

# Southern New England High Country

## REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2018–2022



### VISION

A reinvigorated and resilient economy with strong and sustainable growth on the back of the agriculture, innovation, and quality lifestyle in the high country of New England.

### The Region will be known as:

- › a premier location for technology-driven agri-business in livestock and horticulture
- › a location of choice for innovative and globally-connected 'knowledge-based' businesses
- › a centre for quality education and research
- › an attractive choice for tree-changer professionals
- › as part of the New England High Country, a premium visitor destination
- › a sophisticated country life-style.

# Preface

The NSW Government has assisted local councils and their communities to develop 37 Regional Economic Development Strategies across regional NSW. Each strategy is designed around one or more local government areas that form a functional economic region as defined by economic data and community input. While the strategies have been developed using a consistent methodology, each is a product of detailed data analysis and local community consultation to ensure ownership through a 'bottom-up' process: it sets out a vision for the Region, the strategies, and early stage actions required to achieve the vision.

Regional Economic Development Strategies articulate a framework for identifying actions crucial to achieving the regional vision. Projects listed within this strategy should therefore be viewed as example projects that have emerged from the initial application of the framework. Adoption of these projects would be subject to further evaluative processes.

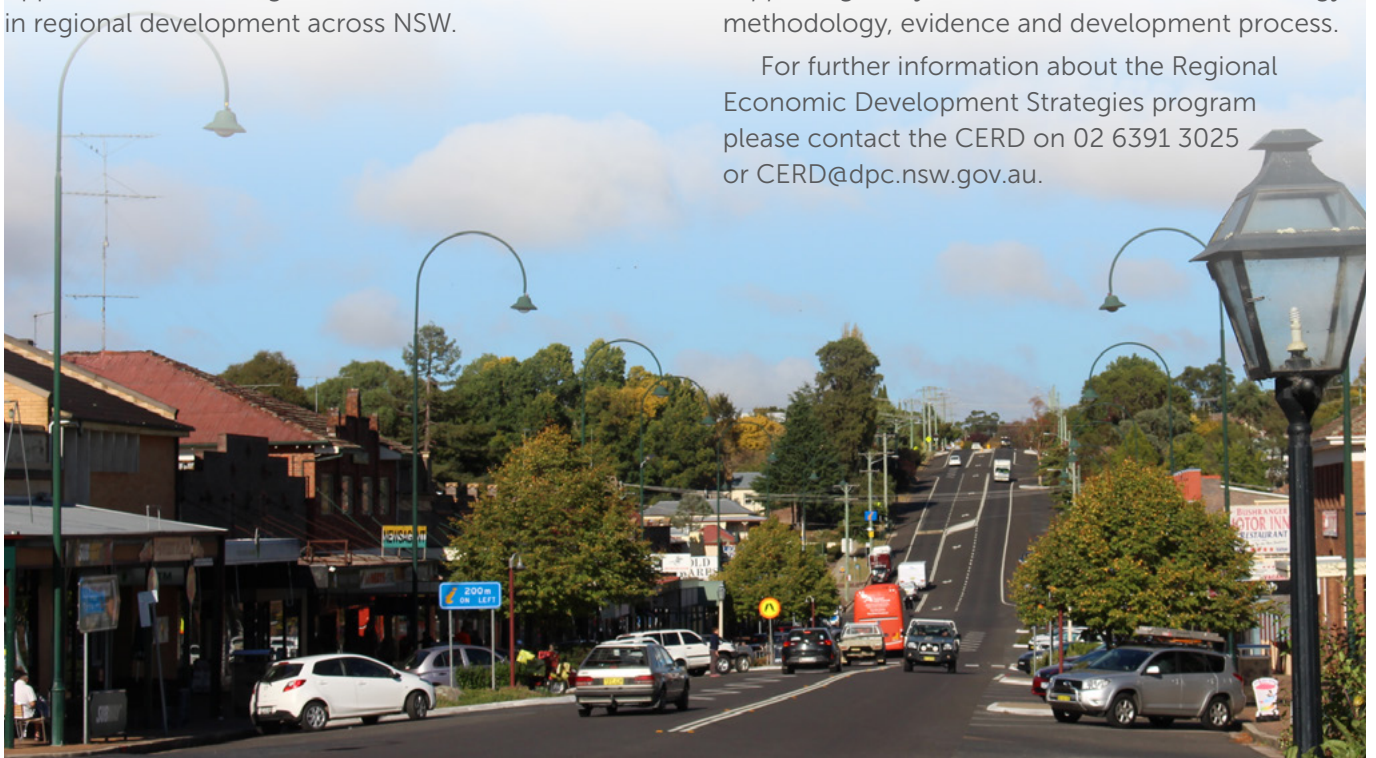
The power of the Strategy is its ability to be used on an on-going basis to identify additional high value projects over time. By complimenting existing funding processes, these strategies present new opportunities to strengthen and increase investment in regional development across NSW.

