



Central West and Orana Regional Plan 2041



Published by NSW Department of Planning and Environment

dpie.nsw.gov.au

Title: Central West and Orana Regional Plan 2041

ISBN: 978-1-76058-639-3

First published: December 2022

Image on front cover: Machattie Park, Bathurst
Above: Orange, Central NSW. Credit: Destination NSW.

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Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Planning 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 in 2021 was 291,073 with 26,652 identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. The *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, trading and seasonal migration while maintaining spiritual connection to Country.

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.

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.

Aboriginal artwork, main street Dubbo.

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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 rapidly diversifying 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 *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 (LSPS) 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 Central West and Orana continues to confront challenges such as drought, bushfire, mice plagues, the global pandemic and more recently, flooding impacts across large areas of the region.

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 to reset priorities through to 2041.

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

As demand for critical minerals increases significantly over the next 40 years, the region is well positioned to become a national leader in critical minerals extraction, processing and advanced manufacturing.

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 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. Continuing to make best use of the existing transmission infrastructure, transforming places such as Lithgow into a clean energy and logistics hub and making Parkes a centre for critical mineral and a circular economy hub will diversify the region's economy.

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 around Bathurst, Orange and Dubbo.

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 the future, the plan contains strategies to boost the region as a visitor 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.

The Hon. Anthony Roberts
Minister for Planning
Minister for Homes



Introduction

This updated 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 under section 3.3 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) and applies to the local government areas (LGAs) of Bathurst, Blayney, Bogan, Cabonne, Coonamble, Cowra, Dubbo, Forbes, Gilgandra, Lachlan, Lithgow, Mid-Western, Narromine, Oberon, Orange, Parkes, Warren, Warrumbungle and Weddin.

This *Central West and Orana Regional Plan 2041* (plan) considers a 20-year timeframe with a focus on the next 5 years.

The EP&A Act provides the legislative basis for regional plans, including requirements for their content and regular review. The EP&A Act also requires the preparation of LSPS 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 LSPS and a requirement to review them at regular intervals.

This plan will guide land use planning decisions in the region by the NSW Government, councils and others to the year 2041.

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 LGAs drain to the coast through the Goulburn/Hunter and Hawkesbury-Nepean rivers (including parts of the Sydney Drinking Water Catchment). 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.

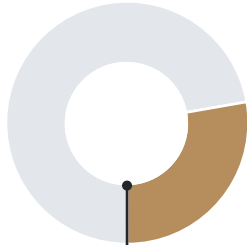
The region's population lives in a diverse network of centres and rural localities. Most people live in or around centres which range in size from large regional cities to smaller towns and villages. Each centre has its own catchment, drawing people from the surrounding communities for employment, services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

The regional cities of Bathurst and Orange in the east have relatively contained local catchments and improving connections, through Lithgow, to both Sydney and, alongside Cowra, to Canberra and on to Wollongong. 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.



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.



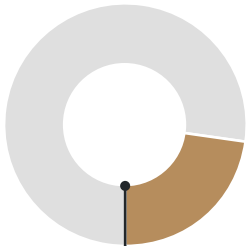
Mining and agriculture remain in the top 5 regional industries, together creating **28%** of the region's economic output.



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

Rural vineyard in Mudgee.
 Credit: Destination NSW



Current and recent challenges

Some of the biggest changes and challenges are not unique to the region. The COVID-19 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 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 (CO₂) and other greenhouse gas emissions occur in the coming decades.¹

Resilience will be a critical component of the region's future with the need to identify vulnerable communities and 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. Subsequently, the 2022 floods resulted in 18 of the region's 19 local government areas subject to a natural disaster declaration². Major dams in the region (Burrendong and Wyangala) have reached capacity requiring WaterNSW to release water to manage storage capacity. While the end of any natural disaster brings relief, recurrence of these events is inevitable.

With all surface water currently allocated, the region needs to become more efficient in its use and smarter with its allocation, to ensure continued regional prosperity. 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.

This includes reallocating any high-security water that is no longer needed to secure town water supplies and support existing and emerging industries such as the green hydrogen economy.

Structure of the plan

The 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:
 - Part 1 contains specific responses to the region-shaping investment that will support economic growth and diversification across the region
 - Part 2 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 3 is concerned with the people and the settlements they live in
 - Part 4 is concerned with the prosperity that the region aspires to which is underpinned by a healthy environment and well-functioning settlement
- Part 5 contains the planning priorities for each local government area.

Within the plan, there are different types of responses as follows:

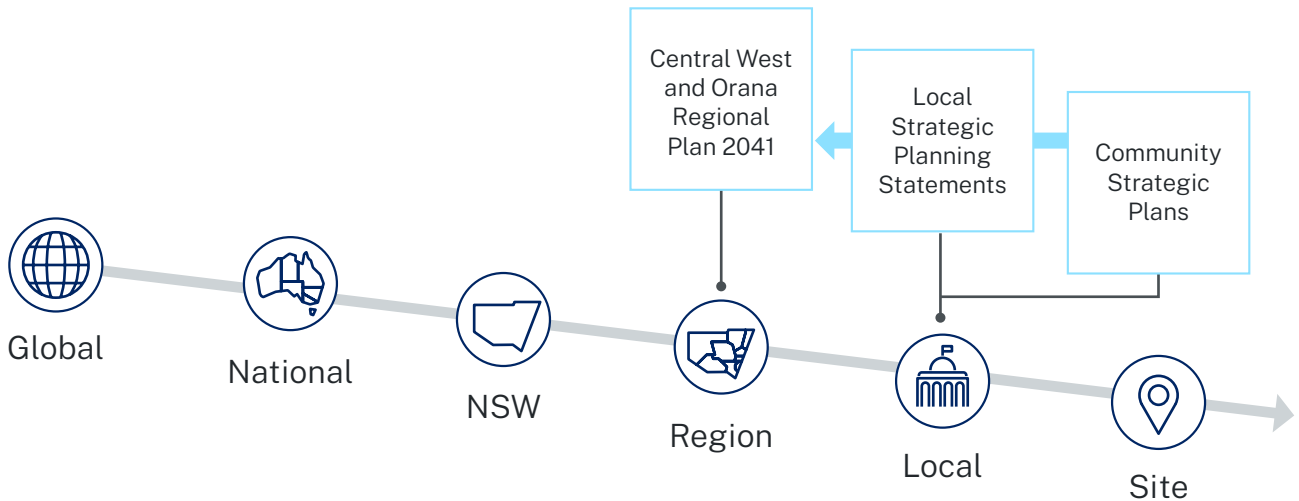
Objectives are high-level goals usually containing strategies, actions and collaboration activities.

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

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

Collaboration Activities are joint initiatives between State agencies, local councils and other parties.

Figure 1: Strategic planning line of sight



Implementation, monitoring and review

The department’s Western Region team will coordinate the implementation of the regional plan and monitor and report on progress. We’ll communicate this to the relevant Regional Leadership Executives (RLEs), councils, state agencies and the community.

RLEs are comprised of the executives of NSW Government agencies in each region of NSW. The RLE’s role is to respond to emerging opportunities and issues, lead cross-government or multi-agency actions, provide strategic advice, broker solutions and make decisions using a whole-of-region and whole-of-government lens. The RLE will be the forum to discuss and resolve implementation issues where identified.

The regional plan will be implemented in accordance with an implementation plan that prioritises actions, collaboration activities and council activities.

These priorities allow governments to focus resources to best address land use planning issues.

Bi-annual planning forums for the department and councils will focus on regional plan performance and collaboration opportunities. Councils will be updated on key actions while having the opportunity to discuss emerging issues and trends and identify where support would be beneficial. The forums may see the reprioritisation or change to regional plan components as required, rather than waiting until the plan is reviewed.

Outcome-specific working groups based around the collaboration activities will include members relevant to the collaboration activity and will meet as needed for that activity.

The implementation plan, reporting on progress towards delivering the plan’s actions and collaboration activities and indicators of relevance to the regional plan (e.g. demographic information) will be displayed on the department’s website.

Vision
A healthy, connected and resilient region,
with a prosperous economy




Pages
12-13

Parts

Region- shaping investment	A sustainable and resilient place	People, centres, housing and communities	Prosperity, productivity and innovation	Local Government Priorities
page 16	page 30	page 54	page 84	page 102

Pages
16-112

Objectives 1-4	Objectives 5-10	Objectives 11-17	Objectives 18-23	Statements for each LGA
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<p>Strategies Guidance for councils in preparing local strategic plans, local plans and planning proposals, as well as setting direction for state agencies to support the objectives of the plan.</p>	
<p>Actions Initiatives that are led by the department that will be delivered in the next 5 years, with new actions identified during the next review.</p>	
<p>Collaboration Activities Joint initiatives between State agencies, local councils and other parties which support the objectives.</p>	



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 325,000 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 Mount Panorama/Wahluu 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, store and use 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 and a transition away from coal mining and coal-fired power generation in Lithgow.

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



Borrodeell Vineyard, Canobolas.
Credit: Destination NSW

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 focal point for freight supporting productive and diversified agribusiness, mining 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 population and 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.

Fast Rail improvements along the corridor will provide 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 Distributor 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 Lithgow and the Blue Mountains and onto Western Sydney provides the region with a competitive level of service, activating the Central West Growth Corridor and supporting regional tourism growth and increased freight certainty.

The critical minerals and energy resource sectors make a significant economic contribution, with new extraction and processing opportunities emerging as the importance of the region's critical mineral resources to modern technology is realised. Landmark solar, wind, pumped hydro, green hydrogen, energy from waste, energy storage, 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.

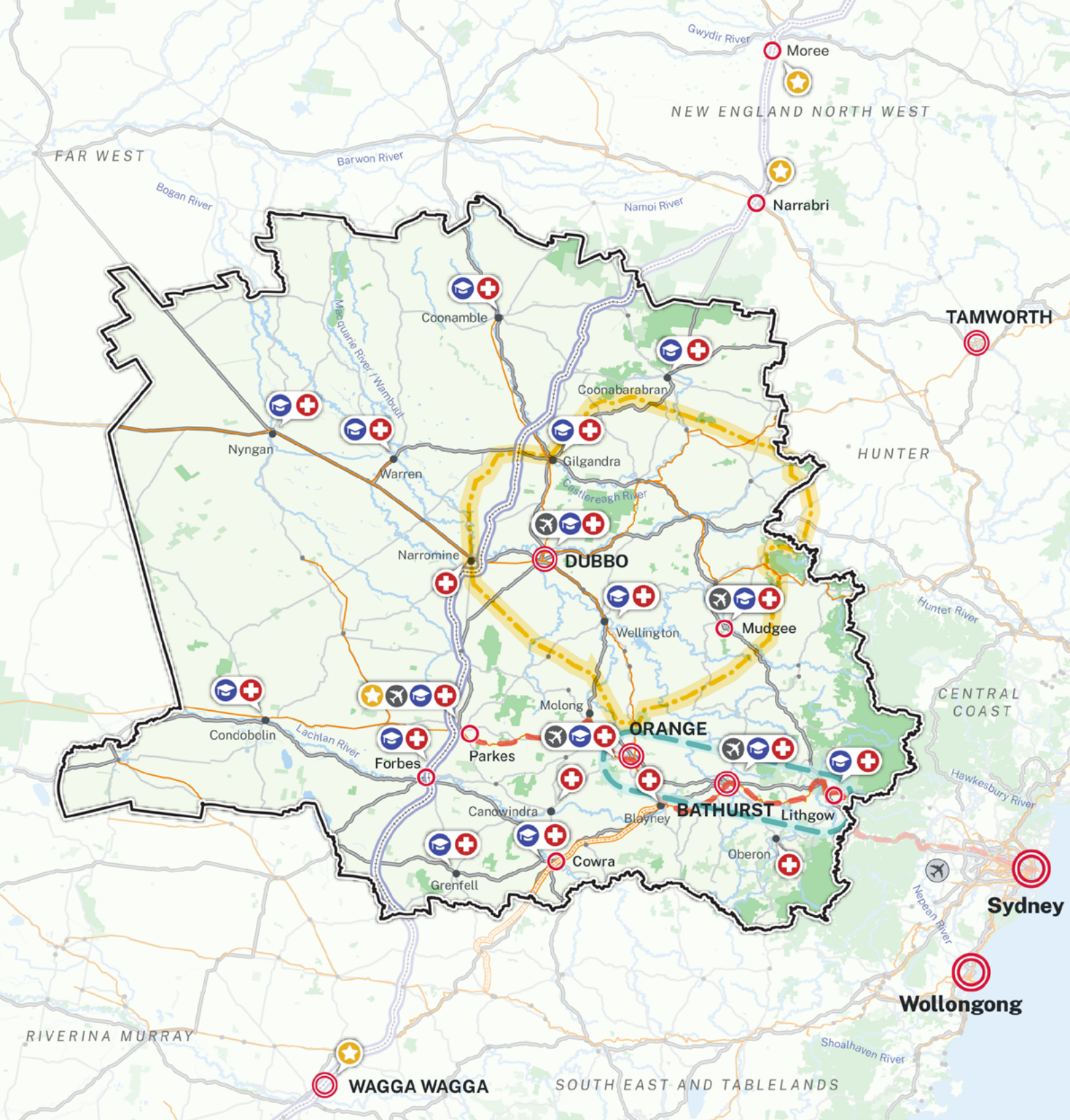


Figure 2: Vision map for the Central West and Orana



- | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|---|------------------------------|
| Regional boundary | Airport (regular public transport) | Inland rail alignment | Central West growth corridor |
| Metropolitan city | Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport | Cowra line rail feasibility investigation | Highway |
| Regional city | TAFE or University | Central West to Sydney Fast Rail – upgraded existing line | Road |
| Strategic centre | Hospital | Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone | National park and reserve |
| Centre | Railway | | State forest |
| Special Activation Precinct | | | Water body |



PART

1

Region-shaping investment



Peak Hill Open Cut Mine in Parkes Shire.
Credit. Destination NSW.



Blayney

PART

1

Region-shaping investment

The Central West and Orana will benefit from significant region-shaping investment through projects such as the Parkes Special Activation Precinct (Parkes SAP), renewable energy projects (e.g. the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone (REZ)), major transport investment (e.g. Inland Rail, the Great Western Highway (GWH) upgrade, Fast Rail) and interest in other infrastructure and mining projects, including the emerging critical minerals sector.

An estimated \$12.6 billion of investment is expected to occur in major capital projects in the region over the next 5 years. With untapped mineral and renewable energy resource potential and improvements to connectivity with international markets, Greater Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne, the region has great prospects for further investment and growth.

This investment will provide significant short and long-term opportunities and challenges to the region. Providing a coordinated State and local government and industry response to this investment, through planning for housing, transport, land use and infrastructure will ensure change occurs in an orderly way and potential blockages or negative impacts are addressed in a collaborative way. A coordinated approach to planning and delivery will also ensure that communities within the region achieve greater collective benefits.

The provision of housing and infrastructure and services to support both construction and operational workforces are challenges that must be overcome through a collective effort. New permanent and temporary residents 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.

Collaboration is required to optimise the region's economic diversification, infrastructure provision, and development of strategic land use planning policy.

Collaboration Activity 1

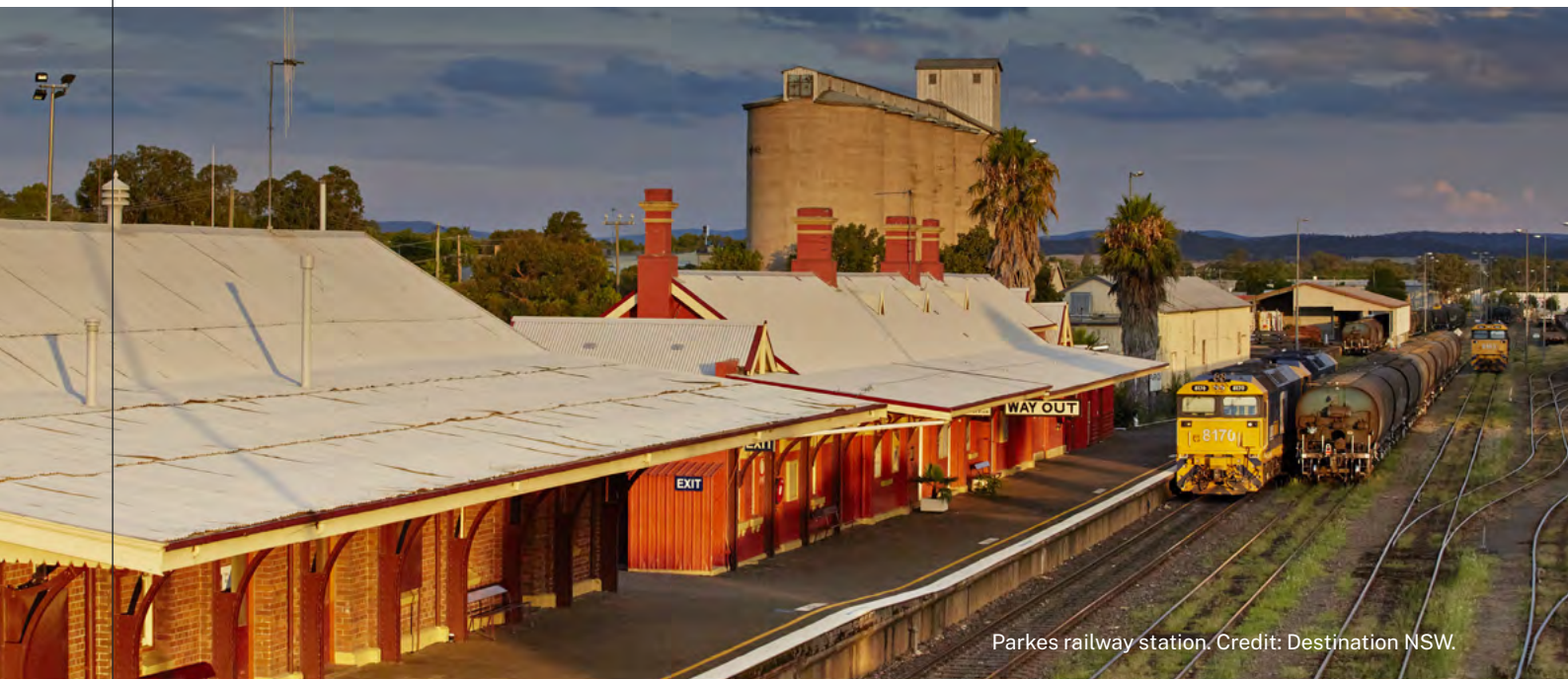


The department will work with the Department of Regional NSW, other government agencies, joint organisations and councils to:

- identify major projects and infrastructure investments within the region, including mining, renewable energy, transmission, and road and rail projects
- understand the cumulative impacts of major projects on the region, including the housing, employment and skills needed to support their construction and ongoing operation and how these projects will affect the surrounding communities
- determine suitable mechanisms to ensure project design and development assessment considers these impacts early.
- collaboratively ensure potential benefits of major projects are realised and shared across the region.

