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# Sustainability Advisory Committee

**Tuesday 31 January 2023**
**6.00pm**
**Council Chambers**
**209 Comur Street, Yass**

**ATTACHMENTS TO REPORTS**
**ITEMS UNDER SEPARATE COVER**

# Sustainability Advisory Committee

**Attachments to Reports**
**Items Under Separate Cover**

**DRAFT YASS VALLEY COUNCIL SUSTAINABILITY POLICY**

1.   **INTRODUCTION**

Council has established a Sustainability Advisory Committee and tasked it, amongst other things, with reviewing Council's existing *Environmental Sustainability Policy* which was first adopted in 2014 and revised in 2019.

In contrast to the existing policy, the Terms of Reference of the Sustainability Advisory Committee reflect a broader concept of sustainability, i.e. one which extends beyond issues of the environment and ecologically sustainable development alone to encompass the economic, social and cultural dimensions of sustainability.

This is consistent with the community's vision as adopted in the *Yass Valley Community Strategic Plan 2042* to *"build and maintain sustainable communities while recognising and respecting the environment and First Nations people of this country".*

Sustainable communities are further defined in the *Community Strategic Plan 2042* as referring to *"social, environmental and economic sustainability, social connections, civic leadership, environmental health and economic prosperity, which can be maintained to meet current and future needs".*

2.   **POLICY OBJECTIVE**

This policy seeks to:

(i)     Establish short and medium term work priorities for the Sustainability Advisory Committee to improve the sustainability of Yass Valley consistent with a 'framework assessment' approach
(ii)    Formalise policy development and service design practices within Council to ensure the proper early consideration of sustainability and climate change adaptation in all decision making
(iii)   Establish a longer term research and engagement agenda for improving the sustainability of Yass Valley

3.   **POLICY SCOPE**

This policy applies to all Councillors and Staff and is intended to integrate sustainable practice into Council's decision making and operations to satisfy the vision articulated in the *Community Strategic Plan 2042* and ensure proper utilisation of the skills and expertise of Council's Sustainability Advisory Committee.

4.   **POLICY PROVISIONS**

Current sustainability of Yass Valley and Yass Valley Council
The Sustainability Advisory Committee has developed the attached *Sustainability Assessment Framework* against which it has assessed the current sustainability of the Yass Valley and Yass Valley Council to the extent that this is possible given available data.

There are two parts to the *Sustainability Assessment Framework*. Firstly, in Part One of the document it recognises that Council has a lead role in both building and maintaining sustainable communities in Yass Valley and, in Part Two, that Council as an institution itself has an obligation to ensure its own operations are conducted in a manner consistent with sustainability principles.

Part One of the *Sustainability Assessment Framework*:

• Lists the critical elements of sustainability – economic, social, environmental and cultural
• Identifies the various sub-elements of each of these, eg. social sustainability can be seen as built upon family, housing, health, and transport
• Identifies at a broad level the various activities, services and policies within Council which impact upon those sub-elements
• Identifies the benchmarks and points of comparison against which Council's performance in supporting these sub-elements through its operations and policies can be assessed

Such benchmarks or points of comparison rely on published data including that of Commonwealth and State Government agencies, eg. the Australian Bureau of Statistic's Census and the NSW Office of Local Government Comparative Data Report, or have been derived based upon publicly available data.

The current set of benchmarks or points of comparison may not be comprehensive due to data limitations and a number act as 'proxy indicators' of performance only. However, while as individual measures there may be issues, in combination they provide a solid analytical basis to establish an informed assessment of Yass Valley's current status against the various sub-elements of sustainability.

In following this approach, the *Sustainability Assessment Framework* has allowed the Sustainability Advisory Committee to ascertain the areas where the gap in Council's current efforts to support the sustainability of Yass Valley and be sustainable itself are most evident. It has also helped in the identification of where Council can best focus its attention in closing that gap, taking into account Council's potential to act and its ability to influence outcomes.

Part Two of the *Sustainability Assessment Framework* does the same as Part One, except the sub-elements and measures are particular to Yass Valley Council itself.

Accordingly, as opposed to looking at the economic aspects of sustainability which apply broadly to communities, Regions or States, the focus in Part Two is on Council's financial sustainability. Part Two also brings together the social and cultural elements of sustainability under the banner of 'Governance' which in its broader sense encompasses issue of organisational culture and organisational practice.

Key findings from applying Part One of the *Sustainability Assessment Framework* are as follows:

**TABLE: 1**

| KEY FINDINGS – YASS VALLEY SUSTAINABILITY STATUS | |
|---|---|
| Economic | There is a broadly positive economic outlook for Yass Valley compared to most parts of regional NSW with comparatively high levels of employment, education and business activity. However, First Nations people and other marginalised groups are not doing as well on these metrics. Additionally, the large percentage of the Yass Valley population that commutes to the ACT presents particular infrastructure and community-building challenges. Indicators specific to tourism, while not definitive, suggest that there may be some adverse trends in this area, although the ongoing impacts of the COVID pandemic makes it difficult to draw any firm conclusion at this time. <br><br> The capacity of Council to influence these forces in the short to medium term through its policies and practices is limited, recognising that it nonetheless has an active role to play in supporting local economic enterprise and in the provision of targeted services. Council also needs to recognise in its policies and service offerings the economic benefit of acting on climate change now and how it can support and grow related innovative and forward-thinking businesses. |
| Social | In respect of family composition, health, transport and housing issues, generally positive outcomes for most Yass Valley residents evident in the data are undermined by poor outcomes for some groups. This is most clearly manifest in respect of housing choice and transport options, and often poorer health outcomes for First Nations people, the elderly and isolated. <br><br> While Council policy and practice can significantly influence land supply and housing, the ability of Council to impact upon unsustainable outcomes in most areas of social wellbeing in the short and medium term is limited. Where effort is made, it needs to be appropriately targeted. In this regard more can arguably be done to establish and enhance existing community spaces and venues, along with promoting events and opportunities for the community to come together. |
| Environmental | To the extent that they can be measured Yass Valley's land, water and biodiversity are poor and require significant investment to be |

| | |
|---|---|
| | sustainable into the future. This can best be supported by Council in the medium to longer term through appropriate land use policies and investment in such things as weed eradication and land rehabilitation.<br><br>Performance in recycling and reuse is comparatively poor as well, and it is in this area where Council can have a direct and immediate impact given its specific responsibility for such matters. A shift in focus which recognises the 'waste hierarchy' and the role of waste prevention in the first instance is required. An appreciation of the 'circular economy' and keeping items in their highest state for as long as possible needs to be better promoted and understood within the community and within Council's itself. Finally, learning from First Nation approaches to sustainability needs to be better understood and promoted across Yass Valley and within Council. |
| Cultural | Historically, Council's investment in cultural (including sport and recreation) services has been limited in comparison with many other Local Councils, although the 2022/23 budget has seen an increased emphasis on such things as support for events and the Arts. The redevelopment of the library as part of the Crago Mills Project also constitutes a significant step and the *Open Spaces Strategy*, once finalised, may translate into increased investment and improved outcomes.<br><br>In short, the opportunity to participate is increasing within Yass Valley and it would be sensible to continue this steady investment and monitor whether it is impacting on participation rates and the creation of a more diverse and culturally engaged Yass Valley community. Appropriate support for First Nation cultural practices also needs to be considered in the design and funding of Council's support services. |

Key findings from applying Part Two of the *Sustainability Assessment Framework* are as follows:

| KEY FINDINGS – YASS VALLEY COUNCIL SUSTAINABILITY STATUS | |
|---|---|
| Financial | Council has performed comparatively well in recent years against key State Government financial benchmarks. The Long-Term Financial Plan for Council however projects significant weaknesses in Council future financial position irrespective of any mitigating impact from proposed asset sales and projected growth in rateable properties. |
| Environmental | There is limited recorded data that has been made available to the Sustainability Advisory Committee in respect of Council's own environmental performance. Aging infrastructure, particularly buildings and other assets, suggest nevertheless that performance is likely to be sub-optimal in relation to energy, fuel costs, water usage etc. There is potential to start benchmarking Council on such matters or establish useful 'proxy' measures in the future pivoting off the existing *Asset Management Plans*. Council also has no active overarching strategy to lessen its environmental footprint but rather is taking isolated and limited actions in a few areas which is not translating into outcomes to the extent it can be discerned from the limited data. |
| Governance | Again, there is limited recorded data which has been made available to the Sustainability Advisory Committee regarding matters such as workplace culture, human resources approach, workplace safety, etc. although the 2022 *Workforce Strategy* has some data and the recently adopted *Workplace Health & Safety Plan* includes several potentially |

| | revelatory performance indicators. Council's democratic practice and its approach to community engagement also meet statutory requirements but are not consistent with best practice in Local Government today and the level of transparency in Council operations is poor based upon anecdotal evidence. |
|---|---|

Based upon these key findings and giving due regard to Council's 2022/26 Delivery Program, the following activities have been determined as priority areas for action. Consistent with its Terms of Reference, which were formally adopted by Council, the Sustainability Advisory Committee will provide support and advice on these matters:

**TABLE: 2**

| PRIORITY AREAS FOR ACTION | |
|---|---|
| Food and Garden Organics Service (FOGO) | More than 40 Local Councils in NSW offer a full Food Organics / Garden Organics (FOGO) service, with another 50 or thereabouts offering at least a garden organics collection service. IN4.5 in Council's *Delivery Program* provides for the investigation of a food and organics collection service in the current and upcoming financial year, including the investigation of costs and community demand through appropriate surveying. Notwithstanding recent issues relating to contamination of FOGO collections in some LGAs, there is a growing expectation that local governments will offer food and garden organic services to their communities as part of their core services and funding is being made available by the NSW Government to assist in this regard. Indeed, the NSW Waste Strategy requires councils to have FOGO in place by 2030. There are issues of design – eg. regularity of collections, bin sizes, on-sale and disposal, the areas to be service, possible extension to commercial premises, etc – upon which the Committee could provide considered advice. Possible savings on landfill need to be considered, as well as any resulting business opportunities. There are also issues related to the education of the community in which Committee members could have an active and very useful role. |
| Electric Vehicles | EN2.1 of the *Delivery Program* states that Council will investigate and implement the use of electric and low emission powered vehicles as part of its commercial and operational fleet. Council subsequently considered a policy on EVs in June 2022 identifying the opportunities and obstacles in moving towards the procurement of a share of electric vehicles in its fleet and plant. The major identified barriers in the report to progress in this regard were the rules around FBT (which has been resolved by the passing of the *Treasury Laws Amendment (Electric Car Discount) Act 2022*) and the upfront purchase cost. However, there are other issues upon which the Sustainability Advisory Committee can assist including the resolution of issues relating to charging and cost recovery. The Committee can also advise on the calculation of potential financial and emission savings through an accelerated shift to EVs and appropriate configuration of the EV fleet. The Committee can also assist by researching the outcome of current trials of operational fleet by various Local Councils and the use of EV fleets as 'battery' storage with charged-up vehicles drawn upon overnight to supply the grid or Council's own night-time electricity consumption. It is also worth further investigating the actions of some councils like Randwick to try and establish or promote a second-hand EV market in Australia. |
| Engagement with other Advisory Committees and Bodies | The Terms of Reference of the Sustainability Advisory Committee include that it works to embed sustainability in Council policies, practices and services. The Terms also state that the Committee should |

|  | engage and take advice from others to identify new and innovative ways of building sustainable practice across Yass Valley and within Council. There is a risk that unless the Committee engages outwardly its efforts to build sustainable practices will be perceived as separate from the work of others. Accordingly, it is intended that the Committee commence a formal program of active engagement with Council's other advisory bodies and relevant Council staff to ensure they understand the role and direction of the Committee and the intent of this policy. In turn, the Committee will then take the views of others into consideration as it progresses through its work program. |
|---|---|
| Design of an approach to engaging the community on a possible future climate change action plan | Further to the above engagement with Council's Advisory Committees and other bodies, it is a requirement of the Committee under its Terms of Reference to engage the community more broadly. In doing so, it is recognised that the Committee is an 'advisory' body only and that it should not build expectations of action that are out of alignment with Council's own *Delivery Program* or the wishes of Councillors. Accordingly, it is proposed as an immediate work priority to focus on designing an approach to engaging the community on a possible future community-led (council-supported) Climate Change Action Plan and, subject to its approval, commence those engagement activities. This action may also indirectly help support Council in its petitioning other tiers of government for the establishing of a National Local Government Climate Response Partnership Fund as identified in Council's advocacy paper *Federal & State Government Support Priorities (Oct 2022)*. |

Ongoing role of the Committee and use of the Sustainability Assessment Framework

The major initial activity for the Sustainability Advisory Committee under its Terms of Reference has been the development of an updated *Sustainability Policy*. Other activities described under the Terms of Reference are:

- To embed financial, environmental, social and cultural sustainability into Council's operations through the continuous review of policies, projects and services offered by Council
- Take advice from all sectors of the community, and to research and propose new and innovative ways of bringing sustainability into all of Council's policies and operations
- Make recommendations to Council on best-practice sustainability, consistent with the *Community Strategic Plan*

Consistent with these Terms of Reference, and the objective of formalising the proper consideration of sustainability in policy development practices, the Sustainability Advisory Committee will continue to develop and refine the benchmarks and measures within the *Sustainability Assessment Framework* and provide an updated assessment of the sustainability of Yass Valley and Council every 12 months.

Council staff will also use the *Sustainability Assessment Framework* in their policy development and service design work and give proper consideration to the impact of their decisions upon the particular measures and benchmarks contained within the framework document.

Council staff will also adopt the practice of early engagement of the Sustainability Advisory Committee in all relevant strategic discussions, policy development and service design work in order that sustainability is given consideration upfront in the design of all Council's policies, plans and services.

This will facilitate the embedding of financial, environmental, social and cultural sustainability into Council's operation, i.e. through up-front and early engagement, as opposed to the end of the policy development process.

Finally, while progressing the above identified priority areas for action and taking a more active role in policy formulation, the Sustainability Advisory Committee will focus its longer term research and engagement efforts on the following matters, with a view to further reporting to Council on their potential value and, where appropriate, integrating action upon them into Council's planning processes.

**TABLE: 3**

| RESEARCH AND ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES | |
|---|---|
| A Renewable Energy Hub | A range of Local Councils across Australia and internationally have established renewable energy hubs. These typically involve the creation of battery storage capacity, the introduction of shared solar and micro-grids. They also generally involve some level of collaboration and partnership between community, private business and government. The possible application of the various models of energy hubs in Yass Valley, particularly in our local villages, warrants further investigation. The creation of renewable energy hubs in the design of new developments is equally worthy of consideration with models from the ACT available for further investigation. |
| Active Transport | Council is seeking a licence to use the Yass Spur Line as an active transport corridor. The construction of an active transport corridor along the old spur line will connect north and south Yass across the Yass River by a cycle and pedestrian route linking sports fields, parks and playgrounds, commercial areas, multiple schools, and new developments. Additional options for further active transport corridors are currently being considered in the *Open Space Strategy* currently under preparation. The strategy will provide a basis to support currently lobbying efforts for funding of the Yass Spur Line and any other options identified. |
| Stormwater Management and Wetlands | An identified risk in Council's 2021 *Climate Change & Natural Disaster Risk Assessment* document is the overburdening of stormwater systems, water courses and flood sinks. The recommended control in response to this risk is improved stormwater capture and usage. Change in this regard will also involve likely works to improve and possibly expand wetlands in Yass Valley. Attention also needs to be given to demand management of potable supplies, consistent with the *Water Source Strategy*, and potential significant damage to energy infrastructure leading to loss of reliable power supply from severe weather events. Further investigation as to options and their appropriateness for Yass Valley is considered a useful focus of further research by the Committee. |
| A Circular Economy | It has been argued to date within Council that the limited scale of Yass Valley's waste collection and geographical constraints make an expanded range of recycling and reuse services commercially unviable. As Yass Valley's population increases this may well change. Equally there may be alternative models in operation elsewhere in Australia or internationally that can be followed and further investigation is warranted as to how Yass Valley can adopt and follow the principles of the 'circular economy' both in support of better environmental outcomes and sustainable economic development. |
| Net Zero target and accreditation | Some 100 Local Councils across Australia have made formal declarations regarding the global climate emergency and an increasing number of Local Councils, including various NSW Regional Councils, have established net zero emission targets accordingly. One of the first in 2013 was the small Victorian Council of Colac Otway but more recently in our area is Parkes Shire Council, which in April 2022 set a target of achieving net zero with a stretch target of 100% reduction in direct emissions by 2030 and 100% offset of indirect emissions by 2030. Investigation is warranted into the basis upon which such targets are set and the potential costs and benefits of action, including the value of seeking formal accreditation of carbon neutrality under the Australian Government's *Carbon Neutral Standard*. |

**5.     DEFINITION:**

For the purposes of this revised Policy, the definition of sustainability as detailed in the Community Strategic Plan 2042 is adopted by Council. Namely, that sustainability considers *social, environmental and economic connections, civic leadership, environmental health and economic prosperity to be maintained in the interests of meeting current and future needs.*

Consistent with NSW legislation and the previous Environmental Sustainability Policy, Council's consideration of sustainability is also guided by:

- The precautionary principle - where threats of serious or irreversible damage may arise given a lack of full scientific certainty.
- The need for inter-generational equity - where the present generation ensures that health, diversity and productivity is maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations.
- The need for conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity.
- The use of improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms to drive better outcomes.
- Improved community engagement in developing shared outcomes.

**6.     REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed following each general election of Council. The associated *Sustainability Assessment Framework* will be updated by the Sustainability Advisory Committee on an annual basis.

**7.     LEGISLATIVE & LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following:

- *Local Government Act1993 Section 8*
- *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 Section 1.3*
- *Biosecurity Act 2015 Section 22*
- *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 Section 1.3*
- *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997*
- *Water Management Act 2000*
- *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2001*
- Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework
- Yass Valley Community Strategic Plan 2042

**8.     RESPONSIBILITIES**

Council and all staff undertaking decision making on behalf of Council are required to take into account the provisions of this policy.

This includes use of the *Sustainability Assessment Framework* in policy development and service design work and consideration of the impact of decisions upon the measures and benchmarks within the *Framework*. Also, that staff engage the Sustainability Advisory Committee early in all relevant strategy discussions, policy development and service design work in order that sustainability is given consideration upfront in the design of all Council's policies, plans and services.

**9.     HISTORY**

**Attachments:** 2022 Sustainability Assessment Framework

**FRAMEWORK FOR ADDRESSING SUSTAINABILITY IN THE YASS VALLEY (JANUARY 2023)**

PART ONE

| Sustainability Element | Sub-element | Relevant Council Activity | Benchmarks / Assessment Point (Data Source) | Results | Relative Status Good/ Moderate/ Poor | Trend Improving/ Stable/ Worsening | Data Quality High/ Moderate/ Low | COMMENT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ECONOMIC | - Employment<br>- Income Growth<br>- Business Activity<br>- Education & Training levels<br>- Equity (Income Distribution) | Land use management policies, Tourism & economic development activities, Revenue policy, Fees & charges, Community services & subsidises | **Participation rate** (15 years or over in FT or PT work) (Census 2021) | 66.8%. NSW Regional average 56.4% | GOOD | STABLE | HIGH | 9,226 residents employed in the year ending June 2021. Of these, 4,002 jobs located in LGA. |
| | | | **Unemployment rate** (Census 2021) | 2.8%. NSW Regional average 4.6% | GOOD | STABLE | HIGH | Unemployment rate has steadily increased from 1.8% in 2010, however, it remains significantly under the regional, state and national averages.<br><br>The rate has also increased sharply since Sept 2021 possibly as a result of COVID-19 impacts. |
| | | | **Individual income** (Census 2021) | 20.7% of local workers earned a high income (>$1,750 per week), and 19.6% earned a low income (<$500 per week).<br><br>NSW Regional average of 21.1% and 14.6% respectively. | POOR | STABLE | HIGH | The outcome is poor in the context of the more equitable income distribution pattern evident in the NSW Regional average and the comparative wealth of the LGA. Eg. the average taxable income is $68,053 compared to Large Rural council average taxable income of $53,624. |
| | | | **Registered businesses** (ABS Business Register) | 2,076. Large Rural council average 1,501 | GOOD | IMPROVING | HIGH | 24 additional construction related businesses created since 2020. 16 additional financial and insurance related businesses created since 2020. 11 additional health care and social support businesses since 2020. 6 less arts and recreation related businesses since 2022 |
| | | | **Business entries – exits** (ABS Yass Region Summary) | 54 net entries in 2021 (244 entries and 190 exits) | N/A | IMPROVING | HIGH | Net result in 2018 of 2; 49 in 2019, 6 in 2020 |
| | | | **Gross regional product** (National Economics (NIEIR) - Modelled series) | $621m as at 30 June 2021 | N/A | WORSENING | HIGH | Annual change has been more sharply felt in Yass Valley over COVID than NSW. 2020 was the largest impact with -8.53% growth, the lowest ever since data collection records in 2001.<br><br>Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing most productive industry sector, generating $91 million in 2020/21, making up 21.97% of GRP for the region. Construction followed with $46.2m GRP, or 11.2% |
| | | | **Local worker qualifications** (Census 2021) | 27.2% Bachelor degree or higher. NSW Regional average of 17.8%<br><br>34.2% of local workers have no qualification. NSW Regional average of 39.1% | GOOD | IMPROVING | HIGH | In 2011 21.3% of persons had a Bachelor degree or higher and 40.3% held no qualification. |

