



DRAFT **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY** **2025-2035**

OCTOBER 2025
FOR PUBLIC EXHIBITION

Port Macquarie-Hastings



Acknowledgement of Country

Yii Biiray Barray

This is Birpai Country

Nyura yii-gu mara-la barray-gu, nyaa-gi, ngarra-gi

You have come here, to the country to see, listen and remember.

Gathay Nyiirun Wakulda

Let's all go together as one

We acknowledge the Birpai people, the traditional owners of the land in which we work and live, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We extend our respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who choose to call Port Macquarie-Hastings home.

Port Macquarie-Hastings Council recognises that the original occupants and inhabitants of this land lived in the area for more than 40,000 years. There were a number of clans speaking several dialects and these people exercised traditional rights over the area including the ownership of sacred and significant sites.



United Nation Sustainability Development goals

In 2015, Australia was one of 193 countries to commit to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Developed by the United Nations, the SDGs are a blueprint for achieving a better and more sustainable future by addressing global challenges related to poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace, and justice.

Recognising the significance of aligning Council documents to the UN SDGs, it is essential to acknowledge that while there may be significant alignment and overlap between the content held within and certain SDGs, they are not always entirely synonymous.

The following SDGs are relevant to this Strategy:



Abbreviations

EDS Economic Development Strategy

LGA Local Government Area

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our success in driving sustainable economic growth relies on strong partnerships and collaboration with local industry and business, state and federal government, major events organisers, the educational sector and the many stakeholders who share in shaping a thriving Port Macquarie-Hastings.

The Economic Development Strategy has been developed to set a long-term framework for strengthening and diversifying the Port Macquarie-Hastings Local Government Area economy to 2035. It builds on the Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS), the Regional City Action Plan (RCAP) framework and the Council's Community Strategic Plan (CSP) and Local Strategy Planning Statement (LSPS).

Our population is expected to grow by 28,000 people between 2021 and 2046 (REMPLAN, 2024), resulting in over 15,000 new dwellings in the Port Macquarie-Hastings by 2046, driven by strong domestic migration. The forecasts are that, over the next 20 years, eight in every ten new households will be 1-2 people only, reflecting our ageing population (REMPLAN, 2024).

Port Macquarie-Hastings is experiencing a significant demographic shift, with a median age of 49—11 years above the national average—and projections indicating that 55% of the population will be aged 65 and over by 2046 (REMPLAN, 2024). This ageing trend will increase demand for health, aged care, and social support services, while also creating workforce challenges, with 25% fewer workers per person over 65. Addressing this requires a holistic approach that not only strengthens economic resilience through targeted workforce attraction and skills development, but also ensures social equity, environmental sustainability in service delivery, and culturally responsive care. Strategic planning now will help future-proof the region and maintain quality of life for all residents. As well as supporting our local economy, the Economic Development Strategy will prioritise Grant Funding Priority Projects.

Council have identified 27 priority projects that have an aggregated cost estimate of \$800m for strategic advocacy for grant funding opportunities. The Infrastructure, Utilities, Community and Recreation and Transport infrastructure and services will require strong collaboration between all levels of government to deliver outcomes for the high growth regional centre of that is the Port Macquarie-Hastings community.

The Construction Industry sector is a key contributor to the economic output of Port Macquarie-Hastings with \$2.06B of economic output which is 16% of the total output. Two thirds of all jobs in Port Macquarie-Hastings are in the top 5 industry sectors. The sectors are Health Care and Social Assistance, Retail Trade, Education and Training, Construction and Accommodation & Food Services.

The Economic Development Strategy outlines what Council, in partnership and collaboration with Government Agencies, Business and Industry sectors, Educational Institutions and Community Organisations can do to manage economic challenges and drive growth to ensure our communities are resilient, healthy, and connected.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY CONT.

The strategy sets out actions that move us towards an economic future that is diverse, next generation ready and is informed by data and insights ensuring that growth is enabled through empowering business, cultivating enterprise and enabling infrastructure.

The Economic Development Strategy is structured around two key elements.

1. **Economic Pillars** – These reflect the outcomes we seek to achieve:
- A diverse and resilient economy.
 - High-value employment opportunities that sustain local livelihoods.
 - A next-generation ready workforce, equipped with the skills and pathways to meet industry needs.
 - A culture of enterprise and innovation that supports new industries, creativity, and entrepreneurship.
 - A strong regional identity, leveraging lifestyle, culture and environment to attract talent, visitors, and investment.

2. **Growth Enablers** – These provide the means to deliver on the pillars:

- Empowering business ecosystems through stronger networks, support services, and digital capability.
- Enabling infrastructure, including transport, utilities, land supply, and digital connectivity, to support sustainable growth.
- Data-driven insights to inform decisions, track progress, and ensure resources are directed where they will have greatest impact.

Together the Pillars and Enablers establish a clear framework for action that will guide Council's role in supporting economic resilience, sustainability, and innovation. They provide the foundation for a strategy that not only responds to the challenges of population growth and industry change but also positions the region to capture opportunities in emerging sectors.

Image credit: Remy Brand



INTRODUCTION

Key Issues, Challenges and Opportunities

The Port Macquarie-Hastings economy is projected to experience solid employment growth, with more than 13,500 new jobs expected by 2046 (REMPPLAN 2024). Much of this growth will occur in population serving sectors such as health care and social assistance, education, and construction, reflecting population expansion and demographic trends. While this growth is positive, it highlights a risk of over-reliance on sectors that are largely driven by local demand and less export-oriented, limiting long-term economic diversity and resilience.

At the same time, the region is facing the potential for a job to population imbalance. The working age population is projected to increase by more than 18,000 people over the same period, outpacing job creation by nearly 5,000 positions. This shortfall underscores the need to attract new industries, support entrepreneurship, and build more high value employment opportunities if the region is to retain and engage its growing workforce.

Demographic change compounds this challenge. An ageing population, declining youth cohorts, and falling school enrolments raise concerns about workforce supply and renewal. Labour shortages are already being experienced in health, trades, and professional services, and are a risk to be managed through the programmed intervention of all the partners and stakeholders of Port Macquarie-Hastings.

Supply chain gaps are a constraint on the Port Macquarie-Hastings economy. Local industries collectively import an estimated \$2.26 billion in goods and services annually from outside the region, particularly in financial services, manufacturing, and construction inputs (REMPPLAN, 2024). This lost opportunity for economic growth for Port Macquarie-Hastings highlights vulnerabilities but also presents an opening to strengthen self-sufficiency and capture more local value and jobs through investment in manufacturing, food processing, and related supply chain activities.

Structural shifts in the economy are a strategic consideration. Traditional

manufacturing continues to decline, while retail and hospitality are being reshaped by online shopping, automation, and casualisation of work. The opportunity for Port Macquarie-Hastings is to support the capacity in industries that could evolve into higher-value or niche opportunities such as marine, agribusiness, food processing, and advanced manufacturing.

Growth pressures bring infrastructure and housing challenges. The forecast demand for an increase in working age residents will require significant investment in housing supply, utilities, transport, and digital connectivity. Without forward planning and strategic advocacy for funding, housing affordability and infrastructure limitations may constrain both business expansion and workforce attraction.

INTRODUCTION CONT.

The Economic Development Strategy provides strategic direction to support future economic growth decisions. The Strategy has been developed to:

- Diversify and strengthen the economic base by reducing reliance on population-serving sectors alone (health care, education, construction) and supporting the development of emerging industries with higher value and export potential.
- Close the jobs gap by generating sufficient local employment opportunities to match projected

growth in the working age population, reducing the risk of underemployment and out-migration.

- Expand high-value employment opportunities in industries with strong growth prospects and competitive advantages, particularly advanced manufacturing, agribusiness and food processing, marine and blue economy activities, and wellness and healthy living industries.
- Address workforce challenges by supporting skills development, training,

and attraction strategies to mitigate the impacts of an ageing population, declining school enrolments, and projected workforce shortages.

- Build resilient supply chains by capturing opportunities in local manufacturing, food processing, and construction-related inputs to reduce reliance on imports and strengthen self-sufficiency.
- Leverage the visitor economy by building on Port Macquarie-Hastings' strong tourism and lifestyle appeal, while diversifying offerings through health, wellness, events, and blue economy initiatives.
- Promote sustainable growth and infrastructure readiness by ensuring housing, transport, utilities, and digital connectivity can meet projected population and workforce growth.

The Economic Development Strategy will be reviewed at least every four years to ensure it responds to changes in the community, market, legislation, and policy over time.