OBJECTIVE 1:

Deliver the Parkes Special Activation Precinct and share its benefits across the region



Parkes railway station. Credit: Destination NSW.

The 4,800 ha Parkes SAP will create jobs across freight and logistics, resource recovery, value-added agriculture, critical minerals processing and energy generation. It will be focused on sustainability as Australia's first UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organisation) 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 up to 3,000 jobs and support additional employment and housing opportunities elsewhere in the region.³ The land uses permitted in the Parkes SAP are intended to support complementary industries elsewhere within the region so they can leverage proximity to Parkes, without competing with the SAP's core land uses.

Locating complementary industries in smaller centres and providing capacity for their future growth can support local employment and economic development. Locations within a commutable distance to the Parkes SAP, including centres and industries in the Lachlan, Forbes and Cabonne LGAs will also be impacted by potential population and industry changes.

Examples of local development opportunities that could benefit from links and proximity to the Parkes SAP include:

- the Central West Industrial Park in Forbes which is ideally located for industry such as intensive agriculture, shed-based agriculture and refrigerated distribution centres
- the proposed logistics and warehousing centre at Condbolin which also benefits from the rail connection between Parkes and Broken Hill
- agricultural and mining enterprises, throughout the region and in the adjoining regions.

Collaboration Activity 2



The department will work with Department of Regional NSW, Transport for NSW, Parkes, Forbes, Lachlan, Orange, Cabonne, Narromine, Dubbo Regional, Cowra and Weddin councils to identify and strategically respond to potential housing and other land use planning opportunities and impacts from the Parkes SAP.

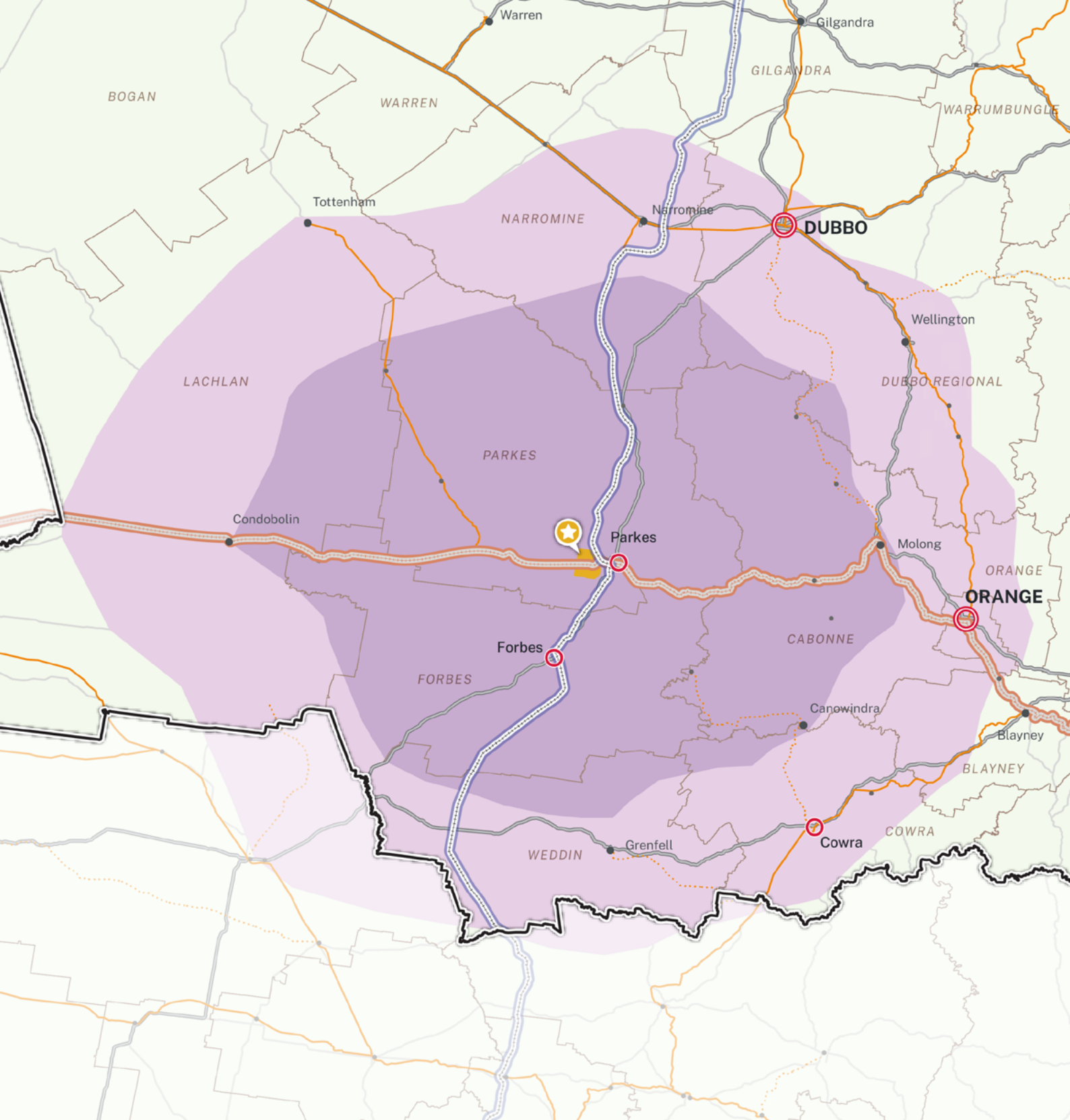


Figure 3: Parkes Special Activation Precinct – potential commuter catchment area



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

OBJECTIVE 2:

Support the State's transition to Net Zero by 2050 and deliver the Central–West Orana Renewable Energy Zone

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 energy sources is essential. The NSW Government has committed to net zero emissions by 2050, requiring greater renewable electricity generation, transmission and storage. Renewable energy is now cost competitive with other forms of electricity generation and is key to NSW achieving net zero.

The Central West and Orana's emissions in 2019 were 8.76 million tonnes of CO₂-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.⁴

Electricity demand is expected to increase as we change the way we power our homes, transport, industry, and centres. The Australian Energy Market Operator forecasts a step-change in the transition away from fossil fuels and higher electrical demand with recent events in the global energy market making this scenario more likely to occur.

This transition will require fundamental changes to how electricity is generated, transported, stored and used. Careful management of this transition will ensure the region benefits from economic diversification opportunities that will come from the transition and for ongoing support for existing industries. Land use planning can help to guide an orderly transition and maximise these benefits for the region. Major energy infrastructure projects in the region will also bring improvements to roads and telecommunications.

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. There is already \$6 billion in planned energy projects in the Central West and Orana region over the

next 5 years⁵. Increasing renewable energy investment, the expected closing of coal mines and coal-fired power generation in the Lithgow area and investment in new technology such as green hydrogen, will contribute significantly to a reduction in emissions.

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 and 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.⁶



Ongoing work to deliver the Central–West Orana REZ includes:

- declaration of 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 (ongoing)
- formal declaration of the intended network capacity (size), geographic area (location) and infrastructure that will make up the REZ (ongoing)
- 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 and industry consultation regarding specific projects around skills, housing and community benefit-sharing.

The Energy Corporation of NSW (EnergyCo NSW) will coordinate the delivery of the REZ in consultation with the industry, councils, First Nations stakeholders and local communities and will establish a community benefit-sharing scheme.

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, information technology 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. Other opportunities for the region could include green hydrogen manufacturing and high-tech manufacturing in centres such as Lithgow that have good infrastructure and network availability, access to water and proximity to major transport routes.

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. 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 2.1



To prepare for the transition to Net Zero strategic and statutory planning should:

- incorporate appropriate scales of renewable energy infrastructure into existing urban areas, including through urban design and place-making projects
- provide opportunity for future buildings and urban release areas to be 'renewable-ready'
- identify opportunities for industries that are potential high-energy users, including manufacturing, materials processing (e.g. critical minerals etc.) to transition to low emissions and renewable energy sources
- provide measures that will increase the energy efficiency of new and renovated buildings and subdivisions
- identify opportunities for the transport network (freight and passenger) to be supported by:
 - encouraging a regional approach to the rollout of renewable fuel vehicle refuelling points including opportunities for council-owned land, and colocation with other public space functions, where appropriate
 - promoting the take up of autonomous 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
- promote waste management measures and resource recovery for households and businesses in the region
- accelerate efforts to restore, manage, and conserve natural environments to serve as a net sink of emissions
- foster mainstreaming of low or no carbon technologies into all relevant council policies.



The region offers potential for renewable energy industries

Collaboration Activity 3



The Energy Corporation of NSW will work with the Renewable Energy Sector Board, the department, Department of Regional NSW, the Department of Primary Industries (Agriculture), councils and Aboriginal and community stakeholders to develop the Central-West Orana REZ.

Collaboration Activity 4



The department, Energy Corporation of NSW, Department of Regional NSW and councils will identify economic diversification and land use planning issues, opportunities and actions to respond to changes in energy generation, transmission, storage and use required to meet the NSW target of Net Zero by 2050.

OBJECTIVE 3:

Sustainably manage extractive resource land and grow the critical minerals sector

The Central West and Orana has an established mining industry and is rich with high-tech metals, critical mineral resources and construction materials. The sector has scope for growth with the region having additional extractive resource potential, supporting infrastructure, a 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 for minerals has grown rapidly due to ongoing demand for construction materials, disruptions to global supply chains and increased prevalence of personal electronic devices, electric vehicles and renewable energy generation.

The *NSW Critical Minerals and High-tech Metals Strategy* identifies potential for increased exploration, mining and processing of critical minerals in the region. There is an opportunity for critical minerals producers, value-add industry and potential exporters to co locate and:

- benefit from proximity to the Inland Rail and existing, approved, and potential mining projects in the Central West and Orana and Far West regions
- support critical minerals and high-tech metals processing and downstream industries such as the circular economy and reprocessing and renewable energy.

Major infrastructure projects within the region and the region's good access to Sydney, Canberra and Newcastle is expected to lead to increased demand for construction materials. For example, the Narromine to Narrabri segment of Inland Rail will require 1 million tonnes of ballast and capping from quarries in the region. The Central-West Orana REZ and other renewable energy projects will also increase demand for construction materials.

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 NSW Government is committed to supporting the growth of the mining sector across the critical minerals supply chain, through investments in exploration, mining, processing, downstream industries, and circular economies. Land use planning can assist in sustaining the success of the sector by:

- ensuring extractive industry projects align with industry best standards, contributing to a secure critical minerals sector and protecting the region's environmental values and productive agricultural land
- improving information on the location and resource potential of critical mineral occurrences in NSW, in consultation with Department of Regional NSW (Mining, Exploration and Geoscience)
- protecting existing projects, associated mining and processing infrastructure, supply chains and known and potential extractive resource deposits, from incompatible land uses
- leveraging mainstream shifts in land use planning regulations to accelerate the development of this emerging metals industry, such as the *Planning Reform Action Plan* designed to reduce red tape and assessment timeframes for development applications (while maintaining a best-practice and transparent environmental assessment framework)
- utilising the Mining Concierge service to support investors and mining corporations navigate regulatory requirements for mining proposals in NSW
- identifying potential industry pinch-points and other opportunities to collaborate around related issues such as housing, transport, logistics and skills.

The region offers potential for increased exploration, mining and processing of critical minerals



Strategy 3.1



Strategic planning and statutory planning are 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 existing and proposed 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 and supply-chain movements
- promoting opportunities for minerals processing within the region
- addressing water resource constraints and impacts
- 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 5



The department and Department of Regional NSW (Mining, Exploration and Geoscience) will identify existing and proposed mining and extractive industry operations and known or potential resource areas in the region and update/produce a map to inform the application of local planning direction 8.1 Mining, Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries.

Collaboration Activity 6



The department and Department of Regional NSW (Mining, Exploration and Geoscience and Regional Development) will collaborate with councils and other stakeholders to identify:

- processing and manufacturing opportunities associated with the critical minerals industry in the Central West and other related industry opportunities, including renewable energy and the circular economy
- potential pinch-points that could affect the mining industry in the region, including housing and supply chains and ways to overcome these pinch-points.

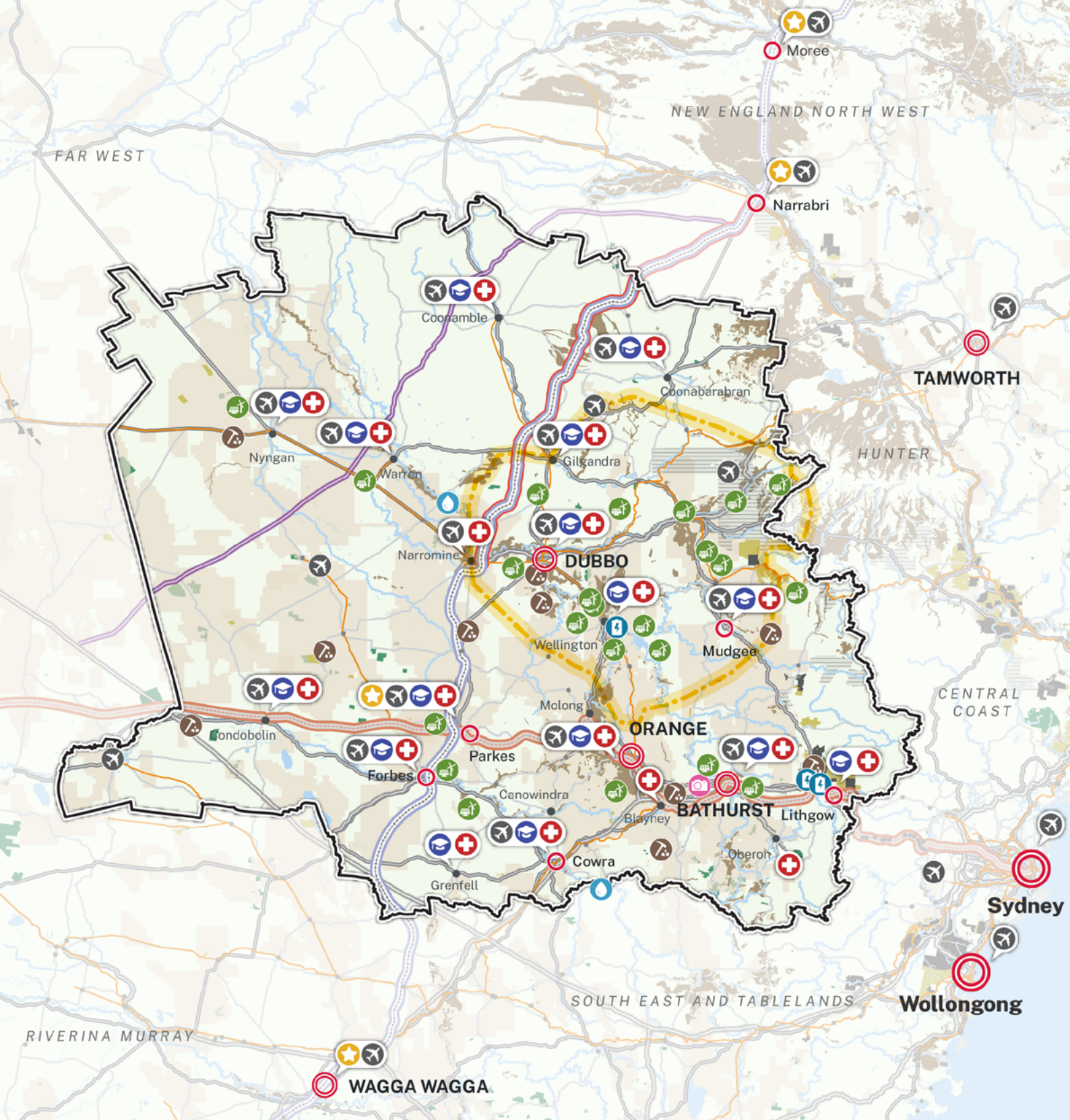
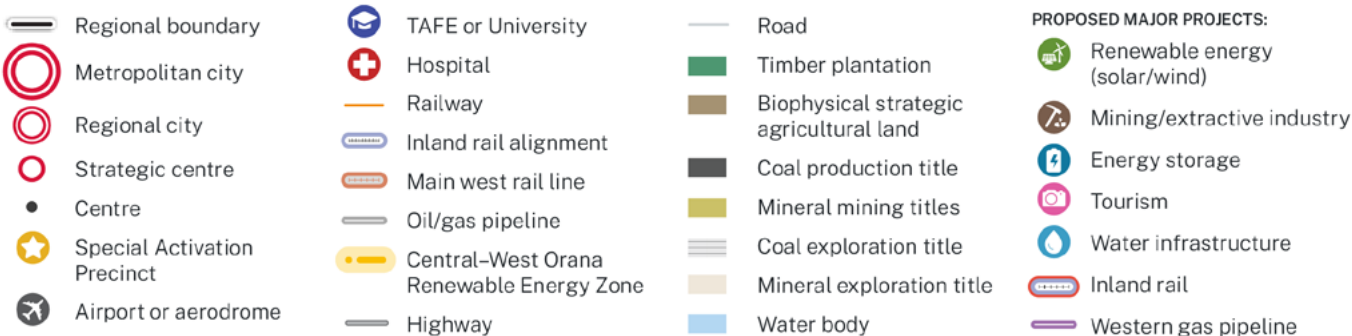


Figure 4: Employment, resources and proposed major projects





Wallerawang Power Station, Lithgow

Economic diversification of existing mining economies

While there will be growth in the production of extractive resources throughout the region, there will also be communities that will move to a post-mining economy (e.g. Lithgow) and others which will be moving through the life cycle of multiple approved mining operations (e.g. Mid-Western) during the lifetime of the Regional Plan. We need to identify how these economies and communities will successfully transition beyond their current reliance on coal mining and fossil-fuel-based thermal power generation in the case of Lithgow.

