



NSW GOVERNMENT
Department of Planning

REGIONAL STRATEGY UPDATE REPORT

2009



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“The seven strategies represent a blueprint for a sustainable, prosperous future for NSW...helping us to implement our vision of this state as a diverse, dynamic and appealing place to live and work.”

Minister's Foreword

How we as a community live, work and grow in our environment is one of the key questions for any government. Beginning in 2006, the NSW Department of Planning released a series of seven regional strategies designed to provide planning support for key growth areas across the state.

This report is the first in a series of updates which reviews the implementation of these regional strategies.

The seven strategies represent a blueprint for a sustainable, prosperous future for NSW. Taken together, they support 275,600 new jobs, 390,400 new homes, and 568,350 new residents.

Most of the strategies address regions that form part of the state's coastal corridor, where the majority of growth is expected to take place. Given the sensitivity of many of these environments,

balancing the demands of a growing population with the need to protect our environmental assets is a key challenge.

We are therefore very proud of the environmental initiatives included in these strategies. One of the key achievements of the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy, for instance, is the inclusion of a series of green corridors providing 32,000 hectares for threatened plant and animal species and public access and recreation.

The regional strategies have been designed to interact with other key policy documents such as the State Infrastructure Strategy and the State Plan, and reflect key priorities of those documents, such as delivering jobs that are close to home and an adequate supply of housing. The strategies are not static reports, but living documents that respond to changing circumstances. They will be kept under review, including in relation to the latest demographic and population data.

Perhaps the best mark of their success is the fact that they are already being used on a regular basis to make decisions about local environmental plans (LEPs) and assist other government agencies in infrastructure planning and service delivery, helping us to implement our vision of this state as a diverse, dynamic and appealing place to live and work.

The Hon. Kristina Keneally
NSW Minister for Planning

Lower Hunter Regional Strategy



More than 18,000 lots have been rezoned in major release areas in the Lower Hunter since the release of the draft regional strategy.

INTRODUCTION

The Lower Hunter Regional Strategy was released in October 2006. It applies to the five local government areas of Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Port Stephens, Maitland and Cessnock.

It is a 25-year strategy focused on creating jobs and investment and planning for growth while protecting the environmental assets, cultural values and natural resources of the region. The strategy supports up to 66,000 new jobs, 115,000 new homes and 160,000 more people by 2031. It establishes important green corridors to protect and enhance the region's strong environmental and biodiversity assets, and promotes Newcastle as the regional city of the Lower Hunter.

The Department has been working in partnership with local councils and stakeholders to implement the strategy.

HOUSING AND SETTLEMENT

A key outcome of the regional strategy is to secure an adequate supply of land for residential development to cater for the housing needs of a growing and changing population. Progress

has been made on a number of fronts since the plan's release.

Population growth

Estimated resident population figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that the Lower Hunter's population increased by around 13,700 people over the two years to 30 June 2008.

Although it is difficult to form conclusions after only two years of data, calculated over the 25-year life of the regional strategy it shows that the regional strategy's population projection of 160,000 additional people is nearly on target. Furthermore, it illustrates that it was essential for the NSW Government to increase the projections from estimations of 125,000 additional people in the draft strategy in order to open up sufficient land for housing to avoid housing affordability problems.

The Department will continue to reassess population projections as part of the standard five-yearly reviews undertaken for all NSW Government regional planning strategies.

Maitland has had the largest growth rate over the last two years. The regional strategy recognises that Maitland is one of the fastest growing local government areas in the state.

TABLE 1: POPULATION GROWTH IN LOWER HUNTER 2006-08

Local Government Area	Estimated Resident Population at 30 June 2008	Population Change since 2006	Average Annual Growth Rate (%/yr)
Lower Hunter			
Cessnock	49,900	1,600	1.62
Lake Macquarie	195,600	3,600	0.93
Maitland	67,600	2,900	2.23
Newcastle	152,700	3,400	1.11
Port Stephens	65,500	2,200	1.7
Total	531,200*	13,700*	1.30*

*May not sum to total due to rounding
 Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Regional Population Growth, 2006-2007 and Regional Population Growth, 2007-2008.

Rezoning of new land

The NSW Government has supported a number of rezonings of land, particularly in the fast growing Maitland local government area, to help meet housing targets. Overall, more than 18,000 lots have been rezoned in major release areas in the Lower Hunter since the release of the draft regional strategy.



Newcastle's coastline

TABLE 2: PROGRESS ON RECENT MAJOR GREENFIELD RELEASE AREAS REQUIRING REZONINGS IN LOWER HUNTER

Local Government Area	Residential Development	State of progress	Estimated new dwellings*
Port Stephens	Karuah	Draft local environmental plan (LEP) in preparation	167
	North Raymond Terrace	Draft LEP in preparation	4,700
	Medowie	Structure plan adopted by council	3,000
	Anna Bay	Structure plan adopted by council	200
Maitland	Thornton North (1)	LEP gazetted July 2007, subdivisions approved	2,500
	Thornton North (2)	Draft LEP in preparation	2,500
	Aberglasslyn	LEP gazetted March 2007	1,200
	Gillieston Heights	LEP gazetted March 2006, housing construction underway	1,200
	Lochinvar	LEP gazetted July 2007	190
Cessnock	Sanctuary Villages	Proposed state environmental planning policy (SEPP) submitted and exhibited	700
	Huntlee	SEPP gazetted January 2009	7,500
	Cliftleigh	LEP gazetted November 2008	900
	Kitchener	Draft LEP exhibited	900
	Nulkaba	Draft LEP exhibited	450
	Bellbird North	Draft LEP exhibited	3,500
	Greta	LEP gazetted December 2008	1,300
Lake Macquarie	North Cooranbong	SEPP gazetted December 2008	2,500
	Pambulong	Draft plan in preparation	450
	Wyee	Structure plan underway	2,000
	Catherine Hill Bay (Rose Property Group)	SEPP gazetted for Rose Property Group September 2008 with concurrent concept plan approval	600
	Middle Camp Coal & Allied)	Proposed SEPP amendment exhibited	222
	Nords Wharf (Coal & Allied)	Proposed SEPP amendment exhibited	90
	Morisset	Structure plan adopted by council and LEP gazetted May 2008 for 200 dwellings (Morisset North)	2,500
Newcastle	Dan Lands	SEPP gazetted February 2007. Project application approved November 2006	400
	Minmi	Proposed SEPP amendment exhibited	3,300

* These numbers may change as a result of the detailed assessment process.

Planning for major release areas

The regional strategy identifies a series of proposed urban areas. Planning is underway for many of these areas, as identified below:

- *North Cooranbong*

A rezoning proposal for the State significant site at North Cooranbong has now been approved and will provide up to 2,500 new dwellings and a mixed commercial and retail centre. The 355 hectare site is expected to generate up to 5,000 jobs and \$2 billion in economic activity over the 20 year lifespan of development. The residential zoning will provide three per cent of total greenfield dwellings identified for the Lower Hunter under the regional strategy.

A proposed voluntary infrastructure agreement between the developer and the NSW Government was on exhibition until December 2008.

- *Greta*

The Greta LEP near Cessnock was also gazetted in December 2008 with the aim to deliver further economic growth and housing security to the Lower Hunter whilst preserving the area's heritage values as a former migrant camp. The plans include the rezoning of 245 hectares of land from rural to a mix of general business and environmental protection zones as well as a residential zone providing over 1,300 new dwellings.

- *Huntlee New Town*

The regional strategy identifies Huntlee as a major release area that will deliver over six per cent of total new dwellings required under

the strategy by 2031. A concept plan for the Huntlee New Town for up to 7,200 dwellings and 300 rural residential lots at Branxton was placed on public exhibition from December 2007 to February 2008, with a preferred project report lodged in April 2008. Rezoning of the State significant site was gazetted in January 2009 for nearly 700 hectares of residential and rural residential development for up to 20,000 people.

- *Medowie*

A draft Medowie Strategy has been developed to guide and manage urban growth, build communities and conserve significant habitat corridors in the Medowie locality. It was prepared by Port Stephens Council to complement the Port Stephens Community Settlement Strategy 2007 and the regional strategy.

Port Stephens Council re-exhibited the draft Medowie Strategy between April and June 2008 after receiving over 300 written submissions from local residents, organisations, developers and government agencies. The latest version of the draft strategy provides for around 3,700 residential lots and a revised biodiversity offsets scheme. The strategy and implementing LEP will be considered by the Department in the future.

- *Wallarah Peninsula*

In September 2008, the NSW Government approved scaled-down plans by Rose Property Group for development of up to 600 dwellings at Catherine Hill Bay and a further 187 dwellings

at Gwandalan. Rezoning of the State significant site was gazetted on 2 September 2008. In response to the feedback of the public and an Independent Hearing and Assessment Panel, the Department significantly reduced the number of dwellings at Gwandalan from 312 to 187 and also reduced the maximum developable area from 60 to 58 hectares.

Another potential State significant site listing and concurrent concept plans, proposed by Coal and Allied at 'Middle Camp' in Catherine Hill Bay and Nords Wharf were exhibited in late 2007 and early 2008, after being extended by four weeks. Independent hearing and assessment panel hearings were held for both development proposals and they are now under assessment by the Department.

- *Sanctuary Villages*

A concept plan and a proposed State significant site listing for the Sanctuary Villages site near Millfield and Paxton is currently under assessment by the Department and was publicly exhibited in September 2008.



Housing construction in Newcastle

- *Lochinvar*

Maitland City Council was given \$40,000 by the Department to develop a structure plan for the 700 hectare site. The plan was completed and adopted by the council in October 2007.

- *Thornton North*

Thornton North is one of the largest development areas in the Lower Hunter, with an estimated lot yield of nearly 5,000 dwellings. An LEP amendment rezoning approximately half the land (allowing for 2,500 lots) was gazetted on 27 July 2007.

The LEP included a “satisfactory arrangements” clause, which prevented development until the Department of Planning was satisfied that arrangement had been made for the provision of essential infrastructure.

The Department of Planning has announced that this clause has been fulfilled in relation to the first stages of development, enabling council to assess various development applications for subdivision for around 892 lots.

- *North Raymond Terrace*

A working group comprising local, State and Commonwealth

Government representatives has been established to investigate Port Stephens Council’s plan for a new town of up to 5,000 dwellings at North Raymond Terrace.

The working group includes representatives from the Department, along with the Department of Defence and Port Stephens Council. This group has been established to consider a number of factors, including the impact of the nearby Williamstown RAAF Base and housing affordability, when making its recommendations.



Housing construction at Gillieston Heights

CASE STUDY: HOUSES ON THE GROUND AT GILLIESTON HEIGHTS

About 1,200 lots are now available to be developed at Gillieston Heights in Maitland. The estate was rezoned in early 2006 in line with the draft regional strategy which was being finalised at the time.

Maitland Council confirmed in November 2008 that 179 lots have been created so far in this estate, where there are 40 approved dwellings and about 25 under construction.

Lower Hunter urban development program established

Another way the strategy aims to ensure an adequate supply of land for residential development is through the recently established Lower Hunter Urban Development Program.

The Lower Hunter Urban Development Program will annually monitor housing supply and demand, so that additional new residential land can be rezoned and brought into supply as needed.

