



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

DETAILED SUPPORTING DOCUMENT
2020 - 2040

Central
Coast
Council

DRAFT SUBJECT TO COUNCIL ENDORSEMENT

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CENTRAL COAST 2040

Over the next twenty years, the Central Coast will transform from what it is today, to realise its full potential as a major regional centre.

The change has already begun. Infrastructure projects such as NorthConnex will improve connectivity and reduce travel time, catalysing business opportunities. The Gosford CBD Revitalisation Plan is activity in motion – cranes are in the sky, new, high quality commercial buildings are appearing – there is investment and confidence in future development and growth for the region.

In 2040, the Central Coast is a smart, connected and vibrant region that values and promotes its natural beauty and heritage, encourages and balances development that contributes to the strength and diversity of the local economy and benefits the growing community.

We have broadened our economic base and successfully attracted high value industries representing the health and medical, advanced manufacturing and professional services sectors. Our desirable location, lifestyle and range of employment opportunities have helped to retain and grow our population, which now approaches 430,000 residents.

Further positive impacts of the higher value industries taking up available employment lands are reflected through lower unemployment, higher average household income and higher levels of education attainment encouraged by the opportunities available. The positive attainment across key socio-economic indicators displays levels commensurate with the Greater Sydney region.

A Smart Region

The Central Coast is a Smart Region, where innovation is embraced, promoted and practiced. Our redeveloped centres and new infrastructure have integrated smart technologies and sustainable and innovative design. Our smart region agenda has attracted high-value, knowledge-based industries, created new jobs which has positively impacted everyday life through improved accessibility to information and services.

The \$348 million redevelopment of Gosford Hospital and integration with the university has drawn health professionals and allied businesses to the region, creating further job opportunities across the spectrum. Wyong hospital's \$200 million redevelopment further enhances the capabilities of the health sector, which is amongst the largest employing sectors in the region.

Business and industry, government and education sectors work together to create new pathways to employment across the region's growth sectors. and provide school leavers with multiple options for further education and career futures.

A Connected Region

Travel times between the Central Coast, Sydney and Newcastle have reduced by up to 30% since the introduction of fast rail in 2030, with the soon to be completed high speed rail further cutting transit times to around 30 minutes.

The improved connectivity has encouraged companies to expand and relocate to the Central Coast, taking advantage of lower land development costs and availability, without compromising employee accessibility, leveraging the strong local skill base.

Following successful trials of Demand Responsive Transport (DRT), the scheme has been expanded to provide accessibility to an increased number of transport hubs, ensuring linkages to all employment zones, commercial centres and tertiary education locations.

Guaranteed connection via DRT to the nearest hub/zone does not exceed 15 minutes.

Dedicated autonomous bus/ tramways and cycle paths with share bike stands and charge point traverse the region along central routes ensuring multi-mode travel options.

A Vibrant Region

Improved accessibility, environmentally sensitive development and focus on the core attributes of the natural Central Coast has developed tourism into a strong, year-round economic contributor. The waterfront sporting, cultural, dining and entertainment precinct draws regional visitation each week for festivals, events and conferences.

A broad level of quality short term accommodation supports outdoor and nature-based activities along the beaches and national parks, which are a national leader in the development of indigenous tourism activities and education.

A succession of new and redevelopment projects has transformed the waterfront precinct into a major focal point for community, sporting, entertainment, dining and leisure activities. Joining the expanded Central Coast Stadium and Leagues Club is the Central Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre. Short term accommodation supports precinct activity and encourages increased length of stay for visitors enjoying one of the region's most attractive assets.

The establishment of the university health, innovation and entrepreneurship precinct has injected vibrancy and activity into through the assimilation of over 2,500 students into the CBD fabric. Additional investment in nearby residential accommodation has followed, along with café's restaurants, bars and other population serving amenities to support the growing liveability requirements.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 INDIGENOUS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians and First Peoples of this Land and pay our respects to Elders, both past and present. The Central Coast Economic Development Strategy reflects our commitment to celebrating Indigenous culture and enhancing economic opportunities and outcomes for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

1.2 OVERVIEW

The Central Coast is a region on the rise. Located in the centre of the fastest growing corridor in New South Wales stretching from the northern edge of Sydney, through to Newcastle. The state projected population along this corridor is estimated to be 1.1 million by 2036. The Central Coast, classed as a Metro Satellite due to its relative proximity to Sydney will become a major economic and population hub over the next two decades, attracting large numbers of families seeking new lifestyle and employment opportunities.

The region has a skilled workforce and a diverse economy, with expertise in healthcare and social assistance, food and housing component manufacturing, logistics, agriculture and construction. The Central Coast has cost-effective access to key consumer markets and export opportunities, with well-serviced road and rail infrastructure as well as strategically located warehousing and freight. Overseas and domestic demand will also support growth in household food manufacturing brands and food production industries. The Central Coast's convenient access to major markets makes it an ideal location for both business and industry.

By 2036, the Central Coast's population is projected to grow to more than 415,000, driving the need for employment and investment in infrastructure (NSW Government, 2018). An ageing population also prevails, with more than 27% of the population expected to be aged above 65 by 2036 (NSW Government, 2018). This will create further demand (and some pressure) for health care and social services, which is already the largest employment sector of the region. Approximately 23% of employed residents travel outside the Central Coast for employment purposes, placing importance on supporting economic growth, increasing skills and training and increasing year 12 completion rates to retain the workforce within the region (NSW Government, 2018).

The Central Coast has identified a range of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, which are explored further as part of the development of this Economic Development Strategy (EDS). The EDS and implementation plan will ensure the most appropriate approach and framework is employed in meeting the changing needs of regional business, industry and community into the future, and to define targets resulting in improved economic and social outcomes for residents.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THIS STRATEGY

Central Coast Council recognises the challenges and opportunities of growth in the coming decades. Historically, the regional economy has underperformed with lower GRP per capita, higher unemployment and lower educational attainment when compared to Greater Sydney. Many Central Coast residents leave the region for every workday – most of these are higher valued, higher remunerated roles such as those in the professional services sector, because sufficient opportunities do not currently exist locally.

The development and growth of the Central Coast as a true, well connected but individually enabled satellite of a broadening Greater Sydney is effectively mandated within NSW State government planning. The Central Coast will play a pivotal role as a northern arm that provides expansion opportunities and the development of a strong, diversified and innovation driven future economy.

Proximity to Sydney is a challenge and opportunity. The Strategy seeks to highlight the opportunities and mitigate the challenges. The EDS provides a strategic framework to guide Councils decision-making around sustainable economic development initiatives that assist in creating jobs and stimulating the Central Coast economy. Central Coast Council's Economic Development and Project Delivery has developed an economic development strategy (EDS), taking a long-term view through to 2040, but focus on the near term (ten-year) horizon for key actions to progress in the interim to start on the path to the 2040 strategy.

The EDS highlights strategies to create a sustainable and increasingly self-sufficient community. It identifies the collaboration and partnerships needed to support a whole-of-Council and community vision for economic development and constructive steps to achieve outcomes.

1.4 APPROACH

The strategy was developed following the compilation of a detailed information base (literature review, socio-demographic and economic modelling) to be tested, informed by and built on through an extensive consultation phase with regional focus groups, one-on-one meetings as well as a Council staff and broader community opinion survey. All this information was compiled to understand the key opportunities presented to the region, the challenges that need to be overcome to realise them, as well as the 'must-have' outcomes for the local community. It is from this information and evidence base that the strategy development framework was developed.

A summary of the key stages in the development of the Central Coast Economic Development Strategy is outlined below:

- Developing a Detailed Evidence Base: Through a detailed literature review, background research and profiling to identify, based on desktop research the competitive advantages and challenges of the region and to be tested and validated in consultation.
- Testing this Data in Consultation: through detailed engagement with the local business and regional community, including:
 - Individual meetings: 17 stakeholders
 - Focus group workshops: 35 attendees
 - Community survey (211 respondents)
 - Central Coast Council officer survey (74 respondents)
- Development of a Strategic Economic Development Framework (Strategic Themes)
- Identification of key game changing initiative that will create an accelerated growth in the regional economic profile
- Reporting around the key strategic themes, the implementation requirements to ensure their success as well as the development of a public facing strategy document, supported by an internal working strategy document and implementation plan.

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

2.1 SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

The Central Coast offers the potential of an attractive lifestyle – a slower than city pace, but with good rail and road accessibility to larger centres and abundant natural beauty throughout the natural bushland, natural waterways and coastline. In addition to the positive lifestyle elements, lower comparative cost of living to other areas within the Greater Sydney catchment has encouraged commuter migration, which will potentially increase as infrastructure projects such as NorthConnex and programmed faster (eventually high-speed) rail improve connectivity even further.

