



# Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2041





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# Acknowledgement

The Department of Planning and Environment acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Barapa Barapa, Nari Nari, Ngarigu, Ngunawal, Wolgalu, Wemba Wemba, Wiradjuri, Yita Yita and Yorta Yorta countries that make up the Riverina Murray region.

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

Colonisation profoundly altered the lives of Aboriginal people and their land. Aboriginal people were dispossessed of their land and prevented from practising culture. Land was cleared, new flora and fauna were introduced and the movement of water across landscapes was modified.

The Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2041 recognises that, as part of the world's oldest living culture, Traditional Owners and Custodians share a unique bond to Country – a bond forged through thousands of years travelling across lands and waterways for ceremony, trading and seasonal migration.

Aboriginal people maintain a strong belief that if we care for Country, it will care for us. This requires Country to be cared for throughout the process of design and development. A Connecting with Country approach can help us to meet statutory requirements to sustainably manage Aboriginal culture and heritage.

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

Image on front cover: Edward River, Deniliquin.

Credit: Destination NSW.

Image on this page: Wagirra Trail and Yindyamarra Sculpture Walk, Albury. Credit: Albury City Council and Destination Riverina Murray.

Artwork (left below) by Nikita Ridgeway.





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River Red Gum Forest, Barham  
Credit: Murray River Council

# Foreword

Known as Australia's food bowl, the Riverina Murray contains large areas of irrigation and is one of Australia's most productive agricultural regions. Wholly located within the Murray Darling Basin, it is home to the nationally significant Murray and Murrumbidgee River corridors. Anchored by three regional cities, the region has excellent freight connections servicing the eastern seaboard of Australia, including direct access to the Port of Melbourne, Port Kembla and Port Botany.

Recent years have seen the people of the Riverina Murray region continue to confront challenges such as drought, bushfire, the global pandemic and 2022's floods. These challenges highlight the importance of strategic planning and the need to adapt to meet changing needs and circumstances.

This Plan builds on the region's first Regional Plan in 2017 by reviewing the original actions and ensuring new outcomes respond to current issues and government priorities. It recognises the need to maintain and improve the resilience of the region's important natural assets that underpin its communities and economy. It strives to align state and local government strategic planning to support ongoing prosperity and growth. We've collaborated closely with the region's twenty local governments and consulted with the community and stakeholders to develop the updated plan.

Aboriginal people, as the original custodians of the region, will be supported and engaged as we plan for the region's economic, social and environmental future.

The region's proximity to Victoria provides opportunities to strengthen links between cross-border communities and support the movement of agricultural produce to export markets in Melbourne.

The Plan provides a framework for recent government priorities around improving regional housing delivery while taking a risk-based approach to natural hazards and the findings of the Bushfire and recent Flood Inquiries. It promotes more housing and greater housing choice in strategic locations throughout the region.

This Regional Plan will improve access to public spaces, enhances biodiversity and recognises the urban and rural lifestyles that people so highly value. It has a strong focus on harnessing the region's enormous potential in many ways, including working with government agencies and councils.

This Plan resets priorities for the area and provides a path for sustained progress and prosperity for the Riverina Murray community for the next 20 years.



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



# Introduction

**Figure 1:** Local government areas in the Riverina Murray region



The *Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2041* is an update to the *Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2036*, which provided the NSW Government’s vision for land uses in the Riverina Murray region. That plan saw the NSW Government work with councils, stakeholders and the community to achieve priority actions.

The updated regional plan is a 20-year land use plan with a targeted delivery focus on the next 5 years. It was prepared under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) and applies to the local government areas (LGAs) of Albury, Berrigan, Bland, Carrathool, Coolamon, Cootamundra-Gundagai, Edward River, Federation, Greater Hume, Griffith, Hay, Junee, Leeton, Lockhart, Murray River, Murrumbidgee, Narrandera, Snowy Valleys, Temora and Wagga Wagga.

Since the release of the *Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2036*, amendments to planning legislation have elevated the importance of strategic planning at a regional and local level in managing population growth and change, and require higher-level planning to account for local strategic planning statements.

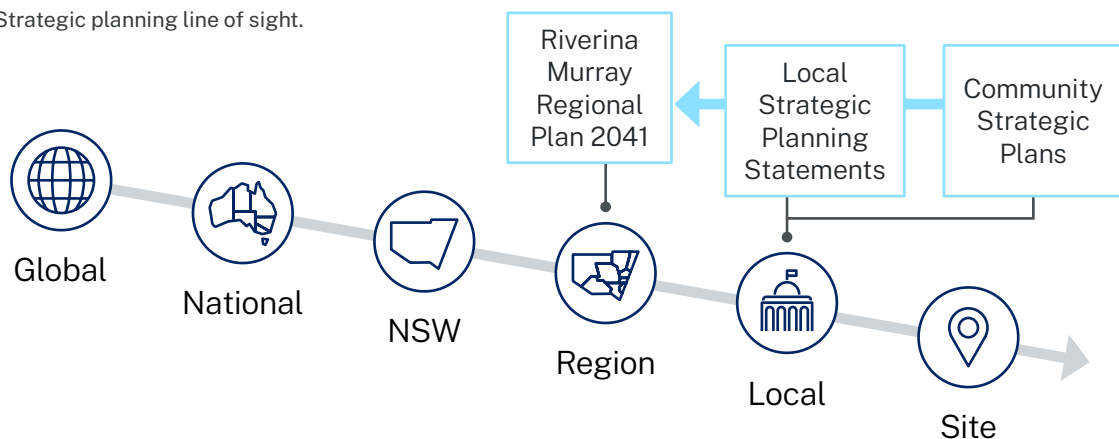
The regional plan draws from local strategic planning statements prepared by each council for their LGA, acknowledging where there are

common interests without duplicating effort. It also recognises the interconnections with Victoria and ACT, as well as the relationships and commonalities with adjoining regions of NSW.

In undertaking this review, the department considered how the region has changed in the last 5 years, the challenges ahead and how best to respond. The review included:

- council and agency surveys, as well as online engagement sessions and one-on-one workshops
- analysis of issues and challenges, regional plan actions and government policy changes
- audits and analysis of all 20 local strategic planning statements in the region
- analysis of planning proposals
- investigation into region shaping major projects and development
- analysis of interstate policy and investment
- a 45 day public exhibition period with four consultation sessions targeting the community, council staff and key State Government agencies.

**Figure 2:** Strategic planning line of sight.





The regional plan covers all facets of land use planning, including the natural environment, future hazards, housing and related infrastructure, industry, employment areas and town centres.

The sense of place within the Riverina Murray region underpins the plan and makes this region unique. It influences regional cities and surroundings areas, supports the opportunities of major transport improvements and digital connections, housing choices and lifestyle needs, and it welcomes the significant capital investment for construction and agricultural production.

The recent drought, floods, bushfires and COVID-19 pandemic will have a lasting impact on the natural environment, community wellbeing, infrastructure and the economy.

The regional plan focuses on a more ambitious and targeted land use planning approach, drawing on the concepts of:

- sequencing planning and infrastructure
- creating great places
- enriching community character
- unlocking sustainable growth opportunities that come from the region's proximity to Victoria and Canberra and its existing endowments.

Other recent strategic work has been incorporated into the regional plan. This includes the regional economic development strategies, the *NSW 2040 Economic Blueprint*, regional water strategies, Future Transport Strategy, the establishment of renewable energy zones (REZs), and the Government's response to the Regional Housing Taskforce Findings Report. The regional plan complements this work with land use responses that will help to meet NSW Government objectives, while also supporting land use planning undertaken by councils and development proponents in the region.

## Key outcomes in the regional plan

- Capitalise on a changing regional economy and catalyst projects such as the Wagga Wagga Special Activation Precinct, Albury Regional Job Precinct, Inland Rail, South-West Renewable Energy Zone (South West REZ) and multiple Murray River bridge projects
- Understand the region's relationships with other NSW regions and states and territories, particularly Victoria, and how to optimise investment and policy decisions that impact the border area and broader Riverina Murray communities
- Recognise stronger than expected population growth, particularly along the Murray River, and related housing pressures
- Better understand and provide more guidance to manage growth pressures in regional cities, commuting towns, border communities, along waterways, and in areas where there is demand for rural residential living.
- Plan for different types of housing to meet changing demographics and to meet demand from temporary workers and visitors without impacting availability and affordability for residents
- Continue to assist Local Aboriginal Land Councils to better utilise the planning system and removing obstacles to achieve the objectives of the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983*
- Focus on rivers and riverine corridors as places for cultural connection, activation, recreation, conservation and economic activity
- Align water and land use planning early, as residential or industrial growth must come from within existing water allocations in the context of more frequent and prolonged drought and floods
- Ensure the aims of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* are considered early in the strategic planning and development process
- Plan for efficient, sustainable and cost-effective infrastructure and services early in the development process
- Support the transition to a net zero carbon emission State by 2050, including enabling the establishment of the South-West REZ
- Plan for the implications of climate change and the need for resilient and sustainable communities.



# Reading the regional plan

The vision for the region to 2041 will be implemented through objectives, strategies and actions for the three sections of the plan (the environment, communities and places, and the economy). In this regard:

- **Objectives** are high-level goals and include a summary of the relevant issues and usually include strategies, actions or collaboration activities to work towards achieving these goals.
- **Strategies** identify policy positions or directions to achieve the relevant objective that will be implemented through strategic planning, statutory planning or state agency planning to inform land use outcomes
- **Actions** will be implemented and led by the Department of Planning and Environment (the department) in the next 5 years.
- **Collaboration activities** are joint initiatives between the department and state agencies, councils or other organisations which support the objectives

- **Council activities** are those actions identified in local strategic planning statements that relate to the implementation of the regional plan. Their inclusion highlights the links between the plan's policy outcomes and local strategic planning and are located on the Riverina Murray Regional Plan webpage.
- **Resources** are documents or websites located on the Riverina Murray Regional Plan webpage. They provide further guidance for the implementation of the regional plan that link in with other government strategies and policies.

## Implementation

With leadership, commitment, collaboration and a clear delivery framework, the regional plan will be implemented in accordance with an implementation plan, displayed on the Riverina Murray Regional Plan webpage, that prioritises actions and collaboration activities. These priorities allow governments to focus resources to best address land use planning issues.

Credit: Margie McClelland-Hay





# Governance

## Department of Planning and Environment – Western Planning Region

The department will coordinate the implementation of the final regional plan and monitor and report on progress. It will communicate this to the Riverina Murray Regional Leadership Executive (RLE), councils, state agencies and the community.

### Regional Leadership Executive

The RLE supports NSW Government priorities in the Riverina Murray Region. It is comprised of regional directors from state government agencies and the joint organisations in the region. The purpose of the RLE 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 is a forum to discuss and resolve any identified issues with the plan's implementation.

### Supporting groups

Relevant stakeholders will be invited to participate in outcome-specific working groups to implement collaboration activities.

### Planning forums

Bi-annual planning forums including the department, key land use planning agencies 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 to identify where support would be beneficial. The forums may see the reprioritisation or change to regional plan implementation, rather than waiting until the plan is reviewed.

### Monitoring and review

The department will regularly monitor and review the progress of the regional plan and will publish the findings on the department's website. This will include updates on:

- progress towards the plan's actions and collaboration activities
- indicators of relevance to the regional plan
- links to relevant resources and to general tracking tools in the NSW Planning Portal.

Planning legislation requires reviews of regional plans as directed by the Minister. Reviews are currently undertaken every 5 years. Reviews revisit regional performance, challenges and opportunities and incorporate updated Census data and local strategic planning statement priorities.

Implementation priorities will be updated as required.

# Resourcing

The Riverina Murray region experiences skill shortages and recruitment difficulties in the strategic planning industry and skilled professionals that can advise governments and the community on issues critical to economic vitality, environmental enhancement and community wellbeing.

The NSW Government will work with the region's councils and organisations to identify the resources needed to facilitate growth that meets the needs of a changing environment and population. Resourcing strategic planning could include:

- reprioritising strategic planning expenditure
- pooling resources across councils
- sharing consultants across multiple councils and/or projects
- consulting with tertiary organisations and professional organisations to provide regionally specific planning courses
- sharing or exchanging resources between the department and the region's councils
- growing the capabilities and number of workers with these capabilities
- providing standardised datasets to inform the preparation of strategic planning documents.

## Action 1



The department will work with and advocate on behalf of councils and agencies in the region to ensure appropriate resources are provided to strategic and statutory planning.



# A vision for the region in 2041

## A diversified economy founded on Australia's food bowl, iconic waterways and a network of vibrant connected communities

The Riverina Murray's environment – including major rivers, waterways and wetlands – are protected and managed for the ongoing enjoyment of residents and visitors. Adaptation and resilience to a changing climate and natural hazards has made the region a renowned leader in sustainable and equitable water management for industries, communities and the environment.

Wagga Wagga, Albury and Griffith provide a range of job opportunities, housing, education and health services. The region's cities and towns remain the key to vibrancy and prosperity.

The region is connected, attractive, healthy, safe and prosperous. Regional places have a strong sense of community identity, resilience and respect for Country. People can access a range of jobs, housing, events, festivals, education, health, recreational and other community services, all within beautiful natural and rural environments.

The population is growing, particularly in and near regional cities and along the NSW-Victorian border and demographic changes see a greater focus on supporting the older population.

Aboriginal culture, heritage and aspirations for land and water and their management are acknowledged, respected and supported.

With greater global demand for food and resources, the Riverina Murray's highly diversified economy draws from its reputation as one of Australia's premium agricultural areas. Irrigated agriculture continues to be a significant part of the regional economy and supports communities in the Western Riverina and near the Murray River. Agricultural diversification, innovation and value-adding leverages advanced and

automated technologies to maximise agribusiness diversification. The region is a well-connected export conduit to Melbourne and ports in NSW. Good strategic planning is minimising the challenges of the interface between residential and agricultural areas.

The expansion of intensive agriculture and food processing has attracted new families to a diverse and expanding economy, with flow-on demand and benefits for population-focused business and services.

The region's economy also benefits from links to adjoining regions, particularly access to Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra, Adelaide and Brisbane. Cross-border and cross-region opportunities drive strategic planning and economic development.

The region is a major freight and transport distribution hub with investment in essential infrastructure generating more efficient and higher capacity freight routes, better access to air and sea ports, competitive freight costs and higher regional productivity.














The Wagga Wagga Special Activation Precinct, Albury Regional Job Precinct and initiatives like the WR Connect industrial hub and freight terminal and the South West Renewable Energy Zone have set the foundation for the region to capitalise on the agricultural endowments and manufacturing opportunities for our major production areas. The region is a leader in both production and manufacturing, while helping to progress the state's goal of achieving net zero by 2050.





Figure 3: Riverina Murray Region Context



- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
|  Regional boundary |  Roads  |  Local government area     |
|  Metropolitan city |  Railway  |  National park and reserve |
|  Regional city     |  Inland rail                                      |  State forest              |
|  Town              |  Possible Melbourne to Albury-Wodonga faster rail |  Water body                |
|  Airport           |  |   |



PART

# 1

# Environment



Cocoparra National Park,  
Wiradjuri Aboriginal Country.  
Credit: John Spencer/DPE





Barmah Lake. Credit: Murray-Darling Basin Authority

PART

# 1

## Environment

The Riverina Murray's environment, river systems and natural water assets shape settlement patterns, the economy and continue to attract people to live and invest in the region.

Biophysical features (landforms, soils, hydrology, bioregions and ecological communities) influence the type and distribution of the region's multiple landscapes within the Murray Darling basin, from the sub-alpine Snowy Mountains sweeping down the western flanks of the Great Dividing Range to form riverine valleys along the Murray and Murrumbidgee rivers to the south-western slopes and semi-arid plains in the west.