| | | | Indicator | Data | Status | Trend | Significance | Comment |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | **ATSI Not in Employment, Education or Training** (ABS Region Summary) | 32.1% not engaged and 15% partially engaged. | N/A | IMPROVING | HIGH | The 2011 result saw 33.1% not engaged and 22.1% partially engaged.<br><br>While no directly comparable data for non-ATSI is available, in 2021, 6.2% of 15-to 24-year-olds in Yass Valley were disengaged with employment and education, compared to 10.5% in NSW Regional. |
| | | | **Tourism expenditure** (National Economics (NIEIR) - Modelled series) | In 2020/21 the total tourism sales in the Yass Valley were $35.2m, the total value added was $18.4 million. | N/A | WORSENING | HIGH | In comparison with 2015/16 employment in the sector (direct and indirect) has dropped 116; sales dropped by $28.8m and value added has dropped by $18.5m |
| | | | **Visitor nights** (Tourism Research Australia) | 547,820 domestic visitor nights in 2020/21. 312,031 domestic day trips in 2020/21. | N/A | STABLE | HIGH | Nights has varied over the last few years but still not achieved the peak of 2017/28.  Day trips appear to be on the decline since first recorded in 2017/18 with 459,999 |
| | | | **Gini coefficient / Income distribution** (ABS Personal Income in Australia 2015/16 to 2019/20) | 2019/20 coefficient of 0.469 compared to NSW average of 0.5 | N/A | STABLE | HIGH | The coefficient in 2011-16 Small Arear Estimates was marginally better at 0.464. It should be noted that income distribution results are more equitable in the LGA's surrounding Yass Valley except for QPRC. |
| **SOCIAL** | - Family<br>- Housing<br>- Health<br>- Transport | Land use management policies, Open space management, Streetscape, Fees & charges, Asset creation, maintenance & management, Procurement practices, Community services & subsidies, Community groups & NGO support activities | **Personal Wellbeing Index** (UC 2022 Regional Wellbeing Survey) | 70.2 compared to NSW Regional result of 72.9 and 74.5 in ACT | MODERATE | N/A | LOW | The data is derived from a sample of 140 in the Hilltops, Upper Lachlan and Yass Valley LGA's. Confidence interval of 3.7.  There is no historical data upon which to determine trend. |
| | | | **DV related assault** (Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research) | 35 incidents in 2021. LGA ranking of 106 in 2021 | GOOD | WORSENING | HIGH | The 24 Month Trend shows a 20.7% increase. The 60-month trend is stable and the recent upwards trend may be related to the COVD lockdowns. |
| | | | **Socio Economic Index of Advantage and Disadvantage** (2016 ABS) | Index result of 1062 which is 20th of NSW LGA | GOOD | N/A | HIGH | The majority of surrounding LGA's have lower index scores, eg. Hilltops at 932, Cootamundra-Gundagai at 926 and Upper Lachlan at 987. There is insufficient historical data upon which to determine trend. |
| | | | **Family composition – One parent with children** (Census 2021) | 8.4% in 2021 compared to NSW Regional average of 10.9% | GOOD | WORSENING | HIGH | 2016 Census result was 7.7% and 2011 result of 7.8% Note that the number of one parent families with dependent children has grown from 296 in 2011 to 308 in 2016 and 358 in 2021. |
| | | | **Lone person households** (Census 2021) | 18.8% in 2021 compared to NSW Regional NSW average of 26.1% | GOOD | STABLE | HIGH | 2016 result of 18.7% and 2011 result of 18.3% |
| | | | **Government rent assistance levels** (Population Health Profile) | 10.4% of private dwelling in 2021. South East NSW Primary Health Network average of 18.5% | GOOD | N/A | HIGH | Trend not determined as historical data not sourced. |
| | | | **Homelessness** (Population Health Profile) | 2.8% in 2016.  South East NSW Primary Health Network average of 3.2% | GOOD | N/A | MODERATE | Trend not determined as historical data not sourced. |

| | | | Indicator | Data | Status | Trend | Significance | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | **ATSI Dwelling needing additional bedroom** (Census 2021) | 5.6% compared to overall average in LGA of 2%. | POOR | IMPROVING | HIGH | Reduced from 17.3% in 2011 |
| | | | **Rent greater than 30% of income** (atlas.id.com.au) | 26.2% in 2021 compared to NSW Regional average of 36% | GOOD | N/A | HIGH | While the Yass Valley Council area had a lower proportion of households paying >30% on rent, it is important to note that this varied across the LGA. Proportions ranged from a low of 6.5% in Gundaroo and District to a high of 30.4% in Yass. |
| | | | **Mortgage greater than 30% of income** (atla.id.com.au) | 10.8% in 2021 compared to NSW Regional average of 12.7% | GOOD | N/A | HIGH | While the Yass Valley Council area had a lower proportion of households paying >30% of income on a mortgage, it is important to note that this varied across the LGA. Proportions ranged from a low of 7.1% in Gundaroo and District to a high of 14.0% in ACT peri-urban area. |
| | | | **Needing assistance with core activities** (Census 2021) | 5.4% compared to NSW Regional average of 6.8% | GOOD | WORSENING | HIGH | Increased from 4.1% in 2011 |
| | | | **Long term health condition** (Census 2021) | 36.4% in 2021 compared to Regional NSW average of 37% | MODERATE | N/A | HIGH | Historical data not available to determine trend |
| | | | **Travel to work means** (Census 2021) | 66.2% travelled to work in a private vehicle and 0.9% took public transport. NSW Regional average travelling in a private vehicle is 68.4% | MODERATE | STABLE | HIGH | In 2021, there were 81 people who caught public transport to work in Yass Valley, compared with 6,137 who drove or travelled as a passenger in private vehicles. |
| | | | **Employment self-containment** (economy.id.com.au) | In 2021, 38.8% of the Yass Valley's resident workers were employed locally. | N/A | STABLE | HIGH | In 2016 38.2% of resident workers were employed locally |
| **ENVIRONMENTAL** | - Land<br>- Water<br>- Air<br>- Biodiversity<br>- Resource use<br>- Climate | Land use management policies, Waste collection, recycling & reuse, Water & sewage, Wood heaters, Asset creation, maintenance & management, Procurement practices, Weed control, tree and vegetation planting & protection (including roadsides) Grass maintenance (including mowing), Open spaces management, Climate adaptation activities | **Greenhouse emissions** (snapshotclimate.com.au) | 444,000 t Co2e in 2020/21 | NA | STABLE | HIGH | Snapshotclimate.com.au reported 452k in 2018/19 with a slight fall in 2019/20 to 439k. Further iterations of the data will allow comparison of YV outcomes to those of other LGAs. |
| | | | **Protected land area** (ABS Yass Region Summary) | 27,938 ha in 2020. | N/A | STABLE | HIGH | 27,375 ha in 2016. The measure is of limited value as it does not provide any insight as to the condition of the protected lands. |
| | | | **Open public space** (OLG Comparative Data 2020/21) | 256 ha of Open Public Space in 2020/21. Large Rural council average is 300.7 ha. | N/A | STABLE | HIGH | 256 ha in 2019/20. |
| | | | **Rainfall** (BoM) | 2019 total of 433.4mm compared to average annual of 716.3mm for Yass (Derringullen). | N/A | WORSENING | HIGH | It is not possible to establish a local area trend based upon recordings from the limited number of stations within the LGA. However, the 2021 YVC Climate Risk Assessment predicts up to a 3% reduction in rainfall along with a greater intensity of storms and floods. |
| | | | **Hot days** (BoM) | 8 days in 2021 above 35 degrees. | N/A | WORSENING | HIGH | The 2021 YV Climate Risk Assessment predicts up to 8 more hot days a year and 13 fewer cold nights. |
| | | | **Water daily usage** (YVC) | AWAITING DATA FROM COUNCIL | | | | 2007 IWCM shows average annual consumption per connected residential property in Yass Valley of 195 KL as of 2004/2005, which is less than state median of 200 KL. |

| Indicator | Data | Status | Trend | Priority | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **River/dam quality testing** (Waterwatch Catchment Health Indicator Program Report 2021) | CMM12 Good; CMM13 Fair; YAS1 Fair; YAS2 Fair; YAS3 Fair; YAS4 Good | MODERATE | IMPROVING | HIGH | Three reaches presented similar scores to 2020, and three showed improvements with two of these moving from fair to good. Overall, better flows in 2021 helped to improve turbidity, nitrates, and electrical conductivity levels in the Yass catchment. |
| **Boil water alerts** (YVC) | AWAITING DATA FROM COUNCIL | | | | |
| **Landfill amounts** (EPA) | 5874 tonnes disposed to landfill in 2020/21 | N/A | WORSENING | HIGH | Disposal to landfill has increased from 3,020 in 2017/18 to 4,346 in 2018/19 to 6,729 in 2019/20. This is contrary to the claim in Council's 2021 End of Term report that there has been a "steady reduction in waste to landfill in the past 3 years". |
| **Organic Waste** (EPA/OLG) | 800 tonnes collected in 2020/21. Large Rural council average is 3645 tonnes | POOR | WORSENING | HIGH | 3010 tonnes collected in 2014/15 |
| **Residual Waste to Total Waste** (EPA / OLG) | 68.6% in 2020/21 compared to Large Rural council average of 57.4% | POOR | IMPROVING | HIGH | The 2019/20 residual waste percentage was 73.4% |
| **Recycling rate** (EPA / OLG) | Recycling rate of 47.3% in 2020/21 compares to NSW average of 44% | MODERATE | IMPROVING | HIGH | The 2019/20 recycling rate was 33.8% |
| **Environmental disaster damage bill/Insurance premium** (YVC) | AVAILABLE DATA NOT PROVIDED | | | | |
| **Solar panel installation** (Clean Energy Regulator Sept 2022) | 35% estimated installations per dwelling. Estimated capacity of 20,698 kWh | GOOD | IMPROVING | HIGH | Estimated rates for surrounding LGA'sa are 28.4% for Upper Lachlan, 32.8% for Hilltops, 32.2% Cootamundra-Gundagai, 30.1% QPRC and 35% Snowy Valleys. |
| **Threatened species and communities** (NSW OEH 2022) | 74 species of flora, fauna or ecological communities are vulnerable; 35 are endangered; and 6 are critically endangered in the Inland Slopes IBRA sub-region. | N/A | N/A | LOW | The available data lists species across the Inner Slopes which extends from Wellington in the North to Albury in the South and provides no trend analysis. Other potentially more telling indicators in the future could be the number and size of voluntary conservation agreements entered into and / or flora and fauna reserves. |
| **EVs registered** (ABS Yass Region Summary) | 11 in 2020 out of total 16,449 registrations. | POOR | IMPROVING | HIGH | Nationally the percentage of total EV registrations in is higher (0.15% in 2021) but as a benchmark this includes metropolitan locations which is not appropriate. |
| **EV charging points** (YVC) | 4 as of 2022. 1 proposed. | N/A | N/A | HIGH | It is noted that a number of LGA's have projections as to expected requirements in coming years which would provide a useful benchmark for YVC. |
| **Weed volumes and / or eradication** (YVC) | 650 inspections per annum and 80 estimated follow-up / compliance inspections 1700 kms in LGA identified as High Risk. 149 funded High Risk site | N/A | N/A | HIGH | At present activity data measures are available only, with no available data for the assessment of outcomes. |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **CULTURAL** | - Opportunity<br>- Participation<br>- Sustaining social capacity & connectedness<br>- Diversity and Inclusion<br>- Recreation<br>- Representation | Libraries,<br>Events,<br>Public art, Asset creation, maintenance & management,<br>Procurement practices,<br>Fees & charges,<br>Community services & subsidies,<br>Heritage services,<br>Support for Indigenous groups & organisations | **Library usage** (YVC) | 20/21 Library visits 30,392<br>20/21 Library members 5363<br>20/21 Circulation 63290<br><br>Circulation per capita is 3.57. Large Rural council average is 3.54 | MODERATE | WORSENING | HIGH | Visitations, membership and circulation have all fallen since 2019/20 |
| | | | **Pool usage** (YVC) | 21/22 Member Visits 10,572<br>21/22 New Memberships 471<br>21/22 Class attendees 288 | N/A | WORSENING | HIGH | 20/21 Member visits were 18,915; New Memberships were 471 and Class attendees numbered 2088.  Care must be taken in discerning any overall trend given year-to-year weather variations and the impacts of COVID. |
| | | | **Population diversity – Born overseas** (Census 2021) | 10.9% in 2021 compared to NSW Regional average of 12.2% | N/A | STABLE | HIGH | The majority of persons born overseas are from English speaking countries. The total number born overseas has increased marginally from 10.1% in 2001. |
| | | | **ATSI population** (Census 2021) | 3.2% | N/A | N/A | HIGH | ATSI share of population has increased from 2% in 2011 to 2.5% in 2016 |
| | | | **Volunteering** (Census 2021) | 22.2% engaged in some form of voluntary work in 2021. Regional NSW average was 15.5% | GOOD | WORSENING | HIGH | The percentage has fallen from 26.8% in 2011 and 29% in 2006 |
| | | | **Heritage items** (NSW State Inventory and YVC LEP 2013 Schedule 5) | 10 items on the State Heritage Register within the LGA; 285 items listed in LEP Heritage schedule; 4 heritage conservation areas; 4 Aboriginal places of heritage significance; and 14 Archaeological sites. | N/A | N/A | POOR | The listing of sites provides little indication as to their condition, appropriateness, usage etc. |

**DRAFT FRAMEWORK FOR ADDRESSING SUSTAINABILITY IN THE YASS VALLEY COUNCIL (DECEMBER 2022)**

**PART TWO**

| Sustainability Element | Sub-element | Relevant Council Activity | Benchmarks / Assessment Point (Data Source) | Results | Relative Status Good/ Moderate/ Poor | Trend Improving/ Stable/ Worsening | Data Quality & Relevance High/ Moderate/ Low | COMMENT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| FINANCIAL | - Budget & Delivery<br>- Asset policy & management plans<br>- Revenue development<br>- Expenditure controls | Annual budgeting process, Long Term Financial planning, Revenue strategy, Reporting and audit, Asset management decisions, Continuous improvement processes | **Budgeted (3rd quarter adjusted) v Actual Operating Results before Capital** (3rd Quarter Budget Review 20/21 and Annual Financial Statements and Budget Review Reports for 20/21, 19/20 and 18/19) | Original budgeted surplus in 2020/21 of $536k. 3rd Quarter predicted surplus result of $1.6m. Actual audited deficit result of $2.2m. | N/A | STABLE | HIGH | In 2019/20 there was a gap between predicted result in 3rd quarter and actual result of $2.47m. In 2018/19 there was a gap between predicted result in 3rd quarter and actual result of $186k |
| | | | **Delivery Program Results** (6 monthly Council Report (Aug 22) and Annual Report 20/21) | 80% reported as being 'On Track'. 12% reported as requiring 'Monitoring'. 8% reported as 'Needs Work' | N/A | STABLE | POOR | In 20/21 Annual Report it was stated for July to December 2020 that: 68% were 'On Track' 18% required 'Monitoring'. 9% 'Needs Work' and 5% were 'On Trend".<br><br>The number of completed delivery program actions is a possible proxy measure as to whether outcomes are being achieved. However, it should be noted that there is limited rigour in Council's current suite of performance indicators (none are numeric) and Delivery Program measures are project-related and do not assess ongoing service delivery. |
| | | | **Building & infrastructure Renewal Ratio** (OLG benchmark is >=100%) (Annual Financial Statements 20/21 OLG Comparative Data 20/21) | 134.3% (as per Financial Statements) 124.3% (as per OLG Comparative Data). Large Rural council average for 2020/21 is 136%. | MODERATE | WORSENING | HIGH | Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) predicts fall below benchmark from 2023/24 to 74.59% and remaining below benchmark into the future.<br><br>. |
| | | | **Infrastructure Backlog Ratio** (OLG benchmark is <=2%) (Annual Financial Statements 20/21 OLG Comparative Data 20/21) | 1.23%. Large Rural council average for 2020/21 is 4.3% | GOOD | WORSENING | HIGH | YVC performance is likely to be significantly below benchmark based upon the figures within the latest asset management plans and the Long-Term Financial Plan. |
| | | | **Asset Maintenance Ratio** (OLG benchmark is >=100%) (Annual Financial Statements 20/21 OLG Comparative Data 20/21) | 100.3%. Large Rural council average for 2020/21 is 97.2% | GOOD | WORSENING | HIGH | See above |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | **Capital Works Program Completion Rate** (Council Revote and Carry-Forward Report (Aug 22) and Annual Reports 20/21 and 19/20 | 21/22 CWP program totalling $16m. Actual expenditure $12m | N/A | STABLE . | POOR | 20/21 CWP program totalling $30m. Actual expenditure of $18.5m.2019/20 CWP program totalling $21.7m. Actual expenditure of $8.9m<br><br>Factors that have impacted adversely on the completion of capital works program include COVID and flooding, and accounting practices used historically by YVC make the true picture difficult to ascertain. Nevertheless, the continued non-completion of the program will lead to further deterioration in YVC's asset position |
| | | | **Own Source Revenue** (OLG benchmark is >=60%) (Annual Financial Statements 20/21 OLG Comparative Data 20/21) | 51.5% in 2020/21. Large Rural council average in 2020/21 is 54.4% | POOR | IMPROVING | HIGH | LTFP predicts steady increase well over benchmark. |
| | | | **Outstanding Rates and Charges** (OLG benchmark is <=10%) (Annual Financial Statements 20/21 OLG Comparative Data 20/21) | 6.25% in 2020/21. Large Rural council average in 2020/21 is 7.7% | GOOD | STABLE | HIGH | While outstanding rates and charges have varied over time with changing economic conditions, they appear stable and are commonly below the benchmark. |
| | | | **Operating Performance Ratio** (OLG benchmark is >=0%) ((Annual Financial Statements 20/21 OLG Comparative Data 20/21) | -1.35%. Large Rural council average for 2020/21 is -3.3% | POOR | WORSENING . | HIGH | Result was above benchmark from 2017/18 to 2019/20.  LTFP predicts fall below benchmark from 2022/23 and not meeting benchmark again until 2026/7 |
| | | | **Competitive Grant Revenue** (YVC) | NO AVAILABLE DATA | | | | A report to Council was provided on grants for the 1st quarter of 2022/23.  Upon the collection of further data and refinement of reporting an appropriate indicator may be formulated in the future. |
| | | | **Audit Program Delivery and Implementation** (YVC) | NO AVAILABLE DATA | | | | Papers and minutes of the ARIC are not published and there is no evidence of regular reporting to Council on the achievement of audit program. |
| | | | **Service Reviews and Implementation** (YVC) | NO AVAILABLE DATA | | | | There is no current organisational program despite this being a requirement under the OLG IP&R Guidelines. |
| **ENVIRONMENTAL** | - Energy usage<br>- Fleet / Plant<br>- Asset choices<br>- Emissions<br>- Waste | Procurement practices, Water usage, Waste & recycling practices, Asset management decisions | **Carbon production and reductions** (YVC) | NO AVAILABLE DATA | | | | Subject to the provision of fuel and electricity usage data a basic carbon footprint calculation for YVC may be possible. |
| | | | **Internal waste volumes and recycling rates** (YVC) | AWAITING DATA FROM COUNCIL | | | | |
| | | | **Fuel usage and electricity costs** (YVC) | AWAITING DATA FROM COUNCIL | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **GOVERNANCE (SOCIAL / CULTURAL)** | - Democratic practice, including transparency, reporting and open access<br>- Workplace culture<br>- HR strategy<br>- Risk management<br>- Community engagement & participation<br>- Service delivery | Organisational structure, Staff engagement and development, Workforce profile and succession planning, Probity controls and processes, Information access, Consultative processes, Support and advice for volunteer organisations & NGO's (including grant opportunities, fundraising, succession planning, advertising & networking) Support for Indigenous groups and organisations | **Workforce age profile** (YVC) | 28% of the workforce is over 55 years and 38% under 35 years | N/A | N/A | HIGH | The age profile of YVC workforce presents a significant risk. |
| | | | **Staff turnover rate** (YVC) | AVAILABLE DATA NOT PROVIDED | | | | YVC's Workforce Management Plan 2022-26 does not provide turnover data. Length of Service data shows approximately half the workforce has less than 5 years' service. |
| | | | **Workforce skills audit** (YVC) | NO AVAILABLE DATA | | | | Workforce Management Plan 2022-26 references possible skill shortage issues but provides no detail. |
| | | | **Staff satisfaction survey** results (YVC) | AVAILABLE DATA NOT PROVIDED | | | | |
| | | | **Worker Compensation premium** (YVC) | AVAILABLE DATA NOT PROVIDED | | | | |
| | | | **Community engagement activity** (YVC) | NO AVAILABLE DATA | | | | Council reports livestream statistics for Council meetings. |
| | | | **Complaints data** (OLG Comparative Data) | 0 Code of Conduct complaints | N/A | STABLE | HIGH | This measure concerns formal Code of Conduct complaints to the OLG. A more useful indicator would be to develop a measure of complaints – as opposed to service requests – made directly to Council. |
| | | | ***GIPA Act* compliance and reporting** (YVC) | 2 applications received in 2021/22 | N/A | STABLE | POOR | Annual Report data and online register are inconsistent. Only formal requests are recorded and reported, when the option is available to also record and report informally granted access requests. |

**Transport
for NSW**

# Draft South East and Tablelands Regional Transport Plan

transport.nsw.gov.au

# Connection to Country

The South East and Tablelands region comprises the traditional lands of the Bidwell, Dharug, Gundungurra, Ngarigo, Ngunawal, Tharawal, Wiradjuri, and Yuin nations.

First Nations people travelled, and continue to travel, within and beyond this region. Many of the transport routes used today – from rail lines to roads and water crossings – follow the traditional Songlines, trade routes, and ceremonial paths on Country that Australia's First Nations peoples have followed for tens of thousands of years.

Today, the South East and Tablelands remains the traditional home for many First Nations people. For the 2021 Census, 11,325 residents (3.9 per cent) of the 291,316 said they were of First Nations background[1].

