

# North Coast Regional Plan 2041





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North Coast Regional Plan 2041

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# Acknowledgement of Country

Planning for the North Coast acknowledges the continuous Aboriginal connection to the land, water, sea and skies in the region.

As part of the world's oldest living culture, Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Australian continent and adjacent islands share a unique relationship to Country – a bond forged through thousands of years Caring for Country, across lands and waterways for ceremony, trading and seasonal migration.

The North Coast Region is on the lands of the Bundjalung, Githabul, Gumbaynggirr, Yaegl, Dunghutti, Thunggutti and Birpai Nations. We respect Aboriginal people's rights, obligations and roles as Traditional Custodians of the land, sea and waterways. We acknowledge the diversity of Country including coastal land, wetlands, rainforests, big scrub, and the mountain ranges within the North Coast Region. We acknowledge the resilience in communities to care for and manage the diverse region for many thousands of years.

Aboriginal people have cultural management responsibilities and maintain a strong belief that if we care for Country, she will care for us. This requires Country to be cared for throughout the process of design and development.

We acknowledge the mistreatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who were forcibly removed from their land, families and communities. We recognise the resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and support the process of truth telling.

We also acknowledge and thank all First Nations people who contributed to the preparation of the North Coast Regional Plan. Thank you for sharing your knowledge and aspirations for this beautiful place. The built environment has a role to play in truth telling and honouring the deep connection First Nations people have with the land, sea, water and sky where we live, work and learn.

Through applying comprehensive and respectful approaches, planning for the North Coast can build capacity and pathways for knowledge sharing between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.

Image on front cover: The Coast Road, Lennox to Ballina.

Image on this page: Kengal Aboriginal Place.

Credit: Destination NSW.

Artwork (right) by Nikita Ridgeway





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# Foreword

The stunning NSW North Coast is one of the state's most desirable places to live, work, visit and play.

The rich and diverse environment and sub-tropical climate forge the unique character of the region, underpinning a growing economy and creating an enviable lifestyle for its residents.

As the bridge between the rapidly growing economic powerhouses of Sydney, Newcastle and South East Queensland, the North Coast offers an unparalleled point of difference as an alluring and accessible destination for new residents and millions of tourists each year.

It's a region of resilience strengthened by a rare community bond. Since the last Regional Plan was released in 2017, these communities have battled devastating floods, bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic. Their courage and support for each other in the face of these life-changing events has been inspirational and the government will continue to stand with these communities and provide them with the support they need to prosper. This updated vision for the region is part of that effort.

Over the past two years COVID-19 has transformed the way people live and work. The pandemic, together with a strong economy, has accelerated the region's popularity with more people able to capitalise on flexible work arrangements to make their sea and tree change dream a reality.

As the strong appeal of the region continues over the next 20 years, its key cities of Tweed Heads, Coffs Harbour, and Port Macquarie are primed to accommodate the growth.

The *North Coast Regional Plan 2041* (the plan) is the updated Government blueprint to harness the opportunities and sustainably support ongoing prosperity and growth for the region over the next two decades.

The plan reflects stakeholder aspirations and needs while protecting the region's precious natural environment and resources. We have worked with the 12 local councils, other government agencies and Aboriginal representatives to develop this plan.

A series of strategies, actions, and collaboration activities will lay the foundation for delivering the plan's priorities.

Capitalising on the region's strategic transport links and special connection to South East Queensland will be key to driving a prosperous economic future.

Supplying enough affordable housing to meet people's needs is a key Government priority.

A range of housing and employment options, especially in the region's cities and strategic centres, will support the growing population, and local council strategies and precinct planning will ensure connected, active, and healthy communities.

Promoting a circular economy, exploring renewable energy opportunities, preserving the region's important farmland, and protecting its biodiversity and waterways, including coastal lakes, wetlands, estuaries and the iconic Solitary Islands Marine Park, is essential to the region's long-term sustainability and prosperity.

The natural disasters the area has experienced in the recent past highlights the importance of strategic planning and the need for our strategic thinking to be able to adapt to meet changing needs and circumstances over the next 20 years.

The unfortunate reality is climate change could lead to a world where there is a greater frequency of natural disasters and this plan prepares for this with measures that build more resilience into planning decisions to better protect people and places.

Overall, this plan resets priorities for the North Coast and builds on the earlier efforts for a more sustainable, prosperous, and resilient region. It focuses on delivering the right housing and jobs in the right locations supported by infrastructure, championing ecofriendly technologies, advancing Aboriginal interests, enhancing biodiversity, and recognising the diversity of landscapes throughout the region.

It is a regional plan that will take a highly targeted subregional planning approach to achieve a brighter, better and more sustainable future for the North Coast.



**The Hon. Anthony Roberts**  
*Minister for Planning*  
*Minister for Homes*



# Introduction

**The North Coast Region sits in the State's north-east and provides arguably NSW's most enviable life-work-play balance across a mixture of urban, coastal, and rural lifestyles.**

The *North Coast Regional Plan 2041* sets a 20-year strategic land use planning framework for the region, aiming to protect and enhance the region's assets and plan for a sustainable future.

As a 20-year plan, it applies to the Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Ballina, Bellingen, Byron, Clarence Valley, Coffs Harbour, Kempsey, Kyogle, Lismore, Nambucca, Port Macquarie-Hastings, Richmond Valley and Tweed.

This Regional Plan represents a five-year review of the region's strategic planning settings and considers some of the key land use challenges and opportunities over the last five years and moving forward. It covers all facets of land use planning, including employment areas, town centres, housing and related infrastructure, the natural environment and hazards.

This past five-year period has seen prolonged drought, flooding, bushfire and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, there have also been many positive developments and major infrastructure investments in the region, including the ongoing upgrade of the Pacific Highway, the Clarence Correctional Centre, the Tweed Valley Hospital and the Richmond Valley Regional Job Precinct.

In the coming 20 years, population growth in the region is expected to be particularly strong in the regional cities and other key centres. With the population rapidly getting older, technology changes, new job opportunities and increasing pressures between urban growth and the need to preserve important farmland and protect the environment, a new regional plan can set out the requirements for clear and coordinated planning across all levels of government and within the community.

We have prepared this plan in consultation with councils and key stakeholders. It is designed to guide planning and decision-making by the NSW Government and councils and to inform decisions by the private sector and the wider community.



Port Macquarie Breakwall  
Credit: Destination NSW



## About the North Coast Region

The region's first people are the Bundjalung, Githabul, Gumbaynggirr, Yaegl, Dunghutti, Thunggutti and Birpai Nations. Their rich cultural heritage is supported through the Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs), which own local land holdings and have responsibilities for Aboriginal people living in the area.

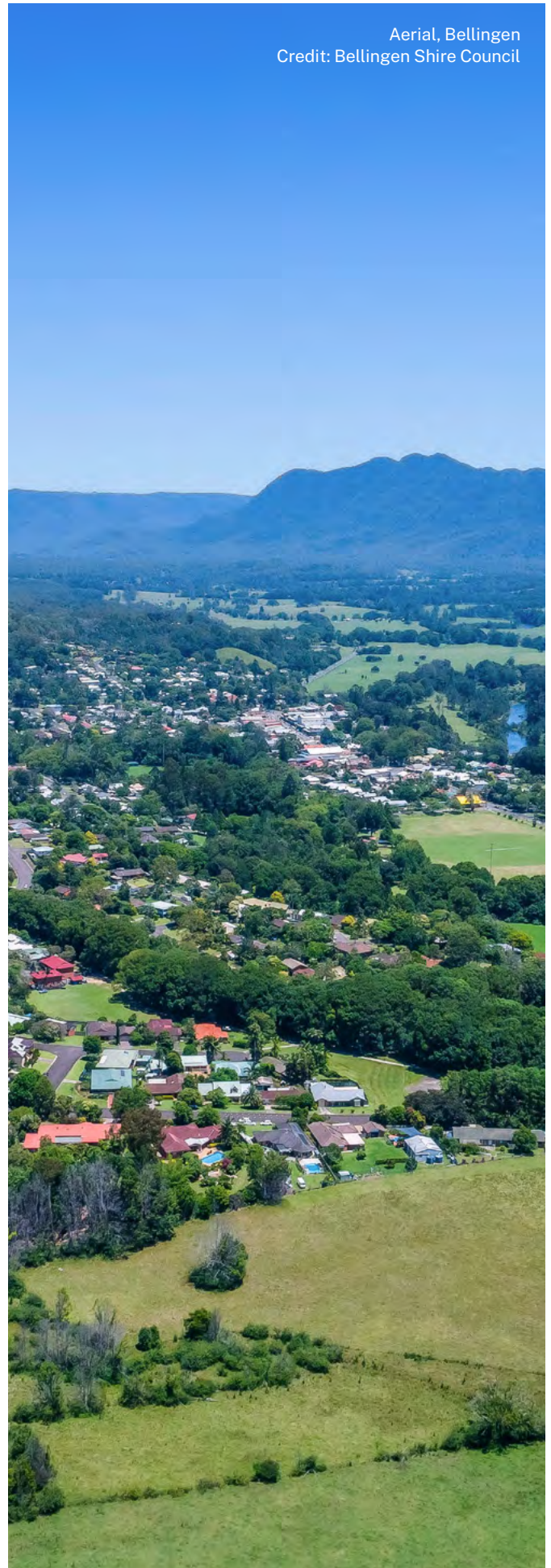
The region's natural environment is its defining characteristic, and must be valued, respected and carefully managed and protected. With the future of work changing, the region is attracting more remote workers, which will see rising demand for local housing, health, education, shops, cafés and services.

The region links the rapidly growing areas of Sydney, the Hunter and South East Queensland.

Many communities are still reeling from the devastating bushfires and floods; and the COVID-19 pandemic has shown how the region's natural and built assets – its main streets, beaches, parks, rivers, and leafy open spaces – are key to public life.

The region has two distinct subregions centred around the Northern Rivers and the Mid North Coast and the regional cities of Tweed, Lismore, Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie. Other centres such as Murwillumbah, Mullumbimby, Byron Bay, Ballina, Kyogle, Casino, Grafton, Bellingen, Macksville and Kempsey are playing an increasingly important role in providing housing and employment opportunities and supporting local communities within these subregions.

The North Coast supports a strong and growing economy. Health care and social assistance to support the region's ageing population continues to be the main economic driver, while the growing education and training, construction, tourism, creative, retail and agriculture sectors are expected to generate increasing employment opportunities.



Aerial, Bellingen  
Credit: Bellingen Shire Council



## About the Regional Plan

The North Coast region has been declared a region pursuant to Section 3.2 in the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

By planning for growth, change and opportunity, the Regional Plan aims to provide a framework for decision-making, balancing social, economic and environmental objectives.

The Regional Plan provides an overarching framework to guide subsequent and more detailed land use plans, development proposals and infrastructure funding decisions at a regional, subregional and local level. Priorities for each council are set out in Local Government Narratives, which will guide further investigations and implementation.

## Review process

The *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) requires five-yearly reviews of regional plans. Since the release of the *North Coast Regional Plan 2036*, the NSW Government has worked with councils, stakeholders and the community to:

- prepare action plans for the regional cities of Tweed, Lismore, Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie
- deliver the *North Coast Housing and Land Monitor 2018*
- develop a model to integrate cross border land use planning between NSW and South East Queensland and remove barriers to economic, housing and jobs growth
- review areas identified as 'under investigation' within urban growth areas to identify sites of potential high environmental value
- support the identification of areas of Aboriginal cultural heritage in areas such as Tweed and Coffs Harbour
- prepare land release criteria to assess appropriate locations for future residential, commercial and industrial uses
- develop an Urban Design Guide for Regional NSW, and
- create a local housing strategy guideline and template.

Together with councils' local strategic planning statements, this review allows communities to work collaboratively to build vibrant places and protect precious landscapes.

In addition to inputs from councils, State agencies and other stakeholders, we drew from:

- council's local strategic planning statements and community strategic plans
- *State Infrastructure Strategy 2018-2038, Future Transport 2056 and A 20-year Economic Vision for Regional NSW*
- regional economic development strategies for Clarence Valley, Coffs Coast, Hastings Macleay, Nambucca, Northern Rivers and Tweed Shire, and
- findings from a dedicated engagement process with representatives of key Aboriginal stakeholder groups in the region to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are reflected accurately and respectfully in the Regional Plan.

## Local strategic planning statements

Regional and local planning must work together. For this reason, the EP&A Act provides a clear line of sight from regional planning to local delivery. This includes local strategic planning statements, prepared by councils, which respond to each LGA's opportunities, changes and trends. This process establishes clear objectives to guide on-the-ground outcomes.

Local strategic planning statements, therefore, must be consistent with the relevant regional plan and a council's community strategic plan.

This framework allows different levels of government to coordinate and realise greater efficiencies as the strategies and actions in regional plans are implemented.

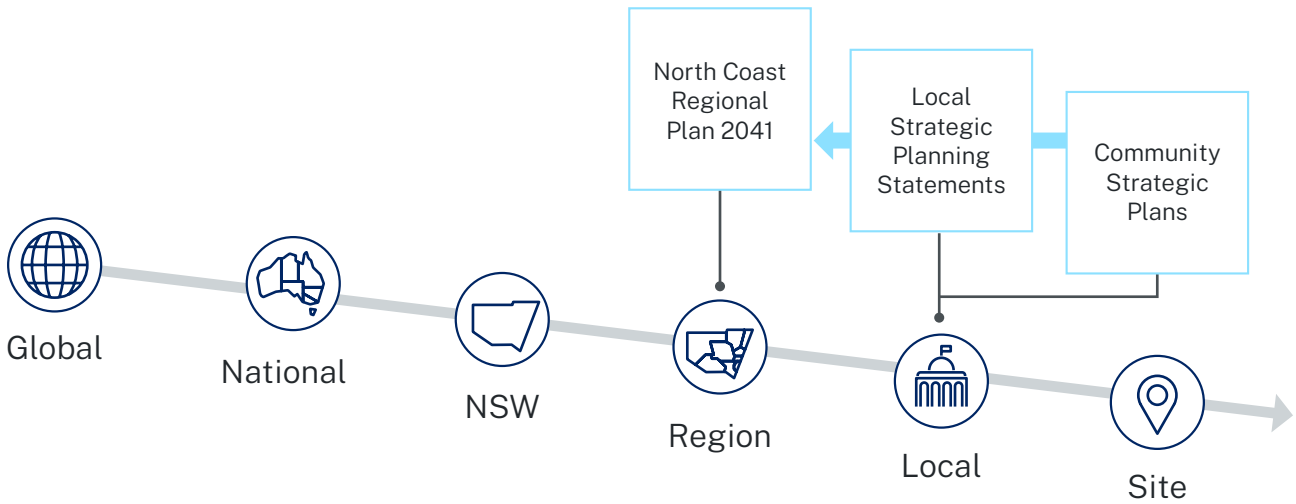


Figure 1: Strategic planning line of sight

## Implementation

The North Coast Delivery, Coordination and Monitoring Committee is responsible for the plan's implementation. Made up of council and State agency representatives, the committee will listen and work with stakeholders to align growth with infrastructure to support growth and change in the region.

The committee will prioritise the actions needed to seize on immediate and emerging opportunities, such as supporting cities, growing the economy, protecting important farmland, capitalising on renewable energy investments and major infrastructure projects, and promoting tourism and manage the environment to sustain the precious natural resources that underpin all of these opportunities.

The committee will monitor and review progress towards achieving the vision and goals for 2041 and detail indicators for housing, employment, communities and the environment, as well as provide advice to government on short-term actions in an annual report.

An Implementation Plan for 2022-2026 supports the Regional Plan.

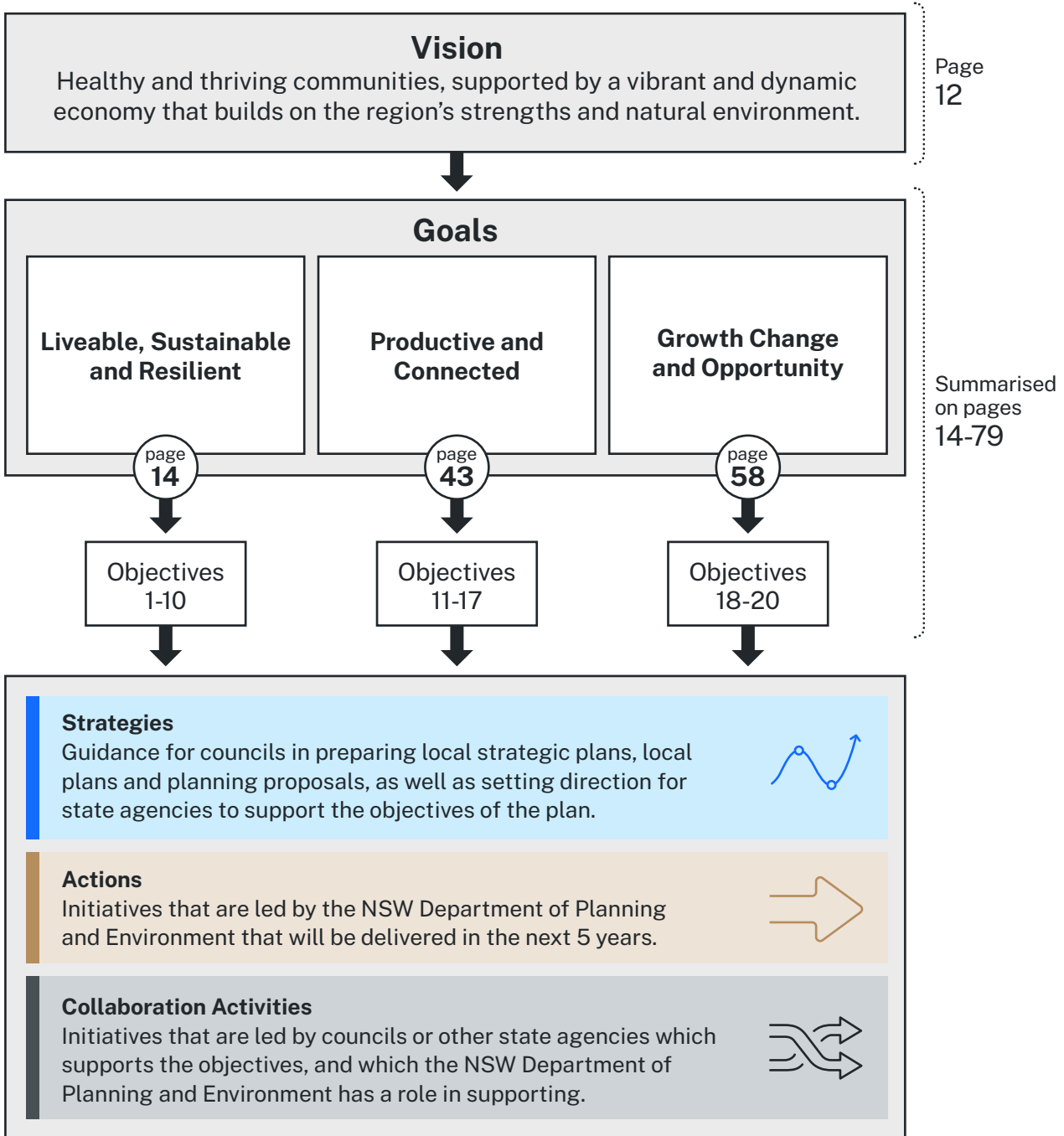


## Strategies, actions and collaboration activities

To support the vision for the region, we've identified strategies, actions and collaboration activities.

Strategies will be implemented by councils when preparing local plans, actions will be led by the Department of Planning and Environment and collaboration activities by the identified stakeholders.

An outline of the plan structure is as follows:



## All actions and collaboration activities in the plan are listed below.

### Actions

Establish the North Coast Urban Housing Monitoring Program.

Provide guidance to help councils plan for and manage accommodation options for seasonal and itinerant workers.

Establish Housing Affordability Roundtables for the Mid North Coast and Northern Rivers subregions with councils, community housing providers, State agencies and the housing development industry to collaborate, build knowledge and identify measures to improve affordability and increase housing diversity.

Continue to provide guidance and tools for councils to use for evidence-based risk-management approaches to build resilience to shocks and stresses, plan for natural hazards and transition to net zero emissions.

The Department of Planning and Environment will work with LALCs, Native Title holders and councils by:

- meaningfully engaging with LALCs and Native Title holders in the development and review of strategic plans to ensure aspirations are reflected in plans
- building capacity for Aboriginal communities, LALCs and Native Title holders to utilise the planning system
- incorporating Aboriginal knowledge of the region into planning considerations and decisions.

Undertake housing and employment land reviews for the Northern Rivers and Mid North Coast subregions to assess future supply needs and locations.

### Collaboration Activities

Work with and assist councils to:

- review biodiversity mapping and related local environmental plan and development control plan provisions
- improve access to data to enable identification of protected areas including NPWS Estate, Crown Reserves and in-perpetuity private land conservation agreements to inform local planning
- ensure koala habitat values are included in land-use planning decisions through regional plans, local strategic planning statements and local environmental plans.

**Lead Agency:** NSW Biodiversity and Conservation Division

Work with councils and agencies and the Transition North Coast Working Group to deliver the North Coast Enabling Regional Adaptation report to provide opportunities for climate change adaptation pathways with the aim of transitioning key regional systems to a more resilient future.

**Lead Agency:** NSW Office of Energy and Climate Change

Support the development of the Richmond Valley Regional Job Precinct to create a hub focused on high-value agriculture, food processing, manufacturing, distribution, and renewable energy.

**Lead Agency:** Department of Regional NSW

To ensure that centres experiencing high growth have well planned and sustainable transport options, place-based Transport Plans will be developed for key cities and centres across the North Coast region.

**Lead Agency:** Transport for NSW

In collaboration with Tweed Shire Council, City of Gold Coast and Department of Transport and Main Roads Queensland, develop opportunities for multimodal transport connections to Coolangatta and the Tweed.

**Lead Agency:** Transport for NSW

Investigate public transport improvements including on-demand services.

**Lead Agency:** Transport for NSW



# Vision

## **Healthy and thriving communities, supported by a vibrant and dynamic economy that builds on the region's strengths and natural environment.**

On the lands of the Bundjalung, Githabul, Gumbaynggirr, Yaegl, Dunghutti, Thunggutti and Birpai people and respecting their connection to Country, the North Coast is a vibrant and growing area. The region's spectacular environment, biodiversity and climate, continues to attract residents and visitors alike providing one of Australia's most enviable lifestyles and underpinning a range of opportunities and a prosperous future.

Located between Sydney and Brisbane, the region offers ready access to domestic and international markets and services via high-quality transport networks. Communities ranging from Port Macquarie-Hastings to Tweed are well connected, attractive, healthy, safe and prosperous. They are places with a strong sense of identity, resilience and respect for Country.

Residents enjoy a broad range of employment opportunities and housing choices along with quality education, health, recreational and other community services. These are located across the region's cities and centres, and all within a

beautiful natural environment set between the Great Dividing Range and the Pacific Ocean.

The North Coast has strong communities of interest and connections focused on the Northern Rivers and Mid North Coast subregions. New housing, services, infrastructure and employment opportunities are being delivered across these subregions based on their natural attributes and advantages to ensure prosperity and growth for all North Coast cities, centres and communities. The Northern Rivers continues to integrate with a burgeoning South East Queensland while the Mid North Coast has strong regional relationships in particular to the north, south and west.

The region is welcoming, inclusive and supports a diversity of rural, coastal, bohemian and cosmopolitan lifestyles. It is economically strong with thriving health, education and construction sectors; local, emerging and creative industries; and other sectors such as agriculture, fishing, aquaculture and tourism which reinforce and embrace the region's local character and charm.

The region responds to the challenge of climate change in constructive and innovative ways that minimise exposure to hazards, build community resilience and promote a sustainable future. The stunning natural environment of the North Coast, including its rich and unique biodiversity, is to be valued, protected and enhanced.

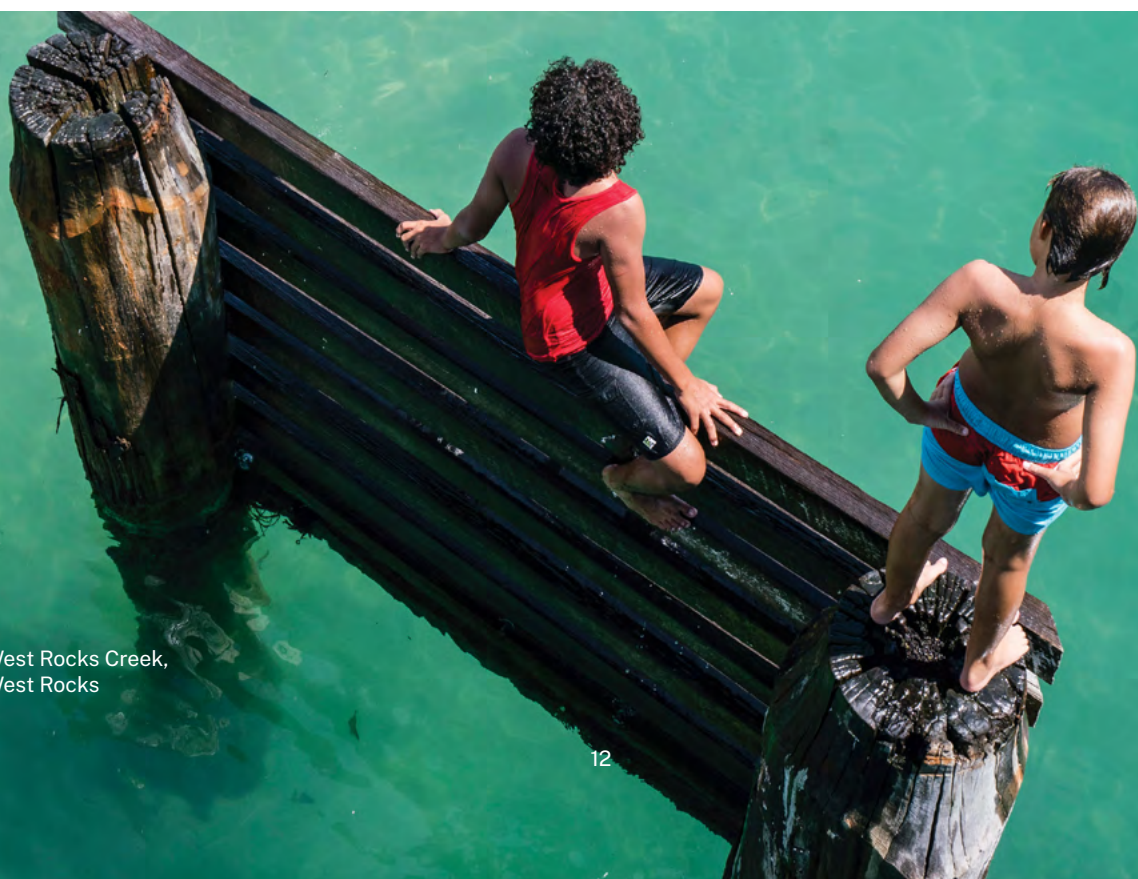
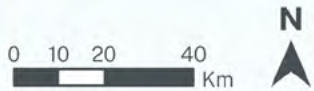






Figure 2: North Coast 2041 Vision Map

- Regional boundary
- - - Northern Rivers / Mid North Coast Subregional Boundary
- Regional city
- Strategic centre
- Centre
- ✈ Airport
- ✈ Gold Coast Airport - Global Gateway
- ⚓ Commercial port
- ⚓ Harbour
- 🎓 TAFE and/or University
- 🏥 Hospital
- 🏥 Approved new Tweed Valley Hospital
- 🏥 Health precinct
- 🏟 Regional sporting complex
- 🏢 Regional job precinct
- 🚊 Railway
- Roads
- Highways and motorways
- 🌍 World heritage area
- 🌲 National park and reserve
- 🌲 State forest
- 💧 Water body





GOAL

1

Liveable,  
sustainable  
and resilient



Ricardoes Tomatoes and Strawberries, Port Macquarie  
Credit: Destination NSW



**The North Coast is one of the most stunning environments in NSW. The region extends from Port Macquarie-Hastings to the Queensland border, and west to the Great Dividing Range and hinterland. From panoramic coastal bays and beaches to scenic rural landscapes, the environment establishes the unique character of the region.**

The region has outstanding biodiversity assets ranging from the Tweed volcano complex and Wollumbin (Mount Warning) caldera in the north to the Middle Brother Mountains in the south, the Solitary Islands that stretch from Coffs Harbour to Wooli, and the largest coastal river system in NSW – the Clarence River.

These assets provide an environment and lifestyle that continues to attract visitors and residents. As a result, it is projected over the next 20 years that a minimum 41,300 extra homes will be needed to meet population growth<sup>1</sup>. Additional homes in excess of those identified for population growth will also be needed to cater for increasing demand for visitor accommodation and replacement homes destroyed by floods and other natural disasters.

Clearing for urban development has occurred across many parts of the region. Sustainable and balanced land use that protects the North Coast's biodiversity and environmental values is essential moving forward. Changing demographics, technology, and lifestyle preferences are expected to drive demand for greater housing diversity in the region. Smaller and lower maintenance homes will be well suited to many of the ageing households and can be accommodated within existing urban areas and help remove pressure on the region's environmental assets from new greenfield development.

Directing growth away from hazards and to locations that avoid and minimise impacts on the natural environment and protecting areas of high environmental value will also ensure the region grows sustainably and in line with community aspirations.



Koala at Billabong Zoo  
Credit: Destination NSW

### Protection of koalas and their habitat

Koalas are an iconic species on the North Coast, which is home to many of the most important koala populations in NSW, including 10 populations identified as priority populations under the *NSW Koala Strategy*, and five of the state's 10 stronghold populations. Protecting and increasing these populations is essential to achieve the NSW Government's goal to double koala numbers in NSW by 2050.

Many of these koala populations face severe threats from habitat loss and fragmentation. Loss of habitat leaves koalas at greater risk of localised impacts, including vehicle strike, domestic dog attack, koala populations becoming isolated leading to a reduction of genetic diversity and increased rates of disease. The 2019–20 bushfires added to these stresses, affecting more than a quarter of koala habitat in NSW with over 30% of suitable habitat impacted in the North East region.

The *NSW Koala Strategy* is the biggest commitment by any state government to secure koalas in the wild on the North Coast.



**OBJECTIVE 1:**

# Provide well located homes to meet demand



Housing at Sapphire Beach

**The demand for housing on the North Coast continues to grow strongly.**

This demand is being primarily driven by migration and demographic factors, including growth associated with the region's proximity to South East Queensland.

