with the region's water based ecosystems, which are highly susceptible to the impacts of climate change and land use changes. The planning and management of coastal settlements and waterways requires an integrated and strategic consideration of the environmental, social, cultural and economic values of these important ecosystems and associated risks.

The NSW Government's *Coastal Management Framework* provides councils with technical and financial assistance to manage the coastal zone including the open coast and estuaries. The framework includes guidance for managing coastal hazards, protecting natural coastal environments and planning the built environment across four key coastal management areas identified in the *Coastal Management Act 2016* and the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021*. These include coastal wetlands and littoral rainforest areas, coastal vulnerability areas, coastal environment area and the coastal use area.

The NSW coastal management framework acknowledges that coastal hazards are expected to be exacerbated by climate change whilst recognising the contemporary risks and challenges for the region's coastline and coastal settlements that natural hazards present. It does this in the context of an increasing population, housing and infrastructure demand.

The NSW Government's *Risk-Based Framework for Considering Waterway Health Outcomes in Strategic Land-use Planning Decisions*, is used for managing the cumulative impacts of development and identifying more naturalised design solutions. These not only help to protect water quality and stream flows, but also assist with reducing flood impacts, improve ecology and contribute to creating and enhancing wildlife corridors.

Local policies and their implementation should be based on the framework so that planning for new development protects, maintains and restores community environmental values and use of the region's waterways and coastal assets following the principles of ecologically sustainable management.

Sensitive estuaries

Sensitive estuaries have been mapped as part of the region's high environmental value lands. These estuaries and their catchments are particularly susceptible to the effect of land use development and are not suitable for intense uses such as housing subdivision.

- **Eurobodalla Local Government Area:** Bengello Creek, Bullengella Lake, Coila Lake, Congo Creek, Corunna Lake, Cullendulla Creek, Durras Creek, Kellys Lake, Kianga Lake, Brou Lake, Lake Brunderee, Mummuga Lake, Lake Tarourga, Little Lake, Maloneys Creek, Meringo Creek, Nangudga Lake, Saltwater Creek and Tilba Lake.
- **Bega Valley Local Government Area:** Back Lagoon, Baragoot Lake, Bournda Lagoon, Boydton Creek, Bunga Lagoon, Curalo Lagoon, Cuttagee Lake, Fisheries Creek, Merrica River, Middle Lagoon, Nadgee Lake, Nadgee River, Nullica River, Saltwater Creek, Shadrachs Creek, Table Creek, Wallaga Lake, Wallagoot Lake and Woodburn Creek.

Assessment and management

The 'avoid, minimise and offset' hierarchy as a requirement of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* and its supporting regulations, applies to areas identified for new or more intensive development. The hierarchy requires that development avoid areas of validated high environmental lands and considers appropriate offsets or other mitigation measures for unavoidable impacts.

Where it is not possible to avoid impacts, consideration must be given to how impacts can be managed or offset through planning controls or other environmental management mechanisms, such as biodiversity certification. Biodiversity certification should be sought for developments such as new land releases or greenfield development, where there is the potential to impact biodiversity values.

Certain development types, such as housing subdivision, are not considered to be suitable in sensitive estuaries or their catchments as they are particularly susceptible to the effect of land use development.

Many landholders manage their properties in ways that protect the natural environment and environmentally sensitive lands on private properties. Travelling Stock Reserves, while serving a function in times of drought, provide a network of corridors connecting otherwise isolated remnants of habitat, allowing native flora and fauna to survive the effects of a changing climate. The reserves also provide opportunities to protect the significance of Country for Aboriginal people, can

inform better knowledge sharing and recognition of their role as a network. Reserves need to be managed as they are often on fertile soil and can support significant biodiversity values including threatened species, and Aboriginal culture.

While large areas of vegetation are protected in national parks and reserves, much of the region was, and is severely impacted by the 2019-20 bushfires. As these climate related events occur, government, the community, business and industry need to work together to build resilience and develop adaptation and mitigation measures.

Supporting initiatives:



- Identify and investigate the mapping for coastal vulnerability areas under *State Environment Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021*.
- Simplify the availability of HEV land data and terminology across environmental planning instruments.

Strategy 5.1



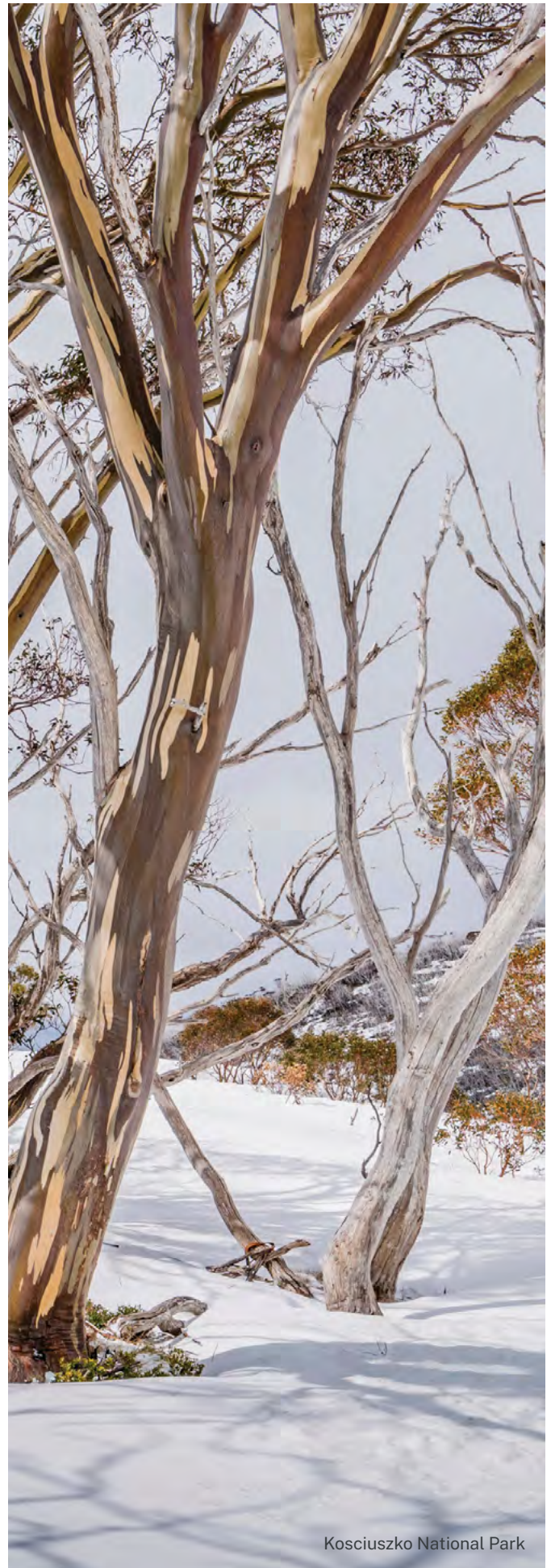
Strategic planning and local plans are to:

- validate mapped HEV lands
- protect the validated HEV lands in LEPs
- minimise potential impacts arising from development on HEV lands, including Groundwater Dependant Ecosystems and implement the 'avoid, minimise and offset' hierarchy
- protect travelling stock reserves, particularly those which contain HEV lands
- manage coastal zones, including the open coast and estuaries through the preparation and implementation of certified Coastal Management Programs
- incorporate the NSW Government's *Risk-Based Framework for Considering Waterway Health Outcomes in Strategic Land-Use Planning Decisions*, with sensitive coastal lakes and estuaries prioritised.

Action 5



Work with councils and Aboriginal community to undertake strategic landscape-scale assessment of biodiversity and areas of HEV, including strategic biodiversity assessments, management of travelling stock reserves and roadside vegetation management plans.



Kosciuszko National Park

OBJECTIVE 6:

Enhance biodiversity, habitats and the connections between them



Josephs Gate, Goulburn

Regional biodiversity corridors are native vegetation links within a region, between regions or between significant biodiversity features. They expand and link different habitats and are critical to long-term ecological connections, particularly in the context of long-term climate change.

Regional biodiversity corridors form part of the Great Eastern Ranges Initiative, to which the NSW Government is a partner¹⁵. The initiative identifies biodiversity corridors across the continent, from the Grampians in Western Victoria to the wet tropics of Far North Queensland. Land uses in regional biodiversity corridors should maintain, and where possible, enhance ecological connectivity.

Green infrastructure, provides a structure to strategic planning for biodiversity corridors, habitats and the connections between them, and how they support good quality of life outcomes for communities and the urban environment. Planning for green infrastructure includes the consideration of elements such as tree canopy, which influences the climate by transpiring water, changing wind speeds, shading surfaces, and modifying the heat absorbed by urban surfaces.

Managing biodiversity

Added pressures to the natural environment due to population growth, agricultural activity and climate change can have a physical impact on biodiversity. After the 2019-20 bushfire season, ecological experts believe that some endangered species may have been driven to extinction. Similarly, climate change is leading to the irreversible loss of key alpine ecological communities in the region¹⁶. It is imperative to build resilience into the region's existing biodiversity areas, as areas of higher biodiversity are more able to adapt and respond to changes and disturbances.

Considerations of climate refugia – the areas where species can retreat to and persist in when environmental conditions change – can enhance the protection of biodiversity through urban development and strategic planning.

Biodiversity strategies can inform planning decisions and other strategic planning instruments including housing and settlement strategies, master plans and rural land use strategies. They can also be used to determine whether land is suitable for strategic or standard biodiversity conservation processes. Alpine Regions are important biodiversity hotspots and are highly susceptible to a changing climate. When councils are preparing biodiversity strategies, they should consider the 2019 study *Climate change impacts in the NSW and ACT Alpine Region*, in consultation with the NSW Government.

Protecting koala habitat

Koala populations have been impacted by drought and the 2019-20 bushfires, which are estimated to have burned 571,568 ha (Figure 10), equating to approximately 26% of the modelled high or very high suitability koala habitat in the region¹⁶. Despite this, breeding populations remain, even in significantly affected areas. Areas known to be important to the species need to be carefully managed so that local populations can recover.

The NSW Government is investing more than \$190 million to help double the number of koalas in NSW by 2050 through the *NSW Koala Strategy*. The strategy supports a range of conservation action to provide more habitat, support local community action, improve koala safety and health, and build our knowledge to help conservation.

The *NSW Koala Strategy* identifies five koala populations in the South East and Tablelands region. The southern tablelands and southern highlands areas are two of the state's ten stronghold 'focus areas' for koala conservation efforts.

To continue to improve koala habitat in the region, The NSW Government will explore grant funding for councils to complete relevant strategic plans of management, in accordance with the requirements under *State Environmental Planning Policy (Biodiversity and Conservation) 2021*.



Superb Parrot (*Polytelis swainsonii*)
Credit: Helen Fallow

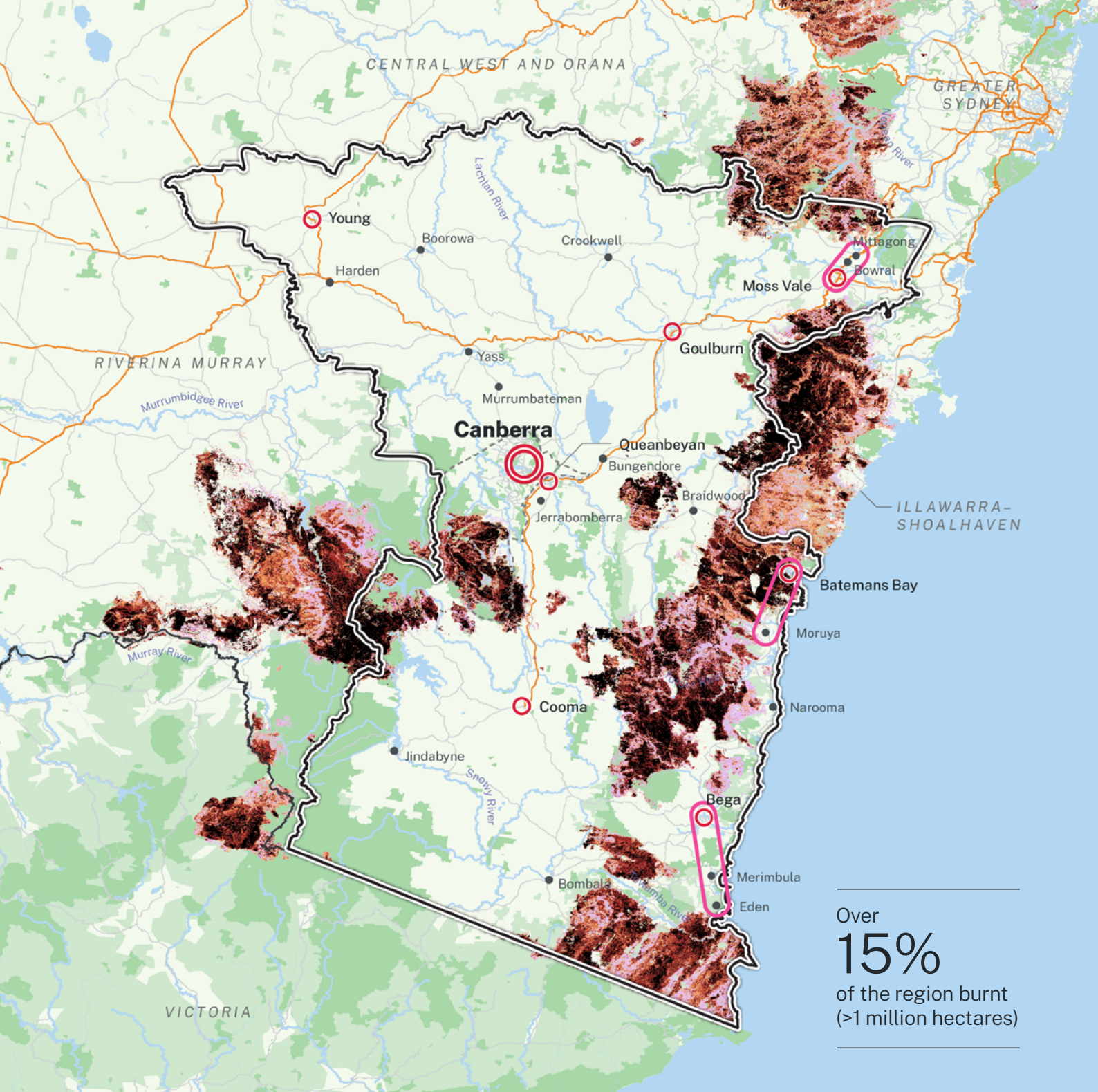


Figure 10: Fire extent and severity from the 2019-20 bush fire season



- Regional boundary
- Australian Capital Territory boundary
- Metropolitan city
- Strategic centre
- Centre
- Strategic cluster

- Railway
- Road
- National park and reserve
- State forest
- Water body

SEVERITY CLASSIFICATION:

- Low (burnt understory with unburnt canopy)
- Medium (partial canopy scorch)
- High (full canopy scorch/partial consumption)
- Extreme (full canopy consumption)

Green and blue infrastructure

The ecosystem provided by green open spaces and waterways (rivers, estuaries, riverfronts and coastline) play a role in:

- keeping the region cool
- encouraging healthy lifestyles (i.e. promotes walking and cycling and helps improve air quality)
- boosting tourism and recreational opportunities
- enhancing bushland and ecological resilience
- supporting the continuity of Aboriginal cultural practices
- maintaining water quality and sequestering atmospheric carbon

These spaces, along with streets and other public spaces also serve an important purpose in establishing, maintaining and enhancing tree canopy, which support communities to manage the impact of extreme heat as populations and urban centres increase in density.

A green and blue grid at a regional level, supports in providing a spatial understanding of the layers of the network of open spaces and waterways in the region and how to improve and better connect them to enhance the services provided. The development of green and blue grids considers the differing local climates, bushfire, flooding and other ecological hazards, as well as local infrastructure planning. This can provide benefits for communities where the NSW Government and councils identify long-term and large scale priorities for 'green infrastructure'.

The *NSW Public Spaces Charter* supports the Premier's Priority to increase the proportion of homes in urban areas within a 10-minute walk of public space by 10% by 2023. Applying the NSW Government Architect's *Greener Places Framework* and the *Urban Green Cover in NSW Technical Guidelines* will work to support improved open space and tree canopy outcomes for communities. These improvements will be especially important in growing areas like South Jerrabomberra, Googong, Parkwood and Moss Vale.

The *Designing with Country* discussion paper identified the concept of an 'Ochre Grid', which when led by representatives of the Aboriginal community, could draw together a rich understanding, learning and respect for Country¹⁷. Through research and conversations with Aboriginal knowledge holders to date, we know that Aboriginal values of landscape integrate multiple scales, from large-scale meaning and symbolism, to detailed land management of specific important sites.

The development of green and blue grids should feature leadership from the Aboriginal community and recognised knowledge holders.

Supporting initiatives:



- Prepare and or update local biodiversity strategies in the context of the regional plan.
- Prepare a koala plan of management for each LGA, where large koala habitat areas and/or significant koala populations are identified.
- Work with councils to develop koala habitat maps and incorporate best practice guidance on strategic planning and design into land use planning to avoid koala habitat loss and fragmentation, and to deliver long-term habitat protections for koalas.
- Implement the recommendations of the NSW Audit Office's review of the effectiveness of the State Biodiversity Offsets Scheme.

Strategy 6.1



Strategic planning and local plans are to:

- protect and enhance the function and resilience of biodiversity corridors, including in LEPs and DCPs
- confirm and validate the location and boundaries of regional and local biodiversity corridors
- consider the needs of climate refugia for threatened and dominant species
- focus offsets from approved developments to regional biodiversity corridors, where possible
- identify long term urban tree canopy targets
- provide mechanisms to strengthen green and blue infrastructure in urban areas, including streets, open spaces and waterways.

Action 6



Establish a green and blue grid for the region to identify opportunities for improvements in green and blue infrastructure as informed by leadership from Aboriginal community members and local governments.

Figure 11: The benefits of green infrastructure



- 1 Reduces heating and cooling costs
- 2 Improves amenity
- 3 Promotes higher spending in retail areas
- 4 Reduces health care costs
- 5 Shades cools streets and public spaces
- 6 Supports community cohesion
- 7 Improves the life span of key assets
- 8 Improves air quality by removing dust and particles
- 9 Improves physical and mental health
- 10 Provides food and shelter for wildlife
- 11 Creates a sense of place and identity
- 12 Carbon sequestration
- 13 Reduces storm water run off

Moss Vale



OBJECTIVE 7:

Build resilient places and communities

To build resilient places and communities, risk exposure (shocks and stresses) needs to be understood. Natural hazards, infrastructure and technological failures need to be assessed from a people-centred, cultural, economic, built form and environmental perspective.

With a changing climate, communities need the skills and knowledge to effectively respond to change, ensuring they are better placed to prepare for, prevent, respond to and recover from the risks they may experience. The NSW Government provides councils with the technical and financial assistance necessary to assess and manage associated risks from flood and coastal hazards.

2022 NSW Flood Inquiry

Following the February-March 2022 flood event, the NSW Government commissioned an independent expert inquiry to investigate issues related to the preparation for, cause of, response to and recovery from the 2022 floods. The report of the NSW Independent Flood Inquiry included 28 recommendations, across a broad range of areas, including emergency management arrangements, land management and planning, equipment and technology, capacity and capability building and research.

The NSW Government has supported, either in full or in principle, the recommendations of the Inquiry and noted some will require further work on implementation, including further consultation with local and Commonwealth governments.

Consistent with the outcomes of the Inquiry the NSW Government has now established the NSW Reconstruction Authority (November 2022). The Authority will have the responsibility and power to facilitate the protection, recovery, and reconstruction of affected communities following a natural disaster. Once the Authority has been stood up and fully operational, it will also be responsible for:

- Developing a State disaster mitigation plan and material to guide councils to prepare adaptation plans; and
- Ensuring development needed to prevent or recover from a natural disaster can be delivered quickly.



Resilience and preparedness

Natural hazards such as heatwaves, bushfires, flooding, storms or infrastructure failure, are regarded as episodic shocks. These are sudden, short-term events that threaten places and communities. Chronic stresses are slower moving challenges that diminish a place, community or local environment over time, or on a cyclical basis. These include air and noise pollution, land contamination, food or water shortages, economic downturn, or technological transition, lack of affordable housing, sea level rise and pandemics. Climate change will contribute to many of these shocks and stressors.

Building resilience into planning enables the community, visitors and businesses to better understand and prepare for a range of shocks and stresses.

Hazards can disrupt road and rail networks and interrupt access to essential services including water, sewerage, power, telecommunications and digital connectivity. This was evident on the south coast in the 2019-20 bushfires. Individuals and communities can become isolated for extended periods. Visiting tourists may also not be aware of the dangers and emergency procedures.

The department has developed a resilience benchmarking matrix tool that identifies key steps for councils as they work to build resilience. The development of strategic plans, local plans and community programs are to leverage the matrix, through engagement with community and Aboriginal knowledge holders to better understand local risks, vulnerabilities and capabilities.

Resilience to natural hazards

Community exposure to natural hazards and chronic stress is increasing due to climate change and with many areas already exposed to bushfire, flood and coastal hazards, with ongoing pressure for development to intensify in these areas.

The 2019-20 bushfires highlighted critical inefficiencies in regional NSW which challenged community resilience. The NSW Bushfire Inquiry (2020) reinforced the need to shift to a strategic approach to planning for bushfire. This includes by developing a new NSW Bushfire policy, to accommodate changing climate conditions, build greater resilience for current and future communities and to decrease the costs of recovery. The Inquiry also highlighted the importance of embedding Aboriginal land management practices in planning and preparing for bushfires, in partnership between the NSW Government and Aboriginal communities.¹⁸

Flood and coastal hazards are manageable disasters as the size and frequency of these events can be estimated. The consequences of these events are

managed through established risk assessment and hazard mapping processes. Land use planning can help to manage the exposure to natural hazards as it governs how land can be used, where built assets can be located, and how they are designed. Land use planning processes that require the rezoning of land is much more efficient when flood and coastal management planning information is considered prior to development, providing greater certainty for agencies, developers and communities.

Programs and guidelines such as the *Floodplain Risk Management Program*, *Coastal Management Program*, *Planning for Bushfire Protection*, *NSW Coastal Design Guidelines* and associated frameworks provide financial and technical support to councils to work with state agencies to identify current and future risks (including climate change and sea level rise projections) that take into account the scale, frequency and severity of future natural disasters. These assessments inform the development of plans with the community to reduce exposure and vulnerability.

There are opportunities for the NSW Government to better coordinate input and strategic guidance from all levels of government, in risk reduction and enhancing emergency preparedness across the policies and frameworks that exist.

Mitigate and adapt to climate change

The range and scale of disasters and changes to the climate requires new partnerships between government and community, with clear roles and responsibilities for prevention and preparedness.

The *Blueprint for a Resilient South East NSW* (Blueprint) provides an analysis of past, current and future risk and vulnerability assessments. It will help councils and communities across South East NSW prevent, prepare, respond and recover from future disasters and challenges. It builds on NSW Government's *Enabling Adaptation in the South East 2017* report, which identified potential adaptation pathways to support communities in the region.

The Blueprint will have a dedicated training program that will build the resilience capabilities of decision-makers, council staff and communities. The establishment of the Blueprint will enable state agencies and councils to report progress on resilience and wellbeing measures in the region. It will also prioritise projects to prevent and prepare for future risks from natural hazards and climate change.

Councils can use the Blueprint alongside the resilience benchmarking matrix tool to develop resilience strategies or climate action plans that embed goals and actions in their Community Strategic Plans and integrated planning and reporting.