The program is overseen by a committee chaired by the Department of Planning, which

includes representatives from every local council in the Lower Hunter, the development industry and representatives from key infrastructure and service providers such as the Roads and Traffic Authority and Hunter Water. The committee was formed in March 2008. It will meet three to four times a year.

CENTRES AND CORRIDORS

The regional strategy identifies Newcastle CBD as a regional city, along with four other major regional centres and two emerging major regional centres. These centres will be a focus for sustainable housing and employment growth. Since the strategy's release, planning has been underway in most of these centres, as outlined below.

- *Newcastle CBD*

In February 2008, the NSW Government gazetted its 25-year plan for the Newcastle CBD. About 10,000 new jobs and 6,500 new residents are proposed in the city centre. The plan includes a new focus on development around Wickham Railway Station and revitalisation of the West End of Newcastle while retaining and protecting heritage values in the city east precinct. Changes were made to the draft plan following council and community feedback.

The NSW Government has approved a concept plan for the former Royal Newcastle Hospital site and a project application for the proposed Peninsula Apartments complex, on the Wirraway Flats site adjacent to the hospital. This will deliver 189 new dwellings.

- *Charlestown*

Charlestown is identified as a major regional centre in the regional strategy, where an additional 4,400 jobs and 3,200 dwellings are proposed by 2031. The Department provided \$100,000 in planning reform



funding to Lake Macquarie City Council to help it undertake a master plan for the CBD area of Charlestown. In January 2008, the council adopted a master plan which aims to help achieve the job and housing targets, with some housing while also addressing other issues including heritage preservation, supporting public transport and defining a 'main street'.

- *Morisset*

Morisset is identified as an emerging major regional centre in the regional strategy. The Department provided \$65,000 through its planning reform funds to Lake Macquarie City Council to prepare a Morisset Structure Plan. It is proposed that there be at least an additional 1,600 jobs and 600 dwellings in this centre. The structure plan was placed on exhibition in 2007 and again in 2008 following revisions. The revised plan addresses issues such as desired future character, environment and conservation, industrial land requirements, infrastructure and open space.

- *Glendale/Cardiff*

The Glendale/Cardiff area is an emerging regional centre, as part of the regional strategy. Lake Macquarie City Council is working on a master plan for this centre.

These plans for Charlestown, Morisset and Glendale/Cardiff will be implemented through the new Lake Macquarie LEP.

Newcastle – Lake Macquarie western corridor planning strategy

The draft western corridor planning strategy was placed on exhibition in April-May 2009. The strategy adds further planning detail to this key area identified in the regional strategy which will help guide the delivery of 8,000 new dwellings, 1,500 hectares of employment lands and increased conservation lands over the next 25 years in the 6380 hectare corridor stretching from Beresfield to Killingworth.



ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT

Port of Newcastle protected through planning controls

In 2006-07, the value of trade moved through the Port of Newcastle was \$8.3 billion, with \$5.7 billion of this related to coal and \$2.6 billion in other trade. A study has found an expected \$1.5 billion will be invested in the port up to 2010, with potential job generation being about 1,530 positions per year.

The regional strategy identifies the need for planning provisions to protect and promote the role of Port of Newcastle, including maintaining employment land around the port for industries that require port access.

To this end, the NSW Government has proposed the Port of Newcastle be identified as a State significant site to recognise its economic importance and provide greater consistency of operation. It is proposed to consolidate the existing zonings and also identify

the importance of associated industrial land and key transport corridors for the port's ongoing operation. Additional commercial uses are also proposed along some boundaries of the Newcastle industrial zone to provide a buffer separating existing residential areas from port industry zoned land – helping protecting the port from damaging land-use conflict. The proposal went on public exhibition in May and June 2008.

Freeway North

In October 2008, the NSW Government gave the go-ahead for a major industrial business park at Beresfield, which will deliver up to 2,100 jobs to the Hunter region. Located on Weakleys Drive, the \$341 million Freeway North Industrial Business Park will be adjacent to the F3 Freeway and New England Highway traffic corridors.

The regional strategy identifies this business park as one of several important sites that will support growing employment needs in the Lower Hunter over the next

25 years. The development will encourage increased business investment, better environmental outcomes and the creation of jobs closer to people's homes.

Tomago site declared State significant

The regional strategy identifies Tomago as a potential location to provide some of the additional industrial land to service the Lower Hunter's expected jobs growth.

The NSW Government has helped achieve this aim by declaring, in June 2007, two industrial sites at Tomago and Kooragang as State significant to support business investment and local jobs. The declaration will underpin the development of a new 351 hectare industrial park and sets aside 241 hectares of internationally recognised wetlands for environmental protection. Future detailed planning applications will be made to either the Department of Planning (for larger projects) or to Port Stephens Council.

Anambah Business Park LEP gazetted

The regional strategy identifies land between Lochinvar and Rutherford, north-west of Maitland, as potential employment lands. An LEP proposed by Maitland City Council for the Anambah Business Park, located on the north side of the New England Highway, was approved by the Minister for Planning in May 2007. The site provides 50 hectares of employment land for light industry and a business park.

Proponent selected for redevelopment of former steelworks site

The former BHP steelworks site is a key site that will satisfy the need for additional jobs and employment lands in the Hunter region. Having been unused since 1999, the NSW Government this year selected Buildev Intertrade Consortium Pty Ltd to redevelop the 62 hectare site that constitutes over a third of the existing Intertrade Industrial Park.

The approval will inject \$120 million of new investment and a potential 3,000 jobs into the Hunter's industrial sector from as early as 2011. The site will be a key hub for general and freight related industry, including warehousing and distribution in the Lower Hunter.

Final Freight Hub Hunter study

The regional strategy recognises the opportunity to expand the freight handling capacity of the Lower Hunter and identifies a 4,000 hectare potential site within proximity to the Port of Newcastle and the junction of the New England and Pacific Highways at Beresfield. A final Freight Hub Hunter study released by the NSW Government in late 2008 investigated the demand for a freight precinct at this site within a regional, State and national context over the next 25 years.

The study found the site could handle two thirds of the 750,000 import/export shipping containers moving through the Port of Newcastle by 2031 and deliver improved efficiency of freight movements on the State and national rail networks.



Newcastle Airport at Williamtown

CASE STUDY: NEWCASTLE AIRPORT

Newcastle Airport is identified as key regional infrastructure in the regional strategy and in the last three years has undergone an increase in employment of over 50 per cent and has contributed an additional \$226 million to the local economy. The Department has been planning in various ways to accommodate the site's continued growth over the next 20 years.

In January 2009, the proposed Newcastle Airport expansion was declared a major project and potential State significant site. This followed a request from Newcastle Airport Ltd, which is owned by Newcastle and Port Stephens Councils. The declaration will streamline the current complicated assessment process and engage all tiers of government, including federal agencies. The expansion will include extended domestic and international terminals, car parks and other airport support services.

In partnership with key stakeholders, the Department has also commenced a key action in the regional strategy, which is to enhance the capabilities of the RAAF Base Williamtown/ Newcastle Airport Defence and Airport Related Employment Zone (DAREZ).

In February 2009, the rezoning of the 88 hectare site was approved, allowing for a range of defence and airport related uses including aeronautics industries and logistics, freight storage facilities and business premises with the capacity to generate over 5,600 jobs.

The rezoning supports the Land Use Development Strategy prepared for the site in December 2007 by the Department of Planning in consultation with a project control group of various State Government agencies, Port Stephens Council and Newcastle Airports Ltd.

ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES

For many years, environmental groups had been campaigning for the protection of green corridors stretching from the Watagan Ranges near Lake Macquarie to the Stockton Bight in Port Stephens and on the Wallarah Peninsula between Swansea and the Central Coast. The draft regional strategy did not contain these green corridors.

However, the final strategy did provide these green corridors – ensuring the Lower Hunter has up to 32,000 hectares in permanently protected conservation lands as it grows into the future.

Since the release of the final strategy, work has been underway to implement the green corridor vision.



Green corridor looking south from Mt Sugarloaf

IMPLEMENTING THE LOWER HUNTER GREEN CORRIDOR VISION

- *Huntlee site rezoning*

Rezoning of the Huntlee New Town development site in January 2009 has triggered the dedication and transfer of nearly 5,900 hectares of conservation land. The conservation lands include some 65 hectares of endangered ecological communities, including Central Hunter riparian forest, coastal warm temperate subtropical rainforest and Wollombi redgum river oak forest.



Elderslie grass trees

- *Public land set aside for conservation*

Approximately 20,000 hectares of land in the Lower Hunter was set aside for conservation with the commencement on 1 July 2007 of the National Parks Estate (Lower Hunter Region Reservations) Act.



Lower Hunter Green Corridors

- Green Corridor Lands
- Rural and Resource Land
- Urban land (current and proposed)



L-R: Regent Honeyeater, Eastern Pygmy Possum; Masked Owl



- Karuah

The Department protected 30 hectares of land in the green corridor, including a State significant wetland, by refusing a rezoning proposal.

- Anna Bay

A proposed rezoning from rural to tourist was not supported because land was in the Watagan to Stockton green corridor, as well as being located near the Stockton Bight in an active sand drift area and a mapped coastal hazard zone.



Recreational tours at Stockton Bight

- Catherine Hill Bay

Following the approval of plans at Catherine Hill Bay, more than 310 hectares of formerly privately-owned land was transferred to the NSW Government and local council in late 2008. The transfer secures a green corridor between the Central Coast and Lower Hunter and assists the protection of 15 threatened fauna species, including the Regent Honeyeater, Eastern Pygmy Possum and Masked Owl.

The transferred section includes the southern section of Catherine Hill Bay Beach, which has until now been privately-owned to the mean high water mark, along with 1.8km of Lake Macquarie foreshore.



Catherine Hill Bay Beach

- *Transfer of public land to green corridor*

Approximately 20,000 hectares of land in the Lower Hunter has been set aside for conservation with the commencement on 1 July 2007 of the *National Parks Estate (Lower Hunter Region Reservations) Act 2006*.

The Act enabled transfer of 20,000 hectares of government-owned land to the State's conservation reserves. The reservation of these areas will also conserve significant areas of threatened plant communities, endangered forest types and habitat for a range of threatened species.

The majority of these areas have or will be transferred into State conservation areas and national parks under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* and will provide a range of additional recreational opportunities for the local community.

- *Transfer of private land to green corridor*

The regional strategy identifies that as much as 12,000 hectares of private land could be transferred into national parks and reserves in return for development potential.

Following the approval of Rose Property Group's residential development at Catherine Hill Bay in September 2008, over 310 hectares of formerly privately-owned land was transferred to public ownership. The transfer is a significant contribution toward the creation of a vital green corridor in the Lower Hunter

and assists ongoing protection of 15 threatened fauna species, four endangered ecological communities and two threatened flora species. The threatened fauna species include the Wallum Froglet, Glossy Black-Cockatoo, Regent Honeyeater, Swift Parrot, Powerful Owl, Masked Owl, Eastern Pygmy Possum, Grey-Headed Flying-Fox and Greater Broad-Nosed Bat.