**Housing Delivery**

A long-term housing pipeline across the North Coast for the next 10 years and beyond will help support community needs and appropriate growth. In local plans, councils should provide for a 10 year pipeline of supply. The first 2-5 years of this is to be zoned and development ready, with planning approvals and infrastructure plans in place. Biocertification can help protect the environment, reduce red tape and maintain a pipeline of developable land.

A housing monitoring program will be established for the North Coast. The program will improve the coordination and delivery of new housing and will set serviced land targets for infill and greenfield areas at the subregional scale to help inform local plans. It will focus on identifying infrastructure requirements, and auditing residential zoned land to identify other barriers to development to establish a clearer housing supply pipeline in key locations.

The program when fully developed will publicly report subregional and LGA based data on approvals and completions. This data can help provide councils with a longer term and strategic approach to respond to higher than expected housing demand.

When preparing land use strategies for housing delivery it is important that councils plan for not only the number of homes needed to satisfy future population growth but also consider other uses such as short term holiday letting that may impact on supply and the number of overall homes that are needed.

### Strategy 1.1

A 10 year supply of zoned and developable residential land is to be provided and maintained in Local Council Plans endorsed by the Department of Planning and Environment.



### Action 1

Establish the North Coast urban housing monitoring program.



## Housing diversity

Housing diversity includes lot sizes, the number of bedrooms, tenure, or whether housing is suitable for seniors, students or people with a disability, or is culturally responsive for Aboriginal communities. Planning for a diversity of housing choices gives people more options at different stages of life and reduces pressure for greenfield release areas on farmland and biodiversity. Greater housing choice through more townhouses, villas, tiny homes, intergenerational housing, and apartments will also maximise the use of existing and new infrastructure and provide greater access to jobs, services and lifestyle opportunities.

Providing housing diversity and choice will improve affordability, help meet the needs of an ageing population and support the ongoing reduction of household size. Greater housing diversity will also attract and retain younger residents.

When preparing strategies or planning proposals, councils should consider and ensure that development controls, such as minimum lot sizes, support the delivery of more diverse housing. These strategies should also consider and plan for caravan parks and manufactured home estates as they provide part of the housing accommodation mix.

Some Aboriginal communities have the desire to live intergenerationally and have caring obligations within family units. It is important to consider the need for culturally responsive housing that supports intergenerational living and considers clustering diverse dwelling options for a range of demographic needs.

## Infill, greenfield and rural residential development

A mix of well-planned infill, greenfield and rural residential locations will be essential in supporting the region's future growth. When developing local housing strategies, infill housing is to be prioritised as it takes advantage of existing infrastructure and services and is a more environmentally sustainable option. Infill development increases the viability of public and active transport, protects valuable agricultural and environmental land and limits the long-term service and maintenance costs to the community.

A significant amount of the growth on the North Coast is expected to occur in the regional cities of Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie, and Tweed. Pursuing suitable housing densities in the right locations within these cities will create a more compact urban footprint and protect significant environmental areas.

Councils' future local housing strategies are to have a clear road map outlining and demonstrating how to deliver 40% of new dwellings by 2036 in the form of multi dwelling / small lot (less than 400m<sup>2</sup>) housing. Demonstrated movement towards achieving this target will also be essential when seeking to justify any urban growth area boundary variations for new greenfield land supply.

When planning for new greenfield areas across the North Coast, these should be located adjacent or near to existing urban areas to encourage the efficient use of land and infrastructure.

Rural residential housing also remains a popular housing choice for certain areas on the North Coast. In many instances it can however be costly to service, environmentally unsustainable and may conflict with important agricultural, urban, industrial or resource lands and increase pressure for new services and infrastructure outside existing settlements. New rural residential release areas must promote sustainable land use outcomes and are to be located outside the more environmentally sensitive and constrained coastal strip.



Opportunities to live on Country is important for many Aboriginal communities. Where LALC land holdings are outside of urban growth area boundaries, there may be locations where rural land sharing arrangements are appropriate to facilitate the development of housing on Country.

The temporary influx of seasonal workers or workers associated with major infrastructure projects can also increase demand for accommodation at different times of the year. An undersupply of accommodation options for these workers can result in upward pressure on rents for all residents. Health and safety concerns may also arise from overcrowding and makeshift housing. Peaks in housing demand may be satisfied through seasonal and itinerant workers accommodation.

**Strategy 1.2**



Local Council plans are to encourage and facilitate a range of housing options in well located areas.

**Strategy 1.3**



Undertake infrastructure service planning to establish land can be feasibly serviced prior to rezoning.

**Strategy 1.4**



Councils in developing their future housing strategies must prioritise new infill development to assist in meeting the region's overall 40% multi-dwelling / small lot housing target and are encouraged to work collaboratively at a subregional level to achieve the target.

**Strategy 1.5**



New rural residential housing is to be located on land which has been approved in a strategy endorsed by the Department of Planning and Environment and is to be directed away from the coastal strip.

**Strategy 1.6**



Councils and LALCs can partner to identify areas which may be appropriate for culturally responsive housing on Country.

**Action 2**



Provide guidance to help councils plan for and manage accommodation options for seasonal and itinerant workers.



Housing at Thrumster

**OBJECTIVE 2:**

# Provide for more affordable and low cost housing

Tweed Heads



Two key aims of the NSW planning system are the delivery and maintenance of affordable housing and the promotion of housing affordability.

Several policy frameworks support the delivery of affordable housing, including infill affordable housing and boarding house provisions in the Housing SEPP.

Councils can also consider providing for low cost dwelling types in their local strategies and plans to assist housing affordability.

Low cost housing types remain in perpetuity, unlike some affordable housing dwellings which revert to market rates after a set period.

## **New affordable housing in Bellingen**

Former aged care residential units will be transformed into up to 40 affordable housing homes for low-income older women in Bellingen. The project includes the redevelopment of the Royal Freemasons' Benevolent Institution sites on Bowra and Watson Streets. Two buildings will be demolished and rebuilt, while the nursing home will be refurbished and made ready for tenants. The project is to be jointly funded by the State and Federal Governments.

## **Improve housing affordability**

The North Coast's housing market remains popular for both residential and tourist accommodation. Finding homes to meet varying needs and budgets can be a challenge for households in the region.

Across their lifetimes, people may need homes of a certain size, configuration, accessibility or location. Changing household types and attitudes such as preferences for lower maintenance, energy efficiency, adaptability and places that are within walking distance of shops, services or public transport, combined with the scarcity of well-located land, are also expected to drive a need for smaller and more affordable housing types. Housing that meets the needs of residents on a range of incomes will also help reduce social disadvantage.

Housing diversity extends into aspects such as lot sizes, the number of bedrooms, or whether housing is suitable for seniors, students or people with a disability. Councils can encourage diversity of housing types through a range of mechanisms such as:

- Bonus development provisions, where a percentage of affordable housing is included in a proposal.
- Reduced contributions or other development incentives that may boost construction of secondary dwellings as alternative affordable housing.



- Planning incentives or negotiated planning agreements to encourage private investment in social and affordable housing.

The NSW Land and Housing Corporation and the NSW Aboriginal Housing Office also play a vital role in providing social housing across the region. Social housing is secure and affordable rental housing for people on low incomes with housing needs. It includes public, community, and Aboriginal housing.

### Ginda Barri Housing Program

This innovative program is a specialised program for young parents to be run through the Macleay Vocational College Kempsey (a school catering for year 9-12 students outside mainstream education). The program ensures participants complete formal education, gain vocational competencies and develop positive parenting skills. Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC) worked with stakeholders including the college to identify sites suited to housing participants in the program. A site was chosen close to the College and was acquired to provide 22 new homes for both participants of the program and social housing tenants. The hybrid model is envisioned as a blueprint for housing strategies in areas of generational disadvantage in NSW. A community housing provider (Community Housing Limited) was allocated tenancy and asset management of the site and developed a tailored allocation strategy which considers the unique needs of the program participants and tenants from the wider community. Upon completion of education and attainment of employment, tenants will be supported to explore opportunities to enter the private rental market.

#### Action 3

Establish Housing Affordability Roundtables for the Mid North Coast and Northern Rivers subregions with councils, community housing providers, State agencies and the housing development industry to collaborate, build knowledge and identify measures to improve affordability and increase housing diversity.



Tweed River



**OBJECTIVE 3:**

# Protect regional biodiversity and areas of high environmental value



Border Ranges National Park

The North Coast is the most biologically diverse region in NSW. The region's environmental values include protected reserve lands, such as National Parks, Conservation Areas and dedicated Crown land, High Environmental Value (HEV) land and a network of biodiversity corridors. These assets make the region a great place to live and visit and provide a range of habitats for ecological diversity.

The region contains several National Parks that make up the UNESCO World Heritage listed Gondwana Rainforests of Australia, which contain the most extensive areas of subtropical rainforest in the world, large areas of warm temperate rainforest, and the majority of the world's Antarctic beech cool temperate rainforest.

Rivers, estuaries, foreshores and beaches of the region are of immense environmental importance and are highly valued by the community. They provide habitat for a great diversity of marine, aquatic and terrestrial plants and animals including migratory shorebirds. The region contains both the Cape Byron and Solitary Islands Marine Parks, and vast areas of significant and sensitive fish

habitat. The region also contains five of the 10 koala stronghold areas as identified in the *NSW Koala Strategy*.

Some of the flora species in the region, such as the Coastal Fontainea and Moonee Quassia, are found virtually nowhere else in the world.

The scenic and cultural landscapes of the North Coast's unique environment contribute to the identity and culture of the region. Preserving and enhancing these landscapes encourages an appreciation of the natural environment, protects heritage and culture, and creates economic opportunities, particularly for recreation and tourism.

Key threats to the environment and its biodiversity include land clearing, poor land and water management practices, habitat fragmentation, degradation of native riparian vegetation, diffuse source water pollution, inappropriate fire regimes, invasive species, pollution, development pressure through population growth, natural hazards, climate change and sea level rise impacts.





QUEENSLAND

**SOUTHPORT**

Broadbeach

**TWEED HEADS**

Kingscliff

Murwillumbah

Richmond River

Tweed River

Kyogle

Multumbimby

Ocean Shores

Byron Bay

**LISMORE**

Casino

Alstonville

Lennox Head

Ballina

Coraki

Maclean

Yamba

Grafton

Woolgoolga

Dorrigo

**COFFS HARBOUR**

Bellingen

Urunga

Nambucca Heads

Macksville

South West Rocks

Kempsey

Wilson River

Hastings River

Wauchope

**PORT MACQUARIE**

Laurieton

NEW ENGLAND  
NORTH WEST

**Figure 3: Environmental Assets**

- Regional boundary
- ⊙ Regional city
- Strategic centre
- Centre
- Ramsar wetlands
- NSW marine parks
- Commonwealth marine parks
- Potential high environmental value land
- World heritage area
- National park and reserve
- State forest
- Water body

0 10 20 40 Km



## Potential High Environmental Value Assets

Protecting and enhancing areas of HEV is integral to maintaining the biological diversity of the North Coast.

To protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity, HEV assets need to be identified at the site map scale and then used to inform strategic planning, LEPs and planning proposals.

Land use planning strategies should ensure new or more intensive development is located in areas of least biodiversity sensitivity and that HEV assets are avoided where possible and protected. They should also consider marine environments, water catchment areas and groundwater sources to avoid potential development impacts.

At the planning proposal stage, HEV assets within the planning area should be identified through site investigations and suitable mechanisms put in place to protect HEV.

Avoiding impacts on, and protecting identified HEV land at the planning proposal stage provides greater certainty and can reduce the need for further biodiversity assessment and offsetting at development stage. This can drive more efficient and streamlined development assessment processes.

Potential HEV assets are shown at the regional scale on the Potential High Environmental Values map and include:

- land with high biodiversity value that is particularly sensitive to impacts from development and clearing (as shown on the NSW Government's Biodiversity Values map)
- native vegetation of high conservation value, including vegetation types that have been over cleared or occur within over cleared landscapes, threatened ecological communities, old growth forest and rainforest
- key habitat of threatened species
- important wetlands, estuaries and lakes
- areas of geological significance.

This mapping is not appropriate for use at a property scale.

Biodiversity certification provides an opportunity for strategic conservation planning at the precinct or landscape scale and can help to provide certainty for development and streamline biodiversity assessment and approval processes for councils.

### Strategy 3.1



Strategic planning and local plans must consider opportunities to protect biodiversity values by:

- focusing land-use intensification away from HEV assets and implementing the 'avoid, minimise and offset' hierarchy in strategic plans, LEPs and planning proposals
- ensuring any impacts from proposed land use intensification on adjoining reserved lands or land that is subject to a conservation agreement are assessed and avoided
- encouraging and facilitating biodiversity certification by Councils at the precinct scale for high growth areas and by individual land holders at the site scale, where appropriate
- updating existing biodiversity mapping with new mapping in LEPs where appropriate
- identifying HEV assets within the planning area at planning proposal stage through site investigations
- applying appropriate mechanisms such as conservation zones and Biodiversity Stewardship Agreements to protect HEV land within a planning area and considering climate change risks to HEV assets
- developing or updating koala habitat maps to strategically conserve koala habitat to help protect, maintain and enhance koala habitat.
- considering marine environments, water catchment areas and groundwater sources to avoid potential development impacts.

### Strategy 3.2



In preparing local and strategic plans Councils should:

- embed climate change knowledge and adaptation actions
- consider the needs of climate refugia for threatened species and other key species.



**Collaboration Activity 1**

Work with and assist councils to:

- review biodiversity mapping and related local environmental plan and development control plan provisions
- improve access to data to enable identification of protected areas including NPWS Estate, Crown Reserves and in-perpetuity private land conservation agreements to inform local planning
- ensure koala habitat values are included in land-use planning decisions through regional plans, local strategic planning statements and local environmental plans.

**Lead Agency:** NSW Biodiversity and Conservation Division



Cathie Creek and Lake Cathie in the Lake Innes Nature Reserve

**OBJECTIVE 4:**

# Understand, celebrate and integrate Aboriginal culture

Murray Scrub walking track,  
Toonumbar National Park  
Credit: Jenny Atkins

The North Coast is on the lands of the Bundjalung, Githabul, Gumbaynggirr, Yaegl, Dunghutti, Thunggutti and Birpai nations. The region is rich in Aboriginal heritage and includes places and objects that are of significance to Aboriginal people because of their traditions, observances, lore, customs, beliefs and history. This includes pre-contact, habitation and usage sites, burial sites and camping, hunting or fishing sites.

Aboriginal cultural heritage also relates to the connection and sense of belonging that people have with the landscape and with each other. These cultural values have been an intrinsic part of the landscape and environment for tens of thousands of years. The rich history of the region includes the Gumbaynggirr people who formed one of the largest coastal Aboriginal nations.

The connection of Aboriginal communities to their ancestral Country is a result of passing down histories and stories of place through generations.

Conserving these values and respecting the Aboriginal community's right to determine how it is identified and managed, is vital in preserving some of the world's longest-standing spiritual, historical, social and educational values.

The NSW Government will partner with Aboriginal communities to ensure Country is cared for appropriately and sensitive sites are protected with Aboriginal people having access to Country to continue cultural practices. Consultation on future land use planning should acknowledge, respect, and reflect Aboriginal interests and cultural responsibilities.

Engagement and partnerships can be formally established through a mechanism such as a Memorandum of Understanding, which sets out what organisations can do to build strong relationships, respect and opportunities within organisations and communities.



## Tweed Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan

With the aims of acknowledging, respecting and improving the understanding of Aboriginal cultural heritage, Tweed Shire Council adopted an *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan* in 2018. The Plan provides pathways for ensuring that individuals have the right tools and information at their disposal to meet their obligations under the law and to enable cultural heritage to be properly assessed and managed.

The management plan is supported by a thematic history and incorporates a written management plan and shire-wide mapping of Aboriginal place of heritage significance (known cultural heritage) and predictive aboriginal cultural heritage.

## Mapping

Accurate and appropriate cultural mapping for the North Coast can identify known and predicted Aboriginal places of cultural significance. Some councils, including Tweed Shire and Coffs Harbour City, have LGA-wide cultural heritage mapping, which supports people to make decisions that ensure cultural heritage can be properly assessed and managed. Any mapping project undertaken by councils must be done in partnership with the local Aboriginal community and identified knowledge holders for that Country.

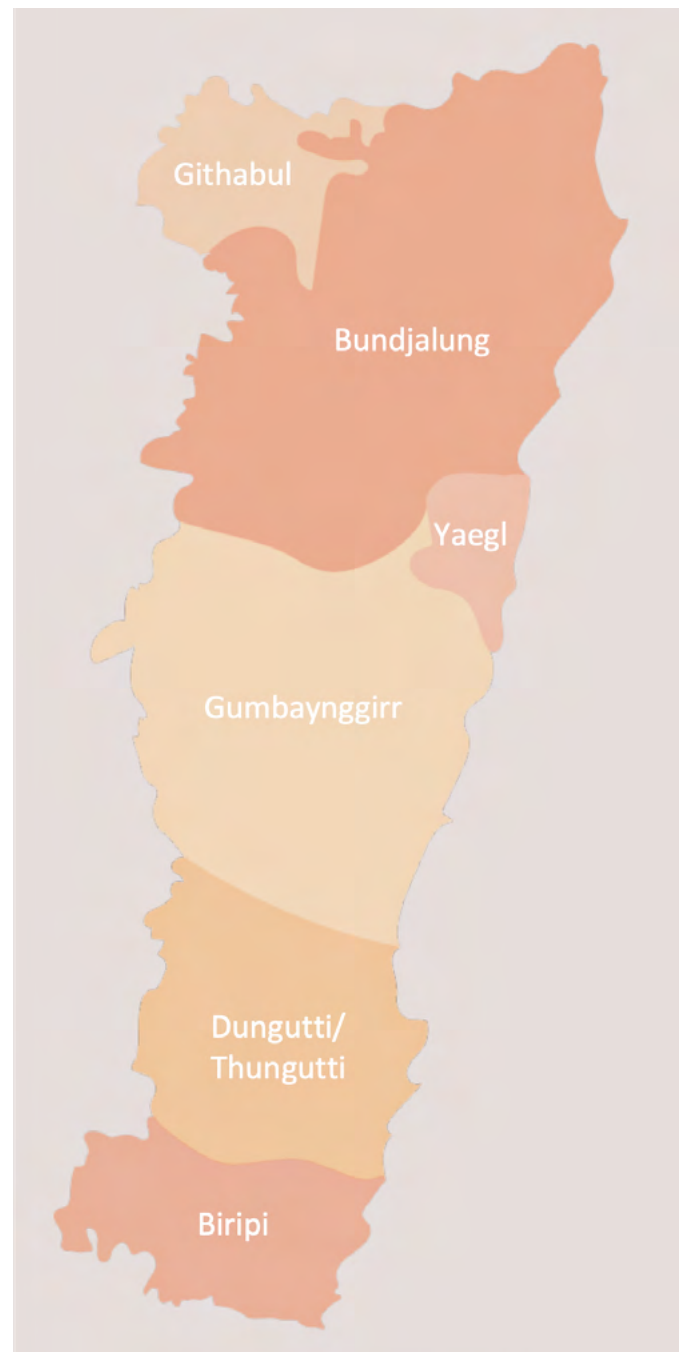
Cultural heritage management plans can accompany mapping and be used to determine how to follow cultural protocols relating to the protection, management and access of culture and Country. Cultural heritage management plans recognise and empower cultural governance decision making structures and sites that are important for cultural practice. Appropriate management of cultural intellectual property needs to be maintained throughout this process.

## Naming of geographical features, cultural sites and local places

Through place naming and visual representation, communities can unlock stories and provide a sense of belonging and identity.

Under the Geographical Names Board Place Naming Policy, Aboriginal names are encouraged for any feature that is not currently named. Where appropriate, Aboriginal place names should be reinstated through the dual naming process. These processes should be led by local communities and councils.

To support dual naming or naming places in local Aboriginal language, interpretive artwork and visual representation of naming can be added to important places, features or local infrastructure including sports fields. This provides opportunities to share local culture and language with the wider community.



North to South the Different Nations

Credit: Image recreated by Zion Engagement and Planning



Njabai, Bulunj, Nangang (Water, River, Food),  
Carrington Street, Lismore

## Connecting with Country

The continuum of Aboriginal history and culture must be a visible part of NSW's built and natural environment.

Government Architect NSW is working with recognised Aboriginal knowledge holders and professionals as well as the design industry, government, and community to develop practical guidance about how to Design with Country.

The *Connecting with Country Framework* recognises the clear need for tools and strategies to assist both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities to share knowledge about Aboriginal places as well as places of shared cultural and heritage significance—and to understand how we can all work to respect and protect sensitive sites and to strengthen culture.

Connecting with Country aims to:

- reduce impacts of natural events such as fire, drought and flooding, exacerbated by unsustainable land and water-use practices
- value and respect Aboriginal cultural knowledge and engage Aboriginal knowledge holders to co-lead design and development of all NSW infrastructure projects
- ensure that Aboriginal people have access to their homelands so they can continue their responsibility to care for Country and protect sensitive sites.

Connecting with Country calls for project teams and leaders to commit to value Country, and by extension, Aboriginal culture and people. When the framework is finalised, councils can work with local Aboriginal communities to identify local priorities to apply the Connecting with Country framework to inform the planning, design and delivery of built environment projects.

### Strategy 4.1

Councils prepare cultural heritage mapping with an accompanying Aboriginal cultural management plan in collaboration with Aboriginal communities to protect culturally important sites.



### Strategy 4.2

Prioritise applying dual names in local Aboriginal language to important places, features or infrastructure in collaboration with the local Aboriginal community.





**OBJECTIVE 5:**

# Manage and improve resilience to shocks and stresses, natural hazards and climate change



Red Cliff Beach, Yuraygir National Park  
Credit: Destination NSW

The North Coast continues to be a great place to live but climate change is increasing its vulnerability to shocks, stresses and natural hazards, including bushfires, heatwaves, droughts, coastal hazards, rising sea levels, storms, floods, acid sulfate soils and landslips.

The topography of the region and coastal setting results in climate conditions that vary across the region. It is very wet along the coast, especially in the north, but drier inland. Summers are warm across the region, with cool winters in the foothills and along the Great Dividing Range. Temperature extremes, both hot and cold, occur infrequently but can have considerable impacts on health, infrastructure and the environment.

Temperatures and extreme weather events on the North Coast are expected to increase in the future. These include droughts, which may result in large scale bushfires, and extreme rainfall causing floods. These events, combined with coastal storms and sea level rise, can have major impacts on our catchments and coasts, with consequent large scale erosion, inundation of low lying areas and critically poor water quality.

## Shocks, stresses and natural hazards

Shocks and stresses cause disruptions that can be expensive and damaging to places, infrastructure and communities. Anticipating the occurrence and impacts of these events will assist communities to be better placed to resist, absorb, accommodate, and recover from a range of risks and to become more resilient.

The State-wide Natural Hazards Package guides how natural hazard risk is to be considered in local land use planning. It recommends multi-disciplinary collaboration, including engagement and collective decision-making across state and local government, including risk and emergency managers and asset owners.

Strategic planning can help to reduce natural hazard risk and build resilience by considering the impacts of shocks and stresses early in decision-making, particularly when planning for future growth and development. This could include appropriate zoning and development controls that consider the constraints that shocks and stresses, including natural hazards place on land.

## Minimising and managing risk

Land use planning can help minimise and manage the impacts of climate change. LEPs identify natural hazard-prone land and apply provisions to exclude these areas from development unless hazards can be mitigated or managed to an acceptable level.

Appropriate hazard studies, including coastal hazard studies that inform Coastal Management Programs, should inform new land use strategies to balance environmental protection with the need to protect development from hazards and to ensure infrastructure is adequate to evacuate people in extreme events.

Green infrastructure and shared spaces between a hazard and residential development or critical infrastructure can be integrated where practical to enhance resilience and protect natural assets from hazards such as urban heat and heatwaves.

The impacts of rising sea levels and climate change will be critical to managing coastal and floodplain risks. Planning and natural resource management authorities will need to consider the impacts of sea-level rises, storm surges and inundation to provide adequate buffers for landward migration of coastal ecosystems and protection of coastal saline wetlands.

The NSW Government's *Flood Prone Lands Policy* aims to reduce the impact of flooding and flood liability on individual owners and occupiers, and to reduce public and private losses resulting from flooding. Under this policy councils are responsible for managing flood risks and developing flood risk management plans that use a merit-based approach to balance social, economic, environmental and flood-risk and determine the appropriate land use on flood-prone land. Guidance for the preparation of a flood risk management plan is provided through the NSW Government's Flood Risk Management Manual.

The 2019-2020 bush fire season demonstrated the need for strategic bush fire planning to help reduce the ongoing risk to life, property, and the environment. *Planning for Bushfire Protection Guideline 2019* bush fire management principles should be considered in strategic planning.

### Tweed Shire Council Voluntary House Purchase Scheme

The scheme aims to permanently remove at-risk people from high flood hazard areas (areas within high flood depths and velocities) by buying their houses. The properties are then back-zoned for more flood compatible uses, such as parkland or farming.

The NSW Government has approved Voluntary House Purchase in the high flood hazard areas of South Murwillumbah, Bray Park, Burringbar and Mooball.

### 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. The department will work with councils to determine how the planning for hazards, including flooding, will inform the planning process.



## Building Back Better

The path to building back better on the North Coast will be informed by the recommendations of the Independent Flood Inquiry. Based on recommendations from the Inquiry, the NSW Government will tailor approaches informed by engagement with local councils and affected communities.

Building back better as a concept is an opportunity to create more resilient communities by embedding lessons learned into post-disaster recovery and using the best-available evidence to inform decision-making. Rather than reverting to like-for-like rebuilding, building back better seeks to understand the threshold of tolerable risk and ensure that the process of recovery reduces the existing risk within an impacted area. It works to ensure that buildings and infrastructure are rebuilt to higher standards, or relocated where this is not possible, so as to mitigate the severity of hazard impacts in the future. This is achieved through a variety of physical and systemic measures that support resilience in the long-term.

## Northern Rivers Reconstruction and Adaptation

In February and March 2022, the Northern Rivers region experienced flooding events that had significant and widespread impacts on housing, infrastructure and businesses in the region.

The Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation (NRRC) came into effect on 1 July 2022 to lead and co-ordinate the long-term reconstruction of flood affected areas across the Northern Rivers. The NRRC is working across government agencies to coordinate the reconstruction and adaptation efforts.

Consistent with the outcomes of the NSW Flood Inquiry the Government has now established the NSW

Reconstruction Authority. 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.

The NRRC will continue its important work rolling out the \$800 million Resilient Homes Program rebuilding communities within the Ballina, Byron, Clarence Valley, Lismore, Richmond Valley, Tweed and Kyogle local government areas, before being transitioned into the NSW Reconstruction Authority at an appropriate time.

### Strategy 5.1

When preparing local strategic plans, councils should be consistent with and adopt the principles outlined in the *Strategic Guide to Planning for Natural Hazards*.



### Strategy 5.2

Where significant risk from natural hazard is known or presumed, updated hazard strategies are to inform new land use strategies and be prepared in consultation with emergency service providers and Local Emergency Management Committees (LEMCs). Hazard strategies should investigate options to minimise risk such as voluntary housing buy back schemes.



Tweed River running through the Murwillumbah countryside  
Credit: Destination NSW



**Strategy 5.3**

Use local strategic planning and local plans to adapt to climate change and reduce exposure to natural hazards by:

- identifying and assessing the impacts of place-based shocks and stresses
- taking a risk-based-approach that uses the best available science in consultation with the NSW Government, emergency service providers, local emergency management committees and bush fire risk management committees
- locating development (including urban release areas and critical infrastructure) away from areas of known high bushfire risk, flood and coastal hazard areas to reduce the community's exposure to natural hazards
- identifying vulnerable infrastructure assets and considering how they can be protected or adapted
- building resilience of transport networks in regard to evacuation routes, access for emergencies and, maintaining freight connections
- identifying industries and locations that would be negatively impacted by climate change and natural hazards and preparing strategies to mitigate negative impacts and identify new paths for growth
- preparing, reviewing and implementing updated natural hazard management plans and Coastal Management Programs to improve community and environmental resilience which can be incorporated into planning processes early for future development
- identifying any coastal vulnerability areas
- updating flood studies and flood risk management plans after a major flood event incorporating new data and lessons learnt
- communicating natural hazard risk through updated flood studies and strategic plans.

**Action 4**

Continue to provide guidance and tools for councils to use for evidence-based risk-management approaches to build resilience to shocks and stresses, plan for natural hazards and transition to net zero emissions.

**Strategy 5.4**

Resilience and adaptation plans should consider opportunities to:

- encourage sustainable and resilient building design and materials (such as forest products) including the use of renewable energy to displace carbon intensive or fossil fuel intensive options
- promote sustainable land management including Ecologically Sustainable Forest Management (ESFM)
- address urban heat through building and street design at precinct scale that considers climate change and future climatic conditions to ensure that buildings and public spaces are designed to protect occupants in the event of heatwaves and extreme heat events
- 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, building back better, whole-of-life cycle maintenance and operation costs for critical infrastructure for emergency management
- adopt coastal vulnerability area mapping for areas subject to coastal hazards to inform the community of current and emerging risks
- promote economic diversity, improved environmental, health and well-being outcomes and opportunities for cultural and social connections to build more resilient places and communities.

**Strategy 5.5**

Partner with local Aboriginal communities to develop land management agreements and policies to support cultural management practices.

**Collaboration Activity 2**

Work with councils and agencies and the Transition North Coast Working Group to deliver the North Coast Enabling Regional Adaptation report to provide opportunities for climate change adaptation pathways with the aim of transitioning key regional systems to a more resilient future.

**Lead Agency:** NSW Office of Energy and Climate Change



**OBJECTIVE 6:**

# Create a circular economy



Ballina Waste Transfer Centre

A circular economy can change how we produce, assemble, sell and use products to minimise waste and to reduce environmental impacts. Transitioning to a circular economy on the North Coast will generate jobs, diversify the economy, increase the accessibility of goods, maximise the value of resources, reduce waste and help protect the region's environment and biodiversity values.

Circular economy principles are essential, especially now that Australia faces restrictions in terms of exporting recyclable materials.

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

The North Coast region is already actively changing the way waste is stored, transferred, repurposed, reused and disposed of to reduce environmental impacts. Six councils in the region participate in the MIDWASTE Regional Waste Forum that aims to reduce the environmental impact of waste and use resources more efficiently. Infrastructure such as the Recycled Water Treatment Plant at Port Macquarie provides a valuable, renewable water resource that reduces demand on drinking water supplies and results in less water pumped from the Hastings River for the town drinking water supply.

Councils should explore opportunities to help promote within their communities investment in renewable energy technologies, circular economy waste solutions and sustainable transport services in a net zero future.