Supporting initiatives:

- Work with Aboriginal communities, public land managers, National Parks and Wildlife Services, NSW Rural Fire Service, Heritage NSW and Local Aboriginal Land Councils to resolve barriers to carrying out traditional land use practices, such as cultural burning and fire management regime programs.
- Develop tools to prepare updated climate and natural hazard opportunity and risk assessments, and implementation measures for multiple hazards such as coastal inundation, flooding and bushfire in response to climate change.
- Prepare Coastal Management Programs to identify and manage existing and future risks to the coastal zone, including risks from coastal hazards.
- Implement the recommendations of the 2022 NSW Flood Inquiry and the 2020 NSW Bushfire Inquiry.

Strategy 7.1

Resilience and adaptation plans are to consider opportunities to:

- identify incentives to encourage sustainable and resilient building design and materials including the use of renewable energy
- promote economic diversity and prosperity, improving liveability and strengthening the health, wellbeing and social cohesion of a place
- integrate emergency management and recovery needs into new and existing urban areas including evacuation planning, safe access and egress for emergency services personnel, buffer areas, whole-of-life cycle maintenance and operation costs for critical infrastructure for emergency management
- recognise the benefits of social connectivity and social cohesion to community resilience.

Strategy 7.2

Strategic planning and local plans are to:

- support councils to review the best available flood information, identify gaps and establish prioritised forward programs to prepare or update floodplain risk management plans to manage existing and future risks, including in areas identified for growth prior to new planning proposals being developed that include flood prone land
- locate new development, including new urban release areas, urban densification or hazardous industries, away from hazard prone areas such as high bushfire, flood, landslide, coastal erosion, coastal and tidal inundation risk locations, contaminated land, and designated waterways to reduce the community's exposure to natural hazards, taking into account the impacts of climate change on the scale, frequency and severity of future natural disasters and the risks posed by natural hazards
- ensure development takes into account the impacts of climate change and sea level rise projections on the scale, frequency and severity of natural disasters, to mitigate risk and improve resilience
- incorporate the best available hazard information consistent with any adopted Floodplain Risk Management Plans, certified Coastal Management Programs and NSW *Coastal Design Guidelines*, and *Planning for Bushfire Protection 2019*.

Action 7

Work with the Canberra Region Joint Organisation, councils, community and other NSW Government agencies to progress and implement the *Blueprint for a Resilient South East NSW* to identify and address regional risks and resilience priorities.

OBJECTIVE 8:

Plan for a net zero region by 2050



Gullen Range wind turbines, Bannister

The NSW Government is committed to achieving a 50% emissions reduction by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2050. *Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020-2030* sets out how it will meet the first stage of this objective over the next decade.¹⁹



135.3m tonne
NSW CO₂e



2.5m tonne
South East & Tablelands CO₂e

Working towards net zero emissions

Electricity generation and the agriculture and transport sectors contribute the bulk of emissions in the region. While the region does not have its own renewable energy zone, the existing renewable energy network, coupled with increased renewable energy into the NSW electricity grid will benefit the region and reduce emissions. Renewable energy initiatives are therefore supported with a particular focus on reducing emissions from agriculture and transport.

The region is already a well-established hub for renewable energy with its many wind and solar farms. Solar photovoltaic uptake is also relatively high in the region with installation on 33% of dwellings, higher than the state and national average.²⁰ Increasing uptake together with battery storage will reduce emissions and improve resilience.

Some councils have a power purchase agreement in place to secure renewable energy for their operations. Remaining councils could secure renewable energy or green power as part of their electricity contracts to reduce emissions and support local renewable energy projects.

Establishing an emissions reduction roadmap to guide the community, businesses, industry and councils towards net zero emissions will help to build community capacity and collaborative initiatives to drive energy efficiency, reduce emissions, encourage the use of renewable energy and position the region as a leader in innovation and sustainability.

Utilise waterways to reduce emissions

Blue carbon sequestration is the removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere by vegetation in waterways and oceans, primarily via mangroves, salt marshes, seaweed and seagrasses. When these ecosystems are protected or restored, they sequester and store carbon.

While they can help to combat climate change, ecosystems such as mangroves, tidal marshes and seagrasses are also critical in supporting coastal water quality, healthy fisheries and protection against floods and storms.²¹

The *NSW Blue Carbon Strategy* provides support to evidence based projects and research to protect and conserve important blue carbon ecosystems. As research continues to develop in this area, the NSW government, councils and other relevant stakeholders could explore opportunities for carbon sequestration in line with this policy using estuarine ecosystems, such as for estuary riverbank restoration or coastal management programs.

However, sea level rise is likely to have significant impacts on the future sequestration potential of these ecosystems.

Strategic planning will need to consider the future potential distribution of these ecosystems and how inland migration can be enabled to maintain and enhance the full range of ecosystem services provided by these ecosystems including carbon sequestration, fisheries and coastal and riverbank protection.

Drive energy efficient buildings and precincts

Reduced emissions and energy efficiency will come with better building design, low emission building materials, integrated renewable energy systems and a precinct-approach to sustainability. Championing these changes work towards supporting liveable communities and creating healthy environments, as evidenced through NSW Government strategies, such as the *NSW Clean Air Strategy 2021-2030*.

Buildings can be designed to be more energy efficient and reduce costs to owners. Integrating passive design into new developments will help to mitigate urban heat island effect, maximise energy efficiency and reduce overall emissions. This also includes considering how people move about and prioritise walking and cycling.

In 2003, the Green Building Council of Australia established an internationally recognised rating system to set the standard for healthy, resilient, positive buildings and places.²² New developments at both a site and precinct scale should explore opportunities to apply these assessments and principles.

State agencies and councils should explore the existing or potential mechanisms in the land use planning framework to further incentivise precinct-scale green star ratings. These approaches should be translated to adapt existing centres to become more sustainable and energy efficient.

Supporting initiatives:



- Identify areas for potential renewable energy sites, including consideration of grid capacity, supporting networks and community resilience.
- Provide opportunities for carbon sequestration using estuarine ecosystems.
- Develop a sustainability framework for employment precincts, growth areas and centres to promote carbon neutral sustainable growth and development.

Strategy 8.1



Strategic planning and local plans are to consider opportunities to:

- encourage initiatives that reduce emissions
- promote opportunities for clean energy generation in the region including bioenergy, solar, wind, hydro, geothermal and storage technologies
- promote opportunities for energy storage, including community scale batteries, deep battery storage, pumped hydro, electrolysers and other innovative storage technologies
- encourage the co-location of renewable energy generation and storage infrastructure, in proximity to the current and proposed future electricity transmission network, but also to minimise any cumulative adverse effects on the natural environment
- incentivise energy efficient building design for residential, commercial and industrial areas.

Action 8



Develop a South East and Tablelands emissions reduction roadmap that identifies innovative initiatives that can be delivered through an ecosystem of collaboration.

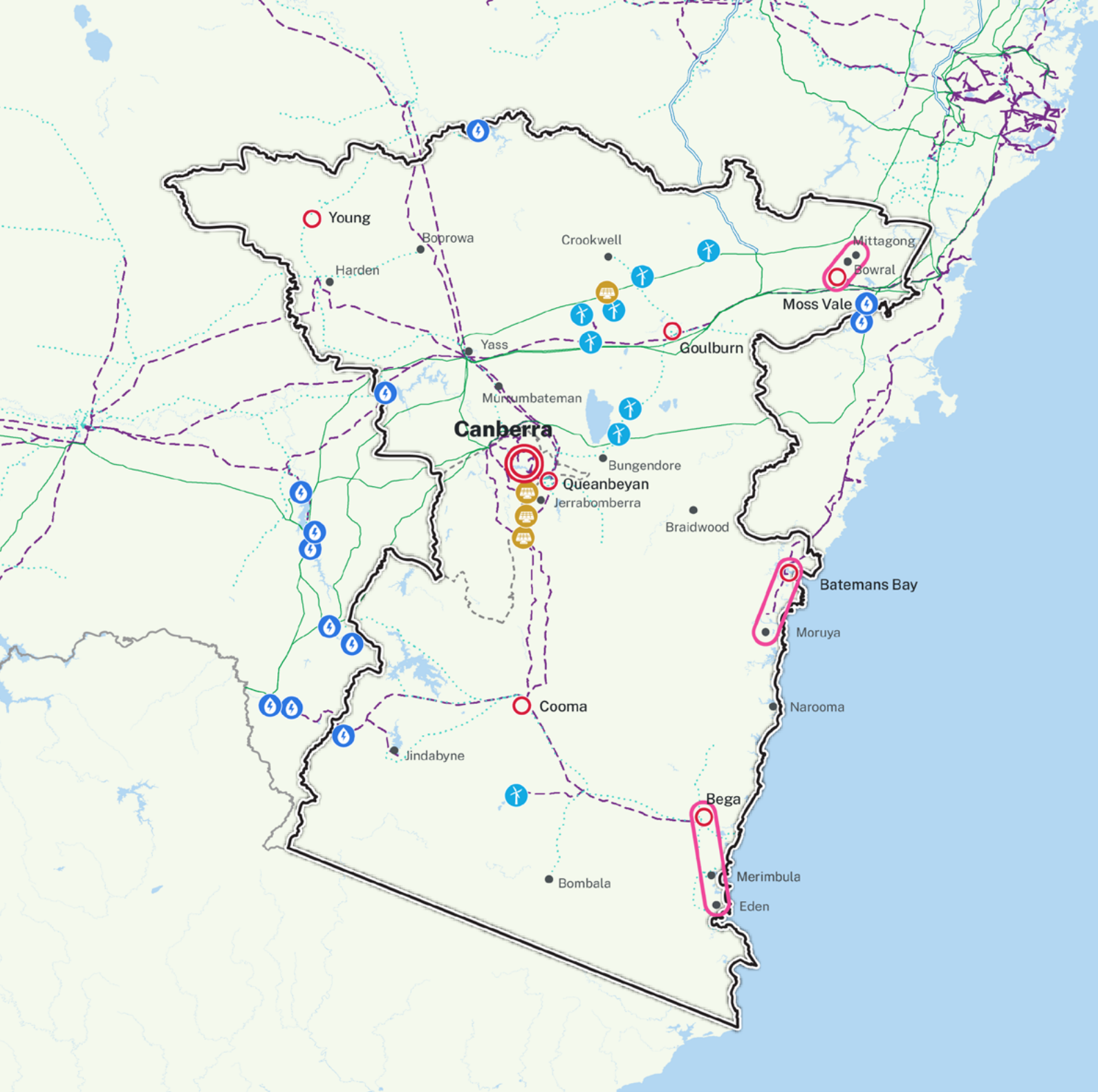











Figure 12: Energy



-  Regional boundary
-  Australian Capital Territory boundary
-  Metropolitan city
-  Strategic centre
-  Centre
-  Strategic cluster

-  Hydro Power Generation (>10MW)
-  Solar Power Generation (>10MW)
-  Wind Power Generation (>10MW)
-  Water body

KEY TRANSMISSION LINE (KILOVOLTS):

-  500kV
-  330kV
-  132kV
-  66kV

OBJECTIVE 9:**Secure water resources**

Wingecarribee Dam

The *State Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2042* identifies the need to improve water security and quality in regional NSW. The future growth and development of the region, coupled with the uncertainties of climate variability and climate change, mean that long-term planning for water supply must be integrated into strategic planning for the region and for adjoining areas including Sydney, which sources a portion its potable water from the northern areas of the region.

Managing water quality and supply

Water quality is primarily managed by restricting access to key water catchment areas, with parts of the region identified within the Sydney Drinking Water Catchment Area. Water quality and access to water particularly in periods of drought in rural areas can also be enhanced through the rehabilitation of degraded river environments and riparian corridors that provide increased in-channel storage of water and protection of water dependant ecosystems.

Key dams and water storages for the region include Avon Dam, Nepean Dam, Wingecarribee Dam, Fitzroy Falls Reservoir, Brogo Dam, and Burrinjuck Dam. Part of the Wyangala Dam storage reservoir also occurs in the north-west corner of the region.

All surface and ground water is currently allocated, so any water required to support growth, needs to be sourced through various forms of redistribution. The *NSW Water Strategy* recognises this and the

associated need to do more with less, in the context of a changing climate.

Water sharing plans set a framework and associated rules to outline how water is allocated across regional areas. These plans aim to protect the environmental health of water sources and ensure long term sustainability of water resources.

Similarly, regional water strategies set the framework for managing water over the next 20 to 40 years, assessing potential drought impacts using climate data and water modelling. Regional water strategies for the South Coast, Murray, Murrumbidgee and Lachlan regions are being developed and will apply to the South East and Tablelands Region, as well as the draft *Greater Sydney Water Strategy*.

These strategies support the delivery of healthy, reliable and resilient water resources for the region by establishing directions for managing water resources and services to ensure future water security, reliability and resilience for a changing climate and population. Further, they recognise that Aboriginal people have traditional ecological knowledge about the Australian climate and make a commitment to seek ways to build this knowledge into regional water strategies and future water and river management outcomes. These ambitions are proposed to be strengthened through a state-wide Aboriginal Water Strategy.

Regional water strategies – Climate data and modelling

The NSW Government has invested in a hydrological modelling approach that develops a more sophisticated depiction of climatic conditions, including likely frequency and duration of future droughts. This approach was based on several river catchments across the state and serves as a foundation for regional water strategies.

This enhanced modelling approach advances water planning and management for NSW. It allows water planning to shift from a short climatic record to a more accurate understanding of extreme events, normal conditions and various other potential situations relating to water security.

Improving water security and management

The region's town water supplies include a range of surface water and groundwater sources. In some areas, such as the Wingecarribee LGA, water supply is comparatively secure – although much of Wingecarribee's water resources flow north towards Sydney and are relied upon as part of the *Metropolitan Water Strategy 2017*.

However, the current local water utility entitlements, particularly surrounding the ACT, are not sufficient to meet future demand from the potential population growth. Establishing close, inter-jurisdictional planning for infrastructure delivery and service provision will address the barriers for water security in areas such as Yass, Murrumbateman and Bungendore.

Other areas such as certain parts of the Hilltops and Upper Lachlan, need to secure a sustainable water source for urban use, particularly in the context of a changing climate.

Town water supplies on the far south coast are generally secure but could become less reliable under climate change scenarios. Considerations to improve storage capacity in existing dams, whilst maintaining environmental sustainability and promoting innovation in renewable energy are being considered in parts of the Bega Valley LGA. These factors will become a particularly important issue to resolve when considering new land release areas or additional density in existing centres. In addition, the viability and growth of regional industries in the far south coast is constrained by the uncertainty of future access to water supplies.

Many other industries such as agriculture and mining can increase competition for resources, particularly during periods of low flows. This can impact water quality and encourage saltwater intrusion, which can pose a risk to industry users, town water supplies, and the environment. In the coastal fringes of the far south coast, projected sea level rise and saltwater intrusion is expected to compromise water and wastewater treatment assets through corrosion and inundation. These risks must be carefully managed through assessment, management and regulation that is informed by best available science.

Water planning for new developments

Portions of the region are located in the Sydney Drinking Water Catchment, where the *Water NSW Act 2014*, *Water NSW Regulation 2020* and *State Environmental Planning Policy (Biodiversity and Conservation) 2021*, act to protect water quality and outline requirements for the assessment of development applications. Similarly, the application of the *Special Areas Strategic Plan of Management 2015* helps to protect water quality and ecological integrity values of waterways and land around key water storages.

Water sensitive urban design is a planning and engineering approach that minimises the impacts of development on the natural water cycle by protecting natural systems and water quality, integrating stormwater into the landscape, and reducing run off, peak flows and demand for potable water.

Planning for new developments in the region should apply these policies and approach early in the design and planning process, to realise the integration of the water cycle into land use planning. This will improve infiltration, waterflows and protect and enhance riparian lands. Specific initiatives can also be carried forward through projects as part of implementing a green and blue grid – as discussed in objective 6.

Reticulated water supply should also be explored for any new land release or an increase in housing densities in existing areas. The provision of potable water must conform to the following water planning principles:

- a reliable supply to provide certainty for consumers (both residential and other)
- an affordable water supply in terms of both capital and recurring costs and
- a quality of supply that meets relevant health standards.

Supporting initiatives:

- Finalisation of the regional water strategies.
- Identify opportunities through innovative technologies and water sensitive urban design to improve water re-use and recycling at a precinct and site scale.
- Work with water utility providers to diversify sources of water including groundwater, stormwater harvesting and recycling to improve water security and resilience of towns and communities throughout the region.

Bega River

**Strategy 9.1**

Strategic planning and local plans should consider opportunities to:

- locate, design, construct and manage new developments to minimise impacts on water catchments, including downstream impacts and groundwater sources
- incorporate and integrate water sensitive urban design and riparian corridors particularly where development is likely to impact water catchments, water quality and flows
- encourage the reuse of water in new development, for urban greening and irrigation purposes
- improve provision for stormwater management and water sensitive urban design and riparian corridor management principles for new development areas, including flood risk and coastal zone planning
- apply water planning principles for potable water
- ascertain infrastructure needs over the next 30 years to accommodate climate change projections and population growth, in the context of applicable water planning strategies

Action 9

(a) Work with Queanbeyan–Palerang and Yass Valley Councils to identify and implement agreed priorities which address water security, infrastructure provision and allocation, and

(b) Outline innovative water planning solutions for the Capital subregion addressing matters such as:

- forecast population growth and strategic planning,
- ecological and aquatic ecosystem management,
- infrastructure capacity, and
- sustainable water management practices in line with the *NSW Water Strategy*.

OBJECTIVE 10:

Manage the role and operation of extractive industries

The South East and Tablelands Region contains valuable mineral resources including coal, precious and base metals and extractive materials. Moving towards a net zero region by 2050 requires strategic thinking about the transition of industries, management and remediation of altered environments and diversifying the knowledge and skill base from mining sectors.

Existing extractive industries in the region

Coal resources in the region are concentrated in the Wingecarribee LGA. There are 2 active underground fields (Wongawilli and Dendrobium) on the eastern border of the area, with production largely contained in the Wollongong LGA (in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region).

The location of current exploration and mining production titles in NSW, explanations of mining and production titles and the roles of community and government in the decision-making process for mining and resource projects may be accessed at commonground.nsw.gov.au

The region contains deposits of several important base metals (lead, zinc, silver, copper) in the Woodlawn and Captains Flat areas. Extractive resources, including construction material such as sand, hard rock and sources of clay and shale for brick making, are extracted throughout the region, including around Marulan, Googong, Bungendore, and Lake George. Limestone is extracted from places such as Marulan, and gold from Majors Creek.

The location of many of these resources, near rail lines and freeways, and their proximity to Australia's biggest construction materials market in Sydney, makes them particularly important to NSW. Whilst noting this, these industries can at times create adverse impacts on locally managed infrastructure and the amenity of local communities. It is critical to find a balance to ensure that the cumulative impact of these uses is mitigated/managed.

Managing mining operations and lifespan

Coal is likely to have a finite lifespan as an energy source as the world moves to cleaner forms of energy generation that will occur over the coming decades. The NSW Government will work to support communities supported by the coal industry, to diversify for the future and retain each community as vibrant places to live, with good employment opportunities.

Rather than returning land to its pre-mining state, there may be opportunities to utilise the features of some mines in a way that can leave an economic legacy for local communities.

Rehabilitated mines could become renewable energy and storage hubs for energy sources including wind, solar, pumped hydro and the associated battery storage. Other industries, such as hydrogen and ammonia, along with high value agriculture can then be leveraged.

Similarly, there may be times and circumstances when land should be kept as native vegetation, or for agriculture to maintain the character and diversity of the local area. Increased pressure to extract resources can lead to increased impact on threatened ecological communities and needs to be managed to ensure that further loss of these communities is reduced.

The impact of urban expansion on resource areas needs to be appraised when councils evaluate planning proposals to rezone land, review LEPs, or sequence land releases. In places like the Wingecarribee and Goulburn Mulwaree LGAs, where there is mining activity, this also means avoiding new settlements in subsidence areas.

Supporting initiatives:

- Work with mining operators and relevant councils to identify the operational lifespan, rehabilitation and closure obligations and opportunities for future land use activities.
- Develop a resource availability plan for the region that considers the avoidance of endangered and critically endangered ecological communities.



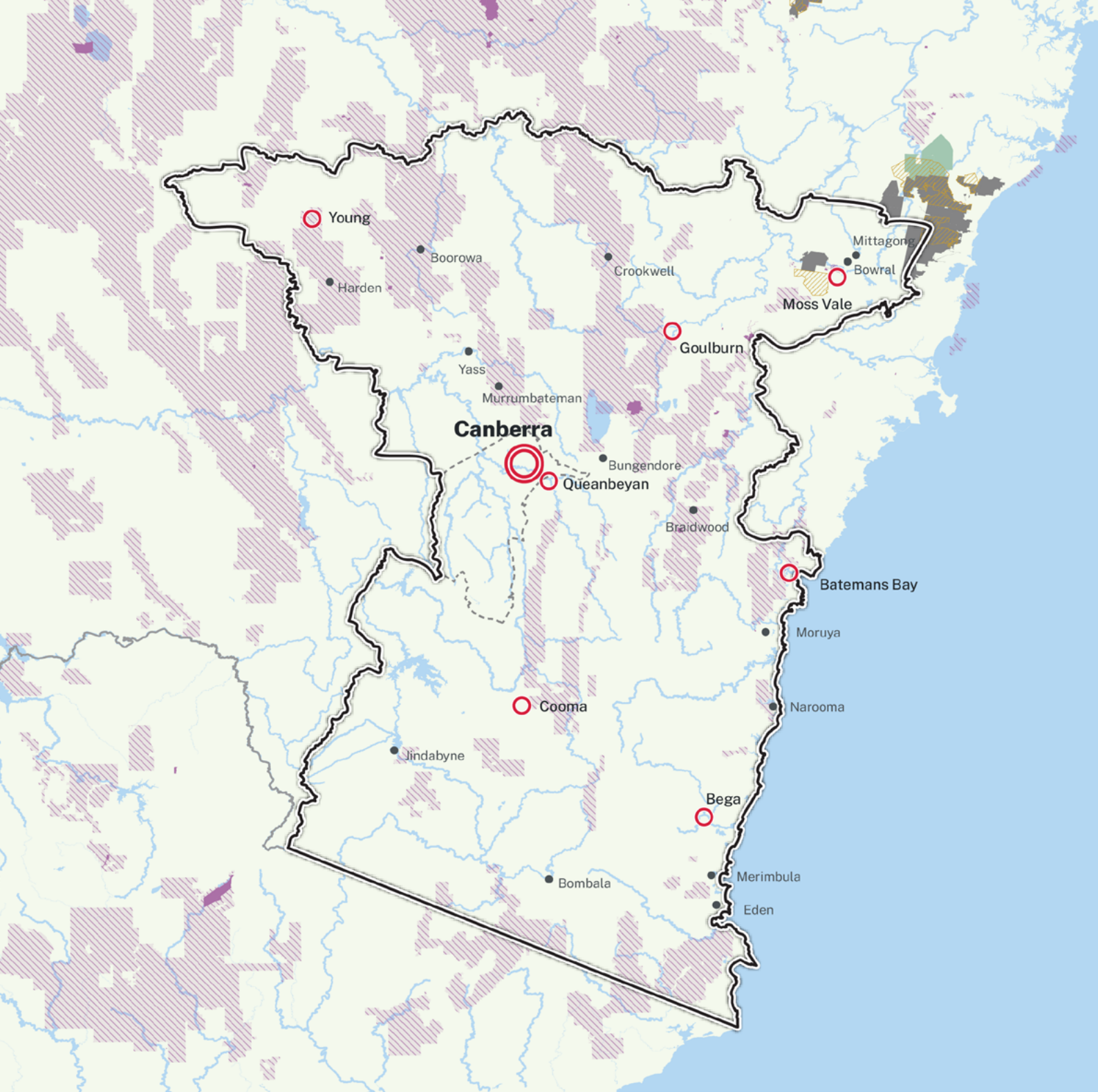


Figure 13: Resources

- Regional boundary
- Australian Capital Territory boundary
- Metropolitan city
- Strategic centre
- Centre
- Petroleum extraction title
- Coal mining title
- Mineral mining title
- Coal exploration title
- Mineral exploration title
- Water body

Strategy 10.1

Consider existing, approved and potential areas of mineral and energy resources in strategic planning and local plans.