With projected high population growth facilitated through improved accessibility and outward pressures from other areas of Greater Sydney, the challenge for the Central Coast in achieving balanced, sustainable growth is four-fold and can be categorised as per below:

Social:	Ensuring that the provision of services to the community such as affordable housing provision, well planned built environment, cultural and recreation space, health and safety and local transport infrastructure are able to keep pace with development and population growth.
Environmental:	In the face of growth pressures, appropriate measures are required to be taken to ensure the protection of key environmental features, biodiversity, management of waste and water, air quality, adaptation to renewable sources and active management of climate change impacts, including positive initiatives.
Economic:	Population growth requires active measures taken to encourage and facilitate economic growth that will provide employment potential for new and existing residents. This requires development of economic strategies, ensuring provision and availability of suitable industrial and commercial lands, support and provision of vocational pathways, support of local business and attraction of new businesses, as well as ensuring financial sustainability of Council.
Civic Leadership:	Ensuring that Council consults with the residential and business community and adopts policy frameworks that are supportive of growth and the continuance of high levels of service provision. To provide leadership in a listening environment and uphold the ethics and integrity expected by the community, whilst making appropriate decisions that prioritise the benefit and prosperity for all.

2.2 PRIORITISATION OF ECO & SMART INDUSTRIES

The predominant employing sectors for the Central Coast are Health Care and Social Assistance, Construction, Retail and Manufacturing. With the exception of the manufacturing sector, which is broadly (there are obviously exceptions) in decline throughout Australia, population and the demands to service population growth is a key driver of the remaining industries.

In order to diversify the economy and create new employment opportunities in higher value, future focussed industries, the Central Coast needs to actively seek, attract and encourage the establishment of businesses that are less population and household service driven and are exporters of goods and services out of the region.

As a region known for its natural beauty, industries that are environmentally aligned and typically come under the banner of 'cleantech' are an obvious synergy. The sector encompasses activities such as solar and other renewables, energy efficiency, environmentally friendly building materials, waste management, and engineering and consulting services.

The manufacturing sector, traditionally strong within the Central Coast still has a significant role to play, with existing companies transitioning to smarter technologies and a concerted effort should be made to both encourage and support this transition, as well as attraction of other advanced manufacturing companies which may range from producing high performance engineered products to functional foods and aerospace components.

The transition of the economy and capture of current and future opportunities is further enhanced through knowledge based industries and professional services, much of which is a current major import to the region. Evidence highlights a high proportion of the outward commuting workforce are employed in these sectors, indicating a strong local skills base that could be available to support local activity. The ability to provide an attractive investment environment and suitable workplace accommodation is a key factor in encouraging both new start-ups and potential relocations.

The development of a Smart Cities framework for the Central Coast will be form integral component of delivering future services and capacity to the residents and businesses of the region and that will act as a catalyst for inward investment and attraction of higher value industries.

2.3 CO-LOCATION AND INTEGRATION OF EDUCATION, TRAINING & JOB GROWTH

With higher than average unemployment and very high levels of youth unemployment experienced across the Central Coast, coordination between all levels of education, training, government and industry is required to adequately address the situation. Consultation with local business indicates opportunities exist ranging from semi-skilled to highly skilled in areas such as manufacturing and engineering. Each sector indicated a shortage of required personnel due to the inability to hire appropriately skilled and educated workers.

Skilling positions is not the only limiting factor constraining growth, transport accessibility is cited as a significant issue for the region – particularly for youth. The education and training sector holds a key position in facilitating improved employment prospects as well as skilling for future roles.

Universities and TAFE institutions are increasingly working together, often in co-located or shared campus facilities and is particularly popular in regional areas. Such is the case with the University of Newcastle and TAFE Hunter and Central Coast Campus at Ourimbah. The campus has a high level of interaction with all levels of government and industry – in this way, opportunities for linking future skilling requirements and provision of suitable learning can be mapped, as well as increasing the relationships between education and industry to engage in research and development, sharing of knowledge and creation of further opportunities that benefit the local economy through attracting additional partnering relationships and encouraged clustering activities.

Assisting, encouraging and facilitating continued engagement and collaboration is a key activity for the Central Coast Council to unlock the potential of relationships.

2.4 ALIGNMENT WITH COMMUNITY PRINCIPLES

One Central Coast (Community Plan) summarises the desired regional outcomes and principles and the 2040 environment and outcome they support. These core outcomes for the community include:

- Belonging
- Smart
- Green
- Responsible
- Liveable.

These community principles are considered and incorporated throughout the Central Coast Economic Development Strategy.

3. CENTRAL COAST OVERVIEW

3.1 REGIONAL OVERVIEW SNAPSHOT

The Central Coast Local Government Area (Central Coast) is located in northern New South Wales, between Sydney and Newcastle. The Central Coast has a large geographical footprint of 168,107 km² and includes the previous local government areas of Gosford and Wyong. Despite the large size of the Central Coast, it loses a significant proportion of its workers each day through a daily commute to Sydney.

Arguably, proximity to Sydney has contributed to dampening development in higher value industries and financial and professional services, which typically are centred closer to high activity and high population areas. As a result, the majority of industry employment is local population and household service based. Comparatively lower industry development and diversification opportunities have resulted in higher than average local levels of unemployment and educational attainment.

Key characteristics of the Central Coast region include:

- The Population in Central Coast in 2018 is recorded as 342,047 people.
- The average age in Central Coast in 2017 was 41.8 years, an increase from 2008 at 39.6 years.
- Local Gross Regional Product was recorded at \$13.49 billion in 2018, following a growth rate of 2.8% from 2017.
- The average weekly household income in the Central Coast was \$1,594 in 2016. This is \$295 less than the New South Wales average household income.
- In July 2018 there were 126,459 local jobs in the Central Coast Region (by place of work).
- In 2016, Central Coast has a self-containment rate of 71.7% and a self-sufficiency rate of 91.1%. The other 39,532 employed Central Coast residents travel outside Central Coast to work.

Key Industries by Value (2017/18):

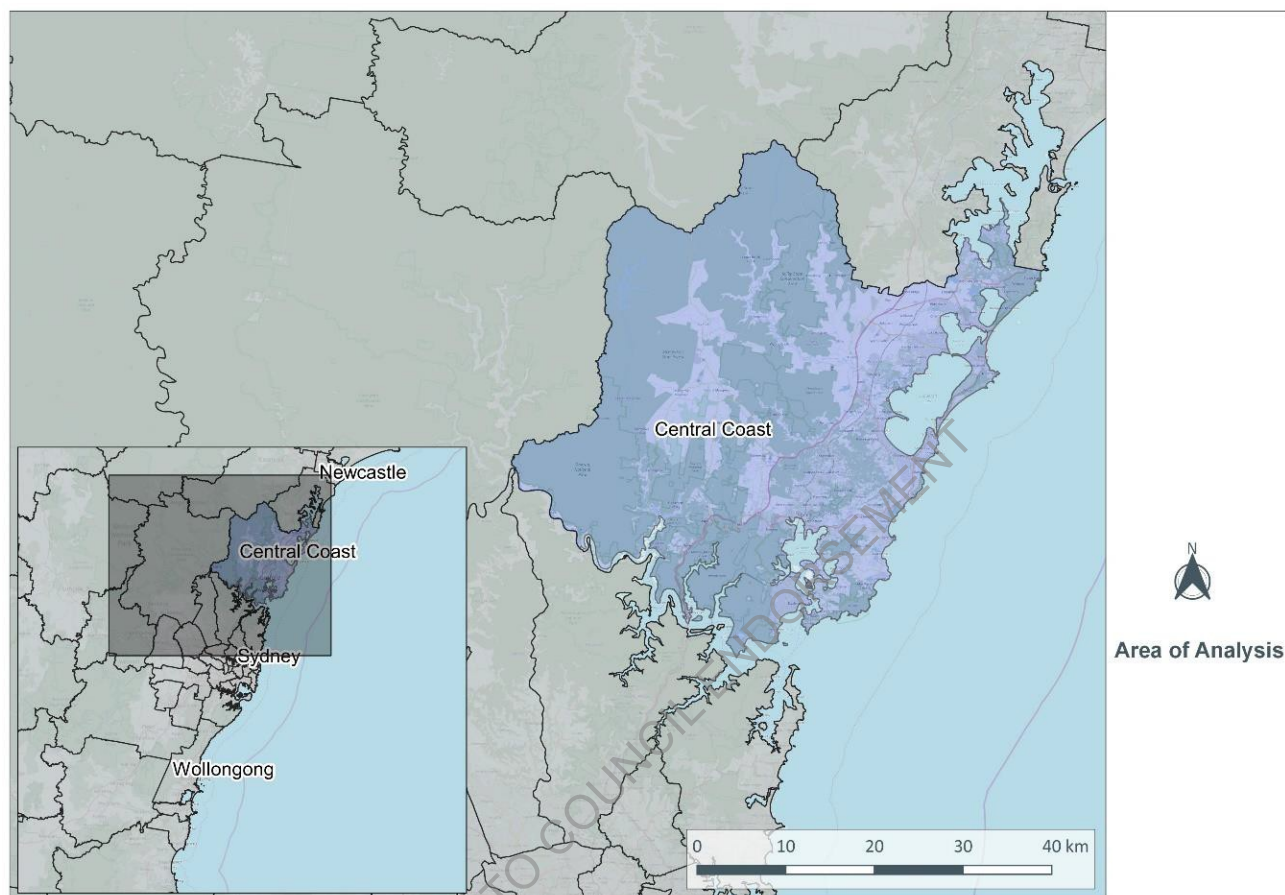
- Health Care and Social Assistance (14.5%)
- Manufacturing (8.9%)
- Retail Trade (7.9%)
- Construction (7.8%)
- Financial and Insurance Services (6.6%).