The area to be transferred to the NSW Government includes the southern section of Catherine Hill Bay beach, which until now has been privately-owned to the mean high water mark, along with 1.8km of the Lake Macquarie foreshore.

Furthermore, the rezoning of the Huntlee New Town development site in January 2009 helps trigger the dedication of nearly 5,900 hectares of conservation land across the Hunter region into public ownership for permanent environmental protection.

This conservation land includes 803 hectares within the site itself and 4,988 hectares of conservation land in other parts of the Hunter region, including 2,287 hectares of land at Mt Poppong and Pickle Bottle Creek, 643 hectares at Pokolbin State Forest and 499 hectares at Elderslie.

The conservation lands include some 65 hectares of endangered ecological communities, including Central Hunter riparian forest, coastal warm temperate subtropical rainforest and Wollombi redgum river oak forest.

A 17 hectare parcel of land located to the south of the first neighbourhood in the Huntlee development site will also be dedicated for research and propagation of the critically endangered *persoonia pauciflora* shrub.

- *Important LEP decisions*

The Department is helping to preserve the Lower Hunter's green corridors, through decisions on proposed LEPs. Below are two LEP case studies:

CASE STUDY: KARUAH

An LEP was proposed to rezone 30 hectares of land at Karuah from rural to residential uses. In mid-2007, the Department did not support the LEP progressing because the land was part of the Watagan to Stockton green corridor which is designated to be managed for conservation purposes and precludes urban development. The site includes a State significant wetland.

CASE STUDY: ANNA BAY

A draft LEP amendment to rezone land at Anna Bay from rural to tourist was not supported in November 2007 because the land was in the Watagan to Stockton green corridor. The site is located near the Stockton Bight within an active sand drift area and a mapped coastal hazard zone. The Department is working with Port Stephens Council to determine an appropriate zoning for the land.

Tillegra Dam

The regional strategy describes the Lower Hunter's water supply as variable, with resources depleting and replenishing quickly depending on weather conditions.

In November 2006 the NSW Government announced works to secure the water future of the Lower Hunter and Central Coast regions for the next 60 years (well beyond the life of the current regional strategy). This included construction of a \$250 million, 450 gigalitre dam at Tillegra, north of Dungog, that will approximately double the existing water storage capacity of the Lower Hunter region. The project is also expected to create about 200 full time jobs during construction.

A project application was lodged in November 2007 and the Director General's requirements for environmental assessment were issued in January 2008. The project was declared critical infrastructure in January 2009.

Release of sea-level rise mapping report

The regional strategy when released noted that the NSW Government was preparing a survey to deliver highly accurate topographical information from which modelling of coastal inundation, flooding and recession can be improved. In May 2008, the NSW Government publicly released this mapping project covering the Wyong, Lake Macquarie, Newcastle City, Gosford and Port Stephens council areas.

The \$500,000 project used cutting-edge airborne laser technology to map low-lying areas to assess areas vulnerable to future sea level rise. Further information on how the NSW Government is planning for climate change is provided on page 47 of this report.

Regional conservation plan

A key action in the regional strategy is the preparation of a regional conservation plan. In April 2009, the Department of Environment and Climate Change released this plan which sets out the region's nature conservation priorities for the next 25 years.

The plan identifies areas with high conservation values, and which provide habitat for endangered ecological communities or threatened flora and fauna. To ensure that these areas are protected for the use and enjoyment of current and future generations, the Government will bring these areas into the State's national parks and reserves system.

The plan includes details of significant additions to the national parks and reserves systems in the region.



Balloons over Lower Hunter vineyards

Far North Coast Regional Strategy



The regional strategy aims to contain the spread of urban development, efficiently use existing services and infrastructure and protect areas of high conservation value.

INTRODUCTION

The Far North Coast Regional Strategy was released in January 2007.

It is a 25-year strategy to promote prosperity, protect the environment and guide jobs and housing growth in six council areas – Tweed, Byron, Ballina, Lismore, Kyogle and Richmond Valley. The strategy supports 32,500 new jobs, 60,400 additional residents and an extra 51,000 homes by 2031.

It also locks in important green breaks between towns and villages from Tweed Heads to Evans Head to limit sprawl and high-rise development along the coastline. Development boundaries will also protect environmental and agricultural lands, including paperbark swamps and the Cudgen Plateau.

HOUSING AND SETTLEMENT

The regional strategy aims to contain the spread of urban development, efficiently use existing services and infrastructure and protect areas of high

conservation value. The table below shows that in the past two years, the strongest growth in population has been in Tweed, one of the region's major centres, and the developing major regional centre of Ballina. This is in line with the strategy.

Population growth

Estimated resident population figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that the Far North Coast's population has increased by 7,300 people over the two years to 30 June 2008. Over the life of the regional strategy, this shows that the region's current population growth after two years is above the regional strategy's population projection of 60,400 additional people. However it is difficult to draw any form of conclusion from just two years of data in the context of a 25-year strategy, particularly when factoring in a potential ageing of the population.

If necessary, the regional strategy's growth projections will be adjusted accordingly as part of the standard five-yearly reviews undertaken for all the Government's regional planning strategies.

TABLE 3: POPULATION GROWTH IN THE FAR NORTH COAST IN 2006-08

Local Government Area	Estimated Resident Population at 30 June 2008	Population Change Since 2006	Average Annual Growth Rate (%/yr)
Far North Coast			
Ballina	41,700	1,400	1.69
Byron	31,500	800	1.29
Kyogle	9,700	0	0.06
Lismore	45,000	800	0.93
Richmond Valley	22,700	600	1.18
Tweed	86,800	3,700	2.2
Total	237,400*	7,300*	1.56*

*May not sum to total due to rounding

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Regional Population Growth, 2006-2007 and Regional Population Growth, 2007-2008.



Mouth of the Tweed River at Tweed Heads



Kingscliff town centre

North Coast Settlement Planning Guidelines

The regional strategy promotes a settlement pattern that accommodates future growth, while providing quality places to live.

In August 2007 the North Coast Settlement Planning Guidelines were released to help councils prepare their local growth management strategies, which will outline how they will accommodate the additional 60,400 people expected to be living in the region by 2031.

For example, the guidelines provide detail on environmental criteria and their application, as well as planning and urban design principles for residential, rural residential, commercial, industrial and tourism lands.

All councils are now using these guidelines.

North Coast Urban Design Guidelines

The North Coast Urban Design Guidelines were released in March 2009 to manage growth on the North Coast in a way that ensures new development is designed to reflect and enhance the unique natural, cultural, visual and built character values of North Coast towns and villages.

The document outlines the characteristics of specific settlements and design guidelines for each, including coastal villages, inland villages, towns, major towns and regional centres.

For example, the guidelines support visual and physical connections to the coast or other water bodies in new development as well as concentrating development in the town core in preference to outward expansion. They also support maintaining existing heritage buildings in new streetscape design, promoting

consistent building heights and setbacks and encouraging areas where large trees can mature.

Housing and land monitor

The regional strategy requires the Department to establish and maintain a new North Coast housing and land monitor. This will provide annual monitoring of the release and use of new housing and employment land.

This data will help inform future planning of services and infrastructure investment priorities on the North Coast. In close consultation with Far North Coast councils, the Department in May 2008 finalised the data collection system all councils will now use to capture this information.

Far North Coast region residential submarket analysis

The residential submarket analysis which was released in March 2009, reviews housing submarkets in the six local government areas of the Far North Coast to establish whether the correct emphasis is being placed on housing availability and affordability, and how future housing should be provided to best meet the targets of the regional strategy. The Department will use the findings of the report to ensure the timely release of residential land releases in the region and in its five-yearly review of the regional strategy.

Planning for major release areas

The regional strategy identifies a series of proposed urban areas. Planning is underway for a number of these areas, as identified below:

- *Cumbalum Ridge*

The Cumbalum Ridge area, north-west of Ballina, has been identified in the regional strategy as a proposed residential release area, which will eventually accommodate up to 4,300 dwellings and associated village and neighbourhood centres. In September 2007, the Department advised Ballina Shire Council it could proceed with a local environment plan (LEP) which rezones the first two precincts of the development to residential.

The council has been asked to provide a local environmental study with the rezoning plan, which examines issues such as visual amenity, Aboriginal cultural heritage and housing types and needs having regard to the regional strategy's aims.

- *Area "E", Terranora*

In October 2007 the Minister approved an LEP rezoning 297 hectares at Terranora in accordance with Tweed Shire Council's urban release program. It is expected that this will provide for 1,100 new dwellings. Under the LEP significant coastal wetlands (89 hectares) and an adjacent buffer on the southern edge of the broadwater (17 hectares) were included in an environmental protection zone. The remaining 189 hectares have been zoned to house an anticipated population of about 2,500 people and associated commercial, recreational and social needs.



Tweed Heads city centre plan

The NSW Government has announced plans to create a new long-term vision for the Tweed Heads city centre. This work is part of the NSW Government's Cities Taskforce project, to drive growth and investment into regional centres. The Cities Taskforce project has to date produced long-term visions and detailed planning documents for Wollongong, Gosford, Newcastle, Penrith, Parramatta and Liverpool.

A reference panel made up of stakeholders and community representatives, including local businesses, residents and ratepayers and environment groups, has been established to provide input as the plans are created. An LEP to provide guidance for further development of the Tweed Heads City Centre is currently being prepared for exhibition.

ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT

The regional strategy designates land within the town and village growth boundary for future release for industrial purposes. Councils are encouraged to stage the release of this land through their local growth management strategies.

Employment lands

There are a number of parcels of land on the Far North Coast identified for employment purposes in the regional strategy. During 2008, rezonings of land for industrial use have been completed for an extension of the Southern Cross Industrial Estate near Ballina Airport (Ballina Shire), a new industrial area south of Lismore at Whyrallah Road (Lismore City) and an additional industrial area near the Casino



State significant farmland at Cudgen plateau

Abattoirs (Richmond Valley Council) with a combined total of more than 80 hectares, supporting employment growth in the region.

Other rezoning proposals for employment lands which have been initiated by councils but have not yet been completed include an industrial area on the Summerland Way at the southern edge of Kyogle, and a new employment area near the Pacific Highway west of Pottsville totalling 46 hectares. The Department is working with the councils to ensure environmentally acceptable development takes place on these sites, having regard to any site constraints

The Department's North Coast Settlement Planning Guidelines released in August 2007 give

guidance to councils in preparing their local growth management strategies. This will ensure that industrial land is made available in a variety of locations to encourage new opportunities as they arise in all major regional centres, major towns and towns.

Tweed employment land management strategy

In March 2007, the Department provided \$35,000 to Tweed Shire Council to prepare an employment land management strategy. The strategy's main purpose is to review current and future commercial and industrial employment land use to improve local job supply, youth unemployment and the decline in rural industries.

The strategy has found that an uptake of ten hectares of industrial land will be required each year to meet projected employment needs over the next 25 years.



Far North Coast littoral rainforest



Lake at the South Golden Beach site

The strategy was publicly exhibited by Tweed Shire Council from 7 May to 27 June 2008. The Department will continue to work with Council to plan for additional employment land.

ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES

Town and village growth boundaries

The regional strategy outlines a series of town and village growth boundaries to reinforce the role of existing villages and centres and ensure there are green breaks between coastal settlements to protect important coastal biodiversity and resource areas. These green breaks include:

- coastal vegetation and heath land between Broken Head and Lennox Head;
- littoral rainforests at Bogangar and Wooyung;
- State significant farmland on the Cudgen plateau.

Except for some speculative interest, no urban rezoning proposals have been proposed, outside the town and village growth boundaries, since the regional strategy was finalised (in both coastal and non-coastal areas). This indicates the regional strategy is providing strong policy direction to councils and development proponents.

Purchase of coastal land

In May 2007, the Department acquired an eight hectare site at South Golden Beach, north of Brunswick Heads, under the Coastal Lands Protection Scheme for inclusion in the adjoining Billinudgel Nature Reserve. The land, purchased for \$750,000, has important biodiversity values including coastal dunes and a range of mature trees including coastal banksias, paperbarks, melaleucas and Bangalow palms.

It also has a shallow lake between the dunes and a creek which joins a large coastal lake system in the Billinudgel Nature Reserve. Securing this site will expand options for outdoor recreation, allowing people to move freely between two existing reserves.

Illawarra Regional Strategy



“ Sensitive environmental areas in the region’s north, including its unique escarpment, will be secured by focusing growth around town centres and new release areas further south.

INTRODUCTION

The Illawarra Regional Strategy was released in February 2007.

It is a 25-year strategy to support local jobs and housing growth, and protect the environment in the council areas of Kiama, Shellharbour and Wollongong. The strategy supports 30,000 new jobs, 47,600 new residents and an extra 38,000 new homes by 2031.

The plan also protects the region’s natural landscape and coastal location, including 14 high value estuaries, coastal lakes and wetlands. Sensitive environmental areas in the region’s north, including its unique escarpment, will be secured by focusing growth around town centres and new release areas further south.

HOUSING AND SETTLEMENT

Population growth

The latest population update from the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows the region has grown by an additional 6,200 people in the two years to 30 June 2008. Over the life of the regional strategy, this growth rate is above the regional strategy’s forecasted projection of 47,600 additional people. However, care needs to be taken in any interpretation of the figure as it represents only two years of data in the context of a 25-year strategy. Nevertheless, there is clearly an ongoing need to provide an affordable housing supply in the Illawarra.

The Department will continue to reassess population projections as part of the standard five-yearly reviews undertaken for all NSW Government regional planning strategies.



Coomaditchi Lagoon



Elevated view of Illawarra's coastline

TABLE 4: POPULATION GROWTH IN THE ILLAWARRA 2006-08

Local Government Area	Estimated Resident Population at 30 June 2008	Population Change Since 2006	Average Annual Growth Rate (%/yr)
Illawarra			
Kiama	20,300	300	0.62
Shellharbour	65,600	2,200	1.67
Wollongong	198,300	3,800	0.96
Total	284,200*	6,200*	1.1*

*May not sum to total due to rounding

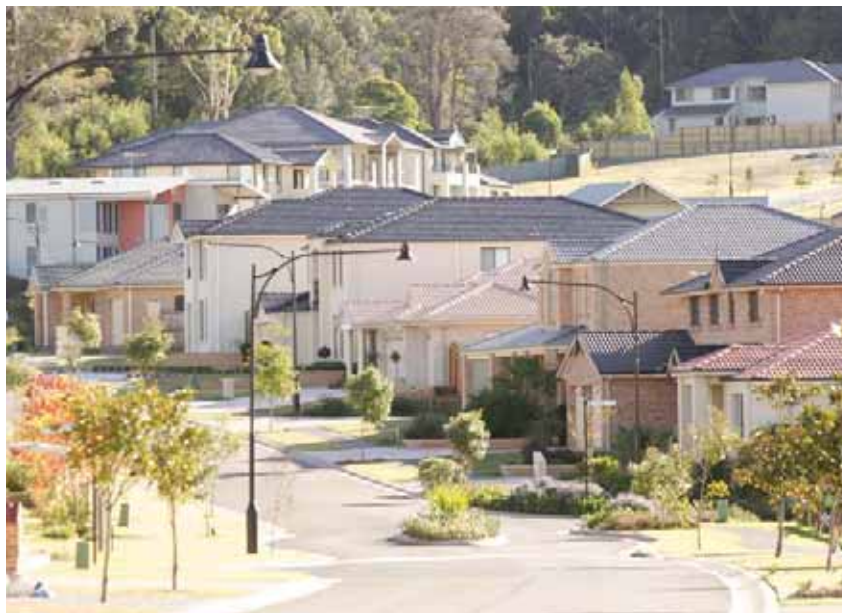
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Regional Population Growth, 2006-2007 and Regional Population Growth, 2007-2008.

Illawarra Urban Development Program

The Illawarra Urban Development Program (UDP) was re-established in 2008, implementing a regional strategy action. The Illawarra UDP is the key program to manage land and housing supply in the Illawarra.

The program is supported by a stakeholder committee, known as the Illawarra Urban Development Committee, comprising Wollongong, Shellharbour and Kiama Council representatives, key State agencies and industry groups. The new committee, chaired by the Department of Planning, held its first meeting in March 2008.

The Illawarra UDP will be supported by an annual monitoring and forecasting program, which will provide information about the number of new releases and dwelling supply in the region.



Residential development in the Illawarra

A forum was held on 25 November 2008 and the outcomes of this will be reflected in an annual update.

The rate of housing production is expected to increase in the Illawarra once new development areas around West Dapto are released.

Planning for new release areas

The regional strategy identifies a series of proposed urban areas. Planning is underway for some of these areas, as identified below:

- West Dapto

West Dapto is the priority new release area to cater for regional housing demand in the Illawarra. Planning work and investigations for developing the West Dapto urban release area is well underway.

The Department supported Wollongong City Council's draft West Dapto local environmental plan (LEP) being placed on public exhibition in September 2007. The NSW Government's former Growth Centres Commission examined significant issues raised during the exhibition period and has determined that West Dapto has the capacity for around 16,000 new dwellings over the next 30 to 40 years. Wollongong City Council has endorsed the findings of the former Growth Centres

TABLE 5: GREENFIELD DWELLING COMPLETIONS IN ILLAWARRA OVER LAST FOUR YEARS

	2004 – 05	2005 – 06	2006 – 07	2007 – 08
Greenfield Development				
Albion Park South	76	74	60	54
Edgewood	36	43	77	21
Haywards Bay	24	17	52	54
Horsley	30	13	18	23
Lakeview/Flinders (inc. Shellharbour city centre)	84	85	114	73
Sandon Point	18	20	16	14
Shell Cove	57	89	68	72
South Gerringong (part 1) (Elambra)	28	25	19	14
Tullimbah Village	0	0	31	0
West Dapto	0	5	37	6
West Kiama	34	37	21	7
TOTAL	387	408	513	338

Source: NSW Department of Planning



Proposed future skyline of Wollongong CBD

Commission review and will implement the recommendations progressively. The Council and State Government are moving forward with the rezoning of Stages 1 and 2 which will deliver 6,600 new dwellings and 324 hectares of employment land (the Kembla Grange industrial areas).

- *Wollongong city centre plan*

The regional strategy has a key aim to strengthen Wollongong as a regional city by driving housing and jobs into the CBD area.

To help achieve this, the Wollongong City centre plan was released in February 2007. This detailed plan supports development.

For instance, since the plan has been in place, the Department has approved the \$311 million GPT 'West Keira' retail development which will stimulate business investment in the Wollongong CBD and deliver 871 operational jobs alone.

ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT

Illawarra Employment Lands Taskforce

The regional strategy emphasises the importance of identifying and protecting sufficient employment lands for jobs growth.

The Illawarra Employment Lands Taskforce was established as part of the State Plan to work with councils and industry to ensure the short and long term availability of employment land in the local government areas of Wollongong, Shellharbour and Kiama (along with Wingecarribee and Shoalhaven). The Taskforce, which held its inaugural meeting in January 2007, is chaired by the Minister for the Illawarra. The Department is one of the key stakeholders.

The Taskforce will assist in resolving whole-of-government issues in regard to employment lands, including ensuring they are serviced with road, utility, and other infrastructure.

Employment Lands Guidelines

The region's Employment Lands Guidelines were released in February 2008. The guidelines apply to the Illawarra region councils but also the adjoining Shoalhaven and Wingecarribee areas, which have strong economic links to the region. The guidelines will assist the NSW Government and the region's councils to promote the orderly planning and development of employment land in the region and the monitoring of the supply of employment lands and their appropriate location. Councils are to consider the Employment Land Principles contained in the guidelines when preparing new LEPs that may reduce or impact on the employment land capacity of the Region.

The table on the following page indicates lands identified by the guidelines as having regional significance as areas generating employment.

Employment lands monitoring

The Illawarra and South Coast Employment Lands Database has been updated and finalised by the Department. The database will enable the NSW Government and councils to track the availability and status of regional employment lands in order to assist in supporting economic growth and employment for the Illawarra and South Coast regions. The Department is currently preparing a summary on employment land for the Illawarra and South Coast regions. This is envisaged to be finalised later in 2009.

TABLE 6: REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT ILLAWARRA EMPLOYMENT AREAS

Employment Precinct	Local Government Area
Port Kembla industrial precinct and Port of Port Kembla, West Kembla Grange, Tallawarra Power Station site, University of Wollongong and Innovation Campus, Wollongong City Centre, Warrawong and Dapto major regional centres	Wollongong
Illawarra Regional Airport, Shell Cove Precinct, Shellharbour City Centre	Shellharbour
Kiama Town Centre, Bombo Quarries	Kiama

CASE STUDIES: PROGRESS ON REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT EMPLOYMENT AREAS

- *Port Kembla industrial precinct*

The Port Kembla precinct is identified as a strategically important employment site in the regional strategy. Economic studies show the port contributes \$418 million annually to the Illawarra economy and provides 3,500 direct and indirect job opportunities.

It is proposed that the Port Kembla precinct be identified as a State significant site to recognise its economic importance and provide greater consistency of operation. A zoning plan has been prepared for the site, which recognises the importance of the port facilities and related industrial land for NSW’s economy and will ensure that land is preserved for important port related functions. The State significant site proposal went on public exhibition from 28 May to 27 June 2008. A draft SEPP is currently being drafted to include Port Kembla as a State significant site.



- *Port of Port Kembla*

Since the Government announcement of the NSW Ports Growth Plan in October 2003, the Port Kembla Port Corporation has been preparing for the port’s transformation from a bulk cargo port to one which is also capable of handling general and break-bulk cargo, containers and cars.

In April 2006, the NSW Government announced approval of the final stage in a \$140 million expansion of Port Kembla. The expansion will transform Port Kembla into Australia’s leading car import centre and secure 1,000 direct and indirect jobs for the Illawarra region.

October 2007 saw the opening of a new 290 metre berth which can accommodate larger car carrying vessels as well as general and container cargo. Two vessels delivering cars to Port Kembla used the new berth later that month.

The Department has also moved to resolve ongoing debate about the road delivery hours of the Port Kembla coal terminal by declaring a development proposal from the company to be a major project under Part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.