## Circular Economy and Waste Reduction Case Study – Revolve Your World

*Revolve Your World* have operated within the Byron Shire since 2016, developing onsite decontamination and consolidation of food and packaging waste from commercial premises within the commercial business district. By using innovative data acquisition, client reporting and waste processing technology, *Revolve Your World* have succeeded in increasing waste recycling from less than 10% to greater than 90%, and diverted greater than 98% of food waste from landfill across their clientele.

### Strategy 6.1



Support the development of circular economy, hubs, infrastructure and activities and consider employment opportunities that may arise from circular economies and industries that harness or develop renewable energy technologies and will aspire towards an employment profile that displays a level of economic self-reliance, and resilience to external forces.

### Strategy 6.2



Use strategic planning and waste management strategies to support a circular economy, including dealing with waste from natural disasters and opportunities for new industry specialisations.

**OBJECTIVE 7:**

# Promote renewable energy opportunities

Technical innovation is driving changes in energy generation and storage. The region has several potential sources of renewable energy, including solar, bio-mass, small-scale hydro, wind, geothermal and wave power. These sources could contribute to electricity generation, reduce the region's carbon footprint and create new economic opportunities and industries to build off.

A strategic and integrated approach to renewable energy projects is needed to leverage the opportunities of renewable energy, long-term sustainability, and to support the State's net zero by 2050 target. Supporting renewable opportunities will also help deliver a circular economy with greater green industries.

Today, wind and solar are the cheapest forms of new electricity generation and the most environmentally friendly. When paired with batteries, pumped hydro or gas-fired generators, they can reliably supply electricity at all times. It is however important that renewable energy projects

are subject to detailed assessment and careful site selection to reduce the likelihood and extent of any potential land use conflicts.

New opportunities for the region include sourcing affordable and locally sustainable bio-mass and developing regional bio-energy industries that can stimulate regional development and employment, while reducing the demand for fossil fuels.

**Strategy 7.1**

When reviewing LEPs and local strategic planning statements:

- ensure current land use zones encourage and promote new renewable energy infrastructure
- identify and mitigate impacts on views, local character and heritage where appropriate
- undertake detailed hazard studies.

Solar Panels, Lennox Head





**OBJECTIVE 8:**

# Support the productivity of agricultural land



Plantation Road, Cudgen

Agriculture is a key industry for the North Coast, and its rich soils, reliable rainfall and range of landscapes support a diverse and important agricultural sector.

The North Coast is facing increasing pressures from growth which has resulted in rural land use conflict and the permanent removal of land from agricultural production. For agriculture to continue to grow and diversify on the North Coast, it is essential sustainable food and fibre production is protected and supported.

The importance of agricultural land on the North Coast is not limited to economic factors. The scenic and environmental qualities attributed to rural lands used for agriculture, make a significant contribution to the character and natural beauty of the region.

## Rural land uses

Rural land in the region is primarily used for agriculture but can also contain a mix of other uses, such as rural residential development, agritourism, renewable energy infrastructure and natural resource extraction. These different land uses contribute to the character and productivity of the region but need to be undertaken strategically to avoid significant impacts on agricultural viability.

Given the importance of agriculture to the regional economy, local planning should ensure that agriculture is supported, managed, and facilitated in appropriate locations. Councils should consider the potential for land use conflict when new development is proposed in rural areas, including the need for buffers around productive agricultural lands. Sensitive land uses should be excluded from rural areas where a significant impact on agriculture would result.

Councils should also apply the agent of change principle for new developments in rural areas to ensure that they include measures to mitigate against any potential adverse impacts from existing land uses in the vicinity.



Minimum lot size standards for dwellings should limit land fragmentation to maintain capacity for sustainable productive agriculture, to enhance the viability of the agricultural sector and maximise production efficiencies.

Dwellings that are not a primary residence or associated with agriculture should be limited to avoid potential conflicts with agricultural activities. Before approving secondary dwellings or detached dual occupancies in rural areas, councils should consider possible land use conflicts and impacts on local agricultural activities.

Agricultural activities, such as horticulture, are growing rapidly on smaller holdings across the North Coast. Local planning controls can help to support these industries by identifying potentially suitable locations for intensive plant agriculture to minimise land use incompatibility and prevent the ad hoc fragmentation of land.

LEPs can also support the agricultural sector by allowing farm boundary adjustments and subdivisions creating a lot for primary production. The provisions should offer flexibility and opportunity while preventing the fragmentation of the rural landscape and the spread of rural housing that is unrelated to agricultural production.

To minimise the loss of agricultural productivity, the application of a conservation zone on land within a rural zone should be confined to those areas within a planning area where the environmental attributes have been verified.

Encouraging greater diversity in the agricultural sector – for example, through agritourism or the processing and packaging of produce and associated retail services and value adding – can make the sector more sustainable and resilient. Boutique commercial, tourist and recreation activities that do not conflict with primary production can offer similar opportunities. Local plans should aim to permit a range of compatible non-agricultural land uses in rural zones to support the diversification of agricultural producers.

Biosecurity will also continue to be an important consideration for agricultural areas and should be considered when preparing strategies and planning proposals along with applying any appropriate buffer areas.



A dairy farm in Casino

## Agriculture and climate change

Climate change is likely to create challenges with long term shifts in weather patterns. These changing climatic conditions will affect agricultural industries on the North Coast in different ways, and these industries may need to adapt or change in response.

It is important that agricultural industries are supported to adapt to climate change by permitting diversification and intensification in suitable locations, and where adequate supporting infrastructure is available.

Supporting a circular agricultural economy that establishes efficiencies and input cost reductions through opportunities such as energy generation and smart grid distribution, innovative off-grid energy solutions recycled water use and waste solutions, will minimise the amount of external inputs required for agricultural production.

There is also an opportunity to recognise the role agriculture plays in carbon sequestration with increasing opportunities for farmers to manage their land to support carbon capture and environmental outcomes.



## Important Farmland

The NSW Government's Important Farmland mapping identifies land that is significant to the region and to the State (see Figure 4).

It is important that this resource is protected as it is fundamental to the strong, profitable agricultural sector in the North Coast. It is essential that these areas are protected from incompatible, competing land uses to ensure that the region can sustain agricultural production and capitalise on increasing demand for agricultural products in the future.

It is recognised that agricultural production may not be suitable on some small pockets of mapped important farmland due to non-biophysical factors that make the land more suited to other uses. The urban growth area variation principles will continue to be used to assess the suitability of these pockets of land for non-agricultural land use (see Appendix B).

Housing delivery targets for new housing will be achieved through development of land generally within the urban growth area boundary. Local planning controls can help to support agriculture by identifying potentially suitable locations for greater residential density within the urban growth area boundary and maximising the density of land proposed to be rezoned for urban purposes. The regional plan's multi-dwelling / small lot housing target will be used to assess the merits of any greenfield development outside the urban growth boundary on important farmland.

Councils should consider a subregional approach to deliver new housing and employment land in appropriate locations to minimise the ad hoc fragmentation of important farmland and maximise economic opportunity.

## Sustainable Agricultural Production

When considering the potential of land to support sustainable agricultural production, the wider importance of agriculture to the area and its resource needs, the following matters should be considered:

1. location, extent and type of agriculture
2. biophysical advantages for agriculture
3. economic contribution of agriculture
4. infrastructure, services and resources established to support agriculture and the flow on economic and social contributions
5. value adding enterprises that are supported by agricultural producers
6. trends in agriculture such as intensification, increase in scale, tenure, employment and changes in technology
7. future agricultural industry development needs
8. factors required to retain or expand local food production
9. factors required to protect environmental assets and catchment water quality.

### Strategy 8.1

Local planning should protect and maintain agricultural productive capacity in the region by directing urban, rural residential and other incompatible development away from important farmland.





QUEENSLAND

**SOUTHPORT**

Broadbeach

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Murwillumbah

Ocean Shores

Byron Bay

Lennox Head

**Ballina**

**LISMORE**

Casino

Alstonville

Coraki

Maclean

Yamba

**Grafton**

Woolgoolga

Dorrigo

**COFFS HARBOUR**

Bellingen

Urunga

Nambucca Heads

Macksville

South West Rocks

Kempsey

**PORT MACQUARIE**

Wauchope

Laurieton

NEW ENGLAND  
NORTH WEST

**Figure 4: Important Farmland**

- Regional boundary
- ⊙ Regional city
- ⊙ Strategic centre
- Centre
- Important farmland
- World heritage area
- National park and reserve
- State forest
- Water body

0 10 20 40 Km





**OBJECTIVE 9:**

# Sustainably manage and conserve water resources



Esk River, Bundjalung National Park  
Credit: John Turbill

## Land use and water planning

The North Coast's many interconnected rivers, creeks, groundwater aquifers, estuaries, marine parks and nationally important wetlands include the main rivers of the Tweed, Richmond, Clarence, Macleay, Bellinger, Nambucca, Hastings, and Camden Haven as well as adjoining coastal catchments and many unregulated rivers.

Future water reliability and security in a changing climate will be central to land use and urban development planning decisions. There is an opportunity to consider water availability and impacts much earlier and more strategically through the planning system.

Climate modelling has found that droughts in the region may be more severe in the future. During extreme droughts, the focus is on securing essential town, domestic and stock water supplies.

The region is also likely to see seasonal shifts in rainfall patterns, higher rates of evaporation and more hot days and more intense storm events. Sea level rise and saline intrusion is an additional risk to future town water security.

Minimal water infrastructure such as large dams or off river storages exist to capture, store or divert flows and most of the region's rivers are unregulated. Water users generally rely on high, reasonably reliable rainfall and small local storages to meet their demands. Towns, communities and industries in the region are susceptible to climate variability and change and protecting water-dependent environmental assets and native species, while still providing sufficient water for towns, basic rights and commercial purposes, is becoming more challenging.



While there is generally enough water in the region to meet annual urban and rural water demands, competition over low flows during the drier spring months increases hydrologic stress on the region's rivers, creeks, and environments such as estuaries, ICOLLs (intermittently closed and open lakes and lagoons) and marine parks.

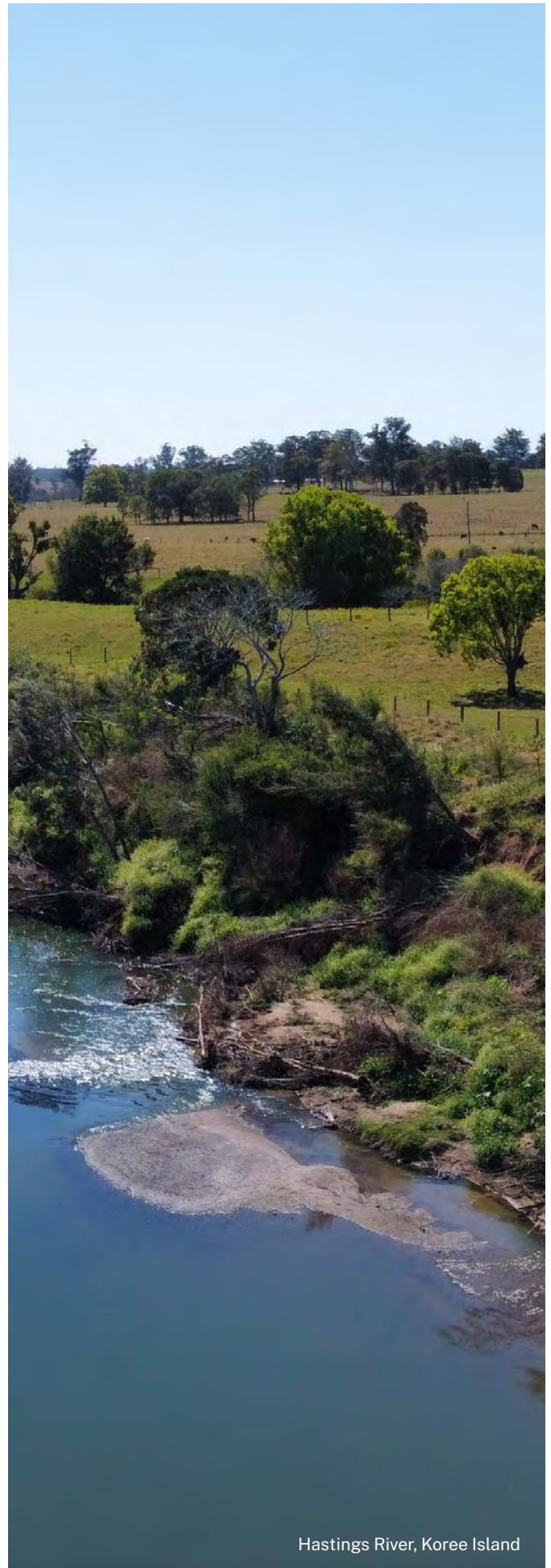
Climate modelling of river systems shows there could be an increase in the number of years in which a cease-to-flow event occurs — across all regulated, unregulated and estuary inflow systems in the North Coast. This affects the river's flora and fauna, as well as downstream water users. Low freshwater flows affect a waterway's flora and fauna, fish habitat, downstream water users such as the tourism and commercial fishing industries, and community recreation and wellbeing. Most councils have already taken steps to secure town water supplies, however, some towns are still vulnerable to extended dry periods combined with the pressure of population growth.

Many of the water sources in the region also suffer from poor water quality due to increased sediment and nutrient loads. Water quality issues are largely a result of diffuse source water pollution caused by historic mining operations, poor agricultural practices and catchment management, pollution from urban centres and issues including drainage of shallow acid groundwater and tidal floodgate operation. Blackwater generation and drainage is also a cause of water quality issues, particularly in the Richmond and Tweed estuaries. Maintaining a healthy riverine and estuarine environment which include important marine parks is not only important to the region's unique and diverse ecosystems, but also critical to supporting the North Coast economy.

The early consideration of water quality and supply in strategic planning is needed to ensure that the region's water supply is secure and resilient. Planning needs to consider whether adequate supply is available to support new development and that new and intensified development is designed to protect the region's water resources. As local water utilities respond to future climatic extremes and investigate alternate water supplies, strategic planning must also consider impacts to water sources, such as groundwater or stormwater.

The location of development should mitigate risks to water sources and the environment while minimising negative effects on the broader catchments.

Aboriginal people have an important connection to sea and waterways or water Country. Aboriginal people want to contribute to decisions that impact water Country. Waterway restoration projects and water management practices across the region can recognise, respect and respond to the Aboriginal community's cultural knowledge, values and cultural rights to water.



Hastings River, Korea Island



**Strategy 9.1**

Strategic planning and local plans should consider:

- opportunities to encourage riparian and coastal floodplain restoration works
- impacts to water quality, freshwater flows and ecological function from land use change
- water supply availability and issues, constraints and opportunities early in the planning process
- partnering with local Aboriginal communities to care for Country and waterways
- locating, designing, constructing and managing new developments to minimise impacts on water catchments, including downstream waterways and groundwater resources
- possible future diversification of town water sources, including groundwater, stormwater harvesting and recycling
- promoting an integrated water cycle management approach to development
- encouraging the reuse of water in new developments for urban greening and for irrigation purposes
- improving stormwater management and water sensitive urban design
- ensuring sustainable development of higher-water use industries by considering water availability and constraints, supporting more efficient water use and reuse, and locating development where water can be accessed without significantly impacting on other water users or the environment
- identifying and protecting drinking water catchments and storages in strategic planning and local plans
- opportunities to align local plans with any certified Coastal Management Programs.

**Strategy 9.2**

Protect marine parks, coastal lakes and estuaries by implementing the NSW Government's *Risk-Based Framework for Considering Waterway Health Outcomes in Strategic Land-use Planning Decisions*, with sensitive marine parks, coastal lakes and estuaries prioritised.

**Strategy 9.3**

Encourage a whole of catchment approach to land use and water management across the region that considers climate change, water security, sustainable demand and growth, the natural environment and investigate options for water management through innovation.



**Figure 5: Water Catchments**

- Regional boundary
- Regional city
- Strategic centre
- Centre
- Water body

0 10 20 40 Km





**OBJECTIVE 10:**

# Sustainably manage the productivity of our natural resources



Plantation Road, Cudgen

The region's natural resources range from rich fertile soils that are the foundation for a traditionally strong agricultural sector to the raw materials used for infrastructure, new housing, industry and primary industries. These natural resources are the basis of future wealth for a large and important sector of the regional economy.

It is important that these resources are not affected or sterilised by the encroachment of sensitive land uses, and that activities are undertaken sensitively to minimise negative impacts on the environment, water quality, important agricultural land, neighbouring businesses and the community. Planning for these activities will help to avoid potential land use conflicts.

Other significant natural resources include extractive materials, ground and surface water, forests and fisheries. Inappropriately located urban development or sensitive land uses can adversely affect or sterilise resource land.

Forests provide tourism and recreation activities, wood products, and protection for water quality, native habitat and connectivity with other forests (such as national parks).

The *Future of Gas Statement* outlines how the NSW Government will improve certainty about future gas production and exploration, but this does not involve any coal seam gas development within the North Coast.

**Strategy 10.1**

Enable the development of the region's natural, mineral and forestry resources by avoiding interfaces with land uses that are sensitive to impacts from noise, dust and light interference.

**Strategy 10.2**

Plan for the ongoing productive use of lands with regionally significant construction material resources in locations with established infrastructure and resource accessibility.





GOAL

# 2

Productive and connected





The North Coast's diverse economy is strong and growing. The health care and social assistance sector continues to grow quickly and supports the region's growing and ageing population. Other economic drivers such as education and training, construction, tourism, retail, agriculture and food manufacturing are also expected to generate increasing employment opportunities.

There will also be new opportunities as the economy diversifies into the knowledge and creative sector like the film and television industry and through investments such as the Richmond Valley Regional Job Precinct. Developing, retaining and attracting skilled workers will be an important focus for key industries.

The North Coast's locational advantages and transport infrastructure underpin the region's economic opportunities and provide efficient and reliable access for residents, visitors and freight. The Pacific Highway upgrade through the region

connects Sydney and Brisbane and is a major contributor to the country's economic activity. Strategic improvements to foster east-west connectivity will complement the Pacific Highway upgrade.

Delivering transport infrastructure to support the North Coast as it grows and changes will support more jobs, housing choice, access to services within and outside the region, and low-carbon transport choices. Walking, cycling and public transport will play a greater role in the North Coast's future, particularly in the region's growing cities and centres.

The North Coast's location and strong relationship with South East Queensland will continue to generate economic opportunities for the region. The Brisbane Olympics in 2032 will bring forward infrastructure spending in the next 10 years and create even stronger linkages and economic prosperity for the region.



Port Macquarie Camel Safaris on Lighthouse Beach  
Credit: Destination North Coast

**OBJECTIVE 11:**

# Support cities and centres and coordinate the supply of well-located employment land

The North Coast's unique mix of cities and centres are hives of economic opportunity. Centres play a crucial role as key places for employment and it is important they evolve and adapt to changes in the regional economy.

Many of these cities and centres have significant economic anchors like hospitals, university and TAFE campuses, airports or other key employment areas. The on-going development of existing sectors and clusters of economic activity will continue to bring economic diversity and provide more job opportunities.

Retaining and managing employment land through flexible planning and development controls will enable communities to respond to new opportunities and technologies. The availability of new greenfield employment lands depends on servicing, location and size, and constraints such as flooding, bushfire, biodiversity, and important farmland.

An appropriate supply of employment land is to be identified through local growth management strategies or local strategic planning statements. Supply should be focused on locations supported by freight access, infrastructure and protected from encroachment by incompatible development. While certain industries such as marine based industries may need to be located away from existing traditional urban centres, it is important that these industries are clustered to minimize the potential for land use conflict and to maximise infrastructure usage.

New investment will be attracted to the centres of employment by harnessing their unique local qualities and competitive advantages. Making cities and centres more attractive can also grow employment and business opportunities while improving the quality of life for the community. Engaging with the community during the development of local strategies is essential, as it can shape local job opportunities to attract and retain professional and skilled workers and to 're-attract' young people who may have grown up in the region and left to travel or pursue further education, and who are looking to return 'home'.

Improved walking and cycling opportunities in the region's cities and centres may also attract young people that were drawn to larger cities.

The region will also need to respond to the changing nature of retail. While physical shop fronts will remain important, their functions and purpose will change depending on market capacity to adopt new technology and digital platforms. It will be important to understand market responses to these changing technologies and how this will influence floor space demand overall.

Freight, service and delivery demands will continue to grow in the region. Addressing the freight needs of urban centres can deliver placemaking outcomes. Considering urban freight logistics in early planning can support centre revitalisation and renewal. Facilitating adequate off-street servicing and loading/dock facilities can limit congestion and amenity impacts on street frontages while securing freight connectivity for local businesses.

New commercial precincts, outside of existing centres should be of an appropriate size and scale relative to the area they will be servicing. Proposals must demonstrate how they will benefit the community and the regional economy, as well as how they will:

- respond to retail supply and demand
- respond to innovations in the retail sector
- maximise the use of existing infrastructure (including public transport and community facilities) commensurate with the scale of the proposal; and
- enhance the value of the public realm.

### Collaboration Activity 3



Support the development of the Richmond Valley Regional Job Precinct to create a hub focused on high-value agriculture, food processing, manufacturing, distribution, and renewable energy.

**Lead Agency:** Department of Regional NSW



**Strategy 11.1**

Local council plans will support and reinforce cities and centres as a focal point for economic growth and activity.

**Strategy 11.2**

Utilise strategic planning and land use plans to maintain and enhance the function of established commercial centres by:

- simplifying planning controls
- developing active city streets that retain local character
- facilitating a broad range of uses within centres in response to the changing retail environment
- maximising the transport and community facilities commensurate with the scale of development proposals.

**Strategy 11.3**

Support existing and new economic activities by ensuring council strategic planning and local plans:

- retain, manage and safeguard significant employment lands
- respond to characteristics of the resident workforce and those working in the LGA and neighbouring LGAs
- identify local and subregional specialisations
- address freight, service and delivery considerations
- identify future employment lands and align infrastructure to support these lands
- provide flexibility in local planning controls
- are responsive to future changes in industry to allow a transition to new opportunities
- provide flexibility and facilitate a broad range of commercial, business and retail uses within centres
- focus future commercial and retail activity in existing commercial centres, unless there is no other suitable site within existing centres, there is a demonstrated need, or there is positive social and economic benefit to locate activity elsewhere
- are supported by infrastructure servicing plans for new employment lands to demonstrate feasibility prior to rezoning.



Streetscape of Bellingham

**Strategy 11.4**

New employment areas are in accordance with an employment land strategy endorsed by the Department of Planning and Environment.

**OBJECTIVE 12:**

# Create a diverse visitor economy



Tweed Heads

The North Coast region has a strong and vibrant visitor economy ranging from the traditional family holiday, lifestyle retreats and those seeking adventure on the many beaches and world class surf breaks.

A key challenge for the region is being able to grow and enhance the tourism sector by having a greater focus on agri-tourism and eco-tourism, while ensuring the impact does not harm the region's environmental and agricultural qualities.

The rich heritage of the Bundjalung, Githabul, Gumbaynggirr, Dunghutti, Thunggutti, Birpai and Yaegl peoples should be celebrated and recognised through opportunities designed with local Aboriginal people - these in turn could provide opportunities to economically empower local Aboriginal communities. Linking these ventures across the region will ensure equity and fairness in the distribution of opportunities.

Tourism can both benefit and increase pressure on the environment and smaller communities. Tweed Heads, Ballina, Byron Bay, Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie are prime tourism development areas, with conference and function centres, access to public transport and large-scale accommodation

and festival venues. Medium-to smaller-scale nature-based and coastal tourism accommodation can be provided outside these prime tourism areas. Event, dining and accommodation options in rural areas should only be considered where they complement and are consistent with prime agricultural pursuits. Agri-tourism and ecotourism should only be located where a long-term, beneficial and sustainable relationship with the environment can be established.

## Brisbane Olympics 2032

There are great opportunities for the North Coast to leverage economic and social benefits from the Brisbane Olympic Games in 2032. Not only during the planning and construction phases but also the longer-term tourism opportunities that will exist. This will include developing an even stronger events and visitor economy for the Northern Rivers supported by world class sporting, recreation and visitor infrastructure and accommodation. This can lead to a change in the tourism industry with direct and indirect employment benefits for the North Coast.





Nambucca River

### Strategy 12.1



Council strategic planning and local plans should consider opportunities to:

- enhance the amenity, vibrancy and safety of centres and township precincts
- create green and open spaces that are accessible and well connected and enhance existing green infrastructure in tourist and recreation facilities
- support the development of places for artistic and cultural activities
- identify appropriate areas for tourist accommodation and tourism development
- protect heritage, biodiversity and agriculture to enhance cultural tourism, agri-tourism and eco-tourism
- partner with local Aboriginal communities to support cultural tourism and connect ventures across the region
- support appropriate growth of the night-time economy
- provide flexibility in planning controls to allow sustainable agritourism and ecotourism
- improve public access and connection to heritage through innovative interpretation
- incorporate transport planning with a focus on active transport modes to connect visitors to key destinations.



**OBJECTIVE 13:****Champion Aboriginal self-determination**

Fingal Head  
Credit: Destination NSW

Local planning can support the economic self-determination and aspirations of Aboriginal people and communities and enable greater choice, access and agency over land, water, housing and resources.

### **Facilitating the prompt, efficient and equitable return of land rights to Aboriginal communities**

The *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983* was passed by NSW Parliament to provide land rights to Aboriginal people in NSW for the historic dispossession of Aboriginal people from their traditional lands. Under the *Commonwealth Native Title Act 1993*, Native Title holders are also returned land as part of determination outcomes of native title claims. Land rights generate economic, social, environmental and cultural benefits and costs for landowners, users and managers.

Local Aboriginal Land Councils are established under the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act* to claim land. Native Title holders and claimants can also hold land, and once granted or transferred, they both activate, utilise and manage land as an economic resource for Aboriginal communities, laying the basis for a self-reliant and more secure economic future.

The NSW Government is committed to the prompt, equitable and efficient resolution of Aboriginal Land Claims on Crown land to Aboriginal communities. This also recognises that in many circumstances native title interests may still exist in that land. Resolving land claims and negotiations will benefit Aboriginal communities and pave the way for strategic and collaborative land use opportunities.



## Partnering with Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs) and Native Title holders in the North Coast region

LALCs and Native Title holders work to improve, protect and foster the best interests of all Aboriginal people within their area.

The 22 LALCs in the North Coast region are Baryulgil Square, Birpai, Birrigan Gargle, Bogal, Bowraville, Bunyah, Casino-Boolangle, Coffs Harbour, Dorrigo Plateau, Grafton Ngerrie, Gugin Gudduba, Jali, Jana Ngalee, Jubullum, Kempsey, Muli Muli, Nambucca Heads, Ngulingah, Thunggutti, Tweed/Byron, Unkya and Yaegl.

Working collaboratively with LALCs and Native Title holders can build capacity for shared knowledge, constructive relationships, and meaningful approaches to strengthen economic self-determination.

Tweed and Byron Shire councils have delivered significant outcomes from having formal Aboriginal identified roles to facilitate meaningful engagement with local Aboriginal community members and stakeholders. These positions can help to ensure that council planning and land use decisions recognise and fully consider the aspirations of the local community.

State agencies and councils have varying levels of knowledge about the land ownership and aspirations of LALCs and Native Title holders and this can impact the ability to work collaboratively on location-specific matters. Building the capacity for shared knowledge about Aboriginal land can help to create more effective relationships between LALCs, Native Title holders, state agencies, and councils. Undertaking local cultural immersion or cultural awareness training can also help those involved with planning better understand the perspectives of First Nations communities and ways that better outcomes for Country can be achieved.

A barrier for Aboriginal land holders to achieve development and conservation aspirations in the region is the land zoning of returned land. The NSW government and councils will work with LALCs and Native Title holders to support the utilisation of the planning system to achieve self-determination.



Outdoor learning space at Coffs Harbour

## Opportunities through strategic planning

LALCs and Native Title holders have varying levels of knowledge and resourcing to enable the utilisation of the planning system to achieve aspirations about the future use of their land.

Local and regional strategic planning can help to give Aboriginal communities a genuine voice in determining how their land is utilised and for what purpose. This provides the ability to translate potential values from returned land into real and tangible benefits for communities.

LALC and Native Title land holdings should be considered in strategic planning for the region's conservation outcomes to help provide upfront investment certainty and help generate economic outcomes through regional development that provides conservation co-benefits. Strong Aboriginal representation at council, such as through an advisory board and/or identified positions in council planning teams, can ensure strategic planning is aligned.

### Strategy 13.1



Provide opportunities for the region's LALCs, Native Title holders and community recognised Aboriginal organisations to utilise the NSW planning system to achieve development aspirations, maximising the flow of benefits generated by land rights to Aboriginal communities through strategic led planning.

### Strategy 13.2



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

### Strategy 13.3



Partner with community recognised Aboriginal organisations to align strategic planning and community aspirations including enhanced Aboriginal economic participation, enterprise and land, sea and water management.

### Strategy 13.4



Councils consider engaging Aboriginal identified staff within their planning teams to facilitate strong relationship building between councils, Aboriginal communities and key stakeholders such as Local Aboriginal Land Councils and local Native Title holders.

### Strategy 13.5



Councils should establish a formal and transparent relationship with local recognised Aboriginal organisations and community, such as an advisory committee.

### Action 5



The Department of Planning and Environment will work with LALCs, Native Title holders and councils by:

- meaningfully engaging with LALCs and Native Title holders in the development and review of strategic plans to ensure aspirations are reflected in plans
- building capacity for Aboriginal communities, LALCs and Native Title holders to utilise the planning system
- incorporating Aboriginal knowledge of the region into planning considerations and decisions.



**OBJECTIVE 14:**

# Deliver new industries of the future

In the future, new and innovative industries will play an increasing vital role in delivering growth and prosperity in the region.

While it is expected the strongest growth will be in traditional health and education jobs, knowledge intensive and creative industries such as the rapidly expanding film sector offer great opportunities to grow and expand the local economy based on the region's natural endowments.

Improved efficiencies in the Region's current key employment sectors will drive resilience and growth.

Advanced manufacturing, technology-enabled primary production and the renewable energy sector are key emerging industries that could rapidly develop in regional NSW. Being prepared for these emerging industries will give new and expanding industries the best chance at success.

New industries of the future will not only provide new jobs and bring new people to the region, it will also diversify the regional economy and make it more resilient to economic disruptions and shocks.

The proximity of the region to South East Queensland, Sydney, Newcastle and local markets and processing centres serviced by the Pacific Highway allows for specialisation particularly in food manufacturing.

The agribusiness sector will grow with better recognition, protection and expansion of the agricultural supply chain, including key transport infrastructure and facilities, supporting secondary processing facilities, and transport and logistics industries.

