

# MNC Strategic Regional Plan 2023-2033



# MNC Strategic Regional Plan

## 2023–2033

### Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land and Elders past, present and emerging.

### Acknowledgement of inputs

We give acknowledgement and thanks to the region's economic development practitioners, in particular those in local government and the Joint Organisation for their feedback and contributions; and to the Regional Australia Institute, particularly Kim Houghton for your input and guidance surrounding liveability strategies.

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### List of Acronyms

GRP	Gross Regional Product
GVA	Gross Value Add
LGA	Local Government Area
MNC	Mid North Coast
MNCJO	Mid North Coast Joint Organisation
MP	Member of Parliament
RAI	Regional Australia Institute
REDS	Regional Economic Development Strategies
RDAMNC	Regional Development Australia Mid North Coast

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# CONTENTS

From the Chair, Kieren Dell	3	<b>Section 3:</b>	15
From the CEO, Madeleine Lawler	4	Regional Strategic priorities	16
<b>Section 1: Context and methodology</b>	5	<b>Priority 1:</b> Connectivity and Infrastructure incorporating digital connectivity, transport links and freight and supply chain infrastructure	18
Context	6	<b>Priority 2:</b> Human Capital and Skills to provide skilled and adaptable workforces, Regional Universities and training, and schooling	22
Values	6	<b>Priority 3:</b> Regional employment and business to develop regional businesses and industry, local R&D and innovation and a strategic regional vision	25
Vision for the Mid North Coast	6	<b>Priority 4:</b> Leadership and Collaboration by investing in regional leadership, capable local government and the Indigenous community	28
Vision statements across the region	7	<b>Priority 5:</b> Amenity and liveability providing services, facilities and liveability and support for local priorities	31
Promoting collaborative partnerships and regional planning	7	<b>Priority 6:</b> Sustainable Natural Resources to build future resilience, ensure sustainable foundations and provide economic opportunities and jobs	33
Community engagement	7	References	35
Regional Collaboration and partnerships	7	Attachments	36
Integrated planning	8	<i>Attachment 1:</i> Regional endowments	36
Major stakeholders in regional economic planning	9	<i>Attachment 2:</i> Mapping regional priorities (Regional Economic Development Plans (REDS) 2023 update)	37
Collaborative economic planning	10	<i>Attachment 3:</i> Economic development priorities (by industry)	38
Methodology	11	<i>Attachment 4:</i> Data tables (by LGA)	39
<b>Section 2:</b>	12	<i>Attachment 5:</i> Significant Infrastructure Investments since 2018	41
Understanding the region	13	<i>Attachment 6:</i> RDAMNC Regional Consultation	42
Mid North Coast, NSW	13		
At a glance	14		
Regional Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges	14		
SWOT Analysis (summary)	14		

## From the Chair, Kieren Dell

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Regional Development Australia Mid North Coast (RDAMNC) is:

- A **connector** which links opportunities for regional growth by joining government with business, not-for-profits and community.
- A **facilitator** of change enabling the creation of sustainable employment **pathways**.
- An independent **voice** for the economy of the Mid North Coast, Lord Howe Island and Norfolk Island.



Regional Development Australia Mid North Coast represents one of the most environmentally abundant regions in Australia, from the lush farming pastures of the Dorrigo and Wingham communities to the marine sanctuaries of Norfolk and Lord Howe Islands to the pristine waterways which join the region's mountains to the sea.

The Mid North Coast offers an enviable lifestyle, with a beautiful natural environment, thriving regional towns and cities, and friendly communities.

However, in many ways, the region is fragmented, with some communities isolated and resistant to change. Building partnerships and relationships between communities is central to the work of RDA MNC, as we believe that a united regional voice is both more efficient and effective in generating positive outcomes for the region.

Building these partnerships is the central goal of RDA MNC.

The bushfires, floods and Covid-19 have marked the region and the RDA MNC team has worked tirelessly to advocate, link, share information and pivot to deliver timely projects. RDA MNC looks forward to supporting the community well into the future.

**Kieren Dell** Chair RDA MNC



## From the CEO, Madeleine Lawler

As the custodian of this Strategic Regional Plan, RDAMNC recognises that success will come from a strong partnership model focused on outcomes. All stakeholders are encouraged to use the plan as a guiding framework to address the region's challenges, needs and priorities for long-term economic growth. The plan has been developed to address a gap in regional economic development as there is no single strategic regional plan which focuses solely on the Mid North Coast region as an economy. Current planning either divides the region into 'Functional Economic Zones' or incorporates the Mid North Coast into a larger NSW North Coast model. This plan makes an important distinction as the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated throughout 2020-21, that the communities and leaders of the Mid North Coast very much see the six LGAs as one distinct regional entity. The plan will be revised annually to maintain its currency and relevance. Monitoring of outcomes and coordination will be done via local working groups.



The plan addresses the Commonwealth Government's six regional priorities of:

1. Connectivity and Infrastructure incorporating digital connectivity, transport links, and freight and supply chain infrastructure.
2. Human Capital and Skills to provide skilled and adaptable workforces, Regional Universities and training, and schooling.
3. Regional Employment and Business to develop regional businesses and industry, local R&D and innovation and a strategic regional vision.
4. Leadership and Collaboration by investing in regional leadership, capable local government and the Indigenous community.
5. Amenity and Liveability providing services, facilities and liveability, and support for local priorities.
6. Sustainable Natural Resources to build future resilience, ensure sustainable foundations and provide economic opportunities and jobs.

### **RDAMNC's role**

The Strategic Regional Planning priorities are informed by stakeholder consultation and underpinned by research and analysis. Led by a non-political community board, RDAMNC will continue to engage with all communities and leaders to deliver a Strategic Regional Plan which genuinely reflects the community needs, priorities, and expectations.

This plan will be a guide for much of the advocacy, facilitation and project development undertaken by the Board and staff. RDAMNC's Annual Business Plans will feed into, and draw from, this Regional Plan to ensure integration of the Priorities and successful implementation and coordination of the key action items.

**Madeleine Lawler** CEO

# **SECTION 1:**

## Context and methodology



## CONTEXT

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### VALUES

The MNC Strategic Regional Plan has been developed with the following values in mind:



### VISION FOR THE MID NORTH COAST

The Mid North Coast Regional Plan reflects the goals of the Mid North Joint Organisation (MNCJO):

“ To help create a vibrant, sustainable region underpinned by economic growth and a commitment to the social and environmental wellbeing of its communities. ”

### Vision statements across the region

The region-wide vision statement above embraces the regional and local government visions set by their Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS):

Coffs Harbour/Bellingen: "A region of well-connected, inclusive and prosperous communities, with the capacity to attract new residents and visitors through its balance of lifestyle, environment and opportunity; underpinned by a diverse economy driven by tourism, agriculture, health, aged care, professional and creative industries."

Nambucca: "A region strengthening key activities such as manufacturing, tourism and agriculture and strongly enhancing its social and natural resource endowments to make Nambucca an attractive place to live and prosper."

Hastings/Macleay: "A region affording diverse opportunities and experiences to its residents and visitors, leveraging the strengths of the Hastings and Macleay valleys in production, services and natural and cultural resources."

MidCoast: "The MidCoast Region will have sustainable economic growth, founded on the Region's natural assets, amenity and location, while offering a healthy lifestyle and community connection".

### PROMOTING COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS AND REGIONAL PLANNING

#### Community engagement

RDAMNC recognises the importance of broad regional engagement to help develop and deliver the Strategic Regional Plan. Regional engagement assists

successful regional development policymaking, program design and management, and service delivery activities. Continuous engagement with communities across the region and utilising local knowledge and skills will help deliver a Strategic Regional Plan that genuinely reflects community needs, priorities, and expectations. Community knowledge and expertise is also required to inform and guide regional development activities.