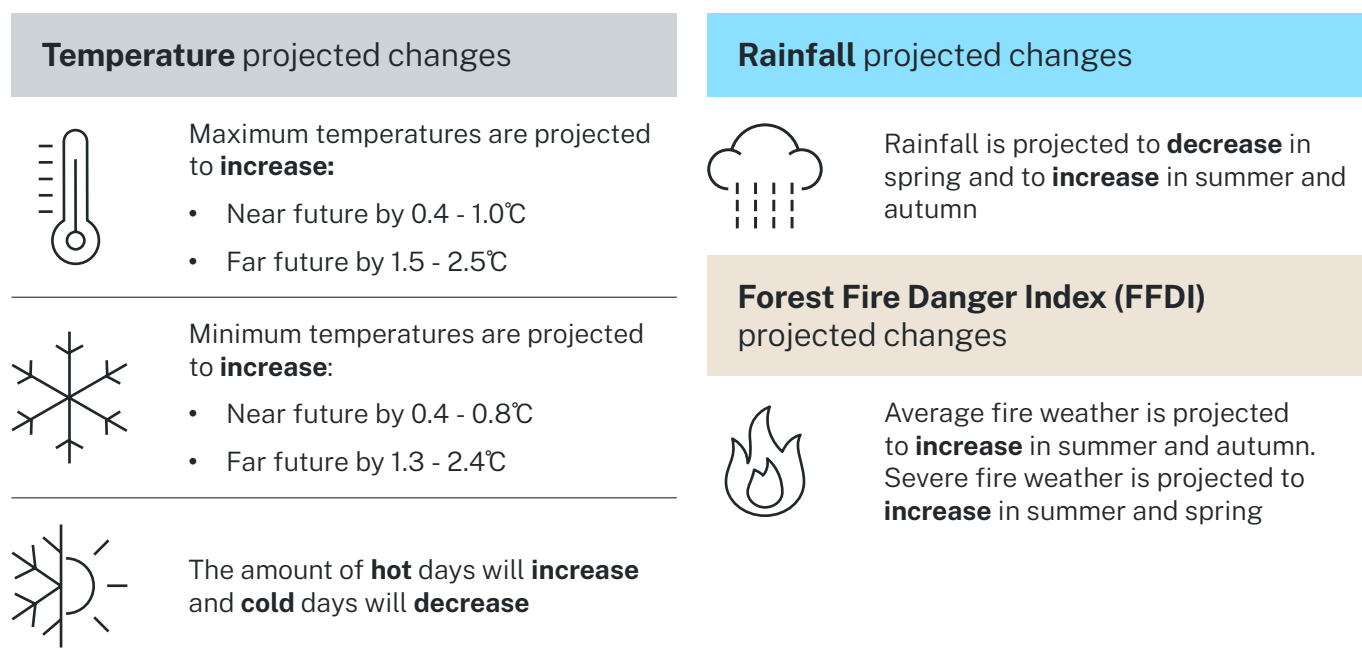
Soil and water influence the type and distribution of the region's ecological communities, including alpine forests, river red gum forests, open woodlands and grassy plains.

Rivers and waterways influence the lifestyle and prosperity of the region's communities, with many towns and villages established alongside the same rivers and waterways that also sustain agricultural enterprises that need irrigation and access to water. These industries must have the availability and security of water provided by the river systems.

Located west of the Great Dividing Range, the Riverina Murray is home to the Oolambeyan, Kosciuszko, Cocoparra, Yanga, Woomargama, Livingstone, Murray Valley and Murrumbidgee Valley national parks and The Rock and the Nombinnie nature reserves. It is dominated by large floodplains, river valleys and some of the longest rivers in Australia including the Murray, Murrumbidgee and Lachlan rivers. The Murray, Edward/Kolety-Wakool, Tumut and Murrumbidgee rivers are home to wetlands reliant on the presence and timing of water, including flood events. This includes Ramsar-listed wetlands such as the NSW Central Murray Forests and the Fivebough and Tuckerbil Wetlands.

The region's topography results in large spatial variations in climatic conditions. Climate projections indicate warmer temperatures and considerable seasonal and annual rainfall variability.<sup>1</sup> The changing climate is increasing or likely to increase the frequency, intensity and extent of floods, bushfire and droughts and could bring about cumulative or concurrent large-scale events or new hazards such as urban heat islands and increases in extreme poor air quality events (see Figure 4). These changes could affect resilient and sustainable future development outcomes.



Figure 4: Projected temperature and rainfall changes in Riverina Murray Region<sup>2</sup>

The Riverina Murray's diverse landscapes support a mosaic of native flora, fauna and aquatic habitats for more than 180 threatened species and 11 threatened ecological communities (TECs).

The region's bioregions are shown in Figure 5. The cooler mountain climates support the TECs of Monaro Tableland Cool Temperate Grassy Woodland and the Montane Peatlands and Swamps in the South Eastern Highlands Bioregion. These cooler mountain communities also contain threatened flora and fauna including the Southern and Northern Corroboree Frogs, Booroolong Frog and Smoky Mouse.

The fertile slopes and low plains of the region's centre are dominated by agriculture, industrial uses, regional towns and associated services. Once widespread, open grassy woodlands are now endangered and critically endangered TECs include White Box Yellow Box Blakely's Red Gum Woodland, Inland Grey Box Woodland and Weeping Myall Woodland. These and other grassy woodland communities support threatened species subject to landholder, community and government-based protection initiatives. They include Squirrel Gliders, Sloane's Froglet, Bush Stone-curlew and woodland bird species.

The west and north west of the region are dominated by the open plains of native grasslands, semi-arid shrublands, with areas of mallee in the far north west. These lower rainfall regions include unique species that occupy niche habitats including the critically endangered Plains-wanderer, Malleefowl, Red-lored Whistler and Southern Bell Frog.














Corroboree Frog, Kosciuszko National Park  
Credit: John Spencer/DPE





Figure 5: Environmental features of the Riverina Murray Region



- |   |                   |   |                                     |  |                                   |
|---|-------------------|---|-------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
|  | Regional boundary |  | Ramsar wetlands                     |  | South Eastern Highlands bioregion |
|  | Metropolitan city |  | Murray Darling Depression bioregion |  | Australian Alps bioregion         |
|  | Regional city     |  | Cobar Peneplain bioregion           |  | Water body                        |
|  | Town              |  | Riverina bioregion                  |  |                                   |
|   |                   |  | South Western Slopes bioregion      |  |                                   |



**OBJECTIVE 1:**

# Protect, connect and enhance biodiversity throughout the region



Inland Grey Box Woodland.  
Credit: Steve Lewer/DPE

The region's multiple biophysical layers have created significant natural environment assets that are important to the biophysical environment while providing positive human experiences and interactions. This can benefit the nature-based visitor economy especially along the river systems and highlands, and support agricultural livelihoods through the provision of ecosystem services (e.g. shade, shelter, pest control or pollination).

In areas likely to experience population and/or economic growth, biodiversity values could be further compromised through clearing of native vegetation. While local strategic planning statements acknowledge the benefits of the natural environment, we can better identify biodiversity values to:

- inform land use decision-making throughout the development process
- avoid and minimise biodiversity loss;
- identify land for environmental conservation, including on land zoned for development
- manage the intersection between the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act) and the EP&A Act to achieve the objectives of both.

Strategic planning must identify biodiversity values in the high growth areas of regional cities, Murray River communities, and smaller towns and villages. Providing future growth potential while protecting biodiversity values is best achieved at the strategic planning stage to avoid unnecessary costs and delays at the development application stage.



### Strategy 1.1



Strategic and statutory planning should aim to first avoid, then minimise impacts on biodiversity and the natural environment. Biodiversity offsetting (through the BC Act) should only be used when 'avoid' and 'minimise' principles are not feasible. To assist with this:

- local strategic planning statements will include:
  - an overview of the LGA biodiversity values and corridors
  - biodiversity protection/enhancement strategies and actions, in consultation with LALCs
  - opportunities for restoration of biodiversity values and strengthening landscape linkages such as green infrastructure networks
- strategic and statutory planning will:
  - identify the broad biodiversity attributes/values of zoned and/or strategy-identified urban investigation areas
  - identify existing zoned urban areas that may be difficult to develop due to biodiversity values
  - protect high environmental value land through conservation zones and conservation agreements
  - ensure land uses adjacent to high environmental value land and land containing regional and locally significant corridors are compatible with conservation outcomes or have adequate buffers to separate incompatible land uses
  - integrate biodiversity values into new and existing developments through water sensitive urban design, green infrastructure and walking and cycling networks
  - consider biodiversity certification for precinct-scale developments and rezonings
  - review and update biodiversity mapping and best practice provisions in the LEP.

Councils will engage with the department (environment division) when developing their local strategic planning statement, or in the early stages of strategic planning, to achieve this strategy.

### Collaboration Activity 1



The department (planning and environment divisions) will help councils to develop and review development control plan controls/principles for environmental land to manage the intersection between the EP&A Act and the BC Act during development assessment.

### Collaboration Activity 2



The department will ensure the NSW Planning Portal can capture validated spatial data on biodiversity values, including data collected to inform local strategies and local, regional and state significant development proposals. This data will support any future identification of biodiversity corridors and climate refugia across LGA boundaries.



Birds take flight over Tuckerbil Swamp, Murrumbidgee Valley.



**OBJECTIVE 2:**

# Manage development impacts within riverine environments



Wiradjuri Trail, Wagga Wagga  
Credit: Destination NSW

Managing the cultural, environmental and economic importance of rivers requires coordinated and consistent approaches to land use planning from all levels of government. This includes how water resources are managed and planned, how new development interacts with rivers and waterfront areas and the connectivity of riverine environments across the regional landscape.

Managing urban growth and land use in riverine areas such as the Murray and Murrumbidgee rivers is essential to enhancing environmental values and other lifestyle benefits (see Objective 9). However, within riverfront towns, desirability for waterfront development (residential, rural-residential development and visitor economy accommodation), combined with outdated and inconsistently applied policies has resulted in poor outcomes. These can include:

- ribbon development and riverfront fragmentation
- a decrease in public access to rivers and waterways
- a decrease in natural amenity
- a cumulative impact of increased clearing in the river corridors and water extraction.

The *Murray Regional Environmental Plan No. 2 (MREP)* was introduced in 1998 along the Murray River to manage inappropriate riverfront development that can result in increased flood hazards, conflicts among recreational users, boating congestion, loss of riparian vegetation and wildlife habitat, visual impacts and declining water quality. While the plan's principles remain relevant, it has been inconsistently applied. *The State Environmental Planning Policy (Biodiversity and Conservation) 2021* supersedes the MREP and includes guidance for development on or near riverine land.

As the region's climate and communities change, better guidance is required for councils and communities to ensure that development on riverine land will conserve waterways, enhance ecological functions and respond to and plan for future natural hazards.



## Strategy 2.1



Strategic and statutory planning for riverine environments will be consistent with the department's waterfront development guidelines to:

- incorporate waterfront areas into open space networks and prioritise public access to riverine lands and waterways
- prioritise subdivision of urban waterfront land for public access
- ensure adequate building and development setbacks from waterways to accommodate natural river processes and reduce the need for future hazard protection
- take account of natural hazards, including flooding 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.

## Action 2



The department will develop waterfront development guidelines to inform development as well as strategic and statutory planning to better manage the competing land uses along river corridors and riverine land. The guidelines will provide best practice design principles to support a regionally consistent approach to the design and siting of development and land uses on riverine land.

## Action 3



The department will continue to review waterfront planning controls in State Environmental Planning Policies and Local Environmental Plans to reflect best practice waterfront planning.



Wagirra Trail and Yindymarra Sculpture Walk. Albury  
Credit: Albury City Council and Destination Riverina Murray



**OBJECTIVE 3:**

# Increase natural hazard resilience



Wagga Wagga levee banks. Credit: John Spencer/DPE

Varying climate conditions adversely impact vulnerable regional systems such as small communities, agricultural productivity, water, transport, energy, the visitor economy and telecommunications and digital connectivity.<sup>3,4,5</sup> For example:

- The 2019-2020 bushfires burnt around 5,000 km<sup>2</sup> within the Albury-Wodonga, Snowy Valleys and Greater Hume LGAs, caused extensive damage to property, infrastructure and the environment, and severely impacted the forestry, viticulture, the visitor economy and hospitality industries. This also led to substantial health impacts from smoke exposure.<sup>6</sup>
- Severe droughts between mid-2017 and 2020 saw towns and industries face the prospect of running out of water.<sup>7</sup>
- The 2012 Murrumbidgee flood inundated homes, businesses and land from Jugiong to Darlington Point,<sup>8</sup> with almost 9,000 people evacuated and more than \$37 million in flood damage to Wagga Wagga.<sup>9</sup>
- The late 2022 flood event in NSW and Victoria resulted in significant flooding in communities along the Murray, Murrumbidgee and Lachlan Rivers and their tributaries. A number of communities experienced evacuations and flooding in parts of their urban areas.

## 2022 NSW Flood Inquiry

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

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

Consistent with the outcomes of the Inquiry, the NSW Government has 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 operation, 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.



## 2019-20 NSW Bushfire Inquiry

Following the catastrophic bushfires across NSW in late 2019 and early 2020, the NSW Government commissioned an independent expert inquiry to understand how the 2019-20 bushfire season was different and make recommendations for future improvements to how NSW plans and prepares for, and responds to, bushfires.

The Final Report of the NSW Bushfire Inquiry (2020) reinforced the need to shift to a strategic approach to planning for bushfire. This includes developing a new NSW Bushfire policy to accommodate changing climate conditions, build greater resilience for current and future communities and to decrease the costs of recovery. The Inquiry also highlighted the importance of embedding Aboriginal land management practices in planning and preparing for bushfires.

Regional growth pressures can increase demand for development near floodplains, high saline and bushfire hazard areas and place additional pressure on water security for all water users.

As climate conditions change, the interface between new development areas and natural environmental features will require careful management to ensure there is an acceptable hazard risk to the local community that does not increase the exposure of people and property to natural hazards.

To reduce hazard risk and build resilient places and built form, most local strategic planning statements identify priority actions to prepare and/or review flood studies, floodplain risk management plans, bushfire prone land mapping, climate change adaptation plans and urban forest strategies. The statements also look to increase resilience in the built form.

The planning system can be utilised to limit the exposure of development to natural hazards and climate change through a risk-management approach. This approach acknowledges that a natural process has the potential to turn into a natural hazard when three elements interact:

- there is a presence or probability of a natural hazard
- people and/or property are exposed to the hazard
- the characteristics of a community make it vulnerable to the damaging effects of the hazard.

Risk is reduced by decreasing the contribution from one or more of the 3 components while not increasing other components or increasing them to a lesser extent. Considering natural hazards early in decision-making limits exposure and vulnerability to risk.<sup>10</sup>

However, the strategic identification and review of hazard prone lands and their associated risks is a challenge for many councils, particularly given resourcing constraints. This means many councils rely on site-by-site analyses that accompany rezoning or development applications.

To reduce exposure to natural hazards and build resilient communities/places, the impacts of natural hazards need to be considered and addressed early in the land use planning and decision-making process. Reducing the level of vulnerability and risk for communities will involve adaptation and mitigation for existing urban areas and avoiding and mitigating risks for new development.

### Strategy 3.1



Strategic and statutory planning will:

- be consistent with applicable NSW policies or guidelines
- take a risk-based approach that uses best available evidence in consultation with the NSW Government, emergency service providers, local emergency management committees and bush fire risk management committees
- ensure new development is located in a way that is commensurate to the risks of unacceptable bushfire, salinity and flooding
- encourage opportunities for co-location of compatible land uses such as open spaces, biodiversity conservation areas and nature-based visitor economy developments in high hazard risk locations
- design communities that:
  - provide public spaces that build community cohesion and interaction
  - include green infrastructure networks at precinct and landscape scales to help avoid hazards such as the urban heat island effect and exposure to air pollution
- provide easy to understand information to increase public awareness of potential natural hazard risks and climate change impacts when consulting on possible future developments.

### Collaboration Activity 3



The department (planning and environment divisions) will investigate priority areas in need of floodplain risk management planning.



