

DESIGN GUIDE



URBAN DESIGN FOR REGIONAL NSW

A guide for creating healthy
built environments in regional NSW

GOVERNMENT
ARCHITECT
NEW SOUTH WALES



Design objectives for NSW

Seven objectives define the key considerations in the design of the built environment.



Better fit
contextual, local
and of its place



Better performance
sustainable, adaptable
and durable



Better for community
inclusive, connected
and diverse



Better for people
safe, comfortable
and liveable



Better working
functional, efficient
and fit for purpose



Better value
creating and
adding value



Better look and feel
engaging, inviting
and attractive

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Minister's foreword

Regional NSW provides an incredibly rich landscape, full of vibrant and diverse cities, towns, and villages across coastal areas, inland plains and tablelands, alpine snow fields, and the vast outback. Our regions are home to about 40 per cent of our State's population and generate one-third of all economic activity in NSW. That's why the NSW Government is committed to creating and sustaining well-designed places which support healthy and thriving regional communities.

The historic patterns of development that have created these unique places now face contemporary challenges from factors at both a local and global scale. Changes to local populations, industries, the nature of work and social connections and increasing climate extremes and natural hazards influence how these places must plan and adapt to ensure their ongoing prosperity.

Urban design plays a direct role in supporting the quality of life in regional areas. It recognises that needs differ across cities, towns and villages and that no two are alike. A well-designed built environment responds to the specific and changing needs and aspirations of local people. Good urban design improves our cultural, economic, and physical wellbeing by creating safe, healthy, and inclusive places and communities.



The Government Architect's **Urban Design for Regional NSW** will help councils, government agencies, planners and designers respond to the specific challenges and opportunities facing regional NSW and demonstrate how good urban design contributes to improving life in regional urban centres.

This guide will help revitalise our main streets and town centres, increase walking and cycling opportunities, improve the design of our subdivisions and their connections to surrounding rural and coastal landscapes, and explore how to engage and enhance the history and culture of these places, including our rich Aboriginal cultural heritage.

[Rob Stokes](#)
[Minister for Planning and Public Spaces](#)

Government Architect's foreword

Design has a crucial role to play in regional NSW to ensure quality of life in our cities, towns, and villages – and to ensure that we support caring for Country. Urban design helps us to create healthy, sustainable, prosperous and resilient communities.

Urban Design for Regional NSW has been developed to help achieve this aim. It will support the goals and directions of the regional plans developed by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.

This guide acknowledges the unique conditions in regional NSW, and how they differ from those in metropolitan centres. There are many settings such as heritage towns, streetscapes and buildings, historic industries and agricultural practices, and extraordinary natural landscapes. We would like to celebrate and enhance these. The success of these places and the meaning they bring to people has a direct impact on the wellbeing of the communities who live in the regions.

Climate conditions are influencing the severity and regularity of extreme weather events in regional NSW. Bushfires, floods, and droughts are a recurring aspect of regional life and it is incumbent upon all of us to ensure that our cities and towns are designed to provide long-term sustainability, safety and security.



The role of integrating urban design in this process is crucial. Urban design takes a holistic approach to the ongoing development of cities and towns, balancing social, environmental, and economic factors. This extends to coordinating the requirements and interfaces of infrastructure, public spaces, and buildings to ensure design outcomes lead to a positive public realm and the creation of thriving, inclusive, and sustainable communities. It is dependent on good design processes and requires all parties within government, industry, and the community to work together in an integrated way to share knowledge and come to a shared vision.

Improving the quality of life for all people in our regional urban environments requires better integration of design thinking and problem solving in planning, project formation, and building processes. This document outlines the importance of urban design and how to approach it – to support everyone involved in the design, planning, and development of sustainable places in regional NSW.

[Abbie Galvin](#)
[Government Architect](#)

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Government Architect NSW acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land and pays respect to Elders past, present, and future. We honour Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' primary cultural and spiritual relationships to place, and their rich contribution to our society. To that end, all our work seeks to uphold the idea that if we care for Country, it will care for us.

About this guide

Urban Design for Regional NSW provides guidance for everyone involved in the design, planning, and development of the built environment across regional NSW.

This includes councils, government agencies who are planning new facilities and infrastructure, regional industries and businesses, design practitioners, local communities, and the many other individuals and organisations who contribute to the design of their environments – whether as decision-makers, service providers, clients, or end users.

The guide is a non-statutory document which supports the NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) and the NSW *Local Government Act 1993*. It has been prepared by Government Architect NSW (GANSW) in collaboration with the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (the Department). It responds to each of the nine NSW Regional Plans established by the Department. Many of these plans call for urban design advice to guide the development of healthy built environments in regional areas. This guide applies to regional NSW – which is all of NSW except the Greater Sydney Region.

How to use this guide

The guide explains how regional councils can use the design objectives set out in **Better Placed: An integrated design policy for the built environment of NSW** (GANSW 2017) to implement their regional and local plans. This advice is complemented by a series of case studies which show how good urban design has been implemented in a wide range of regional contexts.

The guide presents a logic which links design objectives for regional urban areas with advice about how these might be achieved in typical development projects. The Better Placed design objectives are accompanied by regionally specific principles which form the aspiration, and which can be used to review and assess development – from small-scale upgrades to proposals for major projects.

Urban design strategies, formed through engagement with regional councils, provide the priorities for pursuing these design objectives.

- **Section 1:** Explains the context for urban design and why it is so important for regional NSW. It describes the overarching design objectives from Better Placed that we aspire to.
- **Section 2:** Presents seven urban design strategies for regional NSW which support the design objectives. These have been derived from engagement with councils.
- **Section 3:** Provides advice about good process for undertaking projects, and presents guidance to achieve the strategies under four main project types.
- **Appendix:** Presents a brief profile of each of the nine regions, summarising their major characteristics. The urban design strategies presented in the guide will have different outcomes in each region, in response to local characteristics. References to other documents, which can provide further detail are also included. Opportunities for implementing the guide are also provided in this section.

Urban Design for Regional NSW aims to help councils in developing urban design capacity to complement their strategic planning roles. It addresses an identified urban design resource gap in regional NSW, recognising the positive impact of good quality design on regional communities, and the need for targeted practical assistance.

Achieving the Better Placed objectives through the urban design strategies



DESIGN OBJECTIVES FOR NSW – WHAT TO AIM FOR:

Better fit	Better performance	Better for community	Better for people	Better working	Better value	Better look and feel
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URBAN DESIGN STRATEGIES FOR REGIONAL NSW – WHAT TO DO:

1. Engage with the history and culture of places	2. Integrate with the natural environment and landscape	3. Revitalise main streets and town centres	4. Prioritise connectivity, walkability, and cycling opportunities	5. Balance urban growth	6. Increase options for diverse and healthy living	7. Respond to climatic conditions and their impacts
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DESIGN GUIDANCE – WHERE TO IMPLEMENT:

Public space	Town centres and main streets	Infill development in existing neighbourhoods	Greenfield development in new neighbourhoods
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Context for this guide

Regional plans

Nine regional plans detail the NSW Government planning priorities for the State's regional areas, and set out the actions required to achieve them. (See the Appendix for regional profiles.)

NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act

The 2018 amendments to the EP&A Act included new objects, including the requirement to “promote good design and amenity of the built environment”. This “good design” object needs to be considered by planning authorities, such as councils and planning panels, when performing functions and making decisions under the Act.

Better Placed: NSW Government design policy

Better Placed supports the EP&A Act by defining “good design” and explaining how design can serve the public interest. Better Placed establishes NSW Government objectives for the design of built environments across NSW. This guide presents strategies to help regional areas achieve the Better Placed objectives.

Local strategic planning statements

Other recent changes to the EP&A Act include the requirement for councils to prepare 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.

Community strategic plans

Each council has endorsed a community strategic plan that identifies the main priorities and aspirations for the future of its area, addressing civic leadership, and social, environmental, and economic issues based on the social justice principles of access, equity, participation, and rights.

Community strategic plans are part of the integrated planning and reporting framework that applies to local councils under the Local Government Act. Other parts of this framework provide opportunities to promote good urban design.

Related GANSW guidance

Greener Places (GANSW 2020) is a framework for the planning, design, and delivery of green infrastructure in urban areas across NSW. It aims to create healthier, more liveable, and sustainable urban environment by improving community access to recreation and exercise, supporting walking and cycling connections, supporting and maintaining Aboriginal culture and heritage, and improving the resilience of urban areas within regional NSW. It is supported by **Greener Places Design Guide** (GANSW 2020).

GANSW advisory notes provide advice on a range of design methods and processes such as developing design briefs and master planning. This advice has been developed to help implement processes which can improve outcomes.

GANSW case studies showcase examples of successful design projects – demonstrating good design processes and outcomes.

Within this context, Urban Design for Regional NSW aims to help regional local councils develop and implement locally specific design guidance, integrate urban design processes into strategic planning practices, and streamline development assessment processes.

For further information and downloads visit governmentarchitect.nsw.gov.au.



SECTION ONE

**URBAN
DESIGN
OBJECTIVES
FOR
REGIONAL
NSW**

A photograph of a group of people sitting on folding chairs in a grassy field under a large tree. The scene is outdoors, with lush green foliage and a clear sky. The text is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font. The background shows a group of people, some sitting on chairs and some standing, in a grassy area with a large tree in the center. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.



Regional NSW is home to many unique cities, towns, and villages, each with a strong sense of place and identity, shaped by its landscapes, peoples, cultures, and histories.

The design of our regional built environment can enrich these unique places and landscapes, and support them into the future.

Home to Traditional Custodians

In regional NSW, the design of the built environment is an opportunity to connect with Country – to develop ways to share knowledge about Aboriginal places, as well as places of shared culture and heritage significance.

Conserving Aboriginal heritage, and respecting Aboriginal communities' rights to determine how their heritage is identified and managed, will uphold some of the world's longest standing spiritual, historical, social, and educational values.

This guide acknowledges that Aboriginal people are Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters across NSW. As Traditional Custodians, they have an enduring responsibility for maintaining the health and wellbeing of these lands and waters. From deep knowledge and experience, Aboriginal people know that if we care for Country, it will care for us. Furthermore, when people feel strongly connected to place and are supported by their community, they are more likely to prosper. Not only can we learn from this cultural understanding of the interdependency between place and wellbeing, we can apply this as the primary frame through which we consider the design of our built environment.

Understanding Country

Aboriginal people belong to Country defined by a region (nation) and their associated family groups. This is their place of origin in cultural, spiritual, and literal terms. Country includes land, water and sky. It also incorporates tangible and intangible knowledge and cultural practices. In regional NSW, where Country and its landscape is the predominant element, it forms a significant starting point for thinking about the design of our built environment.
—Dr Daniele Hromek, Budawang/Yuin, 2019

1.1 Why urban design matters in regional NSW

Urban design has a vital role to play in assisting local governments and communities to respond to the challenges that face NSW regional areas and rethink how our built environment can support the health and wellbeing of both people and our environment.

Health and wellbeing of individuals and communities is affected by contextual issues such as human health, biodiversity loss, agriculture and production, climate change, changing populations and lifestyles.

Good human health, both mental and physical, is fundamental for populations within regional areas. Ensuring that all regional communities have access to opportunities for active transport, green public spaces, and access to fresh local food is paramount.

Biodiversity loss is one of our greatest threats and goes beyond threatened species – it includes all plants, animals, and microorganisms. Despite pressures of new urban areas within the regions, green places in urbanised areas can be home to many species, offering protection.

In parallel, rural agriculture has been integral to the supply of the State's fresh food for centuries. It bolsters resilience and is supported by a growing interest in local supply chains, sustainability, and the importance of agriculture before European settlement. Other rural industries, such as energy production and tourism, also underpin regional economies and rely on the careful management of resources and impacts to remain sustainable.

The effects of climate change on regional areas, primarily in the form of drought, bushfire, and flood, can have multiple devastating impacts on the health of both biodiversity and humans, and livelihoods. As these are affected, this in turn can lead to other adverse impacts such as changes in populations within certain areas.

Healthy built environments developed through careful urban design can help us to respond to these considerations and enable communities to be resilient and adapt to change. They provide social cohesion, identity and belonging, and a quality of life that supports mental and physical health. This influences our use of resources, our access to food, employment, and affordable housing, and our connection with natural environments.

Many of these challenges were identified by local councils and form the strategies which underpin this guide. When we take these into account we can support the ongoing wellbeing and sustainability of regional communities.

1.2 What is urban design?

Our built environment is always in progress. This ongoing activity involves a range of disciplines and government bodies relating to public policy, design, planning, and development.

Urban design spans across this range of disciplines to create a framework that is place-based and spatial for other designers and decision-makers to work within. The role of urban design is to translate public policy and objectives, planning regulations and practices, development drivers, and the allocation and distribution of resources, into an agreed framework based on a shared vision. This enables the delivery of high-quality built environments that respond to social, economic, and environmental factors and achieve outcomes for the greater public good.

In regional NSW, responding to the greater public good to create strong inclusive communities, is vital. Unlike metropolitan areas, the physical remoteness and challenges of extreme climate conditions that some communities experience results in a greater reliance on social cohesion in town centres. Investment in the public realm through urban design, to create squares, parks, and other places for people to gather, helps to create a foundation for these communities.

The following frameworks support this idea.

Connecting with Country

The different contexts and strategies for urban design presented in this guide serve to illustrate how good design can contribute to sustainably managing Aboriginal culture and heritage in regional NSW by respecting, protecting, and acknowledging experiences, histories, stories, landscapes, sites, and places.



Aboriginal culture is developing a stronger presence in the NSW planning system. Undertaking archaeological investigations and recording Aboriginal heritage is a well-established part of the planning process, but response to Country and culture in the design of places is a relatively new idea. We can learn from Aboriginal knowledge-holders how important connection with place is to human wellbeing, and about environmental management through the experience of caring for Country.

Aboriginal values of landscape extend across multiple scales, from large-scale meaning and symbolism, to detailed land management of specific important sites. Urban design offers an opportunity to engage with Traditional Custodians and communities to create ways of sharing knowledge about Aboriginal places and places with shared significance to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Urban design in regional NSW is an opportunity to connect with Country. For more information see **Designing with Country** (GANSW 2019).

Green infrastructure

Green infrastructure is the network of green spaces, and natural and semi-natural systems that support sustainable communities. This includes waterways, bushland, tree canopy and green cover, parks, and open spaces that are strategically designed and managed to support a good quality of life in an urban environment. In regional areas, green infrastructure is important along with transport, culture, and communications infrastructure, and together they complement each other. For more information see the **Greener Places** framework (GANSW 2020), **Greener Places Design Guide** (GANSW 2020) and case studies (GANSW 2018).

