



Planning &
Environment

Draft
South East

**and
Tablelands
Regional Plan**



DRAFT SOUTH EAST AND TABLELANDS REGIONAL PLAN
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Draft South East and Tablelands Regional Plan
GPO Box 5475, Wollongong NSW 2500.

Cover Images:

Left: Bermagui harbour

Right: Snow gums, Mt Kosciuszko National Park

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Foreword

The South East and Tablelands region is renowned for scenic rural landscapes, spectacular mountain and coastal scenery, and historic towns and villages. It's a great place to live and popular year-round with tourists.

Balancing the growth of this region over the next 20 years, while protecting its highly regarded natural environment, are key drivers for the *Draft South East and Tablelands Regional Plan*.

This is a 20-year blueprint for the future and it contains goals and actions that aim to build a strong diversified economy and resilient and sustainable communities.

Many residents in the region benefit from their proximity to Canberra by accessing its jobs, housing and services and the capital will continue to figure prominently in the way the region grows.

Over half of the projected demand for new housing is expected to occur within commuting distance of Canberra. The draft Plan proposes closer collaboration with the Australian Capital Territory on infrastructure planning and delivery for new housing, jobs and services, and better public transport links to jobs and services. It also supports better transport connections to and from centres across the region.

The draft Plan aims to grow the economy and jobs by maximising the potential of tourism, agriculture and renewable energy opportunities, and by improving cross-border transport connections to make it easier to access opportunities in public administration, education and training.

The draft Plan recognises the community's housing needs are changing and encourages a greater variety of housing in existing regional centres that have infrastructure and services, and in new land releases to create sustainable communities.

By focusing housing in these areas, the region's natural environment, including its sensitive waterways, coast and biodiversity corridors can be better protected.

We want to know what you think about the vision, goals and actions in this *Draft South East and Tablelands Regional Plan* so we can achieve a sustainable future for this important region.

Have your say.

Katrina Hodgkinson

Parliamentary Secretary for Southern NSW

Top:
Batemans Bay

Centre:
Braidwood

Bottom:
Goulburn

4



Introduction

The South East and Tablelands region applies to 14 local government areas extending from the Southern Highlands and Tablelands to the Victorian border, surrounding the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), and incorporating the Snowy Mountains and South Coast.

South East and Tablelands Local Government Areas

Cooma-Monaro, Snowy River, Bombala, Eurobodalla, Bega, Queanbeyan, Yass Valley, Palerang, Young, Harden, Boorowa, Wingecarribee, Goulburn-Mulwaree and Upper Lachlan.

The region is well known for its scenic rural landscapes, spectacular coastal scenery, and historic towns and villages.

It is strategically located between Sydney and Melbourne and is shaped by its ongoing relationship with the ACT. Canberra is a significant driver of growth and economic opportunity across the region, as well as the location of many of the region's tertiary health and education services.

By 2036, the region's population is expected to be 319,450 – an increase of 44,300 from 2016. Population growth is mainly occurring within commuting distance of Canberra and Sydney, in regional centres and along the coast. By 2033, the combined population of the ACT and the three surrounding local government areas is projected to increase to 601,000.

There are opportunities to focus development in and around existing regional centres and towns to create vibrant and attractive places for residents to live and work, and to develop new communities in release areas, supported by infrastructure and services.

Future growth will need to be managed and balanced to protect sensitive natural environments, including the major drinking water catchments, and resource and rural lands that have shaped the region's settlement pattern.

Access to the capital cities – Canberra and Sydney – and strong tourism assets, will help to broaden the economic base of the region, enhancing its long term resilience. Important economic sectors for the region are tourism, public administration, health and aged care services, education and training, agriculture, resources and energy, and freight and logistics.

This draft Plan presents a planning framework that is founded on the following key principles:

- facilitate economic growth, environmental management and social wellbeing;
- respond to the region's landscape, environmental assets, natural and cultural resources, mineral and energy resources (including renewable energy);
- respond to long term structural economic and demographic changes, with a focus on ageing, migration patterns and productivity;
- recognise the implications of a changing climate and build resilience to natural hazards;
- guide the locations for new housing and provide greater housing choice;
- encourage economic activities, consistent with changing market demands and industry needs;
- inform infrastructure and services investment, and coordinate with land use; and
- integrate cross-border drivers of change and coordinate responses Statewide and nationally.

Top:
Chinese Tribute
Garden, courtesy of
Young Shire Council

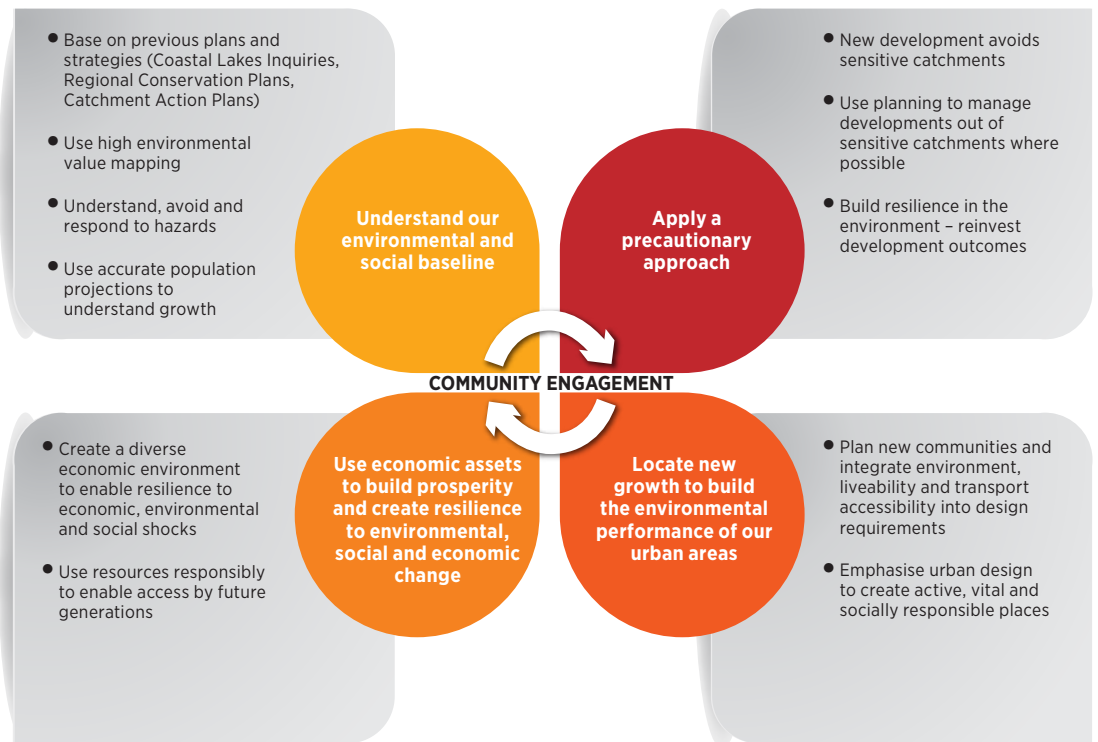
Centre:
Mt Kosciuszko
National Park

Bottom:
Nimmitabel



Above: Bowral

FIGURE 1: BUILDING THE DRAFT PLAN



Evidence to underpin the Plan

This *Draft South East and Tablelands Regional Plan* (draft Plan) incorporates research and expert advice about future development challenges and opportunities. The following evidence forms the basis of the draft Plan:

- previous NSW Government strategies and plans for the region including the *South Coast Regional Strategy 2006–31*, the *Sydney-Canberra Corridor Regional Strategy 2006–31* and the *South Coast Regional Conservation Plan* (2010);
- mapping of regional biodiversity corridors and high environmental value lands, prepared by the Office of Environment and Heritage (see Figure 4: Environmental Values Map);
- NSW Department of Planning and Environment's 2014 Population, Household and Dwelling Projections;
- Department of Industry (Division of Resources and Energy) Geoscientific Data, including data held on the Common Ground website; and

- *Canberra's influence on the surrounding NSW Economic and Housing Markets* (2015) – SGS Economics and Planning.

A range of NSW Government plans have helped to inform the draft Plan including the *Rebuilding NSW-State Infrastructure Strategy* (2014), *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan* (2012), *NSW Freight and Ports Strategy* (2013) and *Southern Regional Transport Plan* (2014).

The work of other stakeholders has also been of value including councils' community strategic plans and Regional Development Australia's *Southern Inland Regional Plan 2013–2016* and the *Far South Coast Strategic Regional Plan 2012–2017*.

The South East and Tablelands: A region of diverse landscapes

The South East and Tablelands has five distinct landscapes that are influenced by geographic, economic and social links, including the delivery of services.

The five regional landscapes are:

- Alpine – comprising Cooma Monaro and Snowy River Shire Councils and Bombala Council;
- Far South Coast – comprising Eurobodalla and Bega Valley Shire Councils;
- Greater Capital – comprising Queanbeyan City, Yass Valley and Palerang Councils;
- Hilltops – comprising Young and Harden Shire Councils and Boorowa Council; and
- Southern Highlands and Tablelands – comprising Wingecarribee and Upper Lachlan Shire Councils and Goulburn Mulwaree Council.

Alpine

The Alpine is characterised by the high plateaus of the Monaro Plains, soft timber forestry, the Snowy Mountains and the headwaters of the Snowy and Murrumbidgee rivers. The area is home to the Snowy Mountains Scheme which produced around 30 per cent of all renewable energy generated in NSW in 2014.¹

The Alpine is renowned for its snow-based tourism, which contributes \$429 million to the regional economy each year and accounts for 27 per cent of the region's total economic contribution from tourism.² The centres of Cooma and Jindabyne provide some higher-density residential development and a range of businesses, retail and entertainment uses.

Far South Coast

The Far South Coast has large areas of national park that are high value vegetation areas. It is characterised by small coastal towns and villages, pristine beaches, sensitive estuaries and coastal lakes and wetlands. It is well known for its dairy industry and an increasing diversification into horticulture and niche produce.

The area's environmental qualities and relaxed lifestyle attract over two million visitors each year.³ Tourism is the main economic driver, contributing around 40 per cent of the region's total economic output. Batemans Bay and Bega are regional centres. Together with Narooma, Moruya and Merimbula, these centres provide residents with business, retail, entertainment, health and other services.

Greater Capital

The Greater Capital is characterised by both productive rural and rural residential uses. Canberra provides a full range of higher-order services and activities, as well as major tertiary education and health facilities.

The Greater Capital contains high-value grasslands and woodlands, with important biodiversity corridors linking to the ACT and beyond. High wind paths also make the landscape attractive to wind farms for renewable energy generation.

Queanbeyan is a regional centre and forms part of the larger Canberra-Queanbeyan metropolitan area.

Hilltops
















The Hilltops are home to smaller rural towns and villages. Young provides residents with supermarkets, health, retail and other services. Agricultural production in the Hilltops is estimated at \$269 million.⁴ A substantial amount of agricultural land is cleared for sheep grazing, as well as horticultural activities including vines and cherries. Corridors of vegetation often follow river systems and main roads. The Hilltops are renowned for cool climate wines and the National Cherry Festival in December.

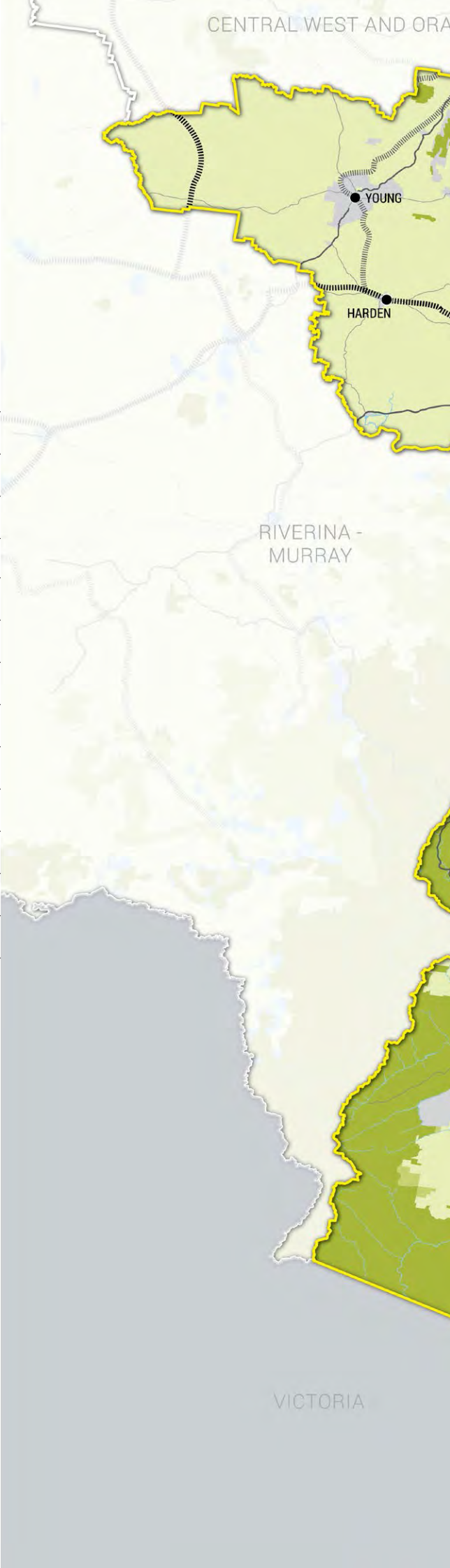
Southern Highlands and Tablelands

The Southern Highlands and Tablelands is characterised by its natural beauty and heritage. It is home to the regional centres of Goulburn and Bowral. Areas of high value vegetation, grasslands, riparian systems, rainforests and woodlands are present, as well as cleared grazing lands, many of which are transitioning to horticulture. Some areas in the Southern Highlands and Tablelands are located within the Sydney Drinking Water Catchment, which provides drinking water to over 4.5 million people.

This part of the region is strategically located between Canberra and Sydney and around 40 per cent of all day trippers to the region visit this area. The Southern Highlands and Tablelands is the only location in the region for coal mining. Like the Greater Capital, this area contains land with high winds that are suitable for wind turbines.

FIGURE 2: REGIONAL PLAN OVERVIEW

	Metropolitan City
	Regional Centre
	Railway
	Railway - Non-operational
	Highway
	Main Road
	South East and Tablelands Landscape
	Sydney Drinking Water Catchment
	Airport
	Commercial Port
	National Park and Reserve
	State Forest
	Rural (RU1 and RU2) Zone
	Marine Park
	Waterway





HILLTOPS

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS
AND TABLELANDS

GREATER
CAPITAL

AUSTRALIAN
CAPITAL
TERRITORY

ALPINE

FAR
SOUTH
COAST

ILLAWARRA -
SHOALHAVEN

CANBERRA

QUEANBEYAN

GOULBURN

MITTAGONG

BOWRAL

MOSS
VALE

BATEMANS BAY

MORUYA

NAROOMA

COOMA

JINDABYNE

BOMBALA

BEGA

MERIMBULA

PORT OF EDEN



Vision

The vision for the South East and Tablelands is to build resilient and sustainable communities by balancing growth opportunities with protecting the region's diverse environment and lifestyles.

The South East and Tablelands will continue to be an attractive place to live, offering residents high quality rural, metropolitan, and coastal or alpine lifestyles that are supported by access to services and jobs. Environmental areas, including high value biodiversity and sensitive estuaries, will be protected and enhanced through better connections to the region's stunning landscapes.

The ACT will continue to be the primary driver of growth for most of the region. The growth of Canberra will provide opportunities to access a wider range of services and job opportunities in public administration, professional services and education. Travelling to and from Canberra will be easier and more convenient with improvements to major roads and public transport across the border.

The region will build economic opportunities by supporting priority growth sectors including:

- tourism;
- health, disability and aged care;
- public administration;
- education and training;
- primary industries and renewable energy; and
- freight and logistics.

Building a strong, diversified economy will enable the region to respond to environmental, economic and social challenges.

The region's diverse landscapes, including its coastal, alpine and rural areas, will attract many visitors and residents. Managing development to

protect the environment will allow communities to live sustainably, and for tourism to develop without adverse impacts on the environment.

Protecting valuable water catchments and water sources will maintain an adequate water supply to meet future demand. Promoting environmental resilience, improving water and energy efficiency, and encouraging innovation will help meet the challenges of climate change.

Delivering more housing in sustainable locations will support a growing and ageing population, help to satisfy the demand for visitor accommodation and contribute to greater housing affordability. New communities will be designed to be water and energy-efficient with integrated walking and cycling paths. They will promote social inclusion, community wellbeing and environmental sustainability. Opportunities for improved public transport, including community transport, will reconnect communities with the surrounding landscape and with other communities.

The funding and timely delivery of infrastructure will be critical to underpinning economic and housing growth across the region. The introduction of high-speed broadband will promote employment opportunities at home, enhance the efficiency of business, and improve the region's connections to Canberra and Sydney.

To achieve this vision, we have set down the following goals:

- GOAL 1: Sustainably manage growth opportunities arising from the ACT;
- GOAL 2: Protect and enhance the region's natural environment;
- GOAL 3: Strengthen the economic opportunities of the region; and
- GOAL 4: Build communities that are strong, healthy and well-connected.

Top:
Merimbula

Centre:
Snug Cove, Eden

Bottom:
Bermagui marina



Delivering the Plan

Achieving the vision and the goals of the final Plan is a shared responsibility, requiring ongoing commitment from all stakeholders, including councils, State agencies and the development and services sectors.

A Coordination and Monitoring Committee will be established to oversee the implementation of the final Plan. It will be chaired by the Department of Planning and Environment and will have representatives from the Joint Organisation of Councils, the Department of Premier and Cabinet, NSW Office of Environment and Heritage and Transport for NSW. This will bring together the agencies and organisations that are responsible for delivering the majority of outcomes under the final Plan.

Collaboration with the ACT Government will be crucial to delivering on the outcomes identified in the final Plan.

The committee will:

- coordinate and drive delivery of actions;
- establish a framework to report on:
 - population;
 - housing;
 - economy and employment; and
 - natural environment and resources;
- oversee an annual report to monitor progress in delivering on actions and the outcomes in the final Plan; and
- provide input to review, update and revise the final Plan every five years, or as necessary.

The committee will be supported by outcome-specific groups to provide advice on particular issues or projects in the final Plan.