Port Kembla works as at March 2008

- *Illawarra Regional Airport*

The regional strategy states that the Illawarra Regional Airport will need to be protected and supported to attract investment. Through the assessment of a project on the neighbouring Illawarra Regional Business Park site, the Department worked to ensure that adequate land would be available for potential expansion of the airport.

The approved concept plan for the business park in early 2009 provided an easement on a 14 metre strip alongside the airport. This request was made by Shellharbour City Council during the assessment period.



Aerial view of the Wollongong Innovation Campus

- *Wollongong Innovation Campus*

In June 2008, the NSW Government opened the first stage of the \$500 million Wollongong Innovation Campus, and at the end of 2008 construction had begun on the site's fourth official building. The NSW Government contributed \$24.5 million towards the campus and played a vital role in securing the 32 hectare site. The campus

will generate around 4,000 jobs as the site of various government and industry based research projects.

- *Shell Cove*

The regional strategy identifies Shell Cove as an important tourism site, located 17km south of Wollongong.

In January 2008, the NSW Department of Planning approved an environmental management plan (EMP) for construction of

the boat harbour. This EMP includes management plans for air and water quality, erosion and sediment, noise, archaeological and heritage and beach nourishment/rehabilitation. As a result of the current economic downturn, construction of the proposed boat harbour has been placed on hold by the developers until a later date.

Illawarra Regional Business Park

The Department has made considerable progress on a major action of the regional strategy to identify and zone new employment lands, in particular at the Illawarra Regional Business Park. The NSW Government gazetted the proposed rezoning and planning regime that will allow for the creation of up to 1,650 new jobs and the protection of 24 hectares of conservation land. The Department was able to streamline the assessment process by considering the rezoning and the concept plan concurrently.

Both approvals were issued in January 2009 for a development comprising 60 business lots, optimising use of the site to sufficiently cater for the region's employment demands.

Shellharbour employment lands funding

The regional strategy identifies that Shellharbour has a shortfall of

vacant employment land. In March 2007, the Department provided Shellharbour City Council with \$55,000 through planning reform funds for a local government area study of employment lands needs.

The main purpose of the study is to provide recommendations for land use planning that facilitates local jobs growth, as an alternative to the high level of inter regional commuting Shellharbour residents currently experience. The study will estimate how much additional employment land is needed and how current land use planning provisions applying to employment lands may need to change, to enable future workers living in Shellharbour City to work within 20 minutes road travel of their home. A draft report was completed in August 2008 and circulated to relevant stakeholders for comment. A final version is expected to be complete in 2009.

ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES

Habitat corridor between Yallah and Marshall Mount

The most significant east-west biodiversity corridor in the region is located to the south of the proposed West Dapto new release area. The regional strategy recognises that planning this new release area provides an opportunity to protect the corridor between the escarpment and the coastal plain between Marshall Mount and Yallah.

The former Growth Centres Commission review of West Dapto recommended that a review be undertaken of this habitat corridor. Future planning for West Dapto will address this recommendation and consider opportunities to achieve an appropriate balance between conservation and development outcomes within this corridor.





View from future Kiama walking track location

Shellharbour/Kiama Hard Rock Review

The Department in partnership with other agencies and councils is undertaking a review, in line with the regional strategy actions, relating to the biodiversity conservation (particularly the threatened species *Melaleuca armillaris*) and the management of the hard rock resource areas around Dunmore.

The project is working to achieve an appropriate balance between biodiversity conservation and mineral resources extraction and will be implemented primarily through the comprehensive Shellharbour and Kiama LEPs.

Coastal land acquisition – Kiama walking track

The NSW Government has acquired land near Kiama to secure six kilometres of public walking track along the spectacular southern coastline. The purchase of small parts of seven waterfront properties along the coastline will allow public access to previously inaccessible areas and allow the current coastal walking track to be extended.

Once complete, the continuous coastal link from Minnamurra to Gerringong will become a major tourist attraction and an important recreational asset for local families and visitors. It will give access

to scenic cliff tops, beaches and popular swimming and fishing spots. Kiama Council will be responsible for constructing and managing the new walking track.

South Coast Regional Strategy



“The strategy will protect the South Coast’s unique environmental areas such as coastal lakes, estuaries and beaches, habitat corridors and lagoons for future generations.”

INTRODUCTION

The South Coast Regional Strategy was released in February 2007.

It is a 25-year strategy which aims to balance environmental protection with ongoing development and economic growth. The strategy supports an additional 60,000 residents, 45,600 new homes and 25,800 new jobs by 2031, with a particular emphasis on jobs for young people.

At the same time the strategy will protect the South Coast’s unique environmental areas such as coastal lakes, estuaries and beaches, habitat corridors and lagoons for future generations. The regional strategy applies to the local government areas of Shoalhaven, Eurobodalla and Bega Valley.

HOUSING AND SETTLEMENT

A significant amount of work has been undertaken by the Department and South Coast councils to assist in delivering the South Coast housing and settlement outcomes and actions.

Population growth

Estimated resident population figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that the South Coast’s population increased by 2,500 people over the two years to 30 June 2008. Over the life of the regional strategy, this shows that population growth is currently below projections, however it is difficult to draw any form of conclusion from only two years of data in the context of a 25-year strategy.

The Department will continue to reassess population projections as part of the standard five-yearly reviews undertaken for all NSW Government regional planning strategies.



Batemans Bay

TABLE 7: POPULATION GROWTH IN THE SOUTH COAST 2006-08

Local Government Area	Estimated Resident Population at 30 June 2008	Population Change Since 2006	Average Annual Growth Rate (%/yr)
South Coast			
Bega Valley	33,000	500	0.73
Eurobodalla	37,100	500	0.65
Shoalhaven	93,900	1,600	0.83
Total	163,900*	2,500*	0.77*

*May not sum to total due to rounding

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Regional Population Growth, 2006-2007 and Regional Population Growth, 2007-2008.

South Coast Settlement Planning Guidelines

The South Coast Settlement Planning Guidelines were released in August 2007. They support the regional strategy by guiding local councils in how to identify, deliver, manage and monitor housing and employment land in the region over the next 25 years.

The guidelines outline the roles and responsibilities for councils and the Department in the production of a new South Coast Housing and Land Monitor, to be updated annually. The monitor will be a process for keeping track of overall development types and land availability in order to provide a context for reviewing the region's settlement policy.

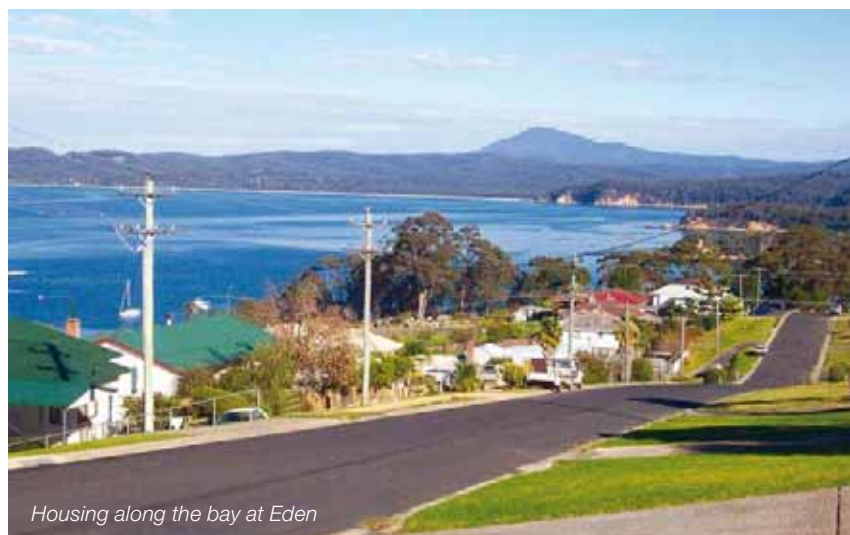
The guidelines also provide further detailed information about the South Coast's expected housing needs, including housing required by families, couples without

children, group households and single people.

Settlement strategies and structure plans

The strategy says that urban investigation areas which are identified in NSW Government-endorsed settlement strategies or structure plans have priority for meeting the region's housing needs.

To date the Sussex Inlet Settlement Strategy, Jervis Bay Settlement Strategy, Nowra-Bomaderry Structure Plan, the Bermagui-Wallaga Lake Structure Plan and Eurobodalla Settlement Strategy have been endorsed by the Department. These plans combined have the potential to provide for up to 37,500 new dwellings.



Housing along the bay at Eden

CASE STUDY: SUSSEX INLET SETTLEMENT STRATEGY

Shoalhaven City Council's Sussex Inlet Settlement Strategy provides a broad framework to guide growth and development in the area for the next 20 to 30 years.

It was endorsed by the Department in August 2007, lifting a 13-year moratorium on further land rezonings in the area south of St George Basin and its foreshores, covering Sussex Inlet. The strategy will provide up to 1,400 dwellings.

The strategy also sets out ways to protect and enhance the natural attributes of the area including:

- preserving high conservation value land and the foreshores of St Georges Basin;
- connecting important areas of vegetation and retaining vegetation along creek lines; and
- providing opportunities for bringing important natural areas into public ownership.

The Department contributed \$100,000 towards the strategy.



Rural settlements in the Eurobodalla shire

CASE STUDY: EUROBODALLA SETTLEMENT STRATEGY

In May 2007 the Department endorsed the Eurobodalla Shire Council's Eurobodalla Settlement Strategy, which sets clear guidelines for urban and rural planning. The Department contributed \$80,000 towards its preparation. The strategy will provide up to 9,100 dwellings.

The settlement strategy also supports:

- environmental protection zones applied to all areas identified as being of high conservation value;

- a buffer to all development adjoining State Forests and National parks; and
- addressing social infrastructure needs such as open space and community facilities when planning for growth.

The document lays the groundwork for more detailed planning – a council wide local environmental plan. Its endorsement is a key step in implementing the NSW Government's vision for sustainable growth and environmental protection on the South Coast.

South Coast Sensitive Urban Lands Review

The independent South Coast Sensitive Urban Lands Review panel was established in April 2006 as part of finalising the regional strategy to review 17 isolated and environmentally-sensitive locations, which

had already been identified by local councils for potential urban development or urban investigations. It received about 180 written submissions and more than 50 individuals and organisations made presentations. The panel's recommendations were incorporated into the final regional strategy.

The panel's work has helped resolve long-standing and divisive debate regarding the sites and provides clear planning ground rules. Of 2,200 hectares of land already zoned for potential development, the panel recommended less than 30 per cent be developed.

The Department has either received a development proposal or been involved in strategic planning work for a number of these sites, including Long Beach, Rosedale, Tathra River and Moruya Heads.

CASE STUDY: COMBERTON GRANGE

The 1,250 hectare Comberton Grange site, approximately 12 kilometres south of the Nowra CBD, requires careful planning as it is in a relatively isolated location and has a number of environmentally sensitive features. For instance, it includes large tracts of native vegetation, a number of important wetlands and forms part of an important local habitat corridor.

In 2006, the South Coast Sensitive Urban Lands Panel identified that, due to the environmentally sensitive nature of the site, the residential component of any proposal at Comberton Grange should be limited and be truly integrated with the tourist facility.