Movement and Place

Movement is a key enabler of places, connecting people, industry, and resources across the vast areas of regional NSW. Done well, good movement can enhance and contribute to better places; done poorly it can diminish places and contribute to their decline. At the wider scale, movement is crucial in regional areas, with the transport of people and freight via road, rail, or sea via long distances between places. Movement's interface with a town centre and the landscape needs careful consideration.

At a more local scale, movement in town centres can encourage other forms of transport, such as cycling and walking. This should be balanced with other factors, such as creating a compact centre. For more information see **Practitioner's Guide to Movement and Place** (GANSW 2020).

1.3 Better Placed design policy

Better Placed: An integrated design policy for the built environment of NSW presents seven design objectives that can be applied to address the unique conditions in regional NSW.

This section outlines key considerations for urban design in regional NSW, aligned to the Better Placed objectives.

Achieving these will ensure that our cities and towns, our landscapes, our buildings, and our public spaces in regional NSW are healthy, responsive, equitable, integrated, and resilient.

The objectives can be used to guide and evaluate the design of the built environment through local planning, design, and development across a range of scales and places.

OBJECTIVE 1.

Better fit

**contextual, local
and of its place**

Across regional NSW there is a rich variety in the character and identity of urban areas, underpinned by diverse landscapes, stories, and cultures to be acknowledged and preserved through urban design.

1. Celebrate culture and nature. Good urban design will identify a region's important cultural and natural assets, of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage, and create proposals which respect and respond to their attributes, meaning, and context.

2. Respond to local character. The expression and interpretation of local character through urban design elements such as the layout of streets, land division patterns, and built form supports local identity.

3. Use the landscape to inform siting and configuration. The arrangement and siting of development should create positive relationships between adjoining buildings and open spaces, including view corridors and natural landscape features.

OBJECTIVE 3.

Better for community

**inclusive, connected
and diverse**

Good urban design brings people together enabling cohesive, regional communities. Public space is the setting for civic life in these areas. It needs to be accessible, welcoming, and sustaining for all people.

1. Welcome people on equal terms. Well-designed regional centres have a key role in attracting local residents and visitors, enabling them to feel welcome, included, and connected to the life of the town.

2. Create places for social exchange. Having a variety of well-designed public spaces for people to come together – formally and informally – is vital to sustain communities and reduce social isolation in regional areas where the physical distance between places is greater.

3. Work with communities. Communities understand and know their places intimately and should be enabled to contribute their vision, stories, knowledge, feedback, and stewardship of the built environment.

OBJECTIVE 2.

Better performance

**sustainable, adaptable
and durable**

Good urban design creates sustainable and resilient places that conserve resources, reduce waste and pollution, and respond to climate change, supporting regional communities, now and in the future.

1. Respond to regional conditions. Good urban design integrates development with local landscape and climatic conditions through adaptive engineering, new technology, and green infrastructure to mitigate current and future environmental challenges.

2. Enhance performance. New development and upgrades should be designed and built to minimise maintenance, perform efficiently, and be multi-functional where possible.

3. Use land efficiently and carefully. Land use for primary production and native species habitat should be balanced alongside new urban development to support the long-term sustainability of regional areas.

4. Adopt new technology. The improved environmental performance of the built environment is contingent on the use of new technology to conserve resources and adapt to climate change.

OBJECTIVE 4.

Better for people

safe, comfortable and liveable

At all project scales, good urban design can improve the day-to-day safety, comfort, and liveability of regional places, and positively influence people's health and wellbeing.

- 1. Enable people to feel at ease.** Passive surveillance of public space, weather protection, and streets that prioritise pedestrian needs of all ages, are ways that urban design can support environmental comfort.
- 2. Optimise connections with the natural environment.** Regional cities, towns, and villages have a defining connection with their surrounding natural landscapes that should be optimised through green infrastructure to connect people with nature in ways that encourage physical activity, passive recreation, learning, and productivity.
- 3. Create healthy and liveable neighbourhoods.** Incorporating the right balance of housing types, open space, transport infrastructure, and local jobs and services can improve liveability and wellbeing. Good urban design creates places that encourage physical, social, and economic activity.

OBJECTIVE 6.

Better value

creating and adding value

Value includes social and environmental benefits, not just monetary return on investment. Community value of an urban project is a good indicator of its success, also allowing benefits to flow to other aspects of regional areas.

- 1. Generate community benefits that can be shared.** Good design can bring many benefits to regional communities – social, environmental, and economic – for those directly involved in a project, and for others beyond the site boundaries.
- 2. Take an integrated approach.** Designing for the holistic integration of all stakeholder needs and elements of the built environment anticipates long-term needs and adds value.
- 3. Create a ripple effect.** Good urban design creates positive interfaces between public and private development that generate new activity – economic and social – and attracts other similar activities that can boost regional businesses and social connectedness.

OBJECTIVE 5.

Better working

functional, efficient and fit for purpose

Effective design process creates places that are functional and fit for purpose. This means organising spaces, designating uses, and supporting services tailored to local needs.

- 1. Design for functionality.** The use of a site, whether it be part of the public domain or on private developable land, should generate design responses that are appropriate within the context, function well, and are fit for purpose.
- 2. Find economies of scale and space.** As a collaborative foundation for urban design proposals, master planning generates economies of scale and improves project viability through testing the efficient use of land, space, and resources.
- 3. Build in robustness and longevity.** A good urban design process will embed appropriate design quality and life-cycle costing into projects from the outset.
- 4. Innovate service design.** Urban design can integrate opportunities to provide more efficient and sustainable solutions for waste management, power, and transport that preserve public space quality.

OBJECTIVE 7.

Better look and feel

engaging, inviting and attractive

Urban design has an important role in creating built environments that inspire and lift the spirit, engage the senses, stimulate the imagination, and speak of the place

- 1. Understand spatial quality.** Good spatial quality can be achieved through the careful design of built form and open space that considers people's physical and sensory experience of environmental elements such as sun, wind, sky exposure, and street enclosure.
- 2. Use appropriate materials and details.** Details and finishes should be durable, true to their materials, locally sourced and sustainable, provide richness and tactility, and invite different uses and interactions.
- 3. Make places enjoyable.** Good urban design makes provision for places with an attractive look and feel that invite people to stop by and enjoy them, through quality materials, landscaping, and amenities.

SECTION TWO

**URBAN
DESIGN
STRATEGIES
FOR
REGIONAL
NSW**



2.1 Urban design strategies

We asked local councils in regional NSW to tell us their challenges for urban design. This section outlines seven urban design strategies which have been identified in response to the issues councils raised, listed below, and in response to the opportunities and challenges identified by the nine regional plans.

Urban design challenges for regional NSW:

Under-realised natural, historic, and cultural assets

Development encroaching into natural landscapes

Fluctuating social and economic activity in regional centres

High levels of car dependence

Balancing pressure for greenfield development with opportunities for new infill development

Population and demographic changes

Climate change, increasing temperature extremes and natural hazard risks

Seven urban design strategies for regional NSW:

1. Engage with the history and culture of places
2. Integrate with the natural environment and landscape
3. Revitalise main streets and town centres
4. Prioritise connectivity, walkability, and cycling opportunities
5. Balance urban growth
6. Increase options for diverse and healthy living
7. Respond to climatic conditions and their impacts.

Implementing these strategies will help regional areas to achieve the NSW Government's Better Placed objectives for the design of the built environment.

These strategies need to be integrated into decision-making at all levels – from regional policies and plans, to local strategic planning, development proposals, and development assessment processes.

In regional NSW, these urban design strategies typically apply to four main contexts:

- public space
- town centres and main streets
- infill development in existing neighbourhoods
- greenfield development in new neighbourhoods.

Advice about how to implement the urban design strategies in each of these contexts is set out in Section 3.2 of this guide.

1.

Engage with the history and culture of places

Urban environments in regional NSW are strongly defined by historic assets of European cultural heritage. However, these were preceded by places and landscapes tied to Aboriginal culture. Different histories and shared stories play out across all our regional cities, towns, and villages. Acknowledging and caring for the assets and landscapes that represent our histories and cultures supports community wellbeing, and helps to define places and contribute to their identity.

Urban design can help us to better appreciate and enrich the value of these assets, and incorporate them into the changing built environment in meaningful, respectful, and useful ways. They can be preserved for future generations and remain part of the public realm.

Engaging with history and culture through effective urban design:

enhances the sense of place and reinforces local identity; stronger connections to place support a sense of community and belonging

identifies, protects, and improves awareness and respect for the unique characteristics and defining qualities of towns and urban areas; civic pride inspires people to better care for and protect their historical and cultural assets

respects the stories and memories of places, recognising cultural longevity and promoting its greater visibility (especially relating to Aboriginal culture and heritage)

encourages economic activity and increases tourism by creating distinct and attractive places for businesses to trade and invest, and for people to visit

improves the value of the building or space and the overall place

provides opportunities for future generations to learn and benefit from significant buildings or spaces, their history and importance.



2.

Integrate with the natural environment and landscape

Connections with rural and natural landscapes are a unique aspect of daily life in many NSW regional areas. Most regional cities, towns, and villages have a strong connection with the natural environment, and with stories and experiences of Country. Careful planning and design is required to integrate urban development sustainably and appropriately.

Engaging with the natural environment in and around regional urban areas can provide multiple ecosystem benefits. It can support biodiversity in native flora and fauna populations, as well as improving quality of life by providing tree-lined streets and better access to green open spaces, waterways, and unique landscape elements.

Integrating with the natural environment through effective urban design:

strengthens connection to Country, improving the health and wellbeing of people, places, and landscapes

provides amenity for local residents and visitors by creating interconnected networks of open space such as creek corridors and park systems – these offer expanded opportunities for walking and social activities to support people’s health and wellbeing

mitigates climate impacts and temperature extremes by providing vegetation that can shade and cool urban areas

improves water and air quality by expanding green infrastructure

improves the quality and increases the value of the public realm; attractive and amenable streets and public spaces can enhance regional centres through good design and careful selection of landscaping and vegetation

supports biodiversity and protects local flora and fauna by using local plant species which are particular to a regional area; using local species also creates a stronger connection with place and helps to strengthen nature-based local character and identity

strengthens and reinforces the environmental, economic, and social value of regional environmental elements such as bushland, rainforests, mountains, deserts, rivers, and lakes.





3. Revitalise main streets and town centres

Main streets and town centres are the heart of many regional communities. They typically contain the biggest concentration of public and commercial facilities including places for people to gather and meet formally and informally. Main street buildings and public spaces record stories and histories, and carry a strong sense of local identity. They also host major events, parades, and festivals which celebrate the culture of an area and generate investment.

Good urban design leads and coordinates improvements to the public realm and main street areas. This can improve the attractiveness of town centres, and enable them to better accommodate public events and celebrations. Improvements can boost the vibrancy of main streets to make them places where locals and visitors want to spend more time, and where businesses want to invest.

Revitalising main streets and town centres through effective urban design:

creates new or improved places for people and communities to gather, meet, and interact that are safe, enjoyable, and equitable; this makes towns more inviting, vibrant, and interesting, which attracts people to visit and live in the area

supports new development, employment, business opportunities and prosperity by concentrating density and commercial activity

creates a more diverse mix of uses and activities, attracting businesses and visitation through improved building and shopfront presentation designed to boost social and economic activity

encourages people to walk around town centres, and integrates pedestrian paths and cycling with vehicle access to create connections and networks that are safe and attractive as well as convenient and efficient

connects significant natural features, buildings, views, and cultural assets to make town centres more navigable, accessible, engaging and attractive, and to reinforce their local character.



4. Prioritise connectivity, walkability, and cycling opportunities

For practical reasons relating to distances and population numbers, private cars are most likely to continue to be the dominant form of transport in many regional areas. However, there are opportunities to reduce car dependency near urban centres through good urban design, planning, and better public transport connections.

Urban development which is compact and well-connected, rather than dispersed, reduces distances and is better suited to walking and cycling. These alternative forms of transport provide health benefits by encouraging people to be active. They also help to make places feel safer through “passive surveillance”, due to pedestrians and cyclists using streets and public spaces. Extending streets from existing neighbourhoods, to connect with streets in new urban areas, makes it easier to move around by foot, bicycle, public transport, or car.

Prioritising connectivity, walkability, and cycling opportunities through effective urban design:

facilitates increased activity and improved community health, including physical and mental health and wellbeing

creates more walkable blocks, increasing pedestrian traffic in town centres; this improves local business exposure and reduces car dependency

allows development to be more sustainable, and reduces traffic congestion, car parking demand, and environmental impacts like noise and air pollution

makes streets and spaces feel more vibrant, interesting, and safe, by having more people present, and facilitates social interaction and activity, which strengthens community cohesion

encourages active travel through walking and cycling to school by children and their carers.

5.

Balance urban growth

In many regional areas there is pressure for new housing development to occur at larger scales on greenfield sites outside town centres. However, the long-term impacts of dispersed, and sometimes isolated fringe development can have high economic and social costs. Urban design and strategic planning aim to achieve a sustainable balance between the consolidation and distribution of new development.

Good urban design creates holistic new neighbourhoods that include appropriate facilities and services to support residents and businesses. It also identifies opportunities for infill development closer to existing town centres that uses established facilities and services, supporting local economies and infrastructure.

Balancing urban growth through effective urban design:

manages development so that its density is appropriate across different urban settings, and respects local contexts and the sensitivity of heritage areas, environmental areas, and other influencing factors

finds opportunities to provide new dwellings within a city or town centre which do not compromise local values relating to heritage and place

reduces car dependence and increases urban mobility through people living closer to town centres and in more walkable and sociable neighbourhoods

boosts activity in main streets and town centres, through urban consolidation and increased local population living in close proximity

protects agricultural land around cities and towns – including for local food production

protects biodiversity and mitigates natural hazards by keeping urban development to a compact form and area rather than dispersed across the rural landscape

increases housing choice through offering mixed development types in both existing neighbourhoods and greenfield settings, and focuses development on people's housing needs

aims to retain and increase opportunities for the local production of fresh food.



6.

Increase options for diverse and healthy living

Regional populations are changing, and we need to respond by rethinking housing forms and densities, and providing new options. In particular, in many regional areas, design and planning needs to allow for the needs of older people. Proximity to essential services and a well-designed public realm make places attractive to live for both young and old.

