


# Central Coast Regional Plan 2041 Consultation Report

September 2022





# Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Planning and Environment acknowledges that it stands on Aboriginal land. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and we show our respect for Elders past, present and emerging through thoughtful and collaborative approaches to our work, seeking to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to providing places in which Aboriginal people are included socially, culturally and economically.

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Central Coast Regional Plan 2041 Consultation Report

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# Introduction

The *Central Coast Regional Plan 2041* establishes the 20-year strategic land use framework for continued economic growth and revitalisation in one of Australia's most diverse and liveable regions.

The plan responds to the NSW's Government's 5-year review of the *Central Coast Regional Plan 2036*. The review meets statutory requirements while also allowing us to reset priorities in the area through to 2041.

Since the 2036 plan was released in 2016, the NSW Government worked with Central Coast Council, the community and other stakeholders to achieve priority actions. These actions informed the review and include:

- adopting the Gosford City Centre Urban Design Framework and State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP)
- developing the state's first Interim Development Delivery Plan for Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) under the NSW Government's Aboriginal Land Planning Framework
- establishing an Employment Lands Development Monitor and Housing Supply Snapshot.

More recently, legislative amendments have elevated the importance of strategic planning at a regional and local level. These changes required Council to develop a local strategic planning statement.

The statement, alongside our statutory planning audit of 18 planning proposals in the Central Coast between October 2016 and January 2021, informed the review.

The review and the final *Central Coast Regional Plan 2041* were also informed by the feedback received when the draft plan was on public exhibition from 6 December 2021 to 4 March 2022. We consulted widely with the community, Council and other stakeholders during this period.

This report summarises our engagement and consultation process and the feedback received. It overviews the submissions received, key matters raised and our response.

# Engagement program

The draft Plan was released for public feedback for 89 days from 6 December 2021 to 4 March 2022. Its release was supported by our wide-reaching engagement program, which involved:

- online content, including our online interactive engagement hub
- a social media campaign
- an advertising and media campaign, including a media release issued by Parliamentary Secretary for the Central Coast, Adam Crouch
- online workshops.

The final plan responds to feedback from:

- residents, community and interest groups
- business and industry peak bodies
- Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC)
- Central Coast Council
- state agencies.

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## Engagement activities

### Online content

We established an interactive community engagement hub via the Social Pinpoint platform. During the exhibition period, this recorded:

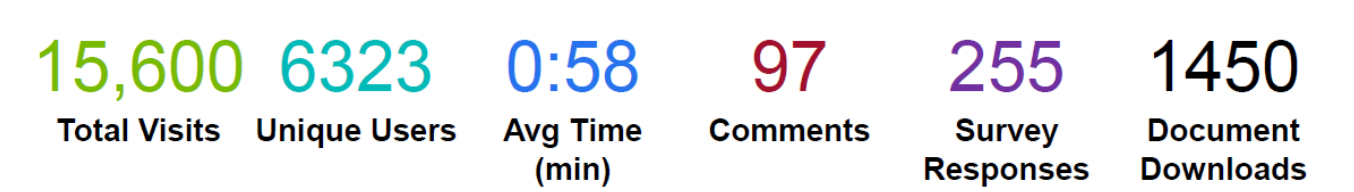


Figure 1: Online engagement hub statistics.

The online engagement hub provided an interactive map and a survey for users to provide feedback. The interactive map represented the Central Coast region, sub-regions and significant areas with ‘information markers’ for users to make comments. People could also drop a category of pin on the map at a location they wished to comment on. The pin categories were general comment, getting around, great places and things we can improve. We received 97 comments via the interactive map.



Figure 2: Word cloud of main topics pinned on the interactive map.

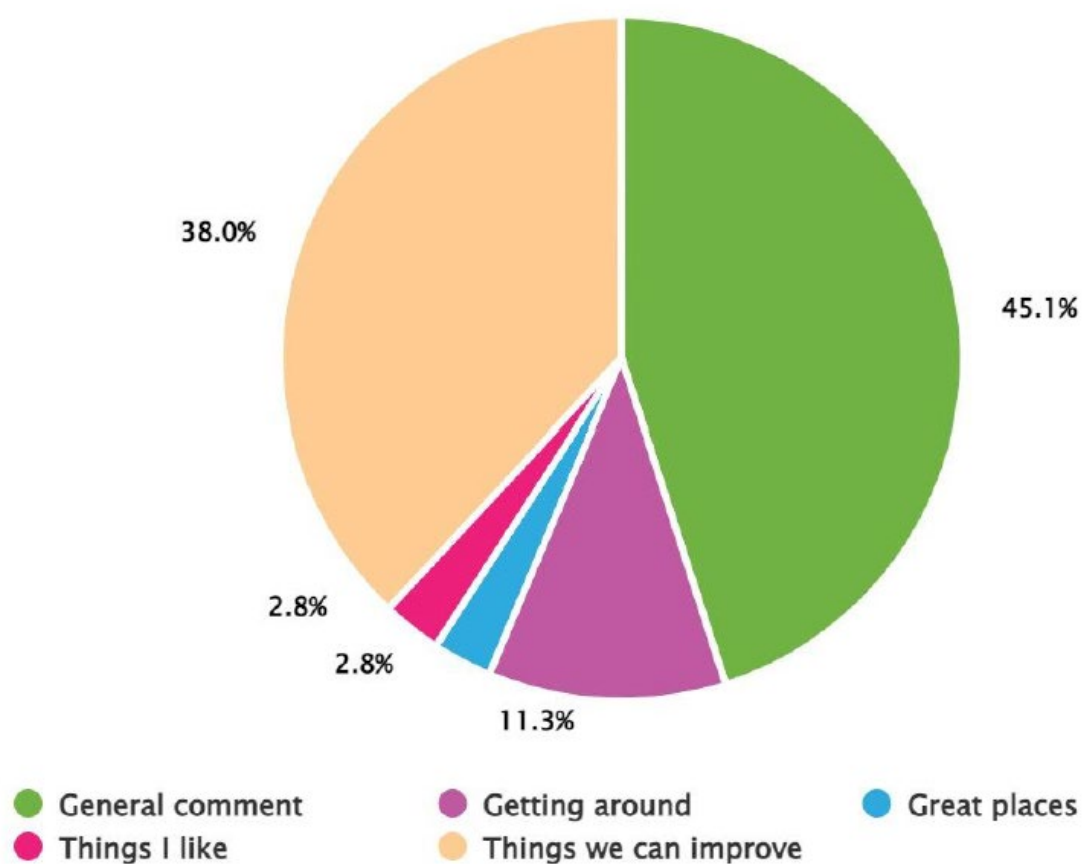


Figure 3: Proportion of comment types for each social pinpoint category.