The Strategy should be viewed as the first stage of a process that will assist those with an interest in the economic development of the Region, particularly councils, communities and local businesses, in planning their future economic activities. It provides a vehicle for engaging the community in a 'conversation' about regional needs and priorities, assists in bringing together key stakeholders and mobilising resources, and in so doing, can facilitate faster access to dedicated NSW Government funding, such as the Growing Local Economies Fund, as well helping to capitalise upon other economic opportunities.

This strategy was formed in collaboration with the Armidale Regional, Uralla Shire and Walcha councils, key stakeholders and the broader regional community, with support from the NSW Government's Centre for Economic and Regional Development (CERD).

It is presented in two documents, the *Southern New England High Country 2018–2022* (this document) which allows the reader to quickly and easily determine key content, while the accompanying *Southern New England High Country Regional Economic Development Strategy – Supporting Analysis 2018–2022* details the strategy methodology, evidence and development process.

For further information about the Regional Economic Development Strategies program please contact the CERD on 02 6391 3025 or [CERD@dpc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:CERD@dpc.nsw.gov.au).



# Introduction

The *Southern New England High Country (SNEHC) (the Region) Regional Economic Development Strategy 2018–2022* (the Strategy) sets out a long term economic vision and associated strategy for the Region that encompasses the Armidale Regional, Uralla Shire and Walcha Local Government Areas (LGAs). Economic research suggests that regions are becoming increasingly specialised in the key engine industries<sup>1</sup> that drive the regional economies and the region's relative strengths (endowments) play a key role in determining these specialisations.<sup>2</sup>

1. For the purposes of regional development, it is useful to classify industries as:

- Engines – industries that bring money into the region (e.g. agriculture) and that drive the local economy
- Enabling – industries that support the engines (e.g. veterinary services to agriculture), and
- Population serving – industries that support the local population (e.g. retail).

Typically the fortunes of the population-serving industries depend on the success of the engines and therefore it is useful to focus on the engine sectors that drive growth.

2. *Regional Economic Growth Enablers Report (2017)*, Centre for Economic and Regional Development.

The Strategy aims to leverage the Region's endowments including its natural resources, infrastructure, location and established institutions and clusters. These endowments are the basis of the Region's established specialities including livestock, horticulture, education, niche manufacturing, Ag Tech and tourism and related emerging opportunities

Actions to capture the opportunities, manage risks and deliver on the vision for the Region have been organised around a set of strategies:

- 1 Strengthen the Region's connectivity
- 2 Secure the inputs for growth
- 3 Strengthen, consolidate and grow key sectors
- 4 Promote an attractive, desirable lifestyle, and
- 5 Effective marketing and promotion.



