

New England North West Regional Plan 2041

This document answers frequently asked questions about the review and update of the New England North West Regional Plan 2041

What is a regional plan?

In 2017, the Department of Planning and Environment finalised regional plans to guide planning for the existing and future community across the nine regions of NSW. These plans set a clear vision and direction for how each region can leverage future opportunities to ensure their communities grow to become even more vibrant, dynamic and prosperous, while providing for housing, jobs, infrastructure, a healthy environment, connected communities and access to green spaces.

The regional plans set out the requirements for clear and coordinated planning across all levels of government and within the community. The plans are structured around defined goals, objectives and actions.

What is the New England North West Regional Plan 2041?

The New England North West Regional Plan applies to the 12 local government areas of Armidale Regional, Glen Innes Severn, Gunnedah, Gwydir, Inverell, Liverpool Plains, Moree Plains, Narrabri, Tamworth Regional, Tenterfield, Uralla and Walcha. It informs all areas of strategic planning, from the development of local plans to the assessment of planning proposals.

The *New England North West Regional Plan 2041* builds on the previous 2036 regional plan that was released in August 2017. Since then, the NSW Government has worked closely with councils, other stakeholders and the community to deliver on the plan's key priority actions.

How was the plan reviewed?

Throughout 2021, the NSW Government consulted with councils and other stakeholders to thoroughly review the previous *New England North West Regional Plan 2036* and develop an updated *draft New England North West 2041* version that resets priorities to ensure continued benefits for the New England North West community for the next 20 years.

Drafting was completed from March to October 2021. Briefings were undertaken with New England North West Delivery, Coordination and Monitoring Committee which includes representatives from key NSW state government agencies and the Namoi and New England Joint Organisation of Councils.

That consultation helped shape the *New England North West Regional Plan 2041*.

How was the community consulted during the regional plan review?

The draft *New England North West Regional Plan 2041* was on public exhibition between 22 November 2021 and 18 February 2022 for the community to have its say.

During exhibition the NSW Government undertook an extensive, multi-phase engagement program to raise awareness and help inform the development of the draft and final plans.

Exhibition of the Draft Plan was managed through a central online exhibition hub and submissions were accepted through the NSW Planning Portal.

Northern Region Aboriginal Land Councils were invited to an in-person briefing session in Tamworth on 7 December 2021 and a workshop on 17 February 2022.

Councils were invited to attend a briefing session on 8 December 2021 and two workshops held online on 1 and 2 February 2022.

The community was invited to attend two online workshops on 2 and 10 February 2022.

Fifty-two submissions were received during the exhibition period. The submissions and results of the exhibition activities were carefully considered by the department to develop the final New England North West Regional Plan 2041.

What are the key themes of the final New England North West Regional Plan 2041?

There are 5 main themes in the *New England North West Regional Plan 2041*:

1. Growth, change and opportunity – which aims to:
 - Establish the four key settlement planning principles for the region, which are:
 - i. Identify growth needs and opportunities
 - ii. Identify and direct suitable land for planned growth
 - iii. Determine the required structure for development
 - iv. Encourage locally responsive, sustainable design
2. Productive and innovative – which aims to:
 - Expand the food processing sector by identifying the most suitable areas for agribusiness to benefit on-farm jobs and attract long term investors.
 - Support the region’s town centres to thrive
 - Coordinate the supply of well-located employment land to enable the region to capitalise on opportunities for job creation and growth
3. Sustainable and resilient – which aims to:
 - Sensibly manage and conserve water resources
 - Continue to position the region as a leader in sustainable and cost-effective energy production
 - Promote sustainable approaches to circular economy
4. Housing and place – which aims to:
 - Deliver diverse and affordable housing, including recommendations from the Regional Housing Taskforce, established by the NSW Government in July 2021 in response to increasing pressures on the supply and affordability of housing in Regional NSW
 - Better understand, respect and integrate Aboriginal culture and heritage in our local area

- Improve access to public spaces and green infrastructure to support connected and healthy communities
5. A smart, connected and accessible region – which aims to:
- Strengthen freight networks to support the agricultural industry to better access national and international markets
 - Leverage new and upgraded infrastructure planned or currently under construction in the region
 - Improve active and public transport networks to make it safer, easier and more enjoyable for people to get around without a car

Is there any investment coming to the region?

The Regional Plan capitalises on the milestone projects that are already underway to help transform and enhance the region's economic and social wellbeing, and drive job creation. Significant investment in the region that will drive job creation include the Moree Special Activation Precinct, the Namoi Regional Job Precinct, Narrabri Inland Port and the New England Renewable Energy Zone. This plan aims to harness these major investments to secure a bright future for the New England North West.

What's in it for my council?

Priorities for each council are set out in Local Government Narratives, which will guide further investigations and implementation. The priorities build on the objectives and actions in the Regional Plan. Regional planning encourages infrastructure delivery that targets the needs of its communities. It also encourages efficiencies in the allocation of resources and investment to improve the liveability and sustainability of the region. The NSW Government will assist councils to translate these priorities into local plans.

How does the Regional Plan fit in with councils' local strategic planning statements?

By 1 July 2020, all councils in NSW were required to prepare a local strategic planning statement (LSPS) setting out:

- the 20-year vision for land use in the local area
- the special character and values that are to be preserved
- how change will be managed into the future.

An LSPS provides an opportunity to ensure that priorities identified in the regional plan are placed within a clear local context for its unique economic, social and environmental characteristics.

Importantly, the LSPS also allows councils to translate their own strategic planning work into local priorities and actions, which in turn informs the review of the regional plan. This feedback cycle from local to regional planning ensures that there is a two-way 'line of-sight' between the different levels of spatial planning.

The LSPSs prepared by all councils in the region, in consultation with their communities, were a key input into the *New England North West Regional Plan 2041*.

What have been the key achievements of the previous Regional Plan 2036?

A Delivery, Coordination and Monitoring Committee was established to oversee and coordinate the implementation of the regional plan. Key implementation achievements from the *New England North West Regional Plan 2036* included:

- Delivery of the Regional Intensive Agribusiness Data and Gap Analysis Report
- Regional City Activation Plans developed for Armidale and Tamworth
- Delivery of the New England North West Housing and Land Monitor, providing an annual review of housing and employment land activity in the region
- Delivery of the [Urban Design Guide for Regional NSW](#) for connected, healthy communities
- Aboriginal Heritage Landscape Mapping completed for new urban release areas across the New England North West region.

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