The survey centred around one of the core themes of the regional plan – the 15-minute region. It generated 255 responses from 148 respondents:

- 83% said their main way of getting around their local area was driving.
- 70% believe it is very important or important to have a mix of facilities, uses or opportunities within 15 minutes of their home.
- People identified their most common everyday needs within 15 minutes of where they live as parks, reserves and other public open spaces; cafes and restaurants; and schools or pre-schools.
- The most popular everyday needs people would like within 15 minutes of their home were cafes and restaurants, small bars and markets.
- Almost half of survey respondents did not support higher density housing, even if it meant they would have an improved mix of everyday needs within 15 minutes of home.
- More than half the respondents were aged 35-54. The gender breakdown was roughly equal, with no non-binary or other responses and 4 respondents preferring not to say. Nearly 5% of respondents identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

## Social media

A social media campaign from 10 Jan 2022 to 18 Feb 2022 aimed to drive traffic to the relevant NSW Planning Portal webpage. The campaign's impacts were limited. It reached men and women in a near-equal amount. People aged 25-34 had the highest reach.

Age and gender distribution



Figure 4: Demographics of people reached during social media campaign.

Feedback from social media was generally negative and specific to local neighbourhood issues. We heard that:

- Local roads need fixing.
- Too many trees are removed for housing developments.
- The NSW Government doesn't listen to feedback.
- The Entrance needs revitalisation.
- Kerbs and gutters are urgently needed.

## Advertising and media

Our media strategy consisted of print, radio and digital display. An advertising and media campaign included paid media to raise awareness and direct people to the online engagement hub.

The Parliamentary Secretary for the Central Coast, the Hon. Adam Crouch MP, issued a media release on 6 December 2021 to announce the exhibition.

We produced 67 radio advertisements across 3 stations, reaching a possible listenership of 1,036,000 people. Radio advertisements generated 5,069 of the 15,600 Social Pinpoint landing page traffic.

## Online workshops

Due to COVID-19, we conducted community engagement workshops online, attended by 64 people. A detailed workshop summary report is attached (Attachment 1). We held targeted workshops with councils, the community, stakeholders and the development industry.

Staff from Central Coast and Lake Macquarie City councils attended the council workshop due to the cross-boundary considerations between each local government area including future growth areas and conservation planning.

Type	Date/s	Participants (excluding DPE staff)
Council workshop	9 February 2022	9
Community workshops (3)	16 – 24 February 2022	29
Invited development industry workshop	16 February 2022	19
Invited stakeholders' workshop	23 February 2022	7

We held the workshops to seek participants' insights and feedback to inform the final plan. Overall, there was general support for the draft plan, its direction and objectives from councils and stakeholders.

There were some concerns from council staff and community representatives about implementing objectives within the existing planning framework and the heavy focus on development outcomes.

Key workshop findings:

- The 15-minute region was a focus of all workshops. Participants generally support the concept as a way to create greater equity of access to everyday needs. Many participants sought clarity on the concept, and we acknowledged that we need to further consider the varying scales and geographies across the region. It was identified that the forthcoming regional transport plan would be critical to this objective.
- Participants wanted greater consideration for biodiversity, natural landscapes, green spaces and the coastal environment. These are intrinsic to the character and attractiveness of the Central Coast. Community participants stressed that climate change and resilience should be a central theme.



- Stakeholders, business and property representatives raised the issues of land zoned for development without the required infrastructure or servicing to unlock its potential, particularly for employment activities.
- Community participants were concerned with the NSW Government’s ability to fund and implement the plan’s infrastructure goals, particularly given the limited detail regarding specific infrastructure projects and potential costs.
- Stakeholders supported the Urban Development Program (UDP), noting its success in the Hunter region in monitoring housing supply. However, several community participants expressed concern regarding the lack of community representation on the UDP committee.
- Development and property representatives asked us to clarify the calculations and assumptions we factored into the stated levels of developable land across the region.
- Participants in all workshops supported an affordable housing target. A community workshop participant noted that due to the increased demand for housing associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, affordable housing targets would be “extremely difficult to achieve”.

# Summary of submissions

We received 124 submissions. We reviewed each in detail and identified and catalogued relevant comments to prepare a comprehensive data set by topic, as follows.

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## Consultation

### Key issues

- We heard that the draft *Central Coast Regional Plan 2041* was not a review or update of the *Central Coast Regional Plan 2036* but a completely new document. Some submitters suggested the plan should be re-exhibited to allow for extended community consultation.
- Some were concerned that there was no formal community consultation undertaken prior to public exhibition to inform preparation of the draft plan.
- The use of online meetings instead of public meetings or workshops was criticised for excluding sectors of the community.