Table 1: 2021 Census All persons

| LGA | Total Population | First Nations Population (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Bega Valley | 35,942 | 3.9% |
| Eurobodalla | 40,593 | 6.1% |
| Goulburn Mulwaree | 32,053 | 5.1% |
| Hilltops | 19,254 | 5.1% |
| Queanbeyan-Palerang | 63,304 | 3.5% |
| Snowy Monaro | 21,666 | 3.1% |
| Upper Lachlan Shire | 8,514 | 3.1% |
| Wingecarribee | 52,709 | 2.3% |
| Yass Valley | 17,281 | 3.2% |
| **Total** | **291,316** | **3.9%** |

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1     Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021
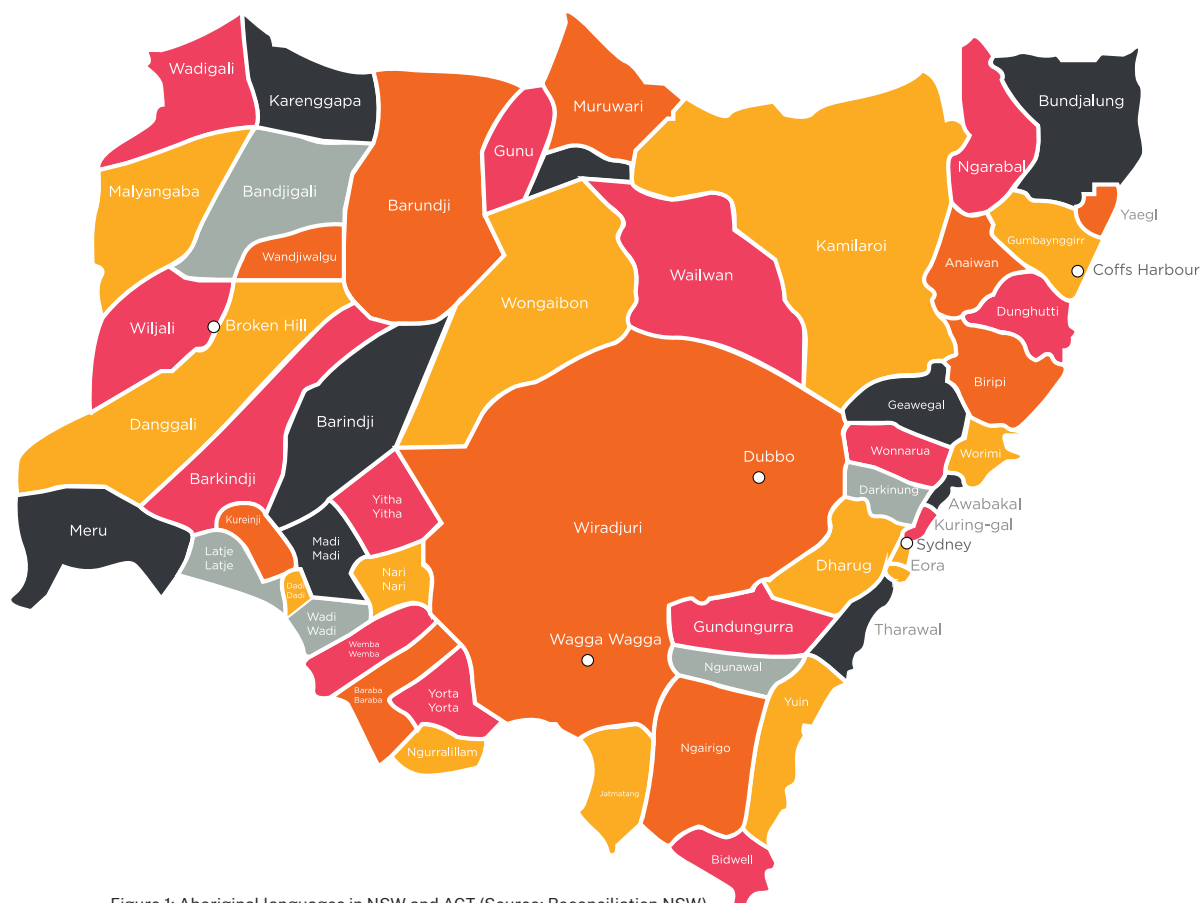
Figure 1: Aboriginal languages in NSW and ACT (Source: Reconciliation NSW).

The NSW Government is committed to ensuring First Nations heritage is reflected in all aspects of the work Transport for NSW undertakes. The Transport for NSW Reconciliation Action Plan 2019-2021 acknowledges and pays respect to the role of First Nations peoples as custodians of the lands where we all work. The Transport for NSW Reconciliation Action Plan 2019-2021 demonstrates a commitment to working towards reconciliation both within Transport and in communities across NSW.

Development of this Draft Plan has been informed through formal engagement and workshops with First Nations representatives from across the South East and Tablelands, including Local Aboriginal Land Councils, community organisations, Australian Government agencies, local schools and businesses, and Elders and community leaders. The stories and messages they shared have helped shape the narrative and transport response.

## NSW Common Planning Assumptions

Common Planning Assumptions are used across agencies to ensure alignment and understanding of the relevant data, policies and assumptions to underpin planning decisions and policy analysis for government strategies and investment decisions. This supports consistency in the advice provided to the NSW Government and the community.

The Common Planning Assumptions represent a consistent baseline or a starting point, and are developed based on current and past trends and agreed policies and plans. They are not targets or scenarios.

This Draft Plan and supporting analyses are based on the agreed Common Planning Assumptions and endorsed COVID-19 scenarios. As at April 2021 Details of the Common Planning Assumptions used are set out in the Common Planning Assumptions Book version 5.1.
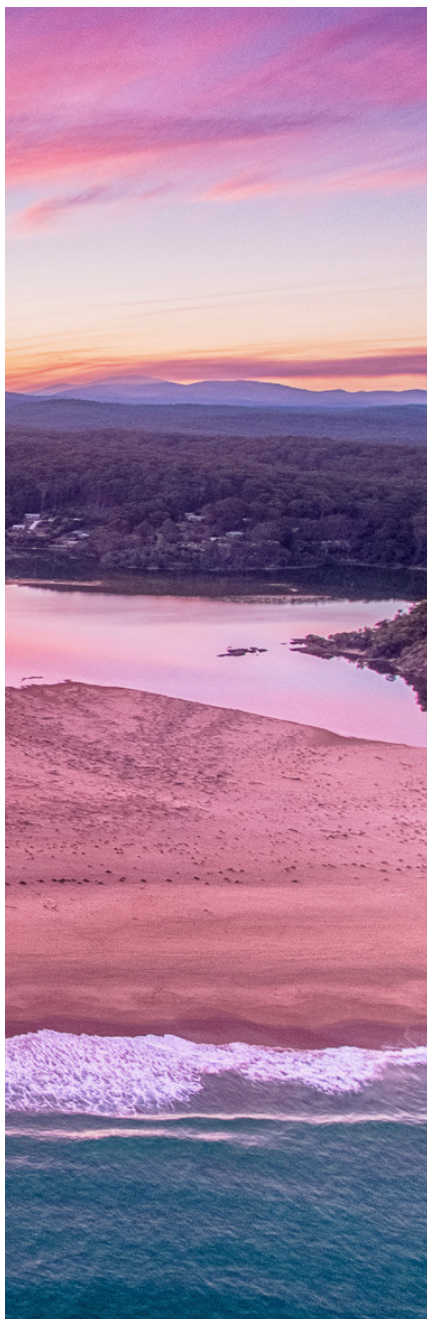
Above: Sun setting over the Bega
River and Tathra Beach, Tathra.
Photo: Destination NSW

Cover: Friends enjoying a scenic
bike ride around Lake Jindabyne
in the Snowy Mountains.
Photo: Destination NSW

# Contents

# 1 Executive Summary

The Draft South East and Tablelands Regional Transport Plan (the Draft Plan) supports the Future Transport Strategy, outlines how Transport for NSW will respond to the transport needs of the region, and how it will plan for future challenges.

The Draft Plan presents a regional transport transport vision for the South East and Tablelands and looks at how transport services and systems, and the policies behind them, will change to provide a better experience for our customers. Key objectives of the vision include:

- Connecting our customers' whole lives by improving public transport connections between neighbouring regions and cities, between the region's strategic centres, and within centres and towns.

- Making walking, cycling, and other micromobility options more attractive, so people can leave their cars at home.

- Making the transport network accessible and easy for everyone to use, regardless of age, ability, financial situation, or personal circumstances.

- Reduced crash rates on roads and incidents on waterways in-line with the 'Towards Zero' goal of zero fatalities and serious injuries on the state's roads by 2050 and waterways by 2056.

- Supporting the NSW Government's goal of net zero emissions by 2050 through initiatives that create a more sustainable and emissions-free transport network.

- Creating 15-minute neighbourhoods where people can easily walk or cycle through their town, village, or neighbourhood.

- Improving the transport network's ability to withstand unexpected service disruptions or emergency events.

- Supporting businesses and the economy by making networks which transport goods more effectively and reliably.

Growth within the region is led by regionally significant projects, such as the Snowy Mountains Special Activation Precinct, South Jerrabombera and Googong developments, and the Southern Highlands Innovation Park

• Planning for seasonal transport needs and increased demand as the region shift towards a year-round visitor economy.

By 2041, the South East and Tablelands population is projected to increase by 20 per cent to around 350,000 people but increases to approximately 940,000 people in combination with the projected ACT population.

Growth within the region is led by regionally significant projects, such as the Snowy Mountains Special Activation Precinct, South Jerrabomberra and Googong developments, and the Southern Highlands Innovation Park. Investments to improve transport services and infrastructure will make sure initiatives like these are effective.

Improving transport connections within the region and beyond is vital for strong economic growth. The region's proximity to Greater Sydney, Canberra, the Illawarra-Shoalhaven and the associated air and seaports, will see an increase in visitors and freight volumes to the region.

The NSW Government has committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 50 per cent by 2030 (over 2005 levels) and net zero emissions by 2050. The Draft Plan outlines the changes to public transport services, improvements to electric vehicle and hydrogen refuelling networks, and promotion of walking and cycling transportation which, together, will deliver the transport sector's response to achieving this goal.

The Draft Plan has identified 49 initiatives which, in combination, will support the state's Future Transport Strategy and the regional transport vision for the South East and Tablelands over the next 20 years.

Car on Kosciuszko Road at Spencers Creek.
Photo: NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE)

Lake Alexandra
Reserve Mittagong.

Photo: Destination NSW

# 2  Introduction

The South East and Tablelands region is bordered by Greater Sydney to the north-east, Central West and Orana to the north-west, Illawarra-Shoalhaven and the Pacific Ocean to the east, Riverina-Murray to the west, and Victoria to the south.

The region is defined by its interdependent borderless connections with the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and the Global Gateway of Canberra, its diverse natural environments, its rural lifestyle, and its growing tourism and agricultural industries.

Canberra serves as the Regional City for the region and provides high-order services such as specialist health facilities, tertiary education, employment, and retail. The seven strategic centres across the region – Batemans Bay, Bega, Cooma, Goulburn, Queanbeyan, the Southern Highlands cluster, and Young – act as local hubs for surrounding towns and villages and provide residents with day-to-day services and amenities.

The region comprises the Local Government Areas (LGA) of Bega Valley, Eurobodalla, Goulburn-Mulwaree, Hilltops, Queanbeyan-Palerang, Snowy-Monaro, Upper Lachlan, Wingecarribee and Yass.

Figure 2: The South East and Tablelands region.

**Connecting our customers'
whole lives**

**Successful places
for communities**
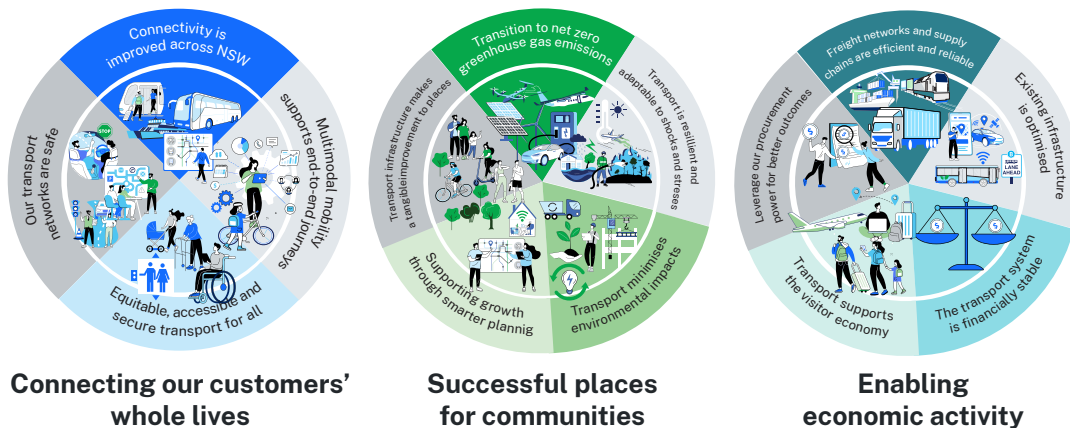
**Enabling
economic activity**

Figure 3: The Future Transport Strategy strategic outcomes.

## 2.1  South East and Tablelands Regional Transport Plan

As a supporting plan of the Future Transport Strategy, the Draft South East and Tablelands Regional Transport Plan ('the Draft Plan') provides a blueprint to guide the transformation of how people and goods will travel within the region over the next 20 years.

The Draft Plan presents the strategic framework for how Transport for NSW will proactively respond to anticipated changes in land use, population, and travel demand across the region. The Draft Plan directly supports the three strategic outcomes of the Future Transport Strategy – Connecting our Customers, Successful Places and Enabling Economic Activity. This ensures the bespoke regional transport vision for the South East and Tablelands, and its key supporting objectives and initiatives, have a direct line of sight to the overarching transport strategy for New South Wales.

The Draft Plan builds on already committed transport projects and identifies new initiatives for investigation to deliver a safer and more efficient and accessible network to better support the local communities, businesses, and industries which rely on transport to connect and grow.

## 2.2  How the Plan was developed

The Draft Plan has been developed simultaneously with the Department of Planning and Environment's (DPE) Draft South East and Tablelands Regional Plan 2041 (the 'Draft Regional Plan') to ensure the land use vision for the region is complemented with a bespoke transport response.

The narrative has also been guided by formal engagement and workshops with key stakeholders to inform the regional transport vision, identify key themes and values, and flag current and future challenges and opportunities for investigation. Stakeholders engaged during the development of the Draft Plan included representatives from all nine Councils across the South East and Tablelands, relevant NSW and ACT Government Agencies, the Canberra Region Joint Organisation, key industry and peak body groups, and First Nations community representatives.

## 2.3  Implementing the Plan

Establishing a regional transport vision for the South East and Tablelands and identifying key initiatives to deliver the vision are just the first steps in the planning process. Transport for NSW is responsible for the implementation and ongoing management of the Draft Plan, with collaborative partnerships established for those initiatives which require support and input from key stakeholders like Local Government, relevant NSW and ACT Government Agencies, and industry and community representatives.

The Plan will be a "living" document to be continually updated as the area changes, technology evolves, legislation adjusts, and new opportunities emerge. Transport for NSW will provide status updates on our allocated deliverables every 12 months and undertake a refresh of the Transport Plan every five years.

## 2.4  Funding and delivery

The Draft Plan comprises a total of 50 initiatives. Whilst some initiatives are already in planning or delivery, new initiatives will require further investigation to determine their feasibility and alignment with the regional transport vision.

Transport for NSW will work collaboratively with key stakeholders to identify opportunities to fund the initiatives outlined in the Draft Plan, including possible Australian Government and private sector financing. This includes ensuring private development and industry operations align with our shared transport vision.

## 2.5  How to read this Plan

The Draft Plan has been developed using a vision-led approach to transport planning. To accept current travel behaviours, in particular high levels of private car use, is unsustainable and unlikely to achieve the regional transport vision for the South East and Tablelands. This vision-led approach assumes existing travel behaviours and trends will change over time. Current travel patterns, therefore, should not dictate future need.

The structure of the Draft Plan reflects the vision-led approach with:

- The 'Transport Challenge' chapter highlighting the key issues that the transport network will likely face over the next 20 years.
- The 'Transport Vision' chapter articulating an aspirational regional transport vision of what the transport network should look like by 2041.
- The 'Transport Response' chapter establishing the actions to deliver the regional transport vision.

The Draft Plan has been developed using a vision-led approach to transport planning.

> An ageing population requires more accessible and flexible services to reduce the reliance on private vehicle to access goods and services.

Family takes a photo at the Big Merino, Goulburn.
Photo: Destination NSW

# 3  The Transport Challenges

The Draft Plan articulates how Transport for NSW, in collaboration with key stakeholders including Local Government, relevant NSW and ACT Government Agencies, industry and community representatives, will respond to the following key issues and trends that will shape the transport needs of the South East and Tablelands over the next 20 years.

## 3.1  A changing population

The South East and Tablelands is home to around 291,000 residents[2], which increases to around 717,000 residents if the ACT population is included. By 2041, the population is expected to increase by 20 per cent to around 350,000 residents[3] and surges to around 940,000 residents when combined with the projected ACT population. The majority of regional population growth is projected

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2     ABS Statistics, 2021 Data
3     NSW Government, 2022 NSW Population Projections

Population increase by **20%** between now and **2041**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2021 | 291,316 | +58,446 |
| 2041 | 349,762 | |



| LGA | 2021 | 2041 |
|---|---|---|
| Bega Valley | 35,942 | 36,223 |
| Eurobodalla | 40,593 | 45,402 |
| Goulburn Mulwaree | 32,053 | 40,204 |
| Hilltops | 19,254 | 19,186 |
| Queanbeyan-Palerang | 63,304 | 83,550 |
| Snowy Monaro | 21,666 | 23,845 |
| Upper Lachlan | 8,514 | 9,699 |
| Wingecarribee | 52,709 | 70,969 |
| Yass Valley | 17,281 | 20,684 |
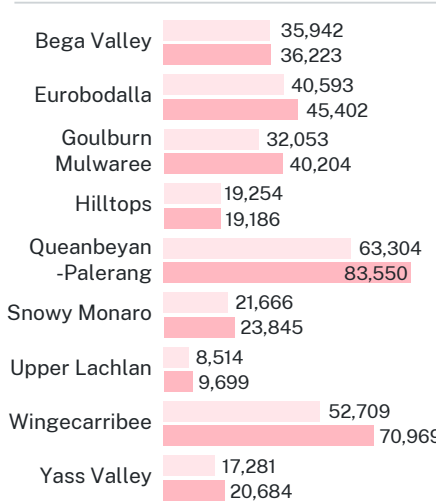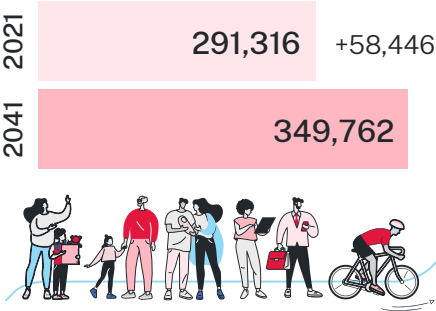
Figure 4: Current and projected populations by LGA in South East and Tablelands.

to occur within the Local Government Areas of Queanbeyan-Palerang, Wingecarribee, and Goulburn-Mulwaree.

Increasing population growth, in and around key strategic centres, combined with anticipated growth in the visitor economy, will result in further congestion on the transport network unless travel behaviour pivots to a more sustainable approach.

The current median age of the region's population is 45 years of age. By 2041, the median age is expected to increase to 47 years of age. Simultaneously, the proportion of the population over 65 years of age is projected to increase from 22 to 28 per cent. An ageing population requires more accessible and flexible services to reduce the reliance on private vehicles to access goods and services.

| | 2021 | 2041 | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0–19 | 24%<br>69,915 | 22%<br>76,948 | ↘ |
| 20–64 | 54%<br>157,311 | 50%<br>174,881 | ↘ |
| 65+ | 22%<br>64,090 | 28%<br>97,933 | ↗ |

Figure 5: Age distribution across current and projected populations in South East and Tablelands.

Canberra Airport, the primary domestic and international airport for the region.

## 3.2 Cross-border transport integration

The limitations of cross-border public and active transport connections means customers from NSW, the ACT, and Victoria currently rely heavily on private vehicle transport.

The South East and Tablelands shares strong connections with the Australian Capital Territory. The ACT provides high-order services, including specialist health facilities, tertiary education, employment, and retail. Canberra Airport is also the primary domestic and international air-travel gateway for most of the region.

The ACT will continue to strengthen its presence in the region over the next 20 years with the population projected to grow to 589,000 residents[4] by 2041. Coupled with the projected population

growth in the NSW LGAs surrounding the ACT – Queanbeyan-Palerang, Goulburn-Mulwaree, and Yass Valley – the increase in population, and the associated uplift in economic activity, will place additional strain on the existing transport network.

Under existing conditions, travelling between NSW and the ACT using public transport and point-to-point services can be a challenging experience. Both jurisdictions have separate bus operators with limited services running between Canberra, Queanbeyan, Yass, and Goulburn. Most cross-border trips require changing between two services whose timetables are not always aligned and can result in two separate fares. Public transport connections to strategic centres further from the ACT, like Batemans Bay and Cooma, can be even more challenging due to limited services.

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4    ACT Planning Strategy 2018, ACT Government

# 3.3  A safer transport network

From 2017 to 2021, 906 people were fatally or seriously injured in crashes on South East and Tablelands roads. Around 55 per cent of all Fatal and Serious Injury (FSI) crashes occurred on roads with posted speed limits of 90 km/h or higher – well above the Regional NSW average of 37 per cent and the NSW state-wide average of 20 per cent.

The number of fatalities and serious injuries is trending in the right direction, with a 41 per cent reduction in the last five years. However, this number still causes a significant level of trauma in local communities, which adds a social and emotional burden to those involved in the crashes. There is also a significant financial burden, with the cost to the South East and Tablelands community over the past five years estimated at approximately $1.5 billion.

The causes of these crash trends must be addressed if the region is to achieve the state-wide goal of zero FSI crashes by 2050. Driver behavioural factors play a considerable role in the cause of crashes. The top three behavioural factors for fatal crashes recorded in the region between 2017 and 2021 were speeding (45 per cent), fatigue (23 per cent), and alcohol (17 per cent).

From 2017 to 2021, 14 fatal or serious injury incidents were recorded as occurring on the region's waterways.

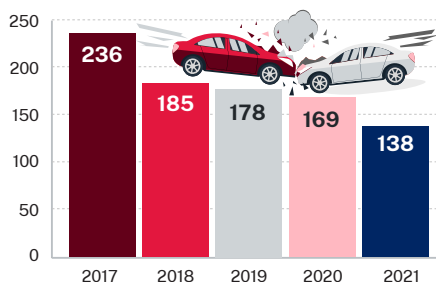**Fatalities and serious injuries from crashes in the South East Tablelands**



Figure 6: Fatalities and serious injuries from crashes in South East and Tablelands.
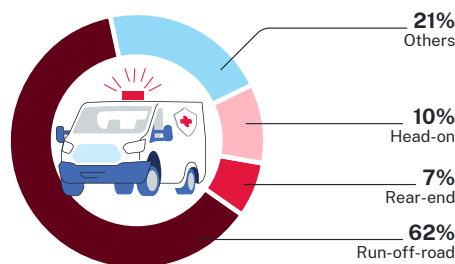


- **21%** Others
- **10%** Head-on
- **7%** Rear-end
- **62%** Run-off-road

Figure 7: Types of crashes recorded in the South East and Tablelands between 2017 and 2021.