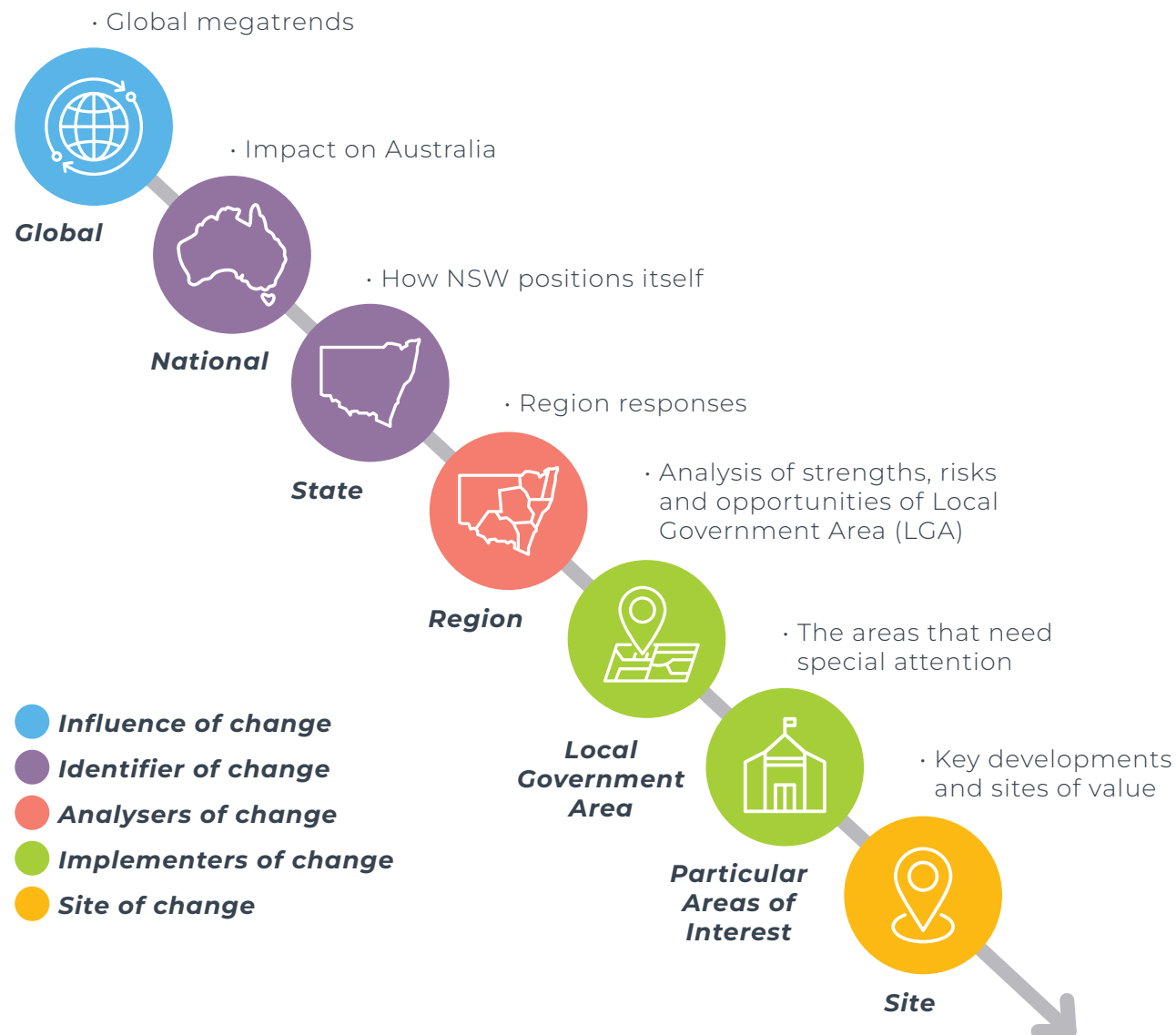
Image credit: Remy Brand



How to Read this Strategy

The Economic Development Strategy is Port Macquarie-Hastings Local Economic Development Strategy. As a Local Strategy document, it is designed to provide high level direction through priorities, desired outcomes and objectives to inform strategies related to Economic Pillars and Growth Enablers. The Strategy is supported by an annexed action plan, which provide detailed actions that will be included in Council's Operational Plan in future years and will be reviewed on a four-yearly basis to align with the Council's Delivery Program.

This Strategy should be read in conjunction with Council's Community Strategic Plan, the Local Strategic Planning Statement, Infrastructure Strategy, Regional Integrated Transport Strategy and the NSW Government's Regional City Action Plan, Regional Economic Development Strategy and North Coast Regional Plan. All actions in execution of the Economic Development Strategy must align with the Strategic Framework of the Strategy.



WHERE ARE WE NOW?



How we developed this Strategy

On 20 February 2025, Council resolved at its Ordinary Council Meeting to develop an Economic Development Strategy and place it on public exhibition.

On 15 May 2025, the Economic Development Strategy was included in the 2024-2025 Operational Plan adopted by Council.

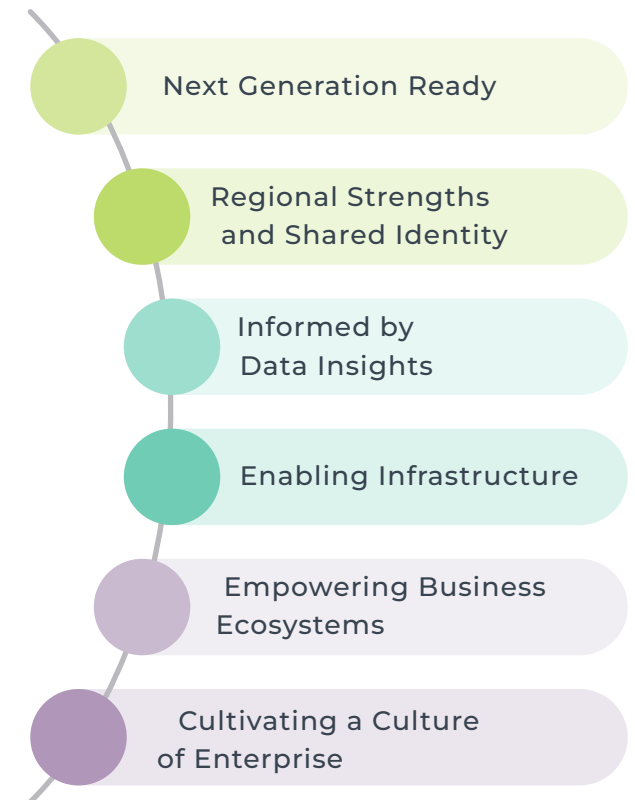
Key stakeholders were involved in assisting in the development of the Economic Development Strategy, including a series of workshops held in August 2025 to receive input. This Economic Development Strategy reflects the aggregation of stakeholder engagement, key issues, and recommended responses.

There will be further opportunity to contribute to the Economic Development Strategy throughout the public exhibition of the document and all submissions will be considered.

Throughout the exhibition, Economic Development staff will be available to answer any questions about the draft Economic Development Strategy.

Stakeholders have contributed valuable insights to date, highlighting the

importance of a data-informed economic development approach that builds on regional strengths and a shared identity to unlock opportunities for economic growth. Feedback from the community has highlighted the importance of preparing our workforce for the future, creating education to employment pathways and ensuring young people and jobseekers are equipped to meet business and industry needs. This constructive input presents an opportunity to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the Port Macquarie-Hastings Economic Development Strategy, ensuring that our decisions are well-informed and aligned with our community's evolving needs.



Council's Vision

To create the most liveable, sustainable and innovative place in Australia.

The Aim of Economic Development Strategy

A diversified and resilient economy that delivers high value employment opportunities

Economic Development Outcomes

Guided by a forward-looking vision, our economic development objectives encapsulate the essence of our community led approach to well-being and our economy, while aligning with the direction of the region and the state government.

- **High value employment opportunities** that sustain local livelihoods and wellbeing.
- **A next generation ready workforce** equipped with the skills and pathways to meet industry needs.
- **A culture of enterprise and innovation** that supports new industries, creativity and entrepreneurship and builds on existing strengths.

- **A strong regional identity** leveraging lifestyle, cultural assets and natural assets to attract talented employers and employees, high value visitors and investment.
- **Enabling infrastructure** including transport utilities, residential and employment land supply, digital connectivity and services infrastructure to support sustainable growth with strong collaborative funding support from all levels of government.

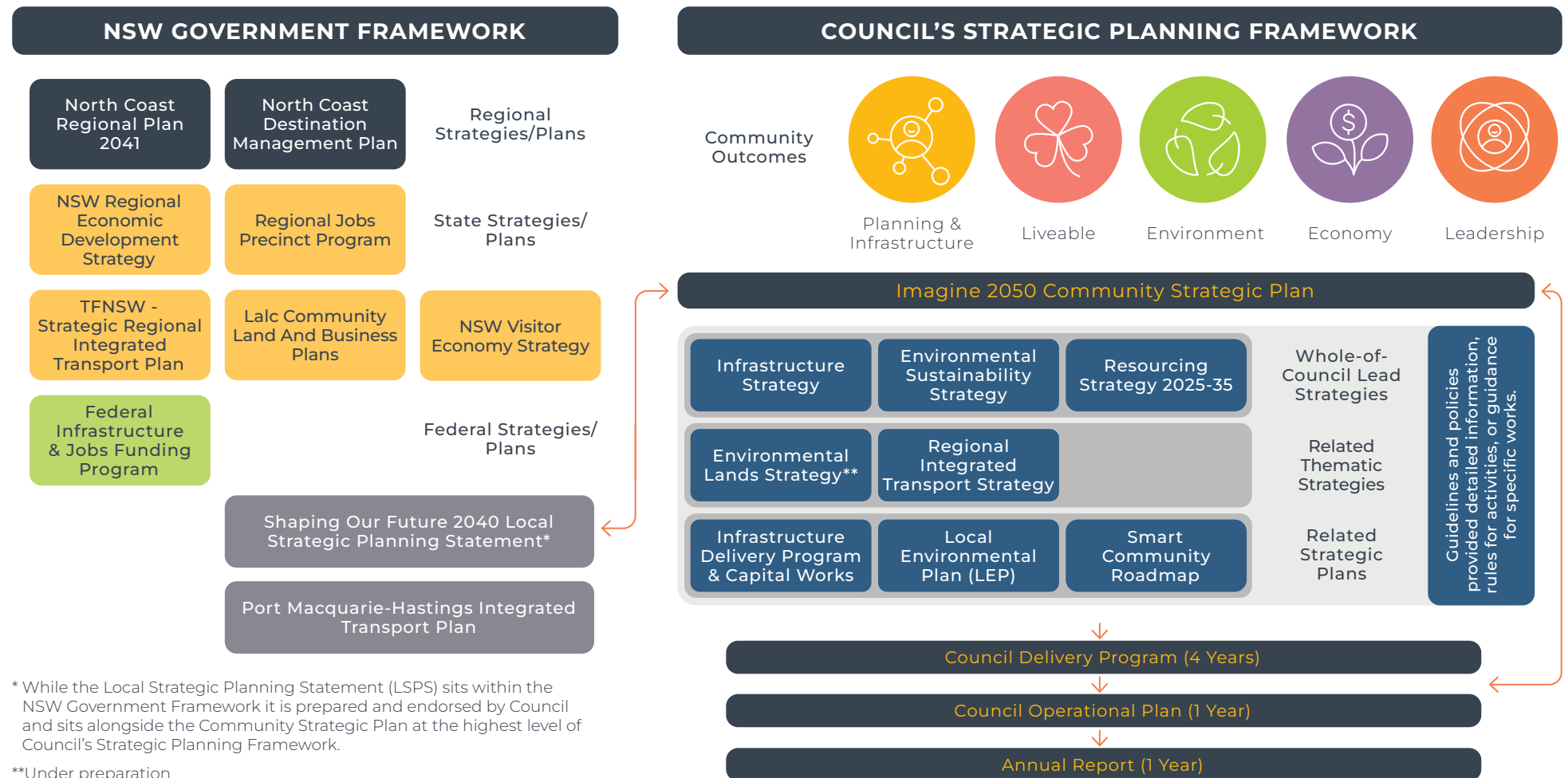
- **Empowering business ecosystems** through stronger networks, support services and digital capability ensuring available resources across all levels of government, and local existing resources, are connected and engaged with the demand.
- **Data driven insights** to inform decisions, track progress and ensure resources across the community and all levels of government, are directed where they will have greatest impact.