### Response

- While the draft *Central Coast Regional Plan 2041* followed an updated format and structure compared to the *Central Coast Regional Plan 2036*, the vision, goals and directions are consistent. This includes our ambitions to plan for more jobs close to where people live, protect the natural environment, create well-connected communities and a plan for a variety of housing choices. Importantly, the *Central Coast Regional Plan 2041* responds to emerging challenges such as achieving net zero, climate change adaptation and resilience and COVID-19.
- The draft plan reviewed the 2036, which was prepared in 2016 through extensive community consultation and involvement. This established a 20-year vision for the Central Coast. Council consulted with the community on this vision in 2019 as it prepared the Central Coast Local Strategic Planning Statement. The then Greater Sydney Commission consulted with the community in 2020 around future economic opportunities. We drew on this more recent consultation for the draft plan and validated its direction with the Central Coast community during the public exhibition.
- The statutory minimum exhibition period for Regional Plans is 45 days. The draft *Central Coast Regional Plan 2041* was exhibited for 85 days (excluding public holidays).
- Online consultation and engagement activities reaches a large audience of stakeholders throughout the region and protects staff and community members for potential risks associated with COVID-19.

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## Administration and implementation

### Key issues

- As a land use plan the regional plan integrates with transport and biodiversity conservation plans by government.
- There was general support for the intent of *Part 1 Making it happen*, particularly in relation to coordinating infrastructure and land planning. However, people did want more detail on the operation of the UDP and Place Delivery Group (PDG) including the proposed allocation of resources required for implementation.
- Several submissions sought clarity regarding responsibility for actions and timeframes, noting that ongoing monitoring and reporting will help to communicate success.
- While there was support for the proposed UDP, several submissions requested:
  - including proposed State and local infrastructure projects in the regional plan
  - establishing sub-committees to target affordable housing, infrastructure and biodiversity
  - clarifying the role of infrastructure providers in determining infrastructure provision
  - increasing membership to include representatives from NSW Treasury, Government Architect NSW, Australian Institute of Architects, Australian Institute of Landscape Architects and local community and environment groups.

### Response

- We include the input and advice from state agencies responsible for transport and biodiversity conservation planning. The regional plan specifically acknowledges the need to align other long-term plans with the vision, objectives, strategies and actions of the regional plan. The governance framework, including the UDP and PDG, will ensure continued involvement of state agencies and alignment between plans.
- We have included further detail, where available, to improve understanding of the proposed implementation and governance framework. We will provide information regarding the UDP and PDG on our website as they are established.
- The UDP will monitor the planning, servicing and development of new residential land and housing to ensure sufficient zoned and serviced land is available to meet short and longer term market demand. The UDP does not have a statutory role, nor does it assume regulatory functions. It is a recognised forum for the NSW Government, Central Coast Council, infrastructure providers and the development industry to better coordinate the supply of land and housing.
- The Regional Housing Taskforce acknowledged importance of UDPs and recommended strengthening the collaboration between the NSW Government, Australian Government, councils and industry to improve how we identify, fund and provide infrastructure to support priority housing. The NSW Government is preparing a response to the taskforce. Its Regional Housing Fund (RHF) will incentivise and support councils to upgrade infrastructure and open space projects that directly support new housing.

- We have included a new action in the final regional plan to establish an affordable housing roundtable on the Central Coast. We will consider expanding membership of the UDP and establishing other sub-committees as required.
- We will publish information via an annual report and an online dashboard with live data on the status of development across the region.

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## Objectives

- *Part 2 Objectives* updated the objectives from the 2016 plan in response to local strategic planning and planning proposals. Some submissions described the proposed strategies as vague and needing refinement to clarify how the objectives will be achieved.
- We added performance outcomes as an assessment framework for when a local strategic plan or planning proposal does not comply with a regional plan strategy yet can demonstrate how the plan's outcomes could still be achieved.
- We added new objectives relating to transport and biodiversity conservation following consultation.
  - The connectivity objective will align with any future regional transport plan, which should reflect the 3 scales of mobility (15-minute neighbourhoods, 30-minute cities/strategic centres and a 90-minute (Six Cities) region).
  - The biodiversity and conservation objective will ensure future development occurs in appropriate locations that do not undermine conservation objectives for the region and protect land of high environmental value.
- We included Objective 9 Productive Landscapes to guide planning for rural lands. These areas support resource extraction and productive agricultural activities, and need easy access to markets in the Six Cities region. We added direction for expanding the settlement boundaries of rural villages to this objective.

### Objective 1: Leverage connectivity for jobs and prosperity

#### Key issues

- Community members objected to rezoning land for employment uses, while industry groups supported this rezoning. Council stressed the need to unlock already-zoned land with appropriate infrastructure before rezoning additional land for employment.
- This objective did not account for the recently announced Renewable Energy Zones (REZ).
- Submissions highlighted the importance of freight corridors to support infrastructure and industry.
- Submissions noted that public transport and infrastructure is inadequate, that the existing bus network is underutilised and that road infrastructure is not safe for cycling.
- We heard that as transport is a significant land use planning issue for the Central Coast, the plan needs a transport planning objective.

- Connectivity to Sydney and Newcastle should be focused on modern, faster train services and maritime access rather than new roads.

## Response

- We revised strategies relating to employment lands to provide clarity. While the plan's focus is on the protection and development of existing zoned lands, new employment lands can be accommodated so long as they can be serviced, respond to an identified need for supply, consider impacts on key transport infrastructure like interchanges, and offset any biodiversity impacts. We have provided guidance on how this is to occur.
- We amended the plan to recognise the opportunities renewable and emerging energy production could provide for the region. The REZ and existing coal-fired power station sites may provide diversification opportunities in the future.
- While not raised in submissions, we refined the circular economy content to clarify desired outcomes. Outcomes will depend on Council's initiatives; we have therefore broadened the strategy to recognise the diversity of opportunities that could be facilitated.
- We moved fast rail elements from draft Objective 1 to Objective 4 in the final plan.
- We included other business priorities such as tourism and the night-time economy in Objective 8.