Key Industries of Employment by FTE (2016):

- Health Care and Social Assistance (17.8%)
- Construction (13.1%)
- Retail Trade (10.2%)
- Manufacturing (8.8%)
- Education and Training (7.1%)

Key Industries of Employment -Total (2016):

- Health Care and Social Assistance (18.3%)
- Retail Trade (13.0%)
- Construction (10.5%)
- Accommodation and Food Services (9.5%)
- Education and Training (8.6%)

Figure 3.1. Central Coast Location

Source: AEC

3.2 SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC & ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

3.2.1 Population

In 2018, Central Coast had a population of 342,047 people and had grown by 0.8% from 2008. The Central Coast population has an older age distribution than the state. Persons aged 25-64 years account for almost half the population, and 20.3% of the population were aged 65 and over in 2017. An ageing population is generally associated with increased demand for health infrastructure and aged care accommodation facilities. Population growth estimates suggest the local population is likely to increase to 414,615 by 2036. This represents growth of 20% from current levels, an average annual growth of 1.1%. This growth is likely to support the region's key sectors, which tend to be population-driven.

As at the 2016 Census there were 12,489 indigenous people living in Central Coast or 3.8% of the total population. Approximately 86.2% of indigenous people were employed in Central Coast, a higher proportion than the state which has 84.7% of its indigenous population employed. Indigenous residents in Central Coast also had a higher high school completion rate than New South Wales indigenous population at 30.6% compared to 28.4%, however, this is still lower than the overall Central Coast average of 40.3%.

3.2.2 Gross Regional Product

In 2018, the region recorded Gross Regional Product of approximately \$13.5 billion. The local economy has experienced strong growth since 2015, spurred by the health care and social assistance and construction sectors. Due to the position of Central Coast, the local economy is likely to have a broader servicing population than resident

population, supporting the economy despite relatively weak population growth outcomes in recent years. The most prominent sectors (by total employment) in the economy in 2018 were health care and social assistance, manufacturing and retail trade with all three of these industries having labour specialisation along with accommodation and food services, construction, other services and rental, hiring and real estate services. Despite growing strongly since 2015, Central Coast had a slow 5-year annual growth and is also expected to grow at a slow pace to 2031, growing at 1.0% annually.

3.2.3 Labour Force

In the September quarter of 2018, Central Coast had a labour force of approximately 180,500 people, with 126,459 jobs located in the Central Coast Council area. Central Coast has a higher rate of unemployment than the state, at 5.8% compared to 4.5%. Youth unemployment (for persons aged between 15 and 24 years) is problematic at 14.6%, though this rate of youth unemployment is relatively consistent with other regions of Australia. The self-sufficiency rate for Central Coast is around 91.1%, meaning 91.1% of local jobs are being filled by residents. This suggests that the resident population is appropriately qualified and skilled for the local industry structure. The self-containment rate for the region is around 71.7%, meaning 71.7% of employed residents work locally.

Health care and social assistance had the most variance between total workers and Full Time Equivalent (FTE) workers with 7,831 more workers in total than FTE. Following this was retail trade and accommodation and food services.

3.2.4 Housing

Despite having lower housing costs (for owner occupiers and renters) than comparison areas of Greater Sydney and New South Wales, housing affordability in the region is problematic with almost 10% of households with mortgages experiencing mortgage stress and 35% of renting households in rental stress.

3.2.5 National Cities Performance Framework Comparison

The Australian Government launched the first National Cities Performance Framework on 8 December 2017 (Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities, 2017). The Performance Framework provides a snapshot of the productivity and progress of Australia's largest 21 cities. The framework tracks performance across the key measures of: Jobs and Skills; Infrastructure and Investment; Liveability and Sustainability; Innovation and Digital Opportunities; Governance, Planning and Regulation; and Housing.

The Central Coast is not currently included within the national framework measurement, nor is all the data from the National Cities Performance Framework available for the Central Coast, however the table below provides available comparisons across the key areas of examination that indicate performance against Greater Sydney (of which Central Coast forms a part) and also against the State as a whole.

Figure 3.2. Smart Cities Benchmarks

Indicator	Central Coast	Greater Sydney	NSW
Jobs and Skills			
Youth Unemployment Rate (Place of Usual Residence) (a)	14.6%	10.4%	13.6%
Unemployment Rate(b)	5.35%	4.5%	4.30%
Indigenous Unemployment Rate (a)	13.8%	11.8%	15.3%
Participation Rate (a)	56.0%	66.9%	59.2%
Gross Regional Product (d)	\$13.49 billion	\$422 billion	\$559 billion
Completed High School (a)	40.3%	65.0%	52.1%
Bachelor's degree or Higher (a)	14.0%	32.7%	23.4%

Indicator	Central Coast	Greater Sydney	NSW
Housing			
Social Housing (a)	3.4%	4.6%	4.4%
Average Weekly Household Income (a)	\$1,594	\$2,118	\$1,889
Proportion of households under mortgage stress (a)	9.3%	8.7%	9.6%
Median House Price (d)	\$690,084	\$1.37 million	\$740,444
Median Unit Price (d)	\$491,484	\$876,780	\$676,368
Proportion of households under rent stress (a)	34.8%	26.7%	27.9%
Infrastructure & Investment			
Proportion of journeys to work by public transport (a)	2.7%	25.3%	16.0%
Liveability & Sustainability			
Proportion of people that volunteer (a)	17.2%	18.0%	18.1%
Languages other than English spoken at home (a)	5.8%	38.0%	25.1%
Adults that feel safe after dark in their local area (a)	47.1 ASR per 100	52.0%	53.4 ASR per 100
Proportion of adults who are obese (a)	32.5 ASR per 100	24.5% ASR per 100	28.9 ASR per 100
Suicides per 100k people (a)	11.6 Average Annual ASR per 100	8.2 Average Annual ASR per 100	9.8 Average Annual ASR per 100
Innovation & Digital Opportunities			
Total Businesses (c)	23,617	N/A	N/A
Households with internet connection (a)	77.3%	88.0%	78.2%
Governance, Planning & Regulation			
Population (c)	342,047	5,230,330	7,988,241
Average annual population growth rate (2008-2018)	0.9%	1.9% (2013-2018)	1.4%
Proportion of population that is Indigenous (a)	4.6%	1.5%	3.4%
Average Age (e)	40.9 Years	35.8 Years	38.1 Years

Note: (a) 2016 data, (b) March Quarter 2019, (c) 2018, (d) June 2018 (e) 2017

Source: Economy.ID (2019), PHIDU (2018).

