

Newcastle

THE CENTRAL COAST OF NSW A SUSTAINABLE, SMART AND CONNECTED REGION

**Regional Economic Development
and Employment Strategy**

Sydney



INTRODUCTION

The *Regional Economic Development and Employment Strategy (REDES)*, is the long-term strategy for sustainable economic development and jobs growth for the NSW Central Coast region.

It has been developed as part of the NSW Government's overarching *Central Coast Regional Strategy* which was released in 2008. This in turn, reflects the bigger-picture *State Plan – Investing in a better future* (2009). It further complements the *Regional Business Growth Plan* for the Central Coast.

The *REDES* has involved the expertise of many experienced business, government and educational leaders. It has been led by Industry and Investment NSW and the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet, which established a core Reference Group to develop the strategy.

The *REDES* Reference Group included representatives from the following:

- NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Industry and Investment NSW
- Regional Development Australia – Central Coast NSW
- NSW Department of Planning
- Gosford City Council
- Wyong Shire Council
- The University of Newcastle – Central Coast
- NSW Department of Education and Training, and
- Buchan business strategists.

Developing the *REDES* has involved consultation with more than 80 large business and regional stakeholders, 300 small and medium enterprises and 400 individuals.

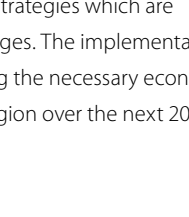
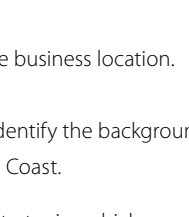
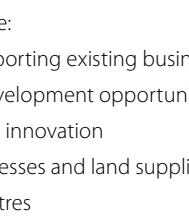
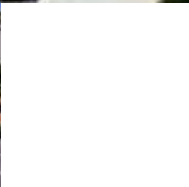
Acknowledgements: This document is based on a detailed evaluation and analysis of the Central Coast region by business strategy consultants, Buchan. The full report is available on request.

It has also drawn on input from elected representatives, Commonwealth Government agencies and commissioned research as well as regional information and analysis, research studies and policy papers from government agencies, councils and industry groups.

While the NSW Government's *Central Coast Regional Strategy* is designed to shape the overall direction of planning and development in the Gosford–Wyong region to 2031, the *REDES* focuses more specifically on economic development.

The *REDES* long term vision will cover the next 20 years to 2031. It is however, a dynamic process and its implementation and effectiveness will be monitored and assessed on an ongoing basis. The *REDES* will also undergo a significant review every five years.





PURPOSE

In 2006 the Central Coast was home to about 305,000 people. A further 100,000 people are expected to move to the region by 2031 (identified in the *Central Coast Regional Strategy*).

This significant population growth means there is a critical need to generate more than 45,000 new jobs in the region over the next 20 years. This is a major economic development challenge which needs to be addressed as a priority.

The *REDES* will set the direction to help build these jobs. Its aim is to lay the foundations for a comprehensive and coordinated approach to sustainable economic development and job generation in the region. It also identifies how the Central Coast can create competitive economic advantages.

The *REDES* will help to create a positive environment for government and business investment in the region.

Strategies identified in the *REDES* include:

- Attracting new businesses and supporting existing businesses
- Improving the training and skills development opportunities
- Increasing research, knowledge and innovation
- Ensuring appropriate planning processes and land supplies
- Planning for regional economic centres
- Providing new infrastructure
- Marketing the region as an attractive business location.

The following pages of this document identify the background to the economic challenges for the Central Coast.

The document also explains the *REDES* strategies which are needed to help overcome these challenges. The implementation of these strategies will assist in delivering the necessary economic development and jobs growth in the region over the next 20 years.



FOOD

The Central Coast is home to a number of the most familiar food brands found on supermarket shelves around the nation. The region has a strong food industry presence and boasts excellent credentials, such as a clean environment, skilled and willing workforce and quick access to markets, which makes it an attractive location for food manufacturing and agribusiness industries. Farmers in the region employ both traditional and advanced methods of intensive agriculture to grow a diverse range of produce that features not only at the finest restaurants, but also on your family dinner table. Bon appétit.



BACKGROUND

In developing the *REDES*, research was conducted in three key areas to provide further context for the strategy. These were:

1. The Central Coast regional economy – including the demographic trends, industry structures, skill levels, employment and innovation.
2. A changing environment – the way we live, work and travel.
3. Community attitudes – which reveal the concerns and needs of business and community members.

REGIONAL ECONOMY

The Central Coast regional economy has a number of important characteristics:

- It constitutes a significant regional economy with a population of more than 305,000 and a total of 86,000 local jobs at the 2006 census¹.
- It is the ninth largest population centre in Australia and the third largest residential region in NSW.
- About 35% of employed residents have jobs outside the region (mainly in Sydney).
- The population is projected to grow by a further 100,000 people by 2031, requiring more than 45,000 new local jobs.
- The population supports a significant number of local businesses.

To date, population growth has been one of the key drivers of economic development on the Central Coast. Population growth alone has led to activity and employment in a range of sectors including housing construction, retail, education, health services and community services. Population growth has also attracted some businesses to the area which have sought a local labour force in an accessible and cost effective location.

The Central Coast has been attractive to business because of its strategic location between Sydney and Newcastle. It has some well located and competitively priced employment lands. Food processors, manufacturers and logistics companies have been drawn to the region and are servicing the broader state, national and international markets. Tourism has been a significant sector with over 4.5 million visitor nights a year and trend growth rates in visitor nights between 1999 and 2007 showing the Central Coast had the strongest performance in NSW.

The outlook for the region is positive with population growth continuing to generate higher consumer demand and new jobs. The challenge, however, will be to generate *enough* jobs – more than 45,000 new jobs by 2031. This will be needed to support the extent of population growth and reduce the need for commuting to work outside the region.

The key to securing these jobs will be a pro-active economic development strategy.

Demographic trends

The Central Coast has experienced a dual pattern of population growth with older people being attracted for retirement living and families also moving to the region. Families have been attracted by affordable housing and a coastal lifestyle, while still having good accessibility to the Sydney metropolitan area. This pattern has produced growth at both ends of the age spectrum, which has implications for the future pattern of demand for services, both public and private. Significant numbers of 18-29 year old adults leave the region each year and this is also an issue.

¹In 2006, there were 86,034 jobs located on the Central Coast (49,684 or 58% in Gosford, and 36,350 or 42% in Wyong. Buchan analysis of ABS Census 2006, Working Population Data – Gosford and Wyong LGAs.



SMART



EDUCATION

The Central Coast is well-served by a variety of education providers, from early child-care through to higher degree research. Childcare and pre-school facilities on the Central Coast are plentiful, modern and well-equipped, with many of the staff trained locally at the Ourimbah campus.

Government and independent primary and secondary schools offer a broad choice for finding the right fit for each child and provide a broad variety of additional experiences based on a foundation of academic excellence.

TAFE NSW, community colleges and private RTO providers train across an extensive range, from short courses to full diploma, working closely with industry and local businesses. The University of Newcastle – Central Coast campus at Ourimbah is based on a multi-sector arrangement now 20 years old, and is showing the way forward for the Australian tertiary sector.

VIBRANT CENTRES

The Central Coast has a vibrant retail sector and this will expand with increasing population and business investment. As part of the regional strategy the Central Coast will develop a stronger network of new and revitalised centres.

Well located new development will assist in creating better, attractive, adaptable and self-reliant settlements that foster a stronger sense of community identity and place. Centres will be the focus of a range of private and public infrastructure and services, including transport, health, education, leisure, entertainment, community and personal services.

The Regional City of Gosford and the Tuggerah-Wyong Major Centre will be supported by a network of Town Centres, Villages and Neighbourhoods. A range of well designed housing opportunities will also be provided in close proximity to these centres in a variety of types and densities.



Industry structure

The Central Coast economy comprises a large number of small and medium sized businesses. At the smaller end there are a significant number of micro businesses and home based businesses, many of which service local markets. There are few large employers. The following table shows the number of employees of various size businesses at the time of the 2006 census.

Number of employees	Number of businesses
100 plus	72
20-99	750
5-19	2,544
1-4	6,471
Sole traders (no employees)	12,663
TOTAL BUSINESSES	22,500

The larger employers included the health service, State and local government, several manufacturers, food processors, logistics and distribution centres, construction, clubs, resorts, call centres, large retailers and the education sector (schools, university and TAFE). The region has been successful in attracting larger businesses in manufacturing, food processing and logistics, with these businesses being part of national or global enterprises. There are only a handful of locally grown large businesses located on the Central Coast.

A narrow jobs base

Compared with other regions, the Central Coast has a narrow jobs base that is highly reliant on population related services, mainly

health, retail and construction. The region is under-represented in knowledge and business services, professional services, technical services and finance jobs. Many of the region's residents, who are employed in the knowledge and business services sectors, are commuting to jobs in Sydney. The 2006 census showed there were 120,712 employed people living on the Central Coast and 86,040 jobs located in the region². This is indicative of the pattern of commuting with around 38,000 residents travelling to jobs outside the region.

Skills

Relative to New South Wales overall and to the Sydney region, the Central Coast has lower average education levels and a smaller share of the population with tertiary qualifications. On an occupation basis, the region tends to have a higher percentage of skilled trades, production and transport and distribution workers. It has less high order white collar occupations, including managers, administrators and professionals, compared with the Sydney metropolitan area. A large share of people in professional and managerial occupations commute.

Part time jobs

There is a higher incidence of part-time employment in the region compared with Sydney and New South Wales. This reflects a number of issues including the structure of local jobs. There is a large percentage of population driven jobs in services, with much of the part-time employment being in retail, hospitality, accommodation, health and community services. This part-time employment can mask under-employment, where people would like more hours or a full-time job. A survey of individuals conducted as part of the *Smarter Central Coast Study* showed that 40% of part-time and casual employees wanted more hours of work³.

² The commute rate is higher than 30,000, as around 9% of jobs (7740) in the Central Coast are held by residents of other LGAs who commute to the Central Coast.

³ Smarter Central Coast, Individuals Survey, Buchan and NWC Research May 2008

⁴ Australian Regional Labour Markets, December Quarter 2008, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.



LOGISTICS AND WAREHOUSING

With a population of over five million located within two hours driving distance of the Central Coast, it is easy to see why logistics companies choose the region as a business base. Centrally located between Sydney and Newcastle, the Central Coast's strategic east coast location is also midway between Melbourne and Brisbane. With many key industrial estates providing easy b-double access to the F3 freeway, combined with the availability of land, a skilled and motivated workforce and a supportive planning regime, the management of even the most complex supply-chain warehousing and distribution system is possible.

Workforce participation

The region has lower overall labour force participation rates compared with Sydney and New South Wales. This highlights the age profile of the region and early retirement by some people. The share of people not in the labour force is higher in the region compared with Sydney and New South Wales.

Unemployment

The Central Coast has traditionally had higher rates of unemployment compared with New South Wales. This reflects a number of factors including continued high rates of youth unemployment due to an insufficient number of entry level jobs for young people. It also highlights social issues and long-term unemployment in the region. More recent data show a decline in total employment in the Gosford-Wyong area and pockets of continuing higher unemployment compared with the Sydney metropolitan area⁴.

Knowledge and innovation

There are relatively low levels of industrial research and development in industry located on the Central Coast. There are some emerging research centres at the University of Newcastle's Ourimbah Campus.

Connectedness

There is a lack of internal connectedness due to public transport access issues and the dispersed location of jobs and population centres. The Central Coast remains a car dependent region. This exacerbates the issue of unemployment, particularly for young people, who have difficulty in accessing public transport in some parts of the region.

THE ENVIRONMENT

The Central Coast, like other regions in Australia, faces a number of environmental issues. These issues include the potential impacts of peak oil⁵ on costs and future transport options in what is a car dependent region. Other issues are the effects of climate change on coastal areas, water availability, the requirements for carbon reduction and balancing future growth with the need to protect the area's significant biodiversity and landscape values.

These environmental issues will impact on the way we live, work and travel.

A major opportunity for the Central Coast is its natural environment and its linkage to lifestyle and tourism assets. Management of the environment will be important for the region as it experiences sustained population growth over the next two decades. This includes maintaining environmental assets, while also making the region a leader in environmentally sensitive urban planning and sustainable building design.

Looking to the future, the region will undergo changes as a result of peak oil and there will be a greater reliance on effective public transport. Consumers and industry will seek to reduce carbon emissions through changes in activities, new technologies and processes. These changes have major implications for the cost structures of all businesses, their production processes and operations. It is already impacting on how industrial, commercial, retail and community facilities are built and the types of housing constructed.

⁵ Peak oil is the term used to describe the point when worldwide production of crude oil peaks in volume. This is expected to result in an increase in oil prices from a decline in the availability of cheap and easily accessible oil sources.



While these factors will create challenges for regional planning and environmental management, they will also generate major new business opportunities and green jobs. A range of new jobs is being created in environmental management, both natural and built environment, environmental engineering, resources management and in building and construction. They are also requiring a green re-skilling of other occupations.

Environmental factors will be important in shaping aspects of future economic development of the region.

COMMUNITY ATTITUDES

Surveys conducted as part of the development of the *REDES* showed that business and the community generally have a positive view of the Central Coast and its long term prospects.

For business, positive factors shaping the future are:

- workforce availability;
- accessibility of the location;
- regional market size; and
- lower business costs.

Businesses have concerns about the structure of the economy, the level of skill, internal transport and movement, infrastructure

and social issues. The structure of the economy was an issue. This included the lack of enough large businesses in the region and exposure to employment sectors that are most vulnerable at times of recession. These sectors also have a low skills base. There were also concerns about a slowing economy and rising costs impacting on business activity. There was a focus on Gosford regional city and for a long term revitalisation strategy for the CBD and the waterfront, including a proactive approach to development. Social concerns included high unemployment, particularly youth unemployment and under employment. Internal movement was an issue particularly the road system and public transport affecting movements and accessibility to jobs and services.

The community wanted to see more local jobs being created, less commuting and regional infrastructure improved to cope with a growing population. They valued their coastal environment and lifestyle and accessibility to Sydney and wanted improved public transport. They also wanted action on jobs, which included attracting more large businesses and government departments and encouraging small business growth, while also boosting regional skills through continued education for young people and more training.

TOURISM

Offering a complete contrast to the hustle and bustle of city life, the Central Coast is conveniently located just over an hour's drive north of Sydney and south of Newcastle. With an area stretching from the Hawkesbury River to the south of Lake Macquarie, visitors are enticed to the Central Coast to discover a world of beautiful coastlines, breathtaking views, sparkling lakes and pristine

hinterland areas. Equally enticing are attractions such as the Australian Reptile Park, Australia Walkabout Wildlife Park, Norah Head Lighthouse, Treetop Adventure Park and Australia's largest horse riding centre at Glenworth Valley. The scuttling of the ex HMAS Adelaide off Terrigal and the opening of the Bluetongue Brewery will provide increased opportunities for tourism on the Central Coast.

SUSTAINABLE





REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

The *REDES* provides a unique opportunity to shape the region's future development in ways which are sustainable from both an economic and environmental perspective.

THE REDES STRATEGY

The *REDES* aims at delivering a sustainable, smart and connected Central Coast.

The key objectives of the *REDES* are:

- To develop a more robust and sustainable regional economy;
- To deliver more than 45,000 new jobs by 2031, increasing the region's level of employment self-containment and providing jobs for a growing population;
- To build skills for the future through a stronger learning culture and targeted skills programs;
- To shape new areas of advantage and business opportunity through increasing the level of research and innovation in the region;
- To ensure the delivery of key infrastructure necessary to support ongoing employment growth;
- To encourage employment growth in key employment nodes, including strategic centres, employment lands and smaller centres;
- To create economic development partnerships between business and government; and
- To provide effective mechanisms for coordinating the strategy.

These objectives will be achieved by identifying a number of component strategies.

From an implementation perspective, there are several factors that will be important for the success of the strategy. These include targeting programs to specific industry sectors, piloting innovative programs on the Central Coast, taking a region-wide approach to marketing and business attraction, developing strong regional partnerships and utilising more co-ordinated approaches that link government programs and their delivery to business.

An integrated region-wide approach is needed to ensure that the Central Coast can capture new opportunities in a highly competitive world for new investment and jobs.

It should be noted that supporting agencies and organisations undertake a large number of operational activities and programs that are not listed as separate strategies, these will also continue to occur.





MANUFACTURING

An increasing number of manufacturers on the Central Coast are finding market opportunities in globally competitive overseas markets. This demonstrated ability to compete globally showcases the capability and efficiency of manufacturing industry in the region. Many businesses are using advanced continuous improvement and innovation discovery techniques to put them at the leading edge of manufacturing practice. As a result, goods manufactured in the region enjoy a strong reputation for quality and performance.

STRATEGIES

In this section strategies which will deliver the outcomes necessary are summarised. Detailed strategies and action plans will be published separately on an on-going basis.

Strategy 1. Strengthening the Regional Economy through:

- **Securing new jobs and supporting existing jobs by:**
 - Facilitating employment growth associated with population growth;
 - Building on existing advantages in food production, logistics, manufacturing and tourism;
 - Creating new advantages through clusters in the health, green industries and ageing sectors.
- **Attracting new businesses to the region, especially in the following sectors:**
 - Food production and associated services;
 - Logistics and associated services;
 - Manufacturing;
 - Tourism;
 - Government agencies; and
 - Call and service centres.
- **Supporting business growth by developing existing small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) through:**
 - Business mentoring programs;
 - Business development programs;
 - Active business incubators; and
 - Business training programs.

Strategy 2. Developing Future Skills through:

- **Designating the Central Coast as a learning region by:**
 - Establishing a Central Coast Learning Region Network, which will promote a learning culture, create community awareness and an increase in take-up of education and training.

- **Boosting skills through:**
 - Sector skills action plans covering skill shortages, emerging industries and small business and establishing business-education partnerships.
- **Strengthening business/education partnerships by:**
 - Brokering business engagement with schools;
 - Ensuring young people develop skills for future employment; and
 - Increasing uptake of vocational education and training (VET) in schools programs, work experience and apprenticeships.
- **Providing targeted skills programs focused on:**
 - Re-skilling mature aged workers;
 - Providing work skills for disadvantaged people;
 - Developing new skills for displaced workers; and
 - Developing employment skills within indigenous communities.

Strategy 3. Increasing knowledge and innovation through:

- **Developing research programs focused on:**
 - Existing sectors, such as health sciences, education, sports science, coastal ecologies and agribusiness; and
 - New sectors, such as green industries - environment and energy, ageing and logistics.
- **Establishing knowledge precincts by:**
 - Creating education/research precincts at Ourimbah and in the strategic centres of Gosford and Tuggerah-Wyong.
- **Establishing a Central Coast Research Centre focused on:**
 - Facilitating innovation in local business through research linkages and new programs; and
 - Monitoring trends in the region.
- **Encouraging innovation by:**
 - Creating new knowledge business;
 - Developing and strengthening innovative businesses; and
 - Developing business linkages.

LIFE AND LIFESTYLE

The Central Coast region offers an attractive lifestyle for families. It boasts clean beaches, calm coastal lakes suitable for boating and reasonably priced housing. The region is also attractive to retirees with its moderate climate and accessibility to medical services both in the region and Sydney.

The region has a number of significant natural assets, ranging from its proximity to the ports of Sydney and Newcastle with good road and rail connections to these centres, a well-established industry base, productive agricultural land, the natural environment with both marine and land-based bio-diversity, a strong sports participation culture and a growing creative group based on music performance and recording.

The Central Coast is the ninth largest population centre in Australia and the third largest in NSW and has discrete natural borders, such as the Hawkesbury River and Lake Macquarie.



Strategy 4. Ensuring an adequate supply of lands for employment through:

- **Ensuring land supply by:**
 - Developing an up to date understanding of both current land supply and future land supply opportunities; and
 - Developing a strategic framework for the future delivery of lands for employment.
- **Streamlining planning processes by:**
 - Identifying strategic projects;
 - Implementing streamlined approval processes;
 - Continuing to implement the State Government's reforms to the NSW planning system; and
 - Facilitating the timely delivery of major development proposals and ensuring an ongoing supply of land for employment.

Strategy 5. Focus on centres development through:

- Creating sustainable centres as major employment hubs;
- Developing key centres in accordance with the Central Coast Regional Strategy;
- Developing a stronger network of new, revitalised and vibrant centres across the region;
- Providing suitable locations for small business;
- Ensuring suitable commercial space is available to attract larger employers to the region; and
- Providing suitable commercial and retail floor space in lower order centres.

Strategy 6. Provision of infrastructure to support economic growth through:

- Developing a regional infrastructure plan covering road links, rail, public transport, telecommunications, water and energy; and
- Advocating for the Central Coast to be a priority region for the national broadband network.

Strategy 7. Marketing the region as a business location through:

- Positioning the Central Coast as a business location;
- Developing marketing tools for broader use; and
- Developing coordinated investment attraction marketing.

ACTIONS

Agencies and organisations will continue to develop specific action plans to deliver against the strategies. These action plans will be reported on on a regular basis to ensure progress is being made on the implementation of the *REDES*.

The *REDES* will be supported by high quality information and regional analysis. This includes business information to track trends in the region and analysis to identify business opportunities and targets.

A key element will be sharing this information across government and business. This will contribute to an improved understanding of the region's economy and will allow supporting strategies to be responsive to change when necessary.



THE FUTURE

The *Regional Economic Development and Employment Strategy* is a long-term strategy, which will shape future economic development and employment growth on the Central Coast.

While the directions for the strategy cover the period to 2031, the immediate focus is on the next five years and actions that can be taken to strengthen the economy. The strategy will generate new jobs, which build on currently recognised advantages.

In the longer term the Central Coast region will look quite different from today. The following table illustrates what the differences might be in assessing the effectiveness of the *REDES* in the longer term.

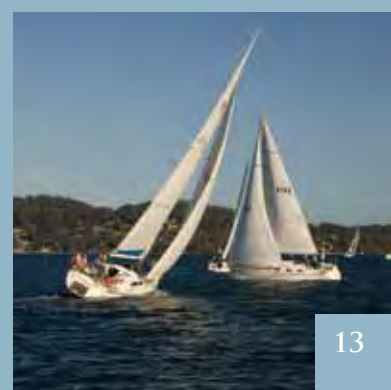
INDUSTRY STRUCTURE
Indicators
More knowledge based businesses located in the region.
More mid-sized businesses that are operating in national and international markets.
More emerging innovative businesses in the region.
A strong and growing small business sector.
An industry structure that takes account of the environmental challenges associated with climate change and changes in energy prices.

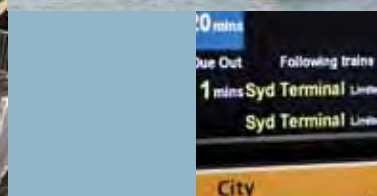
EMPLOYMENT MIX
Indicators
Higher job self-containment rates and lower commute rates.
A faster rate of job creation in the region.
More high skill and professional jobs being created in the region.
Increased participation of young people in the paid workforce.
Higher skill levels and more professionals working in the region.
Greater flexibility in working arrangements (for mature workers, women and others) to enable a return to employment.

ENVIRONMENT
Indicators
Environmental assets (coastal and inland) maintained.
Improved resources management (energy and water).
Implementation of environmentally sensitive urban planning, design and development.
Increase in public transport use.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING
Indicators
Higher Year 11 and 12 retention rates in schools.
Increased university qualifications in the population.
Increased VET enrolments.
Higher rates of participation in VET in school programs.
Strong education/industry partnerships in place.
Improved education/ work pathways and transitions for young people.
Increased business spending on training programs.
Business and community commitment to lifetime learning.

KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION
Indicators
More local businesses engaged in research and innovation.
Industry research centres established in region.
A broader suite of university research centres and programs.
Regional industry/university research partnerships established.
Development of research precincts.





THE FUTURE (CONT.)

SOCIAL

Indicators

- A lower average unemployment rate and youth unemployment rate.
- A reduction in the number of long term unemployed persons.
- Increased participation in the workforce
- Higher average income levels.
- Reduced numbers on income support programs.

PLANNING

Indicators

- Vibrant city centres with more jobs.
- Businesses attracted to strategic centres.
- Planned development of employment lands in strategic locations.
- Revitalised local centres.
- Strong integration of economic development and planning decisions.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Indicators

- Planned infrastructure development that is aligned with the industry growth profile.
- Improvements in the road network and public transport options.
- Extension of telecommunications corridor and high speed broadband access.
- Improvements in key utilities – power and water availability.

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the *REDES* will involve cross agency collaboration in government, the adoption of a region-wide perspective and active involvement by business and the education sector in a wide range of areas of the strategy.

It will also be supported through implementation of the strategic priorities and actions outlined in the *Central Coast Regional Business Growth Plan*.

The implementation of the *REDES* will be achieved through a regional compact for economic development. The regional compact is a commitment by the lead organisations in relation to economic development and the long term future of the Central Coast. Those agencies have the responsibility of leading the implementation of the *REDES* strategies.

A governance model has been established to ensure overall direction, coordination, delivery and continuity of the *REDES*. This model will be supported by arrangements for ongoing collaboration and engagement.

Implementation leadership will be provided through Regional Development Australia – Central Coast NSW (RDACC) working across the three tiers of government and business.



CONNECTED



TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The Central Coast is the connection, linking NSW's two largest population centres, Sydney and Newcastle.

The Central Coast has a resident population of about 305,000, 1.5% of the nation's population. It is the third largest population centre in NSW and the ninth largest nationally.

Of great significance is the fact that some 38,000 people leave the region daily to work, largely in the Sydney metropolitan area. This makes significant road and rail infrastructure essential. Key links are the F3 freeway and the CityRail network.

The unique positioning of the Central Coast provides a great opportunity to leverage the economic activities of the Sydney and Newcastle regions through the creation of employment and service industries locally, connected to these larger population centres.



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NSW GOVERNMENT
Department of Planning

2006-31

CENTRAL COAST REGIONAL STRATEGY



The Central Coast is rich in natural resources and diverse ecosystems with more than half the Region comprising national parks, forests, conservation areas, drinking water catchments and waterways. The area ranges from the plateaus and valleys of the rural hinterlands to the more developed coastal areas, featuring an abundance of waterways and beaches. This Regional Strategy will be used to help ensure that population and economic growth is appropriately balanced against the need to maintain the unique and defining environmental qualities of the Central Coast.

The Central Coast Regional Strategy applies to the local government areas of Gosford and Wyong and is one of a number of regional strategies recently prepared by the Department of Planning. The Strategy provides a framework for local councils in their preparation of new principal local environmental plans.

The primary purpose of the Regional Strategy is to ensure that adequate land is available and appropriately located to sustainably accommodate the projected housing needs and promote local employment opportunities over the next 25 years. The Strategy refocuses development to strengthen and increase the vibrancy of centres and to support the roles of Gosford city centre as a regional city and Tuggerah–Wyong as a major centre.

Detailed strategies are required to facilitate and implement the growth in employment and housing on ‘greenfield’ estates to minimise conflict in the use of the Region’s rural and resource lands. A Structure Plan for North Wyong will be prepared to ensure that future greenfield development occurs in a coordinated and sustainable way. A regional conservation plan will also be prepared to ensure that greenfield development and development around the urban fringes makes a positive contribution to the protection of sensitive environments and biodiversity.

This Strategy represents an agreed NSW government position on the future of the Central Coast. It is the pre-eminent planning document for the Central Coast Region and has been prepared to complement and inform other relevant State planning instruments. Implementation of the Regional Strategy is underpinned on a whole-of-government basis through the action plans outlined in the *State plan: a new direction for NSW*.

The Regional Strategy incorporates the specific regional infrastructure requirements identified in the *State infrastructure strategy 2008–09 to 2017–18 New South Wales*. The Regional Strategy will continue to inform future infrastructure investment priorities for the Central Coast. Infrastructure planning will take into account the broad planning framework identified in the Strategy, to ensure that future population growth is supported by services and associated infrastructure.

The Central Coast Regional Strategy applies to the period 2006–31 and will be reviewed every five years.

Central Coast Regional Strategy

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Foreword

The release of the final Central Coast Regional Strategy establishes the necessary planning framework to deliver a prosperous and sustainable future for the Region's current and future residents.

Known for its outstanding environmental qualities and coastal lifestyle, the Central Coast also has the advantage of being strategically located between Australia's only global city – Sydney, the regional city of Newcastle and the Lower Hunter. It is home to more than 300 000 people.

Over the next 25 years the Central Coast is set to grow by around 4000 people per year. As such, and considering the improved outlook for water supply in the Region, the final Strategy allows for the need to accommodate a population increase

of 100 000 over this time, with associated increases in housing and employment provision. Future reviews of the Strategy will continue to monitor the Region's water supply and other issues that may impact on population forecasts.

The final Central Coast Regional Strategy will ensure that this population growth is accommodated in a manner that preserves and enhances quality of life for the Region's residents, while also protecting the natural environment.

In particular, the Strategy will limit expansion of the urban footprint by protecting land west of the F3 Freeway from further residential development, and improve employment self-containment by creating more opportunities for local jobs closer to home.

The final Strategy also complements the revitalisation of the Gosford city centre, through the Cities Taskforce project, which has established Gosford as one of a network of six regional cities underpinning the State's economic growth.

All of these objectives will be achieved in partnership with local government, setting a clear and sustainable direction for growth that will continue to evolve to reflect the long-term trends and needs of the Region, building on its many existing strengths.

The Hon. Frank Sartor MP

Minister for Planning
Minister for Redfern Waterloo
Minister for the Arts





1

The Central Coast
is located between

Sydney and Newcastle
and covers an area of
1854 square kilometres.

The Region extends
from Gwandalan and
Doyalson in the north,
down the coast to
Patonga in the south
and west to Bucketty
and beyond Mangrove
Creek. It is the
traditional lands of the
Darkinjung, Garingai
and Awabakal people.