Strategy 10.2

Consider alternative land uses at the design stage for a new or expanded mine, and when planning for rehabilitation and closure of existing mines. Also consider:

- adaptive rehabilitation over the life of the mine so that the final landform and rehabilitation responds to emerging opportunities and investments for continued employment
- community involvement to ensure end-of-mine outcomes align with community values.

Strategy 10.3

Consult with the NSW Department of Industry (Division of Resources and Energy) when assessing applications for land use changes (strategic land use planning, rezoning and planning proposals) and new development or expansions to extractive industries.

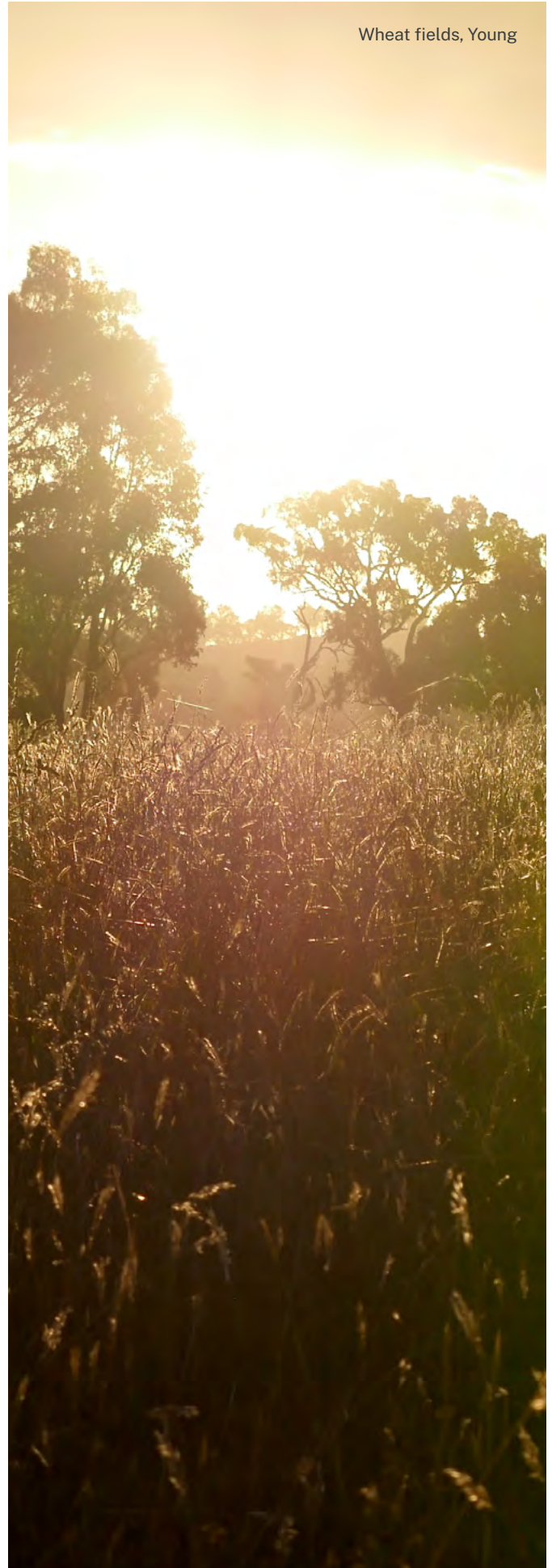
Strategy 10.4

Proposals for new development, or proposals to expand existing mines are to demonstrate and justify the proposed cumulative impact of the development within the region on:

- threatened, endangered and critically endangered species and habitat,
- environmental health outcomes such as water availability and quality, and air quality, and
- the availability of the extracted material across the state and opportunities to provide alternative supply through circular economy practices,

against the state, regional and local economic benefit generated by the development.

Wheat fields, Young



Leveraging diverse economic identities

Potential indicator(s):

- Increased growth in the value (contribution) of the priority growth sectors to the regional economy.
- Increased jobs in strategic centres and clusters.

Objective 11

Realise economic benefits from a connected regional economy

Objective 12

Promote a year-round visitor economy

Objective 13

Promote innovation and sustainability in agriculture and aquaculture industries

Objective 14

Support the development of a circular economy

Objective 15

Promote business and employment opportunities in strategic locations

Objective 16

Support industries to integrate operations and digital solutions

OBJECTIVE 11:

Realise economic benefits from a connected regional economy

Port, Eden



The South East and Tablelands region's diverse economy is underpinned by connections to Canberra and Sydney and varied agriculture and tourism opportunities. It is a hub for renewable energy generation, and its nature-based tourism, including skiing, surfing and bushwalking, attracts increasing numbers of domestic and international visitors.

The region's prosperity relies on an efficient transport network, a healthy rural and natural environment, and a collaborative relationship with the ACT. Developing the Canberra Region Economic Development Strategy (CREDS) is a key initiative of the ACT-NSW MoU. This document will define a coordinated approach to activate economic development opportunities within the 'Canberra region'.

Priority growth sectors

- Tourism
- Agriculture and aquaculture
- Knowledge based industries
- Emerging technology, manufacturing, freight and logistics
- Health care, disability and aged care
- Public administration and defence
- Education and training
- Renewable energy

Leveraging strategic assets

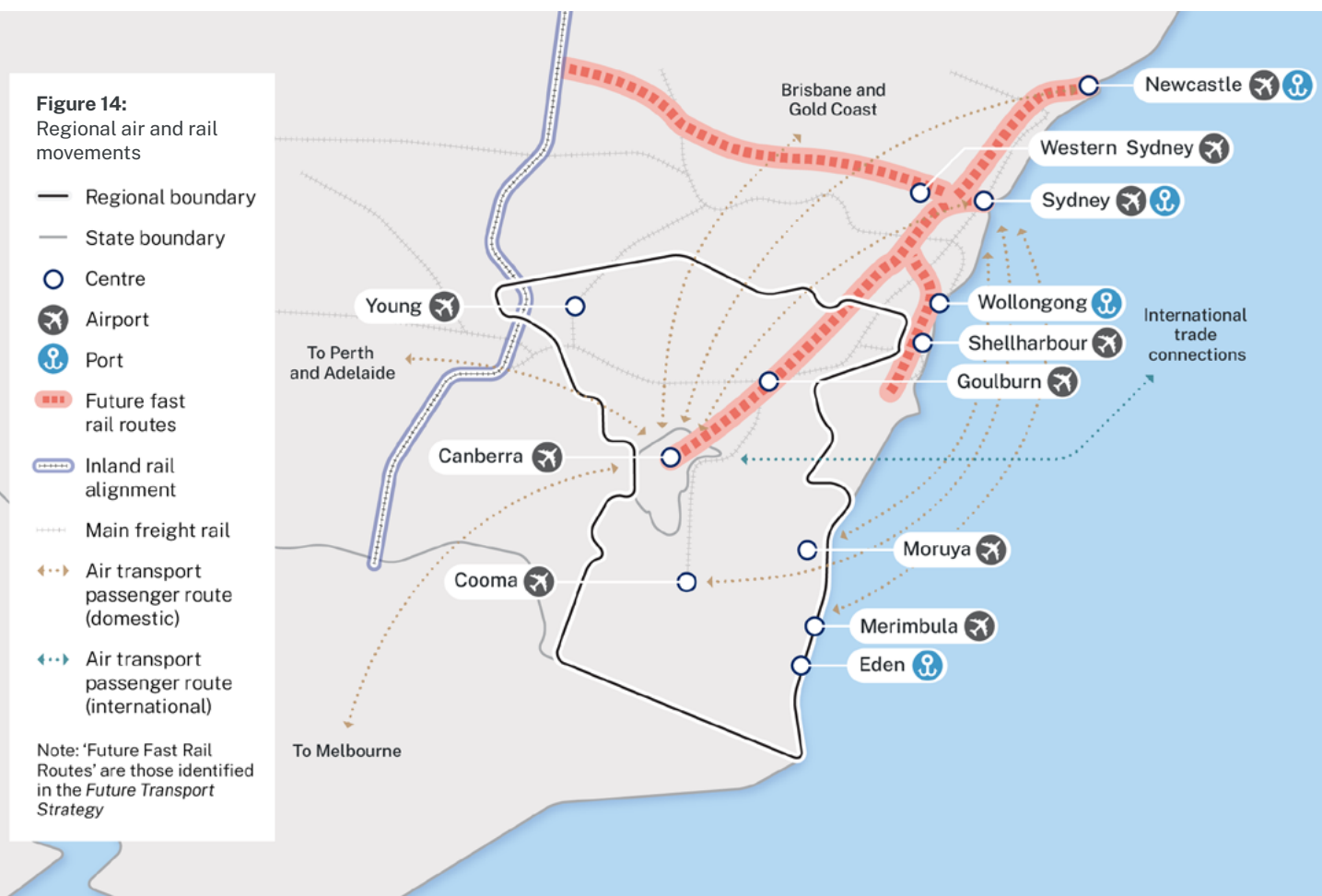
Canberra Airport can drive economic growth as there is no aircraft noise curfew and international services are unconstrained. The passenger terminal has capacity to offer more services, and the master planned freight precinct offers an alternative to Sydney's Kingsford Smith Airport.

The airport's ongoing ability to operate and expand its services cannot be jeopardised by residential development.

Networking Canberra Airport's international operations into the region's other airports will increase exposure to other markets. Linking air-based transit to other assets, including the inland rail line and the Hume Highway, provide significant opportunities to strengthen inter-regional supply chains. It is acknowledged that other opportunities such as the reopening of the Blayney to Demondrille Rail line is a priority for Hilltops Council.

Access to other global gateways, such as the Port of Eden, can provide greater exposure to national and international tourism and export markets.²³ Improved connections to the Ports of Port Kembla, Port Botany and the Port of Melbourne will provide a competitive advantage.

The new Western Sydney International Airport will create an important aviation, innovation and business hub. The employment lands at Goulburn or the Southern Highlands Innovation Park can take advantage of this growth and investment, and offer strategic development opportunities.



Building the economic potential of renewable energy

The NSW Government's *Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap* provides a coordinated framework for a modern electricity system for NSW and a plan to transform to a cheap, clean and reliable energy sector. Major projects like the Hume Link and Energy Connect will increase the capacity of electrical infrastructure in the region to support increased renewable energy.

Renewable energy zones are modern-day power stations that combine renewable energy generation such as wind and solar, battery and high-voltage poles and wires. By connecting multiple generators and storage in the same area, renewable energy zones capitalise on economies of scale to provide cheap, reliable and clean electricity.

While the region is not identified as an initial renewable energy zone, its established network of renewable energy services creates the opportunities for a new renewable energy zone to be declared. This would target key infrastructure upgrades to fill the gaps in areas such as transmission infrastructure and battery storage, for use in the region. Individual community and council led projects are supported to expand local renewable energy networks.

Supporting initiatives:

- Investigate the declaration of a renewable energy zone in the region.



Strategy 11.1

Strategic planning and local plans are to:

- protect Canberra Airport's current and future operations by maintaining restrictions on the location of nearby residential development
- plan for compatible and complementary economic development opportunities around the region's airports, including at Moruya and Merimbula
- identify projects and development incentives to promote the South East and Tablelands Region as a suitable place for businesses to relocate, particularly by identifying strategic freight, livestock and haulage transport route improvements in the Capital subregion.



OBJECTIVE 12:

Promote a year-round visitor economy

Visitors to the South East and Tablelands Region enjoy year-round access to mountains, coasts and rural hinterlands, as well as Canberra's world-class cultural institutions, such as the National Museum of Australia, the Australian War Memorial and the National Gallery of Australia. The *NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030* sets the guiding principles to inform the NSW Government's policy and investment in the visitor economy.



Tourism in the South East and Tablelands region brings

\$1.2 billion

to the regional economy each year²⁵

The region offers



Nature and adventure trails



Bountiful harvest
(land and water)



Authentic culture and heritage



Natural landscapes and waterways



Regional cruise



Tourism in the Snowy Mountains brings

\$500 million

to the regional economy each year²⁷

Regional economic impact

The Snowy Mountains, the south coast and the rural hinterland offer recreational experiences including food, wine and cultural trails. The industry was deeply impacted by the 2019-20 bushfires, followed by the COVID-19 pandemic which reduced international visitors and restricted the capacity and operation of tourism operators and cities. NSW Government's economic responses in the last 12 months have focused on regional travel, and the value of exploring the NSW 'backyard'.

The Snowy Mountains tourism market is geared towards winter, with more than half the visitation occurring during the 14-16 week peak snow period, making it the most seasonal tourism location in Australia. This extends to the region's visitor economy where average winter spend levels considerably outperform those in summer.

Investment as part of the Snowy Mountains SAP could see a step-change in non-winter visitation and position the precinct as a unique and compelling year-round, Australian alpine tourism destination. This could increase annual visitation from a wider range of domestic visitor markets and leverage international connections via Canberra.

Whilst the Snowy Mountains SAP is a primary driver of the regional visitor economy, the collection of activities, events and destinations across the region promote a broader seasonal variety. For example, food and wine trails throughout the LGAs of Yass Valley, Hilltops and Wingecarribee, promote year round visitor activity, whilst the Narooma Oyster Festival provides a significant seasonal boost to the regional economy – estimated \$3 million.

New tourism offerings such as nature based tourism, 'on Country' Aboriginal-led cultural activities, and adventure cycling, coupled with improved access to the area could provide a greater diversity of experiences for visitors. This is highlighted through the current investment in Mogo Trails as a nature based tourism opportunity on the far south coast. These offerings could also serve to strengthen economic opportunities for Aboriginal people and enable the joint management and utilisation of public land.

Complement rather than compete

The tourism industry in the region is centred on Canberra Airport's international links, along with proximity to the major population centres of Sydney, Canberra and the Illawarra. Western Sydney International Airport will provide another gateway for interstate and international visitors to the region.

This diversity of experiences makes the South East and Tablelands region an important component of the ACT's visitor economy. While there is a focus on the variety of experiences that attract people to different areas, these experiences are diverse and geographically separated, providing logistical challenges. This forces operators to compete with one another as domestic travellers focus on short duration overnight or weekend stays.

Improving the function of the tourism industry in the region requires a shift in mentality so that the region's tourism assets complement each other rather than compete. Initiatives through Destination Southern NSW's Tourism Assets Map will improve community knowledge of the region's offerings.

Strategic centres and clusters enable central access, supported by efficient transport connections, so that people can visit multiple destinations more easily. The number of days that visitors stay in the region is a key measure to establish whether tourism initiatives are successful. To service the additional tourism visits, it will be critical to provide appropriate housing for key and seasonal workers in proximity to their employment.

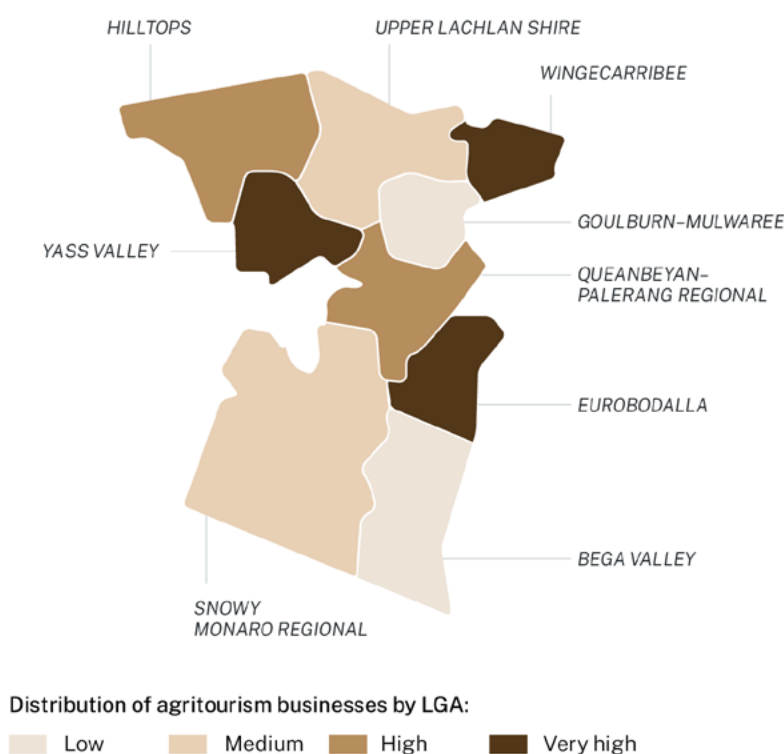
Growth in agritourism

Agritourism ventures such as farm stay accommodation, farm gate activities and farm events enable farmers to diversify and value-add to their existing farming enterprises. Income streams from these accommodations can also educate the community about farm activities. It is estimated that the industry contributes \$137 million to the regional economy.²⁵

However, agritourism may add complexity to rural land use conflict as it provides an experience for visitors close to potentially non-compatible commercial agriculture or rural industry, resulting in potential land use conflicts. This may include biosecurity, odour and air quality impacts.

Agritourism ventures may also expand faster than the provision of local infrastructure, creating further conflict. Therefore, any promotion of agritourism requires councils, the NSW Government and prospective agritourism businesses to minimise conflict with primary producers, rural residents and other commercial rural land uses. The *NSW Agritourism Policy* and associated legislated amendments provides guidance and appropriate planning pathways to manage and support new agritourism ventures.

Figure 15: Agritourism in the Region, Savour the Southern²⁵



Types of agritourism business in the region



Farmstay



Produce, farm gates and attractions



Wineries and distilleries

Agritourism contributes more than

650 jobs

Promoting a blue highway (marine-based tourism)

The South East and Tablelands region boasts two of the nine cruise ready ports of Destination NSW's Blue Highway strategy – Batemans Bay and Eden. These ports sit amongst boating harbours, marine parks and aquatic reserves that offer opportunities for recreational boating, water sports, fishing, and commercial charters and touring experiences, such as whale and dolphin watching.

The South East and Tablelands coastline can leverage the blue highway to increase the economic contribution of marine tourism and create jobs. The *NSW Marine Tourism Strategy* is a 20-year vision to realise the economic benefits of marine tourism that describes how government and industry can work together to develop, market and leverage marine tourism opportunities.

Investment in the following initiatives could provide benefits for the local and regional visitor economy when coupled with targeted investment in relevant infrastructure:

- activation of the network of harbours, beaches and riverfront – such as through implementation of the Batemans Bay Waterfront Master Plan and Activation Strategy.
- improving connections to, and the availability of infrastructure and services to access wildlife events – such as the migration of humpback and other whales or food journeys like the Oyster Trail.
- investment in landside infrastructure at the Port of Eden, including a cruise terminal, more diverse local tourism services and improved connections to Canberra Airport. Investigate solutions to address seasonal transport capacity shortages and promote increased use of public transport by tourists traveling to, from, and within the region, by:
 - improving visibility and awareness of existing services
 - modifying existing services to better meet current and future demand
 - considering new services to address gaps in the public transport network and to provide services on high-demand connections
 - investigate flexible and on-demand transport options to support the existing timetable-scheduled public transport services

Strategy 12.1



Promote cluster and place-based tourism projects that improve local and regional connectivity and user experience at key tourist destinations.

Strategy 12.2



Support new development that is consistent with and complements the final Snowy Mountains SAP master plan.

Strategy 12.3



Strategic planning and local plans are to:

- investigate the suitability of tourist and visitor accommodation and supporting land uses in strategic centres and the regions harbours and ports
- identify infrastructure that connects tourism destinations with each other, and outline how to optimise and improve their accessibility and quality
- reinforce Canberra as an enabler and driver of the region's tourism industry
- identify opportunities and barriers for agritourism, particularly in rural land strategies
- investigate opportunities to provide walking and cycling connections for short trips between destinations.

Action 10



Identify regional tourism networks and establish a roadmap to support their activation, including supporting infrastructure at and between key destinations.

Action 11



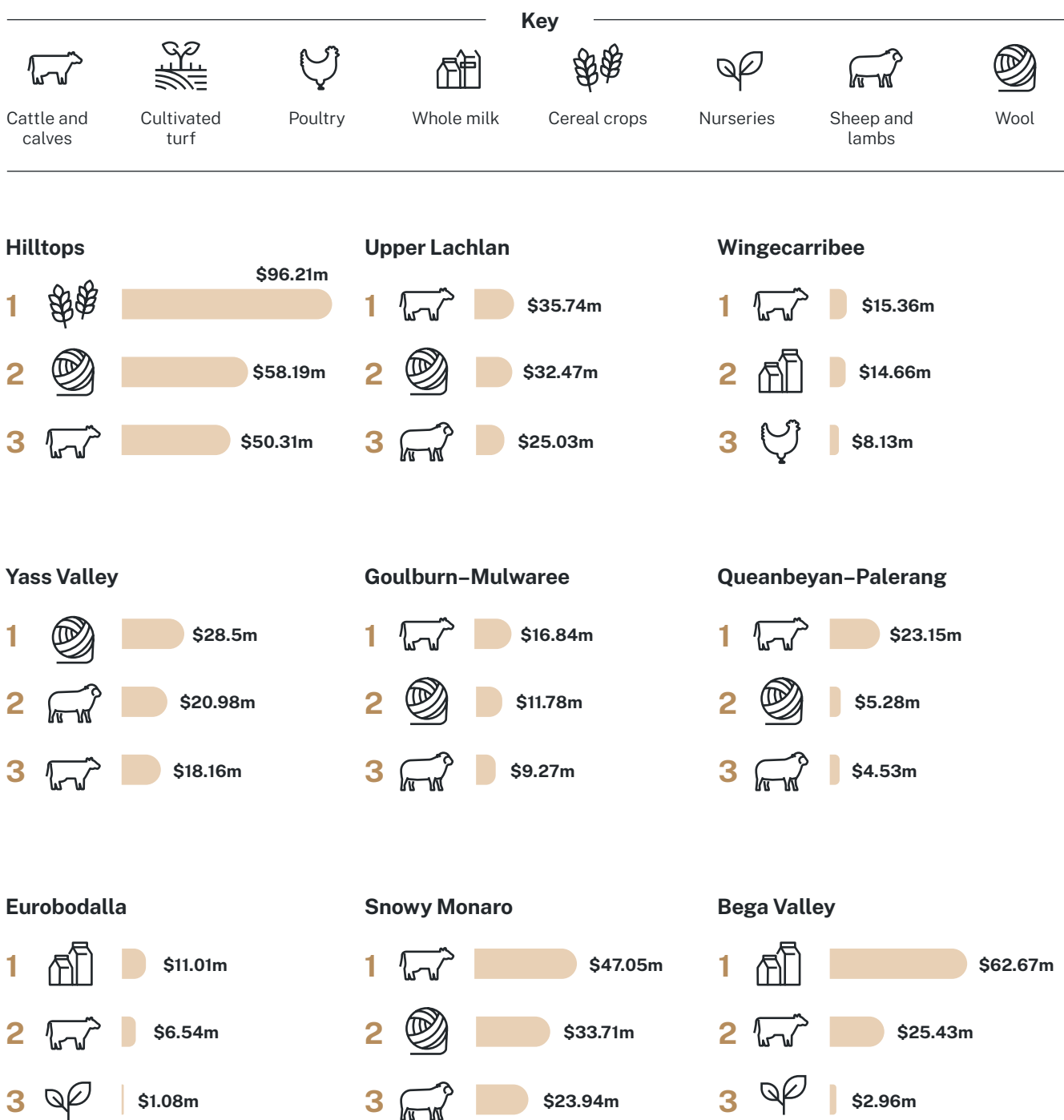
Work with the Canberra Region Joint Organisation, the Department of Primary Industries and the Environment Protection Authority to prepare a roadmap to support agritourism and marine-based tourism opportunities in the region.