Strategic Context

National, State, Regional and Local Plans and Policies

Plans and strategies prepared at the local level must consider and be consistent with national, state, and regional policy and direction. Federal, state, regional, and local policies, plans, and frameworks play a significant role in supporting and informing economic development activity.



Integrated Planning & Reporting (IP&R) & Strategy Framework

All strategic planning at the Council is undertaken within the IPR framework, a mandatory requirement for all NSW councils. Port Macquarie-Hastings Community Strategic Plan (CSP) - Imagine 2050 is the leading plan in this framework and sets out the community's long-term goals and vision to become:

"The most liveable, sustainable and innovative place in Australia".

The Economic Development Strategy has been developed in response to the Community Strategic Plan and the Regional Economic Development Strategy, addresses the challenges facing the community, and establishes strategies, priorities, and actions for achieving our CSP vision. The Economic Development Strategy is a lead strategy providing high-level strategic direction on key challenges and opportunities facing Port Macquarie-Hastings. It considers key trends and explains the implications of key issues and opportunities for Port Macquarie-Hastings in the next 10 years. The strategic direction is focused on making our region a great place to live

- a vibrant and welcoming place where city meets country and coast, a place that protects and embraces our proud culture and unique natural environment,

an inclusive place of strong, resilient communities where people prosper, and a place that people want to be a part of.



NSW North Coast Regional Plan

The North Coast Regional Plan 2041, prepared by the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, establishes Port Macquarie as a regional city anchor within the North Coast region. As one of the State's fastest-growing coastal centres, Port Macquarie-Hastings is expected to accommodate a significant share of future population, jobs, and services on the North Coast.

Economic Development Objectives for Port Macquarie-Hastings

The North Coast Regional Plan identifies the following economic development priorities for the region:

- **Consolidating Port Macquarie as a regional city** – ensuring that it provides a diverse mix of jobs, housing, education, and services to support the wider North Coast.
- **Driving productivity and connectivity** – enhancing transport, utilities, and digital infrastructure to connect businesses and workers with regional, state, and national markets.

- **Diversifying the economic base** – supporting emerging industries alongside established sectors, to reduce reliance on population-serving jobs and strengthen resilience.
- **Aligning land use with economic growth opportunities** – protecting and providing employment land, supporting mixed-use centres, and directing urban growth to areas that can sustain jobs.
- **Supporting sustainable growth** – ensuring that development balances environmental values with economic expansion, particularly in sensitive coastal and hinterland areas.

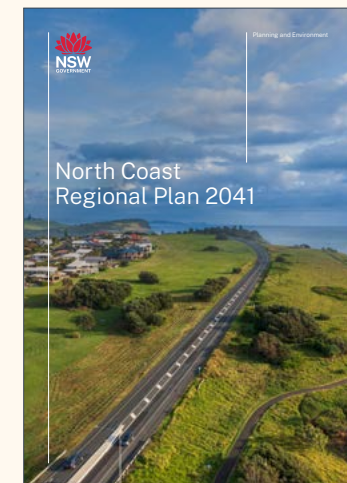
Key Actions Supporting These Objectives

To achieve these outcomes, the NSW North Coast Regional Plan 2041 identifies a range of actions that directly relate to Port Macquarie-Hastings and continue to be a priority strategic element delivered or as an ongoing focus for Council:

- **Regional City Action Plans (RCAPs):** The endorsement of a Port Macquarie RCAP to integrate land use, infrastructure, housing, and employment planning at a precinct scale.

- **Employment land security:** Identification and protection of employment land to ensure sufficient supply for industry, logistics, and business services.

- **Urban growth area boundaries:** Defining and reinforcing growth boundaries to concentrate new housing and jobs in well-served locations.
- **Infrastructure coordination:** Aligning State and Council investment in transport, utilities, and high-speed digital connectivity to support economic growth and workforce mobility.
- **Industry opportunities:** Leveraging Port Macquarie's role on the Pacific Highway corridor to strengthen links to external markets and support growth in the visitor economy, agribusiness, education, health, construction and creative industries.



Local Strategic Planning Statement

Shaping our Future 2040 - Council's Local Strategic Planning Statement is the core document guiding strategic land-use planning in Port Macquarie-Hastings.

Council's first ever Local Strategic Planning Statement was published in September 2020. It sets out a 20-year land-use vision, identifies special characteristics, and specifies directions for managing future change throughout the LGA.

Alignment with Shaping Our Future 2040

The **Port Macquarie-Hastings Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) – Shaping Our Future 2040** sets out the 20-year vision for how land use planning will manage growth and development across the local government area. It provides an important local framework for economic development and is required to give effect to the **North Coast Regional Plan 2041** and other State planning directions.

Economic Development Objectives

The LSPS outlines several key objectives for economic development in the Port Macquarie-Hastings region, including:

- Managing growth sustainably by balancing economic opportunity with environmental protection, liveability, and infrastructure capacity.
- Directing future employment and commercial growth into appropriate areas to avoid sprawl, protect sensitive lands, and maximise accessibility.
- Supporting the development of centres and nodes as focal points for jobs, services, and transport.
- Maintaining adequate employment land supply and flexible zoning to enable new industries, business expansion, and services.
- Aligning local planning with regional and State priorities to ensure economic development contributes to wider North Coast objectives.
- Encouraging integration of economic, social, and environmental outcomes so that growth enhances community wellbeing as well as prosperity.

Actions Supporting These Objectives

To deliver on these objectives, the LSPS identifies a range of actions and planning tools, including:

- **Living and Place Strategy:** Directing where new housing and employment lands will be located to ensure sustainable and well-serviced growth.
- **Employment Land and Zoning Controls:** Protecting and enabling sufficient employment lands through zoning in local environmental plans (LEPs).
- **Centres Hierarchy:** Focusing commercial, retail, and community services into existing and proposed centres to create accessible job hubs and reduce reliance on long-distance commuting.
- **Infrastructure Coordination:** Aligning employment growth with infrastructure and servicing strategies for transport, water, sewer, and digital connectivity.



- **Precinct Planning:** Undertaking more detailed structure planning for key growth areas to ensure integration of employment, housing, and infrastructure outcomes.

- **Integration with State Planning:** Ensuring consistency with the North Coast Regional Plan 2041 and other statutory directions.

- **Monitoring and Review:** Recognising the LSPS as a “living document” with mechanisms to adapt to changing demographic, economic, and environmental conditions.

Port Macquarie Regional City Action Plan

The Port Macquarie Regional City Action Plan (RCAP) has been developed by the NSW Government, in collaboration with Port Macquarie-Hastings Council, to help Port Macquarie fulfill its potential as a thriving regional centre and build on the city’s growth, strong employment base, diversified economy and local character.

The **Port Macquarie Regional City Action Plan 2036 (RCAP 2036)**, prepared by the NSW Government in collaboration with Port Macquarie-Hastings Council, provides a coordinated framework for land use, infrastructure, housing, and economic development in the city to 2036. The RCAP positions Port Macquarie as a regional city anchor and outlines objectives and actions to support sustainable growth and job creation.

Economic Development Objectives

RCAP 2036 identifies several key objectives under its “Work” theme, including:

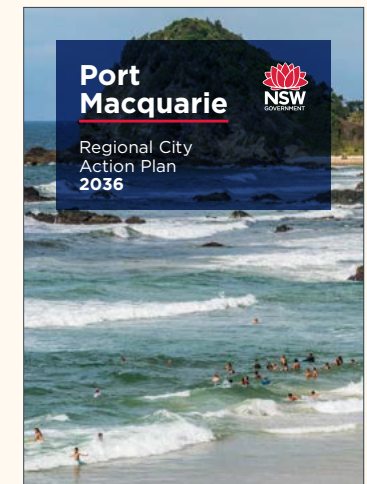
- **Maximising regional specialisations in health and education**, by building on the established base of the hospital, health services, and tertiary education facilities.
- **Growing Port Macquarie as the centre of a thriving and sustainable visitor economy**, leveraging its coastal setting, cultural identity, and natural environment.
- **Delivering local jobs through employment lands and industry sectors**, ensuring sufficient land, infrastructure, and planning controls are in place to attract and retain businesses.

Actions Supporting These Objectives

To give effect to these objectives, RCAP 2036 sets out a range of actions, including:

- **Health and Education**

Precinct planning: Coordinating land use and infrastructure around the Base Hospital and educational institutions to foster a dedicated health and education precinct.



- **Airport Business Park expansion:** Supporting the growth of aviation, technology, and service industries through the expansion of the Port Macquarie Airport Business Park.
- **Employment land activation:** Facilitating development of zoned employment lands, supported by infrastructure and planning controls, to enable new industry and business activity.
- **Gateway development opportunities:** Planning for highway gateway sites at major intersections to accommodate highway-oriented visitor economy, services, and employment.
- **CBD and planning control review:** Reviewing local planning controls to strengthen Port Macquarie CBD as the primary business, retail, and cultural hub.
- **Light and service industrial land investigation:** Identifying opportunities for additional light industrial and service land near urban growth areas to support local supply chains and reduce travel demand.
- **Visitor economy promotion:** Strengthening the role of the waterfront, cultural facilities, and green corridors in supporting the visitor economy for business travel, sporting travel and tourism, events, and visitor experiences.

• **Infrastructure coordination:** Sequencing and aligning infrastructure investment across State and local agencies to ensure growth is supported by timely delivery of transport, utilities, and digital services.

• **Environmental and amenity integration:** Protecting biodiversity corridors and environmental assets as part of growth planning, ensuring the city's natural values continue to underpin its liveability and attractiveness.

The RCAP has several key goals aimed at fostering sustainable growth and enhancing the quality of life in the region. Here are the main goals:

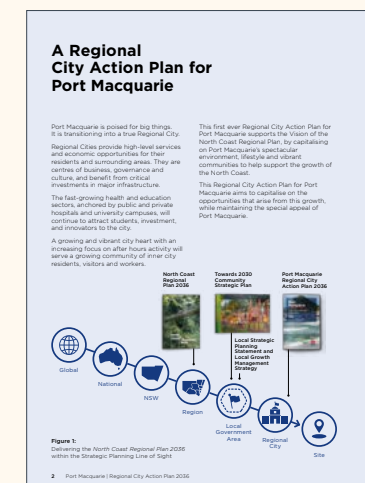
- **Live:** Promote diverse and affordable housing options to accommodate future population growth¹.
- **Work:** Support employment growth and educational opportunities by enhancing existing employment nodes around education, health, and the airport precincts.
- **Move:** Enhance transportation infrastructure to improve connectivity and accessibility within the region.
- **Meet:** Improve public spaces and community facilities to foster social interaction and community well-being.
- **Play:** Develop interconnected green

spaces, walkways, and cycleways to increase tree canopy and create vibrant public areas.