#### Regional Collaboration and partnerships

This plan builds on the foundation of strong regional partnerships and collaboration with stakeholders. The complexity of many of the priorities means that they cannot be fully implemented or actioned by any one agency. Successful outcomes require the support and co-ordination of local government, state and federal agencies, the health, education and training sectors, regional organisations, industry, business, community service and not-for-profits.

Harnessing collaborative regional leadership and establishing effective regional partnerships are key themes throughout. Strong leadership and governance are fundamental enablers of regional development and are characterised by: working to a collective vision, taking cooperative approaches to community engagement, knowledge-sharing, planning, project design, and implementation of strategies and activities. Hence regional collaboration is fundamental to the successful implementation of this plan.

The Mid North Coast Regional Plan was developed via a co-design process with key regional stakeholders.





## Integrated planning

The proposed planning framework for the Mid North Coast Strategic Regional Plan (2032) provides a strong connection between the NSW Government's North Coast Plan (2041) and Regional Economic Development (REDS) Plans and relevant Local Government Economic Development Plans. The format of the plan is guided by the Australian Government's regional priorities and it achieves internal organisational capacity through the annual RDAMNC Business Plan.

The Australian Government's regional priorities are:

- Connectivity and infrastructure incorporating digital connectivity, transport links, and freight and supply chain infrastructure.
- Human capital and skills to provide skilled and adaptable workforces, regional universities and training, and schooling.
- Regional employment and business to develop regional businesses and industry, local R&D and innovation and a strategic regional vision.
- Leadership and collaboration by investing in regional leadership, capable local government, and the Indigenous community.
- Amenity and liveability providing services, facilities and liveability, and support for local priorities.
- Sustainable natural resources to build future resilience, ensure sustainable foundations and provide economic opportunities and jobs.

In 2019, the NSW Government released its revised "20 Year Vision for Regional NSW" which outlines its eight principles:

**Principle 1:** Affordable, reliable, and fast mobile and internet connectivity to support people and businesses.

**Principle 2:** Improved travel between regional centres and from regional centres and international gateways.

**Principle 3:** Freight networks that will increase the competitiveness of key regional sectors.

**Principle 4:** Reliable accessible water and energy.

**Principle 5:** A skilled labour force for current and future needs of the regions.

**Principle 6:** Recognising each region's strengths and underlying endowments.

**Principle 7:** Regulation and planning to promote commercial opportunities.

**Principle 8:** Sustainable economies and communities are better able to recover from shocks.

Supporting this state vision are four Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS) 2020-2041 which incorporate the 'Functional Economic Zones'; Coffs Harbour/Bellingen REDS, which covers the Coffs Harbour and Bellingen LGAs; Nambucca Valley REDS, which includes the Nambucca Valley; Port Macquarie/Kempsey REDS, which focuses on the Macleay and Port-Hastings LGAs and MidCoast REDS which covers the MidCoast Council area.

For the purposes of this plan the Mid North Coast only includes the definition of the Mid North Coast which incorporates the Coffs Harbour, Bellingen, Nambucca, Kempsey and Port-Hastings Councils and the boundaries of the former Taree Local Government Area.

This plan is designed to complement and build on the existing work of the region's agencies, organisations and institutions which have carriage of those policies, plans and strategies. Collectively, these plans and strategies aim to enhance local and regional development throughout the Mid North Coast. The plans and strategies are acknowledged in the references section of this document.



## Major stakeholders in regional economic planning

Regional economic planning and program delivery is a complex and surprisingly disjointed system which hosts many stakeholders representing government, private business, community and not for profit organisations.

With ongoing changes to policy occurring at both State and Commonwealth levels, it is good practice among regional economic development entities to ensure government is informed about both local (place-based) needs, and also to bridge partnerships between stakeholders to reduce duplication and ensure local needs are being met. Ongoing natural disaster has highlighted the importance of astute resource management, provision of information and nurturing collaborative partnerships.

The four major stakeholders in regional economic planning in the Mid North Coast are:

- The Department of Regional NSW
- Mid North Coast Joint Organisation (MNCJO)
- Business NSW
- Regional Development Australia Mid North Coast (RDAMNC).

### Department of Regional NSW

The Department of Regional NSW is a central agency for regional issues, building resilient regional economies and communities, strengthening primary industries, managing the use of regional land, overseeing the state's mineral and mining

resources and ensuring that government investment into regional NSW is fair and delivers positive outcomes for local communities and businesses. The Department of Regional NSW has numerous agencies located within the Mid North Coast. The agencies, and local government representatives speak to the Regional Leaders Group on a range of set and ad-hoc matters.

The Department of Regional NSW also facilitates numerous resilience and recovery meetings, particularly those meetings prominent through the Covid-19 lockdowns and following disasters.

The Department of Regional NSW delivers to the North Coast Regional Plan, which is produced by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment.

### Mid North Coast Joint Organisation

At the time this document was created, the MNCJO represents members from Bellingen, Kempsey and Port Macquarie-Hastings Councils. Nambucca and Coffs Harbour are not currently represented by the Joint Organisation.

Nevertheless, the MNCJO has presented strong results in collaborative funding acquisition, regional planning and broader regional development.

While the MNCJO does not produce a regional plan, it does set out a comprehensive regional operational plan which addresses many of the key issues and opportunities in the Mid North Coast.

MidCoast Council is represented within the Hunter Joint Organisation.

## REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ROLES:



## Business NSW

Business NSW is focused on the wellbeing of the business community. Its purpose is to provide a strong, clear voice for businesses on the issues important to their livelihood. Working closely with its members, Business NSW identifies key issues and finds practical policy solutions to ensure businesses across NSW prosper and grow.

Business NSW has numerous staff across the Mid North Coast who are managed by a regional manager. The Regional Manager plays an integral role in regional economic planning.

## Regional Development Australia Mid North Coast

As a conduit between the three levels of government, industry and local communities, RDAMNC plays an important role both as a source of information, as well as providing leadership in regional development. The intelligence and information gained through the national Regional Development Australia network and national federal government agencies is analysed within a strategic regional

context, and in the case of this Strategic Regional Plan overlays existing state and local economic development plans.

In close collaboration with the community and a broad group of regional and local organisations, RDAMNC is a catalyst for regional economic development which contributes to, and drives, regional business growth plans and strategies. The outcome of these plans is to support sustainable economic development, high value job creation, future focused skills development, and strategic business investment.

## Collaborative economic planning

This plan aims to enable productive and collaborative relationships among all the above-mentioned, regionally significant bodies, local government, business and community, free of any agenda other than successful regional development. It also takes into account economic development planning conducted by individual Councils, particularly as represented via the NSW Government's Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS).





# METHODOLOGY

PHASE 1: Iterative process	
01   <b>Concept design: Conceptual design of strategy</b>	RDAMNC drew inspiration from RDA Northern Rivers in the document design process. It also drew from the 2010 RDAMNC Regional Plan.
02   <b>Mapping: Mapping existing economic strategies (local, State and Commonwealth)</b>	A full list of documents mapped can be found in the REFERENCES section of this document.
03   <b>Consultation: Various consultation throughout the region</b>	A broad cross-section of stakeholders was consulted during the formation of this plan. The consultations helped to establish a common understanding of the region's strengths, challenges, and opportunities for long-term growth. The findings reflect a whole-of-region view that is supported by statistical information, regional strategies and policies which collectively inform the priorities presented in this plan. See attachment 6.
04   <b>Hypothesis development: Develop key strategies</b>	The co-design process started with a set of strategies as an underpinning hypothesis. The strategies were formed through the following consultative processes (see attachment 6b).
PHASE 2: Hypothesis testing	
05   <b>Hypothesis testing: Workshop with key stakeholders and survey</b>	See attachment 6
PHASE 3: Feedback	
06   <b>Documentation: Draft regional plan</b>	November 2022
07   <b>Feedback: Gather feedback from key stakeholders</b>	April 2023
08   <b>Report finalization: Publish public DRAFT report</b>	October 2022
09   <b>Final consultation: Present report to Councils, Local Aboriginal Land Council network, key community stakeholders for feedback; incorporate updated REDS plans</b>	May/June 2023
PHASE 4: Publishing	
10   <b>FINAL REPORT</b>	July 2023



## **SECTION 2:** Understanding the region



RDAMNC represents local government areas from Coffs Harbour to Port Macquarie-Hastings and the (former) Greater Taree LGA boundaries. For the purposes of this document RDAMNC has included data relevant to the entire MidCoast Council boundary, unless otherwise specified in one of the following tables.