The Department in June 2008 declared a proposed \$370 million tourism and residential development for the site, lodged by the Shaolin Temple Foundation, to be a major project. Previous versions of the Shaolin proposal had failed to satisfy the panel's recommendations, but the most recent request received in June 2008 is able to be considered by the Department.



Coastline at Tathra

ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT

Regionally significant employment lands

Employment Lands Principles were prepared and released by the Department in 2007 as part of Settlement Planning Guidelines for the South Coast region. The principles assist the NSW Government and the region's

councils to promote the orderly planning and development of employment land in the region.

For instance, they require councils to preserve lands of regional employment significance and cluster industries and businesses with similar environmental impacts. They also outline regionally significant employment areas to be preserved and supported.

TABLE 8: REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT SOUTH COAST EMPLOYMENT LANDS

Employment Precinct	Local Government Area
Albatross Naval Base and Aviation Technology Park, Nowra-Bomaderry Major Regional Centre, Ulladulla Harbour, Flinders Industrial Park, South Ulladulla	Shoalhaven
Moruya Airport, Batemans Bay Major Regional Centre, Batemans Bay Marina	Eurobodalla
Merimbula Airport, Bega Major Regional Centre, Port of Eden	Bega Valley

Details about planning work at some of these sites is listed below:

- *Ulladulla Harbour*

The regional strategy identifies Ulladulla as a major town and its harbour as a regionally significant employment, tourism and infrastructure location which should be supported through the planning system.

The Department, along with Shoalhaven City Council and the Department of Lands and Department of Premier and Cabinet, have worked together since September 2007 to review existing planning provisions for the town centre and harbour area. In July 2008, the council adopted a new development control plan (DCP) that aims to stimulate new sustainable retail, leisure, commercial and residential activities and a working waterfront. The DCP is currently under review. The Department will work to ensure appropriate height controls for Ulladulla are included in Shoalhaven Council's new LEP.

In addition, the Department of Lands has called for expressions of interest from proponents wishing to redevelop the Ulladulla Harbour and foreshore area. The primary objective of this project is to redevelop Ulladulla Harbour as a major tourist destination featuring an expanded eco-charter and recreational boating precinct, alongside a strong commercial fishing fleet and important vessel maintenance centre. This could include providing a range of new commercial uses around the waterfront, including cafes and restaurants.



Aerial view of Ulladulla harbour

- *Nowra-Bomaderry Major Regional Centre and Flinders Industrial Park*

The Nowra-Bomaderry Structure Plan was endorsed by the Department in February 2008 and Shoalhaven Council is in the process of implementing it through the development of its principal LEP.

The structure plan includes the following employment initiatives:

- the revitalisation of Nowra and Bomaderry town centres;
- expansion of Flinders Industrial Park by 92 hectares;
- increasing the retail floor space in the Nowra CBD through greater densities;
- releasing 581 hectares of new residential land;
- two new neighbourhood centres in the north west and south west of Nowra;

- bulky goods centres in Bomaderry and South Nowra; and
- a convention/entertainment centre in Nowra.

- *Moruya Airport*

Eurobodalla Council has prepared a concept plan looking at expansion around the airport to increase opportunities for employment in the tourism and aviation industries which is consistent with the regional strategy. The plan also looked at aviation-related residential development (ie residential subdivision with hangers). The council is expected to move forward with this in its principal plan.

In addition, to help meet employment growth needs the council is looking at rezoning a large parcel of land at North Moruya for light industrial purposes.

Central Coast Regional Strategy



“It is a 25-year strategy focused on creating jobs and investment and planning for growth while protecting the environmental assets, cultural values and natural resources of the region.”

INTRODUCTION

The NSW Government in June 2008 released the final Central Coast Regional Strategy, covering the Gosford and Wyong local government areas.

It is a 25-year strategy focused on creating jobs and investment and planning for growth while protecting the environmental assets, cultural values and natural resources of the region. The strategy supports more than 45,000 new jobs and 56,000 new dwellings to cater for 100,000 new residents by 2031.

Gosford and Tuggerah-Wyong are identified as the region's key centres.

HOUSING AND SETTLEMENT

Population Growth

Projections of 100,000 new residents in the final regional strategy were revised upwards from the figure of 62,450 residents included in the draft regional strategy. This change is based upon the region's improved long-term water supply outlook.

When the draft regional strategy was released in September 2006, it took into account the region's then ongoing water shortages. However, the draft did acknowledge that the region had the capacity to support higher levels of growth, subject to the completion of a long-term water supply strategy. This strategy – WaterPlan 2050 – has now been adopted by the local water authority, which includes both Gosford and Wyong councils. There is also increased water security as a result of the Government's commitment to the Tillegra Dam project.



Gosford city centre

Estimated population figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that the population in the Central Coast increased by 5,800 in the two years to 30 June 2008. This shows that currently the region's population is below the regional strategy's population projections, however had the figure not been increased from the draft regional strategy, it may have left the region with housing affordability issues.

Population forecasts will be closely monitored, particularly with regard to the region's water supply outlook. If necessary, the regional strategy's growth projections will be adjusted accordingly as part of the standard five-yearly reviews undertaken for all the Government's regional planning strategies.

The majority of new housing will be accommodated within existing urban areas. Greenfield development will be located

almost entirely in the northern part of the Wyong LGA, within land identified in the North Wyong Shire Structure Plan.

Work has already commenced on the structure plan, which is being lead by the Department of Planning in close consultation with Wyong Shire Council and various Government agencies. The preparation of the plan will include several opportunities for community consultation.

TABLE 13: POPULATION GROWTH IN THE CENTRAL COAST 2006-08

Local Government Area	Estimated Resident Population at 30 June 2008	Population Change Since 2006	Average Annual Growth Rate (%/yr)
Central Coast			
Gosford	164,000	1,900	0.58
Wyong	146,600	3,900	1.35
Total	310,500*	5,800*	0.94*

*May not sum to total due to rounding
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Regional Population Growth, 2006-2007 and Regional Population Growth, 2007-2008.

ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT

The regional strategy plans for more than 45,000 new jobs in the region.

The strategy's emphasis on delivering jobs correlates with the priority given to local employment in the Government's State Plan. Currently one in four Central Coast workers commutes outside of the region for work.

Warnervale town centre and Wyong employment zone

In November 2008, the NSW Government approved the rezoning of the Warnervale Town Centre and Wyong Employment Zone

(WEZ) to satisfy the growing need for employment closer to home by creating capacity for approximately 7,000 new local jobs.

The WEZ will attract a mix of warehousing, distribution and manufacturing companies, including a state-of-the-art brewery, due to its proximity to the F3. Consistent with the regional strategy, the WEZ will assist in the long-term growth of the local economy by providing up to \$1.9 billion in new investment.

The Warnervale Town Centre comprises 119 hectares of land allowing for a variety of uses, including the development of up to 2,200 new dwellings, a new railway station, retail and commercial

space and a variety of community facilities. The town centre will have the capacity to service the 40,000 people who will ultimately live in the surrounding area.

Somersby Industrial Park

The regional strategy identifies the Somersby Industrial Park as an important site to help satisfy the region's employment needs over the next 25 years. The site has been zoned for industrial uses since 1981, however due to a number of site constraints, assessment and approval of development proposals has been delayed. A plan of management for the Industrial Park was prepared by a Task Force consisting of NSW

Government agencies, Gosford City Council, landholders and representatives of the Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council. The plan of management aims to overcome delays in the processing of development applications for land affected by threatened species and Aboriginal cultural heritage and to provide certainty for landowners. In February 2008 a new local environmental plan (LEP) was approved to support the implementation of the management plan.

Gosford city centre plan

The regional strategy identifies Gosford as a regional city capable of delivering 6,000 new jobs and 6,000 new dwellings by 2031. In December 2007, the NSW Government approved the Gosford City Centre LEP as part of the Cities Taskforce project to develop a network of regional cities outside Sydney CBD. The LEP is accompanied by a City Centre Vision, a Development Control Plan and a Civic Improvement Plan and includes planning provisions to optimise use of the city's commercial core, deliver improved recreation and retail facilities and accommodate around 10,000 additional residents in the city centre over the next 25 years.

The "Gosford Challenge", led by the Department of Lands and Gosford City Council, aims at preparing a masterplan for the city leading to the construction of specific projects.

Tuggerah town centre

The regional strategy identifies Tuggerah-Wyong as the Central



Employment generating retail development at Tuggerah

Coast's major centre that will perform vital economic, employment, civic, cultural and recreation roles for the north of the region. As expressed by the regional strategy, this is part of the 25-year vision for Tuggerah-Wyong to deliver 5,500 jobs and 4,000 residential dwellings over this time.

In January 2009 the NSW Minister for Planning agreed to consider the proposed town centre to be a potential site of State significance, following support for this step by Wyong Council. The State significant study process will be led by the Department in close consultation with Wyong council, to ensure local knowledge and resources assist the outcome. The study will help to deliver a coordinated planning regime for the Tuggerah town centre that is consistent with the aims of the regional strategy for the broader Wyong-Tuggerah Major Centre.

ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES

A key outcome of the regional strategy is the protection of significant environments such as the Central Coast Plateaux, Wyong Valleys and other non-urban areas. All land west of the F3 Freeway will be quarantined from urban residential development, and a Regional Conservation Plan will be developed by the Department of Environment and Climate Change.

Over 345 hectares of designated conservation areas will be set aside in the Wyong Employment Zone in order to preserve regional wildlife corridors.

Sydney–Canberra Corridor Regional Strategy



“It is a 25-year land-use blueprint focused on creating jobs and reducing the pressure on housing prices in the region, whilst protecting environmental assets, local character and natural resources.”

INTRODUCTION

The NSW Government in July 2008 released the final Sydney–Canberra Corridor Regional Strategy, covering the local government areas of Wingecarribee, Goulburn Mulwaree, Upper Lachlan, Yass Valley, Palerang and Queanbeyan.

It is a 25-year land-use blueprint focused on creating jobs and reducing the pressure on housing prices in the region, whilst protecting environmental assets, local character and natural resources. The strategy supports up to 27,800 new jobs, 25,200 new homes and 46,350 additional people by 2031.

Bowral, Goulburn and Queanbeyan are identified as the region’s major centres and will be

the main focus for new housing and employment over the life of the strategy.

HOUSING AND SETTLEMENT

Population growth

Estimated resident population figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that the population in the Sydney–Canberra Corridor has increased by 4,700 in the two years to 30 June 2008. Extending this figure over the life of the regional strategy, this growth rate is currently above projections, however it is difficult to draw any form of conclusion from just two years of data in the context of a 25-year strategy, particularly when factoring in the ageing of the population.



The Hume Highway links the Sydney–Canberra Corridor

TABLE 14: POPULATION GROWTH IN THE SYDNEY–CANBERRA CORRIDOR 2006-08

Local Government Area	Estimated Resident Population at 30 June 2008	Population Change Since 2006	Average Annual Growth Rate (%/yr)
Sydne –Canberra Corridor			
Goulburn Mulwaree	27,700	500	0.85
Palerang	13,900	1,000	3.47
Queanbeyan	39,600	1,500	1.95
Upper Lachlan	7,400	100	0.29
Wingecarribee	45,400	1,000	1.16
Yass Valley	14,400	600	2.25
Total	148,400*	4,700*	1.64*

*May not sum to total due to rounding
 Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Regional Population Growth, 2006-2007 and Regional Population Growth, 2007-2008.