The ongoing expansion of agribusiness can be supported through a strategic approach to intensive agriculture and food processing to avoid land use compatibility issues, protect the long-term viability of operations and facilitate opportunities for expansion across different rural sectors and communities.

## Coffs Harbour food hub

Bananas were historically the crop of choice for farmers in the Coffs Harbour Region. Blueberries now account for 80% of regional produce, but farmers also grow a wide variety of other agricultural commodities including potatoes, ginger, turmeric, milk, seafood, beef, micro greens, tomatoes, macadamia nuts and avocados.

A Cooperative Research Centre project involving Coffs Harbour City Council and researchers at Queensland University of Technology will look at food production in the Coffs Harbour region and explore opportunities for growth by expanding output capacity, value-adding and deployment of technology. It is intended that the project's findings will support the creation of a smart, sustainable food hub and more streamlined distribution channels in the region.

### Strategy 14.1



Facilitate agribusiness employment and income-generating opportunities through the regular review of council planning and development controls, including suitable locations for intensive agriculture and agribusiness.

### Strategy 14.2



Protect established agriculture clusters and identify expansion opportunities in local plans that avoid land use conflicts, particularly with residential and rural residential land uses.

**OBJECTIVE 15:**

# Improve state and regional connectivity



Pacific Highway, Woolgoolga to Ballina

## Road

The recent investments in north-south highway connections via the Pacific Highway has created significant benefits for the state and the region's local communities in safety, travel time savings, freight efficiency, productivity and lifestyle options. A focus on east-west connectivity is now essential to create a better-connected and more resilient transport network.

Centres west of the Pacific Highway, including Lismore, Casino, Grafton, Wauchope and Bellingen, will benefit from improved east-west connections. The Bruxner, Gwydir, Waterfall Way and Oxley Highways are the key routes connecting regional cities and centres within the region and to the New England North West Region.

As the region's population continues to grow, and agribusiness continues to increase across the region, improved transport connections will benefit both freight and economic opportunities along with

tourism and passenger movements. Better east west connections are also important to reduce the region's vulnerability in natural disasters.

## Rail

High speed rail may one day connect the region's main centres directly to Brisbane, Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne. The benefits of high speed rail could be widespread and include improved access to the capital cities, lower travel time, spurring regional development including tourism, and reducing emissions. Land uses that may affect the long-term viability of any proposed corridors should be avoided.

Existing heavy rail includes the North Coast Rail Line, which is a nationally significant rail line and part of the National Land Transport Network. It provides both passenger and freight services and should be protected from incompatible land uses.



## Air

The North Coast region is situated between international airports at the Gold Coast and Newcastle. Both airports have expansion plans underway and are key gateways for the region.

Intrastate aviation will continue to be important gateways for business, tourism and personal travel, as well as high-value freight in the region. Intrastate air routes connect North Coast holiday airport destinations of Ballina-Byron, Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie.

Smaller airports and airfields such as those at Casino, Lismore, Grafton and Kempsey can play an important role in supporting local communities.

## Freight

Freight connections and activity in the region provides connectivity between regional, inter-regional and international producers, manufacturers and markets. Many different industries rely on these supply chain connections to operate and thrive.

Production and manufacturing in the region includes a diverse mix of types and scales ranging from boutique local goods production to major activities in forestry, livestock and the sugar industry. At the larger scale, there is the sourcing and processing of raw materials, dairy and livestock from neighbouring regions in NSW and Queensland and seafood to Australian markets and international shipping exports.

The amount and value of freight generated by the region will continue to increase over time particularly in relation to wholesale food and agricultural commodities.

Maximising and safeguarding the region's transport assets and expanding export-related and value-adding industries will encourage investment, attract industry and provide certainty to industries.

## Connection to Queensland

The connection with Queensland via Tweed Heads is benefitting from significant public and private investment, such as the commencement of investigations for future light rail/mass transit and the new Tweed Valley Hospital in Kingscliff. In the future, the Gold Coast Light Rail could extend from the Gold Coast Airport into Tweed Heads and Tweed Heads South, changing the way people access jobs, education and services.

The Richmond Valley Regional Job precinct will also explore opportunities for greater connectivity to the planned inland port at the Bromelton State Development Area in Queensland and other surrounding areas such as Kyogle, Lismore and Clarence Valley.

### Strategy 15.1



Protect proposed and existing transport infrastructure and corridors to ensure network opportunities are not sterilised by incompatible land uses or land fragmentation.

### Collaboration Activity 4



To ensure that centres experiencing high growth have well planned and sustainable transport options, placed-based Transport Plans will be developed for key cities and centres across the North Coast region.

**Lead Agency:** Transport for NSW

### Collaboration Activity 5



In collaboration with Tweed Shire Council, City of Gold Coast and Department of Transport and Main Roads Queensland develop opportunities for multimodal transport connections to Coolangatta and the Tweed.

**Lead Agency:** Transport for NSW

Centenary of Federation State Border Marker, Tweed Heads  
Credit: Destination NSW



**OBJECTIVE 16:**

# Increase active and public transport usage

Active and public transport reduces congestion, encourages healthier lifestyles, supports centres, is more sustainable and offers accessibility for people who don't drive.

The region's generally wide streets, lower traffic volumes and safe routes can make walking and cycling safe and convenient transport options. The larger cities and centres enjoy public transport, while some smaller centres have limited public transport options.

Many areas on the North Coast have seasonal changes in population due to tourism. A challenge for these areas is to provide additional services where peak season demand exceeds the service level required for other times of the year.

Transport facilities should be designed for all ages and abilities with equitable access, seating and shade. Community transport will remain important for older people and those experiencing transport disadvantage. Appropriate transport links can assist older people to continue living in their home or community as they age. E-bikes and electric scooters can also compliment other active transport modes and assist with micro freight tasks like food deliveries.

## Public transport

Encouraging infill opportunities in and around activity nodes, and investing in facility enhancements at these key locations, will promote the densities necessary to foster public transport options. Prioritising active and public transport to schools, libraries, hospitals and parks will encourage this change. A multimodal transport network gives customers greater choice in how they move and integrate between different transport modes.

## Promoting walking and cycling as a preferred choice of transport

Active transport networks should link key activity locations and encourage walking and cycling through safe pedestrian crossings, lower traffic speeds, separated cycling paths and before and after trip facilities such as secure bicycle storage.

Walkable neighbourhoods are those with short distances between destinations. Walking and cycling routes are attractive, well connected, safe and shaded, and they integrate easily with other sustainable transport options to provide people with greater choice. This then means people are more likely to only use their cars on trips they cannot do on public and active modes.

In greenfield areas, street layouts should be designed to maximise walkability and connectivity for future residents. New and infill residential development should be accessible by walking and cycling connections and public transport.



Busways, Coffs Harbour



Cyclist, Ballina



## Walking for tourism, recreation, and access to nature

The region's coastal areas and disused railway infrastructure present opportunities to upgrade tracks and trails and make areas newly accessible to the public. The Northern Rivers Rail Trail will eventually connect Murwillumbah, Byron Bay, Bangalow, Lismore and Casino. When completed the trail will be 132 km long and pass through some of the most scenic countryside in New South Wales and will be a drawcard for walkers, hikers, runners and cyclists. It will offer a unique way to explore the region while helping to preserve the area's history and heritage. The region's rainforests also offer great walks.

### Strategy 16.1



Encourage active and public transport use by:

- prioritising pedestrian amenity within centres for short everyday trips
- providing a legible, connected and accessible network of pedestrian and cycling facilities
- delivering accessible transit stops and increasing convenience at interchanges to serve an ageing customer
- incorporating emerging anchors and commuting catchments in bus contract renewals
- ensuring new buildings and development include end of trip facilities
- integrating the active transport network with public transport facilities
- prioritising increased infill housing in appropriate locations to support local walkability and the feasibility of public transport stops.

### Strategy 16.2



Local plans should encourage the integration of land use and transport and provide for environments that are highly accessible and conducive to walking, cycling and the use of public transport and encourage active travel infrastructure around key trip generators.

**OBJECTIVE 17:**

# Utilise new transport technology

New technologies can transform the way we move around and help to better utilise existing transport infrastructure.

While change will continue to occur rapidly, our planning and investment must provide the flexibility to adapt new technology. Rethinking the use of car parks or drop-off bays for electric vehicle recharging is encouraged. Alternative uses such as storage, logistics hubs, depots or community uses may arise if autonomous vehicles reduce the need for car parking.

Future proofing capacity for the delivery of common vehicle charging or battery recharging facilities within new freight precincts will encourage the uptake of electric vehicles particularly within the freight industry.

Advances in hydrogen fuel cell technology will also address range anxiety for long haul transport, particularly for the road and rail freight sector.

Renewable hydrogen will increasingly become a competitive zero emissions fuel option for the heavy transport sector.

On-demand services offer an affordable alternative to taxi services in order to facilitate local travel, including to access medical care and employment opportunities. High customer satisfaction rates and steadily increasing patronage over the life of the pilots have shown that the On Demand Transport pilots services have been successful in improving customer outcomes by providing affordable transport services to customers who live in areas with minimal transport options.

Modern infrastructure will improve access for people with disabilities and those with limited mobility and will assist them to enjoy a more seamless public transport experience, particularly at interchanges.



Electric vehicle charging, Ballina

## Case study: Northern Rivers On Demand Trial

The Northern Rivers On Demand service trial operated between 2020-22 and delivered high quality, safe and efficient public transport which enables convenient and timely travel around the towns of Alstonville, Wollongbar, Chilcotts Grass and Goonellabah, including connections to the daily bus services to Lismore and Ballina.

The On Demand services are an anywhere to anywhere service within geo-fenced areas, and also serve as 'first mile/last mile' services to take customers to bus stops to transfer to buses to Ballina or Lismore.

### Strategy 17.1

Councils should consider how new transport technology can be supported in local strategic plans, where appropriate.



### Collaboration Activity 6

Investigate public transport improvements including on-demand services.

**Lead Agency:** Transport for NSW





GOAL

# 3

## Growth Change and Opportunity



Streetscapes, Bellingen  
Credit: Destination NSW



The North Coast is a growing and vibrant region. More jobs and homes are needed to accommodate the growing population.

We will see more jobs in health care and social assistance as well as construction, accommodation, service industries, agribusiness and high value food and beverage production, advanced manufacturing, tourism, freight and logistics and creative industries (e.g. the film sector).

The regional cities of Port Macquarie, Coffs Harbour, Lismore, and Tweed Heads offer high level services and facilities and their growth and how they connect and integrate with their surrounding subregions is fundamental to the success of the broader North Coast and its communities.

Sustained high levels of growth in South East Queensland will be boosted further by the Brisbane 2032 Olympics and will create increased pressure for housing and land supply in the Northern Rivers, particularly in the Tweed LGA. This brings opportunities for infrastructure and economic development along with risks of losing the Northern Rivers character that so many cherish.

The rural hinterland is an integral and defining part of the North Coast and supports a variety of

land uses including agriculture, agribusiness, rural lifestyle living, horticulture and tourism. As the effects of climate change increase, the region will become more important as a food producer. One of the most important challenges in addressing future growth on the North Coast is the need to maintain an appropriate balance between rural land, environmental protection, and urban development.

Coordination and delivery of housing and employment opportunities across the Mid North Coast and Northern Rivers that directs change and growth based on the natural attributes of each subregion, will help to boost prosperity in all centres and communities while protecting and enhancing the region's environment and character.

The need to protect and enhance the region's natural environment by directing development to appropriate locations is more critical than ever. This may include the recognition that some locations, particularly within the sensitive coastal strip are no longer suitable for significant greenfield housing or employment land release. A focus on urban renewal and infill development and the coordination of certain land supplies with adjacent areas will be key in addressing supply, diversity and affordability issues.



Kayaking on Tweed River  
Credit: Destination NSW



**OBJECTIVE 18:**

# Plan for sustainable communities

Housing at Skennars Head



Land use planning strategies play a key role to help coordinate and facilitate development and investment and generate high quality and sustainable land use planning outcomes. Land use planning strategies include local strategic planning statements. They will be prepared in consultation with the community and relevant government agencies, and generally prior to preparing a LEP to zone land for residential, rural residential, commercial, or industrial land use.

**They will reflect the aims and strategies of this plan and be based on the following key settlement planning principles and the settlement planning guidelines in Appendix A\*:**

**1**

**Identify growth needs and opportunities**

Examine the demand for urban growth and change, based on population and employment projections, and assess supply and demand of suitable land to accommodate growth.

**2**

**Direct growth to identified urban growth areas**

Use the region's urban growth areas to balance urban expansion, protect coastal and other environmental assets, help maintain the distinctive character of the region, and direct growth away from important farmland, sensitive ecosystems, cultural heritage, natural hazards and steep land.

Maps of these areas which include both existing urban lands and investigation areas for potential future urban land, are shown in the Local Government Narratives section of this plan.

If a variation to an urban growth area is proposed, the Urban Growth Area Variation Criteria (Appendix B) must be addressed.

Any change to add or remove land from an urban growth area identified in the regional plan, is to be undertaken as part of a local land use strategy or planning work by council in consultation with the local community. Once adopted by the council and approved by the Department, the amendment will be reflected in the next review of the regional plan.

**3**

**Ensure sustainable development within the coastal strip**

Safeguard the sensitive coastal strip (land east of the Pacific Highway alignment plus the urban areas of Tweed Heads around the Cobaki Broadwater; and for Coffs Harbour, land to the east of Dirty Creek, Upper Corindi, Bucca, Karangri, Upper Orara and Bonville), from increasing population and development pressures, and direct new rural residential development away from this area. Only minor and contiguous variations to urban growth area boundaries within the coastal strip will be considered.

**4**

**Determine a required structure for future development**

Consider structure and precinct plans for employment and housing growth areas to guide and deliver new development and infrastructure. When structure planning is undertaken, it should provide regional and subregional context, establish a local vision, and provide a clear planning framework to coordinate development within the structure plan area.

A character analysis should be included to ensure future development is consistent with preserving the individual character of places, as well as a high-level design to promote development that has good connectivity, environmental management, and social outcomes. It should also consider the right mix of land uses and be prepared following consultation with key private and government stakeholders and the community.

**5**

**Encourage locally responsive sustainable design**

All land use strategies in the North Coast will encourage locally responsive, sustainable design in established urban areas and in new growth areas. This is important to enhance the unique character of the region's cities, centres, towns, villages, and rural hinterland and to protect the key qualities that are important to the community. Priorities for each council are set out in Local Government Narratives within this plan.

Local strategies will plan for timely and economically viable infrastructure, and support proposals that minimise expenditure or the duplication of services. Rezoning should only occur when proposals for new major land release or development demonstrate that servicing can occur from existing infrastructure or that new infrastructure can be provided.

\* These planning principles together with the Settlement Planning Guidelines in Appendix A supersede the *North Coast Settlement Planning Guidelines 2019*.



Housing at Thrumster



## Subregional Planning

The North Coast's subregions are:

- *Mid North Coast* – Port Macquarie-Hastings, Kempsey, Nambucca, Bellingen, Coffs Harbour and Clarence Valley LGAs
- *Northern Rivers* – Tweed, Byron, Ballina, Lismore, Richmond Valley and Kyogle LGAs.

**The Mid North Coast** (Figure 6) covers approximately 21,700 square kilometres, containing the Camden-Haven, Hastings, Macleay, Nambucca, Bellinger, Coffs Harbour and Clarence river catchments. The Birpai, Dughutti, Thungutti, Gumbaynggirr, Yaegl and Bundjalung nations are the traditional owners of this land.

The Pacific Highway connects north towards Queensland and south to Newcastle, the Hunter Valley and Sydney. Waterfall Way and the Gwydir and Oxley highways connect to the New England North West region.

The natural environment underpins many of the subregion's key industries like agriculture, forestry, commercial fishing, aquaculture and tourism. A significant portion is national park or state forest, including the Solitary Islands Marine Park at Coffs Harbour.

People living in Clarence Valley, Bellingen and Nambucca LGAs have strong links to the regional city of Coffs Harbour, while those in the Kempsey LGA link to Port Macquarie. The Pacific Highway upgrade and digital technology will support these links and future growth.

**The Northern Rivers** (Figure 7) spans approximately 10,277 square kilometres and takes in the Richmond, Tweed, Upper Clarence and Wilson river catchments. The Bundjalung and Githabul nations are the traditional owners of this land.

Supporting one of the most biodiverse environments in Australia, the subregion's picturesque coastlines, waterways, rainforests, wetlands and lush rural hinterland make the Northern Rivers a highly popular residential and tourist destination. Creative industries, tourism and agriculture play an important role in underpinning the local economy.

The Northern Rivers is well connected to the surrounding areas of South East Queensland, the New England and the Mid North Coast. The Bruxner Highway is an important link between Ballina, Lismore, Casino and west to Tenterfield on the Northern Tablelands. Summerland Way provides important connections with Grafton to the south, Casino and Kyogle to the west and across to Beaudesert in Queensland.

The opportunities presented by the significant growth in South East Queensland will play an important role in driving economic growth and prosperity in the Northern Rivers.



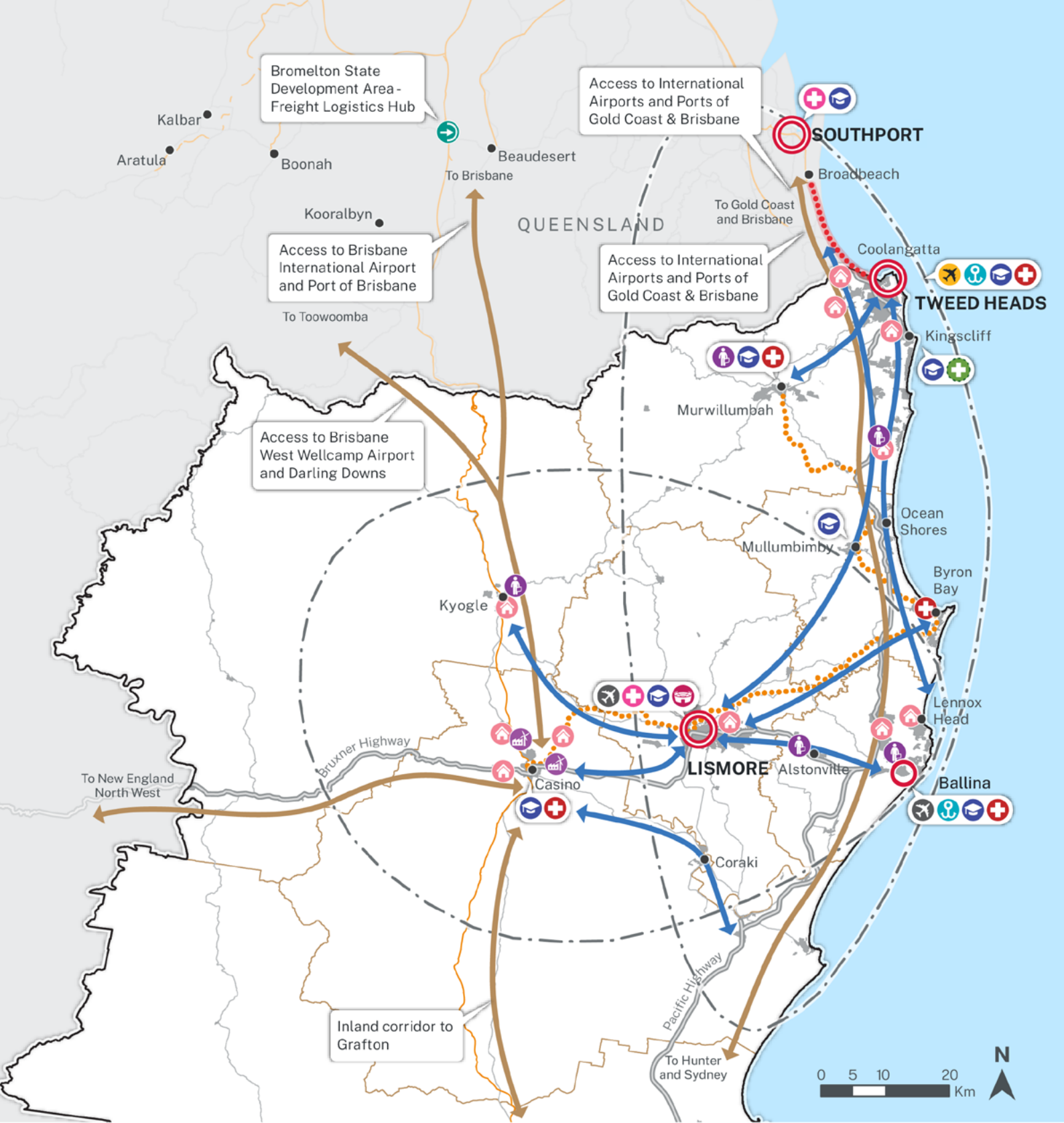
**Figure 6: Mid North Coast Subregion**

- Regional boundary
- ⊙ Regional city
- Strategic centre
- Centre
- LGA boundary
- Railway
- Road

- Highways and motor ways
- ✈ Airport
- 🚢 Commercial port
- ⚓ Harbour
- 🎓 TAFE and/or University
- 🏥 Hospital
- 🏥 Health precinct
- 🏟 Regional sporting complex

- 🏠 Correctional centre
- 👤 New employment lands
- 🏠 Housing release
- 🏠 Urban growth area
- ↔ Inter-regional connections
- ↔ Intra-regional connections
- ⋯ Communities of interest





**Figure 7: Northern Rivers Subregion**

- |                        |                                     |                                    |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Regional boundary      | Investigation for light rail        | Approved new Tweed Valley Hospital |
| Regional city          | Northern Rivers Rail Trail          | Regional Job Precinct              |
| Strategic centre       | Airport                             | New employment lands               |
| Centre                 | Gold Coast Airport - Global Gateway | New housing                        |
| LGA boundary           | Harbour                             | Urban growth area                  |
| Railway                | TAFE and/or University              | Inter-regional connections         |
| Road                   | Hospital                            | Intra-regional connections         |
| Highways and motorways | Health precinct                     | Communities of interest            |
|                        | Regional sporting complex           |                                    |

## Subregional planning principles

The most significant land use planning challenge for the North Coast into the future is ensuring that enough residential and employment lands can be delivered in a sustainable and coordinated way that maintains the region's unique character and addresses long term growth pressures.

New land release areas not affected by biodiversity issues, cultural heritage, important farmland or natural hazards such as flooding and bushfire risk, are becoming increasingly difficult to find. This is now preventing some cities and centres from being able to supply and deliver certain forms of housing and employment lands.

To address this issue and ensure all forms of housing and employment lands are available across the region, councils are encouraged, when preparing land use planning strategies, to look for opportunities and collaborate with partnering councils within their subregions to sustainably locate future release areas.

The priority will be to direct growth to existing zoned land and investigation areas within existing urban growth area boundaries in the first instance. Councils should also remain open to demand for certain types of land uses being met by adjoining or other LGAs within the subregion if their land has a higher or better use.

The principles for subregional planning are:

1. Identify suitable land supplies in appropriate locations to support a range of residential and employment land uses to meet forecast population and employment growth across the Mid North Coast and Northern Rivers subregions.
2. Councils should collaborate, plan and work together when considering the opportunities and need for new release areas, not only for their subregion but also for smaller areas within the subregion.
3. Direct growth based on each subregion's natural attributes and the building typologies most appropriate to each location.
4. Investigate planning levers to facilitate the delivery of housing and employment lands to meet short- and longer-term demands.
5. Strengthen collaboration across councils and the NSW Government to support measures that bring forward a supply of "development ready" land.
6. Protect and enhance inter- and intra-regional transport links to secure freight capacity whilst enabling more active movement connections between local areas.
7. Protect important farmland, HEV assets, water quality, environmentally and culturally sensitive areas and visually sensitive landscapes.
8. Improve house and employment land monitoring in the subregions as a foundation for policy improvements and transparency around emerging issues.

### Action 6



Undertake housing and employment land reviews for the Northern Rivers and Mid North Coast subregions to assess future supply needs and locations.



## The Regional Cities

The North Coast Regional Cities of Port Macquarie, Coffs Harbour, Lismore and Tweed Heads provide:

- central business districts with large retail outlets, including department stores
- a range of employment opportunities
- schools and higher education, sporting facilities, hospitals, and other health services
- NSW Government offices
- tourist accommodation, including ecotourist facilities and caravan parks
- housing choice.

Implementation of Regional City Action Plans (RCAPs) for each city will help to drive diverse economic development opportunities and support the delivery of more new homes and new jobs in the region by 2041.

These opportunities will also spread growth and economic opportunity across all the centres and areas of the region through increased subregional coordination.







Coastline, Port Macquarie  
Credit: Destination NSW

## Port Macquarie RCAP

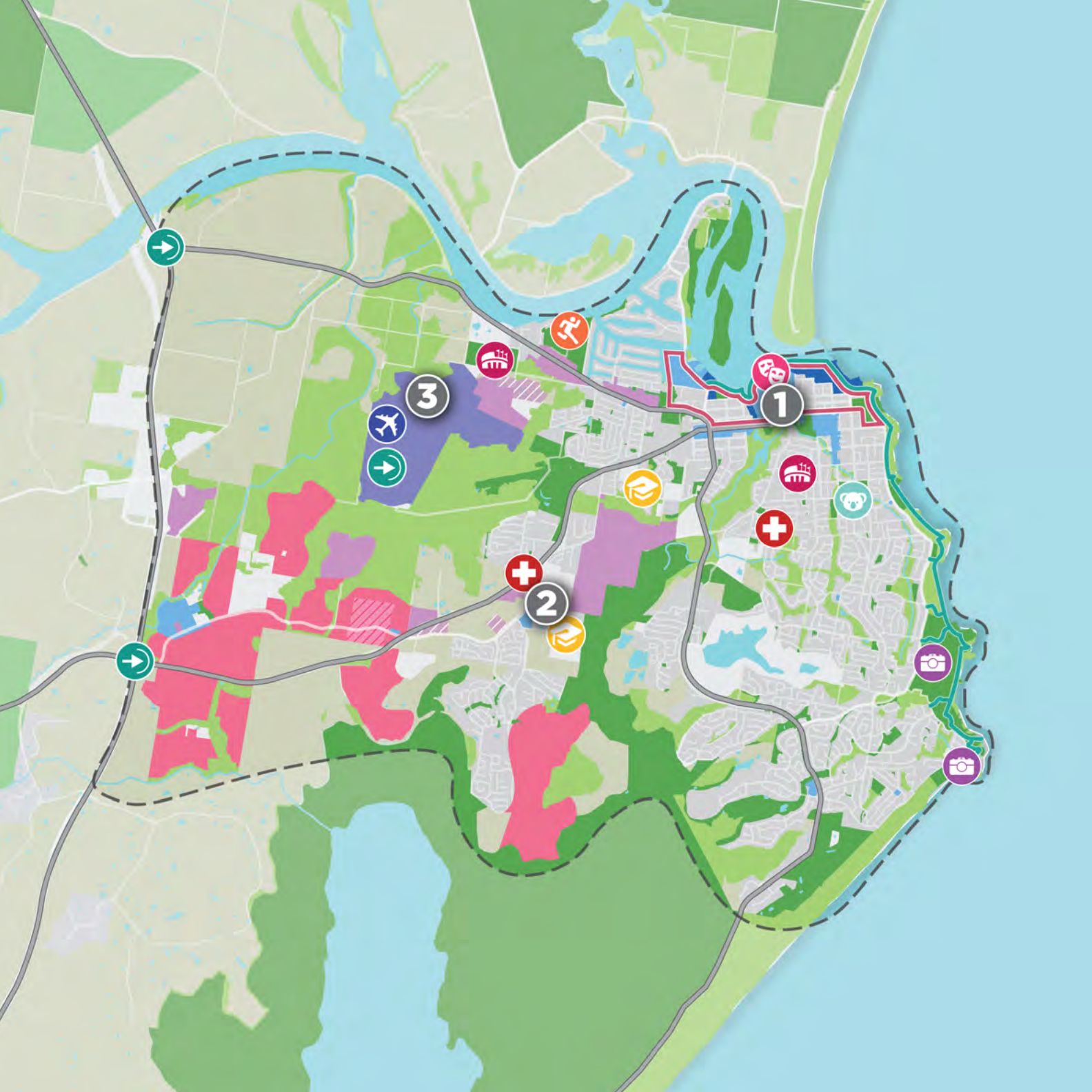
Nestled between the Pacific Ocean and the Hastings River, on the traditional lands of the Birpai people, Port Macquarie is a smart, sustainable, and vibrant regional city with a strong culture and social heart. The people of Port Macquarie protect and embrace the beauty and diversity of the natural environment and take pride in their cultural story and community connections. As the southern gateway to the North Coast, Port Macquarie is economically strong and diverse and is a welcoming city to visit, live, work and play.

The RCAP identifies 17 objectives under five goals to make the city a better place to live, work, meet, play and move.

Five key areas for future collaboration have been identified to help deliver the 20-year strategic vision for Port Macquarie:

1. On-ground verification of Koala corridors to support council's Koala Recovery Strategy
2. Coordinating state and local government approaches to meet affordable housing needs
3. Development of a policy framework to achieve a sustainable and resilient future for Port Macquarie
4. Development of an integrated transport network
5. Development of local place and design guidelines.