## AT A GLANCE (RDAMNC REGION DATA)

### Local Government Areas:

Coffs Harbour, Bellingen,  
Nambucca, Macleay, Port-  
Hastings & (former) Greater Taree

### Land mass: approx.

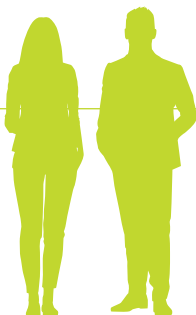
**17,218** sq kms

### Population:

**285,220**

### Commonwealth electorates:

Cowper, Lyne



### State electorates:

Coffs Harbour, Oxley,  
Port Macquarie, Myall Lakes

### Unemployment rate:

MNC 4.9%  
Nationally 3.2%  
(Feb 2023)



### Employers:

Health Care & Social Assistance  
**22,911** jobs (21.3%)

Retail Trade  
**12,488** jobs (11.6%)

Education & training  
**10,892** (10.1%)

Construction  
**10,079** (9.4%)

Source: ABS Census Data 2022 Release 1

### Value added to economy:

#### RDA REGION

Rental, Hiring &  
Real estate services

**\$2.7B** (16.8%)

Health Care & social assistance

**\$2.36B** (14.7%)

Construction

**\$1.6B** (9.9%)

#### Gross Regional Product (GRP)

**\$17.49B**

Total output \$33.25B (est)

#### Regional exports

**\$7.57B**

## REGIONAL STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES SWOT ANALYSIS (SUMMARY)

### Strengths

- A growing region
- Sub-tropical climate
- Liveability
- Natural beauty
- Reputation as a clean environment
- Business opportunities
- Proximity to major markets.

### Opportunities

- Industry diversity and business innovation
- Skills and workforce development
- Collaboration
- Housing
- Business preparedness.

### Weaknesses

- Lack of affordable housing
- Infrastructure gaps: Telecommunications and transport
- Labour shortages for some industries
- Ageing population.

### Threats

- Fast and uneven growth
- Ageing population
- Program duplication and lacking collaboration
- Water security
- Lacking diversity in economy
- Natural disaster and pandemic and lacking skilled people in community to respond.

## SECTION 3:

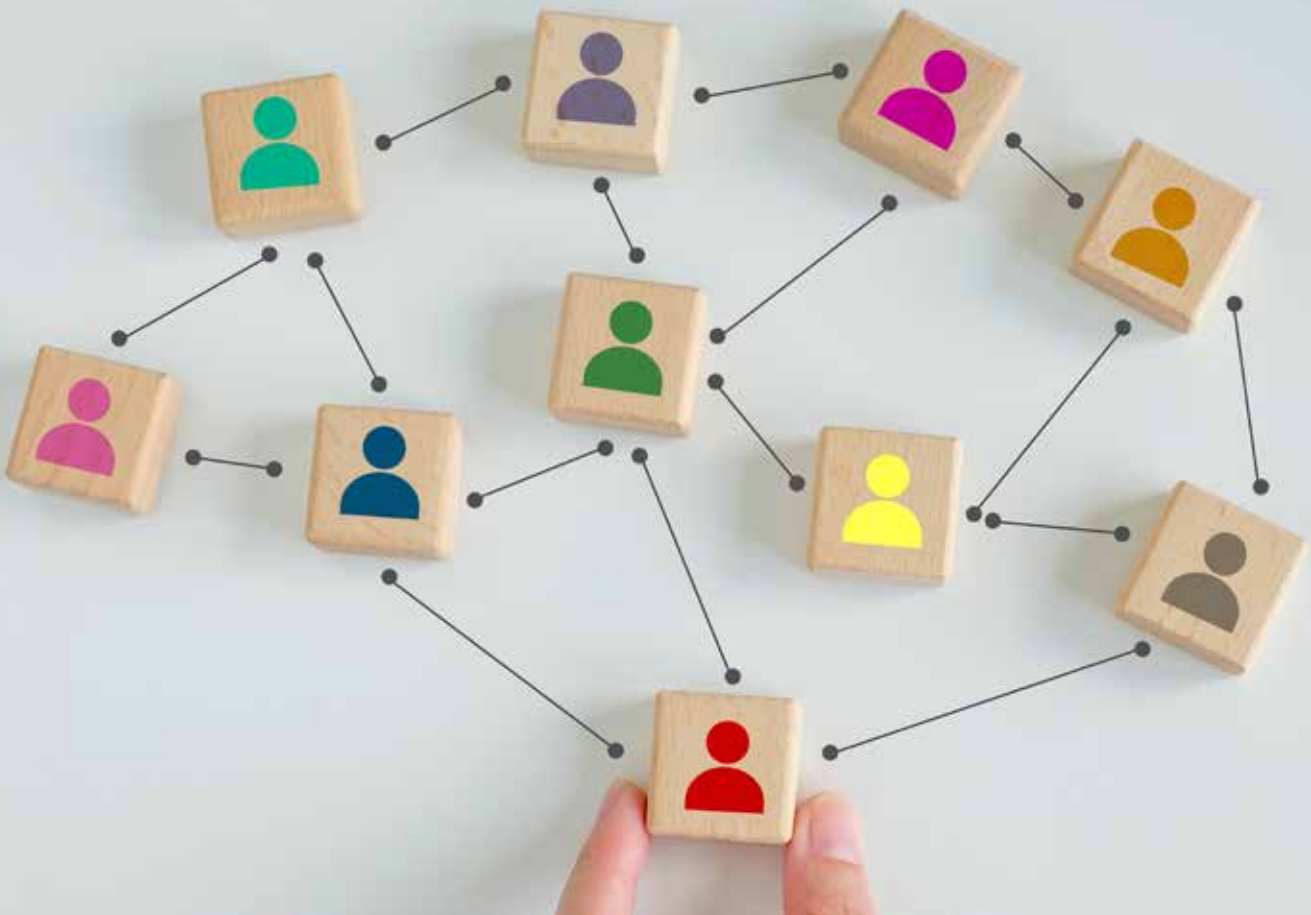
### Regional Strategic priorities





## COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT'S REGIONAL PRIORITIES

- Connectivity and Infrastructure incorporating digital connectivity, transport links, and freight and supply chain infrastructure.
- Human Capital and Skills to provide skilled and adaptable workforces, Regional Universities and training, and schooling.
- Regional Employment and Business to develop regional businesses and industry, local R&D and innovation and a strategic regional vision.
- Leadership and Collaboration by investing in regional leadership, capable local government and the Indigenous community.
- Amenity and Liveability providing services, facilities and liveability, and support for local priorities.
- Sustainable Natural Resources to build future resilience, ensure sustainable foundations and provide economic opportunities and jobs.



