

Department of  
Planning, Industry  
and Environment

# Draft Central West and Orana Regional Plan 2041

First published: November 2021

ISBN: 978-1-76058-492-4

### **Acknowledgements**

© State of New South Wales through Department of Planning, Industry and Environment 2021. You may copy, distribute, display, download and otherwise freely deal with this publication for any purpose provided you attribute the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment as the owner. However, you must obtain permission if you wish to charge others for access to the publication (other than at cost); include the publication in advertising or a product for sale; modify the publication; or republish the publication on a website. You may freely link to the publication on a departmental website.

Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (November 2021) and may not be accurate, current or complete. The State of New South Wales (including the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment), the author and the publisher take no responsibility, and will accept no liability, for the accuracy, currency, reliability or correctness of any information included in the document (including material provided by third parties). Readers should make their own inquiries and rely on their own advice when making decisions related to material contained in this publication.



Aboriginal artwork, main street Dubbo

## Acknowledgment

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Wiradjuri, Wongaibon, Wailwan (also known as Weilwan and Wayilwan), Gamilaroi (also known as Gamilaraay and Kamilaroi), Ngiyampaa, Dharug and Gundungurra countries that this region sits within.

Aboriginal people have lived in the region for at least 60,000 years. Until the arrival of settlers the economy was sustainable, threatened only by natural hazards which were met with resilience gained from generations of life on Country. The Aboriginal economy was tied to the land which provided spiritual, cultural and physical sustenance.

Settlement profoundly altered the lives of Aboriginal people and their land. The economy changed from interdependence with the land to one requiring alteration of the land through clearing, the introduction of new flora and fauna and modifications to how water moves through the landscape.

The population of the region today is 291,500 with 29,800 identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. The draft *Central West and Orana Regional Plan 2041* recognises that, as part of the world's oldest living culture, these Traditional Owners and Custodians share a unique bond to Country – a bond forged through thousands of years travelling across their lands and waterways for sustenance, ceremony, religion, trading and seasonal migration.

Aboriginal people maintain a strong belief that if we care for Country, it will care for us. This requires Country to be cared for throughout the process of design and development. A Connecting with Country approach can give effect to statutory objectives that require Aboriginal culture and heritage to be sustainably managed in the built environment.

Using comprehensive and respectful approaches, planning for the Central West and Orana can build capacity and pathways for knowledge sharing between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.

# Contents

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>A vision for 2041</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Summary of the Regional Plan objectives</b>	<b>15</b>

## Part 1:

<b>A sustainable and resilient place</b>	<b>17</b>
--	-----------

---

<b>Objective 1:</b> Identify, protect and connect important environmental assets	19
<b>Objective 2:</b> Support connected and healthy communities	22
<b>Objective 3:</b> Plan for resilient places and communities	26
<b>Objective 4:</b> Secure and resilient regional water resources	31
<b>Objective 5:</b> Ensure site selection and design embraces and respects the region's landscapes, character and cultural heritage	36

## Part 2:

<b>People, housing and communities</b>	<b>39</b>
--	-----------

---

<b>Objective 6:</b> A network of healthy and prosperous centres	43
<b>Objective 7:</b> Provide well located housing options to meet demand	45
<b>Objective 8:</b> Plan for diverse, affordable, resilient and inclusive housing	48
<b>Objective 9:</b> Manage rural residential development	52
<b>Objective 10:</b> Provide accommodation options for temporary workers	53
<b>Objective 11:</b> Coordinate smart and resilient utility infrastructure	54

## Part 3:

<b>Prosperity, productivity and innovation</b>	<b>56</b>
--	-----------

---

<b>Objective 12:</b> Leverage existing industries and employment areas and support new and innovative economic enterprises	58
<b>Objective 13:</b> Protect agricultural production values and promote agriculture innovation, sustainability and value-add opportunities	60
<b>Objective 14:</b> Protect and leverage the existing and future road, rail and air transport networks and infrastructure	63
<b>Objective 15:</b> Implement a precinct-based approach to planning for higher education and health facilities	70
<b>Objective 16:</b> Sustainably maximise the productivity of resource lands	71
<b>Objective 17:</b> Support a diverse visitor economy	74
<b>Objective 18:</b> Strengthen the economic self-determination of Aboriginal communities	75

## Part 4:

<b>Location specific responses</b>	<b>77</b>
------------------------------------	-----------

---

<b>Objective 19:</b> Strengthen Bathurst, Dubbo and Orange as innovative and progressive regional cities	78
<b>Objective 20:</b> Leverage the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone to provide economic benefit to communities	85
<b>Objective 21:</b> Leverage the Parkes Special Activation Precinct and plan for associated growth	86
<b>Objective 22:</b> Protect Australia's first Dark Sky Park	88

<b>Local Government Priorities</b>	<b>89</b>
------------------------------------	-----------

<b>List of strategies, actions and collaboration activities</b>	<b>99</b>
---	-----------

<b>Glossary</b>	<b>116</b>
-----------------	------------

<b>References</b>	<b>118</b>
-------------------	------------



*Orange, Central NSW. Credit: Destination NSW*

## Foreword

The Central West and Orana region is the vast geographic heart of NSW that balances stunning natural landscapes with vibrant regional cities and centres, historic towns and villages, diverse lifestyles, and community festivals and events.

The region's resilient and diverse economy is on the cusp of unprecedented opportunity presented by major investments in the Inland Rail, Parkes Special Activation Precinct and the Central–West Orana Renewable Energy Zone (REZ).

Our efforts to align state and local government strategic planning will harness these opportunities and support ongoing prosperity and growth over the next 20 years. The draft Central West and Orana Regional Plan 2041 is a key part of this.

The plan establishes a strategic framework, vision and direction for land use, addressing future needs for housing, jobs, infrastructure, a healthy environment, access to green spaces and connected communities.

It leverages the region's central location and builds on its strengths to provide smart, efficient and reliable connections that bring residents and visitors closer to jobs, centres, education, and the natural environment.

The plan is informed by Local Strategic Planning Statements that set the 20-year vision for how Central West and Orana councils use land and enhance the special character and values of communities.

The past two years has seen the people of the Central West and Orana continue to confront challenges such as the ongoing recovery from drought and bushfire, mice plagues and the global pandemic.

These challenges highlight the importance of strategic planning and the need to adapt to meet changing needs and circumstances. It's for this reason we're reviewing and updating the regional plan every 5 years to reset priorities through to 2041.

Since the first Regional Plan was released in June 2017, together with councils, other stakeholders, and the community, we have worked to deliver the plan's priorities. In the review of the plan we have identified new areas of focus.

The updated plan recognises the importance of water and that future population and economic growth is dependent on this precious resource. It elevates the river systems to places for recreation, conservation and to enhance urban areas.

The future of energy production is renewable; the region's vast open spaces and higher altitude tablelands make it well suited for increased wind power generation, large-scale solar energy, bioenergy generation and pumped hydro. The Central–West Orana REZ will supercharge the development and consumption of a mix of renewable energy resources.

The REZ is expected to attract \$5.2 billion in private investment to the region by 2030, support around 3,900 construction jobs, 500 ongoing jobs and contribute to achieving a Net-Zero emissions future for NSW.

Providing the right amount of suitable, affordable housing to satisfy the diversity of needs in a growing region is a key priority. The plan will implement recommendations from the Regional Housing Taskforce, especially for the subregional housing markets in Bathurst, Orange and Dubbo, and provide accommodation for workers to service the Parkes SAP.

The plan builds on our work with councils to make the region's town centres green and vibrant places with activated high streets. Higher-density 'infill' development will be encouraged in and around the centres of the region's cities to take advantage of existing services and infrastructure and support the revitalisation of these hubs.

Looking to a post-pandemic future, the plan contains a number of strategies to boost the region as a tourist destination. These include transforming disused railway lines into cycle trails to augment the existing network of trails that loop through cities, towns, and villages.

This plan builds on our ongoing ambition for a more prosperous and resilient Central West and Orana for all who live, work, play and visit the region.

**Rob Stokes**

Minister for Planning and Public Spaces,  
Minister for Transport and Roads



# Introduction

The *Central West and Orana Regional Plan 2036* (current regional plan) sets the strategic framework for the region, to ensure the region's ongoing prosperity. It is a 20-year land use plan prepared in accordance with section 3.3 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) and applies to the local government areas of Bathurst, Blayney, Bogan, Cabonne, Coonamble, Cowra, Dubbo, Forbes, Gilgandra, Lachlan, Lithgow, Mid-Western, Narromine, Oberon, Orange, Parkes, Warren, Warrumbungle and Weddin.

The *Central West and Orana Regional Plan 2036* was the first regional plan for the region and one of 9 prepared for NSW regions outside Sydney.

The current regional plan included a commitment for its regular review. The review provides an opportunity to consider the change in the last 5 years, the challenges ahead and update the plan to respond. This draft *Central West and Orana Regional Plan 2041* (draft plan) considers a 20-year timeframe with a focus on the next 5 years.

The EP&A Act now provides the legislative basis for regional plans, including requirements for their content and regular review. The EP&A Act also requires the preparation of local strategic planning statements which provide an opportunity for a council to set out the strategic vision for the future of the LGA. Each council in the region has a local strategic planning statement and a requirement to review them at regular intervals.

This draft plan builds on the existing regional plan and the 19 local strategic planning statements.

*Capertee Valley. Credit: Mayumi Iwasaki*



*Fields of canola and Parkes Observatory, Parkes.  
Credit: Destination NSW*

## About the Region

The Central West and Orana region is at the geographic heart of NSW. Lithgow, in the east, is only 141 km to Sydney, Grenfell in the south is 314 km to Albury and the Victorian border, Nyngan is 588 km to Broken Hill while Coonamble in the north is approximately 250 km from the Queensland border.

The region's natural setting includes the highlands, tablelands and slopes in the east with fertile volcanic soils and the plains that dominate the northern and western areas of the region with fertile alluvial soils.

The east and north of the region generally drain to the north west through the catchments of the Bogan, Macquarie and Castlereagh rivers which join the Barwon Darling in the adjoining Far West region. The southern part of the region drains westerly through the Lachlan River and its tributaries before joining the Murrumbidgee in the Riverina Murray region while parts of the Mid-Western, Lithgow and Oberon local government areas (LGAs) drain to the coast through the Goulburn/Hunter and Hawkesbury–Nepean rivers. The region also has significant groundwater resources with the Great Artesian Basin and fractured rock aquifers in the north and the shallow alluvial fan aquifers of the Darling River Basin.

The rivers of the region connect the varied floodplain wetlands and vegetation communities including the sub-alpine forests in the east to the semi-arid woodland and grasslands in the west.

The region broadly experiences a temperate climate with hot summers and cool winters with higher annual rainfall patterns in the eastern parts of the region compared to the western parts of the region.

The region's population lives in a diverse network of centres and rural localities. Most people live in or around centres which range in size from large regional cities to smaller towns and villages. Each centre has its own catchment, drawing people from the surrounding communities for employment, services and social networks.

The regional cities of Bathurst and Orange in the east have relatively contained local catchments and connections to both Sydney and, alongside Cowra, to Canberra. In the north of the region Dubbo and Mudgee also have connections to the communities in the Hunter Valley with Dubbo also being a major service centre for much of western NSW.

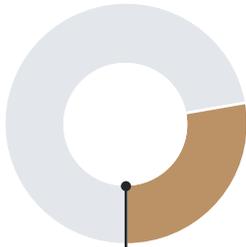


In 2016, the Central West and Orana region produced

**\$44 billion**

economic output in 2016

Agricultural production occurs from the vast plains of the Orana in the north and west to the sub-alpine areas of the Central West in the east, from intensive and irrigated crops – including vegetables, fodder, stone fruits, grapes and cotton – to extensive broadacre cropping, meat and wool production and forestry.



### Mining and agriculture

remain in the top 5 regional industries, together creating

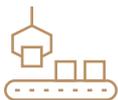
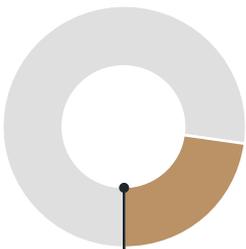
**28%** of the region's economic output.



**11,413** people employed in agriculture in 2016.

The region has rich natural endowments. While challenges exist, the people of the region can confidently look to continued prosperity if planning and decision-making responds to the challenges of a changing climate and the biophysical limitations of the region.

The economy is diversifying and can become more sustainable and resilient. An asset for the region's future, which is yet to be integrated into land use planning and decision-making, is the knowledge of Aboriginal people – the oldest living culture on Earth.



### Manufacturing and construction

together create

**23%** of economic output.



### People-related services are the most significant employers in the region



**15,618** people employed in health care and social assistance



**11,544** people employed in retail services

## Current and recent challenges

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

Climate change remains the planet's biggest challenge. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Sixth Assessment Report confirmed Global surface temperature will continue to increase until at least the mid-century under all emissions scenarios considered. Global warming of 1.5°C and 2°C will be exceeded during the 21st century unless deep reductions in carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and other greenhouse gas emissions occur in the coming decades.<sup>71</sup> The regional plan needs to both respond to the changing climate and support the objective of moving NSW to a carbon neutral economy.

Resilience will be a critical component of the region's future. Strategic planning will be necessary to identify vulnerable communities and the opportunities to better anticipate, mitigate, manage or avoid disruptive challenges.

The drought of 2017 to December 2019 was the driest 36-month period on record with average rainfall across the Murray–Darling Basin 100 mm lower than the second driest period. By the end of March 2021, less than one per cent of the region was drought affected compared to 100% in early January 2020. While the end of drought is a time for celebration, its recurrence is inevitable.

All surface water is currently allocated, meaning that water needs for the region's growth needs to come from water that is used for other activities. Similarly, groundwater in the more populated parts of the region is also fully allocated. Climate change could lead to longer and more severe dry periods which could result in less water being available to meet the region's needs. In response, the *NSW Water Strategy* recognises the need to do more with less and make water resources go further in a future with a more variable and changing climate.

## Updates in the draft plan

The regional plan has been reviewed and updated to ensure it addresses emerging and future challenges that will affect the region. Key areas of change that are integrated throughout the draft plan are:

- **water** is at the heart of the plan, given all future regional growth needs to come from within existing allocations, and climate change predictions are for more extreme wet and dry periods, with more frequent and prolonged drought and floods
- increased recognition of the **rivers and their corridors** within planning considerations as places for recreation, conservation and as general indicators of the health of the region
- the need to ensure the core aims of the **Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 (BC Act)** are achieved as growth occurs
- planning for the efficient, sustainable, and cost-effective delivery of hard and **soft infrastructure to support development**
- **early consideration** during the lifecycle of planned development of **biodiversity approvals and infrastructure delivery** to ensure they are not impediments to development
- the region's role in supporting the **State's transition to net zero carbon emissions by 2050** through a broad range of actions, including through enabling the establishment of a renewable energy zone
- ways to respond to a changing regional economy and catalyst projects such as the **Parkes Special Activation Precinct (Parkes SAP), Inland Rail and Central–West Orana Renewable Energy Zone (Central–West Orana REZ) to capitalise on opportunities**
- the need to address **changing housing needs** including different types of housing to meet changing demographics, varying household income levels, achieve sustainable and resilient planning outcomes and to meet the needs of accommodation for temporary workers and visitors without impacting availability and affordability of housing for the resident population
- building on work commenced since release of the last Regional Plan to **assist Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs)** to better utilise the planning system and removing obstacles to achievement of the underlying objectives of the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 (ALR Act)*.

## Structure of the draft plan

The draft regional plan is structured in the following way:

- a vision describes the region in 2041 that planning should aspire to
- Parts 1 to 4 are each based around 4 broad themes
- Parts 1 to 3 contains responses applying to the region or to multiple parts of the region
- Part 1 is concerned with the values of the Central West and Orana that make it a great place to live including environmental and heritage values
- Part 2 is concerned with the people and the settlements they live in
- Part 3 is concerned with the prosperity that the region aspires to which is underpinned by a healthy environment and well-functioning settlement
- Part 4 contains more location specific responses around the regional cities, the Central–West Orana REZ, Parkes SAP and the planning priorities for each local government area.

### Within these chapters there are different types of responses as follows:

**Objectives** are high-level goals usually containing strategies, actions and collaboration activities.



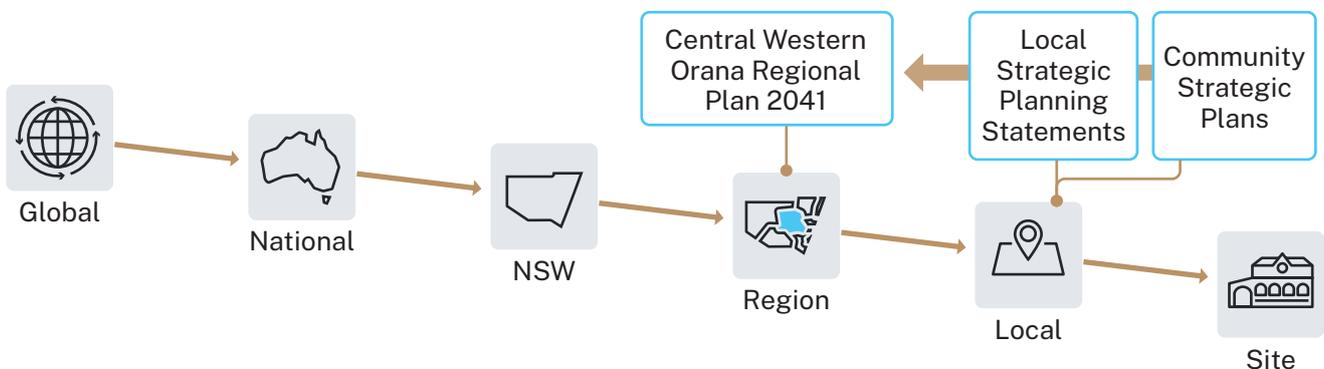
**Strategies** identify policy positions or directions implemented through strategic planning (including local strategic planning statements), local plans (including LEPs and development control plans) or State agency planning.



**Actions** describe initiatives that will be led by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment in the next five years, with new actions identified during the next review.



**Collaboration Activities** include important initiatives led by State agencies or local councils



## Governance

Achieving the vision and objectives of the Regional Plan requires leadership, commitment, ongoing collaboration and a clear delivery framework.

The draft plan emphasises State and local collaboration and collective responses to support growth and change. This will be achieved through formal and informal collaborative frameworks, based on a strong evidence base and coordination.

Consultation on the draft plan will include a discussion on the governance framework to guide its ongoing delivery. A suggested model

would be the establishment of a Coordinating and Monitoring Committee chaired by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment with representation from bodies responsible for delivery of the Regional Plan's objectives for example, local government, the Department of Regional NSW, Transport for NSW and NSW Health.

The Committee could report to the Central West and Orana Regional Leadership Executive, bringing a whole-of-regional government approach to planning.

## Implementation plan

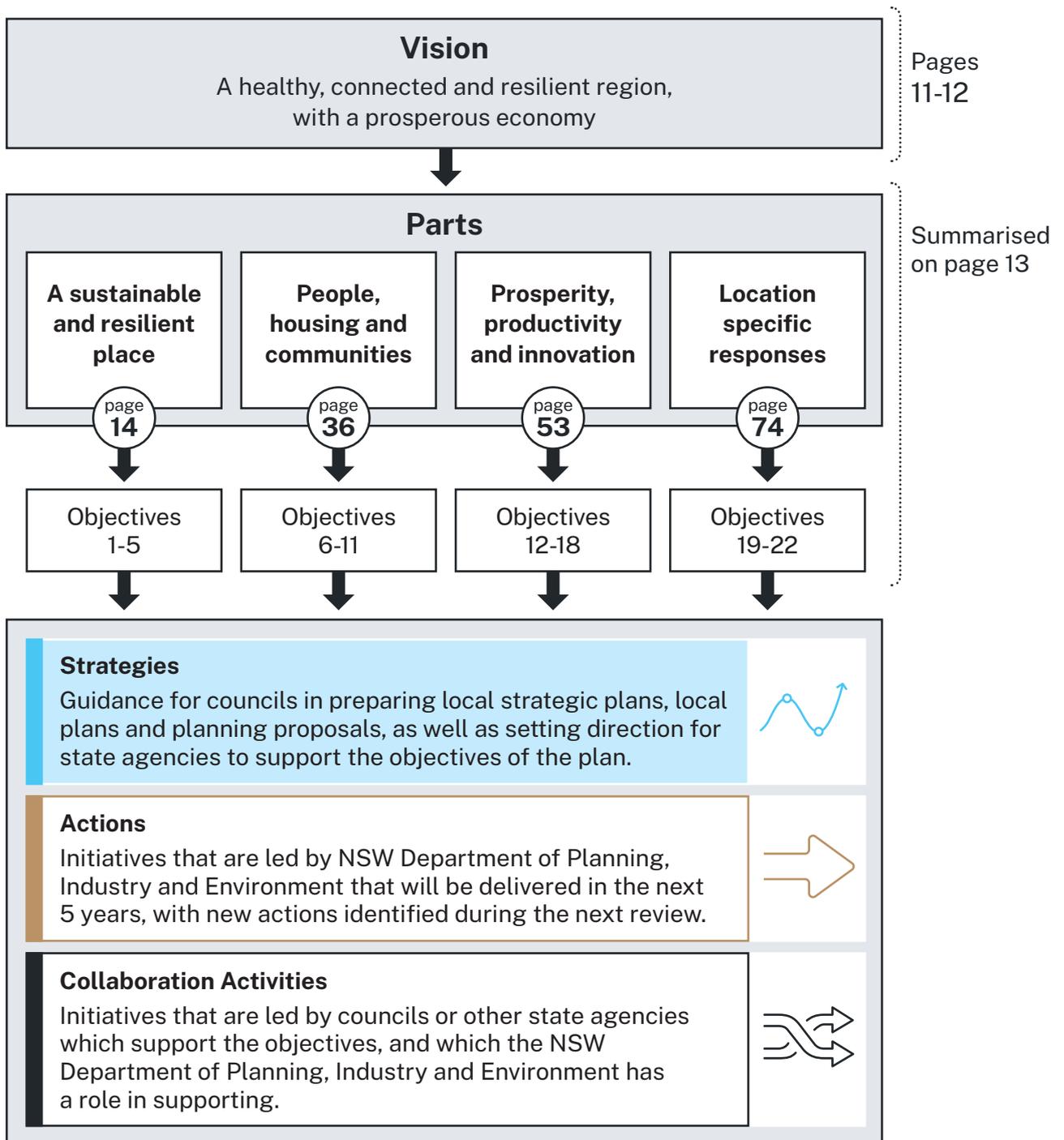
Following public exhibition and prior to finalisation of the Regional Plan, an Implementation Plan will be prepared to:

- explain the links between the vision, themes, objectives, strategies, actions and collaboration activities
- assign accountabilities for implementing actions and where appropriate, funding opportunities
- guide a future governance committee, as noted above
- inform the monitoring of the Regional Plan.

Feedback from public exhibition will be used to refine the plan's deliverables and develop the Implementation Plan.

## Monitoring and review

Progress towards achieving the vision and meeting the objectives will be monitored. An online dashboard will include indicators for housing, employment, communities and the environment. The Regional Plan will be reviewed and adjusted every 5 years, or as necessary, to realise the vision for 2041.





*Hot air ballooning, Mudgee*

## A vision for 2041

At the heart of NSW, the Central West and Orana is a healthy, connected and resilient region, with a prosperous economy; home to more than 300,000 people.

People are attracted to the region's regional cities and centres, historic towns and villages, diverse lifestyles, and community festivals and events.

The expansive river systems and wetlands of the Macquarie Marshes and Lachlan catchment are integral to life in the region and their health an indicator for broader social, economic, and environmental health. Rivers, wetlands and groundwater systems are protected through a coordinated approach to land use planning which supports secure and resilient water supplies.

The character and identity of the region is celebrated and protected. Scenic landscapes ranging from the globally recognised Blue Mountains and the western plains to unique local settings such as the communities of Wellington and Coonabarabran which enjoy vistas to Mt Arthur Reserve and the Warrumbungle Range, provide aesthetic, social and economic value to the region.

Riverfront activation enhances the amenity of centres and provides attractive public space corridors for the enjoyment of residents and visitors. Visitors also enjoy diverse cultural festivals, events and attractions such as

Taronga Western Plains Zoo in Dubbo and the raceway on Wahluu/Mount Panorama in Bathurst.

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

The consideration of climate change risk and adoption of adaptation and mitigation measures including innovative ways to manage and use water, harness renewable energy and prepare for natural hazards, as well as circular economy and low emissions transport initiatives build resilience in the region. These initiatives will support a more sustainable and lower carbon future.

Engagement and partnership with Aboriginal communities contributes to effective relationships between LALCs, State agencies and councils. Benefits to strategic planning, the economic potential of Aboriginal land holdings and a better understanding of Aboriginal places, culture, and heritage are realised.

Housing reflects the changing needs and preferences of the region's households with more supply, diversity and more affordable housing, including higher density development in and around the centres of the regional cities



*Borrorell Vineyard, Canobolas.  
Credit: Destination NSW*

and strategic centres. Design quality ensures local built form, heritage and character is reflected in new and intensified housing areas.

The regional cities of Bathurst, Orange and Dubbo and strategic centres each benefit from a collaborative approach to planning for their communities with a focus on high quality and sustainable urban design and integrated land use, transport, infrastructure, open space and recreation planning and delivery. These places give people in rural communities access to quality health, aged care and community services and facilities. Smaller centres have stable or growing populations having leveraged their locational advantages and physical attributes, improvements in digital connectivity, and underutilised infrastructure to become desirable places to live and do business.

Investment in roads and logistics facilities, including Inland Rail, provide a more efficient freight network. The region is recognised as a nationally significant freight hub supporting productive and diversified agribusiness and manufacturing industries and enabling distribution of products domestically and around the world, including organics and free-range produce, raw fruits, seeds, vegetables, meats and dairy products.

The expanded workforce is supported by local housing choice and services. Water and energy security projects are supporting and encouraging the region to prosper and supporting new economic opportunities.

A dedicated fast rail corridor from Sydney is providing a catalyst for urban rejuvenation with the regional cities and strategic centres seeing a trend of transit orientated developments, particularly around the fast rail station precincts.

Improved transport connections including planned improvements to the Newell Highway through Coonabarabran, Dubbo and Parkes and local government projects such as the Bathurst Southern Ring Road, Dubbo Southern Bridge, and heavy vehicle bypasses in Blayney, Cowra, Condobolin and Parkes, provide capacity and connectivity for agribusiness, manufacturing, mining and tourism. The upgraded Great Western Highway connecting the Central West, through the Blue Mountains and onto Western Sydney provides the region with a competitive level of service that supports regional tourism growth and increased freight certainty.

The mineral and energy resource sectors make a significant economic contribution, with new opportunities emerging as the importance of the region's critical mineral resources to modern technology is realised. Landmark solar, wind and bioenergy projects and the Central-West Orana REZ make the region a renewable energy leader.

The Parkes SAP provides opportunities for new industries in agriculture, freight and logistics, manufacturing, energy and resource recovery and transport.

# Summary of the Regional Plan objectives

## Part 1: A sustainable and resilient place

**Objective 1:** Identify, protect and connect important environmental assets

---

**Objective 2:** Support connected and healthy communities

---

**Objective 3:** Plan for resilient places and communities

---

**Objective 4:** Secure and resilient regional water resources

---

**Objective 5:** Ensure site selection and design embraces and respects the region's landscapes, character and cultural heritage

---

## Part 2: People, housing and communities

**Objective 6:** A network of healthy and prosperous centres

---

**Objective 7:** Provide well located housing options to meet demand

---

**Objective 8:** Plan for diverse, affordable, resilient and inclusive housing

---

**Objective 9:** Manage rural residential development

---

**Objective 10:** Provide accommodation options for temporary workers

---

**Objective 11:** Coordinate smart and resilient utility infrastructure

---

## Part 3: Prosperity, productivity and innovation

**Objective 12:** Leverage existing industries and employment areas and support new and innovative economic enterprises

---

**Objective 13:** Protect agricultural production values and promote agriculture innovation, sustainability and value-add opportunities

---

**Objective 14:** Protect and leverage the existing and future road, rail and air transport networks and infrastructure

---

**Objective 15:** Implement a precinct-based approach to planning for higher education and health facilities

---

**Objective 16:** Sustainably maximise the productivity of resource lands

---

**Objective 17:** Support a diverse visitor economy

---

**Objective 18:** Strengthen the economic self-determination of Aboriginal communities

---

## Part 4: Location specific responses

**Objective 19:** Strengthen Bathurst, Dubbo and Orange as innovative and progressive regional cities

---

**Objective 20:** Leverage the Central–West Orana Renewable Energy Zone to provide economic benefit to communities

---

**Objective 21:** Leverage the Parkes Special Activation Precinct and plan for associated growth

---

**Objective 22:** Protect Australia's first Dark Sky Park

---

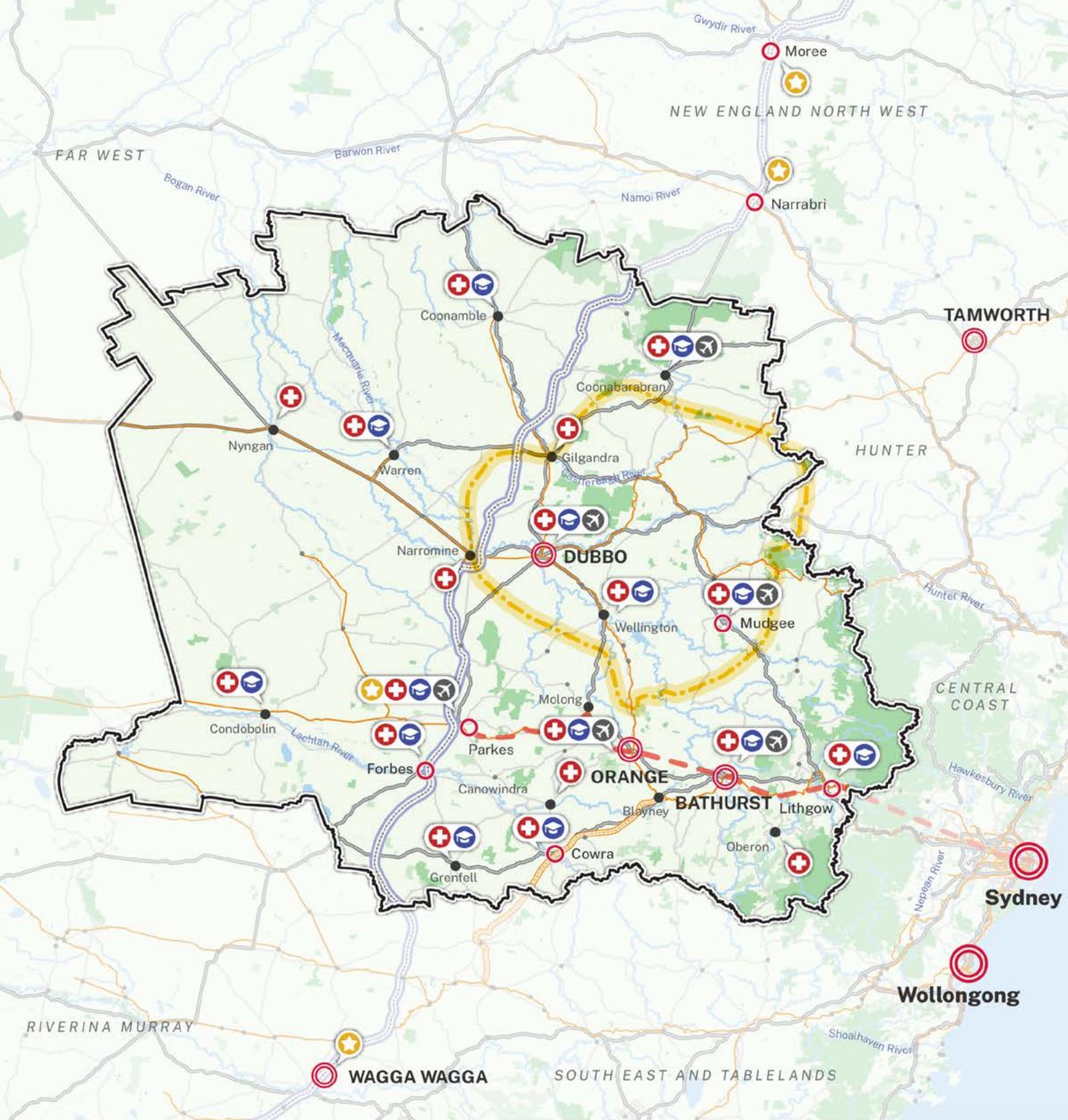


Figure 2: Vision map for the Central West and Orana



PART

# 1

## A sustainable and resilient place





PART

1

# A sustainable and resilient place

The Central West and Orana includes some of Australia's most unique ecosystems which also have significant Aboriginal cultural importance. This includes the Ramsar-listed Macquarie Marshes, covering more than 200,000 ha, the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area and more than 149,000 ha of national parks, including Australia's only Dark Sky Park, Warrumbungle National Park.

The region's waterways and water resources, including the Macquarie and Lachlan rivers, underpin the health of the natural environment and are integral parts of the broader Murray-Darling Basin.

The lands and water of the Central West and Orana region have been cared for by Aboriginal people for more than 60,000 years. The Wiradjuri are the people of three rivers: the Kalari/Galari (Lachlan River), the Wambool (Macquarie River) and the Murrumbidgee (Murrumbidgee River). Access to rivers and water is essential for fulfilling cultural obligations and passing down knowledge to the next generation.

Secure and resilient water supplies are critical. The rivers, creeks, lakes, and water storages also offer recreation, open space, tourism and place making opportunities for the region's cities, towns, and villages. The NSW Government's regional water strategies have

new data showing that extended droughts could be more frequent in the future.

The region's ecosystems and communities are subject to natural hazards that will be exacerbated by climate change and can impact human, cultural, natural and economic systems. The 2019-20 bushfire season is understood to have significantly impacted rare or threatened animals, plants and insects with some of the losses feared to be permanent. For example, the critically endangered breeding population of the Regent Honeyeater in the Capertee Valley, the world's second largest canyon, was substantially impacted by these fires. Building resilience into biodiversity areas will help to avoid irreversible environmental damage, including species extinction.

All levels of government, the community, businesses, and industry must work together to enable the transition to a low-carbon future and build resilience to climate change. This requires workable adaptation and mitigation measures, innovative ways to use and manage water, harness renewable energy, prepare for natural hazards and promote a circular economy and low emissions transport. Land use and infrastructure planning must respond to these risks and new opportunities.

**OBJECTIVE 1:**

# Identify, protect and connect important environmental assets

## High environmental value land

Biodiversity values are mapped at a regional scale through high environmental value (HEV) mapping or through biodiversity mapping in LEPs.

