

Central Coast Regional Plan review

This document answers frequently asked questions about the scheduled review and update of the Central Coast Regional Plan

Regional plans set a 20-year framework, vision and direction for strategic planning and land use to ensure the regions in NSW have the housing, jobs and infrastructure they need to grow and prosper. The plans make sure that development is carried out in a way that maintains healthy environments, ensures access to green spaces and connects communities to each other and the rest of the state. They help create vibrant places for people to live, work and visit.

In 2016, we released Central Coast Regional Plan 2036, one of 9 plans prepared to cover all NSW regions outside Greater Sydney.

To make sure regional plans remain relevant, they are reviewed every 5 years. The review provides an opportunity to consider the changes that have affected the region and to adjust the plan to meet the challenges and opportunities ahead.

We reviewed the Central Coast plan in 2021 and developed an updated plan – the Central Coast Regional Plan 2041. Following are answers to some frequently asked questions about the update process and the new plan.

What is the Central Coast Regional Plan 2041?

The Central Coast Regional Plan 2041 updates the strategic framework for the region, building on the previous plan that was released in October 2016. The update considers the impacts of recent significant trends, changes and events on land use planning and the future prosperity of the region.

The updated plan extends the 20-year land use vision for the region out to 2041 and has been prepared under section 3.3 of the NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. It applies to the Central Coast local government area.

What did the 2036 plan help to deliver?

Since the release of the Central Coast Regional Plan 2036, the NSW Government has worked closely with Central Coast Council, Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council, other stakeholders and the community to deliver key priority actions to improve the region for residents and visitors.

Achievements under the plan include delivery of:

- the Gosford City Centre Urban Design Framework
- the State Environmental Planning Policy (Gosford City Centre) 2018
- an interim Darkinjung Development Delivery Plan developed under the NSW Government's Aboriginal Land Planning Framework
- the Employment Lands Development Monitor and Housing Supply Snapshot

- the Somersby to Erina Corridor Strategy and the Tuggerah to Wyong Economic Corridor Strategy
- the Central Coast Strategic Conservation Planning Program (which is ongoing).

How was the plan reviewed?

Throughout 2021, the department reviewed the '2036' regional plan and investigated how it had been used and its effectiveness. We investigated strategies implemented in other parts of the world, sourced the latest data and evidence on drivers of growth and change and consulted with Central Coast Council and other stakeholders.

The updated plan responds to this work and resets the regional plan priorities to ensure the plan continues to respond to the region's needs for the next 20 years.

The review of the '2036' plan involved:

- an audit of the actions delivered under the plan to determine which elements have been effective and which ones remain relevant for the revised plan, along with an independent review of all rezonings over the last 5 years for their alignment with the current regional plan
- a review of the Central Coast Council's local strategic planning statement so the revised plan can build on and provide guidance for the council's future review
- an investigation of strategic planning underway across Europe and North America, including how concepts such as '15-minute neighbourhoods' and improved infrastructure coordination have been applied across Portland and Glasgow
- alignment with Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council's Interim Development Delivery Plan under the Aboriginal Lands SEPP and with Transport for NSW's draft Central Coast Regional Transport Plan being developed concurrently
- consultation with Central Coast Council, Lake Macquarie City Council, state agencies, other stakeholders and peak bodies, all of which provided detailed feedback on the '2036' plan and the development of the Central Coast Regional Plan 2041.

Was the updated plan publicly exhibited and what was the response?

The draft updated plan was exhibited for community feedback from 6 December 2021 to 4 March 2022. We received 124 submissions.

During this period, we consulted widely with the community, council, and other stakeholders, including the development industry. Engagement included a social media campaign, a survey, online workshops and an interactive digital hub.

We will release a submissions and engagement summary alongside the final updated plan.

What were the key themes raised in submissions?

Most public submissions generally supported the draft plan. The valuable feedback they supplied helped shape the final version of the updated plan.

There was general approval for the establishment of an Urban Development Program Committee and the concept of creating '15-minute neighbourhoods.' Some submissions requested that population and dwelling targets be

included in the plan and also highlighted the importance of enhancing the Coastal Open Space System, which provides a range of wildlife habitats and biodiversity corridors. This network of reserves is managed by the council.

Many submissions wanted the final plan to emphasise the significance of climate change and the increased risk of natural hazards such as drought, flooding and sea level rises.

What is different in the final '2041' plan compared to the draft that was exhibited?

The main change between the draft and final plans was to make the document easier to use. We clarified requirements for local strategic planning statements and planning proposals to be consistent with the regional plan and made the plan simpler and easier to navigate. We also refined the way we will plan for and track the supply of land to align with feedback from industry. A section was added on the transition to the Greater Cities Commission framework.

We have included dwelling targets based on population projections and added detail to the district and planning priorities section to reflect feedback from Central Coast Council.