**Figure 8: Port Macquarie RCAP Vision Map**







Coffs Harbour Jetty  
Credit: Destination NSW

## Coffs Harbour RCAP

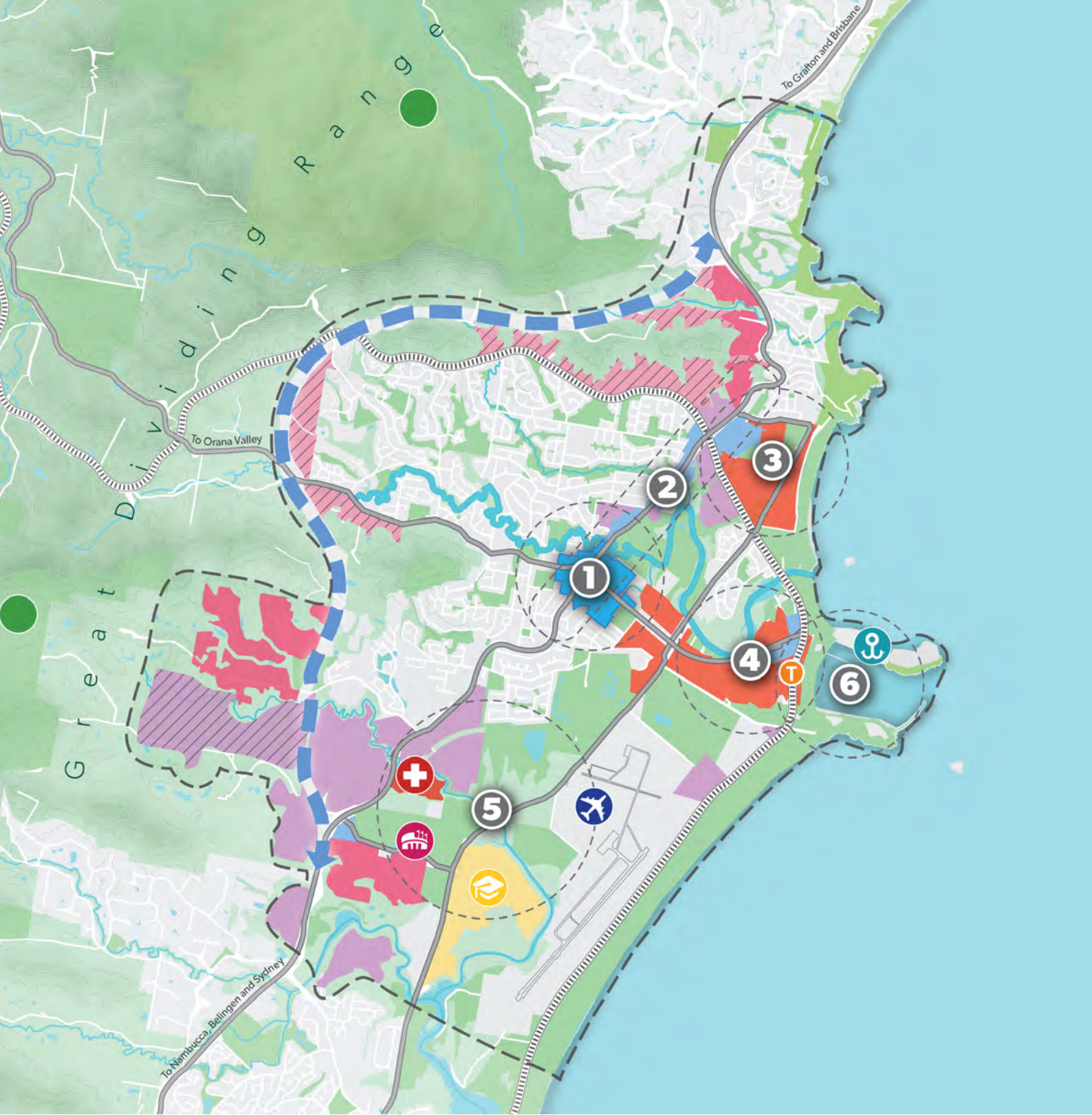
On the lands of the Gumbaynggirr people and respecting their spiritual connection to country, Coffs Harbour is growing within its spectacular natural setting, cradled between the green embrace of the Great Dividing Range and the blue expanse of the Pacific Ocean. It is a welcoming city showcasing its signature blend of worldly city buzz, culture and creative energy, a tapestry of places and sustainable agricultural harvest. As a mid-way point between Newcastle and South East Queensland, it leads through region-shaping civic, tourism, health and education anchors.

The RCAP identifies 20 objectives under five goals to guide growth and change in the city.

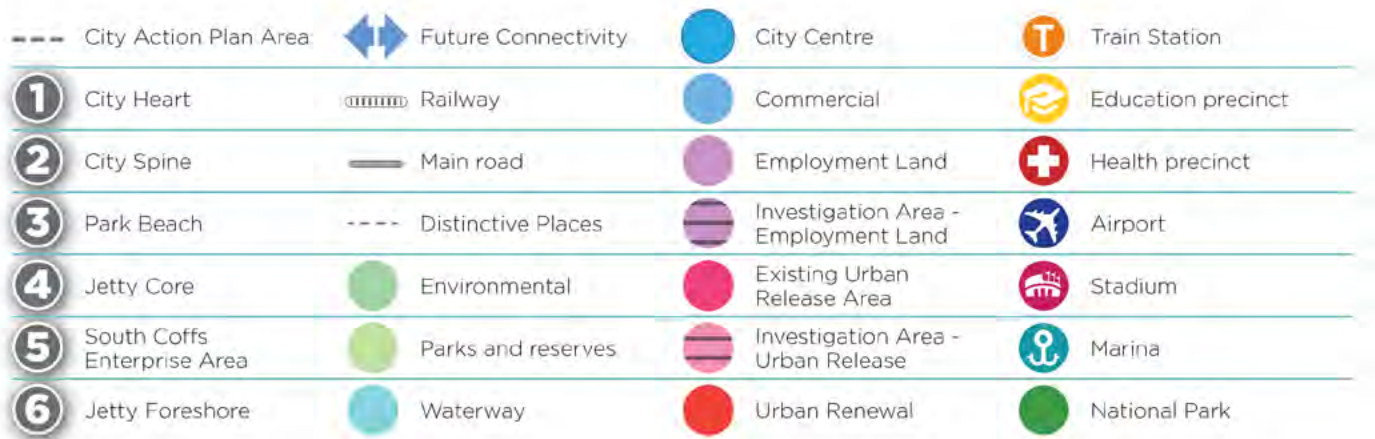
Targeted actions highlighting areas for collaboration and future work across government include:

1. Coffs Harbour City Centre
2. City spine renewal strategy
3. Coffs Harbour future transport plan
4. Jetty Foreshores Precinct
5. South Coffs Harbour Regional Sporting Hub
6. Support the local arts, cultural and creative energy of Coffs Harbour
7. South Coffs Harbour Enterprise Area.





**Figure 9: Coffs Harbour RCAP Vision Map**







## Lismore RCAP

Located on Bundjalung Country, Lismore is characterised by natural beauty, productive agriculture and connection to the Wilsons River. The community is welcoming, artistic and diverse, and a thriving local economy builds on the strong education, health, creative and innovation ecosystem.

The RCAP was produced and finalised prior to the 2022 floods and contains planning measures that promote resilience and natural disaster protection. The RCAP identifies 18 objectives under five goals to live, work and learn, meet, play and protect, and move. Along with other strategies and plans, it will guide the growth of Lismore city and transform it into a more exciting regional city bursting with investment, jobs and a vibrant lifestyle, and will be an important part of Lismore's recovery.

Key targeted actions highlighting areas for collaboration and future work across government include:

1. Protection and enhancement of vegetation to strengthen corridors that support koalas and other wildlife
2. Development of a policy framework to provide housing options that support social inclusion, including crisis accommodation, housing for seniors and people with disability, single households and affordable living
3. Development of a floodplain risk management plan that considers the findings of the Lismore Floodplain Risk Management study to guide appropriate development decisions.



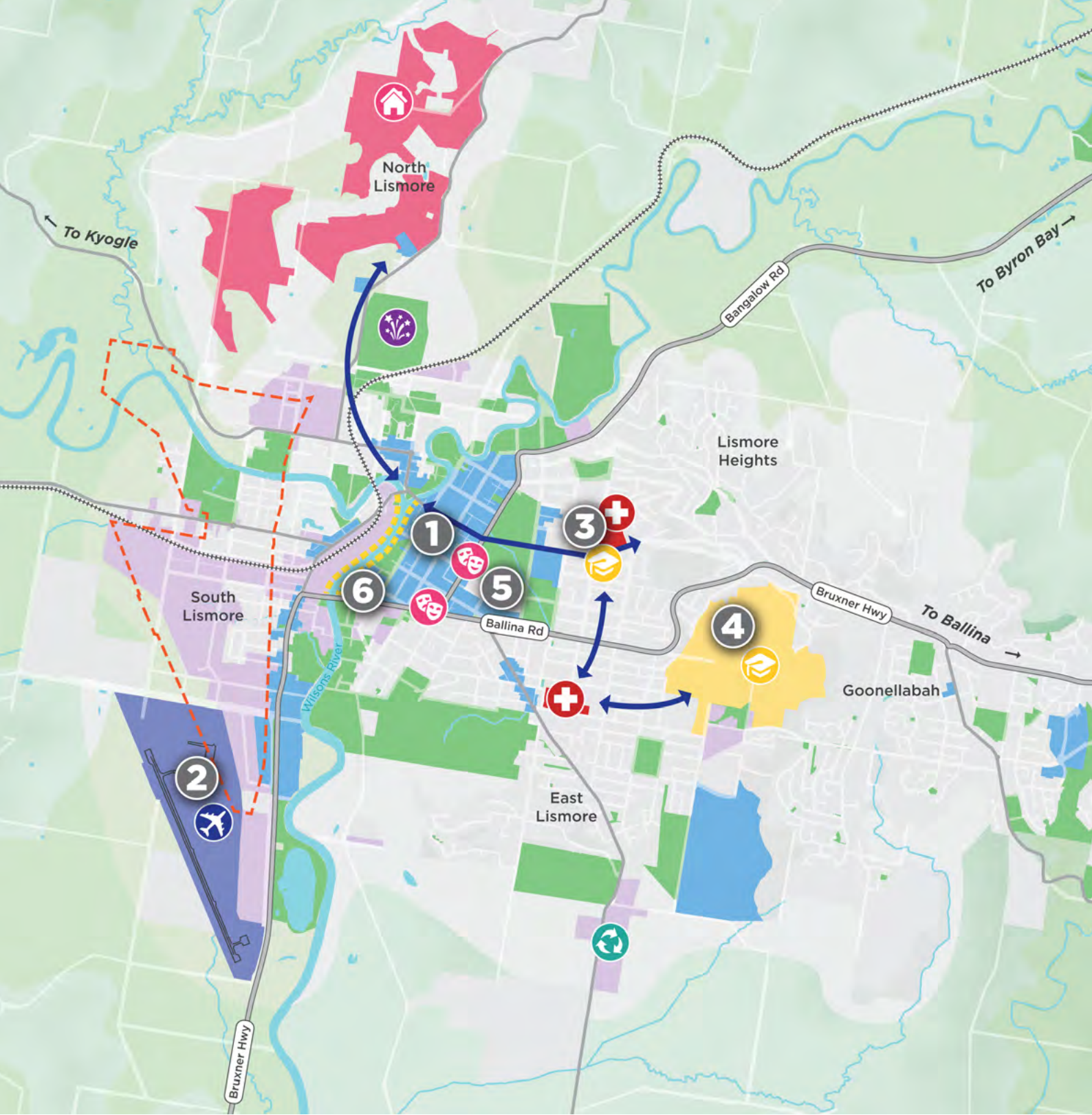
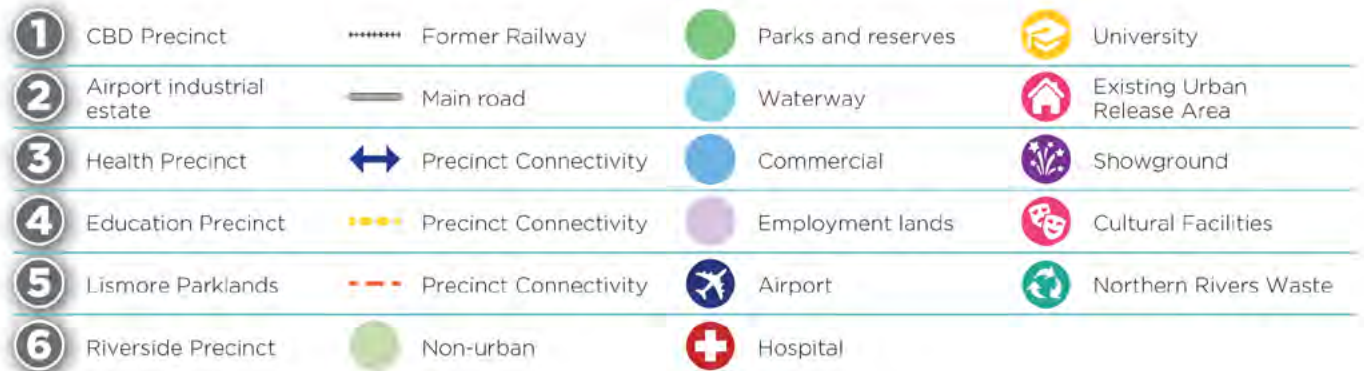


Figure 10: Lismore RCAP Vision Map







Razorback lookout, Tweed Heads

## Tweed RCAP

Nestled between the Pacific Ocean and the riverine estuaries of the Tweed River on the traditional lands of the Aboriginal people of the Bundjalung nation, Tweed Regional City is a connected, sustainable city with a distinctive sense of place. The people protect and celebrate the beauty and diversity of the natural environment and take pride in their cultural story and community connections. As the northern gateway to NSW, Tweed Regional City is economically resilient and diverse and delivers on its potential as a welcoming city to live, move, work, meet and play.

The RCAP identifies 17 objectives under five goals to make the city a better place to live, move, work, meet and play.

Targeted actions highlighting areas for collaboration and future work across government include:

1. Whole of government affordable housing solutions
2. Increased tree cover canopy
3. Resilience planning – flooding and regional approaches to water security
4. Tweed Transport Plan
5. Tweed active transport links
6. Tweed Multi-Modal Corridor Study
7. Economic development action plan
8. Hospital precinct visioning
9. Great public spaces and precincts
10. Inclusive and accessible space





**Figure 11:** Tweed RCAP Vision Map





**OBJECTIVE 19:**

# Public spaces and green infrastructure support connected and healthy communities



Public street artwork, Lismore

The North Coast region is one of the most highly desired places to live and visit in NSW, with beautiful country, easy access to nature and vibrant public spaces used for community meetings, markets and celebrations.

Public spaces are all places publicly owned or of public use, accessible and enjoyable by all for free and without a profit motive and these include our public open spaces, public facilities and streets.

They are places that people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities can use to relax, exercise, play and enjoy the civic and natural environment. New and existing neighbourhoods should have access to a range of great public spaces within a well-distributed network of green infrastructure.



## Public Open Spaces

Both active and passive (including parks, gardens, playgrounds, public beaches, riverbanks and waterfronts, outdoor playing fields and courts, and publicly accessible bushland).



## Public Facilities

Public libraries, museums, galleries, civic/community centres, showgrounds and indoor public sports facilities.



## Streets

Streets, avenues and boulevards; squares and plazas; pavements; passages and lanes, and bicycle paths and parking.



### Activating open space: West Kempsey pump track

A piece of underutilised land has been transformed into a community co-designed pump track in West Kempsey, through a partnership between Kempsey Shire Council and community organisations.

A pump track is a 'rollercoaster' path which riders of bicycles, skateboards, scooters and roller-skates of all abilities can complete without needing to pedal or push. The facility has been designed to provide a recreational riding area and safe community space for individuals and families to enjoy.

### Public facilities for connected and inclusive communities

Public libraries, museums, galleries, civic and community centres provide space for the community to express themselves creatively and are drawcards for an area.

Town centres and existing gathering places should have areas which can be used creatively by the community for events and cultural practices.

Across the region, there needs to be more Aboriginal cultural infrastructure and places to support ongoing cultural practice. This may include multipurpose facilities, with men's and women's business spaces and places to undertake cultural activities and practices.

Council policies and planning mechanisms should be reviewed in conjunction with community consultation to ensure public spaces can be used for creative or temporary uses, where appropriate.

### The Quad – Lismore

The Quad is a central public greenspace in the heart of Lismore CBD. It plays an important role in the community as a free public meeting place, a performance venue, a children's play space, a creative hub and space for community events.

### Key strategic and regional opportunities identified for public open spaces are:

- Complementing regional sporting hubs in Coffs Harbour and Lismore.
- Expanding regional recreational walking and cycling paths, including the NSW Coastline cycleway.
- Improving access to and connections within the Sealy lookout/ Nigii Precinct in Orara State Forest, including upgrade to adjacent rainforest walking track network.
- Enhancing visitor experiences in key national parks in the region, including some in the Gondwana Rainforests World Heritage Area and Coffs Coast Regional Park.
- Guulabaa - Place of Koala, a nature based tourism precinct in Cowarra State Forest.
- Protecting and enhancing Urunga Wetlands.
- The Northern Rivers Rail Trail.

### Green infrastructure

Green infrastructure is the network of green space, natural systems and semi-natural systems that support sustainable communities and include waterways, bushland, tree canopy and open spaces that are strategically planned, designed and managed to support a good quality of life in an urban environment. Prioritising and integrating green infrastructure with development and the public realm is important for liveable and sustainable places.

Public spaces need to be designed and managed so that they remain comfortable places to be as the region gets hotter. This includes increasing the number of trees and other vegetation in developed areas, maximising shading and using materials with greater reflectivity, less heat capacity and (in the case of paving materials) more permeability.

Strategic planning and local plans should encourage the retention of existing and planting of new street trees along the main streets of towns and centres, to provide for natural shading opportunities and to reduce urban heat.

When landscaping, there are many benefits to using local plant species which are particular to the regional area. Local species can support biodiversity, protect local flora and fauna, are well suited to the local conditions and reduce the risk of environmental weed invasions. Using local species also creates a stronger connection with place and helps to strengthen nature-based local character and identity. Using local plant species can support biodiversity and strengthen nature-based local character and identity.

### Strategy 19.1



Councils should aim to undertake public space needs analysis and develop public space infrastructure strategies for improving access and quality of all public space to meet community need for public spaces. This could include:

- drawing on community feedback to identify the quantity, quality and the type of public space required
- prioritising the delivery of new and improved quality public space to areas of most need
- considering the needs of future and changing populations
- identifying walkable and cycleable connectivity improvements and quality and access requirements that would improve use and enjoyment of existing infrastructure
- consolidating, linking and enhancing high quality open spaces and recreational areas
- working in partnership with local Aboriginal communities to develop bespoke cultural infrastructure which responds to the needs of Aboriginal communities and facilitates continued cultural practices.

### Strategy 19.2



Public space improvements and new development should consider the local conditions, including embracing opportunities for greening and applying water sensitive urban design principles.

### Strategy 19.3



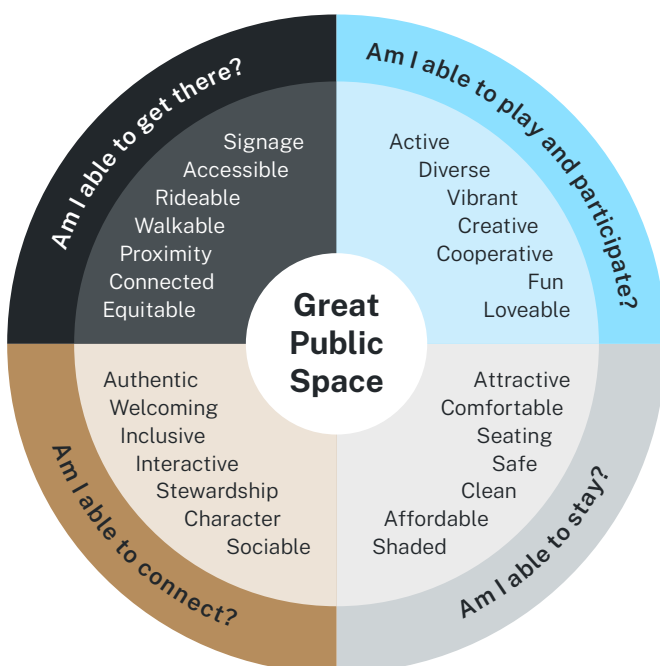
Encourage the use of council owned land for temporary community events and creative practices where appropriate by reviewing development controls.

### Strategy 19.4



Local environmental plan amendments that propose to reclassify public open space must consider the following:

- the role or potential role of the land within the open space network
- how the reclassification is strategically supported by local strategies such as open space or asset rationalisation strategies
- where land sales are proposed, details of how sale of land proceeds will be managed
- the net benefit or net gain to open space.



Streetscape, Ballina



**OBJECTIVE 20:****Celebrate local character**

— The Back Alley Gallery, Lismore

Character is the combination of things that make a place, street, village or town recognisable. It's all the things that are special and unique about a place and can help to create a sense of community. The North Coast is renowned for its diverse local character, a key reason the region is such a desirable place to live and visit.

Retaining and celebrating local character is important as places evolve. Places that evolve in response to an identified local character and agreed desired future character are likely to be more sustainable, contribute to good quality of life and attract investment.

Local character is also important in new development areas. An idea of the future character of a place can be established through strategic visioning.

Local character is integrated into land use planning through local character statements, development control plans and local strategic planning statements.

### **Placemaking in action: Murwillumbah parklet trial**

As part of a placemaking pilot project, two parklets were installed in existing car spaces in the Murwillumbah CBD in November 2020.

Evaluation of the trial found that people and businesses were overwhelmingly supportive of the streetscape improvements and agreed they made the streets more attractive, lively and vibrant.



## Urban design

Urban design shapes how public areas and main streets are used and experienced. Urban design can make town centres more attractive and enable them to better accommodate public events and celebrations, to boost the vibrancy of main streets and attract locals, visitors and businesses<sup>2</sup>.

Urban design should reinforce the local character and complement natural features, important buildings, views and cultural assets.

This requires local planning to determine suitable building heights, setbacks and details that are appropriate for neighbouring historic and cultural assets and their characteristics or proposing complementary uses that can help to preserve what makes a place or asset special.

Any proposed development activity must consider the potential impacts on Aboriginal cultural heritage values, and incorporate these where appropriate in partnership with the local Aboriginal community.

## Heritage

Heritage is distinct from local character, although there are often common elements between a conservation area and a place with a valued or distinctive local character.

Managing heritage is not just about managing the material culture of the past, it is also about understanding how heritage influences and shapes communities today.

## Urban Design Guide for Regional NSW

The *Urban Design Guide for Regional NSW* recognises that across regional NSW there is a rich variety in the character and identity of urban areas, underpinned by diverse landscapes, stories, and cultures to be acknowledged and preserved through urban design. The Guide provides guidance on how urban design in regional NSW should celebrate culture and nature, respond to local character, and use the landscape.

### Strategy 20.1



Ensure strategic planning and local plans recognise and enhance local character through use of local character statements in local plans and in accordance with the NSW Government's *Local Character and Place Guideline*.

### Strategy 20.2



Celebrate buildings of local heritage significance by:

- retaining the existing use where possible
- establishing a common understanding of appropriate reuses
- exploring history and significance
- considering temporary uses
- designing for future change of use options.



Bellingen's Spring and Autumn Plant Fairs, Bellingen



# Local Government Narratives

The NSW Government will work with each council to deliver the objectives and actions set out in this plan. Priorities for each council that will guide further investigations and implementation are detailed in the following section.

# Ballina Shire

Ballina Shire is located on the lands of the Bundjalung people, the traditional custodians of the lands within its local government boundary. It is a popular lifestyle, tourism, cultural and recreation destination.

Ballina is the shire's strategic centre and provides essential and higher-level services to residents. Centres like Alstonville and Wollongbar fulfill local service needs for residents who live further inland, and Lennox Head services the coast north of Ballina.

The distinctive coastline, lowland, escarpment and plateau areas, including the Ballina to Lennox Head coastal strip and the red soil plateau, in particular, possess unique landscapes and cultural values that create lifestyle and economic opportunities.

The shire's extensive environmental, landscape and open space assets contribute significantly to the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of Ballina, and attract many to the area, making the shire a lifestyle destination.

Ballina has a strong and diverse economy that is sustained by a stable and highly skilled workforce. The shire delivers a range of employment opportunities, with a strong retail sector as well as health, education, cultural and recreation opportunities.





## Regional Priorities



- Expand nature-based, adventure and cultural tourism by investigating opportunities to develop and enhance infrastructure and places which support this, including major event spaces within the shire.
- Support a sustainable agricultural sector in farmland areas across the shire.

## Liveable and Resilient



- Support environmentally sustainable development that is responsive to climate change and natural hazards, in particular flood risk.
- Retain and protect local biodiversity through effective management of environmental assets and ecological communities.
- Promote and recognise Aboriginal culture, local character and local creativity and investigate opportunities for the provision and enhancement of cultural and community assets within the shire.

## Productive and Connected



- Maximise the opportunities associated with the Southern Cross Industrial Precinct to deliver additional jobs.
- Support employment lands and jobs at Ballina, Lennox Head and Wollongbar.

## Housing and Place

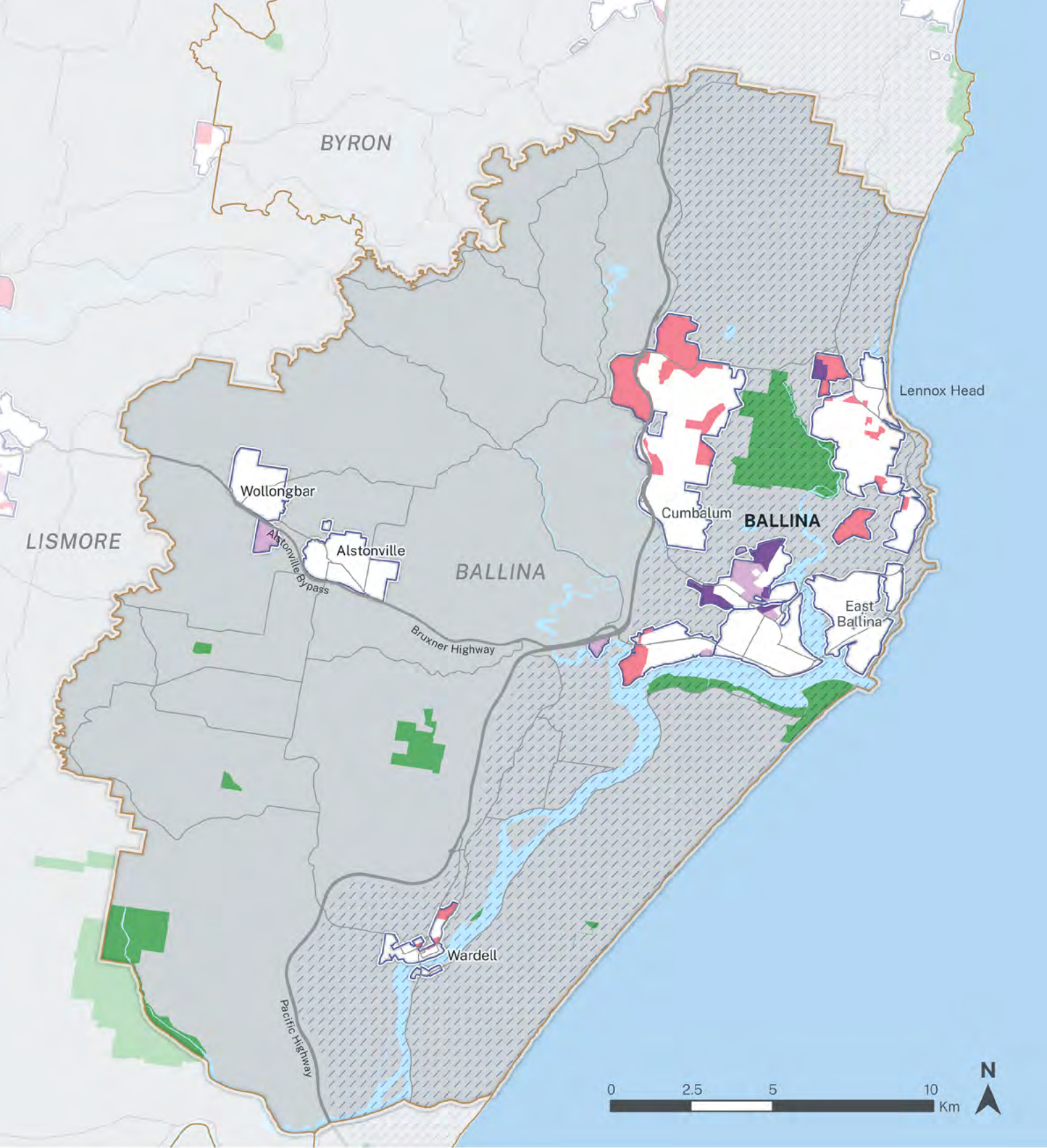


- Deliver housing at Cumbalum, Kinvara, Wollongbar and Lennox Head.
- Support the delivery of housing supply and greater diversity in strategic and local centres, including higher density housing within and close to Ballina CBD.
- Promote social cohesion and connection through good design and place making.

## Smart, Connected and Accessible (Infrastructure)



- Support economic growth associated with the Ballina-Byron Gateway Airport.
- Support a regional framework for employment land delivery by fostering stronger connections and collaboration at the Northern Rivers subregional level.
- Maximise opportunities associated with growth in South East Queensland and the increased connectivity provided by the upgraded Pacific Motorway and digital technology.



**Figure 12:** Urban growth area map for Ballina LGA

- LGA boundary
- Road
- Highway
- National parks and nature reserves
- Water body
- Urban growth area
- Investigation area-urban land
- Investigation area-employment land
- Existing employment land
- Coastal strip

Growth areas show the boundaries of urban areas and as such, identify both existing and proposed urban lands. Not all land identified within the growth area can be developed for urban uses. All sites will be subject to more detailed investigations to determined capacity and future yield. Land that is subject to significant natural hazards, environmental constraints and or servicing constraints will be excluded from development.



# Bellingen

Bellingen Shire is located on the lands of the Gumbaynggirr people, the traditional custodians of the lands within its local government boundary. The shire's diverse range of coastal, hinterland and rural communities, make it a popular tourism, cultural and recreation destination. Bellingen is the main centre and boasts a rich architectural heritage and rural charm. Its diverse culture is shown through a range of local businesses, events and housing, giving the region its distinct character. Dorrigo and Urunga fulfil the local service needs for residents who live further inland and on the coast. Bellingen Shire is well known for its idyllic mix of natural landscapes, including the Dorrigo Plateau, World Heritage rainforests of the Waterfall Way, fertile valleys of the Kalang and Bellinger rivers, and its picturesque coastline and villages including Urunga and Mylestom.

More than half of the shire is national park or state forest and managing this unique natural environment appropriately will be key to delivering a sustainable future.

The local economy is underpinned by strong community-based employment in the health and social assistance, agriculture and tourism sectors. Its proximity and growing connectivity to the Mid North Coast subregion, particularly Coffs Harbour, is creating strong social and economic links between the communities, and ensuring access to high-level employment, health, education and cultural opportunities for the Bellingen community.



Bellingen

## Regional Priorities



- Identify additional employment investigation areas for inclusion in the urban growth areas, to secure employment land supply in proximity to Bellingen and Urunga.
- Support the growth and diversification of the Bellingen Shire's agricultural base through encouraging regenerative agricultural practices and leveraging local food production systems.
- Identify opportunities to enhance natural and cultural tourism through the creative industries sector, the world heritage listed national parks, and coastal and heritage assets.

## Liveable and Resilient



- Provide mitigation measures in response to climate change.
- Support environmentally sustainable development that is responsive to natural hazards, in particular bushfire and flood risk.
- Retain and protect local biodiversity through effective management of environmental assets and ecological communities.