The ongoing validation, update and sharing of this spatial data through project-based and site-specific investigations will improve the understanding of the region's biodiversity values and enable this data to be used at the precinct or site scale. Sharing and updating this spatial data will be vital in protecting and connecting important environmental assets.

These values must be considered early in land use planning to avoid or better manage impacts on sensitive areas from new development. Areas of known HEV should be avoided.

Where impacts cannot be avoided, councils must consider how to minimise or offset impacts through, environmental management or the conservation mechanisms available under the BC Act. Where relevant, this should involve the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust.

### High Environmental Value Land

Potential lands with high environmental value are shown at the regional scale in the HEV map and include:

- sensitive biodiversity values
- native vegetation of high conservation value, including vegetation types that have been over-cleared or occur within over-cleared landscapes, threatened ecological communities, old growth forest and rainforest
- key habitat of threatened species
- important wetlands
- areas of geological significance.

The HEV layer on the Figure 3: Environment map in this plan displays regional scale data and is not appropriate for use at a property scale. Site-specific investigations are required at the property or precinct scale to refine the HEV sufficiently for it to be used for more detailed strategic or local planning.

### Strategy 1.1

Identify and protect the region's important environmental assets in strategic planning and local plans by:

- validating biodiversity mapping and prioritising investigations in areas experiencing development pressure to identify HEV land
- identifying validated HEV land in LEPs
- restoring or improving biodiversity values, especially in areas identified as HEV
- preparing and implementing biodiversity conservation strategies
- identifying and protecting areas of climate refugia and embedding climate change adaptation actions in local environmental plans.



### Action 1

Ensure the timely sharing of validated spatial data on biodiversity values via the NSW Planning Portal, including data collected to inform local strategies and local, regional and state significant development proposals.



### Collaboration Activity 1

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will work with and assist councils to:

- review biodiversity mapping and related LEP and development control plan (DCP) provisions
- improve access to data to enable identification of protected areas including National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) Estate, Crown Reserves and in-perpetuity private land conservation agreements to inform local planning.



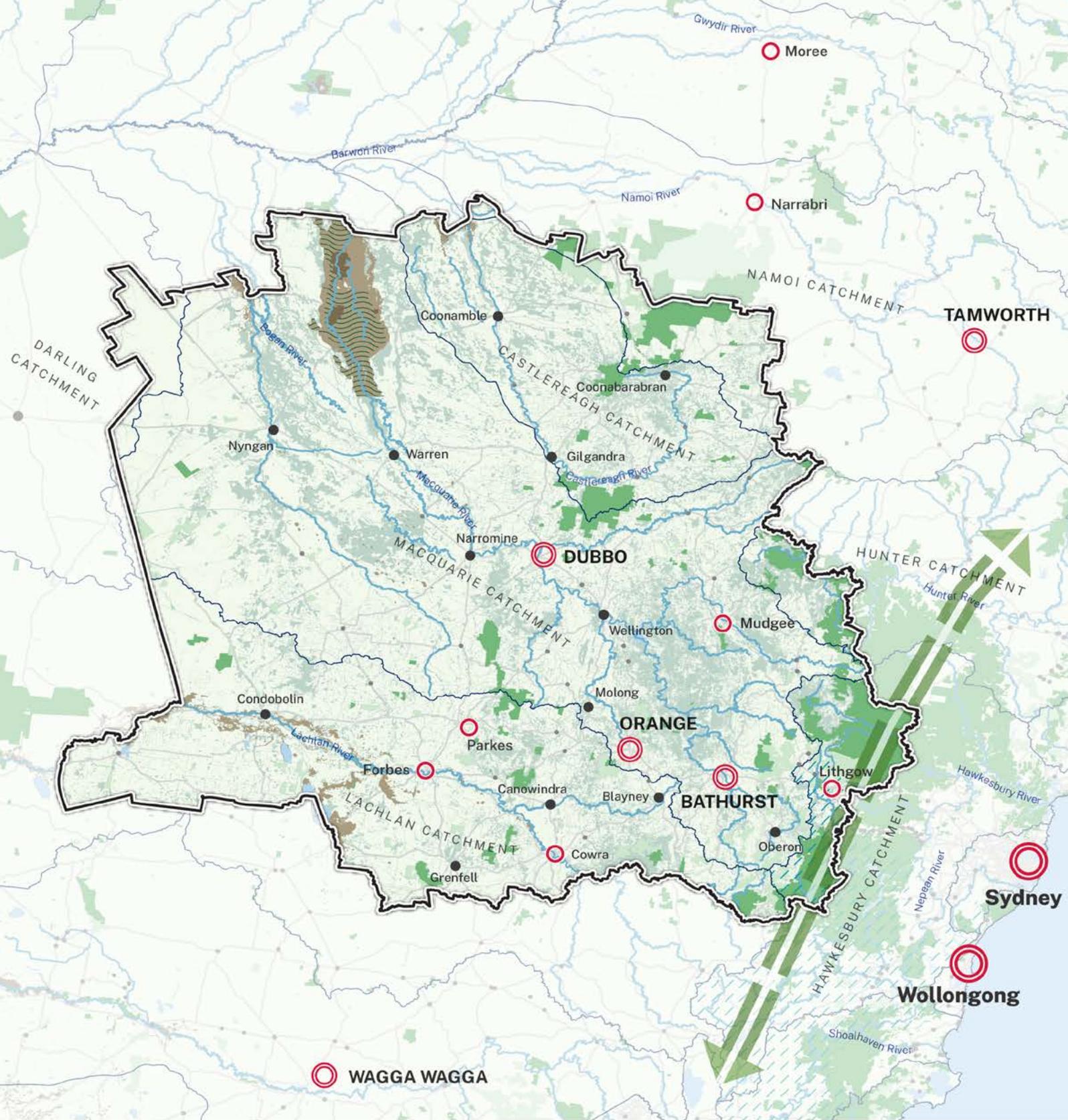


Figure 3: Environmental values

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
|  Regional boundary             |  River catchment boundary |  Ramsar site               |
|  Metropolitan city             |  River                    |  Wetlands                  |
|  Regional city                 |  Road                     |  National park and reserve |
|  Strategic centre              |  High environmental value |  State forest              |
|  Centre                        |  Sydney Water catchment   |  Water body                |
|  Great Eastern Ranges Corridor |  Macquarie Marshes        |   |

## Biodiversity values and new development areas

Responding to the biodiversity values in new development areas at early stages of the planning process leads to better biodiversity and development outcomes. Local land use strategies should document decisions to avoid areas of identified HEV and areas that require further measures to minimise or offset unavoidable biodiversity impacts.

This will be particularly important when planning for new development areas to support Bathurst, Dubbo and Orange and the strategic centres, where most of the new growth is expected to occur.

Detailed survey data, biodiversity and LEP mapping, State agency data such as the Biodiversity Offset Scheme Biodiversity Values Maps and the NSW Department of Regional NSW Local Land Services Native Vegetation Regulatory Map are sources of evidence to support decision-making.

Biodiversity certification provides the opportunity for strategic conservation planning, at the precinct or landscape scale, to achieve environmental approvals across a broad area and streamline the subsequent development application process.

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will work with councils to investigate opportunities for biodiversity certification under the BC Act, particularly during local strategic planning and when preparing amendments to LEPs.

### Strategy 1.2



Respond to biodiversity values when planning for new residential and employment development by:

- avoiding areas with identified HEV and focusing development on areas with lower biodiversity values
- identifying opportunities to integrate biodiversity values into new development
- using buffers to separate or manage incompatible land uses
- investigating opportunities to apply biodiversity certification.

## Biodiversity corridors

Biodiversity corridors allow for natural movement of animals and plant material through the landscape and are critical for the maintenance of ecological processes. They range from discontinuous areas of habitat, lineal strips of vegetation or large areas of habitat. Biodiversity corridors also have the potential to support recreational opportunities, in appropriate locations.

Biodiversity corridors can be identified at regional, sub-regional, local and site level, noting that local networks can help to protect regional ecosystems.

Biodiversity corridors only partly compensate for overall habitat loss and fragmentation of the natural landscape. Unconnected vegetation remnants and partially vegetated corridors should be maintained and enhanced as part of a broader network.

A strategic approach to biodiversity planning for public and private lands will help species adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Private landholders can enhance and link areas of remnant vegetation with reserves such that biodiversity conservation and other existing economic land uses such as agriculture can coexist.

The region's rivers, road corridors and travelling stock reserves primarily facilitate livestock movement and provide supplementary grazing areas in times of drought, bushfire or flood. These are strategic assets that contribute to biodiversity corridors.

The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area forms part of the Great Eastern Ranges Corridor initiative and provides the opportunity to link with biodiversity corridors that extend into the region.

Identifying priority areas for biodiversity connectivity, investment or management is an evidence-based approach for strengthening the region's biodiversity connectivity and ecosystem resilience. Strategically recognising vegetation types or species that are likely to experience future development pressures will also improve environmental outcomes.

Climate change also requires a consideration of climate refugia – the areas where species can retreat to and persist in when environmental conditions change.

### Strategy 1.3



Create biodiversity corridors, including riparian corridors, through strategic planning and in LEPs by:

- identifying a biodiversity corridor network
- preparing and validating biodiversity corridor mapping
- identifying biodiversity investment opportunities.

# Support connected and healthy communities

## Parks, open spaces, bushland and waterways

National parks, rivers and riverfront land provide opportunities for recreation spaces, community wellbeing and tourism. The *NSW Public Spaces Charter* supports the Premier’s Priority to increase the proportion of homes in urban areas within a 10-minute walk of quality green, open and public space.

Using existing public space assets effectively, and sharing them more broadly, will support demand for open space, in accessible locations. For example, open spaces within school grounds could be shared by the wider community outside of school hours.

Planning for new and existing urban areas must include diverse, quality public open spaces, smart landscapes that are fit for purpose and versatile to accommodate changing participation, behaviours and activities. This will include better use of water, better landscaping, more durable and high quality facilities, better lighting and the creation of multi-use spaces and fields.

The retention of existing public open space is a priority of the NSW Government to ensure these assets are improved and not lost to short-term economic opportunities.

A green, cool and resilient NSW with sufficient tree canopy, healthy waterways and native vegetation, and access to quality green open spaces is essential to healthy, resilient and liveable communities. The NSW Government has signalled its recognition of this through recent policy directions including the creation of a new Design and Place State Environmental Planning Policy (Design and Place SEPP), the release of the Government Architect NSW’s *Greener Places* Design Framework as well as the better environment Premier’s Priorities:

- Greener Public Spaces – to increase access to quality public spaces by 10% by 2023
- Greening our City – to plant a million trees and increase green cover by 2022 (note this is Greater Sydney specific for now).

Mayfield Garden, Oberon



There may be opportunities to extend existing trails or create new trails based around the region's natural features, rural landscapes and centres through land-owner agreements and strategic acquisitions. Existing trails include:

- the Central West Cycle Trail an almost 400 km loop through Mudgee, Gulgong, Dunedoo, Mendooran, Ballimore, Dubbo, Geurie, Wellington, and Goolma
- the Tracker Riley Cycleway between Dubbo CBD, Dundullimal Homestead and Taronga Western Plains Zoo, partially along the Macquarie River
- Gilgandra CBD connections to the Castlereagh River and the Windmill Walk along the riverbank.

Several disused railway lines exist which could be transformed into rail trails.

### Strategy 2.1



Undertake public space needs analyses and develop public space strategies by:

- exploring new public space opportunities and green infrastructure in accordance with the Government Architect NSW's Greener Places and Better Placed, Designing with Country discussion paper, the Streets as Shared Spaces program and Everyone Can Play
- using community feedback to identify the quantity, quality and type of public space and green infrastructure required
- considering the needs of future and changing populations
- identifying opportunities to:
  - prioritise new and improved quality public space to areas of most need
  - incorporate natural drainage features within public spaces and linking them with green infrastructure networks
  - improve walking and cycling connections to public space
  - enhance tree canopy across the private domain.

### Strategy 2.2



Strategic planning and local plans should consider opportunities to:

- ensure new residential areas provide sufficient public and open space
- demonstrate how the quantity of, and access to, high quality and diverse existing public space is maintained, embellished and improved.

### Strategy 2.3



LEP amendments that propose to reclassify public open space must consider:

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

### Collaboration Activity 2



The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will work with councils and State agencies to identify recreation and tourism facilities and opportunities for pedestrian and cycling networks.

These should respond to the environmental significance of each area and could include new or upgraded visitor facilities, walking and cycling tracks, based on areas such as:

- the Warrumbungles, Coolah Tops, Blue Mountains, Pilliga and other national parks and State forests
- the region's rivers and dams, including the Lachlan River, Belubula River, Bell River, Bogan River, Castlereagh River, Cudgegong River, Farmers Creek and Macquarie River, Burrendong Dam, Windamere Dam, Wyangala Dam, Carcoar Dam, Lake Cargelligo and the surrounding land
- wetlands such as the Macquarie Marshes and Lachlan catchment wetlands
- the Wellington, Jenolan Caves and Borenore caves
- surplus Transport for NSW land and decommissioned railways such as Binnaway to Gwabegar, Coolah to Craboon and Grenfell to Greenthorpe and other linear areas such as travelling stock routes
- regional sporting and recreation hubs such as the Lake Burrendong Sport and Recreation Centre and the existing regional sports hub in Dubbo and potential hubs in the other regional cities.

The investigations should identify opportunities to link assets, such as a new trail that links Coonabarabran with the Warrumbungle National Park.



*Macquarie River, Dubbo. Credit: Destination NSW*

## Western NSW rivers

The region's rivers and their related groundwater sources face competing demands for recreation, town water supply, rural uses and environmental needs.

Strategic planning must recognise the diverse landscapes through which the river systems occur, the interdependencies with human and non-human use of the land and water, and the need to protect the rivers.

For example, the Macquarie River's upper reaches flow to Burrendong Dam and onto some of the region's most isolated rural landscapes. Its central sections form part of the Wellington, Dubbo, Narromine and Warren LGAs, then feed into the Macquarie Marshes before meeting the Barwon River, downstream of Brewarrina. Its waters are supplied to towns such as Nyngan and Cobar and high security mines via Warren Weir.

Land use impacts in the upper reaches of the Macquarie River, therefore, will impact the biodiversity of the

Macquarie Marshes and the quality and availability of water for downstream communities and industry.

Development pressures for residential and rural-residential subdivision could, if not well planned, decrease public access to rivers and waterways, decrease natural amenity and increase clearing in the river corridors, which can impact runoff and ultimately water quality.

This regional plan recognises the importance of the rivers and aims to protect them for their cultural, environmental and economic value through a coordinated approach to land use planning. It is intended for this approach to apply to the rivers of the Murray–Darling system within NSW and allow all levels of government to work together to recognise and protect the benefits the rivers provide.

## Riverfront activation

Placemaking brings life to riverfront areas in centres. This includes attractive public space corridors that integrate with broader open space and pedestrian and cycle networks where people can use cooler areas provided by a rich tree canopy. It may involve bringing additional land into public ownership to enhance existing open space and support continuous links and networks.

Rivers and riverfront areas should be the centrepiece of riverfront centres, with multiple opportunities to visually connect and sensitively interact, using viewing areas, platforms and pathways, while ensuring flood risk is considered.

There are also opportunities to reorient commercial and retail frontages towards the riverfronts and for riverfront walks to connect to pedestrian and cycle networks that link with centres, residential areas, employment areas, cultural facilities and transport nodes.

The region's riverfront sites have extensive Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal histories. The celebration of these historic values in interpretive design elements and cultural activities will create new destinations, experiences and stories for generations to come.

Riverfront activation strategies will need to carefully consider the impacts of hazards and a changing climate when considering opportunities to activate these spaces.

### Case Study

#### Dubbo Riverfront Master Plan

Dubbo Regional Council is developing a master plan to activate the bank of the Macquarie River between the LH Ford and Serisier bridges. The master plan includes a riverside stage, boardwalk and a kids' playground; better connections between the Dubbo CBD and river precinct; opportunities for economic activity; and rehabilitation and restorative planting.

### Strategy 2.4



Prepare activation strategies for rivers, dams and lakes to identify:

- areas that can be embellished to provide tourism, recreation and public open space opportunities that support the principles of the Public Spaces Charter
- environmental values to be protected
- opportunities to integrate with adjoining urban areas and pedestrian and cycle networks
- preferred land uses and planning controls for the surrounding areas
- opportunities to integrate activation strategies with planning for hazards such as drought and floods.

### Strategy 2.5



Strategic planning and local plans should consider opportunities to:

- recognise the river corridors in LEPs to increase protection for the rivers
- connect existing river walks and trails to enhance user experiences and link riverine towns and villages
- identify opportunities for new river walks and trails and linkages to support local and regional connectivity and tourism opportunities.

### Action 2



Develop a framework for the management of the Western NSW rivers to identify objectives and guidance on:

- priority areas for activation
- mechanisms to fund public ownership of riverfront land, preparation of riverfront activation strategies and a body of knowledge regarding the implementation and delivery of riverfront activation strategies
- mechanisms to ensure riverfront areas provide public and environmental benefits, in perpetuity
- support for councils on the planning and management of riverfront lands.

# Plan for resilient places and communities

The changing climate is increasing the frequency, intensity and extent of known natural hazards as well as the potential for cumulative or concurrent large-scale events or new hazard threats.

The *NSW Climate Change Policy Framework 2016* aims to make NSW more resilient to a changing climate.

Building resilient places and communities requires us to consider shocks and stresses from a people-centred, cultural, economic, built form and environmental perspective.

Episodic shocks are sudden, short-term events that threaten places and communities, such as heatwaves, storms or infrastructure failure. Chronic stresses are slower moving challenges that diminish a place, community, or local environment over time, or cyclically. These include a changing climate, land contamination or economic downturns.

Communities need the skills and knowledge to effectively deal with these shocks and stresses to resist, absorb, accommodate and recover from place-based risks.

Building resilience into the planning system builds understanding and successful responses. New

development must avoid areas affected by relevant hazards or mitigate the effects of hazards within affected areas.

The *2017 Western Enabling Regional Adaptation Central West and Orana region report* identifies the region's vulnerability to climate change and provides the basis for ongoing work to support the region's adaption to climate change. Examples of focus areas include establishing water corridors and flora and fauna refuges, improving water security for small towns through enhancements to regional infrastructure and improving irrigation efficiency.

Recent natural hazard events include:

- the 2019-2020 bushfires which burnt 3,230 square kilometres within the region
- severe droughts between mid-2017 and 2020 which resulted in towns and industries facing the prospect of running out of water<sup>2</sup>
- floods, including September 2016 when flood levels peaked at 10.67 m at the Forbes Iron Bridge<sup>3</sup>
- storm events associated with high winds which cause damage to homes, infrastructure and disrupt power supply.<sup>4</sup>

*Blayney Main Street*



Floods also have a rejuvenating effect on the natural environmental assets and habitats for native fish and bird species as well as agricultural industries such as cropping and grazing in the dried lakebed of Lake Cowal.<sup>5</sup>

Councils and State agencies undertake valuable work in natural hazards and climate change risk management. Flexible and frequent review of hazard studies and maps will ensure they respond to the new knowledge about the frequency, intensity and impacts of the hazards.

The *NSW Flood Prone Land Policy and Floodplain Development Manual (2005)* guides councils to make informed decisions on managing flood risk, consider new data on flood affectation and impacts and ensure resilient development of flood-prone land.

*NSW Planning for Bushfire Protection (2019)* provides bushfire protection measures and principles to be considered at the strategic planning and development assessment stages. Resilience NSW is implementing the recommendations of *Final Report of the NSW Bushfire Inquiry*, including a shift to a strategic approach to planning for bushfire and a new NSW bush fire policy similar to the NSW Flood Prone Land Policy.

The draft *Strategic Guide to Planning for Natural Hazards* helps councils effectively consider and integrate risks from natural hazards into strategic land use plans and decision-making. This guide is supported by updated documents which include the *Considering Flooding in Land Use Planning* guideline (2021).

Naturally occurring asbestos that may be affected by ground-disturbing activities is found primarily in the Dubbo Regional, Cabonne, Orange, Cowra, Blayney, Mid-Western Regional and Bathurst Regional LGAs. Geological areas containing natural asbestos include the Ordovician to Early Silurian rocks east of Orange and Ultramafic complexes near Fifield, south-west of Dubbo.<sup>6</sup> The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment has published mapping which identifies areas with potential for naturally occurring asbestos in rocks and sediments that are less than 10 metres below the natural surface level.

Naturally occurring asbestos only poses a health risk when elevated levels of fibres are released into the air, either by human activities or by natural weathering, and the fibres are inhaled. The Office of Local Government's *Model Asbestos Policy for NSW Councils* (November 2015) helps councils to formulate asbestos policies to ensure a consistent approach to managing asbestos.

## Addressing natural hazards

Councils prepare water and drought management plans, integrated water cycle management plans, floodplain and bushfire management strategies and energy strategies to address natural hazards.

Initiatives underway to increase the region's resilience to natural hazards include:

- upgrades to water capture, storage and treatment infrastructure
- upgrade to other systems, including relining of sewers
- flood-proofing major infrastructure, including commencing early design for flood immunity for sections of Newell Highway between West Wyalong and Forbes
- investigation into the benefits of tree cover within CBD and medical precincts to battle heat island effects
- funds for energy efficiency and renewable energy installations
- improving ecosystem resilience by removing invasive plant species from riparian corridors and carrying out bank stabilisation works
- diversification of farm income and land-sector carbon abatement schemes in Orana.

### Strategy 3.1



Strategic planning and local plans should consider:

- the proximity of new development, including urban release areas, to areas of high bushfire risk and flooding hazards
- floodplain risk management plans for existing and new growth areas
- avoiding new hazards such as the urban heat island effect
- the impacts of climate change in hazards planning
- impacts of naturally occurring asbestos on development in areas where occurrence is likely.

### Strategy 3.2



Strategic planning and local plans should also:

- consider and integrate guidance from the *Considering Flooding in Land Use Planning* guideline and the draft *Strategic Guide to Planning for Natural Hazards*
- ensure that mapping that identifies hazard-affected areas, including bushfire and flooding, is kept up to date and used in decision-making.

## Circular economy principles

We can limit the production of waste through resource recovery technologies and circular economy initiatives that generate economic value from the recycling of waste streams.

The NSW Government supports a transition to a circular economy which brings opportunities for new industries and employment by reusing, repairing, sharing and recycling waste.

Regional, local, precinct and site-scale opportunities for the re-use of by-products as a resource for others will minimise waste and the transport of waste to landfill.

The NetWaste Alliance, a regional approach to waste management, will be essential to these opportunities by bridging the issues associated with the region's dispersed settlement patterns.

The *Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041* is the NSW Government's long-term strategic framework for communities, industry and all levels of government to reduce waste, emissions and harm to the environment and boost innovation and employment. This strategy is supported by the *Waste Infrastructure Needs Guide* and the *NSW Plastics Action Plan*.

Waste from natural disasters and new industries such as the solar energy sector are emerging issues. This is both a challenge for waste management and an opportunity for the region for better waste capture and processing and new specialisations. As the region's waste streams and quantities change, there is need for State agencies and councils to plan for future waste infrastructure needs, including asbestos.

### Case Study – NetWaste

NetWaste is a voluntary regional waste group that provides collaborative approaches to waste and resource management. It is funded primarily through the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA).

Beyond regional service arrangements, the group promotes targeted waste management projects, education and community engagement programs. Opportunities for circular economy initiatives at a regional and precinct scale should be coordinated through NetWaste.

### Strategy 3.3

Strategic planning and waste management strategies should align with the *NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041* and the *NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy: A guide to future infrastructure needs* when planning for waste and resource recovery, including planning for waste infrastructure to support new industry specialisation and the safe management of large-scale asbestos waste disasters.

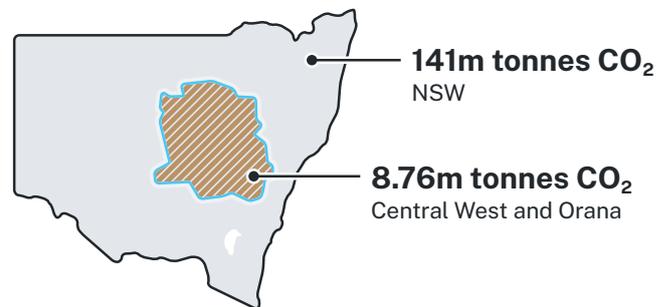


## Net Zero emissions

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

The Central West and Orana's emissions in 2019 were 8.76 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>-e. The bulk of these come from the energy, agriculture and transport sectors due to the region's coal-dominated power supply, agricultural activity, energy-intensive mining activities, growing logistics and freight activities, value-adding manufacturing and high car-dependent travel.<sup>7</sup>

Central West and Orana CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions<sup>8</sup>



The region offers potential for renewable energy industries with vast open spaces and higher altitude tablelands suitable for wind power generation, large-scale solar energy, bioenergy generation and pumped hydro.

The *NSW Pumped Hydro Roadmap 2018* identifies 5,600 potential pumped hydro schemes in the region, representing an opportunity worth 2.2TW installed capacity. The identified area has a high density of both historical and operational mine sites, in addition to industrial sites of Newnes and near Kandos. Some of these sites correlate with potential reservoir locations and could provide opportunities to develop brownfield sites.<sup>9</sup>

The NSW Government is at the planning stage of the Central–West Orana REZ which will help drive down greenhouse gas emissions. Ongoing government and private sector investment in the Central–West Orana REZ will stimulate growth, development and consumption of a mix of renewable energy sources to diversify the region’s coal-dominated energy sector.

The Central–West Orana REZ will be complemented by existing renewable energy projects, future renewable energy projects outside of the declared Central–West Orana REZ area and the growing uptake of rooftop solar systems within the region, providing opportunities for the establishment of virtual power plants around the region.

Renewable energy projects should, where possible, integrate with rural production or on sites where industrial projects such as power stations or mining operations are operating or have ceased operation. For example, work is underway to repurpose the former coal-fired Wallerawang power station at Lithgow, which closed in 2014, into a renewable energy (battery, biomass and solar) industrial and intensive agriculture zone.

Opportunities for business development around carbon sequestration and abatement are expanding, with several land sector carbon abatement schemes implemented through the Australian Government’s Emissions Reduction Fund.<sup>10</sup> Co-location of carbon sequestration and abatement on active farmlands can be encouraged to offset the emissions associated with farming activities, bring new economic opportunities and improve competitiveness given shifting consumer expectations for low emission or low carbon impact products and services.

Emission reduction technologies and opportunities include electric vehicles and charging, ride sharing, micromanufacturing, enhanced/smart public transport, connected and quality active transport networks and integrated water cycle management. Other opportunities could emerge for the region’s industries through the Net Zero Industry and Innovation Program. Under this program, the NSW Government will invest \$750 million to support scientists, researchers and businesses to develop new clean technologies, establish centres of innovation and help industries future-proof and grow their operations.

Improving energy efficient building design through low-emission building materials, passive urban design and integrated renewable energy systems will reduce emissions and reduce ongoing energy costs for owners. Extending these design principles beyond individual buildings and applying low carbon initiatives to regionally significant precincts can reduce the impacts of heat stress for occupants and showcase the effectiveness of low carbon strategies, such as:

- integrated green infrastructure planning
- low carbon infrastructure for new development
- retrofitting as part of infill redevelopment, including rooftop solar
- light coloured roofs to reduce heat
- heat resistant materials
- electric vehicle charging points
- virtual power plants and microgrids
- integrated water cycle management
- urban greening.

**Strategy 3.4**



Strategic planning and local plans should encourage:

- energy efficient building design and practices
- initiatives that reduce carbon emissions through the application of low carbon strategies.

**Strategy 3.5**



Adopt the resilience benchmarking matrix tool being developed by the Department of Planning, Industry and the Environment which will allow councils to assess their level of resilience to place based shocks and stresses and identify key steps council can take to increase their level of resilience maturity.

**Action 3**



The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will continue investigating increased energy and thermal performance standards for housing.



Dubbo Tesla EV Charging Station

## Mobility changes for improved connectivity and sustainability

The transport sector was NSW's second largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in 2017.<sup>11</sup>

Infrastructure improvements, policy interventions and behavioural change are needed for the transport sector to meet the interim 2030 target and the goal of an emission neutral future under the NSW Government's net zero emissions targets.

Collaboration between all tiers of government and industry will underpin changes in how goods and people move around in regions with a dispersed population pattern. Land use planning needs to respond in a way that facilitates a shift towards more sustainable transport habits and responds to emerging technology such as automated and electric vehicles.

The NSW Government is investing \$171 million in electric vehicle charging infrastructure across NSW, aiming to locate these facilities at 100 km intervals along major highways.<sup>12</sup> In response, place-based planning and land use plans should incorporate similar charging infrastructure into urban settings. The Central NSW Joint Organisation has developed an Electric Vehicle Charging Toolkit to guide an electric vehicle charger installation project.<sup>13</sup>

### Strategy 3.6

Encourage a regional approach to the rollout of electric vehicle charging infrastructure that considers potential sites for charging stations, including council-owned land, and opportunities for colocation with other public space functions.



### Strategy 3.7

Strategic planning and local plans should support the take up of automated and electric vehicles for public transport and personal use through on-street parking, and charging points in new developments, commercial centres and in industrial precincts.



# Secure and resilient regional water resources

The region’s water sources include:

- the regulated Macquarie, Cudgegong, Lachlan and Belubula rivers
- several important unregulated rivers and creeks, including the Castlereagh, Bogan, Campbell, Talbragar and Fish rivers
- several groundwater sources.

Recycled water from local water utilities, local runoff captured in farm dams and water captured through floodplain harvesting in the Macquarie Valley are also important water sources within the region.

Healthy water sources are critical to a sustainable aquatic environment that will support ecological processes, benefit the economy, support communities and preserve Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Securing water for regional towns and communities to support future population growth, and for smaller towns that rely mainly on unregulated rivers and creeks, will become challenging as the climate changes. We need to better understand how climate variability and change will impact the region’s communities and existing and emerging industries.

The NSW Government is working collaboratively to improve the resilience of water resources to enable regional growth and prosperity. In the context of the capped and fully allocated systems, water use

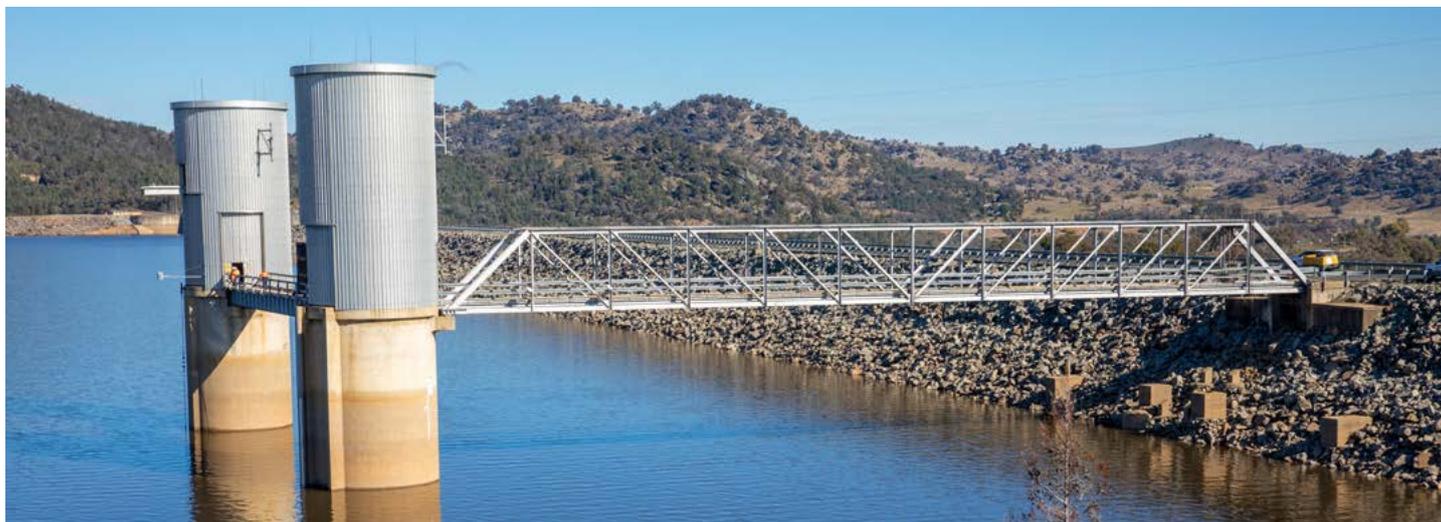
efficiency, water re-use and recycling measures as well as effective sharing of existing or new water infrastructure could provide a catalyst for new high value industries and support economic diversification. For example, closures or changes to ongoing operations could allow water and water infrastructure to be beneficially re-used to support towns, the natural environment or other industries such as tourism, opportunities offered by the Parkes SAP, Inland Rail and investment in renewable energy.

Considering water quality and supply through the strategic planning process will determine whether adequate supply is available to support new development and ensure new and intensified development can protect water resources.

The location of development should mitigate risks to water sources and the environment while minimising negative effects on the broader catchments. The NSW Government’s *Risk-Based Framework for Considering Waterway Health Outcomes in Strategic Land-use Planning Decisions* (2017) supports this process.

Councils are looking to apply integrated water cycle management strategies. The NSW Government will support this work with policy advice and support, funding for water planning and delivery and ongoing cooperation and collaboration.

Cowra Wyangala Dam





Macquarie Marshes

## State and Regional Water Strategies

The NSW Government has developed a 20-year *NSW Water Strategy* to improve resilience of the state's water resources. The NSW Water Strategy together with the 12 regional water strategies that will underpin it, will form the strategic planning framework for water management in NSW.

The Central West and Orana region covers two regional water strategy catchments – the Macquarie-Castlereagh and Lachlan – with a strategy for each catchment due to be finalised in 2022.

The draft Regional Plan, along with collaboration by key agencies and local government will support the regional water strategies initiatives to improve surface and groundwater security and reliability by addressing regulatory barriers, improving policies and processes and investing in new infrastructure.

## Groundwater

Many towns in the region rely on groundwater as a primary or alternative source of water. Some industries and landholders rely on groundwater to support their activities, as well as for domestic and stock use.

Groundwater directly supports ecosystems and, in some instances, provides base flow to rivers which in turn support ecosystems. Over-extraction or contamination can have serious, long-term and sometimes permanent impacts on groundwater. This may ultimately reduce the volume and quality of water available for the users and ecosystems that depend on this groundwater.