3.2.6 Visitor Economy

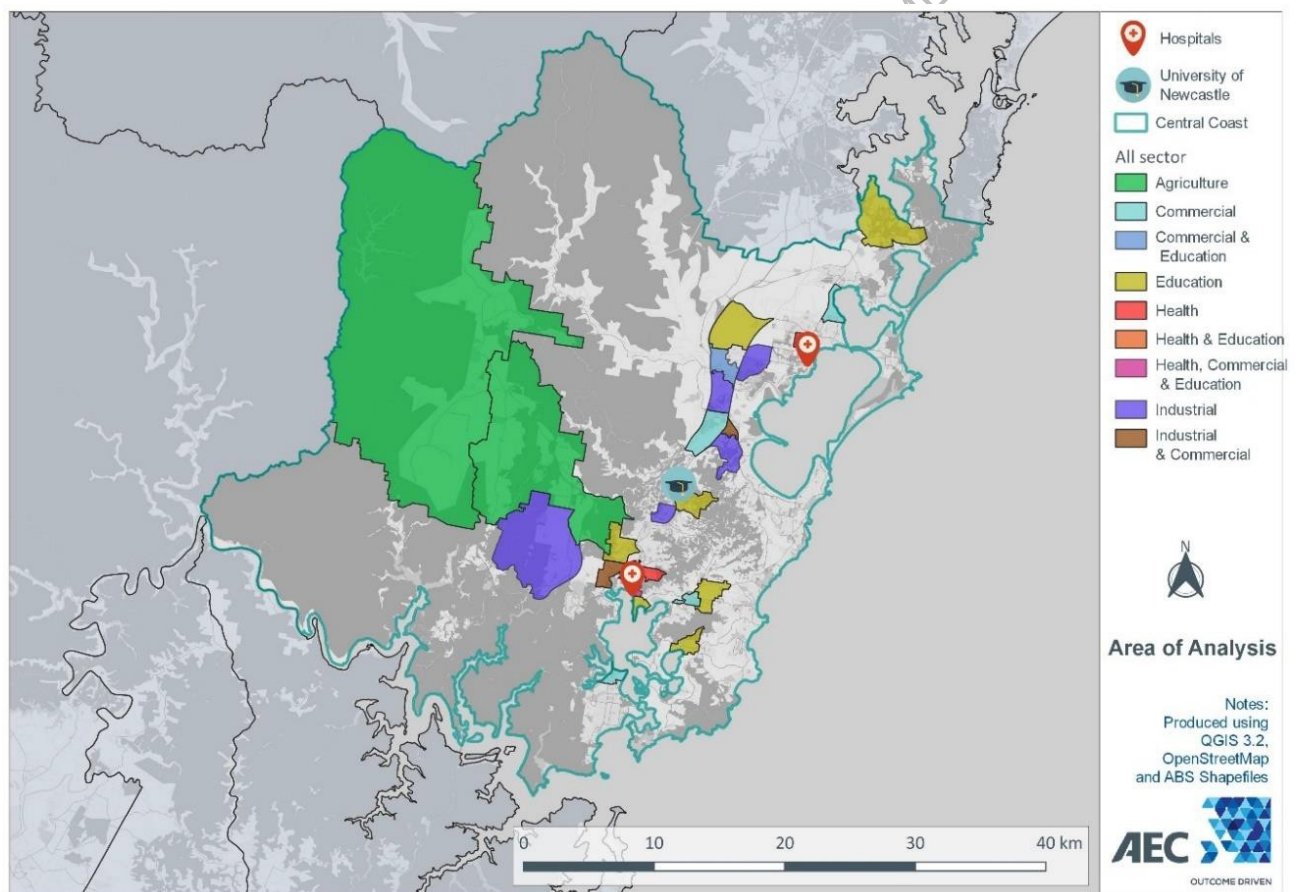
Tourism is a key potential growth sector for the region with tourism and hospitality accounting for approximately 7.9% of Gross Value Added in 2017/18 and 7.1% of employment. In the year ending July 2018 there were just over 5.1 million visitors to the Central Coast, the second most since 2007-08. The majority of visitors were domestic day trippers accounting for almost 70% of visitation however this is a decline in the proportion of day trip visitors that the region has seen historically averaging 71.8% of visitors since 2007-08. Domestic overnight visitors from within New South Wales accounted for approximately a quarter of visitors. Domestic overnight interstate visitors accounted for just 3.8% of visitation whilst international visitors comprised 1.3% of visitors. International visitors have increased their share of visitation from 0.7% in 2012-12 to 1.3% in 2017-18.

3.3 ACTIVITY PRECINCTS & KEY EMPLOYERS

Figure 3.3 outlines the key activity precincts and major employers within Central Coast, which include:

- **Central Coast Local Health District:** The recently redeveloped Gosford Hospital is one stage of the improvements to Central Coast health with a further \$72.5 million expansion for a Medical School and Research Institute, partnered with the University of Newcastle. This will increase jobs and opportunities for medical professionals to come to Central Coast, whilst also bringing spouses who could potentially be working with in the professional services industry.
- **University of Newcastle (UON):** The University has a strong commitment to the region and works closely with the two of the region's key employers (amongst others), an MOU for the CC Food Innovation Region Strategy and the Central Coast Local Health District.
- **Food Manufacturing Precincts:** There are internationally branded food manufacturing businesses that produce on the Central Coast - these include McCain Foods, Sara Lee, Mars, Sanitarium and George Weston Foods.

Figure 3.3. Activity Precinct Map, Central Coast



Source: AEC.

3.4 STRATEGIC ASSETS

Key strategic assets in the region include:

- **University of Newcastle (UON):** The Ourimbah campus, mid-way between the centres of Gosford and Wyong is a critical part of the future fabric for the Central Coast, providing further education and pathways to

employment for youth, as well as opportunities for continued learning and up-skilling of current workforce which will help to meet the challenges of future demands.

- **Food Manufacturing:** There are internationally branded food manufacturing businesses that produce on the Central Coast - these include McCain Foods, Sara Lee, Mars, Sanitarium and George Weston Foods. Clustering of businesses such as these sends a clear message to the industry that the Central Coast region has the required support networks (university research, collegiate businesses) and attributes to support one of the most dynamic industries within the manufacturing sector. CC Food Innovation Region Strategy
- **Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing:** There is a strong cluster of fabricated metal product manufacturing in Central Coast with a considerable amount of employment in structural metal product manufacturing. This is a strong industry and a key strategic asset for Central Coast.
- **General Aviation Airport:** Central Coast Airport is a small aircraft landing area owned and operated by Central Coast Council. It is located in Warnervale and is approximately 90 minutes' drive from Sydney and 45 minutes' drive from Newcastle. The runway at Central Coast Airport is sealed and is suitable for small private aircraft, charter aircraft and other users including helicopters.
- **Natural Assets:** Central Coast has a variety of natural assets that they can utilise including beaches, bushland, lakes and waterways. National parks, state forests, bushland, beaches and waterways occupy over half the region which can be a major drawcard for people moving or visiting the area.
- **High Speed Rail from Wollongong to Newcastle:** The proposed high-speed rail trainline will create a significantly faster transportation method connecting the Central Coast to Sydney. The current rail time from Sydney to Gosford is 1:19 hours with the high-speed rail expected to have an approximate travel time of 0:30.

3.5 LOCAL CHALLENGES

While the Central Coast NSW has many strengths and competitive advantages, there is also a range of challenges and limitations that need to be addressed and mitigated. A brief overview is included below.

3.5.1 Socio-Demographic Disadvantage

The Dropping off The Edge (2015) report shows the persistent communal disadvantage in the NSW Central Coast region, using 22 indicators. This analysis clearly shows that the NSW Central Coast has pockets of severe disadvantage, particularly in the 2262 & 2263 postcode localities. Specifically, these postcodes are ranked in the top 5% of 621 NSW localities requiring rent assistance for people aged 18 and over (APO, 2015). Postcodes 2259 and 2257 are in the top 10% of most disadvantaged for this indicator (APO, 2015). Unskilled workers (postcodes 2262 and 2263), long term unemployment (postcode 2263), numeracy insufficiency (postcodes 2262 and 2257) and psychiatric admissions (postcode 2263) are also areas of concern, with 4 of the 10 postcodes ranking in the top 10% of most disadvantaged (APO, 2015). Overall, 6 out of the 10 Central Coast postcodes are ranked in the top 30% of most disadvantaged communities when compared to the 621 localities in NSW (APO, 2015).

3.5.2 Intra Regional Transport Network/ Linkages

Whilst the Central Coast is well connected via rail & major roads to Sydney and Newcastle, intra-regional transport is difficult, with only a north-south spine providing services. Traversing the region is not an easy prospect, certainly made more difficult due to the natural structure and waterways, which provide challenges. A lack of public transport option is cited as being partly attributable to youth unemployment due to difficulties in getting to/from potential work locations, even though employers in these regions cite skilled labour shortages as being a key issue. The issue affects large sections of the community and also impacts on potential tourism growth – particularly for those who may arrive via train from Sydney. This is a challenge that once addressed could have significant benefits to the community.

3.5.3 Service Infrastructure to Activate Zoned Employment and Business Lands

Currently in the Central Coast there is a significant amount of land zoned for employment, however, businesses cannot use it yet as it is not serviced. Council will need to carry out work on roads, water supply systems, sewers,

fencing and landscaping before it will be serviced appropriately. The packages of land have also been identified as being too small for large scale industrial warehousing, which once serviced could bring large scale manufacturing and industrial businesses to the region. The urban spatial plan will seek to plan to enable larger land parcels and service lands.

3.5.4 Perception & Marketing (Internal & External)

There are some very positive aspects of the Central Coast economy that are currently underplayed. There is a general lack of awareness of the current strengths and potential future opportunities – particularly for business and industry, that are important selling points for the region, which, if matched with the opportunities offered by the region's lifestyle, begin to form some compelling arguments for inward investment and population (particular worker) attraction.