The Central Coast

The Central Coast offers an attractive lifestyle and is a recognised tourist area. The Region's residents, 304 700 at last count, enjoy a combination of city advantages with high amenity coastal, suburban and rural lifestyles. Most people live in detached houses both in existing areas and the new residential areas.

In recent decades the population growth rate on the Central Coast has been nearly four per cent per annum. Since the peak population growth rate of 11 000 people per annum in 1989 – due in part to the opening of the F3 Freeway link to Somersby – the rate of growth has steadily declined to its recent levels of around 3400 people per year (slightly more than one per cent per year).

The character of settlement and development within the Region has evolved from its environment and associated economic development. The area's initial European settlement was as a timber and agricultural area, and more recently it has emerged as a place with strengths in tourism, retiree settlement and family homes. The

environment has been a major influence on the Region and its community which will continue throughout the life of this Strategy and beyond.

Since 1989 there was an exhaustion of large release areas in the Gosford local government area, followed by an increase in greenfield development in the Wyong local government area and an increase in medium density development in coastal locations and around the Gosford City Centre.

The Central Coast's population is dispersed across a variety of urban settings that include towns, villages and neighbourhoods. Large centres on the Central Coast include Gosford, Tuggerah–Wyong, Erina, Woy Woy and The Entrance.

In non-urban areas there are a number of rural villages. The Region's population strongly identifies the Central Coast as a separate Region and it was formally recognised as such in 2005 by the Geographical Names Board.

Due to the existing dispersed nature of settlement, the Region's transport networks must be

1

the central coast



strengthened, and the location of future employment opportunities located to support economic growth and maximise the efficiency of the transport system. Of particular importance, is the development of key employment lands and improving links to the Gosford regional city, Tuggerah–Wyang major centre and the wider network of centres.

The Region has outstanding environmental qualities, including 81 kilometres of ocean coastline, extensive waterways including the Hawkesbury River, Brisbane Water, Tuggerah Lakes, coastal lagoons,

Wyang River, creeks and parts of southern Lake Macquarie. To the west the Central Coast plateaus and Yarramalong and Dooralong valleys extend to the foothills of the Great Dividing Range.

More than half of the Region is comprised of national parks, state-owned and privately-owned bushland, regional and local open space, conservation areas and aquatic systems including water supply catchment areas. The majority of existing and future development on the Central Coast is located in coastal areas and the valleys and plains that

surround the coast's numerous waterways. These characteristics require careful management to maintain the distinct environmental character of the Central Coast.



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Regional challenges

The Region's waterways, topography and conservation areas, along with important resource lands, limit the expansion of the urban footprint. This means that future growth will largely be contained within existing settlement areas, apart from nominated greenfield areas. In planning for growth and change, the Central Coast Region faces a number of challenges in relation to water supply, economics and transport, the environment and population centres and housing.

WATER

The Central Coast has recently experienced its worst drought on record. Combined with the changes predicted to occur as a result of climate change, developing a safe and secure water supply without compromising the health of the Region's water sources is one of the greatest challenges that the Region faces. These changes mean that a range of options need to be considered to develop a more secure water supply system and that future growth must be carefully managed.

The Central Coast plateaus and Wyong valleys are important water catchment areas and are coming under increased pressure for development. Future growth across the Region needs to be sensitive to both its impact on the quality of the water supply and the increased demand on the water supply system.

The key water challenges include:

- providing a sustainable long-term water supply for residential, employment and environmental purposes
- protecting the health of the Region's rivers, lakes, underground water sources and estuaries
- protecting water catchment areas from inappropriate development
- managing population growth in relation to the capacity of water supply
- investigating alternative water sources that are sustainable in the longer term.

ECONOMIC AND TRANSPORT

Perhaps the greatest challenge is to create local job opportunities to match labour force growth, whilst protecting the Region's natural environment. The proportion of the adult workforce commuting out of the Region for work has increased to over 25 per cent, resulting in a range of specific infrastructure and social challenges. The Region needs to take advantage of its location between the global city of Sydney and regional city of Newcastle, and increase employment self containment, to reduce the need for out-commuting. Providing capacity for over 45 000 new jobs over the next 25 years will help ensure a robust and adaptable economy.

The economic base of the Central Coast is varied and covers many sectors. Key economic sectors include manufacturing, retail, agriculture, tourism, construction, and service industries such as health and community services and property and business services. Sectors expected to experience strong growth over the next 25 years include wholesaling,



retailing, property and business services, tourism, health services, cultural and recreational services and personal services.

Strengths of the Central Coast's economy include innovative small manufacturers, competitiveness in logistics, strong growth in building and construction, food production, hospitality and tourism.

The key economic and transport challenges include:

- ensuring that sufficient employment lands and commercial office space is provided in appropriate locations to accommodate growth in existing and emerging industries and businesses
- increasing and diversifying job opportunities and increasing the level of employment self containment
- promoting innovation and skills development within the Region
- supporting and strengthening the existing employment base to help key industries achieve critical mass
- encouraging and investigating opportunities to diversify the Region's economy
- protecting existing and proposed transport corridors within the Region and to surrounding regions
- capitalising on the Region's position between Sydney and Newcastle

Planning in the context of Sydney and the Lower Hunter regions

The Central Coast Region is bound by the Sydney Region to the south and the Lower Hunter Region to the north. Sydney and the Lower Hunter Region will continue to significantly influence both the economy and people of the Central Coast over the next 25 years and beyond. If these relationships are not managed effectively then the Coast's identity, unique character and natural environment will suffer.

The relative affordability of land on the Central Coast in comparison to Sydney, the attractive natural environment and the large number of workers who commute to Sydney has placed pressure on property values and transport infrastructure. While Sydney will continue to play a major role for residents on the Central Coast, particularly in respect to its employment and tourism networks, this Strategy aims to reduce the percentage of commuters by providing more local jobs and strategically targeting employment types that support the Greater Metropolitan Region. The Strategy

is also aimed at retaining the special character of the Central Coast.

The Lower Hunter Regional Strategy plans for more than 160 000 additional people by 2031. Newcastle is identified as the regional city for the Lower Hunter and Morisset has been identified as an emerging major centre. Future additional residential development is planned for the Wyee, Nords Wharf, Gwandalan and parts of Catherine Hill Bay, which are in and to the north of the Central Coast Region. The Central Coast will continue to provide jobs for residents of the Lower Hunter and vice versa. Planning for the North Wyong Structure Plan Area needs to carefully consider the existing and future relationship between the two regions.

Planning for the northern most part of the North Wyong Shire Structure Plan Area, from Gwandalan to Catherine Hill Bay, also needs to be considered in the context of the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy, particularly the identified urban areas and conservation corridors in and adjoining the Wallarah Peninsula.

- supporting and strengthening tourism opportunities as well as managing the impact of seasonal population fluctuations on the Region's environment and infrastructure.

ENVIRONMENT

The continued demand for new housing within the constrained geography of the Region could place pressure on the Central Coast's environment. The North Wyong

Shire Structure Plan Area covers land within the catchments of Lake Macquarie and Tuggerah Lakes, the Porters Creek wetland and includes a significant east-west regional biodiversity corridor. Planning in this area, and throughout the Region, needs to minimise adverse impacts on these areas and ensure future residents are not at risk from hazards such as flooding, coastal erosion, bushfire and changes due to climate change. Existing development is concentrated along the coastline



and coastal waterways and already places pressure on these sensitive environments.

Securing the Region's long-term water supply without compromising the health of the Region's rivers, estuaries and lakes is a priority for the Central Coast.

Population growth and the demand for new housing must be managed to protect the natural environment, the Region's biodiversity, its agricultural and resource lands and its Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural heritage.

The western half of the Region (west of the F3 Freeway) is largely comprised of the Central Coast plateaus and Wyong valleys. These lands support agricultural production and contain water supply catchments which must be protected from urban and rural residential uses. The natural environment also includes a number of resource areas that need to be balanced with biodiversity values.

The key environmental challenges include:

- providing a sustainable long-term water supply
- providing a balance between future development and important conservation values
- improving identification, protection and enhancement of natural environments, including significant biodiversity corridors, regionally significant vegetation, coastal lakes and estuaries, and landscape values

- managing stormwater to protect downstream receiving environments and identifying opportunities for sustainable use of this valuable resource
- improving understanding of Aboriginal cultural heritage values and incorporating this information within land use planning and natural resource management processes
- allowing for development and redevelopment while protecting significant cultural heritage
- accepting the value of rural lands as food-producing lands and ensuring the long term protection of these assets
- managing natural hazards in new developments, including flooding, coastal erosion and inundation (including the impacts of climate change), land instability, bushfire and acid sulphate soils.

POPULATION, CENTRES AND HOUSING

More growth has recently occurred in Wyong Shire than in Gosford. The majority of population growth has been in-migration by retirees and families relocating from the Greater Metropolitan Region, especially Sydney.

The proportion of the population over 65 is projected to increase substantially over the next 25 years to around 24 per cent. This is the highest percentage for the Greater Metropolitan Region, which covers

Sydney, Wollongong, Newcastle as well as the Central Coast. As well as the general ageing of the current population (a large proportion of which are families), longer life expectancy will also play a major role in increasing the number of people aged over 65. Retirees are likely to continue to live in coastal areas such as Ettalong, Toukley, Kincumber and Umina, which creates a number of specific infrastructure needs.

The annual population growth is expected to average 4000 people per year, or slightly more than one per cent per year, between 2006 and 2031. By way of comparison, historical growth rates for the Central Coast prior to the year 2000 have been over 2.5 per cent or approximately 7000 people per year.

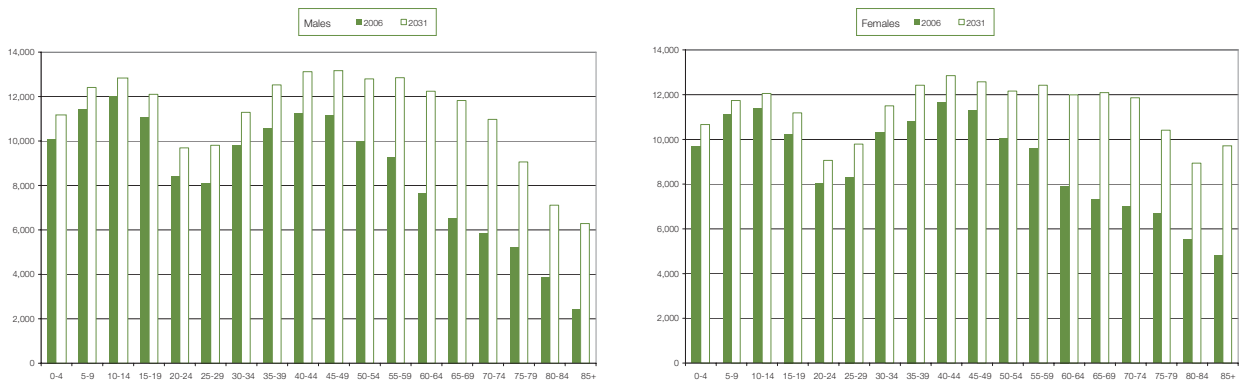
There remains a noticeable reduction in the population of adults aged 20–29 years old. Historically, this has been attributed to people in this age group moving to Sydney for lifestyle and employment reasons. A goal in providing increased jobs, education, cultural, recreation and entertainment opportunities on the Central Coast is to reduce the future loss of this age group.

Services to support population growth will need to be planned and delivered as this Regional Strategy is implemented. These services include social infrastructure, transport infrastructure, the identification of new landfill sites, continued waste minimisation programs, upgraded electricity

2

regional challenges

Figure 1: Central Coast aged distribution 2006 and 2031



Source: NSW Department of Planning

infrastructure, and a sustainable water supply. The delivery of state infrastructure to service this growth will be coordinated through the NSW Government's State Infrastructure Strategy.

Improved urban design in new release areas and increased densities within centres and infill development will promote sustainability and help to protect the Central Coast's unique natural setting.

In 2001, there were 139 000 dwellings in the Region and, of these, 79 per cent were detached dwellings (compared with 64 per cent across NSW), 6.9 per cent flats, units and apartments (compared with 18 per cent across NSW), and 10 per cent semi-detached. The Central Coast in 2001 also had a high dwelling vacancy rate of 12.5 per cent compared with 8.9 per cent across NSW. The vacancy rate however is expected to decrease over the next 25 years as more people retire to their current holiday homes.

As the Region grows, the rate of in-migration is set to fall but be replaced by natural increase, i.e. more births than deaths.

The key population and housing challenges include:

- providing the right type of housing in the right place and at the right time
- focusing new development within existing urban areas and the North Wyong Shire Structure Plan Area
- providing housing choice in appropriate locations, reflecting changing demographics and associated reduction in household size
- reducing youth out-migration by providing vibrant town centres with increased job, education and training opportunities
- ensuring quality urban design and amenity that is sensitive and complementary to the character and lifestyle of the Region's centres

- implementing a centres hierarchy that clearly identifies the roles and relationships of centres
- focusing population growth to ensure efficient use of infrastructure, including public transport
- rejuvenating Gosford as the regional city of the Central Coast, developing Tuggerah-Wyong as the Region's major centre and revitalising other town centres to attract both residential and business investment
- strengthening the Central Coast's unique identity
- providing a framework for the planning of new infrastructure and facilities for the growing population and concentrations of elderly people and young families.



3

A vision for the future

A prosperous, sustainable, liveable and well-coordinated future for the Central Coast

PROSPEROUS

A competitive, adaptable and sustainable economy with increased local employment opportunities and a place where people increasingly want to live, work, visit and invest.

SUSTAINABLE

A healthy and sustainable environment continues to be enjoyed by future generations.

LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES

Communities supported by a range of housing, employment, education, training, research and life-long learning opportunities with access to vibrant, well-serviced centres. The design of new developments and the redevelopment of existing areas encourages community interaction and cohesion.

IMPROVED REGIONAL COORDINATION AND IDENTITY

A region where important issues such as the provision and location of essential human services and associated infrastructure are identified, coordinated and well managed.

There exists a strong regional identity and pride in the Central Coast.



THE CENTRAL COAST AT 2031

In 2031 the Central Coast will have:

- a population of just over 400 000 people
- an additional 56 000 dwellings
- more units and townhouses in key centres, to provide a better housing mix as larger centres are revitalised and new residential land is released
- a regional city at Gosford and major centre at Tuggerah–Wyong, focused on business

STATE SIGNIFICANT SITES

The Minister for Planning has declared that two major projects in Wyong Shire will be considered as State Significant Sites, under State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Projects) 2005. The Minister will determine new planning controls for these important projects.

The projects are:

- **Warnervale Town Centre**
This mixed use development covers a 119 hectare precinct in Warnervale, and will provide a new town centre focused on public transport. The town centre will house up to 5000 residents, along with retail, commercial, community and conservation areas.
- **Wyong Employment Zone**
This site is strategically located between the Warnervale Town Centre and the F3 Freeway. The Wyong Employment Zone is expected to generate 6000 jobs and to set aside important conservation areas.

activity, housing opportunities and employment generation

- town centres at The Entrance, Bateau Bay, Erina, Lake Haven, Toukley, Woy Woy and Warnervale
- seventeen villages and numerous neighbourhoods with viable shops and services and high amenity.

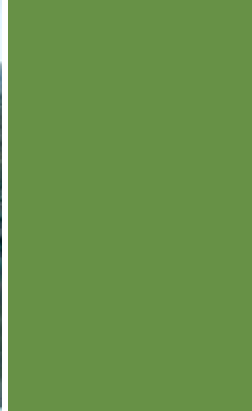
The Region will also have:

- sufficient employment land and retail and commercial floor space to provide capacity for more than 45 000 additional jobs
- better connected centres and employment areas protected rural and resource lands and conservation areas as urban development is directed to existing centres and appropriate release areas in the north of Wyong shire
- a strong economy that maximises investment opportunities for competitive

businesses and employment opportunities for the regional workforce

- increased opportunities for local products and services to be provided to other areas within the Greater Metropolitan Region
- an economy that effectively competes in a range of value-added activities in business services, cultural, sporting and recreational industries, health services, advanced manufacturing and logistics, tourism and hospitality
- new business opportunities that support the lifestyle and service requirements of a rapidly growing and ageing population
- recognition for Gosford as an important public administration centre within the Greater Metropolitan Region.





THE STRATEGY AT A GLANCE

The Central Coast Regional Strategy will provide the strategic framework to guide sustainable growth within the Region over the next 25 years. This Regional Strategy:

- Provides a plan to accommodate an additional 100 000 people expected to be living in the Region by 2031.
- Identifies that an additional 56 000 dwellings will be required over the next 25 years to accommodate the increased population and falling household occupancy levels.
- Focuses the majority of new housing in existing urban areas – 71 per cent or 40 000 new dwellings will be located in centres (including up to 3000 in and around the new Warnervale town centre) and existing urban areas. Twenty-nine per cent or 16 000 new dwellings will be located in other new land release areas with the majority of these in the North Wyong Shire Structure Plan Area.
- Provides a framework that allows for flexibility in the distribution of population and employment targets, having

regard to more detailed local planning that is consistent with the Regional Strategy and centres hierarchy.

- Promotes Gosford as the regional city of the Central Coast and Tuggerah–Wyong as the major centre with a focus on employment generation and the key priorities for centre planning.
- Identifies the North Wyong Shire Structure Plan Area as the focus for new employment lands and new greenfield residential development and the key priority for release area planning.
- Nominates a framework under which future lands will be identified.
- Supports creating the capacity for over 45 000 jobs in the Region over the next 25 years: 6000 in Gosford, 5500 in Tuggerah–Wyong, 18 000 in the remaining centres and other employment types (e.g. home business), 5000 in Employment Lands and 10 500 in the North Wyong Shire Structure Plan Area.

- Provides a framework by which future employment opportunities beyond this can be identified and located.
- Prevents development in areas constrained by coastal processes, flooding, wetlands, important primary industry resources and significant scenic and cultural landscapes.
- Protects the cultural, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage values and visual character of the Region's centres and surrounding landscapes.
- Provides a framework for important environmental assets, landscape values and natural resources to be identified and protected.
- Provides a framework for future rail and road transport infrastructure to be identified and prioritised.
- Requires that new development occurs in a sustainable manner.

All major development proposals will be required to contribute to additional regional infrastructure costs.



LINKAGE BETWEEN CENTRES

Major corridors in both LGAs provide the largest concentration of residential and employment development. The Region's intra-regional road network focuses this activity on the two major centres; The Gosford Regional City in Gosford LGA and the Tuggerah-Wyong Major Centre in Wyong LGA.



**NORTH WYONG SHIRE
STRUCTURE PLAN AREA**

A structure plan will identify land available for development and those areas that need to be preserved because of their conservation or resource value. The Structure Plan will include the majority of future greenfield release areas for the Region. The Wyong Employment Zone and a new Town Centre at Warnervale will be the initial focus of development within the structure plan area.



NEW EMPLOYMENT LANDS

The Wyong Employment Zone is a major employment node that is being planned between the Sparks Road F3 interchange and the site of the new Warnervale Town Centre. This node will capitalise on the location between Sydney and Newcastle, be over 300 hectares in size and generate capacity for up to 6000 new jobs.



EMPLOYMENT LANDS

Contain various employment activities such as factories, warehouses, high tech manufacturing, transport logistics or major storage operations with some associated offices. These places are vital to our economy.



CONSTRAINED EMPLOYMENT LANDS



RAIL NETWORK AND STATION



STRATEGIC BUS CORRIDOR



FREEWAY



HIGHWAY



MAJOR ROAD



NATIONAL PARK



REGIONAL/STATE PARK





RURAL AND RESOURCE LAND



EXISTING URBAN AREA



-  **PROPOSED URBAN AREAS**
-  **PROPOSED CONSERVATION AREAS**

*NORTH WEST
METROPOLITAN
SUBREGION*

*NORTH
METROPOLITAN
SUBREGION*

LOWER HUNTER REGION

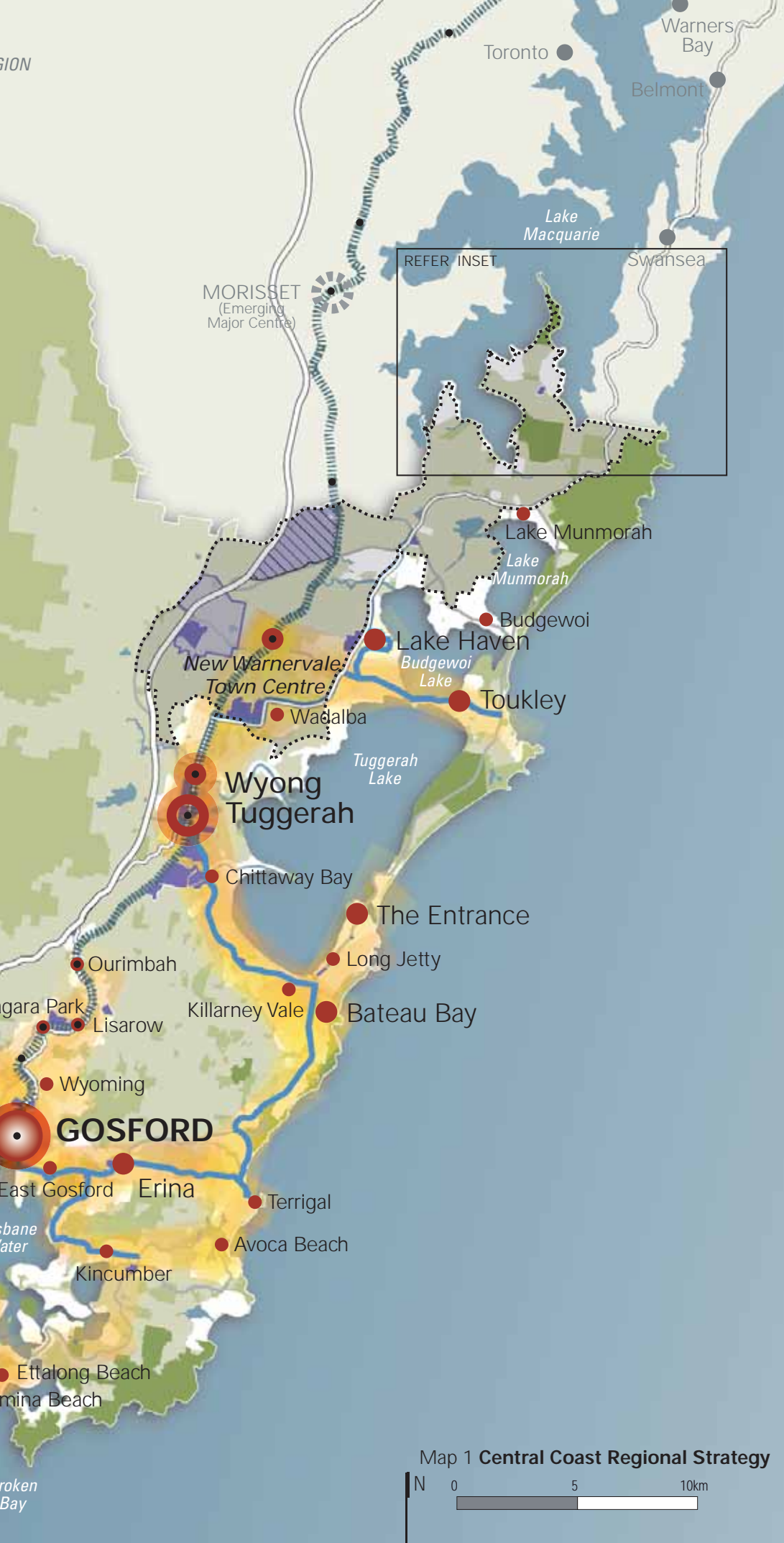
Nia

West Gosford

Woy Woy

Hawkesbury
River

*NORTH
EAST*



100 000 more people
56 000 new homes
45 000+ new jobs
25 year plan
7 town centres
1 major centre
1 regional city

GOSFORD CITY LGA

Gosford City is projected to grow by an additional 30 000 people, with the majority being housed in existing urban areas and in centres. No new greenfield areas are planned.

WYONG SHIRE LGA

Wyong Shire is projected to grow by an additional 70 000 people who will be housed in existing urban areas and green field areas. The Tuggerah-Wyong Major Centre will be the Shire's principal centre for retail, business and administration.



REGIONAL CITY

Gosford will be a city serving the entire Region. It will provide the Central Coast with higher-order civic and administration services, cultural and recreational facilities, medical/health specialists and services (including a major regional hospital), professional services, a regional library, regional entertainment facilities and a regional civic precinct. The revitalisation of Gosford will refocus it as the Regional City and strengthen its economic and employment significance.



MAJOR CENTRE

The Tuggerah-Wyong centre will develop as the Region's Major Centre and will perform vital economic, employment, civic, residential, social and cultural roles for the northern half of the Central Coast and support the Gosford Regional City.



TOWN CENTRE

Town Centres will generally have concentrations of retail, health and professional services mixed with medium density residential within and adjoining the centre. Town Centres will also serve surrounding residential areas and have a public transport interchange.



VILLAGE

Village Centres will generally be small to medium sized concentrations of retail, health and other services integrated with medium density (largely town house style) residential living. Local public transport will provide connections to Town Centres.





Centres and housing

BACKGROUND

Settlement in the Central Coast is characterised by a network of towns, villages, neighbourhoods and rural communities. Seventy per cent of future residential growth to 2031 is forecast to occur in the Wyong local government area with 30 per cent in the Gosford local government area. Map 2 shows nominated centres, existing greenfield areas and the North Wyong Shire Structure Plan Area that will be investigated for its potential for additional greenfield development.

To accommodate this growth, the Central Coast will require 56 000 new dwellings with 40 000 new homes to be located in centres and existing urban areas and 16 000 new homes located in greenfield release areas. The largest proportion of future growth will be in existing and emerging centres.

The identified benefits of concentrating growth and activities in centres include:

- improved access to and coordination of retail, office, health, education, leisure, entertainment and cultural

facilities, and community and personal services

- collaboration, competition and innovation-sharing among clustered businesses
- more productive use of existing infrastructure (state and local)
- better returns and outcomes for public and private investment
- opportunity for increased sustainable transport options such as public transport, walking and cycling, leading to healthier communities and enabling people to carry out a number of activities in one location
- reinforced, revitalised and strengthened current centres
- protected sensitive and non-urban locations, including agricultural and resource lands. With such rapid historical population growth, the Region's unique character has changed
- providing appropriate design standards and guidelines to maintain and enhance centres will result in high quality development responsive to the Region's climate, natural

features, landscape and character.

The dwelling and employment capacity targets need to be distributed across the Region and in a variety of centres. Redevelopment and revitalisation strategies will be required for the strategic centres of Gosford and Tuggerah–Wyong, as well as other centres within the centres hierarchy. As well as controls on the built form, local councils will also need to consider infrastructure and servicing, and place management strategies to assist in achieving redevelopment objectives.

OUTCOMES

New development will include well designed housing within close proximity to services and facilities, preferably within walking distance. Well located new development will assist in creating better, attractive, adaptable and self-reliant settlements that foster a stronger sense of community identity and place. The provision of more adaptable housing will allow the ageing population to 'age in place'.

DEFINITIONS

Greenfield development

Development that occurs outside of the existing urban footprint, excluding minor infill, and includes areas already identified for future development.

Centres development

Development that occurs within and around the centres defined in the Regional Strategy.

Infill development

Development that occurs generally within the existing urban footprint and outside of the centres, such as dual occupancy development, subdivision of existing allotments and redevelopment of previously non-residential land within urban areas for residential purposes. This category can also include minor infill development on the edge of the urban footprint.

Sydney Region Land Supply Program

The NSW Government has established a Land Supply Program within the Department of Planning to ensure the strategic provision of jobs and housing at a local and subregional level. This program includes an enhanced Metropolitan Development Program (MDP) as well as establishing an Employment Lands Development Program (ELDP).

Metropolitan Development Program (MDP)

The NSW Government's key program for managing residential land and housing supply, and assisting

infrastructure coordination. Originally established in 1981 as the Urban Development Program, it includes both housing supply in the established areas and in fringe greenfield locations.

The NSW Government approval is required for new greenfield areas to be included on the MDP. They must be consistent with this Strategy and satisfy the Sustainability Criteria included in Appendix 3.

As part of the enhanced MDP a 'Five and Ten Year Staging and Sequencing Plan' is being prepared that includes a program for the release of land and identifies key infrastructure.

Employment Lands Development Program (ELDP)

The ELDP has been established to ensure land the Sydney Region will continue to have sufficient stocks of appropriately located, zoned and serviced land to support economic development and competitiveness. The ELDP will parallel the MDP. The two programs are aligned under the Land Supply Program.

METRIX planning tool

The Sydney Metropolitan Strategy committed to both subregional and regional planning, in consultation with local government and State agencies. The METRIX planning tool is an internet-based electronic model that has been developed by the Department of Planning to assist this process. The tool can be used by councils to estimate how many

dwelling might ideally be expected to be located within identified centres and how many may be expected to be outside of these centres.

The METRIX tool allows councils and the State Government to share information and to perform analysis of various scenarios for the distribution of future dwelling growth. When council input their long-term (2013, 2021 and 2031) dwelling and employment capacity targets for their local government area, the data will then be used to inform discussions with State agencies and influence long-term spending on infrastructure through the State Infrastructure Strategy. The METRIX tool has been made available to both Gosford and Wyong councils.

Strategic centres

The Strategic centres of Gosford regional city and Tuggerah-Wyong major centre will play a vital role in shaping the future of the Central Coast. Development of the centres inline with their role in the centres hierarchy is critical to ensuring sustainable growth, providing a focal point for local development and a significant contribution to local employment capacity. Strategic centres will be planned in partnership between the Department of Planning and councils.