**Behavioural factors in South East and Tablelands fatalities 2017-2021**

|  | Speeding | Tired drivers and riders | Drink driving | Seatbelt non-usage | Illicit drugs present |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| All regional NSW | 44% | 22% | 19% | 15% | 24% |
| South East and Tablelands | 45% | 23% | 17% | 11% | 13% |

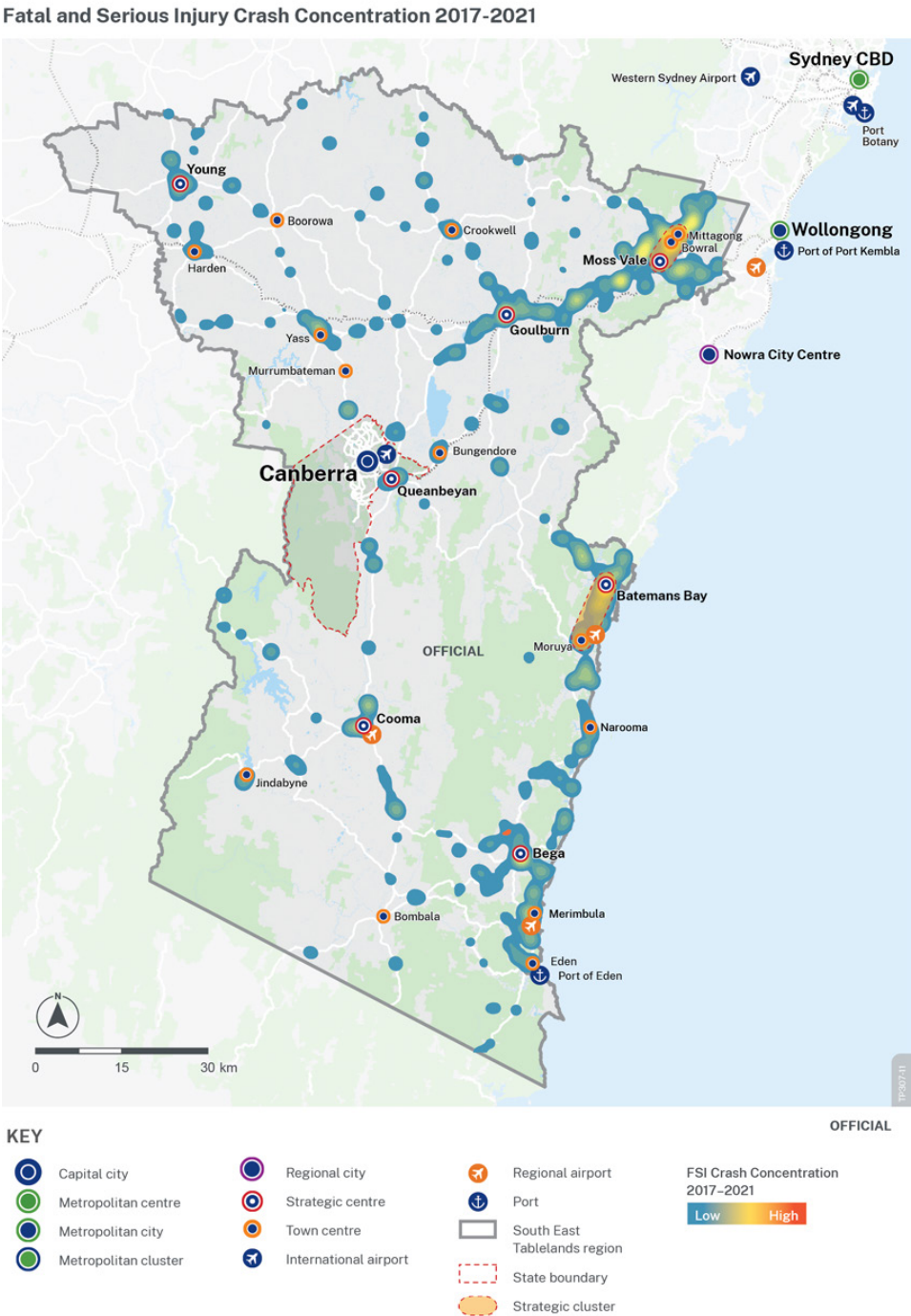Source: Transport for NSW, 2022

Figure 8: Fatal and serious injury crash concentration 2017-2021.

Figure 9: The NSW TrainLink network in and around the South East and Tablelands.

# 3.4  Greater modal choice

The limited public transport coverage in the region is a significant challenge for customers who are not able to travel by private vehicle. The 2016 Census reports that 3.5 per cent of South East and Tablelands households do not own a private vehicle[5]. Households that do not have access to a private vehicle can find accessing employment, medical, educational, recreational, and cultural activities extremely challenging.

There are limited public transport options to connect customers to their nearest strategic centre, or between centres. The region's low population density means most high-order services require trips to the Global Gateways of Canberra, Greater Sydney, or Wollongong.

Centres along existing NSW TrainLink routes have some options for customers to travel between strategic centres, however, attending tertiary education and medical appointments using these services is not always possible because of the lack of availability, timetable flexibility, and travel time length.

Furthermore, public transport services and the associated infrastructure do not meet the accessibility and safety needs for all customers, including those with disabilities, limited mobility, customers with prams, and non-English speakers.

Travel within centres, villages, and neighbourhoods without using a private vehicle can be difficult because of incomplete walking and cycling networks, limited marked foot crossings and pedestrian refuges. This results in customers walking and riding on roads and uneven surfaces.

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5    Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016

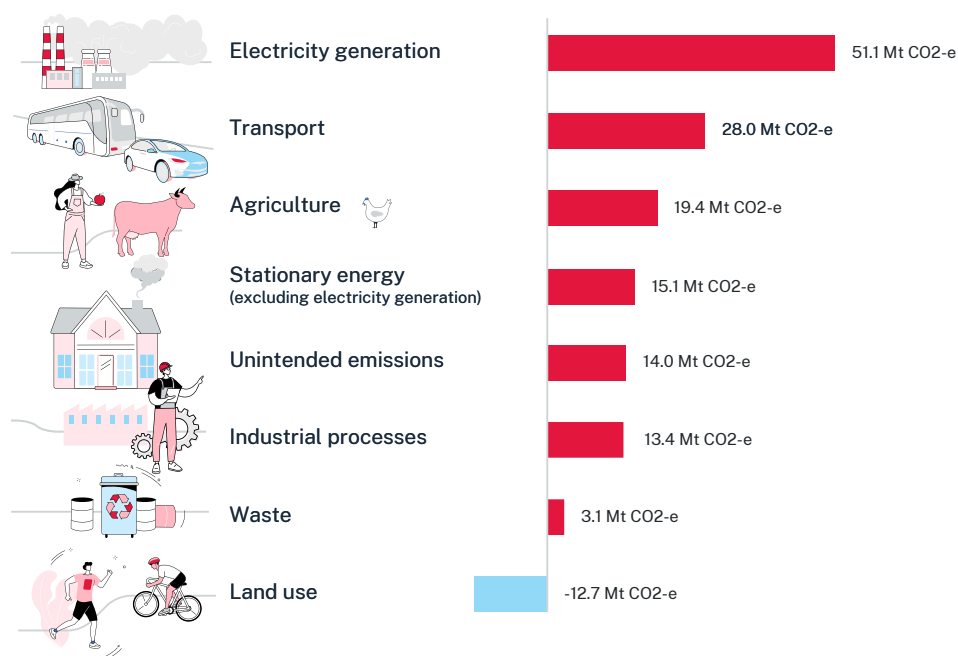| | |
|---|---|
| Electricity generation | 51.1 Mt CO2-e |
| Transport | 28.0 Mt CO2-e |
| Agriculture | 19.4 Mt CO2-e |
| Stationary energy (excluding electricity generation) | 15.1 Mt CO2-e |
| Unintended emissions | 14.0 Mt CO2-e |
| Industrial processes | 13.4 Mt CO2-e |
| Waste | 3.1 Mt CO2-e |
| Land use | -12.7 Mt CO2-e |

Figure 10: NSW emissions by sector in 2017.

## 3.5  A zero-emissions future

In 2017, the transport sector was the second largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in NSW. Transport for NSW supports the NSW Government's goal to reach net zero emissions by 2050 and acknowledges the transport sector will need to play a key role in the transition towards a zero emissions future.

The transition will require all levels of Government, industry, and community to collectively work together to deliver the services and infrastructure necessary to support the greater uptake of zero-emission technology, as well as actively promote the behavioural changes needed to secure a more sustainable future.

Whilst electric vehicles are forecast to reach upfront price parity with traditional combustion engine vehicles in Australia from 2024[6], access to charging infrastructure across the region is currently limited. Furthermore, refuelling opportunities for hydrogen fuel cell vehicles, although currently being trialled in the ACT, do not yet exist in the South East and Tablelands.

Although trips made on foot or bicycle are emissions free, a lack of safe, convenient, and connected pedestrian and cycling infrastructure in urban environments across the South East and Tablelands is currently limiting the uptake of more trips by these modes.

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6    Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020-2030

## 3.6  An evolving freight task

Over the next 20 years, the annual freight task for the South East and Tablelands is projected to increase from 15.2 million tonnes in 2021 to 20.3 million tonnes by 2041, with outbound freight approximately double the inbound freight task, both now and into the future. Key commodities exported from the region include timber, agricultural products, and construction materials, with over 75 per cent of total exports originating from the Local Government Areas of Goulburn Mulwaree and Wingecarribee.
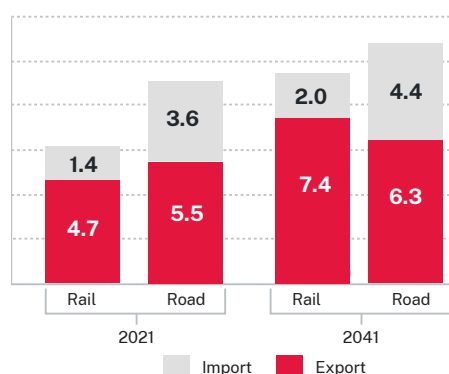


Figure 11: Current and project freight volumes to and from South East and Tablelands (MT/year).

Under existing conditions, goods moved by road are approximately 1.5 times the annual volume moved by rail; however, by 2041 the volume of goods moved by road and rail across the South East and Tablelands is projected to approach parity. Despite this growing regional freight task, existing constraints on the regional road and rail freight networks will make servicing this demand challenging.

The NSW Heavy Vehicle Access Policy Framework outlines the concept of "moving more with less" by increasing the use of High Productivity Vehicles (HPVs). Opportunities for the expanded use of HPVs across the region are currently limited. Whilst the Framework seeks to increase access on key regional road freight corridors for vehicle combinations up to a Performance-Based Standard (PBS) Level 2B vehicle, only the full lengths of the Barton, Federal, Hume, and Monaro Highways are currently accessible to this class of vehicle.

Many east-west road connections in the region are limited to B-double vehicle combinations due to geographic constraints, like Clyde and Brown Mountains on the Kings and Snowy Mountains Highways respectively, as well as asset limitations like Warri Bridge over the Shoalhaven River. The Princes Highway Corridor just south of Nowra through to the intersection with the Snowy Mountains Highway at Bega is also currently restricted to HPV combinations.

From a rail perspective, increased demand to move goods by rail, particularly from the Goulburn Mulwaree and Wingecarribee LGAs, also has the potential to increase conflict between freight and passenger services on the Main South Rail Line.

Figure 12: Current PBS 2B High Productivity Vehicle (HPV) network access.

Driver fatigue was the second highest behavioural contributor to fatal and serious injury crashes in the South East and Tablelands recorded between 2017 and 2021. As such, it is critically important we provide our freight customers with frequent and high-quality rest areas to stop, revive, and survive. Under existing conditions, the Kings, Monaro, and Princes Highways have intervals between heavy vehicle rest areas which make it difficult for drivers to comply with road safety guidance, log book requirements, or simply to find somewhere to rest.

Lastly, increased production from local industries is likely to result in more freight vehicles using the local road network, potentially exposing more first and last mile network limitations. Also, as strategic centres and urban environments expand, freight vehicles and supporting policies will need to be 'fit-for-purpose' and cognisant of place. This will ensure sensitive land uses are effectively protected, and local amenity is preserved.

## 3.7  The visitor economy and seasonal impacts

The regional visitor economy is projected to expand across the South East and Tablelands over the next 20 years. The Snowy Mountains Special Activation Precinct (SAP) is anticipated to create additional demand during the winter months, and support opportunities for year-round tourism across the Snowy Mountains.

Increased travel demand during seasonal peaks presents transport challenges ranging from unpredictable and increased travel times, lack of viable alternatives to

> As populations in Greater Sydney and the ACT increase, this is likely to result in further visitations for the region, exacerbating current challenges.

private vehicle transport, and high parking demand at popular destinations like the NSW Snowfields and the Sapphire Coast beaches and waterways. Wingecarribee and Goulburn Mulwaree's proximity to Greater Sydney make them popular destinations for day-return and weekend visits. As populations in Greater Sydney and the ACT increase, this is likely to result in further visitations for the region, exacerbating current challenges.

Finally, climate change will increase weather variability across the region with more hot days, colder nights, extreme flooding, drought and bushfire events, and sea level rises. Increased weather variability will place greater strain on the transport assets and services, with remote and coastal communities having the largest exposure to disruption during major weather events. Many communities in the region rely on transport corridors across the Great Dividing Range which are often closed due to damage from natural disasters. These closures force affected customers to make significant detours. All transport assets will be required to be designed to accommodate a more volatile climate.

Young township.
Photo: Destination NSW

# 4   The Transport Vision

The 2041 South East and Tablelands transport network provides safe, efficient, and sustainable connectivity with more bespoke multimodal transport solutions to enable all customers to travel to, from, and within the region in the way that is most convenient regardless of age, ability, or income.

The transport network enables successful places for communities with convenient walking, cycling, and micromobility connections to nearby businesses and services which are safe, sheltered and follow the principles of the NSW Movement and Place Framework. The region's strategic centres, towns, and villages are vibrant places which prioritise pedestrians and cyclists and encourage residents and visitors to spend time in them.

Our customers' whole lives are better connected with improved public transport services between and within the region's strategic centres. The secure collection of additional transport data, which is then easily viewed by customers, supports informed decision-making and enables personalised, on-demand services to fill connectivity gaps in the network.

Customers are also better connected to neighbouring cities and regions, such as the Illawarra-Shoalhaven and Western Sydney, with more rapid transport options, including faster rail connections between Canberra and Greater Sydney that provide an attractive alternative to private vehicle and air travel. Residents living near these connections enjoy living in rural NSW with easy access to the benefits of more dense cities.

The region enjoys seamless connectivity with the nation's capital, Canberra. Improved public transport and point-to-point service integration, and active transport infrastructure, connect the two communities stronger than ever before.

Investments in road and waterway safety, supported by safe speeds and behavioural programs, make the road and waterway networks safer and contribute towards NSW's goal of zero fatal and serious injuries on roads by 2050 and waterways by 2056.

Electric vehicles make up most new car sales and the expanded hydrogen refuelling and electric vehicle charging networks support convenient, emissions-free travel throughout the region. Furthermore, all buses and trains are replaced with full-electric, hydrogen, or hybrid alternatives.

The resolution of freight constraints on the road and rail networks enables more efficient vehicles to move 'more with less'. Domestic and international supply chains are also strengthened which allows the region's economy to continue growing with sales into new markets by making use of more efficient connections to Canberra and Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airports and the seaports at Eden and Port Kembla.

The more efficient, safer, and sustainable transport network supports the Snowy Mountains Special Activation Precinct and other similar initiatives to realise the region's ambition of becoming a year-round visitor economy. Temporary transport responses, including additional public transport and traffic management, enable the network to meet seasonal travel demands at locations like Jindabyne during winter and the Sapphire Coast in summer.

Lastly, the transport network is better equipped to meet the increasing challenges introduced by a changing climate and the resulting increased frequency and intensity of damaging weather events. More resilient assets reduce the likelihood of disruptions and improved network management systems enable customers to make informed journey planning in real-time.

# 4.1  Achieving the Transport Vision

Achieving the regional transport vision for the South East and Tablelands will not only require the implementation of identified initiatives, but also the application of guiding principles, support of state-wide and region-specific targets, and a conscious ability to align with supporting and complementary transport and land use-focused strategic plans and strategies.

It will also need to be underpinned by a robust governance structure and open and collaborative partnerships between Transport for NSW and key stakeholders including NSW Government Agencies, Local Government, the ACT Government, industry, and community representatives.

Further detail on how the regional transport vision will be achieved is outlined in the following sections.
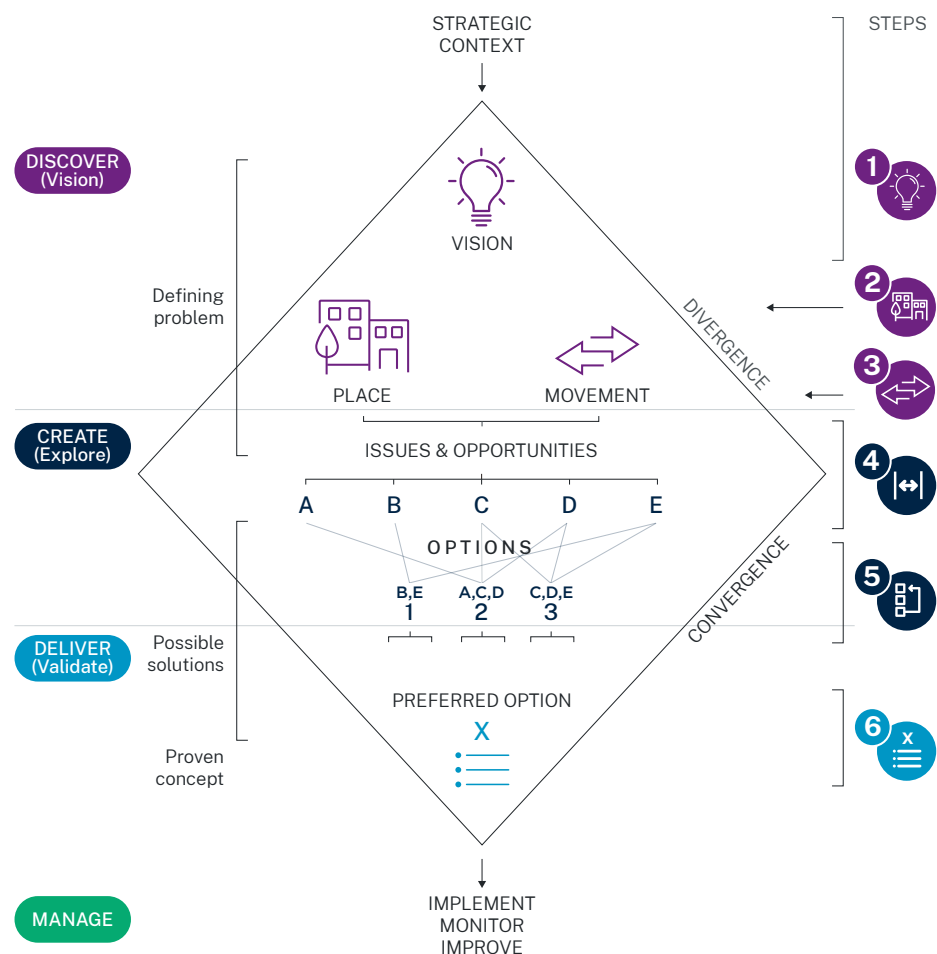
Figure 13: Movement and Place Approach.

# 4.2  Guiding principles

The implementation of the objectives and initiatives identified in this plan will be actively cognisant of, and align with, the following guiding transport planning principles.

## NSW Movement and Place Framework

The NSW Movement and Place Framework (the 'Framework') is a multi-disciplinary, place-based approach to the planning, design, delivery, and operation of transport networks. It recognises and seeks to optimise the network of public spaces formed by roads and streets and the spaces they adjoin and impact.

The Framework considers the whole street including footpaths, from property line to property line and considers the needs of customers both moving through, and spending time, in a place.

Our roads and streets are key public spaces for our communities – places where people spend time and socialise – enabling activities that add vitality to neighbourhoods. Aligning movement and place in the design of roads and streets can give users of all ages and abilities better, safer, and healthier travel options while creating appealing places where people want to live.

The objective is to achieve roads and streets that:

- Contribute to the network of public space within a location, where people can live healthy, productive lives, meet each other, interact, and go about their daily activities.

- Are enhanced by transport and have the appropriate space allocation to move people and goods safely and efficiently and connect places together.

Successful application of the Framework will ensure the streets and roads of the South East and Tablelands effectively balance the movement of people and goods, with the amenity and quality of places, as well as support a vibrant and accessible region in which to live, work, play, and visit.

## Road User Space Allocation

While the NSW Movement and Place Framework seeks to balance the movement of people and goods with the amenity and quality of places, Transport for NSW's Road User Space Allocation Policy, and the supporting Road User Space Allocation Procedure, outlines objectives, principles, and processes to safely and equitably allocate road space to different priority user groups.

As shown in Figure 14, the approach considers all road users through a modal hierarchy lens, with the needs of people spending time in a place to be considered first, followed by pedestrians, cyclists, public transport, freight, and point-to-point services. The needs of private vehicles are considered last.
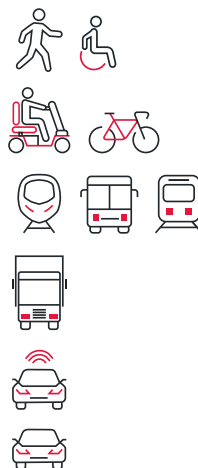


Figure 14: Order of modal priority when allocating road space by user.

By implementing the Road User Space Allocation Policy, and supporting Procedure, Transport will ensure the allocation of road user space:

- Is a deliberate exercise that considers the place, function, and movement requirements of roads.

- Achieves the strategic intent and outcomes as set out in state-wide and regional strategies and plans.

- Considers the limited amounts of space available to accommodate competing user need.

- Can be adjusted to respond to specific circumstances.