## Objective 2: Ensure economic self-determination for Aboriginal communities

### Key issues

- We received limited feedback to Objective 2. However, multiple submissions commented on the focus of the objective in relation to Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) without recognising any potential Native Title groups.
- Community members requested a stronger emphasis on Aboriginal cultural heritage, while noting this is separate to economic self-determination.

## Response

- The plan aims to assist Darkinjung LALC convert claimed land into economic development opportunities to fulfill the intent of the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983*.
- We have updated the objective to take a broader view of land rights, native title, housing and empowering Aboriginal voices. The objective notes there are no registered native title groups or active native title claims on the Central Coast. We will work with relevant groups if there are any positive new claims to protect native title rights and interests and to ensure the planning system does not restrict the use of land for spiritual, cultural or economic uses.
- We included Aboriginal cultural heritage in Objective 6.

## **Objective 3: Create a 15-minute region made up of mixed, multi-modal, inclusive and vibrant local communities**

### **Key issues**

- Submissions generally supported the 15-minute region concept, though there was confusion around the idea, with some stakeholders interpreting it increasing car traffic in residential areas, and others seeing it as generating a need for more parking in centres.
- A variety of stakeholders raised issues in terms of achieving the objective. Some noted it was not applicable to rural areas, while others raised concerns with topography and climate; how the existing street and settlement patterns support car dependence; and the lack of infrastructure and street lighting.
- Stakeholders noted the need for better public transport, more cycling infrastructure, increased tree canopy and shade cover, and shared path networks.
- Respondents raised the issue of land use conflicts such as odour and noise created by non-residential uses in residential areas.
- Many submissions suggested we more clearly demonstrate how to achieve a 15-minute region.
- One submission said the draft plan did not identify enough contexts applicable to the Central Coast and recommended the inclusion of 'Small Coastal Suburb' or 'At Capacity Coastal Suburb' as a context setting.

### **Response**

- We renamed the objective to "Create 15-minute neighbourhoods to support mixed, multi-modal, inclusive and vibrant communities".
- New content explains where we are now versus where we want to be, the applicability of the 15-minute concept in various contexts, and how the objective is underpinned by a desired increase in walking, cycling and public transport use.
- We note the 15-minute region is not a one size fits all solution; rather it is a guiding principle to promote and improve connectivity across the Central Coast for the 20-year life of the regional plan. Increases in housing density around transport nodes and centres will attract businesses and services to reduce the need to travel for daily needs and will encourage walking and cycling.
- To recognise the need for quality public spaces and an increased urban tree canopy, we expanded the objectives to include the green infrastructure elements from the draft Objective 5.
- To clarify the extent of mixed use neighbourhoods and limit land use conflict, Strategy 3.1 specifies the kind of low-impact land uses that planning proposals must not prohibit in urban and suburban contexts.

## **Objective 4: Plan for "Nimble Neighbourhoods", diverse housing and sequenced development (draft/exhibited plan)**

### **Key issues**

- Submissions sought clarity regarding the population, dwelling and job projections underpinning the proposed increase in density and the specific densities proposed.

- Submissions noted the need for housing diversity, social housing, affordable housing and adequate supply of rental accommodation, and pointed to the need for incentives to improve provision of these housing types.
- There was concern regarding the plan's intention to prioritise development in existing urban areas to support efficient use of infrastructure and protect natural areas on the urban fringe. Opposition was based on concerns around increased traffic and parking demand, impacts on wildlife corridors and environmentally sensitive land and the urban heat island effect.
- Council and community members opposed residential development west of the M1 due to potential impacts on agricultural land and drinking water catchments.
- Submissions that supported the concept of nimble neighbourhoods requested further detail on how this would be achieved.
- Some submissions requested direction for the provision for future greenfield opportunities in existing nimble neighbourhoods in a rural or semi-rural neighbourhood.

## Response

- We have provided further justification that supports the increase in density, explaining how current housing stock does not cater for shrinking household sizes or allow older residents to downsize within their existing community. The plan also defines and sets targets for infill and greenfield development and explains how this objective will minimise urban sprawl and impacts on wildlife corridors, land with environmental values and scenic landscapes.
- We have included updated population projections and added benchmarks for required densities in various contexts.
- We removed long-term potential future growth areas west of the M1 motorway.
- The plan is now aligned with the *Central Coast Affordable and Alternative Housing Strategy*, which has a target of 7,600 additional affordable homes by 2036. The actions and strategies under this objective include the establishment of an Affordable Housing Roundtable and affordable housing contributions schemes.
- The plan emphasises an infrastructure-first and place-based approach and identifies the need to improve infrastructure. Increased densities and improved housing diversity will help to reduce the per capita cost of future infrastructure.

## Objective 5: Connect green infrastructure and quality public spaces to the landscape (draft/exhibited plan)

### Key issues

- Biodiversity and conservation were to all stakeholder groups. Feedback identified various plans, strategies and legislation that should align with the regional plan, including the relationship between State and local biodiversity strategies.
- There was general support for green infrastructure and stakeholders emphasised the need to protect and expand the Coastal Open Space System and set more ambitious targets for urban tree canopy coverage.
- Council and community members noted that the plan did not adequately address heritage.



- A number of mapping amendments were suggested, including identification of conservation priority areas, nature reserves, drinking water catchments, marine areas and regional corridors.
- Concerns were raised around mountain bike use and associated destruction of bushland.
- A separate environment objective was suggested, which would identify specific strategies and actions to protect natural areas and biodiversity, drinking water catchments and manage agricultural and resource lands.
- Further, we heard that the plan should seek to improve water quality measures to protect marine parks and aquatic reserves, and environmentally sensitive downstream assets.
- We heard that biodiversity issues should be addressed early in the rezoning process and that the importance of not compromising biodiversity connectivity should be part of future growth plans. Any expectation set that public land is accessible to more people for more uses requires funding commitments to achieve this.

