



Planning &  
Environment

**2036**

**Central  
West and  
Orana**

**Regional  
Plan**

**Consultation Report 2017-2019**





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# Introduction

The NSW Government is committed to planning for the future housing, jobs, infrastructure and environmental needs of its regions. To deliver this commitment, the NSW Department of Planning and Environment released a draft Central West and Orana Regional Plan in early 2016 for public comment.

Stakeholders and the community were invited to provide submissions on the draft Plan between 4 April 2016 and 4 July 2016. During this period, the Department received 42 submissions from a wide range of stakeholders.

This report summarises the engagement program undertaken for the draft Plan and feedback received through the engagement program. It also details the range of submissions received in response to the draft Plan, the themes raised through submissions and the NSW Government's response and actions related to these issues. These responses have guided the development of the final Central West and Orana Regional Plan.

The NSW Government has set four goals for the Central West and Orana region:

- The most diverse regional economy in NSW;
- A stronger, healthier environment and diverse heritage;
- Quality freight, transport and infrastructure networks; and
- Dynamic, vibrant and healthy communities.





# Engagement program

## Methodology

To raise awareness of the draft Central West and Orana Regional Plan and to encourage feedback to help inform the preparation of the final Plan, the Department undertook a wide-reaching, engagement program which initially ran from 4 April 2016 and 4 July 2016.

To ensure the final Plan responded to a range of needs, a thorough stakeholder analysis was undertaken and a range of stakeholders were consulted, including:

- residents, community and interest groups
- business and industry peak bodies
- high school students
- local Aboriginal Land Councils
- local government and council joint organisations

## Tools and results

The engagement program involved a number of tools to reach these stakeholders and gather their feedback.

### Events and briefing sessions

Briefings to engage groups and people who represented a range of interests were held early in the consultation period. The Department also held a number of follow-up meetings and briefings that focused on specific issues raised by participants. In total, 30 briefings were held with 173 attendees.

Meetings with key stakeholders have continued after the consultation process in order to discuss and clarify issues raised in the submissions.

## Local government

Following the launch of the draft Plan, the Department approached councils in the region to request their support in promoting the draft Plan to the community via their newsletters, websites and other channels.

### Central West and Orana Councils:

Bathurst Regional  
Blayney  
Bogan  
Cabonne  
Coonamble  
Cowra  
Dubbo Regional  
Forbes  
Gilgandra  
Lachlan  
Lithgow  
Mid-Western Regional  
Narromine  
Oberon  
Orange  
Parkes  
Warren  
Warrumbungle  
Weddin

## Youth forum

To engage younger people living in the Central West and Orana region, the Department facilitated a youth forum on 20 June 2016 for high school students in partnership with Charles Sturt University at the Orange campus.

Year 11 and 12 high school students attended from Wellington High School, James Sheahan Catholic High School and Canowindra High School. The forum attendees engaged in discussions on a range of matters, including:

1. recognising the important role and function of regional cities and centres to provide higher order services and industries to meet the needs of the wider region, reducing the need to travel outside the region (i.e. to Sydney).
2. the need for more investment in infrastructure to provide safer and more efficient travel and invest in rail infrastructure to take trucks off the road.
3. supporting a transition to more renewable energy sources, reducing carbon emissions, reducing risks of climate change, growing employment opportunities in the renewable energy sector.
4. recognising the important role of urban design in providing well designed public places and recreational facilities to socialise, reduce crime, attract and retain people in towns and villages, encourage people to live locally and improve the look of towns and to integrate new technology in public spaces and facilities.

The forum was well received by the 13 attendees and feedback from the forum was considered in developing the final Plan. The Department's response to specific issues raised has been included in the submissions analysis section of this report.

## Email direct marketing

An email titled 'Help shape the future of the Central West and Orana community' was sent out 4 April 2016 to over 5,000 subscribers on the Department's eNews to launch the engagement program for the draft Plan and encourage subscribers to visit the Department's website and lodge a submission.

## Survey

The Department created a survey comprising 20 questions that asked respondents about their priorities, values, views and goals for regional planning.

The survey, available online via the Department's website, received 78 survey responses.

The results of the survey showed:

- The three most important factors to residents of the Central West and Orana region are health, jobs and farming
- Jobs and resource management are factors that residents see as important, but are not well managed in their area
- There is positivity about the goals in the draft regional plan, with more than 60% support for all goals



**The five most important factors to the Central West and Orana region respondents were:**



**#1 HEALTH SERVICES IN YOUR AREA**



**#2 JOBS IN YOUR AREA**



**#3 FARMING AND/OR AGRICULTURAL LAND IN YOUR AREA**



**#4 PROXIMITY TO SERVICES YOU REQUIRE**



**#5 OPEN SPACES, PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS IN YOUR AREA**

**Digital (including online activity, social media and website)**

The Department undertook a comprehensive program of digital advertising during the campaign. This program helped drive engagement by advertising on a number of channels including Facebook, across NSW Government whitelist websites, key regional press online mastheads and Google Search.