Types of centres

The Central Coast Regional Strategy identifies a hierarchy of centres, classifies larger centres and articulates their future roles. The Strategy also identifies the amount of employment that each centre type within the hierarchy requires and the amount, distribution and mix of housing required to 2031. The size, status and functions of a centre broadly correspond to its level of accessibility by various means of transport and its level of business and community investment.

The Central Coast centres hierarchy is illustrated in the Regional Strategy Map, described in Appendix 2 and is summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: The Central Coast centres hierarchy

Classification	Summary of hierarchy
Regional city (Gosford)	The waterfront city of Gosford (including the City Centre and surrounding areas) will be planned to function as the Central Coast's Regional City over the next 25 years. West Gosford, East Gosford and Erina will be planned to grow whilst complementing Gosford and ensuring that it realises its potential as the Central Coast's Regional City.
Major centre (Tuggerah–Wyong)	Tuggerah–Wyong will become a Major Centre with the main shopping, civic and business focus for Wyong Shire. The close proximity and complementary roles of Tuggerah and Wyong will be built on and planned in a coordinated fashion. Wyong, Tuggerah Straight, Anzac Road, Tuggerah Business Park, Westfield Tuggerah, Tuggerah Supa Centa, Westfield's 'Tuggerah Gateway' site and the Tuggerah Lake Reserve will play key roles for the overall centre.
Employment lands	Employment Lands contain the Region's industrial lands such as factories and warehouses. They exclude business–commercial lands and examples include Somersby, Lisarow and Berkeley Vale.
Other centres (town centres, villages and neighbourhoods)	There are over 50 Town Centres, Villages and Neighbourhoods on the Central Coast. Whilst renewal and increased residential densities will occur in these centres over the next 25 years, this will occur at an appropriate scale to protect and enhance the character of these centres. Planning for these centres by local government will be based on the Central Coast Regional Strategy.

THE CENTRAL COAST'S TWO KEY CENTRES ARE

1

The Regional City of GOSFORD

2

The Major Centre of TUGGERAH–WYONG

The NSW Government, in partnership with local government, will plan for the strategic centres of Gosford and Tuggerah–Wyong as a priority. Support will include working with local government and other stakeholders to ensure the centres achieve increased economic activity and employment.



Gosford regional city

In 2006, the Department of Planning's Cities Taskforce, in partnership with Gosford City Council, prepared a suite of planning tools for Gosford City that consists of a vision, local environmental plan, development control plan and civic improvement plan. The other regional cities in the Greater Metropolitan Region are Parramatta, Liverpool, Penrith, Wollongong and Newcastle. The plans for Gosford were also prepared in close consultation with a range of government representatives and non-government representatives including industry groups, business groups and environmental groups.

The Gosford City Centre plans aim to establish Gosford as a vibrant, attractive and liveable mixed-use city centre, at the heart of the Central Coast regional economy and community. An increase in jobs is to occur around high growth industries such as business services, health, education, retail, tourism and cultural activities. The city centre will benefit from its thriving health industry, higher education activities and from strengthened commercial and retail, waterfront, cultural, leisure and sporting precincts. The city centre will have 6000 new jobs and 10 000 more residents within the next 25 years.

The plan for Gosford:

- create a liveable city
- link and grow the health precinct

- develop the city as a learning centre
- provide for healthy and active lifestyles
- improve the natural environment
- increase commercial investment
- facilitate access and mobility around the city centre
- create new gateways to the city
- develop the railway station as a transport hub
- create a waterfront recreation and cultural precinct
- establish a new town square at Kibble Park
- improve the quality of the public domain
- ensure human scale active street edges
- attract new shopping and leisure activities.

Tuggerah–Wyong major centre

The Tuggerah–Wyong area will be developed as a major centre and will perform vital economic, employment, civic, residential, social, cultural, entertainment and recreation roles for the north of the Central Coast. The major centre will provide access to the F3 Freeway and will be a focal point for major roads and public transport networks that provide key links to surrounding town centres and Gosford regional

city. The Department of Planning will continue to work with Wyong Council to achieve the goals of the relevant local planning strategies to ensure that this centre, as a whole, achieves its major centre role. The directions that have been expressed through council's strategy will inform future planning and include plans to:

- revitalise Wyong centre
- investigate higher density housing
- improve transport links
- upgrade the Westfield shopping centre at Tuggerah
- develop the area between Westfield shopping centre and Tuggerah station
- develop the site between Westfield shopping centre and the F3 Freeway
- investigate development at Tuggerah Straight
- investigate bus services improvements within the centre.

The main challenges for the Tuggerah–Wyong major centre include connecting Tuggerah and Wyong, responding to the large expanses of flood prone land, improving urban design, revitalising Wyong and protecting development opportunities east and west of the Westfield site.

Future reviews of the Regional Strategy may consider the need for additional employment lands west of the F3 at Tuggerah and adjoining



areas, having regard to the overall supply of employment land and progress with development of the Tuggerah–Wyong major centre.

Housing capacity targets

The housing capacity targets for Gosford and Wyong local government areas to 2031 are summarised in Table 2.

As part of the preparation of their principal local environmental plans (LEPs), councils will need to examine land located within and around centres (i.e. generally within a radius of 1000 metres of the regional city and major centre, 800 metres for towns, 400–600 metres for villages and 150 metres for neighbourhoods) for its residential potential to support the centres. Dwelling capacities have been distributed across the respective local government areas.

Councils will also need to undertake a detailed assessment of the capacity of their urban areas to accommodate the projected population, as part of that process. The overall objective for councils will be to ensure sufficient zoned capacity to allow their respective targets to be met for dwelling growth to 2031 and beyond. The capacity assessment will be aided by urban capacity modelling tools developed by the Department of Planning, which has been provided to both councils. The Department of Planning will continue to update the METRIX tool to assist local housing market analysis.

Table 2: Additional dwellings by type and LGA to 2031

Centre Type	Number and percentage of new dwellings		
	Gosford local government area	Wyong local government area	Central Coast Region
Gosford regional city	6000 (36%)		
Tuggerah-Wyong major centre		4000 (10%)	
Centres (town centres, villages and neighbourhoods)	8500 (52%)	14 500 (37%) ⁽¹⁾	
All centres			33 000
Infill	2000 12%	5000 (13%)	7000
Greenfield	0 (0%)	16 000 (40%) ⁽²⁾	16 000
Subtotal	16 500 (30%)	39 500 (70%)	
Dwelling totals		56 000	

1 Includes the Warnervale Town Centre.

2 Targets for greenfield include the North Wyong Shire Structure Plan Area and MDP areas that are outside that area

Councils will be required to demonstrate, through detailed local planning, the distribution of capacity targets across a range of centres within their area. They can assess the centres in their area against the Centres Hierarchy (Appendix 2), including determining individual capacity targets for lower order centres.

Housing supply and demand

Primarily the Regional Strategy plans for increased housing supply in existing areas. Seventy one per cent of new dwellings will be located in centres (including the new Warnervale town centre) and in urban areas through infill and redevelopment. Due to the forecast changing demographics of the Region and the need to revitalise a number of centres, a mix of housing types will be needed. An example of a specific housing need for the Central Coast will be self-care housing for seniors or

people with a disability. Seniors living development is one form of housing that will assist councils in achieving their capacity targets.

Planning for the North Wyong Shire Structure Plan Area will identify suitable land for the majority of greenfield residential development, with an initial focus on areas supporting the new Warnervale town centre. The Structure Plan will also identify land with important conservation values.

LEPs will be required to demonstrate that the population, housing and employment capacity targets set by this Strategy can be achieved. Following more detailed local planning there may be flexibility in the distribution of population and housing capacity targets, provided they are consistent with the requirements of the Regional Strategy and centres hierarchy. When preparing new LEPs councils will also be required to review the validity of the existing urban footprint and



appropriateness of zonings on the fringe of that footprint.

Greenfield development

The Central Coast, as one of five key submarkets for greenfield housing supply in the metropolitan region, has historically provided 12 per cent of greenfield land supply.

Twenty-nine per cent of new houses on the Central Coast will be built in greenfield release areas. Greenfield areas will include areas already identified under the Metropolitan Development Program (MDP) and suitable land within the North Wyong Shire Structure Plan Area. Planning for this area will involve a whole-of-government approach led by the Department of Planning, in conjunction with Wyong Shire Council. The Structure Plan for the North Wyong Shire Structure Plan Area is targeted for completion in 2008. The Structure Plan is an essential step in ensuring a continual supply of land from the Central Coast submarket.

The North Wyong Shire Structure Plan will incorporate plans for the new Warnervale town centre and the Wyong Employment Zone. Both of these areas are currently being considered for assessment as State significant sites, meaning the Minister for Planning will set clear and consistent guidelines for future development and deliver certainty for these important employment areas. There will be a range of actions and coordination mechanisms required for regional

and local infrastructure to allow development of these sites to occur.

The North Wyong Shire Structure Plan will identify land that is suitable, and not suitable, for future development and the future land uses that may be appropriate. In the short term it is expected that greenfield development will focus on the Warnervale town centre and the new employment areas. The Structure Plan will also have regard to development proposals at Catherine Hill Bay, and Gwandalan where there may be opportunities for expansion that would assist in attracting a higher level of facilities and services for that locality. The Structure Plan will also include a staging and sequencing plan and an infrastructure plan to inform future planning for this area and infrastructure investment decisions.

Not all land identified in the Structure Plan area will be suitable for residential or employment development. Land will also need to be set aside for conservation, open space, recreation, drainage, infrastructure provision and resource lands. Characteristics that will substantially limit development in some areas include current and future mine subsidence and flooding issues as well as threatened species and corridor issues. The development of a regional conservation plan will allow improved coordination of decisions related to biodiversity conservation, biodiversity offsets and land release.

Areas west of the F3 Freeway are not required for additional urban

residential development potential during the life of the Strategy.

The Department of Planning has released a regional strategy for the Lower Hunter Region that will inform the preparation of the North Wyong Shire Structure Plan. That strategy has identified the potential for future greenfield development immediately north of the Doyalson area, in the vicinity of Wyee and at Catherine Hill Bay and Gwandalan.

Other release sites not currently identified in the Central Coast Regional Strategy may be considered if it can be demonstrated that the proposal satisfies the Sustainability Criteria outlined in Appendix 3. However, these opportunities for settlement expansion will not apply to the rezoning of land for urban residential development west of the F3 Freeway.

Centres development

Greater residential densities will be located in higher-order centres such as the regional city, major centre and town centres. Increased densities may also be achieved in villages and neighbourhoods but this will be at a lower scale and more focused on the centres themselves. The typical housing type and mix for each centre type is described in the Centres Hierarchy (Appendix 2). The form, location and desired character of development for each centre will be determined by local government, in conjunction with the Department of Planning having regard to the



Centres Hierarchy. Councils will be required to provide the zoned capacity to enable the dwelling capacity targets to be achieved for centres as part of LEPs or local planning strategies, in consultation with the Department of Planning. The take-up and remaining capacity of centres will be considered as part of future reviews of the Central Coast Regional Strategy.

Rural residential development

Existing rural residential development will continue to provide a choice of housing in the Region. Increasing rural small holdings raises a number of issues including fragmentation of agricultural lands and subsequent loss of efficiencies, conflict with other resource land uses such as extractive industries, water rights issues and higher servicing costs. Under the Central Coast Regional Strategy, opportunities for new rural residential development will be limited to those already provided in the Region and opportunities, if any, identified as a part of the North Wyong Shire Structure Plan.

Housing affordability

Housing affordability is a key consideration for all tiers of government in the Region over the next 25 years. The Regional Strategy provides a diversity of housing types which, together with other initiatives, will contribute towards housing affordability.

The NSW State Plan considers housing affordability from two perspectives. Firstly, from the perspective of the first home buyer for whom purchasing a home is increasingly difficult. Secondly, from the perspective of the most vulnerable households; the frail aged, people with disabilities, people with mental illness and people at risk of homelessness; who face poor health, educational or other social outcomes due to high housing costs or overcrowding.

The Metropolitan Strategy, in line with the State Plan, sets goals for housing and land supply. Achieving these targets at a subregional level will ensure the distribution of growth in a manner that provides greater housing choice.

The NSW Government has a range of programs and services to help people gain access to first home ownership. These include:

- the First Home Owners Grant of \$7000 toward the purchase or construction of a new home;
- the First Home Plus scheme, which provides stamp duty and mortgage duty exemptions and concessions for first home buyers, and the First Home Plus One scheme which extends stamp duty concessions to shared equity arrangements; and
- the abolition of mortgage duty on the purchase of owner-occupied residences from 1 September 2007, providing a saving of almost \$2000 on a \$500 000 mortgage and benefiting around 186 000 home buyers each year.

From 1 July 2008 mortgage duty on the purchase of residential investment properties will also be abolished and land tax cuts for property investors introduced.

The NSW Government allocates significant funding towards assisting those most in need to obtain appropriate and affordable accommodation through public and community housing.

The Affordable Community Housing Strategy, announced in March 2007, invests more than \$230 million over four years to deliver more affordable rental housing to people on low to moderate income focusing on:

- long-term leases to community housing providers to provide greater income security and increase their ability to borrow for stock increases
- creation of an Affordable Housing Innovations Fund to increase the supply of affordable community housing through partnerships between the Government, community sector, and private investors.

Encouraging private investment in affordable rental housing is a key element of the strategy.

Gosford Council completed an affordable housing strategy in 2005, and Wyong Council is currently preparing a strategy that will address affordability issues. These strategies will need to be incorporated into the councils' principal LEPs.

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centres and housing

Wyong Council's affordable housing strategy and the North Wyong Shire Structure Plan will consider the role that residential parks and manufactured home estates play in the provision of affordable housing. In 2001 this form of housing comprised 2.3 per cent of all housing in Wyong shire, with a large proportion of it in relatively isolated locations in the northern half of the shire.

For the most vulnerable households the NSW Government remains committed to a strong social housing sector. The State Plan, released in November 2006, identifies the NSW Government's commitment to maintaining the total social housing stock. Councils, in preparing centres planning strategies should discuss the potential for redevelopment of social housing and the role that this could play in helping to achieve council objectives for that centre.

Design quality

The Department of Planning will undertake a series of initiatives to improve design quality in new development including:

- Preparation of educational material for training local government councillors on the benefits and importance of good urban design.

- Develop a set of training modules in partnership with various professional and industry associations to promote a better understanding of urban design and housing types.
- Expand the success of SEPP No. 65 – Design Quality of Residential Flat Development to include medium density housing forms such as town houses and villas.
- Develop Urban Design Guidelines for the new growth centres and Centre Design Guidelines for existing areas undergoing urban renewal.
- Identifying landmark and exemplary sites and instigating processes, including design competitions, to promote excellence in design and planning.

ACTIONS

4.1 The Cities Taskforce, established by the Department of Planning, to continue to work with local government and other stakeholders in planning Gosford Regional City.

4.2 Councils are to provide for a mix of housing types, including housing that will accommodate an ageing population and smaller household sizes through the preparation of LEPs and strategies.

4.3 Councils are to facilitate competitive land releases in the Region and to meet, as a minimum, the dwelling capacity targets and distribution by centres provided in this Regional Strategy, Work to be done in conjunction with the Department of Planning and delivered through the timely preparation of LEPs.

4.4 Councils are to investigate the potential for land located within and around centres for future housing opportunities, consistent with the centres hierarchy and the dwelling and employment capacity targets through the preparation of LEPs and local planning strategies, (i.e. generally within a radius of 1000 metres of a regional city and major centre, 800 metres for towns, 400–600 metres for villages and 150 metres for neighbourhoods).

4.5 Councils are to review their current residential development strategies, including a review of the adequacy and accuracy of existing urban boundaries and zonings in fringe areas, through the preparation of principal LEPs.

4.6 Land to be rezoned for housing during the life of the Strategy is to be located within existing urban areas, existing MDP areas, areas identified through preparation of LEPs and greenfield areas nominated in the North Wyong Shire Structure Plan.

4.7 The majority of future greenfield development is to be concentrated around the Warnervale town centre and Wyong Employment Zone, via the Structure Plan and associated infrastructure plans for the North Wyong Shire Structure Plan Area. This work will be undertaken by the Department of Planning in conjunction with Wyong Council.

4.8 The Department of Planning is to continue to assist Wyong Council in the planning of Warnervale town centre and the Wyong Employment Zone.

4.9 Ensure planning for the Lower Hunter Region informs the more detailed planning that will be done as part of the North Wyong Shire Structure Plan.

4.10 Provide around 70 per cent of new housing in existing urban areas and the new Warnervale town centre by:

- focusing new development in key centres to take advantage of services, shops and public transport as well as identifying and preserving the character of the Central Coast's smaller neighbourhoods and suburbs
- ensuring that existing centres will be developed consistent with the centres hierarchy.

4.11 Urban land releases to contribute to additional regional infrastructure costs in line with adopted government policy regarding infrastructure contributions.

4.12 Implement expansion of the NSW Government's new Land Supply Program for the Central Coast to:

- monitor housing supply and demand in both greenfield areas and existing areas
- include the new Employment Lands Development Program
- be the principal tool for the coordination and staging of land release for both residential and employment lands
- report the Central Coast separately from Sydney.

4.13 Consider a range of affordable housing strategies, including forms of low-cost housing, suitable zonings and development controls to improve housing choice, and specific schemes. These strategies must be consistent with relevant State policies.

4.14 State Government will develop options for improving housing affordability, with a focus on affordable housing for particular

groups in the community. The Department of Housing and Department of Planning to identify how these initiatives can be applied to the Central Coast.

4.15 Councils are to consider the appropriateness of the locations in which residential parks or caravan parks are permissible during preparation of principal LEPs, including their access to services. This review is also to have regard for protection of existing affordable housing stock.

4.16 Councils to prepare locally responsive design guidelines for the urban areas and include provisions to ensure that new development is consistent with these guidelines.

4.17 Councils to incorporate provisions into development control plans that require new buildings to be designed to be able to adapt to meet the needs of a changing demographic and, where appropriate, to alternative future uses.

4.18 In planning for development and redevelopment of urban areas, councils are to consider the need for civic open space and access to a variety of open space and recreation opportunities (e.g. coastal foreshore and riparian land), in a manner that is consistent with the maintenance of ecological values.

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centres and housing

4.19 Recognise the regional and state significance of the Warnervale town centre in providing a new community, government and business focus over the next 25 years. To ensure this, the NSW Government will:

- lead the major strategic planning for this area
- ensure that Ministerial consent is required for major developments and infrastructure in that area, where appropriate

4.20 The Department of Planning, as a part of future reviews, is to review population and employment capacity targets contained within this Strategy and will work with councils to determine the take up of land for residential and employment purposes.

4.21 Councils and the NSW Government are to undertake integrated land use and transport planning to ensure that opportunities to benefit from infrastructure investment are realised.

4.22 Councils are to ensure location of new dwellings improves the Region's performance against the target for State Plan priority E5 'Jobs closer to home – increase the proportion of people living within 30 minutes of a city or

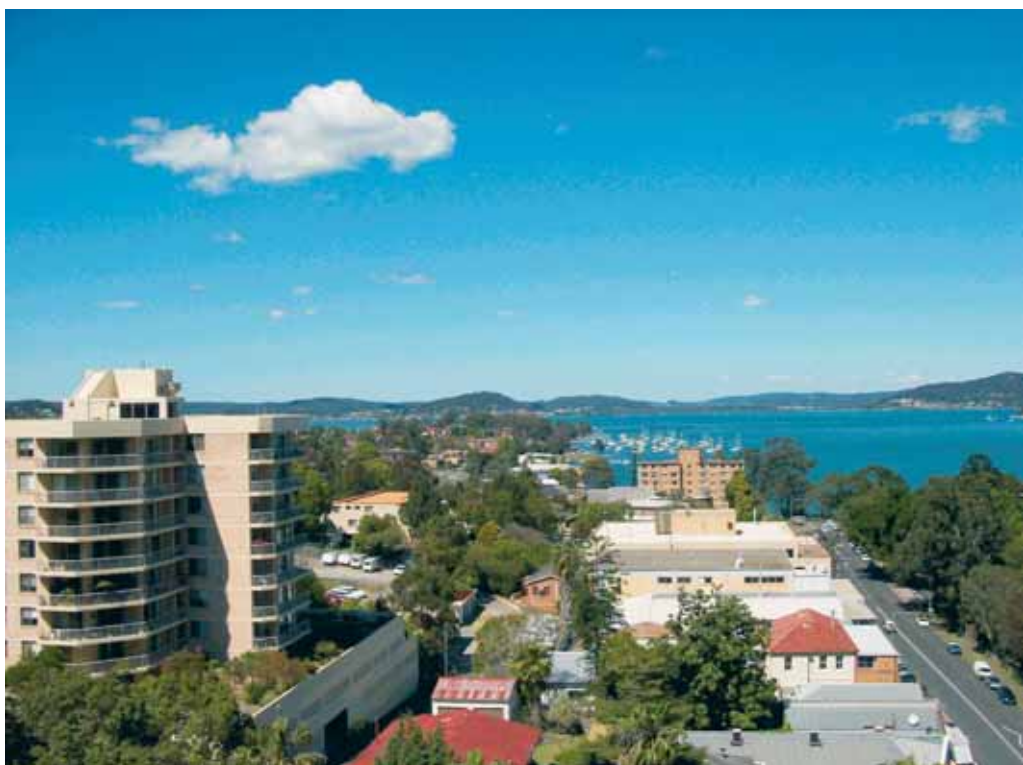
major centre by public transport in metropolitan Sydney'.

4.23 The Department of Planning is to prepare Centre Design Guidelines to encourage improvement and appropriate renewal of local centres and exchange of practices between councils.

4.24 The Department of Planning is to assess proposed land release areas against sustainability criteria and implications on infrastructure funding.

4.25 Prior to the preparation of LEPs and centres planning strategies, councils need to establish whether development or redevelopment of any significant government landholdings could assist in achieving the overall objectives for that centre.

4.26 Councils are to implement their cultural plans and investigate opportunities to encourage clusters of entertainment and cultural facilities, including activities based around the night economy when preparing centres planning strategies.





Economy and employment

BACKGROUND

A key issue for the Central Coast over the next 25 years is to increase the current level of employment self containment. Historically, local employment growth has not kept pace with increases in population. Over 25 per cent of employed persons, or nearly 30 000 people, who live on the Central Coast currently work outside the Central Coast. The majority of these workers commute to Sydney. Improving economic development and increasing local employment is fundamental to reducing the proportion of workers commuting out of the Region over the next 25 years. Centres and employment lands on the Central Coast are identified on Map 3.

This chapter discusses the broad directions around which economic growth is likely to occur on the Central Coast to 2031, and identifies a series of objectives and actions to support employment growth and prosperity, particularly in relation to centres and employment lands. Sydney's Metropolitan Strategy *City of cities: a plan for Sydney's future* (NSW Department of Planning 2005) identifies a capacity

target of 55 000 jobs for the Central Coast between 2001 and 2031, which equates to a requirement for more than 45 000 new jobs between 2006 and 2031. It is estimated that approximately 10 000 jobs were created between 2001 and 2006. A range of actions are proposed to facilitate a greater level of employment self containment for the Central Coast. Close monitoring of employment growth will ensure that the capacity targets and related employment actions can be adjusted over time to ensure that the Metropolitan Strategy targets are met or exceeded.

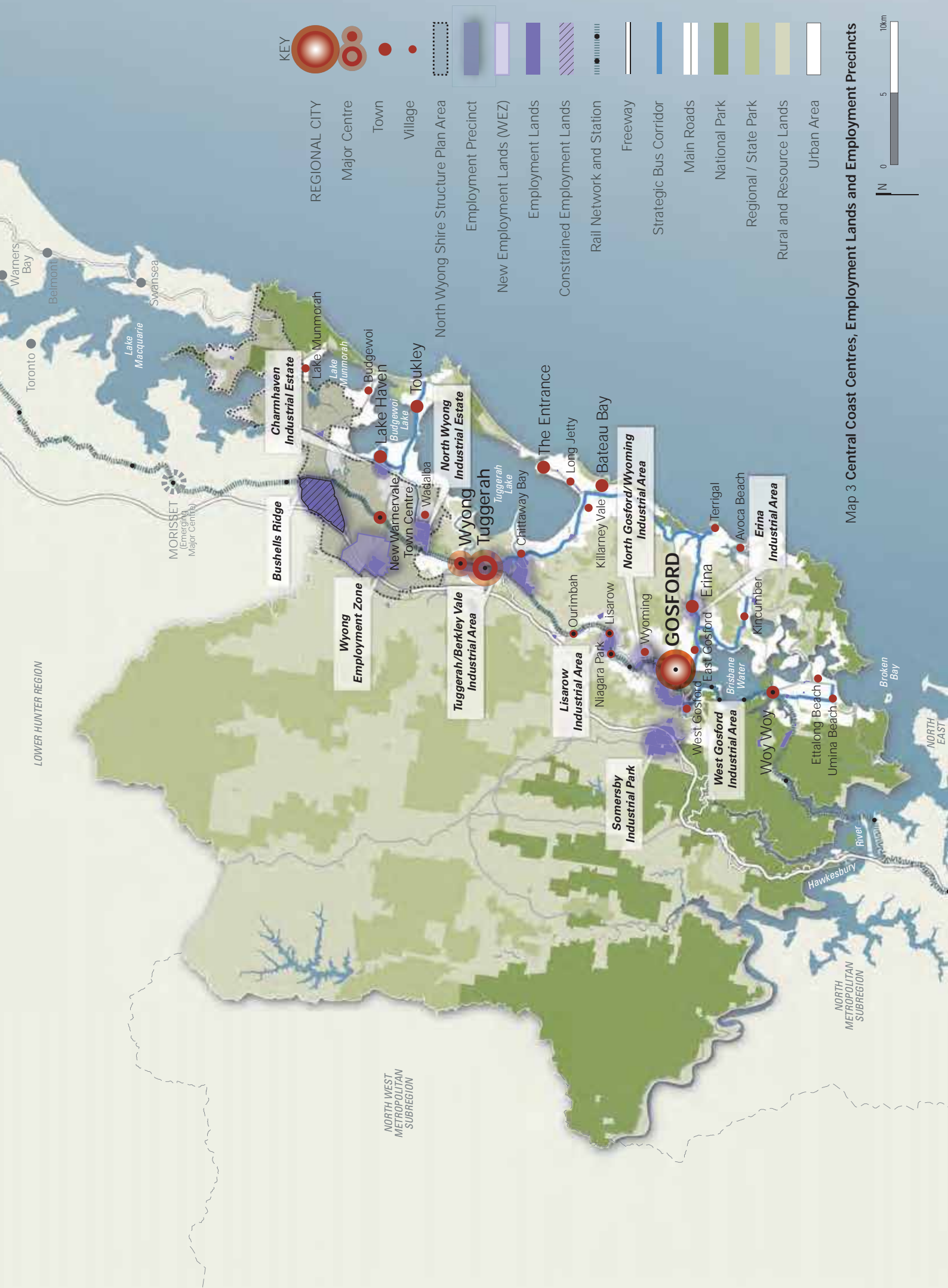
The Central Coast's economy has evolved from primary industries, specifically agriculture, forestry and mining industries to a diverse economy with a strong presence in manufacturing and service industries. Apart from external factors such as national economic growth rates, employment growth on the Central Coast is largely driven by:

- the Region's resource base attracting investment in agriculture, fisheries, forestry, minerals/mining and energy sectors

- population growth driving new economic and employment opportunities
- competitively-priced employment lands and the position of the Region between Sydney and the Hunter for industrial and logistics businesses and good interregional transport infrastructure, i.e. the F3 Freeway and rail
- demographic and lifestyle changes, such as young families, older professional workers who commute part-time to Sydney and retirees.

These changes have resulted in the growth of home-based businesses, and demand for childcare facilities, entertainment, cafes and specialised health services. The Region's natural assets bring an increasing number of tourists, creating opportunities in accommodation and hospitality industries.

The Central Coast economy has become important as a market for goods and services, as a focus of primary and secondary production and as a labour supply for Sydney.



With the forecast increase in population, an ageing population and the need to provide a greater diversity of employment opportunities, growth in service-related sectors such as retail and community services, including health, education, public administration, trades, property and business services as well as hospitality services are expected to continue.

The Region has a range of knowledge-based institutions that are major contributors to the local economy, such as Ourimbah University, major hospitals and several TAFE campuses. Combined, these present major opportunities for the Region in relation to future training opportunities and knowledge-based growth. Building on these strengths through provision of better local training and good quality local jobs will contribute to reducing the loss of people aged between 20 and 29 and provide a range of other benefits.

Agriculture makes a significant contribution to the Central Coast's economy. Several agricultural activities have the potential to increase the Region's domestic and export markets, including horticulture, particularly the high technical area of commercial plant propagation. The main agricultural areas on the Central Coast such as the Central Coast plateaus and Wyong valleys have good access to supply fresh produce to local and Sydney markets.

Employment lands for Sydney action plan (Department of Planning 2007) identifies a range of measures to protect and enhance the supply of employment lands across the Sydney metropolitan area. The action plan detailed a range of initiatives which the NSW Government is pursuing to advance planning of employment lands. These are summarised under five key areas of activity:

- 1 Establish an Employment Lands Development Program to maintain the balance between demand and supply of employment land.
- 2 Release more greenfield land to overcome a shortage of supply.
- 3 Develop new policy initiatives to encourage the regeneration of 'brownfield' sites to support new investment and employment opportunities.
- 4 Employ more efficient processes for zoning and developing employment lands.
- 5 Improve coordination between State departments and agencies, councils and industry to improve economic development opportunities associated with employment lands policy.