OBJECTIVE 13:

Promote innovation and sustainability in agriculture and aquaculture industries

Agriculture is a collection of specific industries, including growers, breeders, processors and marketers. Most industries have a distinct supply chain and while agriculture is a broad term, it's the success of individual industries that cumulatively reflects the success of 'agriculture' in the region.

Figure 16: Top Three Contributors to Agricultural Production in the South East and Tablelands, 2020²⁴



Agriculture in the Region

The region's agricultural land offers favourable growing conditions and great access to export markets. With the introduction of connected and automated vehicles (CAVs) and Higher Productivity Vehicles (HPVs), the industry can help to increase food security while reducing food mileage. Land use conflicts between agricultural production and urban uses will need to be carefully managed.

The region also comprises a well-established network of small-scale producers of boutique foods and beverages such as truffles, processed meats and wines. These activities can promote regional tourism opportunities through farm stays, farm gate trails, food events and farmers markets in Young, Bungendore, Braidwood and Moruya.

Biosecurity risks also pose a threat to the region's productive agricultural land. These risks often occur as a result of trade, the spread of feral and exotic species, tourism, climate variability and competing priorities for resources. These issues can be managed by applying the recommendations of biosecurity plans in land use planning decisions.

The NSW Department of Primary Industries is mapping state significant agricultural land. Once the mapping is finalised, councils will consider it, as well as existing agricultural profiles for the region that identify secondary industries, as well as challenges and opportunities in strategic planning and local plans.

The NSW Government is reviewing the recommendations of the *Improving the Prospects for Agriculture and Regional Australia in the NSW Planning System* report, prepared by the NSW Agricultural Commissioner. The review will guide how state agencies and councils can respond to the recommendations.

Top 5 agricultural industries are beef, lamb (mutton), crops, wool and milk. These contribute

90% of all agricultural value in the Region²⁶



The microclimate suits **cherry production**, contributing

41% of the state production, mainly around Young²⁶



The region supplies more than

21% milk production²⁶



The region is a **seed potato growing region**, mainly around Crookwell

The value of agricultural production in the region was more than **\$1.1b** in 2019-20²⁷



The region contains

12% of all of NSW's farm businesses²⁷



Viticulture for cool climate wine also developing in the region



The region supplies nearly

19% of **lamb and mutton production**²⁶ and the state's total **wool production**



Canola crop near Goulburn, NSW



Productive agricultural lands often face competing pressures from urban development and other important industries which support the NSW economy. Forestry is an example of an industry in which the growth demands of the sector needs to be balanced with the availability of land for agricultural production. Rural lands strategies provide an important framework to identify how to balance these priorities. However, determining the suitability, timing and availability of land for each purpose requires collaboration and multi-lateral agreement across each level of government.

Aquaculture in the Region

The south coast's oysters, mussels and scallops enjoy an international reputation as being safe, sustainable and high quality. Aquaculture provides regional employment, tourism opportunities, food security and a reliable supply of quality fresh seafood for locals and international diners alike.

The NSW Government encourages the sustainable development of aquaculture through best management practices and has 3 sustainable aquaculture strategies in place that should be considered in strategic and statutory planning: *NSW Oyster Industry Sustainable Aquaculture Strategy Fourth Edition 2021*, the *NSW Marine Waters Sustainable Aquaculture Strategy* and the *NSW Land Based Sustainable Aquaculture Strategy*.

Aquaculture catchments in the region should be protected from urban development and other activities that could negatively impact water quality.

Opportunities for innovation and sustainability

Agricultural production and land management can contribute to net zero emissions by 2050. The industry has the potential to better embed sustainability in practice through greater consideration of:

- the impacts on waterways and ecosystems, and benefits of riparian rehabilitation on productivity and access to water in periods of drought
- the use of chemicals, including pesticides and fertilisers
- opportunities for biomass production
- sustainably powered vehicles and use of trains for mass haulage to reduce transport sector emissions
- emerging digital technologies and biotechnology to improve the productivity and quality of produce
- vehicle movements as part of the supply chain (including access to other complementary businesses in the area, waste management entities and freight movements to international markets).



Oyster farms, Batemans Bay
Credit: Destination NSW



Current **aquaculture** value
State wide is

\$98.4m
(2020/21)²⁸



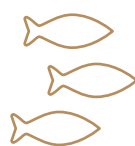
The **shellfish (oysters and mussels) industry** in NSW is worth

\$60m

with south coast businesses contributing 50% of this value²⁸



The production of **marine algae** is an emerging industry, subject to current leases being considered by the department



Known for inland aquaculture, including the farming of freshwater fish species such as **trout, Murray cod, barramundi and yabbies**²⁹

Carbon sequestration through soils on agricultural land could mitigate the impacts of climate change. However, effectively enabling this process, requires management actions such as stubble retention, maintaining ground cover, pasture phases in crop rotation, improving plant production through nutrient management and overcoming soil constraints such as soil acidity. This approach is supported by the NSW Local Land Services and NSW Department of Primary Industries (Agriculture).

There is also value in reducing the dependence on energy intensive transport from transporting agricultural goods to and from the region. Encouraging local food production and supply by having farmland close to towns and villages or encouraging farmers markets and community gardens, is more sustainable.

The NSW Government has committed \$206 million over the next 10 years to a Sustainable Farming Program. The program will support farmers who are taking action to improve biodiversity and reduce carbon emissions, while enhancing their long-term productivity and increasing their access to the market and other financial opportunities.

Transformative change in the agriculture sector requires further research into achieving:

- zero waste by encouraging circular economy principles on farms to meet zero waste principles
- carbon neutrality through carbon sequestration opportunities
- food as medicine providing a safe and nutritious food supply
- food production, anywhere, anytime
- agriculture resilience to climate, pests and diseases

Supporting initiatives:



- Implement relevant recommendations from the *Improving the Prospects for Agriculture and Regional Australia in the NSW Planning System* report.
- Work with councils and the Department of Primary Industries to establish a criteria for classifying rural and industrial zones and associated land uses across the region.
- Identify opportunities for the primary industries sector to adopt natural capital programs that will enhance nature, reduce emissions, increase productivity and facilitate new/diversified income streams.

- Work with councils, NSW Government agencies and the Commonwealth Department of Agricultural, Fisheries and Forestry to undertake a strategic assessment of the growth and infrastructure demands for the agricultural sector in the region, in the context of competing industries such as Forestry.
- Prepare and or update rural land strategies that are tailored to each area and assess:
 - relevant state, regional and local strategic planning policies and objectives
 - geographical and physical attributes of the land and its capacity to support productive rural uses including soil type, climate, vegetation cover, access to water, slope and drainage
 - agricultural trends and opportunities, including agricultural productivity and land use (such as agricultural activities, manufacturing and value-add industries, resource extraction, renewable and other energy), drivers of change, changes in farming practices and processes, and farm investment patterns
 - employment generated from rural industries
 - natural resources and environmental features and their importance, including sites of archaeological and cultural significance
 - environmental hazards that could affect how the land is used and developed, such as erosion, salinity, flooding and bushfire risk
 - settlement patterns and demographics of local communities in the area
 - existing lot sizes and land use patterns, including holding sizes and trends in land amalgamation
 - infrastructure capacities, constraints and thresholds for upgrades available for agriculture and other relevant land uses
 - how to protect agricultural land and rural industries from land use conflicts and fragmentation
 - areas for urban expansion and options to protect rural land uses until the expansion is realised.

Strategy 13.1

Strategic planning and local plans are to:

- protect identified state significant agricultural land and industries from incompatible or sensitive land uses, land use conflict and fragmentation
- protect assets and infrastructure such as freight, logistics and major rural industries from land use conflict and the encroachment of incompatible land use to facilitate investment in the agricultural supply chain
- identify opportunities for the clustering of compatible land uses
- identify opportunities for using land, particularly agricultural land, to sequester carbon in vegetation and soils, and to grow biomass for bioenergy
- avoid the impacts of development on aquatic habitats in freshwater systems and aquacultural estuaries
- promote opportunities to better connect the aquaculture industry to export markets
- manage water availability, enhance waterways and protect water sources.

Strategy 13.2

Changes to rural zones and/or lot sizes are to be justified by a rural lands strategy (or the like) endorsed by council and the department, which:

- sets a vision for rural land uses
- identifies key natural, cultural and economic assets
- analyses opportunities and constraints to the use and development of rural land, including any potential land use conflicts and proposed responses
- establishes strategic directions, outcomes or policies for the management and development of rural areas
- incorporates consultation with state agencies, the community and industry groups
- includes implementation mechanisms, such as planning instruments and policies.

Cows near Tathra



OBJECTIVE 14:

Support the development of a circular economy

The region's transition to a circular economy will bring opportunities for new regional industries, employment and waste reduction, while reducing emissions and improving resilience. The region can benefit economically, socially and environmentally from waste resources by reusing, repairing, sharing and recycling waste, to turn materials into valuable resources and keep them in circulation in the economy.

Waste management influences

The *NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041* and *Circular Economy Policy Statement Too Good to Waste* guide government decisions and resource use and management. The *NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041* includes reforms and targets to reduce waste to land fill and maximise efficiencies. Targets include:

- an 80% average recovery rate from all waste streams by 2030
- significantly increasing the use of recycled content by government and industry
- halving the amount of organic waste sent to landfill by 2030
- tripling the plastics recycling rate by 2030

This strategy will inform broader regional approaches to waste and resource management.

State agencies, councils, and industry bodies should explore strategies to promote greater community awareness and acceptance of recycling and re-use, beyond current land fill practice, in the context of these targets. A targeted approach will identify how land use planning can support a circular economy by encouraging complementary businesses to co-locate, local waste collection and efficiencies in the road network.

Waste from natural disasters is a significant issue given the increased frequency of events. This is both a challenge for waste management but also an opportunity for better waste capture and processing.

Of the 66 natural disaster declarations in NSW between 2018-19-2020-21, 18 impacted the region and 11 impacted both Bega Valley and Eurobodalla Shire Councils²⁰. Even though each LGA in the

region was impacted to varying levels, the outcome increased pressure on waste management services with several council operated landfill sites reaching capacity or expected to do so soon.

Establishing circular economy models across the region

Bega Circular Valley Initiative

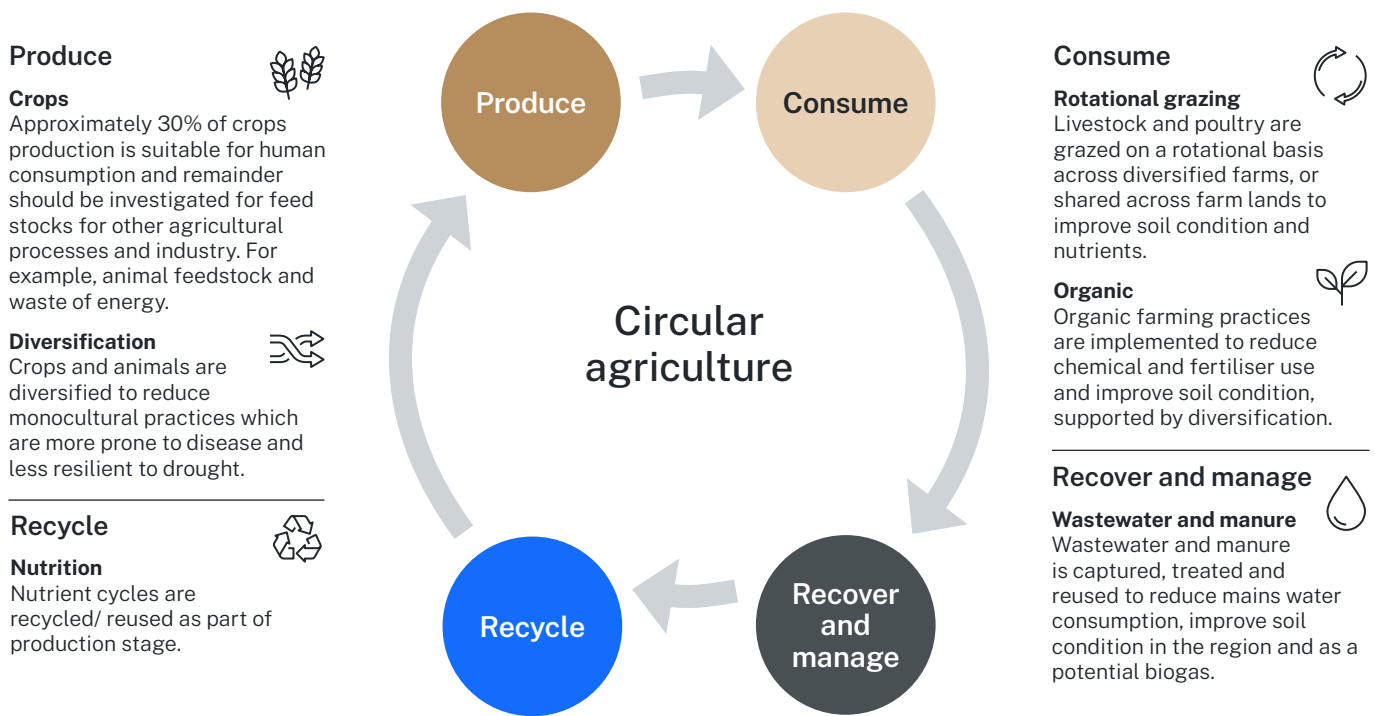
The Bega Valley is an ideal location for a circular economy project, as its contained location enables the measurement of the impact on all natural and man-made resources. The project is a jointly funded \$100m initiative between private enterprise, the community and the NSW government. It includes small and large businesses, universities and international expertise. The initial focus will be on agriculture and aquaculture as these are the area's strengths. Key priority enabling projects include:

- establishing a Bega Valley circular co-operative
- Bega biodiversity and carbon trading desk
- on farm smart water storage network
- Bega smart food and logistics program
- regional circularity baseline assessment of material flows.

Agriculture is a heavy greenhouse gas emitter. Improved agricultural practices can reduce emissions, as can the transition to regenerative agricultural practices, such as increased crop and animal diversity, composting crop residue and organic matter, and improving grazing practices.

To support an agricultural circular economy model for the region, the following key agricultural inputs could be considered as shown in Figure 14 with the aim of utilising and recovering resources at all stages.

This model could be extended, to encompass a systems approach that includes sectors such as renewable energy, water, waste and transport.

Figure 17: The circular economy in the agriculture sector²⁰**Strategy 14.1** 

Strategic planning (including waste and materials strategies) and local plans are to consider:

- the development of a circular economy and opportunities for industrial symbiosis, including engaging with neighbouring regions to leverage opportunities to access land, materials and markets
- disaster waste planning, including the identification of:
 - potential waste streams from each disaster type (bushfire, flood, landslide, urban fire, earthquake, severe storms)
 - temporary sites for collection and sorting of waste
 - increasing the sorting capabilities of council waste facilities to cater for disaster waste
 - investigating shared waste sorting facilities between councils to maximise efficiencies.
- opportunities to reduce the transporting waste off-site
- opportunities to raise community awareness of circular economy approaches, including the scope, benefits and cost implications.

Supporting initiatives: 

- Demonstrate innovative approaches at the site and precinct planning stages to improve waste management approaches and local waste collection systems.
- Provide an education program for community and business on how to establish circular economy practices, based on existing case studies and examples such as the Bega Valley Circular Initiative.

Action 12 

Develop a circular economy strategy for the region that identifies initiatives to address barriers and opportunities in priority growth sectors (employment industries), in transitioning to a circular economy, as guided by the principles set by the *NSW Government Circular Economy Policy Statement*.

OBJECTIVE 15:

Promote business and employment opportunities in strategic locations

Bowral



As industries diversify and adapt in response to climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic, the employment functions of strategic centres and clusters can support local activation and the regional economy. This may involve enabling a mixture of land uses in certain areas to integrate suitable business, office, residential, tourism, retail, education and other uses that maximise public transport use, walking and cycling.

Looking to 2041, strategic centres and clusters will be the focus for more intensive employment uses and public space improvements, as well as technology and transport connections to Canberra and Sydney. This will encourage investment, housing, job opportunities and services. Local centres also drive the regional economy and provide complementary services to support resident, visitor and worker populations.

Strategic centres, clusters and emerging employment areas

The strategic centres and clusters in the region influence local employment and business growth. The COVID-19 pandemic has seen more people relocating to regional areas given home-based working arrangements and the increased home-delivery capabilities of businesses. People are attracted to the historic buildings and tree-lined streets that create a unique character and sense of place.

This character provides a backdrop to community activation, and is essential to the region's identity, tourism and regional economy. It has also promoted activity in hospitality and retail sectors, particularly during weekdays.

Societal change has enabled new bespoke small businesses, and retail and office-based activities are needed in strategic centres and clusters. These uses should be promoted where they:

- complement retail supply and demand, innovation and digital trends in the retail sector
- maximise public transport and community facilities commensurate with the scale of the proposal and
- enhance public areas

Targeted events and programs such as market stall events, information seminars and the temporary closure of streets can improve the reach of small businesses, increase foot traffic to shop fronts and promote activity in centres. Councils can maintain the viability of existing centres by prioritising precinct planning and placemaking initiatives for local centres in local strategic planning statements.

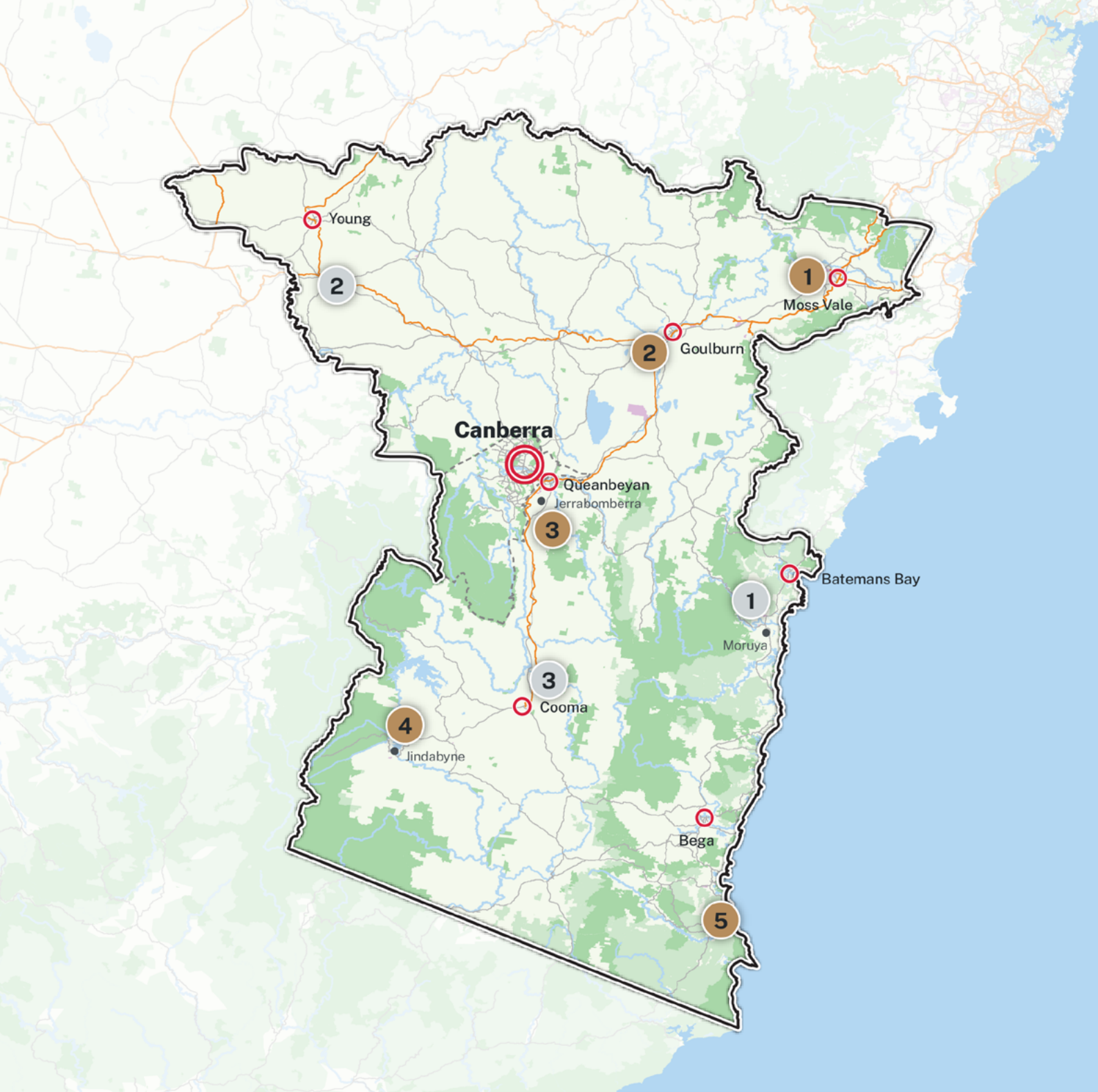


Figure 18: Regional employment investigation areas

- Regional boundary
- Australian Capital Territory boundary
- Metropolitan city
- Strategic centre
- Centre
- Railway
- Road

- Employment land
- National park and reserve
- State forest
- Water body

REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT EMPLOYMENT AREAS

- 1 Southern Highlands Innovation Park
- 2 South Goulburn Enterprise Corridor
- 3 South Jerrabomberra Regional Job Precinct
- 4 Snowy Mountains Special Activation Precinct
- 5 Snug Cove Maritime Precinct

REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT INVESTIGATION AREAS

- 1 North Moruya Industrial area
- 2 Cunningar Employment Precinct
- 3 Polo Flat Industrial Precinct

Regionally significant employment areas

- 1 Southern Highlands Innovation Park**
Formerly known as the Moss Vale Enterprise Corridor, the Southern Highlands Innovation Park presents an opportunity to capitalise on the growth of Western Sydney and the LGA by attracting specialised industries in manufacturing and technology.
- 2 South Goulburn Enterprise Corridor**
A 144 ha precinct comprising of a mix of accommodation, general industrial, small business, warehousing and manufacturing. Underutilised and vacant land has the potential to leverage existing servicing and access to the Hume Highway.
- 3 South Jerrabomberra Regional Job Precinct**
Leveraging opportunities associated with the Poplars innovation precinct, defence, space, cyber-security, information technology and scientific research sectors will grow to leverage access to the ACT through Queanbeyan.
- 4 Snowy Mountains Special Activation Precinct**
Moving to a year round visitor economy, the precinct will provide opportunities for established and emerging businesses to diversify and attract industry investment that are resilient to seasonal changes – i.e., through arts, culture and entertainment offerings.
- 5 Snug Cove Maritime Precinct**
Snug Cove Maritime Precinct within the Port of Eden is continuing to transform into a major destination for tourist and commercial boaters on the South Coast. Continued investment in the Port will promote maritime safety, reliability and accessibility for all users to improve its activation for long term economic success.