DRAFT SUBJECT TO COUNCIL ENDORSEMENT

4. INFLUENCING FACTORS

4.1 KEY GROWTH SECTORS TO 2040

Industries that are well-represented and are expected to have high growth are industries that benefit from local labour specialisation (i.e., an LQ above 1.0) and are anticipated to experience strong (above average) average annual employment growth in New South Wales. These sectors should be pursued for economic development activities, as they are likely to experience significant growth in coming years. The industries located in this section for Central Coast are:

- Health Care and Social Assistance (LQ = 1.4, Growth Expectation = 1.8%)
- Retail Trade (LQ = 1.3, Growth Expectation = 1.6%)
- Accommodation and Food Services (LQ = 1.3, Growth Expectation = 1.5%)
- Construction (LQ = 1.2, Growth Expectation = 1.4%)
- Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services (LQ = 1.1, Growth Expectation = 1.5%)

As manufacturing has many 2-digit industries that can be vastly different, an analysis of these industries is undertaken. An assessment of location quotients at the 2-Digit ANZSIC level suggests Central Coast has labour specialisations in the manufacturing industries of:

- Wood product manufacturing (LQ = 3.0)
- Fabricated metal product manufacturing (LQ = 1.5)
- Non-metallic mineral product manufacturing (LQ = 1.4)
- Food product manufacturing (LQ = 1.3)
- Machinery and equipment manufacturing (LQ = 1.1)
- Furniture and other manufacturing (LQ = 1.1)

Industries which are under-represented are expected to have high growth are industries which don't benefit from local labour specialisation (i.e., an LQ below 1.0) but are anticipated to experience strong (above average) average annual employment growth in New South Wales between 2016 and 2026. These sectors should be investigated further, where appropriate, to determine their potential to be targeted for economic development activities as they are may perform well in the coming years if local supply chains and support are available. Industries located in this section for Central Coast are:

- Education and Training (LQ = 0.9, Growth Expectation = 1.6%)
- Administrative and Support Services (LQ = 1.0, Growth Expectation = 1.5%)
- Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services (LQ = 1.0, Growth Expectation = 1.4%)
- Public Administration and Safety (LQ = 0.8, Growth Expectation = 1.5%)
- Arts and Recreation Services (LQ = 0.9, Growth Expectation = 1.4%)
- Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (LQ = 0.6, Growth Expectation = 1.6%)
- Transport, Postal and Warehousing (LQ = 0.7, Growth Expectation = 1.4%)
- Financial and Insurance Services (LQ = 0.6, Growth Expectation = 1.5%)

4.2 CHANGING DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

The average age in Central Coast in 2017 was 40.9 years, an increase from 2008 at 39.6 years. Central Coast's population is expected to grow and with it, the average age of residents, which is expected to grow to 42.3 years old by 2036. This is likely due to both the aging nature of the wider population as well as the number of youths leaving the region as a result of the lack of opportunities for youths in Central Coast. By creating opportunities to retain their youths, this will help to develop the Central Coast economy.

4.3 COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

A survey of Central Coast Council officers, as well as the Central Coast resident community, was facilitated through the development of the strategy. A detailed survey analysis report was provided to Council and following are the key takeaways.

Lifestyle and liveability of the area are considered key strengths and competitive advantages for the region amongst staff and well as the community. Following lifestyle, the natural environment and accessibility are considered key strengths for the region.

Amongst the staff and the community, lack of job opportunities and transport were identified as the key challenges for the region.

Amongst the residential community, business expansion and tourism are seen as key opportunities for the region. Meanwhile, the staff nominated the creation of 'city based' (Sydney CBD) jobs through the attraction of new business, or relocation or expansion of existing business as the main opportunity for the region – in this way, current commuting residents would also be given the opportunity to find employment close to home. Both of these aspects are invariably related to accelerated jobs opportunities and are linked to the key challenges identified.

The top three areas nominated by the staff for development and prosperity of the region are linked to infrastructure, jobs and sustainable development. Whilst infrastructure was also identified for ideal future vision by the community, residents specifically highlighted the airport/aviation as the best suited industry for future development and ideal vision of the future.

4.4 IDENTIFIED COMMUNITY DESIRES

The consultation identified the following core elements of the future Central Coast socio-demographic and economic structure to 2040. These are summarised below.

4.4.1 Lifestyle & Health

Creating a lifestyle location in Central Coast is essential for creating a place for all residents but also attracting people and investment to the region.

An attractive lifestyle for the older population (over 50s) is important for Central Coast, which will accompany and support the local health precincts development in Gosford.

Once an attractive lifestyle for residents has been developed, this can then be leveraged for activation of the visitor economy.

4.4.2 Protection of the Natural Environment

While the natural assets the Central Coast has to offer are to be leveraged to increase tourism and lifestyle for residents, it is necessary that where possible, protect the environment and make sure that these assets are sustainably managed and developed. Constraints mapping is required to identify those areas that must be protected and those areas where development is justified and should be supported.

4.4.3 Leadership & Communication

There are multiple organisations in the Central Coast working to grow the economy and employment opportunities, however, many do not know what other departments are doing. Leadership and a central driver such as the coordinator general to have everyone working together is necessary for the region's economic development.

Collaboration between Council, Government Departments and business and industry is key in maintaining the current businesses in the region as well as drawing more businesses to the area.

Communicating to businesses outside of the Central Coast that it is open for business and that there are opportunities and support to locate in Central Coast.

4.4.4 Available Serviced Industrial Land to Support Business & Employment Growth

There is a large amount of zoned industrial and business land, however very little of it is serviced appropriately and therefore businesses that want to move to the region cannot find the appropriate land causing these businesses to relocate elsewhere.

4.4.5 Lifestyle & Recreation Precinct

The Central Coast region requires an entertainment precinct, to increase visitation and liveability of its residents and to act as a catalyst to attract private investment. The identified location from consultations is close to the Central Coast Stadium so that major events can continue in the precinct whilst also being close to the Gosford Foreshore. This will work in with the Gosford City Centre Revitalisation which include transforming the Leagues Club Field into a nature-inspired play space, as well as increasing development in the city centre.

An entertainment precinct will likely help to retain youths in the region, especially on weekends with many travelling to Sydney for nightlife. Development of an active night time economy (NTE) through activities such as place activation and establishment of convention and conferencing facilities are key strategic actions

This will also improve the liveability and lifestyle offering of the region, giving residents and people from outside of Central Coast a reason to come for a holiday. With more attractions and offerings identified as a key to increasing tourism and business investment

4.4.6 Local Transport and Access

Local transportation is a must have for the Central Coast, as improving connections to all areas will produce benefits to youth unemployment, tourism and liveability for residents.

5. VISION & TARGETS

5.1 ECONOMIC VISION

Our Bold 2040 Vision for a New Central Coast A choice destination, greater than Sydney, succeeding because of abundant opportunities and incredibly skilled people that thrive on a strong indigenous heritage, natural beauty and unique lifestyle.

5.2 KEY TARGETS

The characteristics of the future economy and how this differs from the current economy are summarised below:

Table 5.1. Key Central Coast Growth Targets to 2040

Description	Now	Goal	2040 Target	Gap
Population	342,047	Realise medium series population projections	429,684	87,637 people
Jobs	126,459	1.5 new jobs per new dwelling to 2040	199,091	72,632 jobs
Employment Self Containment	71.7%	10% enhancement	78.9%	7.2 percentage points
Tourism visitors	4.7 million nights	50% increase in the Central Coasts share of the Greater Sydney Tourism market	14.8 million nights	9.9 million nights
GRP per capita	\$39,453	In line with the Greater Sydney GRP per capita	\$80,775	\$41,322
Gross Regional Product	\$13.5 billion	In line with the Greater Sydney GRP per capita	\$34.7 billion	\$21.2 billion
Household Income	\$1,594 per week	In line with Greater Sydney	\$2,118 per week	\$524

Note: 2040 measures are in 2018 dollar terms

The rationale and logic behind the above growth targets is summarised as follows:

- The population goal is aligned to meet the medium series population projection for the region.
- The jobs target is set to increase the level of local employment targeting the generation of 1.5 jobs per new dwelling developed, which is driven by, and associated with, the talented and educated workers attracted to the region by its lifestyle and job opportunity.
- The additional local jobs will enhance employment self-containment, with a goal of a 10% increase in self-containment by 2040.
- The new jobs will be higher value and paying positions, therefore lifting the GRP per capita, with a goal to be in line with that of Greater Sydney.

6. STRATEGIC THEMES & PRIORITY ACTION

The following strategic themes were identified through background analysis and consultation with key stakeholders in Central Coast.

Each presents a goal, a rationale and headline objectives and tasks to deliver the strategic initiative. A detailed implementation plan has been developed for each and is contained as a separate working document, as it will be updated, refreshed and refocussed regularly. Opportunities for funding to support the implementation of the strategic focus areas action plans are identified at the end of the section.

6.1 ECONOMIC COORDINATION

Goal: Effective planning and governance are cornerstones of successful economic development strategies. We are committed to developing best-practice, agile frameworks to lead and coordinate economic development for the Central Coast. We will provide one single and consolidated message to all key stakeholders regarding the vision, key infrastructure and funding requirements/ priorities for the region and in doing so, deliver economic growth and regional confidence through clear regional leadership and a concerted and collaborative push for identified regional priorities that will deliver growth for the region.

Rationale:

The Central Coast Council must provide one single and consolidated message to all key stakeholders regarding the vision, key infrastructure and funding requirements for the region. This will be developed and supported in conjunction with key industry stakeholders such as RDACC, HCCDC, CCIC, NSW Business Chamber, Local Aboriginal Land Council Darkinjung and key government departments. Council has a clear role as a leader and advocate for the regional community and business to support major infrastructure projects, overcome restrictive policy and legislation and/or work with business and industry proactively to form partnerships that will assist in achieving positive investment outcomes for the council area.

A united and coordinated approach from Council will assist in working toward economic development outcomes. Consultation identified that there was a strong need for a more coordinated and cohesive approach to achieving economic development outcomes and Council has the opportunity to take a lead in this role.