OUTCOMES

A strong policy framework is required to provide capacity for over 45 000 new jobs between 2006 and 2031, particularly for key employment areas such as professional services. Careful attention and priority must be given to planning, economic development initiatives and infrastructure planning to maximise results for the Region. A coordinated plan for economic development and employment growth on the Central Coast is needed to capitalise on its position between the global city of Sydney and the regional city of Newcastle, while strengthening its own sense as a Region.

The gap between forecast labour force growth and job growth will be managed via:

- local planning – which needs to respond to the dynamics of economic change ensuring there are sufficient strategic sites and employment lands to meet industry demand and to attract new investment
- well managed commuting strategies, e.g. a relative increase in employment self containment may still result in an increase of commuter travel over current levels
- improved connections between regions – stronger links to Sydney may spur new employment opportunities in the Region as it will induce additional investment



- improved monitoring and consistency of data across the Region – to allow job creation and investment strategies to be continually updated to respond to changing business environments and requirements.

Population growth will spur new employment opportunities and, if managed correctly, contribute to a reduction in commuting through critical mass and more local demand. This growth alone will not be sufficient to achieve employment objectives for the Region so a Regional Economic Development and Employment Strategy will be prepared to assist job growth. The purpose of the Regional Economic Development and Employment Strategy will be to maintain the Region's environmental and lifestyle attributes while diversifying and deepening the economic base over the next 25 years.

A stronger sense of place will improve the Region's attractiveness to business investment by revitalising key centres such as Gosford. Other actions include promoting and encouraging entertainment, recreation and cultural activities, creating pedestrian-friendly environments, creating quality public spaces and places, improving the diversity and quality of educational opportunities available in the Region and implementing the NSW Government's planning system reforms to simplify the development assessment process.

The Centres Hierarchy (Appendix 2) outlines a hierarchy for employment land and centres that provide employment opportunities across the Region. Implementing plans to revitalise Gosford will be a priority. Staging of development and growth of Tuggerah–Wyong, town centres and villages will support Gosford. Staging of development in Wyong shire will also support further development and revitalisation in Tuggerah–Wyong and the establishment of the Warnervale town centre.

A range of actions are proposed to implement the *Employment lands for Sydney action plan* including facilitation of release of greenfield employment land, identification and classification of employment land, monitoring the release of employment land and strengthening of existing employment nodes. A number of these directions will be addressed through ongoing planning and the Regional Economic Development and Employment Strategy project.

As the Region grows, a number of industries will benefit from an overall increase in the economy and the associated new infrastructure provided, which will in turn attract new opportunities. Increasing real incomes, education and skills development opportunities will reinforce a positive cycle for the Region's development.

Key opportunities for the Region include:

- a general increase in economic activity and provision of quality office space will assist the growth of local business services such as accounting, financial management, IT and legal services
- attractive industrial land prices and proximity to Sydney and Newcastle, especially for Sydney-based manufacturing and logistics businesses
- significant retail growth, based on population growth, will create a need for more speciality shops, bulky goods outlets and department stores
- growth in health services, driven by population growth, lifestyle preferences, an ageing population and growing sophistication and complexity of services. The number of health-related jobs is forecast to increase substantially over the life of the Strategy
- growth in education services, with a corresponding increase in the associated employment in this sector. New schools, vocational education and higher education infrastructure will be required to support a growing population with increased participation in education and skills training
- development of business parks, which provide good building design and layout and an emphasis on light



industrial and value-adding industries and integration of industrial, warehousing and office activities. Significant opportunities also exist to expand technology-based jobs in the Region

- forecasted high rates of growth for cultural industries as well as accommodation and hospitality. The Region's tourism advantages are also likely to increase

- growth of home-based businesses.

Table 3 outlines employment capacity targets for Central Coast centres and employment lands by local government area. These capacity targets outline the preferred employment growth scenario for the Central Coast.

Preparation of new principal LEPs by both councils will require sound strategic planning and careful

consideration of the applicability of the new land use zones for areas. The Department of Planning will work closely with councils in preparing their respective strategies and plans to inform the new LEPs. The Department of Planning will continue to develop policy guidance on the application of zones and related development controls as part of the ongoing planning reform process.

ACTIONS

5.1 Promote economic and employment growth in the Region to increase the level of employment self containment and achieve capacity for more than 45 000 new jobs on the Central Coast over the next 25 years.

5.2 LEPs are to be consistent with the Central Coast Regional Strategy, the related employment

capacity targets and provide a distribution that reflects the centres hierarchy.

5.3 Councils are to investigate strategies to ensure sufficiently zoned land to enable the provision of comparatively low cost premises for start-up business. Centre strategies should include provision of low-cost office and studio space to assist business start-ups for cultural activities.

5.4 The NSW Government is to prepare a Regional Economic Development and Employment Strategy for the Central Coast that will aim to:

- examine possible employment types needed over the next 25 years
- identify strategies to improve employment opportunities in the Region and increase the level of regional employment self-containment
- determine where the jobs should be located
- establish a framework to monitor land area and floor space targets to help ensure an adequate supply of employment land over the next 25 years
- establish a framework so that the capacity targets and objectives of the Central Coast Regional Strategy can be met
- establish a framework for the establishment of business parks

Table 3: Central Coast employment capacity targets by local government area (LGA) and hierarchy 2006–31

Centre type	Gosford LGA employment capacity targets	Wyong LGA employment capacity targets
Regional city (Gosford)	6000 (33%)	0 (0%)
Major centre (Tuggerah–Wyong)	0 (0%)	5500 (20%) ¹
Other centres (town centres, villages neighbourhoods)	9000 (50%)	9000 (33%)
Employmentlands	3000 (17%)	2000 (7%) ²
North Wyong Structure Plan Area	0 (0%)	10 500 ³ (40%)
LGA totals	18 000 (100%)	27 000 (100%)
Regional total	45 000	

¹ Targets for Tuggerah Straight and Tuggerah Business Park are included in the major centre figures.

² Targets for Warnervale town centre are included in the 'Other centres, home-based business and other' figures.

³ Targets for the Wyong Employment Zone are included in the North Wyong Shire Structure Plan Area figures.



economy and employment

Table 4: Schedule of strategic employment lands on the Central Coast

Classification	Employment lands	Local government area	Approximate size in hectares
Land to be retained for industrial purposes	Lisarow	Gosford	50
	North Gosford and Wyoming	Gosford	25
	Erina	Gosford	10
	Somersby	Gosford	300
	West Gosford	Gosford	125
	Mount Penang (not including area proposed for business uses)	Gosford	130
	Charmhaven	Wyong	35
	Tuggerah Business Park and Berkeley Vale	Wyong	200
	Tuggerah	Wyong	60
	North Wyong	Wyong	125
	Bushells Ridge	Wyong	630 ⁽¹⁾
	Wyong Employment Zone (largely new)	Wyong	360 ⁽²⁾
	Hakone employment Corridor (possible future)	Wyong	TBC
	Bruce Crescent (possible future)	Wyong	TBC
	Various employment lands precincts, i.e. Kincumber, Woy Woy, Killarney Vale, Doyalson	Gosford and Wyong	A range of sizes
Land with potential to allow for a wider range of employment uses	N/A. Precincts to be identified through local planning and future reviews of the Regional Strategy		
Land that could be investigated for alternative uses	N/A. Precincts to be identified through local planning and future reviews of the Regional Strategy		

1. The Bushells Ridge area is heavily constrained by threatened species issues. The North Wyong Shire Structure Plan and Regional Conservation Plan will establish a potential employment land yield for this area.

2. The figure for the Wyong Employment zone includes the existing Warnervale Industrial Park and is based on the draft proposal currently being considered by the Department of Planning for listing as a State significant site.

- devise a strategy to increase the level of regional employment self-containment
- identify other factors outside land use planning that will assist employment growth.

5.5 The NSW Government is to recognise the regional and state significance of the Wyong Employment Zone in providing appropriate employment lands over the next 25 years by:

- leading the major strategic planning for this area
- ensuring that Ministerial consent is required for major developments and infrastructure in that area
- providing a framework to inform future state and local infrastructure decisions.

5.6 Ensure LEPs do not rezone employment lands to residential

zonings or other uses across the Central Coast, unless supported by a planning strategy agreed to by the Department of Planning.

5.7 Investigate, through the preparation of LEPs, options to expand existing employment land nodes and ensure future development occurring on employment land does not result in inappropriate fragmentation of that land.

5.8 Ensure that development of residential and mixed-use buildings in business zones do not result in a weakening of a centres retail and commercial functions.

5.9 Ensure that bulky goods retailing is not located on industrial land and is located in centres and nominated nodes.

5.10 The Department of Planning will prepare guidelines to apply to business development and enterprise corridor zones.

5.11 Ensure new retail and commercial development is located in centres. Some local convenience retailing may be required out of centre, however the presence of a convenience shop can initiate a neighbourhood centre, around which other activities such as child care facilities can be located.

5.12 The Department of Primary Industries, Department of Water and Energy and Department of Planning, in conjunction with Department of Environment and Climate Change, is to review planning for the Central Coast



plateaus and Wyong valleys to consider agriculture, extractive resources, water supply values and tourism uses and address any conflict between these uses.

5.13 The NSW Government and councils are to engage with industry regarding employment land stock to ensure a sufficient supply of employment land in the correct locations.

5.14 The NSW Government and councils are to utilise government assets and investment to support centres in accordance with the centres hierarchy.

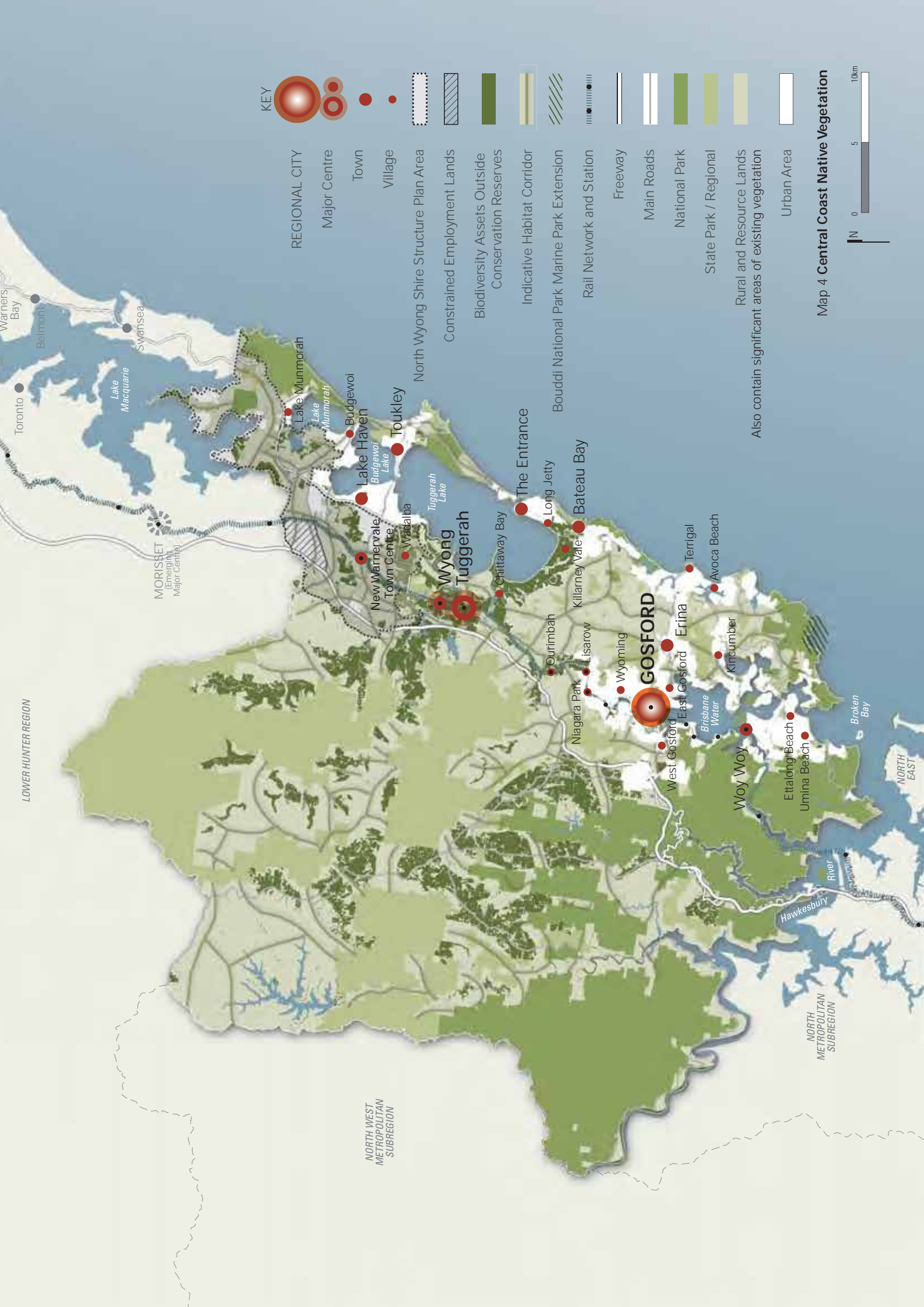
5.15 The Department of Planning is to protect and enhance strategic employment lands through the development of an employment lands State environmental planning policy.

5.16 The Department of Planning is to establish an Employment Lands Development Program, in parallel with the Metropolitan Development Program and under a Sydney land supply program, to:

- improve planning and delivery of employment lands
- monitor demand and supply of employment lands.

5.17 The Department of Planning is to work with councils in identifying and implementing measures to manage interface issues between industrial and residential lands uses.

5.18 Enterprise corridors to be investigated and, if appropriate, implemented through principal local environmental plans – possibilities include, West Gosford and Long Jetty. Detailed guidelines on enterprise corridors will be issued by the Department of Planning.





Environment, heritage, recreation and natural resources

BACKGROUND

The Central Coast's natural environment is highly valued from a cultural, environmental and recreation perspective and is sensitive to change. More than half the Region is comprised of national parks, state forests, regional and local open space, conservation areas and aquatic systems including lakes, estuaries, lagoons, beaches, rivers, creeks, wetlands and water supply catchments, both above and below ground. The diverse range of landscapes and ecosystems support a range of threatened species populations, ecological communities and critical habitat. Sustainable growth requires managing the environmental impact of development and reducing the consumption of natural resources, as well as safeguarding assets from natural hazards, which are expected to increase over time through the impact of climate change.

A Regional Conservation Plan that identifies and protects areas of environmental and conservation value for the Central Coast is underway. In the past, the absence of such a plan has led

to uncertainty, with developers having to resolve complex flora and fauna issues on a site-by-site basis with little regional context. Native vegetation on the Central Coast is identified on Map 4.

Rural and resource lands are an important element of the Central Coast environment. These lands contribute to employment, tourism, cultural and regional identity, character, biodiversity, and catchment protection.

The Central Coast is the traditional lands of the Darkinjung, Garingai and Awabakal people. The Central Coast was first settled by Europeans in the 1800s and the Region still contains a richness of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal archaeological sites, cultural values and settlement characteristics. A significant part of the cultural heritage of the Central Coast is embodied in the natural and built environment.

The Central Coast is part of an airshed that extends from the Sydney Region to the Hunter Region. The Region's non-urban lands provide an important green edge for the north-easterly air movement across Sydney. Major air and noise pollution types on the Central Coast include road (noise and air), rail (noise and vibration) and industrial (noise and air).

Both the Hunter-Central Rivers and Hawkesbury Nepean catchment management authorities have developed catchment action plans, which include regional investment priorities and recommendations for land use planning within the Central Coast. To help achieve long-term environmental sustainability, land use planning objectives must consider the objectives of the catchment action plans and those of other resource management plans, such as water sharing plans and estuary management plans.

Rural and resource lands provide fresh local produce across the Sydney Region. The Central Coast contributes over ten per cent of Sydney's total agricultural production and significant extractive resources such as coal, clay for brick and tile manufacture, construction sand and sandstone.



While coal resources underlie large parts of the Central Coast the most viable opportunities for coal extraction occur in the northern half of Wyong shire. A large resource of friable fine to medium grained sandstone occurs on the Somersby Plateau (including the Calga area). The Somersby Plateau is a major source of fine-to-medium grain sand for the Sydney Region and Central Coast area. Smaller deposits of clay also occur.

OUTCOMES

The Regional Strategy will protect the outstanding environmental qualities of the Central Coast by:

- focusing future population growth in existing urban areas, east of the F3 Freeway (other than in and around existing villages and employment opportunities identified in the strategy), in areas identified as a part of comprehensive local environmental plan reviews and suitable areas within the North Wyong Shire Structure Plan Area
- identifying agricultural land that requires protection from inappropriate development balancing the economic benefits that could result from the extraction of sand, coal and clay resources, the need to address environmental issues, the need to preserve agricultural land use potential and the need to accommodate planned housing and employment growth in the northern half of the Wyong local government area
- requiring councils to implement the relevant policies actions and management plans including those formulated in line with the NSW Government's *NSW estuary management manual* and *NSW coastline management manual* (1990), and *Floodplain development manual: the management of flood liable land* (Department of Natural Resources 2005)
- requiring council environmental planning instruments to incorporate the principle of integrated water cycle management
- requiring councils to implement the relevant policies within relevant catchment management authorities' catchment action plans ensuring





new development incorporates 'water sensitive urban design' and minimising water demand

- implementing the Building and Sustainability Index (BASIX) to reduce water and energy use by residential development
- investigating measures such as dual reticulation (separate drinking and grey water systems) in new developments.

A Regional Conservation Plan will be prepared that identifies and protects state and regional biodiversity values, including buffers to these areas, and provides certainty for development. This plan will be prepared in parallel to the North Wyong Shire Structure Plan so that biodiversity planning can both guide future development and be balanced against the social and economic objectives for development in that area. The conservation plan will also provide a framework for more detailed planning to occur elsewhere in the Region.

The Region's valuable rural and resource lands will be maintained for their agricultural, water supply, environmental, mineral and extractive resources and recreation and tourism opportunities.

- The Region's national parks, waterways, coastline and foreshore areas will be conserved and managed to ensure both their preservation for environmental purposes, as well as their continuing contribution to recreation and scenic amenity.

- The Region's State forests will continue to be managed in accordance with their approved Ecologically Sustainable Forest Management Plans.
- Floodplains, estuaries and coastal areas are extremely important to the Region and require protection. The NSW Government's *NSW coastal policy* (Coastal Council of NSW 1997), *NSW State rivers and estuaries policy* (NSW Water Resources Council 1993) and Flood Prone Land Policy (incorporated in the Floodplain Development Manual) will be carried through into the formulation of local environmental plans and other strategies in the planning process.
- Planning for future development in Wyong shire will take into account the location, timing and building requirements of the NSW Mine Subsidence Board and the Department of Primary Industries.
- The Strategy will build on and implement initiatives and guidelines that include *Action for air* (Environment Protection Authority 1998), *NSW industrial noise policy* (Environment Protection Authority 1998), *Noise and vibration guidelines* (State Rail Authority & Railway Infrastructure Corporation 2003) and *Environmental Criteria for Road Traffic Noise* (Environment Protection Authority 1999). Concentrating more population in existing urban areas, focusing

more development around key public transport nodes and reducing the percentage of the workforce that commutes to Sydney will help to reduce car dependency.

- Aboriginal cultural landscapes have been identified through the Aboriginal Cultural Landscape Planning Project undertaken by the former Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources. The project provides a set of assessment criteria and guidelines to ensure that Aboriginal community and cultural values are equitably considered by both NSW Government and local governments.
- The Region's centres will continue to develop while maintaining the heritage values that are important from past times. This will also have tourism benefits for the Region.

6

environment, heritage, recreation and natural resources

ACTIONS

6.1 The Department of Primary Industries, in partnership with the Department of Planning, is to undertake mapping of regionally significant activities, including agriculture, mining, extractive industry and special uses, to identify rural activities and resource lands for preservation.

6.2 The Department of Planning and Wyong Council are to work with the NSW Mine Subsidence Board and Department of Primary Industries to ensure future

development in Wyong shire takes account of current and potential future mining issues. The findings of the strategic inquiry into the potential coal mining impacts in Wyong local government area established by the Minister for Planning in February 2007 should also be considered.

6.3 LEPs are to appropriately zone land with high state or regional environmental, agricultural, resource, vegetation, habitat, waterways, wetland or coastline values.

6.4 LEPs are to appropriately zone land of high landscape value (including scenic and cultural landscapes).

6.5 Councils, through preparation of LEPs, are to incorporate appropriate land use buffers around environmentally sensitive, rural and resource lands.

6.6 The Department of Environment and Climate Change, working with the Department of Planning, other relevant government agencies and councils, is to prepare a Regional Conservation Plan that:

- identifies the key conservation values of the Region and regionally significant corridors
- outlines how the Regional Conservation Plan relates to the Central Coast Regional Strategy and the relevant catchment action plans
- establishes a biodiversity investment guide that identifies which landscapes and habitats, at a regional level, are to be targeted for investment to achieve improved conservation outcomes
- establishes a biodiversity offset package for greenfield development within the North



Wyong Shire Structure Plan Area and a framework for an offset strategy to be established for development outside of this area until such time as detailed local strategies are prepared

- identifies mechanisms that will be used to fund biodiversity investment
- establish monitoring and review mechanisms.

6.7 The Department of Planning, Department of Primary Industries, Department of Environment and Climate Change and councils to work towards biocertification of LEPs, where appropriate.

6.8 Ensure LEPs facilitate conservation of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage.

6.9 Ensure LEPs do not rezone rural and resource lands for urban purposes or rural residential uses unless agreement from the Department of Planning is first reached regarding the value of these resources.

6.10 Incorporate provisions to control the offsite impacts of development – in particular the export of pollutants and high flows – in local development standards and policies.

6.11 Ensure LEPs and other strategies implement the *NSW coastal policy*, the *NSW Flood Prone Land Policy* and plans prepared in accordance with these documents.

6.12 Protect the health of the Central Coast's waterways, including the coastline, estuaries and lakes

by integrating relevant objectives and targets from the Hunter-Central Rivers and Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment Action Plans, Stormwater Management Plans and Estuary Management Plans (including both the Tuggerah Lakes and Brisbane Water Estuary Management Plans, when completed) into local planning.

6.13 Implement key NSW government initiatives and guidelines, including *Action for air*, *NSW industrial noise policy*, *Noise and vibration guidelines* and *Environmental criteria for road traffic noise*.

6.14 Integrate the aims and objectives of the *NSW waste avoidance and recovery strategy* (NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change 2007) through local development standards and policies.

6.15 Councils and the Department of Planning are to ensure that Aboriginal cultural and community values are considered in the future planning and management of the local government area.



6

environment, heritage, recreation and natural resources

6.16 Councils are to ensure LEPs have regard for State Environmental Planning Policy No. 71 – Coastal Protection.

6.17 The Department of Planning is to continue to expand the NSW Government's Metropolitan Greenspace program and further investigate opportunities to expand regional facilities for families such as picnic areas and walking trails within the Central Coast Region.

6.18 Councils are to continue to maintain or improve the provision of local open space, particularly in centres along strategic bus routes and around centres where urban growth is being located.

6.19 Councils and the NSW Government are to ensure that development in the North Wyong Shire Structure Plan Area and in existing urban areas is designed to encourage use of sustainable forms of transport, including walking and cycling.

6.20 Councils are to review and protect the cultural heritage values of centres, if these centres are identified to be the focus of urban renewal projects.

6.21 Councils and the NSW Government are to ensure that development pressure of tourist activities are managed to minimise

loss of natural resources, potential for land use conflict and impact on the environment.

6.22 Councils are to refer to *Design in context: guidelines for infill development in the historic environment* (NSW Heritage Office and the Royal Australian Institute of Architects NSW Chapter Infill Guidelines Working Party 2006) in preparing development control plans and making decisions relating to development in existing areas so it is compatible with conservation areas and heritage items.

6.23 Councils are to refer to the principles and guidelines in the *Groundwater management handbook: a guide for local government* (Sydney Coastal Councils Group 2006) when undertaking groundwater resource management and broader planning.





7

Natural hazards

BACKGROUND

The Central Coast Regional Strategy recognises that some areas may be subject to the effects of natural hazards such as flooding, coastal inundation and recession which are closely linked to the coastline, estuaries and foreshore areas of coastal lakes.

These areas are also subject to some of the Region's greatest development pressures. Existing and future development within the Region faces varying degrees of risk from natural hazards. Preparation and future reviews of floodplain and coastline management plans must consider the potential for these risks to increase as a result of climate change, including sea level rise.

The Coastal Protection Act 1979 requires councils to prepare Coastal Zone Management Plans using the NSW Government's *Coastal zone management manual* (1991). These management plans will form the basis for the consideration of impacts of new land releases, proposed rezoning and developments in areas subjected to hazards. These risks

may increase due to sea level rise and more frequent and intense storms associated with climate change.

The Floodplain Development Manual covers the management of flood liable land and defines the NSW Government's Flood Prone Land Policy. The manual aims to reduce the impact of flooding on landowners and property. Councils must incorporate processes and planning provisions in LEPs consistent with the Floodplain Development Manual, including preparation of floodplain management plans. These policies and resulting development controls for flood prone land must also be considered as part of the development assessment process.

The Department of Planning is piloting a laser survey of part of the Region that will deliver highly accurate topographic information from which modelling of coastal inundation, flooding and recession can be improved.

In an area that has such substantial vegetated areas and a dispersed population there is a high risk of bushfires. Planning for bushfire protection is undertaken in

accordance with NSW government policy.

Similarly, the management of acid sulphate soils must be undertaken in accordance with NSW government policy.

OUTCOMES

Future urban development should be located in areas that are not vulnerable to coastline recession, frequent flooding or rising watertable consistent with a floodplain and coastal zone management plan. Local planning needs to be consistent with NSW government policy in relation to flooding, acid sulphate soils, bushfires and coastal management plans.

ACTIONS

7.1 Councils are to prepare (or update) floodplain, estuary and coastal zone management plans in order to reduce risks from natural hazards. These plans must be completed and considered in planning decisions made within the areas that they apply to.

7

natural hazards

7.2 Local environmental plans will zone areas subject to high hazard to reflect the capabilities of the land.

7.3 In order to manage the risks associated with climate change, councils will undertake investigations of lands with the potential to be affected by sea level rise and inundation to ensure that risks to public and private assets are minimised.

7.4 Local environmental plans will zone waterways to reflect their environmental, recreational or cultural values.

7.5 Local environmental plans will make provision for adequate setbacks in areas at risk from coastal erosion and/or ocean-based inundation in accordance with Coastal Zone Management Plans. Until these plans are made by the Minister for the Environment and Climate Change, councils cannot zone land or approve new development or redevelopment in potential hazard areas, unless assessed within a risk assessment framework adopted by the council.



Water

BACKGROUND

The Central Coast has recently experienced its worst drought on record. That fact, combined with the CSIRO's predictions of increased temperatures, changes in rainfall and storm intensity due to climate change means that a range of strategies and measures that are not yet in place, must be implemented to develop a safe, secure and reliable water supply. Ongoing security of water supply and drought recovery is a factor that will need to be considered in relation to future reviews of the Regional Strategy.

Water supply on the Central Coast is managed by Gosford and Wyong councils who are each designated as a water supply authority under the *Water Management Act 2000*. On 27 November 2006 the NSW Government assented to the *Central Coast Water Corporation Act 2006*. This Act (the date of its commencement yet to be proclaimed) provides for the establishment of the Central Coast Water Corporation to supply water and sewerage services on the Central Coast. The responsibility

for water supply will remain with the councils who would wholly own this entity with revenues raised by the corporation remaining in the Region. The corporation model has been developed following a request from Gosford and Wyong councils for a new legal entity to enable improved governance and streamlined decision-making. Both councils are taking steps towards establishment of this board and it is expected that the new corporation will come into operation shortly.

Mangrove Creek, Mooney Creek, Ourimbah Creek, Jilliby Creek, Wyong River and several aquifers provide water for the Region, although other sources are being used such as the transfer of water from Hunter Water Corporation. The water supply system includes three major dams (Mangrove Creek Dam, Mardi Dam and Mooney Mooney Dam) along with three weirs, two water treatment plants, 40 reservoirs and almost 2000 kilometres of piping. Groundwater and stormwater are playing increasing roles in the water supply system through a number of projects throughout the Region.

OUTCOMES

The Gosford Wyong Councils Water Authority in recent times has focused much of its energy on contingency and recovery planning as a result of the drought. In August 2007, the local councils formally endorsed *WaterPlan 2050* (Gosford Council & Wyong Councils 2007), the long-term blueprint for managing the Central Coast's water resources over the next four decades. *WaterPlan 2050* provides strategies for delivering a sustainable long-term water supply system to the Central Coast, to accommodate existing and future water needs, without compromising the health of the Region's rivers, estuaries and lakes and to implement natural resource management legislation requirements, e.g. the *Water Management Act 2000*.

WaterPlan 2050 identifies a number of water-saving, water-harvesting and water-supply measures needed to meet long-term water requirements. Options considered under the plan include improved demand management, recycling more



water, more effective use of river water through building transfer schemes, transferring water from the Hunter Region, stormwater harvesting schemes in developing areas, and using groundwater. Two high priority projects have been commenced, an upgraded link between Wyong River and Mardi Dam and a pipeline linking Mangrove Dam to Mardi dam. Construction of the new Mardi-Mangrove link is expected to commence by the end of 2008 and commissioning of the project is scheduled for July 2010 (subject to the necessary approvals).

The Gosford Wyong Councils Water Authority has also achieved development approvals for desalination plants as longer term contingency options. The options for desalination include small mobile plants and a large permanent plant that has the capacity to provide 20 per cent of the Region's water supply.

The NSW Government's proposed 450 billion litre dam at Tillegra will also provide long-term benefits for the Central Coast's water supply system.