# Background

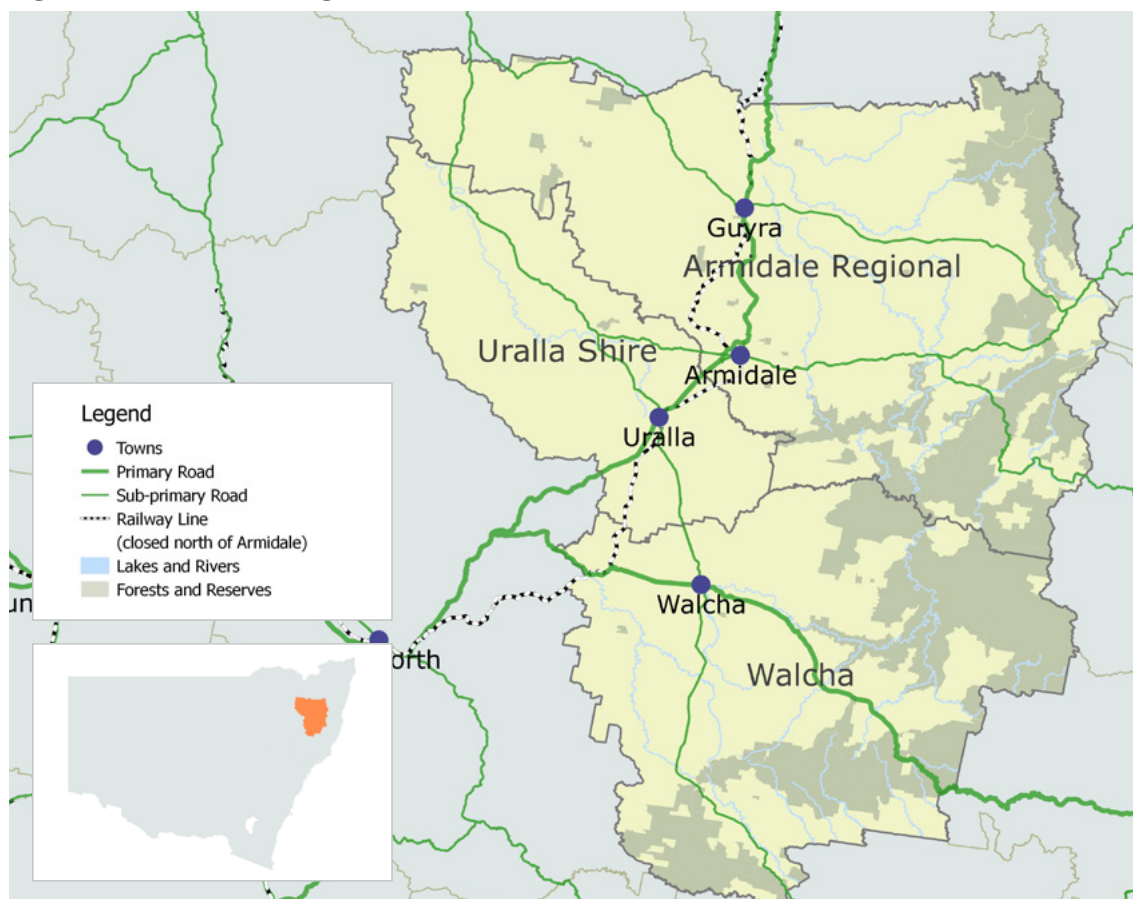
The SNEHC region incorporates an area of 18,108 square kilometres located on the northern tablelands of NSW, in the area known as the New England region. The SNEHC region is located approximately half-way between Sydney and Brisbane and around 200 kilometres inland from the NSW Mid North Coast. The region is part of the broader New England North West region but is distinguished from the regions to the west by its elevation on the tablelands.

The SNEHC region has an estimated residential population of 39,614, with around three quarters of residing in the population centres of Armidale (61%), Uralla (6%), Guyra (5%), and Walcha (town) (4%). The majority (94%) of those working in the Region reside in the region and the majority (94%) of the region's workers are employed in the Region. The Region also has strong linkages with other industries and communities in the broader New England – North West region.

The Region has a strong agricultural base, dominated by the production of beef cattle and sheep for wool and meat. The area is known for producing very high quality, fine and superfine merino wool. The city of Armidale is the regional service centre for the broader New England region. Armidale is the home of the University of New England (UNE) and is a dominant player in the research and development in agricultural technology (Ag Tech). The smaller towns of Uralla, Walcha and Guyra are district centres servicing their surrounding rural communities and highway travellers.

The profile of the labour force is skewed relative to comparable regions due to the high student population. Around 18 per cent of the labour force is aged 15–24, which is relatively high compared to the average for NSW (15%) and for Inland Regional NSW (16%).

**Figure 1: The SNEHC Region**



# Endowments

**Endowments are strengths that a regional economy possesses and that can be leveraged to develop economic opportunities.**

Endowments play a key role in the economic development of each region. The CERD, in its Regional Economic Enablers Report (2016) found that:

*“the future of individual regional economies is inexorably linked to their natural endowments, and attempts to retain or establish industries without an underpinning endowment are unlikely to succeed”.*

A region seeking to encourage economic development should therefore concentrate on factors that enable the growth of endowment-based industries, as well as building local leadership and institutional capacity and capabilities to facilitate businesses and public agencies and services to capitalise on the opportunities that a region’s endowments present.

## Natural endowments

Located on the Northern Tablelands, at elevations of over 1000 metres, the SNEHC region has a cool temperate climate with warm to hot summers and very cold winters. The climate is markedly different to that of the coastal areas to the east and the western slopes and plains to the west. The Region has four distinct seasons which make it attractive for tourism and lifestyle. The high altitude and lower maximum temperatures makes it an attractive place for sports tourism.

The high levels of solar radiation due to the altitude, plus the cool temperate climate is ideal for glasshouse horticulture. Climate change is expected to result in increased temperatures and higher rainfall variability across NSW. This may heighten the region’s relative climate advantages.

The soil in the Region is of good quality with very fertile basaltic soils in some areas. The Region is home to some of the most productive perennial pastures in Australia making it highly suitable for livestock breeding and production. The rainfall is relatively reliable, which is a significant benefit for agriculture.

## Setting

The SNEHC region is known for its high country scenery, waterfalls and gorges, historic towns and vibrant autumn colours.