## Productive and Connected



- Support the development of employment land at Raleigh to supplement employment land delivery in Coffs Harbour.
- Encourage the ongoing viability of regionally important farmland areas, including the Dorrigo Plateau and the Kalang and Bellinger valleys, to support the agricultural sector.

## Housing and Place



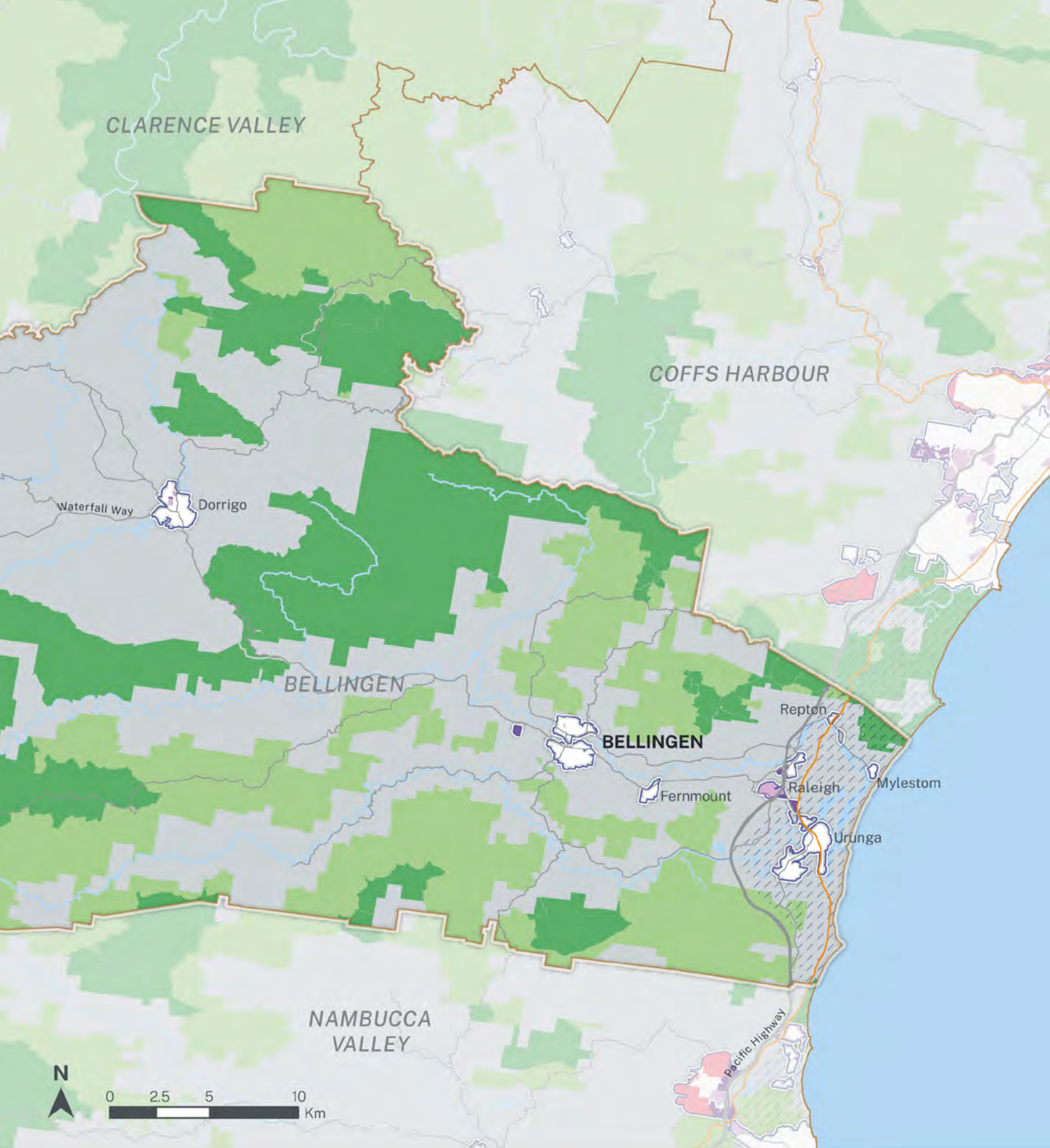
- Deliver housing in appropriate locations including North Bellingen, South Urunga and East Dorrigo.
- Promote the diversification of housing options through increased affordable and social housing, additional infill, housing that caters to the shire's ageing population, and innovative housing types unique to the area including community land trusts and ecovillages.
- Support retention of the distinctive character of the Bellingen Shire's towns and villages.
- Encourage uptake of available greenfield land in the R1 zone to relieve current housing pressure.

## Smart, Connected and Accessible (Infrastructure)



- Foster stronger connections with the Mid North Coast subregion, in particular the Coffs Harbour and Nambucca LGAs.
- Co-ordinate infrastructure delivery with relevant agencies to support the growing population, utilising improved digital technology.





**Figure 13:** Urban growth area map for Bellinghen LGA

- |                                    |                                    |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| LGA boundary                       | Urban growth area                  |
| Road                               | Investigation area–urban land      |
| Highway                            | Investigation area–employment land |
| Railway                            | Existing employment land           |
| National parks and nature reserves | Coastal strip                      |
| State forest                       |                                    |
| Water body                         |                                    |

Growth areas show the boundaries of urban areas and as such, identify both existing and proposed urban lands. Not all land identified within the growth area can be developed for urban uses. All sites will be subject to more detailed investigations to determined capacity and future yield. Land that is subject to significant natural hazards, environmental constraints and or servicing constraints will be excluded from development.



# Byron

Byron Shire is on the land of the Arakwal people, the Minjungabl people and the Widjabul people of the Bundjalung nation.

As one of Australia's most desirable LGA's to live and visit with stunning beaches, beautiful hinterland and vibrant centres like Byron Bay, Brunswick Heads, Mullumbimby and Bangalow, a key challenge is to retain its unique community diversity, natural character and liveability. Its communities provide boutique retail, food and accommodation options, essential services, and offer a unique lifestyle. The shire's year-round popularity and key employment sectors has meant that in addition to its long term residents, it has a high level of visitor and seasonal worker populations.

Collectively this has led to growing pressure on many necessities such as housing, community services and local infrastructure.

Byron Shire is known for its natural beauty and character with unique environmental features such as the Arakwal National Park and the Cape Byron Marine Park. These attributes will continue to draw domestic and international visitors, contribute to attractive lifestyles and grow the local economy. Byron has a strong and diverse economy based on the tourism, agriculture, food manufacturing, health, digital and creative arts sectors. Continuing connectivity improvements throughout the Northern Rivers subregion and South East Queensland will support future economic growth and opportunities.

Wategos Beach, Byron Bay  
Credit: Destination NSW





## Regional Priorities



- Support a resilient and innovative economy based on Byron Shire's unique character, landscapes and important farmland.
- Manage and support sustainable growth.
- Acknowledge native title interests and Aboriginal land rights, support a partnership approach with Aboriginal landowners and native title holders and preserve aboriginal cultural heritage assets, built, natural and intangible.
- Deliver housing equitably to meet the needs of the community.
- Support Byron Shire's visitor economy by fostering sustainable visitation.

## Liveable and Resilient



- Support the shire's net zero target including zero waste to landfill through a circular economy.
- Deliver mitigation and adaptation measures in response to climate change.
- Support environmentally sustainable development that is responsive to natural hazards.
- Protect and enhance local biodiversity through partnerships and management of environmental assets and ecological communities.

## Productive and Connected



- Maximise opportunities associated with the growth of South East Queensland.
- Deliver additional employment land at West Byron and other investigation sites in the Shire.
- Sustain important farmland by encouraging regenerative farming practices and localised food production.
- Encourage opportunities for agribusiness and agritourism, particularly in relation to organic and boutique food production.
- Empower communities to shape the local economy in a manner that creates diverse and inclusive employment opportunities.

## Housing and Place

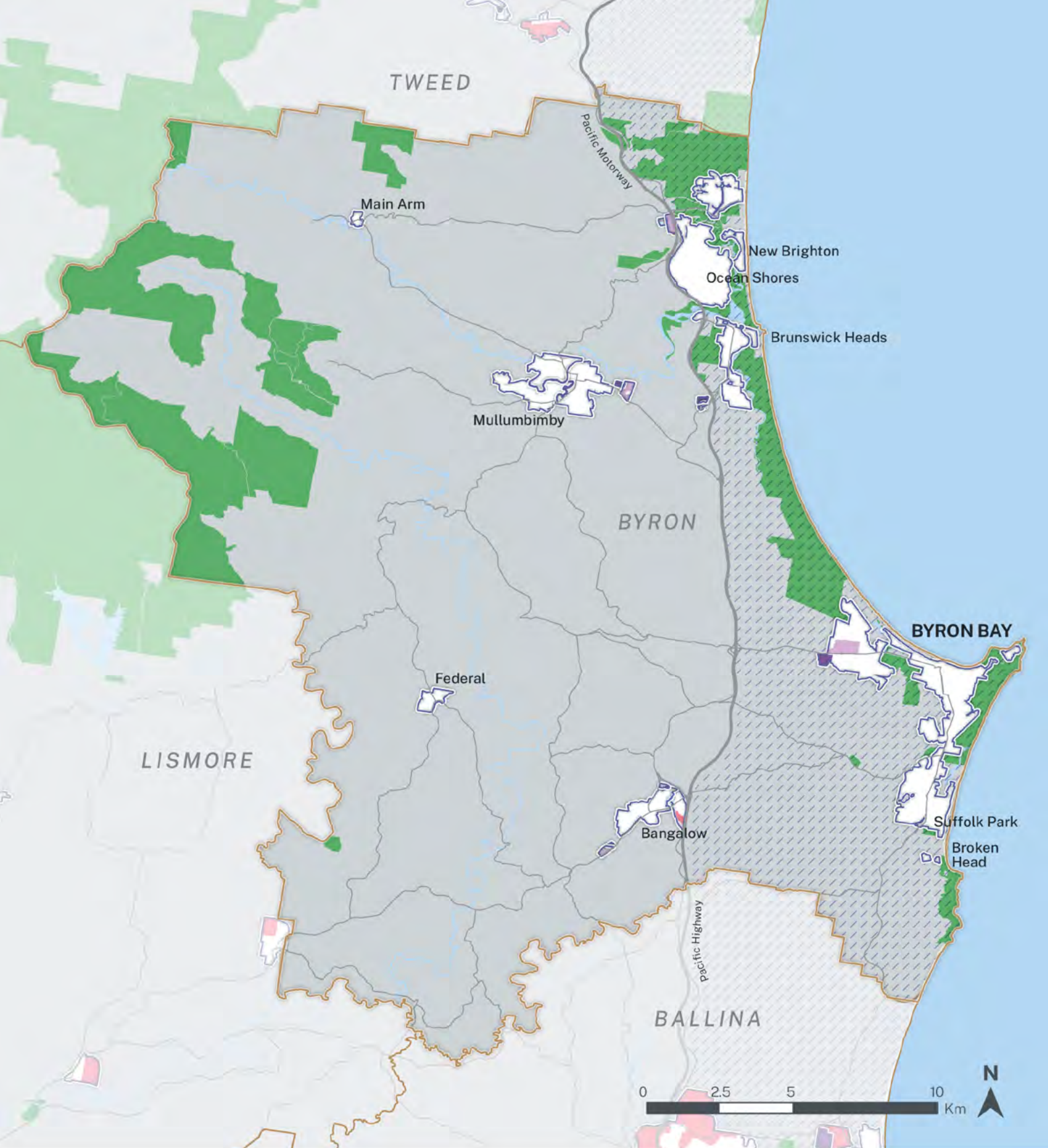


- Investigate opportunities for increased housing diversity and density, encompassing multi-unit dwellings and innovative housing models in appropriate locations.
- Prioritise the delivery of affordable housing to support the local workforce and healthy and diverse communities.
- Encourage design-led and collaborative placemaking initiatives to support healthy lifestyles and create liveable and inclusive places.
- Deliver Place Plans for villages, towns and key precincts that define the community's vision and the priority projects that work towards that aspiration.

## Smart, Connected and Accessible (Infrastructure)



- Foster stronger connections and alignment with the Northern Rivers subregion and South East Queensland.
- Sustainably manage infrastructure need and delivery to accommodate Byron Shire's permanent and temporary visitor populations.



**Figure 14:** Urban growth area map for Byron LGA

- LGA boundary
- Road
- Highway
- National parks and nature reserves
- State forest
- Water body
- Urban growth area
- Investigation area-urban land
- Investigation area-employment land
- Existing employment land
- Coastal strip

Growth areas show the boundaries of urban areas and as such, identify both existing and proposed urban lands. Not all land identified within the growth area can be developed for urban uses. All sites will be subject to more detailed investigations to determined capacity and future yield. Land that is subject to significant natural hazards, environmental constraints and or servicing constraints will be excluded from development.



# Clarence Valley

Clarence Valley is located on the lands of the Bundjalung, Gumbaynggirr and Yaegl people, the traditional custodians of the lands. These nations extend across adjoining LGAs and meet around the Clarence River.

Clarence Valley Council is the largest LGA in the region and is the gateway between the Northern Rivers and the Mid North Coast subregions, with strong connections to the New England North West region.

Grafton provides a range of high-level specialist services to residents and the wider regional community. Yamba and Maclean are important centres providing local services and supporting the local community and visitors. A dispersed settlement pattern is supported by a wide range of unique hinterland and coastal villages. The communities of the Clarence Valley enjoy a laidback lifestyle and have a ready supply of land for housing and employment opportunities supported by strong water security.

Major infrastructure projects like the new Pacific Motorway have significantly enhanced regional connectivity from Clarence Valley to the rest of the North Coast and beyond. Together with rail, air and sea links, these connections provide economic opportunities. The Clarence Valley's tourism and agricultural sectors are strong economic drivers, together with the continued development and delivery of regional government services including justice and health facilities.

The Clarence Valley has abundant environmental assets, including World Heritage rainforests, national parks, coastal wetlands, all centred around the Clarence River (or *Birrinba* in Bundjalung language) and its tributaries. These assets underpin significant aquaculture, agriculture, marine industry and a growing tourism sector, and are of cultural importance to First Nations People, residents and visitors.



Grafton Jacaranda Festival 2018  
Credit: Destination NSW

## Regional Priorities



- Involve First Nations People in decision making and caring for Country.
- Develop Grafton's importance and role in the region through placemaking improvements, growing the economy and providing job opportunities, housing and services.
- Support the growth and diversification of the Valley's agricultural base and support sustainable industries and value adding processes to encourage new opportunities for agribusiness, agritourism and associated manufacturing and transport.
- Expand sustainable nature-based, adventure and cultural tourism by leveraging Clarence Valley's natural and heritage assets.
- Foster stronger strategic relationships with the Northern Rivers and Mid North Coast subregions, and with the NSW Government.

## Liveable and Resilient



- Provide adaptation and mitigation strategies in response to natural hazards, including climate change.
- Promote a sustainable, low carbon community, with an emphasis on local food production.
- Protect natural assets like the Clarence River through sustainable and effective management of natural resources.
- Retain and enhance the unique heritage values of the built environment, through well-designed development in historic centres.
- Support environmentally sustainable development that is responsive to natural hazards.

## Productive and Connected



- Progress opportunities for aviation, industrial and emergency services related clusters at Clarence Valley Regional Airport.
- Focus employment lands in Grafton, Maclean and Yamba, and in planned growth areas near Junction Hill, South Grafton, Lanitza (Airport) and Townsend; and marine based precincts at Harwood.
- Progress opportunities to leverage employment lands delivery in the subregion and opportunities arising from the Coffs Harbour Bypass.
- Promote the sustainable use of regionally important farmland to support agriculture, horticulture, forestry, and aquaculture.

## Housing and Place



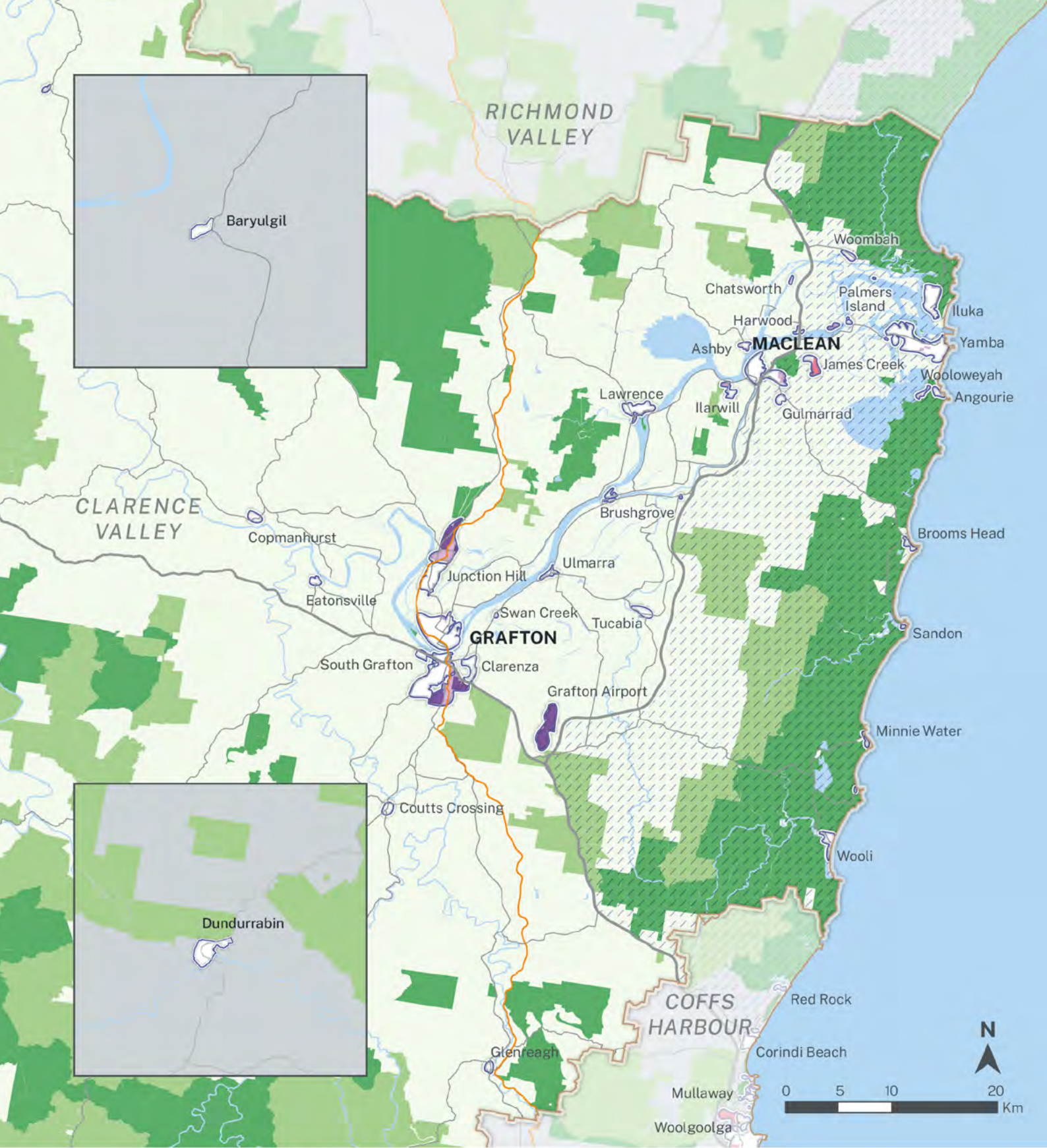
- Enable appropriate housing development throughout the LGA, including at Grafton, Clarenza, James Creek, Junction Hill and West Yamba.
- Explore opportunities to provide more affordable housing near supporting infrastructure and services.
- Provide a diverse range of housing types with access to facilities and services that meet population and demographic needs.
- Protect and enhance the unique character of the LGA's towns and villages.
- Incorporate a placemaking approach to create sustainable and liveable communities.

## Smart, Connected and Accessible (Infrastructure)



- Integrate freight and logistics, industrial development and value adding businesses, taking advantage of road, rail and air freight corridors and infrastructure investment.
- Maximise opportunities associated with regional health and justice infrastructure, including Grafton Base Hospital, Maclean District Hospital, Grafton District Court, and Clarence Correctional Centre.





**Figure 15:** Urban growth area map for Clarence Valley LGA

- LGA boundary
- Road
- Highway
- Railway
- National parks and nature reserves
- State forest
- Water body
- Urban growth area
- Investigation area – urban land
- Investigation area – employment land
- Existing employment land
- Coastal strip

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# Coffs Harbour

The Coffs Harbour LGA is located midway between South East Queensland and Sydney on the lands of the Gumbaynggirr people, the traditional custodians of the lands within its local government boundaries.

The city of Coffs Harbour functions as the regional city for this area, providing a significant share of the region's housing and jobs. It delivers a variety of high-level services, including civic, entertainment and cultural venues. Services and industries like health and education campuses are critical anchors. Growth in these industries will contribute to making Coffs Harbour a thriving compact city, with the growing Coffs Harbour Airport further diversifying the local economy. Local amenities and jobs are also serviced by other centres such as Woolgoolga and Sawtell.

Coffs Harbour is building collaborative partnerships with adjoining LGAs which together have growing creative, digital innovation, manufacturing and transport industries that will facilitate new employment opportunities in Coffs Harbour and the Mid North Coast. The area also supports a highly productive agricultural hinterland, including the nationally significant blueberry industry. Recreation and tourism are important contributors to the Coffs Harbour economy. The Coffs Coast is an accredited ECO Destination and is a leader in environmental tourism. The area will continue as a destination for international and national sporting events and grow tourism associated with significant natural areas including the Solitary Islands Marine Park and Bongil Bongil and Bindarri national parks.

View from Muttonbird Island Nature Reserve, Coffs Harbour





## Regional Priorities



- Manage and support growth in Coffs Harbour, anchored by the expanding health, education and creative industries sectors, and Coffs Harbour Airport Enterprise Park.
- Deliver suitable housing and job opportunities across the LGA including in Coffs Harbour, Woolgoolga, Moonee Beach, Toormina and Sapphire Beach.
- Protect environmental assets that sustain the agricultural and tourism industries.

## Liveable and Resilient



- Provide mitigation measures in response to climate change.
- Support environmentally sustainable development that is responsive to natural hazards.
- Retain and protect local biodiversity through effective management of environmental assets and ecological communities.

## Productive and Connected



- Develop health, education and aviation precincts at the South Coffs Harbour Enterprise Area and Coffs Harbour Airport Enterprise Park, and new employment land at Woolgoolga and Bonville.
- Promote the sustainable use of important farmland areas through encouraging initiatives to support the development of the agricultural sector and agribusiness.
- Identify opportunities to expand nature based, adventure and cultural tourism assets including Solitary Islands Marine Park and other coastal, hinterland, and heritage assets, which will support the local ecotourism industry.

## Housing and Place

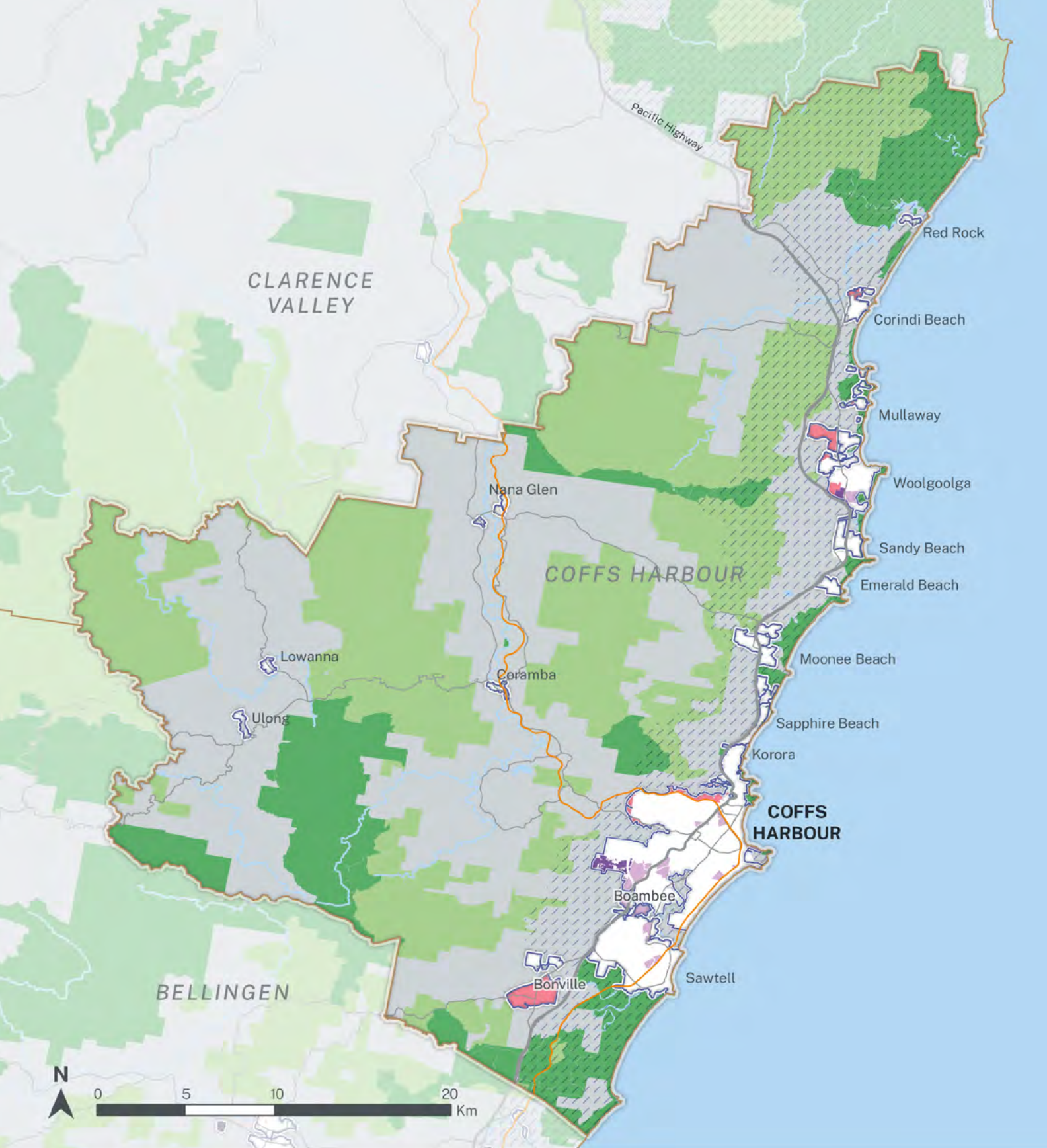


- Enable 'better places' through placemaking initiatives, active transport, urban design specific to the North Coast, and facilitation of the '20 minute neighbourhood'.
- Deliver housing at Woolgoolga, North Boambee Valley and Bonville, and address the temporary worker housing needs associated with the Coffs Harbour Bypass.
- Enhance the variety of housing options available by promoting a compact urban form in and around the Coffs Harbour city centre and Park Beach.

## Smart, Connected and Accessible (Infrastructure)



- Increase and strengthen social, economic and strategic links with the Mid North Coast subregion including Bellingen, Clarence Valley and Nambucca LGAs, particularly regarding the delivery of additional employment lands.
- Maximise opportunities associated with the increased connectivity provided by the new Coffs Harbour Bypass



**Figure 16:** Urban growth area map for Coffs Harbour LGA

- |                                    |                                    |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| LGA boundary                       | Urban growth area                  |
| Road                               | Investigation area-urban land      |
| Highway                            | Investigation area-employment land |
| Railway                            | Existing employment land           |
| National parks and nature reserves | Coastal strip                      |
| State forest                       |                                    |
| Water body                         |                                    |

Growth areas show the boundaries of urban areas and as such, identify both existing and proposed urban lands. Not all land identified within the growth area can be developed for urban uses. All sites will be subject to more detailed investigations to determined capacity and future yield. Land that is subject to significant natural hazards, environmental constraints and or servicing constraints will be excluded from development.



# Kempsey

Kempsey Shire is located on the lands of the Dunghutti and Thungghutti people, the traditional custodians of the lands within its local government boundaries.

The area has a diverse range of natural landscapes from long sweeping beaches bounded by pristine national parks, to estuaries, wetlands and the Macleay River extending to the ancient Gondwana rainforests perched high in the mountains. The shire's communities have strong ties and include Kempsey, Frederickton, South West Rocks, Crescent Head, Stuarts Point, Smithtown, Gladstone, Bellbrook and Kundabung. Kempsey is the focal centre and provides essential retail, commercial and community services to a range of local communities. The area's strong local economy

is underpinned by the agricultural sector, which includes a number of major manufacturers.

The continuing growth of the tourism, health, education and construction sectors will also increase economic diversity and job opportunities. Improved transport accessibility and investment in new tourist activities will see the continued popularity of Crescent Head and iconic destinations like South West Rocks and Trial Bay Gaol. Kempsey Shire has a strong and growing Aboriginal community. Cultural venues like the Wigay Aboriginal Park and Dunghutti-Ngaku Aboriginal Art Gallery offer opportunities to expand engagement with indigenous cultural heritage and diversify employment, whilst celebrating Dunghutti and Thungghutti culture.