Successful application of the Road User Space Allocation Policy, and supporting Procedure, will ensure the streets and roads of the South East and Tablelands consider the needs of all road users collectively, prioritises the needs of the most vulnerable customers first, and helps ensure the transport network positively reflects the aspirations of each place.
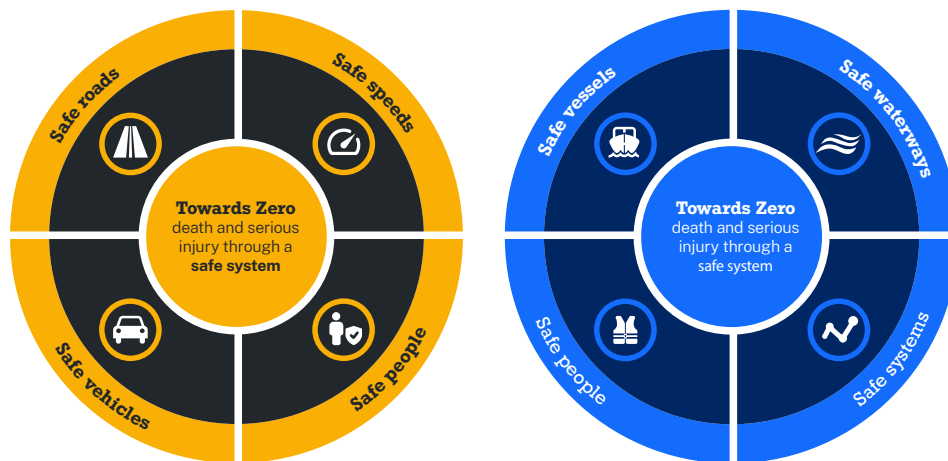
Figure 15: Components of the Safe System approach.

## Safe System approach

The Safe System approach is a key initiative in achieving the NSW Government's "Towards Zero" goal of zero fatal and serious injuries on our roads by 2050 and on our waterways by 2056. The approach recognises that people do make mistakes and aims to ensure that when an incident occurs, the various pillars of each system prevent any fatal or serious injuries. The approach is underpinned by the following principles:

- People are fallible and make mistakes.

- Roads and waterways, and the vehicle that use them, must provide an environment that minimises the likelihood of an incident occurring and reduce the forces or danger if an incident does happen.

- Safety is a shared responsibility.

Application of the Safe System approach will be a key tool in delivering a safer transport network for the South East and Tablelands.

The 2026 Road Safety Action Plan and Maritime Safety Plan 2017-2021 outline in greater detail how the NSW Government will move the state 'Towards Zero'.

## Regional Connected Network

The Regional Connected Network approach to public transport service planning will deliver an integrated public transport network for all Regional NSW. The approach seeks to better meet the everyday travel needs of regional communities through connecting people with, and between, a network of regional cities and centres.

Under the approach, public transport services will be designed to allow for same day return travel, and at times which meet the needs of regional communities to facilitate access to essential services and employment.

As shown in Figure 16, the approach adopts a tiered approach aimed at connecting cities and centres, connecting regional towns and villages, and connecting neighbourhoods.

Using the Regional Connected Network approach as the framework to inform future service patterns for public transport across the South East and Tablelands will considerably improve modal connectivity for customers accessing the Global Gateways of Canberra and Greater Sydney, and travel both between and within regional cities, strategic centres, towns and villages across the region.
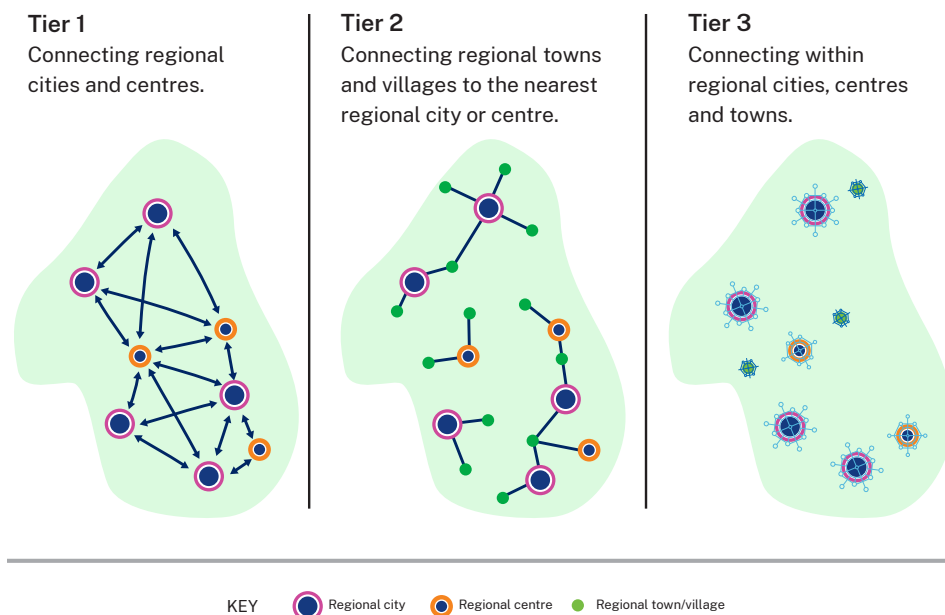
**Tier 1**
Connecting regional cities and centres.

**Tier 2**
Connecting regional towns and villages to the nearest regional city or centre.

**Tier 3**
Connecting within regional cities, centres and towns.

KEY  ● Regional city  ● Regional centre  ● Regional town/village

Figure 16: Regional Connected Networks will help meet the everyday needs of regional communities and businesses.

## 15-Minute Neighbourhoods

The 15-Minute Neighbourhood principle prioritises people's ability to meet everyday needs within their local community, whilst creating thriving and healthy communities. This means prioritising place making, walking, cycling, micromobility, and last mile freight within the neighbourhood context to support 15-minute access to the services customers use day-to-day.

At an average walking speed, a 15-minute walk will cover around one kilometre. Cycling and micromobility can increase this distance to five kilometres or more. With the appropriate infrastructure, policies, and planning, many more journeys to local shops and facilities in regional neighbourhoods can be made without a private vehicle.

Application of the 15-Minute Neighbourhood principle to regional cities, strategic centres, towns, and villages across the South East and Tablelands

will help reduce reliance on private vehicle transport, support improved health outcomes, lower emissions, and better connect people with their local communities and neighbourhoods.

## NSW Government Customer Service Commitments

The NSW Government aspires to become the world's most customer-centric government by 2030. This means Transport for NSW must continue to place the customer at the centre of everything we do. People who use our services and infrastructure will receive high-quality experiences regardless of where they travel and what mode of transport they use.

Transport for NSW will use the feedback and insights customers share to better understand and anticipate their needs, and meaningfully engage them to deliver better services. We will also prioritise investment and decisions on the things that matter most to our customers.

## Planning with Country

Transport for NSW recognises the work needed to achieve reconciliation across all communities in NSW and is embedding a Planning with Country approach into future project development to demonstrate this commitment to reconciliation. By considering Country early in the planning process, Transport for NSW will deliver projects that protect the health and wellbeing of Country, First Nations communities and, by addition, all communities.

Adopting a Planning with Country approach, Transport for NSW is committed to working with local First Nations community groups, Local Government, and NSW Health to understand and better plan for the transport needs of First Nations communities. Drawing on strategies and guidelines, such as the Aboriginal Art Strategy and the Signposting Country Technical Manual, we will investigate ways in which to respectfully incorporate local stories and art into our transport network.

Embedding a Planning with Country approach considers the following principles:

- Starting with Country – Prioritise the health and wellbeing of Country, and First Nations people's relationship to Country, including their cultural protocols.

- Knowledge and awareness – Fostering a strong knowledge base of how best to implement culturally appropriate projects that respect the diversity of First Nations cultures.

- Partnership and collaboration – Support First Nations people to continue their practices of land and water management, and support capacity building within First Nations and non-First Nations communities, including across Government.

- Meaningful engagement – Seek expert guidance on the best way to engage with First Nations communities and organisations.

- Sustaining connection – Ensure continued consultation with First Nations stakeholders, establish on-going relationships, and record areas of concern for consideration as projects progress.

## Influence of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has seen major changes in our way of life, such as working from home becoming the 'new normal' for many. The rapid expansion of working from home opportunities, as well as increased reliance on telehealth services and online shopping, combined to reduce the need to travel during the pandemic. The rise of localism, a greater appreciation of green space and the need for more walkable and cycle-friendly neighbourhoods also increased in importance.

Moving beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, future transport planning in NSW will need to be cognisant of these changes to travel behaviour. The new initiatives in this Plan are to be consistent with present evolving wants and needs, rather than pre-pandemic thinking and approaches.

The NSW Government's 'Streets as Shared Spaces' program, responded to this need and enabled communities and governments to experiment and test changes to streets and places.

Trialling temporary, low-cost solutions can be used to test permanent changes before, or instead of, modelling. These solutions can be made permanent or reversed once their effectiveness is evaluated.

## NSW Public Space Charter

The NSW Public Spaces Charter has been developed to support the planning, design, management, and activation of public spaces in NSW. It identifies ten principles for quality public space, developed through evidence-based research and discussions with public space experts and community members. The Charter is also built on the following three core values that resonate strongly across all the principles:

- Connection with Country
- Equity and inclusion
- Community engagement.

The NSW Government has developed the Charter to support everyone in NSW to have access to high-quality public space that allows them to enjoy and participate in public life.

The Charter aligns with other government and non-government strategies and policies, including the Future Transport Strategy for creating great places, where people can easily access a diversity of public spaces to enjoy the outdoors, interact with others, or just relax.

## 4.3 Applicable targets

### State-wide 'Towards Zero' goal

Transport for NSW is committed to help NSW achieve the ambitious 'Towards Zero' goal of zero fatalities and serious injuries on roads by 2050 and on our waterways by 2056. This is particularly relevant for Regional NSW, where the fatality rate is four times higher than the comparative metropolitan rate.

As a supporting plan of the Future Transport Strategy, this Plan will both support, and contribute to, the state-wide 'Towards Zero' goal.

### State-wide 'Net Zero' goal

The NSW Government's Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020-2030 is the foundation for NSW's goal to reach net zero emissions by 2050 and halve emissions by 2030, compared to 2005 levels.

This Plan will support and contribute to the state-wide emissions reduction goals. This will be achieved by identifying the infrastructure necessary to support greater uptake of zero-emissions technology, as well as promote behavioural change to transition customers to more sustainable and healthy transport modes across the South East and Tablelands.

> Transport for NSW is committed to help NSW achieve the ambitious 'Towards Zero' goal of zero fatalities and serious injuries on roads by 2050 and on our waterways by 2056.

## Region-specific mode share target

Data compiled from the 2016 Census[7] showed that private vehicle transport was the dominant mode of choice for journey-to-work trips across the South East and Tablelands at around 91 per cent, followed by active transport (walking and cycling combined) at just over five per cent and public transport at two per cent.

By 2041, we want to see almost one in every five (18 per cent) trips made by walking, cycling or public transport. This step change in travel behaviour will require collaborative coordination between Transport for NSW and Local Government, as well as key NSW Government Agencies like DPE, NSW Health and the NSW Department of Education. Furthermore, it will need to be underpinned by a comprehensive suite of infrastructure and service improvements, and complementary education campaigns.

**Mode share targets 2016 and 2041**



2% to 5%

Public transport mode share

5% to 8%

Walking mode share
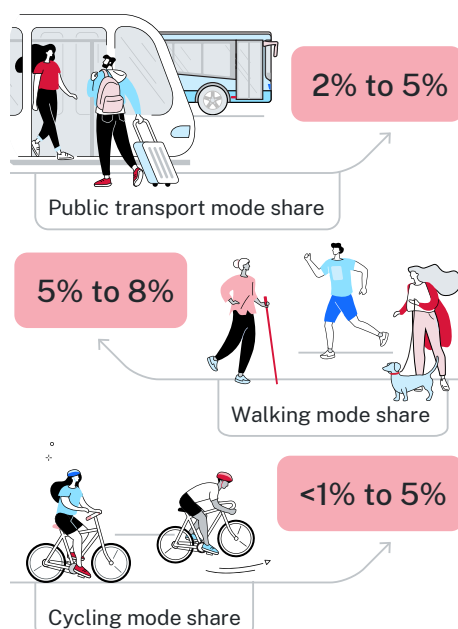
<1% to 5%

Cycling mode share

Figure 17: Mode share targets for the South East and Tablelands.

# 4.4  Complementary plans and strategies

The Draft Plan has been developed as a transport-focused response to the land use aspirations presented in the Draft South East and Tablelands Regional Plan 2041, and other key complementary plans and strategies developed by NSW Government Agencies, Local Government, the ACT Government, and the Canberra Region Joint Organisation.

## Local Strategic Planning Statements (LSPS)

Local Strategic Planning Statements (LSPS) have been prepared for all nine LGAs across the South East and Tablelands. Each LSPS presents a 20-year vision for local land-use, the special character and values that are to be preserved and how change will be managed into the future.

## Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS)

Developed by the Department of Regional NSW, Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS) are the primary evidence base to identify and prioritise NSW Government investment and policy decisions to support regional economic development. Each strategy is designed around one or more LGA that form a functional economic region.

For the South East and Tablelands, REDS have been developed for the Far South Coast, Queanbeyan-Palerang, Snowy Monaro, South West Slopes, Southern Tablelands, and Wingecarribee areas.

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7    2016 Census data was used as the 2021 Census data was still being finalised at the time of writing and the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on the 2021 data is not yet fully understood.

### Draft South East and Tablelands Regional Plan 2041

The Department of Planning and Environment's Draft South East and Tablelands Regional Plan 2041 (the 'Draft Regional Plan') outlines the vision and direction for future land use, housing, employment, infrastructure, environment, and community needs over a 20-year time horizon.

The Draft Regional Plan also provides a platform for targeted investment to diversify industries, create a renewable energy future, and provide housing for a growing resident and visitor population across the South East and Tablelands.

### ACT Transport Strategy 2020

The ACT Transport Strategy 2020 sets out the ACT Government's framework for planning and investment in transport for the next 20 years. The vision laid out is one for a world class transport system that supports a compact, sustainable, and vibrant city. The strategy considers cross-border connectivity with key South East and Tablelands neighbours, such as Queanbeyan-Palerang and Yass Valley.
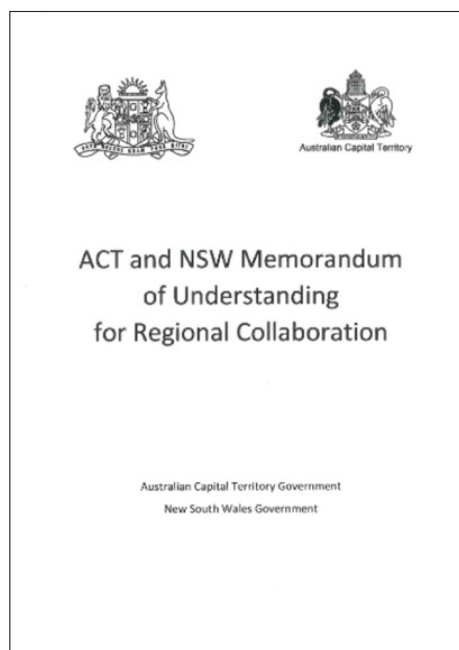
### ACT-NSW Memorandum of Understanding for Regional Collaboration 2020-21

The Australian Capital Territory and New South Wales Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Regional Collaboration is a commitment to strengthen collaboration between the two jurisdictions. The MOU sets out the framework within which the ACT and NSW Governments will work together in the delivery of targeted services, economic outcomes, and implementation of policy to cross border communities.
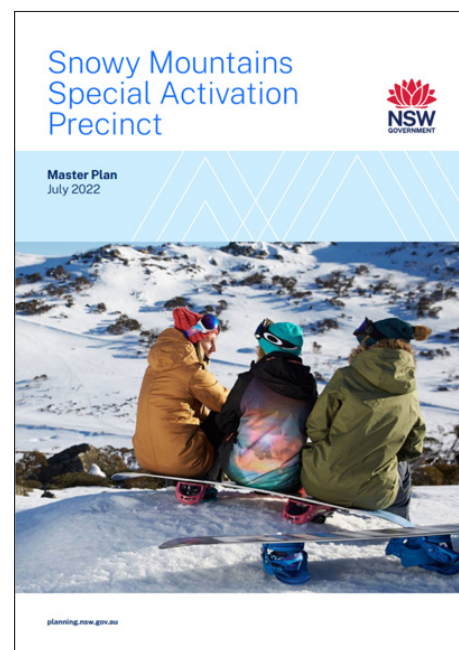
### Snowy Mountains Special Activation Precinct Master Plan

Developed by the Department of Planning and Environment, the Snowy Mountains Special Activation Precinct Master Plan outlines the 40-year strategic plan for the Precinct and how it will be realised. It focuses on ways to increase year-round tourism to grow the regional economy, create year-round employment opportunities, and attract more visitors to the region from Australia and around the world.

### Canberra Region Joint Organisation Resilience Blueprint

The Canberra Region Joint Organisation is currently developing a Resilience Blueprint to help the region better respond and recover from natural disasters. Once complete, Transport for NSW will work collaboratively with the Canberra Region Joint Organisation to identify opportunities to align this Plan with the Blueprint.

# 5  The Transport Response

Responses to each of the key transport challenges are explored in the following sections.

Couple visiting
Crookwell NSW.
Photo: Destination NSW

We believe providing our customers with regionally bespoke solutions based on Future Transport Strategy's three strategic outcomes will overcome the Transport Challenges outlined earlier in the Plan. The following sections outline nine objectives, divided between the three strategic outcomes, with corresponding initiatives, which will provide the blueprint for realising the transport vision for the South East and Tablelands.

## 5.1  Connecting our customers' whole lives

### Objective 1 – Connectivity is improved across the South East and Tablelands

Transport for NSW has adopted the Regional Connected Network approach to deliver an integrated public transport network for all areas of Regional NSW. The intent of the Regional Connected Network approach is to:

- Implement services where they currently do not exist across regional boundaries, and between cities and strategic centres.

- Increase the number of services where they are currently limited to allow for same day return journeys.

- Improve the timing and ease of use of services between strategic centres and neighbouring towns and villages to make public transport a more attractive option.

- Support the region's visitor economy.

**Tier 1 connections** – between capital cities, regional cities, and strategic centres – include connections between the Batemans Bay, Bega, Cooma, Goulburn, Queanbeyan, the Southern Highlands Cluster, and Yass. It also includes connections to key destinations outside the region, including Canberra, Greater Sydney, Wollongong, Wagga Wagga, and Cowra.

**Tier 2 connections** – between strategic centres and nearby towns and villages – includes connections such as between Cooma and Jindabyne, Bega and Merimbula, and Goulburn and Crookwell.

**Tier 3 connections** – within cities, centres, and towns – includes connections like the services which operate within Queanbeyan and the Southern Highlands Cluster.

Figure 19 illustrates the connections across the region which we will investigate for improvements. Improvements may include additional services throughout the week and modifications to existing routes and timetables to improve efficiency, similar to the 16 Regional Cities Services Improvement Program which is delivering improved bus connectivity within Queanbeyan. The full list of proposed connections for investigation have been separated into the following themes:

- Improved Tier 1 connections between centres and beyond the region

- Improved Tier 2 connections between centres, towns, and villages

- Improved Tier 3 connections within centres

**Improved Tier 1 connections between centres and beyond the region**

Transport for NSW will investigate multimodal connectivity improvements between the region's strategic centres and beyond the region to the Global Gateway cities of Canberra, Greater Sydney, and Wollongong, as well as the nearby regional city of Wagga Wagga and strategic centre of Cowra.

These investigations will include:

- Improvements to bus and coach services

- Medium and long-term improvements to NSW TrainLink rail services between Sydney and Canberra, including the Southern Highlands Line.

- Continued investigation of the Southern Inland Fast Rail route from Greater Sydney to Canberra with connections including Goulburn and Canberra. The future Fast Rail network is being investigated along four key corridors linking Sydney to Newcastle and Port Macquarie, Wollongong and the Shoalhaven, and the Central West. In addition to improving inter-regional connectivity, a key benefit of the Fast Rail network will be significant improvements in regional connectivity along those corridors and providing opportunities to improve the existing heavy rail network by allowing the increased frequency and time-of-day servicing of regional centres.

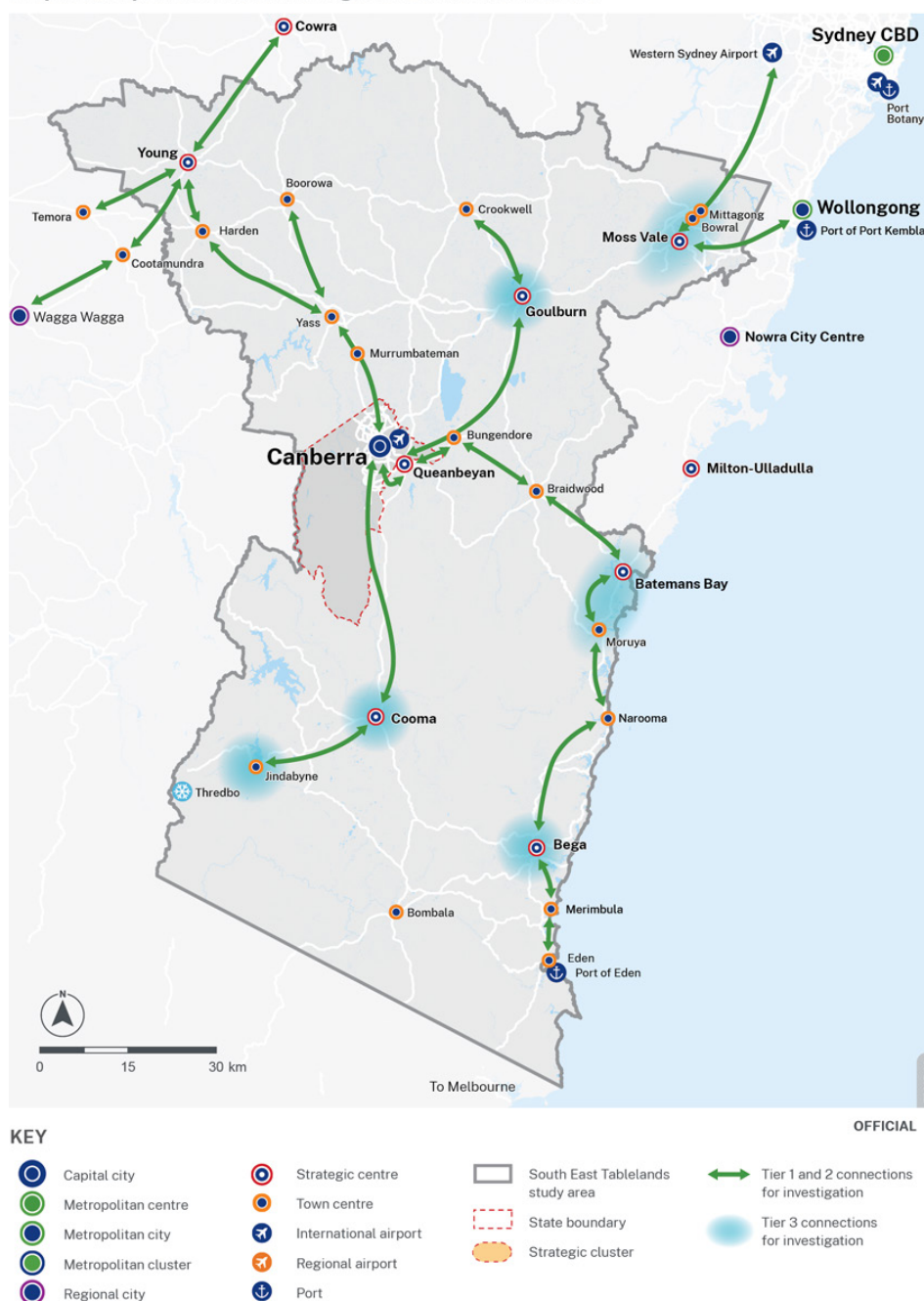Figure 18: The South East and Tablelands Regional Connected Network.