PART

# 2

## Communities and places







Streetscapes, Gundagai. Credit: Destination NSW

## PART

# 2

## Communities and places

The Riverina Murray is a great place to live, work and visit. A growing population requires not just more housing, but a greater choice in housing to accommodate older people, smaller households, seasonal and temporary workers, and tourists. It also requires better public transport networks to keep up with growth, support economic activity and reduce the impact of disadvantage in the region.

The regional cities of Albury, Wagga Wagga and Griffith are home to more than 50% of the region's population and many more people commute to work in the cities from surrounding areas. Around 60% of people in the region only travel less than 10 km for work.<sup>11</sup>

The regional cities provide commercial, residential, cultural and industrial opportunities and higher-order services to catchments that can be as much as two hours away. For example, people in Young, outside the region, access health and education in Wagga Wagga.

There's a variety in the type of housing and services offered in the region's towns and cities. Smaller towns influenced by the growth of larger towns and regional cities tend to offer larger lots and lifestyle benefits. The growth of Wagga Wagga, Griffith and Albury reflect the broad range of economic and social opportunities on offer in these cities.

Population growth and housing needs are likely to be influenced by the expected investment in major capital projects in the region over the next 5 years, attracting permanent and temporary workers.

Demographic changes, such as tree change migration, more flexible work practices, housing affordability and more young people staying in regional areas, particularly regional cities, continue to influence population projections.

Albury, Griffith, Wagga Wagga and cross-border communities are expected to accommodate a large proportion of the growth over the next 20 years. These areas will require effective strategic planning to achieve sustainable development.

Household size is likely to continue to decline and single-person and couple-only households could make up over 60% of all households by 2041. Almost 1 in 5 people are 65 or older today; this is expected to increase to 1 in 4 people by 2041. The number of people aged 85 and older is projected to more than double by 2041. These trends will require a greater proportion of smaller dwellings to be built across the region.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics publishes an annual estimated resident population (ERP) that is rebased off the Census every 5 years. The ERP shows the region has grown consistently by over 17,000 new residents over the last 10 years and is now home to more than 283,300 people.<sup>12</sup>

Since the 2016 Census, many parts of the Riverina Murray region have seen stronger than expected population growth, particularly along the Murray River. The COVID-19 pandemic, however, exacerbated housing pressures.



Collectively the regional cities account for most new residents (more than 1,100 people a year since 2016), yet when smaller towns see relatively substantial and/or consistent population increases, there can be greater pressure on infrastructure and services, as well as housing supply and affordability in these communities<sup>13</sup>.

For example, the population of Moama (twin town to Echuca in Victoria) increased by an average 145 people per year for the last 20 years (between 2-4% per annum), and an additional 225 people between mid-2020 to mid-2021<sup>14</sup>.

Similarly the small towns around Corowa (including Mulwala, the twin town to Yarrawonga in Victoria) collectively grew by an average of 45 people per year over the last 20 years. The small towns around Albury welcome an average of 68 people a year and those around Wagga Wagga, including Junee, welcome an average of 202 new residents a year.

### COVID-19 and housing

During the COVID-19 pandemic, less people left the regions for capital cities and more people left capital cities to live in regions, resulting in record high net increases of people living outside Greater Sydney.

Strong housing sales and increased demand for rental properties in regional areas led to higher housing prices in 2020-21 and rents in regional NSW grew at a faster rate than Sydney. Pre-COVID, house prices in regional NSW were less volatile than in Sydney and rental vacancy rates were steady but tight. Since COVID-19, average regional rental vacancies have dropped to below 1%.<sup>15</sup> These trends have increased pressure on the availability and affordability of housing across the region.

Development activity across the Riverina Murray region has been strong with some towns and cities experiencing above-average population growth in 2020-21, when the total dwellings approved in the region increased by 15% compared to the previous 4 years.<sup>16</sup> This was significantly higher in some LGAs, such as Greater Hume (26%), Albury (43%) and Coolamon (65%).

In addition, the value of approved residential development increased by 25% during 2020-21 compared to the average value over the previous 4 years.

What was expected of housing, public areas, urban design and open spaces in Australia 50 years ago is different from communities' needs, preferences and expectations today. As a result, the supply and diversity of dwellings, as well as public spaces, do not necessarily support the community's aspirations and needs. With agile workforces, changing population structures and climate conditions, strategic planning must consider these issues while directing how development and investment is coordinated to help create high quality, resilient and liveable communities.

Land use planning must also protect distinctive features such as historic buildings and tree-lined streets. These scenic and cultural landscapes provide unique settings and are essential to the region's identity.

Medium density housing, Wagga Wagga





**OBJECTIVE 4:**

# Support Aboriginal aspirations through land use planning



Wagirra Trail and Yindyamarra Sculpture Walk, West Albury.  
Credit: Destination NSW

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 20 LALCs in the Riverina Murray region straddling multiple LGAs and regional boundaries (see Figure 6).

Native title represents 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 lore and customs.

LALCs and native title holders wishing to leverage economic development of 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.



On request, the department conducted assessments of land held by LALCs in NSW since 2019. These assessments, bring together information about landholdings (including mapping and aerial photos), planning controls and constraints, and information about the suitability of land for development. Assessments need to be accelerated in the region to provide base-level planning system information to all LALCs about their land.

Further, strategic planning needs to reflect aspirations of Aboriginal people for Aboriginal land to aid progression through statutory planning processes such as rezonings and development approvals.

There is also opportunity for Aboriginal land owners to capitalise on other NSW Government policy and initiatives such as biodiversity offsetting, providing water to meet Aboriginal cultural and economic aspirations and public infrastructure.

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



#### Collaboration Activity 4

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

- involving LALCs and native title holders in strategic planning and improving consultation processes
- 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 of planning instruments
- supporting Aboriginal land holders to better understand the planning system, including preparing planning assessments of Aboriginal land
- promoting opportunities for cultural awareness training for all involved in planning
- incorporating Aboriginal knowledge into planning considerations and decisions
- providing planning information to Aboriginal people to prioritise unresolved Aboriginal land claims on Crown land
- coordinating initiatives to improve cultural and economic opportunities associated with water resources.

#### Community, Land and Business Plans

The ALR Act requires LALCs to prepare and implement community, land and business plans (CLBPs).

CLBPs describe the LALC aims and how these will be achieved. They give LALC boards and staff an understanding of members' expectations and set benchmarks to be met over the period of the plan. They can also support LALC applications for funding from state agencies or through commercial arrangements.






The Rock Nature Reserve - Kengal Aboriginal Place  
Credit: Destination NSW





**Figure 6:** Local Aboriginal Land Council boundaries and Local Government Areas



-  Regional boundary
-  Local Aboriginal Land Council
-  Local government area



**OBJECTIVE 5:**

# Ensure housing supply, diversity, affordability and resilience

Stronger than anticipated population growth has exhausted serviced land supply in some areas and new growth opportunities will be required to meet demand. In addition to strong growth in the manufacturing sector, the COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to this growth.

New housing supply in regional areas is dominated by large, detached dwellings that do not align with demand for smaller, accessible and affordable housing. While many councils identify the need for more diverse and accessible housing, most report limited take-up of infill development opportunities despite supportive planning provisions and community demand.

Not all factors affecting housing shortages and diversity can be directly addressed through the planning system, however solutions still need to be investigated. Examples of these factors include:

- financial costs and disincentives relating to infill development, and affordable and diverse housing products in regional areas
- the impact of planned major projects on rental and short-term accommodation markets
- meeting thresholds for upgraded or new public infrastructure and services (particularly health and education) faster than expected in some locations
- increased visitors and the uptake of short-term rentals, that reduce the availability of long-term rental housing stock
- the older population and larger proportion of single or couple households
- a lack of tradespeople to meet construction demand, delaying housing supply
- an unwillingness to develop urban zoned land until land prices increase (land banking).

## 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 Riverina Murray 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.

The region was home to 3,254 affordable housing properties in 2017.<sup>17</sup> The 2021 Census found around 3% of all households (and 16% of Aboriginal households) live in social housing, with waiting times for affordable and public housing properties in the region ranging from 2 to 10 years for one-bedroom properties to more than 10 years for 4-bedroom properties.

We need to better understand current and future demographics and corresponding housing needs in all areas experiencing growth, including opportunities to provide the diversity of housing that meets community need, and the location and timing of new infrastructure. Staged urban development will help to achieve efficient, appropriate and sustainable housing development processes.

In addition to regional cities, rural towns and centres need investment in enabling infrastructure to support housing development.

To meet supply and diversity challenges, housing should look for:

- infill opportunities in regional cities, including higher density residential housing such as terraces and apartments near CBDs and public spaces (see Objective 6)
- infill opportunities and other low impact residential products such as villas and townhouses in towns and villages near main streets, open spaces and services.

The region's housing needs to be more energy efficient and resilient to natural disasters to protect occupants from events such as flooding, bushfire and climate extremes such as heat waves (see objective 3).

Making houses more thermal and energy efficient with light-coloured roofing materials, double-glazing, natural light, rooftop solar, heat-pump hot water or making them solar and battery-ready will provide

financial and quality of life benefits. Identifying areas for small-scale clean electricity generation, microgrids and related transmission infrastructure in development areas will allow this infrastructure to be installed upfront or be added without significant disruption.

The diversity of challenges and influences across the region means there is no one-size-fits-all housing solution. A range of solutions will ensure the region's towns and regional cities remain vibrant and productive places to live.

### Strategy 5.1



Local strategic planning statements will:

- overview demographic trends, major projects and industries, and other influences shaping housing demand
- identify high-level constraints and opportunities for growth, including hazards and biodiversity
- identify key infrastructure and servicing requirements for future populations
- identify next steps and commit to preparing or updating strategies for diverse and affordable housing in strategically appropriate locations.

Councils are required to prepare local housing strategies (standalone or included in other strategic work) that will:

- identify the drivers of housing need
- analyse constraints and opportunities to the provision of housing
- identify future housing needs
- identify opportunities or initiatives to provide more resilient housing that responds to hazards and climate change
- identify the preferred type and location of housing
- identify the staging and release of new housing
- commit to timely and orderly provision of infrastructure to service housing and future populations (see Objective 11).

Strategies will accord with state government guidance for preparing housing strategies, including the need to provide a clear evidence base. They will enable assessment of the implications of various locations for new housing and identify required infrastructure. State government agencies (including infrastructure providers) should be consulted during the review or preparation of these strategies.



**Strategy 5.2**

Councils should consider local affordable housing needs, either separately or as part of a local housing strategy, to identify potential community, council and State government solutions and actions that could support low-income renters and purchasers.

**Strategy 5.3**

New urban development will:

- avoid constraints and hazards
- minimise land use conflict with other uses, including agricultural land, freight corridors, industrial uses, and energy developments and corridors
- protect sensitive land uses from sources of air pollution such as major roads, freight routes, and railway lines, using appropriate development controls and design solutions
- protect areas of high environmental value and, ideally, avoid removal
- be integrated with existing urban areas
- provide a variety of housing that reflects community need
- integrate land use and transport planning, including outcomes that support public and active transport opportunities
- protect the viability of city and town centres
- protect and enhance local character
- consider access to existing, or provide new, services and infrastructure as an area is developed
- be designed to support walking and cycle-friendly neighbourhoods and connect to existing active transport networks
- accord with staging and release plans.

**Action 4**

The department will (in consultation with state agencies and councils) identify and clarify the approval process for local housing strategies to streamline rezoning processes.

**Collaboration Activity 5**

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 for land use planning to improve housing affordability outcomes.

**Collaboration Activity 6**

The department will work with 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.

Aerial overlooking Tumut.  
Credit: Destination NSW





**OBJECTIVE 6:**

# Support housing in regional cities and their sub-regions



Aerial, Albury.  
Credit: Destination NSW

The regional cities of Albury, Wagga Wagga and Griffith provide commercial, residential, cultural and employment opportunities and higher-order services to residents and to surrounding areas. They house more than 50% of the region's population and provide 58% of all jobs in the region, supporting those who commute to the cities from surrounding areas.

Conversely, the areas surrounding regional cities provide the agricultural and industrial base for many regional economies, alternative lifestyle opportunities and support tourism and access to recreation.

Redevelopment and higher residential densities will be a focus of urban growth in regional cities and should be supported by strategic planning. Existing urban areas have capacity for infill and revitalisation, particularly near commercial centres. All three regional cities have or will provide medium and high-density housing in or near CBDs.

The continued provision of rural residential development in the three regional cities needs to be managed to protect future urban growth areas from fragmentation and ensure that infrastructure and service provision is economically efficient and effective for the whole city (see Objective 7). Some rural residential areas within or adjoining regional cities have the capacity to increase residential densities to take advantage of their access to infrastructure and services and to promote a more compact urban form.

There are economic benefits for surrounding areas when regional cities grow, particularly in areas within commuting distance. These areas could offer affordable housing and a country lifestyle for residents still seeking the benefits and opportunities of a nearby large city.

Recognising regional cities and their surrounding areas as a single housing market will provide opportunities for these communities and enable local and state governments to focus on appropriate growth, rather than competition between the cities and smaller nearby townships.



## Wagga Wagga

Wagga Wagga is NSW's largest inland regional city, home to more than 67,000 people and the central hub for much of the region's east. Approximately 88% of people in the city of Wagga Wagga live and work in the city; others commute from areas within an hour, including from Junee, Coolamon and Lockhart LGAs.<sup>18</sup>

Wagga Wagga also provides commercial, health, education, civic and social services to a catchment of approximately 190,000 people, as far away as Young in the Hilltops LGA.

While medium density development will increase, the main form of new housing will be in identified urban release areas. The Northern Growth Area will provide more than 6,000 new homes varying in diversity and affordability (approximately 17 years of supply). Council is committed to an integrated master planning process for this area including the NSW Government and infrastructure providers to ensure services are provided in a timely and efficient manner.

Council continues to support urban growth areas to the south of the city, such as the Lloyd development area and increased densities in some existing large lot residential areas, to meet its future urban housing needs.

Wagga Wagga City Council is planning for a transition to a more densely populated city of 100,000 people. This will require a shift in focus for existing rural residential areas on the urban fringe of the city to a more standard housing product, including medium density housing. Council has committed to directing rural residential development away from urban fringes to nearby villages.

In addition, towns and villages like Coolamon, Junee, Culcairn and The Rock could be suitable for standard urban housing at a different price point, as well as lifestyle rural residential development opportunities.

## Albury

Albury is home to around 56,000 people on the NSW side of the Murray River. With Wodonga in Victoria, these twin cities are home to almost 100,000 people.

The combined City is a central hub for south east Riverina Murray and for the north east of Victoria – a broader catchment of around 200,000 people. Nearly two-thirds of Albury's workforce live and work in the city and a further 20% travel from Wodonga. Greater Hume and Indigo (Victoria) LGAs house the most commuters outside Albury/Wodonga.<sup>19</sup>

Albury is the fastest growing centre in the Riverina Murray region, and this will continue with the Thurgoona/Wirlinga Growth Area in the north east expected to provide more than 22,000 new homes (approximately 40 years supply). Growth in this area is supported by comprehensive structure planning.



Figure 7: Influence of Wagga Wagga Regional City on surrounding areas



Figure 8: Influence of Albury Regional City on surrounding areas



Albury is unique due to its intrinsic links and interdependence with Wodonga. While the two cities function separately, there is a focus on “two cities, one community”.<sup>20</sup> Development of both needs to balance growth, competition and sustainable urban outcomes.

In addition to some rural residential opportunities within the Albury LGA, there are opportunities for towns and villages within commuting distance, such as Jindera, Corowa, Howlong, Culcairn and Holbrook, to also provide rural residential development.

## Griffith

Griffith is home to approximately 27,000 people. It is a major commercial centre providing higher order goods, services, jobs and facilities to a wider sub-region of approximately 50,000 people. Most people living in Griffith (90%) live and work there. It sits within the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area, one of the most diverse and productive agricultural regions in Australia.