Regional employment investigation areas

- 1 North Moruya Industrial Area**
Growth in the industrial area will leverage access to the future Moruya Bypass to provide local jobs and access to strategic inter-regional transport connections.
- 2 Cunningar Employment Precinct**
Located 5km east of Harden, along the Sydney to Melbourne Main Southern Railway Line, the Cunningar Grain Transfer Station provides 24 hour rail cycle times to Port Kembla for export to international and various domestic market. It also provides the potential to accommodate regional scale logistics and manufacturing industries that can capitalise on proximity to major agricultural production as well as national freight networks.
- 3 Polo Flat Industrial Precinct**
Polo Flat is Snowy Monaro's largest industrial precinct with 134ha of zoned land. The precinct provides opportunities for industrial; manufacturing and production land uses to support key investment and projects in the southern extent of the region, such as Snowy 2.0.

Regional job precincts

Regional Job Precincts deliver faster planning approvals to provide local councils, regional communities, industry and businesses with greater confidence around future investment and development.

Regional Job Precincts, such as South Jerrabomberra, provide the framework to enable growth in jobs and innovation through the resolution of planning barriers.

The NSW Government will work closely with local councils to build on the long-term strategic planning work already done at a state and local level, to streamline planning processes and make it easier for businesses to set-up or expand.

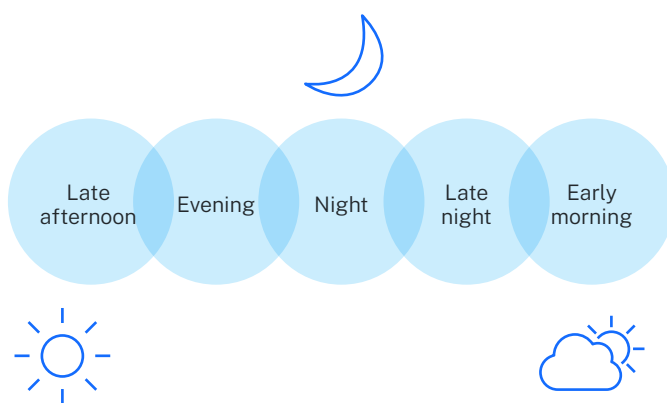
Expanding the 24-hour economy

- Support small business entrepreneurs through the approval process
- Review operating hours of public transport, shopping districts, and community facilities
- Support street markets and footpath dining and activation of the streets and public domain
- Extend hours of recreation, cultural and community facilities
- Invest in outdoor lighting at skateparks, ovals or sporting facilities
- Work with NSW Police and councils to ensure safe night-time environments

24 hour economy

With the rigidity of a typical working day being relaxed across sectors in response to COVID-19, we need to rethink how towns and main streets function over 24 hours. The night-time economy promotes more dining out, entertainment and hospitality. Industries like transport and logistics, cleaning, education, manufacturing, retail and health care also employ workers that work through the night.

Supporting small business and night-time activities will attract visitors and grow the visitor economy. Greater flexibility in operational hours and the interaction between shopfronts and streets supports a safe and flourishing economy and community life from late afternoon to early morning.



Industry clustering

New rural industries such as distilleries, vineyards and local produce or food-based markets create revenue streams and generate local agricultural or tourism jobs. These industries can provide a distinct visitor experience and enhance the competitive positioning of a destination. Agriculture and aquaculture-based industries are limited by geography, based on the land and water required for operations. They are typically concentrated in set locations and interact across a collective of primary producers.

Other employment-based land uses, such as manufacturing, industry and research facilities, should be clustered with complementary and similar land uses to protect public amenity and safety. The investigation of new employment areas in the region should be prioritised and their purpose identified, drawing from the lessons from Regional Job Precincts, including at South Jerrabomberra.

Better understanding the relationships between employment clusters and freight networks will support future infrastructure investments to improve efficiency and collaboration between businesses in the region.

Supporting initiatives:

- Analyse the relationships and gaps in freight movement networks between employment clusters to improve efficiencies.
- Develop 24-hour economy strategies, including supporting implementation initiatives.



Strategy 15.1 

Strategic planning and local plans are to:

- enhance the function of commercial centres by:
 - simplifying planning controls
 - developing active city streets that retain local character
 - facilitating a range of uses within centres in response to the changing retail environment
 - maximising public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure and community facilities
- for strategic centres and clusters:
 - identify the intended future land uses, infrastructure and built form outcomes for the area
 - promote the night-time economy, in strategic centres and town centres where night-time public transport options are available
 - improve access, inclusion and safety, and make public areas welcoming for consumers and workers
 - diversify the range and availability of activities, including extending opening hours for shops, cafes, libraries, galleries and museums.

Strategy 15.2 

Proposals for new retail development are to demonstrate how they respond to retail supply and demand needs, identify innovations in the sector and maximise the use of existing and planned infrastructure, while enhancing the value of the public realm.

Strategy 15.3 

Future commercial and retail activity is to be concentrated in existing commercial centres unless there is a demonstrated need and positive social and economic benefits to locate this activity elsewhere.

Strategy 15.4 

Support development that is aligned with South Jerrabomberra Regional Job Precinct masterplan.

Action 13 

Investigate the Southern Highlands Innovation Park as a regionally significant employment precinct, including the completion of necessary land use and infrastructure planning.

Action 14 

Work with the councils to prepare and or update employment land strategies and profiles for regionally significant employment areas which set an action plan for the application of rural and transition zones.

OBJECTIVE 16:

Support industries to integrate operations and digital solutions

Technology helps businesses to realise efficiencies in how they engage with customers, manufacture products, supply goods and connect to international markets. These tools are an important enabler for the growth and improved productivity in the region.

Research and smart cities approaches

Smart cities focus on utilising data and digital technology to make better decisions and improve outcomes. Whilst normally considered in the context of technology, smart cities focus on relationships and building meaningful inputs. This approach is guiding change in NSW as part of the *NSW Smart Places Strategy* to support how our economy responds to climate change and other megatrends affecting society.

Smart city thinking is often scaled into business operations: for example, farmers and producers utilise technology in the form of satellite and communication systems, to manage crop production, storage and freight. This can build knowledge of seasonal change and efficiencies in the logistics network.

Enhancing the value of these approaches, working with Aboriginal communities and local Aboriginal knowledge holders through joint economic ventures, could revolutionise conventional farming, setting a benchmark in agricultural practice.

Forming partnerships between community, industry, businesses, the public sector and research organisations will also enable progressive and innovative change, particularly as agricultural practices are adapted in the context of climate change. This is illustrated in the partnerships between tertiary institutions and the CSIRO at their facility in Boorowa.

Realising the benefits for communities

Businesses are reaching more customers online and e-commerce is increasing demand for warehouse and logistic properties to accommodate automated warehousing.

Improvements in e-commerce and digital connectivity will continue to provide a strong base for small and boutique businesses to showcase different skills and products. This provides opportunities for farmers to sell products directly to the public, which can provide alternative revenue streams, increase competitiveness in the market or save logistics and freight.

Technology is improving the way people learn and access information, particularly in remote settings. The ability to learn technical and professional skills online will improve workforce skills and allow more people to live outside of cities. Remote working capacity means people can live in the region and work for companies based anywhere. However, improvements to digital connectivity (internet and telecommunications) is a significant barrier to residents accessing these opportunities.

Despite this change, shop front or face-to-face business models will not be replaced by digital services; rather, digital services complement physical premises, allowing businesses to expand their potential.

Supporting initiatives:



- Partner and engage with Aboriginal communities and knowledge holders to enhance industry practice, particularly in priority growth sectors such as agriculture and aquaculture.
- Encourage partnerships between key research bodies and the public sector to improve information and data sharing.
- Improve telecommunications services (internet and telecommunications) in the region's towns and villages.

Strategy 16.1



Locate new warehouse and logistics developments to optimise existing utilities and road and rail networks.

Strategy 16.2



Ensure digital connectivity (internet and telecommunications) is available and meets local consumer demands to enable people and businesses to work and operate remotely.

Planning for fit for purpose housing and services

Potential Indicator(s):

- Increased housing completions, particularly medium density infill development.
- Increased completions of temporary worker, seasonal, social and affordable housing developments.
- Increased availability, capacity and access to essential goods and services in strategic centres and clusters.
- Increased percentage of dwellings located within 30 minutes of a strategic centre and/or cluster.

Objective 17

Plan for a supply of housing in appropriate locations

Objective 18

Plan for more affordable, low-cost and social housing

Objective 19

Improve the quality, resilience and sustainability of housing

Objective 20

Manage rural living

Objective 21

Provide efficient access to infrastructure and services



OBJECTIVE 17:

Plan for a supply of housing in appropriate locations

A mix of well-planned infill, greenfield and rural residential development is essential for the region. Infill housing takes advantage of existing infrastructure and services, increases the viability of public and active transport, and protects valuable agricultural and environmental land – it is a more sustainable option.

Planning for a housing pipeline

The region's population characteristics are forecast to undergo change. Underlying demand for additional housing is based on the NSW population projections – from this we believe:

- Average household size is forecast to decrease from 2.37 people per dwelling in 2016 to 2.23 in 2041, influenced by changing household composition as the population ages.⁵ A mix of smaller, low maintenance dwellings will be required.
- The number of couple and single households is forecast to increase by 40% and 48% respectively as children leave the family home, resulting in a forecast growth in potential dwellings from 145,394 in 2021 to 184,986 in 2041.⁵

Planning for affordable, quality homes in the right locations also requires planning for greater housing diversity to attract and retain younger residents while supporting people who want to stay in their local area as they get older. These factors are further extrapolated for those working in healthcare, education and other services.

Initiatives such as the regional housing taskforce, and the ACT NSW Land and Housing Monitor will support planning for new residential development and identify key barriers in land use and infrastructure planning.

Local housing strategies

Local housing strategies are important tools for councils to link their vision for housing with objectives and targets to ensure considerations of demographic factors, local housing supply and demand, and land constraints are factored into the broader housing pipeline. Local housing strategies, or other similar policies such as settlement strategies, have been prepared for all councils in the region. The following strategies are in place for each LGA (note, some may not be endorsed by the department):

- *Bega Valley Residential Land Strategy 2040 (2020)*
- *Eurobodalla Settlement Strategy 2036 (2019)*
- *Goulburn Mulwaree Urban Fringe and Housing Strategy (2020)*
- *Hilltops Rural and Residential Study (2019)*
- *Queanbeyan Residential and Economic Strategy 2031 (2015)*
- *Snowy Monaro Draft Settlement Strategy (2020)*
- *Upper Lachlan Draft Housing Strategy (2019)*
- *Wingecarribee Local Housing Strategy (2021)*
- *Yass Valley Settlement Strategy 2036 (2019)*

Regional Housing Taskforce

Responds to increasing pressures on the supply and affordability of housing in regional NSW. Consults with relevant experts and stakeholders to investigate planning barriers and address regional housing.



Regional Housing Fund

Established to fast-track supply of development ready land and to deliver more homes. It will:

- unblock and accelerate new housing capacity in regional NSW
- bring forward construction and jobs and economic activity in the short to medium term
- support investment in critical development infrastructure and quality public and open spaces.



Regional Housing Development Program

A longer-term response to regional housing issues that will, over the next 4 years:

- establish a transparent and certain housing supply pipeline in regional NSW
- enable urban development programs for key growth areas and prioritise housing infrastructure
- create a comprehensive regional data and analysis platform to track performance and housing trends
- support strategic planning investigations and technical studies that provide greater certainty and confidence for housing delivery, while reducing the risk of delay
- enable investigation and review of planning policy reforms in a regional NSW context

Vision

To deliver a 10 year pipeline of housing supply in Regional NSW to improve liveability and supercharge economic development

Program Streams

- Housing Data & Analytics
- Identify & Monitor Housing Targets
- Strategic Planning & Technical Studies
- Urban Development Programs
- Policy Reform

Housing, Goulburn
Credit: Destination NSW





Focusing on centres

Strategic centres are a logical focus for growth and investment, given they are often well serviced by utilities, public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure, education, health and community infrastructure, as well as shopping, community and commercial services.

Currently, most of the region's growth is occurring in the Capital subregion. To support existing investment, new development should integrate a mix of uses, promoting greater access to jobs close to where people live and density in areas serviced by existing infrastructure.

As demand for growth in centres rises, careful planning is required to resolve infrastructure barriers prior to enabling additional residential development – this is particularly important for Yass. Similarly, planning for housing growth in strategic clusters needs to consider how existing services in surrounding local networks can support local infill development, while protecting high environmental value land.

Improving housing diversity and density

Housing diversity includes aspects such as lot sizes, the number of bedrooms and accessibility for seniors, students or people with a disability. People may need homes of a certain size, configuration, accessibility or location – housing diversity gives more people more options at different stages of life.

In 2021, around 85% of all dwellings in the region were single detached houses.³⁰ While primarily in rural areas, existing centres could be suitable for appropriate medium density housing products. Careful design can ensure additional density does not compromise the character and amenity of the region's towns and villages.

With this in mind, and in the context of a growing population, promoting greater housing diversity and density will be critical for the Queanbeyan and Goulburn strategic centres, as well as the centres within the Southern Highlands strategic cluster. Other centres identified as areas of strategic investigation, should consider this in line with their respective centres hierarchy and infrastructure capacity.

Smaller homes with fewer bedrooms can support lower cost and lower maintenance lifestyles. Demand for this type of housing is expected to increase given the expected higher proportion of single-person and couple-only households. This type of housing will then enable younger families to move into established larger homes.

Focus for more housing density

**Supporting initiatives:**

- Implement the findings of the regional housing taskforce, including the identification of housing targets for strategic centres and clusters, and identified urban investigation areas as part of providing more certainty about where, when and what types of homes are planned to be built.

Strategy 17.1

Updates to local housing strategies are to be consistent with the *Local Housing Strategy guideline* and are to consider:

- transitional areas between neighbourhoods, and conflicting land uses, such as industrial or agriculture
- existing services that can cater for an increase in population (i.e. social infrastructure, education and health) and encourage walking and cycling
- areas with proximity to road infrastructure and public transport (where available)
- protection of high environmental value land, risk from natural hazards and land constraints
- impacts to health and wellbeing, including the cumulative impacts of air quality
- provision of affordable and social housing as part of new developments, including mixed tenure opportunities
- lower density areas, with capacity for renewal or additional density.

Strategy 17.2

Strategic planning and local plans are to:

- focus new housing development in existing centres, where supported by strategic land use plans such as local housing strategies
- consider the suitability of vacant government owned land for housing
- identify suitable provisions to encourage and incentivise medium density housing (excluding single detached dwellings) and housing for workers in essential services industries
- ensure the potential impacts of existing industrial and agricultural uses, such as on air quality, noise and water quality, are considered when planning for new housing or other sensitive land uses.

Action 15

Prepare a place strategy for the Batemans Bay Strategic Cluster to coordinate strategic planning and infrastructure decisions.

Action 16

Work with councils to prepare place-based masterplans for each strategic centre and clusters, focused on: projected population growth, infill residential growth targets and infrastructure provision, walking, cycling and public transport access, protection of heritage, cultural assets and environment, access to employment.

OBJECTIVE 18:

Plan for more affordable, low-cost and social housing

Affordable housing is part of the housing tenure continuum, and means that households with low or very low incomes have somewhere to live.

State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing) 2021 provides mechanisms for councils to investigate and develop affordable housing contributions schemes to increase the availability of dedicated affordable housing in their LGA.

Housing 2041: NSW Housing Strategy

Housing 2041 sets a long-term vision and objectives for better housing outcomes across NSW. The strategy will benefit people across the housing spectrum, from those temporarily without a home to those seeking housing that better suits their needs.

The strategy also acknowledges that people and households move back and forth along the spectrum depending on life events, aspirations and capacity.

Improving housing affordability

The cost of housing can be influenced by planning processes, design standards and market responses. We have many opportunities to recognise the role of low-cost housing in regional areas and the ways of achieving how it can be provided – for example, by designing homes with fewer bedrooms or car parking spaces, smaller lots or on strata title. This type of housing can be purchased or rented.

Low-cost housing types can be achieved in the conventional housing market without the need for ongoing management and without impacting the financial feasibility of other development. Low-cost housing types also remain relatively low cost in perpetuity, unlike some affordable housing dwellings, which revert to market rates after a period of time (usually, 10 years).

Statutory plans and development control plans can include stringent development controls that add to the cost development. Alternative methods, such as qualitative based performance criteria, can provide opportunities for development to respond in innovative ways, with the potential to reduce costs to homeowners.

Affordable, community and social housing providers

The NSW Government provides social and affordable housing through the Land and Housing Corporation and the Aboriginal Housing Office.

Land and Housing Corporation builds and renews social housing. Social housing is secure and affordable rental housing for people on low incomes with housing needs. It includes public, community and Aboriginal housing.

In 2022, the region had 1,974 public housing dwellings and 1,553 community housing dwellings. Median wait times to access social housing have slowly been dropping across NSW, however, more work will be needed in the future to address the anticipated growth and ageing of the region's population.

The Department of Family and Community Services is preparing a 20-year plan to address the social housing needs, including homelessness, in the region. The plan will consider current and required social housing assets and the resources needed to meet any social housing targets.

The NSW Aboriginal Housing Office plans for affordable, quality housing for Aboriginal people in NSW, recognising that secure, affordable housing can help to address disadvantage and provide opportunities for Aboriginal people. The Aboriginal Housing Office is jointly funded by the NSW and Australian governments to administer the State's Aboriginal community housing assets. It has approximately 6,000 homes in NSW. Of these, 277 homes are located within the South East and Tablelands region, mostly within the Eurobodalla, Bega and Queanbeyan–Palerang LGAs.

Work is underway to build 8 new homes in Eden ranging from 2-bed accessible units through to large 5-bed family homes. Further investment in new homes in Moruya and Young is planned for the coming years. These initiatives support in working towards Closing the Gap target 9 – that by 2031 there is an 88% increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) housing.¹¹

Community housing providers

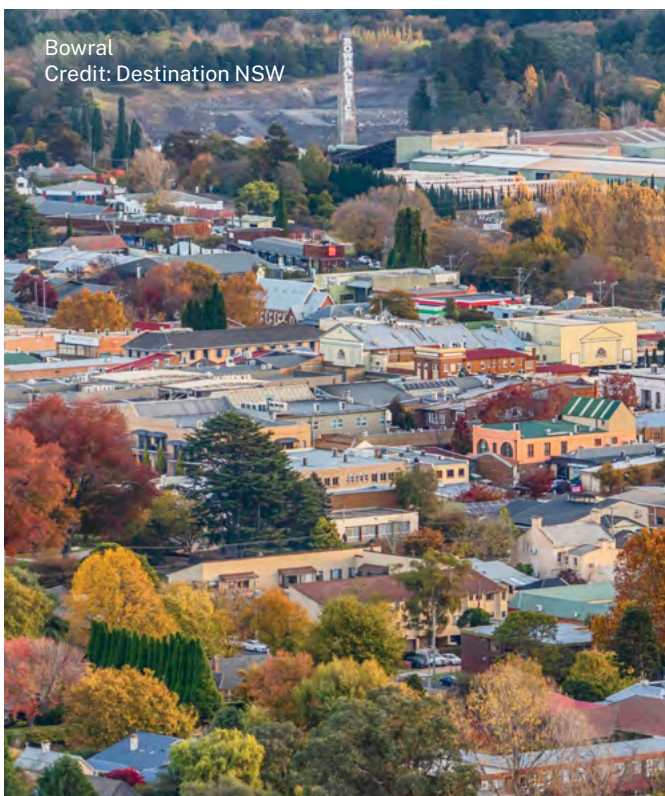
The Southern Youth and Family Service provides accommodation and support to homeless and vulnerable people and their families in the form of housing, health, education and employment. It operates in the Capital subregion and along the far south coast.

There are opportunities for councils and state agencies to make it easier and simpler for housing models such as this by reducing assessment fees, fast-tracking assessment pathways or providing grant funding.

Providing for short term accommodation

Major projects and industries require temporary and permanent workers during construction and operation. These workers contribute to local economies and communities through direct and indirect employment opportunities and support growth and other investments across the region.

We are actively seeing significant housing stress in some towns and villages from an influx of temporary workers during the construction of large-scale developments, such as renewable energy projects, upgrades to main roads and highways, and investment in health infrastructure. The region also experiences an influx of seasonal and itinerant workers that support agricultural industries during harvest or sowing periods and the tourism industry on the coast and in the mountains.



In some instances, major project and seasonal housing needs are met locally, without analysis of any impacts, nor any remediation, which impacts the availability of housing for residents and tourism. However, considerations of the impacts of these developments and in particular short term accommodation for holiday letting, is important given their impact on local housing availability and affordability.

While land uses such as boarding houses, hostels, backpackers' accommodation, and caravan parks can attract seasonal and itinerant workers, any form of residential, tourist and visitor accommodation can support these workforces when planned effectively. Development bonuses and incentives, funding offsets and design flexibility can promote greater uptake of these uses, where infrastructure and services are, or can be readily available.

Strategic and statutory planning needs to ensure temporary workforces are accommodated to support local economic development. This requires a coordinated and ongoing process to understand the scale of major projects and seasonal workers, and where they will occur, to plan for the right types and locations of housing.

This can be addressed where projects that are likely to attract large numbers of permanent, temporary, seasonal and itinerant employment opportunities, consider:

- the anticipated impacts on local housing markets to ensure workers can access accommodation without impacting housing availability, visitor accommodation and
- housing options such as new permanent housing within nearby towns, temporary worker accommodation as part of the project if it is outside a safe commutable distance to the town, accommodation in nearby towns, or more permanent accommodation that could be re-purposed.

Supporting initiatives:



- Prepare planning guidance for councils to enable and manage affordable and seasonal workers housing.
- Work with Department of Regional NSW, joint organisations and councils to quantify housing demands from major projects and infrastructure investments to 2027, including mining, renewable energy, transmission, and road and rail projects.
- Identify opportunities to utilise government owned land to support the provision of additional social and affordable housing, including where partnerships may be possible with community housing providers.

Strategy 18.1

Strategic planning and local plans are to:

- identify suitable locations for social and affordable housing developments
- promote mixed tenure development outcomes for social, affordable and market housing, including outlining minimum density and dwelling mix requirements for new developments
- identify where opportunities exist to renew social housing and increase and diversify social housing stock
- include planning controls to support the provision of temporary, seasonal and itinerate employment workers
- ensure a minimum of 30 percent of dwellings developed on government owned land are dedicated as affordable or social housing
- include minimum affordable and social housing targets, including suitable development incentives to enable development.