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. The NSW Government's Royalties for Rejuvenation Fund will continue to support investment attraction and the growth of new jobs and industries in coal mining communities as our energy mix evolves over the coming decades.

Lithgow will diversify its economy by building on its existing economic and infrastructure strengths, its natural environment and landscape and proximity to the regional cities of Bathurst and Orange and to the Blue Mountains and Western Sydney. Lithgow's transition will be supported by the NSW Government and provide a successful economic transition model for communities moving away from a fossil fuel-based economy.

Lithgow will build on its current strengths in:

- manufacturing and processing and the presence of multinational organisations including Thales, Ferrero, and Veolia (Veolia Water Treatment Plant)
- visitor economy, with Emirates (One & Only Wolgan Valley Luxury Resort), the proposed Gardens of Stone and the Lost City Adventures project supporting increased tourism activity and investment
- repurposing and reusing its existing infrastructure and water agreements to support new industries such as renewable energy (including solar energy generation, green hydrogen manufacturing and storage) and adaptive reuse of former industrial sites such as the Wallerawang Power Station site.

Collaboration Activity 7



Department of Regional NSW, Training Services NSW, Lithgow City Council, the department and industry representatives will support preparation and delivery of an economic transition and diversification plan for Lithgow.

OBJECTIVE 4:

Leverage inter-regional transport connections

Inland Rail

Inland Rail will be a freight rail line connecting Melbourne and Brisbane via regional Victoria, NSW, and Queensland with more than 1,000 km of the total 1,700 km line in NSW. It is expected to be operational by 2027 and will:

- boost national productivity and provide a catalyst for further economic development and employment growth in the regions
- support more than 21,500 jobs at the peak of construction and contribute more than \$18 billion to GDP during construction and the first 50 years of operation⁷
- optimise freight efficiency and transport reliability, catalyze investments, and benefits for industries such as agricultural, mining and logistics by unlocking opportunities to access domestic and international markets.

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

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

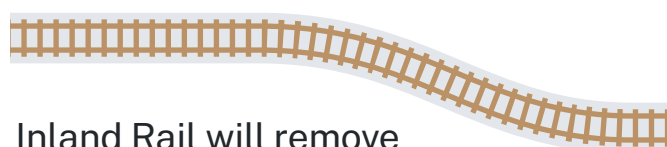
The Narromine to Narrabri section of Inland Rail is a 306 km⁸ section of new track (and primarily new rail corridor) that will provide east-west connections at Narromine and Gilgandra (Curban).

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. Planning for the establishment of the rail corridor will also need to consider issues related to severance of land holdings by the rail corridor.

Several centres along the Inland Rail will experience growth and development, such as Narromine and Parkes, and will require planning resources to strategically plan and manage land use change efficiently and effectively.

Temporary workforce accommodation facilities for approximately 2,000 employees (at peak construction) are expected to be constructed at Narromine, Gilgandra, Baradine and Narrabri⁹. Councils will respond by identifying opportunities for the post-construction use of temporary worker accommodation and/or associated infrastructure to support local housing markets, towns and future major projects, as well as consider demands on infrastructure provisions to cater for a large transient population.

While Inland Rail is being purpose-built for freight, there may be long-term demand for passenger movements in the future.



Inland Rail will remove

63,000

heavy vehicle trips a year from sections of the Newell Highway⁹



and support more than

21,500

jobs at the peak of construction



Great Western Highway

The upgraded Great Western Highway connecting the Central West, through the Blue Mountains and to the Western Parkland City provides the region with a competitive level of service that supports growth in the regional visitor economy and increased freight certainty.

The Great Western Highway upgrade between Katoomba and Lithgow, features the country's longest road tunnel and at peak construction will have 3,900 employed. The project will improve the connection between Central West NSW and Western Sydney, reduce congestion, improve access resilience and freight productivity, and provide a safer and more reliable journey.

With a predicted 30 minute travel time reduction from Lithgow the upgraded access will place parts of Central West and Orana within a 60 minute commute from the Western Sydney Aerotropolis and the Western Parkland City. The upgraded highway access will further unlock development opportunities for the region and support the establishment of the Central West Growth Corridor comprising Lithgow, Bathurst, Orange and the surrounding areas.

Fast Rail

The *Fast Rail Strategy* will be a blueprint for the Fast Rail network. It will aim to improve connectivity between regional cities by considering 4 corridors: Southern Inland, Southern Coastal, Northern and Central West.

Improved passenger rail and connections to Sydney and beyond can strengthen 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 support jobs growth in Lithgow, Bathurst and Orange and in the surrounding communities. Bathurst and Orange already share a strong commuter connection for employment accounting for approximately 25 to 35% of all trips within this corridor.

Collaboration Activity 8



The department will work with Transport for NSW, the Australian Government, the Australian Rail Track Corporation, Department of Regional NSW and councils to ensure the challenges and opportunities associated with Inland Rail are appropriately addressed through strategic and statutory planning measures that:

- support establishment of the new freight route and associated infrastructure and land use
- either avoid or manage any potential land use conflicts associated with its ongoing operation
- facilitate initiatives that enable the region, surrounding communities' and industries to benefit from the establishment of the inland rail
- enable the long-term potential for passenger services.

Collaboration Activity 9



The department will work with Transport for NSW, Department of Regional NSW, councils and other stakeholders to identify opportunities to leverage proposed investment in upgrading the Great Western Highway and Fast Rail to create a growth corridor linking the Lithgow, Bathurst and Orange areas to Greater Sydney, Western Sydney Aerotropolis and the Western Parkland City.



Figure 5: Inter-regional connections



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

PART

2

A sustainable and resilient place





PART

2

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 Wambuul (Macquarie River) and the Murrumbidjeri (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. Making the best use of infrastructure from mining and energy projects which are ceasing operation will help the region adapt to and thrive in a carbon constrained future. Land use and infrastructure planning must respond to these risks and new opportunities.

OBJECTIVE 5:

Identify, protect and connect important environmental assets

Macquarie River/Wambuul, Dubbo. Credit: Destination NSW



High environmental value land

Terrestrial 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.

Terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity 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 Figure 6: Environment values 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.



Figure 6: Environmental values

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

Strategy 5.1



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
- protect, maintain and enhance HEV on public land by assessing council managed land for the presence of HEV to identify land suitable for conservation agreements.

Collaboration Activity 10



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 11



The department (planning and environment divisions) will work with and assist councils to:

- understand and apply the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act)
- prepare and review LEP and development control plan (DCP) controls/principles to guide development and align the EP&A Act and the BC Act throughout development assessment
- identify potential development and conservation opportunities for zoned development sites that have known biodiversity values
- 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.

Cowra Bakers Shaft Reserve





Mandagery Creek in Manildra, NSW.

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 new growth is expected to occur, or where new or expanded development such as mining and industrial activity occurs.

Sources of biodiversity values information and data to support decision making include:

- Detailed survey data
- LEP mapping
- State agency data such as the Biodiversity Offset Scheme and Biodiversity Values Maps
- The Department of Regional NSW Local Land Services Native Vegetation Regulatory Map.

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 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 5.2



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
- identifying HEV land at planning proposal stage through site investigation
- applying appropriate environmental zones to validated HEV land
- encourage biodiversity certification at the precinct scale for high growth areas and by individual landholders at the site scale, where appropriate.

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 to 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. TSRs provide corridors connecting otherwise isolated patches of vegetation and habitat. They are often located on fertile soils and in overcleared landscapes and support a range of threatened species and ecological communities. TSRs provide important refugia and often contain the most intact and representative remnant native vegetation in that area. These reserves can contain significant biodiversity and Aboriginal cultural heritage values and must be carefully managed to balance the needs of travelling stock and conservation.

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 5.3



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
- use travelling stock reserves mapping and their categorisation methods to identify potential biodiversity corridors and linkages in the local landscape
- establish relevant partnerships with LALCs and Councils to protect and manage travelling stock reserves
- identifying in LEPs as a map overlay with associated clause
- reviewing land zonings on land where there are opportunities to protect high priority corridor areas
- reserving links between areas of projected climate refugia.

Strategy 5.4



Support the Biodiversity Conservation Trust in delivering private land conservation programs by:

- educating landholders on conservation outcomes and financial opportunities available through conservation agreements on private land
- encouraging and supporting landholders to participate in private land conservation
- encouraging landholders to prioritise investment in biodiversity corridors and linkages.

OBJECTIVE 6:

Support connected and healthy communities



Mayfield Garden, Oberon

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 improve residents' quality of life by increasing 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.

Centres without riverfront land should also identify opportunities to improve natural and open space assets and link these to their centres, for the benefit of residents and visitors.

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, enhanced air quality 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 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).

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 and similar links between the Forbes CBD and Lake Forbes.

Several non-operational railway lines exist which could be transformed into rail trails. NSW Government has streamlined the process to enable greater flexibility in the development of rail trails. This could facilitate opportunities to connect places through a network of trails providing valuable public space and supporting the region's visitor economy.

Strategy 6.1



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
- understand and manage potential noise impacts of play areas on existing and proposed surrounding residential areas
- 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 and preparing Active Transport Plans, where appropriate
 - enhance tree canopy across the private domain.

Strategy 6.2



Strategic planning and local plans should consider opportunities to:

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

Strategy 6.3



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.



Victoria Park, Forbes.
Credit: Destination NSW

Collaboration Activity 12

The department will work with councils, joint organisations, LALCs and State agencies to identify recreation and tourism facilities and opportunities for pedestrian cycling networks and destinations, including mountain bike tracks and parks.

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, Lake Forbes and the surrounding land
- wetlands such as the Macquarie Marshes and Lachlan catchment wetlands and reserves such as the Gum Swamp Bird Sanctuary
- 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 (the Cowra line), the Molong Toongi Rail trail and other linear areas such as travelling stock routes
- the Central West Cycle Trail
- regional sporting and recreation hubs such as the Glen Willow Regional Sports Complex, Lake Burrendong Sport and Recreation Centre and the existing regional sports hub in Dubbo and potential hubs in other centres
- The Lithgow Lost City Adventure Experience, a regional eco-tourism precinct.

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

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 in 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, upstream 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 for pedestrians and cyclists.

Rivers and other waterbodies, along with waterfront areas should be the centrepiece of adjoining 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 riparian corridors 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.

Strategy 6.4



Strategic and statutory planning for riverine environments should be consistent with the objectives in the department's waterfront development guideline to:

- incorporate waterfront areas into open space networks and prioritise public access to riverine lands and waterways
- consider areas that can be embellished to provide tourism, recreation and public open space opportunities that support the principles of the *Public Spaces Charter*
- prioritise subdivision of urban riverfront land for public access
- recognise the river corridors in LEPs to increase protection for the rivers
- ensure adequate setbacks from waterways to accommodate natural river processes and reduce the need for future hazard protection
- integrate activation strategies with planning for natural hazards, including flooding, drought and climate change
- ensure nearby land use intensification is sympathetic to riverine land values
- encourage opportunities for restoration of biodiversity values and strengthening landscape linkages
- integrate riverine land into new and existing developments through water sensitive urban design, cool green cities and walking and cycling networks
- identify opportunities for cultural practices, recognition of culture and place and economic opportunities for Aboriginal people (including cultural tourism)
- identify opportunities for new river walks and trails and linkages to support local and regional connectivity, tourism opportunities and biodiversity corridors.

Action 1



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 and management 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
- potential interactions with WaterNSW assets and responsibilities under the *Water Management Act 2000*.

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 Emile Serisier Bridge 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.



Macquarie River in Dubbo.

OBJECTIVE 7:

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. 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 water¹¹
- flooding throughout 2022 – the region experienced several major flood events in the Lachlan and Macquarie catchments.
- storm events associated with high winds which cause damage to homes, infrastructure and disrupt power supply.¹²

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.¹³

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 guide *Planning for a more resilient NSW – 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.¹⁴ The department 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.

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.

2022 NSW Flood Inquiry

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

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

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

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

Strategy 7.1



Reducing the level of vulnerability and risk for communities will involve early consideration of natural hazards and avoidance and mitigation for both existing and new development areas. To achieve this strategic and local planning must:

- ensure consistency with the applicable NSW policy, manual and/or guidelines
- take a risk-based-approach that uses best available science in consultation with the NSW Government, emergency service providers, local emergency management committees and bush fire risk management committees
- locate development away from areas of known high bushfire, salinity and flooding risk
- support/encourage opportunities for co-location of compatible land uses such as open spaces, biodiversity conservation areas and nature-based tourism in high hazard risk locations
- design communities that:
 - provide interactive public and open spaces to enhance a sense of place and social cohesion to enable communities to withstand and adapt to climate change and respond to natural hazard events
 - integrate, protect and deliver green infrastructure networks at the precinct and landscape scales to help avoid new hazards such as the urban heat island effect
 - provide the public with up to date and readily understandable information to increase awareness of the natural hazard risks and climate change impacts that could affect where they develop, live or work
- consider changes to flood hazards resulting from major infrastructure projects (such as Inland Rail) on existing and future land use, flood mitigation options, feasibility studies and updates to floodplain risk management plans
- 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.

Over the next 20 years, NSW waste volumes are forecast to grow from 21 million tonnes to nearly 37 million tonnes.¹⁵

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. Opportunities such as the recovery of energy from waste to support manufacturing industries and businesses and using clean energy (e.g. as is proposed for the Parkes SAP) is an opportunity that will, if realised, benefit the region.

Analysis has shown that increasing Australia's recovery rate by 5% could add \$1 billion to Australia's gross domestic product. Likewise, a 5% improvement in material efficiency could increase GDP by \$24 billion. The Central West and Orana is uniquely placed to capitalise on the projected growth in waste by implementing circular economy principles. Improvements in road and rail freight connections into Western Sydney along with Inland rail providing direct access to Melbourne and Brisbane uniquely positions the region, particularly Parkes and surrounding LGAs, for a strong circular economy. The ample supply of suitable land coupled with strong freight connections will see the region become a circular economy hub.¹⁶

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 *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.

Strategy 7.2

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:

- identifying waste infrastructure required to support new industry specialisations, including renewable energy generation
- the safe management of waste (e.g. asbestos) associated with large-scale disasters
- a focus on precincts that support circular economy activities and industries
- planning instrument amendments required to make it easier to develop waste and circular economy infrastructure.

Collaboration Activity 13

The department will work with the Department of Regional NSW, the Environment Protection Authority and councils to identify land use needs, including redundant land fill facilities, and employment opportunities associated with the circular economy, including embedding circular procurement principles.

Parkes SAP circular economy opportunities

Circular economy principles are a key focus of the Parkes Special Activation Precinct. This involves targeting businesses with complementary land uses to offer co-location benefits.

A key element of the Parkes SAP circular economy is a proposed energy from waste facility, as part of the dedicated resource recovery and recycling sub-precinct. The sub-precinct will include businesses which manage and reuse waste, reducing landfill via recycling and re-manufacturing with non-recyclable materials being diverted to the energy from waste facility.

An example of development that could support this precinct includes a proposed advanced plastics renewal facility proposed for the Parkes SAP which is anticipated to support 100 new jobs and process up to 200,000 tonnes of waste plastics each year.