Priority Actions:

- Update Council's governance and resourcing of its economic development functions
- Identify suitably qualified experts and leaders with a range of skills to work with and advise Council's leadership with expert advice and co-ordinating capacity for ongoing Economic Development best practice.
- Develop a Central Coast Advocacy framework for Council to plan and deliver advocacy to implement identified priorities and drive change in the political landscape to influence public investment, build key relationships and influence policy
- Develop a Central Coast Economic Development Marketing and Communication Plan
- Explore new options to 'democratise' economic planning and prioritisation by enabling broader community and business engagement

6.2 ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIPS

Goal: Collaboration with partners is an economic development catalyst, generating better policies, expanded trade and commerce, new investment, and knowledge exchange. We are committed to nurturing partnerships that deliver economic strength, resilience, and opportunity to the Central Coast.

Rationale:

The Central Coast covers a large area with a diversity of townships, community groups, government and Councils. In order for the Central Coast to realise its potential as a region with a City that has a growing diverse economy which retains its youth and raises all levels of benchmarking data to level with greater Sydney strong leadership and collaboration with key industry stakeholders such as RDACC, HCCDC, CCIC, NSW Business Chamber, Local Aboriginal Land Council Darkinjung and key government departments will form the cornerstone of achieving our vision.

Priority Actions:

- Collaborate with all levels of government and the community to secure a City Deal for the Central Coast to support productive and liveable cities that encourage innovation, support growth and create jobs
- Develop a regional economic action plan with surrounding councils to leverage economic agglomeration
- Collaborate with local industry and community to prepare a Visitor Economy Growth Action Plan
- Prepare a roadmap to enhance international economic engagement and trade, working with Austrade and NSW Government
- Collaborate with all levels of government to deliver essential services and infrastructure to our growing communities across the Central Coast

6.3 ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Goal: Physical and digital infrastructure are foundations of economic development, providing vital networks to support investment, trade, innovation and wellbeing. We are committed to building high-value local infrastructure, working with other governments and the private sector to expand the Central Coast's economic capacity. Key targets being, public transport network to allow the local population to access job opportunities as well as the available serviced employment lands to attract new employers to the region.

Rationale:

The Central Coast has significant tracts of zoned industrial land, however, much of it is in part or wholly constrained by environmental constraints, and/ or a lack of infrastructure. This means the effective available employment lands accessible by new businesses wanting to invest in and locate to the Central Coast are very limited. Identified employment land and activation precincts such as the Southern and Northern growth corridors. The Southern Growth Corridor links the Somersby Business Park and to Erina, providing services to the communities in the southern half of the region. The Northern Growth Corridor links Tuggerah to Warnervale to become a priority location for service and business growth.

Whilst the Central Coast is well connected via rail and major roads to Sydney and Newcastle, intra-regional transport is difficult, with only a north-south spine providing services. Transport from residential areas to employment areas without a car is difficult. This is made more complex by the natural structure and waterways. A lack of public transport options presenting difficulties in getting to/from potential work locations is cited as being largely attributable to the high local youth unemployment, even though employers in these regions cite skilled labour shortages as being a critical issue/ constraint.

The region needs a proactive and investment ready (supportive) planning framework and team that reflects the economic strengths and growth areas of the economy. Industries such as food product and housing component manufacturing, education and training, transport and logistics, health and medical precincts and industrial and commercial space in general need to be catered for and areas found for their expansion.

Priority Actions:

- Progress growth corridor development strategies
- Progress development strategies for Urban Release Areas
- Enhance local infrastructure with 'smart technology' to increase efficiency, connectivity and capacity
- Prepare a Central Coast Transport Strategy, highlighting priority transport infrastructure projects, over the short and longer term to achieve the 30-minute city
- Explore options to bring super-fast digital connectivity to the Central Coast (including optic fibre, mobile, and wireless networks).
- Work with local developers to modernise planning processes and requirements to future-proof our new developments
- Develop a dedicated, long-term Central Coast Infrastructure implementation plan to guide local planning and engagement with the State and Federal governments to clearly articulate the need and benefit

6.4 ECONOMIC INNOVATION & ENTERPRISE

Goal: Local business and enterprise are the drivers of economic development, powering employment, innovation, and investment. We are committed to supporting a thriving business and innovation eco-system, creating new jobs, commercial profit and community value for the Central Coast.

Rationale:

The Central Coast has strong representation in advanced manufacturing, health care and social assistance, retail trade, accommodation and food services, construction but is also poised to benefit from the emerging sectors in education and training, professional scientific and technical services, logistics and transport, financial and insurance services and the visitor economy. We can begin to build the future of tomorrow by mobilising the students of today to be ready for tomorrow through working with established industries and capitalising on the emerging high growth industries.

Priority Actions:

- Work with the local innovation eco-system to establish a Central Coast Innovation Network
- Start a digital education and accelerator program for all primary and secondary public schools on the Central Coast
- Establish and partner with Universities to foster collaboration and attraction of new high value industry and to enhance existing established industry
- Identifying precincts and sectors with high growth prospects, and preparing roadmaps to drive this economic development
- Develop an internal Innovation Policy Framework for Council
- Transform Council's innovation and business development programs to enhance local impacts and outcomes
- Prepare a roadmap to drive economic vibrancy and diversity, exploring options such as events, city activations, better design, place-making, and promotion and utilisation of natural areas
- Build on existing advanced manufacturing and food innovation to enhance and promote business excellence
- Prepare a health innovation business case to compliment the growing health economy

6.5 ECONOMIC FUTURES

Goal: The digital revolution is driving incredible changes to economies and communities the world over, presenting a host of new opportunities and challenges. We are committed to future economy leadership, leveraging digital technology and new economic opportunities for a stronger Central Coast.

Rational:

For the Central Coast to achieve the 30-minute city, digital infrastructure is the foundation of a smart city which draws its people into the CBDs for high value work and retains existing industry and attracts new innovative industry. With 65% of children now entering school projected to hold jobs that currently don't exist the promotion and facilitation of digital literacy coupled with smart infrastructure will enable the Central Coast workforce to pivot positively towards the emerging economy of the future.

The children and youth of today play a key role in mobilising towards the emerging future economy. It is imperative that we engage, collaborate and assimilate what the future generation desire. It is essential that we provide exciting opportunities and activities locally that attract and retain the younger generation after leaving school.

Priority actions:

- Prepare a Night-Time Economy discussion paper, exploring options for enhancing the diversity and size of our night-time economy
- Develop and implementing a Central Coast Future City (Smart Technology) road map
- Work with industry and community to promote 'smart working' (e.g. remote/flexible/co-working) opportunities for the Central Coast
- Promote programs to improve digital literacy and skills for all primary and secondary public schools and for businesses and the broader community
- Establish a framework to optimise the economic value of 'big data' for the Central Coast
- Prepare a youth engagement action plan for enrolment and education to enhance human capital, capacity building, employment opportunities and participation

6.6 ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

Goal: In a fast-paced global economy, retaining competitiveness and meeting changing community expectations depends on continuing economic transformation. We are committed to progressing such reform – of economic systems, regulations, and frameworks – to ensure the ongoing strength and sustainability of the Central Coast's economy.

Rationale:

Encouraging established businesses to invest further and attracting new investments to the region enables governments to stimulate employment and develop the economy and in doing so, drive accelerated job growth and prosperity. Governments support investment (existing business expansion and new investment) primarily by developing a business environment that is attractive and by promoting the attributes of their region as an investment location. Council may, in some instances, provide incentives (financial and non-financial) and other services to support and encourage investment. There are a range of investment attraction incentives local government can pursue to attract, support and encourage investment

A local government that is supportive of business investment and is proactive in its planning policy and development approvals will be seen as a cooperative, supportive and attractive investment ally. Disinterest, confused processes and changeable rules all present strong signals to investors that it will be better to invest elsewhere.

For a local government to fully embrace business and industry support and investment attraction it must be appropriately resourced.

Priority Actions:

- Identify high value regulatory reform and 'red tape' reduction initiatives to unlock economic growth
- Develop a 'Circular Economy' framework to build our sharing economy
- Explore options to accelerate the production and consumption of renewable energy to power the Central Coast economy
- Prepare an economic roadmap for the Central Coast to progress the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Prepare a framework to incentivise to attract new high value corporate commercial business and partner with Government, to attract Government institutions to relocate to the region in order to lead the revitalisation of the CBDs and enhance the employment diversity of the region

DRAFT SUBJECT TO COUNCIL ENDORSEMENT

Investment Attraction Incentives

Non-Financial Investment Attraction Incentives

When considering the term 'incentives', this is not solely – and often, in the case of local government – rarely related directly in financial terms. Typically, assistance is offered and provided in the form of utilisation of existing services to provide benefit. This type of assistance is not to be underestimated or undervalued. Smooth and swift development assessment processes and the intentions of a progressive and engaged local government can contribute significantly to the development process and in turn have a substantial impact upon development costs.

