



# RDACC Business Plan 22-23

# OUR VISION

A scenic view of a coastal waterway, likely a bay or estuary, with lush green mangroves lining the banks. The water is calm and reflects the sky. In the background, there are rolling hills and a clear blue sky with scattered white clouds. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

## THE VOICE FOR THE CENTRAL COAST

"We will achieve this by bringing the community together to encourage **discussion**, **debate** and to **prioritise** the infrastructure needs of the Central Coast and by **communicating** these priorities, with sound reason/justification and community agreement."

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

RDA Central Coast will continue building on its achievements from earlier years to enable a stronger economy for the Central Coast region.



In accordance with the RDA Charter, we will:



Facilitate regional economic development outcomes, investment, jobs, and local procurement.



Promote greater regional awareness of and engagement with Australian Government policies, grant programs and research.



Improve Commonwealth regional policy-making by providing intelligence and evidence-based advice to the Australian Government on regional development issues.



Coordinate the development of a strategic regional plan or work with suitable existing regional plans that will align with the Commonwealth's regional priorities.

To support the achievement of these objectives, RDA Central Coast will continue to work closely with key stakeholders to identify and clearly understand the current and emerging critical issues and opportunities for our region.

This Plan has been developed in consultation with these key stakeholders and aligns the prescribed strategies and initiatives with the newly elected Commonwealth Government's National and Regional Priorities:



Regional Jobs Growth & Building Regional Skills



Regional Infrastructure Investment



Supporting Modern Manufacturing



Regional Housing Affordability

Learn more at [rda.gov.au](http://rda.gov.au)

The **RDA Central Coast Board and staff** are well positioned to drive the development of the economic base of our region, seek out quality development opportunities, create an environment for jobs growth, proactively attract business investment, identify enabling infrastructure needs, and facilitate whole of region stakeholder collaboration.

This will be achieved through proactively facilitating regional discourse, attracting new business opportunities, supporting growth of existing businesses, attracting government funding, and marketing the Central Coast as an attractive region for business growth and investment.

*Laurie McKinna*

Chair

## WHO WE ARE



RDA Central Coast Chair, Lawrie McKinna; Deputy Chair, Anna Cruckshank; and CEO, John Mouland.

In recent times, RDA Central Coast has called on all major stakeholders to recognise that this is a critical time for everyone to work together. The needs of our region must be met collectively, through true collaboration, cooperation and negotiation at all levels.

With tens of thousands of people moving to the Central Coast over the next two decades, there is an urgent need for enabling infrastructure, road funding, job creation, transport requirements and housing. We also need to ensure synergies are realised between all major infrastructure projects, to enable our region to reach its full potential.

The **RDA Central Coast Board** will play a critical role in developing our regional economy and creating local employment opportunities after the latest period of COVID-19 lockdown hit many Central Coast businesses hard.

Our role is to make sure all levels of government and industry are working together to attract funding and investment to our region, so that we are achieving the best outcomes possible for the people of the Central Coast.

Despite the challenges of recent years, RDA Central Coast has:

- Led the delivery of over \$800M of infrastructure spending on the Coast, resulting from the landmark Central Coast Infrastructure Priority process.
- Deployed the Central Coast Food Innovation Initiative that has delivered numerous outcomes including the Coast's first ever Australian Food & Agribusiness Doctoral Training Centre (DTC).
- Led unprecedented roundtable discussions between all sides of government and regional leaders to develop a greater focus on strategic economic issues impacting our region.

## WHAT WE DO

### Key Achievements

There has been a lot to celebrate on the Central Coast, with **over \$1.5 billion** in funding announcements for critical facilities and regional infrastructure being made in the last year. Key outcomes for 21/22 include:

- The region receiving **\$1 billion** of joint government funding for first stages of **high-speed rail** between Sydney and Newcastle.
- A joint government investment of **\$72 million** that delivered **The University of Newcastle Central Coast Clinical School and Central Coast Research Institute**.
- **\$420 million** joint Government funding for **upgrade for the Pacific Highway** through Wyong.
- **\$900,000** of NSW State Government funding to build a **brewhouse, manufacturing facility, laboratory, and packaging area** at Halloran that will result in the project delivering **47 full-time jobs** over the next two years.
- **\$530,000** from the NSW State Government for a Final Business Case to establish a **Centre of Excellence for Indigenous Creative Learning**.
- The planning approval of the **\$172 million Private Hospital** that will provide more than **2,200 construction jobs** and create **460 ongoing full-time jobs**, a **multi-million financial boost** for the local economy and **improved healthcare access** for the fast-growing Central Coast community.
- **\$17.2 million** Federal Government commitment for the **Central Coast Food Manufacturing Precinct and Innovation Hub** in Lisarow; and
- **\$18 million** provided by the NSW State Government to deliver the development of a **university campus in Gosford City**.