Water sharing plans have been developed for a number of Central Coast water sources including Jilliby Creek, Ourimbah Creek and the Kulnura Mangrove Mountain groundwater source. In addition to the water sharing plans already gazetted, plans are also

being developed for the remaining water sources. Water sharing plans are legal documents made under the *Water Management Act 2000*. They provide the rules for allocating water for the environmental needs of the water source and direct how water is to be shared. Implementation of water sharing plans is managed by the Department of Water and Energy. These plans will determine environmental flow and water access rules for both surface and groundwater and are critical to ensuring ongoing water supply for the Central Coast.

The NSW Government is working to ensure the plans meet environmental requirements and allow provision for security of water supply to service expected population growth for the Central Coast. There is agreement in principle to allow greater extraction of water during times of high flow and reduced extraction from very low flows, subject to determination of environmental flow requirements, and further information being provided by councils in relation to the environmental health of the respective waterways under the proposed extraction regime.

The NSW Government's Building Sustainability Index (BASIX) requires residential development to adopt water-efficient features with a goal of reducing water and energy

consumption. This goal aligns with the Gosford Wyong Councils Water Authority's objectives of reducing water demand via the installation of water-efficient devices such as rainwater tanks.

Councils must continue to incorporate appropriate water-efficiency initiatives into both planning strategies and development controls. This is likely to include encouraging rainwater tanks, non-potable water usage, water reuse and water sensitive urban design. The NSW Government continues to support water sensitive urban design and integrated water catchment management. Councils should continue to adopt these principles in local planning and seek funding for local stormwater initiatives.

Other demand management options being implemented on the Central Coast include water restrictions, water efficiency refits, an expanded rebate system for water tanks and water efficient appliances and programs to increase efficiencies and recycled water usage for major users.

Much of the land to the west of the F3 Freeway is part of the water supply catchment of the Central Coast. The Central Coast Regional Strategy will protect the Region's water supply catchment from inappropriate development or land use.



Management of groundwater extraction and development within catchment areas will also be an ongoing area of concern for both councils and the Departments of Environment and Climate Change, and Water and Energy.

The Central Coast Regional Strategy aligns with the work of the NSW Government and councils to ensure a secure, safe, and adequate regional water supply through supporting:

- specific environmental flows for all rivers and estuaries
- sustainable extraction of groundwater
- per capita reduction in town water use
- Improved protection of water quality and quantity in water supply catchment areas
- improved water cycle management to, in part, increase reuse of water.

Several recent NSW Government initiatives that will help the local water authority and councils to provide a more robust and adaptable water supply system include:

- construction of the new 450 billion litre Tillegra Dam
- construction of a pre-treatment plant on the Williams River to

increase available water for transfers from the Hunter Region

- management of the transfer pipeline between the Hunter and Central Coast regions
- temporarily allowing increased water extraction from Ourimbah Creek
- extension of the NSW Government's Water Savings Fund (part of Metropolitan Water Plan) to the Central Coast in May 2006. This funding could be used for rainwater tank and water efficient appliance rebates and allows industry and other large water users to save and harvest water.

ACTIONS

8.1 The local water authority and councils are to implement *WaterPlan 2050*, having regard to the dwelling and employment capacity targets in the Regional Strategy for the next 25 years and take part in future reviews of these capacity targets.

8.2 Councils must incorporate appropriate water efficiency, integrated water cycle management and water sensitive urban design initiatives in local planning, development standards, policies and LEPs.

8.3 Develop water sharing plans and implement environmental flows to improve waterway health as outlined in the existing and proposed water sharing plans and relevant catchment action plans, whilst providing water for forecast population growth.

8.4 Require new residential development to comply with BASIX targets to reduce water consumption and energy consumption.

8.5 Ensure that LEPs seek to improve existing land use conflicts within defined water catchment areas.

8.6 At each review of the Regional Strategy an assessment is to be carried out on the capacity of the water supply system to adequately meet forecast housing and employment capacity targets.



Health

- 1 Gosford Hospital: Carpark and Main Access and Mandala Mental Health
- 2 Wyong Hospital Redevelopment



Education

- 3 Brisbane Water Secondary College: Trade School*
- 4 Gorokan High School: New Gymnasium
- 5 Jilliby Public School: Library and Administration Facilities*
- 6 Kariong Mountains High School: New School
- 7 Lisarow High School: Upgrade Library*
- 8 Pretty Beach Public School: Demountable Replacement



Ageing, Disability and Home Care

- 9 Accommodation Reconfiguration and Fitout, Green Point
- 10 Accommodation Reconfiguration and Fitout, Wyong
- 11 Re-accommodation of Large Residential Centres, Hamlyn Terrace
- 12 Re-accommodation of Large Residential Centres, Wadalba
- 13 Stronger Together: New Accommodation, Wyong



Attorney General

- 14 Court Upgrade: Gosford



Police

- 15 Wyong Police Station



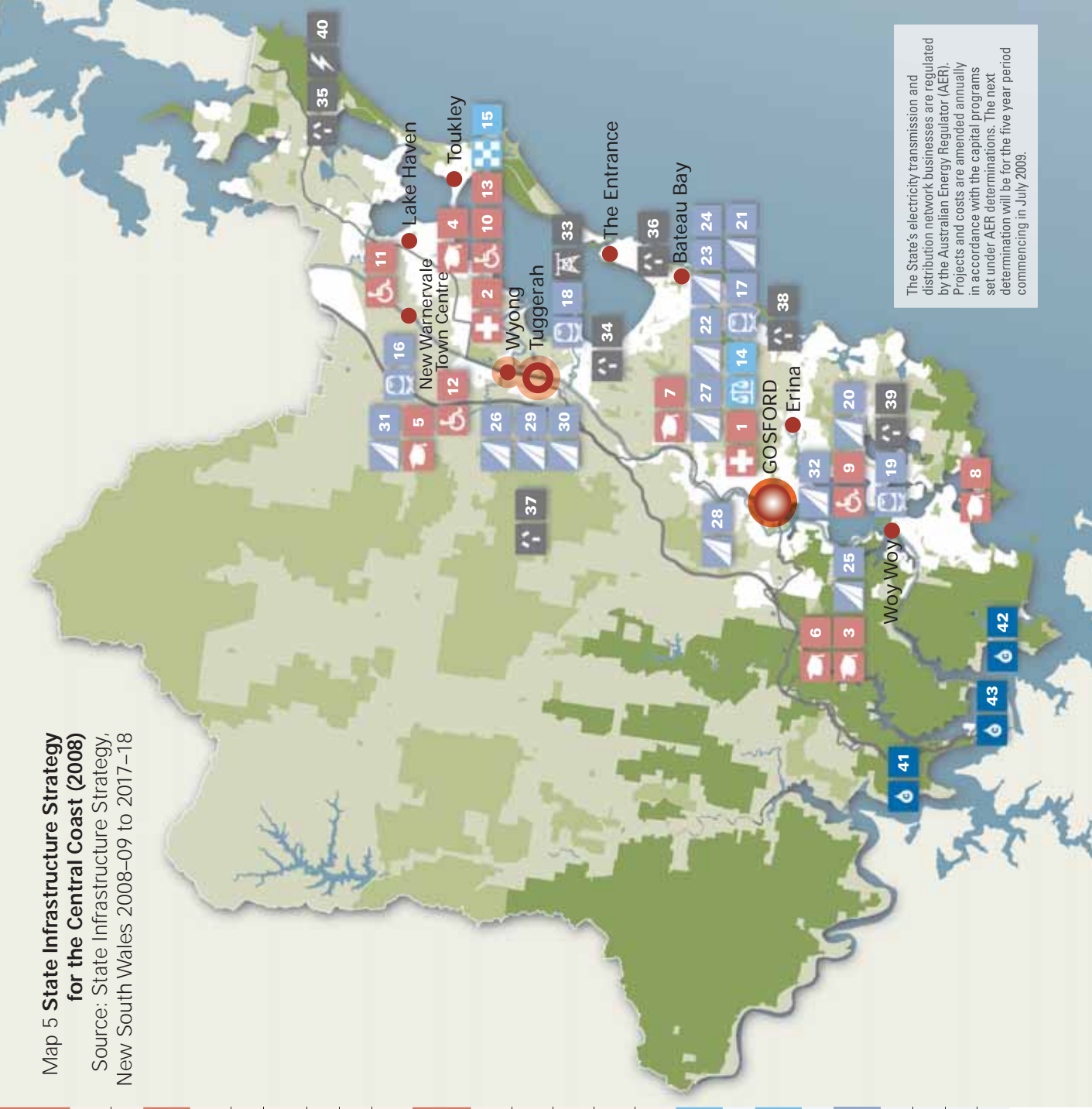
Rail

- 16 North Warnervale: New Railway Station*
- 17 Stabling, Central Coast
- 18 Tuggerah Station Interchange and Car Park
- 19 Woy Woy Commuter Car Park Expansion

Map 5 State Infrastructure Strategy

for the Central Coast (2008)

Source: State Infrastructure Strategy, New South Wales 2008–09 to 2017–18



REGIONAL STRATEGY CENTRES

Regional City	Major Centre	Town	Urban Area	Major Road	Rail Line	National Park	State/Regional Park	Non-urban Land



Roads

- 20 Avoca Drive: Sun Valley Road to Bayside Drive: Widen to 4 Lanes
- 21 Central Coast Highway: Brisbane Water Drive, Manns Road Intersection Upgrade*
- 22 Central Coast Highway: Carlton Road to Matcham Road*
- 23 Central Coast Highway: Matcham Road to Ocean View Drive*
- 24 Central Coast Highway: Ocean View Drive to Tumbl Road, Widen to 4 Lanes
- 25 Central Coast Highway: Woy Woy Road Intersection Upgrade*
- 26 Pacific Highway: Lisarow to F3 Stage 2, Glen Road to Burns Road, Widen to 4 Lanes
- 27 Pacific Highway: Lisarow to F3 stage 3, Railway Crescent to Glen Road, Widen to 4 Lanes*
- 28 Pacific Highway: Narara to Lisarow Upgrade, Manns Road to Railway Crescent*
- 29 Pacific Highway: Tuggerah to Wyong, Anzac Road to Johnson Road, Widen to 4 Lanes
- 30 Pacific Highway: Wyong Road Intersection Upgrade*
- 31 Sparks Road: Upgrade*
- 32 Terrigal Drive Upgrade*



Transmission

- 33 Tuggerah 330KV Transformer



Distribution

- 34 Berkeley Vale Zone Substation
- 35 Lake Munmorah Zone Substation
- 36 Long Jetty Feeders
- 37 Ourimbah Subtransmission Substation
- 38 Wamberal Zone Substation
- 39 Woy Woy & Umina Zone Substation



Generation

- 40 Colongra Gas Turbine Peaking Plant

Country Towns Program

- 41 Bar Point Sewerage Upgrade

- 42 Little Wobby Sewerage Upgrade

- 43 Mooney Mooney/Cheero Point Sewerage Upgrade

* These projects are not yet approved but form part of the \$140 billion State Infrastructure Strategy to 2017–18.



9

Regional infrastructure

BACKGROUND

A range of public and private infrastructure will be required to service new employment and residential areas as well as existing areas that are subject to ongoing growth and redevelopment. An additional challenge in providing infrastructure and services to the Region is the large fluctuations due to the seasonal holiday periods. Concentrating the majority of future growth in and around the Region's centres provides an opportunity to more efficiently use existing and augmented water, energy, waste and transport infrastructure.

The Central Coast Regional Strategy is linked to the NSW Government's four-year budget cycle through the *State infrastructure strategy 2008–09 to 2017–18 New South Wales* (NSW Treasury 2008), which charts the infrastructure provision that the NSW Government will need to undertake in NSW. The State Infrastructure Strategy has an overall ten-year outlook and allows both public and private sectors, including local councils and the wider community to make decisions

based on the NSW Government's priorities and timing for major infrastructure.

Given that current growth forecasts involve substantial population growth, including further growth in the commuting workforce, long term planning for infrastructure, particularly water supply, road and rail transport is critical. The Region's dispersed population, dispersed employment centres and complex geography (i.e. large water bodies and numerous conservation areas) mean that it is difficult to service areas from a road and public transport perspective. Similarly, continuing to improve the management of waste services is important as Gosford's existing landfill sites – Woy Woy and Kincumber – are both expected to reach capacity during the life of the Strategy.

The Strategy recognises that there are several infrastructure areas that could, some time in the future, potentially constrain the capacity for growth in the Region. It will be important for these factors to be considered in future reviews of the Regional Strategy.

OUTCOMES

There are several initiatives within the Central Coast Regional Strategy that will inform future reviews of the State Infrastructure Strategy. These initiatives are all planned within the first five years of the Strategy, and include:

- a Regional Economic Development and Employment Strategy
- planning for Gosford regional city by the Cities Taskforce
- the North Wyong Shire Structure Plan
- a review of rural lands and resource planning
- a Regional Conservation Plan
- preparation of new principal LEPs (Gosford 2009 and Wyong 2011)
- outlining plans for upgrading water infrastructure (ongoing).

The Regional Strategy requires that plans for Gosford regional city and the North Wyong Shire Structure Plan Area consider infrastructure requirements and, in the case of the Structure Plan, a staging and sequencing Shire Structure Plan

9

regional infrastructure

will identify where the majority of the Region's future greenfield dwellings to 2031 will be located. The plan will focus the majority of new development around the new Warnervale town centre. Staging of development will be targeted to ensure that centres and key infrastructure are developed in an efficient and timely manner.

The Strategy recognises that there are short- and long-term measures that are underway to secure a sustainable water supply. New development opportunities will focus on major employment centres so as to maximise economic growth in the Region, and ongoing reviews will be required to ensure that there is satisfactory consideration of major infrastructure requirements, including water supply issues.

ACTIONS

9.1 The Department of Planning and relevant NSW government agencies are to undertake a number of strategies that will plan for future growth to implement the Central Coast Regional Strategy.

9.2 The Department of Planning is to review the population and employment capacity targets contained within this Strategy as part of five-yearly reviews.

9.3 Councils are to identify suitably-located and appropriately-zoned land for new water supply, wastewater treatment and recycling, energy and waste avoidance, and resource recovery infrastructure, to

support growth in major regional centres and major towns.

9.4 Suitable locally-generated and/or renewable energy projects such as wind, solar, bio-waste and wave power will be supported.

9.5 In preparing LEPs, councils are to liaise with road, rail, water and energy providers and make provision for any regional road, rail, gas, water or electricity infrastructure corridors that may be required.

9.6 Councils are encouraged to promote waste avoidance and resource recovery in demolition and building work as well as in the design and occupancy of residential, commercial and industrial development.





Regional transport

BACKGROUND

Transport infrastructure on the Central Coast is provided by Federal, State and local governments. The network includes an arterial road system with major highway and freeway links to the adjoining regions, rail links, bus networks, a local airport, ferry services and pedestrian and bicycle networks.

Dispersed settlement across the Central Coast has resulted in a regional transportation network formed to connect these dispersed centres and localities. Ensuring improved transport networks for existing areas and adequate services for new development in the northern half of Wyong shire are significant challenges as a result of this settlement pattern. The Region's large water bodies with flat topography and scenic environments surrounding them, provide opportunities for improved scenic bicycle networks.

The Region is currently highly car dependent in terms of travelling between centres, railway stations and other key destinations. There

are also a large number of workers who commute out of the Region for work by train and by road, predominantly on the F3 Freeway. The F3 and the Sydney-to-Newcastle rail line both have important national and State freight functions, and are susceptible to disruption by fire and storm damage.

The NSW Government is continuing to upgrade the regional road network and include bus priority and cycleway construction in these upgrades. A network of strategic bus corridors will be progressively implemented, providing fast, frequent, direct and convenient links between larger centres and major areas of patronage with more local networks. The strategic bus corridors will be supported by improved roadside infrastructure and bus priority measures, underpinned by larger contract regions for the Central Coast.

The rail corridor is located on the western fringe of the heavily populated coastal areas with buses playing an important role in intra-regional public transport. The rail network links the major

centre of Tuggerah–Wyong, Gosford regional city and centres to the north and south. It also provides one of the main interregional links to the Lower Hunter and metropolitan Sydney. RailCorp's planned initiatives under the State Infrastructure Strategy include:

- a new railway station at North Warnervale
- providing additional stabling capacity on the Central Coast to accommodate new outer suburban cars
- providing an additional platform at Hornsby station (as part of the Rail Clearways Program), improving reliability for Central Coast services
- interchange and commuter car park improvements at Tuggerah and commuter car park expansion at Woy Woy.

Road and rail infrastructure play the most significant roles in moving freight to, from and through the Central Coast.



Recent trends suggest industry is consolidating warehousing and distribution centres to reduce the cost of maintaining inventories. Distribution centres include local delivery centres, freight terminals and inter-modal facilities. There is an increasing demand for these facilities in strategic locations, particularly near major roads such as the F3 Freeway.

Warnervale Airport is owned by Wyong Shire Council and operates as a local airport. The future of the airport is being considered as part of the rezoning for the wider Wyong Employment Zone area.

Ferries on the Central Coast provide a regular service from Empire Bay to Woy Woy via Davistown and Saratoga, linking to train services. They also link between Wagstaffe and Ettalong and Palm Beach in Sydney's north. There are several privately-operated tourist cruise services on the Central Coast with a focus on Brisbane Water and Tuggerah Lakes.

A number of specific transport infrastructure projects have been identified in the *State infrastructure strategy 2008–09 to 2017–18 New South Wales* (NSW Treasury 2008). These projects are shown on Map 5.

OUTCOMES

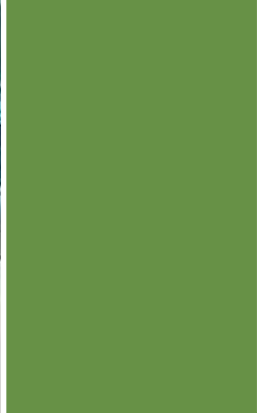
Connecting the Central Coast's centres and focusing links on Gosford and Tuggerah–Wyong will ensure the Region grows its economic diversity whilst reducing both the economic and environmental cost of doing business. The Region's centres are being connected by public transport via existing train services, improved local bus services, and walking and cycling facilities. Both councils should continue to explore opportunities for funding under the NSW Coastal Cycleway program and the Roads and Traffic Authority's cycleway programs.

Similarly, connecting centres to destinations such as recreation areas, schools and residential areas are vital to making centres and surrounding areas attractive places to live, work and invest.

The Ministry of Transport, the Roads and Traffic Authority and RailCorp will develop strategies, that identify future improvements to the capacity of both road, rail and bus services to cater for future population growth, and to identify infrastructure investment priorities. These strategies will inform the relevant agency's total asset management plans and future reviews of the State Infrastructure Strategy.

The NSW Government's Rail Clearways plan and the new Chatswood to Epping railway line will improve rail access for Central Coast residents who travel into and around Sydney. The Rail Clearways plan aims to improve capacity and reliability on the CityRail network. The benefits from these actions will extend to freight and intercity services from the Central Coast to Central Station and other areas.

As part of the bus reform process in NSW, bus services within the Region will be improved through the Ministry's integrated network planning process in partnership with the local bus operators. This process will also involve consultation with relevant stakeholders and the general community. Part of the network planning process is to introduce the strategic bus corridors identified on Map 1. The resulting integrated network plans will provide bus services that are fast, frequent and direct, connecting regional and district centres and major patronage generators such as hospitals, educational facilities and major retail centres such as Erina and Tuggerah. The network plans will also enable the RTA to provide bus priority measures along the nominated strategic bus corridors.



Improved self-containment of employment within the Region will help to reduce pressure on transport networks, particularly for flows to Sydney and the Lower Hunter Region.

A train station will be planned and developed within the new Warnervale town centre. This will greatly improve transport access for residents in the northern half of Wyong shire and complement the range of retail, business, community, health, social, recreation and residential functions that are planned for that centre and its surrounds.

Connecting regions and gateways

The NSW Government's Metropolitan Strategy *City of cities: a plan for Sydney's future* (NSW Department of Planning 2005) recommends connecting regions and economic gateways within the Greater Metropolitan Region including the Central Coast. Subject to Federal Government support and the recent review of the F3 to M7 corridor selection and the AusLink corridor strategies – *Sydney urban corridor strategy* (Australian Government Department of Transport and Regional Services 2007) and *Sydney–Brisbane*

corridor strategy (Australian Government Department of Transport and Regional Services 2007) – there are a number of proposals undergoing assessment or evaluation. These include widening parts of the F3 Freeway to improve connection to Sydney, connecting it to the M2 Motorway and possibly north-western Sydney and the M7. The planning for these links is an ongoing process with the Federal and NSW Government working closely together.

The Metropolitan Strategy identifies the need to plan for the provision of sufficient freight transport capacity in key corridors. One of the key corridors that influence freight movement on the Central Coast is the Sydney-to-Newcastle freight corridor. Planning also needs to be undertaken to determine ways to enhance rail freight capacity between Sydney and Newcastle.

Planning for land around several of the interchanges along the F3 Freeway (including Somersby, Tuggerah and Warnervale) to become key employment land nodes (for appropriate employment types) is also important for the efficient movement of freight.

ACTIONS

10.1 The Ministry of Transport, the Roads and Traffic Authority and local councils are to implement the strategic bus corridors with improved bus priority on all corridors.

10.2 The NSW Government is committed to planning and delivering a new town centre, including the station and interchange. Bus services that reflect the centre's important role as a town centre will be introduced.

10.3 For centres that are subject to redevelopment strategies, councils are to identify, in consultation with the Ministry of Transport, passenger interchanges that are centrally located, visible from public areas, integrated into overall centres and well connected to both pedestrian and bicycle paths.

10.4 The Roads and Traffic Authority is to continue to plan for and implement upgrades to the Pacific Highway, the Central Coast Highway, Terrigal Drive, Avoca Drive and Sparks Road and to incorporate bus priority and cycleway initiatives where justified and feasible.



regional transport

10.5 Investigate better management of through-traffic in relation to Gosford regional city, with a long term objective of improving the connection between the city centre and the waterfront.

10.6 Assess and evaluate proposals to widen parts of the F3 Freeway. Progress investigations into the F3 Freeway and M2 Motorway connection. As a result of the Federal Government's review of the F3 Freeway and M7 Motorway corridor selection and the AusLink corridor strategies – *Sydney urban corridor strategy* (2007) and *Sydney–Brisbane corridor strategy* (2007) – undertake preliminary planning for a new connection from the M7 to north of the Hawkesbury River. The Ministry of Transport will also participate in these reviews.

10.7 The NSW Government is to continue to improve the reliability and increase the capacity of rail services by continuing to implement the Rail Clearways project, in accordance with the State Plan.

10.8 The NSW Government is to facilitate greater use of rail for freight movement and reduce the impact of road freight movement by promoting greater efficiency of road freight movements and developing a series of strategies to reduce emissions from diesel vehicles, reduce noise

impacts from freight movements, activities around the domestic intermodal terminals, as well as the movement of construction materials and bulk fuel.

10.9 Councils and the Department of Planning are to ensure there is sufficiently zoned employment land near major transport nodes to meet targets set by the Regional Strategy, through the preparation of LEPs and the North Wyong Shire Structure Plan.

10.10 Concentrate employment in areas that allow for efficient public transport servicing, such as centres and specialised key nodes.

10.11 Council and the NSW Government to investigate opportunities for additional or improved forms of regional public transport, subject to future funding.

10.12 Councils and the NSW Government to work together to align walking and cycling networks with public transport routes to improve accessibility to public transport. This will include completion of the NSW Coastal Cycleway network.

10.13 Councils in conjunction with State Government will develop strategies that identify future improvements to the capacity of road, rail and bus services to

cater for population growth, and to identify infrastructure investment priorities in conjunction with future reviews of the Regional Strategy.

10.14 The NSW Government, in partnership with councils and the community, to develop and implement TravelSmart and other travel demand management initiatives including those focused on major trip generating land uses.



Implementation

This Regional Strategy will be implemented primarily through local environmental plans, development control plans, the State Infrastructure Strategy and funds collected as development contributions.

Ongoing stakeholder involvement with the Central Coast Regional Strategy will ensure it is implemented, reviewed, remains responsive and is kept up-to-date.

As part of the NSW Government's state-wide planning reforms, Gosford and Wyong councils will be required to prepare a new principal LEP by 2009 and 2011 respectively. The Minister for Planning has issued a direction to councils to ensure local plans are consistent with relevant regional strategies. The Department of Planning will also work with both councils to ensure that these reviews are achieved within this timeframe.

Other implementation mechanisms for the Central Coast Regional Strategy include:

- the Cities Taskforce, established by the Department of Planning, will continue to work with local government and other

stakeholders in planning the Gosford regional city

- continuing support for planning the Tuggerah–Wyong major centre by the NSW Government and Wyong Council
- preparing a Regional Conservation Plan
- preparing a Regional Economic Development and Employment Strategy
- planning for the new Warnervale town centre and Wyong Employment Zone, in conjunction with Wyong Council
- preparing a Structure Plan that will guide future development in the northern part of Wyong Shire
- the Sydney Region Land Supply Program consisting of the Metropolitan Development Program and the Employment Lands Development Program
- reviewing rural and resources land use planning on the Central Coast
- continuing to work with the local water authority, the Department of Water and Energy and the

Department of Environment and Climate Change towards a more robust and adaptable water supply system on the Central Coast

- a statutory framework that requires councils to prepare LEPs that are consistent with the Regional Strategy.

An integrated approach to regional governance will be essential to implementing the Strategy through partnerships between all tiers of government, stakeholders and the wider community.

Contributions

Where development or rezoning increases the need for State infrastructure, the Minister for Planning may require a contribution towards the provision of infrastructure.

Funds collected from contributions from major developments will be used for regional infrastructure, consistent with the State Infrastructure Strategy, and approved biodiversity outcomes.

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implementation

Funds collected by councils through section 94 contributions plans and levies will be used to fund local infrastructure and achieve any local biodiversity outcomes.

ACTIONS

11.1 Provide a statutory framework for the primary tools of implementation by preparing a Direction under section 117 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* that will require all LEPs to be consistent with the Central Coast Regional Strategy.

11.2 The NSW Government to implement, review and update the State Infrastructure Strategy as part of the annual budget process.

11.3 The Department of Planning and councils are to ensure LEPs and development controls are consistent with the Regional Strategy.

11.4 The Department of Planning through the Sydney Region Land Supply Program and Employment Lands Development Program is to continue to support local planning programs through the provision of information and modelling on dwelling and employment.





Monitoring, review and governance

BACKGROUND

The Department of Planning will work in collaboration with other State agencies and partners including local government, the Federal Government, business and non-government organisations to achieve the objectives of the Regional Strategy and inform future reviews of the Regional Strategy.

The Department of Planning will review the Central Coast Regional Strategy every five years in partnership with the Central Coast Regional Coordination Management Group, and following consultation with local government. The review will assess any demographic and economic changes occurring in the Region and this will assist local councils with their five-year review of LEPs.

The NSW Government through the Metropolitan Development Program will monitor and manage the pace and location of housing growth on the Central Coast. In addition, an Employment Lands Development Program will be used to monitor employment land development. This program will provide annual

updates on levels of stock, trends and projected demand.

A key vision of the Strategy is improved regional coordination over the life of the Strategy. Implementing the directions and actions in the Central Coast Regional Strategy will be the responsibility of State and local government and regional stakeholders. The Regional Coordination Management Group will provide advice on the implementation and review of the Regional Strategy against its aims and actions.

ACTIONS

The Regional Coordination Management Group is to work in partnership with Department of Planning to undertake the following actions:

12.1 Coordinate the NSW Government's response to implement the actions in the Regional Strategy.

12.2 Contribute to the development of performance measures against the aims of the Regional Strategy.

12.3 Provide a framework to inform the State Infrastructure Strategy on the strategic infrastructure priorities for the Central Coast.

12.4 Work with the Department of Planning on the five-yearly review of the Central Coast Regional Strategy.

12.5 The Department of Planning is to:

- coordinate structure planning and infrastructure planning for the North Wyong Shire Structure Plan Area
- annually review the progress on housing and employment targets in the Regional Strategy and report on progress to the Regional Coordination Management Group
- in consultation with the Department of Environment and Climate Change staff, report to the Minister for Planning and the Minister for Climate Change, Environment and Water on the progress of implementing the Central Coast Regional Conservation Plan

12

Monitoring, review and governance

- report to the Minister for Planning on the progress in implementing the dwelling and employment capacity targets in the Regional Strategy
- coordinate and take part in a comprehensive review of the Central Coast Regional Strategy every five years, or shorter periods if required by the NSW Government, in partnership with the Regional Coordination Management Group
- coordinate, as part of future reviews, an assessment of the capacity of the Region's water supply, road and rail infrastructure to cater for forecast growth.





Appendix 1

NSW STATE PLAN AND THE CENTRAL COAST

The *State plan: a new direction for New South Wales*, released in November 2006, defines the overarching goals and outcomes that the NSW Government and the community agree should shape public policy over the next ten years.

The objectives and priorities of the State Plan are mirrored in the aims of the Metropolitan Strategy and set out in terms of five areas of activity of the NSW Government:

Rights, Respect and Responsibility – the justice system and services that promote community involvement and citizenship.

Delivering Better Services – the key areas of service delivery to the whole population (health, education, transport).

Fairness and Opportunity Services – that promote social justice and reduce disadvantage.

Growing Prosperity Across NSW – activities that promote productivity and economic growth, including in rural and regional NSW.

Environment for Living – planning, environmental protection, and arts and recreation.

Implementation of the Metropolitan Strategy, the subregional strategies and regional strategies will help to achieve the priorities and targets set by the State Plan. The actions and directions of the Metropolitan Strategy – and the subsequent subregional and regional strategies

– strongly contribute to the majority of the State Plan priorities, in particular, building harmonious and healthy communities, providing a high quality transport system as well as improving urban environments and stimulating business investment.