## Response

- We moved content regarding biodiversity and conservation from Objective 5 to objective 6 “Conservation of heritage, landscapes, environmentally sensitive areas, waterways and drinking water catchments”. Urban greenery content is now in Objective 3.
- We created a separate objective – objective 6 in the final plan - addressing biodiversity and conservation. This responds directly to feedback around the plan’s environmental protection and sustainably aspirations. Strategies supporting the new objective seek adequate protection of high environmental value areas. This will balance demand with the need to conserve the natural environment and retain a quality of life that is inherently connected to nature.
- The new objective 6 addresses the *NSW Water Strategy*, *NSW Koala Strategy* and *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*. It incorporates strategies to protect coastal environments and strengthen the Coastal Open Space System as well as strategies to protect heritage.

## Objective 6: Reach net zero and increase resilience and sustainable infrastructure (draft/exhibited plan)

### Key issues

- Submissions were consistent in highlighting the importance of climate change and the increased risk of natural hazards such as drought, bushfire, flooding and sea level rise. Stakeholders sought assurance that new development would avoid areas where risks cannot be mitigated.
- Submissions identified the need to plan for lower emission transport such as electric vehicles and micro-mobility solutions such as shared bikes and e-bikes.
- Submissions highlighted the importance of carbon sink stores and opportunities for blue carbon and carbon storage areas.
- The plan must align with the Hunter and Central Coast Adaptation Strategy.

## Response

- The final plan now clearly identifies climate change challenges and potential impacts, and proposes clear strategies that will limit exposure in the future such as directing residential development away from land constrained by natural hazards. The plan also proposes strategies to adapt existing settlements to the impacts of climate change.
- We expanded the section on net zero transportation, which aims to decarbonise the transport sector.
- We have added content that notes the importance of carbon sink stores.
- We added a strategy requiring local strategic planning statements to give effect to the Hunter and Central Coast Adaptation Strategy.

## Objective 7: Plan for businesses and services at the heart of healthy, prosperous and innovative communities (draft/exhibited plan)

### Key issues

- Of all the objectives, this one generated the least engagement.
- The role of last mile freight to support place-making was identified.
- Community members noted that the plan did not address art or cultural infrastructure.

### Response

- We amended the objective to recognise the need to plan for last mile freight when planning for centres and main streets.
- Culture and art infrastructure sit outside the scope of the plan; however, the plan now recognises the need for centres and main streets to be visually engaging, embrace heritage and Country, and to celebrate local identity.
- While not raised in submissions, we added direction in this objective for the visitor economy. The visitor economy presents a diversification opportunity, particularly given the Central Coast's assets and location. This has synergies with strategies to revitalise centres and main streets as well as the night-time economy.
- Updates also recognise the importance of knowledge and innovation centres for economic diversification and the role of institutions like Gosford Hospital and University of Newcastle (Ourimbah) in the region's broader skills and training network. The plan fosters their expansion and clustering of value-adding activities.

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## District planning and growth areas

### Narara district

#### Key issues

- Council noted the Great Weekender Trail Catalyst Project - walking and cycling links between Somersby and Erina.

- Challenges for the Woy Woy Peninsula include king tides, future sea level rise, and urban heat island effect.
- Priorities for Gosford include waterfront activation, a university campus and public transport and traffic improvements.
- The 15-minute district was supported as a concept for Narara, but the requisite increase in density was viewed negatively. Car dependency was cited as a hurdle.
- Narara and other parts of the Central Coast will likely experience challenges with increased density around Terrigal Lagoon.
- Submissions suggested we consider the 2010 Gosford City Centre Master Plan *Our City Our Destiny*.
- It was suggested that resolving the deferred matters lands would help to solve the housing crisis.

## Response

- Feedback helped us to clarify our priorities for different areas of the district. The focus in the Somersby to Erina growth corridor is on economic development, and this section now includes the Great Weekender Trail. The focus for the Woy Woy Peninsula is building resilience, which will include limiting development in areas with flood hazards and increasing the urban tree canopy.
- The future vision for Gosford now incorporates the recently announced university campus and emphasises the importance of the waterfront.
- Car dependency is acknowledged as a problem; consequently, the final plan identifies the need to upgrade active transport infrastructure before reducing car parking requirements.
- The recent release of the *NSW Koala Strategy* led us to identify this as a key element under the priority of protecting ridgelines and conservation areas.

## Central Lakes district

### Key issues

- With the recent and planned closure of several power stations in this district, stakeholders raised concerns with the remediation of associated coal ash dams.
- Eraring Power Station was considered an opportunity for economic development.
- Submissions opposed the inclusion of Warnervale Airport in the plan, possible future master plans and upgrades and potential impacts on the Porters Creek Wetland.
- Concerns were raised regarding water quality in Lake Macquarie and Lake Munmorah.
- As the Wyong Employment Zone is already zoned, it was suggested it be moved into the short-term category for sequencing.
- Council requested clarity on whether the relocation of Warnervale Train Station is still proceeding.
- More detail was requested on the future of the Warnervale Town Centre.
- Concerns were raised regarding mapping of biodiversity corridors in certain locations.

## Response

- Remediation of ash dams will be included in power station remediation plans. The development around ash dams will be managed to avoid adverse health impacts on the community or environment. Remediation will be in accordance with the NSW Legislative Council Public Works Committee's report on their enquiry into coal ash repositories, published in September 2021.
- We included discussion on the future of Eraring Power Station. A collaborative planning approach will be undertaken to growth and development of the area.
- The repeal of the *Warnervale Airport (Restrictions) Act 1996* – independent of the regional plan – requires a master plan must for the site. The Warnervale place strategy will need to align with the master plan. The number of submissions concerning Porters Creek Wetland underlined the importance of this ecologically significant area to the community.
- We updated the final plan to acknowledge the need to improve water quality in Tuggerah Lakes. A new strategy requires planning proposals to demonstrate that development within a drinking water catchment or sensitive receiving water catchment will achieve a neutral or beneficial effect on water quality. This is consistent with the recommendations of the Tuggerah Lakes Expert Panel's report.
- We removed the preliminary sequencing and will develop a sequencing plan guided by the infrastructure-first and place-based framework in *Part 1 Making it happen*.
- Transport for NSW is responsible for a new or upgraded Warnervale station. The regional plan provides a framework for the future land uses in the town centre, including principles to guide any zoning amendments.
- Biodiversity corridors applying to land can be refined with supporting studies which will allow reviewing land zones and possible rezoning can be investigated by individual landowners.