Implementation

The actions in the final South East and Tablelands Regional Plan will be implemented through a number of mechanisms including:

- local planning directions under Section 117 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, issued by the Minister for Planning;
- whole-of-government policy alignment; and
- regional collaboration across government, business, key stakeholders and the wider community, for specific projects and processes.

The NSW Government will be responsible for implementing these actions and will work with councils on relevant initiatives.

Infrastructure coordination

The draft Plan aligns regional planning for housing and economic activity to existing and planned infrastructure investments. The infrastructure context and priorities in this draft Plan are drawn from the *Rebuilding NSW – State Infrastructure Strategy* (2014), *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan* (2012), *Southern Regional Transport Plan* (2014) and the *NSW Freight and Ports Strategy* (2013).

Work undertaken by both the NSW Department of Industry and Regional Development Australia Southern Inland on the region's economic growth sectors has also informed infrastructure planning.

The NSW Government will use the final Plan, along with annual monitoring of development activity, to advise infrastructure agencies about the timing of new developments to inform

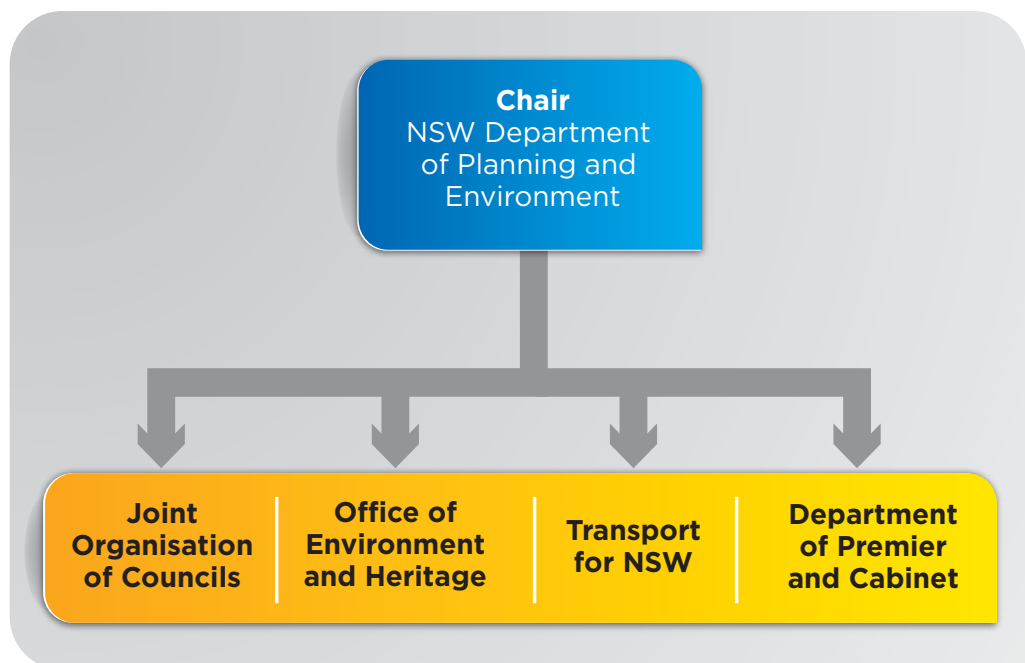
Top:
Bradman Museum,
Bowral

Centre:
Tilba Tilba

Bottom:
Monaro



FIGURE 3: COORDINATION AND MONITORING COMMITTEE





Left: Wagonga Inlet, Narooma
Right: Robertson

infrastructure service planning and asset management. Opportunities for private sector delivery of infrastructure will also be explored to support growth.

The NSW Government will continue to work with infrastructure providers to coordinate the delivery of infrastructure that meets community needs. This includes:

- informing the prioritisation of future infrastructure investment to support planned growth and change;
- coordinating the roll-out of infrastructure to support strategic employment and housing land, such as South Jerrabomberra; and
- exploring innovative design and delivery approaches across infrastructure sectors.

Local planning initiatives

A Ministerial Direction will require all councils to implement the directions and actions of the final Plan appropriate to their local area, in their council planning strategies and local environmental plans. Reviews of, and amendments to these local strategies and plans will need to be consistent with the policies and actions in the final Plan.

In addition to statutory mechanisms, councils will lead and participate in relevant strategic projects such as urban design and public domain improvement projects to deliver the outcomes of the final Plan.

Once finalised, the Plan will replace the following strategic plans:

- *South Coast Regional Strategy 2006-31;*
- *Sydney – Canberra Corridor Regional Strategy 2006-31;* and
- *South Coast Regional Conservation Plan.*



GOAL 1 – Sustainably manage growth opportunities arising from the ACT

As a capital city, Canberra is the driver of growth for the surrounding local government areas within the region. As the only metropolitan city nearby, it provides access to specialist employment opportunities and higher-order services, including tertiary health and education. The Greater Capital and beyond provides a number of economic, housing and leisure opportunities for residents and workers based in the ACT.

The current estimated population of the ACT, combined with the Greater Capital is 456,450. The population is projected to increase to 601,000 by 2033, which is comparable to the current population of the Gold Coast.

More than 20 per cent of workers in the South East and Tablelands access job opportunities in the ACT, with more than one-third (36 per cent) employed in public administration. NSW residents also access health and education services in the ACT, accounting for seven per cent of all school enrolments⁵ and 20 per cent of all public hospital admissions.⁶

Of the 214,000 jobs in the ACT, 10 per cent were filled by workers living in NSW. The direct impact of the ACT is strongest in bordering local government areas, excluding Tumut, although the ACT services a much larger area and extends as far as the coast.⁷

The Greater Capital has the most significant relationship with the ACT:

- almost 40 per cent of residents in the Greater Capital use the ACT's public hospitals;⁸ and
- 90 per cent of the NSW students attending schools in the ACT were from the Greater Capital.

Areas within commuting distance to the ACT provide a wide range of housing opportunities and easy access to jobs, education, services and recreation in Canberra. Over half (53 per cent) of projected demand for new housing in the region is expected to occur in the Greater Capital. This equates to 14,750 new dwellings.

To manage this growth sustainably, efficient transport connections need to be available to link homes to jobs and services.

The NSW Government is committed to taking a region-wide approach to economic investment, infrastructure delivery, skills development, servicing provision and housing development. This will facilitate sustainable growth and optimise the region's economic prospects.

Collaboration between the ACT and NSW Governments is underpinned by the *ACT and NSW Memorandum of Understanding for Regional Collaboration*, signed in December 2011. The memorandum seeks to strengthen collaboration between the two jurisdictions to improve outcomes and service delivery to the region.

- more than half (56 per cent) of its workforce travelled to the ACT for work in 2011;

Top:
Courtesy of Canberra
Airport

Centre:
North Googong
housing release

Bottom:
Queanbeyan District
Hospital, courtesy of
NSW Health



Above:
Googong Reservoir, Queanbeyan, courtesy of CSIRO

ACT Planning Strategy

The *ACT Planning Strategy* (2012) aims to help Canberra achieve its economic, social and environmental aspirations. The strategy focuses on:

- intensifying urban development around Canberra's existing centres and corridors. It includes a target to achieve 50 per cent of new housing delivered through urban intensification;
- expanding greenfield sites around Gungahlin and Molonglo Valley; and
- improving transport connections to enhance the movement of the 20,000 people travelling into Canberra from NSW each day.

The strategy acknowledges that the success of Canberra as a city is dependent on its relationship to surrounding NSW areas. It acknowledges that regional collaboration is important on issues such as biodiversity, transport and economic development.

DIRECTION 1.1 Provide well-located and serviced land for housing in the Greater Capital to meet demand

The draft Plan aims to create sufficient housing supply in the Greater Capital to meet market demand. The timely delivery of infrastructure and investment is pivotal to achieving this objective.

Queanbeyan is a major regional centre and forms part of the larger Canberra-Queanbeyan metropolitan area. The rural character of the Yass Valley and Palerang contrasts with the largely suburban character of Queanbeyan.

The population of the Greater Capital is expected to grow to 108,500 by 2036, which will require an additional 14,750 new dwellings. Councils have indicated that existing release areas have capacity for almost 18,000 new dwellings in places such as Googong, South Jerrabomberra, Yass, Murrumbateman and the cross-border development at Parkwood.

Additional pressure for housing in NSW is being driven by ACT policies for more compact settlement and housing affordability. This is leading to development proposals that are inconsistent with current planning strategies in areas close to the NSW and ACT border – mostly within Yass Valley Local Government Area. These proposals have the potential to undermine sustainable urban outcomes from identified new urban areas and place undue pressure on infrastructure capacity.

Housing affordability is a significant issue around the ACT and NSW border, with 50 per cent of households on moderate, low and very low incomes experiencing housing stress.⁹ The popularity of housing in the Greater Capital is influencing median house values. For example, median housing prices in Murrumbateman (Yass Valley) have increased by 90 per cent from 2004 to 2014 to \$650,000 compared to Canberra, which rose by 50 per cent over the same period to \$537,500.¹⁰

Growth places pressure on infrastructure and services including roads, utilities, education, health, emergency services and cemeteries and crematoria. This is particularly the case when new development is close to the ACT and NSW border, for example, South Jerrabomberra and Parkwood.

The availability of water will continue to be a key driver and limiting factor on the amount and location of any additional urban development in the Greater Capital.

A suite of related actions is required to coordinate and deliver infrastructure, monitor housing activity and respond to changes to demand through the review of local housing strategies.

Water supply in the Greater Capital

Water is supplied to Queanbeyan by the ACT Government under the terms of the *Queanbeyan Water Agreement 2008*. In the case of Yass Valley and Palerang, water supply is managed by each council under the *Water Management Act 2000* and relevant water sharing plans.

The supply of water and sewer services in the ACT is driven by demand and provided by ICON Water. ICON Water is a Territory-owned corporation that delivers the water supply to the ACT and to Queanbeyan under the *Queanbeyan Water Supply Agreement*.

Yass Valley and Palerang Councils are responsible for water supply as water supply authorities. The Yass Dam is the main storage area for these local government areas. The dam wall has recently been raised to increase capacity and a pipeline from Yass to Murrumbateman is being constructed to provide reticulated water to service the first stages of urban growth at Murrumbateman. Bungendore and Braidwood are the two main centres for Palerang, with demand for urban water in these areas close to council's water entitlement.

ICON Water supports cross-border cooperation in water and sewerage matters. This includes mutual information-sharing (resources, knowledge and capabilities) between ICON and councils, particularly those located closest to the ACT, including Cooma-Monaro, Palerang and Yass Valley.

Any future growth in the region that requires the support of the ACT water and wastewater network would be subject to negotiations to achieve:

- sustainable diversion limits;
- trading of water entitlements;
- a bilateral agreement between jurisdictions requiring Cabinet endorsement; and
- a commercial agreement with ICON that will require consideration of their business model, business cases for development and competing servicing priorities.

ACTION 1.1.1 Coordinate infrastructure delivery to support release areas in the Greater Capital

Infrastructure and services are needed to support and stimulate housing development. The coordination of infrastructure across different jurisdictions is a key issue in the South East and Tablelands. The delivery of electricity, water, roads and schools will require cooperation between utility providers, and local, State and Territory Governments.

Councils, infrastructure agencies and utility providers will continue to identify the strategic infrastructure investments needed to support the delivery of housing in the Greater Capital.

The priority for State agencies and other key stakeholders is to focus on coordinating new infrastructure to achieve development outcomes in the short to medium term.

The NSW Government will:

- coordinate delivery of infrastructure required to support housing delivery in the Greater Capital, including South Jerrabomberra and Parkwood.

ACTION 1.1.2 Develop principles to guide the development of a cross-border infrastructure funding model to support cross-border developments

In the Greater Capital, urban development has implications for infrastructure and services provided by the ACT Government, particularly roads, education, health and emergency services.

Coordinating the funding and delivery of infrastructure in a cross-border setting requires cooperation between jurisdictions and an understanding of their different governance and budgetary structures. Further work is required to create a consistent approach to infrastructure funding and delivery.

The NSW Government will work collaboratively with the ACT Government to:

- develop an agreed set of principles to inform a new cross-border infrastructure funding model.

ACTION 1.1.3 Develop a cross-border land monitoring program

The demand and supply of land and housing in the ACT and the Greater Capital are related, as they both operate within the same housing market. This has implications for infrastructure and service delivery by both jurisdictions.

A cross-border land and housing monitor will enable better tracking and forecasting of housing and employment land release in the



Above:
Federal Highway
upgrade work, near
Queanbeyan

region. This will improve information about supply and demand and provide a better understanding of the infrastructure and service implications arising from growth, particularly in locations close to the ACT.

The NSW Government will:

- work with the ACT Government to develop a cross-border land and housing monitor.

ACTION 1.1.4 Support the development of local housing strategies in the Greater Capital

Council local housing strategies are the first step to identifying housing needs and planning for a range of housing types. They also help identify the infrastructure needed to support local communities. Analysis suggests there is sufficient zoned land to meet demand over the next 20 years. The NSW Government will continue to monitor the take-up of existing land supply and levels of demand, in collaboration with the ACT Government.

Many councils in the region are developing or reviewing their local housing strategies to respond to changing demand. A review of Queanbeyan Council's *Residential and Economic Strategy* and Yass Valley Council's *Towns and Villages Study* (2010) is currently under way.

Pressure for new land release, in areas outside those already identified in an existing strategy, will require careful consideration. This is particularly relevant to the efficient use of infrastructure and services and the development of sustainable communities.

A long term approach is needed to identify future growth options for the region, beyond current expected demand to 2036. The focus will be on community development and settlement expansion, rather than isolated site land release. This will support better cross-border planning and service delivery of water supply, energy infrastructure, roads, public transport, education and health services, and a better approach to biodiversity and rural land uses.

The NSW Government will:

- prepare guidelines for local housing strategies;
- support councils to review local housing strategies;

- prepare Statewide land release criteria to inform settlement planning for new communities; and
- continue to work with the ACT Government and councils to assess the long term growth options for the region and to inform a settlement strategy beyond the expected growth for the next 20 years.

DIRECTION 1.2 Improve cross-border transport connectivity

Existing road infrastructure is a major asset for the region and further investment in the road network will support economic growth. Developing and maintaining the network is fundamental to a number of stakeholders in the region.

Canberra's role as the regional hub generates significant cross-border movement, including a large daily movement of workers and school students between NSW and the ACT. In 2011, 27,800 people indicated that they worked in the ACT but lived elsewhere. Over 23,000 people or 84 per cent of these were residents in the South East and Tablelands region.¹¹

The Greater Capital was the biggest source for commuters to the ACT, accounting for 89 per cent, with Queanbeyan alone representing 57 per cent. About 95 per cent of Queanbeyan commuters travel by car rather than public transport.¹²

Almost 5,000 people travelled from the ACT to NSW for employment. Queanbeyan was the largest area for commuters from the ACT at 81 per cent or 3,815 people, followed by Palerang with 502 people (11 per cent).

There is also a strong cross-border movement of school and vocational students. Of the total NSW students attending schools in the ACT, 38 per cent came from Queanbeyan, followed by Palerang (32 per cent) and Yass Valley (20 per cent).

Increased demand for housing in the Greater Capital adds additional pressure on roads and cross-border connectivity.

The *Southern Regional Transport Plan* is the NSW Government's plan for the provision of transport in the region and it is informed by the

NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan. The *Southern Regional Transport Plan* and this draft Plan aim to improve cross-border connections through better integration of public transport.

ACTION 1.2.1 Work with the ACT Government to make travelling to and from Canberra easier and more convenient

Travel to the ACT is integral to the economic growth and prosperity of the southern region. Some communities in the region access employment, education, health, air travel and higher-order services in Canberra. The main strategic transport routes connecting the two jurisdictions are the Hume, Federal, Monaro, Barton and Kings highways, and Pialligo and Canberra Avenues.

Communities on both sides of the ACT and NSW border have raised the need for better integration of transport services. The NSW Government has appointed a Cross-Border Commissioner to advocate for businesses, organisations and residents in border communities.

Achieving a seamless public transport connection between jurisdictions requires ongoing collaboration between the NSW and ACT Governments.

Transport for NSW and Roads and Maritime Services are progressively preparing network and corridor strategies to cover every State road in NSW to better manage transport infrastructure and maximise benefits for all road users. Network and corridor strategies provide the following benefits for the State road network:

- a plan for network/corridor improvements that consider all modes of transport;
- transparency for the community, councils and other government agencies about planning and investment decisions;
- consistency in planning, management and the operation of roads; and
- the integration of road safety, traffic and asset maintenance projects.

Network and corridor strategies relevant to the region include planning for road upgrades and improvements to the Barton Highway and

Queanbeyan to Batemans Bay corridor. A *Queanbeyan to Batemans Bay Corridor Strategy* was released in September 2009 and a *Draft Barton Highway Improvement Strategy* was released in November 2015.

The NSW Government will:

- prepare an issues and options paper on cross-border public transport that will include mapping of public transport services, demand and measures to overcome legal and contractual barriers;
- finalise and implement the *Draft Barton Highway Improvement Strategy*; and
- implement the *Queanbeyan to Batemans Bay Corridor Strategy*.

ACTION 1.2.2 Improve sharing of transport data between the ACT and NSW, including the development of a cross-border transport model

Particular routes in and out of Canberra are currently under pressure. Development in the region will intensify these pressures and affect transport efficiency for passengers and freight, as well as public safety. More integrated planning for cross-border transport is needed.

The region is part of a freight corridor that connects Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne. Current and consistent information on freight movements is important for planning and to capitalise on the region's freight network. The ACT and NSW Governments will work collaboratively to enhance data-sharing.

The ACT and NSW Governments have begun work to produce a cross-border transport model. Work has already commenced to incorporate Queanbeyan traffic data into the ACT model.

The NSW Government will:

- continue to work collaboratively to develop a cross-border transport model that incorporates Queanbeyan and Yass. Opportunities to further expand the model and incorporate other local government areas will be considered in the future; and
- enhance data-sharing on freight movements between NSW and ACT to build an evidence base to enhance future freight management.

GOAL 2 – Protect and enhance the region’s natural environment

The South East and Tablelands region is one of the most biologically diverse in NSW. It includes the unique alpine environment of Australia’s highest mountains and the State’s only wilderness coastline. The region is characterised by the grasslands and woodlands of the South West Slopes and Southern Tablelands, and the escarpment forests of the coastal and hinterland regions. The Snowy Mountains and Monaro are dominated by broad grasslands of alpine and sub-alpine environments.