Kempsey Post Office

## Regional Priorities



## Liveable and Resilient



## Productive and Connected



## Housing and Place

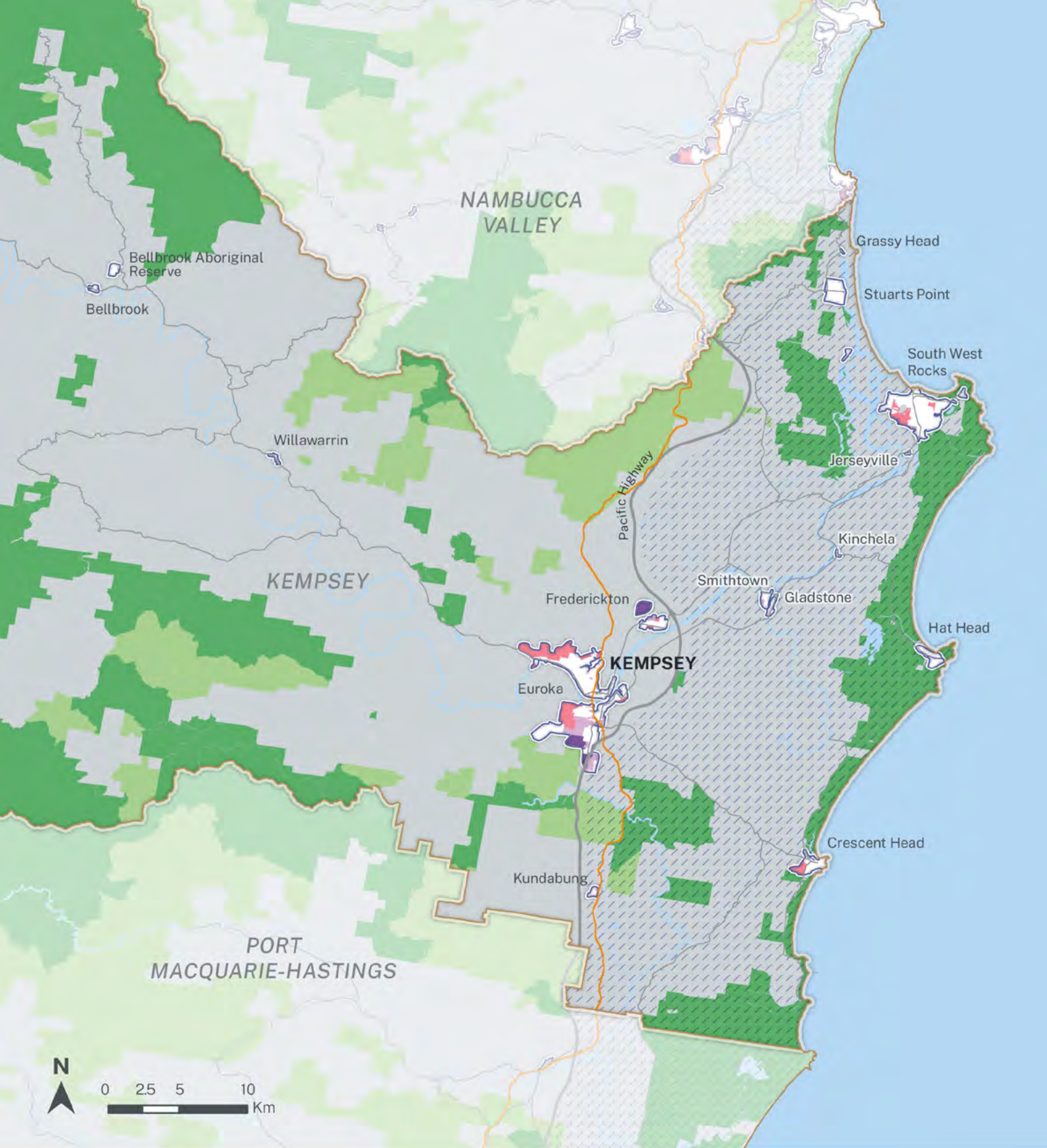


## Smart, Connected and Accessible (Infrastructure)



- Support the growth and diversification of the shire's agricultural base by leveraging the strength of the dairy and cattle sector to encourage smart and sustainable opportunities for agribusiness and associated manufacturing and transport.
- Promote the shire as an enterprising business and country lifestyle destination for investment, learning and employment.
- Promote and develop indigenous cultural heritage business enterprise and tourism opportunities.
- Support environmentally sustainable development that is responsive to climate change and natural hazards, such as bushfire and flooding.
- Protect, enhance and maintain local biodiversity through effective management of environmental assets.
- Support new and emerging job opportunities associated with the West Kempsey Health and Education Precinct.
- Develop the enterprise corridor between South Kempsey and Frederickton, and investigate employment land options for South West Rocks.
- Support the sustainable and regenerative agricultural practices and appropriate use of important farmland in the Macleay Valley.
- Promote the shire as a premier regional visitor destination and continue to expand nature-based, adventure and cultural tourism by leveraging the area's environmental and iconic assets such as World heritage Gondwana rainforests, the Five Headlands Trail, Trial Bay Gaol and Smoky Cape Lighthouse, the Slim Dusty Centre, the Macleay Valley Mountain Bike Park and the proposed Macleay Valley Adventure Park.
- Deliver housing at South West Rocks, in addition to West and South Kempsey.
- Maintain the unique character of the area's towns and villages.
- Deliver rural residential housing opportunities across the LGA including at Collombatti, Frederickton, Yarravel, Euroka, Dondingalong, Verges Creek, Crescent Head, South Kempsey, and Yarrahapinni, and investigate options at Kundabung.
- Develop opportunities to achieve a diverse range of housing products across multiple towns that are fit for purpose.
- Foster a stronger subregional identity with Port Macquarie, Coffs Harbour, Bellingen and the Nambucca Valley.
- Develop opportunities to grow local jobs associated with increased connectivity with a focus on Frederickton, Stuarts Point, West and South Kempsey.
- Co-ordinate infrastructure delivery with relevant agencies to support anticipated growth of the area, including a second bridge at West Kempsey and Kempsey Armidale Road upgrade.





**Figure 17:** Urban growth area map for Kempsey LGA

- |                                    |                                    |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| LGA boundary                       | Urban growth area                  |
| Road                               | Investigation area–urban land      |
| Highway                            | Investigation area–employment land |
| Railway                            | Existing employment land           |
| National parks and nature reserves | Coastal strip                      |
| State forest                       |                                    |
| Water body                         |                                    |

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# Kyogle

The Kyogle LGA is located on the lands of the Bundjalung and Githabul people, the traditional custodians of the lands within its local government boundary. It has a rich history and is well known for its heritage buildings and architecture that reflect the early timber milling and agricultural ventures of the area. Kyogle is the focal centre of the area, providing local retail, commercial and community services and is experiencing increased housing, business and visitor growth, affirming its role as an important local centre.

Kyogle offers a unique and attractive point of difference in the wider Northern Rivers, with a relaxed lifestyle, World Heritage rainforest and the renowned Border Ranges, Toonumbar and Richmond Range national parks. This landscape and local character are major drawcards for tourists, particularly those seeking eco-tourism and adventure tourism experiences. Kyogle is the gateway to the rich agricultural areas in Queensland, including the Scenic Rim and Darling Downs. Additional investment in transport infrastructure is leading to sustained economic growth and enhanced connectivity with Lismore, Casino, Tweed and Bromelton in Queensland.



Townships, Kyogle  
Credit: Destination NSW



## Regional Priorities



- Support the important local grazing, dairy, crops and horticulture industries and expand on opportunities for agribusiness and agritourism, including small scale agricultural development.
- Identify opportunities to expand nature based, adventure and cultural tourism and enhance visitor experiences by capitalising on natural assets within areas such as world heritage national parks.
- Continue to support Local Aboriginal Land Councils to maximise land opportunities and assist in economic self-determination for the local Aboriginal community.
- Maintain the liveability of Kyogle through social and community infrastructure, open space, social housing, inclusivity and cultural heritage.

## Liveable and Resilient



- Support environmentally sustainable development that is responsive to climate change and natural hazards.
- Retain and protect local biodiversity through effective management of environmental assets and ecological communities.

## Productive and Connected



- Develop employment lands at Kyogle in conjunction with the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation to support jobs growth.
- Support the retention of important farmland throughout the LGA by encouraging agricultural diversification and promoting contemporary sustainable farming practices.

## Housing and Place

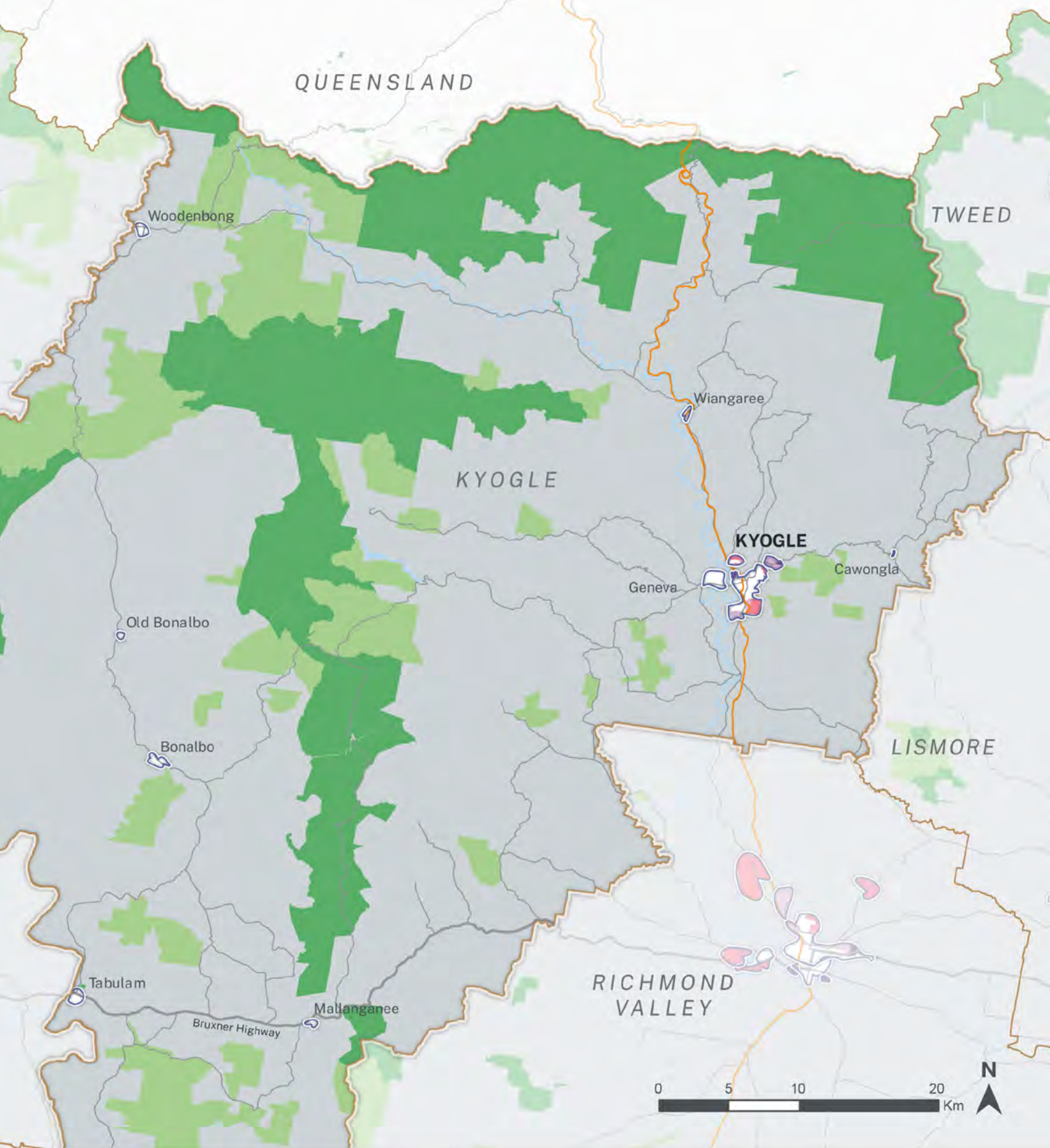


- Deliver a variety of housing options in appropriate locations across Kyogle.
- Maintain the village character and rural lifestyle of Kyogle's smaller communities.
- Improve housing choice in the LGA by encouraging diversification of housing products, including smaller dwellings for the ageing population.

## Smart, Connected and Accessible (Infrastructure)



- Grow agricultural links along the Summerland Way and Clarence Way corridors to South East Queensland to maximise connections with national and international markets.
- Foster stronger connections and alignment with the Northern Rivers subregion, South East Queensland and the Scenic Rim through increased connectivity and advancements in digital technology.
- Maximise opportunities associated with Brisbane West Wellcamp Airport and the expansion of the Bromelton State Development Area to support Kyogle's agricultural sector.



**Figure 18:** Urban growth area map for Kyogle LGA

- LGA boundary
- Road
- Highway
- Railway
- National parks and nature reserves
- State forest
- Water body
- Urban growth area
- Investigation area-urban land
- Investigation area-employment land
- Existing employment land
- Coastal strip

Growth areas show the boundaries of urban areas and as such, identify both existing and proposed urban lands. Not all land identified within the growth area can be developed for urban uses. All sites will be subject to more detailed investigations to determined capacity and future yield. Land that is subject to significant natural hazards, environmental constraints and or servicing constraints will be excluded from development.



# Lismore

Lismore is an inland LGA located at the centre of the Northern Rivers on the lands of the Widjabal/Wyabal people of the Bundjalung nation, the traditional custodians of the lands within its local government boundary.

Lismore provides high-level services to its residents and those from surrounding LGAs. The floods of early 2022 caused widespread physical, social and emotional damage to communities. The rebuilding and reimagining of Lismore's future will be a priority in the coming years.

Rural villages including Bexhill, Clunes, Dunoon, The Channon, Nimbin, Goolmangar, Caniaba and Wyrallah fulfil local service needs and contribute to the unique local character of the area.

The LGA includes part of the Border Ranges rainforest region, one of 15 Australian biodiversity hotspots, and supports fertile, productive land

and expansive floodplains. This rich environment underpins the area's important agricultural and tourism sectors.

Lismore has a strong economy, anchored by major retail, civic and tertiary infrastructure. Lismore Base Hospital and the Lismore campus of Southern Cross University will continue to deliver sustained growth in education and health services industries.

Lismore is supported by a flourishing creative arts scene, showcasing public art in the CBD, and hosting markets and events. Whilst Lismore regroups, temporary uses that allow this sector (and others) to operate will be important. Lismore's proximity to significant rural production areas in the Richmond Valley and Kyogle LGAs offer opportunities to activate agribusiness and leverage cross-border agricultural activities and freight transport opportunities.



Streetscape at night, Lismore

## Regional Priorities



- Expand Lismore's role as a regional city through urban renewal of the CBD, enhanced housing delivery and continuation of critical services delivery to the subregion.
- Identify opportunities to expand tourism and enhance visitor experiences associated with the Gondwana Rainforests and Border Ranges, Lismore's arts and culture scene, and the Northern Rivers Rail Trail.

## Liveable and Resilient



- Support mitigation measures in response to climate change, including investment in green energy industries.
- Encourage environmentally sustainable development that is responsive to natural hazards, in particular flooding.
- Retain and protect local biodiversity through effective management of environmental assets and ecological communities.

## Productive and Connected



- Support the creation of new opportunities that capitalise on the education and health-services industry clustering with the Southern Cross University and Lismore Base Hospital precincts.
- Maximise opportunities associated with the strong local livestock and horticulture sectors to encourage new opportunities for agribusiness and agritourism.
- Protect the on-going viability of important farmland areas while allowing sustainable practices and other compatible uses on agricultural land across the LGA.
- Support the development of employment lands, including commercial and industrial employment opportunities such as retail sharing outside the Lismore CBD.

## Housing and Place



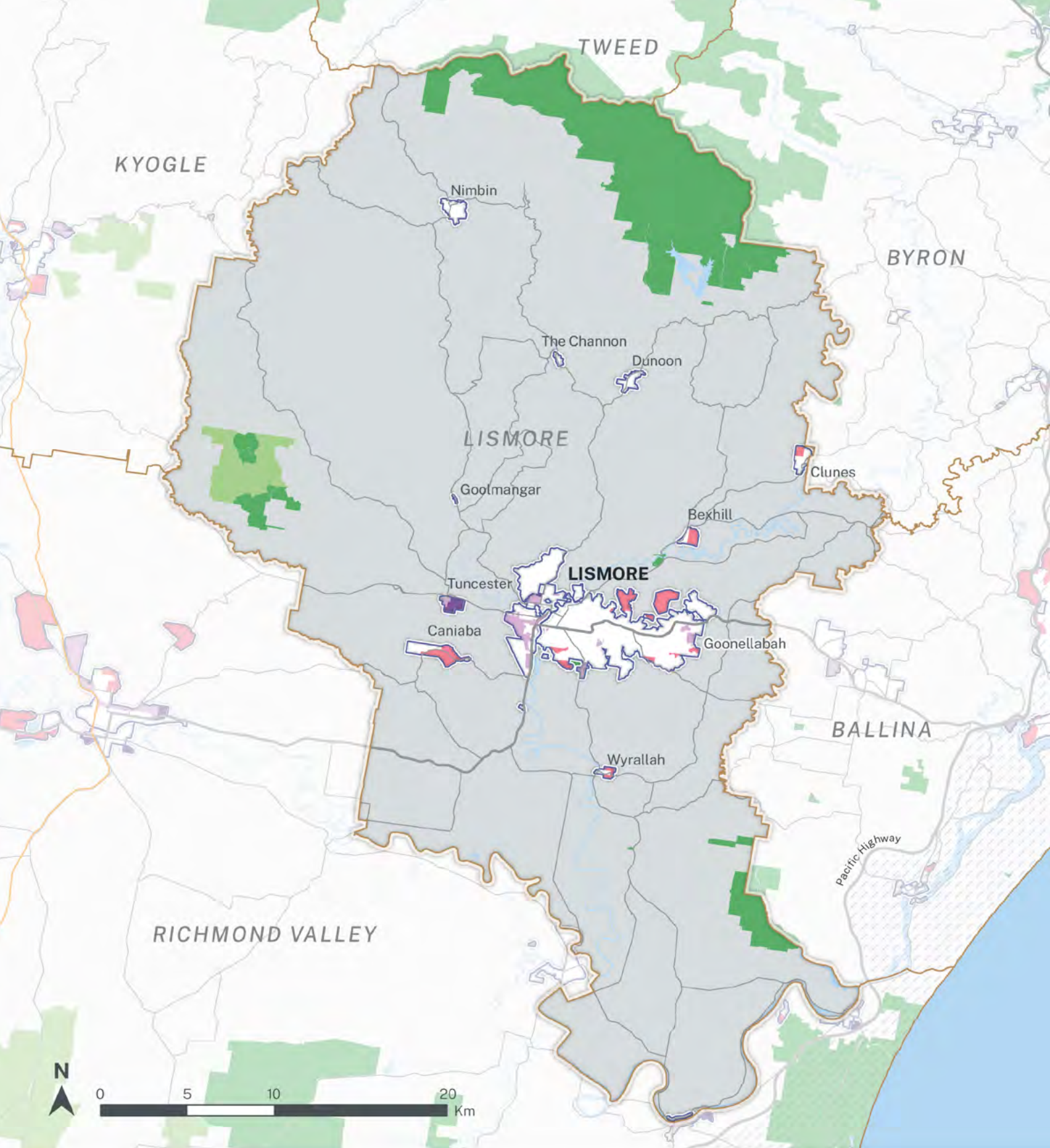
- Support realignment works on the Bruxner Highway to improve east-west connectivity.
- Deliver housing across Lismore, including at North Lismore and Goonellabah, with additional housing in appropriate urban investigation areas.
- Support the delivery of enhanced housing diversity including medium density housing, affordable housing and housing appropriate to the climate of the region.

## Smart, Connected and Accessible (Infrastructure)



- Grow stronger connections and alignment with the Northern Rivers subregion and South East Queensland.
- Maximise opportunities associated with Brisbane West Wellcamp Airport and the expansion of the Bromelton State Development Area to support Lismore's agricultural sector.





**Figure 19:** Urban growth area map for Lismore LGA

- |                                    |                                    |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| LGA boundary                       | Urban growth area                  |
| Road                               | Investigation area-urban land      |
| Highway                            | Investigation area-employment land |
| National parks and nature reserves | Existing employment land           |
| State forest                       | Coastal strip                      |
| Water body                         |                                    |

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# Nambucca

The Nambucca Valley LGA is located on the lands of the Gumbaynggirr and Dunghutti people, the traditional custodians of the lands within its local government boundary.

The Nambucca Valley has important scenic and ecological values, including pristine coastal waters, the Gaagal Wanggaan (South Beach), Yarriabini and Dunggir national parks, parts of the New England Plateau, and the Nambucca River and Taylors Arm floodplains. Macksville is the main centre, providing essential retail, commercial and community services. Housing and jobs are also located at Nambucca Heads, Valla and Bowraville.

The shire has a strong economy based on tourism, agribusiness and manufacturing, assisted by competitive land values and strong industry networks which will increase the diversity of industry sectors.

Nambucca has strong links with Coffs Harbour which provide residents access to a variety of higher-order employment, health and education services. Opportunities also exist for Nambucca to support Coffs Harbour through the availability of additional employment lands. Enhanced connectivity as a result of the Pacific Highway upgrade and digital technology has strengthened this relationship and will support future growth across the LGA.



Nambucca River, Macksville  
Credit: Seen Australia



## Regional Priorities



- Enhance liveability for current and future residents of the Nambucca Valley through infrastructure investment and opportunities available from existing assets.
- Identify agribusiness opportunities that harness the flourishing dairy, beef, blueberry, and macadamia industries.
- Identify opportunities to expand tourist activities at coastal destinations, heritage tourism at Bowraville, agritourism and Aboriginal cultural tourism.

## Liveable and Resilient



- Support environmentally sustainable development that is responsive to climate change and natural hazards, in particular flood risk.
- Protect important environmental assets to support the tourism sector and centres such as Nambucca Heads, Valla Beach, Bowraville and Scotts Head.

## Productive and Connected



- Deliver job opportunities by supporting Nambucca Valley's growing economy and diverse industrial base.
- Promote sustainable uses of important farmland and direct non-agricultural growth towards Macksville, Nambucca, Bowraville, Valla and Scotts Head.
- Develop employment lands at Macksville, Bowraville and Valla.

## Housing and Place

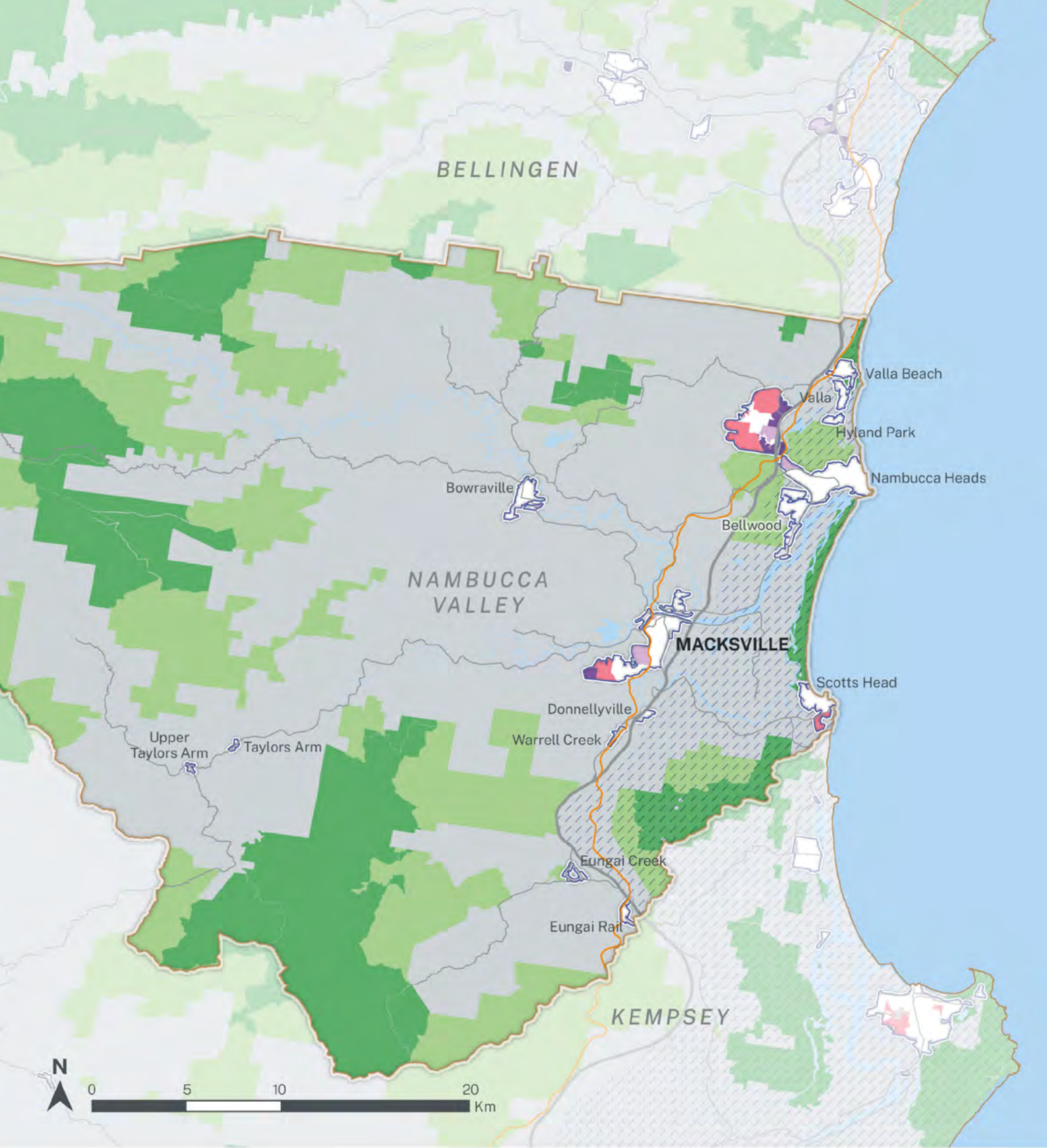


- Deliver additional housing at Macksville, Valla, Scotts Head, Nambucca Heads and Bowraville.
- Enhance the variety of housing options across Nambucca Valley, including additional social and affordable housing, and housing for the local Aboriginal community that are fit for purpose.
- Support rural residential housing opportunities in appropriate locations.

## Smart, Connected and Accessible (Infrastructure)



- Foster stronger connections and alignment with the regional city of Coffs Harbour and other surrounding LGAs such as Bellingen and Kempsey.
- Increase infrastructure investment to support the growing population, utilising improved digital technology.



**Figure 20:** Urban growth area map for Nambucca Valley LGA

- LGA boundary
- Road
- Highway
- Railway
- National parks and nature reserves
- State forest
- Water body
- Urban growth area
- Investigation area-urban land
- Investigation area-employment land
- Existing employment land
- Coastal strip

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# Port Macquarie-Hastings

The Port Macquarie-Hastings LGA is located on the lands of the Birpai people, the traditional custodians of the lands within its local government boundary.

Port Macquarie-Hastings is the southern gateway to the North Coast. Its diverse and high quality environment underpins the local economy, and continues to attract new residents and visitors. Port Macquarie is a regional city with a thriving cultural and civic centre, accommodating a distinctive mix of retail, commercial, tourism, entertainment and cultural activities.

Coastal and rural centres, such as Lake Cathie, Bonny Hills, Laurieton and Wauchope, will continue to provide local jobs and lifestyle housing options, whilst embracing their unique character and heritage value.

The area has a diverse and vibrant economy as a result of ongoing investment in the health, education, agriculture and aviation sectors. The Port Macquarie Base Hospital, the growth of the Charles Sturt University Campus, and the increasing capacity of the Port Macquarie Airport and associated future airport business park will increase local opportunities and deliver jobs.



Port Macquarie

## Regional Priorities



- Protect, conserve and enhance local biodiversity, natural waterways and aquatic habitats, ecological communities and areas of high environmental value.
- Plan and deliver all forms of local and state infrastructure across all levels of government in anticipation of projected housing and jobs growth.
- Sustainably deliver housing diversity and regional density targets close to employment across the LGA.
- Maximise Port Macquarie's role as a sustainable, compact green and blue regional city, with a distinctive and fully integrated city heart.

## Liveable and Resilient



- Support environmentally sustainable development that is responsive to climate change and natural hazards such as coastal erosion, drought, flooding, bushfire and sea-level rise.
- Ensure future water and food security across the LGA.
- Retain and protect threatened and endangered species with a focus on protecting and growing the largest coastal koala population in NSW.

## Productive and Connected



- Drive opportunities for investment in existing and emerging industry sectors to activate existing business precincts and employment lands.
- Foster industry excellence, innovation, and economic development opportunities in the LGA's key health and education anchor industries.
- Protect the LGA's farmland and encourage regenerative and sustainable agricultural practices and initiatives to support the development of the agricultural sector and agribusiness.
- Expand year-round tourism opportunities including accessible eco-tourist, agritourist and Aboriginal cultural experiences, diversification of events, and adequate facilities to support conferences and longer-term holidaymakers.

## Housing and Place



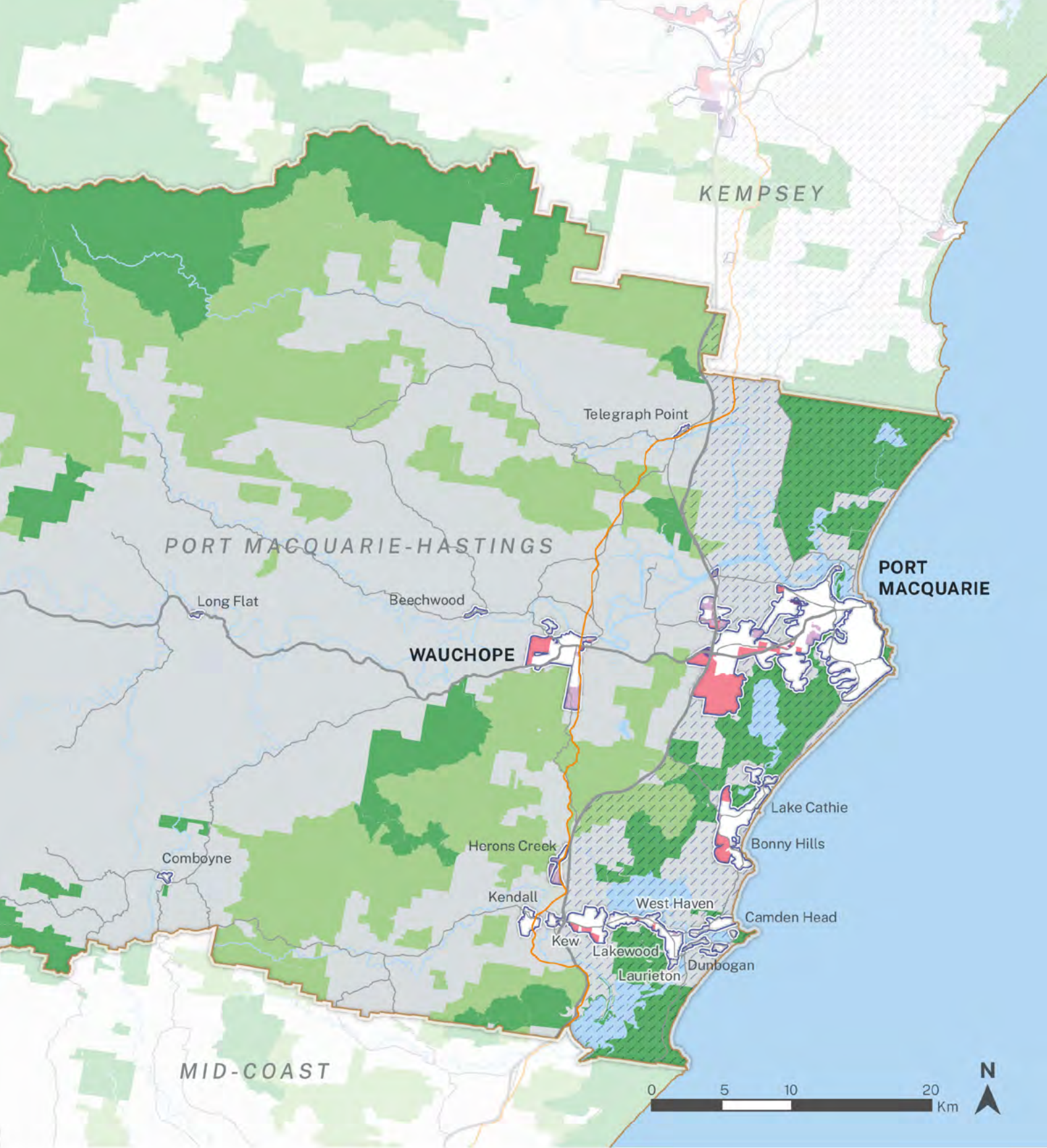
- Encourage uptake of available greenfield land in the R1 zone to relieve current housing pressure and drive sustainable and efficient use of existing infrastructure.
- Investigate and deliver innovative housing solutions to ensure housing diversity, including increased affordable and social housing, additional infill, and housing that caters to the LGA's ageing population and supports workers in key service industries such as health, aged care, and hospitality.
- Deliver a compact regional city and towns, villages and rural communities that respect their natural environment, history, Aboriginal culture, and character.