Some communities are experiencing high rates of population growth, and areas with seasonal job and recreational opportunities see temporary influxes of people. Increasing housing choices in regional areas can help provide the right level of amenity for differing lifestyle needs, to ensure ongoing health and wellbeing.

Increasing options for diverse and healthy living through effective urban design:

creates built environments which are more diverse, varied, and vibrant

attracts new residents through increasing housing choices and types, which can respond to varying needs and reinforce community stability

retains local populations and allows households to evolve and adapt over time in the same town, for example young people moving from the family home to a smaller home, and older people downsizing in their neighbourhood

supports the sustained health of Country, the environment, the economy, people, and communities

creates built environments which allow people of all abilities and ages to have access to healthy lifestyles that support mental health.





7.

Respond to climate conditions and their impacts

Varied climate zones, landscapes, and topographies across NSW generate weather and temperature conditions that affect different regional urban settlements in different ways. Compared to long-term records the climate is changing – weather patterns are becoming less predictable, temperatures more extreme, sea levels are rising, and natural hazards such as bushfires, drought, and flooding are becoming more intense and more frequent.

Urban design and planning of new development can mitigate some of these risks and create more comfortable environments. Integrating the design of stormwater systems, roads, streets, parks, and open spaces with existing and new urban development has the potential to generate innovative multifunctional solutions to manage the impacts of extreme weather events while positively contributing to the appearance and function of a local area. Well-orientated development with the right setbacks, materials, and exterior openings, provides the right level of sun exposure, saves energy through passive heating and cooling, and is good for the environment.

Responding to climate and its impacts through effective urban design:

improves the amenity, health, and safety of the public realm, in day-to-day and extreme conditions

responds to and celebrates an area's predominant climate, for example a semi-tropical climate, or hot arid climate

mitigates risk and protects against natural hazards, such as bushfires, flooding, and extreme weather, to create safer, resilient towns and stable property values

reduces a development's environmental footprint, reducing carbon emissions through more compact and resource-efficient urban development

reduces energy costs by integrating passive environmental design features

mitigates and anticipates the particular impacts of climate change such as sea level rise, urban heat-island effect, prolonged drought, and increases in extreme weather events

SECTION THREE

URBAN
DESIGN
PROCESS
AND
IMPLEMENTATION
FOR
REGIONAL
NSW

A photograph of a man in a black tank top and shorts flying a red ladybug-shaped kite in a park. The kite is in the air, and the man is looking up at it. In the background, there is a body of water, a building, and other people sitting on a bench. The sky is blue with some clouds.



3.1 Urban design process

Good design is both an outcome and a process. Good design outcomes depend on good design process.

Understanding what constitutes good design applies to all types and scales of built environment projects, from large-scale capital works like building whole new greenfield suburbs, to small-scale interventions like creating a new entry space for a public swimming pool.

A good urban design process involves working in collaboration on three major activities: discover, create, deliver – throughout the project.

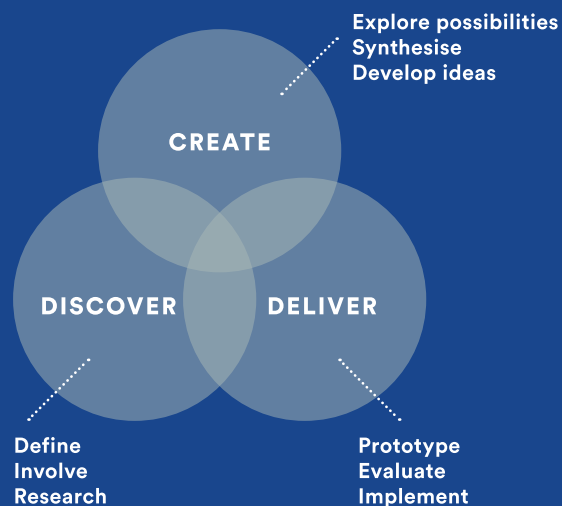
These activities are repeated throughout the life of a design project. With each iteration, design ideas and design decisions become better informed and more resolved – ultimately leading to a better result.

The collaboration needs to include consultation, research, analysis, and review to explore possibilities, develop and refine ideas, and gather feedback. To guide the design process, leadership, governance, and review processes need to be clearly established from the outset.

Successful collaboration involves working with many people, bringing to the project a diverse range of experience and expertise. An urban design project team might include community members, community organisations, local businesses, developers, councillors, planners, architects, landscape architects, heritage advisors, historians, builders, engineers, photographers, artists, economists, and others depending on the scale and type of project and the context.



Community consultation using a large aerial photo, for the Blayney 2020 Master Plan. Image: Place Design Group.



The following prompts describe actions within the urban design process and who is involved. Throughout the process, actions may need to be revisited and repeated, as ideas and concepts become more resolved.

1. DISCOVER

1.1 Define your project

A. Articulate the case for change

The case for change, or a statement of needs, establishes the key drivers for a project. It determines which circumstances need to be improved.

- Establish a clear intent, and the driving issue that is prompting the need for the project. For example, failing infrastructure, poorly used public space, the need for more housing, or damaged or degraded areas.
- Identify the related challenges and opportunities. The case for change may point to a specific issue. However, consider other related issues and opportunities for improvement. A project to fix poor drainage in a main street or town square may also be an opportunity to improve accessibility for pedestrians.
- Identify any government priorities which relate to the project. They could be general programs such as health or climate adaptation initiatives, or specific local targets or actions. This could help with guidance or funding.
- Identify and clearly state the project objectives. These will become a reference point for decision-making throughout the design process. The objectives might be general or specific environmental, social, or economic goals; they can be as tailored or specific as required.

B. Define the governance structure

Effective governance is crucial, and needs to be established from the outset. This includes leadership and stewardship within the organisation and in relation to stakeholders and contributors who will be involved.

- Establish clear governance principles for the project to aid decision-making with multiple parties.
- Identify the project leadership structure and define roles based on the principles. This could be documented as an organisational chart.
- Ensure there is clear understanding and definition between decision-makers and advisors or contributors. Establish clear processes for review and decision-making.
- Identify how governance might shift over the life of the project, either due to changes in government, or through the need to transfer different leadership skills.

C. Establish a budget

- Consider the longer term value that the project could achieve, including the social and environmental value through its delivery.
- Understand the broader life-cycle costing, from inception through to ongoing operational costs of the completed project.
- Identify funding sources and how much finance is available for the different stages of the project.
- Identify if there are any partners who may be able to contribute to financing, along with ideas and particular skillsets.

D. Establish a time line

- Establish the whole life cycle of the project from its inception, including business case, concept, tender processes, detail development, construction and post-occupancy/operation evaluation.
- Determine the program of activities and develop a time line for all stages. Identify critical dates, and build in contingencies for potential delays.
- The time line may need to be revised as the project progresses, to accommodate discoveries or new information, and to include more detail as the project activities and outputs are further defined.
- If the project needs to be broken down into stages, make sure each stage has a clear objective, inputs, activities, outputs (deliverables) and outcomes. Identify what needs to happen to move on to the next stage.

1.2 Involve all relevant parties

E. Involve stakeholders from the outset

Collaboration from the outset, with everyone involved, is essential for a successful project. Collaboration will yield a deeper understanding of the issues involved, including some that may not be readily apparent. Involving stakeholders is crucial – to gain their insight, and also to ensure they understand and agree with proposals which will affect them. It can reveal a greater range of possibilities and options, reduce unnecessary delays, achieve savings, and lead to a better overall result.

- Identify all the key stakeholders and their interest in the project. Remember to include end users and third parties.
- Develop a community engagement strategy for the life of the project, tailored to the specific requirements of the local

community, which sets out an appropriate approach and activity types. Consider including specialist engagement experts on the project team. They will be able to identify activities, such as workshops, walking tours, or forums, which are appropriate for the project.

- Identify and engage with statutory authorities early in the process who will be approving the project. They will have their own requirements for the site and these will need to be understood by the project team from the outset.
- Engage with the community to understand and respond to their needs, priorities, values, and aspirations; to learn from their knowledge and experience; to understand the history and culture of places; and to involve them in decision-making and design processes.
- Acknowledge different points of view and requirements. Look for opportunities to engage with people from all cross-sections of the community. This can include activities aimed at younger or older generations.
- Engage with Aboriginal Elders and other knowledge-holders and walk Country to learn the stories of a particular place and people ensuring all cross-sections of the community are consulted.

F. Engage the right expertise

The procurement of built environment professionals such as urban designers, project managers, traffic planners, community consultation experts, engineers, landscape architects, architects, access consultants and others should occur as early in the process as possible. In-house capabilities may already exist. Professionals from a range of different disciplines will add value to the project.

- Determine the types of expertise, including specialist disciplines, that you will need to include to make the project successful. Some will be required on the project team, and others will be needed to provide specialist technical input at various stages.
- Identify consultants from pre-qualification schemes which ensures the engagement of highly skilled and experienced organisations, as well as emerging businesses, who can provide quality strategy and design services.
- Consult widely across a variety of disciplines.
- Collaborate with the project team to understand the entirety and extent of the circumstances and requirements.
- Engage suitably qualified consultants where there are no in-house skills, to provide advice and prepare technical studies providing detailed information on particular subjects.
- Determine how you will involve local knowledge, experience, and expertise.

Refer to the GANSW advisory note **How to Engage Consultants** (GANSW 2018).

G. Establish a vision

The vision for the project sets the shared aspirations for the place.

- Develop the vision through engagement with all the project stakeholders, including the community and those with a vested interest in the project. The vision statement will also become an ongoing reference point throughout the project.
- Ensure the vision is specific to the place, and is aspirational. Ensure it responds to the local council's broader aspirations too, as articulated in the local strategic planning statement.

Refer to the GANSW advisory note **Strategic visioning** (GANSW 2018).

H. Develop a detailed design brief

A good design brief specifies what is required from the members of the project team and from the various consultants in order to achieve project objectives, and is an important foundation for the project work. The scope of your brief will depend on your particular goals and circumstances.

- Write up a detailed brief in collaboration with the project team and with others who can help to understand and define requirements. Specialist advice might be required to define and detail specific needs in order to respond to the problem the project is seeking to solve.

Inclusions may be:

- functional requirements of clients, end users and others (third parties) who may be affected by the project outcome
- design quality aspirations
- life cycle, time frames, staging, and milestones
- cost and resource constraints
- a development and divestment strategy: how will it be developed and then handed over to new owners or operators?
- planning pathways – what permissions will be required and what options are available?
- scope of work and outputs required – the brief may be for an initial feasibility design, an urban design framework, reference design, precinct plan, concept master plan, detailed master plan, or site plan.

Consider the brief in the short and the long term – look into future functions, possibilities, problems, constraints, and requirements.

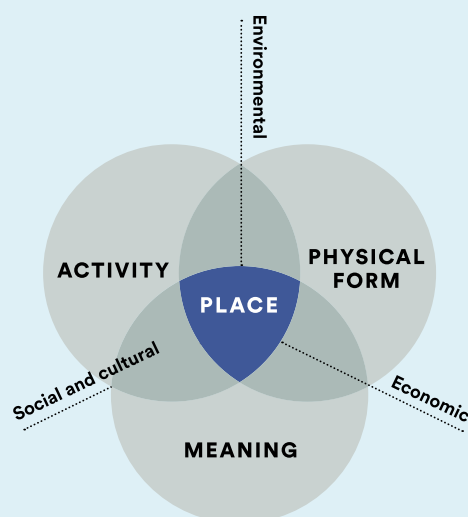
For more information see GANSW advisory note **How to develop a design brief** (GANSW 2018).

1.3 Research

I. Undertake detailed place analysis

The GANSW advisory note **Place analysis** (GANSW 2019) sets out an effective method for better understanding place. This can be used to assess existing places or desired future places, and to determine strategies to improve their quality.

- Analyse the site and its surrounding area to identify all the factors which will influence the project. Allow time for desktop analysis and thorough site visits.
- To understand a particular project type, or design for a particular condition or requirement, analysis of existing research or undertaking new research may be required.
- Research social and economic conditions and environmental ecologies and systems as appropriate.
- Refer to local strategies with implications for the design of public spaces – such as strategies for open space, recreation, public domain, cycling, local traffic management, tree canopy, green infrastructure, and park management.



Places are a synthesis of layers and elements

Decision-makers and designers can better understand places as a combination of factors. Places are a synthesis of activity, physical form (the surrounding environment), and meaning:

Meaning

People's understanding and connection to places, which reinforces personal or collective identity and belonging.

Physical form

The physical attributes of the surrounding environment including its material, spatial, and natural qualities.

Activity

The things that people do and the things that are happening in a particular location or area.

J. Identify constraints and opportunities

- Identify the major physical and delivery constraints and opportunities which will influence design decisions throughout.
- Accurately map the constraints early in the process following a detailed place analysis. Some constraints also offer opportunities. Obstructions or difficulties can lead to identifying different ways of seeing a problem that might offer new solutions or reveal other possibilities.
- Identify and explore the major physical and delivery opportunities. Project research will allow opportunities to emerge.
- Ensure specialist expertise from the project team helps to identify different constraints.

K. Identify an urban logic (or key design intent) which underpins the project and emerges from the analysis. This may be one key idea or a series of interconnected ideas.

- The design intent will respond to the constraints and opportunities and will inform the development of subsequent place-based design principles.

L. Develop project-specific design principles

- Establish design principles which respond to the unique qualities of the place, the end users, and to the overall vision, the urban logic, and project objectives.
- Identify useful precedents and case studies of well-designed projects, demonstrating best practice, either local, national, or international. Precedents can inspire new ways of thinking about a particular problem or type of project, and suggest creative processes and solutions that can help to improve design quality and add value to projects.

2. CREATE

2.1 Explore possibilities

M. Test scenarios

With design principles established, explore the possibilities for the project, extending beyond the obvious or standard response.

- Explore different ways to respond to the design brief and the project objectives by developing different scenarios. Scenarios are a way of “testing” the aspirations for the project – and can be posed as a series of questions which explore different possibilities to determine if objectives are being met.
- Consider the scenarios from different extremities. For example, the amount of built development; the framing of different priorities, staging, directions, or opportunities; or the level of intervention and investment.
- Challenge assumptions, conventional methods, and mainstream ways of thinking and working. Scenarios at this stage are not options. They are different ways to consider the project.
- Investigate time frames. Understand the project as a series of stages, and define the steps required over a period of time to reach the desired vision. Consider short-, medium-, and long-term stages.