These goals are designed to create a balanced and thriving regional centre that supports both economic development and environmental sustainability.

The RCAP promotes a mix of dwelling types to deliver a compact city that provides diverse housing options. By coordinating infrastructure delivery, the RCAP supports the development of housing and employment options in areas that are well-serviced and accessible. The plan incorporates feedback from the community and stakeholders to ensure that housing and employment strategies meet local needs.

These efforts are part of a broader collection of strategies and stakeholder collaboration to manage and shape the city's growth, making Port Macquarie a thriving regional centre.



NSW Government Hastings Macleay Regional Economic Development Strategy

The Hastings Macleay Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS), prepared by the NSW Government, provides a long-term, place-based framework for economic development across the Hastings Macleay Functional Economic Region, which includes both Port Macquarie-Hastings and Kempsey local government areas.

The REDS (2018–2022) and its 2023 update outline a vision for fostering sustainable, diverse, and resilient economic growth through coordinated action and investment.

Economic Development Objectives

The REDS identifies several objectives relevant to the Port Macquarie-Hastings region:

- Growing the population and labour pool to expand workforce capacity and meet projected employment demand.
- Fostering industry development and diversification, building on existing strengths in health, construction, education, agriculture, visitor economy, and related industries while expanding into emerging and export-oriented sectors.
- Leveraging the region's assets to

strengthen connections with domestic and international markets.

- Building resilience and adaptive capacity to respond to shocks such as natural disasters and structural economic change.
- Strengthening enabling foundations, including infrastructure, governance, and institutional partnerships, to support long-term growth.

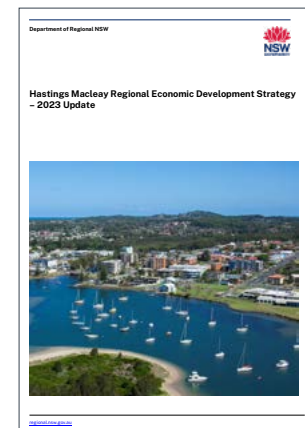
Actions Supporting These Objectives

To deliver these outcomes, the REDS sets out a series of supporting actions and enablers, including:

- **Industry cluster development:** Encouraging growth in agribusiness, food processing, aquaculture, advanced manufacturing, and clean energy to capture value-added opportunities.
- **Workforce attraction and skills development:** Targeted programs to attract skilled workers, retain existing talent, and provide upskilling opportunities to align with industry needs.
- **Infrastructure investment:** Prioritising transport, utilities, and digital infrastructure to support industry growth, business expansion, and improved market access.
- **Precinct and place-based planning:** Coordinating land use and investment in key growth precincts to maximise the

economic and social return on infrastructure.

- **Institutional and governance mechanisms:** Strengthening regional forums and partnerships between local councils, State Government, industry, and community to drive delivery.
- **Disaster preparedness and resilience:** Ensuring economic planning incorporates measures for disaster mitigation, recovery, and climate resilience.
- **Anchor institutions and strategic projects:** Leveraging major institutions and investments such as Charles Sturt University's Port Macquarie campus expansion to drive innovation and attract complementary industries.
- **Market access initiatives:** Enhancing connectivity to regional, national, and international markets through improved logistics and supply chains.
- **Ongoing monitoring and review:** Updating actions to remain responsive to changing conditions and emerging opportunities.



Quadruple Bottom Line

Preparation of the Economic Development Strategy has been guided by the Quadruple Bottom Line (QBL) which addresses, economic, social, environment and civic leadership (governance considerations).



Social Sustainability

Social wellbeing

Support cohesive, inclusive, diverse and dynamic communities



Environmental Sustainability

Protect the natural, social, cultural and built heritage

Value the environment and cultural legacies through sensitive development and decreased consumption of resources



Economic Sustainability

Maintain a strong and stable local economy

Ensure the delivery of services, facilities and infrastructure is financially sustainable



Civic Leadership

Governance How Council engages with the community

How community will be involved in helping to deliver Imagine2050 Transparency and accountability in decision-making

Role of Council

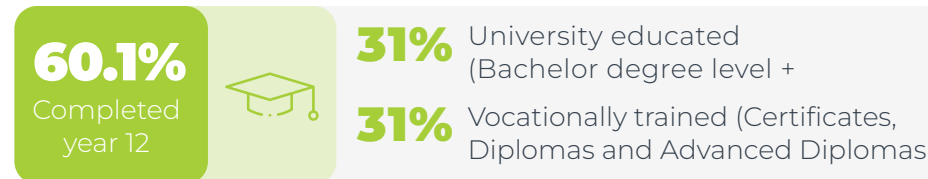
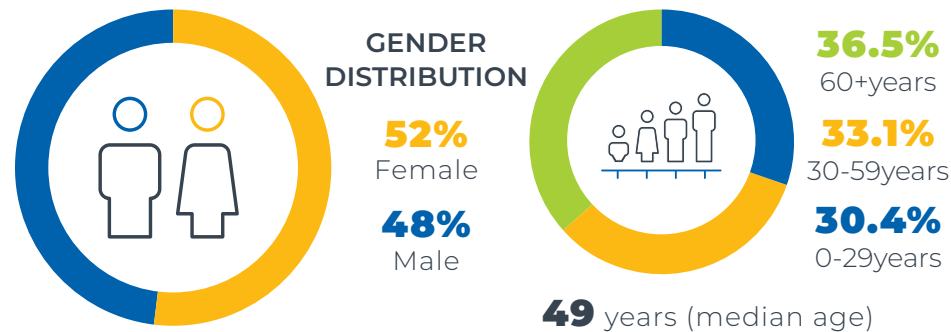
To action the Economic Development Strategy, Council will undertake roles to enact the delivery on the Strategic Priorities in partnership and collaboration with all stakeholders. Achieving our long-term strategic objectives is a shared responsibility with the collective commitment of all levels of government, industry groups, community organisations and individuals.

ROLE	DESCRIPTION
Deliver	Council delivers a range of programs and facilities including waste collection, water supply, wastewater, libraries, maintenance of local roads, beaches and public spaces, recreation facilities and community programs, community engagement, special events and regulatory functions.
Advocate	Council advocates to other levels of government on behalf of the community, seeking policy changes and partnerships to deliver infrastructure and services that meet both current and future needs. This includes securing grants for community groups to support projects and activities aligned with the community's vision.
Leader	Identifies key community issues; mobilises stakeholders to collaborate on diverse interests; invites consensus; plans direction via policy and practices; navigates any obstacles; guides the way forward to achieve our community's vision.
Partner	Collaborates with providers, suppliers and other interests to deliver products and services which meet communities' needs.
Capacity Builder	Supports community groups by fostering leadership, encouraging self-determination, and helping them access resources. It also facilitates strategic partnerships that align with shared goals and regional priorities.

OUR COMMUNITY

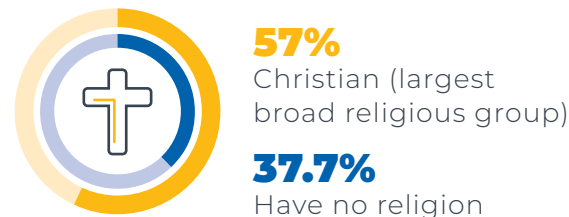
Population Demographics

92,650 Population  **▲103,890** by 2035 **▲119,027** by 2050



Diversity

5.5% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER THAN NATIONAL AVERAGE

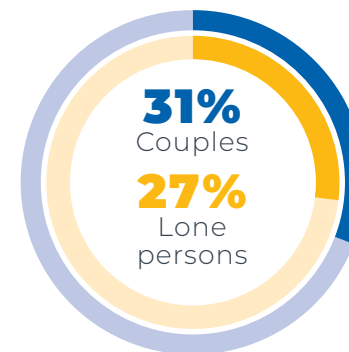


Household Composition

39,259 Private Dwellings 

2.3 average number of people per household

DOMINANT HOUSEHOLD TYPES



COMPARED WITH NSW & SIMILAR CITIES:

HIGHER

 Couple-only and lone person households

LOWER

 Families with children and group households

Lone person households concentrated near the **town centre**

Families with children concentrated in **suburban and rural areas**



44,999 by 2035

 Growing trend in couple-only and lone person households

2.15 average number of people per household by 2041



OUR ECONOMY

Employment & Industry

34,462

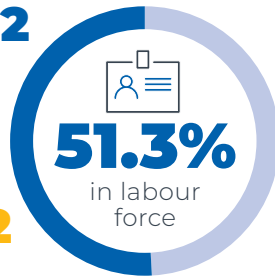
total jobs

7,471

businesses

12,092

volunteers



Full-time **26.4%**

Part-time **19.3%**

Unemployed **2.45%**

TOP EMPLOYING INDUSTRIES

1. Health Care & Social Assistance
2. Retail Trade
3. Education & Training
4. Construction
5. Accommodation & Food Services

TOP INDUSTRIES BY OUTPUT

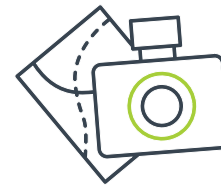
1. Construction (\$2.1bn)
2. Electricity, Gas, Water & Waste Services (\$1.9bn)
3. Health Care & Social Assistance (\$1.4bn)
4. Rental, Hiring & Real Estate Services (\$1.4bn)
5. Manufacturing (\$1.2bn)

TOP SPECIALISED INDUSTRIES

(Compared to broader NSW)

1. Electricity, Gas, Water & Waste Services
2. Accommodation & Food Services
3. Health Care & Social Assistance
4. Retail Trade
5. Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing

Tourism



\$540m

output

814,000

visitors annually

DOMESTIC OVERNIGHT VISITATION



AIRPORT



5,013

flights

225,468

passengers

Economy

\$6.7b

Gross Regional Product



REGIONAL EXPORTS

\$3.2b

REGIONAL IMPORTS

\$2.8b



HOUSING

Housing affordability

\$840,000
Median residential house price



\$580 median weekly rent

HOUSING STRESS

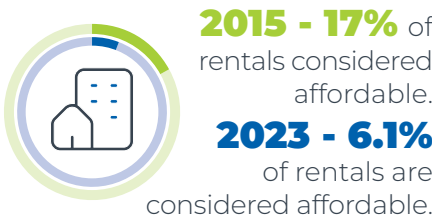
5,322 dwellings in housing stress (13.3%)

1,185 in mortgage stress (14.4% of mortgages)

4,137 in rental stress

50.4% of rentals

Housing stress relates to households renting or paying a mortgage and their ability to meet their housing costs. A household experiences housing stress when the cost of housing (either as rent or mortgage repayments) is high relative to household income.