The Department will continue to reassess population projections as part of the standard five-yearly reviews undertaken for all NSW Government regional planning strategies.

Housing and land monitor

In accordance with the regional strategy, a housing and land monitor is being developed for

the Sydney–Canberra Corridor Region. This monitor will help to secure an adequate housing supply for the region’s future and in particular report on:

- the amount of land available for housing; and
- the completion of new housing.

It is envisaged that this will be

reported annually, with the first report expected in 2010.

Planning for new release areas

Significant progress has been made to address a key outcome of the regional strategy to secure adequate residential development for the area, particularly around Queanbeyan.

- *Queanbeyan*

In December 2008, the Minister approved the amended Queanbeyan Residential and Economic Strategy 2031 that will satisfy the need for an additional 10,000 dwellings for the area over the next 25 years.

Rezoning of land at Googong is planned for 2009, which has been identified to provide new residential dwellings under the regional strategy. The site has the capacity to yield up to 5,500 dwellings.



Queanbeyan’s main street



Turbines at the Crookwell wind farm

Initial rezonings of Stage 1 lands at South Jerrabomberra are also underway and will involve residential and employment lands along with sites for community facilities including a sporting complex and school.

The new homes will provide greater housing affordability in Queanbeyan, where the average cost of housing has increased by 25 per cent in the five years to 2007.

- *Wingecarribee*

The Wingecarribee comprehensive local environmental plan (LEP) was publicly exhibited for a second time in March–April 2009 and includes provisions to support its centres, and protect key natural resources including Sydney Water catchment areas, mining and agricultural lands.

Plans have already been progressed to rezone two new release areas at Moss Vale in 2009, which will help achieve

dwelling targets for Wingecarribee outlined in the regional strategy by delivering around 1,400 new lots.

Goulburn Mulwaree LEP finalised

Many actions and outcomes in the regional strategy are to be implemented through new council local environmental plans.

In February 2009, the NSW Government approved the Goulburn Mulwaree local environmental plan (LEP). Some of the LEP's key provisions addressed directions in the regional strategy, including:

- The majority of new housing being provided at Marys Mount and Kenmore in Goulburn, with smaller release areas being located at Marulan;
- Rural residential development being limited to those areas on the fringes of existing villages;
- Identification and protection of extractive industries through use of zoning/LEP mapping;

- A focus on new employment lands around Goulburn, with the addition of industrial land at Murrays Flat;
- The Goulburn CBD being identified as the commercial focus of the local government area through appropriate zonings and development standards;
- Recognition of the importance of the Hume Highway and the Main Southern Railway line;
- Identification of environmentally sensitive lands; and
- Extensive listing of heritage items.

The LEP supported new residential land releases of 2,000 lots at Marys Mount and 700 lots at Marulan, along with 170 hectares of employment land at Murrays Flat.

Goulburn Mulwaree Council had been operating under two different LEPs since 2004. The LEP was the first by a regional council in NSW in line with the Department's new Statewide template, which provides a consistent style and layout for LEPs while still allowing councils to continue to set local planning policies.

Upper Lachlan Shire draft LEP approved for exhibition

In April 2009, the NSW Government approved the Upper Lachlan Shire draft LEP for public exhibition. The LEP will deliver a number of key actions in the regional strategy, in particular to support the growth of centres within the region whilst protecting land of significant agricultural and environmental value.

ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT

The regional strategy provides significant new employment capacity in the region, by requiring an additional 295 hectares of employment land, particularly the development of new freight and logistics hubs along the Hume Highway, as well as industries that require easy access to the high-technology and defence industries in Canberra.

As part of the recently approved Queanbeyan Residential and Economic Strategy 2031, the South Jerrabomberra area has the capacity to provide 130 hectares of employment land. The aim is to reduce the current level of residents commuting to centres such as Sydney, Canberra and the Illawarra region, from 26 per cent to around 20 per cent. This is in line with the Government's State Plan priority to deliver jobs closer to home.

The approved \$1 billion Southern Distribution Hub in Goulburn has the potential to deliver on key employment targets of the regional strategy by providing 430 hectares of new employment land and up to 3,000 new jobs to the region. The proposal also takes advantage of the site's strategic location next to the Hume Highway, which is identified by the regional strategy as the region's key infrastructure and primary freight route between Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne.

Earlier in 2009, the Department of Planning endorsed Yass Valley Council's Industrial Lands Study 2008 which will in the future

help inform the preparation of the council's new LEP. The study identifies an additional 131 hectares of employment land for future development including land strategically located on the Hume Highway, which delivers on a key action of the regional strategy to identify employment land potential in Yass Valley.

The Department of Planning is currently developing an employment lands monitor for the region, which will report on the supply of employment lands including details of locations and zoning. This monitor will be updated annually by councils. It is expected that the first report will be available in 2010.

ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES

The regional strategy aims to preserve important agricultural areas, which contribute nearly \$200 million per year to the region's economy, while requiring councils to identify land of high conservation value and develop planning provisions to protect these areas.

The strategy's approach to rural residential development is consistent with the findings of the recent independent inquiry into rural land use and the resulting Rural Lands state environmental planning policy (SEPP).

The regional strategy also addresses the need for a sustainable approach to the region's water supplies in a number of ways.

- The NSW Government continues to work with Goulburn Mulwaree Council to provide additional water security, and has declared a proposed pipeline from Wingecaribee Reservoir a major project to be assessed under Part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.
- The strategy requires that sustainable water supply options are in place for all new residential areas in the region before development takes place.
- The strategy is consistent with the water sharing agreement for the cross border areas in the southern areas of the region, which was signed by the NSW and ACT Governments.
- No new residential or rural residential area will be allowed in Sydney's drinking water catchment unless it maintains or improves water quality.

Mid North Coast Regional Strategy



The region is home to the biggest tourism industry in NSW outside Sydney, with approximately 3.3 million overnight visitors annually spending \$1.5 billion and creating employment opportunities for more than 9,000 residents.

INTRODUCTION

The NSW Government in March 2009 released the final Mid North Coast Regional Strategy, covering the local government areas of Clarence Valley, Coffs Harbour, Bellingen, Nambucca, Kempsey, Port Macquarie-Hastings, Greater Taree and Great Lakes.

It is a 25-year land-use blueprint designed to cater for a region that is experiencing one of the highest annual population growth rates in the State. The region is also home to the biggest tourism industry in NSW outside Sydney, with approximately 3.3 million overnight

visitors annually spending \$1.5 billion and creating employment opportunities for more than 9,000 residents. The regional strategy supports up to 48,500 new jobs, 59,600 new homes and 94,000 additional residents by 2031.

The regional strategy identifies Grafton, Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie and Taree as the region's major centres, and appropriate locations for councils to investigate for new housing, industrial and commercial land. The strategy identifies a need for an additional 232 hectares of industrial land and about 210 hectares of commercial land over the next 25 years, particularly across the region's four major centres.

The regional strategy aims to encourage growth while preserving the area's natural resources, including 700 significant coastal wetlands, 600,000 hectares of conservation reserves and 70 littoral rainforests. A draft Regional Conservation Plan will be prepared for public comment by the Department of Environment and Climate Change. The protection of these environmental assets is supported by the regional strategy's vision for a series of 'green breaks' between settlements, minimising urban sprawl along the coast.



Boating along the mid north coast contributes to a thriving tourism industry

TABLE 15: POPULATION GROWTH IN THE MID NORTH COAST 2006-08

Local Government Area	Estimated Resident Population at 30 June 2008	Population Change Since 2006	Average Annual Growth Rate (%/yr)
Mid North Coast			
Bellingen	13,200	200	0.74
Clarence Valley	51,000	900	0.91
Coffs Harbour	70,400	2,500	1.76
Greater Taree	47,800	800	0.82
Great Lakes	34,900	700	0.96
Kempsey	28,900	300	0.3
Nambucca	18,900	300	0.5
Port Macquarie-Hastings	73,900	2,600	0.72
Total	338,800*	8,100*	1.21*

*May not sum to total due to rounding

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Regional Population Growth, 2006-2007 and Regional Population Growth, 2007-2008.

HOUSING AND SETTLEMENT

Population growth

While it is difficult to draw any form of conclusion from only two years of data, estimated resident population figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that the population in the Mid North Coast increased by 8,100 in the two years to 30 June 2008. This figure is nearly on target with the projected population growth over the life of the strategy. However, the NSW Government will continue to monitor population growth rates and projections and adjust accordingly, as part of the standard five-yearly reviews undertaken for all the NSW Government's regional planning strategies.

There will also be considerable changes to the demographics of the region, with the proportion of those aged 65 and over expected to more than double by 2031.

To cater for this increasing and changing population, the regional strategy aims to provide an additional 59,600 new dwellings of which 60 per cent are proposed to be detached, and 40 per cent to be multi-unit. Much of these new dwellings will occur as infill, particularly in centres such as Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie. The regional strategy also has the flexibility to ensure an adequate housing supply can be provided if there are unexpected increases in population.

Land east of the proposed new Pacific Highway alignment is identified as a Coastal Area

where land release will be limited to the growth areas mapped in the regional strategy. Within the Coastal Area, the majority of development will occur in the major regional centres of Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie and the the major towns of Maclean, Woolgoolga and Forster-Tuncurry.

Councils will continue to prepare local growth management strategies in consultation with the Department in order to define land available for future urban and rural-residential purposes, however 90 per cent of the growth areas are already zoned for urban use or included in such a strategy.

Urban development in areas that are not already zoned or identified for development in the regional strategy will be considered if it can satisfy the Sustainability Criteria listed in the regional strategy. The criteria do not apply in the Coastal Area.

Thrumster

The regional strategy identifies Thrumster as a key urban release area to meet the needs of a growing population in the Port Macquarie area. The Minister in December 2008 approved a local environmental plan (LEP) to allow the development of around 4,200 residential lots covering around 800 hectares. The release area will also include a new town centre that will service local residents and may generate up to 2,000 new local jobs.



A large portion of the site – some 247 hectares – has also been preserved as environmental conservation land to protect endangered ecological communities and vital koala habitats.

North Coast Urban Design Guidelines

These guidelines were released concurrently with the regional strategy. The guidelines are a resource document to assist in advancing quality urban design on Far and Mid North Coasts of NSW and are further explained in the Far North Coast Regional Strategy chapter.

ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT

The regional strategy plans for an additional 48,500 jobs to meet the needs of an increased population by 2031.

In particular, the strategy estimates 232 hectares of industrial land and about 210 hectares of commercial land will be required to meet these job projections. The growth area maps allow for a significant surplus

of industrial land to facilitate possible new industries and a land bank for the future.

Coffs Harbour, Taree, Port Macquarie and Grafton have been identified as having the greatest capacity for commercial redevelopment, while centres such as Forster-Tuncurry, Kempsey, Macksville, Bellingen, Woolgoolga and Maclean are also expected to undergo some growth and redevelopment of their commercial centres reflecting their role as major towns.

The development of highway service centres also represents an opportunity for regional economic growth, and the regional strategy identifies key locations along the Pacific Highway where these centres may occur.