The South East and Tablelands is home to more than 100 threatened plant species, 112 threatened animal species, and 13 endangered ecological communities.¹³ Over three million hectares or 56 per cent of the region has high environmental value or forms part of a national park or state forest (see Figure 4).

Important marine values are conserved in the Batemans Bay Marine Park, which showcases distinctive marine life and provides opportunities for the scientific study of marine biodiversity in a relatively natural state.

The region also supports a number of important coastal lakes and lagoons, coastal wetlands, sensitive estuaries and the protected waters of the south coast.

This draft Plan takes a landscape-based approach to regional planning that recognises the importance of the region’s unique environmental features to residents and tourists, and protects the recreational attractions that enhance the economy.

The draft Plan identifies regional landscape values, and connections and management

challenges. It sets directions for regional growth to achieve sustainable development outcomes that are balanced with environmental values. It aims to protect and restore environmental values and connections to the landscape, to contribute to healthy, engaged communities.

DIRECTION 2.1 Protect the region’s diverse environmental values

The region’s high environmental value lands and network of biodiversity corridors that link high environmental lands are mapped in Figure 4.

Currently the availability of local scale, field-validated vegetation mapping varies across the region. Field-verified vegetation mapping is used to identify, protect and manage environmental assets at a local scale, and to validate any new growth areas. Areas identified for new or more intensive development can then be located to avoid or mitigate potential impacts on these values. The NSW Government is working with councils in the region to extend this mapping to the Tablelands, Alpine and South West Slopes landscapes.

High priority groundwater dependent ecosystems, and aquatic and marine habitats, are also part of the region’s high environmental values. These areas are mapped by the Office of Environment and Heritage and the Department of Primary Industries. Any development on waterfront land should protect these environmental values. Guidelines on the design and construction of a controlled activity on waterfront land (as defined in the *Water*

Top:
Pelicans, Wagonga Inlet,
Narooma

Centre:
Sandy Creek loop track-
Bournda National Park,
courtesy of the Office
of Environment and
Heritage

Bottom:
Monaro High Plain
grasslands





Left: South East Forest National Park

Right: Tollgate Islands Nature Reserve, Batemans Bay, courtesy of Office of Environment and Heritage

Management Act 2000) are available from the Department of Primary Industries.

The importance of riparian land management is well recognised. Riparian outcomes can include bank stability, water quality, terrestrial and aquatic habitat and biodiversity corridors. An integrated understanding of flooding, bushfire, access and tenure can influence riparian outcomes and the way that new development and subdivisions are designed.

ACTION 2.1.1 Avoid, minimise and offset the impact of development on significant environmental assets

Significant environmental assets and important environmental values that need to be protected are mapped to assist council strategic planning and the development of local environmental plans. The Office of Environment and Heritage has mapped areas of high environmental value. The Department of Primary Industries has mapped fish community status, aquatic threatened species distributions, key fish habitat and marine protected areas.

Areas identified for new or more intensive development will be required to implement the 'avoid, minimise and offset' hierarchy.¹⁴ The hierarchy requires development to avoid areas of validated high environmental value and to consider appropriate offsets or other mitigation measures for unavoidable impacts.

The *NSW Biodiversity Offsets Policy for Major Projects* (2014) applies to all biodiversity in NSW, including aquatic biodiversity. All other offsets or compensation requirements are covered by the Department of Primary Industries, *Fisheries Policy and Guidelines for Fish Habitat Conservation and Management* (updated 2013).

Where it is not possible to avoid impacts, councils will be required to consider how they can be managed or offset through particular planning controls or other environmental management mechanisms.

The NSW Government will work with councils to review and update existing local environmental plans to determine if existing environmental protections for areas of high environmental value are appropriate or need to be enhanced.

Criteria for mapping of high environmental value lands

The criteria for mapping lands with high environmental value are:

- existing conservation areas including national parks and reserves, declared wilderness areas, marine parks, Crown reserves dedicated for environmental protection and conservation, and flora reserves;
- native vegetation of high conservation value including vegetation types which have been over-cleared or occur within over-cleared landscapes, old growth forest and rainforest;

- threatened ecological communities and key habitats;
- important wetlands, coastal lakes and estuaries; and
- sites of geological significance.

The high environmental value mapping is intended to provide a regional level overview for strategic planning. Planning authorities should contact the Office of Environment and Heritage to obtain the most recent spatial data when considering areas proposed for land use change or intensification.

The NSW Government will:

- provide high environmental value mapping and spatial data of environmental features to planning authorities, as appropriate, particularly for areas proposed for land use change or intensification;
- support planning authorities to undertake strategic, landscape-scale assessment of biodiversity and areas of high environmental value; and
- require that councils and development proponents protect the high environmental value lands in rezoning decisions.

ACTION 2.1.2 Protect the region's biodiversity corridors in local planning controls

Regional biodiversity corridors are identified in a number of sources including national, State, regional and local level corridor planning initiatives. Maintaining and improving these corridors will protect and enhance the ecology of the region and the movement of plants and animals.

Regional biodiversity corridors are shown in Figure 4. These are key native vegetation links within a region, between regions or between significant biodiversity features. Identifying environmental corridors that expand on and link different habitats is a critical step towards securing ecological connections and their long term viability.

When making or amending local planning controls or strategic plans, councils will be required by the NSW Government to:

- confirm and validate the location and boundaries of regional biodiversity corridors;
- focus offsets from approved developments to the regional biodiversity corridors, where possible; and
- allow land uses within regional biodiversity corridors that maintain, and where possible, enhance ecological connectivity.

The regional biodiversity corridors form part of the *Great Eastern Ranges Initiative*, to which the NSW Government is a partner. The initiative identifies biodiversity connections across the continent, from the Grampians in Western Victoria to the wet tropics of Far North Queensland.

The NSW Government will:

- identify opportunities to protect and enhance the function and resilience of biodiversity corridors in strategic plans; and
- provide regional biodiversity corridor mapping and methodology to planning authorities as appropriate.

ACTION 2.1.3 Prepare a comprehensive koala plan of management for the Cooma-Monaro Local Government Area

A survey of koalas in the Cooma-Monaro Local Government Area identified a high level of activity in the eastern part around Numeralla. Council has deferred increases in development potential around Numeralla until a comprehensive koala plan of management has been prepared.

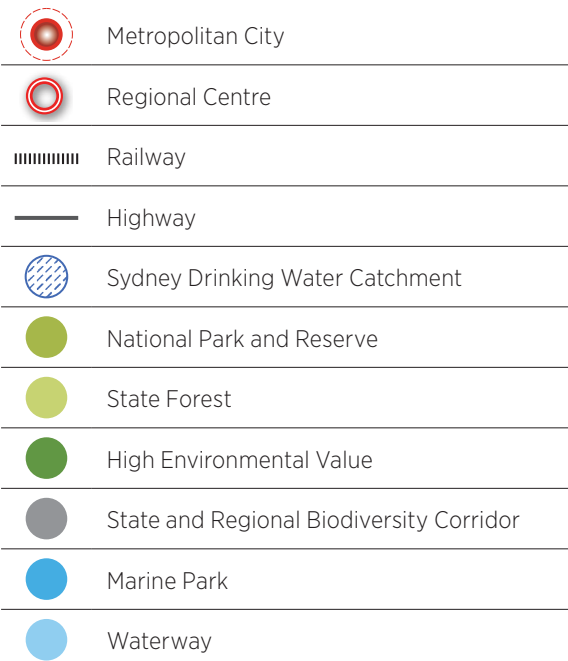
In 2013, the NSW Government gave Cooma-Monaro Shire Council a grant to conduct a further survey of the koala population to the north of Numeralla. The study area is approximately 150,000 hectares and extends from the Calabash locality in the north to the Dangelong Nature Reserve in the south. The central feature of this area is a series of eucalypt timbered ranges that extend along its north/south axis.

The surveys in Cooma-Monaro found a low density, but healthy population of koalas across the study area. A comprehensive Koala Plan of Management will be developed under *State Environmental Planning Policy No. 44 – Koala Habitat Protection* to guide future changes in land use that will maintain and allow the koala population to expand.

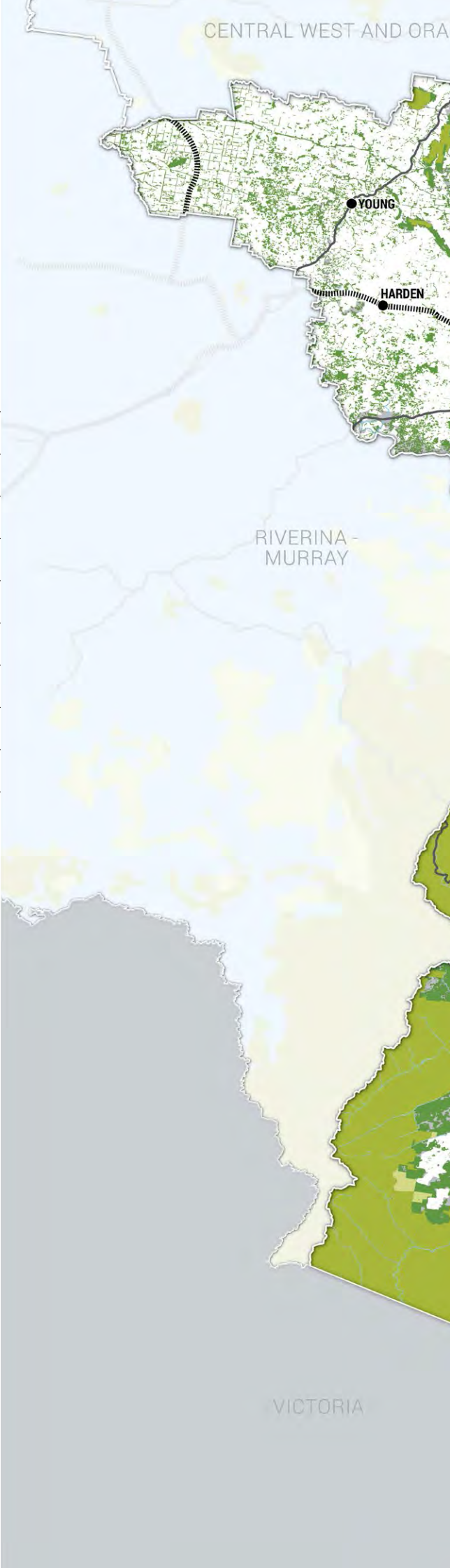
The NSW Government will:

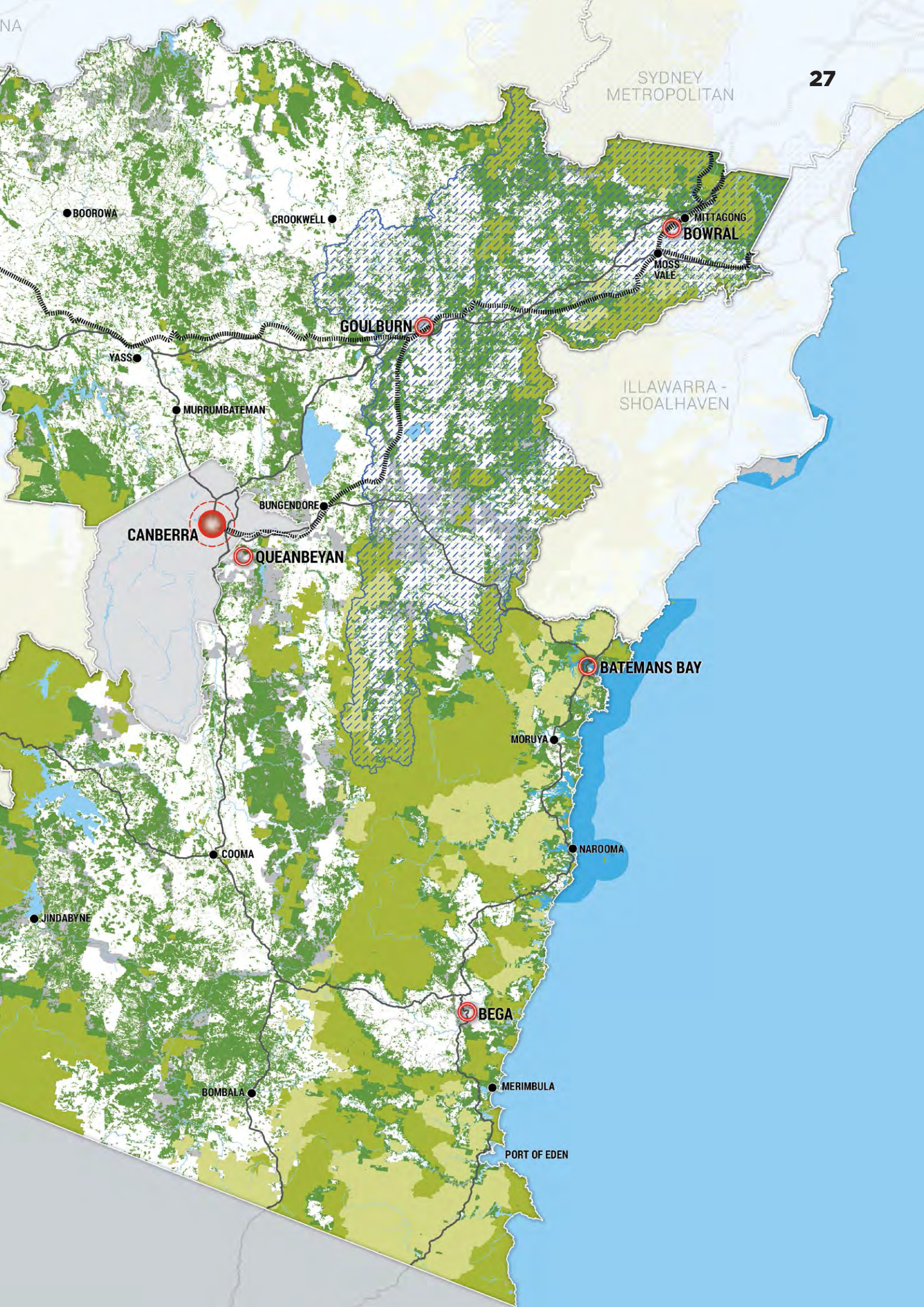
- support Cooma-Monaro Shire Council to develop and implement a Koala Plan of Management; and
- support councils across the region to monitor the koala population, where relevant.

FIGURE 4: ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES



DISCLAIMER:
The map is recommended for use at a regional planning level and gives an indication of relative biodiversity values at this scale. While this data may provide an indication of relative biodiversity significance at the local level, users should be aware that the data has limitations including those of scale and positional accuracy of attributes. The environmental values on the map are an amalgam of available data at the time of preparation. It is envisaged that the map will continue to evolve as ongoing work and identified mapping actions in the Plan are progressed.







Left: Estuarine vegetation, Bermagui
Right: Merimbula foreshores

DIRECTION 2.2 Manage development to protect the Far South Coast environment

The Far South Coast has some of the most spectacular coastal scenery in NSW. It has unspoilt beaches interspersed with rugged headlands and dunal systems that protect coastal lakes and lagoons. The landscape is characterised by rolling, partly wooded pasturelands, small rural and coastal villages, and some of the most pristine and vulnerable ecosystems in Australia.

This part of the region has a diverse array of marine, estuarine and freshwater environments that are integral to the region's character and contribute to its lifestyle, economy and tourism. There are 57 estuaries on the Far South Coast, representing almost one-third of those in the State.

The Far South Coast is home to almost 50 threatened plant species, 80 threatened animal species, and 16 endangered ecological communities.¹⁵ Forty-three per cent of the Far South Coast landscape is protected within a number of national parks, thereby protecting over 417,000 hectares of native vegetation.

The environmental, social and economic values of these coastal environs can be affected by over-extraction of water, contamination, and conflicting land uses such as urban expansion.

Projections for the Far South Coast indicate that an additional 5,400 dwellings will be required to meet population growth by 2036.

Councils have indicated that existing release areas currently have capacity for almost 13,000 new dwellings. No additional land needs to be identified in the medium term, however, planned growth needs to be carefully managed to achieve sustainable environmental outcomes.

As the region grows, coastal landscapes such as Wallaga Lake and Clyde River, will need to be protected. A strategic approach will be adopted to provide certainty about future land use and to preserve the unique characteristics of the natural environment.

ACTION 2.2.1 Focus urban growth on the Far South Coast in existing urban growth areas

Identifying locations where growth can be achieved sustainably is important to protect the environment on the Far South Coast.

Councils on the Far South Coast have developed local housing strategies to guide settlement patterns, including the *Eurobodalla Settlement Strategy* (2006), *Bega and District Strategic Directions Report* (2006), *Eden Structure Report* (2006), *Bermagui and Wallaga Lake Land Use Structure Report* (2008) and the *Merimbula District Structure Report* (2008).

Mapping growth areas identified in each local housing strategy on a regional scale will improve understanding about regional settlement opportunities. It may also highlight possible impacts on biodiversity corridors, high environmental value land and sensitive coastal estuaries.



Growth area maps will provide clarity for landowners, developers and the community about where growth is likely to occur, and the environmental and infrastructure issues that are likely to arise as urban development proceeds.

The NSW Government will:

- work with Eurobodalla and Bega Valley Shire Councils to develop urban growth area maps to guide sustainable growth on the Far South Coast.

ACTION 2.2.2 Protect sensitive estuaries on the Far South Coast

The Far South Coast has several important estuaries including coastal wetlands, and sensitive lakes and lagoons. The catchments of these systems need to be managed to avoid impacts on aquatic habitats.

Fifty-seven of the State's 184 estuaries are on the Far South Coast, with 28 in Eurobodalla Local Government Area and 29 in Bega Local Government Area. The majority of these are intermittently closed and open lakes or lagoons that are particularly susceptible to water quality issues due to the intensification of land uses associated with urban development.

The agreed environmental values and goals for the State's surface waters are set out in the NSW Government's Water Quality and River Flow Objectives. They express:

- the uses and the values the community places on rivers, creeks, estuaries and lakes (for example, drinking water, healthy

aquatic life and water suitable for recreational activities such as swimming and boating); and

- a range of water quality indicators for assessing whether the current condition of our waterways supports these uses and values.

Systems that are particularly susceptible to the effects of land use development are identified as sensitive estuaries. A higher level of intervention is needed to protect, maintain and/or restore the water quality and ecological condition of these sensitive estuaries.