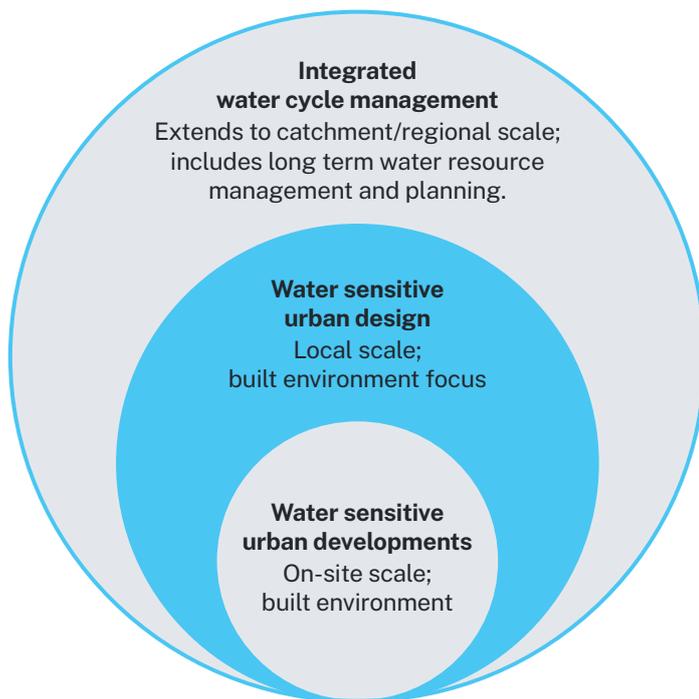
During the last drought, the Restart NSW Water Security for Regions Program provided funding for water supply improvements in most parts of the region. In addition to major water infrastructure upgrades occurring across the region, several water utilities in the region sought funding to access groundwater to supplement water supplies during dry periods, including Parkes, Forbes, Condobolin, Cowra and Dubbo.

Land use planning can protect groundwater by considering it in strategic and local planning decisions and limiting land uses that can harm groundwater quality or lead to its overuse.

## Water sensitive urban design

Water sensitive urban design is the application of integrated water cycle management principles in urban planning and design to achieve better urban water management outcomes. It can extend the life and reliability of water supplies.

Councils can improve water efficiency through building design; planning controls that avoid or mitigate impacts of development on drinking water catchments; using wastewater for council parks or in agriculture and by introducing demand management measures.



### A 'new' water source for Parkes

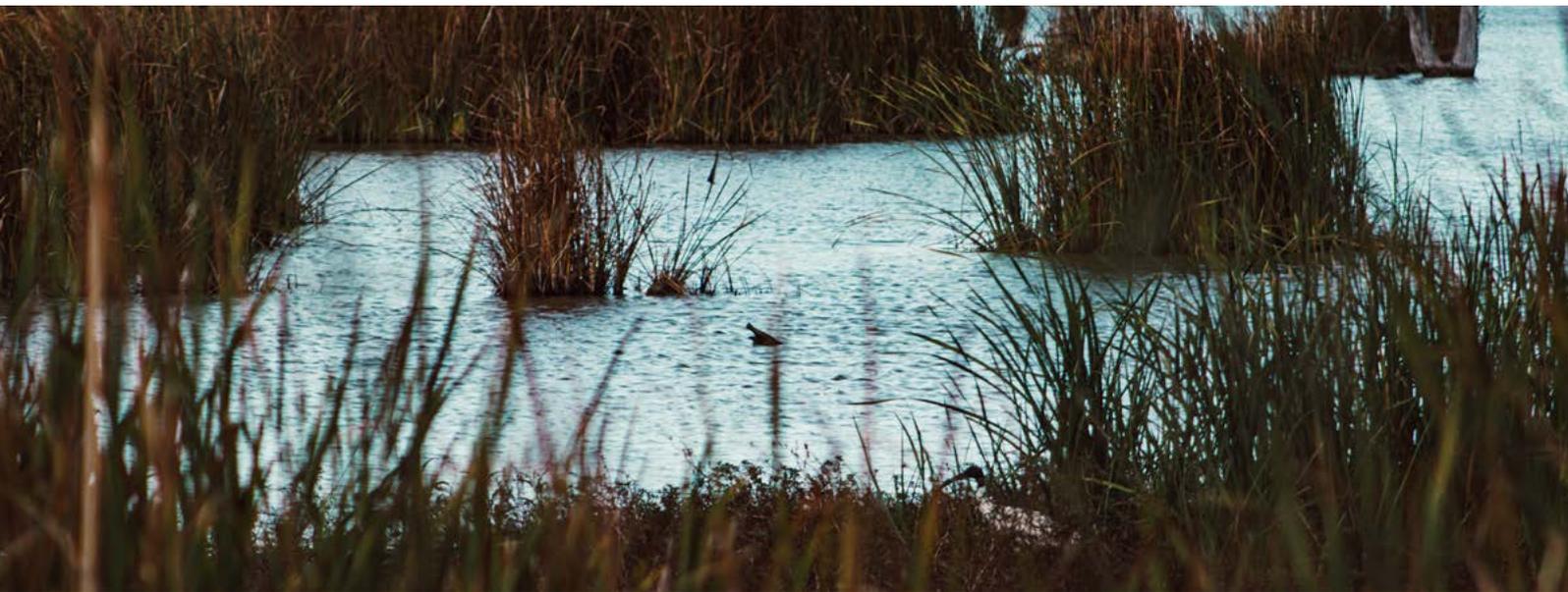
The social impacts of extended dry periods and severe droughts can limit the ability to fill public pools, irrigate playing fields or keep public space green. This can have a detrimental effect on social wellbeing.

Parkes Shire Council uses recycled water to maintain green spaces, relieving pressure on water supplies and creating room for growth in demand. A new scheme will use recycled water for open space irrigation. It will produce up to two megalitres of water per day, equal to two Olympic size swimming pools of water. Schemes like these can help to improve water security by providing additional sources of water for a town's green spaces without the need to rely on potable (drinking) water supply from rivers and groundwater sources.

#### Strategy 4.1

Strategic water and land use planning, at the regional and local scale, must consider opportunities to:

- improve the reliability, quality and security of the region's water supply by considering the impact of the following on water security:
  - climate variability and change
  - planned future growth
  - integrated water cycle management and water sensitive urban design
  - the needs of the natural environment
- locate, design, construct and manage new developments to minimise impacts on water catchments, including downstream impacts and groundwater resources
- encourage the re-use of water in new development, for irrigation purposes, including dual water systems
- improve provision for stormwater management and the application of green infrastructure
- encourage industries with higher water demands to more efficiently use water and:
  - locate in areas where water can be accessed, is secure and won't impact on other water users or the environment
  - identify the relevant water source and pathways to accessing the water to support the enterprise
- identify and consider surface and groundwater drinking water catchments and storages
- limit land uses that can harm surface and groundwater quality or lead to its overuse
- consider water needs and sources early in planning and development processes.



*Monkeygar Crossing at Macquarie Marshes*

## **Protecting the Macquarie Marshes and Lachlan Catchment Wetlands**

### **Macquarie Marshes**

The Macquarie Marshes are one of the largest remaining inland semi-permanent wetlands in south eastern Australia as well as a nationally significant breeding site for waterbirds. The floodplain wetland system comprises of interconnecting permanent wetlands, ephemeral wetlands, river channels and floodplain which covers over 200,000 ha between Warren and Carinda.

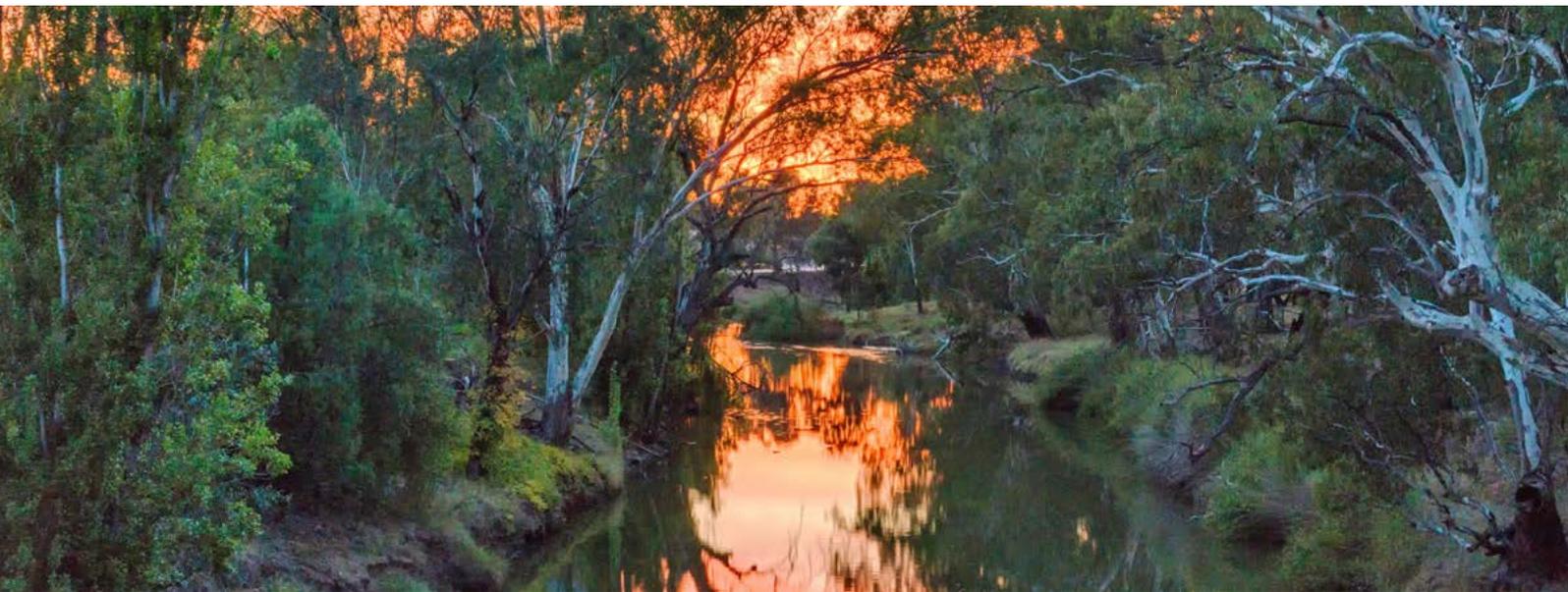
Approximately 22,000 ha is within the Macquarie Marshes Natural Reserve which was listed under the Ramsar Convention.

The Wailwan people have utilised and cared for the Marshes for thousands of years. The Marshes feature in Creation stories, provide a rich natural food source

and facilitate cultural practices. The Wailwan Aboriginal peoples still have custodial relationships with the land and waters to this day.

The Marshes are spread across the Warren and Coonamble LGAs with nearly 90% in freehold title on private land. The Marshes support cattle grazing, some dryland cropping and irrigation cropping as well as a limited amount of eco-tourism. Access to the Nature Reserve is restricted and not publicly accessible. There are viewing decks and boardwalks on private land that showcase the wetland complex.

The historical and contemporary combination of agricultural practices as well as altered hydrological regimes have changed the extent and ecological character of the wetlands. A range of interlinking land degradation issues, including the reduced quantity and quality of river flows, are exacerbated by prolonged droughts and climate change.



Lachlan River in Condobolin. Credit: Destination NSW

### Lachlan Catchment Wetlands

The Lachlan Catchment stretches from near Goulburn in the Great Dividing Range in the East through to the Great Cumbung Swamp near Oxley, in south west NSW.

The Lachlan River is fourth longest in Australia and flows through the lands of the Nari Nari, Ngiyampaa, Wiradjuri and Yita Yita Nations. It has provided food, shelter and resources to Aboriginal people for between 40,000 and 65,000 years. The Lachlan supports a diverse range of landscapes and species that vary enormously through extremes of weather conditions

The Lachlan River system, floodplains, swamps and wetlands provide habitat for birds a range of native fish including an endangered population of Olive Perchlet.

The Lachlan Catchment supports 471,011 ha of wetland with 8 nationally significant wetlands recognised as providing important waterbird habitat and also good examples of a number of wetland types found associated with lowland rivers

The Lachlan River system and wetlands have been fundamentally changed through the building and operation of dams, and the use of water, mainly for irrigated agriculture. This has altered the flow patterns of the river and has substantially changed the inundation of wetlands.

Lake Cowal and Lake Cargelligo are also wetland habitats of significance. There are opportunities to consider their protection in planning decisions.

A strategic approach to the Macquarie Marshes and the Lachlan Catchment Wetlands will ensure sustainable land uses minimise environmental impacts and improve environmental health.

#### Strategy 4.2



Improve knowledge of conservation measures, management and use of the region's wetlands to inform consideration of wetland protection in strategic planning and local plans.

#### Collaboration activity 3



The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will work with councils, State agencies and landowners to protect the Macquarie Marshes and Lachlan River wetlands while supporting sustainable economic land uses through:

- a common zoning approach
- a review of permissible land uses
- identifying tourism opportunities.

# Ensure site selection and design embraces and respects the region’s landscapes, character and cultural heritage

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

Scenic landscapes vary across the region from broad, open landscapes of plains and rolling hills to centres with dramatic vegetated backdrops including Mudgee, Lithgow, Wellington, Coonabarabran and Orange. Other centres in the region have unique rural settings such as Gilgandra, Dubbo, Parkes and Forbes. The centres have a strong sense of place and identity, shaped by landscape and the region’s people, culture, and history.

Visual landscapes and settings can be impacted through activities such as residential development encroaching on scenic backdrops and ridge lines and infrastructure development such as renewable energy projects.

Scenic and cultural landscapes should be protected for their aesthetic, social and economic values and for the character and identity of the region.

Distinct heritage values come from the region being home to Aboriginal people for thousands of years and the early inland flow of convict and pastoral settlement, following the first European crossing of the Blue Mountains in 1813.

The civic hearts of the early inland settlements have a distinct Victorian style character, heritage houses and buildings. Heritage values are acknowledged through town-based heritage trails and the early settlements in the region are linked through the Cobb & Co Heritage Trail.

The restoration and adaptive re-use of historical buildings can be extended to the preservation of local industrial heritage such as Foundations Portland, which has repurposed an old cement works or Narromine Soul Food in a former orange packing shed.

*Former Portland Cement Works, Lithgow*





Wiradjuri Amphitheatre

## Aboriginal heritage

The built environment also provides an opportunity to connect with Country and develop a better understanding of Aboriginal places, culture, and heritage. Conserving Aboriginal heritage and respecting Aboriginal communities' rights to determine how their heritage is identified and managed, will uphold some of the world's longest standing spiritual, historical, social, and educational values.

Incorporating local Aboriginal knowledge, culture and traditions into centres, place and development planning will embed cultural awareness and build respect for the region's cultural history. Respectfully combining history and heritage with modern design creates places with shared values and a clear sense of place and identity.

The Government Architect NSW is working with Aboriginal knowledge holders, built environment experts and the community to develop cultural design principles to respond to Aboriginal cultural connections to Country in the designing and planning of new projects.

### Strategy 5.1

Strategic and local planning will strengthen the amenity in centres across the region by:

- identifying and protecting scenic and cultural landscapes
- providing guidance for new development to ensure that views of scenic and cultural landscapes, particularly views from the public realm, are protected
- elevating the importance of design quality and design excellence
- reflecting local built form, heritage and character in new and intensified housing areas.

### Strategy 5.2

Use strategic planning and local plans to recognise and enhance local character through local character statements in local plans that accord with the NSW Government's *Local Character and Place Guideline*.

### Strategy 5.3

Use strategic planning and local plans to consider opportunities to apply the seven urban design strategies for regional NSW when planning for:

- public space in centres, including main streets
- development in both existing and new neighbourhoods.

### Strategy 5.4

Identify, conserve and enhance Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural heritage values through strategic planning and local plans by:

- engaging Traditional Owners and the community early in the planning process to understand cultural and heritage values.
- undertaking heritage studies to inform conservation and value add opportunities
- adaptively re-using heritage items and heritage interpretation
- managing and monitoring the cumulative impact of development on the heritage values and character of places.

## Urban design strategies for regional NSW



### Engage with the history and culture of places

Urban environments in regional NSW are defined by non-Aboriginal cultural heritage, which was preceded by places and landscapes tied to Aboriginal culture. Different histories and shared stories play out across regional cities, towns and villages. Acknowledging and caring for assets and landscapes that represent histories and cultures supports community wellbeing and helps to define places.



### Integrate with the natural environment and landscape

Most regional cities, towns and villages have a strong connection with the natural environment and with stories and experiences of Country. Careful planning and design is required to integrate urban development sustainably and appropriately.



### Revitalise main streets and town centres

Main streets and town centres typically contain the biggest concentration of public and commercial facilities. Main street buildings and public spaces record stories and histories, carry a sense of local identity, or host major events, parades and festivals.



### Prioritise connectivity, walkability, and cycling opportunities

Private cars are likely to remain the dominant form of transport in regional areas. Car dependency can be reduced near urban centres through good urban design, planning and better public transport connections.



### Balance urban growth

While there is pressure for new housing development on greenfield sites outside town centres, the long-term impacts of dispersed and sometimes isolated fringe development can have high economic and social costs. Urban design and strategic planning should balance the consolidation and distribution of new development.



### Increase options for diverse and healthy living

Rethinking housing forms and densities and providing new options should allow for the needs of older people, proximity to essential services and well-designed public areas



### Respond to climatic conditions and their impacts.

Varied climate zones, landscapes and topographies affect different regional urban settlements in different ways.

PART

# 2

## People, housing and communities





PART

# 2

## People, housing and communities

The Central West and Orana region is home to more than 290,000 people who benefit from an enviable work/life balance. People enjoy good access to recreation and cultural activities, education, employment, health care and attractive centres with unique local character.

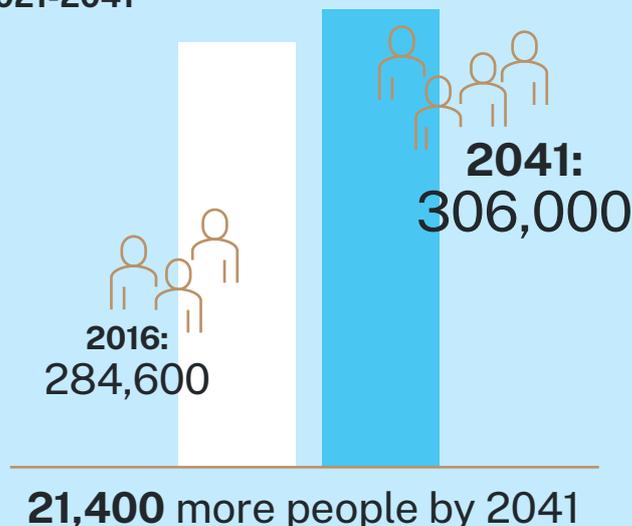
Regional cities, strategic centres, towns and villages form an interdependent network of centres which are a strategic asset for the region. These centres service communities across local government boundaries and in some instances into other regions.

Strengthened connections across the 3 regional cities, 5 strategic centres, towns and villages will enable strategically coordinated land use and infrastructure planning and build the region's resilience and economic capacity.

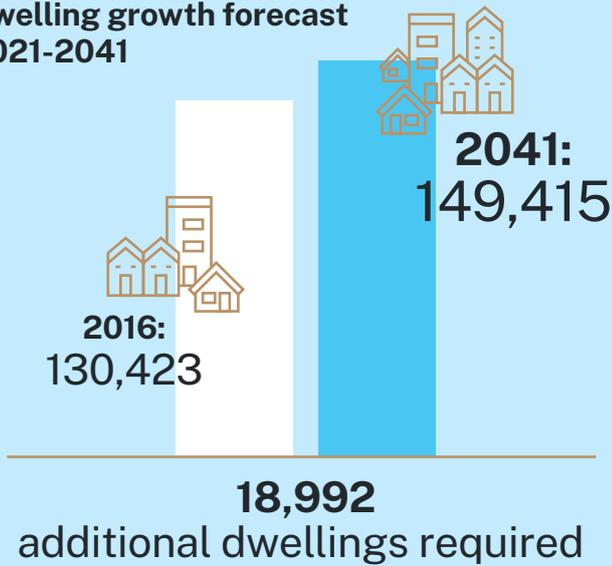
By 2041 the population of Central West and Orana is projected to grow to more than 306,000 people. This equates to the need for at least an additional 18,992 new homes. Housing supply and demand will be shaped by the older population, an increase in single person households and a decrease in average household size – and ongoing demand for housing for

key workers such as nurses or teachers, and temporary workers. The mix of temporary workers and tourists at different times of the year add a dynamic nature to the region's communities.

### Population Growth Forecast 2021-2041

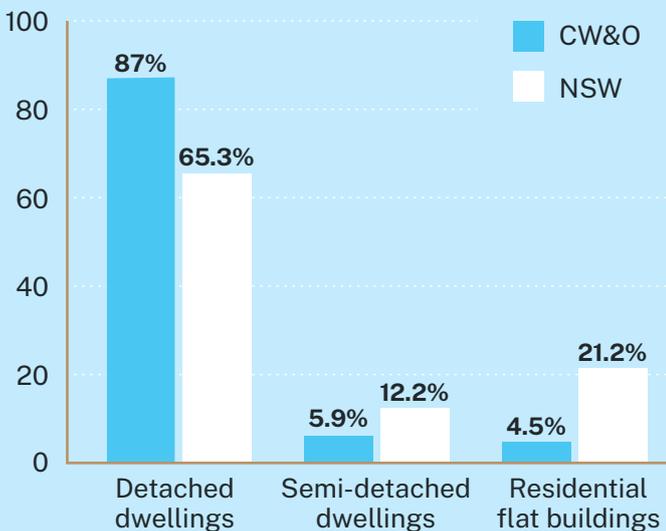


### Dwelling growth forecast 2021-2041



Existing housing stock in the region is mostly large, detached housing with three or more bedrooms. This is due to the predominant family type in most LGAs historically being families with children and a preference for the region’s developers to build this form of housing. This housing is not well suited for the projected shift in housing demand with approximately 60% of families expected to be singles or couples without children by 2041.

### Existing Housing Composition



The greatest population growth and housing demand is expected to occur in the regional cities and strategic centres: Bathurst, Dubbo, Orange, Cowra, Forbes, Lithgow, Mudgee and Parkes. The region’s centres will provide a mixture of housing that meets the population’s changing needs and reflects the unique local character and needs of each community.

The housing mix will include diverse and affordable housing, with a variety of smaller housing types, shop top housing and higher-density development to provide housing for seniors, students and key workers.

New residential development will occur in areas that make the most effective use of existing infrastructure and services. Local strategic planning will ensure new development areas have links to nearby shops and services and infrastructure demand and delivery is considered early in the planning process.

The regional cities and strategic centres sit on national highways and railway networks. Bathurst and Lithgow are positioned to be able to capitalise on proximity to Sydney, including the rapidly growing Western Parkland City, and Dubbo and Mudgee on proximity to Newcastle. The region will also benefit from improved links to Canberra from centres such as Cowra, Forbes and Grenfell.

An estimated \$12.6 billion of investment in major capital projects is expected in the region over the next 5 years.<sup>14</sup> This investment will create employment benefits during the construction phase and flow on benefits throughout the broader economy. This investment includes the Parkes SAP, Central-West Orana REZ, Inland Rail, health and road improvements and associated infrastructure. This includes the Parkes SAP, Central-West Orana REZ, Inland Rail, health and road improvements and associated infrastructure.

This is in addition to the seasonal workforce required to support existing industries such as agriculture and, to a lesser extent, mining and energy production.

The high proportion of drive-in/drive-out workers in these industries, as well as short-term and seasonal workers and tourists, is likely to affect both large and small centres across the region and specifically increase demand for smaller and more affordable housing.

### Population projections

Population projections are based on what we believe is most likely to happen in the future. However, because we know that unexpected events and policy decisions may alter future population growth, a range of population outlooks should be considered.

The future is uncertain. To account for this we can model a range of future populations by changing the projected levels of births, deaths and migration, based on how they varied in recent years and major policy decisions. The NSW Government regularly reviews population projections to be able to understand and respond to unexpected events such as the COVID-19 pandemic or expected events such as the construction of major infrastructure projects such as the Inland Rail, Central West-Orana REZ and the Parkes SAP. New population projections will be prepared early in 2022.

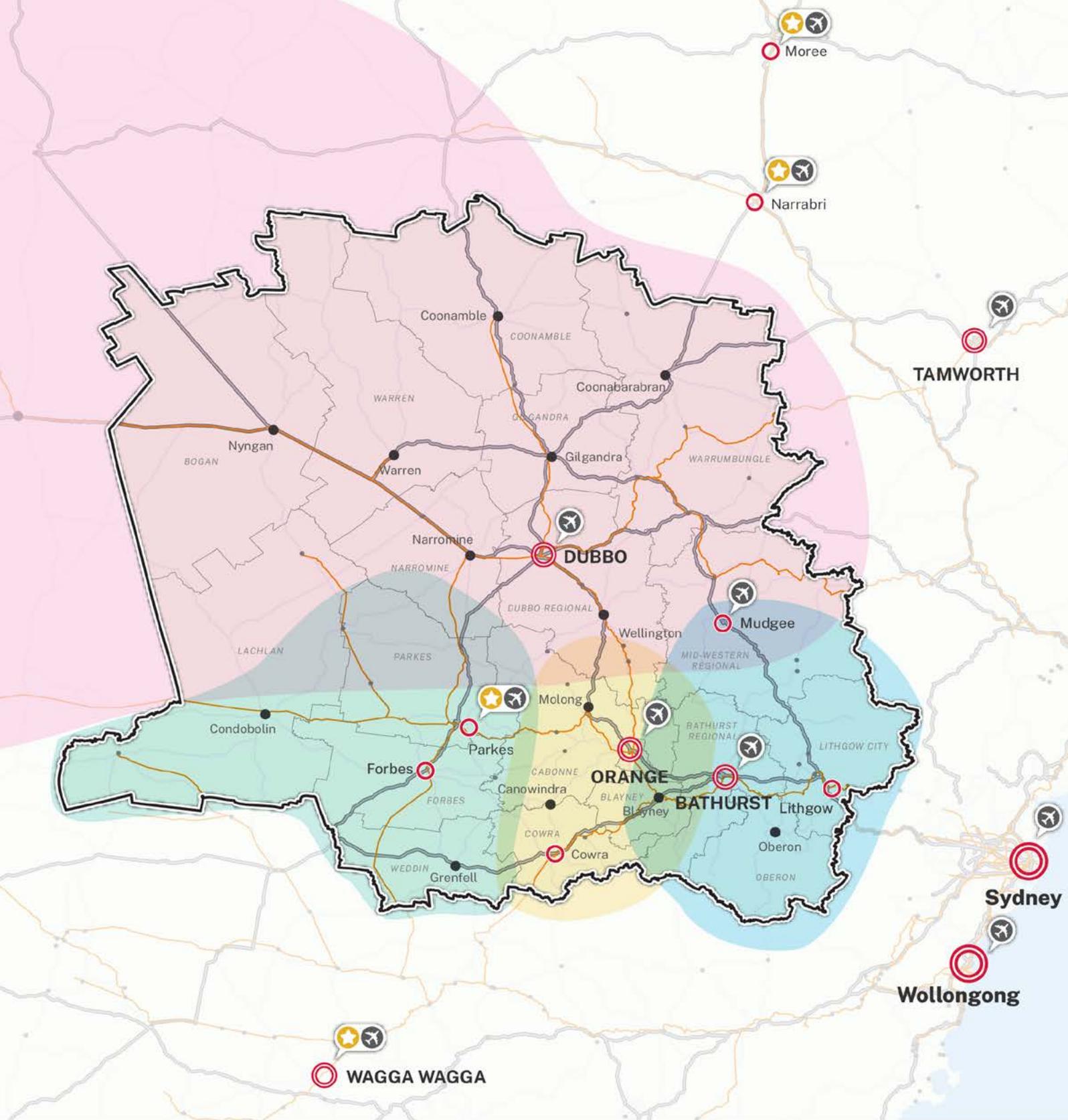


Figure 4: Centres



- |                             |  |                                |
|-----------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| Regional boundary           | Airport (regular public transport)       | Local government area boundary |
| Metropolitan city           | <b>SUB-REGIONAL SERVICES CATCHMENTS:</b> | Railway                        |
| Regional city               | Abercrombie-Mid-Western catchment        | Highway                        |
| Strategic centre            | Mid-Lachlan catchment                    | Road                           |
| Centre                      | Orana catchment                          |                                |
| Special Activation Precinct | Orange-Cowra catchment                   |                                |

# A network of healthy and prosperous centres

The growth of regional cities and strategic centres will encourage investment, increase housing choice, diversify industry and create new job opportunities – all of which will benefit the immediate and broader regional community.

While the population of some smaller towns and villages is projected to remain relatively stable or in some cases decline, these are dynamic communities with temporary tourists and worker populations that fluctuate at different times of the year. Smaller centres will continue to provide affordable more housing, services, attractive lifestyles and jobs in agribusiness, mining, and tourism.

These communities can grow and prosper by leveraging economic opportunities related to their proximity to larger centres, features such as riverfront areas, relaxed lifestyles and diverse employment from an increasing number of value-adding investments, including food processing and manufacturing. People living or working in smaller centres access regional cities and strategic centres for higher level services and employment. As the region’s population gets older, public transport and access to health services will become more important.

The changing nature of retail as well as restrictions introduced to manage COVID-19 are shifting how and where people work and live and how they use their local community. E-commerce and online access to services creates opportunities for smaller centres to reverse population decline and foster new economic opportunities.

With people working from home, more people use open space and recreation facilities and engage with their local centres when they walk or shop locally. These changes, when combined with long-term trends such as the aging of the population, provide the opportunity for councils to rethink the role and function of smaller centres and ensure their ongoing vitality.

This could mean providing a greater mix of housing in and around centres, activating vacant sites and spaces through demonstration projects, providing a greater mix of uses including shared public spaces, smart work or co-working hubs, education facilities, health services or community and social services. These facilities increase diversity within centres and contribute to the unique lifestyles they offer.

## Strategy 6.1



Use local and strategic planning to reinforce the beneficial housing and employment relationships between the regional cities and strategic centres and their surrounding centres.

## Strategy 6.2



Use local strategic planning and local plans to strengthen commercial cores by:

- reinforcing the centres hierarchy when planning for commercial and retail development
- supporting a mix of land uses so that local streets and spaces can adapt to the changing retail environment
- incentivising medium density residential and mixed-use development in appropriate locations in and around centres
- creating active streets with local character
- enabling night-time uses
- activating underutilised sites and facilities for temporary uses or demonstration infill development projects
- improving public open space, public facilities, green infrastructure and green walkable, liveable streets
- enhancing and protecting creative work and performance spaces and facilitating street art.

## Collaboration Activity 4



The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will work with Regional NSW, Destination NSW, other relevant NSW Government agencies and councils to:

- identify new economic development and urban activation opportunities for smaller centres throughout the region
- leverage the locational advantages and physical attributes of these centres, including for centres within a commutable distance to a regional city or strategic centre or other major employment opportunities.

## Safety, amenity and connectivity in regional cities and strategic centres

The NSW Government's *A 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW* recognises the importance of connectivity between regional centres.

Improving road and rail connections between the regional cities, strategic centres and rural communities will support more diverse and affordable housing choice, access to jobs and education, and lifestyle opportunities. Priority should be on connections that maximise accessibility to and from workplaces, educational institutions, public transport stops and stations, and centres.

People will be more inclined to choose walking or cycling if they live on or near well-designed streets, paths and public spaces that are separated from motorised traffic, easy to navigate and comfortable, or can access other items like end-of-trip facilities with adequate shade.

The planning and design of new communities must integrate with existing networks and connect new facilities such as schools with residential areas through walking and cycling network improvements.

Well-designed and integrated local and regional pedestrian and cycling networks can also attract visitors. Where possible, walking and cycling networks should connect to tourism or recreation destinations, public space or environmental assets such as national parks or waterways.

Transport and land use integration in centres can be supported through application of the Movement and Place framework,<sup>15</sup> which balances the need to efficiently move people and goods with the need for pleasant and attractive streets and places. The framework requires collaboration between State agencies, councils and industry.

Transport for NSW's *Regional NSW Services and Infrastructure Plan* commits to place-based transport plans for regional cities across NSW. These will draw on the expertise of multiple stakeholders and practitioners including those with expertise in land use planning, urban design, and transport planning.

### Streets as Shared Spaces

High street activation projects in Bathurst, Coonabarabran, Gilgandra and Lithgow through the Streets as Shared Spaces program have tested ideas for improvements to local streets, paths and public spaces.

#### Strategy 6.3



Integrated land use and transport planning should aim to improve transport in regional cities and strategic centres, and their connections with regional communities.

#### Strategy 6.4



Use strategic planning and local plans to strengthen connectivity within centres by:

- improving and establishing connected and accessible green walking and cycling networks that are integrated with public transport facilities
- activating entrances to public spaces, civic buildings, shopping centres and parks
- promoting redevelopment and higher densities within walking distance to town centres, public spaces and transport interchanges
- balancing the needs of pedestrians and vehicle traffic on main streets and prioritising pedestrian movements in town centres
- widening footpaths and building cycle infrastructure, all weather protection, shade, lighting, and supportive street furniture.
- enabling provision of secure bicycle parking and end-of-trip facilities
- enabling micro-mobility including e-bikes and e-scooters
- better integrate walking and cycling networks into the design of new communities
- prioritising walking and cycling around schools, health services, aged care facilities and sporting, cultural and recreational facilities
- exploring and supporting ideas from the Streets as Shared Spaces program
- utilising green infrastructure to create a network of connected open spaces.

#### Collaboration Activity 5



Work with Transport for NSW and Bathurst Regional, Dubbo Regional and Orange City councils on place-based transport plans for the regional cities that use the Movement and Place framework.

# Provide well located housing options to meet demand

The Central West and Orana region needs an adequate supply of affordable, well-designed housing in the places where people want to live.

Future residential growth will be predominantly accommodated in existing urban areas or in new development areas identified in local housing strategies. Regional cities and strategic centres will be the focus of growing populations and service provision for the region. Strengthening smaller centres can also be supported through better utilisation of existing infrastructure as an alternative to greenfield development.

The region's centres will support housing by making efficient use of existing infrastructure and services. This will involve identifying areas for intensification and renewal, prioritising the development of unused or underutilised land and identifying new areas for growth.

In some cases, the historic release of land for housing on the fringe of centres has occurred without adequate strategic planning or the consideration of the entire development cycle. This has sometimes led to poor environmental outcomes, land that is difficult or costly to develop or conflicts with surrounding rural and resource lands.

Housing decisions need to consider the region's natural environment values. When developing local housing strategies, councils should clearly identify where urban growth is preferred and the areas that should be avoided, including areas with high biodiversity or biodiversity connectivity values. Better upfront consideration of infrastructure provision and necessary biodiversity approvals will improve the timely provision of housing and create more certainty. Avoiding areas of high biodiversity value when planning, limits the need for costly offsetting at the development stage.