Energy efficient and resilient housing

Improving energy efficient building design through low-emission building materials, passive urban design and integrated renewable energy systems will reduce emissions and 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 7.3

Strategic planning and local plans should encourage:

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

OBJECTIVE 8:

Secure resilient regional water resources

The region's water sources include:

- the regulated sections of the Macquarie, Cudgegong, Lachlan and Belubula rivers
- unregulated rivers and creeks, including the Castlereagh, Bogan, Campbell, sections of the Macquarie, Talbragar and Fish rivers
- groundwater sources
- water supply infrastructure including Burrendong Dam, Carcoar Dam, Wyangala Dam, Windamere Dam, Oberon Dam, Rydal Dam, Lake Rowlands and the Fish River Water Supply Scheme.

Recycled water from local water utilities, storm water harvesting initiatives, local runoff captured in farm dams and water captured through floodplain harvesting in the Macquarie Valley are also 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 intensification of land uses and changes to existing catchment conditions can contribute to runoff and water quality issues, if not appropriately managed. These impacts can degrade aquatic ecosystems and impact on environmental health of the catchments. 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.

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 large parts of two regional water strategy catchments – the Macquarie–Castlereagh and Lachlan – with a strategy for each catchment due to be finalised in 2022.

The Regional Plan, along with collaboration by key agencies and local government supports 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.



Cowra Wyangala Dam

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.

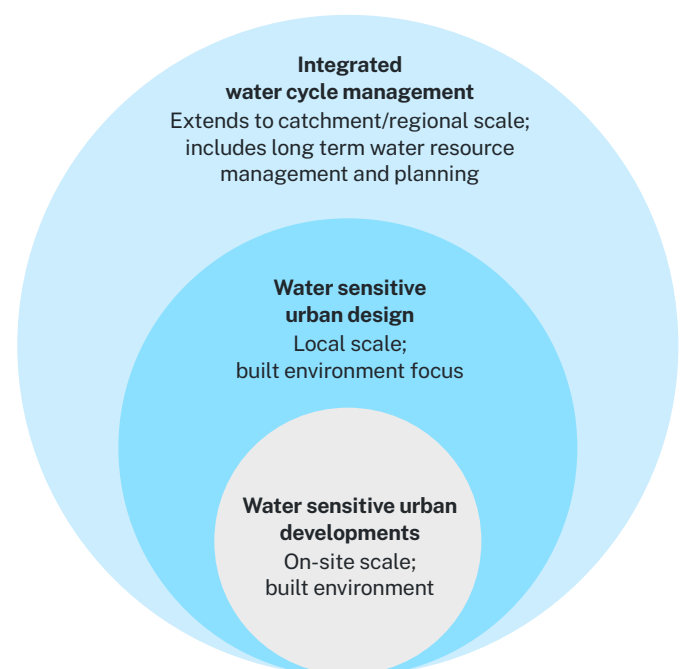
During the last drought, the Restart NSW Water Security for Regions Program provided funding for water supply improvements in most parts of the region. In addition to major water infrastructure upgrades occurring across the region, several water utilities in the region sought funding to access groundwater 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.





An alternative 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 this 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.



A family enjoying open space in Parkes

Strategy 8.1

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 an internationally 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 Nature Reserve which is listed under the Ramsar Convention, along with two areas of private land (Wilgara Wetlands and 'UBlock').

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 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 8.2



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 14



The department 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.



Lachlan River in Condobolin. Credit: Destination NSW

OBJECTIVE 9:

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

Former Portland Cement Works, Lithgow



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.



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. Good examples of this can occur through landscape and place design or in designated places where culture is celebrated, such as the Wiradjuri Dreaming Centre in Forbes. Respectfully combining history and heritage with modern design creates places with shared values and a clear sense of place and identity.

Strategy 9.1



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 9.2



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

Strategy 9.3



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 9.4



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
- working with Traditional Owners to deliver strategic adaptation plans and pilot actions to mitigate climate change impacts on Aboriginal cultural heritage
- 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.



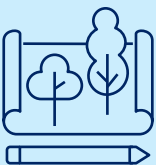
Revitalise main streets and town centres

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

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.

OBJECTIVE 10:

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 10.1

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 7: Dark Sky region



PART

3

People, centres, housing and communities





A postal worker in Dubbo

PART

3

People, centres, housing and communities

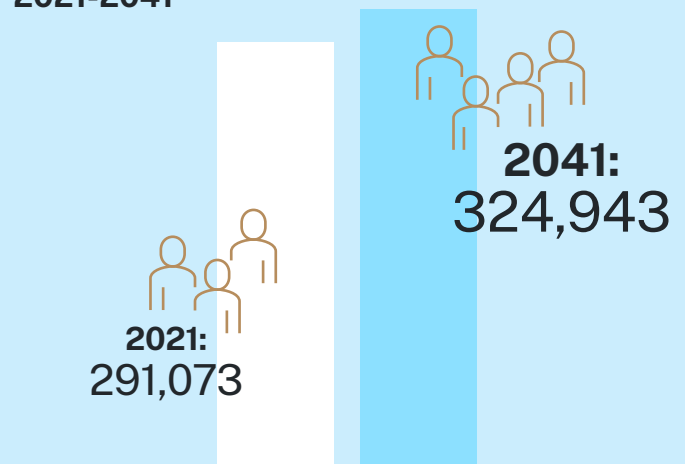
The Central West and Orana region is home to more than 290,000 people who benefit from an enviable work/life balance. People enjoy good access to recreation and cultural activities, education, employment, health care and attractive centres with unique local character.

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.

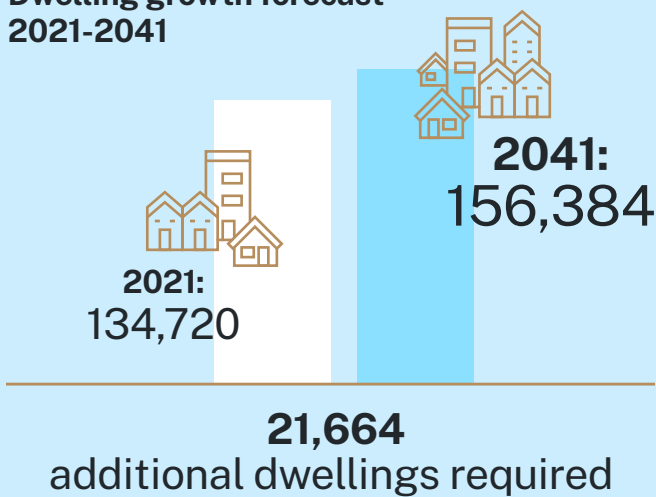
By 2041 the population of Central West and Orana is projected to grow to more than 324,943 people. This equates to the need for at least an additional 21,664 new homes. Housing supply and demand will be shaped by the older population, an increase in single person households and a decrease in average household size—and ongoing demand for housing for key workers such as nurses or teachers, and temporary workers. The mix of temporary workers and visitors at different times of the year add a dynamic nature to the region's communities.

Population Growth Forecast 2021-2041



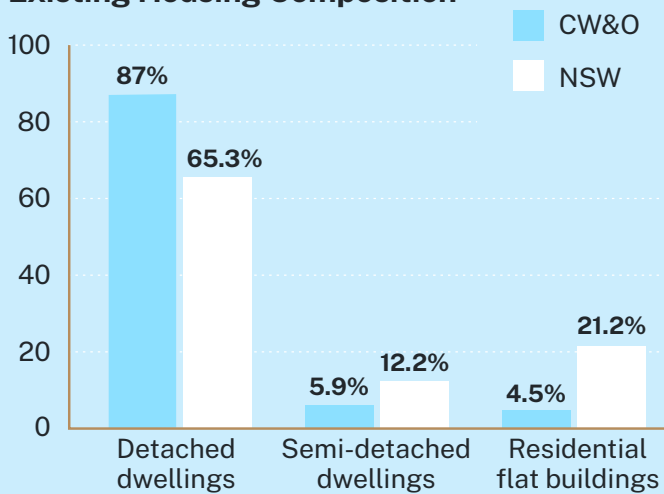
33,870 more people by 2041

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. Growth is also likely to occur in smaller centres which benefit from access to the regional cities and major employment precincts and projects. 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 walking and cycling 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.¹⁴ 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 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 visitors, 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, expected events such as the construction of major infrastructure projects like the Inland Rail, Central West–Orana REZ and the Parkes SAP and where councils have growth aspirations above the predicted rate of population growth or decline.

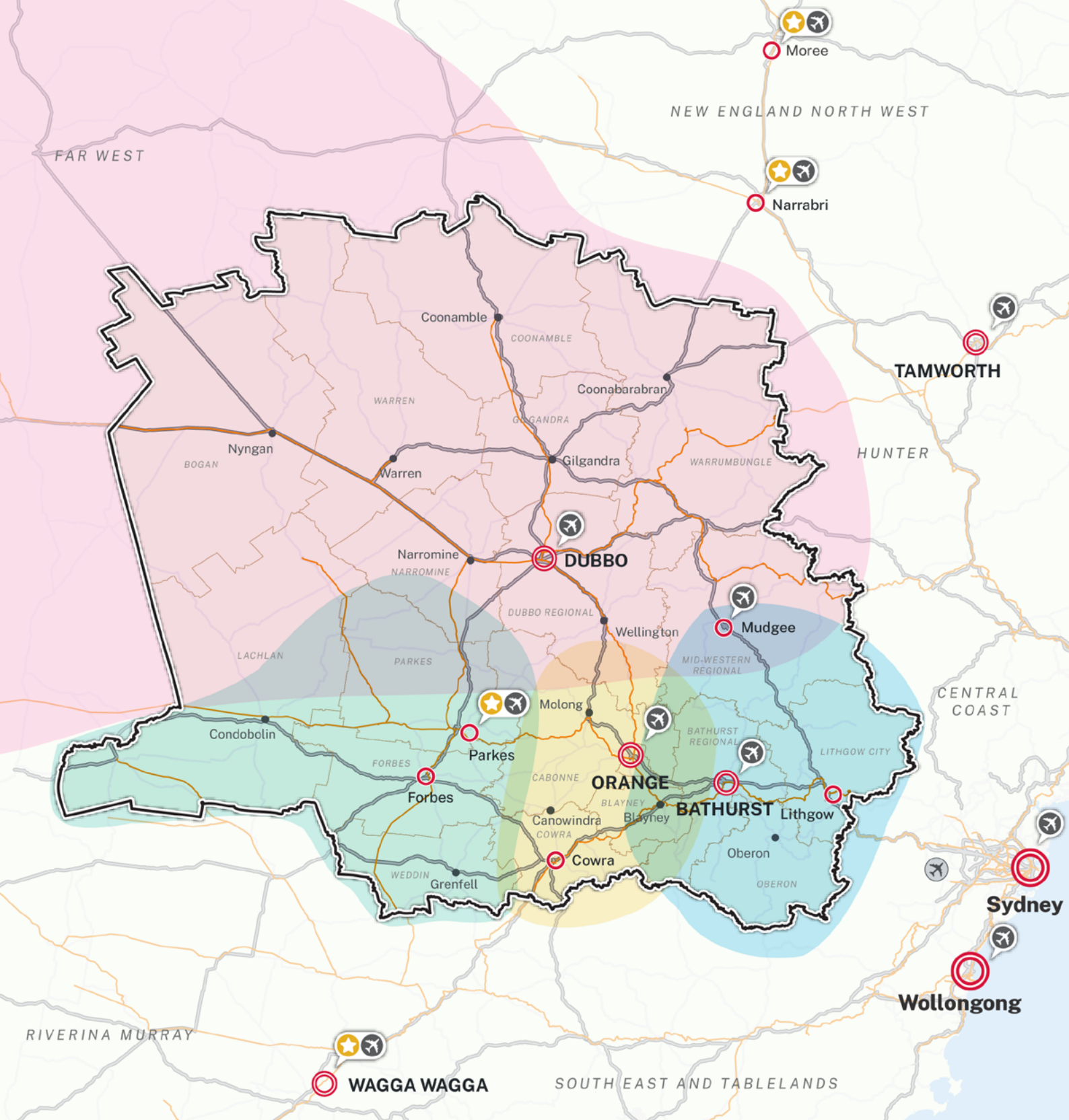
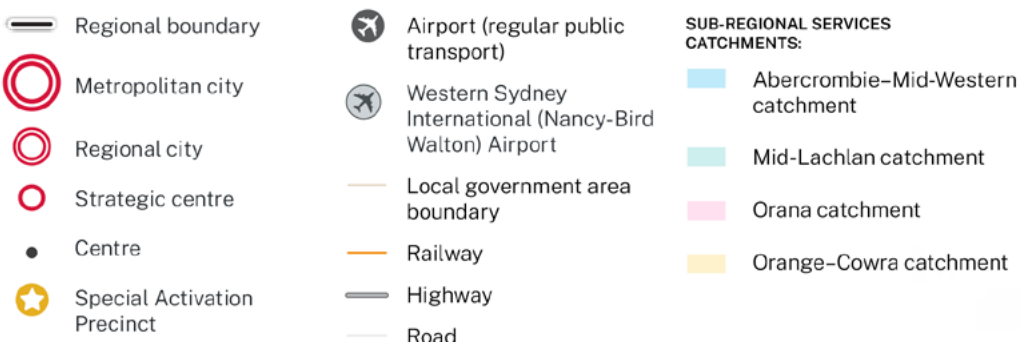
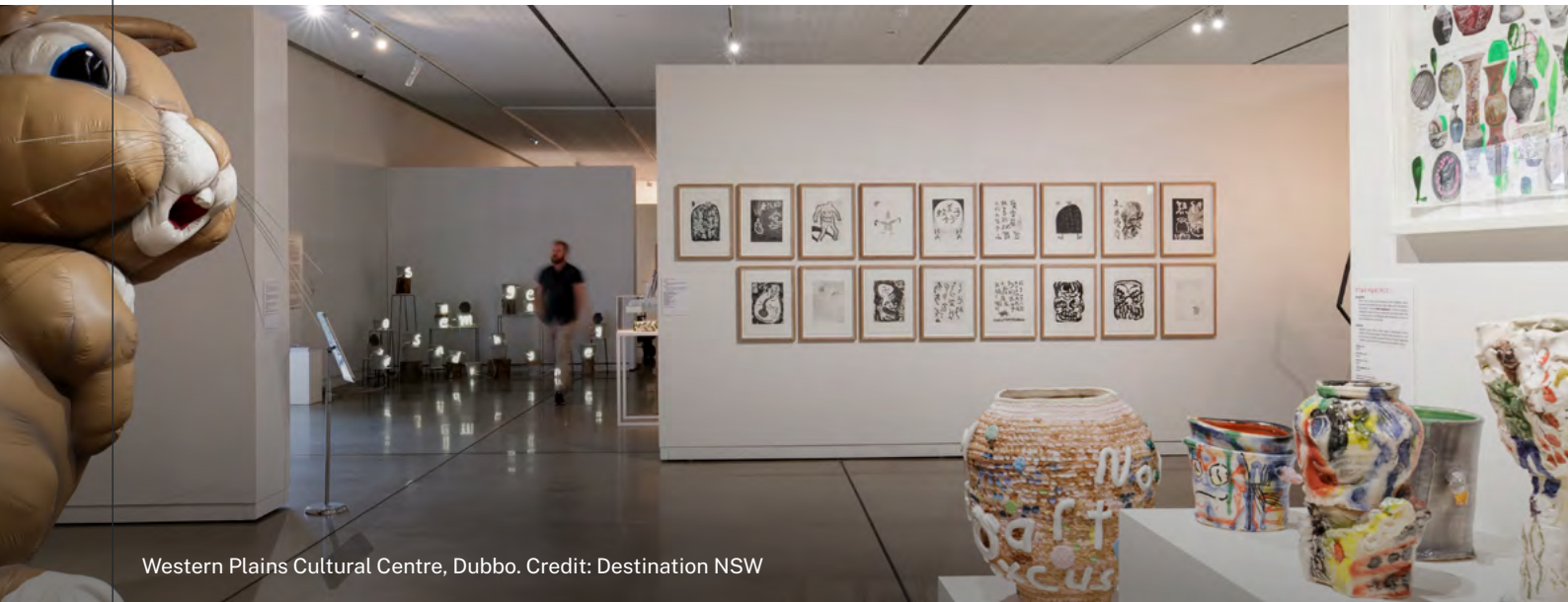


Figure 8: Centres



OBJECTIVE 11:

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



Western Plains Cultural Centre, Dubbo. Credit: Destination NSW

The region's projected population growth will be greatest in the regional cities, with a combined growth of 30,062 people (in the regional cities and surrounding LGAs) 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 and other key destinations (e.g. rail stations, employment areas and health and education precincts). 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.

The regional cities will support broader economic growth and diversification throughout the region. Dubbo will develop further as a manufacturing and mining service centre as the critical minerals sector and renewable energy industries develop in the region.

Bathurst and Orange are also rapidly expanding and, with Lithgow, will form a growth corridor that links the region, to Greater Sydney. The catalyst for this corridor and related opportunities include investment in the Great Western Highway and Fast Rail which will improve connections with the Western Parkland City and the Aerotropolis.

Strategy 11.1

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 11.2

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 15

The department will work with councils, joint organisations and State agencies, including the Department of Education, to establish the following, commencing with the regional cities:

- subregional consideration of housing supply needs, based on the distance people are prepared to travel for work
- auditing and monitoring of the housing supply pipeline to create better data on land supply, development activity, and constraints to delivery to improve the evidence base for planning, infrastructure coordination and investment decisions.

