

Planning for the future

What is the *Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041*?

The NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment has developed regional plans across all of NSW. These plans will guide planning for existing and future community needs for housing, jobs, infrastructure, a healthy environment, connected communities and access to green spaces. The plans set a clear vision and direction for how each region can leverage future opportunities to ensure their communities remain vibrant, dynamic, and prosperous.

They coordinate a whole-of-government approach to land-use planning decisions and priorities across the state.

The Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan applies to the four local government areas of Wollongong, Shellharbour, Kiama and Shoalhaven. It aligns with councils' plans to inform all areas of local strategic planning, from the development of local plans to the assessment of planning proposals.

The *Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041* builds on the previous regional plan that was released in November 2015.

The new plan identifies 15 regionally significant precincts to drive jobs creation, housing and vibrant communities, with a focus on diverse, affordable and social housing. The 15 precincts cover more than 2,300 hectares of land for employment, recreation, culture, housing and innovation to provide 45,000 jobs and 38,000 new homes.

All regional plans must undergo a review and update every five years to reset priorities.

The Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan is the first of the state's nine regional plans to undergo this process. Following a comprehensive 20-month review, we have finalised the revised and updated regional plan to reset priorities for the region for the next 20 years.

What are the key themes of the *Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041*?

Four main themes drive the *Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041*:

1. [A productive and innovative region](#) – which aims to:
 - strengthen metropolitan Wollongong to be a connected and innovative city
 - activate and transform Nowra city centre to attract investment and achieve its growth potential
 - grow the Port of Port Kembla as an international trade hub and leverage its potential as a hydrogen hub
2. [A sustainable and resilient region](#) – which aims to:
 - plan for a carbon-neutral region by 2050
 - increase urban tree canopy cover
 - promote sustainable approaches to a circular economy and resource optimisation.
3. [A region that values its people and places](#) – which aims to:
 - deliver diverse and affordable housing
 - increase access to public spaces and green infrastructure

- understand the changing nature of work and changing needs of local neighbourhoods in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
4. [A smart, connected and accessible region](#) – which aims to:
- explore opportunities to improve connections with Sydney and Canberra, as well as within the region, with the establishment of walking and cycling paths and public transport
 - understand the opportunities that arise from the growth in Western Sydney and the future Western Sydney Airport
 - prepare for mobility changes that improve connectivity and sustainability, including opportunities to support the uptake of electric vehicles.

How was the plan reviewed?

From October 2019 to December 2020 the NSW Government consulted widely with councils, other stakeholders and the community to thoroughly review the previous *Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2036*. The aim was to develop an updated version that resets priorities to ensure continued benefits for the Illawarra Shoalhaven community for the next 20 years.

That consultation helped shape the *Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041*.

How will the new regional plan be implemented?

An Illawarra Shoalhaven Coordinating and Monitoring Committee will oversee the delivery and implementation of the regional plan, bringing together agencies and organisations responsible for delivering the plan's nine actions. The committee will monitor and review progress towards achieving the vision and meeting the objectives. The committee will also be supported by outcome-specific groups to provide advice on particular issues or projects.

To accompany the regional plan, the department has developed an [Implementation Plan \(2021–2026\)](#). The implementation plan:

1. explains the linkages between the vision, themes, objectives, actions, strategies and collaboration activities in the regional plan
2. assigns accountabilities and timeframes for the implementation of actions
3. guides the Illawarra Shoalhaven Coordination and Monitoring Committee in its role of overseeing delivery of the regional plan
4. informs monitoring of the regional plan.

How was the community consulted during the regional plan review?

Between October 2019 and December 2020, the NSW Government undertook an extensive, multi-phase engagement program to raise awareness and help inform the development of the draft and final plans.

Phase 1 Research and Engagement began in late 2019 and consisted of stakeholder and community engagement to inform the review of the regional plan.

Phase 2 Pre-exhibition focused on raising community awareness of the Illawarra Shoalhaven regional plan and its review in the lead up to the exhibition of the updated plan. This phase centred around an online community engagement hub that included an interactive map, survey and videos.

Phase 3 Exhibition ran for 6 weeks in late 2020 and provided opportunity for formal community engagement and submissions on the *draft Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041*. This phase involved an updated community engagement hub and stakeholder engagement through webinars, social media, print, online and radio media and virtual stakeholder engagement.

Read the [Consultation Report](#) for more details.

What is the Special Infrastructure Contributions Scheme for the Illawarra Shoalhaven?

A [Special Infrastructure Contributions \(SIC\) scheme](#) has also been established to ensure the right infrastructure is in place to support the development of the region's two priority growth areas: Nowra–Bomaderry and West Lake Illawarra.

The SIC will ensure the community reaps the benefits of the Illawarra Shoalhaven's growth. Developers will contribute up to \$124 million for important upgrades to roads, education and health facilities, emergency services, cycleway networks, public open spaces and biodiversity.

What were the key inputs into the development of the new regional plan?

Illawarra Shoalhaven Urban Development Program

The Illawarra Shoalhaven Urban Development Program (UDP) is how the NSW Government manages housing supply in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region. The UDP monitors the planning, servicing and development for new urban areas in Wollongong, Shellharbour, Kiama and Shoalhaven, as well as the provision of housing in existing urban areas.

The UDP monitors take-up rates, land supply and dwelling production; coordinates the release and rezoning of land; and strategically plans to ensure the sustainable supply of housing to meet the region's needs.

Public Spaces in the Illawarra Shoalhaven: Opportunities for a Recreational Grid

Public Spaces in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region, Opportunities for a Recreational Grid is a study prepared for the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment to help inform the development of the *draft Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041*.

It investigated and analysed access to public spaces throughout the region and identifies opportunities to improve health, wellbeing, and recreational outcomes.

A Regional Approach to Sustainability in the Illawarra Shoalhaven: Sustainability Plan

This plan was prepared for the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment to ensure sustainability was embedded throughout the draft regional plan.

Its primary purpose was to identify the opportunities within the region for sustainability to drive a more connected, innovative and diverse community within the Illawarra Shoalhaven. It identified actions and collaborative opportunities.

How does the *Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041* fit in with councils' local strategic planning statements?

By 1 July 2020, all councils in NSW were required to prepare a local strategic planning statement (LSPS) setting out:

- the 20-year vision for land use in the local area
- the special character and values that are to be preserved
- how change will be managed into the future.

An LSPS is an opportunity to ensure that priorities identified in the regional plan are placed within a clear local context and tailored to the unique economic, social and environmental characteristics of the local government area.

Importantly, the LSPS also allows councils to translate their own strategic planning work into local priorities and actions, which in turn informs the review of the regional plan. This feedback cycle from local to regional planning ensures that there is a two-way 'line of sight' between the different levels of spatial planning.

The LSPSs prepared by Shoalhaven, Shellharbour, Wollongong and Kiama councils, in consultation with their communities, were a key input into the *Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041*.

What have been the key achievements of the previous *Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2036*?

Highlights from implementing the previous Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan include:

- exploring place-based opportunities to grow the national competitiveness of metropolitan Wollongong
- developing the NSW South Coast Marine Tourism Strategy
- developing initiatives to protect and enhance the natural environment, including biodiversity corridors, riparian areas and Lake Illawarra stormwater management
- monitoring and analysis of land for housing and job creation, including the development of a [digital dashboard](#)* to enable people to search current, historical and estimated housing data for the region.

How can I access the *Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041*?

A [digital](#)* and [print](#) version of the *Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041* is available on the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's website.

*Not accessible via Internet Explorer web browser.

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