Local housing strategies will be periodically reviewed to remain current and responsive to changing demographic patterns and other drivers of regional growth and change. This should include consideration of opportunities for growth to be shared across LGA boundaries, where multiple areas can benefit from drivers of housing demand.

Regular monitoring of land supply and demand will permit the timely release of land for development and contribute to better planning and infrastructure decision-making. A Regional Housing Monitor is under preparation that will, once complete, monitor the production and take-up of residential land and housing construction.

*Residential street in Bathurst*





Southlakes Estate, Dubbo

### The Regional Housing Taskforce

In June 2021 the NSW Government established a Regional Housing Taskforce in response to increasing pressures on the supply and affordability of housing in regional NSW.

This comes from a combination of factors. A strong economy means more people want to live in the regions and work in jobs close to where they live. COVID-19 has transformed the way people live and work with more people choosing to move out of cities.

The taskforce will investigate regional housing issues, including the barriers experienced in buying, renting and building a place to live in the regions. It will report to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces.

#### Strategy 7.1



To ensure an adequate and timely supply of housing, in the right locations, strategic and local planning should:

- respond to environmental, employment and investment considerations, and population dynamics when identifying new housing opportunities
- consider how proposed release areas could interact with longer term residential precincts
- provide new housing capacity where it can use existing infrastructure capacity or support the timely delivery of new infrastructure.

#### Strategy 7.2



Utilise the Regional Housing Monitor to collect data on dwelling production and take-up rates to inform infrastructure sequencing and servicing plans of residentially zoned land.

Share data with infrastructure providers, including the Department of Education, to coordinate the approach to land release, rezoning and infrastructure needs earlier in the planning process.

#### Action 4



Develop strategies to inform the subregional consideration of housing supply needs, based on the distance people are prepared to travel for work, with the areas for immediate consideration being:

- Bathurst, Dubbo and Orange and their catchments
- large employment areas such as the Parkes SAP and the Central-West Orana REZ and surrounds.

#### Collaboration Activity 6



The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will work with other State agencies, councils and other housing stakeholders to consider opportunities to implement the adopted recommendations of the Regional Housing Taskforce.



Buildings on Gulargambone main street

## Infill development and renewal projects

While the conservation of historic town centres is a challenge, higher-density development can still be encouraged in and around the centres of the regional cities and strategic centres to take advantage of existing services and infrastructure and to help revitalise central areas.

Re-using and repurposing sites where the historic land use is no longer needed, or buildings have been abandoned or destroyed, avoids the cost of developing new infrastructure. This process is as important in larger centres where greater housing choice is needed as it is for smaller centres where well-located development can sustain rural services and communities.

### Abandoned buildings

Some Local Councils across regional and remote NSW report that there are numerous derelict and abandoned residential buildings. These often contain asbestos and have become targets of antisocial behaviour such as vandalism and arson. The result can be negative amenity, safety and health impacts for neighbours and the community. When people enter these sites, they risk exposure to asbestos fibres and contraction of asbestos-related diseases, along with the safety risks associated with dilapidated and unstable structures.

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) is leading a multi-agency response to assess these public health risks through the NSW Asbestos Coordination Committee (NACC) Technical Working Group (TWG).

This project represents an opportunity to unlock serviced residential land, in centres, and support remote communities improve amenity and public health.

### Strategy 7.3



Use strategic planning and local plans to facilitate a diversity of housing in urban areas by:

- creating flexible and feasible planning controls, including a greater mix of housing in new release areas
- aligning infrastructure and service provision to housing supply needs
- exploring public space improvements to encourage higher densities near town centres
- reviewing policies and processes to improve certainty and streamline development processes.

### Collaboration Activity 7



NSW Government, through the NSW Asbestos Coordination Committee will work with interested Councils to identify opportunities to address derelict housing containing asbestos.

# Plan for diverse, affordable, resilient and inclusive housing

While regional NSW continues to experience economic growth and industry diversification, there is growing evidence of housing stress and homelessness.

Housing affordability is becoming an increasing issue for the region. Between 2017 and 2020 average house prices in the region grew by 10%, which is above the NSW average of 6% for the same period.

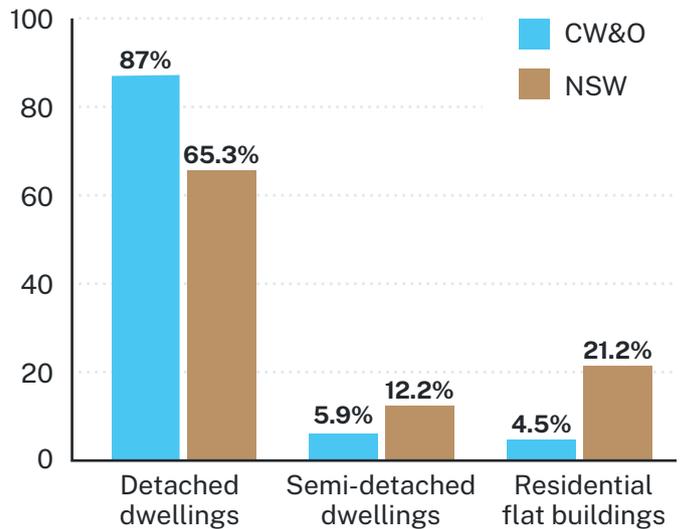
Increasing average house sale price was most pronounced in Mid-Western Regional and Orange LGAs where prices rose by 23 and 22% respectively. The average weekly rents in the region also increased above the State average over the period, rising 9% compared to a reduction of one per cent for NSW. Greatest increases in weekly median rent were experienced in the Orange LGA which rose by 20% and the Mid-Western Regional and Cabonne LGAs which each rose by 18%.

The size of households is changing, with more single person households and a decrease in the average number of occupants in each household. Planning for a diversity of housing choices for existing and future residents will give people more options at different stages of life.

## Diverse housing

Housing diversity includes aspects such as lot sizes, the type of dwelling, the number of bedrooms, or whether housing is suitable for seniors, students or people with a disability.

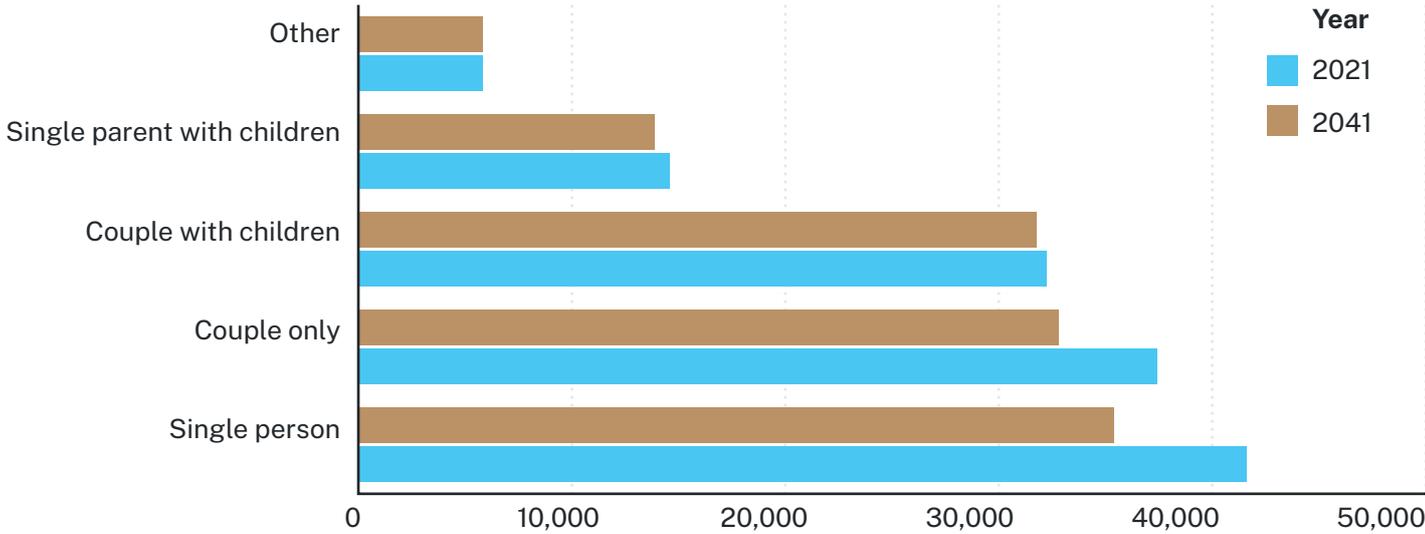
## Existing Housing Composition



*Gilgandra Orana Living Cottages*



### Household Composition Forecast 2021-2041<sup>16</sup>



### Improve housing affordability and the provision of affordable housing

Aligned with *Housing 2041* is recognition that people live in diverse tenures and that housing should be affordable, stable and supportive of their aspirations and wellbeing.

Increased housing affordability will result from better and more diverse housing designs, delivered in the right places, with alignment to infrastructure and community services.

This draft Regional Plan encourages innovative approaches to affordable housing solutions, collaborative efforts and recognition of the continuing shift in policy approaches that can increase affordability in NSW.

### NSW Aboriginal Housing Office

The NSW Aboriginal Housing Office (AHO) plans for affordable, quality housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in NSW. It is jointly funded by the NSW and Australian governments to administer the State’s Aboriginal community housing assets, including 685 homes in Central West and Orana.

The AHO is trialling podular housing, where homes are constructed offsite, reducing onsite building time. The homes also offer flexibility and can be extended with additional pods as required.

### NSW Housing Strategy: Housing 2041

Housing 2041 aims for NSW residents to have housing that supports security, comfort, independence and choice for all people at all stages of their lives.

It outlines 4 NSW housing system pillars:

- Supply – housing supply delivered in the right location at the right time
- Diversity – housing is diverse, meeting varied and changing needs of people across their life
- Affordability – housing that is affordable and secure
- Resilience – housing that is enduring and resilient to natural and social change.

The objectives in each pillar are interrelated and together will contribute to better economic, health and social wellbeing outcomes for the people of NSW.

**Strategy 8.1** 

To improve housing diversity, strategic and local planning should:

- allow a diversity of housing, including affordable housing, student housing, shop top housing, more dense housing types and housing choices for seniors close to existing services, and on land free from hazards
- improve certainty of development outcomes and streamline development processes.

**Action 5** 

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will develop a tool to review local plans to:

- identify the dwelling capacity of areas zoned for residential and mixed use development
- consider how current zones and planning provisions are providing a mix of housing
- test options for a greater housing mix, including mixed use development in appropriate locations.

**Collaboration Activity 8** 

Collaborate across the NSW Government and with industry to identify opportunities to:

- ensure affordable housing options are permissible, with guidance provided for preferred locations
- ensure development standards support a variety of housing types, including smaller and more affordable housing types
- attract investment to increase the rental housing supply in regional markets
- facilitate pilot projects that test:
  - alternative forms of housing, including build to rent, boarding houses and co-living houses
  - the provision of low-cost loans for infrastructure to unlock opportunities for private sector housing supply
  - the use of publicly-owned land to test new housing typologies in partnership with industry and community housing providers.

**Older people**

People older than 65 will make up a quarter of the region's population by 2041. Growth in the proportion of the population aged over 65 between 2016 and 2041 is projected to be most significant in the LGAs of Lithgow, Warrumbungle, Weddin, Blayney and Narromine, with projected growth between 10 and 12%.

Drivers include:

- increased life expectancy
- outward migration of younger people
- increased in-migration of retirees and other older people seeking a change in lifestyle.

Housing for seniors ranges from independent smaller homes, specifically built to meet the needs of people as they age, to communal independent living arrangements, residential aged care facilities, and high-care hospital and palliative care facilities.

An older population increases demand for local services and amenities such as public transport, health care and recreational facilities.

Slow growth in the provision of seniors housing and infrastructure in the region may be attributed in part to economies of scale and economic viability. Smaller housing types, dual occupancy and multi-dwelling housing are filling this gap in some areas.

**Strategy 8.2** 

Plan for a range of sustainable housing choices in strategic planning and local plans including:

- a diversity of housing types and lot sizes, through appropriate development standards, including minimum lot sizes, minimum frontage and floor space ratio
- housing that is more appropriate for seniors, including low-care accommodation
- considering development incentives or reduced contributions to boost construction of secondary dwellings (granny flats)
- innovative solutions for older people, multigeneration families, group housing, people with special needs or people from different cultural backgrounds
- sustainable housing solutions that can reduce costs and environmental impacts of household operations.

## Social housing and homelessness

The NSW Government builds and renews social housing in the region through programs such as Communities Plus and the Social and Affordable Housing Fund.

Modelling suggests an estimated 60% increase in homelessness in the Far West and Orana areas since early 2020. Reducing homelessness requires transparent, consistent and repeatable statistics to support targeted strategies which provide both emergency and long-term housing solutions and strong government collaboration with the relevant industry sectors.<sup>17</sup>

A culture of collaboration between councils, community housing providers, industry and the NSW Government will drive positive change in the social housing and homelessness sectors. Investment into social housing can also provide a strong economic stimulus and recovery mechanism.

### Strategy 8.3

Assess the potential to renew social housing sites to increase social housing stock and bring greater diversity and vibrancy in local communities.



### Strategy 8.4

Use strategic planning and local plans to consider responses to homelessness, including the role of caravan parks, manufactured home estates, tiny homes, and manufactured homes on land in existing centres, new development areas and on publicly-owned land.



## Collaborative and inclusive planning

Aboriginal people are entrusted with the knowledge and responsibility to care for land. The intimate knowledge of land and ways of relating to it is referred to as connection to Country. We need to better understand this connection through consultation and partnerships with Aboriginal communities on future land use planning.

Local housing strategies and local environmental plans should be prepared in consultation with Aboriginal communities, in addition with the AHO, the NSW Department of Communities and Justice and the Land and Housing Corporation.

Collaborative and inclusive planning will build trust, integrity and empower Aboriginal communities. This requires mechanisms that acknowledge the diversity of communities and the resources needed to participate.

### Strategy 8.5

Prepare local housing strategies and LEPs in consultation with Aboriginal communities, in addition with the AHO, the NSW Department of Communities and Justice and the Land and Housing Corporation.



### Three Rivers Regional Assembly

Three Rivers Regional Assembly (TRRA) is the regional Aboriginal governance body for the Three Rivers region representing the interest of Aboriginal peoples across a large part of the Central West and Orana planning region. They ensure Aboriginal communities have a real and genuine voice in determining services in the Bathurst Regional, Dubbo Regional, Gilgandra, Mid-Western Regional, Narromine, Bogan, Orange, Parkes and Warren LGAs. TRRA strengthens the capacity of leaders and community members to negotiate and set regional priorities.

# Manage rural residential development

Rural lifestyle development provides an option for people to live in a semi-rural or urban fringe setting. Rural living and lifestyle developments are subject to strong demand in the region.

The challenge, particularly within commuting distance of larger towns and major employers, is to maintain a supply of land while managing potential land use conflict with agricultural land, respecting environmental values and encouraging economically efficient use of infrastructure. Another challenge is the fragmentation of rural and/or agricultural land with a dwelling – this affects the value of land and the ability of farming enterprises to amalgamate.

A subregional approach to planning for rural lifestyle development could balance the ability to provide options for rural residential development without impacting the availability of unconstrained vacant urban land.

## Strategy 9.1



When planning for new rural residential development consider:

- proximity to existing urban settlements to maximise the efficient use of existing infrastructure and services
- avoiding primary production zoned agricultural land and mineral resources and consider land use conflict when in proximity to such land
- avoiding areas of high environmental, cultural or heritage significance, or areas affected by natural hazards
- provision of a sustainable water supply through reticulated water supply, roof catchment and/ or accessing water from a river, lake or aquifer in accordance with the *Water Management Act 2000*
- impacts on the groundwater system
- future growth opportunities of the closest local centre
- context in terms of supply and demand across the subregion
- cost effective service supply.

## Strategy 9.2



Enable new rural residential development only where it has been identified in a local strategy prepared by the relevant council and endorsed by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.

Rural residential, Bathurst



# Provide accommodation options for temporary workers

Many areas experience high demand for short-term accommodation due to the construction of large-scale infrastructure, renewable energy and mining projects as well as seasonal agricultural employment.

Over the next 5 years, the region has more than \$12.6 billion of planned investment in major capital projects<sup>18</sup> which is estimated to support a significant amount of construction-related jobs and flow on employment benefits elsewhere in the region. This includes the Parkes SAP, Central-West Orana REZ, Inland Rail, health and road improvements and associated infrastructure.

The demand for temporary worker accommodation impacts local housing markets and tourism accommodation. Since 2016, there has been a rapid growth in Short-Term Rental Accommodation (STRA) in the region, catering primarily to tourists and providing accommodation for seasonal or temporary workers. Ensuring adequate accommodation is available to residents and workers while supporting the tourism industry is a priority for councils. High demand for STRA can increase pressure on already stressed housing markets which can lead to higher rents and housing affordability issues, poor outcomes for rural centres and safety concerns from overcrowding and makeshift housing. Low availability of tourism accommodation can also slow the growth of the visitor economy as tourists seek accommodation outside the region.

Addressing demand for housing and associated needs of workers will provide safe, secure, and suitable housing while also contributing to the economic growth of towns, particularly those near large investment projects. Short-term accommodation can be adapted into alternative uses such as tourism accommodation or low-cost housing for vulnerable people, as demand for accommodation fluctuates. This may also reduce pressure on social and affordable housing provision.

Strategic and statutory planning can go part of the way towards facilitating and guiding investment in short-term and temporary accommodation. We also need a coordinated approach from all levels of government to understand and appropriately manage the accommodation of the workforce.

Councils need to ensure a variety of housing types, particularly in areas accessible to construction projects and areas which will be the focus of ongoing employment, including Parkes SAP, the Central-West Orana REZ and mining projects.

## Strategy 10.1



Prepare local housing strategies and local plans which enable safe, secure, quality and well-located housing for temporary workers by:

- permitting temporary worker accommodation, supported by tools such as a new model local clause and guidance for preferred locations
- using development standards to support a variety of housing, including medium density housing and other smaller and more affordable housing types
- suitably integrating sites for temporary accommodation into centres.

## Action 6



Investigate options to ensure new public and private infrastructure, mining and other major employment-related projects plan for workforce accommodation during the lifecycle of the project, by identifying:

- the workforce required and their accommodation needs
- when the workforce will come to the region and how long they will stay
- housing, health, education and commercial needs for the workforce and their families
- how the project will impact tourism and how this impact will be addressed
- housing options to support the surrounding centres and community for the lifetime of the project, including construction and operational phases
- opportunities to retain project-related housing as community managed assets in the long term
- opportunities for new projects to provide a financial contribution towards the provision of key worker accommodation.

# Coordinate smart and resilient utility infrastructure

Improving infrastructure networks can be capital intensive, yet brings great benefits in terms of transforming communities, underpinning water security or powering homes and industry.

Integrating infrastructure and land use planning makes more efficient use of existing infrastructure and improves how infrastructure provision is coordinated across agencies and the private sector. It helps to justify investment in upgraded or new infrastructure, enables co-location of infrastructure and maximises effectiveness, efficiency and resilience. Resilient infrastructure withstands disruption while maintaining basic integrity and function.

Funding and servicing models for utility infrastructure should provide sufficient flexibility to support new industries with high energy or water needs. New models for the provision of utility infrastructure, such as cost-sharing between industries, will support and stimulate growth in agribusiness and value-added manufacturing industries, as well as other development.

Local strategies should plan for timely and economically viable infrastructure and support proposals that minimise expenditure or duplicate services. For example, urban growth should be directed to areas with infrastructure capacity, or where upgrades or new infrastructure is cost-effective.

Proposals for land release or development should demonstrate that servicing can occur from existing infrastructure or that new infrastructure can be provided.

To support cross-border, inter-regional and intra-regional communities, councils should collaborate across borders. This will strengthen relationships, coordinate growth, and deliver infrastructure more efficiently.

## Strategy 11.1



Use strategic and local planning to maximise the cost-effective and efficient use of new or existing infrastructure by:

- focusing development around existing infrastructure and promoting co-location of new infrastructure
- undertaking infrastructure service planning and cost-benefit analysis prior to rezoning, to establish whether land can be efficiently and feasibly serviced
- considering resilience in infrastructure planning at a local, intra-regional and cross border scale
- providing attractive modal alternatives to private vehicle transport including public transport services as well as integrated walking and cycling networks
- installation of a fibre-ready pit and pipe network that allows for Fibre to The Premises broadband service in accordance with the Australian Government's National Broadband Network (NBN)
- identification of appropriate sites and capacity to provide for water security, wastewater service capacity, electricity supply, and emergency services.

*Southlakes Estate subdivision, Dubbo*



## Improve access to infrastructure and services for discrete Aboriginal communities

The Roads to Home program provides better access to infrastructure and services for discrete Aboriginal communities across NSW. It means Aboriginal communities can subdivide their land and for roads and infrastructure services to be dedicated to councils where previously they were managed by the communities themselves.

Roads to Home respects the rights of local landowners. It aims to improve quality of life and economic opportunities and while upgrading roads and services such as household waste collection, postal delivery, emergency vehicles and community transport in discrete Aboriginal communities.

The Gulargambone Top community (Weilwan LALC) in Coonamble Shire LGA has received road reserve infrastructure upgrades and obtained development consent for subdivision through the program. Other communities in the program include Nanima Village (Wellington LALC) in Dubbo Regional LGA, Willow Bend and Boona Road (Condobolin LALC) in the Lachlan Shire and Peak Hill Reserve (Peak Hill LALC) in the Parkes Shire. Quambone, Gulargambone Mission and Murrin Bridge will be included in the Program in the future.

Through engagement with LALCs, councils should consider which local plan provisions apply to discrete Aboriginal communities and whether zoning appropriately reflects current and future land use. This will help to build respectful relationships, inform decisions about management of LALC-owned infrastructure and assets and inform the Roads to Home program.

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will work with State agencies to ensure the Roads to Home program is coordinated with other programs being delivered in discrete Aboriginal communities.

Building the capacity for shared knowledge about Aboriginal land can help to create more effective relationships between LALCs, State agencies and councils.

### Action 7

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will continue to work with State agencies to provide access to infrastructure and services to discrete Aboriginal communities through Roads to Home.



## Utilise smart infrastructure

Smart technology enables better access to services and economic opportunities. Dubbo Regional Council, for example, is seeking to become a Smart City through its *Smart Cities Strategy* which guides its internal use of technology and helps provide services to the community.

The NSW Government's *Smart Places Strategy* takes a place-based approach to smart places and interconnected systems. Improved digital connectivity and programs such as the NSW Government GiG State program, which aims to improve internet connectivity for regional communities and businesses,<sup>19</sup> will drive smart city initiatives in the region as well as facilitate business and investment especially for tourism and the visitor economy. Improved regional digital connectivity will also facilitate the growth of digitally connected objects, known as the Internet of Things.

Smart infrastructure can also improve public spaces with smart lighting, smart screens and smart tour guides. The integration of smart city technology with smart phones will make it easier for people to find their way around or visit local attractions.

### Strategy 11.2

Integrate smart technology and the Internet of Things into strategic planning, including how it can improve community engagement and information sharing in the planning process.



PART

# 3

Prosperity,  
productivity  
and innovation





Word of Mouth Wines, Canobolas.  
Credit: Destination NSW

PART

# 3

## Prosperity, productivity and innovation

While traditionally anchored in agriculture, manufacturing and mining, the region's health, education and tourism sectors present opportunities for economic growth. Opportunities are also emerging in food production and packaging, aged care and related services, critical minerals production and renewable energy. Growth across these sectors must be carefully managed and planned to ensure land uses are compatible and contribute to the region's ongoing prosperity.

Proximity to Sydney, Newcastle, Port Kembla and Canberra and their respective international gateways, along with the north-south access to Brisbane and Melbourne on the Newell Highway and Inland Rail, will stimulate growth through servicing national and international markets. The ability to export produce through Canberra Airport, along with opportunities associated with the new Western Sydney International Airport and Aerotropolis and improved connectivity to Sydney, will benefit the agricultural industry in the region.

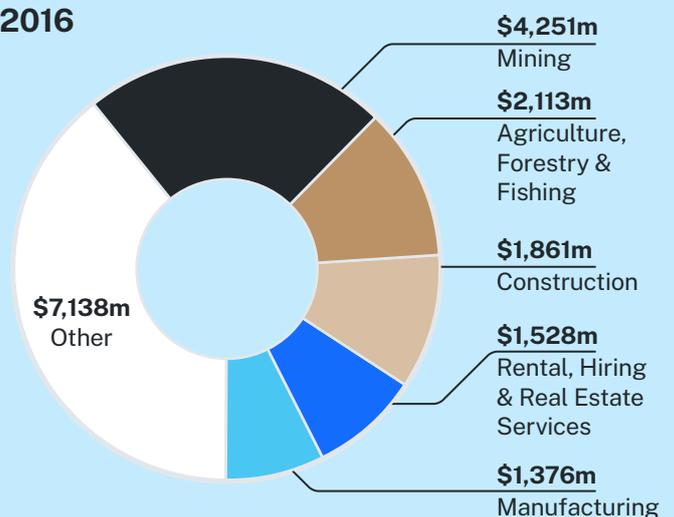
Greater connectivity will enable the region to meet growing demand from Asia for exports of agriculture and minerals, tourism and capitalise on opportunities that arise from the Parkes SAP and increasing global demand for critical minerals. This will coincide with demand from a growing Greater Sydney, despite the access constraints of the Blue Mountains. New technologies in health, agriculture and online education, and improvements in telecommunications, will benefit the agribusiness, education and health sectors. These shifts require coordinated, long-term planning and investment to maximise regional productivity.

Expenditure on major capital projects in the region within the next 5 years is expected to total an estimated \$12.6 billion; of this, investment in energy related projects accounts for 50% of the total value.<sup>20</sup> This expenditure is expected to support direct construction-related jobs, ongoing operational employment and additional employment and investment opportunities.

The flow on effects will be most pronounced in the construction industry, with \$1.5 billion in value added, followed by the rental, hiring and real estate services industry (\$917 million) and manufacturing (\$566 million).<sup>21</sup>

Capitalising on these opportunities will strengthen the region's economy and make it more resilient to change, in an increasingly uncertain future.

**Top industries by economic contribution 2016**



**OBJECTIVE 12:**

# Leverage existing industries and employment areas and support new and innovative economic enterprises

Supporting existing industries and employment precincts will facilitate new business and investment activity and create employment opportunities and benefits for the community.

While the Parkes SAP will provide an economic boost for part of the region, strategic planning can leverage other employment lands to take advantage of existing specialisations and industry clusters.

Retaining and managing employment land and creating flexible planning and development controls will respond to opportunities and technologies, including catalytic investments such as the Parkes SAP, the Central-West Orana REZ and regional specialisations such as mining and health and education.

There is also an opportunity to identify new employment lands that utilise existing infrastructure, including former mines, power stations or other sites serviced by pipelines, transport access and electricity.

The NSW Government's review of employment zones in the *Standard Instrument – Principal Local Environmental Plan 2006* (template which stipulates the form and content of all LEPs) will streamline and simplify business and industrial zones. The reform will guide how councils support centres, manage contemporary land use conflicts, sustain employment lands and create a nexus between the zones and strategic planning.

From this, councils can review their employment lands to identify opportunities, rationalise existing zones and develop appropriate planning controls as part of ongoing strategic and statutory work.

The shift towards advanced manufacturing in the region is based around existing industries such as agriculture and mining. Leveraging the manufacturing sector in areas such as Cowra and Bathurst to develop more advanced manufacturing will require fewer low-skilled positions and more specialised and higher skilled roles.

Other actions, beyond land use planning, will also be required to increase industry specialisation, including skills development and attraction that can leverage existing research and development infrastructure and networks.

Diversified and sustainable water sources are needed to help support new growth, employment and investment in the region. Accessing water to support this growth will need to be an upfront assessment consideration and included in local strategic planning.

## Strategy 12.1



Use strategic planning and local plans to:

- identify and protect employment lands from the encroachment of incompatible development
- identify local and subregional specialisations
- identify future employment land and the infrastructure needed to support it
- consolidate isolated, unused or underused pockets of industrial land
- respond to characteristics of the resident workforce and that in neighbouring LGAs
- provide flexibility in local planning controls
- respond to future changes in industry to allow a transition to new opportunities
- identify relevant water sources and pathways to accessing water to support enterprise.

## Strategy 12.2



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

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

## Renewable energy investment in the region

Renewables are now the cheapest form of new, reliable electricity generation and are key to helping NSW achieve the target of net zero emissions by 2050.<sup>22</sup> Within 15 years, 75% of the State's coal powered electricity generation is expected to reach the end of its technical life. Replacing these energy sources and building the infrastructure needed to connect new sources to homes and businesses will give NSW consumers continued access to reliable energy.

There is strong investor interest in developing renewable energy and storage projects in regional NSW. There is already \$6 billion in planned energy projects in the Central West and Orana region over the next 5 years.<sup>23</sup>

Large-scale investment in solar and wind energy generation in the region has seen community concerns around potential conflicts between renewable energy developments and agricultural and residential uses. While wind and solar projects can be compatible with certain forms of agriculture, there are concerns around the selection of sites containing valuable agricultural lands and the cumulative impact of renewable energy projects on agricultural production. There are also concerns about projects impacting on the rural landscape and visual catchment values of the regional cities in particular.

Wind and solar energy projects are subject to merit-based assessments that consider the compatibility of the project with existing land uses, impacts on amenity and potential effects on agricultural land during construction, operation and after decommissioning. Coordination of new projects, transmission capacity

and network upgrades will ensure that the benefits of these projects to the overall electricity network are fully realised. A sustainable renewables industry also includes remediation of sites and reinstatement of soil profiles to achieve pre-production land values, as well as consideration of end-of-life recycling.

### Strategy 12.3

To facilitate a renewable energy industry, use strategic planning and local planning to:

- advocate for coordinated community benefit from renewable energy projects, including through the use of development-based contributions
- take a regional approach to housing, service provision, skills and employment to adequately address the cumulative impacts of major renewable projects
- encourage diversification of local industries into renewable energy generation, energy sector supply chains and competitive advantages in energy intensive production.

### Strategy 12.4

Encourage renewable energy proponents to develop projects that are appropriately located and compatible with surrounding land use practices to minimise land use conflict and environmental and social impacts. Key landuse conflict issues to be considered are the impacts on Important Agricultural Land, coexistence with agricultural activities and visual impacts on centres.

Wellington Solar Farm



# Protect agricultural production values and promote agriculture innovation, sustainability and value-add opportunities

Agricultural production in the Central West and Orana is diverse and includes irrigated cotton, lucerne, winter cereals, horticulture as well as extensive areas of dryland cropping, livestock grazing (including beef, sheep and wool), and timber production in the region's east. These are clustered due to various factors including climate, topography, water needs and proximity to processors.

The region contains unique production areas with industries of limited geographical spread such as the Towac Valley based in the Cabonne LGA, the upper Macquarie alluvials of Bathurst, the Millthorpe–Blayney plateau and the developed irrigation areas of both the Macquarie and Lachlan Rivers that support or have the potential to support a variety of agricultural landuses such as horticulture, vegetables, lucerne and cotton. As the climate changes, industry locational needs will change and some of these locations will become more important. Future locational needs will be identified through climate vulnerability work that will enable the local need of industries to be identified and protected from incompatible land uses, including rural-residential and urban development. This is particularly important for agricultural products with short term supply chains and perishable products that will become more important to be maintained into the future for the local community. Future farming, which may include vertical farms and insect farms, should be considered as part of the future of agricultural landuse in the region.

Agricultural production supports an extensive value chain including major livestock centres in Dubbo and Blayney, transport, logistics and inter-modal transport hubs, cotton gins, canneries, packing and processing.

*Mulyan Farm, Cowra*



Livestock production for meat occupies 70% of land used for agriculture in the region; beef production is focused in the eastern parts of the region and sheep in the south western parts of the region.<sup>24</sup>

The region produces more than 10% of the NSW orchard fruit and wine grapes. The industry is concentrated in the south west of the region, particularly in the Cabonne LGA, where there is access to high security irrigation water supplies and suitable climatic conditions.

The main regional agricultural commodities have shown sustained growth in terms of value of production. The region's agriculture industry is estimated to produce \$2.4 billion of agricultural commodities annually,<sup>25</sup> including \$1.3 billion from wine, beef, wool, vegetables, cotton, wheat, fruit and timber. This represents 18% of all agricultural production in NSW annually.<sup>26</sup>

The LGAs contributing the most in terms of total agricultural commodity value are Lachlan (mostly wheat), Narromine (mostly wheat and cotton), Parkes, Forbes and Coonamble (mostly mixed farming) and Cabonne (mixed farming and horticulture).

Agriculture is a significant employer across all parts of the region with 12,413 people directly employed in primary production<sup>27</sup> with significant flow on effects for the regional and local economy.

Diversification has helped to expand agricultural activities, businesses and industries, making agribusiness one of the most important economic sectors. Access to affordable land and labour and conflict with non-agricultural land uses are becoming significant issues for the industry. Crop protection, improved water use efficiency and innovative land management practises are enabling producers to manage climate risks.

Highly productive agriculture requires ready access to water, appropriate lands and suitable climates. While the total area of land available for agriculture in the region is large, comparatively few locations have access to all these characteristics. Important agricultural land needs to be identified and prioritised for ongoing agricultural use.

Agricultural land also plays an important role in contributing to environmental services such as improving ecosystems, scenic contribution, and the opportunity to mitigate against climate change through carbon farming potential.

A critical mass of agricultural industries maintained to capitalise on demand and increase both productivity and employment, and ensure fresh food is available locally is also essential to the community.

### Agriculture innovation

The Central West and Orana is moving to higher value-added manufacturing and food processing such as organic and free-range production, grain milling, animal product and fibre processing, pet food manufacturing, packing of raw fruits, vegetables, meats and seeds, and the processing of foods such as dairy products.

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

Transformative change in the agriculture sector such as regenerative agriculture will contribute to zero waste and carbon neutrality while helping producers to enter niche markets and sell high value products. Digital technology and biotechnology will improve productivity and quality while enhancing sustainable farm management practices.

Resilience to pests and diseases will become increasingly important.

The region has access to international markets via Port Newcastle, Port Botany, Sydney Airport and Canberra Airport. Products such as beef, lamb, goat, and dairy are already being exported to South East Asia.

Inland Rail, Western Sydney International Airport, improved road and rail links to Newcastle along with the proposed program of upgrades to the Great Western Highway will all open new domestic and international markets.