N. Understand the planning implications

Facilitating change through a project may require amendments to planning controls. You may need to commission detailed studies to inform the proposed changes:

- transport and traffic
- social infrastructure
- heritage
- environmental factors
- economics and employment.

These studies can be used to develop and test design options and inform necessary amendments to the local environmental plan and development control plan.

- Identify different planning pathways, what is involved with each, and the preferred pathway which will provide the best outcome.
- Identify how different scenarios might influence the choice of planning pathway.

2.2 Synthesise thinking

O. Combine the ideas and efforts through collaboration

- Invest time in bringing all the information into a synthesised proposition. Bring all the constraints, opportunities, and possibilities into the picture.
- Look at the constraints, ideas, and needs from others’ points of view. Identify gaps or differences that might exist between different needs and expectations.
- Identify opportunities, and devise solutions that link and solve multiple problems. Look for links between different modes of knowledge.
- Consider public benefit and how to maximise long-term value.

P. Use the right urban design tools

- Develop the project proposal using the most appropriate tools or outputs for creating the design outcome, for example a master plan or urban design framework.

Refer to the GANSW advisory notes **Master planning process overview**, **Strategic frameworks**, **Urban design frameworks**, **Master plans** and **Implementation plans** (GANSW 2018).

2.3 Develop ideas and options

Q. Refine and resolve the design

Continued reiteration and refinement of design concepts and ideas will help to solve some of the more complex issues.

- Create many iterations of the design idea, and develop a range of different options. Understand the implications of different ideas and scenarios.
- Review ideas from different perspectives and with different parameters, e.g. consider small, medium, and large interventions.
- Discuss the ideas and options with stakeholders such as approval bodies and end users.
- Visualise and communicate ideas using drawings, diagrams, models, and graphics.
- Refine the ideas, based on feedback, and develop a preferred option.

R. Test design integrity through design review processes

- Ensure the project is reviewed early in the process by an experienced panel made up of architects, urban designers, and landscape architects.

3. DELIVER

3.1 Test and evaluate the design

S. Test a range of design ideas

- Testing of design ideas determines whether the ideas meet the key project objectives.
- Explore problems in detail and test different solutions to obstacles.
- Test a range of ideas for particular elements of the scheme to examine different ways of meeting the broader project objectives.
- Test the public amenity the scheme offers, and how it aligns with the project objectives and design principles. This can include aspects such as solar access, accessibility, street views, urban heat-island mitigation, vistas, and privacy.
- Develop ways to improve the design when testing reveals issues that need resolution.
- Examine different options with regard to the function of the spaces, the likely cost, and the time frames required.
- Identify the elements that require special attention – such as paved surfaces, landscape, sports facilities and playing fields, seating and outdoor furniture, lighting, or amenities such as toilets.
- Refine and develop the design concepts.

T. Evaluate the design options

- Examine and analyse each option based on research, overall objectives, the needs of stakeholders, and public interest to determine if good design solutions are being met.
- Understand and assess the balance of time, cost, and quality.
- Use a structured design review process to review options early in the process. Large State significant projects can undergo design review through the NSW State Design Review Panel. Smaller projects could be reviewed through a council's own design review process. The role of design review in the development of a project is valuable to ensuring the right design outcomes are met.
- Ensure that specialists with the right design expertise provide independent evaluation.
- The design team should reiterate the process that has been established for design evaluation and decision-making.
- Further refine and resolve the design and prepare project documentation.

U. Design the procurement methodology

- Develop the process for engaging the services of those who will deliver the project.
- Refer to detailed references in the Appendix.

3.2 Implement the project

V. Develop an implementation strategy

- Develop a program of works – including staging, funding, planning approvals, procurement and divestment strategies and processes which are viable for the client and other key stakeholders. Depending on the type of work proposed, approval may be required by way of a development application.
- Understand the planning approvals process and requirements, and provide the relevant information. Ensure regular communication with the local authority to monitor progress of the application, and respond to any queries that might arise during the determination phase.
 - Consider incorporating temporary uses to facilitate change and activate a site earlier in the development process. These can help early activation and raise community awareness of the long-term renewal which may be taking place.
 - Include funding as part of the strategy. Identify and secure the funding sources. Funds may need to come from a range of sources, and could be phased over an extended period of time.
 - Identify the divestment strategy where relevant. This should include measures to ensure the design intent is carried through if the site is divested to others.

W. Ensure the design intent carries through

Carry the design intent through to completion of the project. Ensure the vision and objectives continue through into project delivery and construction. Review design quality at key stages in the delivery process.

X. Undertake post-occupancy evaluation

Undertake post-occupancy evaluation to learn lessons for future projects. This process can identify how people think about and use the building or place, whether it meets all the original aspirations, and whether there are areas that could be improved.

3.2 Urban design implementation

The potential to implement these urban design strategies is most likely to occur in four typical regional project types:

1. public space
2. town centres and main streets
3. infill development in existing neighbourhoods
4. greenfield development in new neighbourhoods.

For the purposes of this guide, these four contexts are used as typical scenarios for framing advice about implementing good urban design. However, this advice about good design can apply across a broader range of projects and contexts.

Public space

Public space is the most important application for urban design – in both metropolitan and regional areas. Public space should be designed to facilitate civic pride, social cohesion, a sense of community, economic activity, and to support people’s health and wellbeing. As part of the public realm, open space is an important element and defining characteristic of many regional urban areas. Well-designed streets, squares, parks, and gardens reflect the local character and climate, and hold stories about the histories of a place and its people. In regional towns, public spaces include open spaces like streets, shopfronts, forecourts, squares, parks, public gardens and landscaped areas, riverbanks, sports facilities, public car parks and transport networks, as well as public buildings like railway stations, libraries, hospitals, schools, halls, swimming pools, galleries, and museums.

Albury Council’s Murray River Experience Master Plan connects a series of river landscapes, parks, playgrounds, public artworks, and amenities along Albury’s interface with the iconic Murray River. A community wood-fired oven at Hovell Tree Park is one of many delights town visitors and residents can enjoy along this extensive green infrastructure network. Image: Simon Dallinger.





Town centres and main streets

Across NSW, town centres and main streets play a major role in creating a sense of place and identity for regional areas. They typically perform a range of functions – as a major concentration of shops and services, the primary location of civic buildings and facilities, an important place for public events and gatherings, and a hub for local and regional transport services. Urban design can help to facilitate and combine these different roles to create town centres and main streets which are welcoming, attractive, safe, and vibrant places for residents, businesses, and visitors.

Infill development

New development in existing neighbourhoods within regional areas can occur in different ways. In some cases, a single dwelling will be replaced with a new dwelling to better accommodate the needs of the resident. In other cases, the change might involve increasing the number of dwellings on the same land, and providing shared spaces or facilities. This is typically in response to an identified need for more housing in an existing neighbourhood – to make better use of existing services and infrastructure, and to reduce the need for greenfield development. The locations for infill development can be guided by local strategic planning statements.

Greenfield development

Greenfield development in new neighbourhoods generally occurs on previously undeveloped land on the outskirts of towns. The location of greenfield development is guided by strategic planning documents, with subsequent land-use planning identifying areas which are suitable for urban development, and areas which need to be retained for environmental management and non-urban purposes. Detailed planning for new neighbourhoods determines the location and layout of new streets, open space, infrastructure, buildings, and different land uses.



Wilcannia Health Service successfully provides a new health accommodation facility within an existing building. Image: Brett Boardman.



Maitland Riverlink by CHROFI.
Image: Brett Boardman.

Public space

STRATEGY 1

Engage with the history and culture of places

1. Retain, improve, and acknowledge valued public assets and landscapes through:

retaining and re-using of existing public buildings and landscapes of historic or community value, with new public uses in existing buildings to generate new activity

identifying opportunities to create new public spaces adjacent to places of cultural significance

designing of open spaces that respect the history and culture of an area

identifying and discussing of elements and areas of Aboriginal cultural heritage with Aboriginal knowledge-holders and custodians, and an appropriately sensitive response to their acknowledgement

Refer to **Design for Heritage** (GANSW 2019) to identify ways in which heritage buildings might be adapted for public use.

STRATEGY 2

Integrate with the natural environment and landscape

2. Embed green infrastructure as the primary network first through:

making new or revitalising green connections between new and existing public spaces

identifying opportunities for public open space to form part of a wider ecological framework connecting to surrounding regional landscapes and river systems

integrating existing natural features such as bushland and waterways into new public space proposals

designating all public waterways as open space for recreation and biodiversity corridors

incorporating planting of street trees and other forms of landscaping into the street design.

Reconciliation Shield by Barkindji /Yorta Yorta artist Tamara Murray is one of the sculptures installed on the Yindyamarra Sculpture Walk along the banks of the Murray River. As well as celebrating the region's cultural heritage, the master plan for the river has improved opportunities for walking and cycling.
Image: Albury City Council.

3. Design public spaces to connect with surrounding natural features and landscapes through:

embedding stories, knowledge, and experiences of Country into the design process

facilitating physical and visual linkages to important landscape features and landmarks, such as waterways, bushland, and hills

establishing active edges, connecting with adjoining landscape areas or features

aligning any urban development and built form with the topography and landscape form.

4. Design public spaces and streetscapes to support biodiversity through:

working with the natural landscapes

using local native vegetation which can withstand the climate and soil conditions

ensuring adequate size and continuity of open spaces to support and protect biodiversity

retaining and increasing tree canopy in proposals to retain habitats for wildlife, improve air quality, and provide shade.

5. Design green public spaces and streetscapes to support recreational uses through:

retaining and integrating bushland and waterways for recreational use

integrating street trees alongside cycle routes and walking trails.



STRATEGY 3

Revitalise main streets and town centres

6. Enhance existing town public spaces by:

rethinking the use of public space which is currently underused such as car parks, vacant blocks, laneways; these could provide new squares or open arcades

integrating forgotten or left-over land, designed with a new function, for example community gardens or dog parks

integrating commercial and retail uses that serve and improve the public realm

designing multifunctional public spaces in town centres to cater for a range of uses such as performances and markets.

The design of Orange Regional Museum by Crone Architects includes outdoor stepped seating that can be used as an amphitheatre to watch events and performances or as a place to sit and enjoy the sun. Image: Troy Pearson.

STRATEGY 4

Prioritise connectivity, walkability, and cycling opportunities

7. Improve streetscape amenity and experience by:

establishing or improving pavements and cycling paths through centres or suburbs

increasing street trees, lighting, shade and other infrastructure which creates desirable walking conditions

locating walking and cycling paths close to each other to improve natural surveillance and safety

integrating new pedestrian crossings at key points to ensure safe walking connections between local destinations

designing for people of all ages and abilities, providing lift access or ramps where gradients are steep

investigating opportunities to transfer excess road space to cyclists and pedestrians instead of cars

integrating clear wayfinding elements

providing more efficient car parking areas to increase space for vegetation or other facilities.



8. Identify new opportunities to improve walkable access by:

integrating a connected network of walking and cycling routes with existing parks, sports and recreation facilities, council-owned open space, bushland, river and drainage corridors, and transport corridors

investigating new connections through town-centre blocks, where a car park, laneway, forecourt or building may provide the chance to link key streets or facilities

investigating opportunities for pedestrian bridge crossings – either to supplement existing infrastructure, or to forge a connection between two destinations.

STRATEGY 5 Balance urban growth

9. Provide sufficient public space to cater for current and future populations by:

understanding the demographic of the area and people's needs to inform the type of public space required now and in future

undertaking an audit to assess the quality and quantity of public space and whether it will meet future needs

integrating new public spaces which will respond to the areas that may transition.

Refer to **Place Analysis** (GANSW 2019) to understand how to optimise places to increase public space opportunities.

Refer to the **Greener Places Design Guide** (GANSW 2020) for specific guidance to determine the quantity, quality, and uses of open space.

STRATEGY 6 Increase options for diverse and healthy living

10. Design open space and park improvements for local diverse needs by:

providing areas for both active recreation, and passive recreation, and catering for intergenerational needs and for people of all abilities

designing sporting facilities to be multipurpose, to cater for a range of activities, ages, and abilities

designing new public squares, parks, public facilities, car parks, and gardens to respond to local climate conditions, and to cater for seasonal weather changes, including for both sun and shade across the seasons.

11. Improve safety and accessibility by:

ensuring active frontages line the perimeter of parks and other public spaces

selecting and positioning landscape elements to maintain visibility through and within parks

providing lighting to encourage use at night

designing for all abilities and ages.

STRATEGY 7 Respond to climatic conditions and their impacts

12. Embed environmentally sustainable design principles from the outset by:

integrating shade measures within landscape and built structures to provide comfort to public areas

using materials that are durable, resilient, and appropriate for their climate

using trees, low-level planting, and shade devices for shade and natural cooling to reduce heat gain.

13. Design resilient public spaces to allow for climate extremes by:

integrating water-sensitive urban design elements to ensure water management can resist the possibility of flooding

designing large, protected public spaces which can accommodate the community during evacuation.



The upgrade of a much-loved boat harbour and waterfront in Tweed Heads by Aspect Studios has created a multifunctional civic park. Part of the design integrates existing trees with a new timber deck area that provides a shaded place to sit overlooking the beach. Image: Simon Wood.

Town centres and main streets

STRATEGY 1

Engage with the history and culture of places

1. Enhance the role, visibility, and value of historic buildings and landscapes by:

retaining and restoring buildings, landscapes, and elements of local value, incorporating them within new development

adapting historic buildings for new purposes, especially when they are underused, exploring uses which complement other nearby uses

creating opportunities for interpretation, to encourage people to engage with local cultural heritage

acknowledging and respecting Aboriginal heritage and culture by integrating and preserving landscapes, places, objects, sites, stories, memories, and experiences.

2. Ensure that new development is sensitive to its immediate context by:

analysing and understanding the local character of the main street or town centre, including how it has been created, and which elements contribute to maintaining it

determining building heights, setbacks, footprints, and details which are appropriate for neighbouring historic and cultural assets and their characteristics

proposing complementary uses to adjoining uses that hold historic or cultural value.

STRATEGY 2

Integrate with the natural environment and landscape

3. Relate main streets and town centres to surrounding natural features by:

facilitating physical and visual linkages to significant landscape features, increasing awareness and enjoyment through new views and access

ensuring stories and connections with Country are embedded in the design process and design outcome

using local species of trees to foster a local streetscape character.

4. Continue green infrastructure networks through main streets and town centres to improve urban amenity, build local character and support biodiversity by:

planting street trees and integrating other forms of landscaping into the street design to create continuous green connections between open spaces and to outer areas

ensuring adequate size and continuity of open spaces and landscaping to support habitat for local flora and fauna.