Based on recent data from the NSW *Natural Resources Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Strategy 2010-2015*, and previous work done to assess the vulnerability of estuaries in the Eurobodalla and Bega Valley Local Government Areas,¹⁶ more than half of the 57 estuaries in the region have been identified as sensitive (see Table 1). This is due to natural physical characteristics such as shallow depths and poor dilution and flushing capabilities.

Other significant water bodies are protected under *State Environmental Planning Policy No. 14 – Coastal Wetlands 1985* and the *Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia* (2001). They are also mapped in Figure 4 as high environmental values.

The NSW Government will work with councils to:

- protect sensitive estuaries from development that affects water quality or ecological function.

TABLE 1: SENSITIVE ESTUARIES IN THE SOUTH EAST AND TABLELANDS

Local Government Area	Sensitive Estuary
Eurobodalla	Lake Tarourga, Tilba Tilba Lake, Corunna Lake, Nangudga Lake, Lake Brunderee, Little Lake, Kellys Lake, Kianga Lake, Congo Creek, Meringo Creek, Durras Creek, Saltwater Creek, Bengello Creek, Maloney's Creek
Bega Valley	Baragoot Lake, Nadgee River, Merrica River, Cuttagee Lake, Curalo Lagoon, Bournda Lagoon, Middle Lagoon, Nullica River, Shadrachs Creek, Woodburn Creek, Saltwater Creek, Boydtown Creek, Fisheries Creek, Table Creek, Bunga Lagoon, Back Lagoon



Left: Dune vegetation, Bermagui
 Centre: Clyde River Estuary, Batemans Bay
 Right: Oyster farming, Wapengo Lake, near Tathra

ACTION 2.2.3 Review and update coastal management plans

Risks associated with coastal processes, including erosion and inundation in the coastal zone, are currently managed by councils through coastal zone management plans.

A high proportion of the population on the Far South Coast is concentrated in sensitive locations or settlements. For example, 45 per cent of Bega Valley's population live adjacent to 10 per cent of the coastline. Seasonal tourist and visitor use places additional pressure on the environment. The coastal zone needs to be protected as it is one of the region's greatest natural assets.

Both Bega Valley and Eurobodalla Shire Councils are in the process of completing coastal zone management plans for their local government areas that identify areas affected by coastal hazards, both now and in the future. In addition, both councils have completed, or are updating, a number of coastal zone management plans for estuaries. These plans outline key management strategies to protect and improve estuary health. They will be considered together with associated studies, such as the *Eurobodalla Shire Hazards Scoping Study 2010*, when proposing new developments in these catchments.

Overview of Coastal Reforms

The NSW Government has a vision of thriving and resilient communities that live and work on a healthy coast, now and into the future.

The new coastal management framework will better equip coastal communities to respond effectively to existing and emerging coastal challenges and opportunities.

The coastal management reforms will establish the legislative and policy settings and the practical tools that resilient coastal communities need to:

- protect and enhance the natural values of the coast;
- ensure ongoing public access, use and enjoyment of our beaches and coastal foreshores; and
- support coastal communities to increase their resilience to existing and emerging coastal hazards and threats.

The reforms will encourage coastal communities to build capacity, forge strong partnerships and shape their own future on the coast.

The NSW Government is implementing this vision through:

- a new legislative and regulatory framework to establish a contemporary approach to coastal management;
- a new coastal management manual to better support council decision-making; and
- a toolkit for identifying and assessing coastal hazards and risks, and selecting and funding affordable coastal management programs.

The elements of the reform are:

- a draft Coastal Management Bill;
- an Explanation of Intended Effect for the proposed Coastal Management State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP); and
- a draft coastal management manual.



The NSW Government will:

- require that councils review and update their coastal zone/estuary management plans, and locate new urban releases away from high flood hazard areas, high coastal erosion/inundation risk hazard areas and designated waterways consistent with the plans; and
- complete the coastal reform program, to address community concerns related to coastal hazard management.

ACTION 2.2.4 Create a consistent approach to protecting important riparian areas in planning and development controls

Riparian lands help to stabilise banks, maintain water quality and provide habitat and links for native species and communities. In 2004, the NSW Government undertook strategic assessments and mapping of riparian corridors in the region. However, this information has not been consistently applied to councils' local environmental plans.

Protecting Sensitive Urban Lands in the Far South Coast

The Sensitive Urban Lands Panel was set up by the NSW Government in 2006 to guide planning outcomes for potential development sites in sensitive coastal locations in the Far South Coast (Long Beach, Malua Bay, Rosedale, Moruya Heads, Narooma South, Wallaga Lake, Bega South and West, Wolumla, Tathra River and Lake Merimbula).

The panel's recommendations have been reflected in final planning for all sites. The outcomes and recommendations of the *Sensitive Urban Lands Review* will continue to guide future land use planning decisions and protect and conserve sensitive coastal locations.

The NSW Government will:

- review riparian management outcomes to deliver greater consistency and certainty in the way they are applied in development controls.

ACTION 2.2.5 Investigate opportunities to integrate the marine estate and adjacent coastal land uses

Activities on land have the potential to influence natural systems along the coast. To better manage these potential impacts, the NSW Government will improve the coordination of marine and coastal (land based) activities.

The *Marine Estate Management Act 2014* provides for strategic and integrated management of the whole marine estate – marine waters, coasts and estuaries. It sets the legal foundation for delivering the NSW Government's vision for a healthy coast and sea, managed for the greatest wellbeing of the community, now and into the future. It means that decisions consider environmental, economic and social factors.

The NSW Government will:

- prepare a Marine Estate Strategy for NSW in partnership with key stakeholders. This will consider the marine estate, including its social, economic and ecological values, and will determine the management priorities for the estate;
- prepare a Local Environmental Planning Practice Note to guide council's application of natural, recreational and working waterway zones when preparing local environmental plans, while also considering foreshore access and foreshore building lines; and
- develop regional boating plans to improve boating safety, boat storage and waterway access on major waterways.



Above:
Dam water release
on the Snowy River
from Lake Jindabyne,
courtesy of the Office
of Environment and
Heritage

DIRECTION 2.3 Build the region's resilience to natural hazards and climate change

The South East and Tablelands region experiences a range of natural hazards including storms, floods and bushfires. Climate change is also likely to affect the region in the following ways:

- higher temperatures;
- increased sea levels;
- changed rainfall seasonality, with drier average seasonal conditions;
- potential for increased intensity and frequency of extreme weather events, including storms (and resulting flooding and erosion); and
- increased risk of bushfires.

By 2070, the number of days with a temperature over 35°C is projected to increase by an average of eight days per year. The greatest increases will occur in the Southern Tablelands and South West Slopes, which are projected to experience temperatures of over 35°C, over 30 days per year.¹⁷

Natural hazards can impact on the region's economic base, particularly the agricultural sector. It can also affect infrastructure, the sustainable design and development of settlements, health and wellbeing, natural resources and biodiversity. One of the major challenges for the Alpine ski resorts is the sustainability of natural snow conditions and the impact of climate change on snow levels.

Many existing settlements in the region are affected by floods to varying extents. Strategies will need to be developed, in consultation with local communities, which balance the benefits and risks associated with development and human occupation. A Flood Risk Assessment was undertaken by Bega and Eurobodalla Shire Councils, and both councils are progressing the preparation of floodplain risk management plans to reduce the risks to life and property from flooding.

Substantial work has been done by the NSW Government, councils and the community to

develop natural resource and hazard management policies, plans and guidelines. These will continue to be developed, implemented and reviewed to incorporate new information.

Council growth management strategies, local environmental plans and development control plans will implement the principles and recommendations of the following plans and policies:

- *NSW Coastal Policy* (NSW Government 1997);
- *State Environmental Planning Policy No. 71 – Coastal Protection*;
- *NSW Government Water Quality and River Flow Objectives* (1999);
- *South East Catchment Action Plan* (2014);
- *Southern Rivers Catchment Action Plan 2013-2023*;
- local stormwater management controls;
- *NSW Flood Prone Lands Policy* (NSW Government 2005);
- Floodplain Risk Management Plans, prepared in accordance with the *Floodplain Development Manual* (NSW Government 2005);
- *Coastal Zone Management Plans* under the *Coastal Protection Act 1979* No.13;
- *Coastal Zone and Estuary Management Plans*, prepared in accordance with NSW Government policy;
- soil landscape mapping;
- *Planning for Bush Fire Protection 2006* (Rural Fire Service in collaboration with the NSW Department of Planning and Environment);
- *Acid Sulfate Soils Planning Guidelines* (NSW Government 1998);
- local planning directions 2.2 (Coastal Protection), 4.1 (Acid Sulfate Soils), 4.3 (Flood Prone Land) and 4.4 (Planning for Bushfire Protection) under section 117(2) of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*; and
- water sharing plans.

ACTION 2.3.1 Apply contemporary risk management to flooding and other hazards

Local councils are primarily responsible for flood risk management through the development and implementation of floodplain risk management plans. Plans are prepared in consultation with the local community and relevant agencies. Mitigation works, land use planning, and emergency management – using the best available information, are some of the tools used for flood risk management. Information is continually improving as councils complete flood studies and floodplain risk management studies, prior to completing floodplain risk management plans.

Flooding is predicted to occur more frequently and possibly with greater intensity in the future. Planning for new urban release areas and infill areas must consider the impact of climate change, including sea level rise, on flooding. This should incorporate up-to-date information on regional climate projections and related impacts, and it should prioritise resilience to climate change in the siting and development of infrastructure and land uses.

Other hazards include bushfires, storms and landslips; some of which are predicted to occur more frequently and, possibly, with greater intensity. These events are associated with some of the areas experiencing the greatest development pressure.

The NSW Government will work with councils to:

- use the best available information on flooding to build resilience to natural hazards and improve and expand this information, particularly where new growth opportunities are being considered;
- improve the available data on natural hazards and map all vulnerable estuaries and their catchments, to enable sustainable planning of urban environments;
- develop, update and implement floodplain risk management plans; and
- manage risks associated with future urban growth in flood prone areas as well as risks to existing communities.

ACTION 2.3.2 Build on regional understanding of projected climate impacts and implement opportunities to respond

In 2012, the NSW Government released the South East Integrated Regional Vulnerability Assessment, which outlines the process for identifying regional climate change vulnerabilities and potential actions to reduce vulnerability. The assessment laid the foundations for the Enabling Adaptation in the South East project which aims to help State and Local Governments to incorporate climate change considerations into planning.

The project has engaged the NSW Government, Local Government, Australian Government and ACT Government to identify and prioritise actions to integrate climate adaptation into regional decision-making. It has developed regional capacity and identified ways to build resilience to climate extremes and minimise impacts on local communities.

The NSW Government will:

- continue to work with regional decision-makers to address climate change vulnerabilities by enhancing government service delivery and minimising impacts on local communities;
- support councils to assess and respond to impacts and opportunities associated with a changing climate; and
- support communities and businesses to understand and respond to climate-related risks by providing climate information.

DIRECTION 2.4 Protect and secure the region's water resources

The South East and Tablelands' water catchments provide water resources to support the region's urban areas, agriculture, environment, economy and lifestyle. The future growth and development of the region, coupled with the uncertainties of drought and climate change, mean that long term planning for water supply must be an integral part of strategic planning.



Left: Lake Jindabyne
Right: Lake George

A number of regional communities are located within the drinking water catchment of Sydney, Australia's largest city. The location of future population growth will be strongly influenced by the capacity to provide potable water.

There are striking differences in water availability throughout the region. In some areas, such as Wingecarribee, water supply is comparatively secure – although much of its water resources flow north towards Sydney. Goulburn has recently enhanced its water supply through the construction of an emergency pipeline from the Wingecarribee Reservoir. There are significant pockets of urban development that rely on rainwater tanks as a source of water for urban uses.

Yass Valley and Upper Lachlan Local Government Areas have water security issues and this is intensified by a changing climate.

The current institutional framework for water supply involves a number of authorities. In the southern area, Queanbeyan City's water supply is provided by ICON Water – a corporatised ACT Government authority – while in other areas the local council is the water authority.

Major initiatives to achieve the long term sustainability of water assets within the region include the *Metropolitan Water Plan 2010*, relevant catchment action plans and water sharing plans, which include rules for managing extractions and licence holders accounts, as well as water trading.

ACTION 2.4.1 Finalise water sharing plans for rivers and groundwater systems in the region

Water sharing plans have been established over the majority of the region. These aim to preserve water resources in rivers and groundwater systems by balancing the needs of the environment and water users. Water sharing plans establish rules for sharing water between the environmental needs of the river or aquifer and water users. The plans also establish rules for sharing water between different types of water users such as town water supply, rural domestic supply, stock watering, industry and irrigation. The plans establish a secure and tradeable property right in water, allowing towns and water-dependent businesses to develop and invest with certainty.

The region is covered by six existing water sharing plans, with the following five expected to commence in 2016:

- the Clyde River Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources;
- the Deua River Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources;
- the Tuross River Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources;
- the Snowy Gnoa Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources; and
- the South Coast Groundwater Sources.

The NSW Government will:

- finalise and implement the outstanding water sharing plans for the region.



ACTION 2.4.2 Prepare integrated water cycle management strategies

An acceptable reticulated water supply will be necessary to underpin greenfield urban developments and increase housing densities in existing areas. The provision of potable water will have to conform to the following water planning principles:

- a reliable supply to provide certainty for consumers (both residential and other);
- an affordable water supply in terms of both capital and recurring costs; and
- a quality of supply that meets relevant health standards.

An integrated water cycle management strategy will need to be prepared by the local water utility to ascertain infrastructure needs over the next 30 years to accommodate population growth. The strategy will have to conform to legislative, climate variability and other requirements.

The NSW Government will:

- support councils to prepare an integrated water cycle management strategy.

Protecting the Sydney Drinking Water Catchment

Drinking water for almost 60 per cent of the State's population is partially sourced from the region, and part of the region is located within the Sydney Drinking Water Catchment. Protecting water quality and quantity in this catchment is essential for the health and security of these communities.

Rigorous planning and development controls apply to proposals within the Sydney Drinking Water Catchment. Developments must have a neutral or beneficial effect on water quality and should not reduce the quantity of water reaching reservoirs. These protections form part of a suite of legislation that protect the catchment areas, including:

- *State Environmental Planning Policy (Sydney Drinking Water Catchment) 2011*;
- local planning direction 5.2 *Sydney Drinking Water Catchments*, issued under Section 117(2) of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*;
- the *Water NSW Act 2014* and the *Water NSW Regulation 2013*; and
- the *Water Management Act 2000*.

Under the *Water NSW Act 2014* and *Water NSW Regulation 2013*, areas of land have been declared as 'special areas'. The region contains parts of the Metropolitan, Woronora and Shoalhaven Special Areas that are critical in protecting the water quality in the storages.

The NSW Government has also announced the cancellation and buy-back of all petroleum exploration licences covering the Sydney Drinking Water Catchment, including the Special Areas.



DIRECTION 2.5 Protect the region's cultural heritage

The South East and Tablelands region has a rich and diverse cultural heritage that includes the environment, objects and places. There are 136 identified heritage items listed on the NSW State Heritage Register with over 3,126 local heritage items listed in local environmental plans and by other State agencies. There are 10 Aboriginal Places identified and protected under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*. These assets enrich and contribute to the region's identity and character, while also providing a sense of place and history.

The Aboriginal community has strong links to the region's coastal, rural and alpine landscapes. The process of protecting and preserving Aboriginal heritage provides Aboriginal people with an opportunity to be involved in and consulted about the conservation of their heritage.

Effective and early consultation with the community on urban growth and development issues will enhance respect for cultural values and provide opportunities to pursue sustainable, social and economic outcomes for heritage assets. One successful example of this is the *Eurobodalla Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Study 2004-2008*.

Harm to Aboriginal objects and places, or areas of significance to Aboriginal people, should be avoided wherever possible. Heritage is irreplaceable and should be appreciated, valued and protected for the benefit of current and future generations. Where impacts on Aboriginal and historic heritage cannot be avoided, appropriate heritage management mechanisms must be implemented.

Areas of high growth can have cumulative impacts on both Aboriginal cultural heritage values and historic places. Early investment at the strategic planning stage to protect and preserve heritage will provide greater certainty for stakeholders in the development assessment process.

In addition to State heritage listed sites, known areas of heritage significance in the region include:

- Lake George sand deposits in Palerang Local Government Area;
- cultural landscapes between Gulaga and Biamanga National Parks in the Eurobodalla and Bega Valley Local Government Areas; and
- remnant vegetation within roadside corridors and Travelling Stock Reserves in Young, Harden and Boorowa Local Government Areas.



Left: Historic Tilba Tilba

Centre: Work by Aboriginal artist, Enid Clarke, courtesy of Young Shire Council

Right: Rural landscape, courtesy of Young Shire Council

ACTION 2.5.1 Conserve heritage sites when preparing local planning controls

It is important that councils' growth management strategies and local environmental plans are consistent with heritage legislative processes, including:

- directions issued under the Planning legislation, such as local planning direction 2.3 *Heritage Conservation*;
- *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* (and any outcomes from the NSW Government's Aboriginal cultural heritage reform); and
- guides and principles for heritage protection, released by the NSW Heritage Council.

Other priorities for councils when preparing local planning controls include:

- developing Aboriginal cultural heritage studies to prioritise proposed growth areas in consultation with the NSW Government;
- conducting ongoing consultation with the community, including the Aboriginal community, to capture cultural values and identify places of significance to ensure they are protected;
- acknowledging cultural heritage assets, where appropriate, as a 'value addition' in development, including the adaptive reuse of heritage resources; and

- avoiding impacts to heritage, particularly rare examples of cultural heritage such as scarred (modified) trees, rock engravings, stone arrangements, rock art, fish traps and burials.

The NSW Government will:

- require that councils and other planning authorities undertake studies and consult with both the Aboriginal and broader community to identify heritage values at the strategic planning stage for new release areas;
- require that councils conserve heritage assets when undertaking local strategic planning and development; and
- provide resources for the provision of heritage advice to inform planning processes.



GOAL 3 – Strengthen the economic opportunities of the region

The South East and Tablelands region generated \$10.2 billion in gross regional product in 2013. When combined with the ACT, this figure rises to \$41 billion – almost one quarter of the combined regional NSW and ACT total.¹⁸ The region's top five industries for gross regional product in 2013 were manufacturing; construction; health care and social assistance; public administration and safety; and agriculture, forestry and fishing.

These top five industries combined contribute around 37 per cent of the region's economy and account for more than 50 per cent of the region's employment. The draft Plan will help further diversify the region's economy through a focus on six priority growth sectors:

- tourism;
- health, disability and aged care;
- public administration and defence;
- education and training;
- primary industries and renewable energy; and
- freight and logistics.