Housing and economy

10+ years
Wait for Social Housing availability



734 general applications

161 priority applications

ON WAITING LIST

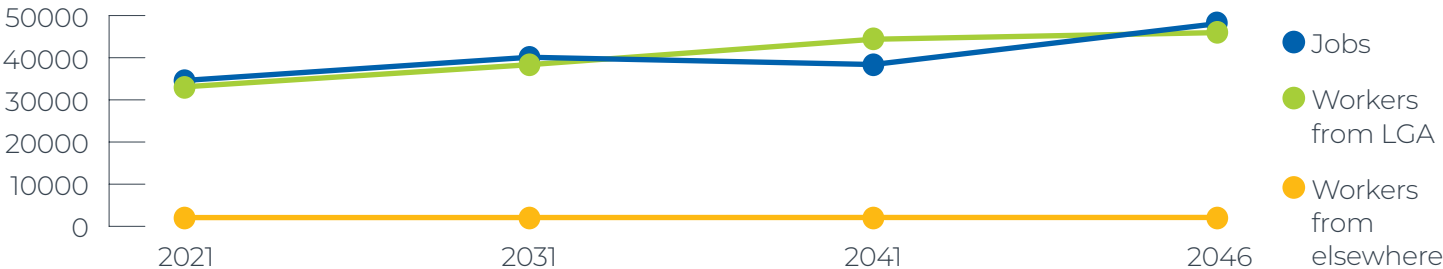
1,100 social and community dwellings

VACANCY RATES
Vacancy rates have been low for a sustained period, indicating a significant under-supply



986
Peak of dwelling approvals 2022/23

WORKERS AND RESIDENT LOCATION



LOCAL ENDOWMENTS AND CONNECTIVITY

Economic and Cultural Assets

The Glasshouse drives culture, business, tourism and community prosperity



- Generates tourism and visitor spend
- Drives conference and business events
- Supports local jobs and suppliers
- Boosts hospitality and retail sectors
- Hosts Visitor Centre as a service point for tourists

SKILLS & TRAINING

- CSU - Innovation & research partnerships; developing skilled graduates for key sectors
- TAFE NSW & schools network - strong vocational education base



Lifestyle and Natural Environment

40,000+

ha of national parks & state forests



Coastal & Hinterland diversity Including:

- Sea Acres Rainforest
- Burrawan State Forest
- 17 beaches
- 6 coastal villages

KOALA CAPITAL

Globally recognised for our conservation programs and eco-tourism icons, including Billabong Zoo and Guulaba



Air, road and rail

PORT MACQUARIE AIRPORT

One of the region's most significant pieces of economic infrastructure.

Reliable air services enable growth:

- Gateway for visitors and events
- Connects businesses to markets
- Fast access to metro centres
- Attracts residents and investors
- Enables timely freight movement

CENTRAL REGIONAL HUB

100+ Regular weekly flights



Flights to Brisbane, Sydney, and Lord Howe Island



Rail and coach services via Wauchope, Kendall, and Port Macquarie



Strong road and air connectivity via Pacific and Oxley Highways





Enabling Infrastructure

A significant amount of infrastructure is required to support future economic growth. Some of this infrastructure is needed ahead of residential and employment land development and growth.

Council's adopted ***Project Funding Priorities (February 2025)*** document identifies 27 priority projects for advocacy for funding from state and federal government. Strong collaboration between all levels of government is essential to the future of Port Macquarie-Hastings. The 27 priority projects are estimated at \$800m cost of works. This highlights the importance of all levels of government to address the housing and jobs challenges in regional areas with collaborative funding and working together. Port Macquarie-Hastings as a high growth and high value regional centre needs prioritisation for funding and the economic development strategy will anchor the strong relationships that exist with our state and federal partners.

Of the 27 priority projects there are:

- 12 Infrastructure Projects
- 3 Utilities projects

- 7 Community and Sporting and Recreation Projects
- 5 NSW Government Transport Infrastructure Services Projects

The Economic Benefits of Grant Funding and Strategic Advocacy

1. Financial & Resource Leverage

- **Maximise external funding** – reduces the burden on Council's own ratepayer base.
- **Address infrastructure gaps** – grants can fund projects beyond Council's ordinary revenue capacity.
- **Offset budget constraints** – enables delivery of "above base" projects without increasing debt.
- **Leverage partnerships** – grant success often attracts co-funding from State, Federal, and potentially private investment.

2. Strategic Alignment & Advocacy

- **Advance regional priorities** – aligns projects with State and Federal government agendas for regional NSW.

- **Policy influence** – builds visibility with funding bodies, shaping future funding program design.
- **Unlock strategic projects** – delivers major enabling infrastructure (transport, infrastructure and services, digital, utilities) critical for growth.
- **Demonstrate proactive leadership** – positions Council as a strong advocate for its community's needs.

3. Economic Growth & Development

- **Stimulate local economy** – grant-funded projects support jobs, training, and supply chain participation.
- **Enable business growth** – funding for innovation hubs, precincts, and industry diversification.
- **Support visitor economy** – grants can target tourism infrastructure and destination development.
- **Drive long-term competitiveness** – reduces barriers to investment and increases regional attractiveness.

4. Community & Social Outcomes

- **Enhance liveability** – community facilities, open spaces, cultural, sporting and recreational assets.
- **Address disadvantage** – targeted funding for housing, skills, and social inclusion.
- **Improve resilience** – disaster recovery, climate adaptation, and health-focused projects.
- **Build equity of access** – external funding may support rural and smaller communities within the LGA.

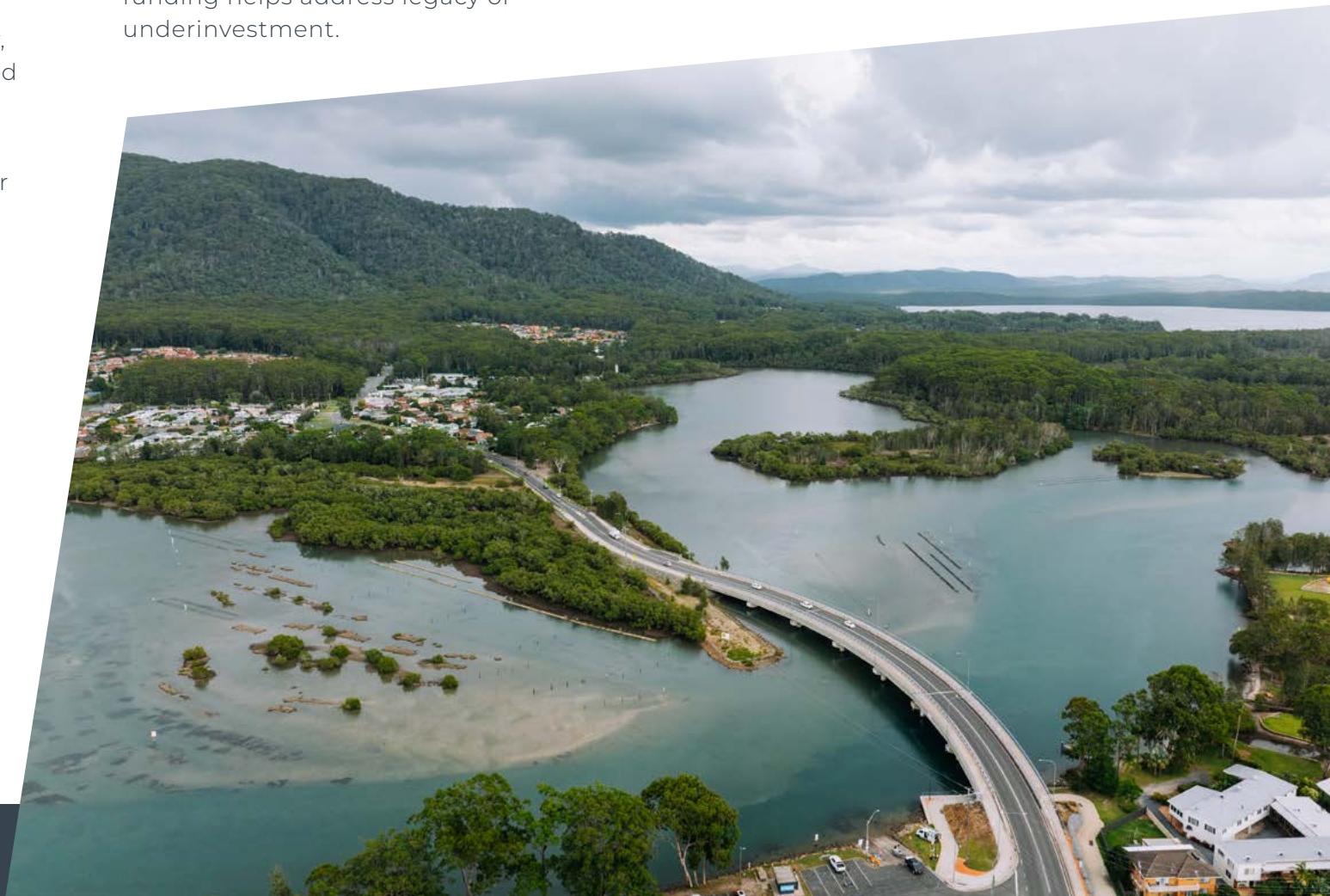
5. Organisational Benefits

- **Improve Council's financial sustainability** – diversifies revenue streams.
- **Strengthen cross-department collaboration** – grants require integrated planning between teams.
- **Boost Council's reputation** – as an effective, innovative, and successful grant recipient.

6. Risk Management & Futureproofing

- **Avoid missed opportunities** – competitive grant funding requires readiness and prioritisation.
- **Reduce infrastructure backlog** – funding helps address legacy of underinvestment.

