

Lower North West

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2018–2022



VISION

The Lower North West will have strong, resilient and sustainable economic growth, building on key industries of Agriculture, Agri-processing, Mining, Transport and Tourism.

Preface

The NSW Government has assisted local councils and their communities to develop 37 Regional Economic Development Strategies across regional NSW. Each strategy is designed around one or more local government areas that form a functional economic region as defined by economic data and community input. While the strategies have been developed using a consistent methodology, each is a product of detailed data analysis and local community consultation to ensure ownership through a 'bottom-up' process: it sets out a vision for the Region, the strategies, and early stage actions required to achieve the vision.

Regional Economic Development Strategies articulate a framework for identifying actions crucial to achieving the regional vision. Projects listed within this Strategy should therefore be viewed as example projects that have emerged from the initial application of the framework. Adoption of these projects would be subject to further evaluative processes.

The power of the Strategy is its ability to be used on an on-going basis to identify additional high value projects over time. By complementing existing funding processes, these strategies present new opportunities to strengthen and increase investment in regional development across NSW.

Importantly, the Strategy should be viewed as the first stage of a process that will assist those with an interest in the economic development of the Region, particularly councils, communities and

local businesses, in planning their future economic activities. It provides a vehicle for engaging the community in a 'conversation' about regional needs and priorities, assists in bringing together key stakeholders and mobilising resources. In so doing, it can facilitate faster access to dedicated NSW Government funding, such as the Growing Local Economies Fund, as well as helping to capitalise upon other economic opportunities.

This Strategy has been developed for the Lower North West Region which encompasses the Tamworth Regional, Gunnedah Shire and Liverpool Plains Shire Local Government Areas (LGAs). This Strategy was formed in collaboration with the councils, key stakeholders and the broader regional community and benefited from economic-analytical assistance provided by the NSW Government's Centre for Economic and Regional Development (CERD).

It is presented in two documents, the *Lower North West Regional Economic Development Strategy 2018–2022* which allows the reader to quickly and easily determine key content, while the accompanying *Lower North West Regional Economic Development Strategy 2018–2022: Supporting Analysis* details the strategy methodology, evidence and development process.

For further information about the Regional Economic Development Strategies program please contact the CERD on 02 6391 3025 or CERD@dpc.nsw.gov.au.



Introduction

The *Lower North West Regional Economic Development Strategy 2018–2022* (the Strategy) sets out a long term economic vision and associated strategy for the functional economic region encompassing Tamworth Regional, Gunnedah Shire and Liverpool Plains Shire Local Government Areas (the Region). Economic research suggests that regions are becoming increasingly specialised in the key ‘engine’ industries¹ that drive the regional economies and a region’s relative strengths (endowments) play a key role in determining these specialisations.²