Common amongst the types of 'soft' services offered by local government that are exempt of financial offerings, but equally provide benefit to proponents may take the form of:

- Site selection services
- Site infrastructure advice
- Assistance with planning processes to facilitate development approvals
- Links to government, business and employment support programs
- Access to statistical and general information and other reports that may assist business
- Access to business and community network contacts such as Chambers of Commerce
- Market information
- Supply Chain and workforce development.

Financial Investment Attraction Incentives

Local governments may also offer financial investment incentives to businesses wishing to locate, expand and retain their operations within the region. It is important to note that not all investment attraction activities are externally directed and that a portion of investment will logically come from within the area. Retention of local business that are seeking to expand is just as important as the attraction of new opportunities.

Discretionary support may be provided to approved businesses and projects where the nature and scale of investment displays the propensity to stimulate significant (sometimes quantified) economic and community benefits, diversity and value-add to the wider regional economy beyond the growth of the business itself. Typically, if offered, local government investment incentives seek to support projects that:

- Inject direct capital investment
- Create new jobs
- Create direct value-add through construction and operations
- Catalyse additional investment
- Generate growth in a key strategic area
- Support the growth of other businesses.

Direct financial incentives typically would take the form of offsets or deferrals for infrastructure costs, rate rebates or other discounts on related development assessment fees or financial grants for establishment costs.

7. IMPLEMENTATION

A detailed implementation plan outlining the targeted measures, responsibilities and timings for each action are outlined in a separate implementation plan. This plan is intended to be a working document with implementation progress monitored on a quarterly basis and an annual review refocussing key areas of investment and activity as required. The following sections outline the Central Coast Council and its Executive Leadership Teams role in economic development and the delivery of this strategy.

7.1 IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING

A detailed implementation plan is provided under a separate cover as it forms a working document that will be updated on a regular basis (at least every 2-3 years) and refocussed to ensure it is working with and being responsive to the ever changing surrounding environment.

The implementation plan provides an overview of the core focus and direction to realise the opportunities and catalytic enablers for the Central Coast outlined in the preceding Economic Development Strategy.

7.2 COUNCILS ROLE IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The role of Local Government in economic development is sometimes difficult to define, often subject to the unique priorities and regional constraints influencing the achievement of outcomes. In any case, the role of Council will typically fall into one of the following categories.

- **Advocacy:** The Council engages the business community and other levels of government to develop commitment, energy and attitude towards identified priorities. For the EDS, Council has a role to play in advocating for business needs, maintaining a future-focused agenda, and supporting the delivery of critical infrastructure to support economic development priorities.
- **Facilitation:** The Council acts in the EDP as a facilitator of opportunities. This involves connecting the various stakeholders to achieve desired outcomes. The Council can act as the information link between government, business and consumers, as relevant information is vital in generating local awareness and demand for identified priorities. The Council can also promote events and activities that support business capacity building and other economic development related initiatives, such as workshops to build the knowledge of businesses around skill development.
- **Planning & Regulation:** The Council's planning framework provides a mechanism to regulate and/ or encourage certain activities and developments that influence economic activity. Specific opportunities that relate to the EDP is the role the Council plays in making sure a positive, proactive and solution focused approach is applied.
- **Service Provider:** Service provision is one of the major functions of Local Government. A reliable supply of services and information can support economic development related opportunities.

7.3 GOVERNANCE

To be effective the EDS needs to have actionable targets tied back to the objectives of each strategic direction. It is critical these are resourced and funded as part of Council's annual Operational Plan. There are a range of funding sources available for the execution of the EDS, and Council needs to ensure there are clear and consistent guidelines regarding how funding is secured and allocated.

Beyond this Council needs a clear path and mechanism through which it communicates with and engages with the local business community and potential investors.

With the criticality of the earnest change required for the Central Coast to take advantage of current development interest, reinvigoration of the Gosford CBD and improved accessibility brought about by the NorthConnex infrastructure project, there may be a case for exploring differing models of governance to assist in driving the economic agenda.

Such varying models exist in many other local government areas across Australia and the suitability of each has its pros and cons, which are outlined in the table below.

Table 7.1. Overview of Observed Pros and Cons of Governance Options

Structure	Typically Observed Pros	Typically Observed Cons
Advisory Board/Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accesses private sector leadership and knowledge • Easier accounting and financial reporting • Greater alignment with Council goals • Creates forum for public-private discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must operate under Council bureaucracy • Less flexible than independent models • Depending on governance, can have limited scope and influence
Strategic Alliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple structure usually agreeable to all members • Creates forum for regional cooperation and discussion • Can have effective lobbying voice to State and Federal Government • Informal structure can allow flexibility and efficient response to issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited commitment from members • Limited buy-in from members • Difficult to tackle big issues • Difficult to affect change and demonstrate results • Places undue stress on existing commitments • Limited funding
Government Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent government agencies that operate under a CEO/Board structure • More efficient and able to react to issues • Strong ties to Government for policy and funding • Strong structure and foundation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still a part of government bureaucracy • Limited by Act and formal structure • Funding options are limited
Independent Association/Organisation (Third Party)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverages private sector experience • Delivery/outcome focused • Independent • Highly efficient and flexible • Leverages a broader set of skills • Can react quickly to market/issues • Combines public and private sector funding and input • Has significant input from private sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding can dictate action • Personalities/staff critical to success • Highly visible • Financial reporting required • Governance must be correct to ensure strategic direction

Key considerations in the operation of a governance model is to ensure there are sufficient and appropriate review periods and sunset clauses as required to ensure the entity remains focussed, efficient, effective and avoids becoming a bureaucracy in and of itself.

7.4 FUNDING SOURCES

There are numerous opportunities for public investment available to the Central Coast Council to support the delivery of the Economic Development Implementation Plan. The core options, likely suitable to support the identified Central Coast options are outlined below:

Figure 7.1. Project Funding

Fund	Focus
Federal Government	
Climate Solutions Fund – Emissions Reduction Fund	On 25 February 2019 the Australian Government announced the Climate Solutions Fund, providing an additional \$2 billion to continue the momentum towards reaching Australia's 2030 emissions reduction target. The Emissions Reduction Fund supports Australian businesses, farmers and land managers to take practical actions to reduce emissions and improve the environment.

Fund	Focus
Clean Energy Finance Corp	The Clean Energy Innovation Fund is the largest dedicated Australian investor of its kind. It was created as a specialist financier to invest \$200 million in early-stage clean energy companies. The Fund targets technologies and businesses that have passed beyond the research and development stage and which can benefit from early stage seed or growth capital to help them progress to the next stage of their development.
Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) Grants - Round 21	The Cooperative Research Centres (CRC) Program supports industry-led collaborations between industry, researchers and the community. It's a proven model for linking researchers with industry to focus on research and development towards use and commercialisation.
Austrade: Export Market Development Grants (EMDG)	Provides exporters who are aiming to increase their international sales with reimbursements of up to 50% of promotional expenses. Promotional expenses must be over \$15,000 to a maximum of \$150,000.
NSW Government	
Tourism Infrastructure Development Fund	The NSW Government has \$100 million available for new tourism projects across regional NSW with round two of the \$300 million Regional Growth—Environment and Tourism Fund now open.
Boosting Business Innovation Program	The New South Wales Government has invested \$18 million in the Boosting Business Innovation Program, giving small businesses access to research organisations to build strong local business communities and stimulate economic growth in metropolitan and regional NSW.
TechVouchers	The TechVouchers fund encourages research collaboration between NSW small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) and Boosting Business Innovation Program (BBIP) delivery partners. Through TechVouchers, SMEs can be connected with an expert in a relevant field of research and embark on an innovative joint research project. The program also enables access to high tech instruments and facilities that would otherwise be difficult to access.
Growing Local Economies Fund	Is used to invest in crucial projects needed to support job creation and economic growth in regional NSW. This could be used to invest in the necessary infrastructure to service employment lands. The GLE program has been paused as of 14th July 2019 but will reopen following a review.
Small Business Grant	The Small Business Grant is designed to encourage small businesses, not liable for payroll tax, to employ new full-time, part-time and casual workers.
Infrastructure grants	The NSW Government offers grants to communities across NSW to support the building, renovation and fit-out of infrastructure. Funding is available for arts and cultural infrastructure, sport and recreation infrastructure and projects that enhance facilities used to shelter communities and provide emergency services.
Snowy Hydro Legacy Fund	The fund will help to deliver critical infrastructure and priority initiatives identified in the 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW, NSW State Infrastructure Strategy 2018–2038 and other long-term government plans. The five areas of immediate focus will be improved water security, rail and road transport connections, freight linkages, digital connectivity and Special Activation Precincts to attract more industry investment in the regions.
Central Coast Council	
Fund the program from general revenue	Using general Council revenue to fund economic development programs.
Borrow for infrastructure development	Take out loans for investment in infrastructure development.

Source, Australian Government (2019), Austrade (2019), CEFC (2019), NSW Government (2019b).