For Central West and Orana the digital advertising campaigns achieved 1,269,346 digital media impressions and 6,732 digital engagements\*.

Digital advertising helped to raise awareness of the consultation on the draft Plan and encouraged people to visit the Department’s website to provide feedback or make a submission. The website featured the draft Plan, a summary of the Plan’s highlights, an interactive map, and the online survey. During the campaign our website received 6,281 unique views relating to the draft Plan.

People also provided feedback by commenting on Facebook. The three most popular themes discussed as a result of the Facebook campaign were:

1. Protecting the environment
2. Types of housing
3. Boosting the economy

**Media**

The Department distributed a media release on 4 April 2016 to announce the regional planning process.

In total, the media releases generated 18 media stories.

MEDIA STATISTICS	
Newspaper/Online articles	15
TV coverage	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>

\*Digital engagements: This includes any engagement with an ad or a post, for example clicks through to our website, Facebook post likes or post shares or comments on posts or ads, interactive map comments or any other responses.

**UNION BANK BUILDING**





# Submissions

## Methodology

As a result of the community engagement program outlined above, the Department received 42 submissions either in hard copy via post or electronically.

Each submission was comprehensively reviewed and relevant comments were identified and catalogued to prepare a comprehensive data set by theme. These 14 themes were:

1. Population Growth
2. Housing
3. Centres and Settlements
4. Transport and Infrastructure
5. Land Use Conflict
6. Agriculture
7. Resources and Energy
8. Environment
9. Health Services
10. Education Services
11. Economy
12. Implementation and Monitoring
13. Local place based
14. Other matters

For some categories, for example 'Transport and Infrastructure' – a large volume of feedback was received. In these cases, sub-themes (for example – freight and logistics, public transport, proposed infrastructure and local roads) have been used to sort, analyse and present information.

## Summary of submissions

### Type of submitters

A wide range of stakeholders made submissions including:

- private individuals
- business and industry
- local government

### Location of submitters

The Central West and Orana Regional Plan covers the 19 Local Government Areas (LGAs) including:

Bathurst Regional, Blayney, Bogan, Cabonne, Coonamble, Cowra, Dubbo Regional, Forbes, Gilgandra, Lachlan, Lithgow, Mid-Western Regional, Narromine, Oberon, Orange, Parkes, Warren, Warrumbungle and Weddin.

### Broad issues

1. Stakeholders expressed positive feedback about the draft Plan goals, and suggested some additional directions.
2. Stakeholders requested strong guidance for preventing and managing conflicts between environmental areas, agricultural land, extractive industries, and rural residential or urban residential development.
3. Stakeholders would like more information relating to the different settlements in the region, including regional cities, strategic centres, towns and villages.



# Submissions: Analysis and response

## Population growth

Themes that emerged were:

- Requests for separate population projection data for the Central West and the Orana.
- Requests for additional information on the drivers of change outlined in population projections.
- Population projections data used in the draft Plan does not reflect population changes occurring at a local level.

## Response

In response, the Department has:

- Included population projection figures for the region as a whole. The population figures for each local government area in the Central West and the Orana, can however be accessed via the Department's population projections online.
- Includes text about the broad population trends for the region, including the ageing of the population. An action has also been included in the final Plan to undertake scenario planning with local communities to better understand the implications and factors contributing to population change.
- Based the final Plan on the latest population, household and dwelling projections data prepared by the Department. These are identified in the final Plan as projections, not targets, and are based on assumptions that take into account current trends for births, deaths and migration. Projections can change due to factors such as migration levels, new technology and social attitudes to different living arrangements.

## Housing

Themes that emerged were:

- Support for increasing the range of housing options to suit changing demographics within the region, including housing for seniors and affordable housing.
- Submissions support the commitment to develop guidelines to inform the provision of seasonal and itinerant workers accommodation for workers during the construction and operation phases of mining operations and backpackers during fruit picking seasons.
- More strategies are requested in the final Plan to inform and support ageing in place in smaller communities as well as the provision of seniors housing in smaller towns and villages, including addressing economic feasibility of senior's housing development.
- Suggestions for principles to be developed to guide the location of new rural residential development to appropriate locations and minimise potential land use conflicts with agricultural land uses.