Griffith City Council’s urban release areas at Lake Wyangan and Collina are likely to supply most standard housing for the foreseeable future however some additional housing in the city centre and on the urban fringes of Griffith are being supported while the urban growth areas are strategically planned for houses and infrastructure. Council’s housing strategy focused on housing diversity and affordable housing options and opportunities to increase housing in and close to the city centre, where there are substantial redevelopment and mixed-use opportunities for apartments. To allow for this to occur, Council has actively supported the relocation of the Griffith freight terminal to a more appropriate location in order to reduce potential land use conflicts on new infill residential development. If relocated the site could be master planned to facilitate medium density and affordable housing close to the CBD.

Given the increasing costs of housing in regional cities, there are still opportunities for commuting-distance towns and villages like Yenda, Hanwood, Leeton and Darlington Point, particularly for rural residential development.

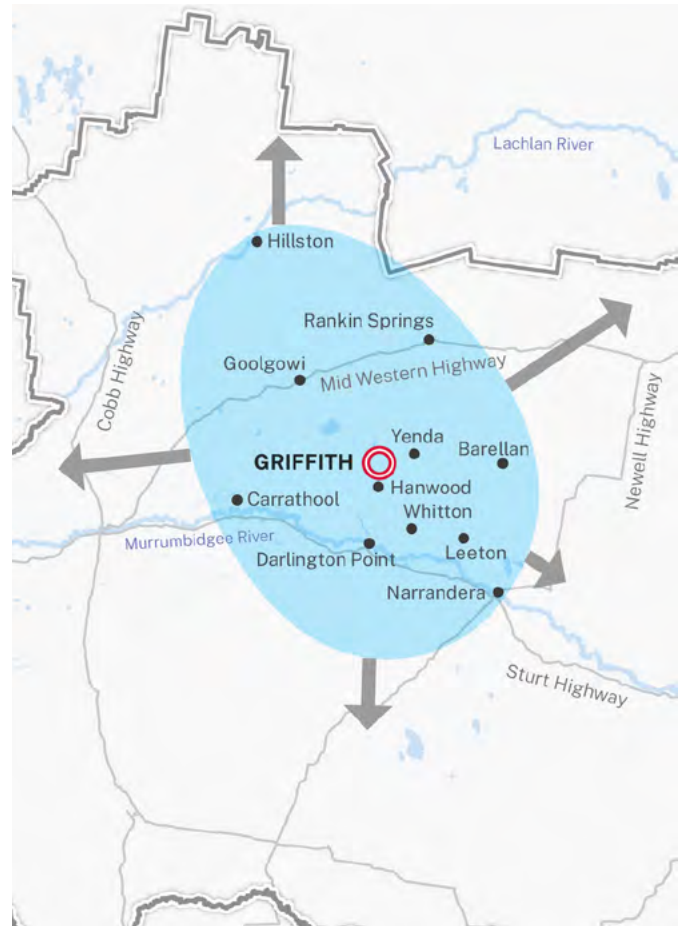


Figure 9: Influence of Griffith Regional City on surrounding areas

### Strategy 6.1

Strategic and statutory planning for the regional cities will aim to:

- coordinate appropriate urban growth and development through structure and master planning, particularly in new urban release areas
- increase infill and residential densities within or close to the CBD, in consultation with relevant government infrastructure and service providers (such as schools and transport), where appropriate.
- where strategically justified, transition rural residential development to a standard residential product
- set targets, timeframes and staging for servicing urban land; identify infrastructure requirements and priorities; align infrastructure plans; and audit residentially zoned land to identify development barriers
- review the supply of zoned and strategy-identified land to understand constraints, priorities and development pathways.



**Collaboration Activity 7**

The department will work with:

- Coolamon, Cootamundra-Gundagai, Greater Hume, Junee, Lockhart, Narrandera and Snowy Valleys councils to respond to potential housing and economic impacts and opportunities from the growth and development of Wagga Wagga
- Federation and Greater Hume councils to respond to potential housing and economic impacts and opportunities from the growth and development of Albury, in consultation with Albury City Council, adjacent Victorian councils and the NSW and Victorian cross-border commissioners
- Carrathool, Leeton, Murrumbidgee and Narrandera councils to respond to potential housing and economic impacts and opportunities from the growth and development of Griffith.

**Collaboration Activity 8**

The department will work with Wagga Wagga, Albury and Griffith city councils and relevant government agencies to coordinate appropriate urban growth and development through structure and master planning, particularly in new urban release areas.

**Collaboration Activity 9**

The department will work with Griffith City Council and other relevant agencies to consider the relocation of the Griffith freight terminal to a more appropriate location with less potential land use conflicts, to provide greater housing choice near the CBD.

Streetscapes, Wagga Wagga. Credit: Destination NSW





**OBJECTIVE 7:**

# Provide for appropriate rural residential development



Springvale, Wagga Wagga.  
Credit: Destination NSW

Rural residential development provides an option for people who want to live in a semi-rural or urban fringe setting where the dwelling is the primary use of the land. This type of development is known by many names, including ‘rural residential’, ‘rural lifestyle’, ‘rural living’ and ‘large lot residential’ development. It is usually on the edge of or near villages, towns and regional cities. There are many towns in the region that provide rural residential development that support a larger urban centre, including Jindera (15 minutes from Albury), Coolamon (30 minutes from Wagga Wagga), Moama (10 minutes from Echuca, Victoria) and Yenda (15 minutes outside Griffith). It does not include smaller lots with dwellings that are intended to be used for commercial farming enterprises (such as intensive agriculture).

Demand for rural residential development within commuting distance of regional cities and towns is expected to continue. Population and employment opportunities will increase in the regional cities and many towns across the region, enabling smaller communities to provide lifestyle opportunities without competing with the regional cities or larger towns. In addition, rural residential development offers housing options in smaller towns where there is low or no growth.

Rural residential development supports growth in rural communities and contributes to housing diversity. However, it must be planned to minimise or avoid unnecessary and irreversible impacts as it can:

- increase potential for land use conflict with nearby or adjoining productive agricultural, industrial, mining or energy uses
- fragment rural or agricultural land, creating dwelling opportunities that can increase the value of rural land and potentially reduce the ability of farming enterprises to amalgamate
- place pressure on infrastructure and services, resulting in an economic burden on councils
- contribute to a greater reliance on private vehicle transport to access essential services
- cause biodiversity losses, weed control issues or erosion, or in waterfront areas, water quality issues, vegetation loss or impacts on infrastructure in and adjoining the waterway
- restrict future urban growth opportunities due to multiple landowners and competing priorities.



### Strategy 7.1

New rural residential development areas must be identified in a local housing or other strategy, approved by the department, prepared in accordance with Objective 5 and:

- be near existing urban areas to maximise the efficient use of existing infrastructure and services, such as roads, water, sewerage and waste services, public transport and social and community infrastructure, (including access to education facilities)
- not reduce future urban development options
- protect the economic use of rural land and be located away from significant agriculture, forestry, extractive resources or energy production or distribution areas or other air pollution emission sources (see Objective 12)
- not be located on areas of high environmental value or areas of cultural or heritage significance or not adversely affect nearby land with those values
- avoid fragmentation of waterfront areas, and not proliferate additional water rights to water bodies
- avoid areas that could pose a risk to public safety, including flood, landslip, bushfires, proximity to hazardous or offensive industry uses or contaminated land
- be suitable for on-site effluent disposal (if required), or ensure treatment systems that can avoid overflow during storms
- avoid locations that could adversely impact surface water or groundwater resources  
Note: where onsite sewer is being proposed, the cumulative impacts on groundwater must be considered.
- provide an adequate water supply for domestic purposes
- offer permanent and safe all-weather access, avoid ribbon development along main roads and minimise access off major roads
- provide a lot size and zone that ensures a dwelling is the primary use of the land.  
Note: The RU4 Small Lot Primary Production Zone is not suitable for rural residential development.



Rural residential development, NSW





**OBJECTIVE 8:**

# Provide for short-term accommodation

The Shamrock Hotel Motel, Temora  
Credit: Destination NSW



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

There has been significant housing stress in some towns and villages from an influx of workers during the construction of large-scale developments, such as renewable energy projects, mining, Murray River bridge crossings and Inland Rail. Seasonal agricultural employment and the visitor economy also create demand for short-term accommodation.

In some instances, major projects and seasonal housing needs are met locally, without analysis of any impacts, nor any remediation, which affects the availability of housing for residents and the visitor economy.

Workforces need to be accommodated appropriately to support local economic development. This requires a coordinated and ongoing process to understand the scale of major projects and workers and where they will occur, to enable appropriate planning for the right types and locations of housing.



Councils need to plan for a range of housing and accommodation options, particularly where demand for temporary accommodation is high. For example, councils could:

- consider seasonal and itinerant worker accommodation needs in local housing strategies and local strategic planning statements
- review LEPs to provide for temporary worker accommodation, caravan parks, manufactured home estates or moveable dwellings
- implement short-term rental accommodation policies
- review planning controls to identify barriers to the provision of suitable accommodation
- partner with the community housing sector to provide affordable housing supply suitable for worker accommodation and longer term affordable rental housing
- apply for low-cost loans for infrastructure to support private sector housing
- encourage better utilisation of existing dwelling stock.

### Strategy 8.1



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.

### Strategy 8.2



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.

### Collaboration Activity 10



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

- quantify housing demands from major projects and infrastructure investments, including mining, renewable energy, transmission, and road and rail projects
- understand the cumulative impacts of major projects on the region and affected communities
- determine suitable planning mechanisms to ensure the project design and development assessment process considers these impacts early.

### Collaboration Activity 11



The department will work with councils to review LEPs to facilitate workforce accommodation associated with major projects.



**OBJECTIVE 9:**

# Plan for resilient places that respect local character

Streetscapes, Coolamon.  
Credit: Destination NSW



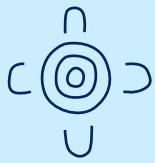
Main streets, rural landscapes and vistas, interactions with the natural environment and waterways, open spaces and cultural and heritage places can contribute to unique, locally recognisable places.

Well-designed places are usually great places to live and visit. When planning places, the urban design strategies for NSW can assist efforts to represent community values and ambitions and build resilience (see Figure 10).

Understanding what resonates with people and makes an area special can help to retain and celebrate local character.

Figure 10: Extract from Government Architect NSW (2020) *Urban Design Guide for Regional NSW*

## Urban design strategies for regional NSW



### Engage with the history and culture of places

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



### Integrate with the natural environment and landscape

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



### Revitalise main streets and town centres

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



### Prioritise connectivity, walkability, and cycling opportunities

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



### Balance urban growth

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



### Increase options for diverse and healthy living

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



### Respond to climatic conditions and their impacts.

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



## Aboriginal heritage

Conserving Aboriginal heritage and respecting Aboriginal people's rights to determine how their heritage is identified and managed can help to uphold some of the world's longest standing spiritual, historical, social and educational values. Incorporating local Aboriginal knowledge, culture and traditions into centres, places and developments will embed cultural awareness and build respect for the region's cultural history. Respectfully and authentically combining history and heritage with modern design creates places with shared values and a clear sense of place, identity and offers unique opportunities for the visitor economy.

## Non-Aboriginal heritage

Heritage conservation attracts businesses and residents and supports the visitor economy. Better promotion and targeted community education initiatives can increase community support for managing and protecting heritage assets.

Heritage is distinct from local character; it is not just about managing the material culture of the past, it is also about understanding how heritage influences and shapes communities today. Heritage buildings can be re-used as both cultural infrastructure and modern economic activities.

Heritage is irreplaceable and should be valued and protected. Appropriate heritage management mechanisms developed with communities, such as Aboriginal and cultural heritage studies can inform strategic and statutory land use planning.

### Strategy 9.1



Councils will identify, conserve and enhance cultural heritage values by:

- engaging with the community early (including Traditional Owners) in the planning process to protect, preserve and nurture Aboriginal cultural heritage
- undertaking heritage studies to inform conservation and development opportunities
- encouraging adaptive re-use or sympathetic new design in heritage settings
- managing and monitoring the cumulative impact of development on heritage values and character of places
- creating opportunities for Traditional Owners to manage and protect Aboriginal heritage.



Leeton Township.  
Credit: Destination NSW

## Waterfronts

Rivers and waterfront areas can be the centrepiece of waterfront communities, allowing people to visually connect and sensitively interact with the water. Stronger links between towns and waterways can optimise the heritage and character of a place, make waterway areas more attractive, and potentially provide new public space and areas for recreation. Riverfront master planning processes such as the Wagga Wagga Riverside Strategic Master Plan, Albury Murray River Experience Master Plan, Hay Shire Council's Murrumbidgee River Master Plan 2021 and the Deniliquin CBD Master Plan create better connections between towns, rivers and people.

Reorienting commercial and retail frontages to waterfronts could help to create waterfront connections for pedestrian and cycle networks between centres, residential areas, employment areas, cultural facilities and transport nodes. This can occur alongside improvements to riparian zones and river channels across the Riverina Murray region.

To do this, councils and public land managers need support to fund the ownership, embellishment and ongoing maintenance of waterfront lands and the preparation of waterfront activation strategies to identify key sites.

The region's waterfront 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. Collaboration and partnerships with Aboriginal communities and Traditional Owners can help to identify opportunities for cultural practice, better recognition of culture and place and economic opportunities for Aboriginal people, including the cultural visitor economy.



### Strategy 9.2



Strategic and statutory planning will consider:

- areas that can be embellished for recreation and public open space opportunities, aligned with the principles of the *NSW Public Spaces Charter*
- environmental values to be protected (in accordance with Objectives 1 & 2)
- opportunities to integrate with urban areas, pedestrian and cycle networks and irrigation channels
- preferred land uses and planning controls for waterfront areas
- opportunities to integrate activation strategies with planning for hazards such as drought and floods (in accordance with Objective 3)
- mapping river corridors in LEPs to increase protection
- connecting waterfront walks and trails
- opportunities for cultural practice and economic uses for Aboriginal people (see Strategy 9.1).

### Action 5



The department will develop a management framework for western NSW rivers to guide:

- priority areas for activation
- mechanisms to fund public ownership of waterfront land
- the preparation and implementation of waterfront activation strategies
- mechanisms to ensure waterfront areas provide long-term public and environmental benefits
- councils on the planning and management of waterfront lands.

Marrambidya Wetlands, Wagga Wagga  
Credit: Chloe Smith Photography; Visit Wagga Wagga



## Built environments

The region's places offer distinctive features such as historic buildings and tree-lined streets that help to create a unique character and sense of place. These characteristics are essential to the region's identity, visitor economy, and regional economy.

The CBDs of Wagga Wagga, Albury and Griffith provide well designed mixed-use, residential, retail and commercial development within and adjacent to the CBDs, and quality public spaces that encourage more diverse, vibrant and interactive community and business areas.

The region's busy and attractive main streets contribute to the regional economy and social wellbeing. They provide for day-to-day needs and act as a hub for surrounding communities. Examples include:

- Junee's distinctive two main streets either side of the railway line, preserved heritage buildings and streetscapes, accessible public open space and community facilities within an idyllic rural setting
- Temora's main street precinct, providing local shopping, dining and services within a preserved heritage streetscape
- the townships of Barooga and Tocumwal and their landscape and urban form that is central to their identity of towns on the banks of the iconic Murray River framed by magnificent Red Gum trees
- Leeton's main street, with beautifully restored and maintained art deco buildings, including the Roxy Community Theatre

- Sheridan Street in Gundagai, which features new tourist and information facilities and greater foot traffic from well-designed civil works and the repainting of buildings.

The revitalisation and development of built environments throughout the region will contribute to the growing population's health and wellbeing. Many of the region's town centres would benefit from strategic planning to fully appreciate the opportunities of vibrant built environments.

### Strategy 9.3



Councils should undertake strategic, place-based planning of CBDs and main streets to:

- identify opportunities to diversify land uses and activate and/or revitalise centres
- be walking and cycle-friendly and manage the competing needs of movement and place outcomes
- recognise and celebrate the local character of the place and its people
- enhance vitality and economic viability
- consider public domain improvements, public art, community events, markets and festivals, local housing and night-time options such as restaurants and bars.