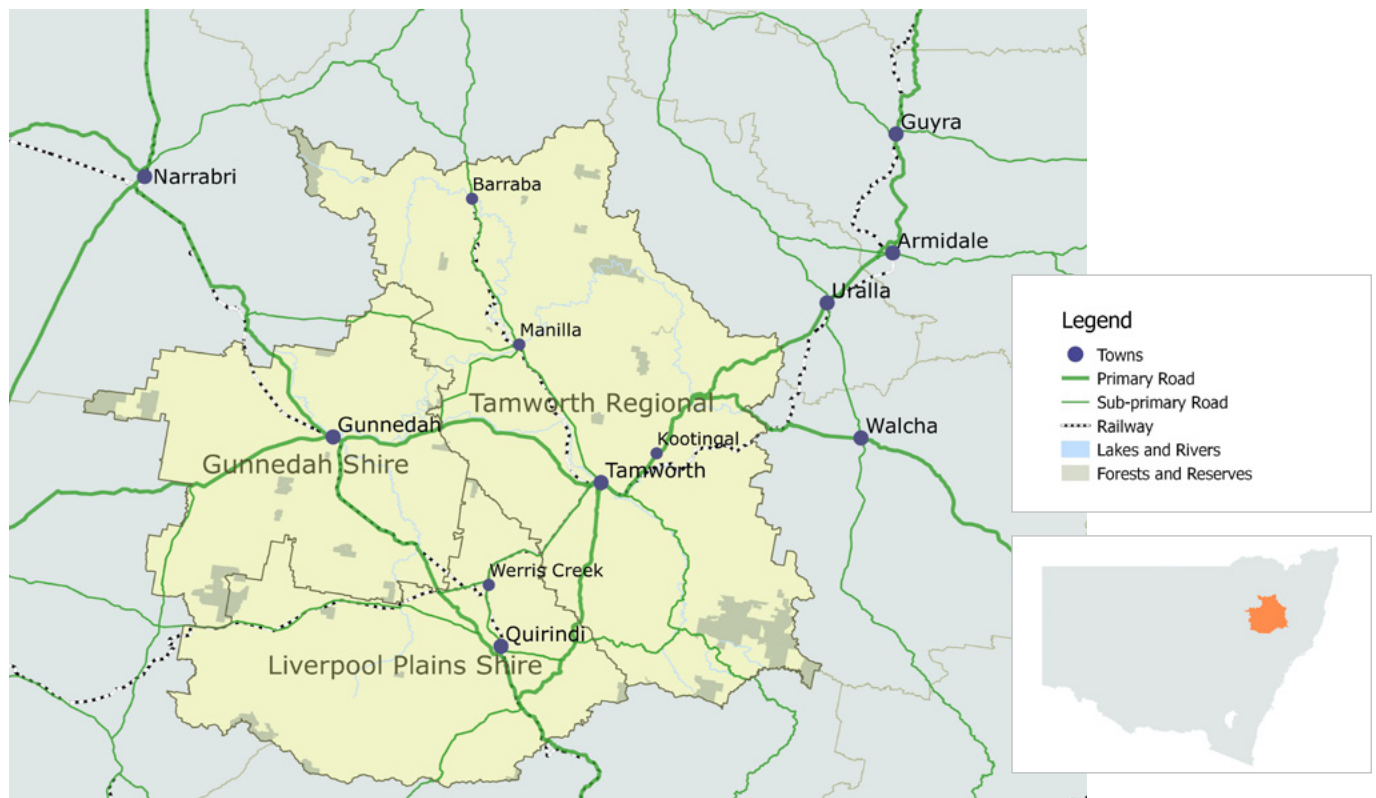
1. For the purposes of regional development, it is useful to classify industries as:
 - Engines — industries that bring money into the region (e.g. Agriculture) and that drive the local economy
 - Enabling — industries that support the engines (e.g. Veterinary Services to Agriculture), and
 - Population serving — industries that support the local population (e.g. Retail).Typically the fortunes of the population-serving industries depend on the success of the engines and therefore it useful to focus on the engine sectors that drive growth.
2. *Regional Economic Growth Enablers Report (2017)*, Centre for Economic and Regional Development.

This Strategy is based on industry specialisations and opportunities that leverage the Region’s key endowments — relating to location, accessibility and connectivity; highly productive agricultural land; significant mineral resources; and strong lifestyle attributes — to guide investment and other actions over the period 2018 to 2022. The four core strategies that have been identified to capture the opportunities, manage risks and deliver on the vision for the Region are:

- A** Deliver key infrastructure as a foundation for growth
- B** Provide a positive, supportive environment to facilitate business growth and investment
- C** Support and leverage key sectors
- D** Position and promote the Lower North West Region as a location of choice.

The strategy also takes account of regional risks and how they might be addressed.

Figure 1: The Lower North West Region



Background

The Lower North West Region forms the southern end of the New England North West (NE-NW) region of NSW. The Region is located approximately 350 kilometres north-west of Sydney and 250 kilometres west of Newcastle. It has an area of 19,954 square kilometres and incorporates much of the upper catchment area of the Namoi River, a tributary of the Murray–Darling River system.

The Lower North West Region has an estimated residential population of 81,423 representing 44% of the total population of the NE-NW region. The main population centres are Tamworth (a regional city), Gunnedah (a sub-regional centre) and Quirindi (a district service centre).