Figure 19: Public transport connections to be investigated for improvements.

Specifically, we will investigate the feasibility of more frequent public transport connections between the Southern Highlands Cluster and Greater Sydney and Wollongong. This will improve modal choice for those Wingecarribee residents travelling to neighbouring cities for employment, educational, and recreational opportunities.

We will also investigate opportunities to improve connectivity between the ACT and neighbouring communities in Goulburn Mulwaree, Queanbeyan-Palerang, Snowy Monaro, and Yass Valley local government areas(LGA) through the following initiatives:

- Transport will work with the Department of Regional NSW and the NSW Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner to establish a NSW-ACT Cross-Border Transport Working Group. The group will work to further understand the challenges customers face when completing cross-border journeys and work to implement solutions.

- Transport will work with the ACT Government and other stakeholders to improve the consistency of public transport ticketing systems across borders as well as the coordination of timetables between services.

- Investigate improvements to existing public transport connections between:
  – Goulburn and Canberra
  – Bungendore and Canberra
  – Cooma and Canberra
  – Young, Yass, Canberra, and Queanbeyan
  – Yass, Murrumbateman, and Canberra.

- Investigate the feasibility of a future rapid public transport link between Queanbeyan and the ACT.

- Transport will also continue to work with Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council on investigations to provide a new connection for Googong and South Jerrabomberra residents into the ACT. The investigation will also include public transport and walking and cycling connectivity.

Transport will continue to monitor the road connections between Victoria and the South East and Tablelands, including road safety trends, and undertake improvements as required.

Where appropriate, Transport will also look to improve public transport connections between the region's strategic centres and the new Western Sydney Airport and existing airports at Sydney, Canberra, Merimbula, Moruya, and Cooma.

Transport will also consider the integration of emerging aviation technologies, such as electric vertical take-off and landing aircraft, across the region, supporting improved connectivity and enhancing regional resilience by sustainable advances in air transport.

**Improved Tier 2 connections between centres, towns, and villages**

Strategic centres are hubs for employment, retail, health, education, and cultural activities for their surrounding towns and villages. Transport for NSW recognises the critical role transport plays in connecting smaller towns and villages to their nearest centre, and the benefits of improved modal choice for regional customers.

Kings Highway, Queanbeyan.
Photo: Transport for NSW

To improve connections between different centres and their nearby towns and villages, we will investigate public transport improvements between each of the strategic centres and their satellite communities. The objective of these improvements is to improve day return service frequencies between the smaller towns and villages and their nearest strategic centres.

Examples of connections which will be investigated include:

- Batemans Bay, Braidwood, Bungendore, and Queanbeyan
- Bega, Merimbula, and Eden
- Canberra, Cooma, and Jindabyne
- Goulburn and Crookwell
- Goulburn, Bungendore, and Queanbeyan
- Young, Harden, and Boorowa.

## Improved Tier 3 connections within centres

Transport for NSW is currently delivering the 16 Regional Cities Services Improvement Program in Queanbeyan, which will see public transport improvements within the centre and improve the attractiveness and appeal of using public transport for short journeys. We will investigate the feasibility of extending this type of service improvement to the following strategic centres:

- Batemans Bay
- Bega
- Cooma
- Goulburn
- Southern Highlands Cluster
- Young.

Initiatives Table 1: Connectivity is improved across the South East and Tablelands.

|    | Initiative | Project phase | Timeframe |
|----|-----------|---------------|-----------|
| 1  | 16 Regional Cities Services Improvement Program – Queanbeyan | In Delivery | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 10 | Plan connection between Googong, South Jerrabomberra, and the ACT | In Planning | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 15 | NSW-ACT Cross-Border Transport Working Group | In Planning | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 23 | Fast Rail Improvements – Sydney to Canberra | For Investigation | Medium (5-10 yrs) |
| 28 | Improved public transport connectivity within the strategic centres of Batemans Bay, Bega, Cooma, Goulburn, the Southern Highlands Cluster and Young | For Investigation | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 29 | Improved public transport connectivity between centres | For Investigation | Medium (5-10 yrs) |
| 30 | Improved public transport connectivity to the Global Gateways of Greater Sydney and Wollongong | For Investigation | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 31 | Improved public transport connectivity to the Global Gateway of Canberra | For Investigation | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 32 | Improved day return service frequencies between towns and villages and their nearest strategic centre | For Investigation | Medium (5-10 yrs) |
| 36 | Medium-term rail improvements between Macarthur and Canberra | For Investigation | Short (0-5 yrs) |

Cycle lane in Crookwell.
Photo: Transport for NSW

## Objective 2 – Multimodal mobility supports end-to-end journeys

Most South East and Tablelands customers are reliant on private vehicles to travel as they are not provided with more attractive or competitive options. To improve liveability within the region, we will provide a wider range of travel options, offering customers the ability to choose the transport mode which best meets their needs. To achieve this, we will provide a multimodal transport system where different services are seamlessly integrated and are supported by strong walking and cycling networks and robust micromobility, point-to-point, and public transport services.

Transport for NSW will work collaboratively with DPE and local governments to investigate opportunities to improve walking and cycling connectivity and create 15-minute neighbourhoods. The investigations will include the Batemans Bay, Bega, Cooma, Goulburn, Jindabyne, Merimbula, Queanbeyan, the Southern Highlands Cluster, Yass, and Young. We will also
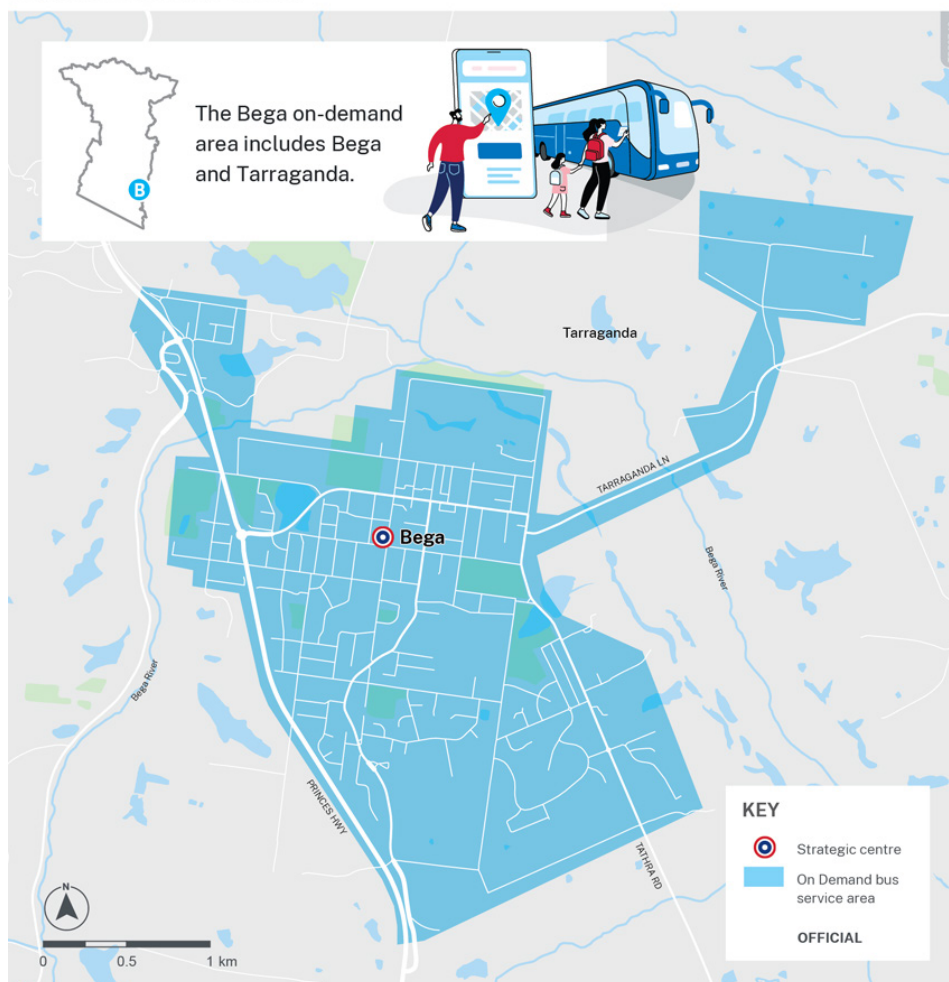
**Bega On Demand bus service**



Figure 20: Current on-demand service coverage for Bega.

partner with local governments to deliver positive active transport outcomes through the NSW Government's 'Get NSW Active' Program.

We will also look to improve walking and cycling connectivity through the NSW Government's Walking and Cycling Program, in addition to influencing new developments to provide strong walking and cycling infrastructure from day one. Furthermore, we will encourage local governments to support the inclusion of secure bicycle parking and end-of-trip facilities, such as change rooms, showers, and personal storage lockers, in all new commercial, residential, and mixed-use developments to further support sustainable transport options across the region.

We will pay specific attention to investigating opportunities to improve walking and cycling connections between Queanbeyan and the ACT so customers from both jurisdictions have the option to walk or ride rather than drive. We will do so by working collaboratively with
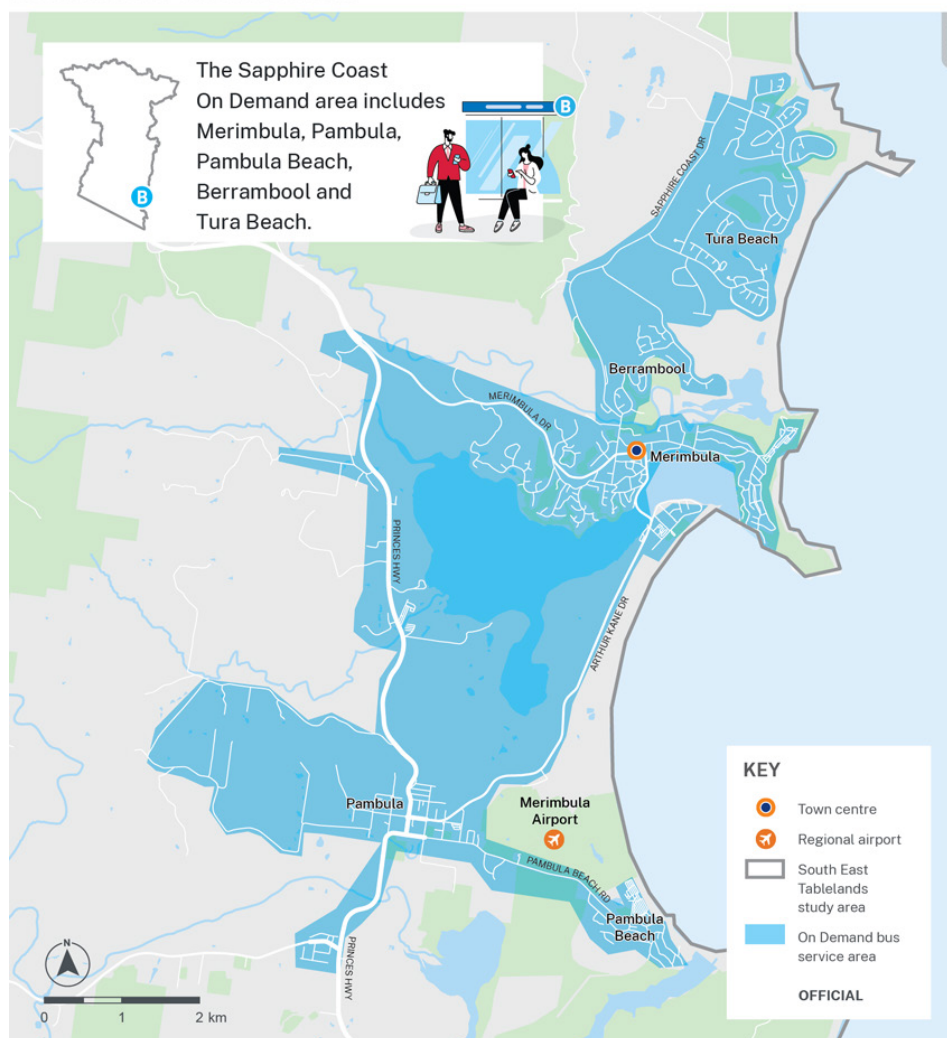
Figure 21: Current on-demand service coverage for Merimbula.

Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council and the ACT Government. The proposed NSW-ACT Cross-Border Transport Working Group will also consider opportunities for further investigation.

Transport for NSW will work with local governments to investigate opportunities to enable the use of more micromobility technologies in the South East and Tablelands, such as participating in the NSW Government's trial of shared e-scooters. New micromobility technologies, such as e-scooters, offer customers an affordable, convenient, and sustainable mode of travel for short trips within centres, and can help visitors see and experience more of the region up close and support the visitor economy. However, the need to balance these benefits with the known risks of e-scooters to their riders and other road users, particularly pedestrians, remains paramount.
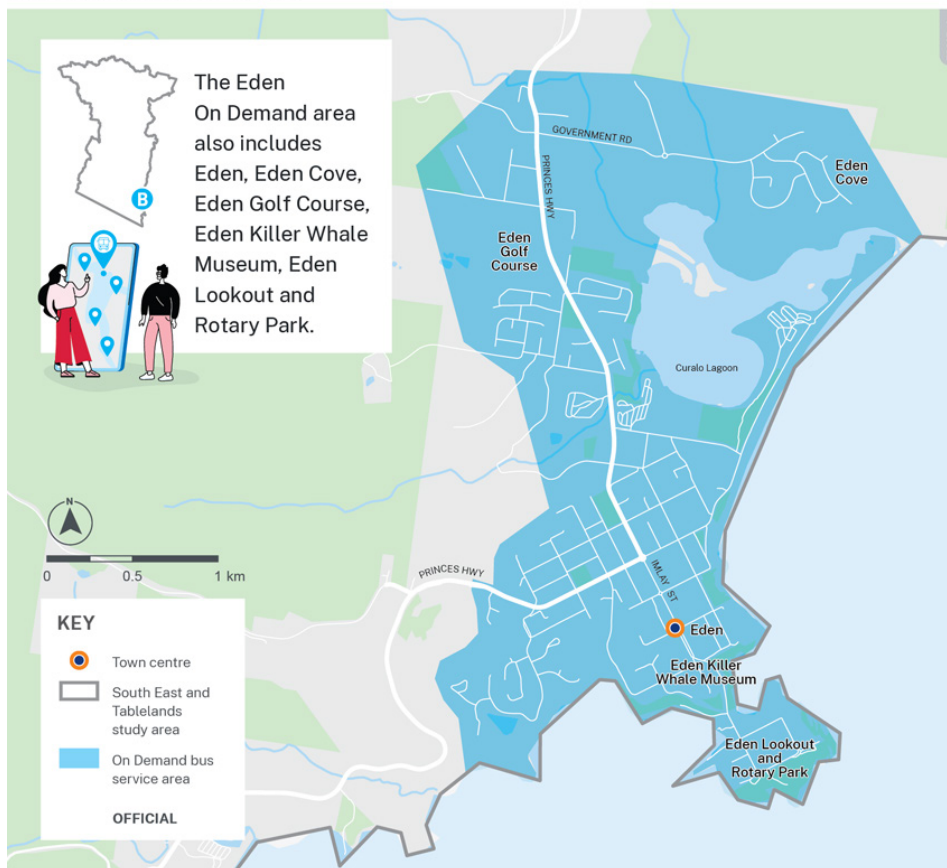
**Eden On Demand bus service**



Figure 22: Current on-demand service coverage for Eden.

Every morning across the region, around one in five cars are driving students to school[8]. To help improve liveability for families and to give customers a more sustainable and healthier alternative, Transport for NSW  will work collaboratively with the NSW Department of Education, independent schools, and local governments to address barriers to walking and cycling to and from schools across the South East and Tablelands.

For journeys not suitable for walking, cycling, and other micromobility modes, we will investigate opportunities to make the point-to-point and public and community transport services integrate more seamlessly through initiatives including:

- Investigating opportunities to complement traditional, timetabled services with on-demand and community transport services. Transport for NSW is already involved in trials of similar services at various locations within the Sapphire Coast and between Batemans Bay and Canberra and will take the experience gathered from these trials to provide similar services across the region.

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8    Active Transport to School, TfNSW website.

**On Demand bus route**
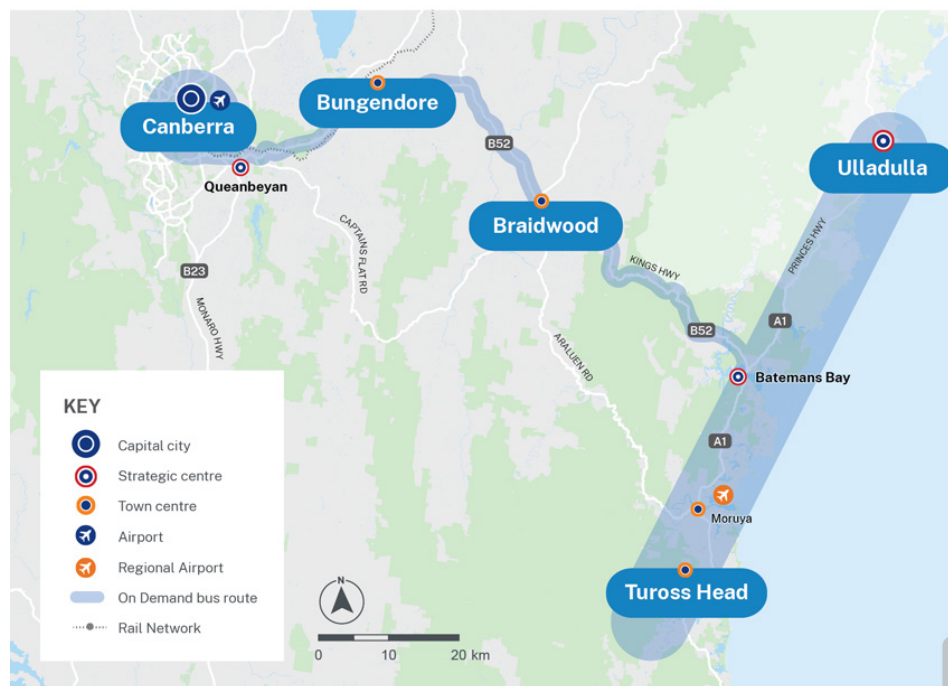


**South Coast to Canberra On Demand service**

The privately operated on demand service operating between Canberra and the South Coast connects residents along the route to medical appointments, work trips, education, shopping, and Canberra Airport. It also connects Canberra residents with towns and tourist destinations along the South Coast. Customers request a service between the hours of operation and the service picks up and drops them off at their front door for a fee. Fares can be made for one-way or return services.

Figure 23: Current on-demand service coverage for between Canberra and the South Coast.

- On-demand services would bridge gaps in customers journeys, such as connecting a customer from their home to the timetabled public transport network or connecting a customer at a time of day or week when other services are not operating. These options could also provide customers with more culturally appropriate services.

- Investigating opportunities to expand contactless payment options on public transport services throughout the region so customers can benefit from tap-on and tap-off convenience.

Initiatives Table 2: Multimodal mobility supports end-to-end journeys.

| | Initiative | Project phase | Timeframe |
|---|---|---|---|
| 22 | Electronic public transport payment options for Regional NSW | For Investigation | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 33 | Improved cross-border active transport connectivity between Queanbeyan and the ACT | For Investigation | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 38 | Investigate opportunities to participate in shared e-scooter trials | For Investigation | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 40 | Strengthen 15 Minute Neighbourhoods in Strategic Centres | For Investigation | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 43 | Investigate opportunities to complement traditional, timetabled services with both on-demand transport and community transport services | For Investigation | Life of Plan |
| 45 | Work collaboratively with Local Government to ensure new developments and growth areas include walking and cycling infrastructure, bicycle parking and end-of-trip facilities | For Investigation | Life of Plan |
| 48 | Work collaboratively with NSW Department of Education, independent schools, and Local Government to address barriers to walking and cycling to school | For Investigation | Life of Plan |

## Objective 3 – Equitable, accessible, and secure transport for all

Barriers to transport can affect people's ability to access employment, education, health, social, leisure, and cultural activities and services. To truly connect the whole lives of all customers we need to plan, deliver, and operate with inclusivity built into our transport system to ensure everyone has access to the services they need, regardless of age, ability, socio-economic, or personal circumstances. This is an important outcome to achieve for the South East and Tablelands as the population is growing and the proportion of customers aged over 65 years of age is increasing.

To achieve this goal, Transport for NSW will undertake the following:

• Transport Access Program (TAP) upgrades are being installed at Moss Vale Station and similar improvements are planned for Queanbeyan Station. These upgrades will provide upgraded footpaths and kerb ramps, new 'Kiss and Ride' and taxi zones, additional accessible parking spaces, improved amenities, as well as improvements to wayfinding and lighting.

• Investigate opportunities to expand contactless payment options on public transport services throughout the region so customers can benefit from tap-on and tap-off convenience.

• Support improved public transport connectivity with better end-of-trip facilities at public transport interchanges, such as secure bike storage and better bus stop amenities.

• The existing rail fleets which operate on the Southern Highlands, Sydney to Canberra, and Sydney to Melbourne lines are in the process of being replaced by an all-new fleet of trains as part of the Regional Rail project. The new trains will provide more comfortable seating, electronic device charging facilities, and greater storage for customers. They will also provide improved accessibility, including accessible toilets on every train, wider doors, priority seating, and accessible help points. Customer safety will also be improved with new CCTV systems.