These funding achievements mark a new era in regional collaboration and highlight the real value of all regional leaders and major stakeholders working together for what our community rightly deserves.

RDA Central Coast continues to facilitate this collaboration and campaign for improved infrastructure through the [Critical Infrastructure Priorities List](#).

RDA Central Coast success is underpinned by 3 key aspects:

1. Significant cooperative joint working relationships across all levels of government and with other partners.
2. A strategic framework that provides the basis for future growth and prosperity of the Central Coast region.
3. Proactive, strategic relationships with all regional stakeholders including business leaders, local developers and investors.

## REGIONAL VISION

*"A healthy natural environment, a flourishing economy and well-connected communities."*



Gosford is the capital of the region. This thriving centre is a smart hub for **health and education**. The renewal of the city centre has attracted new residents, jobs, business, and investment.



A strong and diversified economy supported by **efficient freight and passenger connections** to adjoining regions.



Economic growth in the **Northern and Southern Growth Corridors** has **increased investment** in health, education, advanced manufacturing, and service industries, with **tourism and recreation mainstays** of the economy.



Settlement is concentrated around **existing urban and employment areas**, the Warnervale–Wadalba release area, the Northern and Southern Growth Corridors, and existing rural villages to **take advantage of jobs, services, and public transport**.



The **scenic values and distinctive character** of communities continue to underpin our **social and cultural identity** and our renowned natural environment provides attractive settings for a **range of lifestyles** and is a **drawcard for visitors** beyond the region.



Revitalised local centres have become livelier, with **vibrant retail and services**.



Communities are better connected by an **integrated transport system** that prioritises **cycling, walking and public transport**.



Enough **housing to satisfy demand** around **Gosford City Centre**, in **growth corridors and local centres** across the region, which are well supported by infrastructure, jobs, services and transport.



Greater **housing diversity** to suit the **changing needs of the community**, particularly the **ageing population** and the needs of **weekend and seasonal visitors**.



Coordinated land use and infrastructure planning have assured the longer-term **productivity of agricultural lands** and help **support local communities** and **contribute to the state economy**.



A '**green grid**' criss-crosses the region, allowing residents to connect to a network of **open space, natural areas and recreational facilities**. Protecting the region's coastal areas, water resources and biodiversity has assured the **lifestyles, economic prosperity, and environmental health** of the region.



Improvements to **water and energy efficiency** have strengthened our **resilience to natural hazards and climate change**.

To achieve this vision, regional stakeholders have set 4 overarching objectives:

- A prosperous Central Coast with more jobs close to home.
- Protect the natural environment and manage the use of agricultural and resource lands.
- Well-connected communities and attractive lifestyles.
- A variety of housing choice to suit needs and lifestyles.

## ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT

The Central Coast's economic strengths lie in its skilled workforce, proximity to Sydney, growing population, natural environment, and resources.

The region has an estimated **116,730 local jobs** and this number is projected to increase by **24,674 jobs** to **141,404 by 2036**. Employment is concentrated in areas with infrastructure that has the capacity to support future growth, potentially above current projections.

### Regional Strengths and Opportunities



Major public infrastructure investments



Improved road and rail access - Warnervale Town Centre



Highway Upgrades



Population Growth



Strategic Education Assets



Growth Corridors Significant Expansion



Advanced Food Manufacturing



Warehousing and Logistics



Affordable Employment Land



Geographic Location and Connectivity



Unique Natural Environment



Coordinated assessment and development of land owned by the **Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council** will deliver long-term benefits for the region's Aboriginal community.