STRATEGY 3

Revitalise main streets and town centres

5. Enhance the public realm to encourage people to spend time in streets and public spaces by:

upgrading streetscapes and public spaces through improvements to landscaping, pavements, street furniture, and lighting, shade, shelter, seating and play spaces

making new or improved pedestrian connections through spaces such as laneways and car parks.

creating spaces for events and gatherings such as small squares for outdoor dining

using public art to create places which are distinctive, and which reflect local identity

locating main street services underground, where feasible.

6. Plan for a range of retail options and other uses to increase activity and patronage by:

limiting isolated retail activity in dispersed locations – to optimise town centre viability

locating council offices, libraries, schools, tertiary education and other institutional and community uses within town centres

increasing land-use mix and density, encouraging shop-top housing and mixed-use redevelopment close to town centres, community facilities, and public transport.

7. Encourage building improvements and street activation which provide short to long-term place making improvements by:

restoring, repurposing and reactivating existing buildings with injection of new uses

maintaining continuous and interesting street frontages with low-cost, temporary uses to activate empty shopfronts

investigating facade upgrades and shopfront improvement programs for main streets

retaining existing shop awnings and investigate opportunities for new awnings.

STRATEGY 4

Prioritise connectivity, walkability, and cycling opportunities

8. Locate community infrastructure within the town-centre walking catchment to boost walkability and economic activity by:

co-locating community infrastructure with retail uses and public transport stops

“bookending” key community uses at either end of a main street.

9. Improve streetscape amenity to increase walking and cycling by:

accommodating pedestrian numbers on footpaths during busy periods

increasing trees, lighting, and shaded seating.

integrating landscaped central reservations on wide carriageways of main streets

introducing appropriate traffic-calming measures and car parking where a main street is also a major traffic thoroughfare

increasing permeability by using laneways or creating new through-block connections

providing end-of-trip facilities in local amenities for cyclists who are commuting or touring.

STRATEGY 5

Balance urban growth

10. Establish appropriate densities to support the viability of town centres by:

designing for a mix of housing types, sizes, and densities that will increase the resident population in neighbourhoods

identifying opportunity sites for desired future development in town centres rather than on urban fringes.

11. Develop built form and landscape controls to support local character by:

coordinating height limits, setbacks, and allowable floor-space ratios

maintaining existing lower scale street-wall development, with higher levels required to be set back further from the street front.

STRATEGY 6

Increase options for diverse and healthy living

12. Plan for variety and density that will benefit the diversity of residents, businesses, and local services by:

encouraging diversity in housing types and housing tenures in mixed-use and residential developments

Tamworth residents were invited to participate in the upgrade redesign of one of their main streets. A festival day was held by the local council to present design options for locals to test out and vote on their preferred option. Landscape and urban design by Spackman Mossop and Michaels gave shape to the community’s vision for their public realm with moveable street furniture to allow for flexibility during Tamworth’s Country Music Festival. Image: Genevieve Harrison.



13. Allow for a sufficient quantity and quality of open space and community infrastructure by:

providing for a range of community uses which support anticipated demographic changes

designing buildings to ensure the amenity of the public realm is optimised for all.

14. Provide public spaces that are multifunctional by:

designing spaces to accommodate a range of activities to appeal to different groups and encourage incidental meetings

accommodating community gardens with other functions, such as food production.

STRATEGY 7

Respond to climatic conditions and their impacts

15. Design buildings and the public realm to provide comfort and shelter during extreme heat by:

using street trees, low-level planting, shade canopies, and water features, as well as appropriate materials, to provide shade and natural cooling, to reduce heat gain

ensuring building setbacks and heights allow for appropriate solar access and shading of the public realm

upgrading existing footpath awnings, and verandahs providing shade.

16. Protect built form and the public realm against natural hazards by:

using water-sensitive urban design strategies to manage stormwater, while maintaining the quality and character of the public realm

integrating urban design, infrastructure, and engineering solutions for town centres and main streets in proximity to coastlines, rivers, or bushland to mitigate risk of damage from floods, fire, or other climate-related events.

Infill development

STRATEGY 1

Engage with the history and culture of places

1. Understand and respond to the context by:

identifying the uses, features, and cultural aspects which contribute to the local character of a place, and look for opportunities to incorporate these into new infill development

ensuring building heights, setbacks, and footprints of new development are appropriate to neighbouring buildings

allowing uses which are complementary to and appropriate for adjoining uses.

2. Enhance the value of historic assets by:

retaining and preserving historic buildings, landscapes, trees, public spaces, and elements of local value; adapting them for new purposes where appropriate, especially when they are underused

incorporating historic and cultural elements in new development

integrating uses which will enrich the quality and identity of historic buildings and landscapes

creating interpretive opportunities to encourage people to engage with local cultural heritage.

STRATEGY 2

Integrate with the natural environment and landscape

3. Connect and engage urban development with natural features and conditions by:

facilitating physical and visual linkages to landscape features and landmarks

aligning development and built form to the local topography and landscape

orienting new buildings to optimise solar access in winter, and shade in summer.

4. Embed green infrastructure by:

establishing new or revitalising existing green connections between infill development and open spaces to form continuous green infrastructure networks

enhancing streets by planting street trees and integrating other forms of vegetation and landscaping into the street design.

5. Provide public open spaces and streetscapes that support biodiversity by:

integrating existing natural biodiversity systems so that fauna and flora habitats are connected and protected, and continue to add richness to the landscape

ensuring adequate size and continuity of open spaces to support and protect biodiversity.

STRATEGY 3

Revitalise main streets and town centres

6. Improve and revitalise the public realm by:

enhancing existing streetscapes through planting, paving, street furniture, lighting, and public art, encouraging people to spend time in streets and public spaces

creating new or improved pedestrian connections within infill areas, increasing through-block links

creating larger and smaller spaces for events, gatherings, festivals, and outdoor dining.

7. Encourage a range of retail options and other uses by:

integrating appropriate levels of retail uses in infill areas to increase activity in neighbourhoods

creating and maintaining continuous, active, and interesting street frontages

encouraging activities that relate to the desired character of the street

identifying areas for shop-top housing.

STRATEGY 4

Prioritise connectivity, walkability, and cycling opportunities

8. Support public transport viability and walkability within local town and village centres by:

linking new infill residential development with existing shops, community facilities, public open spaces, and public transport to increase patronage

enhancing existing streets to support permeability, provide access to centres, and support a variety of street activities

locating community infrastructure in town centres, or co-locating shops and public transport stops

integrating local accessibility improvements with longer term strategic initiatives such as new transport corridors.

9. Improve streetscape connectivity and amenity to encourage walking and accessibility by:

integrating street trees, street lighting, drainage, and other infrastructure

creating connections that improve access for pedestrians and cyclists, with new or embellished open space and improved connections for walking and cycling

investigating opportunities for “park and walk”, with landscaped car parks at the edge of town, which facilitate a pleasant and accessible walk into the centre.

STRATEGY 5
Balance urban growth

10. Review existing infrastructure and its potential by:

identifying areas that can be improved to support increased populations

considering green infrastructure, social infrastructure, and movement infrastructure.

11. Investigate the constraints and opportunities for amalgamation of lots by :

understanding the minimum number of lots required for successful economic development and to create well-designed urban environments

ensuring small-scale infill development does not compromise other longer term opportunities.

STRATEGY 6
Increase options for diverse and healthy living

12. Consider how infill areas can help meet community needs by:

providing a diversity of housing types and tenures, appropriate to the location, supporting different household configurations

designing subdivision plans with a range of lot sizes and configurations

ensuring sufficient quantity and quality of open space and community space to support current and future populations.

13. Reinforce economic and employment opportunities by:

identifying suitable locations for new and emerging economic development.

14. Encourage communal spaces for people to interact within residential developments by:

encouraging safe and attractive courtyards, forecourts, meeting rooms, decks and garden spaces which provide communal access and facilitate social activity

exploring opportunities for alternative parking models to optimise open space

integrating spaces which accommodate bikes for general cycling, and electric bikes for longer trip distances.

STRATEGY 7
Respond to climatic conditions and their impacts

15. Encourage design that reduces energy consumption by:

designing buildings to suit local climatic conditions all year through passive measures.

16. Design the public realm to provide comfort and shelter during temperature extremes by:

ensuring building setbacks and heights allow for solar access and shading appropriate for the seasons and the climate

integrating quantifiable measures that respond to the urban heat-island effect.

17. Design to protect built form against natural hazards such as floods, storms, bushfires by:

reviewing existing urban drainage systems to identify upgrades which may allow for a more holistic, water-sensitive, and attractive approach to managing stormwater, linking into green infrastructure networks

minimising housing on the periphery of regional cities, towns, or in bushland areas

using urban design processes to integrate landscape design, infrastructure, and engineering solutions for infill development.



The design of a commercial infill site on Bay Street, Byron Bay responds to the warm subtropical climate of the region and contributes to the area’s local character. Borrowing elements from regional vernacular buildings, the project combines verandahs, slatted screens, and corrugated iron roofs to create generous and flexible outdoor rooms that can be used by owners, tenants, and customers in all weather conditions. Image: Troppo Architects.

Greenfield development

STRATEGY 1

Engage with the history and culture of places

1. Manage connections between new neighbourhoods and surrounding uses by:

considering the connections between new neighbourhoods and existing areas and activities, including coastal environments, bushland, agriculture, and industrial land

ensuring valuable and important natural or cultural landscapes and sites are protected and enhanced through change to an area

ensuring that areas of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage are protected.

STRATEGY 2

Integrate with the natural environment and landscape

2. Connect and engage urban development with natural features by:

integrating physical and visual linkages to landscape features and landmarks, and using these as key design features

integrating new development with surrounding natural environments to ensure a permeable transition which captures environmental and cultural values of the area

aligning new built form with the prevailing topography and landscape.

3. Embed green infrastructure as a network by:

enhancing streets by planting street trees and integrating other forms of vegetation and landscaping into the street design

designating creeks and waterways as open space for recreation and biodiversity corridors for enhancement and protection; establish new green connections between new and existing open spaces

retaining significant areas of existing tree canopy, and complementing this with new landscaping to form a continuous green canopy, providing urban shade in summer.

4. Design public open spaces and streetscapes to support biodiversity by:

incorporating extensive vegetation and natural landscape spaces into new neighbourhoods

ensuring adequate size and continuity of open spaces to support and protect local biodiversity.

STRATEGY 3

Prioritise connectivity, walkability, and cycling opportunities

5. Plan for a network of interconnected streets to facilitate walking and cycling by:

connecting streets and pathways in new neighbourhoods with existing streets and pathways in adjacent urban areas

retaining high-amenity areas, such as land adjacent to waterways, for public access

providing a network of new open space with different qualities and functions to meet the needs of future residents

connecting shops, public facilities, and public transport stops to surrounding areas with direct routes for walking and cycling.

6. Support the viability of public transport and local town and village centres by:

increasing density and planning for compact neighbourhoods around town centres, shops, community facilities, public open spaces, and public transport to increase patronage

co-locating community infrastructure with retail centres and public transport stops

creating street networks which are permeable and provide direct access to centres, with a clear hierarchy of street types to support different activities.

STRATEGY 4

Balance urban growth

7. Limit low-density greenfield development on the urban fringe by:

establishing clear boundaries for future growth at a strategic planning level; limit dispersed, sprawling development which has the potential to impinge on semi-rural, rural, and bushland areas

providing diversity of lot sizes and housing types to balance density, creating compact development and sustainable, connected, and liveable places

locating new local shops within walking distance of most dwellings, in the most accessible places such as street corners

integrating new housing on the urban fringe, so it is sympathetic with the semi-rural and bushland edge, bringing the existing landscape into the open spaces of the development.

STRATEGY 5

Increase options for diverse and healthy living

8. Guide the extent and type of new development to suit the anticipated new community by:

ensuring subdivision plans contain a range of lot sizes and configurations that can provide new housing and other complementary uses to meet community needs and address projected demographic profiles

providing a diverse range of housing types and tenures, which are appropriate to the location and different household configurations

providing adequate green infrastructure including a network of green spaces and corridors to improve connectivity with nature and outdoors, and support mental and physical health.

9. Reinforce economic and employment opportunities by:

increasing the density of mixed-use housing development around town centres and commercial areas particularly in areas of declining population

enhancing the quality of the public realm to attract business

improving accessibility and connections between residential development and retail, industrial, or commercial areas.

10. Encourage communal spaces within residential developments by:

encouraging safe and attractive courtyards, forecourts, meeting rooms, and decks and garden spaces which provide communal access and facilitate social activity.



Greenfield development Habitat, Byron Bay, provides a mix of housing types and sizes, integrated with retail and business premises and landscaped public spaces for socialising and recreation. The development is connected to the town via public transport and a cycleway, and the network of streets encourages cycling and walking. Image: Christopher Frederick Jones.

STRATEGY 6

Respond to climatic conditions and their impacts

11. Guide and encourage higher standards of sustainable building design by:

ensuring new-build development optimises opportunities for providing comfort and shelter during extreme heat, with lower reliance on mechanical cooling and ventilation

optimising orientation, external solar shading, natural ventilation, thermal mass, and other passive climate devices – these should be integral to street layout and building design

ensuring buildings are designed to suit specific local climatic extremes

minimising the urban heat-island effect from the outset by integrating trees, green roofs and walls, appropriate materials, pale coloured roofs and surfaces, and other passive devices to create shade and reduce heat absorption.

12. Design the public realm to provide comfort and shelter during extreme heat by:

designing streets to deliver extensive street tree planting which will provide shade and natural cooling, particularly in hotter areas

using trees, low-level planting, shade devices, and appropriate building, paving and other landscaping materials to reduce heat absorption and build-up; consider water features where possible

ensuring building setbacks and heights provide appropriate solar access and shading for the public realm; provide continuous shade awnings or integrate colonnades for new shopfronts.

13. Protect against natural hazards by:

integrating generous tree canopy within urban areas to reduce ground temperatures and mitigate the urban heat-island effect

integrating new open space with existing waterways to assist with flood mitigation

increasing drainage capacity in streetscapes with planting and water-sensitive urban design

using urban design processes and engineering solutions to integrate landscape design, and infrastructure near the coast, rivers, and bushland, to mitigate risk

designing with the natural topography to eliminate adverse effects on natural drainage of overland flow

identifying the requirements and legislation for building in areas prone to bushfire or flooding.