## Tuggerah district

### Key issues

- The main concern raised related to the water quality of Tuggerah Lakes reflecting the findings of the Expert Panel in the regional plan.
- Council emphasised The Entrance as the initial focus of development in the Karagi growth area to boost its viability as a town centre and develop Long Jetty and Killarney Vale once Central Coast Highway is upgraded.
- Several stakeholders identified Council's work to identify and manage flood risk in the Karagi growth area.

### Response

- We updated the plan to identify The Entrance as the initial focus of development, with Long Jetty and Killarney Vale requiring an upgrade to Central Coast Highway.
- The regional plan now cites Council's Floodplain Risk Management Strategy as important in sustainably managing development in this district.

## Watagan district

### Key issues

- Feedback opposed residential development west of the M1 due to potential impacts on agricultural land and drinking water catchments.
- Council requested a review of biodiversity corridors across agricultural land to remove potential impacts on agricultural production.

### Response

- We removed long-term potential future growth areas west of the M1 motorway.
- The regional plan utilises data on biodiversity corridors from the Department's Biodiversity and Conservation Division. Further investigations are needed to justify an amendment to current biodiversity corridor locations.

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## Other matters

Matters not specifically about the regional plan were referred to relevant state agencies for their information. We shared submissions with information and recommendations relevant to the regional transport plan with Transport for NSW and referred local planning issues to Central Coast Council.

# Attachment 1 – Cred Consulting Workshop Summary Report

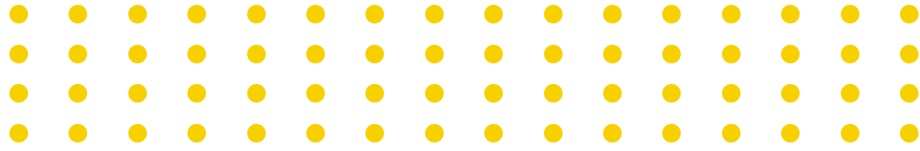
# Central Coast Regional Plan 2041 Workshop Summary Report

Client: Department of Planning and Environment

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# 1. Executive summary

This report summarises findings from meetings and workshops designed and facilitated by Cred Consulting in February 2022, with the Department of Planning and Environment (the Department). The Department sought feedback from councils and other stakeholders on the draft Central Coast Regional Plan 2041 (the draft Plan).

Feedback provided in these meetings and workshops will inform preparation of the final Central Coast Regional Plan 2041 (the final Plan).

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## 1.1 About the Central Coast Regional Plan

The NSW Government has reviewed the *Central Coast Regional Plan 2036* as part of its first 5-year review to reset its priorities and extend its reach to 2041. The regional plan is a 20-year land-use blueprint to support the prosperous future of the Central Coast region.

The draft Plan provides the updated priorities for the region and covers the Central Coast local government area. Due to significant development areas at the boundary between Central Coast Council (CCC) and Lake Macquarie City Council (LMCC) local government areas, LMCC staff were invited and participated in the Council discussions about the draft CCRP 2041.

## 1.2 Summary of workshop key findings

- Council and stakeholders expressed support for the draft objectives and the desired strategic outcomes, however concerns were also expressed about the ability to integrate and implement some of the objectives into the current planning framework.
- The vision for the Central Coast region was supported by Council and stakeholders, with some community participants noting it is not as important as a consideration when compared to other aspects such as biodiversity and natural areas preservation, and night time economy.
- Objective 3: Create a 15-minute region was a focus of almost all the workshops, with many participants noting support for the strategic intent of this objective but raised concerns about the application across the Central Coast region given the existing geography. It was acknowledged that the framework to implement the 15-minute region requires refinement and further consideration of the different scales and geographies across the region.
- Public transport options and access across the Central Coast is critical to the success of a 15-minute region and more work with Transport for NSW is to be done on the release of the regional transport plan. Increasing accessibility to centres and services across the region and improving equity, particularly for residents without private vehicles was important to the community and stakeholders.
- The cost and resourcing requirements of Council to implement the plan, as well as the significant infrastructure and servicing that is required to unlock land across the Central Coast was a significant challenge raised by Council participants and stakeholders. The community participants discussed the implementation plan and requested greater certainty about the timeframes for delivery of actions.
- Many of the community participants did raise concerns that the plan seemed focused on development and rezoning and that issues such as resilience and climate change should also be key themes that underpin the Plan.

# Introduction

The workshops were part of the wider engagement activities delivered to support the public exhibition of the draft Central Coast Regional Plan 2041 between 9 February and 21 February 2022.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic limitations, all community engagement activities were conducted via an online platform (“Zoom”), with the aim of reaching Council and community stakeholders across the region.

**From across the Central Coast region, 64 people participated in the meetings and workshops delivered from 9 February to 24 February 2022,** throughout the formal public exhibition period.

Table 1 (on page 5) provides an overview of activities.

## 1.3 Workshop overview and methodology

Throughout the exhibition period, a total of six information sessions and workshops were held. At all meetings, the Department of Planning and Environment’s Central Coast planning team presented on the background research undertaken, key global and regional drivers of growth and change, and what the revised plan aims to achieve for the Central Coast. Workshop participants were taken through each section of the draft Plan and the future implementation process. At each stage throughout the workshop, participants were provided the opportunity to discuss key issues, ask questions and seek clarification about the draft Plan content.