The Region is home to several National Parks, World Heritage Areas and State Forests suitable for outdoor-adventure based activities including hiking, canyoning, mountain biking, bird watching, trout fishing and other outdoor adventures. National Parks include the New England National Park, 85 kilometres east of Armidale off the Waterfall Way, the Cathedral Rock National Park 70km east of Armidale and the Oxley Rivers National Park near Armidale and Walcha. The Green Gully Track near Walcha is an award-winning signature walk.

The National Parks and other outdoor areas are accessible through key touring routes such as Waterfall Way. Helicopter gorge rides operate from Armidale Airport.

## Infrastructure

The Region is well connected from a transport perspective. The New England Highway provides links to the Sydney and South East Queensland markets, the east coast ports and the Wellcamp Airport at Toowoomba. Thunderbolt’s Way, the



Oxley Highway and Waterfall Way link the region with the NSW mid north coast. Thunderbolts Way forms part of the fastest route from regions north and west of Uralla to Newcastle and Sydney. Being half-way between Brisbane and Sydney, the Region is a convenient central location to serve regional markets in northern NSW and Southern Queensland, and a useful stopping point for travellers.

The SNEHC region is well served by Armidale airport with regular passenger services to Sydney and Brisbane. The rail line is also an asset with the passenger rail service supporting residents, students and visitors. The de-commissioned rail corridor to the north of Armidale has the potential to be converted to a rail trail.

The NBN infrastructure is an important asset, particularly for Armidale, which is the only city<sup>3</sup> in Australia with widespread fibre to the premise (FTTP) connections. NBN is being rolled out across the Region. As with many regional areas poor mobile communications is an issue hindering development

The high-voltage transmission lines that pass through the Region are an asset which, coupled with favourable climatic conditions are creating opportunities for renewable energy generation.

## Education, lifestyle and other facilities

Relative to most of regional NSW, the Region has very good education facilities including the UNE and a number of high-quality schools. These facilities are

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3. Other cities in Australia will receive a mixture of NBN technologies.

an industry in themselves and an important addition to lifestyle.

The Region's strength in education and lifestyle provide it with several labour force strengths. Relative to other regional areas of NSW, the labour force is well educated. The student population are a flexible source and, upon graduation, provide an enviable source of skilled labour. The attractive lifestyle and airport connections assist in attracting high-skilled labour to the Region.

The Region is renowned for its cultural heritage and cultural facilities and has a number of good sport, recreation and tourist infrastructure assets that contribute to and enhance its reputation and as a desirable destination to live, study and visit.

## Established institutions and clusters

The region is home to a number of well-established industries and institutions that can be leveraged for economic growth. There are established industry clusters in education and livestock production, and a growing Ag Tech cluster and horticultural sector. Associated with these clusters, the region has an established positive reputation for research, innovation and education in agricultural industries. The UNE SMART Farm is a key institution that contributes to strength Armidale's growing reputation for developing and commercialising Ag Tech. The higher education cluster includes the UNE, TAFE (including TAFE Digital NSW) and private schools.



# Specialisations

Obtaining an understanding of a region’s competitive advantages<sup>4</sup> is complex. A commonly used simple form of analysis is the Location Quotient (LQ) which measures the employment concentration in industry sectors within a regional economy, compared with the same sectors across NSW.

The higher the LQ, the higher the likelihood that the Region is specialised in that industry relative to NSW. For the purpose of this analysis, LQs are used as a proxy measure for those sectors and industries that represent a region’s competitive advantages.