Agriculture is the main economic activity within the Region. Farming is dominated by irrigated and dry land cropping (grains, legumes, oil seeds and cotton) on the fertile plains and lucerne and pasture production for hay on the river flats. Livestock production includes beef cattle, sheep for meat and wool, and poultry for meat and eggs. There is an emerging Equine sector. The Region has a concentration of agricultural processing facilities including meat and poultry processing plants, a dairy, grain and oil seed mills for human consumption, stock feed mills and a cotton gin, tannery and olive processing plant. Mining, particularly for coal but also for other minerals and hard-rock aggregate, is another significant activity.

The Region has a strong Services sector that supports the broader NE-NW region. Tamworth is the largest retail and commercial centre in the NE-NW region. It is the regional centre for health, professional and government services and is home to Tamworth Regional Airport, which is one of the busiest and fastest growing airports in regional Australia. The Agriculture and Mining sectors are supported by many transport companies, and professional and commercial services.

The population (particularly in the city of Tamworth) has been growing (since 2001 at a rate of 0.7% per annum) and the unemployment rate is low (5.9%) compared to the NSW average (6.3%). Consistent with Regional NSW, the Lower North West has, relative to the NSW average, a lower proportion of people aged 25 to 49 years and a higher proportion of people aged 65 years and over. The level of education attainment of the labour force in the Lower North West Region is on par with Inland Regional NSW and Regional NSW in terms of the proportion of the labour force that have Certificate and Diploma qualifications but lower (16% compared to 18%) in terms of the proportion of the workforce with University degrees.



Endowments

Endowments are strengths that a regional economy possesses and can capitalise on.

Economic principles suggest that endowments play a key role in the economic development of regions. The CERD in its Regional Economic Growth Enablers Report (2017) found that:

The future of individual regional economies is inexorably linked to their natural endowments and attempts to retain or establish industries without an underpinning endowment are unlikely to succeed.³

A region seeking to encourage economic development should therefore concentrate on factors that enable the growth of endowment-based industries. It must also build local leadership and institutional capacity and capabilities to facilitate businesses and public agencies and services to capitalise on the opportunities that a region's endowments present. Endowments can lead to opportunities from which commercial and industrial interests may leverage and develop specialisations.

The key endowments of the Lower North West Region, identified through analysis and community consultation, are its:

- **Location, accessibility and connectivity**
- **Highly productive agricultural land**
- **Significant mineral resources**
- **Strong lifestyle attributes.**

Location, accessibility and connectivity

The Lower North West Region is highly accessible by road, rail and air. The Region sits at the junction of three major highways and three railway lines and is traversed by several significant inter-regional link roads. Two of the highways are part of the National Road Freight Network, with most of the rail infrastructure being part of the National Rail Freight Network. Air services are available from Tamworth Regional Airport to Sydney and Brisbane.

The Lower North West Region has ready access to the East Coast domestic markets and to the Port of Newcastle (3 hours by road), Port Botany (5 hours) and Port of Brisbane (7–8 hours). In the future, the Region will have access (via Narrabri) to the Inland Rail.

It should be noted, however, that there is considerable diversity across the Region in the level of 'accessibility and connectivity'. Although the range of transport infrastructure appears comprehensive, freight times from parts of the Region are significant. For example, road freight time from Gunnedah to Sydney is at least five hours, and 7.5 hours to Brisbane. Currently, passenger rail from Gunnedah to Sydney is around 8 hours and the town has no passenger air service.

The diversity in 'connectivity' also includes slow Internet speed and mobile phone black spots in many parts of the Region. Improvements in these issues (additional investment in key infrastructure) will add to the Region's location, accessibility and connectivity endowment, and related enhancements to productivity and lifestyle.



3. *Regional Economic Growth Enablers Report (2017)*, Centre for Economic and Regional Development.

Highly productive agricultural land

The Lower North West Region has highly productive agricultural land coupled with a favourable climate and access to water. The average value of agricultural production per hectare of agricultural land in the Region is double that of the rest of NSW. Most of the agricultural land in the Liverpool Plains and Gunnedah shires and some of the river flats in the Tamworth Regional LGA are classified as 'Biophysical Strategic Agricultural Land of State and National Significance'.⁴

The Lower North West Region is an optimum location for intensive livestock production (cattle and sheep feedlots, piggeries and poultry farms) with suitable climate and topography, secure water, access to feed (grain, oil seeds, legumes, hay and silage) and processing facilities, and access to domestic and export markets.