## MID NORTH COAST SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

<b>PRIORITY (defined by the Commonwealth)</b>	<b>MNC Strategic Priority</b>
<b>PRIORITY 1   Connectivity and Infrastructure incorporating digital connectivity, transport links and freight and supply chain infrastructure</b>	1a: Infrastructure prioritisation 1b: Connectivity: Digital 1c: Connectivity: Physical
<b>PRIORITY 2   Human capital and skills to provide skilled and adaptable workforces, regional universities and training and schooling</b>	2a: Skills 2b: Access to regional data
<b>PRIORITY 3   Regional employment and business to develop regional businesses and industry, local R&amp;D and innovation and a strategic regional vision</b>	3a: Strengthen business 3b: Local spend 3c: Industry attraction
<b>PRIORITY 4   Leadership and collaboration by investing in regional leadership, capable local government and the Indigenous community</b>	4a: Identity 4b: Governance
<b>PRIORITY 5   Amenity and Liveability providing services, facilities and liveability and support for local priorities</b>	5a: Housing 5b: Health Services 5c: Cost of living 5d: Amenity 5e: Connection to community 5f: Lifestyle and opportunity 5g: Dedicated and permanent liveability/resilience staff in local government
<b>PRIORITY 6   Sustainable natural resources to build future resilience, ensure sustainable foundations and provide economic opportunities and jobs</b>	6a: Food security 6b: Water security 6c: Improve resilience to natural disaster and climate change 6d: Create a circular economy 6f: Enhance access to renewable energy sources

## **PRIORITY 1:** Connectivity and Infrastructure incorporating digital connectivity, transport links and freight and supply chain infrastructure.

The Mid North Coast has suffered extensive infrastructure damage in recent years through natural disaster - including bridges, roads, power distribution and telecommunications infrastructure, parks and reserves, recreational infrastructure and damage to natural assets and the environment.

While all levels of government have contributed unprecedented funding to infrastructure at a local level, Councils often speak of 'implementation fatigue' brought about through:

1. Long and arduous bureaucratic approval processes often requiring specialised staff (or consultants) to develop business cases, environmental studies and other supporting documentation to support grant applications. Furthermore, extensive funding assessment times can mean that building costs often increase before funding is announced, and materials and labour require longer than ever before to procure. Often grant timeframes are unrealistic due to projects needing to be "shovel ready", the approvals required, and the influx of natural disasters placing increased pressure on capacity to deliver in the prescribed timelines. These constraints were identified in an IPART Report into Regulatory Burden on Local Government, with 94 recommendations made. The effects of the pandemic have increased pressure on raw materials with cost blow outs and delays in supply chain increasing cost pressures on grant funds received by local government.
2. Tight Local Government budgets do not enable betterment of key infrastructure, and with increased exposure to natural disaster the Councils are simply chasing their tails. Need to "build back better".
3. Much of the recent infrastructure funding allocations in the Mid North Coast in recent years has been allocated for disaster remediation, leaving gaps in both general works programs as well as important infrastructure which supports regional growth.
4. Requirements around State and Federal funding for infrastructure are generally cumbersome and restrictive, not allowing for new and innovative solutions to infrastructure issues. In addition, time constraints around funding (often aligned with election cycles) can cause issues for local governments and their communities who would benefit from longer time frames for consultation with key stakeholders.



While changing government procurement processes takes time, the MNC Strategic Regional Plan (MNCSR) calls for greater collaboration across the region in its identification, implementation and maintenance of key infrastructure so that strategic projects of benefit to the entire region can be prioritised in collaborative applications.

The Mid North Coast Joint Organisation (MNCJO) has already demonstrated the benefits of a collaborative approach via its extensive work in replacing wooden bridges across the region. Not only has this saved each Council involved the administrative task of applying for funding, the successfully procured applications have enabled the Councils to collectively steer purchasing and acquisition of contractors in a timely manner.

The North Coast Regional Plan (2022) identifies a new entity called The North Coast Delivery, Coordination and Monitoring Committee whose role is to implement the actions outlined in the North Coast Strategy and to listen and work with all stakeholders and the community to make sure that growth is aligned with infrastructure and delivered in the right places and at the right time.

How this entity will work alongside Infrastructure Australia is yet to be determined. There are no specific infrastructure projects identified within the North Coast Strategy. The MNCSR seeks to identify these and to work with appropriate stakeholders to solidify an established list of regional priorities.

Digital connectivity in the Mid North Coast is hindered by inefficient landline, mobile and internet networks. Not only does this impact the business community, it also has dire impacts in times of natural disaster. Lack of digital connectivity also stifles the development of lucrative and clean industries such as advanced manufacturing, digital industries and creative industries all of which require fast internet.

Development of the Pacific Highway is providing ongoing improvements to connectivity between Sydney and Brisbane including the Mid North Coast Region.

The Mid North Coast has airports at Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie and Taree, enabling a range of passenger and freight services.

Major freight hubs are currently located in Taree, Port Macquarie and Coffs Harbour, with one planned for the Nambucca Valley as a component of the Valla Growth Precinct.

While the Mid North Coast is connected via roads, rail and air to the North and South, the same benefits are sorely lacking to the West. This hinders opportunities such as access to the Inland Rail network, particularly for our primary producers.

Smaller producers have further difficulties connecting with larger markets in Sydney, Brisbane and Newcastle as they do not have the quantity of supply to utilise the services of larger freight companies.





**PRIORITY 1:** Connectivity and Infrastructure incorporating digital connectivity, transport links, and freight and supply chain infrastructure.

**Vision:** Efficient digital connectivity within the region and across the globe and appropriate physical infrastructure with a supported approach to building back better.

**Strategic focus:**

1a. Infrastructure prioritisation

1b. Connectivity: Digital

1c. Connectivity: Physical

**Responsible entities**

- Local Councils
- The Mid North Coast Joint Organisation
- Transport for NSW
- NSW Department of Planning and Environment
- Treasury NSW
- Network providers
- Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development.

**Drivers**

- Local Government Strategic Plans and Community Vision Documents
- MNC Joint Organisation of Councils
- A critical regional infrastructure list endorsed by Infrastructure Australia
- Collaborative understanding of the benefits of collaborative procurement
- Mechanisms to support collaborative procurement and project delivery
- Equal access to effective and affordable telecommunications
- Addressing mobile blackspots throughout the region
- Implementation of disaster proof infrastructure to support effective telecommunications

- Identification of preferred approach to transport logistics for small producers
- Relevant and accessible regional freight hubs
- Access to international freight distribution.

**Inhibiting factors**

- Lacking a collaborative/cooperative/united approach to regional infrastructure (focus on individual LGAs)
- Competitive funding processes
- Competing priorities and parochialism
- No formal mechanism for collaborative procurement across the region
- No scope for new and innovative thinking (i.e. the like for like approach is not always the best approach)
- Limitations to mobile phone coverage and resilience, especially in times of disaster
- Uptake of NBN Fixed Wireless & NBN Sky Muster Plus in outlying areas of the region, often because of latency and data limitations
- Ineffective infrastructure
- Competitive marketplace whereby some areas are not considered feasible to connect
- Lacking connectivity to the West
- No access to international freight systems
- Difficulties reaching major markets for small producers.

**Strategic actions**

- Regional infrastructure priorities are identified and prioritised
- Regionally significant infrastructure projects are advocated for at every level of government
- Explore opportunities to align all Councils to the MNC Joint Organisation through a pilot program to address critical infrastructure skills shortages. For example, a regional engineering capacity to design and construct bridges under fixing country bridges Kempsey Shire Council for example currently funded to replace 54 bridges
- All Councils in the region work together to identify priorities and to share both procurement opportunities and risks. Investigate opportunities for greater use of renewable energy resources
- Undertake a regional needs assessment of cultural, sporting, environmental and social infrastructure, which would include community and key stakeholder engagement
- Work with the private sector to identify substandard quality in digital connections, develop a region-wide digital black spots map and identify potential rectification projects
- Advocate for a region-wide digital black spots map and identify potential rectification projects
- Telecommunications infrastructure investment
- Renewed MNC regional freight strategy
- Strategic planning to enhance connectivity to the West
- Small producer logistics strategy and associated advocacy
- Improved linkages between major regional centres and smaller towns
- Identify supply chain vulnerabilities.