- **Mitigate regional inequalities** – ensures North Coast is not overlooked compared to metro LGAs.
- **Future-proof projects** – positions Council to respond quickly and in alignment with the objectives of new funding rounds.



Project Funding Priorities

The Port Macquarie-Hastings region is a place of opportunity, innovation, and resilience. As one of the fastest-growing regions in New South Wales, our community is at the heart of everything we do. We are committed to ensuring that the infrastructure, services, and economic foundations of our region continue to support our residents, businesses, and visitors both now and into the future.

Strong collaboration between all levels of government is essential to making this vision a reality. As we advocate for the funding and resources needed to support our community's aspirations, we invite all candidates, elected representatives, and stakeholders to join us in shaping a future that reflects the needs and ambitions of the Port Macquarie-Hastings region.

We are proud to work alongside our community to create a place that is not only a beautiful location to call home but a thriving, innovative, and well-connected region that continues to grow and prosper. Together, we can build a future that delivers on the promise of a stronger, more sustainable Port Macquarie-Hastings.

Community and Recreation Projects			
Cowper	Port Macquarie	Port Macquarie Aquatic Centre	\$67.5 million
Cowper	Thrumster	Thrumster Sporting Fields	\$28 million
Lyne	Rainbow Beach	Rainbow Beach Sporting Fields	\$17.4 million
Lyne	Wauchope	Hastings Regional Sporting Complex	\$73 million
Cowper	Port Macquarie	Tuffins Lane Playing Fields	\$3.5 million
Cowper	Port Macquarie	Wayne Richards Park Stage 3 and 4	\$44.5 million
Lyne	Camden Haven	Camden Haven SLSC Building	\$5.2-8.2 million

Federal	Township	Project	Cost Estimate
Utilities Projects			
Lyne	Port Macquarie	Cowarra Water Supply Scheme	\$165 million
Cowper	Port Macquarie	Thrumster Wastewater Scheme	\$134 million
Lyne	Kew/ Kendall	Kew/Kendall Wastewater Scheme Diversion	\$39.2 million

NSW Government Transport Infrastructure and Services			
Cowper	Port Macquarie	Oxley Highway Upgrade (Lake Road to Wrights Road), Incorporating Phillip Charley Drive Interchange Upgrade	
Cowper	Port Macquarie	Oxley Highway / Pacific Highway Intersection Upgrade	
Cowper	King Creek	Oxley Highway / King Creek Road Intersection Upgrade	
Lyne	Lake Innes	Pacific Highway / Houston Mitchell Drive Intersection Upgrade	
Lyne /Cowper	Regional	Implementation of the 16 Regional Cities Services Improvement Program Priority Actions (Bus Services)	
Federal	Township	Project	Cost Estimate
Infrastructure Projects			
Cowper	Port Macquarie	Lake Road Upgrades	\$20-25 million
Cowper	Port Macquarie	Hastings River Drive Duplication (Hughes to Boundary Street) & Boundary Street Upgrades	\$40-45 million
Cowper	Port Macquarie	Hastings River Drive Duplication (Hughes to Boundary Street)	\$18-20 million
Cowper	Port Macquarie	John Oxley Drive Upgrade (Kingfisher Drive to The Ruins Way), incorporating Major Innes Road Upgrade)	\$20-25 million
Lyne	Lorne	Lorne Road Sealing Stage 2	\$10 million
Lyne	Kew	Schools to Schools Shared Path (Kew to Laurieton)	\$3-5 million
Lyne	Kew	Schools to Schools Shared Path (Kew to Kendall)	\$3-5 million
Cowper	Port Macquarie	Lighthouse Road Upgrade, (Incorporating Active Transport Corridor)	\$10-15 million
Lyne	Wauchope CBD	Wauchope CBD Drainage Upgrade	\$8 million
Lyne	Lake Cathie	Ocean Drive Corridor Upgrades, Lake Cathie	\$25 million for each Projects 15 & 16
Lyne	Laurieton	Kew Road / Ocean Drive and Bold Street / Ocean Drive Intersections Upgrade	\$5-6 million
Lyne	Comboyne	Orara Street / Comboyne Street / Graham Street Intersection Upgrade	\$2.5-3 million

**OUR
STRATEGY
FOR WHERE
WE WANT
TO BE IN
10 YEARS**



Economic Development Strategy on a page

COUNCIL'S VISION *To create the most liveable, sustainable, and innovative place in Australia*

Economic
Pillars & Growth
Enablers

**Next
Generation
Ready**

**Regional
Strengths &
Shared Identity**

**Informed
By Data
Insights**

**Enabling
Infrastructure**

**Cultivating
A Culture Of
Enterprise**

**Empowering
Business
Ecosystems**

Why

To ensure the future workforce is equipped with the skills and pathways needed to meet evolving industry demands.

To leverage the region's unique lifestyle, culture, and environment to attract talent, visitors, and investment.

To make evidence-based decisions that maximise impact and ensure resources are effectively targeted.

To provide the physical and digital foundations necessary for sustainable economic growth.

To foster innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustainable business practices.

To support business growth, innovation, and resilience in a rapidly changing economy.

Outcome

A skilled, adaptable, and future-ready workforce that supports economic resilience and innovation.

A strong regional brand that enhances liveability, attracts strategic investment, and supports high-value industries.

A data-informed economic strategy that is responsive, measurable, and aligned with emerging opportunities.

Infrastructure that supports business attraction, population growth, and regional connectivity.

A dynamic and creative economy driven by enterprise, collaboration, and environmental responsibility.

A thriving local business environment with strong networks, support services, and inclusive participation.

Objectives

Strengthen education-to-employment pathways, align training with industry needs, and support youth and jobseekers through partnerships and data-driven planning.

Promote the region's value proposition, develop investment tools and campaigns, and align investment, workforce, and visitor economy strategies with regional strengths.

Establish regular reporting, conduct targeted research, and share insights with stakeholders to guide collaborative planning and investment.

Advocate for and invest in transport, utilities, housing, and digital infrastructure to unlock economic potential.

Support collaboration and innovation, promote sustainability, and connect businesses through networks and funding opportunities.

Deliver capability-building programs, streamline regulatory processes, and promote inclusive economic development.



Priority One: Next Generation Ready

Where we want to be in 10 years.

Outcome	A skilled, adaptable, and future-ready workforce that supports economic resilience and innovation.
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How we will get there.

Objective	Strengthen education-to-employment pathways, align training with industry needs, and support youth and jobseekers through partnerships and data-driven planning.
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No.	Strategies	Council role
1.1	Strengthen Education partnerships and foster career awareness pathways for students.	Deliver Advocate Leader
1.2	Work with Industry and Education to build stronger ties between the tertiary education sector and local business and industry through co-hosted events, workshops and innovation forums to connect employers with students.	Advocate Leader Partner
1.3	Collaborate to strengthen school to work transitions and promote vocational pathways.	Advocate Leader Partner
1.4	Collate and analyse workforce skills gap reports to inform strategic planning and investment attraction decisions.	Deliver Advocate Leader
1.5	Collaborate with Education and Training providers by aligning programs with the current and future workforce needs.	Deliver Advocate Leader

How we will know if we get there

Measure	Target & Baseline
The number of Engagements with Business and Industry partners	Four per year
Examples of new opportunities created	Two per year
Track engagement between Educators and Employers	Evidence of strengthened relationship
Examples of school to work transitions	Number of successes

Why it is an Economic Pillar

The strength and sustainability of the Port Macquarie-Hastings economy depends on the capacity of its future workforce. Demographic forecasts show the region is experiencing an ageing population, declining youth cohorts, and diminishing school enrolments as a percentage of total population.

At the same time, employment forecasts highlight a forecast **net shortfall of jobs compared to the working age population**, alongside skill shortages in health, trades, and professional services. Preparing the next generation with the skills, opportunities, and pathways they need is therefore essential to maintaining economic resilience, community wellbeing, long-term growth and the retention and attraction of Port Macquarie-Hastings talented young people.

Why it is a Strategic Priority

Prioritising *Next Generation Ready* ensures that:

- Young people can access education-to-employment pathways locally, reducing the risk of talent leaving the region.
- Businesses benefit from a workforce that is skilled, adaptable, and digitally capable, positioning them to compete in evolving industries.
- The region can respond to structural shifts - such as automation, renewable energy, advanced manufacturing, and health innovation - with a labour force prepared for the emerging opportunities.
- Lifelong learning, training, and workforce attraction initiatives help fill short term gaps while also future proofing the economy.

Alignment with the Community Strategic Plan

This pillar directly supports the Port Macquarie-Hastings **Community Strategic Plan (CSP)** objectives of:

- **A thriving, resilient and inclusive economy** – by ensuring the workforce can meet local industry demand and attract investment.
- **A connected, sustainable and resilient community** – by retaining young people and providing equitable access to education, training, and employment.
- **Leadership and partnership** – by fostering collaboration between Council, education providers, business, and community to deliver future-ready initiatives.

Through this alignment, *Next Generation Ready* becomes not only an important economic opportunity but also a community priority, ensuring that growth delivers benefits for current and future generations across the Port Macquarie-Hastings LGA.

Priority Two: Regional Strengths and Shared Identity

Where we want to be in 10 years.

Outcome	A strong regional brand that enhances liveability, attracts strategic investment, and supports high-value industries.
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How we will get there.