The *NSW Central West Food and Fibre Strategy* has been prepared to guide collaboration between state and local government on growing the regions agricultural industry through value-adding and intensive agricultural production. The Strategy identifies industry trends,

opportunities for growth and local actions to promote food and fibre activity in the eleven Central West LGAs. Significant opportunities identified include the potential of the Inland Rail Project and proximity to Parkes Intermodal hub and Special Activation Precinct for the LGAs of Forbes, Lachlan, Parkes and Weddin.<sup>28</sup>

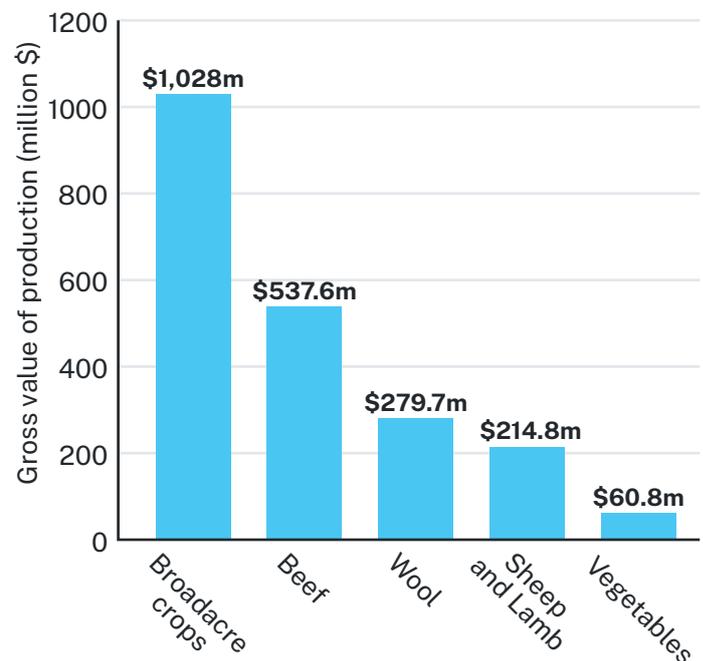
#### Strategy 13.1

Use strategic planning and local plans to:

- identify and enable emerging opportunities for agriculture, including agriculture innovation and value-add opportunities such as on-farm processing that includes provisions for intensification of industry, farm gate sales and small-scale value adding manufacturing that advantages the differentiation of the local produce
- encourage local food supply and consumption
- protect agricultural land and industries from land use conflicts and fragmentation
- maintain and protect agricultural land and industries from land use conflicts and fragmentation, especially those lands identified as important such as those identified as Class 1-3 using the NSW land and capability mapping, biophysical strategic agricultural land, those currently developed for irrigation, or other special use lands that support specialised agricultural industries
- enable freight and logistics precincts and intermodal hubs to grow and adapt to changing needs
- support sustainable and efficient use of water by agricultural industries



#### Industry by gross value (2016)



## Viability and integrity of rural land

Rural land in the region is primarily used for agriculture. The most common land use by area is grazing, which occupies almost 70% of productive agricultural land; broadacre cropping and a small area of horticulture occupy the remaining 30% of productive agricultural land.<sup>29</sup>

Rural land in the region also contains a mix of other uses, such as rural residential development, agri-tourism, renewable energy infrastructure, mining and other natural resource extraction. While these land uses are also important for the region's future growth, they need to be carefully planned to avoid land use conflict and impacts on agricultural productivity. This is particularly important when reviewing local plans and planning for:

- new development in rural areas and considering whether productive agricultural lands should be protected by land use buffers
- sensitive land uses, such as residential development that could impact on agricultural land uses.

The NSW Department of Primary Industries has developed agricultural profiles for the Central West and Orana region that provide an overview of agriculture including details of the top 5 agricultural industries operating in the region, secondary industries that support and rely on those agricultural industries and challenges and opportunities that are collectively faced by agricultural industries. These profiles will assist in planning for agriculture in local strategic planning and local plans.

### NSW Agricultural Commissioner

The NSW Agricultural Commissioner was appointed in August 2020 to advocate on behalf of the State's primary producers and work with stakeholders to understand barriers to the future success and viability of agriculture in NSW in the planning framework. This will include investigations into how land use conflict with primary producers can be mitigated and better managed.

An agricultural land use planning strategy is being considered by NSW Government in consultation with the NSW Agricultural Commissioner. Implementation is being considered by Department of Primary Industries.

## Important Agricultural Land

The NSW Government's Biophysical Strategic Agricultural Land mapping identifies agricultural land significant to the State.

There is an opportunity to complement this mapping with regional-scale mapping that reflects regional climatic, geological and socio-economic conditions to provide a greater picture of Important Agricultural Land (IAL) in the region.

Department of Primary Industries has developed a methodology to map the existing or future location of local or regionally important agricultural industries or agricultural resources. This will enable a greater understanding of the location, pressures and opportunities for greater utilisation of the Regions agricultural resources.

Local planning is needed to supplement the State and regional mapping and policy to minimise land use conflict and identify initiatives to protect and enhance the future viability of IAL.

The IAL mapping will:

- complement the NSW Government's Biophysical Strategic Agricultural Land mapping
- identify highly fertile and productive soils, other areas where highly productive agriculture occurs and infrastructure that is critical to the agricultural industry
- enable a greater understanding of the location, pressures and opportunities for greater utilisation of the region's agricultural resources.

### Strategy 13.2

Strategic and local planning should maintain and protect the productive capacity of agricultural land in the region.



### Strategy 13.3

Use strategic and local planning to consider the quality of the land for agriculture and the scarcity of productive agricultural land in the region when making decisions regarding:

- the permissibility of compatible non-agricultural land uses in rural zones, without compromising agricultural production
- minimum lot sizes, standards for dwellings and limiting land fragmentation
- farm boundary adjustments and subdivisions to create a lot for primary production
- identifying suitable areas for smaller agricultural holdings for activities such as horticulture, whether these areas are suitable for inclusion in the primary production small lot zone, and ensure they are not developed for rural residential use.



# Protect and leverage the existing and future road, rail and air transport networks and infrastructure

The Central West and Orana region’s connections along major transport links support domestic and international supply chains and contribute to a diverse and productive regional economy.

Investment in transport infrastructure and services to better connect with the Hunter, Central Coast, Greater Sydney and Illawarra Shoalhaven is providing access to new markets. The upgrade of the Great Western Highway between Katoomba and Lithgow will capitalise on growth in Western Sydney, including the Western Sydney International Airport and Aerotropolis. Improved connections to Newcastle, Canberra and Port Kembla will provide additional access opportunities to markets and export gateways.

Upgrades to the Newell and Golden highways, Inland Rail and the Parkes SAP will increase opportunities for new freight and logistics facilities and intermodal

hubs. This requires an appropriately located supply of industrial zoned land, particularly in regional cities and strategic centres.

Population growth, smart technologies and demand for more sustainable transport highlight the need for integrated transport and land use planning. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated some of these changes, particularly the increase in demand for walking and cycling networks and faster delivery of goods and services to homes and workplaces.

Effective integration of land use and transport planning will ensure transport improvements contribute to making the region liveable, prosperous, and sustainable places and a functional and resilient region. The draft *Central West and Orana Regional Transport Plan* identifies how transport planning will support the region’s changing land uses in the region.

*Newell Highway, Dubbo*



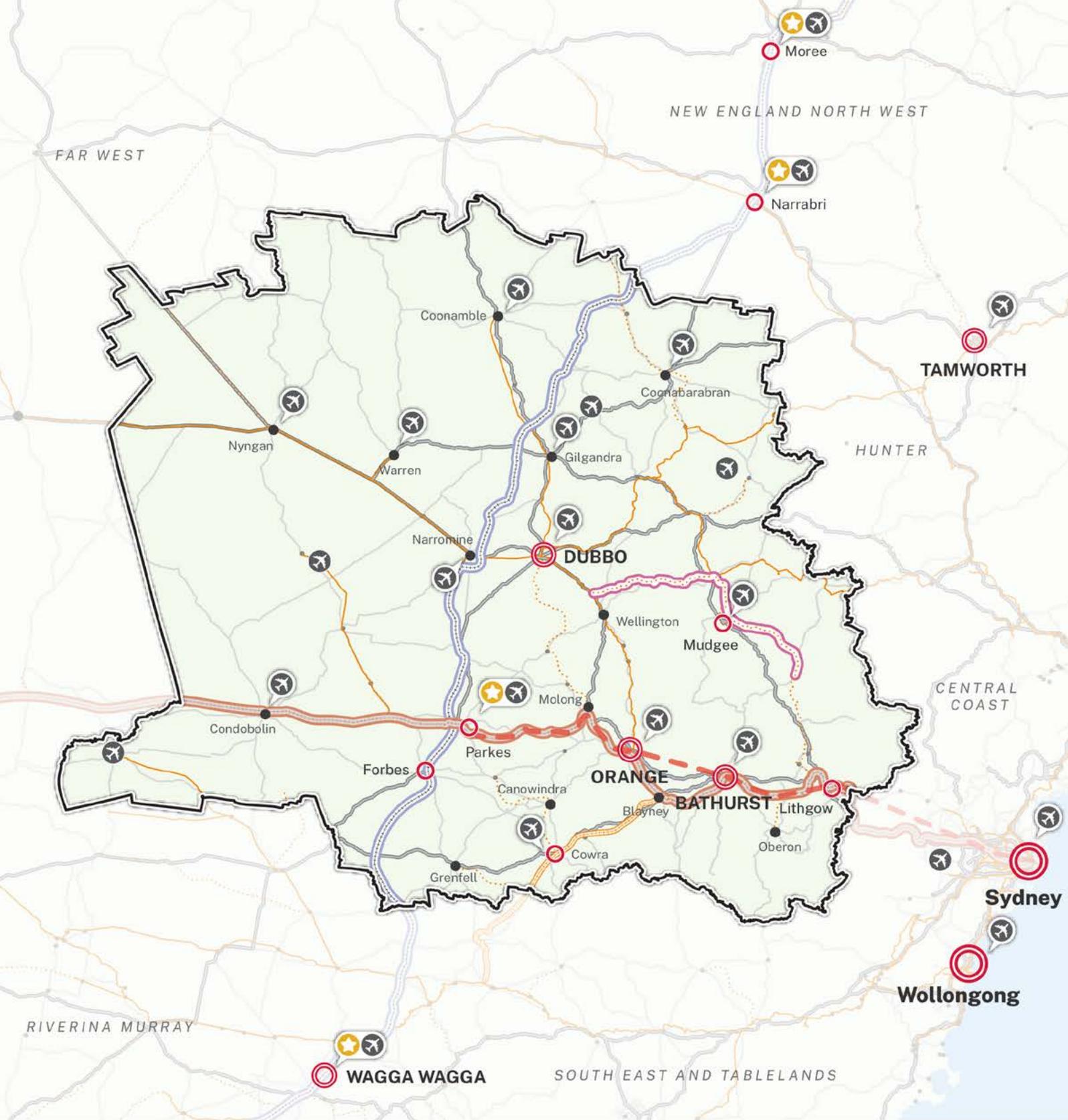


Figure 5: Regional transport



- |                             |   |                                  |
|-----------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| Regional boundary           | Airport and aerodrome                                 | Main west rail line              |
| Metropolitan city           | Railway   | Sydney to Central West fast rail |
| Regional city               | Railway (non-operational)                             | Highway                          |
| Strategic centre            | Railway reactivation (investigation)                  | Road                             |
| Centre                      | Inland rail alignment                                 |                                  |
| Special Activation Precinct | Blayney to Demondrille rail feasibility investigation |                                  |



Central West Livestock Exchange, Forbes

## Existing and future freight connections to activation precincts, Inland Rail and major freight centres

The Central West and Orana's freight connections extend to Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong, Brisbane, Melbourne, Broken Hill, Adelaide and Perth, with the Main West Rail line meeting the Inland Rail line in Parkes. The convergence of these corridors at several locations, including Dubbo and Parkes, is a competitive advantage.

With the region's freight task expected to significantly expand over the next 20 years, there is a need to protect the current freight network and support future freight requirements.

Upgrading links to Greater Sydney such as the Great Western Highway Upgrade Project and links to Greater Newcastle such as the Golden Highway will connect Central West and Orana to global gateways for freight.

Other initiatives to improve east-west freight connections include investigating the activation of the rail connection between Blayney and Demondrille and undertaking preliminary work to identify route options for a fuel pipeline corridor to connect the Port of Newcastle fuel import terminals to a Central Western NSW location via the Hunter.

Supply chain operations are increasingly becoming around-the-clock operations and can be impacted by encroachment from residential areas and other sensitive land uses. Land use planning can minimise conflict by considering supply chains early in the planning process, mitigating associated noise and air emissions and encouraging off-road freight or connections between heavy vehicle routes that do not involve local roads where possible.

Strategic planning to support transport planning initiatives will require a cooperative approach between the NSW Government, councils and the joint organisations.

### Strategy 14.1



Strategic planning and local plans should consider opportunities to:

- protect and improve existing and emerging freight transport networks to new infrastructure such as the Parkes SAP, major freight facilities and connections to the Inland Rail
- minimise the negative impacts of freight movements and deliveries on urban amenity, particularly with proposed town and heavy vehicle bypass and distributor roads
- enhance freight and logistics facilities by limiting the encroachment of incompatible and sensitive land uses
- address first mile and last mile freight limitations, including off-street loading docks, the allocation of kerbside space, formal de-coupling sites, alternative last mile delivery vehicles, as well as appropriate access for vehicles on local road networks and accommodating larger vehicle combinations.

### Strategy 14.2



Identify future heavy vehicle and town bypass and associated road corridors in local land use strategies and investigate opportunities to reserve this land for future use at the appropriate time and to minimise the encroachment of incompatible land uses.

### Collaboration Activity 9



Work with Transport for NSW and councils on planning for improved connections between Central West and Orana and eastern NSW, including Sydney, Newcastle and Canberra.

## Opportunities from improvements to the existing rail network the addition of Fast Rail

The *NSW Fast Rail Network Strategy* will be a blueprint for the Fast Rail network. It will aim to improve connectivity between regional cities by considering 4 routes: Sydney to Newcastle and Port Macquarie, Sydney to Wollongong-Bomaderry, Sydney to the Central West, and Sydney to Canberra.

Faster passenger rail and connections to Sydney and beyond can strengthen the economic productivity and connect people to jobs, services, and more affordable housing. Development and business investment at new stations could see an increase in jobs, markets and workers, as well as opportunities for coordinated place-making in centres and along the corridor.

Greater connectivity through Fast Rail has the potential to sustain communities such as Lithgow, currently projected to see a population decline by 2041 and encourage additional growth and change in Bathurst and Orange. Fast Rail presents an opportunity through greater connectivity to arrest this forecasted decline in population and jobs. There is potential to see an increase of between 5,000 and 20,000 people in key centres across the corridor.

Bathurst and Orange share a strong commuter connection for employment accounting for approximately 25 to 35% of all trips within this corridor. Fast Rail is expected to double the employment pool for these regional cities which could lead to an additional 7,500 jobs for Bathurst and Orange.

### Collaboration Activity 10



Work with Transport for NSW to leverage potential rail transport investment such as Fast Rail, future uses for the Blayney-Demondrille and Maryvale-Gulgong rail corridors and potential rail opportunities such as passenger services to Newcastle and along the Inland Rail.

## Opportunities from the Inland Rail

Inland Rail is a freight rail line connecting Melbourne and Brisbane via regional Victoria, NSW, and Queensland that will be operational by 2026. More than 1,000 km of the total 1,700 km line will be in NSW.

Inland Rail will support more than 21,500 jobs at the peak of construction and contribute more than \$5.5 billion to GRP during construction and the first 50 years of operation.<sup>30</sup>

A regional approach will guide land use planning around future inland rail junctions, the intermodal hubs, and the rail corridor.

Inland Rail will enhance existing freight infrastructure, making it easier for businesses, farms, mines, cities, and ports to connect to domestic and international markets.

Intermodal hubs will benefit from connections to Inland Rail. Strategic centres such as Parkes, Forbes and other towns orientated to support existing road and rail freight networks should be planned to leverage the benefits of Inland Rail and associated land uses, including the Parkes SAP.

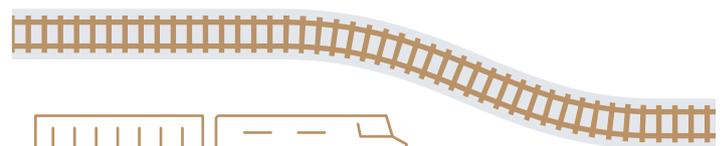
### Movement of goods

across Australia's urban areas is set to increase by nearly **80% by 2040**



**74%**

of all inter-capital freight between Brisbane and Melbourne is carried by road



Inland Rail will remove

**63,000** heavy vehicles trips a year from sections of the Newell Highway<sup>31</sup>



Pacific National grain train, Lachlan

The Narromine to Narrabri section of Inland Rail is a 306 km<sup>32</sup> section of new track (and primarily new rail corridor) that will provide east-west connections at Narromine and Gilgandra (Curban).

The connection with the existing Main West Rail Line from Sydney to Perth/Adelaide at Parkes SAP will benefit the region's agriculture and manufacturing industries with improved freight efficiencies and better access to north-south freight destinations.

Inland Rail will move through a predominantly rural landscape dominated by primary production. Planning for ancillary uses along the rail corridor must minimise land use conflict with both the operation of the rail corridor and the surrounding productive agricultural areas.

Temporary workforce accommodation facilities for approximately 2,000 employees (at peak construction) are likely to be in Narromine, Gilgandra and Baradine.<sup>33</sup> Councils will respond by identifying opportunities for the post-construction use of temporary worker accommodation to support local housing markets, as well as consider demands on infrastructure provisions to cater for a large transient population.

While Inland Rail is currently designated for freight, there may be demand for passenger movements in the future. The NSW Government will investigate these opportunities.

**Strategy 14.4**



Local strategies and local plans should respond to the Inland Rail alignment to support operations and minimise land use conflict that could limit future network capacity.

**Collaboration Activity 11**



The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will work with Transport for NSW, the Australian Government, Australian Rail Track Corporation and councils to identify and plan for the Inland Rail land use requirements and options around transport intermodal hubs and connections to existing rail network.



Figure 6: Regional connections

- NSW
- Central West and Orana region boundary
- Cities and towns
- Regional connections
- Inland rail
- ✈ Airport (regular public transport)
- Rail
- Roads

0 50 100 200 km





Parkes Regional Airport

## Airports and aerodromes

Air transport infrastructure at Dubbo, Mudgee, Orange, Bathurst and Parkes provide regular passenger services. Smaller facilities such as Cowra, Forbes, Gilgandra and Narromine support freight, emergency services, aviation training, agriculture, rural-residential development, recreational aviation and other aviation uses such as gliding.

Technological change will affect the aviation industry which will in turn change land use and infrastructure requirements at airports and aerodromes. Land uses must be compatible with their employment generating potential and future operations. This requires a regional approach to guide land use planning around the region's airports and aerodromes.

### Strategy 14.5



Support the operation of regional airports and aerodromes through strategic planning and local plans which should consider opportunities to:

- manage and protect airport and aerodrome land-uses and airspace, including future airport and aerodrome operations
- limit the encroachment of incompatible development
- ensure operations are not compromised by development that penetrates the Limitation or Operations Surface
- identify and activate employment lands surrounding airports and aerodromes.

# Implement a precinct-based approach to planning for higher education and health facilities

Healthcare, social services and education account for 24% of the Central West and Orana region’s jobs. These industries drive economic growth with the health care and social assistance industry alone producing approximately \$1.6 billion of value added to the region’s economy.

Health and education precincts allow shared facilities, encourage innovation and attract private investment regional cities and strategic centres. They increase the diversity of service offerings, particularly for hospitals that serve wider communities such as Dubbo Base Hospital, which is also the primary hospital for the Far West.

Dubbo Regional Council has partnered with Charles Sturt University, the Western NSW Local Health District and Department of Planning, Industry and Environment to develop a Health, Education and Wellbeing Precinct Master Plan to support health, education, agricultural research, training and recreation-related development in a central hub. Similar precinct-based planning approaches around health facilities are being established in Bathurst, Mudgee and Orange.

Orange is becoming a hub of medical, health, and education and research expertise with the development of the Orange Health and Innovation Precinct. The precinct master plan aims to attract new residents, businesses, jobs and enterprise, while creating synergies with education and research. Land adjacent to the precinct could, in future, leverage the master plan’s medical or research objectives and improve integration with the surrounding area.

*Dubbo Hospital*



Similar precinct-based planning opportunities could establish complementary, flexible and adaptable multipurpose health centres in places like Cowra, Gilgandra and Coonabarabran. Technological innovation and e-health initiatives will also improve medical access and connectivity.

Precinct-based planning approaches should also be investigated around tertiary education and major secondary education institutions in Bathurst, Dubbo, Orange and Lithgow to create mixed use precincts. These could feature local workforce training, or research and industry business development collaboration, and bring activity to local centres and campuses.

The expanding online and distance education services by providers within and outside the region will also increase local access to services and sustain community wellbeing, particularly in smaller and isolated communities.

## Country Universities Centre

Country Universities Centre in Parkes is a dedicated learning and study space that provides access to high-speed Internet, modern technology, and general academic support to anyone studying higher education from any higher education provider.

Cowra Shire Council and Mid-Western Regional Council are seeking to establish Country Universities Centres to provide tertiary education opportunities for their communities

### Strategy 15.1

Support mixed use precincts through strategic planning and local plans by considering

- mixed use facilities and research and accommodation precincts
- the encroachment of inappropriate and incompatible land uses
- multipurpose, flexible and adaptable health and education infrastructure
- the development of education precincts around universities and other educational facilities.



# Sustainably maximise the productivity of resource lands

The Central West and Orana has an established mining industry and is rich with high-tech metals and critical mineral resources. The sector has scope for growth given the region’s quality infrastructure, highly skilled local workforce and a strong services industry.

The region sits within the Lachlan Orogen geological province which hosts traditional metal resources such as gold, silver and base metals, and a significant proportion of the State’s emerging critical mineral resources such as cobalt, scandium, rare earth elements and titanium. Global demand has grown rapidly due to the prevalence of personal electronic devices, electronic vehicles and renewable energy generation.

Major infrastructure projects, access to Sydney, Canberra and Newcastle, and housing and employment growth will also increase demand for construction materials. There are transport efficiencies and local employment benefits where these materials are sourced from within the region. For example, the segment of Inland Rail between Narromine to Narrabri will require 1 million tonnes of ballast and capping from quarries in the region. This project, or the Western Slopes gas

pipeline, could be leveraged to bring broader economic benefits beyond construction phases such as through improved road infrastructure and installation of utilities.

The Central–West Orana REZ and other renewable energy projects will also increase demand for construction materials. Protecting extractive industries will ensure continued infrastructure investment in the region.

Minerals can only be mined where they occur and it is often difficult to predict the location of viable deposits. This makes it important that known resources are protected from sterilisation by inappropriate zoning or development, and that access to land for mineral exploration is maintained over as much of a planning area as possible.

While there will be growth in the production of extractive resources throughout the region, there will also be communities that will transition to a post-mining economy during the lifetime of the Regional Plan.

*Peak Hill Open Cut Gold Mine, Peak Hill.  
Credit: Destination NSW*



Natural resource extraction is a transitional land use, requiring planning throughout the physical and economic life cycle of projects. This includes consideration of the environmental, economic and social impacts and opportunities through the exploration and project development, construction and operation, rehabilitation and closure phases of each project. This approach will reduce the potential for land use conflict, facilitate economic development and build on the region's strengths and emerging specialisations.

The *Strategic Statement on Coal Exploration and Mining in NSW* sets out the NSW Government's approach to managing the life cycle impacts of coal mining in mining communities and the global transition to a low carbon future. This includes some regional variations in terms of coal production with some areas seeing a gradual decline while others could see short to medium term increases, subject to rigorous assessment and extensive community consultation.

Lithgow LGA has historically benefited from coal production and thermal power generation. With coal production expected to reduce and the economy transitioning, there will be opportunities to diversify the economy due to its proximity to the rest of the region, Sydney and the Western Sydney International Airport and Aerotropolis.

Lithgow already accommodates multinational organisations including Thales, Ferrero, Emirates (One & Only Wolgan Valley Luxury Resort) and the Veolia Water Treatment Plant. There are also plans for the former Wallerawang Power Station to be repurposed into a multipurpose industrial and renewable energy storage area.

The NSW Government announced the Royalties for Rejuvenation Fund in April 2021. The Fund will support the growth of new jobs and industries in coal mining communities as our energy mix evolves over the coming decades. The Fund sets aside a portion of coal mining royalties, to ensure coal mining communities have a strong future for decades to come and have the support they need to recalibrate their local economies.

### Strategy 16.1



Use strategic planning and local plans to consider the life cycle of resource extraction opportunities, including:

- protecting potential mineral and energy resources from land uses that would sterilise this potential
- protecting resource extraction projects from land uses that could impact operations
- protecting road, rail and freight routes from development that could affect current or future extraction
- promoting opportunities for minerals processing within the region
- addressing water resource constraints and impacts.

### Strategy 16.2



Consult with the Department of Regional NSW (Mining, Exploration and Geoscience) division when assessing applications for land use changes (strategic land use planning, rezoning and planning proposals) and new developments or expansions.

### Strategy 16.3



Use strategic planning and local plans to identify future mine closure dates, understand potential changes to water, economic/skill profiles and demographics, and consider land use changes, mine rehabilitation activities and post-mining land use opportunities.

### Collaboration Activity 12



The Department of Regional NSW, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Training Services NSW, Lithgow City Council and industry representatives will form a project control group to oversee the preparation of an economic transition and diversification plan for Lithgow.

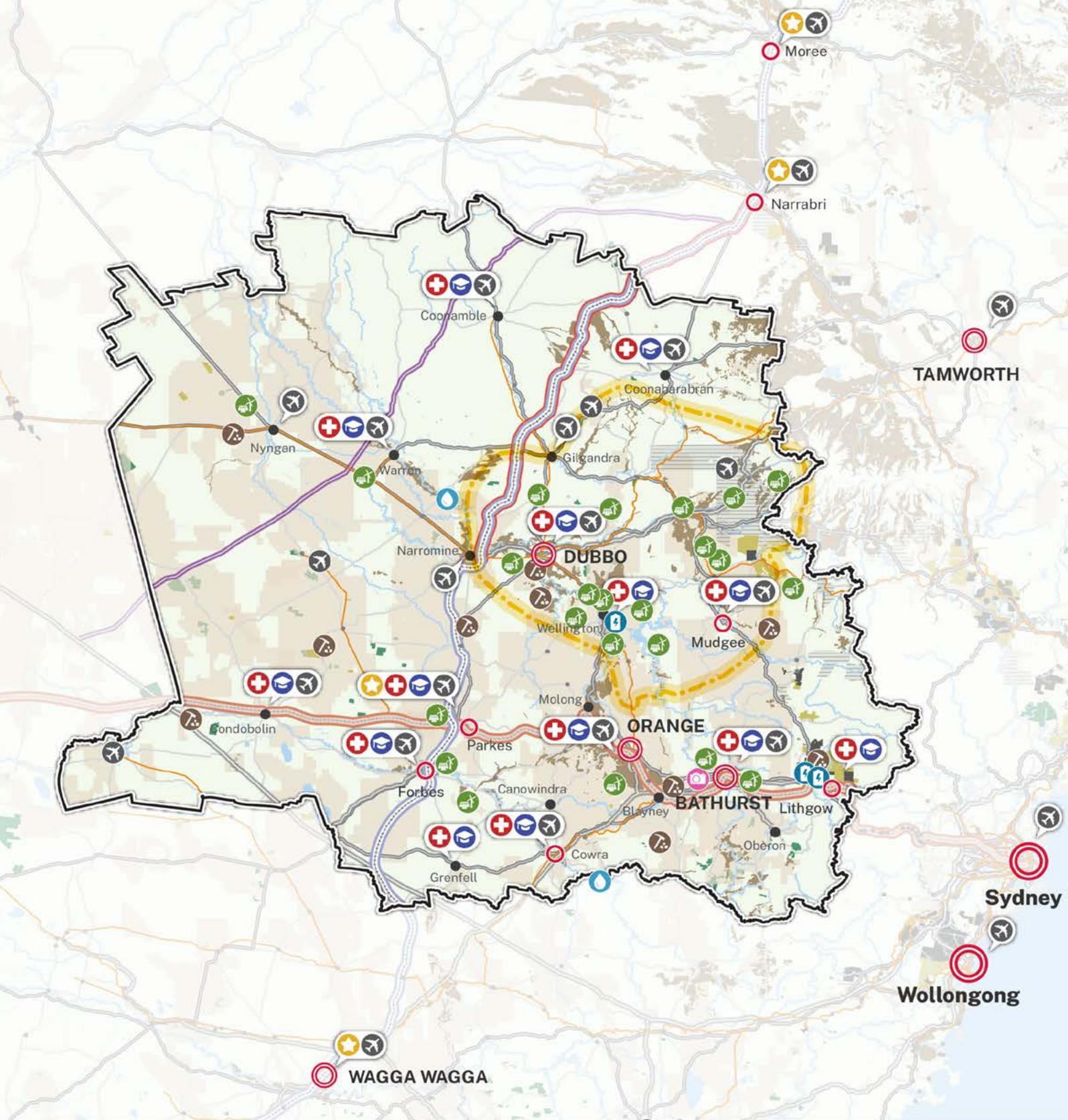
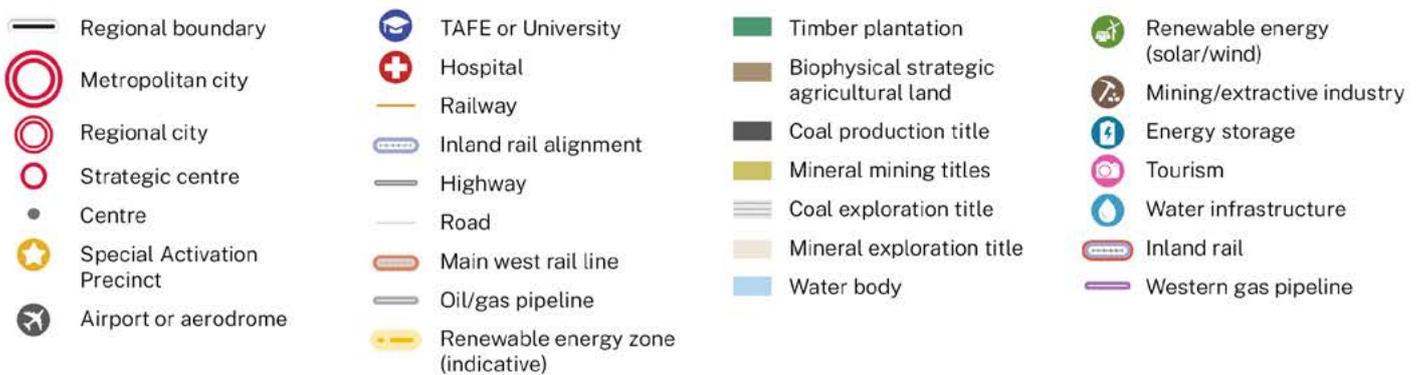


Figure 7: Employment, resources and proposed major projects



**OBJECTIVE 17:**

# Support a diverse visitor economy

Tourists are attracted to natural features such as the Blue Mountains, Warrumbungle and Wollemi national parks, a vibrant arts scene, food and beverage trails, character-filled towns and historic villages such as Gulgong and Millthorpe and a calendar of music, sporting and cultural events.

Agritourism represents a diverse and unique tourism offering, including food and wine trails, farm stays, farmers markets and farm gate experiences.

Tourism provides a significant contribution to the regional economy. In 2018-19 tourism-related industries contributed \$559 million of gross value to the region's economy. In the same year 9,214 people were employed in these industries which include accommodation services, cafes and restaurants and a range of other industries that support tourists and residents of the region.

Increasing visitation and expenditure requires complementary products and experiences, including eco-accommodation, nature-based and cultural experiences, food and wine (including agri-tourism) experiences, adventure activities and event facilities. Investment from the NSW Government and councils can facilitate private sector investment and increase tourism numbers.

Ongoing collaboration between NSW NPWS, Destination NSW, destination networks, councils and local tourism organisations will also support a diverse visitor economy.

Stronger connections between the region and Sydney, Newcastle and Canberra will open up new tourism opportunities, facilitated by transport infrastructure projects such as Fast Rail and the Great Western Highway Upgrade.

## Strategy 17.1



Use strategic planning and local plans to:

- create or enhance green and open spaces in tourist and recreation facilities
- help develop places for artistic and cultural activities
- allow sustainable agritourism and ecotourism
- improve public access and connection to heritage through innovative interpretation
- plan for transport – including walking and cycling – to connect visitors to key destinations, including riverfront areas
- facilitate sufficient short-term visitor accommodation.

*Jannei Goat Dairy, Lithgow*



# Strengthen the economic self-determination of Aboriginal communities

OCHRE (Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility, Empowerment) is the NSW Government’s overarching policy framework for working with Aboriginal communities. It represents a commitment to work in genuine partnership with Aboriginal people to support strong communities through education, economic development and culture.

LALCs are central to the land rights network. LALCs work to improve, protect and foster the best interests of all Aboriginal people in their area. Working collaboratively with each LALC will build capacity for shared knowledge, constructive relationships, and meaningful approaches to strengthen economic self-determination.

Ongoing involvement of Aboriginal people in strategic planning will:

- facilitate the prompt, efficient and equitable return of land to Aboriginal communities
- maximise benefits generated by land rights to Aboriginal communities
- improve the strategic identification and conservation of environmental values
- build delivery capacity for LALCs
- embed cultural knowledge in land use planning decisions.

## Aboriginal land use and development

Under the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983* (ALR Act), certain land can be returned to Aboriginal communities as part compensation for historic dispossession. The prompt, equitable and efficient resolution of Aboriginal land claims on Crown land will benefit Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal landowners and occupiers and pave the way for strategic and collaborative opportunities.

LALCs are established under the ALR Act to claim land and, once granted, activate, utilise and manage land as an economic resource for Aboriginal communities, laying the basis for a self-reliant and more secure economic future.

When land is returned to LALCs, planning controls such as zones are not amended, in some cases restricting the ability for economic development. Since 2019, the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment has conducted assessments of land held by LALCs in NSW.

These assessments, called planning analysis reports, identify priority sites for further investigation of economic opportunities by bringing together essential information about landholdings (including mapping and aerial photos), key planning controls and constraints, and general information about the suitability of land for development.

Other work to protect and recognise Aboriginal lands includes the State and regional water strategies.

*Aboriginal cultural heritage, Dubbo*



## Shared knowledge of LALC aspirations and needs in the planning system

Individual LALCs have varying levels of knowledge about and engagement with the NSW planning system and development processes. This influences the extent to which LALCs can make informed decisions about the future use of their land. Similarly, State agencies and councils have varying levels of knowledge about LALC land ownership, development aspirations and roles and responsibilities.

Building the capacity for shared knowledge about Aboriginal land will create more effective relationships between LALCs, State agencies and councils.