The Region has a reputation for resilient, innovative and award-winning farmers, with farmers tending to be early adopters of new land management practices, production techniques, business models and technology. It also has a reputation for producing quality livestock, including international award-winning beef.

There are significant opportunities to grow the intensive Livestock, Poultry and Equine sectors as well as the Agri-Processing and Service sectors.

Significant mineral resources

Located at the southern end of the Gunnedah Basin, the Lower North West Region has high quality

4. NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure (2012) New England North West Strategic Land Use Plan.

coal deposits, hard rock aggregate resources and the largest deposit of zeolite in Australia. With the ramping up of coal production, the development of two additional large coal mines and the active exploration of a number of lease areas, the Region will see continued growth in the coal sector over the next decade. There are opportunities to expand the production of hard rock aggregate and zeolite.

Strong lifestyle attributes

The regional city of Tamworth is a major asset, providing access to a city lifestyle and higher order facilities and services, including quality health, education, professional and commercial services, sporting and entertainment. Tamworth also has a relatively high profile and level of awareness in the market place (for labour, business investment and tourism). The Lower North West Region is also within half a day travel to Sydney and Newcastle for tertiary services.

Supporting Tamworth is a diversity of attractive, well serviced towns and rural villages that offer different experiences including the aspirational 'country lifestyle' while having ready access to Tamworth. Land and premises are affordable, business start-up costs are relatively low, and flexible planning schemes enable the establishment of home-based and agri-businesses.

The Lower North West Region has an attractive setting. Several large water storage dams and the Namoi River and its tributaries provide access to water-based recreation and sporting activities. The Region also has quality event, entertainment and sporting venues and facilities, and a strong program of events and activities.



Specialisations

Obtaining an understanding of a region’s competitive advantages⁵ is complex. A commonly used simple form of analysis is the Location Quotient (LQ) which measures the employment concentration in industry sectors within a regional economy compared with the same sectors across NSW.

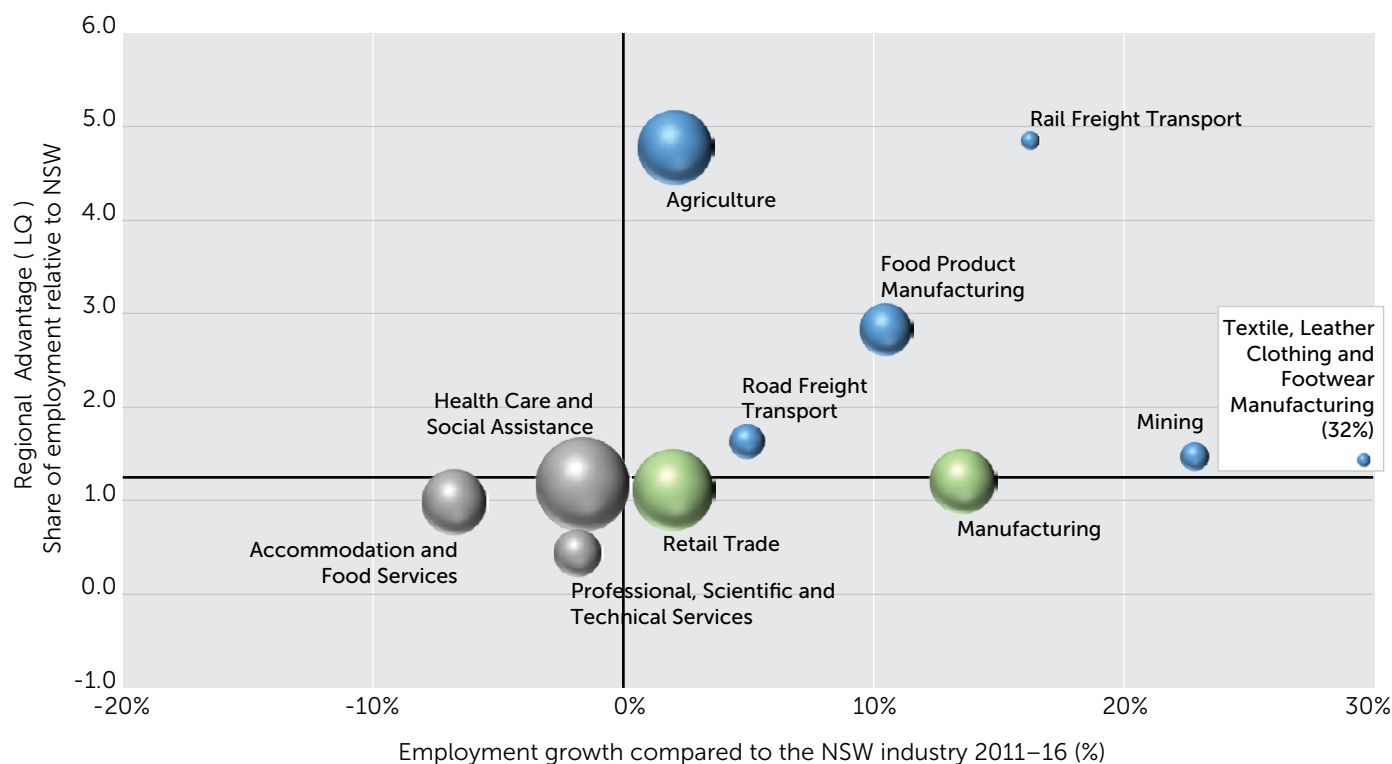
The higher the LQ, the higher the likelihood that the region is specialised in that industry relative to NSW. For the purpose of this analysis, specialisations as defined by LQs, are used as a proxy measure for those sectors and industries that represent a region’s competitive advantages.