The Mid North Coast Regional Development Board is to pursue the opportunities identified in its *Regional Economic Profile (2008)* in consultation with councils, industry, business and other stakeholders, which will encourage the development of high-skill and high-wage industries in the region.

ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES

The regional strategy has a strong focus on protecting the Mid North Coast's valuable environmental assets, which include 600,000 hectares of conservation reservations, 700 coastal wetlands, 70 littoral rainforests, over 1,000 Crown Reserves and two marine parks. About 20 per cent of the region is currently reserved in national parks and other reserves. The Coastal Area that protects many of these important tracts of land links with the Far North Coast's coastal stretch of green breaks in the north, and the Lower Hunter's green corridor in the south.

Green breaks

By restricting urban settlement to identified growth areas within the Coastal Area, a series of coastal green breaks containing the region's most prized coastal assets will be protected against rezonings for new development over the life of the regional strategy.

Examples of areas to be protected through these 'green breaks' include the following.

- The estuary, wetlands and sugar cane growing areas of the lower Clarence Valley.
- The green belts between coastal villages, such as between:
 - Scotts Head and Stuarts Point north of South West Rocks
 - Yamba and Angourie in the Clarence Valley coast

- Red Rock and Corindi Beach, Sandy Beach and Emerald Beach and Emerald Beach and Moonee Beach on the Coffs Coast
- Crescent Head and the north shore of Port Macquarie
- Bonny Hills and North Haven in the Port Macquarie-Hastings local government area
- Old Bar and Diamond Beach on the Manning Valley coastline.
- Stunning coastal scenery which can be seen from Middle Brother Mountain south of Camden Haven.
- The Maria River wetland near Port Macquarie.
- The natural scenery around Wallis Lake and Smiths Lake in the Forster-Tuncurry area.

A Regional Conservation Plan is currently being prepared by the Department of Environment and Climate Change to establish a framework for protecting the biodiversity values of the

region through LEPs and other mechanisms. Local councils will play an important role in identifying areas of high conservation value and biodiversity corridors for protection in their new LEPs.

Farmland mapping project

Agriculture remains an important economic industry for the Mid North Coast, and in 2001 it was worth \$245 million to the region. The conservation of high quality farmland in the region therefore is a key action of the regional strategy.

The Mid North Coast Farmland Mapping Project was carried out as a partnership between the Departments of Planning, Primary Industries and Environment and Climate Change, with the project's first stage funded by the Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority. The project mapped regionally significant farmland capable of sustaining long term agricultural activity in the local government areas of Port Macquarie-Hastings, Kempsey, Nambucca, Coffs Harbour, Bellingen and Clarence Valley.

The maps aim to protect these areas from urban or residential development other than in the limited circumstances as permitted by the *Mid North Coast Farmland Mapping Project Final Recommendations Report (2008)*.

A number of key upgrades to water supply infrastructure will help secure the region's water supply over the life of the regional strategy. The completion of the Shannon Creek water storage facility, presently under construction, and the recent filling of the new Cowarra water storage facility, will secure urban water supplies to the main growth areas of Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie.

The current augmentation of MidCoast Water's water filtration and pumping infrastructure, access to a groundwater source at Nabic in 2008 and a programmed increase to the storage capacity of the Bootawa Dam by 2012 will meet future growth and development water demand for southern areas while satisfying requirements for environmental flows.

AREAS PROTECTED THROUGH GREEN BREAKS POLICY



L-R: Sugarcane farming at the Clarence Valley; Coastal view from Middle Brother Mountain south of Camden Haven; Smiths Lake near Forster; Maria River wetland near Port Macquarie

Issues relevant to all strategies

Rural lands

The NSW Government in May 2008 released the Rural Lands state environmental planning policy (SEPP). The Rural Lands SEPP sets a broad framework to protect the State's rural industry, which is worth \$7.3 billion a year, while also allowing councils to plan for new rural lifestyle development.

The Rural Lands SEPP allows councils to retain existing minimum lot size provisions and provides principles for use by councils if they want to change lot sizes. The SEPP also removes the ability of local councils to approve new concessional lot developments, in line with a recommendation from the independent Central West Rural Lands Panel that such developments are residential in nature and can cause land-use conflict and fragmentation.

The Rural Lands SEPP helps implement the actions of a number of regional strategies to preserve the regional rural economy and limit the introduction of unplanned rural-residential development.

The SEPP applies to 106 councils across NSW.



Rural residential development in the Yass Valley

CASE STUDY: COASTLINE CYCLEWAY

The NSW Government's Coastline Cycleway program provides funding for councils to build new cycleways, along a 1,500km route the length of the NSW coast. This program helps coastal residents and tourists more easily access our beautiful coastline, promotes healthy living, links existing communities and provides easier access to services and shops.

In early 2008, the NSW Government provided \$1.25 million in funding for 12 coastal cycleway projects, including:

Far North Coast

- \$25,000 to Ballina Shire Council for planning a cycleway link between Ballina CBD and West Ballina;
- \$80,000 to Byron Shire Council to construct a 140 metre off-road shared path section on the main road leading into Byron Bay from the Pacific Highway;

Illawarra

- \$146,000 to Wollongong City Council to construct a 650 metre shared use path adjacent to George Hanley Drive to replace the existing sub-standard asphalt path which currently runs through Stuart Park;
- \$247,500 to Shellharbour City Council to construct a 550 metre section of off-road shared use track that includes a bridge crossing of the mouth of Little Lake;

South Coast

- \$39,000 to Eurobodalla Shire Council to provide a new 21.5 metre bridge crossing of Kianga Creek and \$2,500 for signage on the Bay Coast route from Batemans Bay to Batehaven;
- \$81,250 to Shoalhaven City Council for 1.26 kilometres of on-road cycleway and 470 metres of off-road shared use pathway in Sanctuary Point, Paradise Beach and Anson Street;

Central Coast

- \$204,063 to Gosford City Council to deliver an 850 metre section of the Woy Woy Foreshore shared use cycle and pedestrian path;
- \$142,290 to Wyong Shire Council for another 320 metres of the Wilfred Barrett Drive Shared Pathway at The Entrance North.

Mid North Coast

- \$16,400 to Clarence Valley Council to provide a missing link to existing cycleways in the Grafton city centre;
- \$185,000 to Great Lakes Council to deliver a 1.4 kilometre extension of the Tuncurry Cycleway along Beach Street from North Street to Parr Road; and
- A further \$80,000 to Great Lakes Council to build 700 metres of off-road shared use cycle and pedestrian path at Pacific Palms.



Cycleways in the Illawarra

Seniors living

The regional strategies include actions to ensure new development within and adjacent to existing villages and rural towns preserves their character, scale and cultural heritage values.

In December 2005, the NSW Government placed a moratorium on seniors living developments on rural land adjoining urban land, due to concerns about impacts of such developments overwhelming small villages. After review, the moratorium was lifted but only on the basis that each development undergoes a ‘compatibility’ test to determine if it should be allowed to proceed to development application lodgement. The Department issues such site compatibility certificates.

Developers on these sites must also clearly establish that their proposal is for bona fide aged-care

accommodation, or for people with a disability. The regional strategies are a helpful resource for the Department’s staff when examining whether to issue site compatibility certificate.

Planning for climate change

Climate change is a major planning issue, especially for coastal communities who will be most affected by a rise in sea level. Each of the regional strategies includes actions requiring councils to carefully plan for climate change.

In May 2008, the NSW Government publicly released a \$500,000 project which maps low-lying areas in the Gosford, Wyong, Lake Macquarie, Newcastle and Port Stephens council areas.

In February 2009, the Department of Planning in conjunction with the Department of Environment and Climate Change released

a draft sea level rise policy statement for consultation with relevant stakeholders. The draft policy statement is a coordinated approach to tackling sea level rise and sets out sea level planning benchmarks that will allow all levels of government to make more informed long term planning decisions.

Once finalised, the statement will be used to develop guidelines assisting the NSW Government and local councils in the preparation of land use strategies, local environmental plans and in development assessment.

Infrastructure

In June 2008, the NSW Government released the State Infrastructure Strategy 2008-18. It outlines a \$140 billion capital program for the next decade. It links the planning embedded in the regional strategies with the budget process.

The regional strategies and their demographic information are repeatedly referenced in the State Infrastructure Strategy. A Schedule in each regional strategy identifies the infrastructure to be rolled out in each of the regions.

CASE STUDY: HERITAGE

In April 2009, the 2009-2011 NSW Heritage Grants Program issued grants to 73 separate heritage projects, 15 of which were located in areas covered by the regional strategies. These included the following:

Lower Hunter

- \$75,000 to St John's Anglican Church Raymond Terrace to carry out conservation works on the St John's Anglican Church at Raymond Terrace.
- \$25,000 to Kiztwo Pty Ltd to reinstate the two storey verandahs of the Grand Hotel at Newcastle, based on historical photographs.
- \$55,000 to Maitland City Council to install a lift in the Chapel and complete the adaptive reuse of the Administration Building at the 1826–1875 former Maitland Gaol complex.
- \$20,000 to Maitland City Council to undertake an exploration of the Female Wing and Cookhouse at the 1826–1875 former Maitland Gaol complex.

Far North Coast

- \$67,250 to Richmond Valley Council to stabilise and repair a number of outbuildings on the 1936–1940 Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome site.
- \$41,750 to All Saints Anglican Church Parish of Murwillumbah to undertake conservation works on the C.W. Leggo pipe organ in

All Saints Anglican Church at Murwillumbah.

Illawarra

- \$75,000 to Scots' Presbyterian Church Kiama to conserve the bell tower at the Scots' Presbyterian Church at Kiama, which was built in 1863.

South Coast

- \$12,800 to Lady Denman Heritage Complex Huskisson Inc. to create a display and interpretation area on the Lady Denman Ferry at Huskisson that was built in 1912.

Sydney-Canberra Corridor

- \$25,000 to Goulburn Mulwaree Council to stabilise the foundations and install new drainage systems and guttering at the St. Clair at Goulburn, which was built in 1840 and is now used as a folk museum.
- \$25,000 to David and Wendy Paley to carry out conservation works on the Coach and Horses Inn at Berrima, which was built in 1856.
- \$40,000 to Mr Ted Graban to carry out major conservation works to the former Prince Albert Inn, now known as The Poplars at Braemar, which was built in c.1845.
- \$50,000 to Lopmisa Pty Ltd to install a fire sprinkler system and undertake conservation works on the

1834–1850 White Horse Inn at Berrima.

- \$50,000 to Southern Region Community College to undertake conservation and adaptive reuse works to enable the Railway Barracks at the Goulburn Railway Station, which were established in the 1880s, to be used for community and commercial purposes.

Mid North Coast

- \$26,000 to Port Macquarie-Hastings Council to continue conservation works on Port Macquarie's Second Burying Ground, used between 1824 and 1886.
- \$75,000 to Notaras Bros Entertainment Pty Ltd to undertake further conservation work to the 1925–1940 Saraton Theatre at Grafton.



Customs House heritage item in Newcastle

Further information

Department of Planning

PO Box 39 Sydney NSW 2001

Email: information@planning.nsw.gov.au

Inquiries: 02 9228 6333