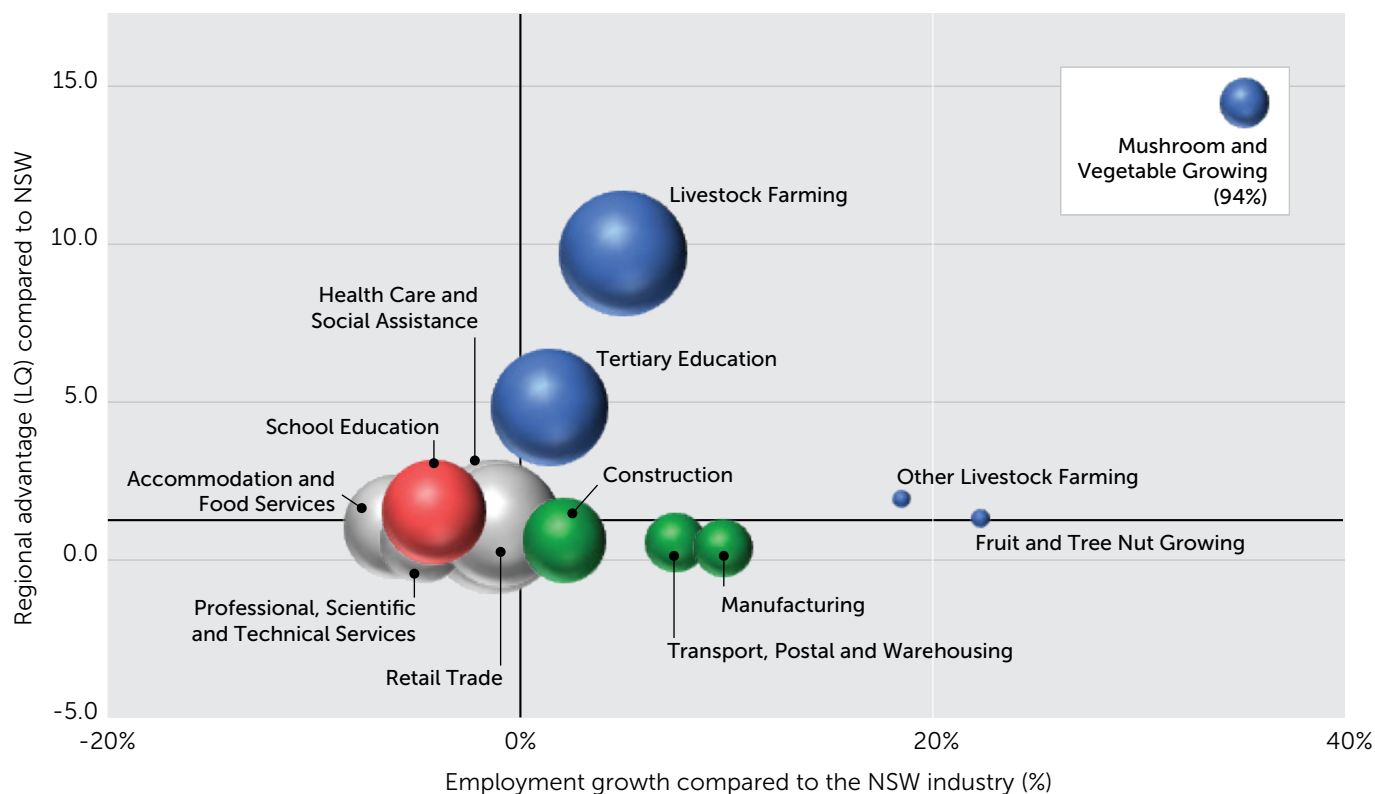
While LQs are used in this document for that purpose, they are only a partial measure of those competitive advantages. Hence, they have been considered alongside additional qualitative evaluations and data analysis, such as Input-Output analysis, to arrive at the findings for the Strategy.

Figure 2 shows the industries in the Region by employment size, employment growth between 2011 and 2016, and LQ (measure of competitive advantage across regional NSW).

An LQ of 1.25 or more is generally regarded in the literature as denoting a regional specialisation. The higher the LQ, the more specialised an industry is in the Region relative to the NSW. Industries with a larger ‘bubble’ employed more people at the time of the 2016 ABS Census.

The colour of the bubble reflects if the industry is considered a regional specialisation and employment in the industry has grown from 2011 to 2016 relative to the NSW industry average. Blue and red represent industry specialisations that have grown (blue) or fallen (red) in employment relative to NSW. Grey and green represent industries that are not specialisations that have grown (green) or fallen (grey) in employment relative to NSW.

**Figure 2: Employment by sector – relative growth and relative concentration**



Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2011, 2016. See the Supporting Analysis for notes about the analysis.

4. A region’s competitive advantage for an industry includes its ability to produce goods and services at a lower cost or differentiate its products from other regions.



As highlighted in Figure 2, *Livestock Farming* (represented here by Sheep, Beef Cattle and Grain Farming and Other Livestock Farming) is a key specialisation. Within this sector the main industries are sheep and beef cattle farming which together employ around 10 per cent of the workforce, and account for about one third of regional exports. *Horticulture* (Fruit and Tree Nut Growing and Mushroom and Vegetable Growing) is another important industry that has grown substantially, largely as a result of expansion of tomato operations in Guyra.

The Ag Tech industry (which is not reflected in the figure) is another specialisation that is a potential economic driver.

*The Region has an established cluster of Ag Tech businesses and Armidale has been selected by NSW Government as one of three locations for an Ag Tech Cluster initiative.*

*Tertiary Education* is a key specialisation as a consequence of the University of New England in Armidale being a major employer and a TAFE facility which provide services to students from outside of the Region. Recently (TAFE NSW) was selected as the site for the headquarters for TAFE NSW Digital which will bring additional employment to the region. The Region also has a specialisation in *School Education* reflecting that it is home to several independent boarding schools.