## **PRIORITY 2:** Human Capital and Skills to provide skilled and adaptable workforces, Regional Universities and training, and schooling.

Skills and people shortages are common across Australia and globally, with some sectors such as hospitality, aged care and construction facing unprecedented shortages.

RDAMNC's 2020 MNC Employment Strategy highlighted the need for a more 'joined up' system supporting stronger linkages between jobseekers, students, supporting services (such as education and labour market programs) and employers. While the Commonwealth funded Local Jobs Program has the potential to improve these connections, there are still many improvements to make.

Covid-19, natural disasters and a changing employment landscape has exacerbated difficulties in labour markets, and without a strong intervention soon, industries will be decimated.

Under-employment is a serious problem particularly among low skilled workers in the region. Enhanced partnerships between industry sectors, and between industry and service providers, could result in mechanisms such as labour hire companies being established to tackle such issues.

While Migration has been a go to workforce solution for many of these labour markets for decades, Covid-related border closures and migration restrictions highlighted the flaws in this solution, creating crisis in many industries, particularly hospitality and agriculture.

With increasing pressure on the housing market, we need to engage people that already live here to fill jobs.

The Mid North Coast also boasts the highest density of universities in any region across Australia (RDA University Economic Report, 2017). There is scope to strengthen partnerships between the education sector and employers, and to enhance access to post graduate education in the Mid North Coast.

There are many different data points related to employment. One of the issues experienced when trying to understand what employment and skill shortages look like on the Mid North Coast is that there is a lack of comprehensive, standardised, and place-based source of data to inform decision making.

This means decisions such as which industry to focus on, what courses to provide, or even how to determine Skilled Migration priority lists is generally left to the loudest industry voice to determine.

Despite the best efforts of those providing data, adequate granular data is expensive to gather and often inconclusive as people do not always want to share the full detail of their employment, workforce, shortages or skills.

One single, comprehensive and place-based data source would enable a real and robust conversation about the true situation surrounding skill supply and demand in the Mid North Coast.

This would enable entities to align their efforts in gaining workforces where they are needed, to better understand future trends and labour market opportunities, and to see where labour markets are dropping off.

Without comprehensive intelligence on the future of our industries it is very difficult to equip young people with the skills they will need for future employment, although we do know that automation and globalisation are changing the face of the future workplace.

**PRIORITY 2:** Human Capital and Skills to provide skilled and adaptable workforces, Regional Universities and training, and schooling.

**Vision:** A skilled and job-ready region supported by a cohesive and data driven approach to employment pathways with strong relationships between schools, business and community.

**Strategic focus:**

2a. Skills

2b. Access to regional data

**Responsible entities**

- Commonwealth Department of Employment
- NSW Department of Regional NSW
- Commonwealth Department of Workplace Relations and Employment
- Australian Bureau of Statistics
- My Future Workforce.

**Drivers**

- Industry based approach to employment pathways
- Enhanced support of careers advisors in schools
- Ability to link employers with marginalised and under-employed workforces
- Collaboration among supporting services and employers
- Ease of sharing de-identified data for employers and jobseekers
- An environment that responds to a data informed approach
- Appropriate infrastructure to collect data.

**Inhibiting factors**

- Disjointed State / Commonwealth approach to employment pathways
- Reliance on Migration program
- Lack of funding among school-based careers advisors
- Lacking opportunities to share labour markets better enabling currently under-employed employees to have more sustainable employment, and employers to have more access to skilled labour
- Privacy concerns
- Conflicting data
- Lack of data sharing between levels of government and other organisations
- Reporting can be expensive and time consuming
- Data manipulation can skew the situation.



**Strategic priorities**

- Development of industry-based clusters incorporating support networks
- Support for careers advisors
- Enhance linkages between jobseekers, students and employers
- Work with industry to investigate workforce development opportunities to attract and retain staff
- Targeted programs for marginalised groups
- Grow our service capabilities across the region (pride in our regional identity)
- Attract skilled workers to the region
- Investigate opportunities to improve regional connectivity to education campuses
- Undertake a health and social services skills study to identify emerging requirements for labour and other resources, in partnership with key operators in this sector (skills audits My Future Workforce)
- Identify indigenous business and employment opportunities in consultation with the Aboriginal community and industry leaders
- Establish use of a set data source to report employment data
- Promote a set data source among employers and related service providers
- Establish goals related to identified measures
- Better understand future trends in industry and employment in the Mid North Coast
- Advocate for skill development and training that is future facing e.g. skills for the digital economy.



## **PRIORITY 3:** Regional employment and business to develop regional businesses and industry, local R&D and innovation and a strategic regional vision.

Only .02% of businesses located on the Mid North Coast employ over 100 people, and 60% of businesses do not employ anyone at all (2021).

While larger businesses have funding to support operations and growth and development, small businesses often struggle to find the time or financial resources to get the help needed.

Businesses typically need support across human resources, technology, processes, systems and planning, succession planning and leadership.

While business owners can access a plethora of online courses and programs, there are very few available directly on the Mid North Coast.

There are many programs designed to provide support, connections and access to funding pathways. These programs are not always applicable to the broad range of business types across the region, including social enterprise and not-for-profits.

RDAMNC's 2019 regional skills survey identified that most businesses who responded did not do workforce nor succession planning. With response to natural disaster now of paramount concern, these types of plans are essential for businesses who are likely to experience rapid change.

The MNC's Gross Regional Product (value added) is currently \$16.1B. To enhance this as we support

existing local businesses, our region must find ways to increase revenue in the local economy.

Understanding where our regional economic leakages are and enabling local procurement policies and shop local programs to support locally based businesses of all kinds will be critical to enhance our GRP.

A better understanding of our regional supply chains will also highlight leakages and opportunities to create more manufacturing and logistics options to reduce economic leakages.

The MNC currently imports \$6.2B in goods and services. Of these imports, 29% (\$1.84B) comes from the Manufacturing sector, a further 13.6% (\$854M) from Construction and 7.8% (\$491M) from Accommodation and Food Services.

While industry attraction is a performance indicator across all levels of government and not-for-profit organisations, there is no strategic nor collaborative approach that currently exists within the Mid North Coast.

Taking time to create a strategic and formalised approach which builds on resources will enable stronger results for the region.



**PRIORITY 3:** Regional employment and business to develop regional businesses and industry, local R&D and innovation and a strategic regional vision.

**Vision:** A robust, supported and responsive business sector which commits to reducing leakages from the regional economy.

**Strategic focus:**

3a. Strengthen business

3b. Local spend

3c. Industry attraction

**Responsible entities**

- Business NSW
- Department of Regional NSW
- Various labour market programs
- Large businesses
- Government
- Local Government (Shop local)
- Invest NSW
- Regional Development Australia Mid North Coast.

**Drivers**

- Joined-up programs providing end to end support for businesses
- Programs designed to support small business, not-for-profits and social enterprise
- Opportunities for busy people in business to come together
- Procurement policies
- Shop local campaigns
- Regionally based supply chains
- Circular economy strategies
- Collaborative investment attraction
- Identification of land which has regional significance.

**Inhibiting factors**

- Business support programs are not place based: different regions have different needs
- Limited time capabilities among business owners
- Limited support capacity among programs
- Limited support for small business
- Workforce gaps in every industry
- Lacking succession planning
- Spending outside the community
- Globalisation
- Lacking procurement policies which support local procurement
- Lacking collaboration among agencies tasked to attract industries
- Lack of strategic focus
- Lacking investment in tourism infrastructure
- Ad-hoc priorities derived from agencies with little consultation on the ground.