Following the Department’s presentation, Cred Consulting facilitated a discussion regarding:

- What participants saw as being the priority for the Central Coast region.
- The draft Plan objectives and whether participants supported/agreed with them and the intended outcomes from each.
- What parts of the draft Plan require amendment and/or strengthening.
- Whether any aspects of the draft Plan need to be updated.
- Whether there are any aspects of the draft Plan that should not be in the final Plan.

The six workshops were designed specifically to engage with Council, the development industry, key stakeholder bodies and organisations, local Aboriginal community representatives, and the Central Coast community to provide their insights and feedback to inform the finalisation of the Central Coast Region Plan 2041.

The presentation method for each workshop were varied and can be summarised as below:

- Council workshop (1) - targeted for the Council staff. As above, DPE presented highlights for each theme of the draft Plan and sought feedback at the end of each theme, throughout the presentation. Representatives from both CCC and LMCC participated in the workshop.
- Development industry workshop (1) – specific to invited development industry representatives from the Central Coast and Hunter regions. At this workshop, both the draft Central Coast Regional Plan 2041 and the draft Hunter Region Plan 2041 were discussed with a focus on objectives and issues specific to the property and development industry. Representatives from the Greater Sydney Commission also attended the workshop to listen and provide an update on the inclusion of the Central Coast into the new Greater Cities Commission.
- Central Coast Stakeholders workshop (1) – invited key stakeholders from business peak bodies and organisations, government organisations and educational institutions, and Local Aboriginal Land

Councils. Representatives from the Greater Sydney Commission also attended the workshop to listen and provide an update on the inclusion of the Central Coast into the proposed Greater Cities Commission.

- Community workshops (3) – aimed to be an information session as well as an interactive workshop seeking feedback and inviting the Central Coast community to ask questions that would be considered in the finalisation of the Plan. The more detailed context enabled informed discussion at the workshops by all participants. Unlike the Council session, a general discussion at the end of the presentation, with the community guiding the conversation about what was important to them to discuss and issues to raise was held.

Table 1. Overview of engagement activities

Type	Date/s	Participants
Council workshop	9 February 2022	9 (excluding DPE staff)
Invited development industry workshop	16 February 2022	19 (excluding DPE staff)
Community workshops x3	16 February – 24 February 2022	29 (excluding DPE staff)
Stakeholders' workshops	23 February 2022	7 (excluding DPE staff)

## 2. Summary of discussion

The workshop discussions facilitated by Cred Consulting form an important part of the feedback on the draft Plan and will be considered in preparation of the final Plan. This section provides a summary of discussions at all workshops regarding the draft CCRP 2041. Discussion points have been separated into three parts, reflecting the sections of the draft Plan – regional plan objectives, regionally significant growth areas/district planning, and implementation – and the structure of the workshop.

### 2.1 Introduction

Overall, there was general support for the draft plan, its direction, and objectives. However, questions were raised about the implementation of the objectives within the existing planning framework and the draft Plan being heavily focused on development outcomes.

Objective 3: Creating a 15-minute region was a focus of discussion across all workshops. Many participants asked questions to clarify the concept itself, the intended outcomes and how it would be implemented given the geography and existing land use pattern across the Central Coast region.

While many attendees supported the intension of this objective to create greater equity of access across the Central Coast and have services, work, and entertainment opportunities closer to where people live, it was discussed and acknowledged by DPE staff that work was needed to further consider the varying scales and geographies across the region. It was identified that the forthcoming regional transport plan would be critical to the successful delivery of Objective 3.

Greater consideration for the importance biodiversity, natural areas, green spaces, and the coastal environment, which are intrinsic to the character and attractiveness of the Central Coast, be given within this plan. Community participants advised that climate change and resilience should be clearly articulated as a central theme of the Plan.

Stakeholders, business, and property representatives raised the issues of unlocking land with adequate infrastructure and servicing to support future development, particularly for employment activities. It was acknowledged that across the Central Coast region there was land available for redevelopment, but that the challenge was the inadequate infrastructure and servicing to “unlock” the potential.

Community participants were also concerned with government’s ability to fund and implement infrastructure goals as set out in the draft Plan, particularly given the limited detail regarding specific infrastructure projects and potential costs.

Stakeholders were supportive of the Urban Development Program (UDP) noting its current success within the Hunter region. However, several community participants expressed significant concern with the identified membership of the UDP committee noting the absence of community representation. It was requested that opportunities for the community to be represented on the committee be considered.

Development and property representatives discussed and requested clarification about the calculations and assumptions that were factored into the stated levels of developable land across both the Central Coast and Hunter regions.

There was support from participants across all workshops for the inclusion of an affordable housing target within the draft Plan. A participant at the development industry stakeholders workshop suggested that a target also be considered for inclusion in the Hunter Regional Plan. It was noted by one community workshop participant that, especially in a post-COVID-19 environment, affordable housing targets within the Central Coast region would be “*extremely difficult to achieve*”.

## 2.2 Regional Plan Objectives

This section summarises the feedback and discussions about the objectives within the draft Plan. Across all workshops, discussions were guided by participants and focused on Objectives 3, 4, 5 and 6. Feedback on the remaining objectives was limited, and comments have been captured in the meeting notes and would be included in the formal written submissions to DPE throughout the public exhibition period.

### Objective 3: Creating a 15-minute region and Objective 4: Plan for “Nimble Neighbourhoods”.

Councils, stakeholders, and most community participants were supportive of the desired outcomes and intention behind Objective 3, however a common concern raised was that the current physical conditions and challenges of the Central Coast make it difficult to achieve this objective, especially with the current issues of inadequate infrastructure provision and limited public transport accessibility. The Department acknowledged the current challenges, noting that objectives and actions would be implemented over a 20-year period, and it was important to set the aspiration within the region plan.