While LQs are used in this document for that purpose, they are only a partial measure of those competitive advantages. Hence, they have been considered alongside additional qualitative evaluations and data analysis, such as Input-Output modelling, to arrive at the findings for the Strategy.

Figure 2 shows selected industries in the Region by employment size, employment growth between 2011 and 2016, and LQ.

- An LQ of 1.25 or more is generally regarded in the literature as denoting a regional specialisation.
- The higher the LQ, the more specialised an industry is in the region relative to NSW.
- Industries with a larger ‘bubble’ employed more people at the time of the 2016 ABS Census
- The colour of the bubble reflects if the industry is considered a regional specialisation and employment in the industry has grown from 2011 to 2016 relative to the NSW industry average. Blue represents industry specialisations that have grown in employment relative to NSW. Grey and green represent industries that are not specialisations that have grown (green) or fallen (grey) in employment relative to NSW.

Figure 2: Employment by sector – growth and concentration



Source: ABS 2016 and 2011 Census of Population and Housing. Data notes are provided in the Supporting Analysis.

5. A region's competitive advantage for an industry includes its ability to produce goods and services at a lower cost or differentiate its products from other regions.



- Industries to the right of the vertical line grew faster between 2011 and 2016 than comparable industries across NSW, industries on the left grew more slowly.

As reflected in the figure above, Agriculture and Agricultural Processing (e.g. Food Product Manufacturing) are key specialisations with Agriculture being the Region's main engine industry. The value of agricultural commodities produced in the Region in 2015/16 was \$704 million, equivalent to around \$8,850 per resident.

In terms of value of production, the main agricultural activities are broadacre cropping (grains, legumes, oilseeds and cotton), cattle production and poultry production. The Region also has a growing Equine industry, driven largely by the establishment of the Australian Equine and Livestock Events Centre in Tamworth. The Region's growing specialisation in the Agricultural Processing sector includes livestock and poultry processing, grain processing, cotton ginning, leather processing and several boutique processors of other products.

Mining is a significant engine industry within the Lower North West Region, with coal mining (from the Gunnedah Basin) being the main activity. There are 6 operating coal mines and two more major coal mines have been approved. Other resources extracted commercially in the Region include zeolite (Liverpool Plains Shire), tungsten, copper, gold and hard-rock aggregate.

Relative to NSW, the Lower North West Region does not have a specialisation in Non-Agricultural Manufacturing, however, there are many niche specialisations including metal extrusion and fabrication, and the production of silos, specialist

farm equipment, bricks and pavers, furniture, wooden frames, trusses and other products (e.g. stakes), signs, leather and textile products and foam products.