For example, the structure of the urban areas and the physical environment created by the pattern of land uses, the relationship to transport services, the quality of the pedestrian environment, including the accessibility of open space and safe walking and cycling networks, are significant for a number of outcomes. These factors strongly influence the opportunities for people to be physically active and for reducing the growth in motor vehicle use. The Regional Strategy also implements specific targets of the State Plan. This includes increasing the share of dwellings located within 30 minutes by public transport of a strategic centre and providing more jobs closer to home.

The State Plan lists a commitment to the following local actions for the Central Coast:

- implementing the Regional Strategy for the Central Coast to guide appropriate development, maintain the lifestyle and environment and include government intervention to increase local employment growth.
- ensuring employment land is provided to increase local jobs, such as the Somersby Industrial Park and the Wyong Employment Zone

- expansion of mental health services with new facilities including the Gosford Mandala Unit
- ongoing upgrades of roads in the Region, including the Central Coast Highway, Pacific Highway and Avoca Drive
- improving F3 links to Sydney to three lanes in each direction in partnership with the Federal Government
- creation of a better public transport system, including new outer suburban train carriages, upgrades at Tuggerah and Woy Woy stations, rail maintenance upgrades and better local bus services
- upgrading electricity infrastructure
- upgrading services for older people
- providing new social housing
- planning and delivering a new town centre at Warnervale, including a new railway station and transport interchange.

A2

Appendix 2

CENTRAL COAST CENTRES AND EMPLOYMENT HIERARCHY

Several characteristics have been considered in preparing these definitions that include centre role, scale, built form, employment type and employment numbers for the various centre types as well as the transport and services and connections that should be available in these centres.

The built form controls provide a guide as to what form of development generally typifies centres with that standing. The planning regarding the scale, form, density and type of development for these centres will be undertaken by local councils.

Future centres development will be focused on the regional city, major centre and centres that contribute to employment and a variety of economic activity. Detailed centres planning will largely be undertaken by councils, in consultation with the Department of Planning.

Regional City

Gosford will be the principal city serving the entire Region. It will provide the Central Coast with higher-order civic and administration services, cultural and recreational facilities, medical/health specialists and services (including a regional hospital), professional services, a regional library, regional entertainment facilities and could include a regional civic precinct. Gosford will also perform a local role for residents within the city centre.

Gosford city will continue to include education facilities such as the TAFE and could incorporate off-campus expanded university facilities.

The core will include specialised, possibly boutique style retail, high density housing, a major public transport hub (including a rail and bus interchange) providing connections to global Sydney and other regional cities.

Priority will be given to:

- expanding retail and commercial activities in the city centre and ensuring that these functions are not put at risk by residential development
- encouraging and facilitating the development of strategic sites in the city centre that help to achieve the vision for the regional city
- integrating the waterfront with the city centre and developing marina, performance and artistic cultural activities as well restaurants
- requiring a high standard of urban and building design within the town centre
- investigating how through-traffic can be better managed through the CBD or redirected around the CBD.

Built form: high density located around major public transport (up to 1000 metres from centre).

The built form must respond to the landscape including the waterfront and surrounding vegetated hills. Buildings that generally have integrated uses such as a mix of commercial, retail and residential floor space. The highest residential densities will be located around the railway station.

Employment: providing capacity for 6000 or more additional jobs.

Transport: focal point for roads and major public transport (rail and bus) with access by walking and cycling.

Recreation: the presence of regional open space and regional-level entertainment facilities. Major cultural activities will be hosted in the regional city.

Shops/services: major retail and supermarket services, specialist shops, restaurants, cafés in a 'living city' that operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Includes professional and educational services.

Catchment population: 10 000 to 15 000 people locally with a wider catchment of 400 000 to 450 000 people.

Major Centre

Although somewhat separated by Tuggerah Straight, the Tuggerah-Wyong centre will be unified by landscaping, building design and pedestrian cycle paths and has the advantage of two railway stations. It combines the local government area's principal administration, civic, major shopping, bulky goods and business park functions.

Employment is expected to increase to by 4500 or more additional jobs by 2031. Growth in Tuggerah will be driven by expanding retail floor space to provide for the large Wyong Shire catchment area, improving connections between major employment generators and Tuggerah Station and through the provision of new business park opportunities. Growth in Wyong will be driven by residential development, revitalisation of the retail area, strengthening of the commercial function, provision of cultural facilities and activation of the Wyong River foreshore.

Priority will be given to:

- ensuring the future expansion of major retail and commercial elements in Tuggerah and new development contributes to achieving an attractive and pedestrian-friendly major centre
- creating a civic focus in Tuggerah that links with the train station
- improving connections to both Tuggerah and Wyong train stations from the surrounding areas
- increasing residential densities and town-based commercial activity in Wyong
- requiring a high standard of urban and building design in both Tuggerah and Wyong.

Built form: mainly low rise but opportunities for higher densities around train stations and town centres (up to 1000 metres from centre). High amenity setting with distinctive character for both Wyong and Tuggerah.

Employment: providing capacity for 4500 or more additional jobs to 2031. Diversified employment sectors such as retail, bulky goods, administration, business parks, cultural facilities and employment/industrial lands.

Transport: focal point for roads and major public transport (rail and bus) with access by walking and cycling. Pedestrian linkages within the centre and with key attractors such as Wyong River and Pioneer Dairy will be substantially improved.

Employment Lands

Employment lands encompass clusters of major construction, manufacturing, light industry, transportation and storage activities. They include distribution centres, factories, warehouses and other industrial uses and should have high quality access to major strategic transport corridors.

There are a number of guiding principles that relate to employment lands in the Region:

- Where feasible, existing zoned employment land should be utilised before new employment lands are developed. However the land must be suitably located for the proposed employment activity.
- The rezoning of employment lands to residential and other non-employment uses should not be supported unless supported by an employment lands strategy.
- Opportunities for expansion of existing nodes for employment purposes where they are approaching full development should be investigated.
- The North Wyong Shire Structure Plan will consider the future supply areas of employment lands and their relationship with other uses in that area.
- Employment lands should have appropriate buffers to residential areas.

Examples include Somersby Industrial Park, West Gosford, Lisarow, Berkeley Vale and Wyong North.

Built form: industrial type warehouses, factories and other industrial and light industrial use buildings.

Employment: 10 to 50 jobs per hectare.

Transport: access to major strategic transport corridors such as the F3 Sydney to Newcastle Freeway and Sydney to Newcastle rail freight corridor.



Appendix 2

Town Centres	<p>Town centres will generally have concentrations of retail, health and professional services mixed with medium density residential within the centre. Town centres will also serve surrounding residential areas.</p> <p>Services present will generally include two to three supermarkets, a discount department store, more than 50 shops, child care, schools, community facilities, bank, branch library, professional services, medical centre and small civic square.</p> <p>Centres that will develop as town centres over the next 25 years are Bateau Bay, The Entrance, Erina, Lake Haven, Toukley, Warnervale (new) and Woy Woy.</p> <p>Built form: planning strategies will be required to determine appropriate low to mid-rise living opportunities (up to six storeys, where appropriate) in and around the core of the centre (up to 800 metres from centre). Lower-rise development will be provided surrounding the core. Some clusters of commercial use within the core with higher density residential around and on top as part of overall mixed-use development.</p> <p>Employment: a variable number and type of jobs. Employment sectors will differ between town centres. Service employment focused on the local area as well as some civic services.</p> <p>Transport: public transport interchange (frequent buses and/or rail) with access by walking and cycling.</p> <p>Recreation: the presence of a civic square and sporting facilities.</p> <p>Shops/Services: the presence of retail including 50 or more shops, two to three supermarkets, a discount department store and community facilities.</p> <p>Catchment Population: 5000 people locally.</p>
Villages	<p>Village centres will generally be small- to medium-sized concentrations of retail, health and other services integrated with medium density (town house style) residential living. Local public transport will provide connections to town centres.</p> <p>Villages will have 11 to 50 shops, a small supermarket, child care, primary school, access to small parks and access to a general practitioner plus ancillary (dentist, podiatrist) and local business services (accountant, lawyer).</p> <p>Centres to be developed as villages over the next 25 years are Avoca Beach, Budgewoi, Chittaway Bay, East Gosford, Ettalong, Killarney Vale, Kincumber, Lake Munmorah, Lisarow, Long Jetty, Niagara Park, Ourimbah, Terrigal, Umina Beach, Wadalba, West Gosford and Wyoming.</p> <p>Built form: medium density and a focus on townhouse and villa development in close proximity to the town centre (up to either 400 or 600 metres from centre).</p> <p>Employment: less than 1000 jobs focusing on local retail and services.</p> <p>Transport: located on key transport routes with frequent buses or trains supported by walking and cycling.</p> <p>Recreation: a local park.</p> <p>Shops/Services: local retail facilities with 11 to 50 shops including a supermarket. Usually includes a primary school.</p> <p>Catchment Population: 2000 to 4000 people locally.</p>

Neighbourhoods	<p>Neighbourhoods generally have local shops combined with lower density residential development. Neighbourhoods will service the daily needs of residents with services being located within walking distance. They will have four to ten shops with access to small parks, a primary school and child care centre. Neighbourhoods do not usually contain health services.</p> <p>Built form: up to three-storey residential, including shop-top dwellings, townhouses and villas as well as detached houses (up to 150 metres from centre).</p> <p>Employment: less than 50 jobs predominantly in trade and local services.</p> <p>Transport: local bus service with walking and cycling.</p> <p>Recreation: a local park.</p> <p>Shops/Services: four to ten shops.</p> <p>Catchment population: 1000 people locally.</p>
Business Parks	<p>Out of centre commercial activity generally refers to a business park. To remain competitive with other regions, the Central Coast must continue to provide land for a diversity of employment activity over the next 25 years, including business parks. There are considerable benefits of consolidating operations into a single site that combines head office, back office, manufacturing, warehouse and distribution activities.</p> <p>Development of business parks must have a minimum warehouse component, a total maximum percentage office floor space for the park and be accessible by public transport, walking and cycling.</p> <p>The Regional Economic Development and Employment Strategy will include a framework for the development of future business that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prohibits office-only activities in out-of-centre locations • sets a maximum percentage of office floor space within an out-of-centre commercial complex where this office floor space is integrated with activities such as manufacturing and distribution • ensures that business parks are strategically located near a major transport corridor. <p>Transport: must include frequent and direct access to public transport, and for walking and cycling.</p>

A3 Appendix 3

SUSTAINABILITY CRITERIA FOR NEW LAND RELEASE – CENTRAL COAST

The following Sustainability Criteria allow the NSW Government to take strong positions in relation to matters of urban settlement in the Central Coast confident in the knowledge that innovative development proposals can still be considered even though they may be outside of the Regional Strategy process. The Sustainability Criteria represent a clear, transparent list of matters that any new proposal will be assessed against.

In order that a development proposal can be considered against the Sustainability Criteria it will be necessary to demonstrate to the local council, as well as the NSW Government, that the proposal satisfies the Sustainability Criteria. As with all rezoning proposals the Department of Planning requires a thorough assessment of the merits of the proposal by the LEP Review Panel, as well as requiring public consultation

through the statutory processes as set out in the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

<p>1. Infrastructure Provision</p> <p>Mechanisms in place to ensure utilities, transport, open space and communication are provided in a timely and efficient way.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development is consistent with the Central Coast Regional Strategy, the relevant Residential Strategy, North Wyong Structure Plan, applicable regional infrastructure plan, Metropolitan Strategy and relevant section 117 direction. • The provision of infrastructure (utilities, transport, open space and communications) is costed and economically feasible based on government methodology for determining infrastructure contribution. • Preparedness to enter into development agreement.
<p>2. Access</p> <p>Accessible transport options for efficient and sustainable travel between homes, jobs, services and recreation to be existing or provide.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility of the area by public transport and appropriate road access in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Location/land use: to existing networks and related activity centres. > Network: the areas potential to be serviced by economically efficient public transport services. > Catchment: the area's ability to contain or form part of the larger urban area which contains adequate transport services. Capacity for land use/transport patterns to make a positive contribution to achievement of travel and vehicle use goals. • No net negative impact on performance of existing subregional road, bus, rail, ferry and freight network.
<p>3. Housing Diversity</p> <p>Provide a range of housing choices to ensure a broad population can be housed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes to the geographic market spread of housing supply, including any government targets established for housing for the aged or disabled or affordable housing.
<p>4. Employment Lands</p> <p>Provide regional/local employment opportunities to support the Central Coast's expanding role in the wider regional and NSW economies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains or improves the existing level of subregional employment self containment. • Meets subregional employment capacity targets. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Employment related land is provided in appropriately zoned areas.

<p>5. Avoidance of Risk Land use conflicts and risk to human health and life is avoided.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where relevant, available safe evacuation route (flood and bushfire). • No residential development within the 1:100 floodplain. • Avoidance of physically constrained land. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > High slope. > Highly erodible. • Avoidance of land use conflicts with adjacent, existing or future land use and rural activities as planned under the Regional Strategy.
<p>6. Natural Resources Natural resource limits not exceeded/ environmental footprint minimised.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand for water does not place unacceptable pressure on infrastructure capacity to supply water and environmental flows. • Demonstrates most efficient/suitable use of land. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Avoids identified significant agricultural land > Avoids impacts on productive resource lands, extractive industries, coal, gas and other mining, fishing and aquaculture. • Demand for energy does not place unacceptable pressure on infrastructure capacity to supply energy. Requires demonstration of efficient and sustainable supply solution.
<p>7. Environmental Protection Protect and enhance biodiversity, air quality, heritage, and waterway health.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent with the approved Regional Conservation Plan. • Maintains or improves areas of regionally significant terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity (as mapped and agreed by the Department of Environment and Climate Change and the Department of Primary Industries). This includes regionally significant vegetation communities, critical habitat, threatened species, populations, ecological communities and their habitats. • Maintains or improves existing environmental condition for air quality. • Maintains or improves existing environmental condition for water quality and quantity. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Consistent with community water quality objectives for recreational water use and river health (Department of Environment and Climate Change and catchment management authority). > Consistent with catchment and stormwater management planning (catchment management authority and local council). • Protects areas of Aboriginal cultural heritage value (as agreed by Department of Environment and Climate Change).
<p>8. Quality and Equity in Services Quality health, education, legal, recreational, cultural and community development and other government services are accessible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available and accessible services. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Do adequate services exist? > Are they at capacity or is some capacity available? > Has the NSW Government planned and budgeted to further service provision? > Developer funding for required service upgrade/access is available.

Further information

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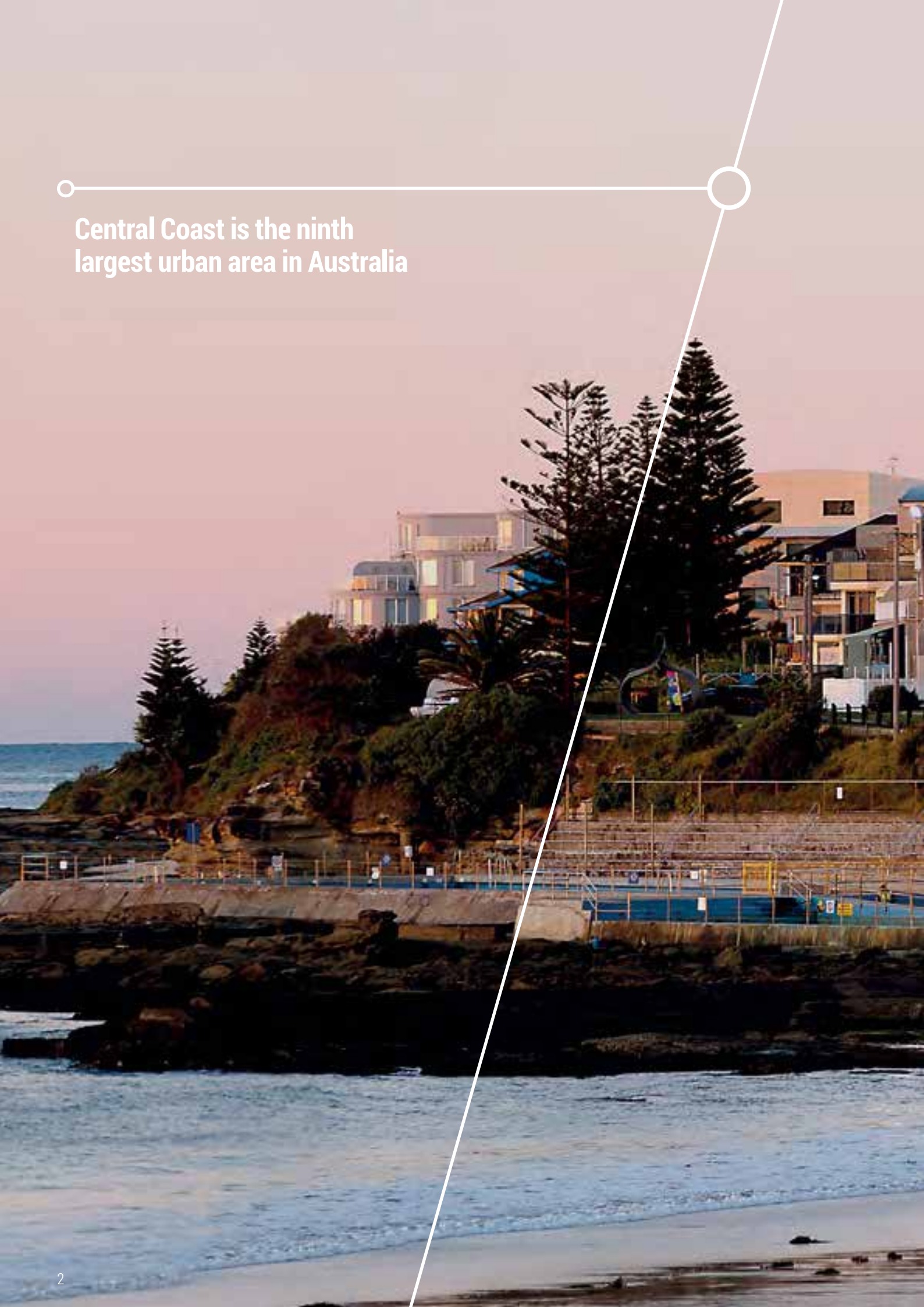
2031

your future **central coast**

A DISCUSSION PAPER
SEPTEMBER 2014



Planning &
Environment

A photograph of a coastal urban area at dusk. In the background, modern multi-story buildings with lit windows are visible. In the middle ground, there are several tall, dark trees and a playground with a blue slide. In the foreground, there is a swimming pool with a blue surface and a concrete deck. The ocean is visible on the left, and a sandy beach is at the bottom. A white line with two circles at its ends runs diagonally across the image, separating the text from the photograph.

**Central Coast is the ninth
largest urban area in Australia**

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FOREWORD



The Central Coast has a unique environment with many beautiful waterways and natural areas. These features contribute to the Region's enviable lifestyle but also provide challenges to planning for the future growth of the Region. Balancing the growth of the Region will be crucial to protect the environment while providing enough housing and employment opportunities for the Region's growing and changing population.

The agricultural, retail, health, tourism and construction industries continue to be of significant economic importance to the Region, as well as to the State. The Region's proximity to both Newcastle and Sydney provides it with many opportunities and challenges for planning the Region's economy. The Region needs to build on its competitive advantages to increase economic development and provide more local jobs.

This Discussion Paper is the first step in the strategic planning process. We know that the community is best placed to tell us how the Central Coast should balance its growth to provide housing and jobs whilst protecting the environment. Rather than make assumptions on what people need from their Region over the next 20 years, we want the new plan to reflect the desires of Central Coast residents and businesses.

We will consult with communities, residents, businesses, all levels of government and industry on their vision for the Central Coast. We want to find out where and how people work, the kind of homes, neighbourhoods and centres they want to live in, the places that they visit and how the NSW Government can help to deliver this vision.

Understanding these issues will help create plans that link development and infrastructure and drive economic growth in the Region. In order to do this, we need to get our basic land use planning right. We need to provide more housing, greater housing choices and more local jobs. We must integrate our land use planning with transport and infrastructure planning so that new infrastructure investment supports growth in the Region. We also need to manage these changes while protecting our environment, heritage and quality of life.

The feedback that we receive from this Discussion Paper will set the direction for the new draft Central Coast Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan (which will be placed on exhibition for further community consultation), so it's important that everyone gets involved and has their say.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pru Goward'.

Pru Goward
Minister for Planning

We are developing a Plan to facilitate and deliver the growth needed on the Central Coast over the next 20 years.

This Discussion Paper seeks your views on what strategies or actions will be needed to provide housing, employment and natural resource management to achieve balanced growth for the Region.

It is the first step in the development of a Central Coast Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan.

This Discussion Paper allows us to consider the needs and desires of the people who live and work in this important Region as we develop the draft Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan.

THE CENTRAL COAST REGION





○ ————— ○

**Creating new jobs and more
affordable housing is a priority
of the NSW Government**



Central Coast snapshot

- Made up of Gosford and Wyong local government areas
- Area of 1,854 square kilometres
- 322,650 population in 2011
- 19,600 more people since 2006
- Population concentrated along coast and Brisbane Water and Tuggerah Lakes

The Central Coast is the ninth largest urban area in Australia.

Its appeal is obvious – liveable communities, enviable lifestyle, relatively affordable housing, close to Sydney and Newcastle, great services and natural attractions.

All of these elements have ensured the ongoing growth of the area with the local population increasing on average by 3,920 every year since 2006.¹

Despite its attraction to new residents from outside the Central Coast and a growing local population, housing supply over the last five years has been well below what's needed with only an average of 790 new houses built annually for the last 5 years.

While recent development approval rates are promising, with a 37 per cent increase in housing approvals on the Central Coast between July and November 2013 compared with same period in 2012,² more needs to be done.

The reasons for this are many:

- Past planning decisions
- Changing economic conditions
- Difficulty bringing new housing to market

Bridging the housing supply gap, providing the right quantity as well as the right mix of new housing, developing centres which satisfy our needs, are all key issues facing the Central Coast community.

We also need to provide enough employment for a growing population and reduce the region's commuting rates.

The NSW Government is supporting sustained housing and jobs growth by reducing red tape, reducing costs, simplifying planning and focusing on the infrastructure needed to deliver growth.

The local councils of Gosford and Wyong are behind the push for more housing as well as more jobs locally.

A Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan for the Central Coast is the first step in realising these commitments and goals.

Keeping the skills of the population in the area is also an important issue as we plan ahead. Many Central Coast residents commute daily to other areas and while this will continue, we want to make sure we are expanding the local economy to provide new job opportunities close to home.



26% The proportion of the Central Coast population that will be over the age of 65 by 2031

This will help boost the area's strong and varied base across important industries such as manufacturing, retail, agriculture, tourism, construction and service industries, including health and business services.

The ideal location of the Central Coast between Sydney and Newcastle means it will continue to grow and we need to work together to ensure that this growth is sustainable. This will ensure future generations can continue to enjoy the Region's attractive environment and live and work in homes and centres that suit their immediate and future needs.

WHY THE CENTRAL COAST NEEDS A REGIONAL GROWTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plans

- Set a shared vision with communities
- Respond to growth sustainably
- Plan new housing, jobs and infrastructure for 20 years

Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plans are strategic plans for an area, such as the Central Coast, and are prepared using a wide range of studies and evidence as well as detailed input from local councils and their communities.

These plans set the vision for up to twenty years and facilitate good development over that time by identifying areas where housing and employment growth is best placed to occur.

Importantly, these plans are developed following significant engagement with local communities and their councils, to arrive at a shared vision for the future based on evidence.

Once agreed, the Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plans will provide a framework to support expected population growth and guide land use decisions for 20 years and:

- Set housing and employment targets
- Identify potential growth areas
- Propose new release and infill development around transport corridors and town centres

- Determine existing and new regional infrastructure needed to support growth
- Guide more detailed local planning by local government
- Gathering, sharing and discussing the evidence is the first step in developing a Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan.

The Discussion Paper identifies the issues and supporting evidence, so that the local community, councils and stakeholders can actively participate in the decisions needed for the Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan.

The pool of evidence clearly shows some very important issues facing the Central Coast over the next twenty years, all of which are explored in this document:

- An increase of 64,250 new residents over the next 20 years³
- A need to increase housing supply to improve choice and affordability
- A projected demand of 36,800 new dwellings⁴
- Demand for 30,750 new jobs and more than this if we want to increase the level of local employment⁵
- Demand for new infrastructure, beyond current and planned services
- Protection of the environment and natural assets.



Key Challenges Facing the Central Coast

- How do you see your Central Coast in 20 years?
- What do you see as the challenge to growth?
- What is the economic future of the Region?
- How does the Central Coast get there?

The population of the Central Coast is expected to grow by almost 20 per cent (64,250 people) between now and 2031. Population growth presents challenges that have the potential to impact on the lifestyle of Central Coast residents and the economy.

The region is already facing challenges caused by:

- a low take-up of public transport due to the Region's geography
- high levels of out-commuting for work
- limited housing supply and low housing affordability
- an historic lack of infrastructure provision, including physical infrastructure such as roads and public transport, as well as social and cultural infrastructure.

The coastal waterways and rugged topography of the Central Coast have led to dispersed settlement and difficulties in connecting residential and employment centres. This has resulted in a high dependence on private cars for transport. Only 4 per cent of people who work in the Region travel to work on public transport and only 28 per cent who work outside the region travel by public transport. The Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan provides opportunities to better align transport and land use planning to respond to this challenge. In particular, there is a need to consider how employment centres on the Central Coast can be linked to improve public transport.

The lack of local jobs has led to two issues: a higher than average unemployment rate (for example, youth unemployment in some areas reaching above 30 per cent) and a high rate of out-commuting where 26 per cent of Central Coast residents travel out of the Region for work.

A priority of the Plan will be to increase the proportion of Central Coast residents working in the Region by facilitating 30,750 new jobs between now and 2031. A measurable target for the maximum rate of out-commuting will be set.

The supply of new housing has not kept pace with demand in the Region. In the last five years, the average yearly construction of new housing was 790 dwellings, which is well below the 1,840 dwellings needed annually to support projected growth. Of this housing, 75 per cent was built in existing areas, as greenfield development rates have fallen to 200 dwellings per year. The lack of supply is impacting on the affordability of housing in the Region – only 9 per cent of homes for purchase were available for low income earners. However, recent trends are showing a more promising upswing where there was a 37 per cent increase in the number of homes approved between July and November last year compared to the same period in 2012.

The backlog in delivering infrastructure to support growth has been a key challenge for the Central Coast for two decades. Whilst investment in infrastructure has been made, high population growth has meant that it has not kept pace with demand. The Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan offers an opportunity to better align land use and infrastructure provision by identifying key infrastructure improvements. The Plan also offers opportunities for higher levels of growth in the Region, if some of the infrastructure backlog challenges are resolved.

A Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan can tackle these challenges head on. It can outline the actions that need to be taken – and the stakeholders responsible – to galvanise the economy and deliver the housing, jobs, services and infrastructure a much larger population will need.

A plan that is championed by all the key stakeholders – government, community, councils and business, can ensure the region prospers as it grows.

Housing for current and expected growth

In the next 20 years:

- The population is projected to grow to 386,900
- As many as 64,250 new residents
- Creating potential demand for 36,800 new dwellings

Modelling undertaken in 2014 projects the Region's population will grow from 322,650 in 2011 to as much as 386,900 by 2031. That means as many as 64,250 new residents of the Central Coast, needing new homes and jobs.⁶

It is estimated the area will need to deliver 36,800 new dwellings to meet the projected population growth,⁷ well over the rate of housing currently being delivered.

What is driving this growth?

- Local population growth (35 per cent of annual growth by 2031) as well as people moving into the area (65 per cent of annual growth by 2031)⁸
- The attraction of liveable communities and lifestyle
- New residents attracted to the area by relatively affordable housing
- Proximity to Sydney and Newcastle metropolitan areas
- Changes in demographics – ageing population, increase in life expectancy and young people leaving home.

In the draft Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan to be developed and released for public consultation, a range of options for how new housing can be delivered will be explored, including a focus on infill development. The community will be asked to comment on these options.

It is important as we manage this future growth that we balance it with the protection of the Region's biodiversity, productive rural and resource lands as well as understanding current and future infrastructure needs.

The Central Coast Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will also:

- identify priority centres and development areas for short, medium and long term growth and infrastructure investment
- identify opportunities to improve housing affordability and the supply of affordable housing
- outline the next steps to achieve the vision for the region's centres and development areas
- build on work undertaken by Government and development industries to promote development in and around existing centres.

Increasing local employment opportunities

In the next 20 years:

- Population growth will drive employment demand
- It is projected that we will need to create more than 30,750 new jobs
- Plan and deliver employment generating land

A growing population not only means new housing but also new jobs. Increasing local employment by building on the Region's strengths and diversifying its economy will address this issue. Preliminary modelling shows that 30,750 new jobs will be needed to 2031 to meet the growing population.⁹



3,950

The number of new dwellings built in the Region in the last five years

To help continue to reduce the percentage of people who commute outside the area for work even more jobs are needed.

While the percentage of employed adults who commute out of the Region for work has reduced from around 30 per cent in 2001 to around 26 per cent in 2011, it remains high.¹⁰

The Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will:

- establish new regional level employment targets which aim to reduce the Region's current commuting rates
- respond to trends in recent employment planning and development
- identify future roles for centres and other employment areas within the Region
- support local industries such as health care, tourism, construction and agriculture
- look at how to facilitate the development and redevelopment of centres and key employment areas
- assist in addressing the shortage of industrial land in coastal areas
- support public and private action to generate employment.