4.

APPENDIX

Regional profiles

Regional profiles are presented for:

Central Coast

Central West and Orana

Far West

Hunter

Illawarra–Shoalhaven

New England North West

North Coast

Riverina Murray

South East and Tablelands.

These profiles complement the nine regional plans established by the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment. The profiles presented here summarise the major characteristics of each region, including its topography and geography, climate type, and a snapshot of the future climate, settlement types and industries, population information, and factors driving change and economic growth.

The urban design strategies presented in this guide will have different outcomes in each region, in response to these local characteristics.

For more information see the regional plans on the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment website.

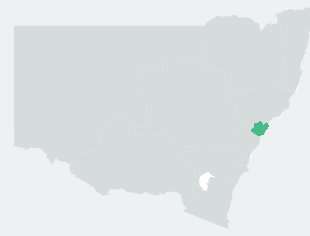


Aboriginal custodian groups
The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) Map of Indigenous Australia¹, is an attempt to represent the language, tribal, or nation groups of the Indigenous peoples of Australia.

The following regional profiles list the Aboriginal custodian groups recognised by this map. AIATSIS acknowledges “the information on which the map is based is contested and may not be agreed to by some traditional custodians. The borders between groups are purposefully represented as slightly blurred. They do not claim to be exact. The map is not definitive and is not the only information available which maps language and social groups.”



CENTRAL COAST REGION



KEY INFORMATION



POPULATION 2016²	339,550
POPULATION 2036² (PROJECTION)	415,050
URBAN CONCENTRATION³	96%
CLIMATE ZONES⁴	Warm temperate
GROSS REGIONAL PRODUCT (GRP) 2016⁵	\$17.4 billion
MAIN INDUSTRIES (BY GRP) 2016⁵	Manufacturing Construction Rental, hiring, and real estate services Healthcare and social assistance
MAIN INDUSTRIES (BY EMPLOYMENT) 2016⁵	Healthcare and social assistance Retail trade Construction Accommodation and food services
COUNCILS	Central Coast
ABORIGINAL CUSTODIANS OF THIS COUNTRY¹	Darkinjung Ku-ring-gai

REGIONAL CONTEXT

We acknowledge that the people of Darkinjung and Ku-ring-gai countries are the Traditional Custodians of the land which sits within this region.

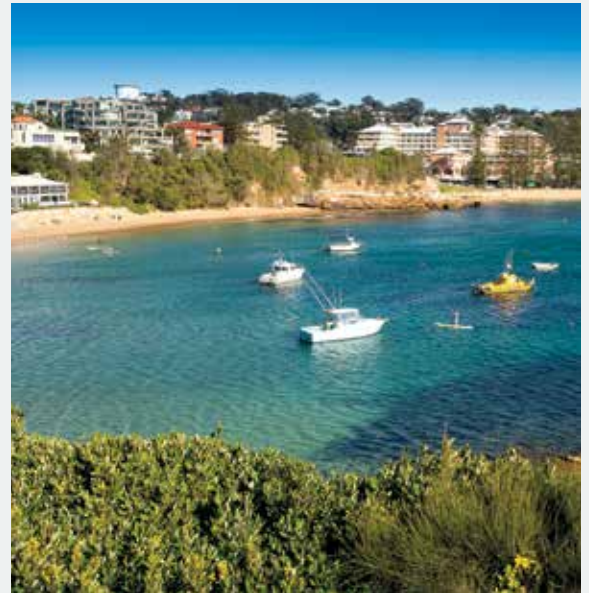
With an ideal warm temperate climate, the Central Coast offers favourable conditions for an active lifestyle and outdoor-focused living. The region's geography, including its ocean coastline, waterways, wetlands, and forests have guided the location of settlement. The predominance of these natural features has contributed to an urban form characterised by dispersed development and a high degree of interface between urban areas and natural environments.



Gosford, the region's first centre of European settlement, became a town in the 1880s, supported by rail access to Sydney, and highway links in the 1930s. Today the strategic centres of Gosford, Erina, Woy Woy, Tuggerah, Wyong, and Warnervale are a focus for employment, shopping, services, and community events. Although the region is serviced by the Central Coast and Newcastle railway line, limited integration of transport and land use has contributed to reliance on private vehicles.

The region's strategic location between Greater Sydney and Greater Newcastle will continue to attract new residents, jobs, business, and investment, particularly around existing urban and employment areas, such as the Warnervale–Wadalba release area, the Northern and Southern Growth Corridors, and existing rural villages. Planning and urban design frameworks can help guide the quality of the built environment in the future development of these areas.

The region is projected to continue to warm during the near future (2020–39) and far future (2060–79), compared to recent years. The warming is projected to be on average about 0.7 degrees Celsius in the near future, increasing to about 1.9 degrees Celsius in the far future. The number of hot days is projected to increase, and there are projected to be fewer cold nights. (Source: Central Coast – Climate change snapshot, Office of Environment and Heritage, 2014.)



CASE STUDY

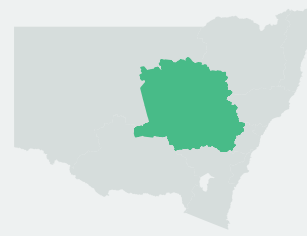


[The Art House, Wyong](#) Transforming the town centre with a great public building

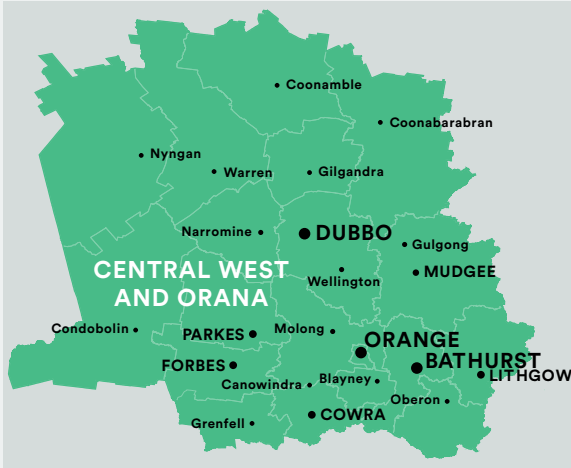
Further information on this case study is available on the website.

Image: TZG Architects.

CENTRAL WEST AND ORANA REGION



KEY INFORMATION



POPULATION 2016²	285,500																				
POPULATION 2036² (PROJECTION)	308,950																				
URBAN CONCENTRATION³	74%																				
CLIMATE ZONES⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Hot dry summer, cool winter – Mild temperate – Cool temperate 																				
GROSS REGIONAL PRODUCT (GRP) 2016⁵	\$18.8 billion																				
MAIN INDUSTRIES (BY GRP) 2016⁵	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manufacturing Mining Construction Agriculture, forestry, and fishing 																				
MAIN INDUSTRIES (BY EMPLOYMENT) 2016⁵	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthcare and social assistance Agriculture, forestry, and fishing Retail trade Education and training 																				
COUNCILS	<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>Bathurst Regional</td> <td>Lithgow</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Blayney</td> <td>Mid-Western Regional</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bogan</td> <td>Regional</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cabonne</td> <td>Narromine</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Coonamble</td> <td>Oberon</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cowra</td> <td>Orange</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dubbo Regional</td> <td>Parkes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Forbes</td> <td>Warren</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gilgandra</td> <td>Warrumbungle</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Lachlan</td> <td>Weddin</td> </tr> </table>	Bathurst Regional	Lithgow	Blayney	Mid-Western Regional	Bogan	Regional	Cabonne	Narromine	Coonamble	Oberon	Cowra	Orange	Dubbo Regional	Parkes	Forbes	Warren	Gilgandra	Warrumbungle	Lachlan	Weddin
Bathurst Regional	Lithgow																				
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Cowra	Orange																				
Dubbo Regional	Parkes																				
Forbes	Warren																				
Gilgandra	Warrumbungle																				
Lachlan	Weddin																				
ABORIGINAL CUSTODIANS OF THIS COUNTRY¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wiradjuri Gamilaraay Wailwan 																				

REGIONAL CONTEXT

We acknowledge that the people of Wiradjuri, Gamilaraay, and Wailwan countries are the Traditional Custodians of the land which sits within this region.

Located in the heart of NSW, the Central West and Orana Region contains a diversity of natural and built environments. The southern and eastern parts of the region are characterised by the varying topography of hills and mountains with higher rainfall, cooler temperatures, and fertile farming land. The northern and western areas are characterised by lower rainfall and flatter slopes and plains, supporting more extensive agricultural production. These differences in geography and climate broadly align with proximity to the Great Dividing Range and beyond to Sydney.

European settlement of the region occurred following the crossing of the Blue Mountains from Sydney in 1813, with a denser pattern of settlement clustered in the south-east part of the region. Settlements in the western areas of the region typically established adjacent to rivers. Today, there are considerable variations across the region in access to transport infrastructure and digital connectivity, with implications for economic opportunity. Large variations in climate affect liveability, and include very hot summers and cold winters.



Water security is a particular challenge for the region.

The era in which cities and towns were established has had a strong influence on the architectural style of buildings, and the urban design qualities of streets and public spaces. Town centre buildings constructed in the 1800s and early 1900s typically placed a strong emphasis on the design of detailed front facades, and were positioned close to the street. These are buildings which reflect the dominant cultural values of the time in which they were constructed.

Today, Bathurst and Orange are a focus for economic activity and housing, and Dubbo plays a specific role as an economic hub and provides services to many dispersed communities across the western part of the State. All of these regional cities are supported by a network of strategic centres and local centres, each with their own distinct character and assets. The region's central location in the State, diversified economy, and strong network of cities and centres will attract new residents, jobs, business, and investment. Good urban design practices and consultation with communities can help to ensure that current values are protected and enhanced as new development occurs.

The region is projected to continue to warm during the near future (2020–39) and far future (2060–79), compared to recent years. The warming is projected to be on average about 0.7 degrees Celsius in the near future, increasing to about 2.1 degrees Celsius in the far future. The number of hot days is projected to increase and the number of cold nights is projected to decrease. (Source: Central West and Orana – Climate change snapshot, Office of Environment & Heritage, 2014.)



CASE STUDY

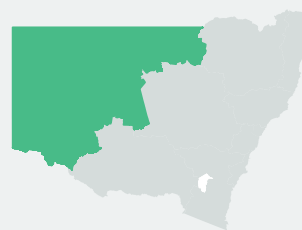


Blayney 2020 Master Plan
**Rethinking and collaborating:
using a broad planning
approach to drive regional
growth and activity**

Further information on this case study is available on the website.

Image: Place Design Group.

FAR WEST REGION



KEY INFORMATION



POPULATION 2016²	47,500
POPULATION 2036² (PROJECTION)	42,850
URBAN CONCENTRATION³	80%
CLIMATE ZONES⁴	Hot dry summer, cool winter
GROSS REGIONAL PRODUCT (GRP) 2016⁵	\$3.1 billion
MAIN INDUSTRIES (BY GRP) 2016⁵	Mining Agriculture, forestry, and fishing Rental, hiring, and real estate services Construction
MAIN INDUSTRIES (BY EMPLOYMENT) 2016⁵	Agriculture, forestry, and fishing Healthcare and social assistance Mining Education and training
COUNCILS	Balranald Bourke Brewarrina Broken Hill Central Darling Cobar Walgett Wentworth Unincorporated Area
ABORIGINAL CUSTODIANS OF THIS COUNTRY¹	Bandjigalia Barindji Barkindji Barranbinja Barundji Dadi Dadi Danggali Gunu Kamilaroi Karenggapa Kureinji Latje Latje Madi Madi Malyangaba Muruwari Ngemba Wadilgali Wailwan Wandjiwalgu Wiljali Wiradjuri Wongaibon Yitha Yitha

REGIONAL CONTEXT

We acknowledge that the people of Bandjigalia, Barindji, Barkindji, Barranbinja, Barundji, Dadi Dadi, Danggali, Gunu, Kamilaroi, Karenggapa, Kureinji, Latje Latje, Madi Madi, Malyangaba, Muruwari, Ngemba, Wadilgali, Wailwan, Wandjiwalgu, Wiljali, Wiradjuri, Wongaibon, and Yitha Yitha countries are the Traditional Custodians of the land which sits within this region.

The Far West is the largest region in NSW. It is characterised by a hot, semi-arid climate and desert landscapes, but also contains rich farmlands, rangelands, and internationally significant wetlands. Since the 1820s, agriculture and mining has shaped the location and size of towns. This is particularly evident in the case of Broken Hill, which in 1911 was the largest settlement in NSW beyond Sydney, due to local mining activity.





Wilcannia Health Service
Supporting long-term wellbeing by involving the community in the design and development of their healthcare centre

Further information on this case study is available on the website.

Image: Brett Boardman.

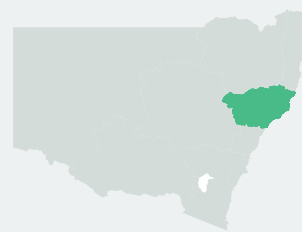
The region’s main local settlements are small and dispersed, providing services to their surrounding areas. Intense heat, particularly in summer, affects liveability, and can limit options for outdoor recreation. Social connectivity is also challenged by the vast distances between towns. The southern part of the region is closer to Adelaide than to Sydney, and towns such as Wentworth and Balranald have strong cross-border relationships with settlements in Victoria.

The region is home to some of Australia’s most significant Indigenous cultural heritage. Cultural heritage, “outback” landscapes, the Barwon–Darling river system, World Heritage wetlands, and remote towns which reflect the history of settlement – all combine to give the region a character which is distinct from other parts of NSW. The region’s population is projected to remain relatively stable or in some locations decline, however, high levels of transient workers and tourists see many populations fluctuate throughout the year. Good urban design provides the opportunity to celebrate the unique landscape, character, and heritage of centres, towns, and villages across the Far West and leverage new economic opportunities to support the highly resilient and self-reliant communities across the region.



The region is projected to continue to warm during the near future (2020–39) and far future (2060–79), compared to recent years. The warming is projected to be on average about 0.7 degrees Celsius in the near future, increasing to about 2.1 degrees Celsius in the far future. The number of high temperature days is projected to increase, with fewer potential frost risk nights anticipated. (Source: Far West – Climate change snapshot, Office of Environment & Heritage, 2014.)