Tamworth Regional Airport has a cluster of aircraft repair and maintenance facilities, including the QantasLink Heavy Maintenance Facility. It also has a cluster of flight and aeronautical training companies and emergency and regulatory service providers.

The Road Freight Transport sector is an enabling industry, with the Lower North West having concentrations of road transport companies, rail and train maintenance facilities and aviation businesses.

The Lower North West Region has a concentration of trucking companies (more than 30 employing companies plus sole traders) with services including light haulage and general freight, bulk haulage (grain, fuel, fertiliser), heavy equipment haulage and livestock carriers.

The Health Care and Social Assistance sector is a major employer and is emerging as a specialisation for the Region. Tamworth Regional Hospital is a rural referral hospital with an extensive range of higher order medical and allied health services, including an oncology centre.

Tourism (for which Accommodation and Food Services are proxy sectors) is not a specialisation relative to other areas of NSW. Nevertheless it is an important sector that helps diversify the economy and by raising the profile, helps to play a part in relocation decisions. The Lower North West Region hosts a number of high profile events, including the Tamworth Country Music Festival (Australia's largest music festival) and AgQuip (one of the largest agricultural events in the world) in Gunnedah.

Strategy

The four Strategy elements for the Lower North West Region link directly to the opportunities presented by the Region's endowments, specialisations and core competencies and also aim to address key regional risks.

The Strategy elements were derived from an analysis of the endowments that underpin the Region's strengths, followed by examination of current industry specialisations and emerging specialisations, identified in consultation with the community and councils.

The Region has significant opportunities to build on its specialisations and its endowments to grow the economy. These opportunities include growing the key ('engine') industry sectors:

- Agriculture and Agri-business – to further leverage the Region's significant advantages for agriculture to increase productivity, foster emerging activities, and encourage growth and diversification of the agri-processing and services sectors.
- Mining – to leverage the proposed expansion in mining to grow the Mine Services sector and attract new residents.
- Transport and Logistics – to improve efficiency and productivity in the Transport sector and to leverage assets such as the rail and airport infrastructure to attract investment.
- Tourism – to increase visitation by building the drive-touring and events markets, through product development, marketing and promotion.

As a regional service hub, Tamworth's economy will benefit from growth in the key sectors both in the Lower North West Region and within the broader NE-NW region.

Opportunities

Key engine sectors

- Agriculture and Agri-business
- Mining
- Transport and Logistics
- Tourism

The four elements of the strategies to drive growth, realise the opportunities and achieve the vision are:

- A Deliver key infrastructure as a foundation for growth**
- B Provide a positive, supportive environment to facilitate business growth and investment**
- C Support and leverage key sectors**
- D Position and promote the Lower North West region as a location of choice.**

Each element is accompanied by a set of early actions, which should be interpreted simply as example actions derived from the preliminary application of the Strategy framework. It is therefore expected that there will be other actions capable of contributing to the attainment of the Region's vision that are yet to be identified. Consequently, an action's alignment with the Strategy is the primary strategic consideration, rather than it being listed in this document, and all proposed actions will be subject to further qualitative and quantitative evaluative processes. The key strategies and actions are summarised below with further details provided in the *Lower North West Regional Economic Development Strategy 2018–2022: Supporting Analysis*.

Strategies

A	Deliver key infrastructure as a foundation for growth
B	Provide a positive, supportive environment to facilitate business growth and investment
C	Support and leverage key sectors
D	Position and promote the Lower North West Region as a location of choice



A. Deliver key infrastructure as a foundation for growth

The condition and capacity of infrastructure underpins economic development. Within the Lower North West Region there are opportunities to improve infrastructure to increase connectivity, reduce business costs and facilitate productivity gains, and to leverage infrastructure assets to attract new businesses and investment.

It is also essential that the Region's infrastructure has the capacity to accommodate growth. Planning and building for growth, removes the time and cost 'bottlenecks' often faced in bringing greenfield sites and new projects on-line and surety of access and supply provides businesses with the confidence to plan and invest.