*State Environmental Planning Policy (Aboriginal Land) 2019 (Aboriginal Land SEPP)* and associated planning measures provide an opportunity for LALCs to utilise an alternative pathway for rezoning proposals. Development delivery plans – strategic plans for priority LALC land – can then be considered during the assessment of planning proposals and development applications.

Including Aboriginal people in strategic planning and recognising their aspirations for their land in State and local strategic plans will in most cases obviate the need for the pathways offered by the Aboriginal Land SEPP.

### Strategy 18.1



The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will continue to offer and accelerate the preparation of planning assessments of the landholdings of LALCs.

### Strategy 18.2



Provide planning information to LALCs to help prioritise unresolved Aboriginal land claims on Crown land.

### Collaboration Activity 13



The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will work with LALCs and councils to better reflect LALC aspirations in plans by:

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

PART

# 4

## Location specific responses



# Strengthen Bathurst, Dubbo and Orange as innovative and progressive regional cities

The region’s projected population growth will be greatest in the regional cities, with a combined growth of around 26,000 people over the next 20 years. The regional cities of Bathurst, Dubbo and Orange share the common strategic vision of sustainable growth supported by well-planned infrastructure and open space that embraces local character and cultural and built heritage.

The regional cities provide regional-scale health, education, transport, civic and administrative functions for dispersed rural communities. They are a focal point for aged care, community services and government jobs, while also being sporting, tourism and event destinations.

Collaboration across councils will ensure the benefits of regional cities are shared across the region.

New retail and commercial investment will be focused around traditional CBDs and respect the existing character and heritage values of each centre. These centres will have a greater mix of uses and bring in elements to strengthen the night-time economy.

New residential development in and around CBDs will support population growth and allow for more diverse and affordable housing. A coordinated approach to the design and delivery of new residential areas will ensure an efficient supply of a diversity of housing.

Pedestrian and cycle networks should connect to public spaces, parks and assets such as the waterways. Urban and place design will also acknowledge that the regional cities sit within the traditional lands of the Wiradjuri people.

Master planning for employment areas of regional significance, including the health and education precincts, airports and other large employment areas will support economic development in surrounding areas. A collaborative approach to design of these precincts, with a focus on high quality urban design and integrated land use, transport, infrastructure, open space and recreation planning and delivery is essential.

## Strategy 19.1



Use economic development and local housing strategies to reinforce the regional-scale functions of each regional city by:

- establishing a governance framework that can attract long-term investment and collaborate on economic development initiatives
- focusing investment in growth industries and increase economic diversification
- strengthening economic and housing connections between the regional cities and their surrounding centres, based on their commuting worker catchments
- ensuring there is sufficient capacity to meet ongoing housing and employment needs.

## Strategy 19.2



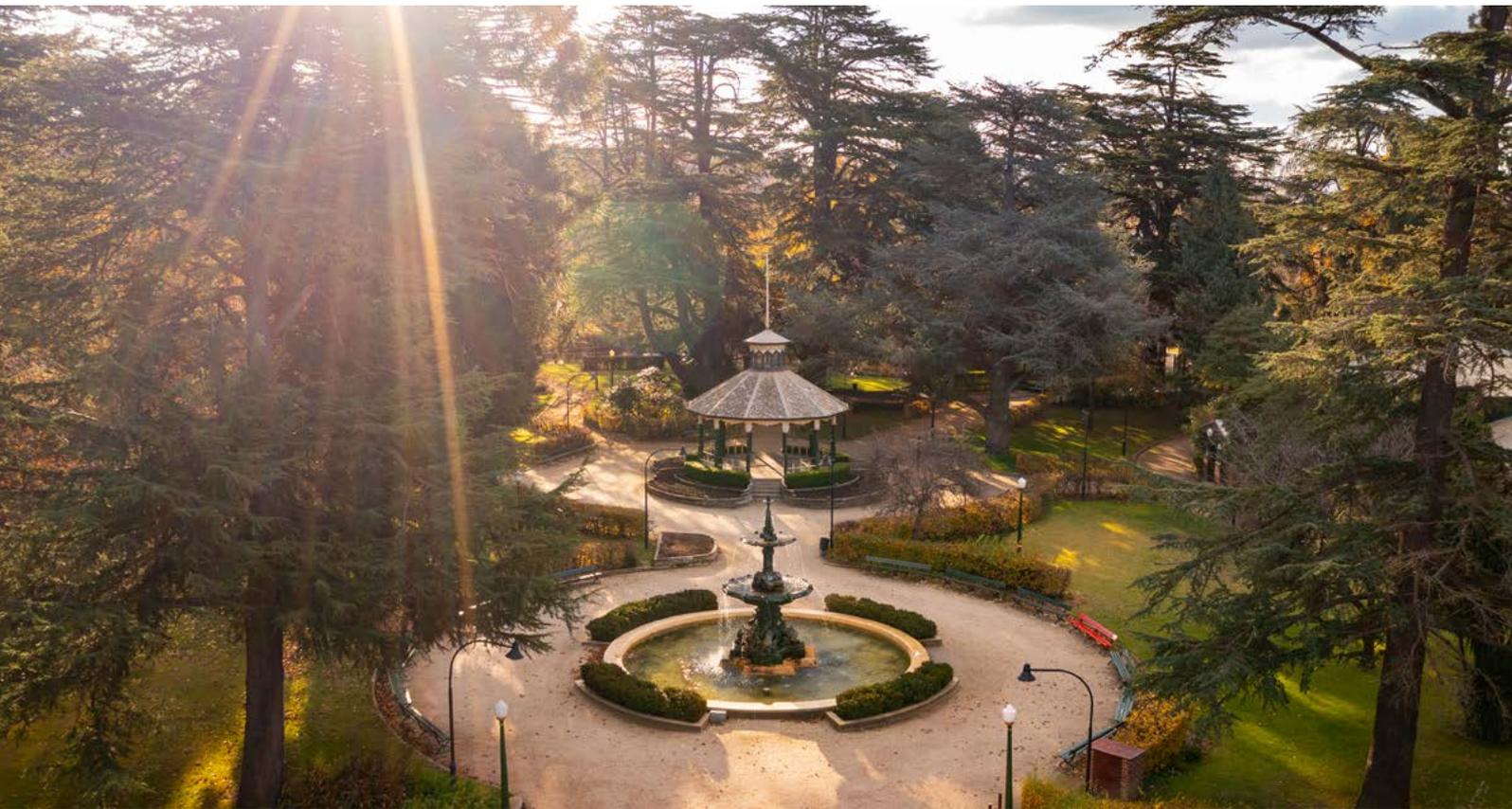
Prepare and implement precinct-based master plans for health, education, other employment, cultural, sporting and recreation precincts that consider opportunities for co-location, including for residential development and integration with the broader city.

## Collaboration Activity 14



The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will collaborate with councils and State agencies, including the Department of Education, to establish a coordinated residential development program to:

- improve the planning, prioritisation, delivery, servicing and monitoring of land for new housing.



Machattie Park, Bathurst

## Bathurst

Bathurst services a catchment of 146,000 people and sits on the banks of the Wambool/Macquarie River, with the backdrop of Wahluu/Mount Panorama.

To strengthen its role as a regional city we need to capitalise on Bathurst's:

- public service, health care and social assistance, services, construction and manufacturing and retail employment
- education and training assets, including Charles Sturt University, the Western Institute of TAFE and Western Sydney University's clinical education facility at Bathurst Base Hospital
- tourism opportunities, based around the Bathurst 1000, racing industry, and the city's rich heritage and surrounding heritage towns and villages and destinations such as the National Motor Racing Museum, Bathurst Rail Museum and the Australian Fossil and Mineral Museum.

To support the growth of Bathurst as a regional city, strategic and local planning will focus on:

- implementing Bathurst Council's Town Centre Master Plan
- providing a diversity of housing, in accessible locations
- facilitating mixed use and employment development including health, education and other government services
- re-using heritage buildings
- enabling a night-time economy
- facilitating new residential development in Eglinton and Laffing Waters and investigating new housing opportunities in areas such as north of Eleven Mile Drive, west of Sawpit Creek and east of Perthville
- investigating new employment lands east of Bathurst Regional Airport, the former army depot, on Sydney Road and the expansion of the service trade centre to the west
- improving the city's public space, pedestrian and cycle networks and links to the Macquarie River
- protecting productive agricultural land around the city
- improving links to Sydney via road and rail and connections to Orange, Dubbo and other centres in the region.

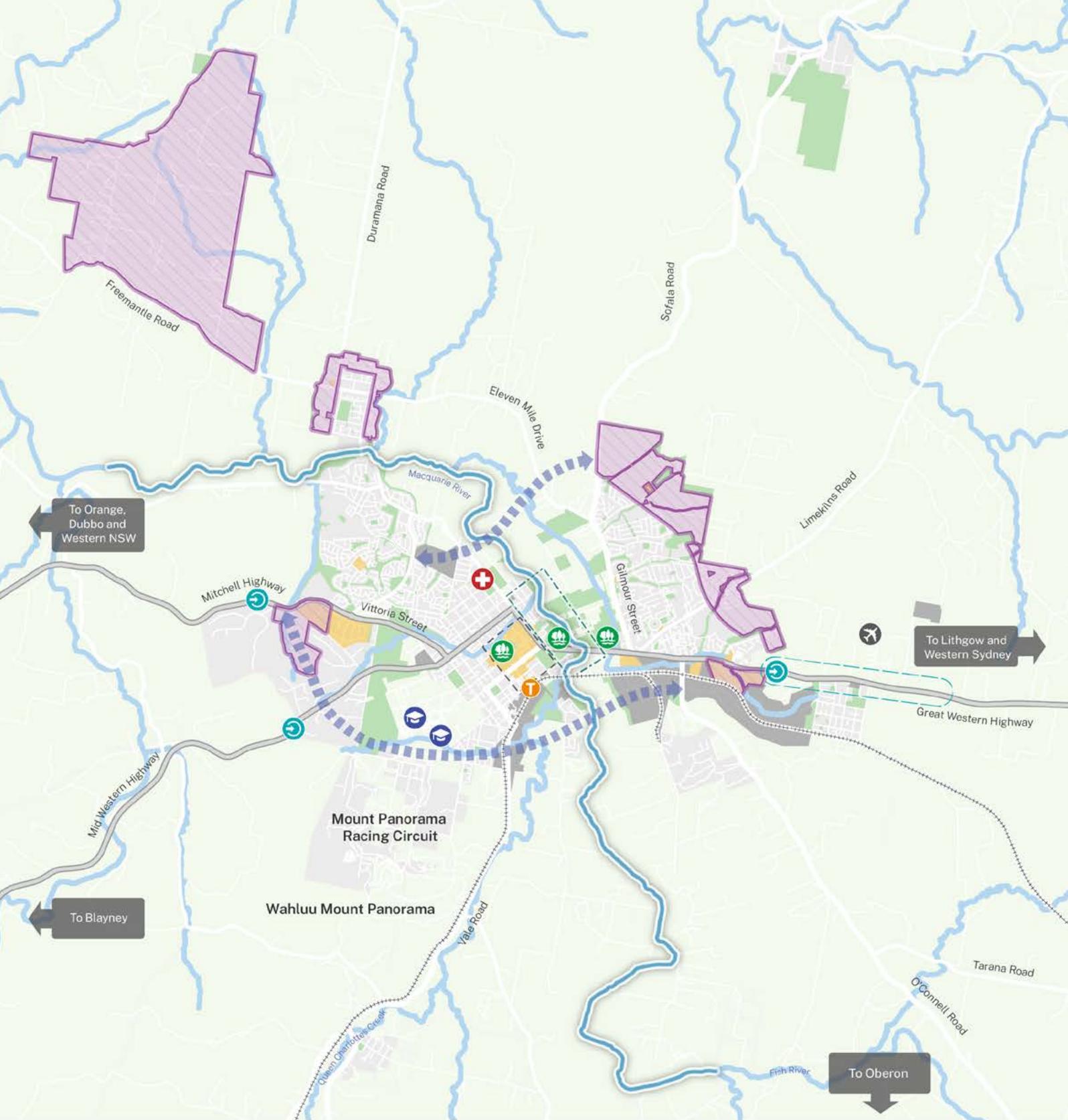


Figure 8: Bathurst regional city

- |                              |                        |                       |
|------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| --- CBD core                 | River connectivity     | TAFE or University    |
| Urban release area           | Future road connection | Regional open space   |
| Commercial land              | Railway                | Regional city gateway |
| Industrial land              | Highway                | Urban land            |
| Existing urban release areas | Bathurst airport       | Open space            |
| Gateway investigation area   | Train station          | Water body            |
|                              | Hospital               |                       |





Main street Dubbo

## Dubbo

Dubbo services a catchment of 120,000<sup>34</sup> people and sits on the Wambool/Macquarie River.

To strengthen its role as a regional city we need to capitalise on Dubbo's:

- education, public administration, professional, other government employment (including correctional services) and retail services
- recreation, tourism and cultural infrastructure, including Taronga Western Plains Zoo, Western Plains and Wiradjuri Cultural Centre, Old Dubbo Gaol and Dubbo's role as a stopover for people travelling through
- manufacturing, construction, agriculture and agribusiness, food manufacturing, business services, transport, mining and renewable energy services
- mining and renewable energy investment, including the Central-West Orana REZ.

Strategic and local planning will focus on:

- implementing Dubbo Regional Council's city centre strategy
- facilitating mixed use development, including government services
- re-using heritage buildings
- enabling the night-time economy

- capitalising on its location at the junction of the Golden, Newell and Mitchell highways and being close to Inland Rail
- becoming a Smart City through use of telecommunications infrastructure and smart transport initiatives identified in the Smart Cities Strategy
- continuing to strengthen the Dubbo Health Education and Wellbeing Precinct (Dubbo Hospital, Dubbo Private Hospital, Lourde Hospital, Charles Sturt University, Dubbo TAFE, School of Rural Health (University of Sydney)); sports facilities including the sports hub at River Street; and other supporting industries and research opportunities
- facilitating new residential development in the existing urban area and new development areas in Dubbo's north west, south west and south east
- strengthening Dubbo Regional Airport as an emergency service centre and maintaining air services to regional centres and interstate
- improving public open space, pedestrian and cycle networks and links to the Macquarie River
- improving road and rail links to Orange, other centres and to the Far West region.



Figure 9: Dubbo regional city



- |                                |                                     |                       |            |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| --- CBD core                   | River connectivity                  | Train station         | Urban land |
| Urban release area             | Proposed river crossing             | Hospital              | Open space |
| Commercial land                | Riverfront connectivity improvement | TAFE or University    | Water body |
| Industrial land                | ..... Railway                       | Regional open space   |            |
| Health and innovation precinct | — Highway                           | Regional city gateway |            |
| Existing urban release area    | Dubbo city regional airport         | Western Plains Zoo    |            |



*Housing on Mitchell Highway, Orange*

## Orange

Orange services a broad catchment area that includes centres and localities in the surrounding Blayney and Cabonne LGAs. Many of the features which make Orange such a successful regional city, occur in the surrounding LGAs.

To strengthen its role as a regional city we need to capitalise on the city's:

- agricultural production, research and tourism (including the wine and food industry), mining and support industries, healthcare, education and public administration
- quality of life in the CBD and the surrounding area
- education and research, including Charles Sturt University, NSW TAFE and the NSW Department of Primary Industries' Global Ag-Tech Ecosystem (GATE) facility
- civic, public services and other government employment, anchored by the head offices of NSW Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Development and the Commonwealth Regional Investment Corporation.

To support the growth of Orange as a regional city, strategic and local planning will focus on:

- implementing Orange Council's Future City plans
- encouraging investment on the former Orange Base Hospital site

- encouraging mixed use development within the CBD
- re-using heritage buildings
- strengthening the night-time economy
- developing the Orange Health and Innovation Precinct (Orange Hospital, Bloomfield Medical Centre and private hospital, the GATE facility and surrounding lands, the School of Rural Health (University of Sydney), Bloomfield Park and the historic Bloomfield Hospital) and integrating with the surrounding road network, the sports precinct at Sir Jack Brabham Park, and residential and employment areas
- facilitating a diversity of new residential development
- planning for the regional airport and surrounding development
- providing high quality residential development in North Orange and Shiralee
- complementing growth in centres within and outside Orange LGA
- facilitating active recreation opportunities in and around the Mount Canobolas area
- protecting and encouraging agriculture and horticulture opportunities around Mount Canobolas
- improving the city's open space network with a focus on new urban release areas, interconnected pedestrian and cycle networks and protecting central parks and surrounding reserves
- improving road and rail links to Bathurst, Dubbo and other centres in the region.

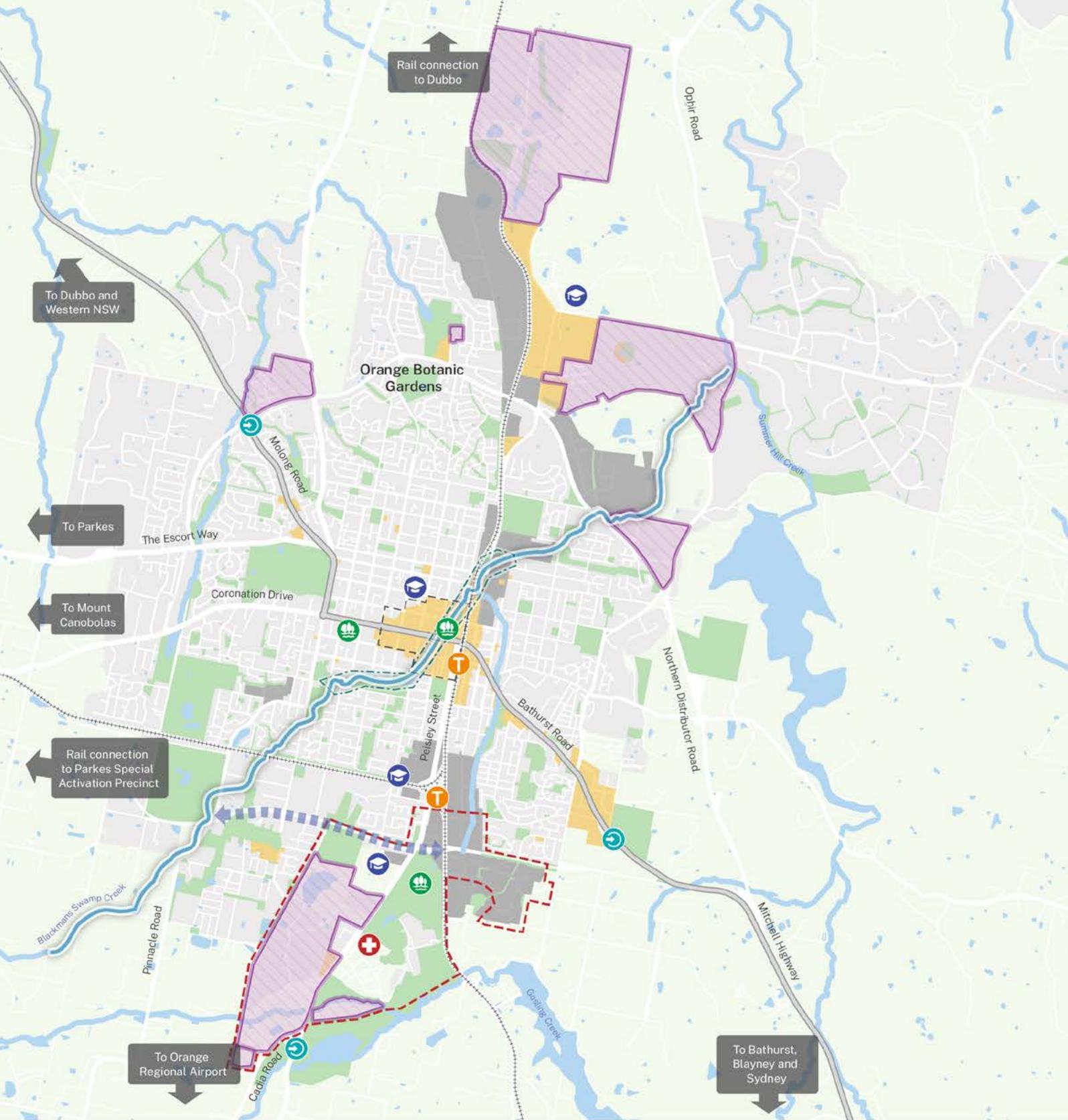


Figure 10: Orange regional city



- |     |                                |  |                        |  |                       |
|-----|--------------------------------|--|------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| --- | CBD core                       |  | River connectivity     |  | Regional open space   |
|     | Urban release area             |  | Future road connection |  | Regional city gateway |
|     | Commercial land                |  | Railway                |  | Urban land            |
|     | Industrial land                |  | Highway                |  | Open space            |
|     | Health and innovation precinct |  | Train station          |  | Water body            |
|     | Existing urban release area    |  | Hospital               |  | TAFE or University    |

# Leverage the Central–West Orana Renewable Energy Zone to provide economic benefit to communities

The NSW Government's *Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap* provides a coordinated framework for a modern electricity system for NSW and a plan to transform the electricity sector into one that is cheap, clean and reliable. The Central–West Orana REZ is one of at least 5 REZs to be rolled out across NSW.

The Central–West Orana REZ is located around Dubbo and Wellington on the land of the Wiradjuri, Wailwan and Kamilaroi people. It is expected to attract \$5.2 billion in private investment to the region by 2030 and support around 3,900 construction jobs at its peak and 500 ongoing jobs.<sup>35</sup>

Several key steps required to develop the Central–West Orana REZ are:

- declaration of the new REZ transmission infrastructure as Critical State Significant Infrastructure due to its importance to future energy supply and security in NSW (already occurred)
- planning for the REZ transmission infrastructure (underway)
- rigorous assessment and extensive community consultation for both the REZ transmission infrastructure and private sector energy generation and storage projects
- formal declaration of the intended network capacity (size), geographic area (location) and infrastructure that will make up the REZ
- finalisation of the access scheme for the energy projects that will participate in the REZ
- a competitive process for the REZ access scheme
- ongoing community consultation and benefit-sharing.

The development of an access scheme is a vital step for the Central–West Orana REZ. It will enable the NSW Government to coordinate the connection of energy generation and storage projects to specified electricity network infrastructure in the REZ. This will help optimise energy system benefits and minimise impacts on local communities. Participants will be required to pay access fees, a portion of which will go towards community and employment initiatives in the REZ.

The Energy Corporation of NSW (EnergyCo NSW) will coordinate the delivery of the Central–West Orana REZ and lead consultation with councils, First Nations stakeholders and local communities to ensure the Central–West Orana REZ is delivered in a way that works for communities. EnergyCo NSW will also have a key role in upfront strategic planning and developing benefit-sharing schemes that ensure the benefits of the Central–West Orana REZ are equitably shared with local communities.

There may also be opportunities to leverage the Central–West Orana REZ and renewable energy investment elsewhere in the region to attract regional energy-intensive industries such as minerals processing, IT and data centres, high value agriculture, manufacturing and food processing to maximise the benefits of low-cost energy in the region, including in the Parkes SAP.

Hosting solar and wind projects also provides landowners and farmers an additional long-term income stream – around \$1.5 billion in landholder lease payments will flow to farmers across NSW by 2042. Major energy infrastructure projects in the region will also bring improvements to roads and telecommunications.

## Renewable Energy Zones

REZs are modern-day power stations that combine renewable energy generation such as wind and solar, storage such as batteries, and high-voltage poles and wires. By connecting multiple generators and storage in the same location, REZs capitalise on economies of scale to deliver cheap, reliable and clean electricity for homes and businesses in NSW.

### Collaboration Activity 15



The Energy Corporation of NSW will work with the Renewable Energy Sector Board, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, councils and Aboriginal and community stakeholders to develop the Central–West Orana REZ.

# Leverage the Parkes Special Activation Precinct and plan for associated growth

The 4,800 ha Parkes SAP will create jobs across freight and logistics, resource recovery, value-added agriculture and renewable energy. It will be focused on sustainability as Australia’s first UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization) Eco-Industrial Park, where businesses will work together to achieve environmental, economic, and social efficiencies through onsite energy generation.

By 2041, it is estimated that the Parkes SAP could generate between up to 3,000 jobs and will create additional employment opportunities in the region.<sup>36</sup> New residents may move into the region to work in the Parkes SAP or support industries, which will impact demand for housing, utilities and social infrastructure. Short-term workers typically choose to locate where there are a variety of services, more rental properties and higher rental vacancy rates or more affordable accommodation. Permanent workers may require a broader range of housing types.

Locations within a commutable distance to the Parkes SAP including centres in the Lachlan, Forbes and Cabonne LGAs will also be impacted by potential population changes. This will impact housing across LGA boundaries.

The land uses permitted in the Parkes SAP are intended to promote and align with economic growth opportunities for the region more broadly. This could mean other industries can leverage proximity to

Parkes without competing with the Parkes SAP’s core land uses. Locating complementary industries in smaller centres can support local employment and economic development. These industries should be protected and encouraged to grow.

The Central West Industrial Park in Forbes is ideally located for industry such as intensive agriculture, shed-based agriculture and refrigerated distribution centres. Condobolin also benefits from the rail connection between Parkes and Broken Hill and a review of industrial and rural lands may identify opportunities for additional employment uses there and across Lachlan LGA.

The SAP will also benefit the broader Parkes LGA, in particular Parkes CBD. The NSW Government will continue to work with Parkes Shire Council to identify how the SAP will shape the demand for infrastructure, services and the overall structure of Parkes.

**Action 8**



The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will establish a subregional working group with Parkes Shire, Forbes Shire, Lachlan Shire, Orange City, Cabonne, Narromine Shire, Dubbo Regional, Cowra and Weddin councils to respond to potential housing and economic impacts and opportunities from Parkes SAP.

*Manufacturing Plant at the Parkes SAP*



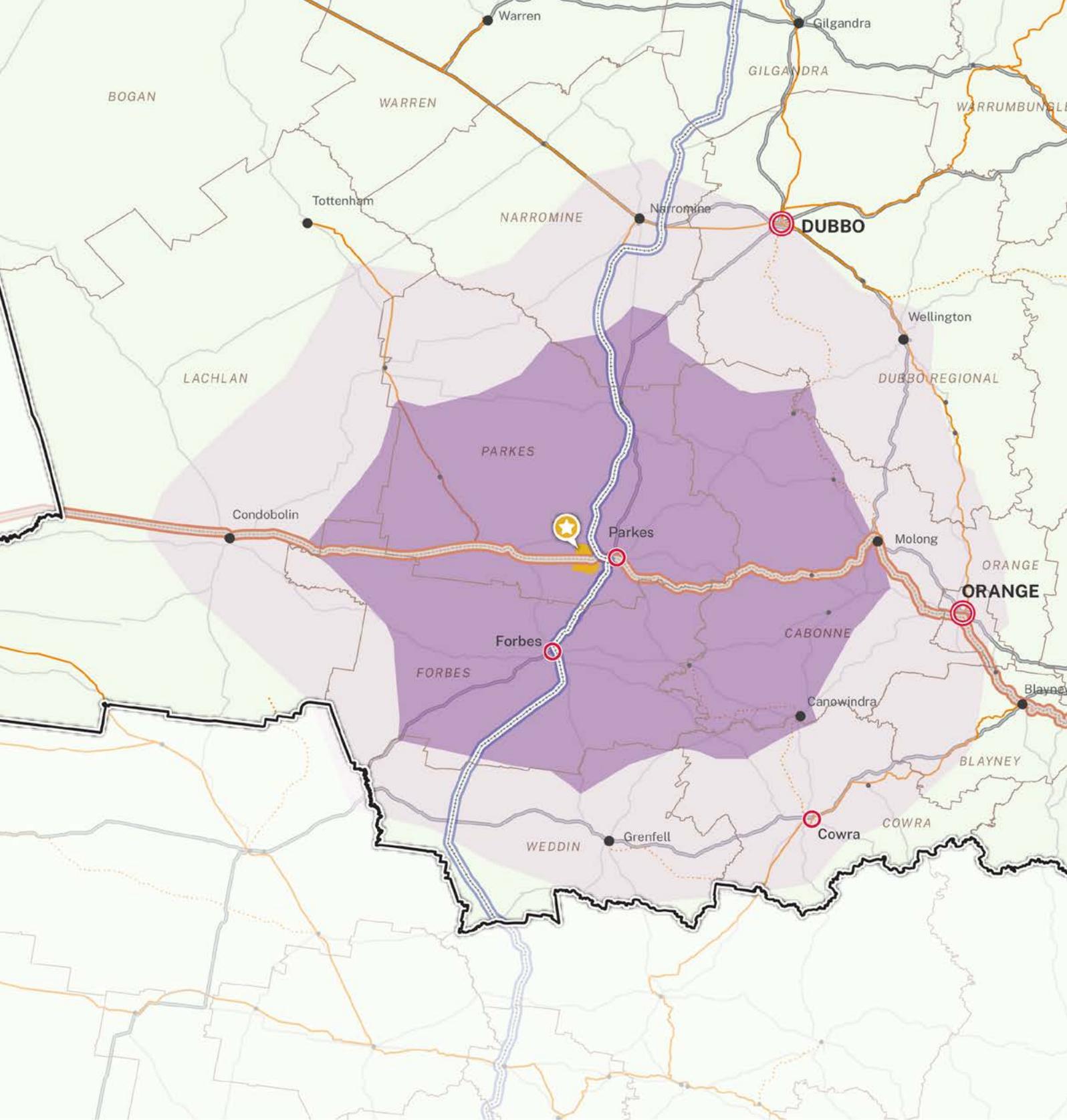


Figure 11: Parkes Special Activation Precinct

- |  |                             |   |                                  |   |                       |
|--|-----------------------------|---|----------------------------------|---|-----------------------|
|  | Regional boundary           |  | 60 minute drive time from Parkes |  | Inland rail alignment |
|  | Regional city               |  | 90 minute drive time from Parkes |  | Main west rail line   |
|  | Strategic centre            |  | Local government area boundary   |  | Highway               |
|  | Centre                      |  | Railway                          |  | Road                  |
|  | Special Activation Precinct |  | Railway (non-operational)        |   |                       |

# Protect Australia’s first Dark Sky Park

The Siding Spring Observatory in the Warrumbungle National Park is one of few light observatories in the world that can observe the entire southern-hemisphere sky.

The Observatory is at the centre of the Dark Sky Region, which covers a 200 km radius from the facility. Light associated with development in the Dark Sky Region can reduce the ability of the optical telescopes to engage in scientific investigation and, therefore, impacts the operations of the Observatory.

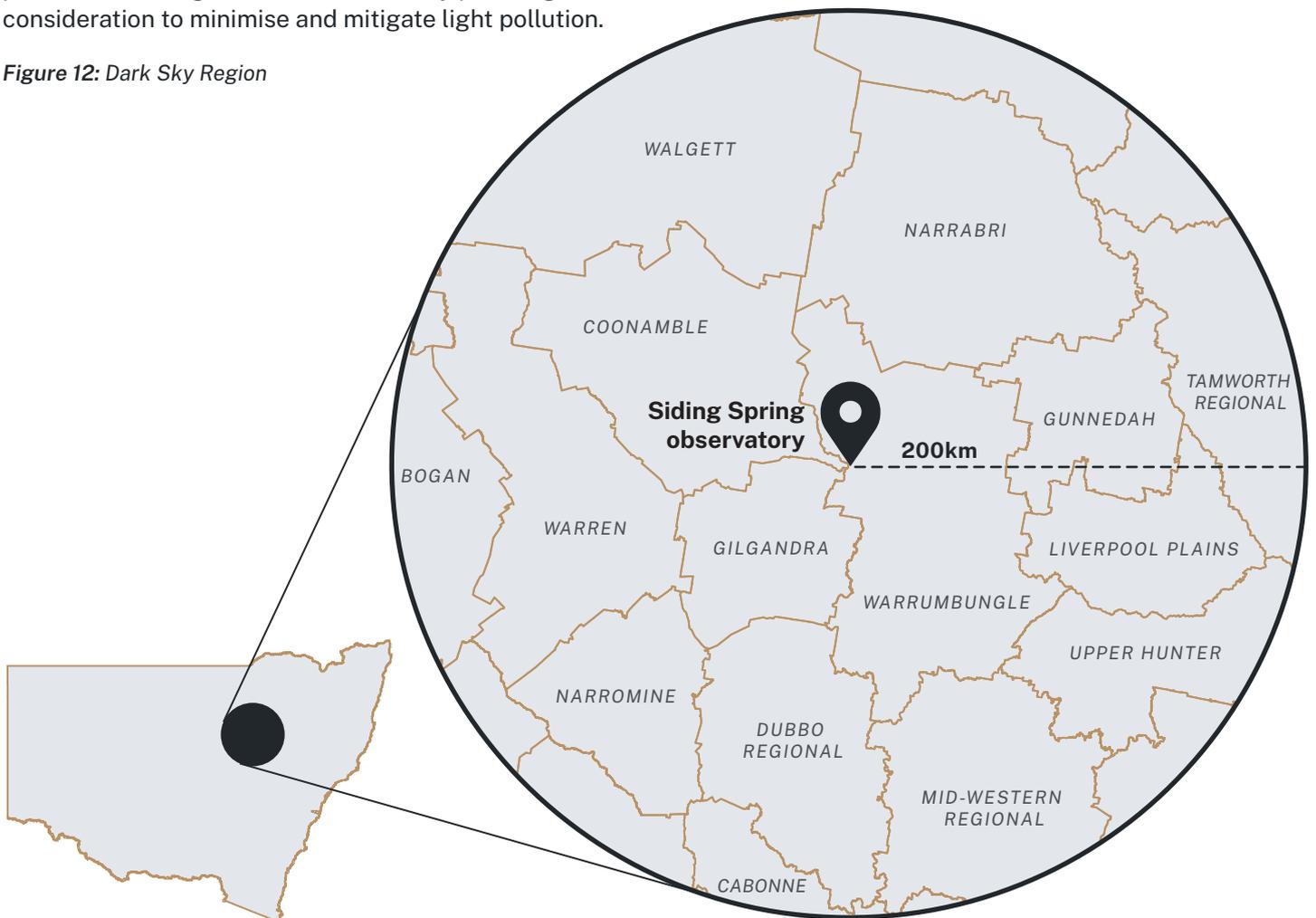
In 2016, the International Dark Sky Association declared the site and surrounds of the Observatory as Australia’s first Dark Sky Park. The Dark Sky Planning Guideline provides related guidance, such as early planning consideration to minimise and mitigate light pollution.

### Strategy 22.1



Minimise light pollution and the impact of artificial light to protect the observing conditions at the Siding Spring Observatory, through implementation of the Dark Sky Planning Guideline.

Figure 12: Dark Sky Region



# Local Government Priorities

Councils have provided the following information about their planning priorities, drawn from their strategies and local strategic planning statements. These priorities together with the proposed regional responses documented in the strategies and actions, will work together to meet the vision for the region.