Infrastructure needed for growth

In the next 20 years we need to:

- Match growth with infrastructure
- Continue exploring new ways to deliver services

New housing and new residents mean additional demands on existing infrastructure and the need for new services to be developed over time.

Understanding the infrastructure needed to support population growth is critical. The Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will consider regional infrastructure requirements such as energy, waste, water and sewer systems, education, information and communications technology, health and emergency services and road and rail.

Regional infrastructure planning will be a core part of the Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan. It will include identifying the existing infrastructure capacities and shortfalls, future needs in response to planned population and jobs growth, looking at opportunities to maximise use of existing infrastructure and services, and identifying when and where new infrastructure will be required.

Improved rail and road access will benefit existing and future residents, commuters and create local employment opportunities. The proposed M1 (formerly F3 Freeway) to M2 link will be a significant region shaper for the Central Coast by improving connections between the Central Coast and parts of Sydney. Additional long-term opportunities that have the potential to change the Region are the Australian Government's high-speed rail network concept and Wyong Shire Council's concept for a regional airport.

Protecting biodiversity, rural and resource lands and building resilience to natural hazards

In the next 20 years:

- We must balance growth and environment protection
- Provide greater access to natural areas, enhancing tourism and recreation opportunities, lifestyle and wellbeing
- Manage natural hazards including bushfire and floods

The Central Coast's natural environment is highly valued by its residents and provides a multitude of economic opportunities. Identifying and protecting conservation areas of regional significance – including the many waterways, foreshore areas that contribute to health of the waterways and key biodiversity corridor networks and linkages – will help to maintain the Region's environmental attributes.

Providing public access to foreshore areas in a sensitive manner will benefit the health and wellbeing of existing residents and promote a broader range of tourism and employment opportunities.

Where biodiversity impacts are unavoidable to achieve regional growth priorities, offset mechanisms will be put in place.

The Central Coast's attractive environment also presents challenges in relation to natural hazards management and planning. Extensive vegetated areas present bushfire hazards, ocean foreshores are subject to storm damage and inundation and coastal plains and floodplains are affected by flooding.

The Central Coast's rural areas are also highly valued by residents. These areas provide important agricultural, extractive resources, cultural, landscape, biodiversity, tourism industry and water supply values. How rural and resource lands are used and managed affects the Region's ability to locally produce food, supply safe drinking water, generate affordable energy or produce raw materials for construction.

The proximity of the Central Coast to Sydney and the Hunter provides opportunities to increase the value and importance of the Region's agricultural areas and has placed higher demands on its extractive resources.

The NSW Government has already responded to community concerns by banning new coal seam gas exploration for large areas of the Central Coast Region and identifying parts of the Central Coast's agricultural areas as Biophysical Strategic Agricultural Land.

The Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will identify a framework for the ongoing planning of these areas in a partnership between Government, landowners and industry.

The key objectives of NSW 2021 underpin this document, namely the creation of liveable communities, investment in infrastructure and boosting economic growth.

The NSW Government is committed to delivering evidence-based, strategic planning that will help us deliver on key goals of NSW 2021.

The Central Coast Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan is one tool to deliver these statewide objectives through an agreed government and community vision for the Region.

It is a vision that will also benefit from the important planning work that has already been undertaken at a local and state level ensuring previous work is best utilised.

Integrated planning

Bringing together important plans and work already undertaken will form the foundation of the Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan.

These important strategies and plans include:

- *NSW 2021*, the Government's 10-year plan to rebuild the economy, provide quality services, renovate infrastructure, restore Government accountability and strengthen our local environment and communities
- the *State Infrastructure Strategy*, the 20-year strategy to identify and prioritise the delivery of critical public infrastructure that drives productivity and economic growth, presenting strategic options for delivering infrastructure in an efficient way
- the *Long Term Transport Master Plan*, the 20-year plan to return quality services through the development of a world-class transport system for NSW
- the recently released *Central Coast Regional Transport Plan*, the 20-year plan for transport infrastructure and services on the Central Coast
- the *Central Coast Regional Action Plan*, developed with input from communities across the region to identify the actions the NSW Government will prioritise over the next two years

- Regional Development Australia's Central Coast Regional Plan 2012-2017
- the new approach to strategic planning which is based around community participation, strategic focus, policies and decisions based on sound evidence and linking growth to infrastructure.

Community Strategic Plans and local planning strategies

Both Central Coast councils have recently undertaken important strategic planning work including their Community Strategic Plans and local planning strategies based on detailed community engagement.

These plans identify broad goals and aspirations for the future and the local planning strategies outline the settlement, development and conservation outcomes to achieve these aspirations. These will inform the Central Coast Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan and improve integration between State agency and local government planning.

National Urban Policy

The NSW Government has endorsed the Australian Government's National Urban Policy (2011), which presents a framework to guide land use policy development and investment in cities.

The Central Coast Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will be developed in line with this framework to ensure it supports nationally agreed principles and outcomes. Further details can be found at Attachment A.



Planning for the future

Here are some of the important things we know about the Central Coast and need to think about when setting the vision and planning for growth for the next 20 years.



322,650

Population of the Central Coast in 2011



64,250

The projected population growth from 2011 to 2031 if the Region continues to grow at the expected rate



26%

The proportion of the Central Coast population that will be over the age of 65 by 2031



3,950

The number of new dwellings built in the Region in the last five years



36,800

Projected new housing demand to 2031 if the Region grows at the expected rate



9%

The percentage of housing stock that was affordable to low income earners on the Central Coast in late 2012



131,000

The number of Central Coast residents employed in 2011



34,353

The number of Central Coast residents who travel outside the Region each day for work



26%

The proportion of employed Central Coast residents who travel outside the Region each day for work, down from over 30% in 2001



30,750

The number of new jobs required to support new growth



55%

The proportion of zoned industrial land which is undeveloped



8,406

The combined number of students enrolled at the combined university and TAFE campus at Ourimbah

The principles that guide our planning

Guiding the preparation of the new Central Coast Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan are these principles:

- securing the delivery of more housing, greater choice and more affordable options in line with market needs
- facilitating economic growth, strengthening local employment, reducing unemployment and the number of workers commuting outside the Region
- collaborating with the local councils and the community to develop a shared vision
- cutting red tape and building in the flexibility necessary for balanced growth
- supporting the development of centres with services, infrastructure and capacity for growth
- linking land use, transport and infrastructure planning and making it easier to travel within the Central Coast and adjoining regions
- encouraging a high standard of design, good energy efficiency and access to excellent public spaces and recreation opportunities
- balancing development with protection of the environment and agricultural lands
- protecting our Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural heritage
- building resilience to natural hazards, climatic events and helping the community to understand and minimise the impacts of a changing climate.

A new approach to planning

This Discussion Paper is one element of the NSW Government's fresh approach to strategic planning. Under this approach communities will have genuine and early opportunities to set long-term planning outcomes for their regions and Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plans will be developed in place of existing Regional Strategies.

The Central Coast Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will create a strategic vision and a framework to set the foundation for growth on the Central Coast and be informed by both Councils' recently finalised LGA-wide LEPs. Future reviews of these plans and related local strategies will ensure consistency with the new approach to strategic planning.

Research that will shape our plans

Population, housing and employment projections support the exhibition of this Discussion Paper. In addition, new research will underpin the development of the Central Coast Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan and be publicly available during the exhibition of the draft Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan, including:

- the key drivers for the Central Coast's housing and employment markets
- the feasibility and viability of development in new development areas and centres
- the characteristics of the Region and opportunities for growth
- an audit of key enabling infrastructure (existing and planned) and its capacity to support growth
- alternative growth scenarios and infrastructure requirements.

HAVE YOUR SAY

- Do you agree with the principles established for the preparation of the Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan and should there be any others?

HOUSING OUR GROWING POPULATION

The Central Coast faces a number of challenges that affect the supply of new housing.

Housing demand and supply

Key Issues

- Population projected to increase by 64,250 by 2031
- By 2031, 35 per cent of the Region's population growth will be from natural increase and 65 per cent will be from new residents moving into the Region
- It is projected that 26 per cent of the population will be 65 or older by 2031
- We are likely to need 36,800 new dwellings by 2031
- Recent new housing supply has been averaging 790 dwellings per year
- Current predictions show we will need to more than double housing supply to approximately 1,840 new dwellings per year to meet demand

Historically, drivers of the Central Coast's housing market have been its relative affordability by comparison to Sydney, its attractive lifestyle, improvements in physical connections to Sydney and attraction of the area to young families and retirees relocating from Sydney. Housing demand from these groups is expected to remain strong with 65 per cent of annual population growth in 2031 expected to be from people moving to the Region.¹¹ More recently, growth from within the existing population through higher birth rates and increasing life expectancy and increasing rates of new household formation have driven housing demand.

In the five years to 2011, the Central Coast's population grew by approximately 19,600 people – an average of 3,920 each year.¹² The Region's population is expected to increase by 64,250 between 2011 and 2031.¹³ During that time the percentage of the Region's population aged over 65 years is expected to increase from 19 per cent in 2011 to 26 per cent in 2031 and the number of people per occupied dwelling is expected to drop from 2.5 in 2011 to 2.3 in 2031.¹⁴ This means that more dwellings will be needed to house the same number of people.

The Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan must ensure new housing capacity meets the changing needs and preferences of the growing population. ABS data shows an average of 790 new houses have been completed per year over the last five years¹⁵ which is well below the average 1,840 dwellings required annually to meet the current regional growth projections.¹⁶

The slowdown in new housing production has been most noticeable in new or greenfield development areas where average dwelling completions were less than 200 per year over the last five years.¹⁷ The 2008 Regional Strategy required an annual average of over 750 new dwellings each year in these areas.



36,800

**Projected new housing demand to 2031
if the Region grows at the expected rate**

According to industry, several factors have contributed to reduced housing production in greenfield areas:

- reduced availability of finance for the development industry in regional areas
- higher land, construction and development contribution costs
- less demand for the type of housing that has traditionally been built in release areas.

Current estimates predict the need for 36,800 new dwellings to 2031.¹⁸ The type of housing built must meet community need. New research into the Central Coast housing market will test the current housing predictions; identify how to overcome barriers to housing development; determine an appropriate 20-year growth target and appropriate housing mix; and investigate whether current development controls will support these targets.





9%

The percentage of housing stock that was affordable to low income earners on the Central Coast in late 2012

Reduced housing production has contributed to decreasing housing affordability overall and less affordable housing options for middle and low income families. A 2012 housing affordability and choice study prepared for Wyong Shire Council found around 14,000 low-moderate income households in Wyong LGA were in housing stress (that is, more than 30 per cent of gross household income spent on rental or mortgage costs).¹⁹ Other factors that contribute to reduced housing availability in the Region are:

- Many Central Coast houses are purchased as second, unoccupied homes,²⁰ as demonstrated by high vacancy rates on Census nights (13 per cent in 2011 compared with 9.7 per cent for NSW)²¹
- A high number of dwellings constructed in the region are three to four bedroom detached dwellings that are less affordable for low income families and less suitable for smaller households and the elderly. Almost 75 per cent of houses on the Central Coast have three or more bedrooms compared to 69 per cent for NSW.²²

While access to housing and construction finance has been difficult in recent times, better planning processes, prioritising infrastructure provision and reduced development costs can remove barriers to the construction of new housing. The Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will address these issues.

Previous regional plans have limited new residential development and the majority of employment opportunities to the east of the M1 Pacific Motorway. Work to support the Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will consider whether development opportunities exist west of the M1 Pacific Motorway, whether these are appropriate and whether these are required to meet the expected growth or housing demand.

Greenfield and infill development

The 2008 Regional Strategy aimed for 70 per cent of new housing in existing urban areas and 30 per cent in greenfield areas, which in part reflected the lack of greenfield housing opportunities in the Gosford LGA. While housing production in the last five years has been below historic levels, 75 per cent of new dwellings have been developed in existing urban areas and 25 per cent in new development areas.²³

Similar increases in development in existing areas have been experienced in the Sydney Metropolitan and Lower Hunter Regions, reflecting higher demand for housing in established areas that provide better access to services and infrastructure, and limited supply of new housing in greenfield areas. While it will take time to assess if this represents a short-term shift in housing demand or a long-term shift in preference, providing a variety of new housing in both existing areas and new residential areas will benefit both the supply and choice of housing in the Central Coast.



Greenfield housing supply

The 2008 Regional Strategy identified that all of the Region's new development areas will be in the northern areas of Wyong LGA as few opportunities exist within Gosford LGA. Gosford City Council is currently reviewing planning in the Erina Valley and other development opportunities may exist on the urban fringe or new sites for rural-residential development, housing or employment.

The 2012 North Wyong Shire Structure Plan identifies short, medium and long-term priority release areas in the northern areas of Wyong LGA based on the priority of focusing development and infrastructure investment in and around the Warnervale Town Centre and Wyong Employment Zone and accounting for potential coal mining in the northern parts of Wyong LGA. The Structure Plan will be incorporated into the Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan, along with new development sites identified through the Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan process.

Evidence elsewhere in regional NSW has demonstrated that zoning significant amounts of land for residential development does not necessarily translate into higher housing production. The identification of new residential land on the Central Coast needs to respond to market preferences and the delivery of enabling infrastructure needs to be prioritised to ensure land is development ready.

Identifying impediments to meeting market demand for housing

On the Central Coast and in the adjoining Lower Hunter Region, the following issues appear to be impacting housing supply:

- **Infrastructure and servicing:** The delivery of economic and social infrastructure needs to both stimulate and support housing delivery. The coordination of infrastructure and services across multiple landowners is a key issue for new release areas on the Central Coast.
- **Project feasibility:** A range of new and changing economic circumstances affect the market viability of many housing projects, including changing development costs, shifting markets and buyer preferences and difficulties in financing new housing projects.
- **Site location and market preferences:** Development rates are currently well below long-term trends, particularly for new development areas. This is likely to be due to a combination of changing housing markets, buyer location preferences and infrastructure delivery challenges.
- **Biodiversity offsetting:** The development of new housing and employment land sites that contain native vegetation has been affected by the need to resolve biodiversity offsetting environmental legislation requirements.

Our recent and current focus

The NSW Government and both Councils have developed new planning controls for centres on the Central Coast, including Gosford, Warnervale Town Centre, Tuggerah, Wyong, The Entrance-Long Jetty and Toukley. Similar planning is underway for other centres including Budgewoi and Erina.

Both Councils have implemented strategies to facilitate redevelopment in centres, including height bonus schemes and discounts for local development contributions. The Central Coast Regional Development Corporation has also undertaken detailed planning for the Gosford Waterfront to support commercial, residential, cultural and recreation facilities to revitalise Gosford Regional City. The Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will support this work.

The NSW Government has worked with both Councils to provide zoned capacity for more than 6,840 new houses and 9,320 new jobs in existing and new development areas since the release of the 2008 Regional Strategy. Additional capacity has been provided under the new LGA-wide LEPs finalised in 2014.

The Department of Planning and Environment has developed the Urban Feasibility Model (UFM) which will be used to develop a detailed assessment of development capacity and viability under the new LEPs. The UFM is a GIS based modelling tool which uses area-specific sales data and has been developed in consultation with the development industry and Councils.

The North Wyong Shire Structure Plan identifies capacity for an additional 12,750 new dwellings in this area. Work to implement the Structure Plan includes the detailed planning and facilitation of development for Warnervale Town Centre and funding for a new intersection to the site via the NSW Government's \$500 million Housing Acceleration Fund.²⁴

The Central Coast Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will incorporate key outcomes of the North Wyong Shire Structure Plan and identify any new growth opportunities such as Wyong Shire Council's recent identification of possible new rural-residential areas west of the M1 Pacific Motorway. Similarly, additional land around the Somersby and Mount Penang areas may have potential for more development.

The Central Coast Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will clearly identify actions and responsibilities to support the development of new housing and redevelopment of existing areas, consider new development opportunities and ways to resolve blockages which impact on housing supply.

NSW 2021 includes targets to improve housing affordability and the Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will help to achieve these by:

- setting dwelling targets for Central Coast LGAs and working with the Councils to ensure targets are achievable through LEPs and sufficient capacity is provided for additional housing in the right locations
- providing five and 10-year forecasts of dwelling production to infrastructure providers and aligning infrastructure delivery with housing delivery
- applying an urban feasibility model to test different growth options in order to identify feasible development outcomes.

The NSW Government has established an Affordable Housing Taskforce and a Cabinet Taskforce on housing supply to develop affordable housing initiatives and to resolve blockages to housing supply.

HAVE YOUR SAY

The Central Coast Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will set targets for the number of new houses required, the type of housing required and where best to build these to support the Region's growing population. You can help us by answering these questions:

- What sort of housing will best suit your current and future needs and why?
- How can Government support renewal of centres and what types of housing is best suited to these areas?



PROVIDING JOBS AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

NSW 2021 focuses on strategic growth in our regions by promoting investment in priority regional infrastructure to grow enterprises and job opportunities.

Economic opportunities

Key Issues

- 30,750 new jobs will be needed by 2031
- 26 per cent of workers travel outside the region to work
- Key industries include construction, retail, education, health and social services, manufacturing, logistics, agriculture and tourism
- 55% of the Region's 2,030 hectares of zoned industrial land is not developed

The Central Coast economy has strengths in housing construction, retail, education, health and community services, manufacturing, logistics and tourism.²⁵ Developing these strengths and focusing on opportunities such as food production innovation and research, business services and professionals, health clusters and services for the ageing population will fortify the Region's economy.²⁶

The largest employment sectors in the Central Coast in 2011/12 were health care and social assistance (20,162 employees), followed by the retail trade (18,794 employees), accommodation and food services (12,132 employees) and construction (11,991 employees).²⁷ Industries with significant growth potential include agriculture, which had an output of \$157 million in 2010/11 (up from \$127 million in 2005/06), and tourism and hospitality, which had sales of \$473.7 million in 2011/12.²⁸

Preliminary modelling indicates 30,750 new jobs will be needed to 2031 based on factors such as the ageing population and decreasing participation rates for people of working age.²⁹ The Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will facilitate more local jobs, above the projected rates, to reduce the percentage of the workforce that commutes out of the Region for work.

The planning system alone cannot create jobs but can support economic growth that leads to job creation. A range of strategies will be required to support economic growth and development to support employment targets. The 2008 Regional Strategy recommended the preparation of a Regional Economic Development and Employment Strategy (REDES). Prepared in partnership by the NSW, Australian and local government, with industry involvement, the REDES identifies planning and non-planning actions to support jobs growth.³⁰ The Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will support the ongoing implementation of the REDES.

The Central Coast REDES

The REDES process has been led by the Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services, Gosford City Council and Wyong Shire Council, Department of Premier and Cabinet, and Regional Development Australia, which coordinates activity to implement REDES. The REDES is a coordinated government and industry approach to support economic development and employment creation on the Central Coast, based around seven strategies:

- attracting new businesses and supporting existing businesses
- improving training and skills development opportunities
- increasing research, knowledge and innovation
- ensuring appropriate planning processes and land supplies
- planning for regional economic centres
- providing new infrastructure
- marketing the region as an attractive location.

The REDES actions and outcomes will be monitored and adjusted over time to make sure they remain relevant and a priority for the project partners. An Executive Committee comprising the Minister for the Central Coast, the General Managers of Wyong and Gosford Councils and chair of Regional Development Australia Central Coast oversee the implementation of the REDES through a rolling 18 month action plan.

Both Councils are investigating opportunities to encourage employment-generating developments, including possible university campuses in Gosford and Warnervale, a potential theme park at Warnervale and a regional airport.

Economic challenges

In 2011, the Central Coast had 131,000 employed residents, an increase of 8.5 per cent during the proceeding five year period compared to 7.8 per cent for the rest of NSW.³¹ While the proportion of the workforce commuting has decreased from over 30 per cent in 2001 to 26 per cent in 2011,³² the Central Coast economy maintains a strong relationship with Sydney and the Lower Hunter to a lesser extent.

Other economic challenges for the Region's economy include:

- potential loss of manufacturing activity due to broader economic factors (such as loss of jobs to emerging nations, high Australian dollar)
- out-migration of young adults aged 19 to 29 for education, employment and lifestyle opportunities
- a narrow jobs base and economic reliance on population-related services such as health, retail and construction
- lower levels of skills and education attainment relative to NSW and Sydney
- a higher incidence of part-time employment and underemployment compared to Sydney and NSW
- lower labour force participation rates compared to Sydney and NSW due to the Region's age profile
- higher rates of unemployment, particularly youth unemployment, compared to Sydney and NSW.³³

Distribution of new employment

The 2008 Regional Strategy identified an employment distribution to 2031 of 18,000 (40 per cent), of new jobs in Gosford LGA with the remaining 27,000 (60 per cent), in Wyong LGA. Key areas identified for job growth were Gosford City (6,000 new jobs), Tuggerah-Wyong (5,500 new jobs) and centres and industrial areas within the North Wyong Shire Structure Plan area (10,500 jobs). In the 5 years since 2008 there has been redevelopment activity and employment growth in centres such as Erina, Tuggerah and Umina and a push for commercial development outside of traditional centres, in centres such as North Wyong and West Gosford.

Investigations to support the Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will identify where employment is currently located and where future employment growth is expected to occur. The NSW Government supports growth in centres that provide housing and employment options close to jobs, transport, services and facilities.

The Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will be informed by recent centre planning and development and will identify expected areas for growth, how growth could occur and successful redevelopment actions that can be replicated elsewhere in the Region. It will also aim to identify:

- factors that supported growth in centres such as Erina, Umina and Tuggerah
- barriers to centre development
- whether certain centres should be the focus of future growth
- how best to support development in existing and planned centres
- emerging expectations of business in relation to the provision of quality employment lands and floor space.

Land for industrial and commercial development

Since 2008, almost 280 hectares of new industrial land has been rezoned in the Wyong Employment Zone and several major developments have already located in this area, including the \$100 million Woolworths distribution centre and several other food manufacturing and logistics businesses. Gosford City Council and Wyong Shire Council are working on plans to provide additional employment capacity in areas such as Somersby Industrial Area, Warnervale and North Wyong.

In 2011 the Central Coast had 2,030 hectares or 13 per cent of all zoned industrial land in the combined Sydney and Central Coast Regions.³⁴ Of this, Wyong LGA has around 1,450 hectares of industrial land (70 per cent of the Region's supply) and Gosford LGA has around 580 hectares (30 per cent of supply).³⁵



30,750

The number of new jobs required to support new growth

Fifty five per cent, or 1,120 hectares, of zoned industrial land in the Central Coast is undeveloped,³⁶ with the largest concentrations in the Wyong Employment Zone and Bushells Ridge in Wyong LGA. The complex challenges relating to the funding and delivery of infrastructure (for example, roads, drainage and stormwater) and the need for multiple approvals and offsets for biodiversity issues need to be carefully considered in order to support employment growth.

Wyong Shire Council is changing the land use zoning of employment land in the North Wyong and Warnervale areas to allow a range of development including commercial offices. The relationship between commercial development in these areas and nearby centres, including the Warnervale Town Centre, must be managed carefully to ensure centres develop as planned. The Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will respond to these new developments and provide guidance for similar proposals in the future.

Our current focus

NSW 2021 has a clear objective to rebuild the economy. This requires policy settings to build business confidence and attract investment. The NSW Government's focus is to decentralise population and employment growth to encourage strategic growth in the regions. Actions to achieve this include:

- delivering the Jobs Action Plan to help meet the target of 40,000 new jobs in regional NSW by 2021
- developing Regional Action Plans to harness business opportunities, match skills to regional industries and address impediments to growth

- supporting regional business growth through tailored programs and local facilitation services
- working with Regional Development Australia committees and the Australian Government to promote regional industry opportunities.

Measures such as prioritising infrastructure investment through Infrastructure NSW will also lift business confidence. The REDES is a good example of how all levels of Government can work together to support jobs growth. The Department of Planning and Environment will engage with key industries (for example, agriculture, tourism, development / construction, health and social services) to identify how the Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan can assist these industries to grow.

HAVE YOUR SAY

The Central Coast Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will set targets for the number of new jobs and planning actions to achieve this goal and where best to locate these jobs. You can help us by answering these questions:

- How can we support business growth in our tourism, agriculture, health and construction industries?
- What other employment opportunities should we plan for and promote (for example possibly university campuses, major recreation facilities and a regional airport)?
- Where do you think the best locations are for future employment growth?



The Central Coast is linked by an extensive road network and car travel is the Region's dominant mode of transport. Public transport connects people to centres, services and wider bus and rail networks for travel within the Region and beyond.

Integrating land use and transport

Key Issues

- Only 4% of people travelling to work inside the Region do so by public transport
- Freight volume between Hornsby and Gosford on the M1 Pacific Motorway is expected to increase by 79% by 2031

The Central Coast's dispersed nature of settlement and natural features limits the number of alternative east-west and north-south road connections. This places a high reliance on the State road network and means local and interregional traffic use the same roads which reduces the effectiveness of bus public transport and contributes to the Region's high level of car dependency.

Further, high car use has been influenced by the location of employment areas, residential areas, and social infrastructure outside existing urban areas and away from existing public transport corridors.

Focusing a higher proportion of growth in and around centres, key growth corridors and areas accessible to centres will support an expanded and more frequent bus network, provide better connections to the rail network, and increase public transport participation rates. The Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will ensure future land use decisions consider access to the transport network and manage the Region's level of car dependence.

Transport for NSW and the Department of Planning and Environment will work together to improve land use and transport planning by aligning the Central Coast Regional Transport Plan and the Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan to respond to specific land use and transport challenges.

Public transport

In 2011, 72 per cent of people travelling to work outside the Region did so by car and 28 per cent travelled to work by public transport.³⁷ On the Central Coast, private vehicle use accounted for 96 per cent of trips to work and only four per cent of people travelled to work by public transport.³⁸

Many public transport services in the Central Coast are underutilised. NSW 2021 commits to deliver more express train services for the Central Coast³⁹ and the recently implemented train timetables deliver 10 extra weekly peak services and around 1,200 extra seats to Sydney each morning.⁴⁰ The 2012 Central Coast Regional Action Plan also established a target of improving public transport connectivity across the Central Coast to make public transport a more attractive option.⁴¹

Bus services will be able to compete with private car use if adequate access is given to rail services, if services are integrated, and with better bus/rail interchanges. Improved pedestrian and cycling networks will offer healthy transport alternatives for short local trips and the journey to work.

Future opportunities to increase public transport may include park-and-ride facilities, changes to parking policies, more bus priority works, more frequent and express bus services into Gosford and Tuggerah-Wyong and improved marketing and promotion of public transport services.

As people age and their independent mobility decreases, dependence on public transport and community transport services increases.⁴² Given the ageing of the Region's population, this will be a significant issue for the Region's transport system. Flexible transport, community transport and taxi services must be able to assist connectivity and mobility into the future.

Roads

From 2006 to 2011, there was a slight reduction in the number of commuters departing the Central Coast by private transport, down from 74.7 per cent to 72.2 per cent.⁴³

The NSW Government is working with Wyong Shire Council, UrbanGrowth NSW and landowners to deliver the new Warnervale Town Centre and is funding the construction of a new intersection to provide access to the new centre and a proposed new transport interchange. Wyong Shire Council also has a proposal for a new road to link these areas directly to Wyong which will, when built, provide significant benefits for housing and employment areas in the broader Warnervale area.

The NSW Government has made a number of major investments in the Central Coast road network, including the just completed \$85 million duplication of the Central Coast Highway between Matcham Road and Ocean View Drive at Wamberal. Construction of the \$170 million upgrade to the Central Coast Highway, Brisbane Water Drive and Manns Road intersection at West Gosford is underway, and planning has commenced for:

- M1 Pacific Motorway: widening from Wyong Road to Doyalson Link Road and from Kariong Interchange to Somersby Interchange, which includes upgrading three of the Kariong Interchange ramps
- Pacific Highway: upgrades from Narara to Lisarow, and through Wyong town centre
- Wyong Road: Upgrade at Pacific Highway, Enterprise Drive and Mingara Drive to Tumby Road upgrade
- Terrigal Drive: Charles Kay Drive intersection and Jessie Hurley Drive intersection upgrades.

Upgrades and improvements in recent years include improvements to the Central Coast Highway at Erina and Erina Heights, Pacific Highway at Ourimbah, Avoca Drive and the widening of the M1 Pacific Motorway between Mount Colah and Cowan, along with the establishment of an emergency contraflow system and upgrade of the M1 Tuggerah Interchange.

Upgrades to the Sydney road network such as the proposed M1 Pacific Motorway to M2 link will also benefit commuters to and from the Central Coast and provide additional opportunities for businesses on the Central Coast to provide goods and services to the Sydney Metropolitan Region.

Freight movements

Road and rail infrastructure are the focus of freight movements which are expected to increase and an efficient freight network will be critical to support business development in centres and employment areas. Freight volume on the M1 Pacific Motorway between Hornsby and Gosford is expected to increase by 79 per cent from 2011-31. The NSW Government will aim to increase the share of rail for freight in order to reduce pressure and congestion on the Region's roads.⁴⁴

The rail freight corridor is shared with the passenger rail network. The NSW Government and Australian Government are currently delivering increased capacity and reliability through the \$1 billion investment in the Northern Sydney Freight Corridor (NSFC). The NSFC program currently comprises four projects: North Strathfield rail underpass; Epping to Thornleigh third track; Gosford passing loops (work underway); and the completed Hexham passing loop. These improvements will double the corridor's carrying capacity.

Additional coal freight and loading capacity upgrades are expected in the adjoining Lower Hunter Region, including the upgrade to Newcastle's port facilities. Transport for NSW has initiated the Wyong to Newcastle Coal Rail Enhancement Program to increase coal transport capacity between the Central Coast and Lower Hunter's power stations and coal mines in the northern parts of the Central Coast and Newcastle.⁴⁵



Water transport

Water transport has played an historic role in the development of the Central Coast and ferry services operate between several centres on Brisbane Water, along the Hawkesbury River and between Ettalong and Palm Beach in the south. Given the Region's geography, water transport will continue to form part of the region's transport offer.