People living within commuting distance to Canberra are well placed to benefit from work opportunities in public administration and safety; professional, scientific and technical services; and education and training. These sectors combined account for almost 50 per cent of employment in the Greater Capital.

The key driver of growth in the ACT and surrounding region is the Australian

Government. It is the biggest employer of the ACT's workforce (20 per cent) and this is likely to continue, particularly in defence. The greater proximity that a local government area has to Canberra, the more employees it has in public administration. This is the largest industry employing residents of the Greater Capital (25 per cent).

The draft Plan aims to:

- support and promote the growth of the tourism industry;
- enhance the productivity of primary industries;
- support the productivity and capacity of the region's mineral and energy resource lands;
- grow regional strategic assets to support economic growth; and
- strengthen the economic self-determination of Aboriginal communities.

It builds on the NSW Government's five goals for regional economic development:

- promote key regional sectors and regional competitiveness;
- drive regional employment and regional business growth;
- invest in economic infrastructure and connectivity;
- maximise government efficiency and enhance regional governance; and
- improve information-sharing and build the evidence base.

Top: Viticulture at Hilltops, courtesy of Young Shire Council

Centre: Bowral retail

Bottom: Canola, around Harden, courtesy of Paul Foley, Destination NSW



Left: Annual Cherry Festival, courtesy of Young Shire Council

Centre: Wombeyan Caves, near Mittagong, courtesy of the Office of Environment and Heritage

Right: Perisher Ski Resort

Global Sydney: a driver of growth for Wingecarribee

The Wingecarribee Local Government Area – on the north eastern border of the region – is strategically located between Sydney, Canberra and the Illawarra and has good access to major infrastructure, including rail and the Hume Highway.

Population growth is driven by the area's proximity to major metropolitan markets for regionally-based business and land affordability. Access to infrastructure, such as the M7 and M5 motorways in Sydney, supports high rates of commuting out of the area. Further economic benefits are expected in the area from the construction of the second international airport at Badgerys Creek.

Almost 16 per cent of the resident workforce of Wingecarribee commutes to Sydney for work. Twenty-two per cent of these commuters are skilled workers. According to the 2011 census, the top five commuting destinations for Wingecarribee residents were Wollondilly, Sydney CBD, Campbelltown (South), Wollongong and Camden.

Wingecarribee offers rural lifestyle benefits, but it is also well placed to capitalise on the economic and employment benefits of Sydney's global economy. Advanced technologies are allowing more people to work from home, and transport links between Sydney, the Illawarra and Canberra are improving.

DIRECTION 3.1 Support and promote the growth of the tourism industry

The region has a strong tourism industry with unique attractions ranging from the snowfields to the coast, as well as access to Canberra's world-class cultural and heritage institutions such as the National Museum of Australia, the Australian War Memorial and the National Gallery of Australia.

Destination NSW estimates that the region's visitor economy is worth over \$1.6 billion per year and brings in over 6.1 million visitors each year. Almost 70 per cent of the economic contribution to tourism in the region comes from the Far South Coast (40 per cent) and the Alpine (27 per cent).¹⁹

The diverse nature of the region offers a high-quality of life for residents and delivers wide-ranging outdoor, cultural and heritage experiences. There is potential to promote investment in regional tourism.

Understanding the importance of tourism to the local, regional and State economy, and its flow-on effects, is crucial to supporting a strong and sustainable visitor economy. Employment in tourism encompasses retail, cafes, accommodation, manufacturing, education and transport.

There are several regional airports in the region which provide tourism opportunities, particularly in popular tourist destinations such as the Far South Coast and Alpine. The *Moruya Regional Airport Master Plan* outlines plans for the future growth of the airport as a transport, tourism and commercial precinct.



The economy of the Far South Coast has diversified over the past few decades from primary industries to a visitor economy, which is now an important economic driver, contributing \$650 million to regional economic product.²⁰

In the Alpine, tourism contributes \$429 million to the regional economy. The main drivers are skiing and related winter sport experiences that span a period of 16 to 18 weeks. For the rest of the year, the tourism industry promotes more diverse recreational activities.

A strong and vibrant year-round visitor economy is necessary to support and sustain a growing and strong regional economy. Increasing the number of visitors to the region and encouraging day-trippers to stay overnight or take longer holidays in the area will benefit the regional economy. Tourism organisations in the region have developed destination management plans that aim to capitalise on:

- trails and experiences: including the sustainable use of national parks, Crown Lands, agricultural lands, and other assets to promote experiences that are nature and eco-based, food and wine-based (including agritourism), adventure-based (canoeing, kayaking, sky diving and mountain biking) and arts and cultural-based;
- marine-based tourism: the Port of Eden has the potential to leverage further marine-based tourism to capitalise on the region's numerous small ports, boating harbours, marine parks and aquatic reserves. Activities include cruise ship visits at the Port of Eden (connecting north at Port Kembla and Jervis Bay), recreational boating, water sports, fishing, and commercial charters and touring (for example, whale and dolphin watching).

Crown Lands are also important tourism, recreational and environmental assets that can support growth in the tourism sector.

The South Coast Regional Tourism Organisation's *Destination Management Plan* outlines elements required to grow the visitor economy that are equally applicable across the region. These include:

- enhancing regional assets;
- building relationships, attractions and activities;
- diversifying the market;
- providing infrastructure; and
- developing skills.

ACTION 3.1.1 Improve tourism related transport services

Tourism at any time of the year, and the influx of visitors particularly during holiday periods, puts pressure on the region's transport systems and services.

Of the 6.1 million visitors each year to the region, almost 3.5 million were domestic day visitors. Almost 40 per cent of all day trips in the region were to the Southern Highlands and Tablelands. The next most popular destinations with day-trippers were the Greater Capital (17 per cent) and the Alpine (10 per cent).²¹

The South Coast (which includes the Illawarra-Shoalhaven) is the third most visited region in NSW for domestic overnight visitors. It accounts for 42 per cent of the region's total overnight visitors, with over two million visitors each year.

Peak transport demand in the region can be seasonal. The tourist centres along the east coast, including Batemans Bay, Moruya, Narooma and Merimbula, attract a large number of visitors and greater travel demand during the summer months. The ski fields located around Jindabyne are a primary tourist attraction during the winter months.

An efficient transport system is necessary so that the region remains a key tourist destination.



Left: Whale watching, courtesy of Sapphire Coast Tourism
 Centre: Cherry orchards, courtesy of Young Shire Council
 Right: Bega Cheese factory

The NSW Government will:

- improve tourism-related transport services through initiatives such as:
 - branding public transport services;
 - raising awareness of travel options through brochures and websites; and
 - seasonal transport options such as holiday bus services and/or park and ride services.

ACTION 3.1.2 Develop a stronger marine-based tourism industry capitalising on the region's numerous small ports

There are opportunities to enhance marine-based tourism by taking advantage of the network of harbours along the NSW South Coast. These include Batemans Bay, Bermagui, Merimbula and the harbours further north, such as the marina under construction at Shell Cove, and the numerous marine parks located along the coast.

In 2015, the NSW Government released Regional Boating Plans that identify actions on boat safety, and access and infrastructure to improve boating experiences in NSW. Delivering these improvements will help to build the capacity of the region's ports and harbours.

The *Far South Coast Regional Boating Plan* (2014) includes an allocation of funds from the *NSW Boating Now* program for priority projects to improve access to local waterways over the next three years. Projects include improving boating access at Batemans Bay and upgrading boat ramps at Narooma and Wallaga Lake.

A commitment under the *Illawarra-Shoalhaven Regional Plan* is the development of a strategy to encourage marine-based tourism activities. Broadening the scope of this work to include the harbours of the Far South Coast would deliver a more comprehensive strategy to support marine-based tourism opportunities for the south coast of NSW.

The NSW Government will:

- incorporate Far South Coast ports and harbours into a strategy to encourage marine-based tourism activities along the south coast of NSW.

DIRECTION 3.2 Enhance the productivity of primary industries

There are economic development opportunities in primary industries such as agriculture (including value-adding), and forestry and fishing in a large part of the region.

Agriculture continues to be a strong economic driver contributing 7.1 per cent to gross regional product – up 7.7 per cent between 2006 and 2013.²² In 2011, agricultural activities operated across 2.5 million hectares of farmland in the region, employing 5,161 people. The communities of Upper Lachlan, Boorowa, Harden, Young and Bombala each generate at least 15 per cent of their employment from agriculture.

The region produces a diverse range of agricultural products including milk, potatoes, meat, fruit, nuts, grapes, nurseries, cut flowers,



vegetables, eggs, crops, hay and wool. Close proximity to the two major capitals – Sydney and Canberra – provides access to labour, a population seeking agritourism experiences, and a ready market for fresh food and niche produce, such as organic and specialised agricultural products.

The region has established infrastructure that supports domestic and export agricultural trade via roads, rail, ports and airports, including Canberra Airport. Agricultural industries support and underpin a range of secondary industries across the food supply chain, such as small species abattoirs, the Bega cheese processing facility, wine processing facilities and regional saleyards.

In addition to food production, farmers are increasingly directly involved in retail, marketing and value-adding or secondary processing. This increases local employment and has flow-on effects in the local economy. There is also potential to increase economic viability by accessing export markets.

Agriculture supports regional tourism through farm stays, farm gate trails, farmers markets and food events. The Southern Harvest Association promotes the region as an agritourism destination through activities such as farmers markets, trails and regional food production mapping.

Timber products continue to be important to the region, with a major sawmill and an export woodchip mill at Eden. The emergence of timber products in Eden has largely come about from a deep natural harbour in Twofold Bay (Eden), surrounded by more than 163,000 hectares of state forests.

Fishing and aquaculture, particularly oysters and shellfish, are important industries on the Far South Coast. There are 103 oyster farmers in the region, producing mainly Sydney Rock Oysters and smaller quantities of Native Oysters and Pacific Oysters. The region contributes more than 30 per cent of Sydney rock oyster production in NSW.²³

Biosecurity risks should be considered in planning for this region, for example, the expansion of residential development into rural areas increases the risk of animal and plant pests and diseases affecting food production, the environment (particularly wildlife) and human health.

ACTION 3.2.1 Identify regionally important agricultural lands and reflect the outcomes in local planning controls

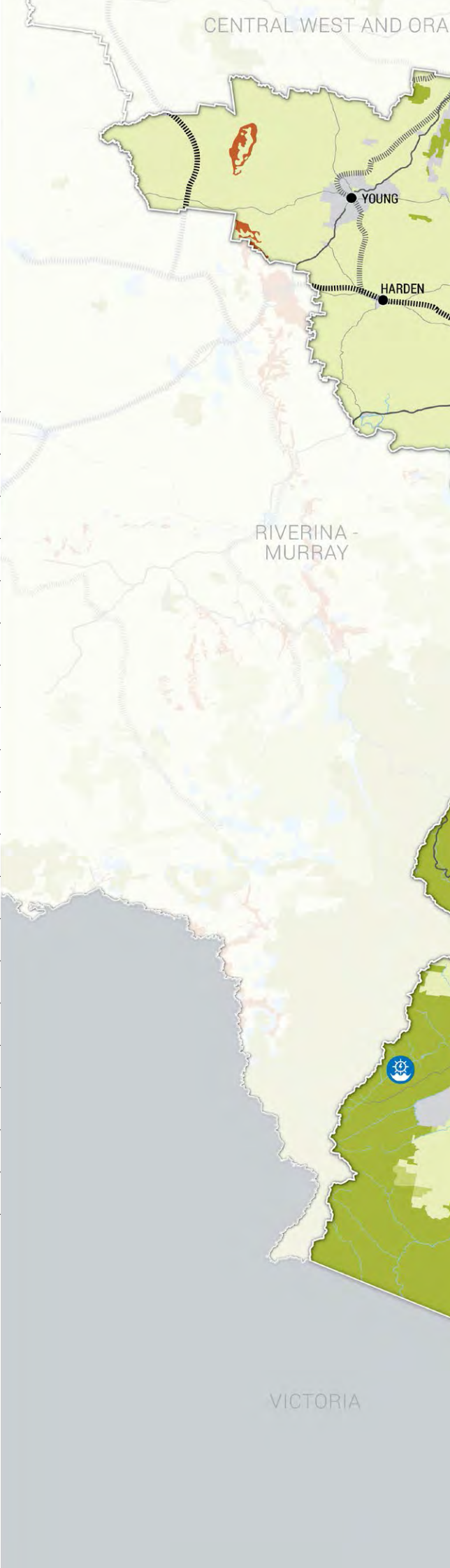
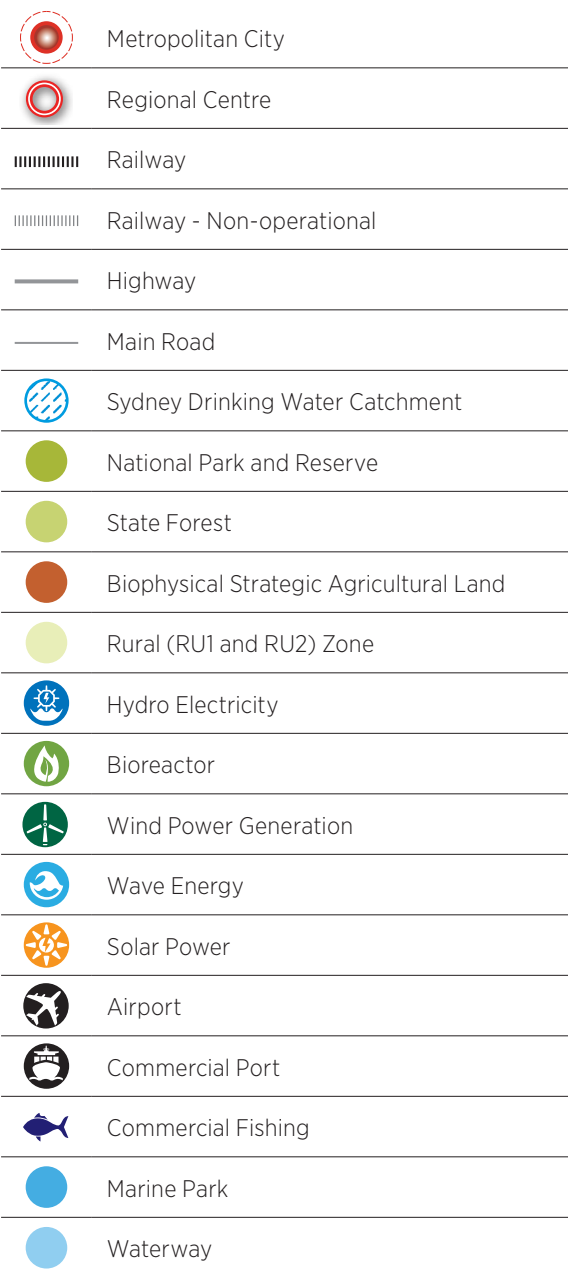
In January 2014, Biophysical Strategic Agricultural Land maps for NSW were released that identified land with high quality soils and water resources that are capable of sustaining high levels of productivity in the region (see Figure 5).

Regionally important agricultural land will be mapped to guide government when making planning decisions, preparing local plans, and investing in infrastructure. The maps can be used to identify areas with potential for land use conflicts, such as the expansion of rural residential uses. The mapping will provide industry with information on the existing agricultural production in the region, and on land that is suitable for future investment for agricultural production and associated activities, such as value adding/ processing, and agritourism.

The NSW Government will:

- map land that is highly suitable for agriculture and industries to better inform strategic and local planning processes; and
- develop profiles of the leading agricultural industries to guide future investment decisions.

FIGURE 5: NATURAL RESOURCES AND RENEWABLE ENERGY





SYDNEY
METROPOLITAN

45

ILLAWARRA -
SHOALHAVEN

BOOROWA

CROOKWELL

MITTAGONG

BOWRAL

MOSS
VALE

GOULBURN

YASS

MURRUMBATEMAN

CANBERRA

BUNGENDORE

QUEANBEYAN

BATEMANS BAY

MORUYA

NAROOMA

COOMA

JINDABYNE

BOMBALA

MERIMBULA

PORT OF EDEN

BEGA



Above: Bowral, Southern Highlands

ACTION 3.2.2 Manage biosecurity risks to protect current and future industries

Effective biosecurity is important because it contributes to the wellbeing and prosperity of the region, and more broadly the nation. A biosecurity event not only has a negative impact on the direct industry, it has broader impacts on surrounding industry and associated industries such as manufacturing and processing, transport and tourism.

Potential biosecurity risks are increasing due to a number of factors such as globalisation of trade, population growth, climate variability and competing priorities for resources, including land use conflicts.

Managing the risks to biosecurity can often be minimised through appropriate land zoning and by applying buffers, to separate different land uses using distance, vegetation or topography.

The *NSW Biosecurity Strategy 2013-2021* outlines the Government's commitment to strengthen and maintain biosecurity measures across NSW. Local Land Services will continue to play a key role in collaboration with other organisations such as the NSW Department of Primary Industries.

The NSW Government will require councils to:

- identify opportunities to minimise biosecurity risks for current and future industries through biosecurity plans and strategic planning (including a review of zones in local plans); and
- promote the application of buffer areas to minimise biosecurity risks when assessing the potential impacts of new development.

DIRECTION 3.3 Support the productivity and capacity of the region's mineral and energy resource lands

The South East and Tablelands region contains valuable mineral and energy resources including coal, precious and base metals, extractive materials and renewable energy such as wind, solar and hydro-electricity.

The region's abundance of renewable resources presents economic opportunities for further investment in the renewable energy sector. The region is part of the South East Region of Renewable Energy Excellence – an industry cluster initiative to position the ACT and south east NSW as a region of excellence for Australia's renewable energy industry.

A number of wind energy installations are located between Queanbeyan and Crookwell. In 2014, hydro-electricity from the Snowy Mountains Scheme produced 30.6 per cent of all renewable energy generated in NSW and solar, including solar hot water, contributed 33.3 per cent in the same period.²⁴

New jobs will be created in regional NSW over the next 20 years through construction, installation, manufacture and operation of renewable energy technologies.²⁵

Mining in the region experienced around 7 per cent growth in gross regional product between 2006 and 2013.²⁶ Mining activities directly benefit the economy and indirectly provide inputs into other activities including:

- manufacturing and agricultural businesses; and
- construction of new housing developments and transport assets.