Figure 13: Local government areas



## Bathurst Regional

Bathurst Regional LGA is focused on the city of Bathurst, the oldest inland European settlement on Australia's mainland. Rich in built and natural history, it was home to 44,000 in 2020 and services a catchment of more than 150,000 people.

New residents are moving into new residential areas such as Abercrombie, Eglinton, Kelso North and Windradyne.

Bathurst Regional LGA contributed \$2.99 billion<sup>37</sup> to GRP in 2020. Economic sectors include manufacturing, public administration and safety, education and training, health care and social assistance, services (electricity, water and gas), construction and retail.

Several NSW Government regional and head offices have relocated to Bathurst, and there are more than 3,500 established retail businesses across the LGA. Rural areas support livestock grazing and wool production, agriculture, as well as the forestry industry.

More than 200,000 people visit Mount Panorama motor racing circuit during events. Students study at more than 60 educational institutions including Charles Sturt University, Western Institute of TAFE and the Western Sydney University's clinical education facility at Bathurst Base Hospital.

Bathurst Regional Council's priorities for the LGA are:

- a sustainable water supply to meet forecast population growth
- Wahluu/Mount Panorama, which showcases the region on an international stage
- a diversity of housing for the population's changing demographic make up
- maintaining a compact city to protect the agricultural resources of the broader LGA
- moderate housing densities that both maintain a rural character while being different from metropolitan Sydney
- Aboriginal and European built heritage, heritage parks and gardens, natural landscapes and vistas
- aligning development, growth and infrastructure to meet the region's changing needs
- community resilience to natural hazards and extreme weather events
- the LGA's cultural and sporting heritage
- education, knowledge and technological change.

## Blayney

Blayney Shire LGA is home to 6 growing villages, including Blayney and Millthorpe. The LGA also benefits from connections to Orange and Bathurst.

Blayney Shire LGA contributed \$679.2 million<sup>38</sup> to GRP in 2020, supported by the mining, manufacturing, and agricultural sectors. It is home to a substantial cold storage facility, a pet food manufacturing business and one of the Southern Hemisphere's largest gold mining operations at Cadia Valley.

Three State significant projects are proposed for 2022: the Cadia Valley Gold Mine expansion; Flyers Creek Wind Farm and the McPhillamys Gold Project. These projects will support an estimated 1,750 construction workers in the Blayney Shire and wider region.

Blayney Shire Council's priorities for the LGA are:

- adequate and sustainable residential and industry growth
- the economic pillars of agriculture, mining, renewable energy and tourism
- transport infrastructure, particularly the Blayney Demondrille rail line, Mid-Western Highway and Millthorpe Road
- the heavy vehicle detour route around Blayney township
- a diversity of housing throughout Blayney LGA
- environmental and heritage assets such as towns, villages, buildings, streetscapes and vistas
- opportunities for a regionally significant intensified agricultural precinct for agribusinesses.

*Machattie Park, Bathurst*



## Bogan

Bogan Shire LGA in the region's north west is serviced by Nyngan, which sits at the junction of the Mitchell and Barrier highways on the Bogan River. Nyngan supports smaller towns and villages such as Girilambone and Coolabah.

Mining and agricultural production, including livestock grazing and large-scale cropping, are primary economic drivers. The LGA contributed \$268.7 million<sup>39</sup> to GRP in 2020, with mining the largest contributor and agriculture the largest employer.

Nyngan has road and rail access to Dubbo via Narromine, which links to Parkes, the Parkes SAP and Inland Rail. Bogan Shire LGA is well placed to capitalise on global demand for protein and grain-based commodities.

Bogan Shire Council's priorities for the LGA are:

- the opportunity of value-adding, given the quantity and quality of the agricultural commodities produced
- potential fishing platforms, boardwalks, bird hides, fish cleaning areas and signage along the Bogan River, as part of a cultural walking trail
- opportunities to increase CBD business and industry growth such as adaptive re-use of vacant spaces, community facilities such as hot desking or support for start-up businesses
- a flood study for Nyngan and the wider Bogan Shire
- the mining and resources sector and associated businesses.

## Cabonne

Cabonne LGA is one of the fastest-growing LGAs in the Central West due to its agricultural sector and proximity to Orange. Of its numerous villages, Molong, 35 km north west of Orange is the largest. Molong provides services and facilities supporting other villages such as Yeoval, Cumnock, Manildra, Cudal, Cargo, Canowindra and Eugowra.

The LGA contributed \$852.2 million<sup>40</sup> to GRP in 2020. Significant mining, agriculture and manufacturing operations provide more than half the LGA's jobs. The agricultural sector supports more than 50% of all businesses including value-adding industries such as a flour mill, canola mill and olive processing facilities.

The LGA shares the Cadia Valley mine with Blayney Shire LGA. A potable water pipeline from Orange to Molong Dam improves water security from Molong to Cumnock and Yeoval.

Cabonne Council's priorities for the LGA are:

- the economic diversity of towns, villages, and commercial centres
- appropriate development in villages
- mining and agribusiness sectors and associated businesses
- protecting agricultural land from residential development
- the local, regional and state transport network
- using rural character to diversify the economy in areas such as tourism
- implementing the *Blayney, Cabonne and Orange Subregional Rural and Industrial Lands Strategy*
- the Parkes SAP.

## Coonamble

The town of Coonamble, 160 km north of Dubbo, is the main service centre of Coonamble Shire LGA. Sitting on the Castlereagh River, it supports villages such as Gulargambone and Quambone and is home to a multipurpose health service that integrates a range of health services; rural support services; shops; as well as primary and high schools and a TAFE.

The LGA contributed \$231.8 million<sup>41</sup> in GRP in 2020. Agriculture employs more than 33% of the workforce and produces cereals, oil seed, legume crops and livestock. Opportunities exist in aged care and the development of Coonamble's cultural and historic character.

Coonamble Shire Council's priorities for the LGA are:

- existing settlements
- economic and tourism development including the new Visitor Information Centre, Coonamble Riverside Caravan Park and potential artesian spa, and sealing Tooraweenah Road to the Warrumbungle National Park
- Coonamble's main street, CBD
- agribusiness, including value-add manufacturing, transport and logistics, and associated businesses
- Coonamble Shire's cultural and historic character
- the local road network, to guarantee effective transport routes for local produce
- protecting agricultural land from residential development.

## Cowra

Cowra LGA is in the south of the region and was home to around 12,730 people in 2020. Cowra is the main centre of the LGA, sitting at the junction of the Mid-Western Highway, Olympic Highway and Lachlan Valley Way, with direct connections to Bathurst, Wagga Wagga, Dubbo and Canberra.

Cowra provides services to the smaller villages of Woodstock, Wattamondara, Wyangala, Noonbinna, Gooloogong, Darbys Falls, Morongla and Billimari. Cowra is the Central West and Orana region's gateway to Canberra.

Cowra LGA contributed \$753 million<sup>42</sup> to GRP in 2020, with agriculture contributing \$124 million. The largest commodities produced are vegetables, hay, livestock and wool.

Cowra LGA supports a robust manufacturing sector with value-adding activities in agriculture, engineering and furniture for wholesale trade.

The emerging aviation sector around Cowra Airport includes an expanded light aircraft manufacturing plant and a future pilot training academy.

Cowra Council's priorities for the LGA are:

- innovation, technological advancement and investment in the growing agricultural, industrial and manufacturing sectors
- transport connections, including reopening the Blayney–Dmondridge rail line, upgrading Lachlan Valley Way, a CBD bypass, and a second bridge crossing to connect the Hume to the Newell and Mitchell highways
- the sustainable growth of Cowra's health sector
- Cowra Airport
- a more secure water supply and involvement in decision-making processes.

*Main street Dubbo*



## Dubbo Regional

The Dubbo Regional LGA is in the Orana with a population of 54,000 in 2020. Dubbo LGA contributed an overall GRP of \$3.7 billion<sup>43</sup> in 2020 supported by construction and manufacturing, health care and assistance, real estate services, public administration and safety, agriculture, education and training.

The LGA is also home to several large-scale renewable energy projects and is seeing greater integration and development of smart technology and supporting infrastructure.

Dubbo Regional LGA is at the centre of NSW with access to the Newell, Mitchell and Golden highways and connections via air and rail routes. The LGA provides a diverse range of services to a wider catchment of more than 120,000 people.

Key attractions include Wellington Caves, Mount Arthur Reserve, Bald Hill Reserve, Burrendong Dam, Taronga Western Plains Zoo and Macquarie River Tracker Riley walking trail.

Dubbo Regional Council's priorities for the LGA are:

- Dubbo as a regional city and as a centre of excellence for health care, social assistance, and community services
- Dubbo as a mining services centre for the Orana and Western NSW
- economic infrastructure such as the Newell, Mitchell and Golden highways
- tertiary education offerings and professional, government and retail sectors
- tourism and diverse and sustainable businesses in Dubbo and Wellington
- agribusiness, transport and logistics
- the availability of affordable housing and a variety of housing types and formats, including housing for seniors and people with a disability
- the health of the Macquarie and Bell rivers and master planning for the Macquarie, Talbragar and Bell rivers
- protecting agricultural land from encroachment from residential development
- the ongoing growth and development of Dubbo Regional Airport
- a review of voluntary planning agreement options to include provision of affordable rental housing contributions in planning proposals for increased residential development.
- a Green Web Management Plan.

## Forbes

Forbes Shire LGA was home to 9,920 people in 2020 and contributed \$643.6 million<sup>44</sup> in GRP in 2020. Agriculture is the biggest industry.

The main centre is Forbes, with a thriving town centre and a diverse economy. Lake Forbes is an area for recreation and provides a connection to water.

Residential land releases support new industries. The town centre and Lake Forbes foreshore have brought renewal and opportunity, as does the state-of-the-art visitor information centre, new art gallery, and the Somewhere Down the Lachlan Sculpture Trail.

Forbes sits on the Newell Highway, and is close to the Parkes SAP, supporting a diverse industrial and commercial economy.

The Central West Industrial Park and Central West Livestock Exchange supports the LGA's rural industries and manufacturing. Value-adding and circular economy approaches link the agricultural and industrial sectors.

Forbes Shire Council's priorities for the LGA are:

- investment in value-adding manufacturing industries
- improved transport links and value-added production in the agricultural sector
- employment generating rural and agricultural industries and other
- agricultural, livestock and meat processing industries
- Forbes District Hospital
- protecting agricultural land from residential development
- tourism-related development.

*Central West Livestock Exchange, Forbes*



## Gilgandra

Gilgandra Shire LGA sits on the Castlereagh River, 65 km north of Dubbo. The local service centre of Gilgandra sits at the junction of the Newell, Oxley and Castlereagh highways and services other villages including Tooraweenah. Gilgandra has a well-equipped hospital, a strong retail sector, schools and a TAFE.

Gilgandra Shire LGA contributed \$257.9 million in GRP<sup>45</sup> in 2020, supported primarily by agriculture, including cereal, oil seed and legume crops, and livestock production. Potential economic growth areas include aged care, renewable energy generation and enhancing Gilgandra's cultural and historic character.

Gilgandra Shire Council's priorities for the LGA are:

- Gilgandra and Tooraweenah
- value-add and diversification opportunities in the agribusiness sector
- opportunities from the area's rural character to support value-adding industries, tourism, and energy generation
- provision and continued development of major regional sports, recreation and cultural events and facilities
- development of transport and logistics sectors and associated businesses to maximise Gilgandra's location at the junction of the Newell, Oxley, and Castlereagh highways
- reviewing the Gilgandra Activation Blueprint
- smart city services, community engagement and data equity
- opportunities from Inland Rail including proposed industrial subdivision adjacent to the existing rail corridor
- infrastructure to connect Inland Rail and the Dubbo to Coonamble line at Curban
- flood protection for Gilgandra
- housing availability in Gilgandra.

## Lachlan

Lachlan Shire LGA in the south west of the region is positioned to enhance a diverse agricultural and industrial manufacturing base.

Condobolin, the local service centre, provides a hub for agricultural activity, grain storage and transport links to Lake Cargelligo, Tottenham, Tullibigeal, Burcher, Derriwong, Fifield and Albert. Condobolin is also a centre for sporting and recreational activity.

Lake Cargelligo is the second largest service centre and residential area. It provides a local centre for agricultural activity, grain storage and transportation links to Condobolin, Parkes, Griffith, Hillston and Hay.

As part of the largest natural inland lake system in NSW, it is a tourism destination. The Wiradjuri people have used the area as a food and water resource for centuries.

The LGA contributed \$385.5 million<sup>46</sup> to GRP in 2020, with agriculture as the largest industry. This includes irrigation and cropping on the Lachlan River floodplain involving cotton and grains, and livestock. The manufacturing sector is growing at a high rate. Mining is a developing sector within and adjoining Lachlan Shire and could contribute to an increased population and job numbers.

Lachlan Shire Council's priorities for the LGA are:

- the primacy of the main streets of Condobolin and Lake Cargelligo
- agribusiness, transport and logistics sectors and associated businesses
- connections for the industrial manufacturing and agriculture sectors to Inland Rail and the Parkes SAP
- mining potential and resources while planning for long-term social and utility growth
- the natural environment
- provision and development of major regional sports, recreation, and cultural facilities
- infrastructure needs for Condobolin and Lake Cargelligo as well as surrounding villages
- residential needs in Condobolin and Lake Cargelligo that are under pressure from expanding industries and larger surrounding centres
- economic development opportunities for Aboriginal communities
- cultural heritage sites and properties
- protecting agricultural land from residential development.

## Lithgow

Lithgow LGA is on the edge of the Blue Mountains, about 140 km west of Sydney. It was home to 21,500 people in 2020, and includes the strategic centre of Lithgow, the towns of Portland and Wallerawang, numerous villages, and large areas of National Parks and State Forests, including the Wollemi and Marrangaroo national parks, and Newnes State Forest.

The LGA contributed \$2 billion<sup>47</sup> to GRP in 2020. Mining was the largest contributor through established coal mines, supported by electricity, gas, water and wastewater services. Other economic sectors include health care and social assistance, manufacturing, public administration and safety, and retail.

Lithgow LGA provides approximately 15% of the State's power needs and supplies coal, mining expertise and manufactured product. With major changes in the electricity and coal production sectors, Lithgow is an area in economic transition. A roadmap for this transition forms part of the Lithgow Emerging Economy Project.

The LGA has the potential to grow renewable energy industries such as pumped hydro, big batteries, solar and wind energy. It is also suited to agricultural-based industries to supply the Sydney Basin, and as a commuter suburb of Sydney, via the rail network. The proximity to the Western Sydney International Airport and Aerotropolis opens up other opportunities.

Lithgow City Council's priorities for the LGA are:

- Lithgow Emerging Economy Project
- Lithgow's main street and CBD
- transport and freight connections that capitalise on Lithgow's proximity to Sydney
- opportunities from the LGA's location and rural character, such as tourism
- the right housing in local areas
- items and places of heritage significance
- creating a sense of place in public spaces.

*Wallerawang Power Station, Lithgow*



## Mid-Western Regional

Mid-Western Regional LGA is in the central ranges, approximately 210 km north west of Sydney, 250 km west of Newcastle, and 300 km north of Canberra. It is home to 25,350 people and includes the towns of Mudgee, Gulgong, Rylstone and Kandos.

The LGA contributed \$2.9 billion<sup>48</sup> to GRP in 2020 with the largest contribution from mining. The top 4 economic sectors (mining, real estate, construction and agriculture) each contribute more than \$100 million per annum.

With new State significant developments, continued mine expansion and a growing population, median house values, sales and development approvals will remain strong. Major industries such as manufacturing and construction will continue to thrive off the back of mining, with 3 large mining projects in the Ulan area with current approvals in place to 2039. New wind and solar projects will provide short-term opportunities for local businesses during construction.

Tourism-related businesses are expected to expand, given the LGA's reputation as a food and wine destination and major events, including sports tourism. Further expansion of cultural facilities will enhance the overall visitor experience.

Mid-Western Council's priorities for the LGA are:

- appropriately located and serviced land for residential development
- the mining and resources sector and associated businesses
- the established food and tourism market
- protecting agricultural land from residential development
- major recreation, cultural and regional sports facilities, including the Glen Willow Regional Sports Complex.

*Streetscape, Mudgee. Credit: Destination NSW*



## Narromine

Narromine LGA is in the Macquarie Valley. It had an estimated population of 6,450 people in 2020. Narromine is the Shire's main town, located 37 km west of Dubbo on the Macquarie River. It provides services to the smaller settlements of Trangie and Tomingley.

Narromine LGA contributed \$415.8 million<sup>49</sup> to GRP in 2020, with the largest contribution from agriculture, including sheep, cattle, and wool production, as well as broadacre cereal crops and citrus fruit. Cotton production has increased in recent years. Health care, education and retail also provide jobs and Tomingley's mining activity adds to the diverse employment opportunities.

Narromine's agricultural contribution to GRP relies on water allocations from upstream Burrendong Dam, with groundwater allocations during drier periods softening downturns.

Significant opportunities exist in freight and logistics, with Inland Rail planned to intersect with existing rail freight infrastructure at Narromine.

Narromine is an aviation hub, with gliding and aviation-related development around Narromine Aerodrome, including Skypark, a residential aviation precinct.

Narromine Shire Council's priorities for the LGA are:

- plan for and manage rural residential development and future land zoning
- opportunities from the Aerodrome site
- protecting local character
- A potential secondary inland hub focused on agricultural commodities associated with Inland Rail.

*Housing estate in the Sky Park at Narromine Airport*



## Oberon

Oberon LGA is adjacent to the Blue Mountains and was home to 5,400 people in 2020. Attractions include the Jenolan Caves and Mayfield Garden, one of the world's largest privately owned cool climate gardens.

The LGA contributed \$373.4 million<sup>50</sup> to GRP in 2020 through the manufacturing, agriculture and fishing and forestry sectors. Value-adding related to forestry products is a major economic driver, with more than 25% of employment in manufacturing related industries. Unique agricultural pursuits are a growing and vital industry.

Oberon's climate supports specialised horticulture. Its location close to Sydney and export markets will drive growth in agriculture and associated value-add manufacturing industries.

Oberon Council's priorities for the LGA are:

- residential land planning in towns and villages including future residential areas in Oberon
- forestry and agricultural sectors and associated businesses
- opportunities to support freight and logistics industries
- cool climate opportunities to support eco-tourism and food tourism
- Oberon commercial core areas
- regional forestry freight corridors.

## Orange

Orange LGA includes the regional city of Orange, towns and villages of Lucknow, Spring Hill, Spring Terrace and Huntley, as well as part of the highly productive Mount Canobolas horticultural area. Orange had a population of 42,500 people in 2020.

Orange LGA contributed \$3.2 billion<sup>51</sup> to GRP in 2020. The diversified economy includes health care and social assistance, mining and mining support, public administration, education, tourism, viticulture and horticulture. Orange is home to the head office of the NSW Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Development and the Commonwealth Regional Investment Corporation.

Orange provides higher-order services to the wider region through the Orange Health Service, Charles Sturt University and TAFE, and a regional airport at Spring Hill. The regional city includes new release areas for residential and industrial land uses.

Expansive wine and horticultural industries throughout the LGA reinforce the city's agricultural focus and support a significant tourism sector.

Orange City Council's priorities for the LGA are:

- the growing healthcare sector and related industries in the health precinct at Bloomfield, around Orange Hospital
- industrial land and industrial areas
- housing in residential release areas, including North Orange and Shiralee, and housing options in existing urban areas
- the need for a temporary activations policy, to engage in ideas and community acceptance for public realm interventions
- Orange's commercial areas
- promoting neighbourhood character in the *Orange City Council Development Control Plan 2014*
- preparation of an urban biodiversity framework
- protection from and preparation for natural hazards.



Peak Hill Open Cut Gold Mine, Peak Hill.  
Credit: Destination NSW

## Parkes

Parkes Shire LGA had an estimated population of 14,700 people in 2020. It includes the strategic centre of Parkes and smaller towns of Peak Hill, Alectown, Cookamidgera, Bogan Gate, Trundle and Tullamore.

Parkes contains the first SAP in regional NSW, offering opportunities for business development and employment growth in the Central West.

Parkes Shire LGA boasts a strong, diverse economy, with a GRP of \$1 billion<sup>52</sup> in 2020. The economy is underpinned by agriculture and mining, strengthened by transport and logistics, retail, public administration and development of Parkes SAP.

The mining sector contributes almost a third of the GRP, mainly generated through Northparkes Mines copper mine. Retail, health care and agriculture, together account for a third of employment.

Parkes sits at the intersection of the Newell Highway and the rail corridor that links major capitals. Parkes is a critical intermodal node on the first section (between Parkes and Narromine) of the Inland Rail project. Parkes SAP will take advantage of Parkes' location on the Inland Rail and the Main Rail line.

This presents opportunities for value-add industries in the agricultural tech sector, including processing facilities and centralised, cold chain storage and effective distribution points.

Tourism experiences and opportunities range from the Goobang National Park, the CSIRO Parkes Radio Telescope, the Trundle ABBA Festival, and the Parkes Elvis Festival.

Improvements to Parkes CBD are focused on creating vibrancy to support the Shire's economic growth and social fabric. Other work is underway in Trundle, as is

the development of new civic infrastructure, cultural and recreational spaces.

Parkes Shire Council's priorities for the LGA are:

- Parkes SAP
- local health care access
- road, rail and air routes and infrastructure linking Parkes to capital cities and ports
- Parkes Regional Airport as an air freight hub
- water security
- opportunities for life-long learning and adequate education facilities to support a growing population
- adequate supply of residential, industrial and commercial land
- a diversified local economy
- telecommunications infrastructure, including high-speed internet connectivity
- cultural and socially supportive infrastructure
- the visitor economy
- reaching net zero emissions by developing a circular economy.

## Warren

Warren Shire LGA makes up 10,860 square kilometres, around 1.3% of the State's land surface. The LGA had an estimated population of 2,700 people in 2020. Warren is the main township and administrative centre, with smaller villages at Collie and Nevertire.

Warren Shire LGA is a rural area with land used primarily for agriculture, particularly sheep and cattle grazing; wheat, oats and cotton. Warren LGA contributed \$191 million<sup>53</sup> to GRP in 2020 with the largest contribution from agriculture. Agriculture is also the largest employer, followed by health care and social assistance, retail, public administration, and education and training.

The Ramsar-listed Macquarie Marshes, the most significant wetland complex in Australia, sit 110 km north of Warren. They support a unique inland wetland community and several agricultural enterprises.

Warren Shire Council's priorities for the LGA are:

- a potential for a multipurpose space in Warren CBD for entrepreneurial start-ups
- connecting the Macquarie River through to Warren to create higher quality open spaces
- Macquarie Marshes public access and tourism opportunities
- incentives for new or existing businesses to relocate to Warren
- capitalising on Warren Airport's use by the Royal Flying Doctor Service, RAAF and the US Airforce.

## Warrumbungle

Warrumbungle Shire LGA is centrally located and crossed by the Newell, Oxley, Castlereagh and Golden highways. The 2020 population was 9,200 people. The local service centre of Coonabarabran is supported by Mendooran, Bugaldie, Coolah, Dunedoo, Baradine, Binnaway, Neilrex, Purlewaugh, Merrygoen and Ulamambri.

Situated mid-way between Brisbane and Melbourne, 3 hours from Newcastle, two hours from Tamworth in the north and Dubbo in the south; Coonabarabran attracts overnight stays for long haul interstate travellers. Dunedoo is well located for people travelling along the Golden Highway.

The LGA contributed over \$494.4 million<sup>54</sup> to GRP in 2020, with agriculture providing 29% of jobs. It is highly regarded for livestock grazing and cropping, and its location on the Newell Highway, with access to railway lines at Binnaway and Mendooran, provides opportunities to expand the freight network.

Warrumbungle National Park west of Coonabarabran is a popular tourist destination and home to the internationally significant Siding Spring Observatory, which has international Dark Sky status.

Warrumbungle Shire is home to three national parks, providing unique environments and experiences. The LGA is both the traditional land of Kamilaroi people and the Wiradjuri Nation. The area has strong Aboriginal heritage with many sacred sites.

Warrumbungle Shire Council's priorities for the LGA are:

- events that can showcase and raise the profile of the LGA
- placemaking in towns to attract tourism and passing traffic trade, while improving quality of life for residents
- natural, heritage and cultural assets; facilities and services; and town centre presentation
- infrastructure and utilities such as mobile coverage and extensions to NBN services
- major projects such as Inland Rail, windfarms and solar farm projects
- tourism in the Shire's main centres
- Aboriginal cultural heritage and incorporating this into local planning
- potential to use sites for biodiversity stewardship agreements
- updating flood information for flood prone communities

- agriculture and other emerging industries such as value-add manufacturing and freight-related opportunities
- tourism opportunities including Warrumbungle National Park, Coolah Tops National Parks, and Pilliga State Forest
- protecting agricultural land and rural industries from residential development.

## Weddin

Weddin Shire LGA in the region's south is two hours from Orange, Canberra, Wagga Wagga and Dubbo. Grenfell is the local service centre. The LGA had an estimated population of 3,600 in 2020 and contributed \$198 million<sup>55</sup> to GRP in 2020 mainly from agriculture, which accounts for two-thirds of local businesses.

Weddin Shire LGA contains historic cultural and built environs. It supports a variety of agricultural enterprises, including broadacre cropping and grazing, associated agribusinesses, manufacturing, logistics, and retail businesses centred in and around Grenfell.

Weddin Shire Council's priorities for the LGA are:

- agriculture, including broadacre cropping and grazing, and agribusiness diversification
- opportunities to support freight and logistics industries and agricultural production
- protecting important agricultural land from encroachment from inappropriate development.
- the Grenfell to Greenethorpe rail corridor
- visitor and recreation precincts such as O'Briens Hill; Grenfell Railway and Silo Precinct; Company, Vaughans, Bogolong Dams and surrounds; and each of the villages
- climate change and natural hazards.

Grenfell Silos, Weddin



# List of strategies, actions and collaboration activities

## Part 1: A sustainable and resilient place

### Objective 1: Identify, protect and connect important environmental assets

#### Strategy 1.1

Identify and protect the region's important environmental assets in strategic planning and local plans by:

- validating biodiversity mapping and prioritising investigations in areas experiencing development pressure to identify HEV land
- identifying validated HEV land in LEPs
- restoring or improving biodiversity values, especially in areas identified as HEV
- preparing and implementing biodiversity conservation strategies
- identifying and protecting areas of climate refugia and embedding climate change adaptation actions in local environmental plans.

#### Action 1

Ensure the timely sharing of validated spatial data on biodiversity values via the NSW Planning Portal, including data collected to inform local strategies and local, regional and state significant development proposals.

#### Collaboration Activity 1

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will work with and assist councils to:

- review biodiversity mapping and related LEP and development control plan (DCP) provisions
- improve access to data to enable identification of protected areas including National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) Estate, Crown Reserves and in-perpetuity private land conservation agreements to inform local planning.

#### Strategy 1.2

Respond to biodiversity values when planning for new residential and employment development by:

- avoiding areas with identified HEV and focusing development on areas with lower biodiversity values
- identifying opportunities to integrate biodiversity values into new development
- using buffers to separate or manage incompatible land uses
- investigating opportunities to apply biodiversity certification.

#### Strategy 1.3

Create biodiversity corridors, including riparian corridors, through strategic planning and in LEPs by:

- identifying a biodiversity corridor network
- preparing and validating biodiversity corridor mapping
- identifying biodiversity investment opportunities.

## **Objective 2: Support connected and healthy communities**

### **Strategy 2.1**

- Undertake public space needs analyses and develop public space strategies by:
- exploring new public space opportunities and green infrastructure in accordance with the Government Architect NSW's Greener Places and Better Placed, Designing with Country discussion paper, the Streets as Shared Spaces program and Everyone Can Play
  - using community feedback to identify the quantity, quality and type of public space and green infrastructure required
  - considering the needs of future and changing populations
  - identifying opportunities to:
    - prioritise new and improved quality public space to areas of most need
    - incorporate natural drainage features within public spaces and linking them with green infrastructure networks
    - improve walking and cycling connections to public space
    - enhance tree canopy across the private domain.

### **Strategy 2.2**

- Strategic planning and local plans should consider opportunities to:
- ensure new residential areas provide sufficient public and open space
  - demonstrate how the quantity of, and access to, high quality and diverse existing public space is maintained, embellished and improved.

### **Strategy 2.3**

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

### **Collaboration Activity 2**

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will work with councils and State agencies to identify recreation and tourism facilities and opportunities for pedestrian and cycling networks.

These should respond to the environmental significance of each area and could include new or upgraded visitor facilities, walking and cycling tracks, based on areas such as:

- the Warrumbungles, Coolah Tops, Blue Mountains, Pilliga and other national parks and State forests
- the region's rivers and dams, including the Lachlan River, Belubula River, Bell River, Bogan River, Castlereagh River, Cudgegong River, Farmers Creek and Macquarie River, Burrendong Dam, Windamere Dam, Wyangala Dam, Carcoar Dam, Lake Cargelligo and the surrounding land
- wetlands such as the Macquarie Marshes and Lachlan catchment wetlands
- the Wellington, Jenolan Caves and Borenore caves
- surplus Transport for NSW land and decommissioned railways such as Binnaway to Gwabegar, Coolah to Craboon and Grenfell to Greenthorpe and other linear areas such as travelling stock routes
- regional sporting and recreation hubs such as the Lake Burrendong Sport and Recreation Centre and the existing regional sports hub in Dubbo and potential hubs in the other regional cities.

The investigations should identify opportunities to link assets, such as a new trail that links Coonabarabran with the Warrumbungle National Park.

**Objective 2:  
Support connected  
and healthy  
communities**

**Strategy 2.4**

Prepare activation strategies for rivers, dams and lakes to identify:

- areas that can be embellished to provide tourism, recreation and public open space opportunities that support the principles of the Public Spaces Charter
- environmental values to be protected
- opportunities to integrate with adjoining urban areas and pedestrian and cycle networks
- preferred land uses and planning controls for the surrounding areas
- opportunities to integrate activation strategies with planning for hazards such as drought and floods.

**Strategy 2.5**

Strategic planning and local plans should consider opportunities to:

- recognise the river corridors in LEPs to increase protection for the rivers
- connect existing river walks and trails to enhance user experiences and link riverine towns and villages
- identify opportunities for new river walks and trails and linkages to support local and regional connectivity and tourism opportunities.

**Action 2**

Develop a framework for the management of the Western NSW rivers to identify objectives and guidance on:

- priority areas for activation
- mechanisms to fund public ownership of riverfront land, preparation of riverfront activation strategies and a body of knowledge regarding the implementation and delivery of riverfront activation strategies
- mechanisms to ensure riverfront areas provide public and environmental benefits, in perpetuity
- support for councils on the planning and management of riverfront lands.

**Objective 3:  
Plan for resilient  
places and  
communities**

**Strategy 3.1**

Strategic planning and local plans should consider:

- the proximity of new development, including urban release areas, to areas of high bushfire risk and flooding hazards
- floodplain risk management plans for existing and new growth areas
- avoiding new hazards such as the urban heat island effect
- the impacts of climate change in hazards planning
- impacts of naturally occurring asbestos on development in areas where occurrence is likely.

**Strategy 3.2**

Strategic planning and local plans should also:

- consider and integrate guidance from the Considering Flooding in Land Use Planning guideline and the draft Strategic Guide to Planning for Natural Hazards
- ensure that mapping that identifies hazard-affected areas, including bushfire and flooding, is kept up to date and used in decision-making.

### **Objective 3: Plan for resilient places and communities**

#### **Strategy 3.3**

Strategic planning and waste management strategies should align with the *NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041* and the *NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy: A guide to future infrastructure needs* when planning for waste and resource recovery, including planning for waste infrastructure to support new industry specialisation and the safe management of large-scale asbestos waste disasters.

#### **Strategy 3.4**

Strategic planning and local plans should encourage:

- energy efficient building design and practices
- initiatives that reduce carbon emissions through the application of low carbon strategies.

#### **Strategy 3.5**

Adopt the resilience benchmarking matrix tool being developed by the Department of Planning, Industry and the Environment which will allow councils to assess their level of resilience to place based shocks and stresses and identify key steps council can take to increase their level of resilience maturity.

#### **Action 3**

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will continue investigating increased energy and thermal performance standards for housing.

#### **Strategy 3.6**

Encourage a regional approach to the rollout of electric vehicle charging infrastructure that considers potential sites for charging stations, including council-owned land, and opportunities for colocation with other public space functions.

#### **Strategy 3.7**

Strategic planning and local plans should support the take up of automated and electric vehicles for public transport and personal use through on-street parking, and charging points in new developments, commercial centres and in industrial precincts.

## **Objective 4: Secure and resilient regional water resources**

### **Strategy 4.1**

Strategic water and land use planning, at the regional and local scale, must consider opportunities to:

- improve the reliability, quality and security of the region's water supply by considering the impact of the following on water security:
  - climate variability and change
  - planned future growth
  - integrated water cycle management and water sensitive urban design
  - the needs of the natural environment
- locate, design, construct and manage new developments to minimise impacts on water catchments, including downstream impacts and groundwater resources
- encourage the re-use of water in new development, for irrigation purposes, including dual water systems
- improve provision for stormwater management and the application of green infrastructure
- encourage industries with higher water demands to more efficiently use water and:
  - locate in areas where water can be accessed, is secure and won't impact on other water users or the environment
  - identify the relevant water source and pathways to accessing the water to support the enterprise
- identify and consider surface and groundwater drinking water catchments and storages
- limit land uses that can harm surface and groundwater quality or lead to its overuse
- consider water needs and sources early in planning and development processes.

### **Strategy 4.2**

Improve knowledge of conservation measures, management and use of the region's wetlands to inform consideration of wetland protection in strategic planning and local plans.

### **Collaboration activity 3**

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will work with councils, State agencies and landowners to protect the Macquarie Marshes and Lachlan River wetlands while supporting sustainable economic land uses through:

- a common zoning approach
- a review of permissible land uses
- identifying tourism opportunities.

**Objective 5:  
Ensure site selection  
and design embraces  
and respects the  
region's landscapes,  
character and  
cultural heritage**

**Strategy 5.1**

Strategic and local planning will strengthen the amenity in centres across the region by:

- identifying and protecting scenic and cultural landscapes
- providing guidance for new development to ensure that views of scenic and cultural landscapes, particularly views from the public realm, are protected
- elevating the importance of design quality and design excellence
- reflecting local built form, heritage and character in new and intensified housing areas.

**Strategy 5.2**

Use strategic planning and local plans to recognise and enhance local character through local character statements in local plans that accord with the NSW Government's *Local Character and Place Guideline*.

**Strategy 5.3**

Use strategic planning and local plans to consider opportunities to apply the seven urban design strategies for regional NSW when planning for:

- public space in centres, including main streets
- development in both existing and new neighbourhoods.