Strategy 18.2

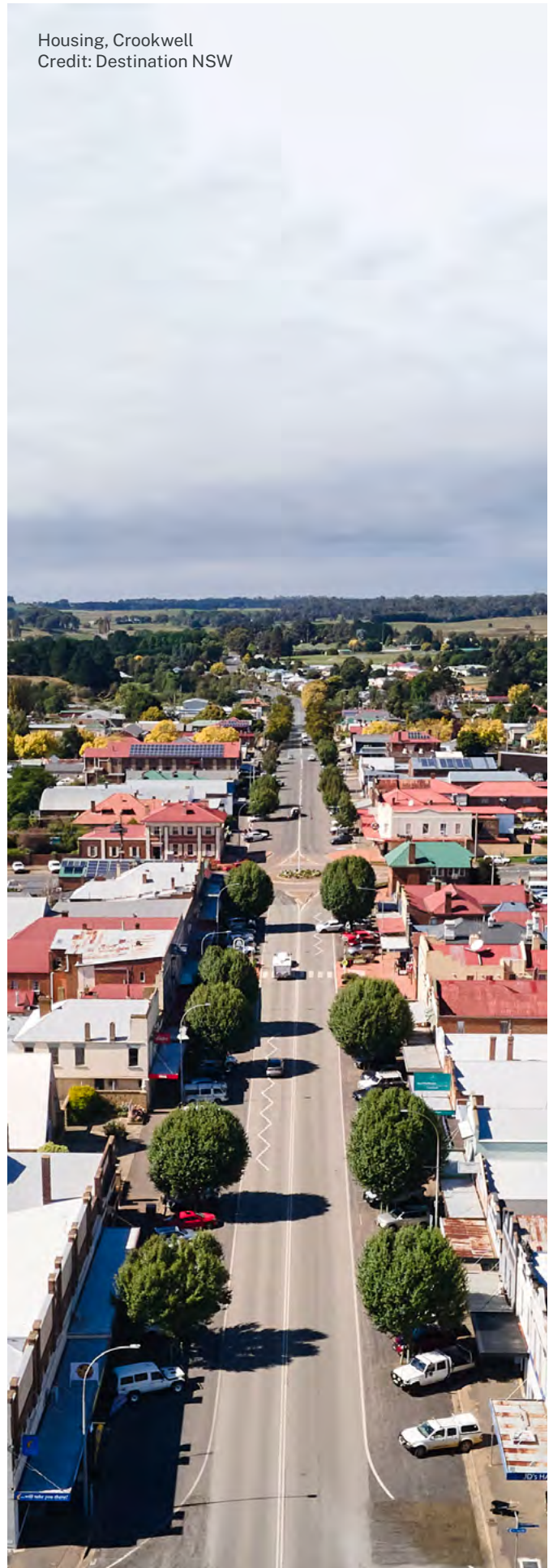
The planning of large-scale projects likely to attract large numbers of permanent, temporary, seasonal and itinerate employment workers, such as state significant development or infrastructure, is to demonstrate:

- how additional workers generated by the project will be housed
- the capacity of the local area and services to support the project during construction,
- the economic impact of the project on the local community and housing market
- the cumulative impact of other projects in the region on the local community and housing market.

Action 17

Work with councils and the Canberra Region Joint Organisation to develop a housing toolkit to support an improved standard and delivery of short term accommodation and social and affordable housing.

Housing, Crookwell
Credit: Destination NSW



OBJECTIVE 19:

Improve the quality, resilience and sustainability of housing

Southern Highlands



Urban design has a vital role to play in assisting local governments and communities to respond to the challenges that face the region, and rethink how our built environment can support the health and wellbeing of both people and our environment in a changing climate.

We need our cities and towns to develop sustainably and adapt to new technology - to foster new and emerging markets, businesses, jobs, and economic prosperity, and to enable the transition to net zero in the built environment.

The *Urban Design Guide for Regional NSW* provides guidance for creating healthy built environments. Applying this guide can support a place based approach in ensuring strategic planning recognises and celebrates the diversity of urban environments, natural landscapes, climates and communities.

Residential design quality and innovation

Creating environmentally sustainable homes require strategic decisions to be made when undertaking design and planning at the early concept stage of design development. Similarly, these decisions need to be carried through to the arrangement of spaces when subdividing land and when choosing appropriate building locations, materials and energy systems

The Australian Government has established the *Your Home: Creating sustainable homes for the future guide* to support growth in community understanding of the benefits and importance of design quality in residential design. This guide outlines the benefits of promoting passive design to take advantage of natural sources of heating and cooling and methods to manage energy consumption and water use. Examples of this include providing roof top solar panels, coupled with battery storage on residential dwellings.

The *State Environmental Planning Policy (Building Sustainability Index) 2004* is a key planning policy which aims to deliver equitable, effective water and greenhouse gas emissions across the state. The policy was updated in 2022 to support in building homes to use less and greener energy. These changes will support in achieving the NSW Government's target of net zero emissions by 2050. Ongoing improvements through NSW Government policy and legislation, in addition to LEPs and council's DCPs, will support in reaching this target, and greater community outcomes.

Considerations for health and wellbeing

The health and wellbeing of individuals and communities is affected by contextual issues such as human health, biodiversity loss, agriculture and production, climate change, changing populations and lifestyles.

Good human health, both mental and physical, is fundamental for the population. Ensuring that the region's communities have access to opportunities for active transport, green public spaces, and access to fresh local food is paramount.

Protecting people from poor air quality is essential for community health as the region's population grows and ages. Higher density housing and more compact community designs with people close to public transport can be good for regional air quality as it can reduce vehicle kilometres travelled. However, it can put higher numbers of people close to traffic pollution.

Consideration of air quality in accordance with the *NSW Clean Air Strategy 2021-2030* should be considered in planning decisions to protect and mitigate against such exposures.

Housing adaptability and resilience

The South East and Tablelands region experiences significant fluctuations in its climate conditions, which creates several challenges in the planning and design of new homes. Climate change will continue to highlight the opportunities to improve the design standards of housing. This includes how they respond to threats such as bushfire and flooding, and emphasise the need for existing homes to adapt, and new homes to be built better.

Several organisations have developed toolkits and guidance to promote the resilience of housing, and associated infrastructure across the region. This includes the *Bushfire Resilient Housing Toolkit* prepared by the Canberra Region Joint Organisation, Queanbeyan–Palerang Regional Council's *Keeping it Cool – vegetation and heat adaptation strategy*, and Eurobodalla Shire Council's *Infrastructure Resilience Plan*. These initiatives support the implementation of the *Blueprint for a Resilient South East NSW* and will help the region achieve its vision under this Regional Plan.

New developments should also consider community resilience at all scales of development. For example, a new subdivision or major urban renewal, should use the layout and composition of development to provide an opportunity for designated safe zones for use in emergency management.

Supporting initiatives:



- Embed circular economy practices in new residential developments, such as by applying the *Better practice guide for resource recovery in residential developments*.
- Undertake natural hazard risk assessments in strategic planning for new housing in accordance with the themes of the *Blueprint for a Resilient South East NSW*.
- Implement the actions of the *Urban Design Guide for Regional NSW* as it applies for the region.

Strategy 19.1



Strategic planning and local plans are to:

- identify opportunities to create positive climatic conditions through layout, siting and appropriate built forms
- support the use of materials that are appropriate to the local area and reduce urban heat
- include appropriate planning and development controls, or suitable design measures to ensure new housing developments are protected from harmful air emissions as generated by surrounding land uses and movement corridors
- apply the local government air quality toolkit and the noise guide for local government in identifying new land for housing or other sensitive uses
- provide opportunities to deliver net zero emission neighbourhoods in alignment with the *NSW Net Zero Plan*.

Action 18



Work with councils and the Canberra Region Joint Organisation to develop a set of master planning principles that provide examples and guidance on how to rezone and develop residential land, in the context of high environmental value land, cultural and heritage significance, important agricultural land and areas affected by natural hazards.

OBJECTIVE 20:**Manage rural living**

Murrumbateman



Rural lifestyle developments give people the option to live in a semi-rural or urban fringe setting. Local housing strategies identify rural residential housing needs and local supply to understand the infrastructure needed to support rural communities.

Constraints in rural residential development

The rural character of the region is a prized asset. However, with significant agricultural and environmental lands in the region, opportunities to increase supply of suitable land is limited. Demand for lower density or semi-rural housing in NSW is leading to development proposals that are inconsistent with current planning strategies in areas close to the NSW–ACT border – mostly within Capital subregion. These proposals could undermine sustainable urban outcomes from identified new urban areas and place undue pressure on infrastructure capacity.

Rural residential development can conflict with environmental and agricultural practices, including through noise, dust and odour impacts. In addition, the fragmentation of rural and or agricultural land through rural residential subdivisions to generate additional dwelling entitlements can affect the value of land and the ability for agricultural practices to amalgamate.

Water catchments due to the proliferation of dams and bores associated with rural residential development can also be impacted. Water supply to these developments, especially in stressed river catchments, has led to a water licensing embargo in the Yass River Valley in the past.

Rural residential areas are also often unsewered and existing water courses and farm dams operate as a constraint due to requirements for effluent management areas and associated buffer requirements. This is a key consideration for properties in the Sydney Drinking Water Catchment.

Rural areas can also be at risk from bushfire and the clearing for house sites, bushfire asset protection and associated infrastructure, particularly local roads, has increased clearing rates. Clearing associated with rural residential subdivision is the major source of vegetation removal in the region.

New rural residential development needs to be balanced against natural hazards, and ecological and land use constraints. It should complement the region's productive agricultural lands and environmental assets, rather than replace them, and should be located on land free from natural hazards.

Planning for rural residential development

Local housing strategies, when complemented by rural lands strategies and biodiversity strategies, can provide a targeted approach to future locations for rural residential development. Land use planning provides the opportunity to assess and consider the appropriateness of land uses as a collective and the need for separation or staged transitions.

Suitable urban growth boundaries to concentrate expected population growth and reduce pressures for fragmentation and land use, enable buffers to intensive agriculture or hazardous industries, allowing for easier planning of agricultural lands, public amenity and the function of the region's towns and villages.

Similarly, local housing strategies and/or rural lands strategies should complement each other, whilst considering:

- historical dwelling entitlements
- the potential expansion, operation and buffer zones to intensive agricultural operations
- existing and potential land use conflicts
- access to natural resources and impact of natural hazards
- high environmental value land
- infrastructure servicing capacity (e.g., water, telecommunications, waste, roads and other utilities)
- the cumulative impact of rural residential development on local services such as health, education and goods, and
- rural character and community sentiment.

Supporting initiatives:



- Review and update (or prepare where not in place) local housing strategies and rural land strategies to provide guidance on how to plan for new rural residential development.
- Consider and apply biodiversity strategies (where adopted) when planning for rural residential development.

Strategy 20.1



Enable new rural residential development only where it has been identified in a local strategic plan, prepared by council and endorsed by the department, and:

- is positioned near existing urban settlements to maximise existing infrastructure and services
- avoids and minimise land use conflicts, including the cumulative impact of clusters of industries in an area
- avoids areas with high environmental value, cultural and heritage significance, important agricultural land and areas affected by natural hazards
- ensures the provision of a sustainable water supply and mitigate any impacts on the groundwater system
- ensures they are not at risk from natural hazards including access by emergency services in the event of flooding.

OBJECTIVE 21:

Provide efficient access to infrastructure and services



Buses in Queanbeyan

Access to social, community, transport and servicing infrastructure is essential to the planning for additional growth so that residents are supported by essential services in healthy and active communities.

Re-thinking access to goods and services

In a region as geographically dispersed as the South East and Tablelands, accessibility to everyday and essential services and facilities differs based on where people live. Everyone should be able to access education facilities, health services, community and social services and a diversity of employment opportunities within commuting distance of their homes.

The *Future Transport Strategy* establishes that in a regional context, the regional connected networks model provides connections in bands that link regional cities and centres for employment and services. It establishes expectations of '30 minutes' to access jobs and services in Greater Sydney; however, expectations for regional areas are yet to be set. Research shows that if people travel more than 60 minutes a day, their quality of life and the liveability of their city declines.

We can adapt this concept to consider how urban and suburban neighbourhoods in strategic centres and clusters operate as a network, to complement and improve access to jobs and services across the population.

As the primary modes of transport in the region is by a car or public transport (where available), planning for the region needs to consider, the type and capacity of services that should be accessible to the population within a 30-minute, 60-minute and 90-minute road-based trip. The availability of jobs and services should expand and increase in capacity as the travel time increases. Similarly, reducing the reliance on private motor vehicles requires improvements to be made to the availability, convenience and accessibility of public transport in response to how people move to meet their service needs.

Planning for strategic centres is crucial here, so that we understand the services available in each strategic centre, the quality and capacity of these services, and the transport connections between them. Clustering and co-locating services in these areas are one way to promote greater convenience and access for communities. Technological changes need to be closely considered in the context of how centres operate and the availability of services provided. This has been highlighted recently through the availability of telehealth appointments which has increased access to health providers.

Realising a 30, 60 and 90 minute model will require continuous and staged investment to protect corridors and then develop an integrated transport network of strategic movement corridors and strategic freight networks. It also requires more efficient use of the current network to reduce travel times and meet customer demand.

Growth in health and education services

Services and facilities such as hospitals, secondary and tertiary education facilities and major recreation facilities tend to be located in the region's strategic centres.

Regional Health Inquiry

The NSW Government has reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening healthcare in rural and regional NSW, following the publication of the findings and recommendations of the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry.

The inquiry highlighted the disadvantages faced in regional NSW regarding the available workforce, access and quality of health services as supported by transport and accommodation, and the understanding of the available services in the regions.

Exploring the current access, quality and availability of health services and supporting worker accommodation, in the context of a 30, 60 and 90 minute model for the region, could support future decisions into the investment into health infrastructure.

Figure 19: The services, facilities and opportunities that support communities



Everyday living

- **Services:**
bank, post office, hairdresser, chemist, childcare
- **Food and drink:**
restaurant, café, pub, takeaway
- **Shopping:**
supermarket, hardware store, neighbourhood shop



Employment

- **Commercial:**
commercial core
- **Retail:**
Local centre, neighbourhood centre
- **Industry and bulky goods**



Education

- **Primary and early education**
- **Secondary education**
- **Tertiary education:**
University, TAFE



Healthcare

- **Health services - minor:**
health consulting rooms, medical centres
- **Health services – local:**
district and base hospitals
- **Health services – regional:**
Primary referral hospital



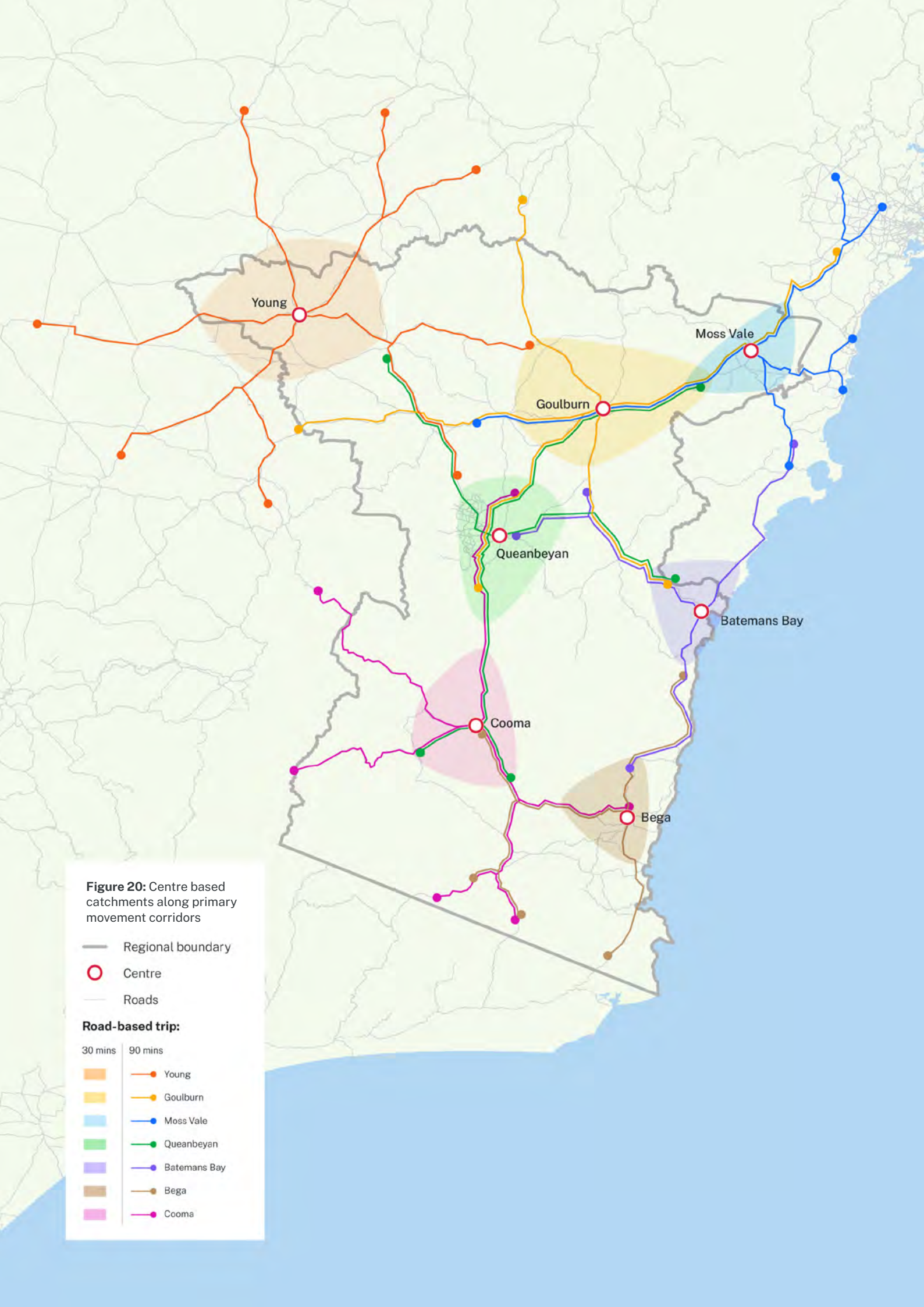
Recreation

- **Indoor:**
Gyms, multi-purpose sports facilities
- **Outdoor:**
Golf courses, outdoor swimming pools, parks and playgrounds
- **Major:**
Stadiums, showgrounds



Arts and Culture

- **Information and education facilities:**
Gallery, library, museum
- **Places of public worship**



The \$260 million investment in the Eurobodalla Regional Hospital will promote greater access to health-related services and employment for the region. When coupled with Bega's South East Regional Hospital, greater opportunities exist to promote higher education development opportunities with links to the University of Wollongong. While regional level health services can be accessed on the far south coast, we need to consider the remainder of the region, particularly around residential growth in the Capital subregion.

Schools near the NSW–ACT border face increased enrolments and many have capacity to use infrastructure more effectively. The NSW Government will continue to monitor population and development trends across the region so that it can plan to meet education needs in government schools.

New schools, if required, will be established where there are no other sustainable options available within existing assets. Planning for new schools considers the specific needs and characteristics of local student population trends. To improve curriculum choice, secondary schools may be combined.

Master planning for new urban release areas should optimise shared facilities for community and school uses.

Expanded tertiary education services and online access to education options will increase local access to services, particularly in smaller and isolated communities. These services provide greater options for young people to stay and study in the region, particularly where a diversity of training options are available. Strategic centres should be places for flexible learning spaces to enable distance education students to complete studies in a building designed for educational services.

Supporting initiatives:



- Plan for and prioritise services and infrastructure investment to maximise cost efficiencies, coordinate the delivery of different infrastructure assets, and achieve equitable sharing of responsibility, including funding, procurement and ongoing maintenance in a cross border context.
- Work with tertiary education providers to expand knowledge sharing and training opportunities when establishing new facilities, including consideration of the need for on-site student accommodation.
- Plan for the provision of future school assets within the region, in particular, identified growth areas.

Strategy 21.1



Strategic planning and local plans are to:

- identify how development and planning support an improvement in 30, 60 and 90 minute road based trips to jobs, social infrastructure (including schools) and services
- improve walking, cycling and public transport access in, around and between strategic centres
- implement planning controls to grow complementary health uses around hospitals
- support the integration of tertiary education facilities with schools and health infrastructure

Strategy 21.2



Support the establishment of tertiary education providers in strategic centres.

Action 19



Undertake an assessment of the type and capacity of the services (movement generators) accessible to the population within a 30, 60 and 90 minute road-based trip of a strategic centre, cluster and other locations, to inform recommendations to other agencies, councils on the sequencing improvements to meet NSW Government targets.

Supporting a connected and active region

Potential indicator(s):

- Resolution of infrastructure and planning barriers (i.e., water security) to unlock Yass as a Strategic Centre
- Strengthened walking and cycling, public transport and road infrastructure connections between key destinations and strategic assets.

Objective 22

Strengthen cross-border connectivity and infrastructure coordination

Objective 23

Enhance strategic transport links

Objective 24

Plan for walkable centres

Objective 25

Adapt infrastructure to meet future needs



OBJECTIVE 22:

Strengthen cross-border connectivity and infrastructure coordination



Glenrock Drive, Googong

Demand and supply of land and housing in the ACT and surrounding areas operate within the same housing market. This has implications for transport planning, infrastructure, water supply and service delivery within both jurisdictions.

Strategic planning plays an important role in ensuring the equitable access to services and essential infrastructure is a seamless process in a cross-border context. This requires the planning and development of major infrastructure such as hospitals, education, justice and retail and commercial precincts to consider the function and composition of land uses, the movement of people across the border, complementary businesses and supporting services, as well as assumed catchment areas to ensure people are not left out or worse off.

Improving connectivity to support growth

Increased demand for housing in the areas bordering the ACT places pressure on roads and cross-border connectivity. Communities on both sides of the border have called for better integrated transport services. Commuters often choose to travel by car to and from the ACT as it is simpler and more time efficient.

This requires collaborative focus on:

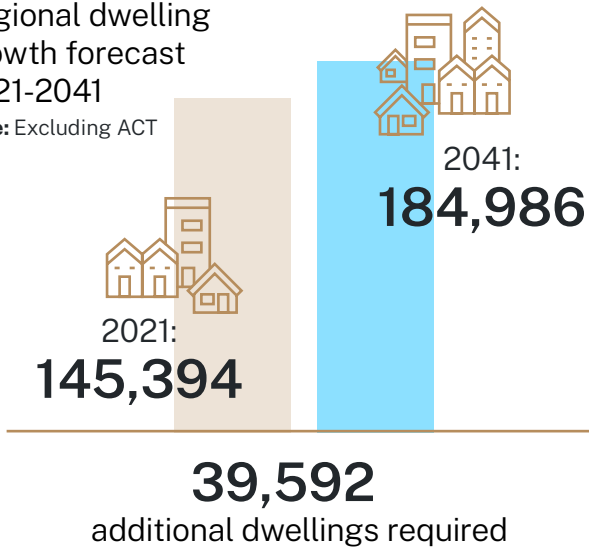
- more frequent and direct public transport connections and stopping points across the border
- less requirements to change services or transport modes when commuting
- standard fees and charges for public transport
- better services and facilities

These improvements also serve to support growth in other sectors, including tourism, which is identified under the principles and actions of the *NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030*.

Further initiatives to inform future discussions are reflected in the *South East and Tablelands Regional Transport Plan* prepared by Transport for NSW.

Regional dwelling growth forecast 2021-2041

Note: Excluding ACT



Infrastructure coordination

The population of the Capital subregion (excluding ACT) is expected to grow to over 150,000 people by 2041, which will require approximately 19,000 new dwellings, equating to more than 48% of the region's projected dwelling demand⁵.

Note: these figures do not include the population forecast or projected dwelling demand for the ACT.

Councils in the Capital subregion indicate that existing release areas have capacity for almost 18,000 new dwellings in places such as Googong, South Jerrabomberra, Yass, Murrumbateman and the proposed cross-border development at Parkwood.

The funding and delivery of infrastructure in a cross-border setting requires cooperation between jurisdictions and an understanding of their different governance and budgetary structures. Further work is required to create a consistent approach to infrastructure funding and delivery.

The availability of water can drive or limit urban development. While the development at Parkwood will be serviced by water from the ACT, future growth, particularly in areas such as Yass, Murrumbateman and Bungendore, requires the support of the ACT water and wastewater network, which may require negotiations involving:

- sustainable diversion limits
- trading of water entitlements
- a bilateral agreement between jurisdictions, requiring NSW Cabinet endorsement
- a commercial agreement with Icon Water Limited that will require consideration of its business model, business cases for development and competing servicing priorities

The ACT NSW cross-border land and housing monitor aims to better track and forecast housing and employment land releases to inform decision-making when coordinating and sequencing infrastructure.