Lake Macquarie City Council staff shared that research they had conducted on the principal pedestrian networks within the Lake Macquarie LGA supported the 15-minute region objective as being a good benchmark for accessibility. However, it was also identified that there is difficulty to get funding for local infrastructure such as footpaths, street trees, and seating which is critical to achieving more walkable neighbourhoods.

Central Coast Council staff noted that the different levels of service provision in neighbourhoods, and layout of urban centres (e.g. Gosford) would affect infrastructure provision considerations when compared more organic centre layouts when considering the 20 year benchmarks and the context. It was also suggested that the Plan be more explicit that Objectives 3 and 4 are interconnected and that they aim to consider the whole of life costs, not just housing and transport.

Key stakeholder organisations, such as UDIA, recommended DPE provide more detail within Objective 3 and Objective 4 to provide greater certainty about the application of both. Many community members interpreted the “15-min region” as being a measure of travel time and therefore were unable to see this being possible within the Central Coast region.

There was also some confusion about the “nimble neighbourhood” and the concept of “optimal density”. Council and community participants questioned why the draft Plan does not outline the desired growth targets and densities, which was considered a way to better understand context and expectations about future growth. Therefore, further consideration for how Objectives 3 and 4 are expressed in the final Plan to provide greater understanding and reflect what they are aiming to achieve would help to increase acceptance and certainty.

Community participants and stakeholders identified that transport and access (to locations, services, and employment) is pivotal to growth of the Central Coast region. One community member noted they would like to see a stronger connection with young people in the development of the 15-minute region approach as access to education, employment and activities was critical to reducing the number of young people moving to Sydney and Newcastle. It was noted that this is important to support the growth of the significant visitor economy in the region and attracting new industries to the Central Coast given its locational advantages and land availability.

## Objective 5: Connect green infrastructure and Objective 6: Reach net zero and resilience

Council, stakeholders, and the community agreed that the coastal, natural, and green open spaces are intrinsic to the character of the Central Coast region and critical to its attractiveness. Community participants identified the coastal environment as not being adequately addressed in the draft Plan and requesting that specific details be included within the final plan about how the important natural areas and biodiversity of the Central Coast will be protected.

Community members also voiced concern that the draft Plan does not adequately acknowledge, or address issues presented by climate change. Several community participants suggested that water supply and bushfire risk be further considered in relation to future regional development and growth. DPE staff acknowledged these concerns and noted that there are already policies in place that aim to respond to these challenges, such as the Coastal Management State Environmental Planning Policy, and Planning for Bushfire Protection.

### 2.3 District planning and regionally significant growth areas

Overall, Councils noted that public transport and accessibility profiles for many major town centres across the Central Coast region are lacking in key connections which allow convenient movement via public transport between town centres, if at all. This would need to be a key consideration in future district planning and identification of growth areas.

The Wyee/Bushells Ridge Road precinct was identified as requiring more collaboration between local and state government agencies in funding local infrastructure such as footpaths and cycleways, substituting car parking, and growth in higher densities. Referenced to the goal in achieving the 'core planning aspirations' as set out by the Central Coast Region Plan 2041.

DPE noted that specific locations, such as those west of the M1, which have been identified as 'future growth areas', and the long-term opportunities, as potential future growth areas, but expect that development would be beyond the timeframe of the current plan.

Lifestyle factors are a key attractor for new residents to the Central Coast region. A key part of what the industry, and community, values in lifestyle choice is the housing diversity. While some participants noted the importance of providing higher density housing typologies closer to city centres and contribute to the supply and affordability of housing, others felt that most people moving to regional areas are not seeking city living, but instead are attracted to the availability of larger detached dwellings and that this is where the demand is. One participant noted that they feel that *"the COVID-19 migration to the Central Coast and Hunter region come with it a greater demand for single, detached dwellings and not apartments"*.

During community member workshops, some participants expressed concerned with health issues associated with power stations, and the coal ash dams located in the Central Coast region, some of which have been identified as being regionally significant growth areas, and requested these issues be highlighted and responded to.

The current actions outlined in the draft Plan relating to Woy Woy, the southern peninsula, and similar locations across the region were identified by community members as being 'ambiguous' and requested actions be more detailed to increase connectivity and limit the impacts of development.



## 2.4 Implementation (“Making it happen”)

Transport and infrastructure provision to “unlock” land across the Central Coast region was considered critical issues to address in the implementation of the Central Coast Region Plan 2041. Alignment with the forthcoming regional transport plan was important and it was suggested that the Region Plan provide a clear summary outlining the relationship of it to other plans.

Community participants discussed that the final Plan provide greater clarity and understanding about the vision and aspirations for the Central Coast into the future as it was felt this was not clearly articulated within the draft Plan.

Stakeholder participants identified some key priorities for the region being increased job creation by “unlocking” land through adequate infrastructure provision and servicing, aligning government agencies with priorities, including the proposed Greater Cities Commission, prioritise and promote investment in Gosford, ensuring the UDP is supporting the regional housing taskforce recommendation, and reducing ‘red tape’ around planning issues and development prohibitions.

DPE acknowledged the challenge about infrastructure provision and outlined the proposal for a new ‘Place delivery group’, to better coordinate and support the growth across the region. DPE staff also identified that a priority has been to focused actions to those that are key to effectively deliver on the vision and objectives and are supported by adequate funding.

Another theme commonly raised by community participants was the importance of the Central Coast region’s natural areas and biodiversity and having adequate data to better manage and protect biodiversity, natural environmental areas, and resource lands. DPE noted that areas of high biodiversity value and corridor networks have been mapped in the draft Plan.

There was concern from community participants that the review has not sort community input and a feeling that engagement has occurred too late in the process to understand the aspirations and issues of the Central Coast community. Councils, the community, and stakeholders also raised concerns with the resourcing implications of the region plan and pressure on Council to deliver on the objectives, especially the significant investment in infrastructure that would be required.



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