**Strategy 5.4**

Identify, conserve and enhance Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural heritage values through strategic planning and local plans by:

- engaging Traditional Owners and the community early in the planning process to understand cultural and heritage values.
- undertaking heritage studies to inform conservation and value add opportunities
- adaptively re-using heritage items and heritage interpretation
- managing and monitoring the cumulative impact of development on the heritage values and character of places.

## Part 2: People, housing and communities

### Objective 6: A network of healthy and prosperous centres

#### Strategy 6.1

Use local and strategic planning to reinforce the beneficial housing and employment relationships between the regional cities and strategic centres and their surrounding centres.

#### Strategy 6.2

Use local strategic planning and local plans to strengthen commercial cores by:

- reinforcing the centres hierarchy when planning for commercial and retail development
- supporting a mix of land uses so that local streets and spaces can adapt to the changing retail environment
- incentivising medium density residential and mixed-use development in appropriate locations in and around centres
- creating active streets with local character
- enabling night-time uses
- activating underutilised sites and facilities for temporary uses or demonstration infill development projects
- improving public open space, public facilities, green infrastructure and green walkable, liveable streets
- enhancing and protecting creative work and performance spaces and facilitating street art.

#### Collaboration Activity 4

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will work with Regional NSW, Destination NSW, other relevant NSW Government agencies and councils to:

- identify new economic development and urban activation opportunities for smaller centres throughout the region
- leverage the locational advantages and physical attributes of these centres, including for centres within a commutable distance to a regional city or strategic centre or other major employment opportunities.

#### Strategy 6.3

Integrated land use and transport planning should aim to improve transport in regional cities and strategic centres, and their connections with regional communities.

#### Strategy 6.4

Use strategic planning and local plans to strengthen connectivity within centres by:

- improving and establishing connected and accessible green walking and cycling networks that are integrated with public transport facilities
- activating entrances to public spaces, civic buildings, shopping centres and parks
- promoting redevelopment and higher densities within walking distance to town centres, public spaces and transport interchanges
- balancing the needs of pedestrians and vehicle traffic on main streets and prioritising pedestrian movements in town centres
- widening footpaths and building cycle infrastructure, all weather protection, shade, lighting, and supportive street furniture.
- enabling provision of secure bicycle parking and end-of-trip facilities

- enabling micro-mobility including e-bikes and e-scooters
- better integrate walking and cycling networks into the design of new communities
- prioritising walking and cycling around schools, health services, aged care facilities and sporting, cultural and recreational facilities
- exploring and supporting ideas from the Streets as Shared Spaces program
- utilising green infrastructure to create a network of connected open spaces.

#### **Collaboration Activity 5**

Work with Transport for NSW and Bathurst Regional, Dubbo Regional and Orange City councils on place-based transport plans for the regional cities that use the Movement and Place framework.

### **Objective 7: Provide well located housing options to meet demand**

#### **Strategy 7.1**

To ensure an adequate and timely supply of housing, in the right locations, strategic and local planning should:

- respond to environmental, employment and investment considerations, and population dynamics when identifying new housing opportunities
- consider how proposed release areas could interact with longer term residential precincts
- provide new housing capacity where it can use existing infrastructure capacity or support the timely delivery of new infrastructure.

#### **Strategy 7.2**

Utilise the Regional Housing Monitor to collect data on dwelling production and take-up rates to inform infrastructure sequencing and servicing plans of residentially zoned land.

Share data with infrastructure providers, including the Department of Education, to coordinate the approach to land release, rezoning and infrastructure needs earlier in the planning process.

#### **Action 4**

Develop strategies to inform the subregional consideration of housing supply needs, based on the distance people are prepared to travel for work, with the areas for immediate consideration being:

- Bathurst, Dubbo and Orange and their catchments
- large employment areas such as the Parkes SAP and the Central-West Orana REZ and surrounds.

#### **Collaboration Activity 6**

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will work with other State agencies, councils and other housing stakeholders to consider opportunities to implement the adopted recommendations of the Regional Housing Taskforce.

**Objective 7:  
Provide well located  
housing options to  
meet demand**

**Strategy 7.3**

Use strategic planning and local plans to facilitate a diversity of housing in urban areas by:

- creating flexible and feasible planning controls, including a greater mix of housing in new release areas
- aligning infrastructure and service provision to housing supply needs
- exploring public space improvements to encourage higher densities near town centres
- reviewing policies and processes to improve certainty and streamline development processes.

**Collaboration Activity 7**

NSW Government, through the NSW Asbestos Coordination Committee will work with interested Councils to identify opportunities to address derelict housing containing asbestos.

**Objective 8:  
Plan for diverse,  
affordable, resilient  
and inclusive housing**

**Strategy 8.1**

To improve housing diversity, strategic and local planning should:

- allow a diversity of housing, including affordable housing, student housing, shop top housing, more dense housing types and housing choices for seniors close to existing services, and on land free from hazards
- improve certainty of development outcomes and streamline development processes.

**Action 5**

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will develop a tool to review local plans to:

- identify the dwelling capacity of areas zoned for residential and mixed use development
- consider how current zones and planning provisions are providing a mix of housing
- test options for a greater housing mix, including mixed use development in appropriate locations.

**Collaboration Activity 8**

Collaborate across the NSW Government and with industry to identify opportunities to:

- ensure affordable housing options are permissible, with guidance provided for preferred locations
- ensure development standards support a variety of housing types, including smaller and more affordable housing types
- attract investment to increase the rental housing supply in regional markets
- facilitate pilot projects that test:
  - alternative forms of housing, including build to rent, boarding houses and co-living houses
  - the provision of low-cost loans for infrastructure to unlock opportunities for private sector housing supply
  - the use of publicly-owned land to test new housing typologies in partnership with industry and community housing providers.

**Objective 8:  
Plan for diverse,  
affordable, resilient  
and inclusive housing**

**Strategy 8.2**

Plan for a range of sustainable housing choices in strategic planning and local plans including:

- a diversity of housing types and lot sizes, through appropriate development standards, including minimum lot sizes, minimum frontage and floor space ratio
- housing that is more appropriate for seniors, including low-care accommodation
- considering development incentives or reduced contributions to boost construction of secondary dwellings (granny flats)
- innovative solutions for older people, multigeneration families, group housing, people with special needs or people from different cultural backgrounds
- sustainable housing solutions that can reduce costs and environmental impacts of household operations.

**Strategy 8.3**

Assess the potential to renew social housing sites to increase social housing stock and bring greater diversity and vibrancy in local communities.

**Strategy 8.4**

Use strategic planning and local plans to consider responses to homelessness, including the role of caravan parks, manufactured home estates, tiny homes, and manufactured homes on land in existing centres, new development areas and on publicly-owned land.

**Strategy 8.5**

Prepare local housing strategies and LEPs in consultation with Aboriginal communities, in addition with the AHO, the NSW Department of Communities and Justice and the Land and Housing Corporation.

---

**Objective 9:  
Manage rural  
residential  
development**

**Strategy 9.1**

When planning for new rural residential development consider:

- proximity to existing urban settlements to maximise the efficient use of existing infrastructure and services
- avoiding primary production zoned agricultural land and mineral resources and consider land use conflict when in proximity to such land
- avoiding areas of high environmental, cultural or heritage significance, or areas affected by natural hazards
- provision of a sustainable water supply through reticulated water supply, roof catchment and/or accessing water from a river, lake or aquifer in accordance with the *Water Management Act 2000*
- impacts on the groundwater system
- future growth opportunities of the closest local centre
- context in terms of supply and demand across the subregion
- cost effective service supply.

**Strategy 9.2**

Enable new rural residential development only where it has been identified in a local strategy prepared by the relevant council and endorsed by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.

**Objective 10:  
Provide  
accommodation  
options for  
temporary workers**

**Strategy 10.1**

Prepare local housing strategies and local plans which enable safe, secure, quality and well-located housing for temporary workers by:

- permitting temporary worker accommodation, supported by tools such as a new model local clause and guidance for preferred locations
- using development standards to support a variety of housing, including medium density housing and other smaller and more affordable housing types
- suitably integrating sites for temporary accommodation into centres.

**Action 6**

Investigate options to ensure new public and private infrastructure, mining and other major employment-related projects plan for workforce accommodation during the lifecycle of the project, by identifying:

- the workforce required and their accommodation needs
- when the workforce will come to the region and how long they will stay
- housing, health, education and commercial needs for the workforce and their families
- how the project will impact tourism and how this impact will be addressed
- housing options to support the surrounding centres and community for the lifetime of the project, including construction and operational phases
- opportunities to retain project-related housing as community managed assets in the long term
- opportunities for new projects to provide a financial contribution towards the provision of key worker accommodation.

**Objective 11:  
Coordinate smart  
and resilient utility  
infrastructure**

**Strategy 11.1**

Use strategic and local planning to maximise the cost-effective and efficient use of new or existing infrastructure by:

- focusing development around existing infrastructure and promoting co-location of new infrastructure
- undertaking infrastructure service planning and cost-benefit analysis prior to rezoning, to establish whether land can be efficiently and feasibly serviced
- considering resilience in infrastructure planning at a local, intra-regional and cross border scale
- providing attractive modal alternatives to private vehicle transport including public transport services as well as integrated walking and cycling networks
- installation of a fibre-ready pit and pipe network that allows for Fibre to The Premises broadband service in accordance with the Australian Government's National Broadband Network (NBN)
- identification of appropriate sites and capacity to provide for water security, wastewater service capacity, electricity supply, and emergency services.

**Action 7**

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will continue to work with State agencies to provide access to infrastructure and services to discrete Aboriginal communities through Roads to Home.

**Strategy 11.2**

Integrate smart technology and the Internet of Things into strategic planning, including how it can improve community engagement and information sharing in the planning process.

## Part 3: Prosperity, productivity and innovation

### Objective 12: Leverage existing industries and employment areas and support new and innovative economic enterprises

#### Strategy 12.1

Use strategic planning and local plans to:

- identify and protect employment lands from the encroachment of incompatible development
- identify local and subregional specialisations
- identify future employment land and the infrastructure needed to support it
- consolidate isolated, unused or underused pockets of industrial land
- respond to characteristics of the resident workforce and that in neighbouring LGAs
- provide flexibility in local planning controls
- respond to future changes in industry to allow a transition to new opportunities
- identify relevant water sources and pathways to accessing water to support enterprise.

#### Strategy 12.2

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

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

#### Strategy 12.3

To facilitate a renewable energy industry, use strategic planning and local planning to:

- advocate for coordinated community benefit from renewable energy projects, including through the use of development-based contributions
- take a regional approach to housing, service provision, skills and employment to adequately address the cumulative impacts of major renewable projects
- encourage diversification of local industries into renewable energy generation, energy sector supply chains and competitive advantages in energy intensive production.

#### Strategy 12.4

Encourage renewable energy proponents to develop projects that are appropriately located and compatible with surrounding land use practices to minimise land use conflict and environmental and social impacts. Key landuse conflict issues to be considered are the impacts on Important Agricultural Land, coexistence with agricultural activities and visual impacts on centres.

**Objective 13:  
Protect agricultural  
production values  
and promote  
agriculture  
innovation,  
sustainability  
and value-add  
opportunities**

**Strategy 13.1**

Use strategic planning and local plans to:

- identify and enable emerging opportunities for agriculture, including agriculture innovation and value-add opportunities such as on-farm processing that includes provisions for intensification of industry, farm gate sales and small-scale value adding manufacturing that advantages the differentiation of the local produce
- encourage local food supply and consumption
- protect agricultural land and industries from land use conflicts and fragmentation
- maintain and protect agricultural land and industries from land use conflicts and fragmentation, especially those lands identified as important such as those identified as Class 1-3 using the NSW land and capability mapping, biophysical strategic agricultural land, those currently developed for irrigation, or other special use lands that support specialised agricultural industries
- enable freight and logistics precincts and intermodal hubs to grow and adapt to changing needs
- support sustainable and efficient use of water by agricultural industries

**Strategy 13.2**

Strategic and local planning should maintain and protect the productive capacity of agricultural land in the region.

**Strategy 13.3**

Use strategic and local planning to consider the quality of the land for agriculture and the scarcity of productive agricultural land in the region when making decisions regarding:

- the permissibility of compatible non-agricultural land uses in rural zones, without compromising agricultural production
- minimum lot sizes, standards for dwellings and limiting land fragmentation
- farm boundary adjustments and subdivisions to create a lot for primary production
- identifying suitable areas for smaller agricultural holdings for activities such as horticulture, whether these areas are suitable for inclusion in the primary production small lot zone, and ensure they are not developed for rural residential use.

**Objective 14:  
Protect and leverage  
the existing and  
future road, rail  
and air transport  
networks and  
infrastructure**

**Strategy 14.1**

Strategic planning and local plans should consider opportunities to:

- protect and improve existing and emerging freight transport networks to new infrastructure such as the Parkes SAP, major freight facilities and connections to the Inland Rail
- minimise the negative impacts of freight movements and deliveries on urban amenity, particularly with proposed town and heavy vehicle bypass and distributor roads
- enhance freight and logistics facilities by limiting the encroachment of incompatible and sensitive land uses
- address first mile and last mile freight limitations, including off-street loading docks, the allocation of kerbside space, formal de-coupling sites, alternative last mile delivery vehicles, as well as appropriate access for vehicles on local road networks and accommodating larger vehicle combinations.

**Objective 14:  
Protect and leverage  
the existing and  
future road, rail  
and air transport  
networks and  
infrastructure**

**Strategy 14.2**

Identify future heavy vehicle and town bypass and associated road corridors in local land use strategies and investigate opportunities to reserve this land for future use at the appropriate time and to minimise the encroachment of incompatible land uses.

**Collaboration Activity 9**

Work with Transport for NSW and councils on planning for improved connections between Central West and Orana and eastern NSW, including Sydney, Newcastle and Canberra.

**Collaboration Activity 10**

Work with Transport for NSW to leverage potential rail transport investment such as Fast Rail, future uses for the Blayney-Demondrille and Maryvale-Gulgong rail corridors and potential rail opportunities such as passenger services to Newcastle and along the Inland Rail.

**Strategy 14.4**

Local strategies and local plans should respond to the Inland Rail alignment to support operations and minimise land use conflict that could limit future network capacity.

**Collaboration Activity 11**

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will work with Transport for NSW, the Australian Government, Australian Rail Track Corporation and councils to identify and plan for the Inland Rail land use requirements and options around transport intermodal hubs and connections to existing rail network.

**Strategy 14.5**

Support the operation of regional airports and aerodromes through strategic planning and local plans which should consider opportunities to:

- manage and protect airport and aerodrome land-uses and airspace, including future airport and aerodrome operations
- limit the encroachment of incompatible development
- ensure operations are not compromised by development that penetrates the Limitation or Operations Surface
- identify and activate employment lands surrounding airports and aerodromes.

**Objective 15:  
Implement a  
precinct-based  
approach to planning  
for higher education  
and health facilities**

**Strategy 15.1**

Support mixed use precincts through strategic planning and local plans by considering:

- mixed use facilities and research and accommodation precincts
- the encroachment of inappropriate and incompatible land uses
- multipurpose, flexible and adaptable health and education infrastructure
- the development of education precincts around universities and other educational facilities.

**Objective 16:  
Sustainably  
maximise the  
productivity of  
resource lands**

**Strategy 16.1**

Use strategic planning and local plans to consider the life cycle of resource extraction opportunities, including:

- protecting potential mineral and energy resources from land uses that would sterilise this potential
- protecting resource extraction projects from land uses that could impact operations
- protecting road, rail and freight routes from development that could affect current or future extraction
- promoting opportunities for minerals processing within the region
- addressing water resource constraints and impacts.

**Strategy 16.2**

Consult with the Department of Regional NSW (Mining, Exploration and Geoscience) division when assessing applications for land use changes (strategic land use planning, rezoning and planning proposals) and new developments or expansions.

**Strategy 16.3**

Use strategic planning and local plans to identify future mine closure dates, understand potential changes to water, economic/skill profiles and demographics, and consider land use changes, mine rehabilitation activities and post-mining land use opportunities.

**Collaboration Activity 12**

The Department of Regional NSW, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Training Services NSW, Lithgow City Council and industry representatives will form a project control group to oversee the preparation of an economic transition and diversification plan for Lithgow.

**Objective 17:  
Support a diverse  
visitor economy**

**Strategy 17.1**

Use strategic planning and local plans to:

- create or enhance green and open spaces in tourist and recreation facilities
- help develop places for artistic and cultural activities
- allow sustainable agritourism and ecotourism
- improve public access and connection to heritage through innovative interpretation
- plan for transport – including walking and cycling – to connect visitors to key destinations
- facilitate sufficient short-term visitor accommodation.

**Objective 18:  
Strengthen the  
economic self-  
determination  
of Aboriginal  
communities**

**Strategy 18.1**

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will continue to offer and accelerate the preparation of planning assessments of the landholdings of LALCs.

**Strategy 18.2**

Provide planning information to LALCs to help prioritise unresolved Aboriginal land claims on Crown land.

**Collaboration Activity 13**

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will work with LALCs and councils to better reflect LALC aspirations in plans by:

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

## Part 4: Location specific responses

### Objective 19: Strengthen Bathurst, Dubbo and Orange as innovative and progressive regional cities

#### Strategy 19.1

Use economic development and local housing strategies to reinforce the regional-scale functions of each regional city by:

- establishing a governance framework that can attract long-term investment and collaborate on economic development initiatives
- focusing investment in growth industries and increase economic diversification
- strengthening economic and housing connections between the regional cities and their surrounding centres, based on their commuting worker catchments
- ensuring there is sufficient capacity to meet ongoing housing and employment needs.

#### Strategy 19.2

Prepare and implement precinct-based master plans for health, education, other employment, cultural, sporting and recreation precincts that consider opportunities for co-location, including for residential development and integration with the broader city.

#### Collaboration Activity 14

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will collaborate with councils and State agencies, including the Department of Education, to establish a coordinated residential development program to:

- improve the planning, prioritisation, delivery, servicing and monitoring of land for new housing.

### Objective 20: Leverage the Central West and Orana Renewable Energy Zone to provide economic benefit to communities

#### Collaboration Activity 15

The Energy Corporation of NSW will work with the Renewable Energy Sector Board, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, councils and Aboriginal and community stakeholders to develop the Central–West Orana REZ.

### Objective 21: Leverage the Parkes Special Activation Precinct and plan for associated growth

#### Action 8

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will establish a subregional working group with Parkes Shire, Forbes Shire, Lachlan Shire, Orange City, Cabonne, Narromine Shire, Dubbo Regional, Cowra and Weddin councils to respond to potential housing and economic impacts and opportunities from Parkes SAP.

### Objective 22: Protect Australia's first Dark Sky Park

#### Strategy 22.1

Minimise light pollution and the impact of artificial light to protect the observing conditions at the Siding Spring Observatory, through implementation of the *Dark Sky Planning Guideline*.

# Glossary

## **Active transport**

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

## **Affordable housing**

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

## **Agribusiness**

A business that earns most or all of its revenues from agriculture, such as food and fibre production, agrichemicals, seed supply, farm machinery wholesale and distribution, freight, logistics, processing, marketing or retail sales.

## **Intensive agriculture**

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

## **Biodiversity**

The variety of life on Earth. The life forms, the different plants, animals and microorganisms, the genes they contain and the ecosystems they form.

## **Biodiversity corridor**

An identified area of land that connects flora and fauna populations, separated by human developments and activities.

## **Central business district**

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

## **Central West and Orana region**

The LGAs of Bathurst Regional, Blayney, Bogan, Cabonne, Coonamble, Cowra, Dubbo Regional, Gilgandra, Forbes, Lachlan, Lithgow, Mid-Western Regional, Narromine, Oberon, Orange, Parkes, Warrumbungle, Warren and Weddin.

## **Circular economy**

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

## **Climate change**

A change in the state of climate that can be identified by changes in the mean and/or the variability of its properties, and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer (Garnaut Review, 2008).

## **Employment lands**

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

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

## **Existing urban areas**

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

## **First mile/last mile**

The first and final stage of a journey in which people or goods travel to a broad range of origins or destinations, such as the trip between a train station and the final destination of a shopping centre or place of work.

## **Green infrastructure**

The network of green spaces, natural systems, and semi-natural systems that support sustainable communities, including waterways; bushland; tree canopy and green ground cover; parks; and open spaces that are strategically planned, designed, and managed to support a good quality of life in an urban environment.

## **Gross regional product (GRP)**

A measure of the size of a region's economy and productivity. The market value of all final goods and services produced in a region within a given period of time.

## **Gross Value Added (GVA)**

A measure of the value of goods and services produced in an area, industry or sector of an economy.

## **Household size**

The average number of people living in a dwelling.

## **Housing affordability**

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

## **Housing density**

A measure of how intensively a residential area is developed, based on the number of dwellings per hectare. Low is up to 15 dwellings/ha, medium 16 to 60 and high more than 60.

## **Housing diversity**

The mix of housing types such as detached dwellings, boarding houses, dual occupancies, group homes, hostels, multi-dwelling housing, residential flat buildings, secondary dwellings, semi-detached dwellings, seniors housing and shop top housing.

### **Infill development**

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

### **Limitation or Operations Surface**

Land where development implications exist due to the Obstacle Limitations Surface for certain airports, as designated by the relevant planning instrument.

### **Local centres**

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

### **Local plans**

Local environmental plans and development control plans, and other statutory and non-statutory plans prepared by council to guide their planning decisions in their LGA. Through land zoning and other development controls, a local plan is typically the main mechanism for determining the type and amount of development that can occur on each parcel of land in NSW.

### **Local strategic planning**

Includes local strategic planning statements, local housing strategies, employment land or retail studies, and other activities to support the development of local plans or local strategic planning statements.

### **Mixed use area**

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

### **NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust**

A statutory not-for-profit body, established under the BC Act, which delivers private land conservation programs and fulfils certain roles under the NSW Biodiversity Offsets Scheme.

### **Population projections**

The set of assumptions about future growth and change to a base of population, dwellings or employment.

### **Public spaces**

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

### **Regional cities**

Centres with the largest commercial component of any location in the region and that provide a full range of higher-order services, including hospitals and tertiary education services. Dubbo, Bathurst and Orange in the Central West and Orana.

### **Regulated river**

River on which a licensed entitlement regime exists with centralised allocation, and from which orders may

be placed for upstream release of a licensed allocation and typically downstream of a surface water storage (an Unregulated River is where no entitlement system exists).

### **Resilience**

Resilience is the capacity of a city's systems, businesses, institutions, communities, and individuals to survive, adapt, and grow, no matter what chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience.

### **Smart technology**

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

### **Social housing**

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

### **Strategic centre**

Centres with significant commercial components and a range of higher-order services. Higher order than local centres but smaller than regional cities. Cowra, Mudgee, Forbes, Parkes and Lithgow in the Central West and Orana.

### **Sustainability**

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

### **Urban land**

Land zoned under any of the following land use zones:

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

# References

- 1 IPCC, 2021. Headline Statements from the Summary for Policymakers. <[https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/downloads/report/IPCC\\_AR6\\_WGI\\_Headline\\_Statements.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGI_Headline_Statements.pdf)>
- 2 NSW Government, 2021. A 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW <<https://www.nsw.gov.au/a-20-year-economic-vision-for-regional-nsw-refresh>>
- 3 Bureau of Meteorology 2017, Special Climate Statement 58, as cited in Lachlan Regional Water Strategy
- 4 State of NSW and Office of Environment and Heritage .2017. Western Enabling Regional Adaptation: Central West Orana region report <<https://climatechange.environment.nsw.gov.au/~media/C06B0C119B33406BA8D42ECD385AA351.ashx>>
- 5 DPI, 2020. Lachlan Regional Water Strategy <<https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/plans-programs/regional-water-strategies/public-exhibition/previous/lachlan>>
- 6 ESRI, 2021. Naturally Occurring Asbestos in NSW <<https://trade.maps.arcgis.com/apps/PublicInformation/index.html?appid=87434b6ec7dd4aba8cb664d8e646fb06>>
- 7 Snapshot Climate, 2021. CO2 Emissions Snapshots for municipalities in Australia <<https://snapshotclimate.com.au>>
- 8 NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, 2014. Central West and Orana Climate change snapshot <<https://climatechange.environment.nsw.gov.au/~media/NARCLim/Files/Regional-Downloads/Climate-Change-Snapshots/CWOsnapshot.pdf>>
- 9 Energy NSW, 2018. NSW Pumped Hydro Roadmap <<https://www.energy.nsw.gov.au/media/1546/download>>
- 10 State of NSW and Office of Environment and Heritage, 2017. Western Enabling Regional Adaptation: Central West Orana region report<<https://climatechange.environment.nsw.gov.au/~media/C06B0C119B33406BA8D42ECD385AA351.ashx>>
- 11 DPIE, 2020. Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020–2030 NSW Government <<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/climate-change/net-zero-plan>>
- 12 NSW Electric Vehicle Strategy, 2021. NSW Electric Vehicle Strategy <<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/climate-change/net-zero-plan/electric-vehicle-strategy>>
- 13 Central JO, 2021. EV Toolkit <<https://www.centralnswjo.com/ev-toolkit>>
- 14 WRI, 2021. Region Shapers - Analysis report for Central West and Orana
- 15 TfNSW, 2021. NSW Movement and Place Framework <<https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/industry/nsw-movement-and-place-framework>>
- 16 DPIE, 2020. FACT BOOK-A Housing Strategy for NSW <<https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/~media/Files/DPE/Factsheets-and-faqs/Policy-and-legislation/Housing/A-Housing-Strategy-for-NSW--Discussion-Paper-fact-book-2020-05-29.PDF>>
- 17 Equity Economics, 2020. Double return: How investing in social housing can address the growing homelessness crisis and boost Australia's economic recovery <<http://www.equityeconomics.com.au/investinginsocialhousing>>
- 18 WRI, 2021. Region Shapers - Analysis report for Central West and Orana
- 19 NSW Government, 2021. Gig State <<https://www.nsw.gov.au/snowy-hydro-legacy-fund/regional-digital-connectivity-program/gig-state>>
- 20 WRI, 2021. Region Shapers - Analysis report for Central West and Orana
- 21 WRI, 2021. Region Shapers - Analysis report for Central West and Orana
- 22 DPIE, 2020. Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020–2030 NSW Government <<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/climate-change/net-zero-plan> >
- 23 WRI, 2021, Region Shapers- Analysis report for Central West and Orana
- 24 DPIE & RMCG, 2016. Central West and Orana Agricultural Industries Final Report< <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/~media/Files/DPE/Reports/Central-West-and-orana-agricultural-industry-report-2016-01.pdf>>
- 25 WRI, 2021. Region Shapers- Analysis report for Central West and Orana
- 26 NSW Trade and Investment 2015 Economic Profile Central West and Orana, Prepared for the Economic Development Strategy for Regional NSW, NSW Trade and Investment
- 27 WRI, 2021, Region Shapers- Analysis report for Central West and Orana
- 28 RMCG, 2019. NSW Central West Food and Fibre Strategy <<https://www.centraljo.nsw.gov.au/content/uploads/Food-and-Fibre-Strategy-Final-combined-compressed.pdf>>
- 29 DPIE & RMCG, 2016. Central West and Orana Agricultural Industries Final Report <<https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/~media/Files/DPE/Reports/Central-West-and-orana-agricultural-industry-report-2016-01.pdf>>
- 30 Department of Infrastructure, Transport, regional development and Communications, 2021. Inland Rail Civil Works Agreements bringing billions in investment for New South Wales and Southern Queensland.<<https://www.inlandrail.gov.au/benefits/nsw>>
- 31 CSIRO, 2019. Inland Rail Supply Chain Mapping <[https://www.inlandrail.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/csiro\\_transit\\_inland\\_rail\\_supply\\_chain\\_mapping\\_pilot\\_study\\_2\\_0.pdf](https://www.inlandrail.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/csiro_transit_inland_rail_supply_chain_mapping_pilot_study_2_0.pdf)>
- 32 ARTC, 2020. Narromine to Narrabri project <<https://inlandrail.artc.com.au/where-we-go/projects/narromine-to-narrabri/>>
- 33 Department of Infrastructure, Transport, regional development and Communications, 2021. Understanding Inland Rail. <<https://1worpv3xudfc4dl40l1hi7fz-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/n2n-eis-summary-findings.pdf>>

- 34 Dubbo Regional Council, 2020. LSPS <<https://www.dubbo.nsw.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/10792/LSPS%20-%20Document.pdf.aspx?Embed=Y>>
- 35 Energy NSW, 2020, Central-West Orana Pilot Renewable Energy Zone, Community Newsletter – December 2020, 2020, <<https://www.energy.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-12/Digital%20newsletter.pdf>>
- 36 NSW Government, 2019. Parkes Special Activation Precinct Economic and industry analysis Final report <[https://shared-drupal-s3fs.s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/master-test/fapub\\_pdf/A+Parks/Parkes+SAP+-+Structure+Plan.pdf](https://shared-drupal-s3fs.s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/master-test/fapub_pdf/A+Parks/Parkes+SAP+-+Structure+Plan.pdf)>
- 37 REMPLAN, 2021. Central West Industries Gross Regional Product <<https://app.rempln.com.au/rdacentralwest/economy/industries/gross-regional-product?state=O3zBf9!5BwdFoD7AFvML7Gh0D6wzcLTEh6oGuxh9hOCxhdZ0>>
- 38 REMPLAN, 2021. Central West Industries Gross Regional Product <<https://app.rempln.com.au/rdacentralwest/economy/industries/gross-regional-product?state=O3zBf9!5BwdFoD7AFvML7Gh0D6wzcLTEh6oGuxh9hOCxhdZ0>>
- 39 REMPLAN, 2021. Orana Industries Gross Regional Product. <<https://app.rempln.com.au/regionaldevelopmentorana/economy/industries/employment?state=DL1NFv!ZXL7FVBxJCn1nPGHPW527uOtNS21AHDNjNRcg525rc8SD3hPSLIbbX2t6ed>>
- 40 REMPLAN, 2021. Central West Industries Gross Regional Product <<https://app.rempln.com.au/rdacentralwest/economy/industries/gross-regional-product?state=O3zBf9!5BwdFoD7AFvML7Gh0D6wzcLTEh6oGuxh9hOCxhdZ0>>
- 41 REMPLAN, 2021. Orana Industries Gross Regional Product. <<https://app.rempln.com.au/regionaldevelopmentorana/economy/industries/employment?state=DL1NFv!ZXL7FVBxJCn1nPGHPW527uOtNS21AHDNjNRcg525rc8SD3hPSLIbbX2t6ed>>
- 42 REMPLAN, 2021. Central West Industries Gross Regional Product <<https://app.rempln.com.au/rdacentralwest/economy/industries/gross-regional-product?state=O3zBf9!5BwdFoD7AFvML7Gh0D6wzcLTEh6oGuxh9hOCxhdZ0>>
- 43 REMPLAN, 2021. Orana Industries Gross Regional Product. <<https://app.rempln.com.au/regionaldevelopmentorana/economy/industries/employment?state=DL1NFv!ZXL7FVBxJCn1nPGHPW527uOtNS21AHDNjNRcg525rc8SD3hPSLIbbX2t6ed>>
- 44 REMPLAN, 2021. Central West Industries Gross Regional Product <<https://app.rempln.com.au/rdacentralwest/economy/industries/gross-regional-product?state=O3zBf9!5BwdFoD7AFvML7Gh0D6wzcLTEh6oGuxh9hOCxhdZ0>>
- 45 REMPLAN, 2021. Orana Industries Gross Regional Product. <<https://app.rempln.com.au/regionaldevelopmentorana/economy/industries/employment?state=DL1NFv!ZXL7FVBxJCn1nPGHPW527uOtNS21AHDNjNRcg525rc8SD3hPSLIbbX2t6ed>>
- 46 REMPLAN, 2021. Central West Industries Gross Regional Product <<https://app.rempln.com.au/rdacentralwest/economy/industries/gross-regional-product?state=O3zBf9!5BwdFoD7AFvML7Gh0D6wzcLTEh6oGuxh9hOCxhdZ0>>
- 47 REMPLAN, 2021. Central West Industries Gross Regional Product <<https://app.rempln.com.au/rdacentralwest/economy/industries/gross-regional-product?state=O3zBf9!5BwdFoD7AFvML7Gh0D6wzcLTEh6oGuxh9hOCxhdZ0>>
- 48 REMPLAN, 2021. Orana Industries Gross Regional Product. <<https://app.rempln.com.au/regionaldevelopmentorana/economy/industries/employment?state=DL1NFv!ZXL7FVBxJCn1nPGHPW527uOtNS21AHDNjNRcg525rc8SD3hPSLIbbX2t6ed>>
- 49 REMPLAN, 2021. Orana Industries Gross Regional Product. <<https://app.rempln.com.au/regionaldevelopmentorana/economy/industries/employment?state=DL1NFv!ZXL7FVBxJCn1nPGHPW527uOtNS21AHDNjNRcg525rc8SD3hPSLIbbX2t6ed>>
- 50 REMPLAN, 2021. Central West Industries Gross Regional Product <<https://app.rempln.com.au/rdacentralwest/economy/industries/gross-regional-product?state=O3zBf9!5BwdFoD7AFvML7Gh0D6wzcLTEh6oGuxh9hOCxhdZ0>>
- 51 REMPLAN, 2021. Central West Industries Gross Regional Product <<https://app.rempln.com.au/rdacentralwest/economy/industries/gross-regional-product?state=O3zBf9!5BwdFoD7AFvML7Gh0D6wzcLTEh6oGuxh9hOCxhdZ0>>
- 52 REMPLAN, 2021. Central West Industries Gross Regional Product <<https://app.rempln.com.au/rdacentralwest/economy/industries/gross-regional-product?state=O3zBf9!5BwdFoD7AFvML7Gh0D6wzcLTEh6oGuxh9hOCxhdZ0>>
- 53 REMPLAN, 2021. Orana Industries Gross Regional Product. <<https://app.rempln.com.au/regionaldevelopmentorana/economy/industries/employment?state=DL1NFv!ZXL7FVBxJCn1nPGHPW527uOtNS21AHDNjNRcg525rc8SD3hPSLIbbX2t6ed>>
- 54 REMPLAN, 2021. Orana Industries Gross Regional Product. <<https://app.rempln.com.au/regionaldevelopmentorana/economy/industries/employment?state=DL1NFv!ZXL7FVBxJCn1nPGHPW527uOtNS21AHDNjNRcg525rc8SD3hPSLIbbX2t6ed>>
- 55 REMPLAN, 2021. Central West Industries Gross Regional Product <<https://app.rempln.com.au/rdacentralwest/economy/industries/gross-regional-product?state=O3zBf9!5BwdFoD7AFvML7Gh0D6wzcLTEh6oGuxh9hOCxhdZ0>>