*Manufacturing* as a sector is not a specialisation. However, the SNEHC region is home to several niche manufacturers which have specialisation in their chosen industries (e.g. furniture

manufacturing). Such businesses take advantage of the attractive lifestyle, central location and good transport infrastructure. Similarly, Walcha is home to several road freight transport companies that provide livestock and general freight services to the broader Northern NSW region. Aircraft maintenance and other services are located at Armidale airport.

An existing constraint to further development is the lack of available industrial and commercial land, particularly in Armidale. Addressing this constraint is likely to lead to further development. Improving road and air connectivity will also facilitate growth in specialised industrial manufacturing.

Tourism (for which *Accommodation and Food Services* is a proxy) is not a regional specialisation but is nevertheless an important industry that complements the other key industries and provides diversity of employment. *Health Care and Social Assistance* is a significant employer but is predominantly a population-serving industry sector that is not expected to contribute strongly to regional income.

There are other potential growth opportunities based on the Region's endowments. The attractive lifestyle, access to education, good transport connectivity to Sydney and northern NSW, and NBN infrastructure in Armidale, makes the Region an attractive base for people serving a range of markets. These include tree-changers, professionals and micro-business owners.

The Region is likely to be relatively more attractive to micro-business owners (i.e. <4 employees) who are more interested in lifestyle and do not rely on deep labour pools of large population centres. Another opportunity is in renewable energy leveraging the proximity to high-voltage transmission networks.



# Strategy

The Southern New England High Country has several opportunities for growth that leverage its endowments and existing specialities to achieve the Region's vision.

A set of strategies to capture the opportunities, have been identified, in consultation with the community and councils and from an analysis of the endowments, specialisations and opportunities.

An initial set of initiatives, actions and infrastructure priorities consistent with the strategic framework have been identified to accompany the strategies. It is expected that over time other actions capable of contributing to the attainment of the Region's vision will be identified. An action's alignment with the Strategy is the primary strategic consideration. Actions will be subject to further qualitative and quantitative evaluative processes.

These key opportunities and strategies are:



## Opportunities

- Improving the productivity of the livestock industry
- Expanding the horticultural sector
- Growing Ag Tech industries
- Growing specialised industry and manufacturing
- Maintaining and expanding opportunities for micro-businesses and lifestyle/tree change professionals
- Growing tourism (the Visitor Economy)
- Maintaining and growing education and training
- Leveraging local advantages for renewable energy

## Strategies

**1**  
Strengthen the Region's connectivity

**2**  
Secure the inputs for growth

**3**  
Strengthen, consolidate and grow key sectors

**4**  
Promote an attractive, desirable lifestyle

**5**  
Effective marketing and promotion



## 1. Strengthen the Region's connectivity

The Region has a number of existing strengths related to its connectivity to other Regions including good air and road transport links and the NBN in Armidale. However, the success of many of the Region's opportunities will depend on further strengthening the connections in particular to address issues in transport and communications infrastructure.

The Airport is critical for growth in sectors and businesses that service markets outside of the Region, including Ag-tech, education, tourism, professional services and specialty manufacturers. It is also a key factor affecting lifestyle and desirability of the location for skilled labour. Investing in key road-infrastructure will improve productivity and facilitate further growth in agriculture and tourism. Improvements in the mobile-communications network will also improve liveability and facilitate the development of further value-added businesses throughout the Region.

This Strategy has direct benefits and provides a foundation for economic growth upon which other strategies can build. The potential benefits include:

- increasing the productivity and profitability of existing industries
- increasing confidence of established businesses to invest and grow
- providing a signal to other firms interested in investing in the Region, and
- increasing the attractiveness of the Region to visitors and potential sea/tree change professionals and other skilled workers.

### **The keys initiatives within this Strategy are:**

- ensuring the on-going sustainability of and increasing the services provided by Armidale Airport
- investing in key road-infrastructure to improve productivity and facilitate further growth in agriculture and tourism
- upgrading the telecommunication network, addressing the mobile black-spots, thereby enabling productivity enhancements in livestock and other agricultural industries.

### **Key infrastructure priorities are:**

- implementing the Armidale Regional Airport Master plan to provide the capacity for larger planes, improve the air-services and position the Region for further growth
- invest in road infrastructure to improve productivity – in particular, key routes for improvement are Thunderbolt's Way, Oxley Highway and Waterfall Way, and
- mobile telephone infrastructure – to address coverage issues in rural areas and enable adoption of technology in land management, production systems and business management.