Streetscapes, Temora  
Credit: Destination NSW



## Public Spaces

Vibrant neighbourhoods feature green infrastructure, and walkable and attractive public spaces.

Public spaces should be high quality, well maintained and integrated with the surrounding environment. They need to be designed and managed so they remain comfortable places to be as the region gets hotter. This can lead to healthier communities, where people are more connected and participate more in community activities, while mitigating climate change impacts, providing habitat for wildlife and improving air and water quality.

Initiatives to improve public spaces include increasing planting of trees and other vegetation in developed areas, maximising shading and using materials with greater reflectivity, less heat capacity and (in the case of paving materials) more permeability.



### Public Open Spaces

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



### Public Facilities

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



### Streets

streets, avenues and boulevards; squares and plazas; pavements; passages and lanes, and bicycle paths

#### Strategy 9.4

Strategic and statutory planning should encourage retaining existing trees and planting new street trees along main streets.



#### Strategy 9.5

Councils should analyse public space needs and develop public space strategies to improve access and quality of all public spaces, including planning new and improved public spaces that align with the 10 principles for quality public space of the *NSW Public Spaces Charter*.



## Smart Places

Smart technology can contribute to quality, productive, resilient and adaptable places and infrastructure. For example, electric vehicle charging infrastructure, smart CCTV, smart lighting, predictive analytics, 'push to talk' emergency systems, smart screens and smart tour guides can improve public spaces and encourage greater use.

Similarly, embedding smart technologies into utility infrastructure and environmental monitoring systems enables real-time management decisions and actions. Land use and infrastructure in new communities or precincts, infill or urban renewal areas should embed smart solutions and technologies.

#### Strategy 9.6

Major commercial, residential and community infrastructure developments should consider ways to enable and incorporate smart technology infrastructure, where appropriate.



#### Strategy 9.7

Statutory planning should be reviewed to support adaptation to new and emerging technology driven-land uses, particularly smart infrastructure.



Murrumbidgee River, Hay  
Credit: Margie McClelland





**OBJECTIVE 10:**

# Improve connections between Murray River communities

Most towns and localities on the Murray River are co-located with a Victorian counterpart (see Figure 11). These twin towns often share housing markets and operate as a single provider of services, employment and retail.

Some Victorian towns and cities within commuting distance of the border are likely to grow significantly over the next 20 years. For example, Bendigo (an hour south west of Moama) and Wodonga (adjoining Albury) are projected to grow by 50% by 2036, taking their populations to over 153,000 and almost 59,000 respectively.<sup>21</sup> Other cities such as Echuca, Shepparton and Wangaratta are projected to grow steadily to 2036.<sup>22</sup>

Albury/Wodonga is a regional centre, highlighted by Victorian Government projections that Wodonga will be one of the top five fastest growing regional LGAs in Victoria over the next 20 years. In addition, the Albury-Wodonga Regional Deal between both councils and the Australian Government will provide funding and support for economic development and infrastructure and connectivity priorities.

NSW Murray River communities have stronger economic and social connections to communities in northern Victoria than other parts of NSW (see Figure 11). Commuting across the border occurs both into and out of NSW communities. For

example, almost 8,400 people live in the Victorian LGAs of Wodonga, Indigo, Moira or Towong and commute to work in the eastern NSW border towns. Just over half the people that live in Moama travel into Victoria to work and over half the number of people that work in Moama live in Victoria.<sup>23</sup>

Melbourne is only 2.5-3 hours from most border communities (by road and rail) and major towns and regional cities in Victoria are within 30-60 minutes. Conversely, the regional cities of Griffith and Wagga Wagga are 2-3.5 hours from most border communities and Albury is nearly 3 hours drive from Moama. People in the central and western parts of the border areas connect to parts of Victoria and Melbourne for work, education, recreation, and services and facilities such as specialised health and high-order retail.

Bendigo's importance to NSW cross-border communities could increase as it is one of three regional cities in Victoria that are projected to account for around half of all Victorian regional growth in the next two decades.<sup>24</sup>

The strong commercial and industrial links between the Riverina Murray region and Victoria are primarily from freight moving through to Melbourne Airport and the Port of Melbourne. Victoria is expecting freight volumes to nearly triple in the next three decades.<sup>25</sup>

**Figure 11:** NSW-Victoria cross-border towns and area of influence



Growth in Victoria's regions is guided by regional growth plans endorsed by all Victorian regional councils. The plans will see housing, jobs, transport and community facilities provided when and where they are needed.<sup>26</sup>

Residents and workers along the Murray River do not always appreciate the different legal and administrative requirements of each State. While this can increase opportunities for funding or leveraging off the success of a cross-border counterpart, it can limit coordination of service and infrastructure delivery, fragment government, duplicate resources, and result in varying approaches to rules and regulations.<sup>27</sup> Cross border commissioners in NSW and Victoria are looking to develop common approaches and resolve issues unique to cross-border communities.

Some of the challenges unique to land use planning in this sub-region include:

- different forms of riverfront ownership. Much of the Victorian side of the Murray River is Crown land, which limits private development opportunities, yet provides visitor economy and amenity opportunities; most of the NSW side of the river is in private ownership
- different state legislation and requirements for development that often result in more favourable conditions in one area over another
- the combined housing markets for twin towns that operate over separate jurisdictions
- better integrating transport and land use planning between jurisdictions (see Objective 17)
- addressing pressure for holiday homes and rural residential developments in small NSW towns and communities where house prices are increasing and rental markets and affordable housing opportunities are tightening.

There are already examples of collaboration between state agencies, such as the Victoria and NSW Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and other more specific MoUs, for example the NSW Department of Primary Industry MoU for Biosecurity and Emergency Management and other more specific MoUs. These MoUs have associated actions that require specific activities to be designed to address cross-border anomalies in legislation, regulation and government policy. Other NSW and Victorian agencies and NSW and Victorian councils could draw from these MoUs and Albury-Wodonga's collaboration experiences and outcomes. Regular dialogue is essential to identify issues, points of difference, best practice examples and potential collaboration activities.

## Two Cities – One Community

In preparing individual community strategic plans, the respective Albury and Wodonga communities identified that the two councils should work more closely to achieve community aspirations and ambitions, value for money and a regional perspective.

A combined community strategic plan 2017-2021 adopted by both councils sets out long-term goals and actions to guide collaboration to realise community benefits and to build on an enduring partnership. The plan is due to be updated in late 2022.

### Strategy 10.1



Local strategic planning statements for LGAs adjoining the Murray River should:

- overview cross-border issues including inter-relationships, inter-dependencies and drivers of change
- recognise opportunities for a cross-border housing and employment lands market
- identify infrastructure and servicing constraints and opportunities in a cross-border environment.

### Strategy 10.2



The LGAs of Murray River, Berrigan, Federation and Albury City should collaborate with their Victorian cross-border local government counterparts through strategic planning for the cross-border towns of Murray Downs/Swan Hill; Barham/Koondrook; Moama/Echuca; Barooga/Cobram; Mulwala/Yarrowonga; Corowa/Wahgunyah; and Albury/Wodonga and investigate shared housing markets to understand demand and supply for housing in the area.

### Collaboration Activity 12



The department will work with relevant councils and agencies to share successful cross-border land use planning collaboration through workshops, practice notes, lessons learnt, or sessions with Joint Organisation planners' groups.

### Collaboration Activity 13



The department will work with NSW and Victorian councils, agencies and stakeholders to understand the servicing and infrastructure catchments for cross-border communities.



**OBJECTIVE 11:**

# Plan for integrated and resilient utility infrastructure



Hume Dam.  
Credit: Dave Taylor

The region relies on quality utility infrastructure, including water supply, sewerage, stormwater, electricity, gas and telecommunications. With growth and climate change, infrastructure should be well designed, more resilient and located in the right place at the right time.

The Regional Housing Taskforce (and other government programs, such as the Town Water Risk Reduction Program) identified deficiencies in utility infrastructure and inadequate alignment between strategic and infrastructure investment planning. These are barriers to urban development and industry diversification or expansion. Many councils highlight the need to prepare or review infrastructure master plans, housing strategies and infrastructure contributions plans to align infrastructure and service provision with anticipated growth.

Strategic planning provides a way to coordinate utility infrastructure that minimises expenditure or duplication of services. It prioritises infill growth opportunities to maximise existing infrastructure and identifies urban growth areas in locations with access to existing infrastructure or where new infrastructure is cost-effective.

## Water

The region sits wholly within the Murray Darling Basin and water management and water sharing are subject to the provisions of the Murray Darling Basin Plan.

Water within the region is finite and water licences are fully allocated. The expected population growth and industry development, coupled with the pressures of drought and climate change, require integration of long-term planning for water resources.

The region's water sources include:

- the regulated Murray and Murrumbidgee rivers
- dams and lakes
- unregulated rivers and creeks
- groundwater sources
- recycled water from local water utilities
- local runoff captured in farm dams
- water captured through floodplain harvesting.

Access to water is critical for some land uses but not

always considered upfront in the planning process. This can lead to population and industry growth in areas with water availability constraints, creating greater pressure on stressed water resources.

In some areas, councils are the local water authority and often draw water supplies from major rivers; in other areas, there are county water authorities, such as Riverina Water, that provide water to multiple LGAs.

There are opportunities to better integrate water resources in strategic planning to optimise water use efficiency, water re-use and recycling, sharing of existing or new water infrastructure or understanding the impact of land use planning decisions on water sources in the context of a capped system.

## Telecommunications

Access to telecommunications is inconsistent across the region. While the regional cities and some parts of the region have established NBN fibre networks, more remote parts have limited access to affordable and reliable digital communication infrastructure or endure mobile phone blackspots. This can limit business growth, the ability to attract skilled workforces and online health and education programs in remote areas. Online health services are essential for different communities, for example, the older populations in smaller centres who require regular, accessible care as they age. Further, a lack of consistent mobile connectivity could be a barrier to the uptake of more autonomous and connected vehicles in the future.

Growing innovation and market competition in communication satellites will improve affordability and reliability of telecommunication services in remote parts of the region.

## Electricity

Ensuring the region has a sustainable and reliable power source will ensure new residential and economic development can be accommodated. Whilst the South-West REZ, Snowy Hydro 2.0 and Energy Connect projects, identified in Objective 13, will contribute to this, aligning electricity infrastructure with identified growth in local strategies will be the most cost effective way to ensure that future areas have readily available electricity.

Greater engagement and collaboration between electricity suppliers and councils through the development and implementation of council-led strategic planning is required. This will ensure electricity infrastructure is fit for purpose and meets the needs of growing communities.

### Strategy 11.1



Strategic and statutory planning will:

- focus development around existing infrastructure and/or promote co-location of new infrastructure, where appropriate
- undertake infrastructure service planning and cost-benefit analysis for land identified for development, to establish whether the land can be efficiently and feasibly serviced
- understand and identify necessary infrastructure upgrades to accommodate additional growth in the immediate to short-term
- include staging plans that:
  - identify the thresholds and timelines for major land release and infrastructure provision
  - identify infrastructure capacity for growth and potential take-up scenarios, including a baseline assessment of extent, type and capacity of existing infrastructure
  - evaluate the cost-effectiveness of the infrastructure required to service the area
  - align with capital investment plans/ priorities of infrastructure providers or public authorities, where possible
  - consider resilience in infrastructure planning at a local, intra-regional and cross-border scale
  - identify and assess appropriate sites and capacity to provide for water security, wastewater service capacity, electricity supply, and emergency services
- optimise development controls to ensure development does not hinder the ongoing operation of infrastructure
- consider and identify infrastructure funding and delivery arrangements such as cross-jurisdictional/sector funding, planning agreements or public private partnerships
- assist public and private providers in aligning infrastructure and service provision with strategically identified growth.



**Strategy 11.2**

Strategic planning will optimise water use by:

- considering water supply and quality issues and opportunities throughout the planning process in the context of climate variability and change, planned growth, integrated water cycle management (or equivalent), and water sensitive urban design and environmental needs
- locating, designing and managing new developments to minimise impacts on water, including downstream impacts and groundwater resources
- encouraging the re-use of water in existing and new development
- improving provision for stormwater management and green infrastructure
- ensuring sustainable development of higher water use industries by supporting more efficient water use and re-use in locations where water can be accessed without impacting other water users or the environment
- identifying and protecting drinking water catchments and storages.

**Collaboration Activity 14**

The department will work with councils and public and private infrastructure and service providers to better align utility infrastructure delivery with strategic growth, particularly electricity providers.

**Collaboration Activity 15**

The department and relevant state agencies will investigate land use and population change impacts on water resources to:

- understand the impact of land use and water management decisions on industries, the environment and communities, in the context of a capped water management system
- assess projected population growth, and regional and local development trends to identify spatial changes in water demand and growth in town water demands
- better link approvals for land use with approvals for water access
- inform councils and joint organisations in the development of strategic plans, integrated water cycle management strategies and regional town water strategies
- enable early consideration of how to better integrate water supply, stormwater management and wastewater management
- improve communication and early engagement to inform councils and proponents about existing or emerging risks to water resources in their area
- improve access to information about water availability, critical water-dependent ecosystems and cultural values to guide strategic and statutory planning processes
- identify any water-related gaps in the planning system and assess the adequacy of current land use planning controls to protect water resources.

Township, Narrandera  
Credit: Destination NSW





PART

# 3

Economy







Berton Vineyards, Yenda. Credit: Destination NSW

PART

# 3

## Economy

Rural lands and natural resources are the foundations of the region’s economic growth, employment and development. They support agribusiness and primary industry sectors such as agriculture, forestry, manufacturing and mining.

The regional cities also contribute to economic growth through retail, commercial and industrial development and hosting assets such as hospitals, tertiary education facilities and airports.

The region is known as Australia’s food bowl and is the largest value-adding agricultural region in NSW. The region’s competitive advantages are its location between Australia’s biggest metropolitan cities and international airports and ports, its links with Victoria, and its agribusiness and value-added manufacturing sectors.

Figure 12 shows the region’s economic assets and includes the major freight routes of the Hume, Newell, Sturt and Cobb highways, important freight railway lines, Wagga Wagga Special Activation Precinct (SAP), Albury Regional Job Precinct (RJP), regional hospitals and regional education precincts. The region will also generate renewable energy in the future within and outside a future Renewable Energy Zone.

Almost two-thirds of resident workers are employed in industrial (32%) or population-serving jobs (27%). Most industrial jobs are agriculture related, which highlights the importance of agriculture and manufacturing.<sup>28</sup> In Carrathool, for example, 60% of residents are employed in the industrial sector.

Planning for the region’s economy needs to:

- protect rural land uses from potential land use conflict and fragmentation
- strategically plan for industrial and commercial growth
- grow CBDs and town centres
- provide health and education for local communities
- support well located renewable energy industries and the consequent transition away from fossil fuels
- encourage developments that support the visitor economy
- integrate transport and land use
- protect freight corridors and logistics facilities.