• Engage and collaborate with the community, local governments, and public transport and point-to-point operators to provide safe and culturally appropriate transport services for all customers.

• Work with local governments, point-to-point operators, and community transport providers to investigate expanding the availability of wheelchair accessible on-demand transport in strategic centres across the South East and Tablelands.

Initiatives Table 3: Equitable, accessible, and secure transport for all.

|    | Initiative | Project phase | Timeframe |
|----|------------|---------------|-----------|
| 5  | Moss Vale Town Centre Improvements and Station Upgrade | In Delivery | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 18 | Queanbeyan Station Upgrade | In Planning | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 22 | Electronic public transport payment options for Regional NSW | For Investigation | Short (0-5 yrs) |

## Objective 4 – Our transport networks are safe

Transport is committed to achieving zero fatal and serious injuries on South East and Tablelands roads by 2050 and waterways by 2056. Improving safety requires a combination of targeted initiatives which consider how people, vehicles, infrastructure, policy, and technology work together to create a safe system.

Across the South East and Tablelands, Transport for NSW will apply the Safe System approach to proactively ensure the transport system is progressing towards being safer for all customers and those who operate and maintain the network. Successfully applying and embedding the Safe System approach to prevent trauma will result in beneficial flow on effects for the performance of the whole network, including minimising disruptions caused by incidents. A safe transport network is a vital part of providing connectivity for all customers.

### Safe roads

One of Transport's roles when implementing the Safe System approach is to provide safe roads which reduce the likelihood of a crash occurring, and when one does occur, reduce the severity of injury for everyone involved. As such, Transport will continue to provide safe road infrastructure by installing more widened medians, safety barriers, motorcycle safety barrier underrun, audio-tactile line marking, safe intersections, overtaking lanes, and many other safety treatments. We will also continue to work with local governments to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists by installing traffic calming devices, separated walking and cycling lanes and infrastructure that improves safety and prioritises pedestrians at key desire lines.

Transport for NSW will continue to utilise the Saving Lives on Country Roads (SLCR) initiative to proactively support a safer road network across the South East and Tablelands. Around three-quarters of deaths on high-speed country roads in NSW involve a vehicle leaving its path. The SLCR initiative is designed to address the two key contributors to these types of crashes – high-risk curves and driver fatigue. A complete list of current projects, both in delivery and in planning, can be found on the NSW Government Towards Zero website https://towardszero.nsw.gov.au/saving-lives-on-country-roads.

Transport will continue to work with local governments to identify additional opportunities in the future, such as ensuring every council has access to a Road Safety Officer to better resource their road safety planning and integration in their local communities.

We will continue to undertake regular road safety assessments of key routes in the region as part of integrating road safety features and requirements into broader transport infrastructure planning and delivery to ensure early and ongoing assessment and management of road safety risks. This includes working with local governments to undertake reviews on Local and Regional roads.

The SLCR initiative and future Route Safety Reviews will support the road safety outcomes already in delivery and in planning for the Barton, Kings, Monaro, and Princes Highways as part of their respective Upgrade Programs. We will also undertake investigations for road safety improvements on the Illawarra and Snowy Mountains Highways.

Transport will also investigate opportunities to consolidate property accesses and adjoining roads along the Hume Highway to better provide safe left and right-turn facilities onto the corridor.

**Safe speeds**

To ensure speed zones improve safety outcomes for all customers, we will commission speed zone reviews across the South East and Tablelands to determine the appropriateness of existing speed limits. Where it is established the speed zone is not appropriate for the local environment, we will work collaboratively with partners, including local governments, to ensure speed limits are adjusted accordingly. This includes investigating areas of high pedestrian and cyclist activity where lower speeds would considerably improve safety and enhance place and local amenity.

A recent local example of where a speed zone has been adjusted is the introduction of a 30 km/h High Pedestrian Activity Area on Shore and Ford Streets in Moruya. The reduced speed limit makes it safer for pedestrians to shop and enjoy the town, especially during the busy summer holidays, while also reducing noise and pollution.

**Safe waterways**

Boating fatalities and serious injuries continue to occur on NSW waterways, leading to drowning and trauma incidents that are almost always preventable. On NSW waterways, we seek to reduce fatalities and serious injuries by 30 per cent by 2025-26 (based on 2019-21 average levels). This is reflected in the following targets:

- Fewer than 13 fatalities on NSW waterways in 2025-26

- Fewer than 218 serious injuries on NSW waterways in 2025-26

To achieve these trauma reduction targets, we will continue to investigate evidence-based options that reduce trauma with a focus on the wearing of lifejackets to reduce often preventable fatalities and improve other safety outcomes. Failure to wear a lifejacket is the biggest contributor to maritime fatalities. To promote safe behaviours, we will use a combination of education and regulation, working alongside the boating community, our safety partners, and across government to help grow the maritime safety culture.

Table 2: Number of fatal and serious injury boating incidents in South East and Tablelands by LGA between 2017 and 2021

| LGA | Fatal incidents | Serious Injury incidents |
|---|---|---|
| Bega Valley | 1 | 2 |
| Eurobodalla | 3 | 4 |
| Snowy Monaro Regional | - | 1 |
| Upper Lachlan Shire | 1 | 1 |
| Yass Valley | - | 1 |

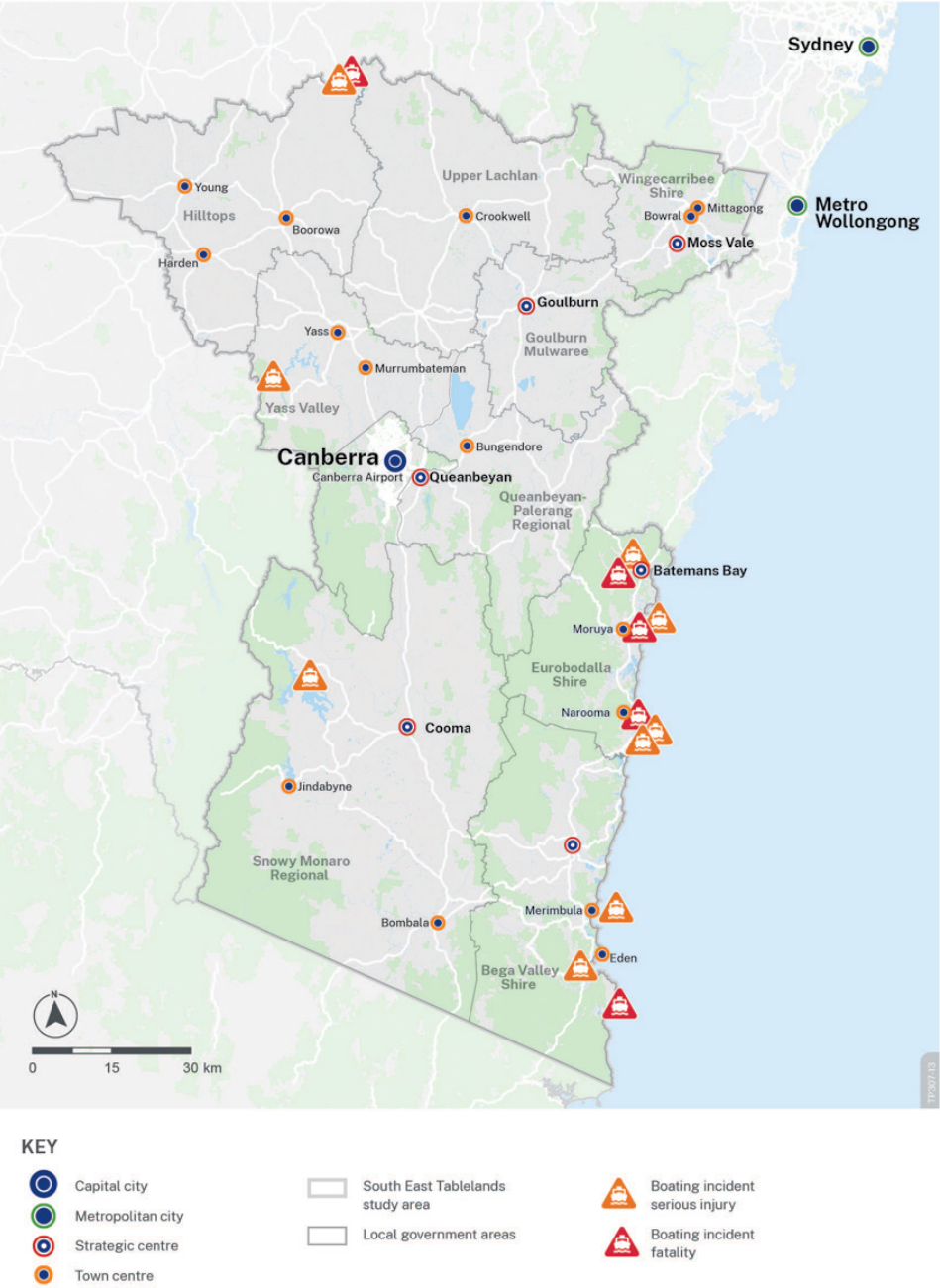**Boating incidents 2017 –2021**



Figure 24: Location of fatal and serious injury boating incidents recorded in South East and Tablelands between 2017 and 2021.

The NSW Government is also committed to improving safe access for all boaters on the State's waterways. We have already made significant investments to improve boating access, infrastructure and amenities, dredge navigable waterways, and install navigation aids across the state including on the NSW South Coast.

We will continue to deliver in these areas through programs such as the Maritime Infrastructure Stimulus and Boating Now programs consistent with the NSW Maritime Infrastructure Plan.

**Safe people**

Providing the right education is vital for equipping people to make safe decisions on the region's roads and waterways. Transport for NSW takes a whole of life approach to safety education which includes education programs for customers first learning to operate a car or boat and those who already have licences but may need a refresh of the rules or current safety advice.

Transport for NSW has many projects across the region underway or in planning to address behavioural issues as part of the 'Towards Zero' initiative. The Local Government Road Safety Program (LGRSP) is one such program that proactively funds educational and behavioural initiatives to address local road safety priority issues such as drink and drug driving, fatigue, speeding, pedestrian safety, and occupant restraint use.

In addition to the existing Driver Licensing Access Program (DLAP), Transport will investigate opportunities to tailor educational programs to support First Nations peoples who are more likely to face barriers to completing the Graduated Licencing Scheme because of limited access to supervising drivers and roadworthy vehicles. Many road safety factors are also disproportionately higher for First Nations peoples compared to other road users, including drink driving, fatigue, speeding, non-use of seatbelts, unauthorised driving, and unregistered driving. Improvements will include more culturally and linguistically inclusive content designed for First Nations and other diverse communities.

We are also developing plans to provide more suitable locations to stop, revive, and survive. Planning activities include assessing the region's existing provision of rest areas on key corridors and prioritising locations for new or improved facilities. Corridors being investigated include the Kings, Monaro, and Princes Highways.

Initiatives Table 4: Our transport networks are safe.

| | Initiative | Project phase | Timeframe |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | Barton Highway Upgrade Program – Stage 1: NSW/ACT Border towards Murrumbateman | In Delivery | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 4 | Kings Highway Upgrade Program | In Delivery | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 8 | Barton Highway Upgrade Program – Stage 2: Kaveneys Road to Murrumbateman | In Planning | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 13 | Monaro Highway Upgrade Program | In Planning | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 16 | Princes Highway Upgrade Program – Safety upgrades between Burrill Lake and Batemans Bay | In Planning | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 19 | Regional Rest Stop Provision and Accessibility | In Planning | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 20 | Barton Highway Upgrade Program – Murrumbateman to Hume Highway | For Investigation | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 25 | Hume Highway Vehicle Access Review | For Investigation | Medium (5-10 yrs) |
| 27 | Illawarra Highway Safety and Reliability Improvements | For Investigation | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 41 | Snowy Mountains Highway Safety and Reliability Improvements – Cooma to Bega | For Investigation | Medium (5-10 yrs) |
| 42 | Princes Highway Upgrade Program | For Investigation | Life of Plan |
| 44 | Work collaboratively with Local Government to ensure posted speed limits safely respond to potential risks in the road environment, are cognisant of place, and consider both activities and land use beyond the pavement | For Investigation | Life of Plan |

Transport for NSW zero emissions bus.

# 5.2  Successful places for communities

### Objective 5 – Transition to net zero greenhouse gas emissions and environmentally sustainable transport

Transport is committed to supporting the NSW Government's target of 50 per cent emissions reduction by 2030 (over 2005 levels) and net zero emissions by 2050. Reducing the transport network's emissions will help reduce the impact of the changing climate, protect the region's diverse natural environment, and make centres nicer places for people to spend time in.

We aim to achieve the reduction in greenhouse emissions by decarbonising operations within the South East and Tablelands region through the following initiatives:

- Transport will work with the NSW Office of Energy and Climate Change and industry partners to provide a robust electric vehicle charging network which builds on the facilities already available to customers on many of the region's roads, including the Barton, Federal, Hume, Illawarra, Monaro, and Princes Highways. Key road corridors will be prioritised, along with businesses and popular tourist destinations. The NSW Government is working with industry providers to install more than 500 new fast and ultrafast EV charger bays across NSW over the next 24 months, with many to be located in the South East and Tablelands[9]. The NSW Government has set a target to ensure chargers are no more than 100 kilometres apart on major roads and highways across NSW.

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9    NSW supercharges EV rollout | NSW Government

## Providing improved public transport services and more comprehensive walking and cycling infrastructure will make leaving the private vehicle at home a feasible option for more customers.

- The NSW and Victorian Governments have each invested $10 million to implement the Hume Hydrogen Highway – a joint initiative to install at least four hydrogen refuelling stations along the Hume Highway by 2026 to support the future use of hydrogen-powered vehicles on this critical north-south corridor.

- The new Regional Rail Fleet, which will replace existing passenger trains on the Southern Highlands, Sydney-Melbourne, and Sydney-Canberra lines, will be powered by a diesel-electric hybrid system which will allow the fleet to run on overhead power when operating on electrified sections of the train network.

- As part of medium-term rail improvements on the Sydney-Melbourne and Sydney-Canberra rail lines, we will investigate the feasibility of extending the electrification of the Main South Rail Line beyond Macarthur.

- Transport's Zero Emissions Buses program is in the process of transitioning the entire NSW fleet of over 8,000 buses to zero emissions electric powered buses. This will also reduce noise in centres and provide smoother journeys for customers.

Providing improved public transport services and more comprehensive walking and cycling infrastructure will make leaving the private vehicle at home a feasible option for more customers. As trips by walking and cycling are essentially emissions free, this would also result in reduced greenhouse gas emissions and move us closer to our net zero goal.

To achieve the mode share target of 18 per cent of trips made by walking, cycling, and public transport by 2041, the 'Providing for Walking and Cycling in Transport Projects Policy' requires every project funded by Transport must include provision for walking and cycling within the core scope of the project. The policy recognises walking and cycling are integral to our transport system, enabling access to key destinations including public transport, and enhancing places.

Initiatives Table 5: Transition to net zero greenhouse gas emissions and environmentally sustainable transport.

|  | Initiative | Project phase | Timeframe |
|---|---|---|---|
| 11 | EV Fast Charging Network | In Planning | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 26 | Hume Hydrogen Highway | For Investigation | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 36 | Medium-term Rail Improvements between Macarthur and Canberra | For Investigation | Short (0-5 yrs) |

Crookwell Wind Farm, the first grid connected wind farm in Australia.
Photo: Destination NSW

## Objective 6 – Transport infrastructure makes a tangible improvement to places

How Transport designs and builds assets directly affects the amenity of places where people live, work, and visit. We seek to provide successful places to support thriving and healthy communities. One way we aim to achieve this outcome is by creating 15-minute neighbourhoods in centres, towns, and villages throughout the region.

The 15-minute neighbourhood concept aims to provide an environment which supports the travel culture, including walking, cycling, and micromobility modes for short trips and which connect seamlessly with public transport for longer distance travel.

We will continue to work with Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council to deliver the Queanbeyan CBD Transformation Strategy which will improve the accessibility and appeal of the Queanbeyan CBD for pedestrians.

We will also partner with local governments to deliver improved walking and cycling connectivity to facilitate places for pedestrians to spend their time in. This includes working to ensure positive walking and cycling outcomes are included as part of the design process for new developments, including key regional developments such as the South Jerrabomberra and Googong residential and jobs precincts, Snowy Mountains Special Activation Precinct, and Southern Highlands Innovation Park.

An example of a recent collaboration includes the NSW Government's Streets as Shared Spaces Program project on Auburn Street, Goulburn with Goulburn Mulwaree Council. Trial intervention projects such as this provide tangible improvements to town centres by trialling new street furniture and lighting and provide more space for pedestrians and businesses by reallocating on-street parking for outdoor dining and activity areas.

Transport for NSW is also working to make town centres nicer places for people to spend their time in by improving pedestrian safety and reducing noise and air pollution through the redirection of traffic onto alternate routes. Projects in planning or identified for investigation include:

· As part of the Princes Highway Upgrade Program, planning work is underway to identify an alignment for a bypass of Moruya which would remove through traffic from Moruya town centre.

· Transport for NSW is supporting Wingecarribee Shire Council with the planning of the Moss Vale Bypass project which would reduce traffic through Moss Vale and provide improved connectivity to the Southern Highlands Innovation Park.

· Transport is planning a new road south of Jindabyne to link with Kosciuszko Road at both ends and intersect with Barry Way at its centre. The project will allow for pedestrians and cyclists to be more highly prioritised in Jindabyne.

· Transport will also investigate the feasibility of new connections onto the Hume Highway, including at the Old Hume Highway in Welby and at the North Goulburn Interchange, to prevent vehicles needing to travel through nearby centres.

Transport will engage with First Nations communities, representative groups, and Local Aboriginal Land Councils to incorporate First Nations heritage and culture into transport projects. Together, we will identify opportunities to celebrate the deep culture and heritage through art and messages on transport routes across the region. Initiatives could include dual signposting of place names, embedding First Nations art and culture into projects, and installing 'Welcome to Country' signage at transport gateways.

Transport will also work with local governments to activate maritime and foreshore precincts to attract more visitors and private investment while also providing improved infrastructure and amenities for boaters.

## Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council, Monaro Lanes - Your High Street Program

The Monaro Lanes Project transformed two pedestrian laneways that act as key connectors to Queanbeyan's high street bringing vibrancy to the space with historical and cultural theming, distinctive lighting, and an open-air art gallery. The laneway upgrades have significantly increased day and night usage of the space with improved safety and comfort. To enhance the benefit of the investment through the 'Your High Street' Program, Council plan to activate the laneways through coffee carts and hole-in-the-wall style hospitality, live music, and an evolving program of new art in the lightbox gallery.

## Objective 7 – Transport is resilient and adaptable to shocks and stresses

Disruptions to the South East and Tablelands transport system impact customers, local communities, and the region's economy. Events like the 2019-20 Black Summer bushfires and recent floods have shown the region's communities are becoming increasingly vulnerable to severe natural hazards. To minimise the exposure of the transport network to these disruptions, effective planning must consider all potential risks in combination with strategies for mitigation, response, and recovery.

Transport infrastructure is critical for local communities during the response stage of a disaster to provide safe evacuation of residents and passage for emergency teams. The region's transport network plays an important role in providing supplies to isolated communities as well as ensuring communities and governments can 'build back better'. All of Transport for NSW's infrastructure projects incorporate the 'build back better' approach to better manage disruptions and minimises the social, economic and connectivity impacts on communities and businesses.

In the South East and Tablelands region, Transport for NSW is delivering and planning initiatives which provide a more resilient transport network that is better capable of serving customers in times of emergency. These include:

• The Nelligen Bridge Replacement project which will provide a new two-lane bridge on the Kings Highway over the Clyde River at Nelligen and is expected to be opened to traffic by late-2023. The new bridge will provide a safe and reliable crossing for motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists with a 100-year design life.

• Planning and investigations for the Princes Highway Upgrade Program will improve safety and efficiency of the corridor between Jervis Bay Road and the Victorian Border offering reliable and safe access during emergency situations and improved capability of protecting communities from bushfires and flooding.

• Other infrastructure projects which are considering how 'infrastructure for resilience' can be provided are the Barton, Kings, and Monaro Highway Upgrade Programs, and the Illawarra and Snowy Mountains Highways Safety and Reliability Improvements for future investigation.

• Continuing to develop, invest in, and deploy operational technologies across the region to enable real-time monitoring of network conditions to then inform customers. Transport recently updated Live Traffic NSW so local governments can share real-time information on traffic conditions, road incidents, and major events. Bega Valley is one of 22 local governments across NSW which have been given access, with the remaining local governments to receive access throughout 2023[10].

Lastly, strengthening the local road, rail, bus, and active transport networks will improve the adaptability and resilience of the transport network and provide customers with viable alternative transport options during network disruptions.

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10   https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/oneroad

Initiatives Table 6: Transport is resilient and adaptable to shocks and stresses.

|   | Initiative | Project phase | Timeframe |
|---|-----------|---------------|-----------|
| 2 | Barton Highway Upgrade Program – Stage 1: NSW/ACT Border towards Murrumbateman | In Delivery | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 4 | Kings Highway Upgrade Program | In Delivery | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 6 | Nelligen Bridge Replacement | In Delivery | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 8 | Barton Highway Upgrade Program – Stage 2: Kaveneys Road to Murrumbateman | In Planning | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 13 | Monaro Highway Upgrade Program | In Planning | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 16 | Princes Highway Upgrade Program - Safety upgrades between Burrill Lake and Batemans Bay | In Planning | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 17 | Princes Highway Upgrade Program – Moruya Bypass | In Planning | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 20 | Barton Highway Upgrade Program – Murrumbateman to Hume Highway | For Investigation | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 27 | Illawarra Highway Safety and Reliability Improvements | For Investigation | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 41 | Snowy Mountains Highway Safety and Reliability Improvements – Cooma to Bega | For Investigation | Medium (5-10 yrs) |
| 42 | Princes Highway Upgrade Program | For Investigation | Life of Plan |

# 5.3 Enabling economic activity

## Objective 8 – Freight networks and supply chains are efficient and reliable

The South East and Tableland's freight task is expected to increase over the next 20 years, from around 15.2 million tonnes to around 20.3 million tonnes. The demand on road and rail freight movements will subsequently increase and it's important the network is able to meet the demand so we can continue to enable economic activity in the region.

The South East and Tablelands is strategically positioned to take advantage of multiple freight gateways, including the Port of Port Kembla, the Port of Eden, Canberra Airport, and the new Western Sydney Airport. Optimising freight corridors to these gateways and to other regions of NSW is key to driving economic success in the region.