Key initiatives and infrastructure priorities within this Strategy are:

- improve telecommunications infrastructure and services to enhance connectivity, enable adoption of new technologies, improve business systems and provide access to information, services, markets and education and training;
- upgrade key roads to improve inter and intra-region connectivity and enable use of high productivity vehicles for freight transport;
- improve and leverage rail and airport assets – for both passenger and freight services;
- upgrade and augment utility services (power, water, sewerage) to meet current needs and provide the capacity for growth; and
- facilitate the development of serviced industrial and employment land, e.g. by providing last mile infrastructure to key industrial precincts.



B. Provide a positive, supportive environment to facilitate business growth and investment

Growing the regional economy is dependent on the strength of local businesses to leverage the region's endowments. Within the Lower North West Region, challenges facing producers and businesses include securing labour, accessing quality training locally, the increasing levels of 'red tape' and the time and costs involved in compliance and limited access to capital.

By showing strong leadership, 'being open for business' and supporting local businesses, the Region's councils can contribute significantly to providing an environment that is conducive to growth. Government agencies also have a role to play in removing barriers, providing funding and encouraging and facilitating growth – for example, through supporting new business start-ups and the relocation of businesses to the Region.

Key initiatives in this Strategy include:

- build strong partnerships between councils and strategic alliances with private sector and industry organisations;
- grow and develop the Region's workforce to address labour and skill shortages;
- identify and advocate for changes to regulatory barriers that hinder industry development and business growth (e.g. by reducing compliance costs and increasing productivity); and
- deliver information and services to actively support and nurture businesses.

The key infrastructure priorities under this Strategy are to:

- improve access to education and training facilities. This could include new trade training facilities (e.g. the proposed Gunnedah Training Centre) and/or a university campus within the Region.



C. Support and leverage key sectors

There are several key sectors that will drive the Lower North West Region's economy in the foreseeable future by creating income and employment opportunities within the Region, and provide nuclei for the attraction of new businesses and investment. These sectors include Agriculture and Agri-processing, Poultry, Equine, Mining, Transport and Logistics (including Aviation) and Tourism.

This Strategy focuses on providing additional targeted support – including development of sector-specific land-use plans and strategies, financial investment and support in addressing sector-specific regulatory matters – to these key sectors to complement the foundations provided by strategies A and B.

The key initiatives in this Strategy are to:

- provide support to Agriculture and Agri-processing;
- facilitate growth in the Poultry and Equine sectors;
- undertake actions to leverage the Mining sector;
- facilitate growth in the Transport and Logistics sectors, including Aviation; and
- grow the Tourism sector (visitor economy).

The key infrastructure priorities under this Strategy are to:

- investment in infrastructure and processing facilities to support and grow the Agricultural and Agri-processing sectors, including Poultry;
- continued improvement of equine facilities within the Region;
- investigate the feasibility of Tamworth Regional Airport becoming a hub for international freight;
- provision of adequate supply of serviced residential and industrial land to accommodate growth; and
- development of additional tourism attractions and facilities, including the proposed Gunnedah Koala Centre and the Tamworth Performing Arts and Convention Centre.



D. Position and promote the Lower North West region as a location of choice

Retaining existing and attracting new businesses and residents is essential for increasing the size and capacity of the Region's workforce and for driving growth.

People making location decisions consider a range of factors including the attractiveness, amenity and appeal of the area, the facilities and services available (including retail, medical and health, education, child care, telecommunications), suitable and affordable housing, employment prospects and the vibrancy and inclusiveness of the community.

Ensuring that the Region is an attractive place to live, work, invest and visit, and has the facilities and services available is part of the foundation for economic growth.

Key initiatives in this Strategy are to:

- grow Tamworth and consolidate its role as the primary regional service centre;
- continue to improve the attractiveness and amenity of the towns and villages;
- improve and expand the activities, facilities and services available;
- plan, facilitate and provide for a range of housing and property choices; and
- market and promote the Lower North West Region as a 'location of choice' to attract new businesses, investment, residents and visitors.

The key infrastructure priorities under this Strategy are to:

- improve health infrastructure in Gunnedah;
- upgrade and expand sporting, recreation and cultural facilities in each LGA; and
- ongoing improvements to the presentation and amenity of the Region's towns and villages.