## Regional Challenges

4 out of the 10 Central Coast postcodes ranked in top 10% most disadvantaged, and 6 out of the 10 are ranked in the top 30% most disadvantaged communities in NSW (out of the 621 localities) (APO, 2015).



Regional Brand



Youth Unemployment



'Development Ready'  
Employment Land



Public Transport



Planning and Development



Youth Population Retention



Wide Socio-Economic Gap



Daily Commuters

In excess of **30,000 residents commute outside the Central Coast region** each day for work which can lead to significant work/life balance and community challenges.



Gosford Hospital at the formal opening of the Central Coast Clinical School and Research Institute.

## Local, State and Regional Plans

The 2022-23 RDA Central Coast Business Plan aligns with the strategic priorities and needs of the region over the next 3-5 years. It also considers the potential impacts of external influences (local, national and international market forces and public policy changes).

This Plan forms part of a much broader policy context, reflecting the wider perspective and aspirations for our region.

The development of the 2022-23 RDA Central Coast Business Plan is aligned with and supports the following existing planning strategies, policy and objectives:

- [Central Coast Council – One Central Coast Community Strategic Plan](#)
- [NSW Government – Central Coast Regional Plan 2036](#)
- [NSW Government – Central Coast & Lake Macquarie Regional Economic Development Strategy \(2018–2022\)](#)
- [NSW Government – NSW 20 Year Economic Vision](#)
- [NSW Government – NSW Tourism & Transport Plan](#)
- [Commonwealth Government – Smart Cities Plan](#)
- [Commonwealth Government – Digital Transformation Strategy \(Vision 2025\)](#)
- [Commonwealth Government – Australia’s Tech Future \(Delivering a Strong, Safe & Inclusive Economy\)](#)
- [Commonwealth Government – Global Innovation Strategy](#)

## Strategic Priorities

Key business activities RDA Central Coast will undertake in the 2022-23 period:

Australian Government Regional Priority	RDA Central Coast Activity
Regional Jobs Growth and Building Skills	Fill current job vacancies, create new jobs, and develop the workforce of tomorrow.
Regional Infrastructure Investment	Identification of critical investments needed to drive economic development in the region.
Support Modern Manufacturing	Delivery of the Central Coast Food Innovation Initiative.
Regional Housing Affordability	The delivery of an Affordable Housing Summit and Regional Taskforce.
Regional Leadership and Collaboration	Leadership of the Central Coast Key Stakeholder Group Initiative.

## WHAT WE DELIVER

### Background and Context

Priorities, activities and performance measures for 2022-23 were informed by the following factors:

- Identified regional priorities;
- The need for direct economic outcomes in relation to the RDA Charter's specific themes;
- Available funding and resourcing;
- Identified gaps in economic development activities in the region;
- Strategic intent of other regional stakeholders;
- Initiatives commenced in previous years; and
- Priorities identified by the newly elected Commonwealth Government.

Priorities and activities were refined after consultation with key regional stakeholders.

The [2022-23 Outcomes and Performance Indicators Table](#) details RDA Central Coast's performance benchmarks and expected outcomes.

### Top 5 Business Activities for 2022-23



Create New Regional Jobs and Develop the Workforce of Tomorrow.



Identification of Critical Investments Needed to Drive Economic Development in the Region.



Delivery of the Central Coast Food Innovation Initiative.



Affordable Housing Summit & Regional Taskforce.



Leadership of the Central Coast Key Stakeholder Group Initiative.

## COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY



RDA Central Coast hosting the first roundtable of local stakeholders to develop a new consolidated employment precinct on the Central Coast.

RDA Central Coast has implemented a successful Communications Strategy to increase visibility across its audiences, promote recognition and understanding of its activities, and actively celebrate its successes with all key stakeholders and the broader community.

This strategy supports RDA Central Coast to build on its strong foundations to:

- Actively position itself as a regional leader in economic development.
- Promote and disseminate information on Australian Government policies and grant programs to state and local governments and industry, business and community sectors.
- Effectively facilitate collaboration and lead discussions between all levels of government, industry and the wider community to successfully advocate on behalf of our community; and
- Strengthen stakeholder engagement and increase promotion of active community participation.

The **RDA Central Coast Communications Strategy** details an integrated suite of activities and measurable deliverables to achieve these organisational aims.



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