26%

The proportion of employed Central Coast residents who travel outside the Region each day for work

New region-shaping infrastructure

The High Speed Rail Study Phase 2 Report was released in April 2013 by the Australian Government and includes a preferred Sydney-Newcastle corridor that broadly follows the M1 Pacific Motorway corridor through the Central Coast with a potential station at Ourimbah⁴⁶. This location would avoid impacts on urban areas and link the Region's road and rail networks. The Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will enable the corridor to be realised, if required. The Department of Planning and Environment and Transport for NSW will continue to work with the Commonwealth Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development to identify and protect a future high speed rail corridor.

Wyang Shire Council supports a concept for a regional airport in the northern part of Wyong LGA and investigations into project need, location, funding and implications for regional and local land use planning will take place. These investigations may consider alternative sites and opportunities for the existing Warnervale airport.

Infrastructure links with adjoining regions

To the south, the Central Coast already has strong education, health, cultural, entertainment and transport links to Sydney and its proximity will ensure these links continue.

To the north, parts of Lake Macquarie LGA will have a closer relationship with the Central Coast, particularly as new areas develop at Wyee, on the Wallarah Peninsula, Warnervale Town Centre and Lake Munmorah. The Warnervale Town Centre, Morisset

and Swansea will service the population of these areas, as will facilities such as the Wyong Hospital at Hamlyn Terrace.

Our current focus

The Central Coast Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan, the NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan and the Central Coast Regional Transport Plans will be aligned to improve and integrate land use and transport planning. The Regional Transport Plan supports the current projected population growth and priorities for redevelopment including Gosford City Centre, Tuggerah and plans for the new Warnervale town centre. The Regional Transport Plan also supports improved connections within the Region and to the adjoining regions. The Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will look to focus growth to make the best use of transport infrastructure and identify new growth priorities which can inform future revisions of the Regional Transport Plan.

HAVE YOUR SAY

The Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will integrate with State and regional transport plans for the Central Coast. You can help us by answering these questions:

- How can we improve transport access to and within our centres and employment areas?
- How can we improve connections between the Central Coast and other Regions?
- How can we encourage more people to use alternative forms of transport, including public transport?



PROVIDING THE INFRASTRUCTURE WE NEED

Provision of adequate infrastructure influences the State's economic competitiveness, the efficient functioning of places and quality of life.

Key Issues

- Additional electricity, transport, communications, waste, health and education and community infrastructure will be required to support our growing population
- The Region's aging population will place new pressures on our health and transport systems

The aims of NSW 2021 to build infrastructure to achieve economic growth are supported by a focus on infrastructure for places such as regions, towns, cities and suburbs rather than by sector or funding source. This place-based approach provides a better basis to coordinate housing, employment and economic growth.

Planning for the Central Coast's infrastructure provides the opportunity to deliver a range of housing, economic and social outcomes such as supporting the role of and redevelopment of centres or enabling the development of employment areas.

The Region's economic infrastructure has traditionally centred on major transport connections to surrounding regions, key centres such as Gosford Regional City, Tuggerah-Wyong, town centres (for example, The Entrance, Woy Woy and Erina) and dispersed employment areas and manufacturing nodes. Transport infrastructure improvements have been critical to the Region's development and its economy.

Aligning infrastructure with the Region's development priorities will assist future infrastructure sequencing and land release programming. This includes identifying strategic infrastructure corridors such as possible future transport connections as well as electricity transmission lines. Future staging of infrastructure development will consider the most

efficient areas to upgrade, having regard to constraints and the need to avoid compromising opportunities for growth in other areas.

Strategic planning in adjoining regions provides the opportunity to improve inter-regional relationships and connections. The preparation of regional plans for Sydney (Metropolitan Strategy for Sydney and Subregional Delivery Plans) and the Lower Hunter, provide the opportunity to:

- recognise and improve the infrastructure that connects the Central Coast to other regions
- identify development and economic outcomes for the benefit of the Central Coast and adjoining regions
- develop and apply consistent policies to manage similar issues across regions.

Information and communications infrastructure

Investment in infrastructure to support information and communications technology (ICT) can benefit health and aged care services, education and training facilities and home-based businesses, and promote innovation in knowledge services. With several areas in the Central Coast forming part of the early stages of the National Broadband Network (NBN) rollout, the Region is well placed to provide a base for workers who telework full or part-time for jobs based in Sydney. Telework has the potential to provide more flexible work opportunities for parents, decrease travel and slow the decline in the labour force due to an ageing population.⁴⁷

An example of a technology enabled opportunity is the recently launched Digital Learning Hub with the Gosford TAFE campus. The tool, iTAFE has been developed by TAFE NSW, with the assistance of partners involved with the REDES and will also provide the opportunity for telecommuting.⁴⁸

The growth of ICT infrastructure will help promote the Region as a centre for research and knowledge-based industries. The proposed ICT-based business park at North Wyong, based around the recently constructed data storage unit and reported to be the first of its kind in the South Pacific, is an example of the types of opportunities for the Region in the growing digital economy.⁴⁹

Wherever possible, future office-based developments should be located within centres to increase economic activity and support centre redevelopment and revitalisation. The growth in office-based employment in centres will support other economic and community activities and allow for more efficient delivery of infrastructure and services.

Infrastructure to help revitalise centres

The revitalisation of key centres is consistent with the NSW 2021 goal of building liveable centres which are great places to live and work. While centre development uses existing infrastructure more effectively, it will still be important to identify and prioritise where new and upgraded infrastructure is required to support centre growth.

Gosford Regional City and Tuggerah-Wyong are the Region's commercial hubs. In 2006, they accounted for over 23,500 jobs and these centres are expected to accommodate a significant share of the Region's office-based jobs to 2031.





8,406

The combined number of students enrolled at the combined university and TAFE campus at Ourimbah

Several proposed development and infrastructure projects in Gosford will encourage revitalisation, including the Gosford Waterfront and performing arts centre projects, Gosford City Council's proposed library complex and campus of the University of Newcastle. The revitalisation of the Gosford City Centre will support and enhance commercial business opportunities and provide a range of inner-city living opportunities.

Several other centres have redevelopment and infrastructure plans including Tuggerah-Wyong and The Entrance. Work is underway to plan for the future development of Erina. Wyong Shire Council's Key Iconic Development Site program has identified a number of redevelopment sites in the LGA and aims to encourage development by allowing significant increases in permissible height in return for community benefits. Several other Council projects are expected to provide the catalyst for additional development and community activity, including the Wyong Art House.

Social infrastructure

Planning for efficient social infrastructure and services will need to respond to the Region's growth and changing demographics. For example, the ageing population is likely to increase the demand for health services related to chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke and cancer.

The Region is serviced by two acute care hospitals, Gosford and Wyong; sub-acute facilities at Woy Woy and Long Jetty; private hospitals in North Gosford and Berkeley Vale; and ten community health centres.

The Central Coast Local Health District's Clinical Services Plan (CSP) will guide high quality delivery of health care for the Central Coast until 2022. The CSP identified a short-term need for expansions to the health workforce, acute and sub-acute beds, ambulatory treatment places and community health services and a need for significant capital and infrastructure development over the next ten years to cater for population growth.⁵⁰

Ongoing investment in public and private education infrastructure will also need to continue. In 2012, enrolments at the combined Ourimbah campuses comprised 4,291 students for the University of Newcastle's Central Coast campus, 4,115 for Hunter TAFE's Ourimbah campus and most of Central Coast Community College's 11,781 short and long-course enrolments. Future higher education opportunities include the University of Newcastle proposal to provide additional education and research facilities in Gosford Regional City and discussions between both Councils and private universities about new facilities in the Region.

Growth infrastructure

The Central Coast may require additional electricity, transport, communications, waste, health, education and community infrastructure to service the growing population. Further investigations by Government agencies, the Councils and private infrastructure providers will identify the capacity of infrastructure and the implications of future growth on planned and existing infrastructure. This will occur during development of the Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan.

In 2012, the Department of Planning and Environment commenced work on a program to develop infrastructure plans for urban release areas to plan and deliver infrastructure to support growth. The program will plan for the package of essential infrastructure to support development, based on sound evidence of infrastructure needs and priorities, aligned with existing budget and planning processes. The Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will identify what areas require new infrastructure plans.

The new infrastructure plans will include contestability assessments to involve the private sector earlier in the planning process and ensure that, where these works are required to support growth, opportunity exists for the delivery of these works to be provided by public or private providers. This will assist with ensuring the most efficient provision and funding of infrastructure.

While significant planning has gone into the release of the Warnervale Town Centre, additional work is required to identify the private, State and local government infrastructure required for future greenfield development areas in Wyong LGA. Future growth areas must be prioritised to inform infrastructure investment decisions. An example of a major project that could assist new development includes Wyong Shire Council's proposed new road linking Warnervale to North Wyong.

Water infrastructure

Water Plan 2050 is the long-term plan for managing the Region's water resources. Its implementation is overseen by the Central Coast Water Corporation which is owned by Gosford and Wyong Councils. The Plan outlines the key system upgrades such as the Mardi-Mangrove Creek dam pipeline link, demand reduction strategies and options to access more water to develop a water supply system that will service a population beyond 2031.⁵¹

Our current focus

Infrastructure NSW is assisting the NSW Government to identify and prioritise the delivery of critical public infrastructure. This planning:

- identifies the gaps and deficiencies in the Region's existing infrastructure and provides efficient infrastructure to support demand
- ensures strategically located employment lands are service ready and developable
- promotes economic-led development through infrastructure, including high speed broadband and other ICT infrastructure
- recognises certain infrastructure investments, particularly those that encourage growth and diversity of centres can also help to foster innovation and entrepreneurship and boost local employment.

In 2012 the Department of Planning and Environment commenced a more detailed growth infrastructure program for new development areas. The Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will be supported by a comprehensive infrastructure planning process which will include recommendations on how this infrastructure can be delivered. This work will form the basis of an infrastructure plan for the Region.

HAVE YOUR SAY

The Central Coast Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will improve the planning and timely provision of infrastructure in the Central Coast and align the planning of land use and transport. You can help us by answering these questions:

- What infrastructure priorities should we focus on to support future growth?
- What other infrastructure would assist in the delivery of further employment and housing?
- How do you think the private sector could contribute to meeting infrastructure needs?

BUILDING ON OUR ATTRACTIVE LIFESTYLE

To remain a place where people are proud to live, the Central Coast must provide and maintain access to our natural environment and build on its housing, employment, education, social and recreational opportunities.

Key Issues

- Housing supply and affordability are key issues for our growing population
- In 2006, 30% of households in the Region were low income earners
- In 2012, only 9% of homes available for purchase were affordable for low income earners

The Central Coast Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will integrate considerations of equity, liveability and social inclusion into planning decisions. This includes housing affordability and social equity – challenging issues to address through a strategic land use and planning framework.

Social inclusion

Measures of liveability, wellbeing and social inclusion are as important as measures of economic and environmental outcomes to ensure quality of life. Concentrations of disadvantage do occur in the Region, particularly where transport options are limited and access to services is poor. More frequent social interaction and engagement with cultural activities will occur with better access to centres and quality affordable housing close to transport, shopping, community services and open space.



322,650

Population of the Central Coast in 2011

The Central Coast Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will consider how urban areas, transport, housing affordability, housing design and environmental quality contribute to a socially-inclusive Region. To do this, it will promote planning that:

- considers social impacts alongside environmental and economic impacts
- considers the specific needs of particular groups of people
- ensures provision of appropriate social infrastructure and services early in the planning process.

Housing affordability

While the Central Coast compares reasonably well against the rest of NSW for housing affordability, it remains a concern, particularly for low and very low income earners which in 2006 accounted for more than 30 per cent of households in the Region:

- In 2006 53 per cent of low income earners were in rental stress and 53 per cent of low income earners who purchased were in house purchase stress⁵²
- A 2012 Wyong Shire Council housing affordability study predicted that by 2031, based on current trends, there could be 21,000 households in housing stress in Wyong LGA⁵³
- In September 2012 only nine per cent of purchase stock was affordable for low income household.⁵⁴

The construction of villas, townhouses and apartments around well serviced centres can give more residents direct access to a range of higher order services and facilities. Increasing the population around centres can also support shopping, office and community services within the centres.



Healthy places to live

The design and construction of places where people live and work can impact the liveability of a place and overall health and wellbeing. For example, access to a range of recreation opportunities and cycling facilities can improve physical and emotional health and support increased economic activity by providing benefits to the tourism industry. The NSW Government has supported the development of walking, cycling, open space and recreation opportunities on the Central Coast through grant funding programs such as the Metropolitan Greenspace and the NSW Coastline Cycleway programs.

The Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will support best practice planning to encourage walking, cycling and public transport, particularly for local trips.

Our current focus

NSW 2021 aims to strengthen the local environment and communities and increase participation in arts and cultural activities. It also aims to, by 2016, increase the proportion of the NSW population involved in local community organisations to exceed the national average and increase participation in sport, recreational, arts and cultural activities in rural and regional areas by 10 per cent.

Through NSW 2021, the NSW Government is:

- setting the future direction for supporting arts and cultural initiatives across NSW by developing an Arts and Cultural Policy, Framing the Future: Developing an Arts and Cultural Policy for NSW as part of the Visitor Economy Industry Action Plan
- investing in regional arts and cultural development, especially in areas of specific need
- investing in regional libraries and creating wireless internet hotspots in rural and regional libraries

- looking at opportunities to improve spectator experiences at stadiums such as the Central Coast Stadium through the NSW Stadia Strategy⁵⁵
- increasing opportunities for people to look after their neighbourhoods, get involved in their communities and participate in cultural, sporting and recreation activities
- supporting the development of Aboriginal tourism experiences and businesses via the Destination NSW: Aboriginal Tourism Action Plan 2013-2016⁵⁶
- developing partnerships to enhance the participation of people with a disability in arts, cultural activity and professional development
- developing guidelines that assist local councils to design and plan for healthy, safe, culturally vibrant and inclusive places
- funding programs that help to protect and enhance open space.

Both Councils' cultural plans aim to promote cultural activity and development across the Region including proposals for performing arts centres at Wyong, the Wyong Art House and a regional performing arts centre at Gosford.

HAVE YOUR SAY

The Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will identify a preferred growth strategy that will protect the area's amenity and provide jobs and housing for existing and future residents. You can help us by answering these questions:

- What would make the Central Coast a better place to live?
- How can we improve the supply of affordable housing and make new housing more affordable?

PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE AND BUILDING RESILIENCE TO NATURAL HAZARDS

The Central Coast's natural environment defines the Region and has shaped its housing and employment growth.

Key Issues

- The Region has over 81 kilometres of ocean coastline and extensive inland waterways, including the Hawkesbury River, Brisbane Water and Tuggerah Lakes
- The Region is home to 11 endangered ecological communities, 1 critically endangered ecological community and 137 threatened plant and animal species
- Natural hazards such as bushfires, coastal erosion, floods and storms affect the Region

The challenge for the Central Coast is to manage the competing land use demands and balance future growth against a need to care for our Aboriginal culture as well as coastal lakes, estuaries, aquifers, threatened species, vegetation communities, habitat corridors, and air and soil quality.

The Central Coast has a diverse range of landscapes, from beautiful beaches, a rocky coastline, coastal valleys and plains to a rugged hinterland with areas of rich farmlands. These landscapes support an equally diverse range of ecosystems, and make the Region a beautiful place to live in, work in and visit.

The majority of the population lives along the coastline and around Brisbane Water, the Tuggerah Lakes and the coastal lagoons. These areas are likely to have been heavily used by the traditional Aboriginal custodians and were the focus of early transport and settlement.

The ability of urban areas to adapt to a changing climate and managing the impact of development on sensitive waterways and heritage values are critical to sustainable development. An understanding of these impacts and their implications for continuing growth is a major consideration for the Central Coast Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan.

The identification of priority conservation areas and habitat areas will help to conserve the Region's biodiversity, provide amenity and assist climate change adaptation. The appropriate management and ownership of these lands remains a challenge. Previous land use and corridor planning by both Gosford and Wyong Councils has identified conservation areas and informed local planning for new development areas, including the North Wyong Shire Structure Plan area.

Managing land use within the drinking water catchments to ensure long-term security of water supply is another important issue.

Environmentally, the south western corner of the Central Coast shares a common catchment with Sydney and drains into the Hawkesbury River and Broken Bay. Historically, the waterways provide important transport links to Sydney and, while no current proposals exist, the potential remains for these links to be developed. Areas in the north east of the Region drain into Lake Macquarie, impacting the waterway's health and management. Connections exist along the region's Lake Macquarie LGA boundary with major biodiversity corridors occurring on the Wallarah Peninsula in the east and at Kiar in the west.

Natural hazards and a changing climate

The Central Coast is subject to natural hazards including bushfires, coastal erosion, floods and storms. These natural hazards impact the urban and natural environment when not appropriately identified and managed. Many natural hazards are known and plans to manage the impact on the urban and natural environment are in place.

Planning future development in and around the Warnervale and Wadalba release areas has been informed by natural hazard risks, including a combination of flood plain risk management plans and bushfire management plans.



Areas expected to be the most susceptible to flooding, inundation from sea level rise and more extreme weather events are those around Brisbane Water, Tuggerah Lakes and on the shores of Lake Macquarie. These are long-established urban areas and have significant investment in public and private development and infrastructure.

NSW 2021 sets out clear goals on the response to climate risk and variability. These goals recognise the NSW Government's view that the best response to a changing climate is to ensure local communities have the best available resources to assess climate risks.

The Department of Planning and Environment is developing tools to give local communities better access to scientific data on the changing risks and natural hazards. These tools will allow people to become more involved in looking after their own neighbourhoods and to input into strategies to minimise the impacts of a changing climate. It will be important for the Councils to understand which areas could be most heavily affected by sea level rise and how these changes will impact on existing and proposed housing, employment, infrastructure and biodiversity.

Protecting the environment

The Central Coast has a range of environments protected in national parks, state conservation areas and other reserves. Previous regional and local plans have identified additional natural areas that warrant protection. The North Wyong Shire Structure Plan identified a proposed biodiversity network between Wallarah/Crangan Bay in the east and Wyee/Kiar in the west. This network would provide important habitat and facilitate movement of wildlife through a variety of landscapes from the coast to the hills in the west.

The Central Coast has records of 137 species of plants or animals listed under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*, 11 endangered ecological communities and one critically endangered ecological community. Council mapping of sensitive areas in each LGA includes flora and fauna protected under State and Commonwealth legislation.

The Department of Planning and Environment is reviewing biodiversity offsetting processes to develop an efficient solution that continues to provide offsets for impacts to biodiversity where impacts can't be avoided, while facilitating development in line with identified growth needs.

Protecting our heritage and engaging with the Region's traditional owners

Engaging with local Aboriginal residents will ensure Aboriginal heritage is identified, considered and protected in a sensitive and respectful way.

The Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) is the Region's largest private landowner and there are opportunities to assist it to achieve the development and conservation aspirations for its land while supporting the aims of the Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan. Both the NSW Government and the Councils work with the LALC to identify future development opportunities for its land and how to achieve regional conservation priorities. This approach is a unique opportunity and could form a guide for similar models of engagement elsewhere in NSW.

Our current focus

Land use planning must remain responsive to ensure appropriate environmental management and to factor natural hazards into planning decisions. Local councils and their communities are best placed to understand the impact of natural hazards on public and private land, and on assets, infrastructure and people.

Allowing for councils and local communities to plan for a changing climate requires the provision of reliable information at a regionally-specific and locally-specific scale. To assist this, the NSW Government will provide technical guidance, based on the best available expert advice, through agency websites.

A risk-based approach will consider the vulnerabilities of existing and future development while maximising the safe and sustainable use of land so prosperity and growth are available to all communities.

HAVE YOUR SAY

The Central Coast Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will shape the pattern of growth in a way that protects the Region's important environmental and heritage values. You can help us by answering these questions:

- How should we protect our natural areas?
- How should we manage environmental values on private land, including land near waterways?
- How can we improve planning for areas affected by natural hazards?



PROTECTING PRODUCTIVE RURAL AND RESOURCE LANDS

Agriculture and extractive industries are important to the Region's economy and have influenced its growth and development. The Central Coast's rural and resource lands also provide important cultural, landscape, biodiversity, tourism and water supply values.

Key Issues

- The Region generated \$157 million from agricultural production in 2010/11 (up from \$127 million in 2005/06)
- The Region has significant energy and extractive resource reserves

Local production is under pressure from the expanding urban footprint and greater demand for rural living opportunities. The combination of agriculture, resource extraction, rural living and tourism can lead to land use conflict and the Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will outline a partnership approach between the NSW Government, Councils and the community for planning these areas.

The rural and agricultural areas at the fringes of the Central Coast's towns, suburbs and in the west of the Region provide food and drinking water for the growing population. The rich reserves of construction sand, brick clays, gravel and timber in these areas have also supported the economic growth and development of the Region, and wider areas.

Today, the Central Coast's rural and resource lands provide:

- a reliable supply of food and amenity horticultural products close to market
- significant agricultural resource potential
- scenic landscape and biodiversity values which help to define the Region
- construction materials for Sydney and the surrounding regions
- a significant contribution to the Region's water supply, particularly in times of low rainfall
- recharge areas for groundwater resources.

How rural and resource lands are managed and utilised affects the Region's ability to locally produce food, supply safe drinking water, generate affordable energy or produce raw materials for construction. The Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will seek to protect these functions and manage the land so this can occur. This work will be carried out in a partnership between local and State government.

Food and water security

The food industry faces pressure to increase production, processing and distribution while facing challenges from climate change, diminishing water supplies, soil degradation, competing uses for traditional agricultural land, rising production costs and changing biosecurity and food safety risks.

The Central Coast has traditionally supplied the Sydney Region with poultry products, fruit and vegetables, nursery plants and cut flowers. The proximity of the Central Coast to Sydney and the Hunter could increase the value and importance of the Region's agricultural areas. The Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will identify productive and sustainable agricultural land complementing the recently completed Biophysical Strategic Agricultural Land mapping, to ensure future food supply.

Securing long-term access to safe and reliable drinking water is critical to future planning. The Central Coast benefits from reliable rainfall, significant groundwater resources and a large surface water catchment. Managing land use in these areas will ensure water is also available for environmental flows in the required quantities and quality.

The NSW Office of Water's 2009 *Water Sharing Plan for the Central Coast Unregulated Water Sources* establishes the rules for protecting the environment, managing extractions, managing license holders' water accounts, and managing water trading for most of the Central Coast. The Ourimbah Creek and Jilliby Creek water sharing plans are scheduled to be merged in 2014 and the broader plan is due for extension or replacement in July 2020.⁵⁷

Energy resources

Coal mining and energy production has occurred in the Central Coast's north since the 1960s. Significant coal and natural gas resources remain under the Region. Coal and gas resources also span the boundary between the Central Coast and Lower Hunter Regions; several coal mines operate across this boundary.

Currently, the most viable remaining coal resources lie under the central, northern and western parts of Wyong LGA.⁵⁸ Surface development will need to continue to be managed to limit subsidence impacts and maintain potential future access to these valuable coal resources.

The NSW Government has amended the Mining State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) to introduce a Gateway process that will apply to State Significant mining and coal seam gas proposals on mapped Biophysical Strategic Agricultural Land (BSAL), including land on the Central Coast. The Gateway process is an upfront, independent scientific assessment of the impacts of a mining or coal seam gas proposal on BSAL. The Mining SEPP has also been amended to identify existing residential areas and several new growth areas on the Central Coast as coal seam gas exclusion zones.

Extractive resources

The proximity of the Region's construction material resources to Sydney and the Hunter means they are of strategic significance. Resources include sandstone, some of which is crushed to make construction sand; hard rock aggregate (basalt); clay used for roof tiles and as an additive for brick making; and coarse aggregate which is crushed to make gravel. Infrastructure supports the removal, processing and transport of these resources.

Offshore marine sand resources may become viable for future extraction, particularly if onshore resources are exhausted or become too difficult to extract. There may also be offshore gas and petroleum resources. The Australian Government regulates proposals outside of State waters (beyond the three nautical mile limit).⁵⁹

Our current focus

Existing planning recognises the importance of protecting agricultural lands and rural landscapes, but can go further by better identifying the values of different rural activities and how the planning process can protect or enhance these values for the Region's growth.

Existing planning also recognises the need to balance future development opportunities with a need to provide access to valuable energy resources and construction materials. Our current focus has been to minimise impacts of resource extraction on urban and future urban areas and areas with high biodiversity or agricultural production values and to ensure impacts of resource extraction outside these areas are appropriately managed.

HAVE YOUR SAY

The Central Coast Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan must provide new land for housing while also preserving and valuing land for the environment, agriculture and resources. You can help us by answering these questions:

- What key environmental attributes should we protect?
- How should we protect and value agricultural land?
- How should we protect and value extractive resources?

The Central Coast Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will benefit from a clear governance framework to oversee the delivery of outcomes, more detailed implementation and reporting requirements.

Key Issues

- The Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will be delivered through a collaborative approach with Gosford and Wyong Councils, the community and key stakeholders
- The Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will include a schedule of infrastructure works needed to support growth

The Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will be implemented through mechanisms such as local strategic and statutory plans, infrastructure plans (State and local) and tools to monitor the delivery of housing and employment lands. It will be delivered through a collaborative approach with the Region's Councils, supported by engagement with the community and stakeholders.

Infrastructure planning and delivery

The planning and delivery of infrastructure in NSW is shared between State Agencies, local government, Australian Government agencies and participation from other parties including developers and private investors.

The Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will include an infrastructure plan which has been agreed by the agencies responsible for delivery. This will enable a more coordinated approach to infrastructure delivery within the Region and deliver the NSW Government's priorities of delivering new jobs and housing while achieving value for money.

Infrastructure projects within the Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will include those identified in key strategies such as infrastructure NSW's State Infrastructure Strategy as well as Transport for NSW's Central Coast Regional Transport Plan.

The NSW Government has led the planning and delivery of the Warnervale Town Centre by coordinating with several Government agencies, Council, UrbanGrowth NSW and landowners to collaborate delivery of the project. This work has been instrumental in securing funding for a new intersection to service the Town Centre. Similar

groups operate under REDES and aim to facilitate development of several key sites in the Region.

Similar models could be developed and applied to the development and redevelopment of other areas to improve the delivery of more housing and employment opportunities.

Accountability and certainty

The Central Coast Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will identify clear lines of responsibility and will be supported by a NSW Government commitment for these actions to be delivered on time. This requires clear arrangements to measure and report on progress and a commitment to transparency when reporting on the NSW Government's performance.

The Plan may establish a governance arrangement to formalise the shared responsibility and cooperation between the State and local government in the delivery of outcomes for the Region. In this way, the community will be able to hold the NSW Government accountable for achieving the Plan's commitments.

The Plan will create greater certainty for communities and investors. It will set out a clear strategic vision to guide and inform local government in local level planning and will establish the shared responsibility for delivering the Central Coast's growth and change to 2031. The Plan must also be allowed to respond to changes in demand and pressure for growth in a way that reflects and respects the vision for growth and conservation of the natural environment.

HAVE YOUR SAY

The Central Coast Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan will provide a new approach to implementation. You can help us by answering these questions:

- What short, medium and long-term actions and accountabilities should a Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan implementation strategy include?
- How can we ensure the growth outcomes identified in the Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan are delivered?

ATTACHMENT A

National Urban Policy Principles

EFFICIENCY	Our cities and the social and economic infrastructure and services that support them should be planned and managed to maximise their efficient use
VALUE FOR MONEY	Investments in our cities should be cost effective to return maximum benefits to communities and investors
INNOVATION	The planning, design, construction and management of our cities requires creative ideas and solutions to meet the current and future challenges
ADAPTABILITY	Our cities need to be adaptable to changes in the economy, population, demographics, technology and the environment
RESILIENCE	Our cities need to be resilient to events such as natural disasters, the effects of climate change and global socio-economic processes
EQUITY	Our cities should support the equitable distribution of access to resources and opportunities, including education, jobs, housing, services and facilities
AFFORDABILITY	Households should have affordable options for where they live and work, how they travel and access services and facilities, and for leisure opportunities
SUBSIDIARITY	Planning and services should be delivered by the most local level of government that has sufficient scale and capability to reasonably deliver them
INTEGRATION	Policies and programs need to be integrated across the different levels of government, across portfolios and with industry and communities
ENGAGEMENT	Planning, policies and programs need to be informed by the views of all sectors of the community

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SHARING IDEAS FOR THE CENTRAL COAST

The NSW Government is asking communities across NSW to have their say on how to shape their future. By commenting on the issues outlined in this Discussion Paper you have the opportunity to influence how the Central Coast develops and grows.

The Department of Planning and Environment in consultation with other agencies will review and consider your comments as a draft Central Coast Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan is prepared. This will also be subject to extensive community consultation.

Although stakeholders' priorities for the Central Coast may differ, it is important everyone gets involved and has their say on how the Region can continue to grow and be enjoyed by future generations.

The Discussion Paper will be on exhibition until 16 November 2014.

To get involved, visit www.planning.nsw.gov.au/centralcoast

You can provide your feedback online, or you can send us a submission by 16 November 2014 to:

- **Email:** centralcoast@planning.nsw.gov.au
(Write 'Central Coast over the next 20 years: A Discussion Paper' in the subject line)
- **Post:** Central Coast over the next 20 years: A Discussion Paper
The Department of Planning & Environment
PO Box 1148
Gosford NSW 2250

All submissions will be publicly available on the Department of Planning & Environment website. If you do not want your personal details to be made public, please state this in your submission. A Submissions Report will be issued after exhibition.



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For more information about Your Future Central Coast
visit: www.planning.nsw.gov.au/centralcoast