

Central West and Orana Regional Plan 2041

This document answers frequently asked questions about the strategic blueprint for the Central West and Orana region.

What are the regional plans?

In 2017, the Department of Planning and Environment finalised regional plans to guide planning for the existing and future communities across the 9 regions of NSW outside Greater Sydney. The *Central West and Orana Regional Plan 2036* was one of the 9 inaugural plans.

These regional plans set out a 20-year vision for the region and the direction to achieve it by responding to existing and future community needs 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 government and within the community. The plans are structured around a vision for the region and defined objectives which include a range of relevant strategies and actions.

Regional plans include a commitment for a 5-yearly review. The review provides an opportunity to consider the changes that affect the region, the challenges and opportunities ahead, and to update the plan to reset priorities.

What is the Central West and Orana Regional Plan 2041?

The *Central West and Orana Regional Plan 2041 (Regional Plan 2041)* is the updated 20-year strategic framework for the region, to help guide and support the region's ongoing prosperity. The Regional Plan 2041 builds on the previous 2036 Regional Plan.

The Regional Plan 2041 is prepared in accordance with section 3.3 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. It applies to the local government areas of Bathurst, Blayney, Bogan, Cabonne, Coonamble, Cowra, Dubbo, Forbes, Gilgandra, Lachlan, Lithgow, Mid-Western, Narromine, Oberon, Orange, Parkes, Warren, Warrumbungle and Weddin.

The Department will now work closely with all 19 councils to ensure each council's local strategic planning statement, relevant local strategies and planning proposals implement the Regional Plan 2041 for their local government area.

What were the key inputs into the development of the Regional Plan 2041?

The review of the *2036 Regional Plan* and preparation of the Regional Plan 2041 involved:

- an audit of actions delivered to determine which elements have been effective and which ones remain relevant for the revised plan.
- a review of the 19 regional councils' local strategic planning statements

- commissioning research to identify the key drivers of growth and change in the region and options to respond to the demand for worker accommodation in the region.
- considering key areas of change that will affect the region in the future such as:
 - the changing regional economy and catalyst projects such as the Parkes Special Activation Precinct, Inland Rail, and the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone (REZ)
 - climate change evidence and policy, including NSW's commitment to achieve a carbon neutral economy by 2050.
 - challenges such as the ongoing recovery from drought, floods, bushfire, and the global pandemic.
- a review of new and proposed policy and legislation.
- consultation with state agencies and councils who provided detailed feedback on the 2036 Regional Plan and the development of the *draft Central West and Orana Regional Plan 2041*.
- consultation with councils, members of the public, elected representatives, and the Aboriginal community during the public exhibition period.

What was the public exhibition process for the draft plan?

The *draft Central West and Orana Regional Plan 2041* (draft Regional Plan 2041) was publicly exhibited from Monday 22 November 2021 to Friday 18 February 2022. During exhibition the Department undertook an engagement program to raise awareness and help inform the development final plan. This included 9 online stakeholder information sessions.

Exhibition of the draft Regional Plan 2041 was managed through a central online exhibition hub and submissions were accepted through the NSW Planning Portal and responses to the regional office. 59 submissions were received. All formal submissions and other written and verbal feedback received during the public exhibition period were considered in the preparation of the final Regional Plan.

A submissions and engagement summary (Consultation report) and details of how the plan will be implemented are available on the [Regional Plan 2041 web page](#).

What are the key themes in the Plan?

The 20-year vision for the region that is expected to be home to more than 325,000 people by 2041, is for a healthy, connected and resilient region, with a prosperous economy. The Regional Plan 2041 contains strategies, actions and collaboration activities which support delivery of the plan's vision.

The main themes in the Regional Plan 2041 are:

Region shaping investments - which acknowledges the major development and infrastructure investments being made in the region, including the Central-West Orana REZ, the Parkes Special Activation Precinct and major transport connections (Inland Rail, Fast Rail and Great Western Highway upgrade project).

A sustainable and resilient place - which provides objectives for the region's environmental assets, healthy and resilient communities and water resources, landscapes, character and cultural heritage.

People, centres, housing and communities – which provides objectives for the region’s centres, temporary worker accommodation, rural residential development, infrastructure delivery and housing supply, diversity, affordability and resilience.

Prosperity, productivity and innovation – which provides objectives for existing industries and employment areas, new and innovative economic enterprises, agricultural production and innovation, transport networks and infrastructure, higher education and health facilities, resource lands, tourism and the economic self-determination of Aboriginal communities.

Local Government Priorities – Council planning priorities, drawn from local strategic planning statements and local strategies. These priorities together with the proposed regional responses documented in the strategies, actions, and collaboration activities will work together to meet the vision for the region.

How does the plan fit in with councils’ local strategic planning statements?

All councils in NSW have a local strategic planning statement (LSPS) which sets out the 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 provide councils with the opportunity to:

- ensure the priorities identified in the Regional Plan 2041 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.

The existing LSPSs informed the Regional Plan 2041 which will in turn inform future reviews of the LSPSs by the councils.

How does the Department of Planning and Environment’s population projections relate to the Plan?

The NSW Government regularly reviews population projections to understand and respond to unexpected events such as the COVID-19 pandemic or expected events such as the construction of major infrastructure projects such as the Inland Rail, Central-West Orana REZ and the Parkes Special Activation Precinct.

New population projections were released in May 2022 which were used for the Regional Plan 2041. While the population projections are a useful tool for monitoring growth and change and understanding potential future change, the vision and activities proposed by the Regional Plan 2041 are independent of these projections and aspire to growth and change beyond what is currently predicted to occur.

Is there any investment coming to the region?

The Regional Plan 2041 provides a framework to leverage expected investment in development and infrastructure initiatives such as the Inland Rail, Parkes Special Activation Precinct and the Central-West Orana REZ to share the economic and social benefits of these projects throughout the region.

What does the Plan say about Renewable Energy?

The vision of the Regional Plan 2041 recognises the importance of harnessing renewable energy and supporting initiatives that deliver the state’s commitment for Net Zero by 2050.

The Regional Plan 2041 acknowledges that the majority of the region’s renewable energy investment will initially occur in the Central-West Orana REZ which is one of at least 5 REZs proposed to be developed in NSW. The

Central-West Orana REZ is expected to attract \$5.2 billion in private investment to the region by 2030 and support around 3,900 construction jobs at its peak and 500 ongoing jobs.

More information on the REZ can be found [here](#).

What's in it for my council?

Priorities for each council are set out in Local Government Priorities, which will guide further investigations and implementation. The priorities build on the objectives and actions in the existing regional plan, the Regional Plan 2041 and the relevant Council LSPS.

The Department will continue to engage with each council to ensure that the Regional Plan 2041 meets needs and expectations and facilitates the efficient allocation of resources and investment to improve liveability and sustainability throughout the region.

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