## 2. Secure the inputs for growth

Building a platform for growth requires ensuring that inputs needed by businesses are in-place. These include availability of skilled and unskilled labour, water and energy security, suitable land and premises and a stable business environment. This strategy focuses on providing key inputs and removing barriers to growth. It helps to position the Region as a favourable, competitive location for businesses seeking to invest and grow.

### **Key initiatives are:**

- invest in infrastructure that will support and facilitate growth, including water, power and commercial and industrial land
- build the size and capacity of the local workforce, through training and skills development and the attraction of skilled workers
- encourage investment by local institutions and high net-worth individuals, and
- provide a positive, supportive environment for business to establish and grow.

### **The key infrastructure priorities under this theme include investments in:**

- water security, including the Malpas pipeline project, and
- business and industrial precincts to provide space for new industry including the Armidale Regional Airport Employment Precinct.



### 3. Strengthen, consolidate and grow key sectors

This strategy focuses on providing targeted support to key sectors that will drive the Region's economy in the foreseeable future. Strong engine industries create income and employment opportunities within the Region, and provide nuclei for the attraction of new businesses and investment.

**Key initiatives under this theme are providing support to:**

- support and strengthen the agricultural sector and build on competitive advantages
- encourage the expansion of horticulture
- encourage and support the growth of the Ag Tech sector through marketing, promotion and partnerships
- support the expansion of education and training facilities within the Region, including strengthening industry-education links
- support micro-businesses and knowledge-based industries
- foster the growth of the manufacturing sector, renewable energy and other specialised industry, and
- support tourism by continuing to expand and improve the attraction, experience and activity base of the Region and by building the events sector (including sporting, business and cultural events).

**The key infrastructure priorities under this theme include investments in:**

- improvements in the local and regional road network to facilitate the efficient and cost-effective transport of livestock, wool and other commodities
- water and power infrastructure is in to support horticulture development
- on-going upgrades of the Walcha, Armidale and Guyra saleyards, and
- product and infrastructure development to support the growth of tourism, including upgrading and expansion of visitor facilities at Dumaresq Dam, construction of the New England Rail Trail (Stage 1), expansion of mountain bike trails and the expansion of the Walcha Outdoor Sculpture Park.



## 4. Enhance the attractive, desirable lifestyle

An attractive, desirable lifestyle is critical to the Region attracting and retaining residents including skilled personnel, retirees, businesses and visitors. Key lifestyle considerations include the presentation of the area, access to facilities and services, suitable housing, employment prospects and the vibrancy and inclusiveness to the community. Enhancing the lifestyle will aid growth and business confidence and provide support to the key engine industries through attraction and retention of people and businesses.

**The key initiatives/actions under the Strategy are:**

- provide services appropriate for growth, and
- continue to develop, position and promote the Region's towns as lifestyle centres.

**The key Infrastructure priorities include:**

- implementation of the Armidale Mall Vibrancy Plan to improve the presentation and attractiveness of the Armidale City Centre and stimulate market demand, and
- progressive upgrading and expansion of sporting, recreation and cultural facilities.

## 5. Effective marketing and promotion

This strategy focuses on raising the profile and awareness of the Region as a highly desirable location to live, invest and visit. Increased awareness of the Region strengths as a location to establish and grow a business, in providing a good lifestyle and a visitor destination.

Marketing and promotion complements and needs to be aligned with the other economic development strategies.

**The key initiatives under this strategy include:**

- supporting existing businesses and industry clusters, including positioning Armidale as a centre of excellence for Ag Tech and knowledge based industries
- marketing to attract new residents, businesses and investment, and
- destination marketing as part of growing the visitor economy
- marketing to enhance graduate retention.

There are no infrastructure priorities for this strategy.