This will assist with the establishment of a range of housing benchmarks and targets which reflect projected demand and address housing supply.

Byng Street, Orange.
Credit: Destination NSW





Machattie Park, Bathurst

Bathurst

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

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

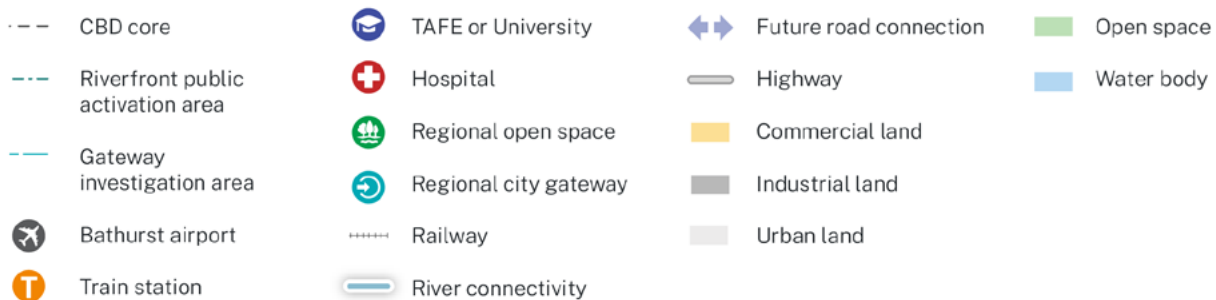
To support the growth of Bathurst as a regional city, strategic and local planning will focus on:

- Undertaking an employment lands strategy inclusive of:
 - opportunities to improve the Bathurst CBD as envisaged in the Bathurst Town Centre Master Plan
 - a review of and future protection for the City's Retail hierarchy
 - opportunities to support an emerging technology sector.
- 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 and facilitating opportunities for urban renewal and increased living densities in the inner city/city centre in a manner that protects and enhances the City's heritage
- 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/Wambuil
- protecting productive agricultural land around the city and reviewing the Region's rural settlement strategy and village plans
- improved road and rail accessibility to Sydney and identifying future growth opportunities as part of a potential growth corridor consisting of Bathurst, Lithgow and Orange
- investigating the future land use potential of the City's eastern gateway and how the scenic values of the gateway can be enhanced
- Protecting Mount Panorama/Wahluu as an international motor racing and events precinct and to support Council's vision to foster future economic growth through the delivery of a motor sport precinct inclusive of a second world class circuit and associated business park
- Nurturing the growing technology sector.



Figure 9: Bathurst regional centre





Main street in Dubbo

Dubbo

Dubbo services a catchment in excess of 120,000¹⁷ people and is situated on the Macquarie River/Wambool. The Dubbo Regional LGA incorporates the town of Wellington, a number of villages, rural lands and environmentally sensitive areas.

To further strengthen the role of Dubbo as a regional city and the wider region, we need to capitalise on the following:

- 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 Cultural Centre, Old Dubbo Gaol and the Wiradjuri Tourism Centre, which is currently under development. In addition, the region has access to extended tourism opportunities including Wellington Caves and Burrendong Dam. All of these facilities further enhance the role of Dubbo as a key regional visitor destination
 - manufacturing, construction, agriculture and agribusiness, food manufacturing, business services, health services, transport, mining and renewable energy services
 - mining and renewable energy investment, including being the main service centre for the emerging critical minerals sector and the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone.
- Strategic and local planning will focus on:
- facilitating further residential development the City requires to ensure significant economic development opportunities are realised, including development in the existing urban area and new development areas in Dubbo's north west, south west and south east
 - ensuring there is a robust strategic planning framework in place to guide and manage the further development and use of the Dubbo Central Business District
 - facilitating mixed use development, including government services
 - re-use of heritage buildings
 - enabling and facilitating the night-time economy
 - capitalising on the strategic location at the junction of the Golden, Newell and Mitchell highways and the economic development opportunities from the Inland Rail
 - further enhancing Dubbo as a Smart City through use of telecommunications infrastructure and smart transport initiatives identified in the *Smart Region Strategy*
 - continue to strengthen and deliver the vision for the Dubbo Education and Health Precinct (Dubbo Hospital, Dubbo Private Hospital, Lourdes Hospital, Charles Sturt University, Dubbo TAFE, School of Rural Health (University of Sydney)) sports facilities and other supporting industries and research opportunities
 - strengthening Dubbo Regional Airport as an emergency service centre maintaining and encouraging further Regular Passenger Transport services to more destinations
 - improving public open space, pedestrian and cycle networks and links to and along the Macquarie River Corridor
 - improving road and rail links to Orange, other centres and to the Far West region
 - ensuring the needs of its growing population are met in relation to infrastructure, an efficient road network and a reliable and cost effective water supply.



Figure 10: Dubbo regional centre



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



Housing on Mitchell Highway, Orange

Orange

Orange services a broad population catchment that includes rural communities, urban centres and villages in the surrounding Orange, Blayney and Cabonne LGAs. At the same time, the city's economic role is increasingly integrated with regional and interstate industrial, extractive resources, agribusiness, logistics and tourism networks. Orange's special identity as a regional city and visitor destination is intrinsically linked to the scenic and environmental qualities of its natural setting, its accessibility to state and regional transport infrastructure and the city's rich blend of historic built forms and contemporary lifestyle opportunities. Orange's contemporary image and role are strongly shaped by the historical pattern of settlement within its surrounding hinterland, which incorporates a mix of volcanic geology, elevated topography, cold climate, terrestrial biodiversity and productive forestry and rural landscapes.

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

- unique geological, scenic, cultural heritage, environmental and landscape settings
- established industry sectors, including agribusiness, research and tourism (including the wine and food industry), mining and support industries, healthcare, education and public administration
- diversity of high quality lifestyle offerings, including inner city, suburban and rural living opportunities
- education and research facilities and networks, including Charles Sturt University, NSW TAFE and the NSW Department of Primary Industries' Global Ag-Tech Ecosystem (GATE) facility

- significant role as a provider of civic, public services and other government employment, anchored by the head offices of Department of Regional NSW and the Commonwealth Regional Investment Corporation
- improved road and rail accessibility to Sydney and future growth opportunities as part of a potential growth corridor consisting of Bathurst, Lithgow and Orange
- capacity to facilitate improved housing diversification and affordability through a mix of infill development and new greenfield development encompassing design quality principles
- the city's established and emerging network of mixed use activity centres and specialist industry nodes
- proximity and accessibility to unique regional recreation assets and conservation areas
- growing visitor and experience economies and accessibility to regional, interstate and international visitor markets
- capacity as a location for major events.

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

- strengthening the city's connection to Country by ensuring the ongoing acknowledgement of Aboriginal culture and natural systems as essential building blocks of the city's contemporary role and identity
- strengthening the city's resilience to the effects of climate change and natural disaster, including drought and climate warming

- implementing Orange City Council's OC Future City plans, including facilitating new mixed-use development and pedestrian amenity within the Orange CBD
- encouraging investment on the former Orange Base Hospital site
- adaptive re-use and restoration of heritage buildings and heritage conservation areas
- strengthening the night-time and visitor economies
- 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 housing and lifestyle opportunities
- strengthening the city's established activity centres hierarchy, and the role of centres in supporting a walkable neighbourhood structure for the city
- leveraging investment in new and emerging enterprises, including those associated with advanced agribusiness, experience economy, logistics and high tech industries
- planning for further industry diversification and specialisation associated with Orange Regional Airport
- complementing growth in other centres within and outside Orange LGA
- facilitating active recreation opportunities in and around the Mount Canobolas area
- protecting and encouraging agriculture and horticulture opportunities
- ensuring new urban growth supports the efficient and cost-effective outlay of infrastructure and preserves existing drinking water catchments and terrestrial biodiversity
- 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 regional road and rail links, including planning for a future Fast Rail connection to Bathurst, Lithgow and on to Sydney
- continued development of the city's transport and freight networks through completion of the Southern Feeder Road.



The Orange Town Hall.
Credit: Destination NSW

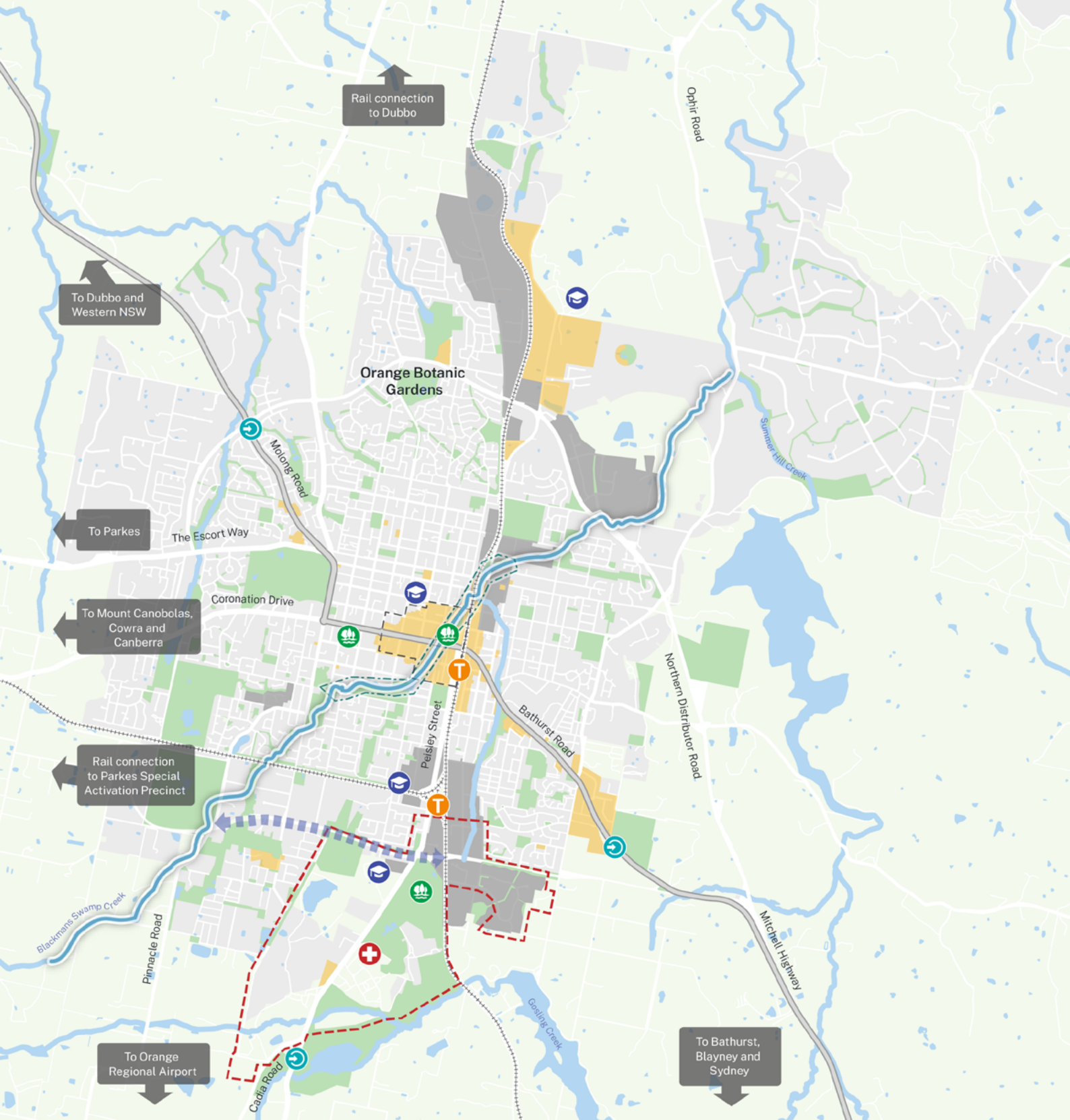


Figure 11: Orange regional centre



- | | | | | | |
|-------|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------------|---|-----------------|
| --- | CBD core | + | Hospital | — | Highway |
| - - - | Riverfront public activation area | 🌳 | Regional open space | 🟡 | Commercial land |
| - - - | Health and innovation precinct | 🚪 | Regional city gateway | 🟤 | Industrial land |
| 🚉 | Train station | 🚊 | Railway | 🟤 | Urban land |
| 🎓 | TAFE or University | 🌊 | River connectivity | 🟢 | Open space |
| ↔ | Future road connection | 🟦 | Water body | | |

OBJECTIVE 12:

Sustain a network of healthy and prosperous centres

The growth of regional cities, strategic centres and smaller centres across the region, 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 centres are projected to remain relatively stable or in some cases decline, these are dynamic communities with temporary visitors and worker populations that fluctuate at different times of the year. Smaller centres will continue to reflect the growth aspirations of their local communities, support new industries and provide 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 and major employment generating projects, 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 12.1



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 12.2



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 16

The department will work with Regional NSW, Destination NSW, other relevant NSW Government agencies, the joint organisations and councils to:

- identify new economic development and urban activation opportunities for strategic centres and 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
- ensure the aspirations and opportunities for centres across the region are understood and considered in future updates to the NSW population projections and Common Planning Assumptions

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. Transport for NSW and councils have a responsibility to plan for and provide safe, convenient and connected active transport infrastructure to encourage people to walk and cycle rather than use their cars. Active transport principles need to be considered in strategic planning, such as LSPS, to allow for the cost efficient and orderly development of active transport infrastructure.

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. The future provision of public transport should also be considered when planning new areas.

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 framework¹⁸, 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.



Scenic Drive, Mudgee. Credit: Destination NSW

Strategy 12.3

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

Strategy 12.4

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 and cyclist movements in town centres
- separating cycling network from road and pedestrian walkway, where possible.
- 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 (Green Grid, Tree canopy) to create a network of connected open spaces and visitor attractions.

Collaboration Activity 17

The department will work with Transport for NSW and Bathurst Regional, Dubbo Regional and Orange City councils on place-based transport plans.

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.

Victoria Park Cycling track, Dubbo.



OBJECTIVE 13:

Provide well located housing options to meet demand



Residential street in Bathurst

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. Better understanding of the capacity of new housing areas and their status in terms of planning and infrastructure provision will help State and local government to identify where to focus available resources to facilitate housing delivery.

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.

The Regional Housing Taskforce

In June 2021, the NSW Government established the Regional Housing Taskforce in response to increasing pressures on the supply and affordability of housing in regional NSW. The Taskforce identified 8 principles and made 5 key recommendations to support regional housing delivery. The strategies, actions and collaboration activities in this Regional Plan have been informed by the recommendations of the Taskforce and establish a strategic framework for localised responses.

In August 2022, the NSW Government adopted all recommendations of the Regional Housing Taskforce as part of a comprehensive response to support delivery of 127,000 new homes needed to house the growing population of the regions over the next 10 years. The whole-of-government response includes:

- support for regional councils to plan for housing through the Regional Housing Strategic Planning Fund
- the expansion of Urban Development Programs into high-growth regional areas
- improvements to regional housing data and evidence to better inform decision making
- delivery of infrastructure funding for the regions
- delivery of homes for key workers that are needed in the regions, such as teachers, nurses and police.

The department will work with councils within the Central West and Orana region to ensure they have support to plan and deliver housing, to meet their community's needs.

Regional Housing Delivery Plans

The Department of Regional NSW is developing a series of place-based Regional Housing Delivery Plans for targeted Functional Economic Regions (FERs). These plans will:

- **Respond** to local housing needs and assist regional communities to facilitate new housing supply, thereby alleviating housing pressure and helping communities face future demand
- **Identify** the specific constraints and barriers to the delivery of new housing supply in that FER and practical solutions to overcome these barriers
- **Provide** clear actions that, if funded and implemented, help deliver new housing and relieve pressure on housing markets.

Strategy 13.1



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.
- Identify a pipeline of housing supply that meets community needs and provides appropriate opportunities for growth.

Strategy 13.2



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.

Collaboration Activity 18



The department will work with other State agencies, councils and other housing stakeholders to implement the adopted recommendations of the Regional Housing Taskforce and the Department of Regional NSW's Regional Housing Delivery Plans.



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 13.3



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 and transit orientated development along key passenger transport routes.
- reviewing policies and processes to improve certainty and streamline development processes.

Collaboration Activity 19



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

OBJECTIVE 14:

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%.