Summary of strategies and actions				
Enablers	Deliver key infrastructure as a foundation for growth	Provide a positive, supportive environment to facilitate business growth and investment	Support and leverage key sectors	Position and promote the Region as a location of choice
Infrastructure and facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve telecommunications (e.g by removing black spots) to increase connectivity and productivity • Invest in key road and road transport infrastructure such as upgrading New England highway to reduce transportation costs • Improve and leverage rail infrastructure • Improve and leverage airport Infrastructure such as the upgrade of Tamworth Airport to support greater capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access to education and training facilities • Establish a Trade Training Centre in Gunnedah 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in infrastructure and processing facilities to support and grow the Agricultural and Agri-processing sectors, including Poultry • Upgrade the showground / equine precinct and playing fields in Gunnedah • Investigate the feasibility of Tamworth Regional Airport becoming a hub for international freight • Develop tourism attractions and facilities, including the proposed Gunnedah Koala Centre and the Performing Arts and Conference Centre in Tamworth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve health infrastructure in Gunnedah • Develop a health and wellness centre in Quirindi • Assess the feasibility of a University campus in Tamworth • Improve the presentation and activation of the Gunnedah and Quirindi town centres and the presentation of the Region's smaller towns and villages Develop Stage 2 of the Northern Inland Centre of Excellence for Sport in Tamworth
People and skills		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define and assess labour force needs • Build the size and capacity of the regional workforce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the mining companies to address skills and workforce needs, and to encourage workers to relocate to the Region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide programs and activities that will assist new residents/ workers to assimilate into local communities

Enablers	Summary of strategies and actions			
	Deliver key infrastructure as a foundation for growth	Provide a positive, supportive environment to facilitate business growth and investment	Support and leverage key sectors	Position and promote the Region as a location of choice
Regulatory and Governance		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and advocate for changes to regulatory barriers that hinder industry development and business growth • Intra-council cooperation and regional economic leadership • Build strong partnerships between councils and strategic alliances with private sector and industries organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect productive agricultural land and water resources within the Region and advocate for on-going water security • Prepare Aviation, Poultry and Equine sector growth strategies 	
Land-use		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for and provide suitable land for business expansion and growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate expansion of serviced residential and industrial land to attract mine workers and mining-related businesses and services • Review planning controls to provide for agricultural diversification (e.g. poultry and equine) • Provide suitable land for the expansion of the Transport and Logistics sectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review urban development strategies and planning instruments so as to provide for a range of housing and property options • Encourage the development of Over 55's housing and supported aged care accommodation
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for improved rail passenger services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver information and services to actively support and nurture businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for the retention and expansion of agricultural research and development institutions and programs • Advocate for the State Government, to improve agricultural extension services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for the continued improvement and expansion of medical and health, education and other social assistance services • Actively market and promote the Region to attract new businesses, investment, residents and visitors

The actions in bold have been assessed as being most significant for economic development

Implementation

A detailed Action Plan is included in the *Lower North West Regional Economic Development Strategy 2018–2022: Supporting Analysis*.

The effective implementation of the Strategy will involve the key stakeholders and regional community that contributed to its development, including all three member councils as well as state government agencies and local entities.

The completion of this document is intended to be the first stage of an ongoing process where new specific actions to further progress towards the vision are identified through application of the framework. It is therefore suggested that an Advisory Committee made up of representatives from each council be established to progress the actions listed in this Strategy, apply the Strategy's framework to identify new actions to be added to the Action Plan, develop key performance indicators and evaluate outcomes. The Advisory Committee would meet every three months and would report progress on actions to each council. The Advisory Committee could also meet every six months with the relevant Regional Director, NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet. These meetings could also be used to check the Strategy's progress and review current grant opportunities.

After two years, the Advisory Committee will conduct a formal review of the Action Plan and associated governance processes, producing a brief report card to be published as an addendum to the Economic Development Strategy. This will also provide an opportunity to update the Action Plan for new or modified actions in view of key economic, social, environmental and policy changes.

After four years, the Advisory Committee will also begin the process of updating or refreshing the Strategy.



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