Objective	Promote the region's value proposition, develop investment tools and campaigns, and align investment, workforce, and visitor economy strategies with regional strengths.
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No.	Strategies	Council role
2.1	Strengthen strategic partnerships with State Government to co-develop priority investment focus areas and actively leverage business development and attraction opportunities.	Leader Partner Capacity Builder
2.2	Build a suite of hard copy and digital Investment Prospectus documents tailored to specific industry sectors for attraction of investment and business for strategic investors, developers and stakeholders.	Advocate Partner Capacity Builder
2.3	Support the development and attraction of emerging industries with higher value and export from the LGA potential.	Advocate Leader
2.4	Collaboratively promote a brand that builds on the region's strengths, lifestyle and economic potential to position it as a desirable place to live work and invest.	Advocate Leader Partner

2.5	Collaborate with regional partners to showcase opportunities and connect with potential investors and skilled professionals.	Advocate Leader Partner Capacity Builder
2.6	Leverage digital marketing and storytelling to highlight success stories, regional assets and lifestyle competitive advantages across key channels and platforms for talent attraction and investment.	Advocate Leader Partner
2.7	Align workforce development initiatives with investment priorities to ensure talent pipelines support emerging and strategically important industry strengths.	Advocate Leader Partner
2.8	Collaborate to strengthen the Port Macquarie visitor economy brand through targeted digital campaigns and immersive storytelling that highlights the region's uniqueness.	Advocate Leader Partner
2.9	Collaborate with local, regional and state partners to deliver immersive visitor economy experiences that leverage key strengths such as agritourism, nature and outdoor, wellness culture, food and wine, arts and culture and events.	Advocate Leader Partner
2.10	Collaborate with local, regional and state partners to develop growth sectors of eco, cultural and inclusive tourism.	Advocate Leader Partner
2.11	Develop a Destination Events Strategy that strategically aligns sponsored events and attracts high-yield, out-of-region visitors during off-peak periods.	Deliver Leader Partner
2.12	Create a marketing plan with KPIs that is strategically aligned with local, regional and state partners.	Deliver Leader Partner

2.13	Advocate for a visiting friends and family program.	Partner
2.14	Advocate for and apply for funding that improves visitor infrastructure & accessibility that supports high-yield visitors.	Advocate Leader Partner
2.15	Deliver a year-round events calendar to drive visitation.	Deliver Leader Partner

How we will know if we get there

Measure	Target & Baseline
An annual report to Council on regional focus areas.	Impact, Successes & Progress on Economic suite of Metrics.
Create Investment Prospectus specific to industry sectors identified.	Delivery and Effective use of the Investment Prospectus.
Collaboration in brand promotion.	Council's efforts supported by evidence of partners and stakeholders.
Collaborate with Regional Partners.	Evidence of Partnership economic development activity being aligned and consistent and leveraging Council's investment.
Leverage digital marketing and storytelling for inspiring investment and talent attraction.	Engagement metrics on digital platforms and number of businesses, employers and media involved.
Develop seasonal campaigns.	Campaign reach and engagement.
Diverse visitor economy experiences.	Operators supported, trained and attending meetings.
Strategically aligned events and visitor economy marketing.	Destination Events Strategy, Events calendar and marketing plan developed.

Why it is an Economic Pillar

A clear and confident regional identity is important for economic competitiveness with other regions and metropolitan areas. Port Macquarie-Hastings has a strong lifestyle appeal, natural environment, and cultural assets that provide a competitive advantage.

Leveraging these strengths through a shared identity empowers the region to differentiate itself in competitive markets for investment, talent, students, and visitors. By building on what makes the region an attractive location, this pillar underpins economic diversification, visitor economic growth, and business and investment attraction.

Why it is a Strategic Priority

Prioritising *Regional Strengths and Shared Identity* provides a framework for the following outcomes:

- The region promotes a unified story to external markets, enhancing recognition and competitiveness.
- Visitor economy growth builds on the area's reputation for natural beauty, events, food, sporting and cultural experiences.

- Local pride and cohesion are strengthened, encouraging residents and businesses to advocate for the region in a consistent and whole of community manner.
- Investment attraction efforts are aligned to the region's unique strengths, including health, wellness, marine, agribusiness, construction and creative industries.
- The region can compete more effectively with metropolitan centres and other regional destinations for skilled workers, students, and new businesses.

Alignment with the Community Strategic Plan

The Regional Strengths and Shared Identity Economic Development Pillar directly contributes to the Port Macquarie-Hastings Community Strategic Plan (CSP) objectives of:

- **A thriving, resilient and inclusive economy** by ensuring businesses have the infrastructure needed to operate and expand.
- **A connected, sustainable and resilient community** by delivering the roads, transport, utilities, and digital services that support growth and liveability.

- **Leadership and partnership** by advocating strongly for funding alignment from State and Federal Governments, ensuring local priorities match national and State policy directions.

Through this alignment, *Regional Strengths and Shared Identity* positions Port Macquarie-Hastings to confidently project its strengths, attract new opportunities, and ensure the benefits of growth are widely shared.



Priority Three: Informed by Data Insights

Where we want to be in 10 years.

Outcome	A data-informed economic strategy that is responsive, measurable, and aligned with emerging opportunities.
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How we will get there.

Objective	Establish regular reporting, conduct targeted research, and share insights with stakeholders to guide collaborative planning and investment.
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No.	Strategies	Council role
3.1	Establish regular community reporting on key regional economic indicators to inform strategy and measure progress.	Advocate Deliver Leader Partner
3.2	Review Council's REMPLAN and Spendmapp data available to the community with an objective of increasing the available information to inform partners and stakeholders in business and industry.	Deliver Leader Partner
3.3	Monitor and report on business and stakeholder engagement to ensure representation, understanding and advocacy of key industries.	Leader Partner

3.4	Targeted research into emerging sectors and how Council and partners and stakeholders can help grow these areas in the region.	Advocate Leader Partner
3.5	Provide internal stakeholders, business and business networks with key insights into the local economy to guide collaborative decision making.	Advocate Leader Partner

How we will know if we get there

Measure	Target & Baseline
Periodic reports to the community published and monitored for views and downloads.	Establish baseline.
Key insights summary and graphics distributed to partners and stakeholders	Quarterly.
Identify emerging sectors and strategies with partners and stakeholders to identify recommended actions and advocacy for each of the parties to take in response.	Twice a year.

Why it is an Economic Pillar

Sound decision-making is fundamental to effective and efficient economic development. With finite resources and increasing demands, Council and the community must prioritise investment where it will deliver the greatest impact.

Informed by Data Insights recognises that reliable evidence, from economic modelling, workforce forecasts, visitor economy data, business surveys, and community feedback, is essential to guide choices, reduce risk, and build confidence among stakeholders.

Why it is a Strategic Priority

Prioritising *Informed by Data Insights* ensures that:

- Limited public funds are directed to initiatives with the strongest evidence of economic and social return.
- Emerging opportunities can be identified early and leveraged before other regions capture them.
- Community and business needs are better understood, strengthening trust in Council's decision making and prioritisation.

- Investments are more resilient to shocks such as demographic change, technology disruption, or natural disasters.
- Progress is measurable, allowing Council and its partners and stakeholders to demonstrate accountability and adapt strategies over time.

Alignment with the Community Strategic Plan

This pillar directly supports the Port Macquarie-Hastings **Community Strategic Plan (CSP)**:

- **A thriving, resilient and inclusive economy** by targeting initiatives that deliver maximum economic return and diversify local industries.
- **A connected, sustainable and resilient community** by using evidence to plan for population growth, infrastructure, and housing in sustainable ways.
- **Leadership and partnership** by sharing insights with business, government, and community to strengthen partnership and collaboration.
- **A healthy natural environment** – by using environmental data to ensure economic growth is consistent with sustainability goals.

Benefits Across the Quadruple Bottom Line

Using data insights delivers benefits beyond the economy:

- **Economic:** Better targeted investments maximise returns, support business confidence, and attract external funding.
- **Social:** Community wellbeing is enhanced when services, programs, and infrastructure are delivered where they are most needed.
- **Environmental:** Data led planning ensures natural assets are protected and climate resilience is built into economic development.
- **Governance:** Transparent, evidence-based decision-making builds trust, reduces duplication, and demonstrates Council's role as a responsible steward of community resources.

By embedding *Informed by Data Insights* as a core economic pillar, Port Macquarie-Hastings ensures that every decision from major infrastructure to industry support and partnerships are guided by evidence and positioned to achieve the best possible outcomes for the greatest number of people.

Priority Four: Enabling Infrastructure

Where we want to be in 10 years.

Outcome	Infrastructure that supports business attraction, population growth, and regional connectivity.
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How we will get there.

Objective	Advocate for and invest in transport, utilities, housing, and digital infrastructure to unlock economic potential.
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No.	Strategies	Council role
4.1	Advocate for Priority Infrastructure, Utilities, Community and Recreation and NSW Government Transport Infrastructure Services, Grant Funding and Delivery.	Leader Partner Capacity Builder
4.2	Advocate for improvement to and application of communication technology in the region.	Advocate Leader Partner Capacity Builder
4.3	Map and promote investment ready sites for commercial and industrial development.	Advocate Leader Capacity Builder
4.4	Advocate for partnerships with airlines and stakeholder networks to drive investment and expansion of aviation capacity.	Leader Partner Capacity Builder

4.5	Collaborate with regional and state networks to align with focus on attracting investment of high quality accommodation in the region.	Advocate Leader Partner
4.6	Advocate for events that deliver or improve infrastructure and services that remain in place for the community after the event.	Advocate Leader Partner
4.7	Advocate for transport infrastructure and services including road, rail, regional airports and regional event infrastructure.	Advocate Leader

How we will know if we get there

Measure	Target & Baseline
Influence, Applications and Grant Funding for Priority Projects	Number of Meetings, Continuous Improvement of Collateral, Grant Applications, Funding Secured.
Technology coverage improvements	Improved coverage, influence, collateral created number of partner meetings..
Map created and collateral created for investment ready sites for commercial and industrial development.	Map, collateral, influence, secure employers and business.
Improve infrastructure and services for events that remain in place.	Identify and report on infrastructure and services improved or delivered by event.
Attract high quality accommodation provider.	Maps, Collateral, Influence, Meetings.

Why this is a Growth Enabler

Infrastructure underpins every aspect of economic activity.

Roads, utilities, digital connectivity, public transport, housing, and community

facilities create the conditions for businesses to thrive, residents to live well, and visitors to access the region.

For Port Macquarie-Hastings, a designated **regional growth Council**, investment in enabling infrastructure

is essential to support high population growth, industry diversification, and the visitor economy. Growth places pressure on existing assets, can impact liveability, and make the region's less appealing to attract investment.

Why it is a Strategic Priority

Prioritising *Enabling Infrastructure* ensures that:

- Population and workforce growth are matched with the services and facilities required to sustain quality of life.
- Business investment is supported by reliable utilities, efficient transport, and high-speed digital connectivity.
- Visitor economy growth is enabled through transport access, visitor facilities, and public domain improvements.
- Housing supply and affordability are supported by essential services and transport corridors.
- The region is positioned to attract **greater than its standard share of State and Federal investment**, reflecting its role as a growth centre for the North Coast.

Alignment with the Community Strategic Plan

This Growth Enabler contributes directly to the **Community Strategic Plan (CSP)** objectives:

- **A thriving, resilient and inclusive economy** by ensuring businesses have the infrastructure needed to operate and expand.