Supporting initiatives:



- Implement and report on the ACT/ NSW cross-border land and housing monitor.
- Develop integrated transport plans for ACT/ NSW cross-border communities.
- Work with the ACT Government and councils to investigate infrastructure needs and, where appropriate, coordinate delivery to support employment and housing growth in South Jerrabomberra.
- Examine ACT/NSW governance arrangements under the ACT/NSW MoU to ensure collaboration mechanisms support strategic cross-border planning and infrastructure matters and a framework for the delivery of agreed infrastructure.

Strategy 21.1



Identify and address planning and infrastructure barriers to deliver housing in a cross-border context.

Strategy 21.2



Promote cross-jurisdictional collaboration to develop a coordinated strategic approach to infrastructure provision, in particular transport connectivity, water supply and water supply options for growth areas.

Action 20



Establish an Urban Development program for the South East and Tablelands Region to better identify, coordinate and prioritise enabling infrastructure for new housing, employment land and monitor delivery.

OBJECTIVE 23:

Enhance strategic transport links



Kosciuszko National Park, NSW.

The road network, particularly strategic transport links, needs to support higher productivity vehicles. This can be achieved by removing height and weight restrictions on major routes, improving rest area options and addressing the constraint of narrow bridges.

Improving supply chain connections

The region has ready access to domestic and international markets via Sydney, Canberra and Wollongong (via the Port of Port Kembla), with road, rail and air freight infrastructure and networks that are critical to agribusiness in particular. Land use planning for supply chains via warehousing and logistics is a key consideration. This includes improving freight connectivity between the ‘first and last miles’ of each trip.

Major opportunities for the freight network include:

- exploring the sequencing and timing of vehicles moving within the region to coincide with air travel at Canberra and Western Sydney International Airport
- improving east-west access along major highways and key regional and local roads connecting the South Coast to Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne
- managing amenity impacts such as noise and air quality, where key routes run through town centres, such as in Young and Goulburn
- planning for, and delivering the duplication of the Barton Highway and other key routes
- enabling higher mass limit and other heavy vehicles under the Performance Based Standards scheme access along major highways and key regional roads

- improving rail transport and investigating intermodal facilities, including the potential to re-open non-operational lines
- building on existing facilities such as grain silos and bunkers to support intermodal connectivity

Areas such as Young and Goulburn act as gateways through the region. Young for example, connects the region to the central west (Dubbo and Orange) and the south west (Wagga Wagga) areas of NSW. Strengthened transport connections in the between the coast, through Cooma and into Canberra could also promote greater efficiencies for the forestry industry, in accessing areas such as the Port of Eden and the neighbouring Snowy Valleys LGA. Planning for strategic centres and the land use composition along freight corridors can provide opportunities to improve access to jobs in complementary industries, and improve vehicle movements.

Enhancing tourist and visitor movements

A common issue experienced by visitors is that the network and connections between the region’s tourist assets could be improved. Geographically, visitors are drawn to the:

- character and heritage of the Southern Highlands
- winery and farm gate experiences across the region, in particular in Hilltops, Upper Lachlan, Wingecarribee and Yass Valley LGAs
- cultural, arts and recreation opportunities throughout the ACT and its surrounds
- adventure and snow-based activities in the Kosciuszko National Park
- beaches and coastal towns on the south coast.

Visitors often pick one or two areas to travel to and stay at a location nearby. This issue is exacerbated for international travellers, where a lack of public transport restricts movement out of key entry points, such as the Port of Eden and Canberra Airport. Improving the availability of public transport information, combined with service and frequency improvements, will help support people visiting or passing through the region.

Strategic centres such as Cooma could support tourist and visitor accommodation and better integrate with public transport to connect key destination points.

Fast rail

The NSW Government has a vision for vibrant and growing regional economies, which includes better connectivity between regional cities, key centres and Greater Sydney. Reduced travel times will give people more choice about where they live and work and provide a catalyst for regional growth.

One of the key elements of NSW Government's *A 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW* is better connectivity between regional centres, and from cities and international gateways. The NSW Fast Rail Strategy, once prepared, will be a blueprint for how the network could look so that future investment decisions on fast rail are well considered.

Four routes have been identified: Northern route including Central Coast and Newcastle, Southern Coastal route including Wollongong and Nowra/Bomaderry, Central West route, and Southern Inland route including Goulburn and Canberra.

Fast rail stations will stimulate development and business investment, with businesses able to access an expanded workforce and markets. Fast rail infrastructure also brings opportunities for coordinated place-making in centres and along the corridor.

Supporting initiatives:

- Plan for inter-regional transport improvements in the region, particularly between strategic centres and key tourist destinations such as between Goulburn via Tarago to South Nowra, or from Queanbeyan to Bateman's Bay.
- Align policies relating to freight movements and related land uses across state agencies.
- Work with Transport for NSW to ensure land is protected to enable the long-term fast rail vision by preventing incompatible development occurring near alignments once corridors are identified.



Strategy 23.1



Optimise the efficiency and effectiveness of freight handling and logistics network by:

- identifying, protecting, maintaining and improving the existing and emerging freight transport network
- limiting incompatible uses in areas expected to have intense freight activity
- managing and protecting airport and aerodrome land uses and airspace to support freight and related business, alongside public and private transport
- identify and activate employment lands surrounding airports and aerodromes with suitable flexibility and provide for future expansion of airports and aerodromes.

Strategy 23.2



Create more sustainable, localised supply chains through emerging advanced manufacturing industries that leverage the region's endowments by:

- locating advanced and value-added manufacturing industries and associated infrastructure to minimise potential land use conflict
- encouraging co-location of related advanced and value-added manufacturing industries to maximise efficiency and infrastructure use, decrease supply chain costs, increase economies of scale and attract further investment
- promoting investment in advanced and value-added manufacturing in employment lands through suitable land use zonings and land use definitions in LEPs.

Strategy 23.3



Strengthen relationships with Western Sydney International Airport and Canberra Airport to improve road freight movements to and from both gateways.

OBJECTIVE 24:

Plan for walkable centres



Bradman Oval, Bowral
Credit: Destination NSW

Throughout the region's strategic centres, towns and villages, walking and cycling could be encouraged through upgrades to the existing transport network. These connections improve accessibility between homes, public transport, workplaces, educational institutions, public open space, shops and other essential services.

The function of centres

The *Future Transport Strategy* and the *Movement and Place Framework* recognises that streets are not just about moving people and goods, they are also places for people to live, work and spend time.

The framework acknowledges that land use planning supports community needs. Centres provide services to communities, acting as a destination point. Improving the efficiency and variety of services near one another can encourage walking and cycling, supported by clear and safe networks and facilities such as secure bicycle storage.

However, given the higher use of motor vehicles in the region's centres, they are not always places where people want to stay and linger. On street parking should not be the only option - parking in centres should be distributed strategically to encourage people to park, then walk, cycle or utilise public transport. The uptake of electric bikes and ride shares will influence how people move around centres.

Thinking about 100 m, 200 m and 400 m catchments from existing car parks can give people a variety and choice of destination, regardless of where they park. Parking can be co-located with public spaces or anchor businesses, such as fresh food and groceries. Disabled access parking and other supporting infrastructure should also be provided at a greater frequency within these catchments.

Improving opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport

Walking, cycling and use of public transport has a number of benefits including reducing congestion, encourages healthier lifestyles, produces low emissions, improves air quality and reduces the demand for parking. Community transport options are also vital for older community members who require to access services in the region.

Close consideration of density, dwelling structure, permeability and establishing local destinations, support in promoting greater uptake of walking and cycling in centres.

Transport facilities need to be designed for all ages and abilities with equitable access, seating and shade. Streets should be considered in terms of their function and character, and whether they can be places that prioritise walking, safe cycling and social interaction. This requires allocation of road space between footpaths, cycleways, public transport and vehicles that considers people's health and safety, and balances movement and place functions in response to the type of street and local conditions.

Public transport is likely to achieve higher patronage if the reach and responsiveness of services is enhanced. Encouraging infill opportunities and streetscape enhancements, such as water fountains, sheltered bus stops and public seating, in and around strategic centres mean more people will live in or use an area, and public transport will be more viable.

Emerging transport technologies, including e-mobility options can also offer compelling alternatives to regular private car use and reduce emissions.

Supporting initiatives:



- Progress planning and delivery of walking and cycling transport projects for strategic centres.
- Apply the Cycleway Design Toolbox and Network Planning in Precincts Guide for in master planning processes, in conjunction with the Movement and Place Framework.

Strategy 24.1



Apply the Movement and Place Framework to new development and to existing towns and villages when undertaking place planning, transport planning or public realm renewal projects.

Strategy 24.2



Strategic planning and local plans are to:

- identify opportunities to integrate walking and cycling networks into the design of both new and existing communities
- prioritise walking and cycling in areas around schools, health services, aged care facilities, sporting, cultural and recreational facilities, and employment areas
- link walking and cycling and new public transport infrastructure and improve interactions with, and separation from the road network through safer pedestrian crossings, lower traffic speeds and designated cycle lanes
- review car parking controls to encourage pedestrian movements.

OBJECTIVE 25:**Adapt infrastructure to meet future needs**

The planning for resilient infrastructure to support communities needs to consider technological advancements, climate change, natural disasters and demographic changes.

Responding to natural disasters

Natural hazards can disrupt road and rail networks and interrupt access to the transport network and essential services including water, sewerage, power, telecommunications and digital connectivity. The frequency and intensity is expected to increase with the impacts of climate change.

Towns and their communities can become isolated for extended periods, which can negatively impact access to and by emergency services, creating significant public safety risks as well as social

networks. Visitors may not be aware of the dangers and emergency procedures, as occurred in the 2019-20 bushfires. The most harshly impacted communities were those with single road and service access points.

Coordinated approaches to infrastructure planning will identify opportunities to improve or provide alternative movement routes. However, this may not always be possible or economically feasible.

Any reviews of existing services in hazard prone areas must consider whether access to critical services such as the State Emergency Service, Ambulance and Fire can be improved, but also consider how communities can be self-sufficient if isolated in a natural disaster event.

Diversifying transport options

The *Future Transport Strategy* sets potential cost-effective pathways to support net zero emissions by 2050, including a shift from private car use to public transport, active transport choices, low-emissions vehicles and a cost-effective, low-emission energy supply.

The *NSW Electric Vehicle Strategy* also aims to make electric vehicles affordable to run and buy in NSW. The electrification of light vehicles is a key pathway for decarbonising the transport sector.

Increasing availability and use of electric vehicles for both private and commercial use throughout the region will require investment in enabling infrastructure at strategic locations across the region to support the objectives of *The Future Transport Strategy* and the *NSW Electric Vehicle Strategy*.

The NSW Government is supporting the roll out of the electric vehicle charging network by identifying where the use of government owned land could be used for necessary infrastructure. Taking advantage of opportunities through the Drive electric NSW EV destination charging grants program will also support in building a strong network to cater for an increased uptake in electric vehicles and increased visitation to businesses across the region.

Planning for a changing population

As people change how they work, learn and do business, access to efficient and reliable digital networks will be vital. These factors will be important as the proportion of older people in the population increases and services become more reliant on digital and remote access.

Digital infrastructure enables greater communication and movement, diversifying access to services such as healthcare, employment and education. For example, telehealth services can improve community access to healthcare and support people as they continue to live in the places they know.

The demands on existing infrastructure should be understood to inform decision making, including how:

- physical and digital systems interact (i.e., modelling consumer needs through real-time data)
- to co-locate services to utilise existing assets and minimise long journeys
- people use public and private spaces, and move around
- to enable access to different services as prioritised by different age groups.

New developments should ensure access to these services are provided and can be expanded or improved to meet the growing technological demands of a changing population.

Supporting initiatives:



- Develop a strategic roadmap to improve the availability of infrastructure and reduce land use planning barriers to support an uptake in electric vehicles, including the roll-out of electric vehicle chargers.
- Undertake an assessment into how local and regional transport networks can adapt to climate change, specifically, the frequency and severity of natural disasters events.
- Invest in smart infrastructure to improve monitoring and evaluation of how people move and use land in their community.

Strategy 25.1



Strategic planning and local plans are to:

- consider the impact of climate change on existing and planned infrastructure capacity
- identify appropriate community refuge centres, including management, ownership and operational requirements
- improve access to battery storage and power generation, drawn from local renewable energy sources to support emergency responses
- increase the availability of back-up drinking water
- broaden the telecommunications and internet networks across the region, particularly to remote communities
- identify and implement strategies that reduce isolation of communities to emergency services in times of flood such as road raising projects identified in Floodplain Risk Management Plans.

PART

3

Implementation





Warri Camping Reserve, Larbert.
Credit: Visit Queanbeyan-Palerang Council

PART

3

Implementation

Several governance arrangements oversee the implementation of this plan. Responsibility for implementing actions and monitoring results is shared with councils, state agencies, service providers and industry. All stakeholders need to have a good understanding of the priorities and deliverables.

This section will:

- ensure ongoing collaboration and agreement of the implementation of actions
- assign accountabilities for the implementation of actions
- explain the role of different groups and committees involved in implementation, and
- inform annual reporting.

Governance and collaborative relationships

Coordination and Monitoring committee

The South East and Tablelands Coordination and Monitoring Committee (the committee) was established in 2017. It provides a regional governance framework and participated in the review process. A re-established committee will oversee and coordinate implementation, bringing together agencies and organisations responsible for the plan's actions. The committee's role is to:

- oversee and coordinate the implementation of the regional plan
- be accountable for the implementation of the regional plan
- be kept informed of general progress and participate in delivery of priority actions
- monitor and track the regional plan's implementation
- where impediments are identified, collaborate to achieve resolution
- provide a forum to discuss and resolve implementation issues or action delivery in a changing regional policy environment
- provide high-level progress updates to the South East and Tablelands Regional Leadership Executive (via the Department of Regional NSW)
- report on the progress on the plan's actions
- inform and participate in a 5-year review of the regional plan.

Membership includes:

- Department of Planning and Environment
- Canberra Region Joint Organisation
- Department of Regional NSW
- Department of Primary Industries
- Transport for NSW
- NSW Health
- Department of Education
- ACT Government
- Councils (located within the South East and Tablelands region)

The committee can be supported by outcome-specific groups that bring together appropriate personnel (government, industry or community) to provide advice on particular issues or projects.

Ongoing collaborative arrangements with the ACT Government will leverage the ACT/NSW Memorandum of Understanding. This includes annual reporting requirements that detail how each jurisdiction works together to support communities in a cross border context.

South East and Tablelands Regional Leadership Executive

An existing governance framework complements the committee's activity. This includes the South East and Tablelands Regional Leadership Executive, a Department of Regional NSW initiative that supports working relationships between state agencies and the Canberra Region Joint Organisation. This group encourages strategic collaboration, consultation, solution brokerage and engagement on regional priorities across government.

The committee also has access to the same agency and local government organisations that comprise the Regional Leadership Executive.

Southern Region Aboriginal Engagement Network: Embedding Aboriginal leadership in decision making

To support the implementation of the Regional Plan, the department will establish an Aboriginal Engagement Network (Network) to advise the Coordination and Monitoring Committee of the priorities of Aboriginal communities in the region. This network will utilise the draft Connecting with Country Framework to guide cultural protocols and the role of the network.

The Network will operate as a collective of groups. The completion of Action 2 will provide guidance and structure to the composition of these groups and the matters for inclusion. Representation is envisioned to comprise of the region's Local Aboriginal Land Councils, with equal opportunities given to registered Aboriginal corporations, traditional owners and elders, where identified outside of the representation of the land council.

Establishing the Network will be based on an agreed terms of reference to be completed as part of Action 2. It is acknowledged that this network will grow over time, and will comprise of different stakeholders, based on the matters being presented to each group.

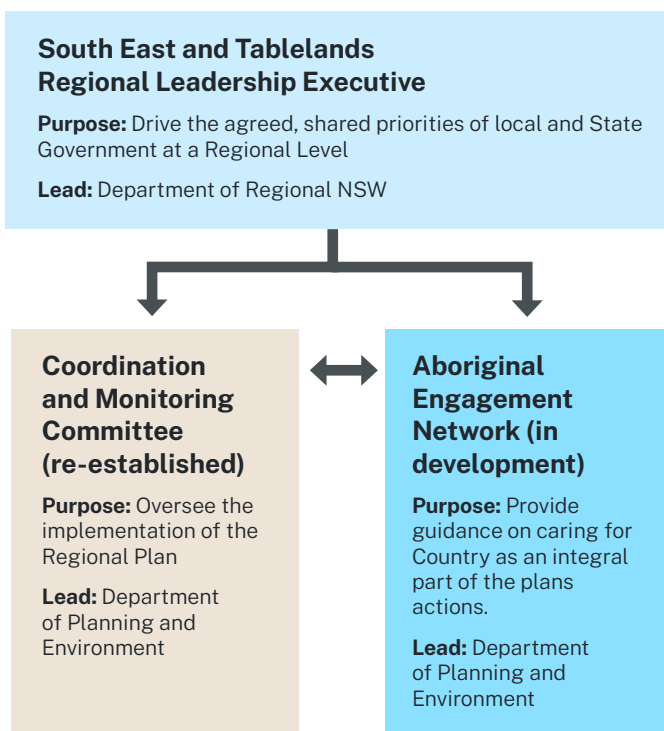
The Network will initially focus on supporting the implementation of the regional plan's actions. The scope of the Network's input may also be extended to providing advice on:

- the assessment of planning proposals (following the issue of a Gateway Determination),
- the preparation of development delivery plans under the Planning Systems SEPP, and
- other policy or NSW Government projects occurring in the region.

As the Network becomes more established, it is envisioned that it may be utilised by other NSW Government agencies to provide a consistent, regular and simplified method of engagement with Aboriginal communities across the region.

The department will convene and coordinate each group until such time as a chair(s) can be appointed.

Figure 21: Regional Governance Framework



Links to other strategies

Strategies that will influence the implementation of the regional plan include:

- *State Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2042*
- *The Future Transport Strategy*
- *A 20-year Economic Vision for Regional NSW*
- *South East and Tablelands Regional Transport Plan*, and other integrated transport plans for the region
- *Blueprint for a Resilient South-East NSW*
- *NSW Housing Strategy 2041*, local housing strategies and employment lands strategies (where adopted by the department and councils)

- *Destination Southern NSW Destination Management Plan 2022 to 2030* and the *NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030*
- *NSW Water Strategy* and the South Coast, Murray, Murrumbidgee and Lachlan regional water strategies.
- *NSW Clean Air Strategy 2021-2030*

Other strategies reviewed as part of this plan or published following its commencement will also influence implementation.

The regional plan incorporates and responds to the aspirations and priorities of local communities, as articulated through councils' local strategic planning statements and community strategic plans. In turn, the regional plan also outlines strategies that should be considered by councils when reviewing these plans. This cycle from local to regional planning ensures a line-of-sight between the different levels of spatial planning.

Review mechanisms

Monitoring

Both the Coordination and Monitoring Committee and the Aboriginal Engagement Network will monitor and review progress towards achieving the plan's vision and meeting the objectives. Each theme outlined in Part 2 outlines a series of 'Potential Indicators' which will inform how the regional plan's success is monitored. These indicators will be agreed by each group on an annual basis and will serve as a focus for the actions in which the implementation of the regional plan is working towards.

Each group will be provided with the opportunity to provide input into the direction of relevant project scope of works to ensure they are aligned with their intent, as described in this section.

An online dashboard will provide an overview of each of the plans actions and will be updated when actions have progressed and have been reported through each group. Both groups will be provided with a quarterly update on the progress of the regional plan from the department, and will provide support through decision making and providing strategic advice on specific projects.

Regional plan review

The regional plan will be reviewed and adjusted every 5 years, or as necessary, to realise the vision for 2041. Any review will revisit regional challenges and opportunities, and incorporate the most up to date information including in state and local polices, such as updated local strategic planning statements. Reviews will be informed by advice from both groups.

Implementation plan updates

The implementation priorities will be updated annually as part of the monitoring program and will form the work program for the following year. These updates will be provided for on the online dashboard. This will ensure that implementation of the regional plan remains current and responsive to regional conditions.

Implementing the plan

The regional plan includes 25 objectives under 5 themes that articulate intended outcomes, activities, and policy positions. These are communicated through actions and strategies to be the focus for the next 5 years and contribute towards achieving the vision in 2041.

The plan comprises of 20 actions to implement the plan. Each of these actions are to be led or coordinated by the department, and will be reported on by its planning division. An overview of the scope, rationale and stakeholders proposed to be involved in each action is provided later in this section.

Delivering specific actions are also expected to impact the need for additional infrastructure planning in the region. This will be explored further as the plan is implemented.

Infrastructure and contributions

Significant investment is required in new development, upgrades to existing facilities, protection of key environmental assets and the provision of growth infrastructure.

Contributions schemes help to fund infrastructure such as roads, public transport infrastructure, pedestrian and cycling paths, health facilities, emergency services, community facilities schools, and open space improvements.

Greater strategic foresight will ensure infrastructure is provided at the right time and in the right location. A regional infrastructure plan could:

- share the costs of growth infrastructure across the public and private sector
- identify other funding sources and approaches as development contributions alone may not be sufficient to fund the required infrastructure
- consider new approaches to securing unencumbered land for infrastructure in established urban areas.

A regional infrastructure plan could also complement the regional plan by focusing on its actions. Servicing agencies, councils, state agencies and ACT authorities must be consulted as part of this process.

As part of this process, infrastructure plans are to identify gaps in service provision by considering public transport capacity, intersection congestion, and provision sports fields, galleries and cultural facilities.

The historic Young town hall building on Boorowa Street, Young
Credit: Destination NSW



Actions for implementation

Action 1

Establish cultural narratives for the region that identify and recognise key Aboriginal stakeholders and provide the key features, themes and significance of Country to Aboriginal communities.

Why

To appropriately recognise Aboriginal knowledge in the region to inform ongoing engagement and to form a greater understanding of the significance of Country in Aboriginal culture, to inform land use planning.

How

The department will work with the Aboriginal community as identified through Action 2, to identify key people, features, events, and themes to recognise the significance of Country and inform greater protection and planning for Country the region. This process is to be informed by oral storey telling and targeted engagement.

This action is intended to evolve in an ongoing process of co-design with Aboriginal communities through its inception, development, and implementation.

Key supporting stakeholders

- NSW Aboriginal Land Council, Aboriginal Affairs, and other relevant NSW Government agencies where considered relevant
- Councils
- LALCs, PBCs, local Aboriginal knowledge holders, traditional custodians, elders and community groups
- Others, where considered necessary.

Potential influences into project scope

- Project examples in Batemans Bay Waterfront and Observation Point and Mogo Trails
- Designing with Country Discussion Paper.

Action 2

Identify potential barriers, bespoke processes, and opportunities to improve ongoing engagement and collaboration with Aboriginal communities in strategic land use planning.

Why

To improve and establish ongoing engagement with Aboriginal communities, enable more transparent decision making and simplify NSW Government community engagement practices.

How

This process will involve working closely with LALCs, traditional custodians, PBCs, elders and Aboriginal communities to identify appropriate processes, reporting, resourcing requirements and where additional support can be provided to equip those brought into planning processes.

This exercise will look to strengthen relationships between government stakeholders and Aboriginal communities in the establishment of the region's Aboriginal Engagement Network.

Key supporting stakeholders

- NSW Aboriginal Land Council, Aboriginal Affairs and other NSW Government agencies, where mechanisms will be introduced to impact planning and assessment processes
- Councils
- LALCs, PBCs, local Aboriginal knowledge holders, traditional custodians, elders and community groups
- community members and industry.