**Strategic actions**

- Access to current program information spanning State/Commonwealth boundaries
- Workforce development and succession planning for small business
- Reduction of red tape that stifles business growth
- Resolving potential land-use conflicts through completion of a land-use strategy.

**Strategic actions**

- Understanding the breadth of business in the region (including micro business, home-based businesses, social enterprise)
- Understand supply chains and associated gaps
- Local procurement policies at all levels of government and in business
- Enhance opportunities for niche manufacturing in the region
- Strengthening regional supply chains
- Shop local campaigns

- Strengthening already established local businesses (as per 3a)
- Identify and promote key strengths of each LGA to better enable industry clustering opportunities
- Circular economy opportunities, particularly in replacing key economic leakages
- Diversify tourism offering to incorporate eco-tourism, cultural tourism, sports and events
- Seek investment in key infrastructure to support conferences and events, in partnership with the main tourist resorts
- Investigate opportunities for food tourism and food manufacturing across the Region, building on its clean and green image
- Facilitate Manufacturing and light industry hub around intermodal facility linking airport, rail and road infrastructure
- Identify development opportunities that have regional significance and collaboratively advocate to realise the vision.





## **PRIORITY 4:** Leadership and Collaboration by investing in regional leadership, capable local government and the Indigenous community.

Recent natural disaster, pandemic and other global catastrophes have impacted the Mid North Coast in ways we have never experienced before.

From supply chain shortages to skill and staff shortages, our Local Government Areas (LGAs) cannot solve pressing challenges that exist, and those that are coming, alone.

While each local government area carries its own tourism branding, there is scope to form a more collective Mid North Coast brand identity which brings together the core characteristics of the LGAs within the Mid North Coast and enables greater collaboration. While it may not result in a visual brand representing the Mid North Coast, building the collaborative architecture that supports the brand is more important now than ever before.

A collective identity will enable the Mid North Coast to form the critical mass required for key lobbying and advocacy, resource acquisition and economic development.

In order to remain current, the MNC Strategic Regional Plan must be owned by the communities it represents, and as such remain a living document.

The collaborative and inclusive intention of the document requires broad representation across the region.

It is recommended the plan is governed through an annual action plan written by RDAMNC which is informed by a range of stakeholder groups including (but not limited to):

- The MNC Joint Organisation (which includes representation by key State agencies)
- State and Commonwealth Government via relevant MPs
- The RDAMNC Board
- Two external stakeholder groups representing key economic development stakeholders and key community stakeholders who meet bi-annually (in individual meetings) to measure the plan's success, adjust actions based on the current environment and set the course of action for the year ahead.
- An annual public survey on the plan's priorities which is presented to the above mentioned stakeholder groups to inform decision making.



**PRIORITY 4:** Leadership and Collaboration by investing in regional leadership, capable local government and the Indigenous community.

**Vision:** A region which delights in collaboration, identifies and strengthens areas of common ground, and celebrates its unique characteristics.

**Strategic focus:**

4a. Identity

4b. Governance

**Responsible entities**

- Councils
- Destination North Coast
- Business NSW
- RDA Mid North Coast.

**Drivers**

- A guide / directory / map of the groups, committees, services and entities that are dealing with particular issues in our region
- Overarching coordination of information gathered through issue-based groups and committees e.g. 'what the Mid North Coast is thinking about housing right now'
- More transparency surrounding what funding is allocated by issue in the region
- Opportunities to contribute to regional decision making on any issue
- Common vision across the region
- A distinctive Mid North Coast brand
- More opportunities to come together (in person or online) to collaborate on ideas, opportunities and issues in our region
- Adoption of one regional plan for the Mid North Coast
- Greater use of communications specialists to maximise benefits of collaboration and share goals/outcomes of work undertaken
- Broad representation throughout the region
- Representation that is inclusive and factors in the needs of diverse groups throughout the region
- Willingness to adapt and change as the external environment shifts
- Ongoing engagement.



### Inhibiting factors

- Lacking regional identity
- Competing priorities
- Parochialism
- Programs not always designed for the regions
- Personal relationships
- Understand other regional branding activities within and external to the MNC
- MNC Regional Branding activity reflecting the clean, green environment and agri-business sector
- Mapping key regional committees and a regional approach to creating a collaborative response
- Understand geographic specialties within the region and advocate for relevant centres of excellence
- Investigate opportunities for 'non-competing' centres of excellence across the broader region
- Collaborative marketing
- Ensure the voices of minority groups are heard in the formation of our brand
- Governance
- Gain endorsement across LGAs to undertake regional branding and understand relevant parameters
- Create a steering committee for the MNC Strategic Regional Plan
- People losing interest
- Poor representation (particularly among minority groups)
- A fast-moving political environment which could stifle the intentions of the plan.

### Strategic actions

- Establish annual action plan
- Establish economic stakeholder group
- Establish community stakeholder group
- Provide a briefing for all stakeholder groups
- Workshop the annual plan to ensure all actions meet the needs of the stakeholders
- Establish a meeting schedule for appropriate review points
- Establish a media presence to enable the Public to stay engaged with the plan.



## **PRIORITY 5:** Amenity and liveability providing services, facilities and liveability and support for local priorities.

In defining the above mentioned strategic priorities RDAMNC has utilised the Regional Australia Institute's (RAI) Regional Liveability Toolkit indicators, including health services, education, cost of living, amenity, connection to community and lifestyle and opportunity as a basis for understanding regional liveability.

Housing is a pressing challenge in the Mid North Coast (and beyond). RDAMNC acknowledges in writing this strategy that homelessness, particularly among older women is a dire issue at this time. As there are already a range of astute not-for-profit organisations and community groups working in this area, we have focused our research towards accommodation for key workers.

In the Mid North Coast there are currently 81,000 spare bedrooms (est.). Our houses are large with 81,458 (74%) people in the MNC living in homes that have 3 bedrooms or more (ABS 2021). In fact, the average number of bedrooms per dwelling is 3.1 and the average occupants 2.3.

The rental market has been tight in the MNC for some years now with 21,601 people renting in 2016 compared to 22,225 in 2021. Census data supports what we already know regarding the rise in rents across the region, with the median rent increasing from \$260 in 2016 to \$330 in 2021.

And yet, while we are now doing more with our empty homes, in 2021 there are still 12,492 unoccupied residences – a slight decrease compared to the 13,847 unoccupied residences in 2016, but still indicative of a substantial unused housing resource in the region.

The RAI's Toolkit was "developed in response to the growing need in regional communities to attract and retain populations. It builds on the Regional Australia Institute's research across rural and regional Australia on population mobility, regional jobs and liveability.

This Toolkit draws together insights from our work to create a practical guide for regional leaders who are seeking to attract and retain populations in their town.

It recognises that Australia has a highly mobile population and that regional "liveability" has a strong role to play in influencing people's decisions about where to live.

The Liveability Toolkit helps regional leaders gather and analyse the data that can help them develop a tailored action plan to improve their town's liveability. By developing a place-based Liveability Action Plan, regional towns can become more successful in attracting the people that they need for a strong and prosperous future."

The Mid North Coast is known for its clean, green natural beauty. But this is not the only liveability factor that will draw the skilled people we need to relocate to (and stay) here. The following strategies aim to enhance liveability in the Mid North Coast for all residents.



**PRIORITY 5:** Amenity and Liveability providing services, facilities and liveability, and support for local priorities.

**Vision:** The MNC is a safe, enjoyable, nurturing and environmentally sustainable place to live.

**Strategic priorities:**

5a. Housing

5b. Health services

5c. Cost of living

5d. Amenity

5e. Connection to community

5f. Lifestyle and opportunity

5g. Dedicated and permanent liveability/resilience staff in local government

**Responsible entities**

- Councils
- State and Commonwealth Government
- Community services (NGOs)
- Community members
- Business and industry.