- **A connected, sustainable and resilient community** by delivering the roads, transport, utilities, and digital services that support growth and liveability.
- **Leadership and partnership** by advocating strongly for funding alignment from State and Federal Governments, ensuring local priorities match national and State policy directions.
- **A healthy natural environment** by embedding sustainability and climate resilience into infrastructure planning and delivery.

Benefits Across the Quadruple Bottom Line

- **Economic:** Infrastructure investment generates construction jobs, unlocks new industry opportunities, and improves business competitiveness.
- **Social:** Residents benefit from better transport, services, housing, and community facilities, strengthening liveability and social equity.
- **Environmental:** Sustainable infrastructure reduces emissions, protects natural assets, and builds resilience to climate impacts.

- **Governance:** Evidence based prioritisation ensures finite resources are invested where they deliver the greatest return, strengthening accountability and public confidence.

Advocacy and Funding Alignment

As a growth regional Council, Port Macquarie-Hastings should be prioritised for infrastructure funding by other levels of government and their agencies. Advocacy efforts must emphasise the region's role in meeting National and State objectives, from housing delivery to regional connectivity, ensuring that investment in enabling infrastructure is both timely and adequate to support future growth.

Priority Five: Cultivating a Culture of Enterprise

Where we want to be in 10 years.

Outcome	A dynamic and creative economy driven by enterprise, collaboration, and environmental responsibility.
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How we will get there.

Objective	Support collaboration and innovation, promote sustainability, and connect businesses through networks and funding opportunities.
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No.	Strategies	Council role
5.1	Support local businesses in preparing for risks and natural hazards impacts by providing practical tools, resources and guidance for continuity planning, disaster readiness and climate adaptation.	Advocate Deliver Leader Partner
5.2	Actively engage with relevant state and federal programs to access funding, resources and strategic support for local business growth.	Deliver Leader Partner
3.3	Collaborate with stakeholders to promote technology initiatives and circular economy practices through pilot programs and business engagement.	Leader Partner

3.4	Empower local business chambers and industry groups to facilitate networking events to connect the cross sector business community.	Advocate Leader Partner
3.5	Encourage the adoption of sustainable business practices to improve efficiency, effectiveness and workplace culture by establishing recognition programs and facilitating access to infrastructure investment.	Advocate Leader Partner

How we will know if we get there

Measure	Target & Baseline
Number of businesses engaged, workshops attended, and adoption of initiatives shared.	Establish baseline and measure growth
Pilot programs created and number of participants.	Establish baseline and measure growth
New partnerships formed from cross collaboration.	Establish baseline and measure growth
Number of businesses recognised for improved operations, workplace culture or efficiency and effectiveness improvement.	Three per year.
Number of businesses accessing funding from state and federal funding sources.	Establish baseline and measure growth

Why this is a Growth Enabler

Enterprise is the foundation of continuous improvement, innovation, new industries, and job creation.

By fostering a culture that supports creativity, managed risks and entrepreneurship, the Port Macquarie-Hastings community can diversify its economy and adapt to change.

A culture of enterprise encourages local businesses and start-ups to grow, strengthens innovation networks, and positions the region as a destination where ideas are turned into practical opportunities. For a growth regional Council, this is important to sustaining competitiveness and attracting talent and investment.

Why it is a Strategic Priority

Prioritising Cultivating a Culture of Enterprise ensures that:

- New industries and businesses emerge to complement and grow established sectors.
- Local entrepreneurs have the support, skills, and networks needed to succeed.
- The region is positioned to take advantage of shifts in technology, digital innovation, and emerging markets.
- Economic resilience is enhanced by encouraging a broader range of industries.
- Port Macquarie-Hastings has a need for a

greater than its standard share of external funding for innovation and business development, recognising its role as a regional growth centre contributing to State and national objectives.

Alignment with the Community Strategic Plan

Cultivating a Culture of Enterprise supports the Port Macquarie-Hastings **Community Strategic Plan (CSP)** by:

- **A thriving, resilient and inclusive economy** building pathways for new businesses, start-ups, and innovative industries to flourish.
- **A connected, sustainable and resilient community** enabling enterprise that creates local opportunities and keeps talent in the region.
- **Leadership and partnership** fostering collaboration between Council, education, business, and State and Federal agencies to strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem.
- **A healthy natural environment** encouraging sustainable enterprises that leverage the region's environmental assets responsibly.

Benefits Across the Quadruple Bottom Line

- **Economic:** Drives innovation, attracts investment, diversifies the local economy, and creates high-value employment opportunities.

- **Social:** Builds confidence, aspiration, and opportunities for residents of all ages to participate in business and enterprise.
- **Environmental:** Encourages development of sustainable, green, and circular economy enterprises.
- **Governance:** Promotes partnerships and transparent investment in programs that generate the greatest benefit across industries and communities.

Funding and Policy Alignment

As a designated regional growth Council, Port Macquarie-Hastings should be prioritised for State and Federal funding to strengthen enterprise ecosystems.

Investments in innovation centres, business accelerators, training programs, and digital infrastructure directly align with National and State policy agendas for innovation, regional growth, and economic resilience. By aligning local initiatives with these policies, the region strengthens its attraction for increased external investment and ensures that finite local resources are directed to initiatives delivering the best outcomes for the greatest number of people.



Priority Six: Empowering Business Ecosystems

Where we want to be in 10 years.

Outcome	A thriving local business environment with strong networks, support services, and inclusive participation.
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How we will get there.

Objective	Deliver capability building programs, streamline regulatory processes, and promote inclusive economic development.
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No.	Strategies	Council role
6.1	Collaborate with industry leaders, government agencies, and private sector advisory services to deliver targeted capability building workshops that enhance productivity, innovation, and resilience across the local business community.	Advocate Partner
6.2	Promote the Economic Development team as a dedicated, business-friendly concierge service that supports both new and existing businesses and whole of Council experiences for complex planning and events customers.	Deliver Advocate Leader Partner
6.3	Conduct regular business confidence surveys to inform regional decision-making.	Deliver Leader
6.4	Work collaboratively with state planning authorities and internal departments to advocate to reduce regulatory barriers and streamline planning and development approvals, making it easier for business to establish and grow in the region.	Deliver Leader
6.5	Develop centres and villages and streets revitalisation programs to invigorate spaces and address nighttime economy opportunities.	Deliver Leader

6.6	Strengthen Aboriginal economic participation by supporting cultural enterprises and facilitating partnerships with Aboriginal organisations.	Advocate Partner Leader
6.7	Promote inclusive economic growth by supporting social enterprises and employment pathways for underrepresented groups.	Advocate Partner Leader

How we will know if we get there

Measure	Target & Baseline
Number of workshops and newsletters distributed. Attendance numbers at events.	Establish Baseline and Growth
Engagement with concierge service. Whole of Council issues solved.	12 engagements per year
Business Confidence Surveys completed and effective communication of results.	Survey response rate > 400 Satisfaction with presentation of information > 85%
Streamlined and cohesive experience for planning and development	Improvement in process and communication. Stakeholder feedback.
Revitalisation projects funded and delivered	Business and visitor feedback. Economic uplift reported through metrics.
Increase the number of supported Aboriginal and social enterprises engaged.	Four engagements per year.

Why this is a Growth Enabler

Strong business ecosystems are a key indicator of resilient regional economies.

An empowered business ecosystem enables enterprises of all sizes, from

start-ups and sole traders to established and high performing industries, to access the networks, services, digital tools, and support they need to grow.

For Port Macquarie-Hastings, strengthening these ecosystems

improves the performance of local businesses through better connection, more innovation, and positioned to compete in regional, national, and global markets.

Why it is a Strategic Priority

Prioritising Empowering Business Ecosystems ensures that:

- Businesses can access the skills, mentoring, networks, and digital capability needed to grow.
- Local supply chains are strengthened, reducing economic leakage and building resilience.
- Industry collaboration is enhanced through chambers of commerce, sector groups, and innovation networks.
- Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are supported to scale, export, and innovate.
- Port Macquarie-Hastings requires greater than its standard share of funding and support from State and Federal programs for business capability, innovation, and digital transformation, reflecting its role as a growth regional Council.

Alignment with the Community Strategic Plan

This priority supports the Port Macquarie-Hastings **Community Strategic Plan (CSP)** by delivering on:

- **A thriving, resilient and inclusive economy** by equipping businesses to adapt, innovate, and expand.
- **A connected, sustainable and resilient community** by ensuring local businesses generate employment and provide essential goods and services.
- **Leadership and partnership** by fostering collaboration between Council, government, business, and education providers to strengthen the business environment.
- **A healthy natural environment** by encouraging sustainable business practices and circular economy opportunities.

Benefits Across the Quadruple Bottom Line

Economic: Drives local business growth, strengthens supply chains, supports job creation, and attracts external investment.

Social: Builds strong networks and inclusive opportunities for business owners and workers, contributing to community prosperity.

Environmental: Encourages businesses to innovate in sustainability, reducing waste and resource use while opening new markets.

Governance: Ensures transparent, evidence-based support for businesses, with partnerships that maximise the impact of limited resources.

Funding and Policy Alignment

As a designated growth regional Council, Port Macquarie-Hastings should be prioritised for external funding and policy support to strengthen its business ecosystem.

Investments in digital capability, business incubators, mentoring programs, and supply chain initiatives directly align with National and State priorities for innovation, productivity, and regional growth.

By aligning local priorities with these broader agendas, Council can ensure finite resources are leveraged for maximum benefit to the greatest number of people.

Implementation, Monitoring and Review

The success of the Economic Development Strategy in meeting the objectives and vision for Port Macquarie-Hastings will depend on ongoing engagement with the community, partners, stakeholders and government agencies and providing Port Macquarie-Hastings with a consolidated, comprehensive suite of aligned strategies. The actions contained within this Strategy will require further strategic attention by Council. The Strategy should be regularly reviewed every five years to capture any changes in the circumstances affecting the future of the Port Macquarie-Hastings community.

The Economic Development Strategy identifies important actions, recommendations, and partners and stakeholders to ensure economic development is a shared responsibility for all stakeholders.

An implementation and evaluation framework for the Economic Development Strategy will be outlined in the Council report that presents the Strategy to Council for public exhibition. This Strategy is supported by an Implementation Framework. On the adoption of the Strategy the implementation and evaluation framework will be amplified to include the evaluation element and will be reported on an annual basis to Council.





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PORT MACQUARIE
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