| Enablers                    | Strategies and key actions  |  |   |  |
|-----------------------------|---|--|---|--|
|                             | 1. Strengthen the Region's connectivity   | 2. Secure the inputs for growth  | 3. Strengthen, consolidate and grow key sectors   | 4. Enhance an attractive, desirable lifestyle  |
| Infrastructure              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand the capacity of Armidale Airport as per Airport Master Plan</li> <li>Improve the regular passenger transport (RPT) services at Armidale Airport (Brisbane, Melbourne, Sydney, Wellcamp)</li> <li>Improve the quality and capacity in key road and bridge infrastructure e.g. Thunderbolt's Way – various segments</li> <li>Expand the mobile telecommunication network</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop the Armidale Regional Airport Employment Precinct</li> <li>Secure and expand the region's water supply (incl. Guyra to Malpas Dam Pipeline, additional off creek storage capacity to drought proof Walcha)</li> <li>Triple capacity of Airport car park to support growth</li> <li>Assess future water needs and evaluate options</li> <li>Upgrade Armidale sewerage treatment plant to support growth</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress the New England Rail Trail (Stage 1) as a key attraction and focal point for cycle tourism</li> <li>Upgrade of Bellevue Oval and the expansion of the Stadium</li> <li>Implement the Master Plan for the development of the Dumaresq Dam as a regional nature and water based activity park</li> <li>Progress the Saumarez Homestead Development Project</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progressively upgrade and expand sporting, recreation and cultural facilities to cater for large scale events</li> <li>Upgrade existing, and develop new, mountain bike tracks</li> </ul>   |
| Facilities and institutions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a strategic alliance between the three Councils to facilitate and drive economic development</li> </ul>  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a UNE Centre for Horticulture</li> <li>Facilitate the development of Armidale as an Ag Tech cluster</li> <li>Support the UNE SMART Region incubator program to encourage start-up businesses</li> <li>Upgrade livestock sale yards to retain economic benefit</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement the Armidale Central Mall Vibrancy Plan</li> <li>Provide and support a rich cultural environment and a vibrant and active arts scene</li> <li>Continue to improve the fossicking experience in Uralla</li> <li>Encourage the establishment of outdoor and adventure-based activities and tours</li> </ul> |
| Regulation and policy       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retain passenger rail services to the Region</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake a pro-business review of key council review policies, plans, processes and regulations</li> <li>Adapt and enhance the institutional and regulatory environment so that the Region is 'open for business'</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that Council processes and regulations and then implement changes to facilitate and support the hosting of events</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide services to support growth</li> <li>Support aging population</li> </ul>   |

| Enablers                                    | Strategies and key actions  |   |  |   |
|---|---|---|--|---|
|   | 1. Strengthen the Region's connectivity   | 2. Secure the inputs for growth   | 3. Strengthen, consolidate and grow key sectors  | 4. Enhance an attractive, desirable lifestyle   |
| Regulation                                  |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Endeavour to improve the regulatory environment for businesses</li> <li>• Ensure that Region is 'open for business'</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Council processes and regulations to facilitate and support the hosting of events</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Encourage and support sporting clubs and associations to attract and host carnivals, competitions, camps, clinics etc.</b></li> </ul> |
| People and skills                           |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build the size and capacity of the local workforce</li> <li>• Support initiatives to identify and address skill gaps</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner with secondary and tertiary education industry to design targeted training pathways for school leavers</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide facilities and services that are adequate to support aging in place</li> </ul>   |
| Land use                                    |   |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect productive agricultural land and water resources</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a choice of housing types</li> </ul>   |
| Services and other                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain passenger rail services to the region</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Encourage and facilitate investment by local institutions and high net-worth individuals (e.g. through encouraging local networks)</b></li> </ul>   |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide services to support growth</li> <li>• Provide services to support aging population</li> </ul>                                    |
| <b>5. Effective marketing and promotion</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve support for use of telecommunications services e.g. organise and market forums to brief and educate the community</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing to attract new residents, businesses and investment- includes direct marketing to targeted industries</li> <li>• Promote the industrial precinct in South Uralla and Armidale Business Park</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Position and promote Armidale as a centre of excellence for Ag Tech and knowledge based industries</li> <li>• Undertake destination marketing as part of growing the visitor economy</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively market 'foot loose' events that could be hosted in the Region</li> </ul>  |

The actions in bold have been assessed as being most significant for economic development.

# Implementation

*A detailed action plan is included in the Southern New England High Country Regional Economic Development Strategy 2018–2022 Supporting Analysis.*

The Strategy will need to be implemented by all three member councils as well as state government agencies and local entities.

The completion of this document is intended to be the first stage of an ongoing process where new specific actions aligned with the Vision are identified through application of the framework. It is suggested that an Advisory Committee made up of representatives from each council be established to progress the actions listed in this Strategy, apply the Strategy's framework to identify new actions to be added to the Action Plan, develop key performance indicators and evaluate outcomes. The Advisory Committee would meet every three months and would report progress on actions to each council. The Advisory Committee could also meet every six months with the relevant Regional Director from NSW Premier and Cabinet. These meetings could also be used to check the Strategy's progress and review current grant opportunities.

After two years, the Advisory Committee will conduct a formal review of the Action Plan and produce a brief report card to be published as an addendum to the Regional Economic Development Strategy. This will also provide an opportunity to update the Action Plan for new or modified actions.

After four years, the Advisory Committee will also begin the process of updating or refreshing the Regional Economic Development Strategy.



Photo courtesy of ICT International

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