**Drivers**

- Access to medical services
- Access to childcare and schools, vocational education and university
- Affordable housing
- Clear buffer/green zones between industrial and residential land to avoid future conflict
- Connected, safe and welcoming communities
- Community events and opportunities to connect
- Inclusion.

**Inhibiting factors**

- Lack of the above mentioned drivers.

**Strategic actions**

- Apply the RAI's liveability toolkit methodology to map liveability across the MNC
- Strategic action to support further housing
- Work with the Department of Planning and Environment to increase and diversify the supply of social and affordable housing types to meet the community's needs
- Access to public transport
- Use best practice in environmental rehabilitation to further build the clean and green image

- Encourage other lifestyle and tourist developments that will increase the Region's attractiveness to sea/tree change professionals and other skilled workers
- Undertake a gap analysis of requirements to better support an ageing population
- Develop a regional catalogue of residential lands for activation and proactively seek funding opportunities for enabling infrastructure to accelerate housing supply
- Advocate for the Department of Planning & Environment to assess the development feasibility of different housing choices across the Region
- Provide greater access to and awareness of indigenous and environmental heritage
- Extend existing Urban Growth Strategies to cover the whole Region
- Advocate for Transport for NSW and the Department of Planning & Environment to:
  - assess public and community transport requirements necessary for 'hub and spoke' regional service delivery
  - link precinct planning outcomes to public transport, school transport and community transport requirements.
- Implement RDAMNC's 'Our Spaces' campaign to encourage community led solutions to housing
- Support Councils to engage permanent resilience/liveability teams
- Incorporate principles and practices of resilience officers in liveability teams.

## **PRIORITY 6:** Sustainable Natural Resources to build future resilience, ensure sustainable foundations and provide economic opportunities and jobs.

There is no doubt the drought, bushfire and floods of recent years have been challenging for Mid North Coast residents. Not only did these events impact the community through significant loss and damage to property, it also impacted the business community creating economic challenges throughout the region. Adding the impacts of pandemic, it has been a tough time for the region.

The events also had significant impacts on our waste management systems which are now operating beyond capacity.

As our Councils improve access to data regarding the local environment we need to prepare new ways to respond to disaster, both when it happens and also before it happens.

Science says our environment is changing and rather than planning for 'business as usual', it is time to plan for a different future and to use data to inform our responses.



**PRIORITY 6:** Sustainable Natural Resources to build future resilience, ensure sustainable foundations and provide economic opportunities and jobs.

**Vision:** Enhanced resilience to natural disaster and climate change.

**Strategic priorities:**

6a: Food security

6b: Water security

6c: Improve resilience to natural disaster and climate change

6d. Create a circular economy

6f. Enhance access to renewable energy sources

**Responsible entities**

- Councils
- NSW Department Planning and Environment
- Resilience NSW
- Commonwealth Department of Infrastructure
- NSW Department of Primary Industries
- Local Land Services
- Aboriginal corporations.

**Drivers**

- Collaborative planning
- Secure water supply
- Secure food supply
- Investment in circular economy activities in the MNC
- Collaborative investment in waste management
- Localised disaster planning and response.

**Inhibiting factors**

- Lacking collaboration.

**Strategic actions**

- Map circular economy opportunities and blockages throughout the Mid North Coast
- Support incorporation of cultural burn practices across the region as a preventative for bushfires
- Support uptake of community based and individual renewable energy solutions to facilitate greater resilience

- Facilitate connections among communication professionals across the councils to support collaboration and connectedness especially for emergency communications
- Support climate change mitigation funding at local government level ie. High tide, sea level rises, landslips, house lifting and moving in flood risk areas, change zoning regs etc;
- Support small farm cooperatives to create local secure food supply eg. North Arm Farms
- Use best practice in environmental rehabilitation to further build the clean and green image
- Leverage the Region's clean and green image to further niche food manufacturing
- Take advantage of renewable energy and micro grids to reduce energy costs
- Further develop the regions "Clean and Green" image for the agribusiness and tourism sectors
- Support councils to retain resilience teams and morph to permanent liveability, resilience and (or) community development roles to ensure communities remain resilient
- Leverage Coffs Harbour's Eco-Destination Certification to promote eco-tourism in the region
- Collaborate with Coffs Harbour to share the know-how to become a eco-destination.

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## ATTACHMENTS

### ATTACHMENT 1: Regional endowments

The REDS plans (2018) provides a more specific list of the region's strengths via listing the endowments the region can capitalise on.

<b>Coffs/Bellingen</b>	<b>Institutional and cultural</b> Southern Cross University; balance of lifestyles; social and economic opportunities; business and industry cooperatives and organisations; local Councils; Gumbaynggirr culture; breadth of creative and cultural industries.
	<b>Physical and geographic</b> Coastal amenity; Bellingen and Kalang rivers; Dorrigo hinterland; arable lands and climate; the harbour and foreshore area; Sydney to Brisbane mid point; eco destination certification.
	<b>Built</b> Pacific highway; Waterfall Way; Coffs Harbour Regional Airport and precinct; accommodation capacity; jetty foreshore precinct; rail line; health precinct; sports facilities; cofts campus precinct; justice precinct; heritage; NBN; Bellingen Valley precinct.
<b>Kempsey/PMHC</b>	<b>Institutional and cultural</b> Balance of lifestyle; social and economic opportunities; local councils; state government agencies; universities; rich Aboriginal and European history.
	<b>Physical and geographic</b> Riverine and hinterland amenity; coastal amenity; access to major metropolitan markets; significant arable land; sporting and recreation infrastructure.
	<b>Built</b> Air services; Pacific Highway; rail services; accommodation capacity and capability; health network; education network.
	<b>Human</b> Diverse specialised skill sets.
<b>Nambucca</b>	<b>Physical and geographic</b> Natural amenity; state forests and national parks; arable land; climate and water; midpoint between major metro markets; access to SE QLD markets.
	<b>Built</b> Pacific Highway; private capital investment; Coffs Harbour airport.
	<b>Institutional</b> Nambucca Shire Council; clean, green, organic branding; North Coast Institute of TAFE; Aboriginal cultural heritage.
	<b>Human</b> Balance of lifestyle; social and economic opportunities; specialised skill sets; entrepreneurship.
<b>MidCoast</b>	<b>Land, water and related</b> Agricultural land; estuaries; Gloucester coal basin; key industry specific assets used for processing (including Wingham beef), private saw milling and seafood processing.
	<b>Infrastructure and location</b> Natural resources; Pacific Highway; rail line; easy access to Sydney, the Port of Newcastle and Newcastle airport; local air services; NBN in key townships; Taree's convenient location for freight and transport; Northern Gateway transport and logistics hub; Gloucester easy access to key markets including the New England; availability and affordability of land.
	<b>Lifestyle, institutions and amenity</b> 192km of coastline; Manning and Myall rivers; high profile tourism towns Forster-Tuncurry; marine park tourism; Manning river; tree change lifestyle; notable features such as Barrington Tops World Heritage Park; National Parks, state forests; accessible as a day trip from the Hunter; proximity to Sydney and Newcastle; Taree key regional centre; large regional hospital; access to higher education; Taree Universities Campus.