## Response

In response, the Department has:

- Included actions to increase the supply and diversity of housing in the region, including housing for seniors and affordable housing.
- Committed to prepare guidelines to help councils Plan and manage seasonal and itinerant worker accommodation.
- Included strategies that respond to the needs of the ageing population by supporting the growth of the health services sector, enhancing housing for seniors in accessible locations and developing inclusive communities for seniors.
- Included actions to guide the location of new rural residential development.



## Centres and settlements

Themes that emerged were:

- Submissions requested a revised settlement hierarchy to better differentiate between major towns and villages.
- Submissions requested that all villages be shown on mapping.
- Support for the Draft Principles for Industrial Land and requests that principles be provided to strengthen the commercial function of CBDs and town centres.
- Support for regionally specific urban design guidelines.
- Submissions requested consideration of an action to prepare strategies for strategic centres, towns and villages (not just the regional cities).

### Response

In response, the Department has:

- Revised the settlement hierarchy for the final Plan to recognise the importance of regional cities, strategic centres, local service centres as well as other towns and villages throughout the region.
- Revised mapping to show key settlements in the region, and included local area narratives to identify the smaller towns and villages in each local government area.
- Included actions for the identification of industrial land as well as actions to strengthen the commercial function of CBDs and town centres.
- Retained the Department's commitment to develop regionally-specific urban design guidelines to respond to the region's unique climate and water security challenges, and provide guidance for preparation of local environmental plans resulting in healthy and livable centres.

- Including a series of actions in the final Plan to protect industrial land, strengthening commercial areas, and support greater housing diversity in the region's regional cities, strategic centres and local service centres and build resilience in the smaller towns and villages.

## Transport and Infrastructure

Themes that emerged were:

- Submissions raised the importance of the freight network to the regional economy, and suggested strategies that would strengthen the Plan and ensure coordinated investment in the freight network.
- The full range of infrastructure should be included in the Plan (airports, hospitals, health services, schools and education, water storage dams, etc) to inform public and private investment.
- Pinch points in the freight network outside of the region (eg. Bells Line Expressway), are a major concern to the regional economy and should be addressed in the plan.
- Support for transport corridors to be identified and protected in Council LEPs.
- Support for the protection of regional airports from encroachment of unsuitable development and also access to Sydney Kingsford-Smith Airport.
- Stronger commitment to regionally significant future transport improvements (Inland Rail, Blayney to Demondrille Railway Line).

### Response

In response, the Department has:

- Outlined the major freight corridors between the region and Sydney, Wollongong, Newcastle, Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide, which are essential to the success of the region's agribusiness, mining, manufacturing, and freight and logistics sectors.



- Identified the strategic need for future infrastructure investment along with actions to better coordinate the delivery of new infrastructure.
- Included actions to work with stakeholders to identify the regional freight network and prioritise and coordinate the delivery of projects to address impediments in the regional freight network.
- Support the continued allocation of regional flights into Sydney Airport and the protection of airports in the region through land use planning.

### Land Use Conflict

Key themes raised:

- Support for directions and actions that discuss protection of agricultural land to reduce loss and fragmentation.
- More land use planning policy to guide land use conflict particularly in regards to protecting agricultural land from unsuitable uses such as mining and rural residential development.
- The mapping of High Environmental Value lands is welcomed, but questioned how this will be utilised to inform land use planning decisions.
- Requests for land use planning principles to prevent fragmentation of agricultural land from rural residential subdivision.

### Response

In response, the Department has:

- Included specific directions and actions to minimise potential land use conflicts arising between different land uses, including, agricultural land, mining and rural residential development.
- Includes actions to improve access to information on High Environmental Value areas, and protect these areas through local plans.

- Retained the commitment to prepare a Regional Agricultural Development Strategy to identify and map important agricultural land, and actions to protect these areas from land use conflict and fragmentation and manage the interface between important agricultural lands and other land uses.

### Agriculture

Key themes raised:

- Support for preparing a Regional Agricultural Development Strategy to identify and map important agricultural land.
- Support for the directions and actions within the Plan that promote the protection of agricultural lands and the focus of growing agribusiness.

### Response

In response, the Department has:

- Retained the commitment to prepare a Regional Agricultural Development Strategy to identify and map important agricultural land.
- Included actions in the Plan to protect important agricultural land, and to support agribusiness diversification by removing planning barriers in local environmental plans.



## Resources and energy

Key themes raised:

- Support for the sections on mining in the draft Plan addressing potential impacts of mining on the environment, agriculture and communities.
- Support for the proposed action to develop scenario planning tool to help communities Plan for impacts on service delivery in mining communities.
- Strong support for renewable energy and actions supporting this in the plan.