Potential influences into project scope

- Others, where considered necessary
- Connecting with Country Framework
- Closing the Gap
- OCHRE framework.

Action 3



Work with the Department of Premier and Cabinet and Crown Lands to develop a coordinated interagency program for land claim processes, including the completion of development delivery plans as part of the land claim process.

Why

To improve the efficiency, timing and quality of outcomes of the land claim process.

How

The department will work closely with the Department of Premier and Cabinet, Crown Lands, LALCs and Councils to establish a set of criteria (simple, medium and complex) to identify land that can be accelerated through the land claim process, without causing greater delays for land which requires more comprehensive assessment.

Specific investigations will also involve the Department working with Crown Lands to undertake Development Delivery Plans with each LALC as part of the land transfer process. Broader system improvements will also be identified through a more detailed scoping.

Key supporting stakeholders

- Department of Premier and Cabinet, NSW Aboriginal Land Council, Aboriginal Affairs, Crown Lands and other NSW Government agencies where required
- Councils
- LALCs, PBCs, local Aboriginal knowledge holders, traditional custodians, elders and community groups
- community members
- Others, where considered necessary.

Potential influences into project scope

- Introduction of new legislation – i.e., Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill
- Implementation of the *NSW Auditor General's Report into Facilitating and administering Aboriginal land claim processes*.

Action 4



Work with councils, Heritage NSW and local Aboriginal communities to undertake and implement heritage studies, including Aboriginal cultural heritage studies to inform local land use strategies.

Why

To ensure planning decisions are informed by the full account of heritage and its associated values to maximise opportunities for protection, management, interpretation and activation.

How

The department will work with councils, Heritage NSW and Aboriginal communities to undertake regional level Aboriginal cultural heritage studies across the region. Each strategy will identify the local and regional heritage significance and identify opportunities for interpretation.

Project stakeholders will identify project boundaries and draw from the completion of Actions 1 and 2 of this plan, to inform heritage management actions as part of each studies implementation.

Key supporting stakeholders

- Heritage NSW, and other relevant NSW Government agencies where considered relevant
- Councils
- LALCs, local Aboriginal knowledge holders, traditional custodians, elders and community groups
- Community members
- Others, where considered necessary.

Potential influences into project scope

- Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Cultural Heritage strategies, where in place.

Action 5

Work with councils and Aboriginal community to undertake strategic landscape-scale assessment of biodiversity and areas of HEV, including strategic biodiversity assessments, management of travelling stock reserves and roadside vegetation management plans.

Why

To act strategically in considering matters of environmental significance and protecting HEV land in planning projects and processes.

How

The department's Environment division will work with councils, Aboriginal communities and other stakeholders as part of biodiversity assessment processes established in strategic planning and statutory instruments.

A set of criteria have been developed for High Environmental Value land and identification methods at the property scale. In addition, Guidelines will be developed to assist in the biodiversity assessment of planning proposals.

The delivery of this action will occur on a project-by-project basis.

Key supporting stakeholders

- Department of Planning and Environment (both Biodiversity and Conservation and Planning Divisions)
- Councils
- Local Land Services
- Aboriginal communities as defined by Action 2
- Others, where considered necessary.

Potential influences into project scope

- Legislative requirements and changes associated with the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*
- Completion of Actions 2, 13 and 15
- Place based strategic planning across the region (where identified by council or the NSW Government)

Action 6

Establish a green and blue grid for the region to identify opportunities for improvements in green and blue infrastructure as informed by leadership from Aboriginal community members and local governments.

Why

To enhance and connect parks, open spaces, bushland, waterways, riparian areas and waterbodies with recreational areas and active transport.

How

The department, together with councils and Transport for NSW will develop a Blue and Green Grid to provide a spatial understanding of the open space network within the region. The Grid will identify how to improve and better connect existing open spaces through investment in green infrastructure, allowing the NSW Government and councils to identify long-term and large scale open space priorities.

Key supporting stakeholders

- Department of Regional NSW, Transport for NSW, Heritage NSW and other NSW Government agencies where relevant
- Councils
- Canberra Region Joint Organisation
- ACT Government
- Aboriginal knowledge holders, as identified through Action 2
- Others, where considered necessary.

Potential influences into project scope

- Establishment of the Green and Blue Grid in other region's such as the Illawarra Shoalhaven Region.

Action 7



Work with the Canberra Region Joint Organisation, councils, community and other NSW Government agencies to progress and implement the *Blueprint for a Resilient South East NSW* to identify and address regional risks and resilience priorities.

Why

To enable councils, communities, emergency services and relevant NSW government agencies to better prevent, prepare, respond and recover from natural hazards, infrastructure and technological failures and other shocks and stresses.

How

The Canberra Region Joint Organisation has been developing the *Blueprint for a Resilient South East NSW*.

The department will work closely with the Canberra Region Joint Organisation, Office of Energy and Climate Change, councils and community to identify initiatives and processes to support its implementation, including its applicability to strategic and statutory planning processes.

Key supporting stakeholders

- Councils
- Canberra Region Joint Organisation
- Office of Energy and Climate Change and other relevant NSW Government agencies where considered relevant
- Emergency services
- Community members
- Others, where considered necessary.

Potential influences into project scope

- *Blueprint for a Resilient South East NSW*.

Action 8



Develop a South East and Tablelands emissions reduction roadmap that identifies innovative initiatives that can be delivered through an ecosystem of collaboration.

Why

To plan for a net zero region by 2050.

How

The department will work closely with key stakeholders to establish a roadmap of initiatives to support business and industry to improve energy efficiency, reduce emissions and encourage the use of renewables.

Key supporting stakeholders

- Office of Energy and Climate Change, Department of Regional NSW, and other NSW Government agencies where relevant
- Canberra Region Joint Organisation
- Service providers
- Industry
- Others, where considered necessary.

Potential influences into project scope

- The completion of other sustainability related initiatives in other regional plans such as in the *Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041*
- Development of the Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) program through Energy Co
- NSW Government programs in accordance with the Net Zero Plan.

Action 9



(a) Work with Queanbeyan–Palerang and Yass Valley Councils to identify and implement agreed priorities which address water security, infrastructure provision and allocation, and

(b) outline innovative water planning solutions for the Capital subregion addressing matters such as:

- forecast population growth and strategic planning,
- ecological and aquatic ecosystem management,
- infrastructure capacity, and
- sustainable water management practices in line with the *NSW Water Strategy*.

Why

To identify the options and solutions to resolve long term water security for the Yass and Queanbeyan–Palerang LGAs, as well as innovative solutions for water planning for areas in the Sydney Drinking Water Catchment.

How

The department will work closely with key stakeholders to identify enabling water infrastructure that is required to provide long term water security. This will involve the identification and utilisation of existing governance frameworks, where established Resolving matters relating to water security will provide opportunities to define the strategic capacity for growth.

Undertaking strategic investigations will enable greater alignment in strategic planning in applying regional water strategies at a localised level. Considerations for the capital subregion will look to support key challenges in managing infrastructure capacity, the Sydney Drinking Water Catchment and water cycle management (recycling).

Key supporting stakeholders

- Department of Regional NSW, Water NSW, Department of Premier and Cabinet, NSW Office of the Cross Border Commissioner, and other NSW Government agencies where relevant
- Yass Valley, Queanbeyan–Palerang and Goulburn–Mulwaree Councils (Snowy Monaro Council where identified in the detailed scope) and servicing agencies
- ACT Government

- ACT and Region Catchment Management Coordination Group and Murray Darling Basin Authority.

Potential influences into project scope

- Existing project examples such as water strategies and water sharing plans for Queanbeyan–Palerang and Yass Valley LGAs
- ACT NSW Government MoU and ACT and Region Catchment Strategy 2016-2046
- Relevant water planning guidelines.

Action 10



Identify regional tourism networks and establish a roadmap to support their activation, including supporting infrastructure at and between key destinations.

Why

To improve the activation of, and access to the region's tourist destinations, promoting regional networks to diversify the region's offerings as part of a thriving visitor economy.

How

The department will work with Destination NSW, Department of Regional NSW, Transport for NSW, the Canberra Region Joint Organisation and its member councils to identify defined tourism networks such as the Blue Highway as outlined in the NSW Martine Tourism Strategy.

The department will prepare individual roadmaps for each network which outline profiles of key destinations, opportunities to improve infrastructure, and strategies to diversify employment opportunities and visitor accommodation.

Key supporting stakeholders

- Destination Southern NSW, Department of Regional NSW, Transport for NSW and other NSW Government agencies where relevant
- Canberra Region Joint Organisation
- Councils
- ACT Government
- Business operators
- Others, where considered necessary.

Potential influences into project scope

- NSW Martine Tourism Strategy
- Regional Economic Development Strategies.

Action 11



Work with the Canberra Region Joint Organisation, NSW Government agencies to prepare a roadmap to support agritourism and marine-based tourism opportunities in the region.

Why

To develop a coordinated approach to planning for agritourism and marine-based tourism throughout the region which supports the realisation of opportunities for these uses in the right locations.

How

The department will work with the Canberra Region Joint Organisation, the Department of Primary Industries, the Environment Protection Authority and other key supporting stakeholders to identify initiatives and processes to support business and industry in establishing new, and growing existing, agritourism and marine-based tourism throughout the region.

Key consideration will be given to the early identification of planning and infrastructure considerations such as land use conflict and supporting infrastructure.

Key supporting stakeholders

- Department of Primary Industries, Environment Protection Authority, Destination Southern NSW, and other relevant NSW Government agencies where considered relevant
- Councils
- Canberra Region Joint Organisation
- ACT Government
- Community and industry stakeholders
- Others, where considered necessary.

Potential influences into project scope

- NSW Government legislative reforms in Agritourism in LEPs
- South East and Tablelands Agritourism and Value-Add study.

Action 12



Develop a circular economy strategy for the region that identifies initiatives to address barriers and opportunities in priority growth sectors (employment industries), in transitioning to a circular economy, as guided by the principles set by the NSW Government Circular Economy Policy Statement.

Why

To help understand the flow of materials, structures and regulatory requirements/changes that would support the circular economy initiatives.

How

The department will work closely with key stakeholders, including the Canberra Region Joint Organisation and Bega Valley Shire Council and industry stakeholders, to identify several initiatives and processes to support business and industry adopt and implement circular economy approaches.

Key consideration will be given to the model developed in the Bega Valley LGA.

Key supporting stakeholders

- Department of Regional NSW, Department of Primary Industries, Environmental Protection Authority, NSW Office of the Cross Border Commissioner, NSW Health and other NSW Government agencies where relevant
- Canberra Region Joint Organisation
- ACT Government
- Councils
- Community and industry stakeholders
- Others, where considered necessary.

Potential influences into project scope

- NSW Government Circular Economy Policy Statement
- ACT NSW Government MoU
- Development of Action 8.

Action 13

Investigate the Southern Highlands Innovation Park as a regionally significant employment precinct, including the completion of necessary land use and infrastructure planning.

Why

To promote greater investment in long-term and innovative employment generating activities, whilst leveraging inter-regional investment and population growth.

How

The department will work with the Department of Regional NSW, Transport for NSW, Council and industry to complete a gap analysis of the Southern Highlands Innovation Park. This will include a vision for the precinct and associated actions to support its activation.

This action will identify appropriate priorities for sequencing of services and infrastructure with development, and how to resolve key land use planning barriers.

Key supporting stakeholders

- Department of Regional NSW, Transport for NSW and other NSW Government agencies where considered relevant
- Aboriginal communities as identified through Action 2
- Wingecarribee Shire Council
- Industry
- Service providers.

Potential influences into project scope

- Council investigations into the area, including Council's LSPS, and Southern Highlands Destination Plan 2020-2030
- Completion of Action 2.

Action 14

Work with the councils to prepare and or update employment land strategies which set an action plan for the application of rural and transition zones, and the development of profiles for regionally significant employment areas to guide their activation

Why

To better understand the priorities and composition of local employment areas, and to activate the region's regionally significant employment precincts to support new and innovative economic enterprises.

How

The department will work with councils to review and update, or prepare local employment land strategies to understand existing capacity, the character of each area, the capacity for change and considerations for employment land on a fringe or rural zoning.

As part of this activity, the department will work with key stakeholders to develop precinct profiles that identify each area's:

- Future role
- Land requirements to support targeted industries
- Infrastructure and servicing requirements
- Existing land constraints
- Enabling and simplified planning controls
- Potential planning approvals pathways to support simplification
- Key stakeholders and appropriate governance systems to support the areas growth.

Key supporting stakeholders

- Department of Regional NSW, Transport for NSW and other NSW Government agencies where considered relevant
- Councils
- Canberra Region Joint Organisation
- Community and industry stakeholders
- Aboriginal communities
- Others, where considered necessary.

Potential influences into project scope

- Existing council local employment strategies and economic development strategies.

Action 15



Prepare a place strategy for the Batemans Bay Strategic Cluster to coordinate strategic planning and infrastructure decisions.

Why

To provide a clear framework to enable growth and target future investment in the context of a changing centres dynamic between Batemans Bay and Moruya, and as investment in key infrastructure alters how the area functions and evolves.

How

The department will complete a place strategy for the Bateman's Bay Strategic Cluster which will set the vision for the area and how by working together, we can make a difference. This approach identifies appropriate provisions that need to be in place to support change and growth, through planning and infrastructure.

The strategy will involve the preparation of relevant technical studies and identify implementation mechanisms.

Key supporting stakeholders

- Department of Regional NSW, Transport for NSW, Heritage NSW, and other NSW Government agencies where considered relevant
- Eurobodalla Shire Council
- Service providers
- Community members
- Aboriginal communities.

Potential influences into project scope

- Existing council projects and investigations such as the Bateman's Bay Waterfront Master Plan and Activation Strategies
- Design and concept planning for Moruya Bypass and Eurobodalla Regional Hospital.

Action 16



Work with councils to prepare place-based masterplans for each strategic centre and clusters, focused on: projected population growth, infill residential growth targets and infrastructure provision, walking, cycling and public transport access, protection of heritage, cultural assets and environment, access to employment.

Why

To evaluate the capacity for growth and guide the renewal of strategic centres and clusters to cater for a growing population.

How

The department will work with each council to evaluate the scale of strategic planning undertaken for each strategic centre and cluster. Based on this evaluation, the Department will collaborate with each council to identify current development and infrastructure capacity, considerations for future density, public domain improvements and activation, transport access and priorities to enable housing and employment growth.

The department will apply relevant the frameworks identified under the NSW Government Architects 'Better Placed' and associated design guides such as Movement and Place. The assessment of, and masterplan for each centre and cluster will involve:

- An opportunities assessment
- A place activation strategy and design guide
A graphical diagram outlining key spatial moves to inform future land use changes.

For areas without strategic centres, the department will work closely with councils to understand the demand for strategic planning.

Key supporting stakeholders

- Department of Regional NSW, Transport for NSW, Heritage NSW and, other NSW Government agencies where considered relevant
- Councils
- Service Providers
- Community members
- Aboriginal communities.

Potential influences into project scope

- NSW Government Architect Design guidance
- Council LSPS's and strategic plans such as local housing/employment lands strategies.

Action 17



Work with councils and the Canberra Region Joint Organisation to develop a housing toolkit to support an improved standard and delivery of short term accommodation and social and affordable housing.

Why

To develop suitable tools to support councils in addressing housing affordability.

How

This action will require collating the existing investigations into housing being completed across different levels of Government and organisations. The department will work with the Canberra Region Joint Organisation and its member councils to understand how to realise more affordable, social, key worker, temporary and seasonal housing in the region.

The housing toolkit will involve the development of case studies or investigate opportunities in the planning framework. These collective initiatives will support the development of affordable and social housing targets in the region, aligned with the regional housing taskforce recommendations.

An initial action out of this toolkit will be to quantify housing demands from major projects and infrastructure investments to 2027, to better plan for temporary workforces generated by increased construction.

Key supporting stakeholders

- Department of Regional NSW, Land and Housing Corporation, Aboriginal Housing Office, Department of Communities and Justice, and other NSW Government agencies where considered relevant
- Canberra Region Joint Organisation
- ACT Government
- Councils
- Community and industry stakeholders
- Aboriginal communities and organisations
- Community housing providers and organisations, i.e. Shelter NSW, Community Housing Industry Association NSW
- Others, where considered necessary.

Potential influences into project scope

- Regional Housing Taskforce recommendations/implementation program
- Local housing strategies, affordable housing strategies and settlement strategies.

Action 18



Work with councils and the Canberra Region Joint Organisation to develop a set of master planning principles that provide examples and guidance on how to rezone and develop residential land, in the context of high environmental value land, cultural and heritage significance, important agricultural land and areas affected by natural hazards.

Why

To strategically understand the capacity for new greenfield development and how to plan for safe, sustainable, vibrant and well-connected communities.

How

The department will work with key stakeholders to establish guidance that considers individual and multiple matters such as high environmental value land, cultural values, agriculture and land use buffers and natural hazards and how development may respond.

Performance-based standards will define minimum requirements for new greenfield development, and will involve the development of relevant local, regional, national and international case studies to support implementation.

Key supporting stakeholders

- NSW Rural Fire Service, NSW State Emergency Service, the Department's Biodiversity and Conservation Division, Department of Primary Industries, Heritage NSW and other NSW Government agencies where considered relevant
- Councils
- Canberra Region Joint Organisation
- Community and industry stakeholders
- Aboriginal communities and organisations
- Others, where considered necessary.

Potential influences into project scope

- *Urban design for regional NSW*
- Natural hazard guidelines such as *Planning for Bushfire Protection and Coastal Design Guidelines*
- *Blueprint for a Resilient South East NSW*
- State Significant Agricultural Land
- *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*, in particular the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme and Biodiversity Certification.

Action 19



Undertake an assessment of the type and capacity of the services (movement generators) accessible to the population within a 30, 60 and 90 minute road-based trip of a strategic centre, cluster and other locations, to inform recommendations to other agencies, councils on the sequencing improvements to meet NSW Government targets.

Why

To better understand existing and future infrastructure requirements to service a growing community.

How

The department will work with key NSW government agencies, councils and servicing agencies, among others, to identify existing and current infrastructure constraints/ barriers.

The department will work closely with other agencies on identifying an integrated land use and transport assessment of the region to identify where better connections can be made or improved, and the role of land use planning to support delivery and future investment. This will include understanding how the 15-minute neighbourhood concept can be applied under the *Future Transport Strategy*.

Key supporting stakeholders

- Transport for NSW, NSW Health, School Infrastructure NSW, Infrastructure NSW, and other NSW Government agencies where considered relevant
- NSW Office of the Cross Border Commissioner
- ACT Government
- Canberra Region Joint Organisation
- Councils.

Potential influences into project scope

- *NSW Future Transport Strategy*
- ACT NSW Government MoU
- Service planning models as identified through NSW Government agencies.

Action 20



Establish an Urban Development program for the South East and Tablelands Region to better identify, coordinate and prioritise enabling infrastructure for new housing, employment land and monitor delivery.

Why

To unlock housing growth through coordinated infrastructure delivery and planning.

How

The department will work with the NSW Office of the Cross Border Commissioner, the ACT Government, councils and servicing agencies to build upon the land and housing monitor established for the LGAs in the Capital subregion. This program will be modelled off the existing Urban Development Program being delivered in the Illawarra Shoalhaven Region.

Key supporting stakeholders

- Transport for NSW, and other NSW Government agencies where considered relevant
- NSW Office of the Cross Border Commissioner
- ACT Government
- Canberra Region Joint Organisation
- Service providers
- Councils.

Potential influences into project scope

- ACT NSW Government MoU, including the ACT NSW Land and Housing Monitor
- Illawarra Shoalhaven Urban Development Program.

Glossary

Affordable housing

Housing for very low-income households, low income households or moderate-income households, as prescribed by regulations or provided for in an environmental planning instrument.

Agritourism

experiences in which a tourist visits a farm or producer to learn more about their property, farming activity or produce.

Biodiversity

The variety of life on Earth. The life forms, the different plants, animals and microorganisms, the genes they contain and the ecosystems they form.

Circular economy

A circular economy values resources by keeping products and materials in use for as long as possible. Maximising the use and value of resources brings major economic, social and environmental benefits. It contributes to innovation, growth and job creation, while reducing our impact on the environment.

Climate change

A change in the state of climate that can be identified by changes in the mean and/or the variability of its properties, and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer.¹⁹

Climate refugia

Areas where species can retreat to and persist in under changing environmental conditions. Refugia are areas that maintain favourable climatic conditions absent in the surrounding landscape, thereby safeguarding the persistence of biodiversity.

Country

The term often used by Aboriginal peoples to describe the lands, waterways and seas to which they are connected. The term contains complex ideas about law, place, custom, language, spiritual belief, cultural practice, material sustenance, family and identity.¹

Employment lands

Land that is zoned for industrial or similar purposes in planning instruments. These uses include manufacturing; transport and warehousing; service and repair trades and industries; integrated enterprises with a mix of administration, production, warehousing, research and development; and urban services and utilities.

First mile/last mile

The first and final stage of a journey in which people or goods travel to a broad range of origins or destinations, such as the trip between a train station and the final destination of a shopping centre or place of work.

Green infrastructure

The network of green spaces, natural systems, and semi-natural systems that support sustainable communities, including waterways; bushland; tree canopy and green ground cover; parks; and open spaces that are strategically planned, designed, and managed to support a good quality of life in an urban environment.

Groundwater Dependant Ecosystems

Ecosystems that need access to groundwater to meet all or some of their water requirements to maintain their communities of plants and animals, ecological processes and ecosystem services.

Housing affordability

The capacity of individuals or households to enter the rental and privately owned housing markets.

Housing density

A measure of how intensively a residential area is developed, based on the number of dwellings per hectare. Low is up to 15 dwellings/ha, medium 16 to 60 and high more than 60.

Housing diversity

The mix of housing types such as detached dwellings, boarding houses, dual occupancies, group homes, hostels, multi-dwelling housing, residential flat buildings, secondary dwellings, semi-detached dwellings, seniors housing and shop top housing.

Local Plans

Includes Local Environmental Plans and Development Control Plans.

Place Strategy

A place-based strategy that provides coordination and delivery of planning, infrastructure and government services. It does not rezone land but provides a spatial representation of key planning factors for that place. This may include areas of high-biodiversity value, key transport links, including cycle paths, areas where development is anticipated and where key supporting infrastructure will be provided to service growth (e.g., schools, sewer, water, roads). A place strategy may include a vision, directions, structure plan and an infrastructure delivery framework.

Prescribed body corporates

A corporation set up under the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006*, which manages and protects the native title rights and interests of native title holders.

Public spaces

Public spaces are all places publicly owned or of public use, accessible and enjoyable by all for free. They include open spaces, public facilities and streets.

Renewable energy zone

A modern-day power station which combines energy generation such as wind and solar, storage such as batteries, and high voltage poles and wires to deliver energy to the homes, businesses and industries that need it.¹⁷

Resilience

Resilience is the capacity of individuals, communities, businesses and systems within a city to survive, adapt and thrive no matter what kinds of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience (100 Resilient Cities).

Smart Cities

Smart cities are those which leverage innovative technologies to improve the quality of life of communities by enhancing the function and access to services – i.e., by strengthening data analysis and collaboration between people, organisations and governments to better understand how people engage with their environment.

Social housing

Housing for people on low incomes or people in housing crisis, owned or managed by government or community housing providers. Rents are based on income.

Strategic planning

Includes the preparation of Local Strategic Planning Statements, local housing strategies, employment land or retail studies, and other activities undertaken to support the development of local and regional plans by all levels of government.

Sustainability

Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Urban Development Program

The NSW Government's program that manages land and housing supply, monitors the planning, servicing and development for new urban areas as well as the provision of housing.

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