**ATTACHMENT 2: Mapping regional priorities (Regional Economic Development Plans (REDS) 2023 update)**

	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4
<b>Coffs/ Bellingen</b>	Grow the year-round visitor economy by further diversifying offerings and connecting businesses in the sector.	Support growth of emerging industries, including knowledge intensive, creative and green economy sectors.	Enhance regional resilience by supporting implementation of sustainable practices in engine industries and investing in robust physical and digital connectivity.	Support skills attraction and retention in population serving sectors, including health care and social assistance and education and training, through delivering sufficient and affordable key worker housing.
<b>Nambucca</b>	Enable the growth of local industry by increasing the supply of industrial land and building on successful local initiatives to connect and train local people for work in key businesses.	Protect and enhance the sustainable utilisation of the region's key endowments which support tourism and agriculture.	Facilitate population growth to expand the shire's internal markets.	
<b>Kempsey /PMHC</b>	Grow the region's skilled labour supply.	Foster industry development in engine and emerging industries, including through growth of industry clusters.	Grow the region's export-based sectors through better connections to markets and understanding of market opportunities.	
<b>MidCoast</b>	Strengthen the region's infrastructure and services offering to attract and retain businesses, residents and visitors.	Invest in workforce development and create opportunities for local businesses to invest and grow.	Actively pursue opportunities to bring investment, businesses and skilled workers to the region.	

**ATTACHMENT 3: Economic development priorities (by industry)**

Information from Regional Economic Development Plans (REDS) 2023 update

Industry	Engine Industries	Emerging Industries
Construction	MidCoast/Nambucca / Coffs-Bellingen/Kempsey-PMHC	
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services		
Manufacturing	MidCoast/Coffs-Bellingen/Kempsey-PMHC	
Health Care and Social Assistance	MidCoast/Nambucca/Coffs-Bellingen/Kempsey-PMHC	
Electricity, Gas, Water & Waste services	Kempsey/PMHC	Nambucca
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	MidCoast/Nambucca/Coffs-Bellingen/Kempsey-PMHC	
Public Administration and Safety		Nambucca
Retail trade		
Education and training	MidCoast/Coffs-Bellingen	Nambucca/Kempsey-PMHC
Professional, scientific & Technical services	Coffs-Bellingen	Kempsey-PMHC/MidCoast
Accommodation and food services		
Transport, postal and housing		Coffs-Bellingen
Financial & Insurance services		MidCoast
Administrative & Support Services		Nambucca
Wholesale trade		
Other services		
Information, Media & Telecommunications		Coffs-Bellingen/MidCoast
Arts & Recreation services		Coffs-Bellingen
Mining		
Tourism	MidCoast/Nambucca/Coffs/Kempsey-PMHC	





(Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census Data, 2022 Release)

### Gross Regional Product (GRP)

[illegible]

## ATTACHMENT 5: Significant Infrastructure Investments since 2018 (REDS Coffs Coast, Nambucca Valley, Macleay and Hastings, and MidCoast)

### COFFS COAST

#### Private:

- Shoreline Development Park Beach care facility
- CODA Coffs Harbour Development
- Big Banana Tourist Park upgrade
- Aanuka Beach Resort redevelopment
- Gumbaynggirr Giingana Freedom School
- Buildonix Australia expansion.

#### Public:

- Coffs Harbour Bypass
- Waterfall Way upgrade program
- Bellingen Bridge Renewal Program
- Kalang Road upgrades
- Coffs Harbour Health Campus
- Yarrila Place
- Bellingen Sewering Coastal Villages
- Coffs Harbour Regional Airport Enterprise Park
- Wiigulga Sports Complex and Coffs Harbour Regional Sports Hub stage 2
- Coffs Harbour Marine Precinct
- Dorriggo Escarpment Great Walk
- Urunga Boardwalk upgrade
- National Cartoon Gallery extension
- Bellingen Memorial Hall cultural arts hub transformation.

### NAMBUCCA VALLEY

#### Private:

- Express Coaches expansion
- Ingenia Holidays White Albatross Resort.

#### Public:

- Pacific Highway Upgrade
- Fixing Country Bridges program
- Macksville Hospital
- Bowraville HealthOne facility
- TAFE NSW Connected Learning Centre – Nambucca Heads
- Nambucca Valley Christian Community School Upgrades
- Roads to Home program
- Gumbaynggirr Aboriginal Keeping place – Macksville
- Bowraville Sports Hub
- Nambucca Heads Library upgrade
- Nambucca Main Beach Coastal Protection Wall replacement.

### HASTINGS MACLEAY

#### Private:

- Charles Sturt University Port Macquarie Stage 2
- Sails Port Macquarie Resort refurbishment
- Sovereign Place Town Centre
- Kempsey Cinema
- Port Macquarie Private Hospital expansion
- Port Macquarie Koala Hospital redevelopment
- Birdon Holdings Aluminium fabrication facility.

#### Public:

- Kempsey Regional Saleyards infrastructure upgrade
- Port Macquarie Health and Education Precinct
- Port Macquarie Hospital helipad relocation and new car parking
- Road upgrades
- Fixing Country Bridges project
- Port Macquarie Airport Parallel Taxiway
- Mid North Coast High Performance Centre
- Hastings Regional Sports Complex
- Verge and Eden Sporting Complex upgrades
- Macleay Valley Recreation Adventure Park
- Cowarra State Forest
- Port Macquarie Bicentennial Walkway upgrades
- Five Headlands Coastal Experience
- Port Macquarie Airport Business and Technology Park
- South Kempsey Employment Lands Hub sewerage upgrades.

### MIDCOAST

#### Public:

- Manning Entertainment Centre – Beryl Jane Fleet Studio
- Tuncurry Recreation Precinct
- Safety upgrades to the Pacific Highway
- Forster Civic Precinct project
- Manning River Rowing Club
- Northern Gateway Transport hub
- Taree Universities Campus
- Road upgrades
- Manning Base Hospital re-development Stage 2
- The Iron Arena
- Fixing Country Bridges project.

## ATTACHMENT 6: RDAMNC Regional Consultation

**RDAMNC conducted primary research which contributed to the development of the MNC Regional Plan via the following events and meetings:**

- Defence Industries Forum (March 2022)
- Key Worker Housing survey (March 2022)
- Ignite MNC (November 2021)
- Housing Ideas Forum May 2021 (Nambucca)
- Innovation Forums May 2021 (Coffs/Port)
- Workforce Development Forums June 2021 (Coffs/Taree/Kempsey)
- Meetings with Councils and MPs throughout the region during 2021/22
- Participation in the Joint Organisation Mid North Coast
- Community consultation informing the North Coast Employment Strategy (2020)
- MNC Skills Audit 2017 and 2019
- Extensive surveys delivered by RDAMNC between 2016-early 2018
- Consultation with all levels of government, industry and community throughout the region between (ongoing)
- Input from collaborative groups including Economic Development Manager (EDM) Network and various taskforces
- Ongoing monitoring of local media and social media
- Market testing concepts using community conversations, social media and Ignite MNC (annual event).

### 6a: Concept and hypothesis development

- Workforce consultation: Coffs Harbour, Kempsey and Taree (Mar 2021)
- Workplace innovation consultation: Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie (May 2021)
- Market intel provided via the Local Jobs Program
- Market intel provided through RDAMNC staff.

### And the following desk research:

- Local Government community and economic development plans
- Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS)
- North Coast Regional Plan
- Relevant State plans
- Relevant Commonwealth plans.

### 6b Hypothesis testing:

- The strategies were then tested through consultation with:
  - The RDAMNC board who is representative of all sectors of the region and industry groups
  - The MNC Joint Organisation
  - Business NSW
  - Economic Development practitioners across the region
  - Department of Regional NSW
  - State and Commonwealth MPs throughout the Mid North Coast
  - RDAMNC then aligned actions in the REDS plans, additional Local Government economic development plans and the North Coast Plan to map a set of actions for each of the proposed strategies.

### The actions were tested more broadly:

- Via a survey which was distributed to:
  - Over 1,500 business owners throughout the Mid North Coast via RDAMNC's mailing list
  - RDAMNC Social Media (Facebook and LinkedIn)
  - Over 25 key local contacts and
  - All MNC media outlets.

There were 50 responses to the survey.



## **MNC Strategic Regional Plan 2023-2033**

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