### Response

In response, the Department has:

- Included a direction to sustainably manage mineral resources, including an action to protect areas of mineral and energy resources potential.
- Retained an action to support communities that are transitioning out of mining operations to manage change in population and demand for service delivery and explore new economic opportunities.
- Included a direction to capitalise on renewable energy opportunities, including identifying areas with renewable energy potential which have ready access to connect to electricity networks.

## Environment

Key themes raised:

- Support for the recognition of climate change in the draft Plan and the impacts this will have on the region.
- Requests for more recognition of the contribution of tourism and recreation and how the protection of the natural environment will support tourism and recreation opportunities.
- Requests for more detail regarding the application of High Environmental Value mapping.

- Support the recognition and protection of Travelling Stock Routes as biodiversity assets for the region.
- Requests for native title to be addressed in the final Plan.
- More protection of heritage, particularly Aboriginal Heritage, within the region.
- Support the information on flooding in the draft Plan, and request more information on bushfires.

### Response

In response, the Department has:

- Included a direction in the final Plan to increase resilience to natural hazards and climate change, including using the most up-to-date information to inform land use planning.
- Included a direction to support tourism opportunities in the region, and additional discussion on recreational opportunities.
- Included a direction in the final Plan to protect the region's environmental assets, including actions to minimise potential impacts to areas of high environmental value.
- Included a direction and actions to work with the Local Aboriginal Land Councils to conduct a strategic assessment of their landholdings to identify priority sites with economic development potential that can create a 'pipeline' of potential projects that the Local Aboriginal Land Councils may wish to consider.
- Included a direction to respect and protect aboriginal heritage, including actions to undertake and implement heritage studies to inform local land use strategies.

Above: "Riverbank Frank", Men's Shed, Dubbo

Right: Newcrest, Cadia, courtesy of Newcrest





## Health Services

- Feedback on this theme included incorporating a hierarchy of hospitals in mapping to show big and small hospitals across the region.

### Response

In response, the Department has:

- Included a direction on growing healthcare and aged care opportunities, including establishing health precincts around hospitals and leveraging opportunities for private sector investment in health services.

## Education Services

- Requests for more information on how education facilities will be managed across the region
- Requests for more detail about the proposed education infrastructure improvements, changes in student numbers, and how the consolidation of infrastructure between schools will be managed.
- Suggestions that local planning is unlikely to be the reason for barriers to education and training sector expansion, and that other barriers need to be investigated.

### Response

In response, the Department has:

- Included a direction to expand education and training opportunities in the region.
- Included actions to encourage greater sharing of community and school facilities and potential joint venture opportunities.
- Included actions to support better community access to quality vocational education.

## Economy

- Requests for more recognition in the final Plan of tourism and recreation in the region and how the protection of environmental assets will support tourism and recreation into the future.
- Requests for more recognition of education and training within the region as an economic strength.
- Requests for a broader focus on economic diversification and economic opportunities in the region.
- Facilitating the growth of agribusiness and value-adding industries in the Plan is supported.

### Response

In response, the Department has:

- Included a direction to support tourism opportunities in the region, and additional discussion on recreational opportunities.
- Better recognised the diverse economic opportunities across the region, including in mining, renewable energy, education and training, agribusiness, and value-added manufacturing, and included actions in the final Plan to support the region's diverse industries.
- Retained directions and actions on supporting agribusiness and value-adding manufacturing.

## Implementation and Monitoring

Themes that emerged were:

- Suggestions for membership of the delivery, coordination and monitoring Committee to include representatives from the community, local councils (including the three Regional Cities), OROC and CENTROC, various NSW Government departments, irrigation companies, and local housing industry.
- Suggestions for Parliamentary Secretary to be appointed chair of the Committee.
- Suggestions for the actions in the Plan to be more measurable with timeframes and deliverables and that the committee is accountable for implementation.
- Suggestions for the final Plan to be a wider whole of government approach and not simply focused on land use.
- Calls for more meaningful community engagement to inform the final Plan.

### Response

In response, the Department has:

- Incorporated a new section titled 'Delivering this Plan' to explain implementation mechanisms and governance structures.
- Prepared a stand-alone Implementation Plan which includes responsibility and timing for actions.
- Noted suggestions for representation on the implementation committee, recognizing that further engagement with additional stakeholders will be undertaken throughout implementation of the Plan and delivery of individual actions.

## Other matters

- A number of submissions related to topics outside the scope of the Plan.

### Response

In response, the Department has:

- Where issues not related specifically to the Plan were raised, these matters have been referred to relevant agencies within the NSW Government.





*For more information about the Central West and Orana Regional Plan 2036  
visit [planning.nsw.gov.au](http://planning.nsw.gov.au)*