Coal resources are concentrated in the Wingecarribee Local Government Area. There are two active underground coal mines (Wongawilli and Dendrobium) on the eastern border of the area, with production largely contained in the Wollongong Local Government Area. There are no current coal seam gas exploration licences.

The Greater Capital contains deposits of several important base metals (lead, zinc, silver, copper) in the Woodlawn and Captains Flat areas.

Extractive resources, including construction material such as sand, hard rock and sources of clay/shale for brick making, are extracted throughout the region (see Figure 8), as outlined below:

- construction material around Marulan and Googong;
- shale and hard rock resources in the Yass Valley area;
- sand and coarse aggregate resources in Bungendore, near the southern margin of Lake George; and
- hard rock resources near Queanbeyan.

The location of many of these resources, near rail lines and freeways, and their proximity to Australia's biggest construction materials market in Sydney, makes them particularly important to NSW.

The importance of mining for the region is also reflected through its economic contribution. In 2014-15, the mining sector alone contributed in the order of \$130 million and generated some 400 full-time jobs.²⁷

The NSW Government has several policy and legislative tools to support the sustainable growth of the mining industry, with resource planning across the State currently guided by the:

- *Mining Act 1992 and Petroleum (Onshore) Act 1991*;
- *Strategic Release Framework* – a mechanism to review and define which lands may constitute new exploration release areas for coal and petroleum. New exploration licences will only be issued in areas released by the Minister for Resources and Energy after an assessment of resource potential, and economic, environmental and social factors;
- *NSW Gas Plan*;
- *State Environment Planning Policy (Mining, Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries) 2007*;
- *Land Use Conflict Risk Assessment Guideline*; and
- the *Preliminary Regional Issues Assessment for Potential Coal and Petroleum Exploration Release Areas Guidelines*.

Definitions

EXTRACTIVE MATERIAL – sand, gravel, clay, soil, rock, stone or similar substances, but does not include turf.

MINERAL – a solid naturally occurring substance including, but not limited to, coal, oil shale, agate, bauxite, copper, diamond, emerald, fluorite, gold, graphite, iron, lead, opal, potassium, rutile, ruby, selenium, silver, topaz, vermiculite, zinc, zirconia but does not include petroleum.

A full list of minerals can be found in Schedule 1 of the NSW Mining Regulation 2010 refer:
<http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/maintop/view/inforce/subordleg+619+2010+cd+0+N>

MINERAL AND ENERGY RESOURCES – minerals, petroleum, gemstones, extractive materials and renewable energy.

MINING INDUSTRIES – industries that mine mineral and petroleum resources.

PETROLEUM (INCL. OIL & GAS) – any naturally occurring hydrocarbon whether in a gaseous, liquid or solid state, or a mixture thereof.

As new economic development opportunities emerge for resource industries, there is potential for conflict to arise. The potential for conflict is likely to occur where development of mineral and energy resources coincides with:

- water resources;
- environmental values;
- land that currently, or may in future accommodate agricultural activities; and
- land that may in future accommodate urban activities.



Strategic Release Framework

The region has a rich and diverse geology creating a potential for future mineral and energy resource exploration and extraction.

There are competing uses for land in this region and there is a need to balance these interests in order to deliver the vision for the region. That is, to deliver a region with a sustainable future that maximises the advantages of its diverse climates, landscapes and resources.

As part of the process to achieve balanced outcomes, the NSW Government has introduced a Strategic Release Framework for coal and petroleum. This is a mechanism to review and define which lands may constitute new exploration release areas.

New exploration licences will only be issued in areas released by the Minister for Resources and Energy after an assessment of resource potential, economic, environmental and social factors.

Community consultation and an upfront assessment of social, environmental and economic matters will occur through a preliminary regional issues assessment.

Overall, the new framework resets the NSW Government's approach to issuing exploration titles so that it is transparent, informed and consistent with the NSW Government's broader mineral and energy resource strategies.

Land use conflicts require a whole-of-government response. The NSW Government is already responding to community concerns about the long term future of coal and gas mining around the State by developing a policy framework for the strategic release areas for coal and petroleum exploration licences and assessment leases.

The NSW Government also closely manages the resources industry by imposing and monitoring operations through consent conditions on development approvals, mining and petroleum leases, activity approvals, mine and petroleum operation plans, extraction plans and rehabilitation plans, to name a few. This will allow both the mining, agricultural and other industries to continue to provide a range of economic opportunities for the region.

ACTION 3.3.1 Implement the NSW Renewable Energy Action Plan to increase renewable energy generation

The NSW Government prepared a *Renewable Energy Action Plan* (2013) to help achieve the national target of 20 per cent of energy generation by renewable energy by 2020. The ACT renewable energy target of 90 per cent by 2020 also presents economic opportunities for the region. These targets have been a driver of wind farm proposals across NSW.

The NSW *Renewable Energy Action Plan* details three goals (and 24 actions) to most efficiently grow renewable energy generation in NSW. The goals are:

- attract renewable energy investment and projects;
- build community support for renewable energy; and
- attract and grow expertise in renewable energy technology.



Left: Woodlawn Bioreactor

Right: Wind farms, near Lake George

The economics of providing services to some areas of the region may create opportunities for the use of localised renewable energy options (see Figure 5).

The NSW Government will:

- implement the actions in the *NSW Renewable Energy Action Plan*.

ACTION 3.3.2 Identify energy and mineral resource lands to support sustainable growth of mining industries and diversification of NSW energy supplies

Australian and State Government policies relating to the resources and energy industries are continually evolving, in response to governments' improved understanding of national issues and opportunities. Enhancing governments' collective understanding of the location, value and attributes of mineral and energy resources will support sustainable long term management of these sectors within the region.

Figures 6 and 8 show the location of existing exploration and production titles for coal, and minerals and quarries (known at February 2016).

Information regarding potential and/or identified mineral and energy resources is available from the Division of Resources and Energy. The data will be updated as geological knowledge is acquired. Mapped resource titles are available on the Common Ground website and geoscientific data is housed in the Department of Industry's Geoscientific Data Warehouse.

Many of these energy and resource lands also provide affordable supply sources for other industries operating within the region, including for example:

- agricultural industries, which use limestone as fertiliser and clay to pelletise stockfeed;
- manufacturing industries that process clays into ceramics and bricks, limestone into

cement, and sands into pigments and glass; and

- construction industries, which use fine aggregates to make concrete and asphalt and coarse aggregates as road and rail ballast.

Understanding the nature and location of these resources, particularly in relation to the infrastructure necessary to support their extraction, is important for anticipating the likely timing of mining activities around the region.

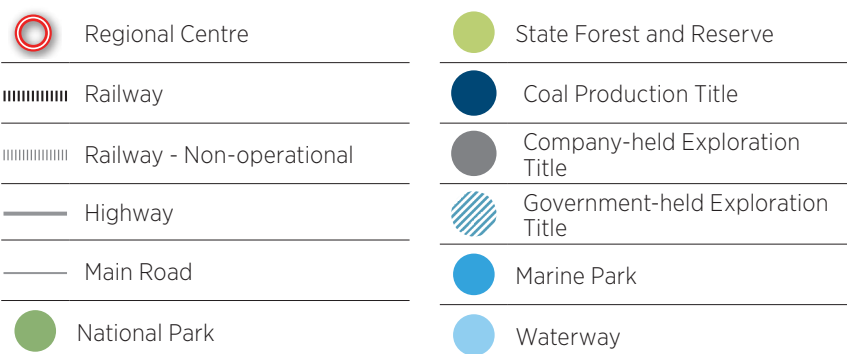
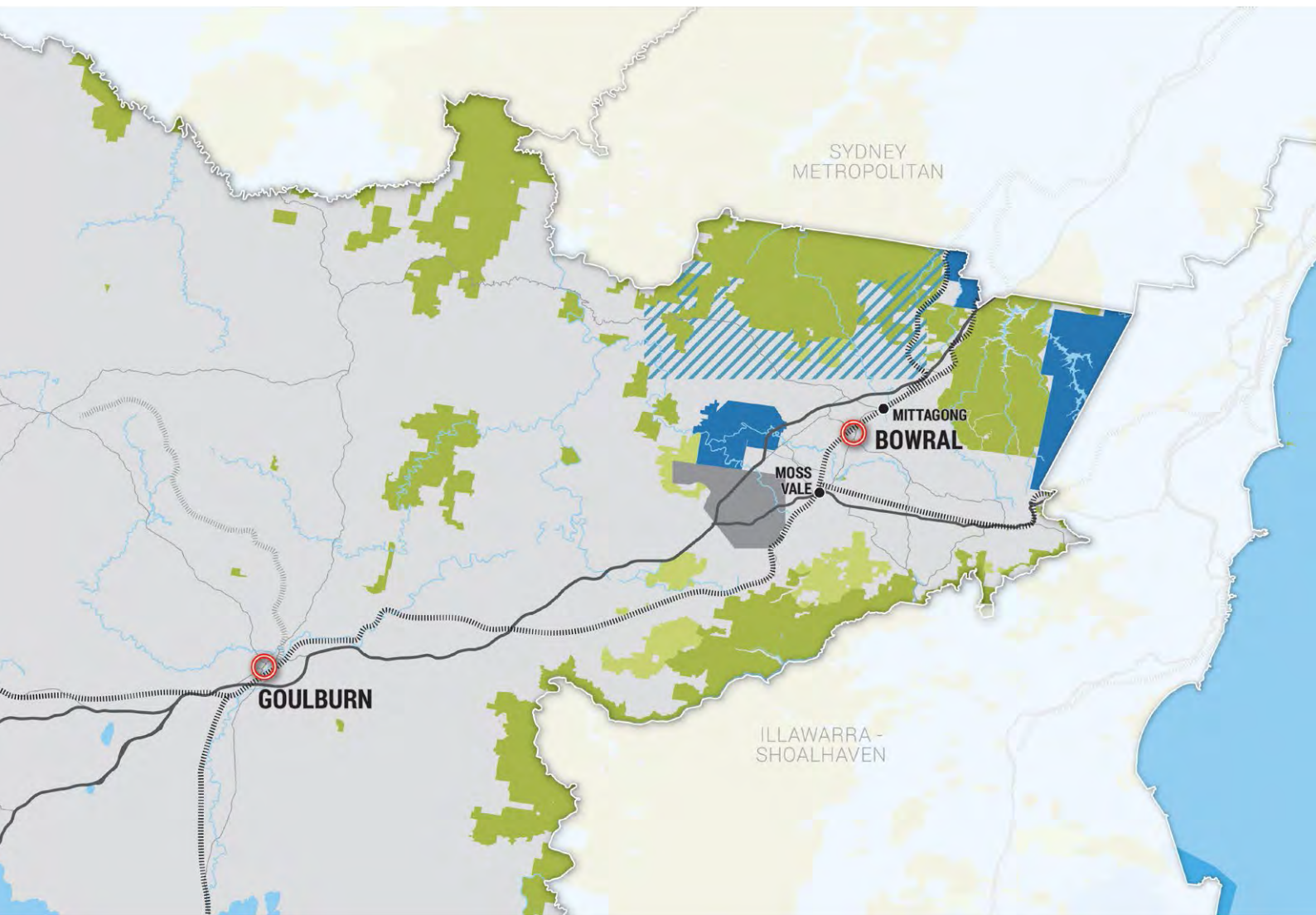
To support the sustainable growth of the mining industry and diversification of energy supplies for NSW, the NSW Government will:

- develop analytical tools to identify and map large-scale renewable energy potential, building on new information such as the Australian Government's Australian Renewable Energy Mapping Infrastructure, as it becomes available;
- provide geoscience information related to the resources and energy sectors in NSW and transparently monitor development activity. Mapping of resource titles is available on the Common Ground website and geoscientific data is housed in the Department of Industry's Geoscientific Data Warehouse; and
- work with councils and industry to identify and support opportunities for smaller-scale renewable energy projects such as those using bioenergy, supporting greater energy security within the region.

The NSW Government will use this information to:

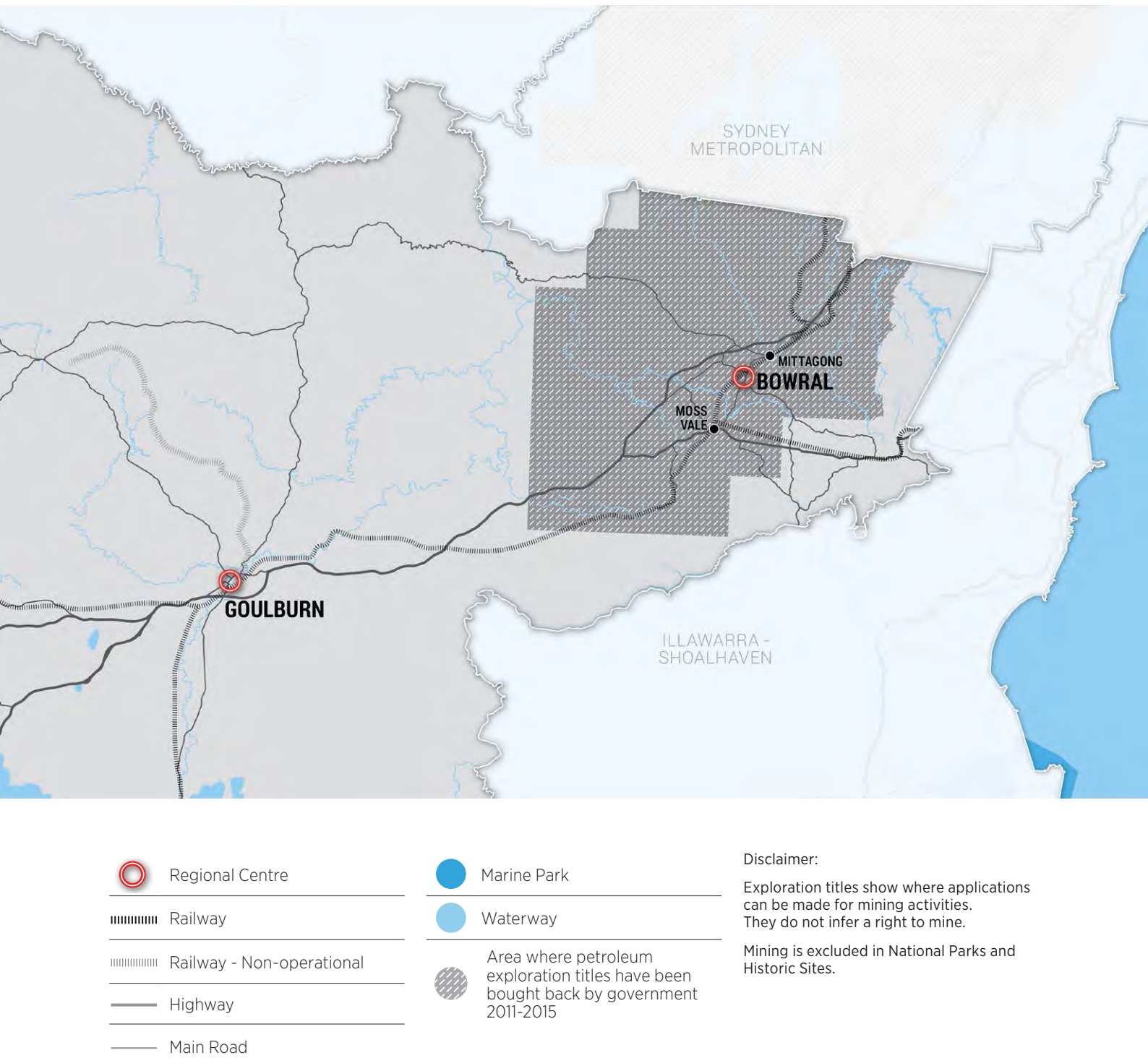
- work with councils and industries in the region to plan for the future of mining industries;
- identify the short, medium and long term development priorities to guide investment decisions for these industries; and
- identify new opportunities for renewable energy industries.

FIGURE 6: CURRENT COAL MINING ACTIVITIES AND EXPLORATION AREAS



Disclaimer:
Exploration titles show where applications can be made for mining activities. They do not infer a right to mine.
Mining is excluded in National Parks and Historic Sites.

FIGURE 7: AREAS WHERE PETROLEUM EXPLORATION TITLES HAVE BEEN BOUGHT BACK BY NSW GOVERNMENT 2011-2015





Left: Schmidt Quarries, near Cooma

Right: Long Wall mining

ACTION 3.3.3 Protect valuable mineral and extractive resources in the region

A range of potentially competing land uses may impact on the ongoing development of valuable natural resources in the region. Decisions to rezone land for urban uses, including rural residential development can inadvertently impact on the growth of rural and resource industries.

The impact of urban expansion on resource areas needs to be appraised when councils evaluate planning proposals to rezone land, review local environment plans, or sequence land releases. In places like Wingecarribee, where there is mining activity, this will also mean avoiding new settlements in subsidence areas.

When assessing applications for land use changes councils will need to consult the mapped resource titles available on the Common Ground website and the geoscientific data housed in the Department of Industry's Geoscientific Data Warehouse, so that valuable resources are not sterilised.

The NSW Government will:

- work with councils to minimise the potential for land use conflict when preparing or considering planning proposals or local strategies in the vicinity of mapped mineral resource areas; and
- work with councils and industry to identify where demands for additional urban lands coincide with identified extractive resources and develop strategies to sequence the release of these in line with mining activities.

Explanatory note: Current Coal Mining Activities and Exploration Areas map

Figure 6 identifies the current coal mining activities in the South East and Tablelands, based on existing licences issued under the *Mining Act 1992*. These include:

- **coal exploration titles** – identifying areas where an exploration licence or assessment lease has been granted to enable title holders to establish the quality, quantity and commercial viability of underlying coal resources. The map identifies those titles that are held by the NSW Government and those that are held by private companies; and
- **coal production titles** – identifying areas where a mining lease has been granted to allow coal to be extracted. Land subject to coal production titles may contain a range of mining-related activities, including open cut or underground mines and surface infrastructure such as roads or rail, as well as buffer zones to sensitive uses or other non-operational areas.

There are also locations where mining activities are excluded by the:

- *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*; and
- *State Environmental Planning Policy (Mining Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries) 2007*.

In this figure a small portion of the Government titles that were granted in 1987 overlay portions of the Nattai National Park that were gazetted in 2010 and 2011. The NSW Government will not conduct exploration activity in the national park.