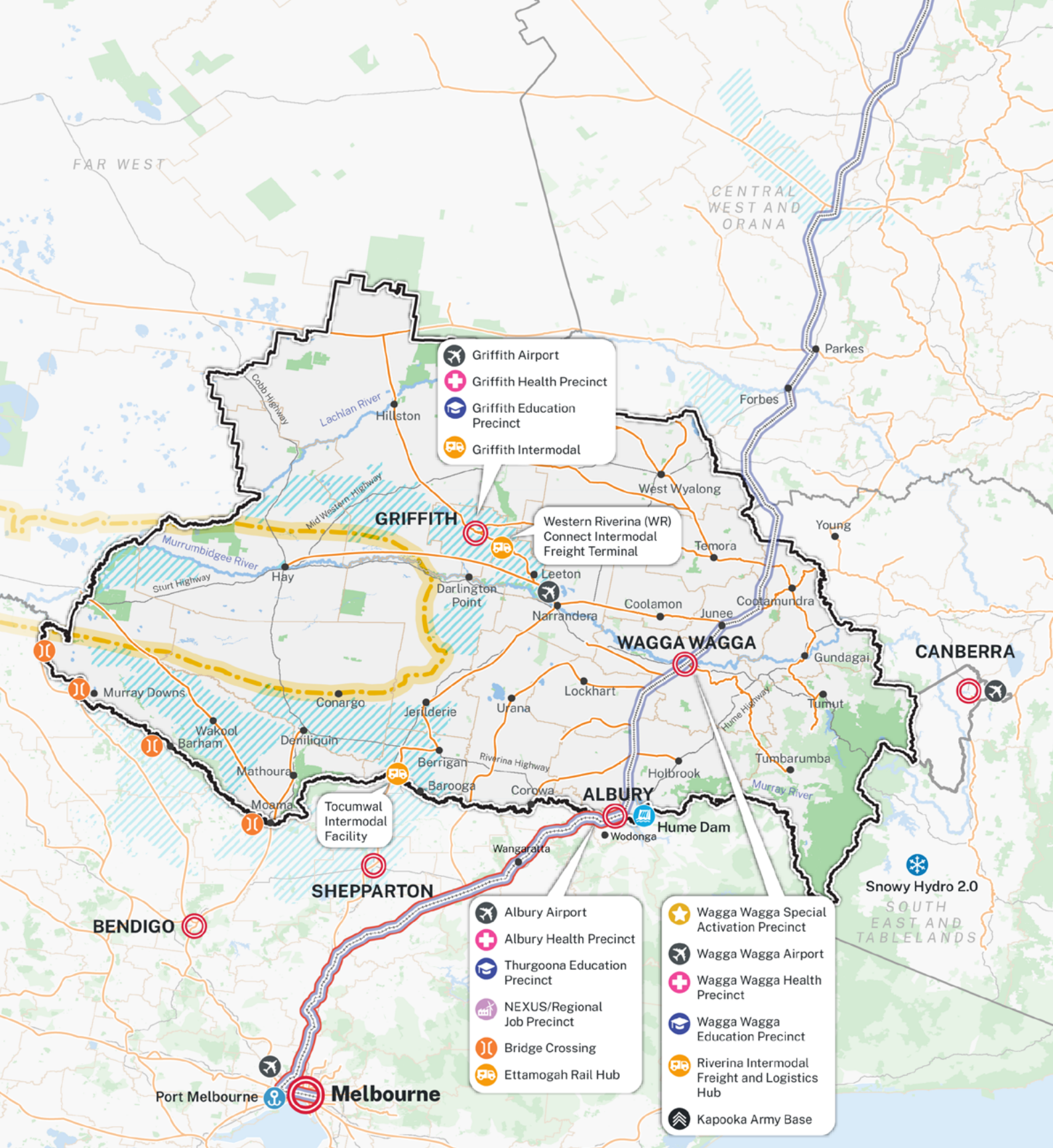


Figure 12: Major economic assets of the Riverina Murray Region



- |                   |  |   |                           |
|-------------------|--|---|---------------------------|
| Regional boundary | Airport  | Local government area                     | State forest              |
| Metropolitan city | Roads  | Proposed south west renewable energy zone | Water body                |
| Regional city     | Railway  | Irrigation areas                          | National park and reserve |
| Town              | Inland rail                                      |   |                           |
| Bridge crossing   | Possible Melbourne to Albury-Wodonga faster rail |   |                           |



**OBJECTIVE 12:**

# Strategically plan for rural industries

Local Rice Grower, Deniliquin.  
Credit: Destination NSW



Rural lands are valued for agricultural production, employment, renewable energy production, the visitor economy, rural industries, extractive industries, forestry, cultural uses, recreation, conservation and rural residential development. These can be competing uses; planning needs to consider the priorities and pathways for the future use and protection of rural land.

Understanding the diversity of rural land use, considering emerging influences, and providing land use responses to protect, support and leverage rural enterprises is essential to protect and plan for rural lands.



## Agriculture

Agriculture is worth over

**\$2 billion** each year

– the most valuable agricultural region in NSW<sup>29</sup>

**18,400 people**

are employed in agriculture and related manufacturing in the region<sup>30</sup>

Agriculture is the primary use of rural land in the region due to its soil types, landscapes, availability of water and climatic conditions as well as the diversity of its production, supporting industries and access to markets. Agriculture drives secondary industries such as processing, milling, pressing, canneries and transport, as well as related industries like wineries, restaurants and the visitor economy.

Agricultural diversity contributes to the region's resilience, a major factor in the region's agricultural success, and includes:

- beef production, cropping, fruit and nuts, which are dominant in the region's east.
- cropping, beef, pigs, poultry and dairy, primarily through irrigated agriculture near the Murray River.
- the Western Riverina plains which support agriculture and associated industries enhanced by irrigation districts, such as cotton, rice and horticulture (citrus, grapes and nuts).

The historical investment and reliance on water for agriculture supports irrigation districts that benefit almost half the region's LGAs, including Berrigan, Carrathool, Edward River, Griffith, Hay, Leeton, Murray River and Murrumbidgee. In Berrigan LGA, for example, irrigation infrastructure services more than 75% of the area.<sup>31</sup>

With government policy separating land and water almost 20 years ago, planning for agriculture is complex and often driven by market forces, notably the price and movement of water.

Over time, farming operations have increased both physically and in value. Changes to water policy combined with technological advancements and economies of scale have changed farming practices.

Land use planning can support productive agricultural lands by:

- identifying and managing land use impacts on productive agricultural areas and areas with opportunities for economies of scale and access to assets such as processing or logistics
- avoiding the fragmentation of rural land from housing so that farms can cost effectively consolidate and minimise land use conflict or loss of highly productive agricultural lands
- locating value-add industries where they can support agricultural production
- ensuring land uses adjacent to highly productive agricultural land are compatible with agricultural production activities or have adequate buffers.

Supply chains, value-add industries and economies of scale are less secure with the market-driven movement of water from different uses and locations. While this has led to growth for some areas such as the nut industry around Tooleybuc, it has placed pressure on nearby areas to adequately service new communities, and in some areas it has also resulted in the underutilisation of existing infrastructure and services, such as within the Berrigan LGA.

Rural land use conflict between farming operations or rural industries and other uses such as urban development, tourism or recreation can stem from pests, noise, odour, dust, lighting or spraying. These conflicts can be minimised with appropriate zoning, permissible uses and development controls.

The BC Act includes requirements for land clearing and creates opportunities for stewardship of biodiversity assets, adopting the principle of avoiding the development of areas of high environmental value where possible. An unintended consequence of the avoidance principle is the need to locate development on environmentally unconstrained land, which is often used for agriculture. Strategic planning needs to balance the needs of communities, economies, developers and the environment when planning for land uses and development outcomes.





## Forestry

Forestry, logging and associated manufacturing industry is worth

**\$219**  
million

Forestry, logging and associated manufacturing<sup>32</sup> employs over

**1,700**  
people

The South West Slopes forestry sector in Snowy Valleys and Greater Hume LGAs is supported by timber processing facilities in Tumut and Tumbarumba. Timber is processed into structural frames, kraft paper and pulp and particle board products.

The growth of the forestry industry has increased the transport of logs and processed timber products to processing plants and export markets via Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide. Regional road improvements are necessary to cope with the increased volumes and size of trucks.

Strategic approaches for forestry hubs could help to identify forestry transportation routes and address network gaps and inefficiencies to facilitate fast and efficient transportation of timber logs and products to processing plants, domestic markets and export portals.

Snowy Valley Council has identified the Riverina Intermodal Freight

and Logistics hub at Wagga Wagga as a strategic asset for the industry and the region as well as the need to upgrade specific freight routes to the hub.

### Bushfire impacts on forestry

The 2019-20 bushfires burned about 492 km<sup>2</sup> of plantation forest and 8,300 km<sup>2</sup> native forests. Bushfire damaged forestry operation infrastructure and facilities such as workers accommodation, roads, bridges and fire trails. The lost timber supply affected the forestry processing and manufacturing industries; this combined with import delays and increasing local and international demand resulted in a wood products supply shortage.

Economic diversification and adaptability for communities with hubs such as Snowy Valleys LGA will be crucial with climate change expected to intensify the bushfire threat, affect water availability and soil quality.



## Mining

The mining and construction material sector is worth

**\$185**  
million

Over

**500**  
people

are employed in mining and construction in the region<sup>33</sup>

The region's extractive operations are mainly for construction materials (construction sand, road and concrete aggregates or roadbase) with the exception of a significant gold mining operation (Cowal Gold Mine), north of West Wyalong in Bland LGA that employs around 385 people.<sup>34</sup>

Quarries in most LGAs provide local sources of construction materials for housing, roads and other infrastructure

Areas with known mineral and construction material resources should be managed to ensure the resources are not affected or sterilised by the encroachment of sensitive land uses. It may be possible to identify activities in key resource areas that enable productive use of the land without sterilising the potential of the underlying resource.

A strategic approach to rural land planning will enable communities and all levels of government to understand the importance of, and plan for, the future of rural industries, energy and mining.

Credit: Simon Freeman 2011



### Strategy 12.1



Local strategic planning statements will:

- overview each LGA's rural land attributes, industries, assets (such as supply chain industries and infrastructure, and natural attributes such as soils, water, climate)
- identify confirmed or potential major projects and social and economic opportunities
- recognise trends and opportunities for rural land uses
- commit to preparing or updating local strategies to support rural land uses.

### Strategy 12.2



Rural land strategies should be prepared when undertaking a review of rural zones and/or rural development controls, they should:

- set a vision for rural areas
- identify and detail key natural, cultural and economic assets
- analyse opportunities and constraints to the use and development of rural land, including any potential land use conflicts and proposed responses
- establish strategic directions, outcomes or policies for the management and development of rural areas
- incorporate consultation with state agencies, the community and industry groups
- include implementation mechanisms, such as planning instruments and policies.
- natural resources and environmental features and their importance, including known sites of archaeological or cultural significance
- environmental hazards that could affect how rural land is used and developed, such as flooding and bushfire risk
- settlement patterns and demographics of local communities in the area
- existing lot sizes and land use patterns, including holding sizes and trends in land amalgamation
- infrastructure capacities, constraints and thresholds for upgrades available for agriculture and other relevant land uses
- how to protect agricultural land and rural industries from land use conflicts and fragmentation
- areas strategically identified for urban expansion and options to protect rural land uses until the expansion is realised.

Rural land strategies should be tailored to each area and, where appropriate and data permits, assess:

- relevant state, regional and local strategic planning policies and objectives
- agricultural trends and opportunities, including agricultural productivity and land use (such as agricultural activities, manufacturing and value-add industries, resource extraction, renewable and other energy), drivers of change, changes in farming practices and processes, and farm investment patterns
- regional economic assets, such as railways and airports, transport routes, logistics hubs and infrastructure such as major irrigation assets and employment generated from rural industries

A defensible methodology should be utilised when reviewing lot sizes in rural areas. This should include the identification of the desirability of lots for rural living versus farming enterprises to ensure that rural lot sizes reflect their intended land use (ie. not rural residential development).



**Strategy 12.3**

Strategic and statutory planning will consider the life cycle of resource extraction opportunities, including:

- protecting potential mineral and energy resources from sterilising land uses
- protecting resource extraction projects from land uses that could impact operations
- protecting road, rail and freight routes from development that could affect extraction
- promoting opportunities for minerals processing
- addressing water resource constraints and impacts
- identifying future mine closure dates, potential changes to water, economic/skill profiles and demographics, and potential land use changes, mine rehabilitation activities and post-mining land use opportunities.

**Collaboration Activity 16**

Using the regional water strategies and the RAMJO Water Position Paper, the department (planning and water divisions) and councils will work together to understand the impacts of an open water market on rural communities and improve planning for resulting land use changes.

**Collaboration Activity 17**

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

Riverina farm. Credit: Destination NSW



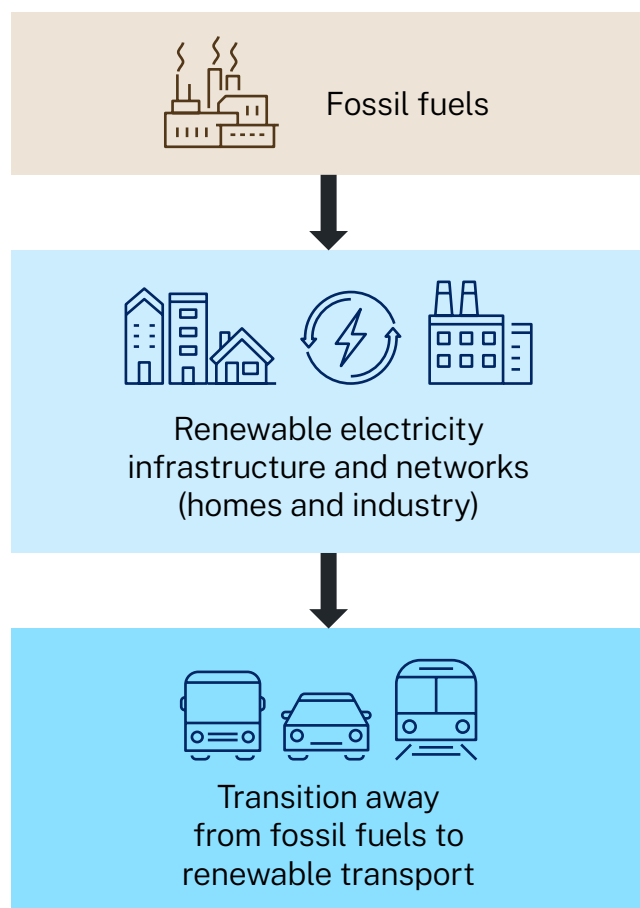
**OBJECTIVE 13:**

# Support the transition to net zero by 2050

## Renewable Energy

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 the cheapest form of new electricity generation and is key to the net zero target.

It is expected electricity demand will increase as people change how they power homes, transport, industry and business. The Australian Energy Market Operator forecasts a step-change in the transition away from fossil fuels and higher electrical demand.



This transition requires fundamental changes in how electricity is generated, transported, stored and used. Careful management will ensure the region benefits from employment opportunities and the potential for the new electricity systems to coexist with existing and future industries and residents. Land use planning can help to guide an orderly transition and maximise benefits.

The Riverina Murray's climate, resources and strategic connections to utility infrastructure place it in a strong position to contribute to and capitalise on the net zero target and electricity infrastructure plans. In recent years, large-scale solar farms account for more than 50% of major projects.

The **South West Renewable Energy Zone (REZ)** is in the early stages of planning. The South West REZ will connect multiple generators and storage in one location, capitalising on economies of scale to deliver cheap, reliable and clean electricity. While we expect the South West REZ to be developed in the medium to long term, it may be needed earlier if the transition away from fossil fuels is faster than forecast.

The region also includes the **EnergyConnect project**, an interconnector being built by Transgrid and ElectraNet between Wagga Wagga and Robertstown in South Australia, with a connection to Red Cliffs in Victoria. The project will upgrade the 33kV transmission line to 500kV between Wagga Wagga and Dinawan, which links to the eastern edge of the South West REZ and will unlock additional transmission capacity.

The region is also home to parts of **Snowy Hydro 2.0**, the largest committed renewable energy project in Australia that will pump water uphill through an underground pipeline into an existing Snowy Hydro dam and release it through an underground hydro-energy power station to create electricity when demand is high. The construction of Snowy Hydro 2.0 by around 2026 offers employment opportunities in parts of Snowy Valley LGA.

The Victorian and NSW Governments are co-delivering the **Hume Highway Hydrogen** initiative between Melbourne and Sydney to accelerate the development of a renewable hydrogen economy and promote its use by the heavy transport sector along Australia's busiest freight corridor.

Land use planning needs to manage several issues to help support the transition to net zero emissions.