HUNTER REGION



KEY INFORMATION



POPULATION 2016²	732,400
POPULATION 2036² (PROJECTION)	862,250
URBAN CONCENTRATION³	90%
CLIMATE ZONES⁴	– Warm temperate – Mild temperate
GROSS REGIONAL PRODUCT (GRP) 2016⁵	\$48.4 billion
MAIN INDUSTRIES (BY GRP) 2016⁵	Manufacturing Construction Mining Retail, hiring, and real estate services
MAIN INDUSTRIES (BY EMPLOYMENT) 2016⁵	Healthcare and social assistance Retail trade Construction Education and training
COUNCILS	Cessnock Muswellbrook Dungog Newcastle Lake Macquarie Port Stephens Maitland Singleton MidCoast Upper Hunter
ABORIGINAL CUSTODIANS OF THIS COUNTRY¹	Awabakal Biripi Worimi Geawegal Wonnarua

REGIONAL CONTEXT

We acknowledge that the people of Awabakal, Worimi, Wonnarua, Biripi, and Geawegal countries are the Traditional Custodians of the land which sits within this region.

The Hunter is located within the fast-growing corridor which extends from the northern edge of Sydney to Newcastle. The region’s population and economic activity is focused on the Greater Newcastle metropolitan area, with Newcastle city centre at its heart. A network of coastal towns and villages across the region experience a warm temperate climate, while inland centres experience a cooler climate which is mild temperate.

European development of the region extended inland in the 1800s from the coastal colonial base of Newcastle, towards pastoral land in the Hunter Valley – and accelerated through the gold rushes of the 1850s, and coal mining operations. Inland settlements are characterised by town centres containing historic buildings which contribute to a local sense of character. Growth pressures in some of these towns have increased since the opening of the Hunter Expressway, and coastal settlements experience seasonal population variations related to tourism in summer months.



Initiatives such as the revitalisation of Maitland's High Street, and the opening of a university campus in Newcastle City Centre, have helped attract people to the region's town centres and make them a greater focus for activity. A wide range of tourism experiences also draws people to the region – including vineyards, coastlines, environmental and cultural experiences, and motor-racing.

The region contains high-value, protected natural environments including the Port Stephens – Great Lakes Marine Park and parts of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. A national biodiversity corridor connecting Victoria to Queensland also extends through the region. These areas add to the Hunter's amenity, and combine with a range of built environments to give the region its character. Good urban design will help guide the growth, renewal, and revitalisation of Greater Newcastle and other cities and centres throughout the Hunter Region, while ensuring their sense of identity and community values are protected.

The region is projected to continue to warm during the near future (2020–39) and far future (2060–79), compared to recent years. The warming is projected to be on average about 0.7 degrees Celsius in the near future, increasing to about 2 degrees Celsius in the far future. The number of high temperature days is projected to increase in parts of the region, with fewer potential frost risk nights anticipated. (Source: Hunter – Climate change snapshot, Office of Environment & Heritage, 2014.)



CASE STUDY

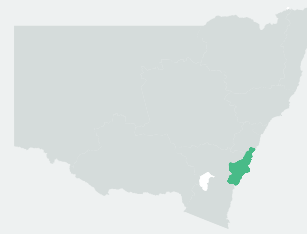


Maitland Levee Reconnecting the town with the river

Further information on this case study is available on the website.

Image: Simon Wood.

ILLAWARRA–SHOALHAVEN REGION



KEY INFORMATION



POPULATION 2016²	404,650
POPULATION 2036² (PROJECTION)	471,700
URBAN CONCENTRATION³	96%
CLIMATE ZONES⁴	– Warm temperate – Mild temperate
GROSS REGIONAL PRODUCT (GRP) 2016⁵	\$22.8 billion
MAIN INDUSTRIES (BY GRP) 2016⁵	Construction Manufacturing Retail, hiring, and real estate services Healthcare and social assistance
MAIN INDUSTRIES (BY EMPLOYMENT) 2016⁵	Healthcare and social assistance Retail trade Education and training Construction
COUNCILS	Kiama Shellharbour Shoalhaven Wollongong
ABORIGINAL CUSTODIANS OF THIS COUNTRY¹	Dharawal Yuin Dharug

REGIONAL CONTEXT

We acknowledge that the people of Dharawal, Yuin, and Dharug countries are the Traditional Custodians of the land which sits within this region.

The geography and landscape qualities of the Illawarra–Shoalhaven Region have strongly influenced its pattern of settlement. Development is focused in areas between the coastline and a corridor of land with high environmental values including the Illawarra Escarpment, drinking-water catchment areas, national parks and State forests. The northern part of the region has a warm temperate climate, with a mild temperate climate in the south.

Wollongong and Port Kembla were established as urban areas in the 1830s, and became a hub of industry, with local coal mining activity attracting heavy industry. Connections with Sydney were strengthened from 1885, with the opening of the railway line. Port Kembla was established as a port in the 1890s and is now used for general cargo as well as exporting coal.

The urban character of the region is diverse. Central Wollongong is characterised by higher density development, with surrounding suburban neighbourhoods having opportunities for increased integration of land use and transport around train stations. Nowra is a major regional centre on the Shoalhaven River. Other large centres such as Shellharbour, Kiama, and Ulladulla are characterised by their respective relationships with the coast, and inland centres, such as Berry and Milton, are characterised by main streets lined with historic buildings. Good planning and urban design practices will support the future prosperity of Wollongong and the surrounding network of centres while ensuring the protection of great lifestyles and connections with stunning landscapes and biodiversity.

The region is projected to continue to warm in the near future (2020–39) and far future (2060–79), compared to recent years. The warming is projected to be on average about 0.6 degrees Celsius in the near future, increasing to about 1.9 degrees Celsius in the far future. The number of hot days is projected to increase, with fewer potential frost risk days anticipated in parts of the region. (Source: Illawarra – Climate change snapshot, Office of Environment and Heritage, 2014.)



CASE STUDY



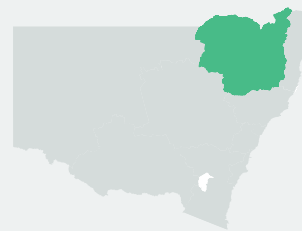
**Wonderwalls Project,
Wollongong**

**Transforming a regional city:
recognising the potential of
a street art festival to drive
lasting change**

Further information on this case study is available on the website.

Image: Luke Shirlaw.

NEW ENGLAND NORTH WEST REGION



KEY INFORMATION



POPULATION 2016²	188,350														
POPULATION 2036² (PROJECTION)	202,150														
URBAN CONCENTRATION³	68%														
CLIMATE ZONES⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Hot dry summer, cool winter – Mild temperate – Cool temperate 														
GROSS REGIONAL PRODUCT (GRP) 2016⁵	\$12.0 billion														
MAIN INDUSTRIES (BY GRP) 2016⁵	Agriculture, forestry, and fishing Manufacturing Construction Rental, hiring, and real estate services														
MAIN INDUSTRIES (BY EMPLOYMENT) 2016⁵	Agriculture, forestry, and fishing Healthcare and social assistance Education and training Retail trade														
COUNCILS	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Armidale Regional</td> <td>Narrabri</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Glen Innes Severn</td> <td>Tamworth</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gunnedah</td> <td>Regional</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gwydir</td> <td>Tenterfield</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Inverell</td> <td>Uralla</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Liverpool Plains</td> <td>Walcha</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Moree Plains</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Armidale Regional	Narrabri	Glen Innes Severn	Tamworth	Gunnedah	Regional	Gwydir	Tenterfield	Inverell	Uralla	Liverpool Plains	Walcha	Moree Plains	
Armidale Regional	Narrabri														
Glen Innes Severn	Tamworth														
Gunnedah	Regional														
Gwydir	Tenterfield														
Inverell	Uralla														
Liverpool Plains	Walcha														
Moree Plains															
ABORIGINAL CUSTODIANS OF THIS COUNTRY¹	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Anaiwan</td> <td>Kamilaroi</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Banbai</td> <td>Kwaibul</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bundjalung</td> <td>Ngoorabal</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Githabul</td> <td>Dunghutti</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gumbayngirr</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Anaiwan	Kamilaroi	Banbai	Kwaibul	Bundjalung	Ngoorabal	Githabul	Dunghutti	Gumbayngirr					
Anaiwan	Kamilaroi														
Banbai	Kwaibul														
Bundjalung	Ngoorabal														
Githabul	Dunghutti														
Gumbayngirr															

REGIONAL CONTEXT

We acknowledge that the people of Anaiwan, Banbai, Bundjalung, Githabul, Gumbayngirr, Kamilaroi, Kwaibul, Ngoorabal, and Dunghutti countries are the Traditional Custodians of the land which sits within this region.

The New England North West Region is characterised by its diversity of landscapes and climates. The eastern part of the region, which is dominated by the Great Dividing Range, contains elevated tablelands with a cool temperate climate and includes World Heritage-listed rainforests such as the Oxley Wild Rivers National Park near Armidale. The western part of the region includes slopes and plains which experience a hot, dry summer and cool winter and includes many rich environmental assets, including the internationally listed Gwydir Wetlands near Moree.

The region's cities and smaller centres are a focus for population and economic growth. In 2016, the region's seven largest centres of Armidale, Glenn Innes, Gunnedah, Inverell, Moree, Narrabri, and Tamworth accommodated 59% of the region's population.



Historically, the region's European settlements grew mainly from the development of cattle and sheep grazing, and mining. By the 1880s, railway lines connected the major regional centres, and encouraged economic and population growth. Historic buildings in town centres continue to provide a strong visual connection to European settlement history.

In the years ahead, the highest rates of population growth are projected for Tamworth and Armidale and the supporting network of strategic centres, while other smaller towns and villages are likely to remain relatively stable or in some cases decline. The application of good urban design practices will support the growth and development of the regional cities, while also helping to enhance the local character and improve place making for all urban areas across the region.

The region is projected to continue to warm during the near future (2020–39) and far future (2060–79), compared to recent years. The warming is projected to be on average about 0.7 degrees Celsius in the near future, increasing to about 2.2 degrees Celsius in the far future. The number of high temperature days is projected to increase, with fewer potential frost risk nights anticipated. (Source: New England North West – Climate change snapshot, Office of Environment & Heritage, 2014.)



CASE STUDY



Fitzroy Street and Bicentennial Park, Tamworth
Staging a pop-up festival to engage the community

Further information on this case study is available on the website.

Image: Genevieve Harrison.

NORTH COAST REGION



KEY INFORMATION



POPULATION 2016²	519,300
POPULATION 2036² (PROJECTION)	595,450
URBAN CONCENTRATION³	79%
CLIMATE ZONES⁴	– Warm humid summer, mild winter – Warm temperate
GROSS REGIONAL PRODUCT (GRP) 2016⁵	\$31.2 billion
MAIN INDUSTRIES (BY GRP) 2016⁵	Construction Manufacturing Rental, hiring, and real estate services Healthcare and social assistance
MAIN INDUSTRIES (BY EMPLOYMENT) 2016⁵	Healthcare and social assistance Retail trade Education and training Accommodation and food services
COUNCILS	Ballina Bellingen Byron Clarence Valley Coffs Harbour Kempsey Kyogle Lismore Nambucca Port Macquarie– Hastings Richmond Valley Tweed
ABORIGINAL CUSTODIANS OF THIS COUNTRY¹	Bundjalung Gumbaynggirr Yaegl Dunghutti Biripi

REGIONAL CONTEXT

We acknowledge that the people of Bundjalung, Gumbaynggirr, Yaegl, Dunghutti, and Biripi countries are the Traditional Custodians of the land which sits within this region.

The North Coast Region’s subtropical climate with warm, humid summers and mild winters, has resulted in a way of life distinctly different from the rest of regional NSW. Design which encourages year-round outdoor living can respond to this benign climate and reduce the need for artificial heating and cooling. The region contains the most biologically diverse natural environment in the State, characterised by an extensive network of national parks which contain 15 World Heritage-listed areas, and a vast collection of endemic plants and animals.

Combined with the natural beauty of coastal landscapes and hinterland areas, the climate has contributed to the region experiencing strong growth in population and tourism. This is placing pressure on existing infrastructure in the northern part of the region, with growth pressures magnified due to increased connectivity with south-east Queensland. The region’s broad range of housing types has also made it an attractive place to live, but in some locations urban development has placed pressure on farmland. Providing appropriate housing is a particular challenge for the North Coast Region.





Bay Street, Byron Bay

Expanding the options for retail and housing in a coastal town

Further information on this case study is available on the website.

Image: Troppo Architects.

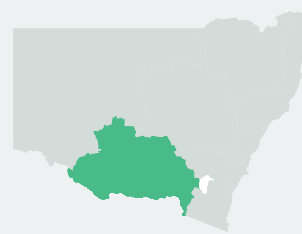
Historically, European settlement of the region increased from the 1820s, with development extending southwards from Brisbane, and northwards from Kempsey. Inland towns were established in response to grazing, farming, and forestry. The region's climate encouraged buildings that were elevated and made of lightweight materials. Over time, this style of architecture has become less pronounced in the region's cities and strategic centres – but is still prominent in the smaller coastal and hinterland centres. Subtropical design elements continue to feature in some new development.

Over three-quarters of future population growth is projected to occur in the Port Macquarie – Hastings, Coffs Harbour, Lismore and Tweed local government areas, with other areas projected to experience modest population growth. Additionally, ongoing improvements to the Pacific Highway, which traverses the region, will drive economic growth and bring communities closer together. Creating a stronger economic base can help provide sustainable employment opportunities. Good urban design will help guide the growth and development of the regional cities and enhance the distinctive and diverse character of communities across the North Coast.

The region is projected to continue to warm in the near future (2020–39) and far future (2060–79), compared to recent years. The warming is projected to be on average about 0.7 degrees Celsius in the near future, increasing to about 2 degrees Celsius in the far future. The number of high temperature days is projected to increase, while a reduction is anticipated in instances of potential frost risk. (Source: North Coast – Climate change snapshot, Office of Environment and Health, 2014.)