The data shown draws on information relating to existing title approvals and is correct at February 2016. The data does not indicate the nature, timing or location of specific mining activities. Further information about recent or current development applications for mining projects in specific locations can be found on the Department of Planning and Environment's Major Projects website at: <http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/>.



Explanatory Note: Areas where Petroleum Exploration Titles have been bought back by NSW Government 2011-15 map

Figure 7 shows where exploration titles have been bought back by the NSW Government, following the release of the *NSW Gas Plan* in 2014. The data shown on these maps draws on information relating to existing title approvals and is correct at February 2016. The data does not indicate the nature, timing or location of specific mining activities. Further information about recent or current development applications for mining projects in specific locations can be found on the Department of Planning and Environment's Major Projects website at: <http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/>.

Mining activities may also be excluded by the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*. In addition to this, *State Environmental Planning Policy (Mining, Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries) 2007* also excludes gas exploration and production in critical industry clusters and around existing settlements.

Explanatory Note: Current Mineral Resource Titles and Exploration Areas map

Figure 8 (over) identifies the mineral resources, other than coal, that are known to occur in the South East and Tablelands, including base metals and construction material such as sand, hard rock and sources of clay/shale. The map shows:

- **current minerals mining titles** – identifying areas where a mining lease has been granted to allow the mineral to be extracted;
- **identified resources** – identifying where previous exploration or assessments have confirmed the presence of a mineral resource. The areas shown include an adjacent transition area around the identified resource, where planning and management should consider the current or future implications of extractive activities;
- **current minerals exploration titles** – identifying areas where an exploration licence or assessment lease has been granted to enable title holders to establish the quality, quantity and commercial viability of underlying mineral resources; and
- **potential resource areas** – where geological surveys suggest there may be a high likelihood of a particular resource, which may be confirmed through future exploration and assessment.

There are also locations where mining activities are excluded by the:

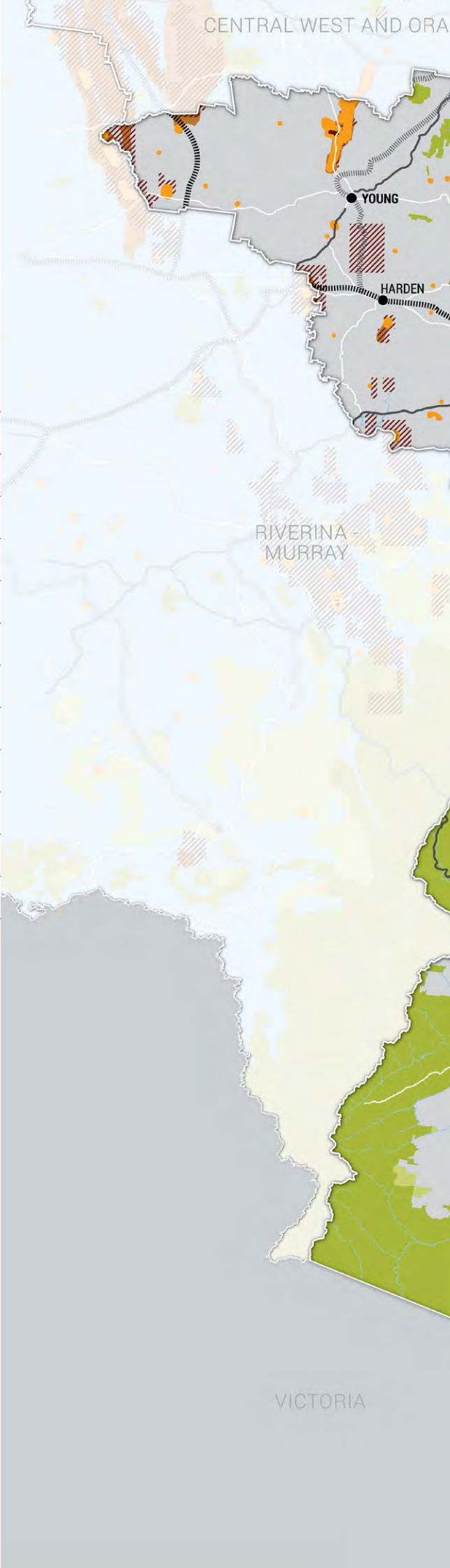
- *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*; and
- *State Environmental Planning Policy (Mining, Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries), 2007*.

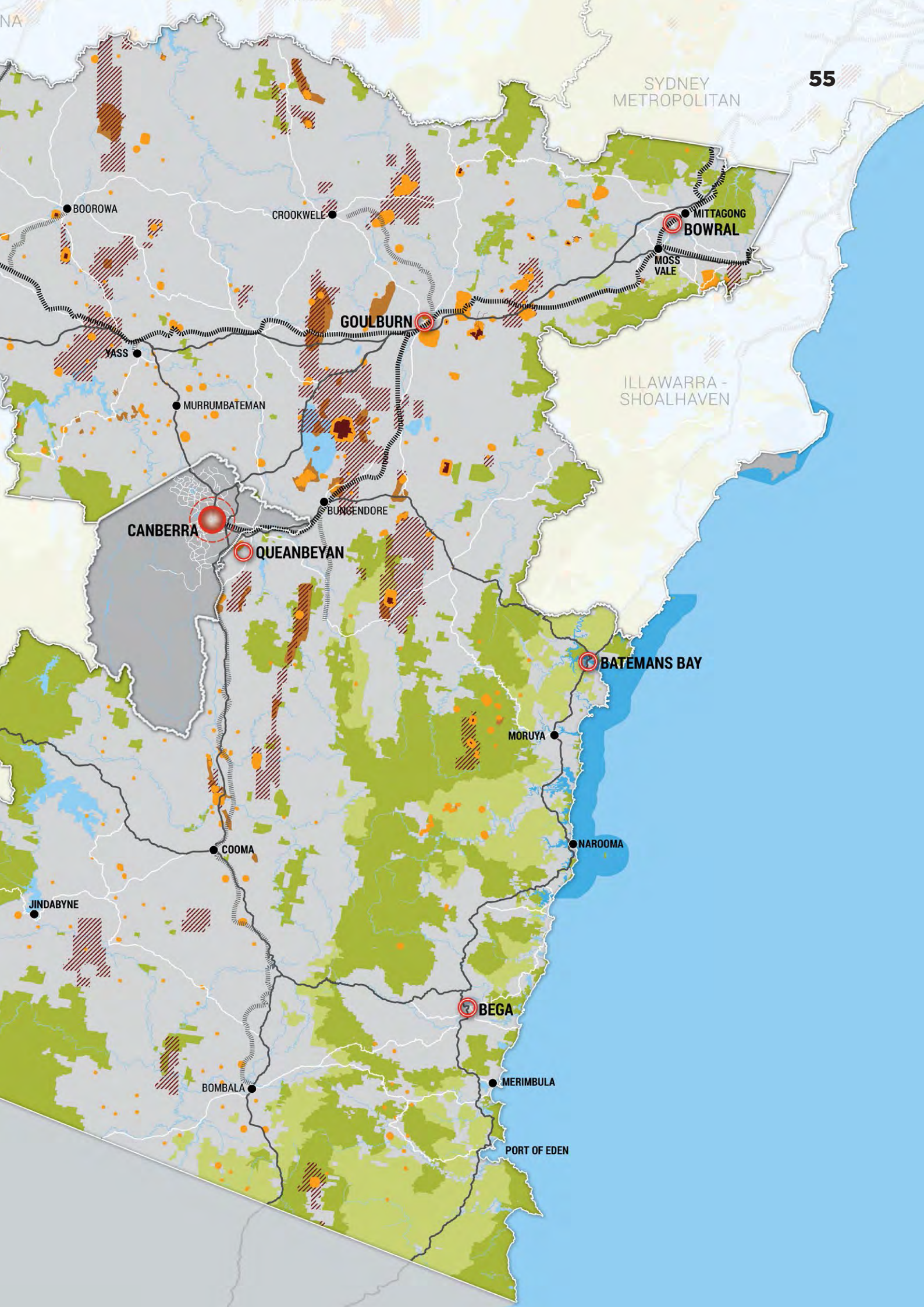
The data shown reflects the NSW Government's *Minerals Resource Audit*, finalised in 2015 and includes existing title approvals issued under the *Mining Act 1992*, correct at February 2016. This data does not indicate the nature, timing or location of specific mining and quarrying activities. Further information about recent or current development applications for mining projects in specific locations can be found on the Department of Planning and Environment's Major Projects website at: <http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/>.

FIGURE 8: CURRENT MINERAL
RESOURCE TITLES AND EXPLORATION
AREAS



Disclaimer:
Exploration titles show where applications can be made
for mining activities. They do not infer a right to mine.
Mining is excluded in National Parks and Historic Sites.







Left: Woodchip mill, Port of Eden
Right: Commercial fishing, Port of Eden

ACTION 3.3.4 Plan for the ongoing productive use of mineral and energy resource lands

Mining activities have specific operational needs that can compete with other sensitive uses over the productive life of the facility or resource. In many cases these activities are also temporary, dependent on the productive life of the facility or resource. Once extractive resource lands have been identified, there may be opportunities to identify interim activities that will enable lands to be used productively, without sterilising the future potential to extract the underlying resource. Any land use changes contemplated in advance of the extraction of resources must be carefully considered.

The Council of Australian Governments Standing Council on Energy and Resources prepared a Multiple Land Use Framework to assist in planning and managing multiple land uses. The framework includes a series of planning principles that can assist in planning around known resource areas, where other high value land uses also exist.

Developing land use plans that respond to the lifecycle of the extractive resource area will enable all stakeholders to better understand the long term productive value of the land and provide greater certainty for investments. These land use plans may consider how identified extractive resource lands may accommodate a range of uses, either sequentially or simultaneously with extraction-related activities.

Having a staged approach to land use planning for a resource area will recognise the sequential nature of activities:

- **lead-in stage** – to determine the project's suitability and viability consideration needs to be given to the:

- potential local and cumulative environmental or social impacts and benefits of the proposed activity; and
- productive value of the resource and the investments in land and infrastructure required to support ongoing operations;

- **operational stage** – consideration needs to be given to the requirements that should be set to manage the production of resources in line with global and national demands, and to maintain buffers to sensitive uses; and
- **transitional stage** – consideration needs to be given to transitioning to other land uses, once the underlying resources have been extracted.

Throughout the lifecycle of the resource, consideration should also be given to opportunities to provide:

- rural and agricultural activities;
- conservation – to protect biodiversity and sustain habitat connectivity; and
- housing – to accommodate long term demands for expanding cities, towns and villages (this will be informed by and support a separate action for long term settlement planning).

The NSW Government will:

- work with relevant councils, communities and industries to prepare staged land use plans which respond to the lifecycle of resource activity for active and emerging mining areas in the region.

ACTION 3.3.5 Implement a robust assessment process to consider social, economic and environmental implications of mining activities and manage these throughout the life of the project

The assessment process provides the opportunity to assess mining applications, specifically, to identify and manage potential land use conflicts that may arise during the life of a project. Also, mineral and energy resource industries are monitored annually to enforce compliance with their conditions of title. A robust and transparent assessment of mining applications is required to balance the social, economic and environmental implications.

The NSW Government is currently responding to community concerns about mining by clarifying the requirements for assessing and determining mining applications through the development of an *Integrated Mining Policy*. The policy will improve transparency, consistency and accountability for assessment decisions. Providing consent authorities with a more comprehensive understanding of environmental impacts and proposed mitigation measures will improve decision-making. The policy will not change environmental standards or community consultation requirements.

Existing processes to manage and mitigate the environmental impacts of a mining development, will be further supported by improving methods to assess the cumulative impact of all relevant activities (including mining) on air, water and soil quality around settlements and strategic agricultural lands.

The NSW Government will:

- work with councils and industry to implement the *Integrated Mining Policy*, including finalising economic assessment guidelines;
- develop a cumulative impact assessment methodology to manage the cumulative health and amenity impacts of proposals that:
 - considers whether cumulative impact thresholds or tipping points can be adequately described and predicted; and
 - considers cumulative impacts on agricultural lands and water resources;
- investigate appropriate methods for encouraging best practice rehabilitation and visual impact management for mines; and
- prepare a development assessment guideline for impacts on human health from dust generated by mining and other activities.

DIRECTION 3.4 Grow regional strategic assets to support economic growth across the region

The region's economic prosperity will be supported by growing the economic competitiveness of the Port of Eden and Canberra Airport. These assets can be used to encourage growth close to areas where population growth is already occurring.

Eden is an active working port, a premier location for whale watching, an emerging cruise destination and home to one of the largest fishing fleets in NSW.

The port accommodates an Australian naval wharf and is the primary woodchip export site in Australia, recently achieving \$2 billion in export revenues.²⁸ Woodchip export is currently the major trade for the port, with over one million mass tonnes exported to Japan, China and Korea in 2011.²⁹ General cargo is also processed at the multipurpose wharf and there is a dedicated eight-hectare cargo storage facility.

Further development of the Port of Eden will improve opportunities for imports, exports, tourism, visitation by cruise ships and luxury vessels. It will also support the growth of the regional timber industry.

Canberra Airport is a key driver of economic growth in the region and is expected to generate over 21,000 jobs by 2030 and contribute \$2.42 billion per year (value-added) to the regional economy.³⁰ Protecting the airport's role in servicing south east NSW will bring economic benefits to the region.



ACTION 3.4.1 Deliver the breakwater wharf extension at the Port of Eden

The breakwater wharf extension at the Port of Eden will allow more cruise vessels to visit, with potentially greater economic opportunities for local businesses. Visitors will be able to experience Indigenous culture and local attractions, such as the Whale Museum and the Sapphire Coast Marine Discovery Centre. There will also be increased economic activity during construction of the wharf associated with:

- upgrading the existing wharf, including fenders and bollards, to accommodate cruise vessels;
- a wharf extension of approximately 50 metres;
- mooring buoy, breasting dolphins and catwalks; and

- dredging of over 50,000 cubic metres of sand and rock to provide for safe manoeuvring and docking of a vessel.

The NSW Government will:

- continue to work with stakeholders to deliver the breakwater wharf extension at the Port of Eden.

ACTION 3.4.2 Protect the role of Canberra Airport to service the south east through relevant local planning controls

In 2012, the catchment for Canberra Airport incorporated about 900,000 people living within a 2.5 hour drive of the airport. The majority of these people live in NSW. There were 3.2 million passenger movements through

Freight Networks in the South East and Tablelands

The South East and Tablelands region includes the busiest interstate, road freight corridor in Australia (Hume Highway) and proximity to two major markets – Sydney and Canberra. The road and rail infrastructure that connects to these markets, and ready access to ports and airports within or near to the region, provide good links with the broader national and international markets.

New opportunities for air freight exist at Canberra Airport. The development of a vibrant air freight operation at the airport is expected to deliver significant economic benefits for the region, including jobs, and open the region up to a broad range of new industry sectors.

With the Hume Highway duplication now complete, the focus for the region is undertaking safety improvements and overtaking lanes on the Princes Highway, south along the coast to the Victorian border.

Significant projects are being undertaken to improve commercial and private transport linkages around the region, such as the Barton Highway (linking the ACT and Southern Tablelands with western NSW), the Kings Highway (between Queanbeyan and Batemans Bay), and the remaining sections of MR92 (Nerriga Road).

The NSW Government's *Southern Regional Transport Plan* and Princes Highway draft corridor strategy makes improving the productivity of the region's freight network a priority. This will be achieved through improvements to road safety and efficiency, and by supporting higher productivity vehicles (including reducing height and weight restrictions on major routes).



Left: Canberra Airport

Right: Aboriginal history of Two Fold Bay, Eden

the airport in 2010–11, which is expected to increase to 6.1 million by 2030–31.

Canberra Airport is equipped and ready for long-range Boeing 747 air operations. It is unconstrained by an aircraft noise curfew and is serviced by a passenger terminal with capacity until 2030, as well as a master planned freight precinct. The site has good access via cross-border arterial roads, which provide easy ground transport access for passengers and freight.

The recent announcement that the airport will provide international services has positive implications for the region. International services will promote tourism, trade and commerce as air services diversify and expand.

The NSW Government will:

- protect the current and future operations of the airport by placing restrictions on the location of residential development in the vicinity.

DIRECTION 3.5 Strengthen the economic self-determination of Aboriginal communities

OCHRE (Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility, Empowerment) is the NSW Government's plan for Aboriginal affairs. It focuses on revitalising and promoting Aboriginal languages and culture, increasing the Aboriginal community's capacity, providing choice and empowering Aboriginal people to exercise that choice, as well as giving them the tools to take responsibility for their own future.

ACTION 3.5.1 Conduct a strategic assessment of land held by the region's Local Aboriginal Land Councils to identify their landholdings and map the level of constraints for each site

Many of the OCHRE actions are outside the planning system; however there is an opportunity to look at the landholdings of Local Aboriginal Land Councils to see how they can best be planned, managed and developed for the benefit of the local Aboriginal community. This will allow Aboriginal people the opportunity to gain economic benefit from their land and provide greater opportunities for economic independence.

Together, Aboriginal Affairs NSW and the Department of Planning and Environment will work with the Land Councils to identify their landholdings and to map the level of constraint at a strategic scale for each site. This information can be used to develop options for the potential commercial use of the land such as for Aboriginal housing and employment opportunities. It has potential to provide economic returns to the Local Aboriginal Land Councils that can be invested in assistance programs in the region.

The NSW Government will:

- work with the region's Local Aboriginal Land Councils to identify their landholdings and map the level of constraints for each site.



GOAL 4 – Build communities that are strong, healthy and well-connected

The draft Plan takes a place-based approach to planning sustainable communities across the region. This means that future generations will be able to enjoy the same landscape values as today's residents.

The draft Plan takes advantage of the region's natural and built landscapes to create high quality neighbourhoods and centres that contribute to social cohesion and community wellbeing. There is an opportunity to restore the natural assets of the region, and allow communities to reconnect to the natural environment and experience the region's rural, alpine, urban and coastal settings.

Population and dwelling growth in the region is mainly occurring within commuting distance of Canberra and Sydney, in regional centres and along the coast. Over two-thirds (69 per cent) of the region's population growth to 2036 is projected to occur in the Greater Capital (see GOAL 1). More modest growth is predicted to occur in the Alpine and Hilltops, in smaller towns and villages that provide local services and jobs to the surrounding area.

The population is growing and changing across the region (see Figure 9). On the Far South Coast, 40 per cent of the population will be

aged 65 years or older by 2036. The people in this age group are likely to be healthier, more active and more productive than previous generations, which mean there are opportunities to harness their skills and knowledge so that they remain engaged in the workforce in varying capacities.