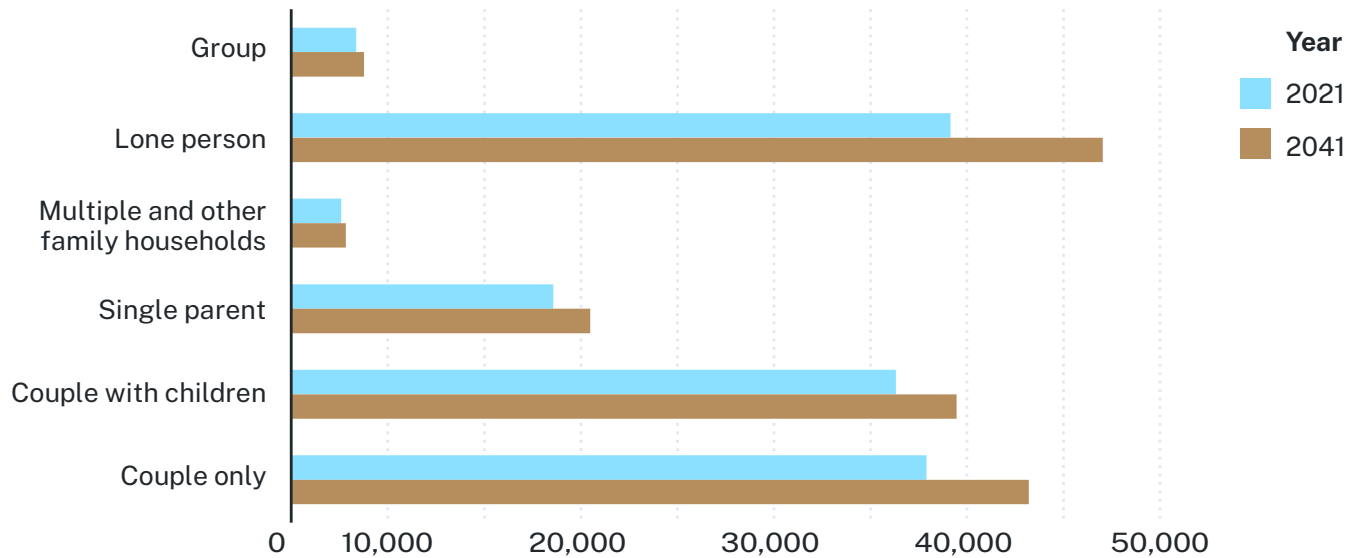
The size of households is changing, with more single person households and a decrease in the average number of occupants in each household. Planning for a diversity of housing choices for existing and future residents will give people more options at different stages of life.

The supply of a diverse housing range needs to reflect the needs of Aboriginal communities. Collaboration with the region's LALCs, native title holders and Commonwealth and State agencies will ensure Aboriginal people's housing needs and demands across the region are understood and supported.



Housing in Parkes.
Credit: Destination NSW

Household Composition Forecast 2021-2041¹⁹



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.

Affordable housing contribution schemes are council-led documents which set out how, where, and at what rate development contributions can be collected by councils for affordable housing. NSW Government has recently published the *Guideline for Developing an Affordable Housing Contribution Scheme* to help councils prepare affordable housing contribution schemes.

This 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 14.1



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 2



The department will use tools such as development capacity models 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 20

The department will work with relevant local and state agencies to investigate the issues and extent of housing affordability across the region and identify opportunities and options for land use planning 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
- identify options for affordable housing contributions
- 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.

Collaboration Activity 21



The department will work with LALCs, native title holders, councils and Commonwealth and State agencies to better understand the housing needs and demand of Aboriginal communities in the Central West and Orana region.

Older people

People older than 65 will make up a quarter of the region's population by 2041. The LGAs expected to have the highest proportion (i.e. over 30% of the population) of 65+ population will be Cowra, Lachlan, Lithgow, Warrumbungle and Weddin. The greatest increase in people in this age group is projected to occur in Bathurst (72%), Orange (72%), Dubbo (56%), Narromine (54%) and Gilgandra (51%).

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 14.2



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
- 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. Social housing assists people who are unable to access suitable accommodation in the private rental market.

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.²⁰

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 14.3



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

Strategy 14.4



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.



A mural on Macquarie Regional Library.
Credit: Destination NSW

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.

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 14.5

Prepare local housing strategies and LEPs in consultation with Aboriginal communities, in addition to 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, Narramine, Bogan, Orange, Parkes and Warren LGAs. TRRA strengthens the capacity of leaders and community members to negotiate and set regional priorities.

OBJECTIVE 15:

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.

Rural residential development also typically requires high levels of service for few residents. A subregional approach to planning for rural lifestyle development could balance the ability to provide options for rural residential development, across local government area boundaries, without impacting the availability of unconstrained vacant urban land.



Rural residential, Bathurst

Strategy 15.1

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, nearby urban land uses and any across LGA-boundary land use compatibility issues
- context in terms of supply and demand across the subregion
- cost effective service supply.

Strategy 15.2

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. Avoid unplanned or unsupported rezoning of rural land.

OBJECTIVE 16:

Provide accommodation options for seasonal, temporary and key 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 projects²¹ which will support a significant number 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. Where centres plan for an influx of temporary workers, economic stimulus for the area and a range of other opportunities can be provided. Encouraging, and planning for temporary workers accommodation to respond to the region's needs assists with economic value capture.

The demand for and supply of 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 for residents, workers and the tourism industry is a priority for councils. To help understand the demand, NSW Government has implemented a statewide regulatory framework for STRA, which requires compliance with the relevant planning framework and fire safety standards, and registering properties using a government run STRA register.

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 provide legacy infrastructure or be adapted into alternative uses such as tourism accommodation or low-cost housing for vulnerable people, as demand for accommodation fluctuates. This may also provide opportunities for growth of towns in the medium to long term and 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 needs 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.

Strategy 16.1



Strategic and statutory planning should consider:

- the provision of housing for workers by employers, including state agencies, by providing flexible controls
- the capacity of existing and planned infrastructure to service accommodation for workers
- provision for workers' accommodation sites such as caravan parks, manufactured home estates, tiny homes and manufactured homes on land in or adjoining existing centres, new development areas and publicly owned land.

Gilgandra Orana Living Cottages



A worker drives a fork lift with packages in Blayney



Strategy 16.2



Development applications for large-scale projects should be supported by a workforce accommodation strategy that:

- assesses anticipated impacts on the local housing market, including cumulative impacts associated with other large scale projects in the area
- shows how potential employees can access accommodation, without detrimentally affecting existing housing availability and affordability
- illustrates how the project will contribute to the supply of local housing, and support the nearest centre or centres
- allows for the plan to be monitored and updated over the life of the project.

Action 3



The department will prepare and release guidance to help councils plan for accommodation options for workforce accommodation.

Collaboration Activity 22



The department will work with:

- the Department of Regional NSW, joint organisations, relevant public authorities and councils to identify and quantify potential housing demands from projects to 2027, including mining, renewable energy and transmission projects, road and rail infrastructure projects
- councils to review LEPs to facilitate accommodation for workers associated with major projects.

OBJECTIVE 17:

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 17.1



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.

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 businesses²², 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 17.2



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.



An electric vehicle charging station in Dubbo.
Credit: Dubbo Regional Council



PART

4

Prosperity, productivity and innovation





Word of Mouth Wines, Canobotas.
Credit: Destination NSW

PART

4

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.

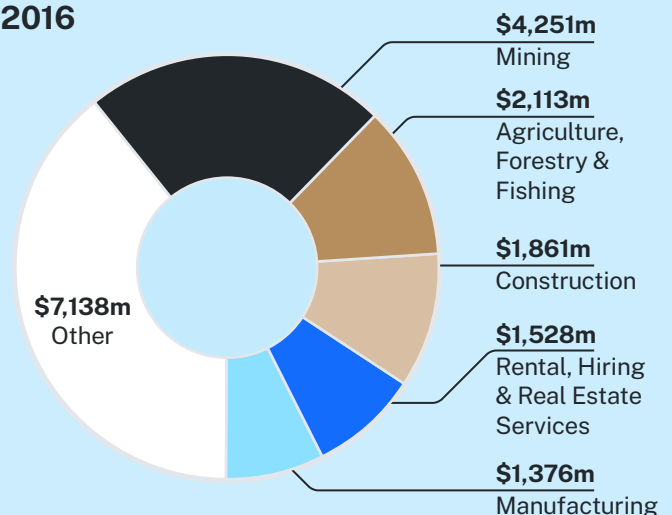
Greater connectivity will enable the region to meet growing demand from Asia for exports of agriculture and minerals, tourism and capitalise on opportunities that arise from the Parkes SAP and increasing global demand for critical minerals. This will coincide with demand from a growing Greater Sydney, 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.²³ 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).²⁴

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 18:

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.

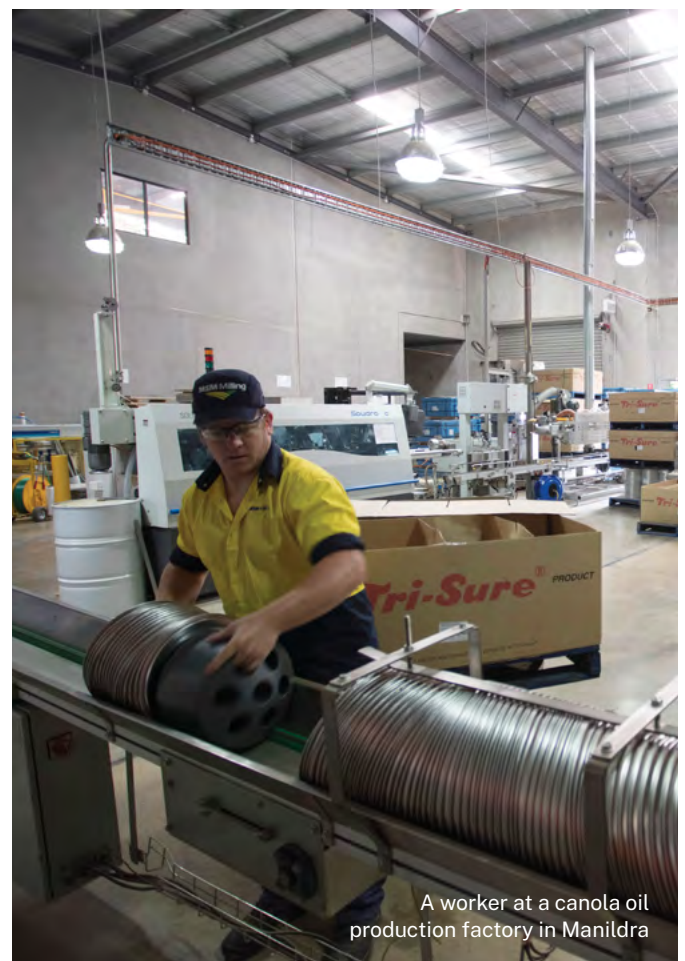
The shift towards advanced manufacturing in the region is based around existing industries such as agriculture, forestry and mining. Leveraging the manufacturing sector in areas such as Cowra, Oberon, Lithgow and Bathurst to develop more advanced manufacturing will require fewer low-skilled positions 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. While regional NSW

is experiencing record levels of low unemployment and skill shortages, the region's rural lifestyle and accessibility will likely see the continuation of greater numbers of people coming to or staying within the region.

Supporting centres development, place making, and the provision of services and housing will help to attract and retain skilled workers. Close collaboration between State and local government is essential to ensure skills attraction and development supports the region's increasingly diversified economy.

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.



A worker at a canola oil production factory in Manildra

Strategy 18.1

Use strategic planning and local plans to:

- identify and protect employment lands from the encroachment of incompatible development
- identify local and subregional employment specialisations
- identify future employment land and the infrastructure needed to support it, including telecommunications infrastructure
- 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 18.2

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.

Collaboration Activity 23

The department will work with councils that propose to update their strategic planning framework for employment land following the recent employment land reforms and to ensure they respond to regionally significant employment drivers and investment, including the regional cities, Parkes SAP and Inland Rail.

Workers at Narromine Transplant Plant Nursery



OBJECTIVE 19:

Protect agricultural production values and promote agricultural 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 needs of industries to be identified and protected from incompatible land uses, including rural-residential and urban development. Potential land use conflict for agricultural products with short term supply chains and perishable products will need to be increasingly managed into the future. 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, Forbes and Blayney, transport, logistics and inter-modal transport hubs, cotton gins, canneries, packing and processing.

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.²⁵

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,²⁶ including \$1.3 billion from wine, beef, wool, vegetables, cotton, wheat, fruit and timber. This represents 18% of all agricultural production in NSW annually.²⁷

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 over 12,000 people directly employed in primary production²⁸ 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 of Newcastle, Port Kembla, 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, Cabonne and Weddin.²⁹

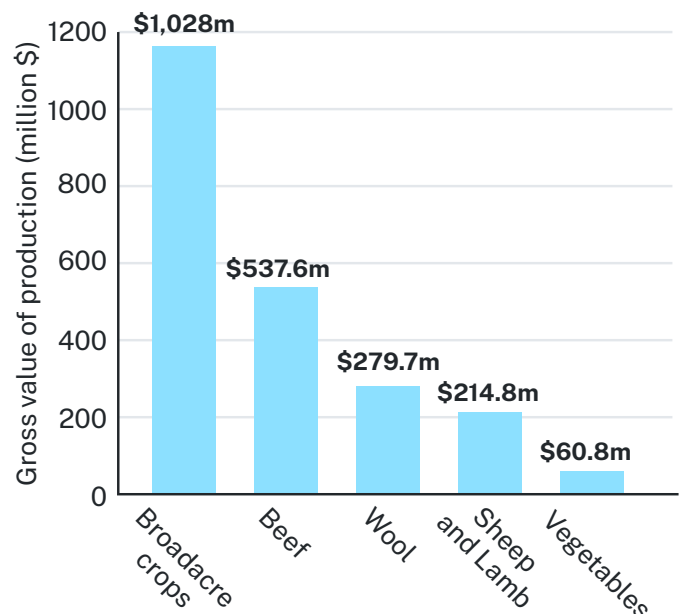
Strategy 19.1



Use strategic planning and local plans to:

- identify and enable emerging opportunities for higher-value 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 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 networks, precincts and intermodal hubs to grow and adapt to changing needs
- support sustainable and efficient use of water by agricultural industries
- actively encourage value-adding businesses in key employment areas such as the Parkes SAP and other areas with good connectivity to agricultural production areas and freight corridors.

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.²⁹

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 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 avoided, mitigated and better managed.

The NSW Government is currently considering its response to the Agricultural Commissioner's work and will, once the response is finalised, work collaboratively to implement the adopted recommendations.

Important Agricultural Land

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

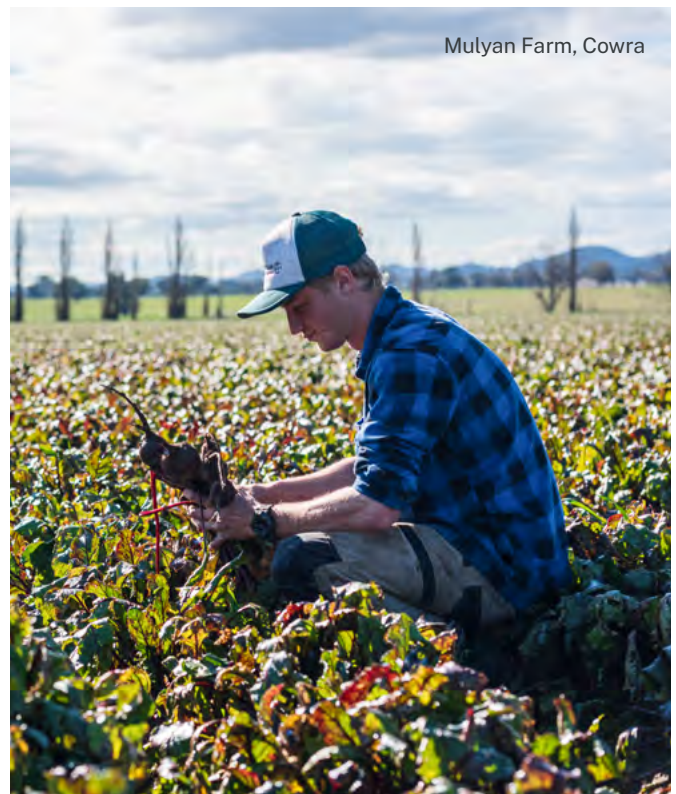
There is an opportunity to complement this mapping with regional-scale mapping that reflects regional climatic, geological and socio-economic conditions to provide a greater picture of Important Agricultural Land (IAL) in the region.

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 region's 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.



Mulyan Farm, Cowra

Strategy 19.2



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

Strategy 19.3



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.
- land use conflict between different agricultural sectors.



Railway line and wheat silos in Molong

Loading up grain at Qube Agri, Narromine



OBJECTIVE 20:

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



Newell Highway, Dubbo

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, Newcastle, Greater Sydney, Illawarra Shoalhaven, and ACT 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. With improved access into Western Sydney along with connectivity between Lithgow, Bathurst and Orange reshaped by Fast Rail, there is opportunity for a Central West Growth Corridor. Improved connections to Newcastle, Canberra and Port Kembla will provide additional access opportunities to markets and export gateways.

Upgrades to the Newell, Great Western 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.