## Land use conflict and local impacts of renewable energy projects



- Some of the community benefits and land use conflict issues, include
  - diversification opportunities for agricultural enterprises
  - impacts or disruption to the production value of high-value agricultural land and mineral resources in the medium to long term
  - construction impacts such as increased truck movements (including oversize and over-weight loads) and traffic disruptions on local roads, providing supplies to the construction workforce and short term demand for housing (particularly in small communities)
  - biodiversity impacts
  - visual impacts, particularly multiple projects in the visual catchments of centres.
- Potential for waste generation during construction phase
- Decommissioning issues need to be addressed e.g. a need for recycling at the end-of-life of developments.



Solar farm solar panels.  
Credit: DPE

## Circular economy

Over the next 20 years, NSW waste generation is projected to grow from 21 million tonnes to over 31 million tonnes and waste-related freight in NSW is expected to rise by 43% by 2036. The *NSW Circular Economy Policy – Too Good to Waste* aims to support the transition to a circular economy to generate jobs, diversify the economy, increase the accessibility of goods, maximise the value of resources and reduce waste.

The regional plan recognises waste as an economic resource that supports a net zero emissions future. The circular economy is about avoiding materials being classified as waste through careful design and specification. This should be considered early in a development, from strategic planning to end of life. The Wagga Wagga SAP and the Albury RJP are examples of strategic precinct planning that promote and provide opportunity for circular economy projects to establish to minimise waste and maximise the use of materials.

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, 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.

A circular economy is also one where materials are retained in use at their highest value as long as possible and are then re-used, repurposed, remanufactured or recycled. The aim is to reduce the consumption of virgin and finite resources, and retain the value of materials with no residual waste to landfill. This requires transformational change in the way that buildings are designed, built, operated and deconstructed and ways to enable shared business models, low-carbon transport and material recycling infrastructure.

New employment opportunities will emerge from the re-use and recycling of waste and waste products as businesses transition to a circular-economy. Positioning the region to be an early adopter in the renewable energy and circular economy industries will support the diversification and value-add opportunities for existing industries, attract new industries and support an orderly land use transition while avoiding and managing associated impacts.

### Strategy 13.1



To prepare for the transition to net zero emissions, strategic and statutory planning will:

- incorporate renewable energy into urban design and place-making projects
- provide opportunities for future buildings and urban release areas to be renewable-ready
- identify opportunities for potential high-energy industries, including manufacturing, materials processing
- identify opportunities for renewable energy vehicle refuelling networks/infrastructure
- appropriately consider opportunities to minimise land use conflict for the South West REZ, renewable energy generation and associated infrastructure outside the REZ.

### Strategy 13.2



Strategic planning and waste management strategies should align with relevant state strategies and guidelines and 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 including 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 18



The department will support Energy Corporation of NSW, the Renewable Energy Sector Board, councils and Aboriginal and community stakeholders to develop the South West REZ.



**OBJECTIVE 14:**

# Protecting and promoting industrial and manufacturing land

Aerial, Griffith.  
Credit: Destination NSW



The manufacturing sector is worth **\$1.7 billion**

Over **11,600 people** are employed in the manufacturing sector<sup>35</sup>

Improved freight connections combined with economic and population growth will drive the need for additional industrial land and precinct opportunities. Already, several industrial precincts provide for a range of employment uses. Co-location or clustering compatible industries in these areas will improve efficiencies and productivity, reduce land use conflict, create new circular economy opportunities and maximise the benefits from infrastructure investment and supply and distribution networks.

## Existing Precincts

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Wagga Wagga SAP</b>                                     | Wagga Wagga SAP is a 4,500 ha business hub incorporating Bomen Business Park and the Riverina Intermodal Freight and Logistics Hub. It is supported by local, state and Commonwealth investment in infrastructure, master planning and streamlined planning processes. The SAP will be home to advanced manufacturing, recycling, renewables including hydrogen, agricultural processing and value-add industries. |
| <b>Albury RJP</b>  | The Albury RJP is a 1,200ha employment precinct encompassing the existing NEXUS Industrial Precinct, Ettamogah Rail Hub, Inland Rail corridor and Hume Highway access. It will be a hub of manufacturing, agribusiness and freight and logistics and emerging circular economy industries.   |
| <b>WR Connect</b>  | WR Connect is an operational intermodal freight terminal and manufacturing and agribusiness hub on the border of Griffith and Leeton LGAs. If upgraded, it will be the newest and largest logistics hub for the Western Riverina, supported by a master plan prepared by Leeton, Griffith, Carrathool, Narrandera and Murrumbidgee councils and the NSW Government.  |
| <b>Griffith's main urban industrial area</b>               | Griffith's main urban industrial area in the city's south east is constrained by sensitive uses, fragmentation, small lot sizes and limited immediate connections to the classified road network. Council has plans to provide for larger-scale industrial uses along the proposed Link Road, south of the city.   |
| <b>Tocumwal Intermodal Terminal and Logistics Precinct</b> | Tocumwal Intermodal Terminal and Logistics Precinct is zoned General Industry to facilitate future business development.   |
| <b>Deniliquin industrial precinct</b>                      | Deniliquin industrial precinct is home to a thriving manufacturing and light industrial sector centred around engineering products for the rural and agricultural sector. Warehousing for rural products is emerging with businesses mostly relocating from Melbourne and Geelong.   |

Ongoing government-led strategic planning and infrastructure investment and development in the Wagga Wagga SAP and Albury RJP will grow existing and attract new businesses. They will leverage off the region's location, rural and agricultural endowments, to provide new and emerging manufacturing opportunities that have traditionally been undertaken overseas.

These regionally significant precincts will have broader implications for their host cities and the surrounding areas. Understanding the associated demand for housing, social infrastructure and land for complementary/secondary industries will inform future servicing decisions and increase leverage of business, industrial and residential growth opportunities in nearby LGAs.

Existing and future employment precincts in small and medium-sized towns such as Leeton, Corowa, Deniliquin, Lockhart, Moama and Jindera are already experiencing pressure for additional industrial land. Flexible planning and development controls can support these areas without undermining regionally significant precincts. This could involve the application of open zones or master planning that creates bespoke precincts to support existing industries, attract new businesses and respond to new opportunities and technologies.



**Strategy 14.1**

Local strategic planning statements will:

- include an overview of the LGA's key industrial land areas, industries (including major employers) and location and significance of strategic assets (such as supply and distribution chain infrastructure, key freight routes, supporting services and natural attributes)
- recognise trends and opportunities for industrial and/or employment land uses
- commit to preparing or updating local strategies for industrial and/or employment land.

**Strategy 14.2**

Strategic planning for existing employment lands and new opportunities will:

- locate new industrial land in areas accessible to inter-regional networks or in areas that could allow rail transport, unencumbered by natural hazards or environmental constraints while accessible to businesses and communities
- provide flexible and simplified planning controls that support the changing needs of industry, emerging industries and diversification, adaptation and innovation
- provide for the supply of diverse industrial land to meet the changing demands of industry
- encourage co-location and clustering of compatible industries to improve efficiencies and productivity, reduce land use conflict, maximise infrastructure investment and capitalise on supply networks
- drive competitive advantage by leveraging strengths, assets and attributes while maintaining integrity of existing industrial precincts
- investigate bespoke industrial precinct planning using targeted responses.

**Strategy 14.3**

Strategic and statutory planning will protect industrial land from potential land use conflicts arising from inappropriate and incompatible surrounding land uses.

**Action 6**

The department will use NSW Government geographic information systems and data tools to audit the region's industrial and business land to guide employment land strategies that will release, coordinate infrastructure and direct employment-generating opportunities.

**Action 7**

The department will consider the sphere of influence the Wagga Wagga SAP will have on land use in the broader region and the associated services and industries required to support its success.

**Collaboration Activity 19**

The department will work with Wagga Wagga, Coolamon, Junee, Lockhart, Temora, Cootamundra-Gundagai, Greater Hume, Narrandera and Snowy Valley councils to respond to potential housing and economic impacts and opportunities from the Wagga Wagga SAP.

**Collaboration Activity 20**

Using the learnings from the Wagga Wagga SAP and Albury RJP, the department will work with councils to undertake industrial land precinct planning to attract new and emerging industries and streamline statutory planning processes



Tocumwal Intermodal Terminal  
Credit: Berrigan Shire Council

**OBJECTIVE 15:**

# Support the economic vitality of CBDs and main streets

Streetscapes, Cootamundra  
Credit: Destination NSW



Retail trade in the regional cities is worth

**\$1 billion**<sup>37</sup>

Over

**8,000 people**

are employed in retail trade in the regional cities.<sup>36</sup>

Wagga Wagga, Albury and Griffith CBDs and other town centres across the region are fundamental to communities, providing daily needs and acting as a social and economic hub for surrounding communities. They also support the freight network which in turn supports the economic vitality of main streets.

Some centres are experiencing declining business activity. Without planned intervention, this could reduce the critical mass of services and related business activities in these towns.

Retail and commercial investment should be focused in and around existing centres to strengthen the role and function of these areas and attract activity and investment, while respecting character and heritage values. Mixed use

developments, the efficient movement of people and goods, smart technology, quality public areas, cultural experiences and night-time uses can assist existing centres to respond to contemporary influences.

Smaller centres should be flexible and respond to community needs and development opportunities, protect the connectivity and functioning of commercial centres and minimise incompatible land uses.

New centres must be an appropriate size for their service catchment. They should only proceed if social and economic benefits can be demonstrated, to ensure the integrity of existing centres is maintained.



**Strategy 15.1**

Strategic and statutory planning for centres will:

- maintain and strengthen the economic vitality and function of established commercial centres and focus future commercial and retail activity in these centres, unless:
  - there is a demonstrated need;
  - there is a lack of suitable sites within or adjoining existing centres; and
  - there is positive social and economic benefit to locate activity elsewhere
- facilitate a range of uses through flexible and simplified planning controls to respond to the changing retail environment
- encourage redevelopment and appropriate higher density residential development in the CBDs of regional cities
- encourage infill and appropriate medium density residential development close to main streets and centres of small and medium sized towns
- conserve cultural heritage values and local character (see Objective 9)
- maximise accessibility and amenity, including support of public and active transport, and greening of buildings and open spaces
- consider freight access early in the planning process to balance the movement and delivery of goods with vibrant, healthy, and successful places.

**Strategy 15.2**

Strategic and statutory planning for new retail and commercial centres and development will demonstrate how they:

- respond to retail supply and demand, innovation and digital trends in the retail sector
- maximise existing public transport and community facilities commensurate with the scale of the proposal
- enhance public areas
- do not detract from established commercial centres.

**Strategy 15.3**

In collaboration with local communities, council strategic planning will recognise and celebrate the local character of places and people, the vitality of centres and economic viability. Initiatives may include public domain improvements, public art, community events, markets and festivals, and local housing to promote activation, dining and the night-time economy.

Townscape, Narrandera  
Credit: Narrandera Tourism





**OBJECTIVE 16:**

# Support the visitor economy

Credit: Murray Downs Golf and Country Club



The visitor economy is worth

**\$921 million**

**10,000 people** are employed in the visitor economy sector<sup>43</sup>

Visitors are attracted to the region's environmental, heritage and agricultural assets, and its strategic location. In river areas, visitors enjoy water sports such as water skiing, paddle boats, house boats, national parks, camping, cycling, mountain biking, hiking, golfing and fishing.

Attractions beyond the water include the Canola Trails, silo art, heritage places and activities, arts and culture, festivals and events - many relating to food and wine. Agritourism is a diverse and unique offering, including farm stays, farmers' markets and farm gate experiences.

Many communities benefit from regional sporting activities and events and Albury and Wagga Wagga attract regional conferences and business events.

NSW Government and council investment can prompt private investment and increase visitor numbers. Collaboration between the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Destination NSW, councils and local organisations will support a diverse visitor economy.

Other regional plan objectives will benefit the visitor economy industry, including riverfront activation (Objective 2), natural hazard resilience (Objective 3), Aboriginal aspirations (Objective 4), cross-border coordination (Objective 10) and enhancing commercial centres (Objectives 9 and 14).



**2.2 million** visitors to the region in 2017<sup>38</sup>

Over **50%** of Murray River tourists are from Victoria<sup>39</sup>

Providing **18,600** jobs and is the highest value tourism region and tourism employer in Victoria<sup>40,41,42</sup>

In 2019-20, the combined NSW and Victoria Murray tourism region was worth **\$1.3 billion**

**Strategy 16.1**



Strategic and statutory planning will support and promote visitor activities and locations and ensure planning controls support and enable tourism developments and complementary land uses in appropriate locations.

Agritourism is supported as ancillary to agriculture, however other tourism in rural areas will need to be strategically justified and be located in areas appropriate for these types of activities. Potential land use conflict with other rural land uses must be taken into account when determining the suitability of a location for a rural tourism use.

**Strategy 16.2**



Strategic planning by councils adjoining the Murray River should include major tourism projects in Victoria. Tourism activities do not recognise state borders. Strategic planning by councils adjoining the Murray River should take into account the combined NSW and Victorian Murray River tourism market.

**Collaboration Activity 21**



The department and relevant councils will work with Destination Riverina Murray and Destination NSW to develop and implement riverfront activation strategies and the framework for the management of Western NSW Rivers (See Action 3).



Deni Ute Muster 2013. Credit: Destination NSW



The Murray River. Credit: Destination NSW



**OBJECTIVE 17:**

# Strategically plan for health and education precincts

Streetscape, Griffith.  
Credit: Destination NSW



The healthcare, social services and education sectors are worth

**\$3.8 billion**<sup>44</sup>

**26,700 people**

(22% of all jobs) are employed in the healthcare, social services and education sectors

The healthcare, social services and education sectors are anchored by major health and educational facilities including Wagga Wagga Rural Referral Hospital, Albury-Wodonga Health, Griffith Base Hospital, Charles Sturt University, UNSW Rural Medical School, Notre Dame University Clinical School, Murrumbidgee Clinical Teaching and Learning Centre, 18 TAFE campuses and a range of smaller hospitals and medical/care facilities across the region.

Population growth increases demand for these facilities. With many LGAs experiencing faster than projected population growth and facing the challenge of sustaining skilled workforces, a coordinated approach to health and education precincts is required.

Master planning for regionally significant health and education facilities in Wagga Wagga, Albury and Griffith will increase quality and diversity of services, enable business synergies, attract private sector investment, improve community access to services and develop local skilled workforces.

Reliance on smaller health and education facilities will also grow with the population. Facilities such as the Narrandera, Junee and Temora hospitals and health services, as well as schools and tertiary education facilities in the Leeton, Deniliquin and Cootamundra LGAs, will be critical to supporting the future population of the region.



## Health and Education Precincts

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Wagga Wagga Health and Knowledge Precinct</b> | <p>Wagga Wagga Health and Knowledge Precinct will support more than 300,000 people<sup>45</sup></p> <p>The precinct includes the Wagga Wagga Rural Referral Hospital, a private hospital, the universities of NSW and Notre Dame, and the largest number of medical specialists of any single location in regional Australia.<sup>46</sup></p> <p><i>Wagga Wagga Health and Knowledge Precinct Master Plan</i> outlines a vision to support additional specialist medical and health services along with short-term accommodation, commercial provisions and training and education services. This requires a transition from residential and industrial uses to land uses that will support health and education in the city.</p> |
| <b>Griffith Health Precinct</b>                  | <p>The Griffith Health Precinct around the Griffith Base Hospital and the St Vincent's Private Community Hospital is supported by master planning and ongoing redevelopment. This will promote complementary uses and minimise land use conflict. The precinct will support additional specialist medical and health services along with short-term accommodation, commercial operations associated with health uses, training and education services.</p>   |
| <b>Thurgoona Education Precinct</b>              | <p>The Thurgoona Education Precinct Master Plan will facilitate joint venture opportunities for shared school and community facilities, and the co-location of education (primary to tertiary), business, research, eco-tourism, recreation and residential uses.</p>  |
| <b>Albury Health Precinct</b>                    | <p>A Health Precinct Master Plan for the Albury Hospital and the Regional Cancer Centre will be supported by the Albury-Wodonga Regional Deal, a collaboration between the Australian Government, NSW Government, Victorian Government, Albury City Council and City of Wodonga Council.</p>   |

### Strategy 17.1



Councils and the NSW Government should work with social infrastructure and service providers on strategic planning that will:

- identify future health and education infrastructure and service needs, including appropriate locations for future facilities or impacts and issues for existing facilities
- determine when, where and what services are likely to be required in response to population growth
- include the growth and development identified in council strategies and plans, economic and employment forecasts, major project approval data and NSW population projections.