We aim to achieve this outcome through improved infrastructure which enables more efficient vehicles to use the network and move "more with less", improved rest areas, and the investigation of new freight connections.

### Moving more with less

The South East and Tablelands road network has been designed to meet the needs of semi-trailer and B-double vehicles. As a result, parts of the network are constrained in trying to meet the access demands for newer High Productivity Vehicles (HPVs) or vehicles running at Higher Mass Limits (HML). Removing these constraints would allow more efficient vehicles to meet existing freight demands with fewer trips.

The primary vision for the NSW road network is to permit access for Performance Based Standard (PBS) level 2B vehicles on major roads, where practicable. PBS 2B vehicles include A-doubles and super B-double vehicles which can operate on the existing B-double network with minor infrastructure upgrades while providing up to a 30 per cent payload improvement compared to a traditional B-double[11]. Transport for NSW will undertake investigations to address freight constraints and improve connectivity, including PBS 2B access, on the following corridors:

- Kings Highway, including the Clyde Mountain Pass and Warri Bridge.
- Princes Highway.
- Snowy Mountains Highway, including the Brown Mountain Pass.

This will support the existing PBS 2B access on the Barton, Federal, and Hume Highways.

Furthermore, the vision for the Hume Highway is to support PBS 3A vehicles to travel unimpeded in both directions between industrial precincts from Sydney and Melbourne. To enable this, planning is underway for the upgrade of Sheahan Bridge near Gundagai. This will provide South East and Tablelands industries with increased capacity to move goods along the corridor and may reduce total truck movements.

### Improved rest areas

Driver fatigue is a top contributor to fatal and serious injury crashes in the South East and Tablelands. We have listened to the freight industry and heard there is insufficient or inadequate rest area infrastructure to allow drivers to rest, complete log books, or inspect their vehicle and loads when required. Rest areas will also need to be assessed to ensure they support the larger vehicles we will be enabling on key corridors.

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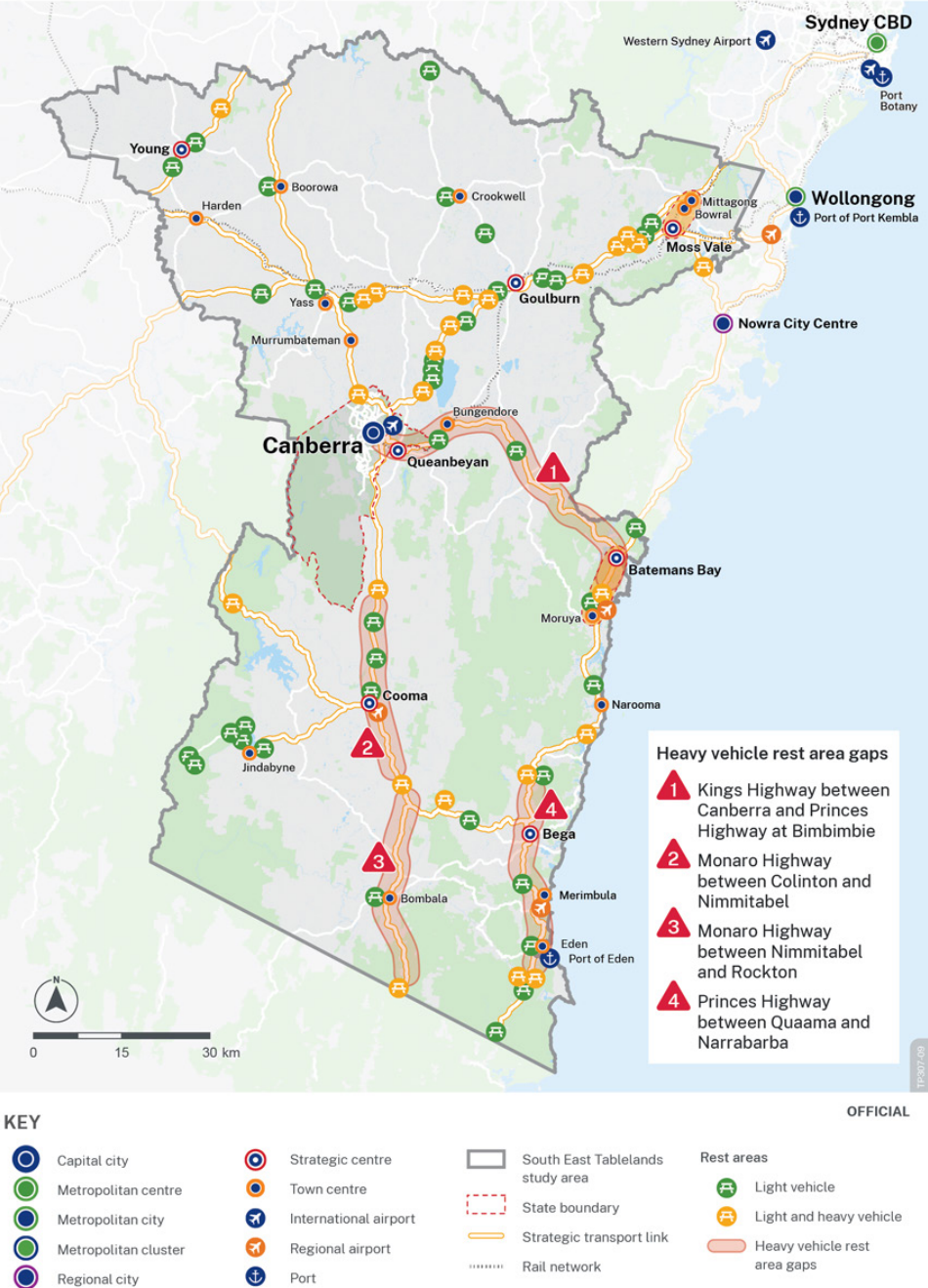11    Moving More with Less – The NSW Heavy Vehicle Access Policy Framework, 2018

Figure 25: Heavy Vehicle rest area gaps in the South East and Tablelands.

Transport will investigate key routes in the South East and Tablelands to identify where improvements to the rest area network are to be prioritised. Corridors to be investigated include the Kings, Monaro, and Princes Highways.

Transport will investigate key routes in the South East and Tablelands to identify where improvements to the rest area network are to be prioritised. Corridors to be investigated include the Kings, Monaro and Princes Highways.

### New freight connections

While optimising existing infrastructure provides many benefits, in some circumstances it is necessary to investigate and implement new freight connections if we are to continue enabling economic growth in the South East and Tablelands.

Investigations will be undertaken for a new rail connection between the Main South Rail Line and the Illawarra. This would provide an additional freight connection to Western Sydney as well as provide improved network resilience and capacity for the Port of Port Kembla. A new connection to Port Kembla would enable South East and Tablelands customers to benefit from the port's planned expansion, which includes a new jobs precinct, more freight terminals, and the establishment of the Port as a potential 'Hydrogen Hub'[12].

Planning for the Blayney to Demondrille Rail Line Reactivation will also provide a new rail freight connection for the region's industry to Cowra and the Central West and Orana. Concept designs are currently underway to support determining the feasibility of reactivating the 179-kilometre line.

Other ways Transport will plan and investigate improving freight connectivity in the region includes:

- Planning to identify an alignment for a bypass of Moruya as part of the Princes Highway Upgrade Program to reduce travel times and provide opportunities to improve the amenity of the town centre.

- Support Wingecarribee Shire Council with the planning of the Moss Vale Bypass project which would provide a more efficient connection to the Southern Highlands Innovation Park and improve amenity for pedestrians in the Moss Vale town centre.

- Investigate new connections onto the Hume Highway, including at Welby and the North Goulburn Interchange, to reduce travel times and provide opportunities to improve the amenity of the Mittagong and Goulburn town centres.

- Working collaboratively with DPE and local governments to ensure key road and rail freight corridors across the South East and Tablelands are protected from incompatible land uses.

- Engaging with local governments and industry to ensure centres are supported with appropriate first-and-last-mile solutions to maximise freight connectivity and efficiency. This will enable continued network access to ensure success of regional centres, towns, and villages and timely delivery of goods to all customers.

12   CSIRO, https://research.csiro.au/hyresource/port-kembla-hydrogen-hub/

Initiatives Table 7: Freight networks and supply chains are efficient and reliable

| | Initiative | Project phase | Timeframe |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | Nelligen Bridge Replacement | In Delivery | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 9 | Blayney to Demondrille Rail Line Reactivation – Concept Design | In Planning | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 14 | Moss Vale Bypass Project | In Planning | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 17 | Princes Highway Upgrade Program – Moruya Bypass | In Planning | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 19 | Regional Rest Stop Provision and Accessibility | In Planning | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 25 | Hume Highway Vehicle Access Review | For Investigation | Medium (5-10 yrs) |
| 34 | Improved Rail Freight Connectivity between Port Kembla and Western Sydney | For Investigation | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 35 | Investigate opportunities to expand the network for PBS Level 2B vehicle combinations on the Kings and Snowy Mountains Highways | For Investigation | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 42 | Princes Highway Upgrade Program | For Investigation | Life of Plan |
| 46 | Work collaboratively with Local Government and DPE to protect key road and rail freight corridors from incompatible land uses | For Investigation | Life of Plan |
| 47 | Work collaboratively with Local Government and industry to ensure places are supported with appropriate first and last mile freight solutions and 'fit-for-purpose' off-street loading facilities | For Investigation | Life of Plan |

## Objective 9 – Transport supports the visitor economy

The South East and Tablelands is home to some of NSW's premier tourism destinations and is a major contributor to the state's visitor economy. It is home to Jindabyne and the Snowy Mountains snowfields, the Southern Highlands, the Sapphire Coast, and parts of the NSW South Coast. The region's visitor economy is projected to grow with NSW Government initiatives such as the Snowy Mountains Special Activation Precinct aiming to make the region a year-round destination for domestic and international visitors and will be a major contributor to fulfilling the state's aim of becoming the premier visitor economy of the Asia Pacific.

Transport will continue to support the NSW Government and the tourism sector to realise this aim through the following series of initiatives:

- We will continue the Jindabyne Snow Bus Trial, which has been running since 2021, to better connect Jindabyne, Perisher, and Thredbo resorts during the popular snow season and to make it easier for all customers to enjoy the Kosciuszko National Park and snowfields. The bus service increases modal choice for customers travelling to the resorts, reduces the demand of providing additional car parking, and makes the trip to the snowfields safer.

- We will investigate opportunities to provide other seasonal public transport services to support visitor economies around the region. These services would provide greater modal choice for customers and would connect popular accommodation locations like caravan parks, motels, and campgrounds with town centres and key visitor destinations like beaches, lakes, and National Parks. The investigation would also consider incorporating community transport into the temporary service plan.

- Transport will work with relevant local governments and DRNSW to investigate the feasibility of repurposing the disused rail lines between 'Goulburn and Crookwell' and 'Queanbeyan and Bombala' as 56- and 208-kilometre rail trails. These rail trails would attract cyclists and hikers to the region and provide an opportunity to explore towns along the former rail line, boosting local economies. We will also work with other local governments and industry to support expanded walking and cycle tourism opportunities across the region, including to find other opportunities to repurpose road and rail assets for active travel.

- Transport will also investigate opportunities to improve public transport connectivity to the Global Gateways of Greater Sydney, Wollongong, and Canberra. These initiatives would aim to make travelling to the South East and Tablelands easier and quicker for customers and increase the number of visitors to the region. Opportunities include more frequent and quicker rail connections, better connectivity to Western Sydney and Canberra Airports, better connectivity to nearby destinations for customers arriving on cruise ships at Port of Port Kembla and Port of Eden, and a Fast

Rail connection between Greater Sydney and Canberra with potential stops in the South East and Tablelands.

- The Draft Regional Plan describes a '24-hour economy' for strategic centres in the region. This includes promoting night-time economies, such as dining out, entertainment, and hospitality. We will work with DPE, local governments, and businesses to provide customers with safe transport connections to support industries which require

24-hour operation. This includes investigating the feasibility of modifications to public transport timetables, expanding the on-demand transport network, and working with point-to-point service operators to ensure customers have a means to travel within strategic centres at all times.

Initiatives Table 8: Transport supports the visitor economy

|  | Initiative | Project phase | Timeframe |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | Jindabyne Snow Bus Trial | In Delivery | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 24 | Goulburn-Crookwell Rail Trail Feasibility | For Investigation | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 30 | Improved public transport connectivity to the Global Gateways of Greater Sydney, Wollongong, and Eden | For Investigation | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 31 | Improved public transport connectivity to the Global Gateway of Canberra | For Investigation | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 37 | Monaro Rail Trail Feasibility | For Investigation | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 39 | Seasonal public transport services to support the visitor economy | For Investigation | Short (0-5 yrs) |
| 49 | Work collaboratively with Local Government and industry to support expanded cycle tourism opportunities | For Investigation | Life of Plan |

Lake Jindabyne,
Jindabyne.

Photo: Destination NSW

# 6  Initiatives

The Draft Plan has identified 49 initiatives which will help propel the South East and Tablelands transport network towards the transport vision. To provide greater clarity as the Draft Plan transitions into the implementation phase, the 49 initiatives have been split by project phase, time period, and responsibility.

Initiatives identified for completion in the short-term are the highest priority items. These initiatives will either be delivered, planned for, or investigated within the next five years. Initiatives identified for completion in the medium-term will be investigated within the next five to ten years, while initiatives with a 'Life of Plan' timeframe represent a commitment for Transport for NSW, local governments, and key stakeholders to work collaboratively as opportunities arise over the next 20 years to accommodate the initiative.

While some initiatives are already in the delivery or planning phases, new initiatives will require further investigation to determine feasibility, as well as ensure

what is progressed for funding is aligned with the regional transport vision for the South East and Tablelands and delivers value for money for the people of NSW.

Transport for NSW will provide status updates every 12 months and undertake a refresh of the Plan every five years. The refresh will consider progress on the initiatives listed in this Draft Plan, as well as identify potential new initiatives that may be necessary to respond to future customer needs, emerging technologies, changing land uses, or new service and/ or infrastructure commitments proposed over the next five years. The refresh will also provide an opportunity to review progress towards the regional transport vision.

## 6.1   Initiatives in delivery

The Draft Plan includes seven initiatives already in delivery. In terms of responsibility for the initiatives already in delivery, Transport for NSW is leading six initiatives and local governments are leading one.

| | Initiative | Time period | Responsibility | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Lead | Support |
| 1 | 16 Regional Cities Services Improvement Program – Queanbeyan | Short (0-5 yrs) | Transport for NSW | |
| 2 | Barton Highway Upgrade Program – Stage 1: NSW/ACT Border towards Murrumbateman | Short (0-5 yrs) | Transport for NSW | Australian Government |
| 3 | Jindabyne Snow Bus Trial | Short (0-5 yrs) | Transport for NSW | |
| 4 | Kings Highway Upgrade Program | Short (0-5 yrs) | Transport for NSW | |
| 5 | Moss Vale Town Centre Improvements and Station Upgrade | Short (0-5 yrs) | Transport for NSW | Wingecarribee Shire Council |
| 6 | Nelligen Bridge Replacement | Short (0-5 yrs) | Transport for NSW | |
| 7 | Streets as Shared Spaces Program – Goulburn | Short (0-5 yrs) | Goulburn Mulwaree Council, | Transport for NSW |

Transport for NSW will provide status updates every 12 months and undertake a refresh of the Plan every five years.

## 6.2  Initiatives in planning

The Draft Plan has identified a total of 12 initiatives in planning. In terms of responsibility, Transport for NSW is leading ten initiatives, local governments are leading two, and DPE is leading one.

| | Initiative | Time period | Responsibility | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | | Lead | Support |
| 8 | Barton Highway Upgrade Program – Stage 2: Kaveneys Road to Murrumbateman | Short (0-5 yrs) | Transport for NSW | Australian Government |
| 9 | Blayney to Demondrille Rail Line Reactivation – Concept Design | Short (0-5 yrs) | Transport for NSW | |
| 10 | Plan connection between Googong, South Jerrabomberra, and the ACT | Short (0-5 yrs) | Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council | Transport for NSW |
| 11 | EV Fast Charging Network | Short (0-5 yrs) | NSW Department of Planning and Environment | Transport for NSW, Industry |
| 12 | Jindabyne Southern Connector Road | Short (0-5 yrs) | Transport for NSW | Department of Regional NSW, Snowy Monaro Regional Council |
| 13 | Monaro Highway Upgrade Program | Short (0-5 yrs) | Transport for NSW | |
| 14 | Moss Vale Bypass Project | Short (0-5 yrs) | Wingecarribee Shire Council | Transport for NSW |
| 15 | NSW-ACT Cross-Border Transport Working Group | Short (0-5 yrs) | Transport for NSW, ACT Government | Department of Regional NSW, NSW Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner |
| 16 | Princes Highway Upgrade Program - Safety upgrades between Burrill Lake and Batemans Bay | Short (0-5 yrs) | Transport for NSW | |
| 17 | Princes Highway Upgrade Program – Moruya Bypass | Short (0-5 yrs) | Transport for NSW | |
| 18 | Queanbeyan Station Upgrade | Short (0-5 yrs) | Transport for NSW | |
| 19 | Regional Rest Stop Provision and Accessibility | Short (0-5 yrs) | Transport for NSW | |

## 6.3   Initiatives for investigation

The Draft Plan has identified a total of 30 initiatives to be investigated over the next 20 years. In terms of responsibility, Transport for NSW will lead the investigation of 21 initiatives, local governments will lead eight initiatives, and DPE will lead one.

| | Initiative | Time period | Responsibility | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | | Lead | Support |
| 20 | Barton Highway Upgrade Program – Murrumbateman to Hume Highway | Short (0-5 yrs) | Transport for NSW | Australian Government |
| 21 | Celebrate First Nations Culture | Short (0-5 yrs) | Transport for NSW | NSW Local Aboriginal Land Councils, Local Government |
| 22 | Electronic public transport payment options for Regional NSW | Short (0-5 yrs) | Transport for NSW | |
| 23 | Fast Rail connection improvenebts – Sydney to Canberra | Medium (5-10 yrs) | Transport for NSW | |
| 24 | Goulburn-Crookwell Rail Trail Feasibility | Short (0-5 yrs) | Goulburn Mulwaree Council, Upper Lachlan Shire council | Transport for NSW, Department of Regional NSW |
| 25 | Hume Highway Vehicle Access Review | Medium (5-10 yrs) | Transport for NSW | |
| 26 | Hume Hydrogen Highway | Short (0-5 yrs) | NSW Department of Planning and Environment | Transport for NSW, Industry, Victorian Government |
| 27 | Illawarra Highway Safety and Reliability Improvements | Short (0-5 yrs) | Transport for NSW | |
| 28 | Improved public transport connectivity within the strategic centres of Batemans Bay, Bega, Cooma, Goulburn, the Southern Highlands Cluster and Young | Short (0-5 yrs) | Transport for NSW | |
| 29 | Improved public transport connectivity between centres | Medium (5-10 yrs) | Transport for NSW | |
| 30 | Improved public transport connectivity to the Global Gateways of Greater Sydney, Wollongong, and Eden | Short (0-5 yrs) | Transport for NSW | |
| 31 | Improved public transport connectivity to the Global Gateway of Canberra | Short (0-5 yrs) | Transport for NSW | ACT Government |

| | Initiative | Time period | Responsibility | |
| | | | Lead | Support |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 32 | Improved day return service frequencies between towns and villages and their nearest strategic centre | Medium (5-10 yrs) | Transport for NSW | |
| 33 | Improved cross-border active transport connectivity between Queanbeyan and the ACT | Short (0-5 yrs) | Transport for NSW | ACT Government, Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council |
| 34 | Improved Rail Freight Connectivity between Port Kembla and Western Sydney | Short (0-5 yrs) | Transport for NSW | |
| 35 | Investigate opportunities to expand the network for PBS Level 2B vehicle combinations on the Kings and Snowy Mountains Highways | Short (0-5 yrs) | Transport for NSW | |
| 36 | Medium-term Rail Improvements between Macarthur and Canberra | Short (0-5 yrs) | Transport for NSW | |
| 37 | Monaro Rail Trail Feasibility | Short (0-5 yrs) | Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council, Snowy Monaro Regional Council | Transport for NSW, Department of Regional NSW |
| 38 | Investigate opportunities to participate in shared e-scooter trials | Short (0-5 yrs) | Transport for NSW | ACT Government, Local Government |
| 39 | Seasonal public transport services to support the visitor economy | Short (0-5 yrs) | Transport for NSW | Local Government, Community transport providers |
| 40 | Strengthen 15 Minute Neighbourhoods in Strategic Centres | Short (0-5 yrs) | Local Government | Transport for NSW |
| 41 | Snowy Mountains Highway Safety and Reliability Improvements – Cooma to Bega | Medium (5-10 yrs) | Transport for NSW | Australian Government |
| 42 | Princes Highway Upgrade Program | Life of Plan | Transport for NSW | Local Government |

| | Initiative | Time period | Responsibility | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Lead | Support |
| 43 | Investigate opportunities to complement traditional, timetabled services with both on-demand transport and community transport services | Life of Plan | Transport for NSW | Local Government, Community transport providers |
| 44 | Work collaboratively with Local Government to ensure posted speed limits safely respond to potential risks in the road environment, are cognisant of place, and consider both activities and land use beyond the pavement | Life of Plan | Transport for NSW | Local Government |
| 45 | Work collaboratively with Local Government to ensure new developments and growth areas include walking and cycling infrastructure, bicycle parking and end-of-trip facilities | Life of Plan | Local Government | Transport for NSW, NSW Government agencies, Industry |
| 46 | Work collaboratively with Local Government and DPE to protect key road and rail freight corridors from incompatible land uses | Life of Plan | Local Government | Transport for NSW, NSW Department of Planning and Environment, Industry |
| 47 | Work collaboratively with Local Government and industry to ensure places are supported with appropriate first and last mile freight solutions and 'fit-for-purpose' off-street loading facilities | Life of Plan | Local Government | Transport for NSW, NSW Government agencies, Industry |
| 48 | Work collaboratively with NSW Department of Education, independent schools, and Local Government to address barriers to walking and cycling to school | Life of Plan | Local Government | Transport for NSW, NSW Department of Education, Independent Schools |
| 49 | Work collaboratively with Local Government and industry to support expanded cycle tourism opportunities | Life of Plan | Local Government | Transport for NSW, Industry |

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