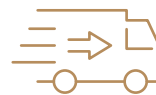
Effective integration of land use and transport planning will ensure transport improvements contribute to making the region liveable, prosperous, and sustainable places and a functional and resilient region. The draft *Central West and Orana Regional Transport Plan* identifies how transport planning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

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



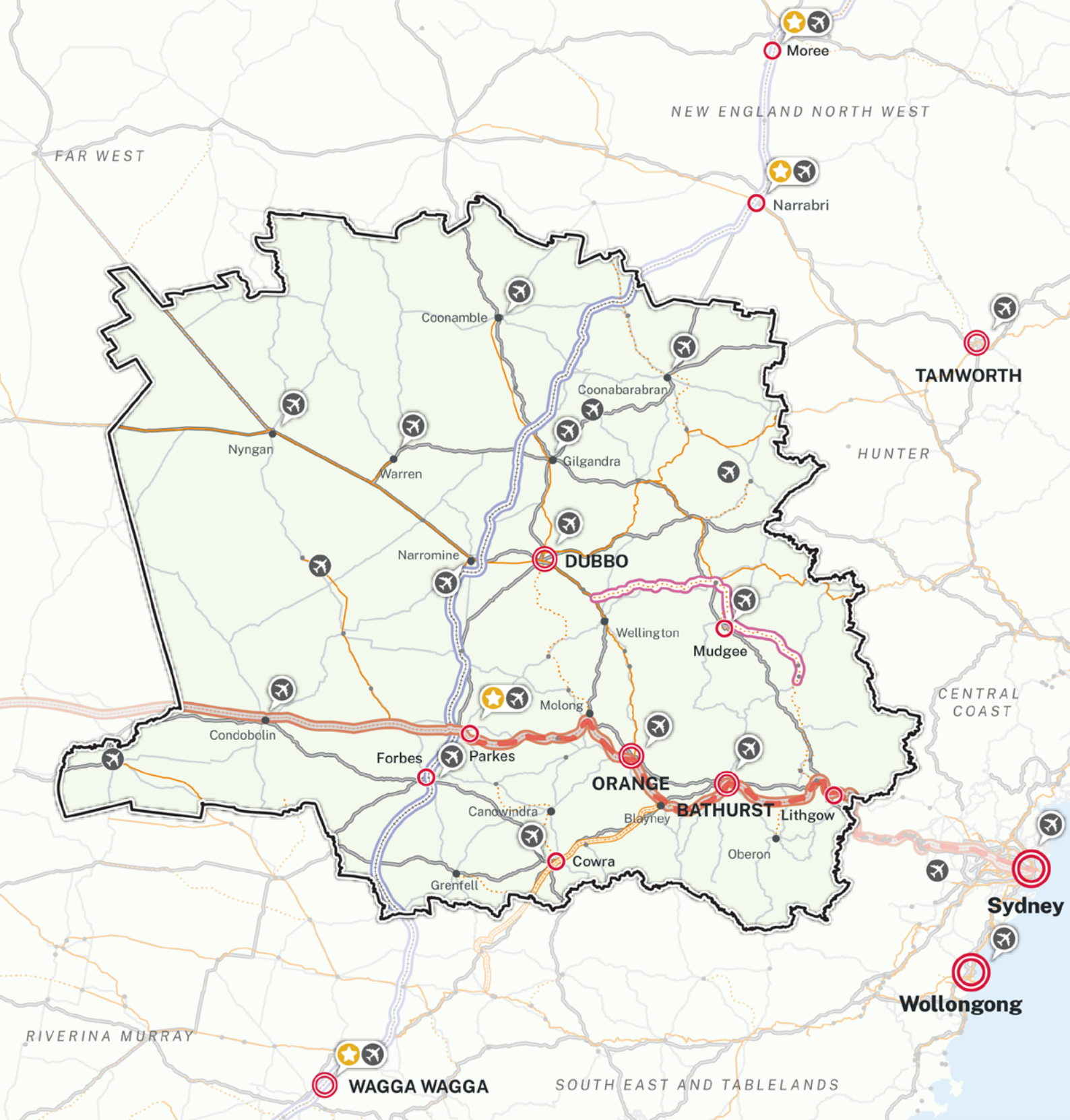


Figure 12: Regional transport



- | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| Regional boundary | Airport and aerodrome | Cowra line rail feasibility investigation |
| Metropolitan city | Railway | Main west rail line |
| Regional city | Railway (non-operational) | Central West to Sydney Fast Rail – upgraded existing line |
| Strategic centre | Railway reactivation (investigation) | Highway |
| Centre | Inland rail alignment | Road |
| Special Activation Precinct | | |

Existing and future freight and passenger connections

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. This will ensure industries such as agriculture, manufacturing, resource recovery and processing can benefit from investment such as the Parkes SAP and Inland Rail.

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. Strengthening and improving these connections will open up the region for additional economic and social opportunities by encouraging new industry such as freight and logistics precincts, supporting the shift to a circular economy.

Other initiatives to improve east-west freight connections include investigating the activation of the rail connection between Blayney and Demondrille (the Cowra line) 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 connections between heavy vehicle routes that do not involve local roads where possible.

The development of electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft and drone delivery technology has the potential to deliver improved transport and health services for regional communities and businesses, and improve the last mile delivery process.

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

Strategy 20.1



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, the Central–West and Orana REZ, 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
- identify and address bypass-related impacts and opportunities for centres and employment precincts
- identify future heavy vehicle and town bypass and associated road corridors and the reservation of this land for future use at the appropriate time to minimise the encroachment of incompatible land uses
- manage the road traffic and safety impacts associated with major employment development and precincts on the local and state road network.

Collaboration Activity 24



The department will work with Transport for NSW, joint organisations and councils on planning for improved connections between Central West and Orana and eastern NSW, including Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong and Canberra.

Collaboration Activity 25



The department will work with Transport for NSW, Department of Regional NSW and Council to leverage potential road and rail investment such as future uses for the Cowra line and Maryvale–Gulgong rail corridors and potential rail opportunities such as passenger services to Newcastle.



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 20.2



Support the operation and future land use potential 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 Obstacle Limitation Surface
- identify and activate employment lands surrounding airports and aerodromes
- encourage investment in compatible industries that benefit from either being close to the airport or aerodrome or that can utilise their respective locational and infrastructure advantages

OBJECTIVE 21:

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 the department 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.

Similar precinct-based planning opportunities could establish complementary, flexible and adaptable multipurpose health centres in the strategic centres and smaller centres across the region, such as Gilgandra, Coonabarabran and Narromine. 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.

Considering the need for education and health facilities early on in the precinct planning process will result in:

- better integration of these facilities into greenfield housing areas
- the timely delivery of new facilities and supportive land uses (e.g. open space)
- improved transport integration and connectivity
- greater opportunity for co-use of facilities, for the benefit of the broader community.

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



Charles Sturt University

Strategy 21.1



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

- mixed use facilities and research and accommodation precincts for temporary and permanent workers
- 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
- land use flexibility around health facilities in smaller centres, such as hospitals and multipurpose centres to encourage supportive and compatible land uses
- sustainable land use requirements and net zero principles.



Dubbo Hospital

OBJECTIVE 22:

Support a diverse visitor economy

Visitors 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.

The visitor economy 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 visitors 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 and support from the NSW Government and councils can facilitate private sector investment and increase tourism numbers. As the visitor economy diversifies and expands in the region, particularly in rural areas, the industry will benefit from greater land use certainty with appropriately zoned land and strategic recognition of regionally significant tourism assets and future tourism precincts.

The *Statewide Destination Management Plan* is a framework to achieve alignment across NSW and assist coordinated delivery of the vision and goals for the NSW visitor economy. It identifies specific local attraction and difference across the regions. 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.

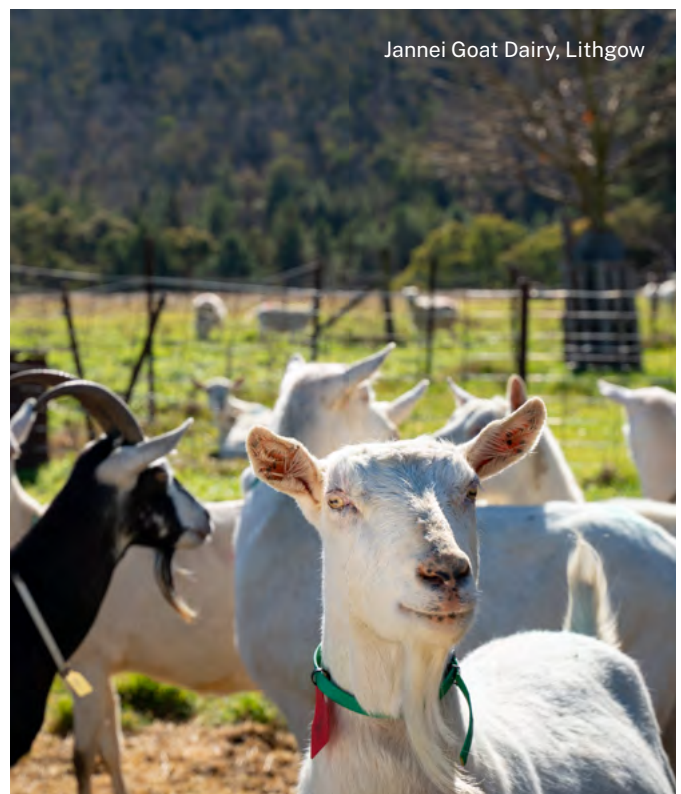
Strategy 22.1

Use strategic planning and local plans to:

- create or enhance green and open spaces in visitor and recreation facilities
- help develop places for artistic and cultural activities
- allow sustainable agritourism and ecotourism, which is compatible with the surrounding land uses
- 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.

Collaboration Activity 26

The department will work with councils, State agencies when developing subregional responses to visitor demands, opportunities and land use planning barriers to support a diverse visitors economy.



OBJECTIVE 23:

Supporting Aboriginal aspirations through land use planning

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.

The *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983* (ALR Act) provides for the return of land to Aboriginal people as compensation for past dispossession. Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs) work to improve, protect and foster the best interests of all Aboriginal people in their area. There are 21 LALCs in the Central West and Orana region, straddling multiple LGAs and regional boundaries.

Native title recognises the traditional ownership of land and waters that have always belonged to Aboriginal people according to their traditions, laws, and customs. The *Commonwealth Native Title Act 1993* sets out how to recognise and protect native title rights, which differs from the statutory right of LALCs to make claims for land under the ALR Act.

The land and environment are deeply entwined with Aboriginal culture and Aboriginal people's connection to Country. As the first managers and carers of the region's lands, Aboriginal people have rights and a moral obligation to care for it under their law and customs.

LALCs and native title holders wishing to develop their land usually need to engage with the NSW planning system. However, links between land rights and planning legislation have been limited until recently, meaning the benefits of land rights for Aboriginal people have not been fully realised. LALCs have varying levels of knowledge about, and engagement with, the NSW planning system and development processes. This influences decision making about the future use of land.

The NSW Government will work with Aboriginal communities to better align strategic planning and Aboriginal community aspirations. This could include facilitating planning proposals with strategic merit to change the land use zone of land:

- within existing urban areas or on the fringe of existing urban areas to an appropriate alternate urban zone

- replacing suboptimal zones outside of existing urban with a logical zone that is consistent with the adjoining land use zones.

Land use planning should also connect with other NSW Government policy and initiatives so that LALCs and native title holders can capitalise on opportunities such as:

- biodiversity offsetting
- providing water to meet Aboriginal cultural and economic aspirations and public infrastructure
- the Roads to Home program which aims to allow discrete Aboriginal communities across NSW to subdivide their land and improve access to infrastructure and services.

Councils should also engage with LALCs to consider whether the planning provisions that apply to LALC-owned land are appropriate.

Improving the cultural competency of all planning practitioners benefits the whole community and should be promoted and accelerated.

Strategy 23.1



Strategic and statutory planning should be informed by and aim to:

- build delivery capacity for LALCs by reflecting Aboriginal aspirations, supported by strategic merit
- improve the identification and conservation of environmental and Aboriginal cultural heritage values
- embed cultural knowledge and values in land use planning decisions.

Action 4



The department will continue to work with state agencies including Transport for NSW and Department of Regional NSW (Local Land Services), to provide access to infrastructure and services to discrete Aboriginal communities.

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 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 whether the zoning and development controls applying to LALC-owned land, including the discrete Aboriginal communities, appropriately reflect the current and intended future land use.

The department 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.

Collaboration Activity 27



The department will work with LALCs, native title holders, councils and Commonwealth and state agencies to better reflect Aboriginal aspirations in plans by:

- involving LALCs and native title holders in strategic planning and improving consultation processes that meet the needs of the community on a local scale
- supporting and partnering with Aboriginal communities to identify opportunities to activate land, including through biodiversity offsets
- identifying where land returned to LALCs and native title holders has suboptimal planning controls and facilitating amendments
- identifying and understanding the housing needs for Aboriginal communities to better inform planning decisions
- identifying where planning proposals brought forward by LALCs and native title holders have strategic merit
- enabling LALCs and native title holders to better engage with the planning system, including through the provision of planning advice, and working in partnership to inform strategic planning
- promoting opportunities for cultural awareness training for all involved in planning
- incorporating Aboriginal knowledge into planning considerations and decisions, including advice on cultural land use options in appropriate zones
- providing planning information to LALCs to prioritise unresolved Aboriginal land claims on Crown land
- coordinating initiatives to improve cultural and economic opportunities associated with water resources
- reflecting local and regional level plans prepared by Aboriginal communities into local and strategic land use plans where appropriate.



Indigenous Cultural Adventures
Sharing Our Stories

Indigenous Cultural Adventures, Orange.
Credit: Destination NSW

PART

5

Local government priorities





Bank Street, Molong

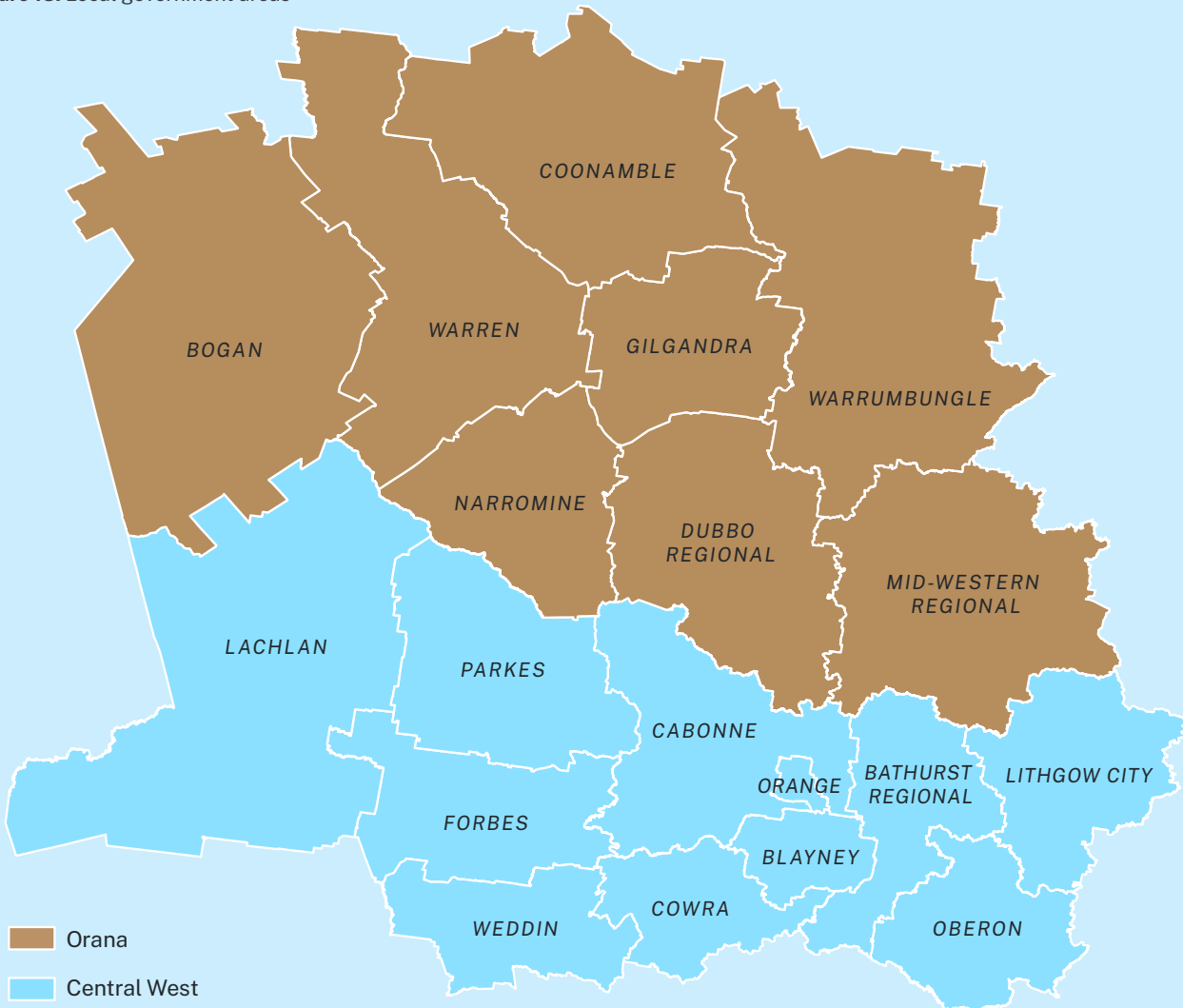
PART

5

Local government priorities

Councils have provided the following information about their planning priorities, drawn from their strategies and LSPS. 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 43,996 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 billion³⁰ to GRP in 2020. Economic sectors include manufacturing, public administration and safety, education and training, health care and social assistance, professional, scientific and technical services, 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
- Mount Panorama/Wahluu, 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 non-Aboriginal 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, ensuring jobs of the future are created.

- identifying opportunities for the LGA as the wider region's economy diversifies, and leveraging its accessibility to Orange, Lithgow and Greater Sydney.

Blayney

Blayney Shire is growing which is resulting in Blayney, Millthorpe and its 6 rural villages all experiencing residential growth. The LGA benefits from close connections and proximity to both regional centres of Orange and Bathurst.