7.5 MONITORING & EVALUATION

The Economic Development Strategy requires a mechanism to measure its performance. The ultimate goal of the Strategy is to create more jobs, create a quality lifestyle and ensure thriving, adaptable and responsive local businesses and industries. It is expected there will be two areas of measurement:

- Measuring the useful implementation of the strategy: focussing on the key performance indicators outlined in the implementation plan. Essentially ensuring the plan is being executed as intended

- Measuring the economic outcomes delivered for the regional economy. This is very challenging to do on a causal basis; however, typically overall economic performance is monitored by tracking a range of broader economic development indicators. An example range of which is included in the table below.

Table 7.2. Key Indicators to Monitor

Indicator	Description
Growth	
GRP Growth	A key indicator to measure the degree to which the economy is prospering is GRP Growth as this will determine the level of economic activity in Central Coast.
Employment Growth	Sustainable employment growth is an indicator of which to measure success of the economy by increasing jobs within the region.
Population Growth	Strong population growth will mean that Central Coast is becoming more liveable and appealing.
Prosperity	
GRP per Capita	GRP per capital measures a regions prosperity as well as the standard of living of those living there.
Unemployment Rate	A decrease in the unemployment rate will mean more people looking for work have been employed.
Incomes (Household and Personal)	A higher average income for both households and individual persons means that businesses are prospering and can afford to pay higher wages.
Productivity	
GRP per FTE	To measure increasing in prosperity GRP per FTE will determine if more is being produced efficiently.
Business Support and Investment Attraction	
Business Counts (Total and Key Industries)	More businesses in key industries can be measured through the annual business counts of Central Coast.
Innovation	
IP Registrations	IP represents creations of the mind or intellect that can be legally owned. IP laws allow for protection of ideas and unique creations that exist in every business and if more registrations are occurring in Central Coast this will mean that there has been an increase in innovation.
Education	
School Containment Rate	This will mean that there is a higher level of students studying at school after they can leave giving them a greater education.
Post-School Qualifications	Post-school qualifications will take a longer period of time to see change but is a measure of educational attainment.
Proportion of Residents Attending Educational Institution	An increase in the proportion of residents that are studying will give a measure of more people searching for higher levels of education.
Infrastructure Delivery	
Non-Residential Building Approvals (by type)	More non-residential building approvals will mean an increase in industrial buildings and workspaces.
Major Projects Planned	The number of planned major projects will mean that more infrastructure is being delivered and is a key measure of infrastructure delivery.
Health	
Obesity Rates	Obesity rates declining is a key measure of health in Central Coast with less obese people causing an uplift in the health of residents.
Core Activity Need for Assistance	If there are more people in need of assistance this is likely a result of an increase in disabilities in the region.
Suicides	The rate of suicides is a key measure of mental health in Central Coast, and declining levels will mean that mental health is improving.

Source: AEC.

8. CATALYTIC PROJECTS

There were a number of catalytic projects identified as having the greatest potential to most expediently activate economic growth in the central coast region. These catalytic initiatives (outlined below) should be prioritised throughout the implementation and delivery of the Strategic Focus Area actions outlined in Section 6.

8.1 DEVELOPMENT & LOBBYING FOR A CITY DEAL

City Deals bring together the three levels of government (Australian, New South Wales and Central Coast Council), the community and the private sector. The City Deal partnership focuses on aligning planning, investment and governance to accelerate growth and job creation, stimulate urban renewal and drive economic reforms to secure the future prosperity and liveability of cities.

Potential projects developed to form part of a City Deal may include:

- Further redevelopment and revitalisation of Gosford into a City with High rise commercial space that increases employment retention and revitalises the waterfront into a world class entertainment, leisure, lifestyle and commercial precinct.
- Further redevelopment and revitalisation of Tuggerah to Wyong and the Wyong town centre.
- Development of Wyong Employment Zone including the Warnervale airport and surrounding employment lands into a General Aviation and Advanced Manufacturing Precinct
- Implementation of a Smart City Strategy to deliver business outcomes through digital connectivity.
- Development of innovation and enterprise hubs to foster entrepreneurship and new business start-ups
- Development of a dynamic, integrated regional transport system to achieve 30 minute city objectives.

8.2 AVAILABILITY OF SERVICED EMPLOYMENT LANDS

Council must be proactive in ensuring that there is sufficiently available and appropriately zoned and serviced employment land to satisfy the growth needs of business and industry. The availability of appropriately zoned and serviced employment lands will facilitate the retention and expansion of existing business. It will also accommodate the anticipated new investment as industry takes advantage of the opening up of the northern corridor.

A critical factor in generating local demand for both the current and future Central Coast, is the facilitation and planning for the short term and ongoing release of serviced lots ahead of market demand.

8.3 LOCAL TRANSPORT NETWORK SERVICES

Whilst the Central Coast's external connectivity via the M1 and rail linkages is good, the internal servicing outside of direct north-south routes makes traversing the region via the public transport network difficult. This lack of transport is cited as a key inhibitor for accessibility that increases employment options. This is particularly relevant to youth unemployment when addressing their ability to access education, training and employment services.

It is critical that the Central Coast community is sufficiently connected by its internal public transport network so they may wake each day with easy, cost effective and time efficient means of travelling to school to work, to the doctor, to see their family or access services. Higher levels of accessibility will benefit youth unemployment, the aged, tourism and liveability levels for residents.

8.4 DEVELOPMENT OF THE NIGHT TIME ECONOMY (NTE)

The Night Time Economy (NTE) can be defined as social or business activities that take place between 6pm and 6am. This includes a myriad of business activities, events and services. Overall, it is generally accepted that the NTE is driven by three core areas, with example activities described below, however, it is a diverse sector and may include varied activities and incorporate ancillary services such as transport and retail. It includes:

- Entertainment: Performing arts, music and culture, sports, amusement parks and centres, casinos and gambling
- Food: Cafes and restaurants, as well as takeaway food services
- Drink: Liquor retailing, pubs, taverns, clubs, bars and hotels

Local government plays a key role in helping to shape vibrant, safe and sustainable Night Time Economies (NTEs), from planning and regulation, to creating spaces through placemaking and urban design to ensuring that a safe, protective environment is conducive to the encouragement of activities that help build and grow active centres.

The Redevelopment of areas within the Gosford CBD, along with place activation initiatives support and encourage the establishment of night time activities. Key developments that support the development of the night time economy include:

- Gosford Waterfront Re-Development: delivering cultural, recreational and leisure space
- Relocation of the University of Newcastle campus to the CBD will drive transformational change to the CBD population and act as a catalyst for new shops, bars, cafes and restaurants to service the student population, 300 of which will also be accommodated within the CBD area.
- Conference and convention facilities¹ at the waterfront precinct, which in turn support demand for additional short term accommodation.

8.5 AVIATION & ADVANCED MANUFACTURING PRECINCT

Feedback from the Community Survey regarding perceptions of the top three future industries for the Central Coast highlighted the aviation (and related) sector as a key and well supported development opportunity. Whilst there has been considerable debate regarding the development of the Wamervale airport, there are clearly opportunities to be explored for some expansion and development that could act as a catalyst for the attraction of high value aviation and aerospace related industries, including:

- Aircraft charter
- Manufacturing and maintenance
- Emergency services operations
- Airborne survey, surveillance and geo-sensing
- Helicopter operations
- Flight training.

The planned future expansion of Newcastle airport located less than one hours drive away, equally offers support and ancillary service opportunities for Central Coast based businesses.

8.6 DEVELOPMENT & IMPLEMENTATION OF A SMART CITIES PLAN

With the level of infrastructure and new development works to be carried out throughout the region, there is a significant opportunity to integrate elements of Smart Cities frameworks and functions into and throughout the fabric of the Central Coast. A Smart Cities Plan can contribute to the following outcomes:

- A strong and connected community that uses emerging technologies and helps to increase community and business participation levels and connectivity
- Create a more liveable region that utilises, smart technologies in its public places and embeds these technologies within its infrastructure

¹ The Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Events (MICE) sector makes a significant contribution to the Australian economy. In 2018-19, revenue is projected at \$12.5 billion for the exhibition and conference centre industry, with New South Wales capturing 28% of total revenue.

- Create a thriving region that is digitally enabled, and the infrastructure contributes to economic transformation in its support of business growth, investment and sustainability within priority sectors.

DRAFT SUBJECT TO COUNCIL ENDORSEMENT

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9.1 Endorsed Central Coast Council Strategies / Plans

Year	Description
2018	Asset Management Strategy
2014	Carbon Tax Repeal Strategy
2019	Climate Change Policy
2019	Community Participation Plan
2018	Community Strategic Plan
2019	Corporate Strategic Plan
2020	Cultural Plan
2017	Destination Management Plan
2017	Disability Inclusion Action Plan
2019	Energy Procurement Strategy
2017	Engagement Framework
2019	Gosford Central Business District Heritage Interpretation Strategy
2013	Settlement Strategy (Wyong)
2019	Somersby to Erina Corridor Strategy
2009	The Entrance Peninsula Planning Strategy
2019	Tourism Opportunity Plan
2007	Water Plan 2050
2013	Wyong Retail Centres Strategy
2019	Youth Strategy
2019	Customer Experience Strategy
2018	Long Term Financial Plan
2018	Resourcing Strategy