There are also opportunities to expand the related products and services on offer to this age group including education and training, supported housing, health, leisure, tourism and recreation, and home services.

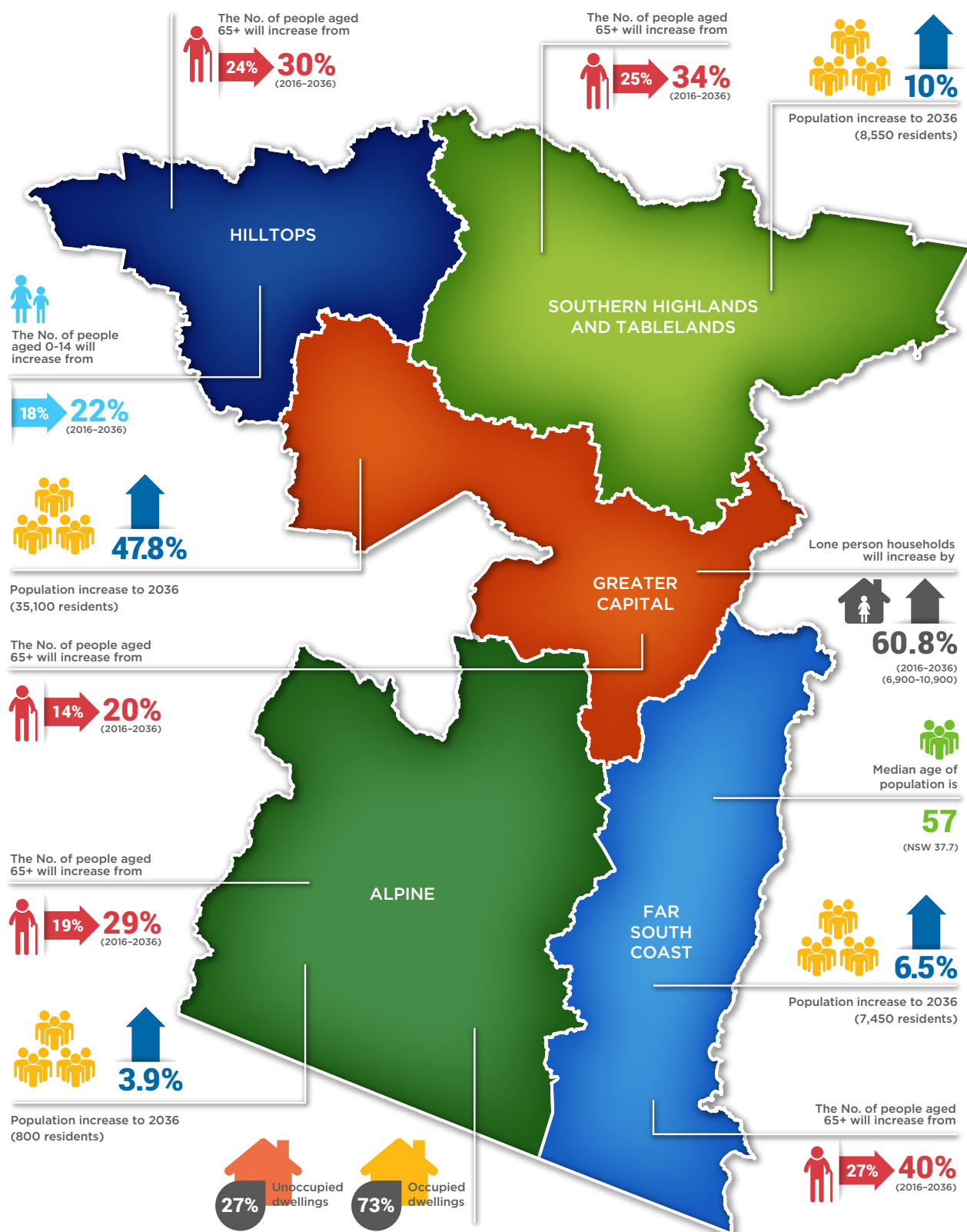
An ageing population also has land use and transport implications. While the population in Hilltops is not growing, there is still a need to provide more housing to cater for the increased number of single and two-person households.

The built environment of neighbourhoods will be integrated with the landscape, open space, public transport, walkways and cycleways to encourage healthy living and community interaction. This includes considering how population growth and change will affect the demand for the region's health and education facilities.

Top: Courtesy of South East Regional Hospital, Bega

Bottom: Bowral

FIGURE 9: DEMOGRAPHIC GROWTH AND CHANGE IN THE SOUTH EAST AND TABLELANDS



DIRECTION 4.1 Provide sufficient housing to suit the changing demands of the region

The region offers a variety of housing options from urban lifestyles in regional centres with shops, restaurants and services, to rural residential, coastal and alpine lifestyles.

New housing must be located to take account of the character, environmental qualities and capacity of the land. The region is expected to need at least 27,750 new homes between 2016 and 2036 to meet population growth and change.

Tourism is an important influence on housing demand. In some parts of the region there is a strong demand for holiday lettings, particularly during summer on the south coast and in winter in the Snowy Mountains.

It is anticipated that Bowral will accommodate the majority of infill development in the north of the region, along with Goulburn, Queanbeyan and Yass in the central parts of the region and Batemans Bay and Bega in the south. These centres have access to local jobs and some are within commuting distance of Sydney and Canberra. These places have capacity for medium and higher density development, including mixed use, to meet the changing needs of the community.

The NSW Government will:

- prepare guidelines for local housing strategies;
- work with councils to deliver local planning controls that plan for a range of housing types and to consider local affordable housing needs and strategies; and
- consider amendments to relevant environmental planning instruments where they are informed by updated housing strategies.

ACTION 4.1.1 Plan for a range of housing types to cater for changing community needs and household choice

Councils should plan for the mix of housing that suits the projected growth, changing demographics (such as an ageing population) and market demand in their area. Zoning and other planning controls that maintain, or in some cases, increase capacity for housing will assist housing delivery. Other council activities such as streamlining assessment processes, or planning for local infrastructure and town centre revitalisation, will also promote development opportunities.

Evidence sourced from council housing strategies shows there is enough zoned land with development potential for the market to supply housing in a range of locations in the region.

Making more housing available in existing urban areas is a sustainable option because it takes advantage of existing job markets, commercial and retail opportunities, and infrastructure such as public transport and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing is appropriate for the needs of very low to moderate income households and priced so that these households are also able to meet other basic living expenses. Housing stress occurs when lower income households are spending more than 30 per cent of their income on rent or mortgage costs. Based on 2011 Australian Bureau of Statistics data, 49 per cent of households in the region on moderate, low and very low incomes are experiencing housing stress.

Affordable and social housing provides housing for workers and others on low incomes and helps avoid issues associated with social disadvantage.

The NSW Government is working on a whole-of-government strategy for affordable housing that assesses the need for social, public and affordable housing across NSW, provides greater planning certainty, and facilitates complementary activities such as partnering with affordable housing providers.



Above: Bega TAFE College, courtesy of University of Wollongong

ACTION 4.1.2 Protect agricultural and environmental land by avoiding the impacts of rural residential development

Rural residential housing is popular in the South East and Tablelands, particularly for higher socio-economic groups that are able to afford to buy a more private and rural lifestyle.

Environmental impacts associated with rural residential subdivision can be significant. The impacts on water catchments due to the proliferation of dams and bores associated with water supply to these developments, especially in stressed river catchments, has led to a water licencing embargo in areas such as the Yass River Valley in the past. When located in areas of intact bushland, the clearing necessary for house sites, bushfire asset protection and associated infrastructure, has led to high clearing rates over time. Clearing associated with rural residential subdivision is currently the major source of vegetation removal in the Far South Coast and Southern Tablelands.³¹

A consistent planning approach to rural residential development protects valuable agricultural land, biodiversity and natural resources. Unplanned rural residential development can create land use conflicts with nearby agricultural uses, land speculation, social isolation and pressure for additional urban services.

The NSW Government has developed the *Right to Farm Policy* which represents a comprehensive approach to dealing with the right of farmers to undertake lawful agricultural practices without conflict or interference arising from complaints from neighbours and other land uses.

The NSW Government will:

- require that councils adopt a strategic approach to providing rural residential housing, and support new rural residential development, only where it has been identified in a comprehensive housing strategy. This will help to avoid impacts on agricultural industries, high environmental value land and high fire prone land. It will also limit the need for allocation of additional water rights.

DIRECTION 4.2 Plan for facilities, including health and education, to service the region's growing and changing population

Delivering health and education facilities that meet the needs of the South East and Tableland's growing and changing population, will be integral to maintaining the region's standard of living.

Demand for the region's health facilities is expected to increase due to the ageing population, overall population growth and the substantial seasonal influx of tourists. The rural and isolated nature of part of the region is a consideration for delivering health facilities.

Health services in the region are delivered with a reliance on Canberra Hospital – the principal referral hospital in the region. The ACT and NSW Governments recognise the importance of closer working relationships between health systems in the region and are committed to developing an action plan to improve cross-border health service coordination.³²

As the region grows and changes, so does the demand for education services. The NSW Government uses a number of measures to understand the demand for schooling, including:

- long term trends in population growth and decline;
- the development of housing by those with school-aged children;
- the preferences in schooling between NSW public schools and non-government schools;
- the size and location of existing schools; and
- the significant cross-border movement to the ACT Government and non-government school systems.

With a growing and ageing population, providing adequate burial space is an important issue for governments and communities to consider. Land needs to be identified and protected for the future so that current and future generations can have burial space that meets their needs.

ACTION 4.2.1 Identify capacity and provide flexibility for investment to upgrade and deliver health services to the community

The NSW Government is looking at both short and long term plans for the redevelopment of its health campuses across the South East and Tablelands. The new South East Regional Hospital at Bega recently opened. Initial planning is under way for the Goulburn, Cooma, Yass and Braidwood Health Services. A master planning exercise is also being undertaken at the Moruya Campus.

The NSW Government will:

- identify the capacity for growth of the region's hospitals, and consider opportunities for future expansion; and
- put in place planning controls that facilitate the growth of complementary health uses around the region's hospitals.

ACTION 4.2.2 Undertake school asset planning to better understand where and when additional schools may be required

School needs in the region are constantly changing. Pressure for increased school placements is greatest in the areas surrounding the NSW and ACT border. The NSW Government continues to monitor the changing demand for school places, particularly when planning new settlements in the cross-border area.

ACT education services will continue to play a role in areas close to the border. The NSW and ACT Governments will continue to work together to meet the growing and changing education needs of the community in a cross-border environment.

The NSW Government will:

- undertake school asset planning to better understand where and when additional schools may be required.

ACTION 4.2.3 Coordinate the planning and delivery of cemeteries and crematoria

NSW data identifies 100 operating cemeteries in the region – 41 closed cemeteries (and many older, un-registered closed cemeteries and burial places) – and three operating crematoria.

With the ageing of the baby boomer generation, demand for cemetery space is projected to increase. Mortality rates for the region are projected to increase 34 per cent from 11,000 per year in 2015 to 16,550 in 2036. Queanbeyan, in particular, will need more facilities in the medium term.

The NSW Government will:

- support councils and infrastructure providers to identify appropriate sites and capacity for cemeteries and crematoria; and
- support planning and site identification to provide capacity for Queanbeyan and the surrounding community.

DIRECTION 4.3 Strengthen the commercial function of the region's centres

Centres concentrate retailing, commercial, business and government functions in one place which makes it more viable for public investment in transport and in the public domain (public spaces).

Centres also play an important role in supporting a diverse range of communities (see Table 2). Allowing centres to grow to accommodate jobs and services is integral to their resilience and their ability to effectively service local communities. The NSW Government is particularly interested in focusing growth, service delivery and investment in the higher-order regional centres.



Lamington Flat Chinese Festival, Young

TABLE 2: REGIONAL CENTRES HIERARCHY

Centres Hierarchy	Centres servicing the South East and Tablelands	Key functions of the Centre
Metropolitan City	Canberra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Important at a metropolitan, national and international scale. ■ Has an economic role that is significant to its entire population catchment. ■ Provides a full range of higher-order services and activities including business, office and retail uses, as well as arts, culture, recreation, and entertainment facilities. ■ Comprises principal referral hospitals, major tertiary education facilities and a major regional airport. ■ Incorporates a full range of housing opportunities including high-density living.
Regional Centre	Batemans Bay, Bowral, Bega, Goulburn, Queanbeyan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Larger-scale centres that service a broad area beyond the local surrounding settlements and offer important health, education and administrative services. ■ Provide employment opportunities and offer a wide range of business, retail and entertainment uses, including discount department stores, warehouses, transport logistics and bulky goods operations. ■ Include mixed uses and densities in the centre.

Councils are encouraged to identify their own centre hierarchies that set out the centres, towns and villages that service local communities. For example, it would be appropriate for major towns such as Cooma, Jindabyne, Merimbula, Mittagong, Moruya, Moss Vale, Narooma, Yass, and Young to be recognised for their strong district functions.

ACTION 4.3.1 Focus commercial and retail activities within the region's centres in line with the regional centres hierarchy

The centres hierarchy will inform policy development, land use strategies, infrastructure delivery and local environmental plans.

The NSW Government supports locating retail activity in centres. Proposals for new retail centres and major new retail developments will be assessed against the region's hierarchy of centres. These proposals should demonstrate how they:

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

The net community benefit should be a factor when assessing these proposals.

The NSW Government will work with councils to:

- focus retail activity in existing commercial centres, unless there is a demonstrated need for new centres, with positive social and economic benefits for the community.

DIRECTION 4.4 Build socially inclusive, safe and healthy communities

In existing urban areas and new release areas, new neighbourhoods and centres will be designed to be environmentally sustainable, socially inclusive, easy to get to, healthy and safe. This is particularly important with an increasing ageing population.

Opportunities for people to be physically active where they work and in their neighbourhoods will be delivered through the design and location of recreation facilities, sporting infrastructure, parks and public buildings. Opportunities will be taken, wherever possible, to reconnect neighbourhood communities with the surrounding landscape. Walkways, cycleways and public transport will be provided to make access to these places easier.

The NSW Government will encourage councils to use neighbourhood planning principles:

- when preparing their local environmental plans and development control plans for new release areas; and
- in strategic planning to revitalise town centres, where appropriate, and to restore ecological function, particularly along waterways and creeks.

Neighbourhood planning principles

Neighbourhoods should have:

- public transport networks that link frequent buses into the rail system;
- a range of land uses to provide the right mix of houses, jobs, open space, recreational space and green space;
- easy access to major town centres with a full range of shops, recreational facilities and services along with smaller village centres and neighbourhood shops;
- jobs available locally to reduce the demand for transport services;
- streets and suburbs that are planned so that residents can walk to shops for their daily needs;
- a wide range of housing choice to provide for different needs and different incomes – traditional houses on individual blocks along with smaller, lower maintenance homes, units and terraces for older people and young singles or couples;
- housing diversity that can be facilitated by providing a number of purpose-designed smaller lots and dwellings;
- new housing developments that provide a proportion of adaptable housing to further increase housing choice across the region, to cater for the ever changing needs of residents;
- conservation lands in and around development sites, to help protect biodiversity and provide open space for recreation; and
- water sensitive urban design to minimise the negative impacts of development on the natural water cycle and protect the health of aquatic systems.



ACTION 4.4.1 Review and update the Neighbourhood Planning Principles

There is significant support for the Neighbourhood Planning Principles. Updates that include outcomes for active transport, water sensitive urban design, water and energy efficiency, and the urban design and public domain of centres will increase their relevance.

The NSW Government will:

- consult with councils, agencies and industry representatives to review and update the Neighbourhood Planning Principles.

DIRECTION 4.5 Enhance community access to jobs, goods and services by improving connections

Good transport connections are essential to move people to and from centres, jobs, shops, entertainment, education facilities and health-care services.

One in three people are projected to be over the age of 65 years by 2036 and this is likely to result in increased travel for health, medical and recreation purposes. The region's dispersed settlement pattern and limited availability of public transport services can impact on social isolation and disadvantage.

The *Southern Regional Transport Plan* and this draft Plan aim to make it easier to get around the region by improving public, community, walking and cycling transport options.

ACTION 4.5.1 Develop a sustainable model for community transport service provision

Community transport is particularly important for people in regional communities who are aged, disabled or mobility impaired. Services allow people in isolated locations to access shops, services (including health and social services) and recreation. In these locations, public transport is usually not available or services are extremely limited.

The ageing population within the South East and Tablelands region is likely to increase pressure on community transport. Service providers will need additional resources and support to respond to increased demand, particularly given that community transport is more expensive to run than other transport services.

Transport for NSW recognises the vital role of community transport service providers in regional and remote communities. A new approach to resourcing the community transport sector will allow it to respond to increasing demand for services in line with the *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan* and the *Southern Regional Transport Plan*.



Left: Rail Freight network, Goulburn:
Right: Road maintenance, Bega

The NSW Government will:

- continue to work with community transport providers to help them meet future demand; and
- work to better integrate community transport services into the overall transport system to more efficiently meet a broader range of needs.

ACTION 4.5.2 Identify and protect future rail corridors

The Australian Government is investigating opportunities for a high-speed rail network between capital cities along the east coast. If feasible, it would significantly reduce travel times between the east coast capital cities and regional centres, and increase transport options in regional NSW. This may generate new opportunities for economic development in the region.

The NSW Government will:

- work with the Australian Government to plan for future rail corridors in the region.

ACTION 4.5.3 Deliver improved transport connectivity for urban centres and towns

Integrating community transport services into the public transport system will be important to improve connections between centres and communities across the region. The NSW Government currently funds several community transport programs for people living in regional areas including:

- *Community Transport Program;*
- *Regional Transport Coordination Program;*
- *Country Passenger Transport Infrastructure Grants Scheme;* and
- *Home and Community Care program (a jointly funded NSW and Australian Government initiative).*

The *Southern Regional Transport Plan* (2013) identified that the region will receive a share of the \$389 million to support and improve rural and regional bus services. Transport for NSW will investigate further opportunities to improve bus operations in the region's major centres, and their connections with regional communities, by working with bus operators to develop routes and timetables to improve services. These initiatives will help to improve access to bus services, service frequencies and the attractiveness of public transport.

The NSW Government will:

- investigate further opportunities to improve bus operations in urban centres and their connections with regional communities.

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