We have reorganised the objectives in response to feedback to include a stronger connectivity objective, a separate objective on biodiversity and a new rural objective.

In response to the council's feedback, we have removed the identification of specific sites as potential future growth areas to the west of the M1 Pacific Motorway.

What are the key themes in the [Central Coast Regional Plan 2041](#)?

The updated plan focuses on making great places that cater for more everyday uses close to home. This will be supported by the right sequencing of development and infrastructure to ensure sustainable growth.

The department will collaborate with Central Coast Council on the regionally significant places across the Central Coast. These places will be key to meeting the plan's vision and objectives in the shortest possible time.

The plan contains the following new 'big ideas' to support the delivery of the vision for the region:

- **new pathways** to promote economic self-determination and greater recognition and respect of traditional custodians, along with greater connection with Country and integrating Aboriginal cultural knowledge and practice into urban design and planning
- a new approach and energy to how we **sequence planning for new land uses and infrastructure** to accelerate proposals that will support the vision and bring even greater public value
- establishment of **net zero emissions as a guiding principle** for all planning decisions
- a focus on **creating 15-minute** neighbourhoods where most needs can be met within a 15-minute walk, bike ride or public transport trip (or drive in rural areas) from people's homes (a response to the new ways people live and work in light of the COVID-19 pandemic)
- **emphasis on consolidation approaches** to growth over expansion approaches, the achievement of optimum densities in various contexts to make public transport and neighbourhood mixes successful, and the establishment of flexible land uses in new and existing neighbourhoods to allow communities to evolve over time

- **a renewed focus on green infrastructure, public spaces and nature** by drawing from the opportunities of a rapidly growing region to plan for a better future and using planning decisions to reinforce, enhance and improve quality of life
- **prioritisation of walking, cycling and public transport** in urban towns and village settings across the Central Coast
- **reinforcing the importance of equity** so that people have greater choice in where and how they live, how they travel and where and how they work.

What is the '15-minute neighbourhood' concept?

The '15-minute neighbourhood' represents a significant change in the way we plan and design for growth. It reimagines cities, towns and communities across the Central Coast as being convenient neighbourhoods where a mix of daily activities can be done close to your home, rather than having separate zones for living, working, shopping, education and recreation. Under this approach, everyday needs like schools, shops, cafes and businesses should be only a 15-minute walk or bike ride away in urbanised areas or a 15-minute drive in more rural areas.

Things that people need less frequently, like hospitals, garden centres, high schools and retail centres, would be in strategic centres within 30 minutes of your home by public transport.

If we reduce car dependency, we can reduce public health and infrastructure costs, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollutants, improve the environment and increase personal health and social equity.

How does the *Central Coast Regional Plan 2041* fit in with council's local strategic planning?

All councils in NSW must have a local strategic planning statement (LSPS) setting out a 20-year vision for land use in the local area, the special character and values that are to be preserved and how change will be managed into the future.

LSPSs have given councils the opportunity to:

- ensure the priorities identified in the regional plan are placed within a clear local context and tailored to the unique economic, social and environmental characteristics of their local government area
- translate their own strategic planning work into local priorities and actions
- inform reviews of the regional plan.

To ensure there is a strong link between the 2 planning levels, councils must consider the Central Coast Regional Plan 2041 in future reviews of their LSPS.

How does the plan account for population changes in the region?

The NSW Government regularly reviews population projections to be able to understand and respond to unexpected events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, drought, floods and catastrophic bushfires. New population projections were prepared in early 2022 and will be revised again in 2023 when they will incorporate the full suite of 2021 Census data.

The reviews of all regional plans consider the most up-to-date population projections.

Is there any investment coming to the region?

Regional plans take an infrastructure-first and place-based approach to generating outcomes for the community. This will deliver great places by identifying and prioritising infrastructure investment upfront as we plan for growth.

Traditionally, strategic land use decisions, including those relating to state infrastructure contributions, often preceded capital investment planning. Consequently, decisions on infrastructure investment often lagged behind the identification and development of new growth areas and housing.

An infrastructure-first, place-focused approach to development planning requires infrastructure providers, the development industry and public authorities to take an integrated and coherent place-based approach to land use planning. This strategic and collaborative approach to infrastructure investment will achieve better outcomes for communities, industry and government.

How will the department work with the council to implement the plan?

The updated plan identifies 4 districts within the Central Coast local government area that each share similar characteristics, such as economic and infrastructure, geography and settlement patterns, housing markets, community expectation and levels of self-containment.

The regional plan acknowledges common planning interests with the council and seeks to avoid duplicating aspects of land use planning. Rather than dictate additional actions for the council, the regional plan identifies the objectives and principles that the council should apply during local strategic planning or when considering development proposals.

The department will work with Central Coast Council on each district's planning priorities, including local planning responses that sequence both planning and investment.