## Smart, Connected and Accessible (Infrastructure)



- Grow community connectivity through sustainable infrastructure and smart/digital technology within and between centres within the LGA.
- Strengthen social and economic links with neighbouring LGAs to the north, south and west.





**Figure 21:** Urban growth area map for Port Macquarie-Hastings LGA

- |                                    |                                    |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| LGA boundary                       | Urban growth area                  |
| Road                               | Investigation area–urban land      |
| Highway                            | Investigation area–employment land |
| Railway                            | Existing employment land           |
| National parks and nature reserves | Coastal strip                      |
| State forest                       |                                    |
| Water body                         |                                    |

Growth areas show the boundaries of urban areas and as such, identify both existing and proposed urban lands. Not all land identified within the growth area can be developed for urban uses. All sites will be subject to more detailed investigations to determined capacity and future yield. Land that is subject to significant natural hazards, environmental constraints and or servicing constraints will be excluded from development.



# Richmond Valley

The Richmond Valley LGA is located on the traditional lands of the Bundjalung people and extends from the coastline at Evans Head to the foothills of the Great Dividing Range, interspersed with state forests, national parks and nature reserves. Its strategic location with the Pacific Motorway, Summerland Way and the Bruxner Highway provides ample opportunity to access economic markets in neighbouring LGAs and South East Queensland.

Casino is the largest settlement in the Richmond Valley and a focal point for the region's beef industry. Casino is a growing centre for manufacturing and food production industries and hosts the largest abattoir and livestock exchange in Northern NSW.

Other centres in the Richmond Valley, such as Woodburn, Evans Head, Broadwater, New Italy, Rappville, Coraki and Rileys Hill, provide rural lifestyle and coastal living opportunities.

These centres support economic diversity through strong retail and service sectors and a growing tourism industry. Richmond Valley's Regional Job Precinct will further increase future investment into the area's agricultural and manufacturing industries.

The LGA also has a number of important environmental assets including beaches, significant rivers, creeks and hinterland area, which will continue to attract visitors and residents.



Northern Rivers Livestock Exchange, Casino  
Credit: Richmond Valley Council



## Regional Priorities



- Expand the local agricultural industries including sugar, beef, dairy, tea tree and soya beans, and explore opportunities to value add to agricultural industries, such as alternative meat products.
- Expand tourism through a whole-of-destination approach, a strengthened brand identity and private sector investment, with a focus on the Northern Rivers Rail Trail and agritourism, as well as traditional holiday markets.
- Leverage the new Regional Job Precinct to continue to expand new employment and housing opportunities in both Casino and the broader LGA.

## Liveable and Resilient



- Improve water quality and security in the Richmond Valley to better accommodate growth, and the peak visitor season.
- Support environmentally sustainable development that is responsive to climate change and natural hazards, in particular bushfire and flood risk.
- Retain and protect local biodiversity through effective management of environmental assets and ecological communities.

## Productive and Connected



- Deliver new and diverse employment opportunities across the LGA.
- Protect the ongoing viability of important farmland across the LGA to sustainably enable agricultural growth.
- Support the development of the Regional Job Precinct, with a focus on food production, manufacturing and alternative energy.

## Housing and Place

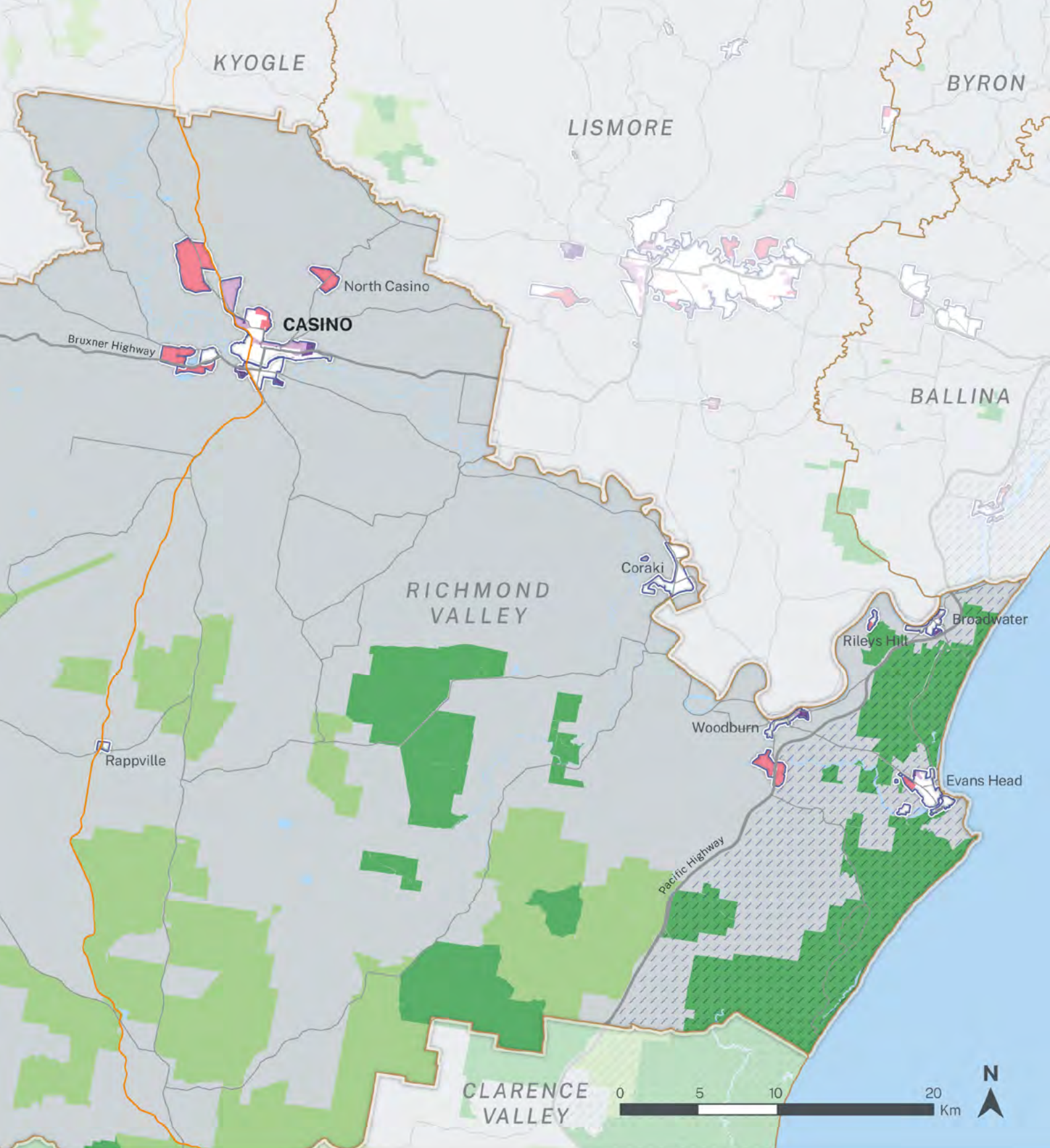


- Deliver new housing in appropriate locations, in line with new economic and employment opportunities.
- Enhance the variety of housing options available across Richmond Valley, ensuring there is adequate housing supply that meets demographic need.
- Retain and support the unique character of local towns and villages.

## Smart, Connected and Accessible (Infrastructure)



- Foster stronger connections and alignment with the Northern Rivers subregion.
- Grow agricultural and freight links to South East Queensland.
- Improve access to reliable broadband and telecommunications services.



**Figure 22:** Urban growth area map for Richmond Valley LGA

- |                                    |                                    |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| LGA boundary                       | Urban growth area                  |
| Road                               | Investigation area-urban land      |
| Highway                            | Investigation area-employment land |
| Railway                            | Existing employment land           |
| National parks and nature reserves | Coastal strip                      |
| State forest                       |                                    |
| Water body                         |                                    |

Growth areas show the boundaries of urban areas and as such, identify both existing and proposed urban lands. Not all land identified within the growth area can be developed for urban uses. All sites will be subject to more detailed investigations to determined capacity and future yield. Land that is subject to significant natural hazards, environmental constraints and or servicing constraints will be excluded from development.



# Tweed

Tweed Shire LGA is located on the lands of the Bundjalung people, the traditional custodians of lands that extend from Grafton on the Clarence River in the south to the Logan River in the north and inland as far as the Great Dividing Range at Tenterfield and Warwick.

The Tweed Shire bridges the North Coast Region and South East Queensland, and is one of the fastest growing areas in the region. Murwillumbah, Kingscliff and Tweed Heads are the key centres of the shire, with Kingscliff becoming increasingly important as its strong growth continues, and Tweed Heads servicing the shire as its regional city.

Tweed residents will continue to access high quality services and facilities from both sides of the NSW-Queensland border. Local services and facilities are provided at Tweed Heads, Casuarina, Cabarita, Pottsville, Murwillumbah, Fingal Head, Chinderah, Uki and Chillingham.

The coastal settlements of the Tweed Shire have experienced some of the strongest growth on the North Coast with projected growth in the urban release areas of Cobaki, Kings Forest and Dunloe Park. The popularity of the Tweed coast is expected to continue, particularly as opportunities for greenfield housing on the Gold Coast become more limited.

The Tweed Shire is recognised for its idyllic coastline, iconic natural environment and contains the Mount Warning Caldera, World Heritage listed rainforests and dramatic mountain ranges. This environment, and the Tweed's proximity to the nationally significant tourist area of the Gold Coast, will support ongoing growth in the tourism industry.

Tweed Heads



## Regional Priorities



- Manage and support growth across the LGA and implement the Regional City Action Plan for Tweed Heads.
- Balance growth in the new housing areas of Cobaki and Kings Forest in conjunction with the urban renewal of Tweed Heads, Kingscliff and Murwillumbah.
- Support regenerative agricultural practices which support the development of the agricultural sector and local food production systems.
- Continue to promote nature-based and ecotourism opportunities associated with the various national parks, the Northern Rivers Rail Trail and the coastline, and identify opportunities available with agritourism and the Brisbane 2032 Olympics.

## Liveable and Resilient



- Support Tweed Shire's move toward net zero through low emissions development and transport solutions, and by embedding principles of the circular economy and maximising resource recovery.
- Provide support to adapt to climate change, particularly in key risk areas such as water security, infrastructure resilience and coastal management to address storm surges and sea level rise.
- Support environmentally sustainable development that is responsive to natural hazards.
- Retain and protect local biodiversity through effective management of environmental assets and ecological communities.

## Productive and Connected



- Foster the growth of knowledge-based and education industries within the Southern Cross University and where enabling land uses or infrastructure is present.
- Capitalise on opportunities associated with the new Tweed Valley Hospital.
- Deliver new employment and business park opportunities at Kingscliff, Pottsville, Tweed Heads south and South Murwillumbah, and encourage the development of airport related and tech business in the Cobaki release area.
- Identify emerging trends affecting work in the Tweed and develop a robust, contemporary and enabling policy framework to foster employment growth.
- Encourage employment and mixed use clustering.

## Housing and Place



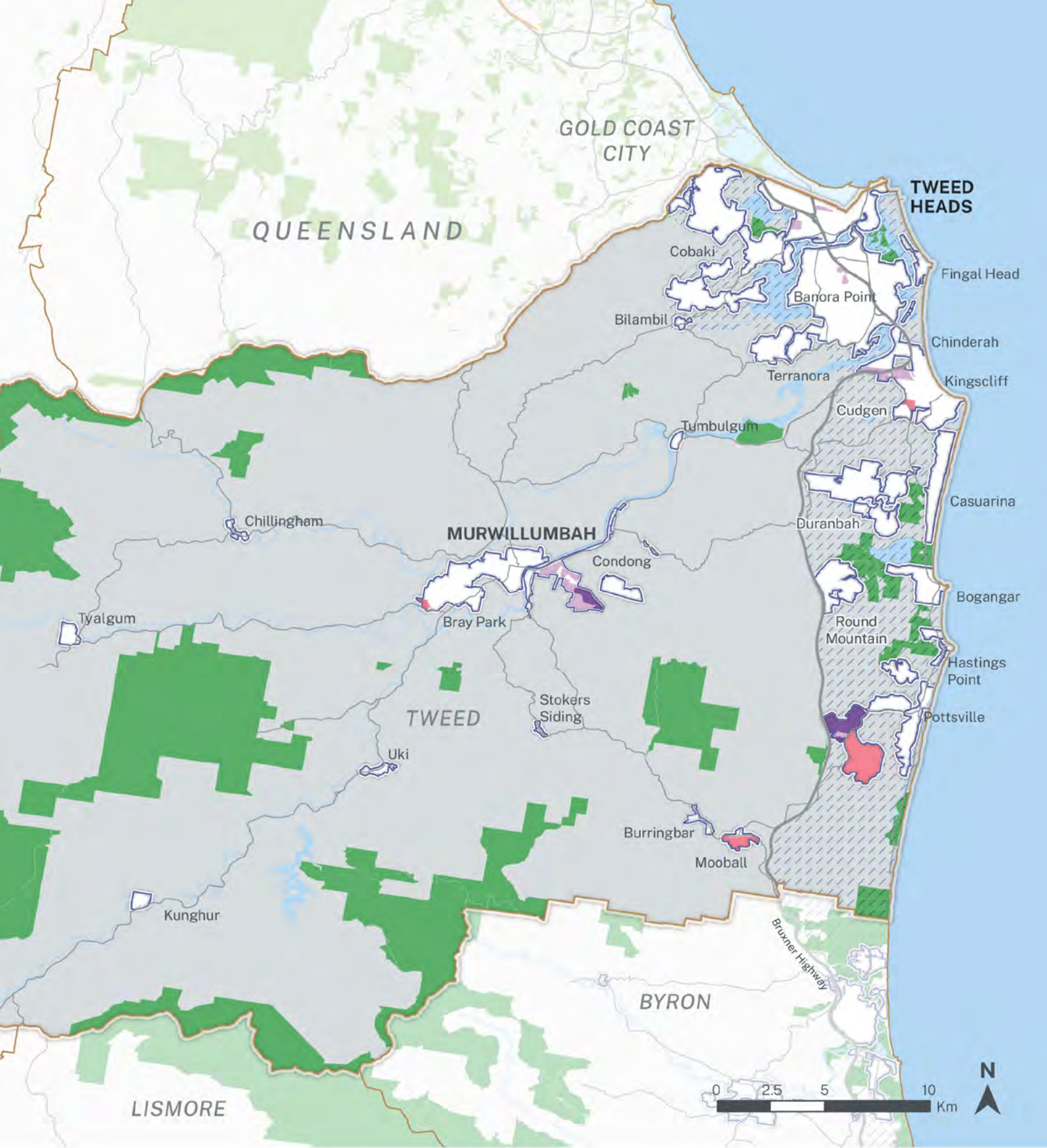
- Enhance housing diversity by increasing housing density in the centres and encouraging a range of housing products.
- Deliver housing across the LGA to meet impending growth from South East Queensland.
- Prioritise the delivery of affordable housing to support workers in key service industries.

## Smart, Connected and Accessible (Infrastructure)



- Foster stronger alignment and integration with the Southern Gateway Regional Economic Cluster in South East Queensland and the Northern Rivers subregion.
- Collaborate with South East Queensland on the Gold Coast Airport precinct masterplan.
- Identify barriers to economic growth and essential infrastructure delivery between South East Queensland and Northern NSW.





**Figure 23:** Urban growth area map for Tweed LGA

- LGA boundary
- Road
- Highway
- National parks and nature reserves
- State forest
- Water body
- Urban growth area
- Investigation area-urban land
- Investigation area-employment land
- Existing employment land
- Coastal strip

Growth areas show the boundaries of urban areas and as such, identify both existing and proposed urban lands. Not all land identified within the growth area can be developed for urban uses. All sites will be subject to more detailed investigations to determined capacity and future yield. Land that is subject to significant natural hazards, environmental constraints and or servicing constraints will be excluded from development.

# Settlement Planning Guidelines

Key Strategy Aims	Principles
Identify growth needs and opportunities	<p>Land use strategies will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Establish the need for any planned areas of urban growth, based on Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) population projections. Councils may wish to use the full range of population scenarios to give an idea of the different possible futures that might arise. Councils also have the option of using population projections from other sources, provided DPE's projections are included as a baseline.</li> <li>b. Include a land use supply and demand overview, including an estimate of supply in developed or developing areas. Rural residential development will be considered a component of residential supply.</li> <li>c. Provide a summary of growth options, including urban infill and no growth options. Where practical, consider growth options outside the LGA.</li> <li>d. Identify urban growth planning priorities based on an assessment of supply and demand and the relative suitability and serviceability of areas for urban growth.</li> </ul>
Identify and direct suitable land to accommodate planned growth	<p>Where urban growth is proposed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e. New greenfield areas should be located adjacent to existing urban settlements to minimise travel and promote sustainability.</li> <li>f. New greenfield areas must be able to be serviced by community services and key infrastructure, including water, sewer, road and waste services.</li> <li>g. New greenfield areas should avoid land that is affected by key constraints, such as areas of high environmental value, high water quality sensitivity, cultural, and heritage significance and/or areas affected by natural hazards such as flooding or high bushfire risk.</li> <li>h. New greenfield areas should avoid and manage the potential for land use conflicts with existing and likely future adjoining use and infrastructure, including road and rail freight corridors, important farmland, and productive resource lands.</li> </ul>



Key Strategy Aims	Principles
Determine the required structure for future development	<p>Where urban growth is proposed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Structure Plans should be considered to provide a framework to coordinate development in new greenfield areas.</li> <li>j. New greenfield areas should be located to provide links to adjoining areas to ensure new areas are well integrated and maximise efficiency and shared use of services and facilities.</li> <li>k. Planning should provide for a mix of compatible land uses and create walkable communities consistent with the settlement hierarchy.</li> <li>l. Planning should provide for local services that meet the day-to-day needs of residents, including areas for open space and recreation.</li> <li>m. The location and scale of new employment zones should not undermine the viability of existing centres and the maintenance of strong multi-functional central business precincts.</li> </ul>
Encourage locally responsive, sustainable design	<p>Land use strategies and plans will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>n. Recognise, protect and be compatible with any unique topographic, natural or built cultural features essential to the visual setting, character, identity, or heritage significance of the area.</li> <li>o. Ensure the latest and best available information in relation to hazards and climate change is taken into account to identify urban growth areas.</li> <li>p. Support a variety of dwelling types and a choice in location, form and affordability.</li> <li>q. Locate development to promote clustering of compatible land uses that support catalyst investments to maximise social and economic benefits.</li> <li>r. Design and locate rural residential release areas to promote clustering.</li> <li>s. Design and locate development to maximise total water cycle management and promote passive environmental design principles. Water sensitive urban design techniques should be incorporated into the design of dwellings, streets, parking areas, subdivisions and multi-unit, commercial and industrial developments.</li> <li>t. Provide for local services that meet the day-to-day needs of residents and areas for open space and recreation.</li> <li>u. Design and locate development to minimise the need to travel, maximise the opportunity for efficient public transport, active transport, and pedestrian access options, and encourage energy and resource efficiency.</li> </ul>

# Urban Growth Area Variation Principles

## Urban Growth Area Variation Principles

<b>Policy</b>	The variation needs to be consistent with the objectives and outcomes in the <i>North Coast Regional Plan 2041</i> and should consider the intent of any applicable Section 9.1 Direction, State Environmental Planning Policy and local growth management strategy.
<b>Infrastructure</b>	The variation needs to consider the use of committed and planned major transport, water and sewerage infrastructure, and have no cost to government. The variation should only be permitted if adequate and cost effective infrastructure can be provided to match the expected population.
<b>Environmental and heritage</b>	The variation should avoid, minimise and appropriately manage and protect any areas of high environmental value and water quality sensitivity, riparian land or of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage.
<b>Avoiding Risk</b>	Risks associated with physically constrained land are identified and avoided, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• flood prone</li> <li>• bushfire-prone</li> <li>• highly erodible</li> <li>• severe slope, and</li> <li>• acid sulfate soils.</li> </ul>
<b>Coastal Strip</b>	Only minor and contiguous variations to urban growth areas will be considered within the coastal strip due to its environmental sensitivity and the range of land uses competing for this limited area.
<b>Land Use Conflict</b>	The variation must be appropriately separated from incompatible land uses, including agricultural activities, sewerage treatment plants, waste facilities and productive resource lands.
<b>Important Farmland</b>	The planning area is contiguous with existing zoned urban land and the need and justification is supported by a sound evidence base addressing agricultural capability and sustainability and is either for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a minor adjustment to ‘round off an urban boundary’, or</li> <li>• if demonstrated through a Department approved local strategy that no other suitable alternate land is available, and if for housing, that substantial movement has been made toward achieving required infill targets within existing urban growth area boundaries.</li> </ul>



# Glossary

## Active transport

Transport that is human powered, such as walking, cycling or using a wheelchair.

## Affordable housing

Housing for very low-income households, low income households or moderate income households, being such households as are prescribed by the regulations or as are provided for in an environmental planning instrument.

## Agent of Change

Principle which requires a person or business introducing a new land use to be responsible for managing the impact of the proposed change.

## Agribusiness

A business which earns most or all of its revenues from agriculture. An agribusiness could include food and fibre production, agrichemicals, seed supply, farm machinery wholesale and distribution, freight, logistics, processing, marketing, and retail sales.

## Biodiversity

Biodiversity describes the variety of life on Earth. The life forms, the different plants, animals and microorganisms, the genes they contain and the ecosystems they form. It is usually considered at three levels: genetic diversity, species diversity and ecosystem diversity.

## Biodiversity corridor

An identified area of land that connects flora and fauna populations, separated by human developments and activities, for the purpose of increasing the biodiversity of an area.

## Central business district

The main cluster of businesses found within a town or city.

## Circular economy

The circular economy model redesigns current linear systems (take-make-waste) to a closed loop or circular system which maximises resource efficiencies, reduces waste and improves natural systems.

## Circular economy activities

Circular economy activities are defined as any activities associated with the operation of Circular Economy infrastructure. Circular Economy activities may also encompass the use of materials produced from Circular Economy Infrastructure, including recovered materials, repaired goods, leased products etc.

## Circular economy hub

A circular economy hub is a collection of businesses that come together on one site so that the by-products of business can be used as a resource (including material, energy or water) in another business closing the loop on material use.

Circular economy infrastructure can encompass facilities that store, transfer, sort, reprocess or repurpose materials and goods to retain their productive value and prevent their disposal to landfill. Examples of circular economy infrastructure includes reuse and repair facilities, sharing and leasing facilities, reverse vending machines, community recycling centres, collection points for producer responsibility schemes, water reuse schemes, material bulking, sorting, storing facilities, material reprocessing and remanufacturing, washing or pelletising facilities, reverse logistics facilities, energy from waste (thermal), anaerobic digestion and chemical treatment of waste etc.

Circular Economy infrastructure also includes the waste and resource recovery facilities as defined in the Standard Instrument such as resource recovery facilities, transfer stations, and compost facilities.

## 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 (Garnaut Review, 2008).

## 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. There are two key types of refugia, termed internal and external, and are determined by their spatial relationship with species' known distributions. Climate refugia data can be accessed at [nswclimaterefugia.net](http://nswclimaterefugia.net) together with associated explanatory reports.

## Coastal Strip

Comprises land east of the Pacific Highway alignment plus the urban areas of Tweed Heads around the Cobaki Broadwater and for Coffs Harbour, land to the east of Dirty Creek, Upper Corindi, Bucca, Karangi, Upper Orara and Bonville.

## Contiguous

Means touching, in contact with, in close proximity, near. The need for contiguous areas is to assist with diversity, resilience, economies of scale and freedom from conflicts in non urban areas.

## Employment lands

Employment lands are areas zoned for industrial or similar purposes in planning instruments. They are generally lower density employment areas, and provide the essential space for the delivery of:

- utilities and urban services, including depots, repair trades and service centres,
- goods including the research, design and manufacturing of goods through to their warehousing, distribution and sale.

## Existing urban areas

Land zoned for an urban purpose, excluding greenfield release areas.

## Greenfield areas

Also referred to as urban release areas, these terms refer to new housing and or employment areas on land that has not been previously developed or used for urban purposes.

## Greenfield housing

Refers to new housing developments on land that has not been previously developed or used for other urban purposes. Release areas typically include greenfield housing.

## Green infrastructure

The network of green spaces, natural systems, and semi-natural systems that support sustainable communities and includes 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.

## Housing affordability

Refers to the capacity of individuals or households to enter the rental and privately-owned housing markets.

## Housing density

Is a measure of how intensively a residential area is developed. It is normally measured as the number of dwellings per hectare. Housing density can be low (<15dw/ha), medium (16-60 dw/ha) or high (>60dw/ha).

## Housing diversity

Refers to 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.

## Infill development

Development in areas already used for urban purposes. This includes the re-use of a site within the existing urban footprint for new housing, businesses or other urban development.

## Important Farmland

Also referred to as Important Agricultural Land, State Significant Farmland or Regionally Significant Farmland. Is high quality agricultural land identified by the Mid North Coast Farmland Mapping Project Final Recommendations Report 2008, Northern Rivers Farmland Protection Project Final Recommendations February 2005 and infill mapping undertaken for the western side of Kyogle Shire in 2019.

## Intensive agribusiness

Relates to agriculture activities such as horticulture, irrigated crops, glass housing, feedlots, poultry farms and the like, that rely on high levels of inputs such as labour and capital to increase yield.

## Knowledge-based industries

Trends and activities that increasingly depend on knowledge, information and highly skilled personnel and organisation, meeting an increasing need for ready access to all these by business and public sectors (OECD, 2005).

## Local centres

Local centres provide 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.



## **Local Plans (Local Environmental Plans or Development Control Plans)**

Statutory and non-statutory plans prepared by council for a local government area to guide planning decisions by local councils. Through the use of land zoning and other development controls, a local plan is typically the main mechanism for determining the type and amount of development which can occur on each parcel of land in NSW. Local plans are the main planning tool that shapes the future of communities and ensures local development is appropriate.

## **Local Strategic Plans**

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 plans or local strategic planning statements.

## **Mixed-use area**

Areas that facilitate a mixture of commercial, retail, residential and other land uses.

## **Multi dwelling / small lot housing**

Dual occupancies, apartments, townhouses, villas or dwellings on lots less than 400 square metres.

## **Nature-based tourism**

Tourism based on the natural attractions of an area. Examples include birdwatching, photography, stargazing, camping, hiking, hunting, fishing, scuba diving, surfing, mountain biking, wakeboard and water skiing.

## **North Coast region**

The Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Tweed, Byron, Ballina, Lismore, Kyogle, Richmond Valley, Clarence Valley, Coffs Harbour, Bellingen, Nambucca, Kempsey and Port Macquarie-Hastings.

## **Planning Area**

The footprint of the proposed area to be developed or rezoned.

## **Population projections**

The outcomes of applying a set of assumptions about future growth and change to a base of population, dwellings or employment. For example, for population: at the broader regional level, those assumptions are about fertility, mortality and migration at the local level, the assumptions are about land supply and development timing. Projection assumptions reflect the policy in place and other circumstances existing or expected at the time of their preparation. Changes in policy and other circumstances, may influence a different outcome.

## **Public spaces**

Are all places publicly owned or of public use, accessible and enjoyable by all for free and without a profit motive.

## **Regional city**

Centres with the largest commercial component of any location in the region and that provides a full range of higher-order services, including hospitals and tertiary education services. Tweed, Lismore, Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie are the regional cities of the North Coast.

## **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).

## **Round Off an Urban Growth Boundary**

Refers to land on the edge of existing zoned urban land which can be considered for inclusion within the urban growth boundary and is not incompatible with the surrounding environment and agricultural land uses.

## **Smart Technology**

Self-Monitoring Analysis and Reporting Technology, which is technology that provides cognitive awareness to objects, by making use of advanced technologies like internet of things, artificial intelligence, machine learning and big data.

## **Social housing**

Rental housing provided by not-for-profit, non-government or government organisations to assist people who are unable to access suitable accommodation in the private rental market. Social housing includes public and community housing, as well as other services and products.

## **Strategic centre**

Centres with significant commercial components and a range of higher-order services. The Strategic Centres are higher order than local centres but smaller than regional cities and are Ballina and Grafton.

## **Sustainability**

Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

## Urban land

Land that is zoned under any of the following land use zones:

- Zone R1 General Residential
  - Zone R2 Low Density Residential
  - Zone R3 Medium Density Residential
  - Zone R4 High Density Residential
  - Zone R5 Large Lot Residential
  - Zone B1 Neighbourhood Centre
  - Zone B2 Local Centre
  - Zone B3 Commercial Core
  - Zone B4 Mixed Use
  - Zone B5 Business Development
  - Zone B6 Enterprise Corridor
  - Zone B7 Business Park
  - Zone B8 Metropolitan Centre
  - Zone IN1 General Industrial
  - Zone IN2 Light Industrial
  - Zone IN3 Heavy Industrial
  - Zone IN4 Working Waterfront
  - Zone SP3 Tourist
  - Zone RU5 Village
- 

# Agency abbreviations

**DPE** – Department of Planning and Environment

**DPI** – NSW Department of Primary Industries

**DPIE** – NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

**DRNSW** – NSW Department of Regional NSW

**TfNSW** – Transport for NSW

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# References

<sup>1</sup> 2022 DPIE Population Projections.

<sup>2</sup> State of New South Wales (Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, 2020).



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# Planning and Environment

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