### Strategy 17.2



Strategic planning and statutory planning should investigate opportunities to create mixed use precincts around locally significant health and educational facilities through planning controls that encourage co-location of complementary uses. The relevant NSW infrastructure and service providers should be consulted early in the planning process.

### Strategy 17.3



Statutory planning will ensure that any development on land within a defined health and/or education precinct is consistent with a council-endorsed master plan.

### Collaboration Activity 22



The department will support Albury, Wagga Wagga and Griffith councils as they prepare and implement health and/or education precinct master plans and appropriate planning provisions.

### Collaboration Activity 23



The department will work with councils and service providers, such as School Infrastructure NSW, Health Infrastructure NSW Department of Education and NSW Health, to ensure education and health facilities are appropriately provided in growing areas.

## OBJECTIVE 18:

# Integrate transport and land use planning

Bethanga Bridge, Bellbridge.  
Credit: Destination NSW



The freight and logistics sector is worth

**\$1.8 billion**<sup>47</sup>

**5,400 people** are employed in the freight and logistics sector<sup>48</sup>

The region includes the convergence of major freight corridors between Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane, providing opportunities to maximise economic growth and take advantage of freight air and/or sea ports at Canberra, Sydney, Wollongong and Melbourne.

Millions of tonnes of freight move in, out and within the region annually by road and rail. The region supports international and domestic supply chains and is home to major logistics and intermodal hubs such as Ettamogah Rail Hub just north of Albury, Western Riverina Intermodal Freight Terminal (WR Connect) in Wumbulgal (Leeton LGA), Tocumwal Intermodal and Logistics Terminal and the Riverina Intermodal Freight and Logistics Hub north east of Wagga Wagga in the SAP.

The freight industry is transitioning away from fossil fuels and establishing a network of hydrogen refuelling and electric vehicle charging stations. E-commerce is also increasing demand for warehouse and logistic properties such as automated warehousing.

The region's intermodal and logistic hubs and new infrastructure projects will support the expected growth of the freight and logistic sector, provide economic opportunities including jobs and enhance connections within the region and to surrounding regions.

In some towns, main streets are freight and transport corridors. Strategic and statutory planning needs to protect the effectiveness of the corridors and provide opportunities for local businesses to leverage the corridors. Planning for new or upgraded freight corridors should consider impacts on sensitive land uses.



## Key regional transport projects

The following are new infrastructure projects that will improve connectivity and freight movement within and to the region.

**Inland Rail** is a 1,700 km freight rail line connecting Melbourne and Brisbane via regional Victoria, NSW and Queensland that is expected to be completed by 2027. It will connect to Wagga Wagga SAP and Albury RJP, and benefit the region's producers and manufacturers to export to domestic and international markets.

Inland Rail's connection with railways between Sydney, Adelaide and Perth at Parkes SAP will give agriculture and manufacturing industries better access to South Australia and Western Australia. The project will catalyse regional investment in agriculture, food processing, manufacturing and packing, and could create opportunities for intermodal facilities and inland ports at major rail junctions. As the Inland Rail is upgraded there will be an increase in larger trains traversing through towns and cities, placing pressure on at-level crossings and urban environments.

The **Newell Highway Program Alliance** involves around 40 additional overtaking lanes, widened shoulders and centrelines and audio-tactile line marking. In combination, it will improve safety and freight productivity, and reduce travel times by up to 33 minutes along the highway between the Victorian and Queensland borders. This will provide an efficient road connection to the Parkes SAP for the region's producers to then tap into markets in South Australia and Western Australia via rail.<sup>49</sup>

Although Inland Rail will remove around 63,000 heavy vehicle trips a year from sections of the Newell Highway,<sup>50</sup> the improvement program's travel efficiencies create potential for a viable freight industry along the Newell Highway, which could support communities such as Tocumwal, Narrandera, West Wyalong and Jerilderie.



Freight Trucks on the Newell Highway  
Credit: Geoff Ward

Major **Murray River river crossing** projects in the region include the second Echuca-Moama Bridge, Barham-Koondrook and Tooleybuc Bridge restorations and plans for the Swan Hill Bridge replacement. These crossings are more than transport functions - they bring social, economic, and environmental benefits to places, businesses and communities.

These projects will address heavy vehicle access restrictions associated with existing crossings and could stimulate investment in agriculture, food processing, manufacturing and packing as businesses leverage unconstrained and efficient access to the Port of Melbourne.

### **Riverina Intermodal Freight and Logistics Hub (RIFL)**

is an 80ha inland port adjacent the Main Southern Rail Line and the future Inland Rail in the Wagga Wagga SAP. It has a 4.9 kilometer siding connected to the Main Southern Rail Line, to support the intermodal terminal, increasing the region's freight competitiveness in national and global markets.

Planned to service a diverse range of commodities, industries and freight types, the RIFL will drive business synergies by allowing freight to be transported close to where it is manufactured and processed. It will enable and attract development of approximately 300 ha of heavy and light industrial land and open secondary manufacturing and warehousing opportunities in adjoining LGAs. This will require appropriately located and serviced employment land.

The Australian, NSW and Victorian governments are investigating **fast and faster rail options** from Sydney to Canberra as well as Melbourne to Albury-Wodonga<sup>51</sup> that could allow businesses to access an expanded workforce and markets, while residents could more easily access jobs and services outside the region.

## Transport and land use planning

Integrating land use and transport planning is key to sustainable development and resilient communities. Early and strategic analysis of land use and transport interactions helps to identify implications and opportunities and provide appropriate place-based planning and responses.

Projects like the improved river crossings create opportunities to better integrate transport and land use planning, which could stimulate residential and commercial development. For example, the second Moama-Echuca bridge and associated Cobb Highway, Meninya Street and Perricoota Road intersection upgrades will see Moama's main street revitalised for new retail and business opportunities.<sup>52</sup>

## Freight and logistics clusters

Freight and logistics are the backbone of the region's economy. Supply chains, which increasingly operate 24 hours a day, can be impacted by the encroachment of residential areas and other sensitive land uses – these issues need to be considered early in land use planning.

Freight and logistics are being shaped by new technologies and systems such as autonomous vehicles, automated warehousing, aerial delivery and pick-up points, micro-manufacturing and advancements in e-commerce. These could impact how, where and when freight is moved. Land use planning responses need to embed flexibility to accommodate technological and industry changes while providing certainty that negative impacts on or from freight and logistics can be managed.

NSW Government-led strategic planning, technical studies and infrastructure development at Wagga Wagga SAP and Albury RJP, combined with council-led employment land planning and development initiatives in Griffith, Jindera, Leeton and Deniliquin will provide well-located, master planned and well-serviced industrial land. Other freight towns such as Tocumwal, Hay and Narrandera could establish appropriately located, master planned and well-serviced employment land that enable freight and logistics to move more efficiently to domestic markets and trade gateways.

Connections to the Port of Melbourne, Port Kembla and Port Botany are critical for the region's economy. Western Sydney International (Nancy Bird Walton) Airport and Canberra Airport could also provide freight opportunities.

As freight volumes grow, so will movements on local and regional roads. However, some roads are already either failing under the pressure of freight movements or offer poor condition or alignment. First and last mile freight issues are more prevalent in industry hubs such as the forestry sector in Greater Hume and Snowy Valleys LGAs or agricultural activities across the region and should be considered when identifying strategic opportunities for growth or investment.

## Intra-regional connectivity

The economic and social relationship between regional cities and surrounding towns allows for an affordable housing market near regional cities. However, public transport services between regional cities and surrounding towns are poor, and private vehicles are often the only choice.

Better understanding of public transport needs, including in cross-border locations, is required. Connections should maximise accessibility to and from workplaces, educational institutions, health services, public transport hubs and retail centres.

## Behavioural and technological change

The older population and changing travel behaviour to more healthy and sustainable options create demand for public transport, and walking and cycling connections. Many towns and urban areas in the region offer wide streets, grid patterned design, relatively low levels of traffic on local roads, and a gentle topography. These assets could support increased active and public transport.

However, the tradition of low density communities, separate land uses and car-prioritising infrastructure has impacted:

- public services and infrastructure costs
- public health costs associated with not actively designing healthy activity
- greenhouse gas emissions
- air pollutants
- social equity
- economic competitiveness and resilience.

Reduced car use and vehicle ownership lowers household costs, improves personal and environmental health, and lowers carbon emissions and air pollution. An active and public transport network integrates nature into neighbourhoods encourages people to enjoy the outdoors while providing corridors for wildlife movement and helping to manage clean stormwater.

The concept of the 15-minute neighbourhood looks to address these many public interests, both for developing new areas and retrofitting existing lower density residential areas. It aims to achieve as much variety in local supporting uses as possible, supported by as much density and variety of housing as is feasible.

In rural towns and villages, the intent for these places to be 15-minute neighbourhoods, where people need only walk, cycle or use micromobility to access one place for most of their daily needs. In more rural areas outside villages and settlements, opportunities to link outer residential subdivisions to village centres and connecting villages through walking and cycling networks could be feasible.



## Air transport facilities

The region's air transport infrastructure supports the visitor economy, freight, medical and emergency services, aviation training, agriculture and recreational gliding. Airports in Albury, Griffith, Wagga Wagga and Narrandera-Leeton also provide regular passenger services. With the growth of e-commerce and increased expectation for faster delivery of goods, airports and aerodromes could become more important in the region's freight and logistics sector.

The Albury airport has been identified for a \$25 million expansion under the Albury Wodonga Regional Deal<sup>53</sup>



Wagga Wagga Airport, Wagga Wagga.  
Credit: Wagga Wagga City Council and Destination Riverina Murray.

### Strategy 18.1



Local strategic planning statements will:

- overview strategic transport assets, including road, rail, air and freight
- identify existing or potential strategic projects or policies to improve transport, including heavy vehicle or town bypasses
- identify transport issues requiring further strategic investigation or funding.

### Strategy 18.2



Strategic and statutory planning will realise land use planning and transport integration by:

- identifying and activating employment lands near freight infrastructure, using planning controls that support supply chain oriented land uses and limit incompatible land uses
- in consultation with Transport for NSW, identifying and investigating opportunities to reserve future heavy vehicle and town bypasses and associated road corridors
- ensuring development proposals for supply chain or logistics hub uses address urban amenity impacts, including the application of buffers where appropriate
- addressing first mile and last mile freight limitations, including off-street loading docks, kerbside space, formal de-coupling sites, alternative last mile delivery vehicles, appropriate access for vehicles on local road networks and accommodating larger vehicle combinations
- incorporating flexible planning controls to support new and emerging technology-driven land uses.

**Strategy 18.3**

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

- planning and designing streets that prioritise walking, cycling and public transport as attractive transport choices, especially in brownfield and greenfield sites
- establishing connected and accessible green walking and cycling networks supported by appropriate user facilities and integrated with public transport
- balancing the needs of pedestrians and cyclists, and vehicle traffic on main streets and prioritising pedestrians in town centres
- requiring major traffic-generating development proposals to demonstrate how the proposal will effectively integrate with existing walking, cycling and public transport networks, where appropriate
- promoting redevelopment and higher densities within walking distance to town centres, public spaces and transport interchanges
- ensuring land use planning creates opportunities for new and emerging transport technologies and services, such as autonomous and electric vehicles and on-demand transport.

**Strategy 18.4**

Strategic and statutory planning will protect supply chains, freight corridors and logistics facilities from future development impacts by identifying measures to mitigate associated noise and air emissions, encouraging off-road freight or connections between heavy vehicle routes that do not involve local roads, and identifying and maintaining buffers between freight infrastructure and incompatible land uses areas.

**Strategy 18.5**

Strategic and statutory planning will need to ensure development outcomes near the Inland Rail corridor or near the road/rail interfaces of Inland Rail do not undermine the function of the Inland Rail.

**Strategy 18.6**

Strategic and statutory planning for airport and aerodrome upgrades will adopt a precinct-based planning approach to complement the expanded or emerging role of the airports and aerodromes. This includes protection from encroachment of incompatible development by:

- managing and protecting associated land uses and airspace, including potential future operations
- limiting the encroachment of incompatible development
- avoiding development that penetrates the Obstacle Limitation Surface
- identifying and activating employment lands in surrounding areas.

Credit: Transport for NSW

**Collaboration Activity 24**

The department, Transport for NSW and, where relevant, the Australian Rail Track Corporation will collaborate on Inland Rail, the Murray bridge projects and Newell Highway upgrades to understand all impacts and opportunities early in the process.



# Glossary

## Active transport

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

## Affordable housing

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

## Agribusiness

A business that earns most or all of its revenues from agriculture, such as food and fibre production, agrichemicals, seed supply, farm machinery wholesale and distribution, freight, logistics, processing, marketing or retail sales.

## 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.

## 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 refugia

Areas where species can retreat to and persist in under changing environmental conditions. Refugia are areas that maintain favourable climatic conditions absent in the surrounding landscape, thereby safeguarding the persistence of biodiversity.

## Employment lands

Areas zoned for industrial or similar purposes. Generally lower density employment areas that provide space for utilities and urban services, including depots, repair trades and service centres, as well as the research, design, and manufacturing of goods through to their warehousing, distribution, and sale.

## 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.

## High environmental value land

Land with:

- sensitive biodiversity values
- native vegetation of high conservation value
- key habitat of threatened species
- important wetlands
- areas of geological significance

## 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 diversity

The mix of housing types such as detached dwellings, boarding houses, purpose-built rentals, 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 used for urban purposes, including the re-use of a site within the existing urban footprint for new housing, businesses, or other urban development.

## Intensive agriculture

Agriculture activities such as horticulture, irrigated crops, glasshousing, feedlots, poultry farms that rely on high levels of inputs such as labour and capital to increase yield.

## Local Environmental Plan (LEP)

The main statutory instrument to guide planning decisions for LGAs through zoning and development controls.

## Population projections

Projections of future size and structure of a population based on past trends and assumptions about the future, such as births, deaths and migration.

## Public spaces

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

## Renewable Energy Zone (REZ)

Zones of energy generation alternatives as power stations close that connect renewable energy such as wind and solar, storage such as batteries, and high voltage power poles and wires in the same location to capitalise on economies of scale to deliver cheap, reliable and clean electricity for NSW.

## Resilience

The capacity of a place, town, city or region's systems, businesses, institutions, communities and individuals to survive, adapt and grow, no matter what chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience.

## Ribbon development

Extensive residential/commercial/industrial development occurring in a linear pattern along a river or road corridor.

## Smart technology

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

## Statutory planning

Includes planning proposals, development applications and other statutory processes that require planning decisions.

## Strategic planning

Includes local strategies for issues such as housing, employment, retail, conservation, rural land, recreation and transport; precinct plans; structure

plans; master plans and other activities that support statutory planning, such as LEPs and development control plans, and decisions.

## 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:

- RU5 Village
- R1 General Residential
- R2 Low Density Residential
- R3 Medium Density Residential
- R4 High Density Residential
- R5 Large Lot Residential
- E1 Local Centre
- E2 Commercial Centre
- E3 Productivity Support
- E4 General Industrial
- E5 Heavy Industrial
- MU1 Mixed Use
- SP3 Tourist
- SP4 Enterprise
- RE1 Public Recreation
- RE2 Private Recreation

## Value-added

Value-added data represents the economic value that is added by each industry sector in a defined region. It can be calculated by subtracting local expenditure and expenditure on regional imports from the output generated by industry sector.



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