

Department of Planning and Environment

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Implementation Plan 2022-25

New England North West Regional Plan 2041

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.

Published by NSW Department of Planning and Environment

dpie.nsw.gov.au

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First published: September 2022

Department reference number: IRD22/24334

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TMP-MC-R-DC-V1.2

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Introduction

The New England North West Regional Plan 2041 is a 20-year blueprint for the future of the region focussing on land-use planning.

Legislative Context

The Regional Plan has been prepared in accordance with section 3.3 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* and applies to the local government areas of Armidale, Glen Innes, Gunnedah, Gwydir, Inverell, Liverpool Plains, Moree Plains, Narrabri, Tamworth, Tenterfield, Uralla, and Walcha.

Five themes guide the 22 objectives:

- Growth, change and opportunity
- Productive and innovative
- Sustainable and resilient
- Housing and place
- Connected and accessible.

The objectives are supported by actions, strategies and collaboration activities.

Purpose of the Implementation Plan

The purpose of this implementation plan is to:

- explain linkages between the vision, themes, objectives, actions, strategies and collaboration activities in the Regional Plan
- assign accountabilities and timeframes for implementation
- guide the New England North West Coordination and Monitoring Committee in its role of overseeing delivery of the Regional plan
- inform monitoring of the Regional Plan

Implementation

The Regional Plan comprises five themes and 22 objectives. The objectives are supported by 11 actions, strategies and 7 collaboration activities that will help to deliver the vision for New England North West Region.

Actions describe initiatives that will be led by the Department of Planning and Environment in the next five years, with new actions identified during the next review. These actions each have an outcome and a deliverable over the five years.

Strategies identify policy positions or directions implemented through council local planning (including local strategic planning statements), local plans (including local environmental plans and development control plans) or State agency planning. They guide decisions that affect land use.

Collaboration activities include important initiatives led by State agencies or local councils. These are key activities that will help the region achieve the objectives of the Plan, and DPE Planning will actively participate.

The New England North West Delivery Coordination and Monitoring Committee will take ownership for implementing this Regional Plan by prioritising the actions needed to be delivered over the next five years.

Actions

The NSW Department of Planning and Environment will be responsible for implementing the 11 actions in 2022-2025. These actions align with initiatives across Government, councils and industry and will require a collaborative effort involving multiple agencies, councils and stakeholders. The 11 actions are to:

1. Work with councils to provide guidance and tools for councils to use for evidence-based risk-management approaches to build resilience to shocks and stresses, plan for natural hazards and transition to net zero emissions.
2. facilitate the improvement and timely sharing of validated spatial data on biodiversity values via the NSW Planning Portal.
3. work with and assist councils to:
 - a. review biodiversity mapping and related local environmental plan and development control plan provisions
 - b. improve access to data to enable identification of protected areas including NPWS Estate, Crown Reserves and in-perpetuity private land conservation agreements to inform local planning.
4. work with Armidale Regional Council on the preparation and implementation of a Local Housing Strategy.
5. monitor housing supply and completions in the region

6. release a package of information to advise how councils can plan for and manage accommodation options for seasonal and itinerant workers.
7. progress Connecting with Country to inform better processes to support the health of Country
8. prioritise the processing of unresolved Aboriginal land claims on Crown land.
9. Deliver an interactive mapping tool to enable LALCs to view their landholding information together with relevant planning controls on the NSW Planning Portal.
10. review its Community Participation Plan to guide consultation with Aboriginal communities in strategic land use planning.
11. establish a New England North West Housing Affordability Roundtable with stakeholders

Collaboration Activities

Collaboration activities are initiatives that are led by councils, a joint organisation of councils or other agencies which support the objectives of the Plan, and which the NSW Department of Planning and Environment has a role in supporting. The collaboration activities are to:

1. Investigate planning pathways to facilitate intensive agriculture within the Namoi Regional Job Precinct
2. Investigate implementation of the Northern NSW Inland Port at Narrabri.
3. Investigate opportunities to source affordable biomass and develop regional bioenergy industries to stimulate regional development and employment.
4. Identify opportunities to leverage investment in the Inland Rail at a regional and local scale
5. Develop place plans for Tamworth and Armidale by 2024
6. Foster a regional approach to the rollout of electric vehicle charging infrastructure that considers potential sites for charging stations
7. Investigate multi modal transport options in other centres.

Governance

New England North West Delivery, Coordination and Monitoring Committee

The New England North West Delivery, Coordination and Monitoring Committee was established during the implementation of the New England North West Regional Plan 2036. Committee members contributed to the review of the Regional Plan which commenced in 2021.

The NSW Government will strengthen these governance arrangements already in place and reconvene the Committee to oversee and report on the implementation of the Plan's actions. The committee will also monitor the effectiveness of the Plan's strategies in setting guidance that supports strategic planning and land use planning decisions for the region.

The role of the DCMC is to:

- Oversee and coordinate the implementation of the Regional Plan
- Provide accountability for delivery of the Regional Plan
- Monitor and report periodically on the progress of implementing the Regional Plan
- Collaborate to resolve issues where impediments are identified
- Provide a forum to discuss and resolve implementation issues or action delivery in a changing regional policy environment
- Prioritise delivery of actions and review project plans for each action in the Regional Plan
- Develop a communication strategy to guide communication from Committee members to the wider network of stakeholders
- Provide high level progress updates to the New England North West Regional Leadership Group
- Inform and participate in a five-year review of the Regional Plan.

Committee membership includes:

- Department of Planning and Environment (Biodiversity Conservation Division)
- Department of Regional NSW
- Joint Organisations of Councils
- Department of Primary Industries (Agriculture)
- Transport for NSW.

Supporting groups

The Committee may be supported by outcome-specific working groups that bring together appropriate personnel (government industry or community) to provide advice on issues or projects.

Links to other strategies

The NSW Government has in place, or is developing, several other strategies that will influence the implementation of the Regional Plan, including the:

- State Infrastructure Strategy 2018-2038
- Future Transport 2056
- A 20-year Economic Vision for Regional NSW and the Regional Economic Development strategies for Northern New England High Country, Southern New England High Country, Lower North West, and Upper North West
- New England North West Regional Transport Plan
- Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020-2030
- State-wide Natural Hazards Package
- Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap
- NSW Water Strategy & Regional Water Strategies
- NSW Minerals Strategy
- Strategic Statement on Coal Exploration and Mining in NSW

The Regional Plan incorporates and responds to the aspirations and priorities of local communities, as articulated through the councils Local Strategic Planning Statements and Community Strategic Plans. In turn, the Regional Plan also outlines several strategies that are to be considered by councils when undertaking reviews of Local Strategic Planning Statements and Community Strategic Plans.

Review mechanisms

Monitoring

The Committee will monitor and review progress towards achieving the vision and meeting the objectives. An online dashboard will include indicators for housing, employment, communities and the environment relating to each theme. An annual Monitoring Report will also be prepared to monitor progress on implementation of the Regional Plan. The Report will outline progress on actions and collaborative activities and reprioritise where needed. A new program of work for each subsequent year will also be identified in the annual Monitoring Report.

Regional Plan Review

The Plan will be reviewed and adjusted every five years, or as necessary, to realise the vision for 2041. A five-yearly review will revisit regional performance, challenges and opportunities and incorporate the most up to date information provided through the census process and updated local strategic planning statements and local plans. The review of the Regional Plan will be informed by the Committee as well as monitoring and indicators.

Implementation Plan updates

The implementation priorities will be updated on an annual basis as part of the monitoring programme and will form the work program for the following year. This will ensure that implementation of the Regional Plan remains current and responsive to regional conditions.