Blayney Shire contributed \$679.2 million³¹ to GRP in 2020, supported by the mining, manufacturing, renewable energy (wind farms) 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:

- leverage its close proximity to both Orange and Bathurst to support sustainable residential and business growth
- acknowledge the LGA's economic pillars being; agriculture, mining, renewable energy and tourism
- prioritise transport infrastructure; particularly the Blayney-Demondrille rail line, Mid-Western Highway and Millthorpe Road
- identify and protect a heavy vehicle detour route around the Blayney township
- create a diversity of housing choice throughout Blayney LGA
- protect environmental and heritage assets such as towns, villages, buildings, streetscapes and vistas
- identify opportunities for a regionally significant intensified agribusiness precinct
- identifying opportunities for the LGA as the wider region's economy diversifies, and leveraging its accessibility to Orange, Bathurst and the Parkes SAP.

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 million³² 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
- identifying opportunities for the LGA as the wider region's economy diversifies and leveraging its accessibility to Dubbo and the Parkes SAP.

Cabonne

Cabonne LGA is one of the fastest-growing LGAs in the Central West, primarily due to its diverse agricultural sector, but also due to its proximity to Orange. Molong, 35 km north-west of Orange, and Canowindra 60km south-west of Orange, are the LGA's largest villages and they provide services and facilities for other villages such as Yeoval, Cumnock, Manildra, Cudal, Cargo and Eugowra.

The LGA contributed \$852.1million³³ to GRP in 2019-2020. Significant mining, agriculture, and manufacturing operations provide more than half the LGA's jobs. The agricultural sector –including horticulture and viticulture –supports more than 50% of all businesses including value-adding industries such as a flour mill, canola mill and olive processing facilities. These provide opportunities for additional agricultural growth and for links with food processing and freight opportunities associated with the Inland Rail and Parkes SAP.

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

Cabonne Council's priorities for the LGA are:

- the economic diversity of towns, villages, and commercial centres
- appropriate development in villages
- ensuring long term benefits for the LGA from the 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.
- managing growth pressures associated with the growth of Orange
- identifying opportunities for the LGA as the wider region's economy diversifies, and leveraging its accessibility to Dubbo, Orange and 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 million³⁴ 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 million³⁵ 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 investigating the reopening the Blayney–Demondrille rail line, upgrading Lachlan Valley Way, a heavy vehicle 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
- Identifying opportunities for the LGA as the wider region's economy diversifies, and leveraging its accessibility to Canberra, Bathurst, Orange and the Parkes SAP.
- a more secure water supply and involvement in decision-making processes.

Dubbo Regional

The Dubbo Regional LGA had an Estimated Resident Population of a population of 54,044 in 2021. Dubbo LGA contributed an overall GRP of \$3.7 billion³⁶ in 2020 supported by construction and manufacturing, health care and assistance, real estate services, public administration and safety, agriculture, education and training.

The Central West–Orana REZ and the emerging critical minerals sector is centered on the LGA and is now home to a number of large-scale renewable energy projects upcoming extractive industries 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 in excess of 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, The Old Dubbo Gaol and the Royal Flying Doctor Visitor Experience Centre.

Dubbo Regional Council priorities for the LGA include:

- 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 Western NSW
- Dubbo at the centre of the emerging critical minerals sector
- the strategic and sustainable growth of the Central West–Orana REZ
- ensuring investment attraction to the region can leverage and encourage robust economic growth
- transport infrastructure such as the Newell, Mitchell and Golden highways
- ensuring the region can benefit from Fast Rail development opportunities into the future
- tertiary education offerings and professional, government and retail sectors
- tourism and diverse and sustainable business in Dubbo and Wellington
- agribusiness, transport and logistics
- further recognition of the importance of the economic growth of Wellington and its role in the success of the region
- 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 having a robust planning framework in place for these critical natural assets
- protecting agricultural land from encroachment from residential development
- the sustainable 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.
- fostering, building capacity and celebrating the culture of the First Nations and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities

- sustainable growth and development of Villages in the LGA and encouraging growth of rural communities
- identifying opportunities for the LGA, as the region's economy diversifies, and from its proximity and accessibility to the Parkes SAP, critical minerals projects, the Central–West Orana REZ and Inland Rail.

Forbes

Forbes Shire LGA was home to 10,023 people in 2021 and contributed \$643.6 million³⁷ in GRP in 2020. Agriculture is the biggest industry. Forbes has a strong connection to water through the Lake Forbes regeneration and its surrounding recreational opportunities and activities. With a thriving town centre and a diverse economy, Forbes brings people together from all walks of life due to its unique lifestyle and economic opportunities.

Forbes is growing quickly, with a projected 1.4% annual growth, and Council has leveraged this growth to provide residential land releases to support new industries entering Forbes. Forbes is also emerging as a rural Tourism Hub with a state-of-the-art Visitor Information Centre, new Art Gallery, multiple major events such as Vanfest and Frost and Fire, the Digital Heritage Trail and the Somewhere Down the Lachlan Sculpture Trail.

With affordable land, new national retail businesses, its position on the Newell Highway, and its proximity to the Parkes SAP and Inland Rail, Forbes' diverse industrial and commercial economy is set to expand. The Central West Industrial Park, underpinned by the Central West Livestock Exchange, provides a strategic home for many businesses that contribute greatly to the economy of the region, and has emerged as the manufacturing hub of the Central West.

Forbes specialises in rural industries and manufacturing by linking its agricultural and industrial sectors through value adding and a circular economy, with strong connections to the region, nation and world through transport and connectivity.

Forbes Shire Council's priorities for the LGA are:

- developing rural tourism throughout the Shire in a multi-faceted approach to events, venues and interactive art installations
- growing the Central West Industrial Park and other industrial land to leverage its location on the Newell Highway and proximity to the Parkes SAP by supporting investment in manufacturing and value-added agricultural industries
- ensuring suitable housing supply by supporting a diversity in housing supply and clearly planned land releases

- developing and enhancing the health services within the community, including the Forbes District Hospital and our education facilities
- leveraging the opportunities of the Forbes Aerodrome, Newell Highway and the Inland Rail upgrades to improve transport links across Australia for freight and our community
- identifying opportunities for the LGA, as the region's economy diversifies, and from its proximity to Parkes, the Parkes SAP and the Inland Rail.

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 will take advantage of the investment in the Central–West Orana REZ and the Inland Rail. Both investments will stimulate economic opportunities and broader community benefit for Gilgandra.

Gilgandra Shire LGA contributed \$257.9 million in GRP³⁸ 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
- flood protection for Gilgandra
- housing availability in Gilgandra
- opportunities from Inland Rail including proposed industrial subdivision adjacent to the existing rail corridor

- identifying opportunities for the LGA, as the region's economy diversifies, and leveraging its accessibility to the Inland Rail, the Dubbo to Coonamble line at Curban and the Central West–Orana REZ.

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.

Lachlan LGA will take advantage of the investment in the Parkes SAP and connections to Inland Rail. Both investments will stimulate economic opportunities and broader community benefit for Lachlan.

The LGA contributed \$385.5 million³⁹ 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
- identifying opportunities for the LGA, as the region's economy diversifies, and from its proximity and accessibility to Forbes, the Parkes SAP and Inland Rail.

Lithgow

In 2020 the LGA contributed \$2 billion⁴⁰ to GRP. The LGA currently provides approximately 15% of the State's power needs and supplies coal, mining expertise and manufactured product. Home to 21,516 people in 2020, the LGA includes the strategic centre of Lithgow, the towns of Portland and Wallerawang, numerous villages, and large areas of National Parks and State Forests.

The Lithgow LGA is strategically located at the interface between greater Sydney and the Central West and Orana, two regions that have historically been disparate. Blurring of the boundaries and integration of their economies would offer unique opportunities to transform the Lithgow LGA. The Great Western Highway Upgrade Program will bring parts of Lithgow within commuter distance to the economic powerhouse of Western Sydney, the Western Sydney Aerotropolis. The LGA will be as close in a commute time to the new Western Sydney airport, as parts of Western Sydney are to the current Sydney airport.

While Lithgow has historically been a centre for coal mining and coal-fired power generation, it has a long and rich history as a centre for industrial development. With an inevitable transition from coal, Lithgow's strategic location, extensive infrastructure and an abundance of natural resources to support renewable energy projects position it as an important centre for innovation in renewables and clean manufacturing.

Lithgow City Council, in partnership with the NSW Government, is supporting the city's economic diversification and growth through the Lithgow Emerging Economy Project. This work will seek to attract investment into the region's growing economies of renewable energy, public administration, advanced manufacturing, health and aged care.

Tourism is also expected to offer economic growth opportunities for the region. In addition to its rich heritage, the area is also the home to fast-emerging adventure tourism at the Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area, which features stunning rock pagodas, sandstone cliffs, canyons and breathtaking scenic views. There is increasing recognition of the beauty and the power of the LGA's landscape and the concept of Seven Valleys offering great opportunity for business growth and investment, driven by increased tourism.

Lithgow City Council's priorities for the LGA are:

- increasing growth, including delivery of new greenfield development opportunities at Marrangaroo
- positioning the LGA as a modern and vibrant economic bridge between Sydney and the Central West
- identifying new economic opportunities to leverage Lithgow's existing transport, mining and energy generation and transmission infrastructure and network connectivity, including exploring opportunities for renewable energy, high-tech manufacturing, green hydrogen and energy storage (including pumped hydro and batteries)
- capitalising on Lithgow's proximity to Sydney transport and freight connections by improving potential for a transport interchange hub (e.g. this could support servicing, maintenance and certification of rollingstock and will open up the potential for more frequent intercity services across the west, connected with a metro service into Sydney)
- safeguarding the natural environment while increasing its appeal and offer to visitors.

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 25,367 people and includes the towns of Mudgee, Gulgong, Rylstone and Kandos.

The LGA contributed \$2.9 billion⁴¹ 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 such as the Central West–Orana REZ, 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:

- making available diverse, sustainable, adaptable and affordable housing options through effective land use planning

- respecting and enhancing the historic character and aesthetic appeal of the towns and villages within the Region
- providing infrastructure and services to cater for the current and future needs of our community
- supporting the attraction and retention of a diverse range of businesses and industries.
- working with key stakeholders to minimise the impacts and leverage opportunities of State Significant Development.
- Identifying opportunities for Mid-Western Regional Council as the wider region's economy diversifies, significant investment occurs in the Central–West Orana REZ and leveraging its accessibility to the Hunter Valley and Dubbo.

Narromine

Narromine LGA is located in the Macquarie Valley, bordering Dubbo, Warren, Parkes and Lachlan LGAs. It had an estimated population of 6,460 people in 2021. 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 \$423.5 million⁴² to GRP in 2021, with the largest contribution from agriculture, including sheep, cattle, and wool production, as well as broadacre cereal crops, citrus fruit and cotton. 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 intersecting with existing rail freight infrastructure at Narromine. Value-added agriculture, manufacturing and service-related industries also remain strong with further development potential in these fields.

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

Narromine Shire Council's priorities for the LGA are:

- planning for and managing rural residential development and future land zoning
- industrial and commercial opportunities from the Aviation Business Park, soon to be constructed industrial hub and industrial estate on the Mitchell Highway.
- protecting local character
- value adding opportunities for the agricultural industry.

- freight intermodal hub focused on agricultural commodities associated with Inland Rail.
- identifying opportunities for the LGA as the wider region's economy diversifies, and leveraging its accessibility to Inland Rail and Dubbo.

Oberon

Oberon LGA is adjacent to the Blue Mountains and was home to 5,419 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 million⁴³ 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 planning strategies for towns and villages including future residential areas in Oberon
- support innovation and value-add opportunities in forestry and agricultural sectors and associated businesses
- opportunities to support freight and logistics industries
- cool climate opportunities to support eco-tourism and food tourism
- expand and diversify Oberon's commercial core areas
- regional forestry freight corridors
- provision and development of regional and local sports, recreation, and cultural facilities protecting cultural heritage sites and properties.
- identifying opportunities for the LGA as the wider region's economy diversifies, and leveraging its accessibility to Bathurst, Orange, Lithgow and Greater Sydney.

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 42,503 people in 2020.

Orange LGA contributed \$3.2 billion⁴⁴ 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:

- support continued growth and diversification in the LGA's healthcare and education sectors
- servicing regional industry growth through the coordination of a revised sub-regional industrial lands strategy and continued provision of a diversity of industrial location opportunities
- growing a strong visitor economy linked to regional tourism priorities and drivers
- developing Orange's urban night-time economy
- facilitate continued growth and diversification of the LGA's visitor economy
- enhancing Orange's cultural quarter and delivering events to increase the LGA's robustness and capacity as a regional visitor destination
- diversification of new housing opportunities in both new greenfield areas and existing urban areas
- ensuring growth in villages is consistent with both cultural heritage requirements and community needs and expectations
- ensure new urban growth prioritises the protection of productive agricultural land, drinking water catchment and terrestrial biodiversity resources and assets
- ensure commercial development supports the development of a viable and sustainable activity centres hierarchy, including the need to facilitate the complementary development of a diverse network of accessible local and neighbourhood centres
- delivery of new social and recreational infrastructure such as the Orange Sports Precinct and relocated Orange Regional Conservatorium
- continued growth in inward investment and industry attraction
- preparation of a new comprehensive development control plan and associated infill guidelines
- preparation of an urban biodiversity framework

- protection from and preparation for natural hazards, including adaptation to the impacts of long-term climate change
- identifying opportunities for the LGA as the wider region's economy diversifies, and leveraging its accessibility to Dubbo, Bathurst, Lithgow and Greater Sydney.
- plan for the challenges and opportunities associated with the Newell Highway upgrade and Parkes Bypass
- support the delivery of new residential areas and increase the range of housing options in existing urban areas with the provision of passive and active recreation areas

Parkes

Parkes Shire LGA had an estimated population of 14,728 people in 2020. It includes the strategic centre of Parkes and smaller towns of Peak Hill, Alecstown, Cookamidgera, Bogan Gate, Trundle and Tullamore.

Parkes contains the first Special Activation Precinct in regional NSW, offering opportunities for business development and employment growth in the Central West. Taking advantage of Parkes' location on the Inland Rail and the Main West Rail line, the Parkes SAP presents opportunities for value-add industries in the agricultural technology and logistics sector. With increased investment in the region's critical minerals industry, Parkes is ideally located for supporting industry and critical minerals value-added manufacturing.

Parkes Shire LGA boasts a strong, diverse economy, with a GRP of \$1 billion⁴⁵ in 2020. The economy is underpinned by agriculture and mining, strengthened by transport and logistics, retail, public administration and development of Parkes SAP. Just over 1,300 local business operate in Parkes Shire, with 6,565 residents – around 44 per cent of our population – in the workforce.

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.

The Newell Highway Upgrade, Parkes Bypass project will be completed in 2024 and will redirect highway traffic, including 1200 trucks per day from the centre of Parkes. Council is planning ways in which Parkes can continue to attract the travelling public to stop in Parkes and visit the CBD.

Tourism experiences and opportunities range from the Goobang National Park, Peak Hill Gold Mine Experience, 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. Main street upgrade works are underway in Trundle, as is the development of new civic infrastructure, cultural and recreational spaces.

Parkes Shire Council's priorities for the LGA are:

- continue to support the NSW State Government in the development of the Parkes Special Activation Precinct

- plan for industrial and commercial land to complement development in the Parkes Special Activation Precinct
- improve the liveability of Parkes by planning for infrastructure, housing and associated land uses to meet people's needs
- support the continued activation of the Parkes CBD
- collaborate with NSW Government as Parkes and the wider region's economy diversifies, and significant investment occurs in the Parkes SAP and the Inland Rail
- identifying opportunities for the LGA as the wider region's economy diversifies, and leveraging its accessibility to Forbes, Dubbo and Orange.

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 2,716 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 million⁴⁶ 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

- identifying opportunities for the LGA as the wider region's economy diversifies, and leveraging its accessibility to Dubbo and Gilgandra.

Warrumbungle

Warrumbungle Shire LGA is centrally located and crossed by the Newell, Oxley, Castlereagh and Golden highways. The 2020 population was 9,209 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 million⁴⁷ 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:

- rural land planning throughout the Shire to standardize the minimum lot size for rural lands
- rural land zoning – look at other possible land zonings within the rural land to maximise the use of undersized rural lots
- explore the local rivers for recreation opportunities throughout the Shire
- 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
- tourism in the Shire's main centres

- Aboriginal cultural heritage and incorporating this into local planning
- 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 existing agricultural land and rural industries from encroachment by residential development.
- prepare and plan for Coonabarabran Bypass – rezoning of land along the bypass route and establish CBD to attract visitors into town
- identifying opportunities for the LGA as the wider region's economy diversifies and leveraging investment in the Inland Rail and the Central–West Orana REZ and its accessibility to Dubbo and Tamworth.

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 3,596 in 2020 and contributed \$198 million⁴⁸ 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 Cowra 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
- identifying opportunities for the LGA as the wider region's economy diversifies, and leveraging its accessibility to Forbes, Parkes, Cowra and Dubbo.

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.

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.

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.

Obstacle Limitation 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 LSPS, local housing strategies, employment land or retail studies, and other activities to support the development of local plans or LSPS.

Mixed use area

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

Net zero emissions

When anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions are balanced by anthropogenic greenhouse gas removal over a specified period.

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 an ecosystem or a built environment'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 E1 Local Centre
- Zone E2 Commercial Centre
- Zone E3 Productivity Support
- Zone E4 General Industrial
- Zone E5 Heavy Industrial
- Zone MU1 Mixed Use
- Zone W4 Working Waterfront
- Zone RU5 Village

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