RIVERINA MURRAY REGION



KEY INFORMATION



POPULATION 2016²	273,150																				
POPULATION 2036² (PROJECTION)	284,300																				
URBAN CONCENTRATION⁵	80%																				
CLIMATE ZONES⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Hot dry summer, cool winter – Mild temperate – Cool temperate – Alpine 																				
GROSS REGIONAL PRODUCT (GRP) 2016⁵	\$18.9 billion																				
MAIN INDUSTRIES (BY GRP) 2016⁵	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manufacturing Construction Agriculture, forestry, and fishing Rental, hiring, and real estate services 																				
MAIN INDUSTRIES (BY EMPLOYMENT) 2016⁵	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthcare and social assistance Agriculture, forestry, and fishing Retail trade Manufacturing 																				
COUNCILS	<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Albury</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Hay</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Berrigan</td> <td>Junee</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bland</td> <td>Leeton</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Carrathool</td> <td>Lockhart</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Coolamon</td> <td>Murray River</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cootamundra–Gundagai</td> <td>Murrumbidgee</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Edward River</td> <td>Narrandera</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Federation</td> <td>Snowy Valleys</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Greater Hume</td> <td>Temora</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Griffith</td> <td>Wagga Wagga</td> </tr> </table>	Albury	Hay	Berrigan	Junee	Bland	Leeton	Carrathool	Lockhart	Coolamon	Murray River	Cootamundra–Gundagai	Murrumbidgee	Edward River	Narrandera	Federation	Snowy Valleys	Greater Hume	Temora	Griffith	Wagga Wagga
Albury	Hay																				
Berrigan	Junee																				
Bland	Leeton																				
Carrathool	Lockhart																				
Coolamon	Murray River																				
Cootamundra–Gundagai	Murrumbidgee																				
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Griffith	Wagga Wagga																				
ABORIGINAL CUSTODIANS OF THIS COUNTRY¹	<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Yorta Yorta</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Muthi Muthi</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wiradjuri</td> <td>Latji Latji</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wamba Wamba</td> <td>Barkindji</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Barapa Barapa</td> <td>Nyampa</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wadi Wadi</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Yorta Yorta	Muthi Muthi	Wiradjuri	Latji Latji	Wamba Wamba	Barkindji	Barapa Barapa	Nyampa	Wadi Wadi											
Yorta Yorta	Muthi Muthi																				
Wiradjuri	Latji Latji																				
Wamba Wamba	Barkindji																				
Barapa Barapa	Nyampa																				
Wadi Wadi																					

REGIONAL CONTEXT

We acknowledge that the people of Yorta Yorta, Wiradjuri, Wamba Wamba, Barapa Barapa, Wadi Wadi, Muthi Muthi, Latji Latji, Barkindji, and Nyampa countries are the Traditional Custodians of the land which sits within this region.

From east to west, the climate and geography of the Riverina Murray Region varies greatly – from the green, rolling hills around Tumbarumba with its cool temperate climate, to the flat, wide plains around Hay with its hot, dry summers. Expansive irrigation areas, including those associated with the Murray and Murrumbidgee rivers, also result in areas with highly regulated natural environments, to provide fertile conditions for agriculture – and support the region’s title as the “food bowl” of Australia.



The distribution of regional cities and urban centres across the region helps to facilitate access to essential services. Settlements along the Murray River have strong relationships with centres in Victoria – with the local character of these places influenced by their cross-border relationships. This extends to the sharing of infrastructure and resources, and is particularly evident in Albury’s relationship with Wodonga. The amenity of the Murray River creates pressure for urban development adjacent to or near the waterway. Relative proximity to Melbourne, including the area around Moama on the Victorian border, also adds to demand for holiday and weekender accommodation.

Like other parts of regional NSW, the character of places is influenced by the timing of, and reason for, settlement. European settlement of Hay related to the location at which a popular stock route crossed the Murray River. The town of West Wyalong, in the north of the region, was developed in the 1890s following the local discovery of gold. Griffith and Leeton display a particularly distinctive character, having been established by the NSW Government as part of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area, and influenced by Walter Burley Griffin. Good urban design will help protect and enhance the distinctive character and qualities of settlements across the region, while also helping to guide development of good built environments in the growing regional cities.

The region is projected to continue to warm during the near future (2020–39) and far future (2060–79), compared to recent years. The warming is projected to be on average about 0.6 degrees Celsius in the near future, increasing to about 1.9 degrees Celsius in the far future. The number of high temperature days is projected to increase, with fewer potential frost risk nights anticipated. (Source: Murray Murrumbidgee – Climate change snapshot, Office of Environment & Heritage, 2014.)



CASE STUDY



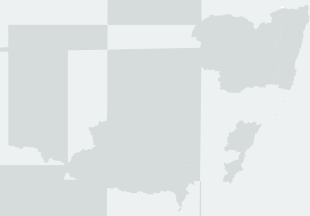
Murray River Experience
Master Plan, Albury

**Building a stronger connection
between the town and the river
through community involvement**

Further information on this case study is available on the website.

Images: (left) Albury City Council;
(right) Peter Charlesworth.

SOUTH EAST AND TABLELANDS REGION



economic development associated with holiday and tourism development in the southern, coastal parts of the region, particularly around Batemans Bay, and further towards Merimbula. The historic town of Braidwood also performs a tourism function, as a mid-way point between Canberra and the South Coast.

The north-east part of the region is subject to development pressure associated with its proximity to Western Sydney with associated demand for housing development in the Southern Highlands and Goulburn. Proximity to the Western Sydney Airport may add to this effect, with potential implications for economic development. The interface between residential and rural land uses is a particular challenge for this region. Very hot summers and very cold winters in parts of the region require buildings to deal with a broad range of temperatures.

The era in which the development of different settlements took place has also affected their local character – with buildings in the centre of Bowral and Young, for example, displaying different architectural qualities to those in the more recently developed centres of Jindabyne and Queanbeyan. Urban design can help guide the growth and development of new urban areas, while retaining and enhancing shared community values.

The region is projected to continue to warm in the near future (2020–39) and far future (2060–79), compared to recent years. The warming is projected to be on average about 0.6 degrees Celsius in the near future, increasing to about 2 degrees Celsius in the far future. More hot days are projected, and fewer cold nights. (Source: South East and Tablelands – Climate change snapshot, Office of Environment & Heritage, 2014.)



CASE STUDY



High Street Bowral **Revitalising a historical town centre with a contemporary arcade**

Further information on this case study is available on the website.

Image: Gina Umoren.

How to implement

The following table provides an overview of actions which councils and other organisations should consider in the implementation of the guide.

IMPLEMENTATION OPPORTUNITIES	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS
Build capacity, provide education, and raise awareness about urban design within organisations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="711 495 1023 521">1 Masterclass program <li data-bbox="711 546 1238 696">2 Provide forums to discuss and promote urban design within the regions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="772 607 979 633">— webinar series <li data-bbox="772 636 1023 663">— conference events <li data-bbox="772 665 979 692">— advisory notes <li data-bbox="711 719 1257 808">3 Promote the guide to secondary, tertiary, professional and industry education and training providers
Establish design champions (including urban designers, architects, and landscape architects)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="711 831 1246 1043">4 Promote an expanded network of regional architects and urban designers, design advisors, and champions in local authorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="772 954 1238 1010">— masterclass addressing key advisory notes <li data-bbox="772 1012 1209 1043">— “road show” promotional program
Communicate the quality of projects through monitoring and evaluation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="711 1066 1246 1167">5 Collect, collate, and share best practice case studies of projects across diverse conditions and settings in regional NSW <li data-bbox="711 1178 1246 1234">6 Establish design review panels to review projects in their early design stages
Foster and develop processes through the whole life cycle of projects which will assist in achieving good outcomes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="711 1256 1230 1379">7 Collaborative discussion forums with project delivery agencies and councils: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="772 1312 1075 1339">— lessons-learnt sessions <li data-bbox="772 1341 1174 1373">— document and share outcomes
Support improvements to procurement of design in regional built environment projects	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="711 1402 1270 1525">8 Workshops to explore ways to improve procurement, including support for local architects, landscape architects, and urban designers in procuring regional projects
Ensure ongoing engagement with Traditional Custodians in the co-design of future plans for the region	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="711 1547 1238 1603">9 Meetings and workshops to discuss the needs for areas of Country.
Support interagency relationships between councils, the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Transport for NSW, Land and Housing Corporation, and others to promote shared responsibility in regional initiatives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="711 1659 1222 1749">10 Workshops with key agencies to identify projects and programs where collaborations can occur
Support strategic planning and its processes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="711 1861 1238 1951">11 Integrate the concepts of the guide into councils strategic planning programs, such as the LSPS
Continue to support the implementation of the regional plans	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="711 1973 1270 2063">12 Workshops with regional teams to discuss issues relevant to the regional plans and the strategies in the guide.



5.

GLOSSARY

A		Design process	A series of actions or steps taken to achieve a particular end. Design processes are not linear; they are iterative, collaborative, and circular, where feedback and ideas are intertwined and continual. Design processes help provide solutions to complex problems where many inputs and concerns are needing to be resolved.
Adaptable	A building, place, or space that is able to adjust to new conditions, or to be modified for a new purpose.	Design review	A process that offers independent, impartial advice on the design of buildings, infrastructure, landscapes, and public spaces. It can be a formal or informal process. For large projects, it is best done by panels comprising leading, cross-disciplinary built environment experts providing independent early assessment of proposals. Design review for a smaller, simpler project might be internal consultation with colleagues. GANSW manages a formal design review process: the NSW State Design Review Panel.
Adding value	Leveraging and building on the existing characteristics and qualities of a building, place, or space to increase social, environmental, and economic benefits to the community.	Design review panel	A panel comprising a diverse group of people with expertise in design and the built environment. A design review panel offers independent, impartial advice on a design proposal, to achieve the best built outcome for stakeholders and the community.
Amenity	A positive element or elements that contribute to the overall character or enjoyment of an area. For example, open land, trees, historic buildings and the interrelationship between them, or less tangible factors such as tranquillity.	Design thinking	Creative strategies designers use in the process of designing.
Attractive	A building, place, or space that is aesthetically pleasing, or appealing.	Design quality	The tactile, physical attributes related to the material finishes and fixtures of the built environment. Design quality also relates to less tangible attributes regarding sense of place and belonging, and Aboriginal culture. Design quality needs to be valued and maintained over time.
B		Development	An initiating process. It implements methods and actions required in the improvement of cities, precincts, buildings, places, or spaces with a socio-economic impact.
Better Placed	Integrated design policy for the built environment of NSW, published by GANSW (2017) – refer to GANSW website.	Discipline	A particular field of knowledge or speciality, such as design, development, and planning.
Bookend	Positioned at the end or on either side of something	Diverse	A building, place, or space that embraces a richness in use, character, and qualities.
Built environment	The constructed environment, understood as distinct from the natural environment. It includes all aspects of our surroundings made by people. The built environment includes cities and towns, neighbourhoods, parks, roads, buildings, infrastructure, and utilities like water and electricity.	Division	Refers to the way private land is subdivided or amalgamated and configured to form lots. It also includes the use, mix, and site coverage of private land.
Built form	The regulatory and statutory frameworks that describe the three-dimensional articulation of building type, function, and use. These frameworks provide the limits within which architectural design operates. The limits are related to envelope, solar planes, setbacks, height, mass, and interface.	Durable	A building, place, or space that is built to be able to withstand wear and pressure for a long period of time.
C		E	
Comfortable	A building, place, or space that provides physical and emotional ease and wellbeing for its people.	Efficient	A building, place, or space that is constructed and functions with minimal wasted effort.
Connected	A building, place, or space that establishes links with its surrounds, allowing visitors and residents to move about freely and sustainably.	End user	Different users can include residents, workers, visitors, students, families, individuals, couples, and the elderly.
Contextual	A building, place, or space that responds to the context in which it is designed.	Engaging	A building, place, or space that draws people in with features that arouse interest.
Context	The physical, social, cultural, economic, environmental, and geographic circumstances that form the setting for a place or building.	Engagement	A consultation process, for example, community engagement whereby a particular group is engaged to gather their input in relation to a particular proposal, challenge, or outcome.
Country	Country includes land, waters, and sky. It can be tangible or intangible aspects, knowledge and cultural practices, belonging and identity, wellbeing and relationships. People are part of Country.		
D			
Design	Both a process and an outcome – a way of thinking and a result of making. For more information see Better Placed.		

Equitable	A built environment that is fair and accessible for all citizens.
Evaluation	Design evaluation happens at several stages throughout the design process – from early design concepts through to highly resolved proposals that are close to final review. It relies on expert advice that responds to established criteria or objectives.
F	
Fit for purpose	A building, place, or space that works according to its intended use.
Form	The overall shape and volume and the arrangement of the parts of a building. The expression or articulation of a built outcome considering building type, function, and use. The architectural expression depends on materials, detailing, colour, and texture.
Functional	A building, place, or space that is designed to be practical and purposeful.
G	
Good design	A phrase that encapsulates the aspirations of Better Placed including its vision for NSW, definition of good process, and outline of objectives for the built environment. Good design creates usable, user-friendly, enjoyable, and attractive places and spaces, which continue to provide value and benefits to people, the place, and the natural environment over extended periods. Good design brings social, environmental, and economic benefits, and builds on these benefits over time – continually adding value. See Better Placed for more information.
Governance	The overarching model or framework of rules and practices that govern a particular project, company, or group of people who are working together.
Green infrastructure	The network of green spaces and water systems that deliver multiple environmental, economic, and social values and benefits to urban communities. This network includes parks and reserves, backyards and gardens, waterways and wetlands, streets and transport corridors, pathways and greenways, squares and plazas, roof gardens and living walls, sports fields and cemeteries. Green infrastructure is the web of interrelated natural systems that underpin and are integrated into our urban fabric.
Green space	An area of grass, trees, and other vegetation set apart for recreational or aesthetic purposes in an urban environment.
H	
Healthy	A building, place, or space that promotes positive social, emotional, mental and physical health for its people.
Housing type	Includes examples such as detached houses, manor homes, town houses, duplexes, apartments and shop-top housing.

I	
Inclusive	A building, place, or space that embraces the community and individuals who use it.
Integrated	A built environment that links communities and functions and activities within a cohesive place.
Interface	A point where two systems, subjects, elements, or organisations meet and interact.
Inviting	A building, place, or space that is welcoming to visitors, community, and individuals.
L	
Layout	The way public buildings, movement networks, infrastructure, and open spaces are placed in relation to each other.
Liveable	A built environment which supports and responds to people's patterns of living, and is suitable and appropriate for habitation, promoting enjoyment, wellbeing, safety, and prosperity.
Local	A building, place, or space that relates to an area or neighbourhood.
Local character	The distinctive features or attributes specific to a neighbourhood, providing a sense of place and identity.
M	
Manor home	A two-storey building that contains three or four dwellings under the one roof, designed to appear as an oversized double-storey house from the street.
Massing	The overall form of a building including its overall height and bulk.
Master plan	A framework document showing how development will occur in a given place and including building parameters like height, density, shadowing, and environmental concerns. It is a visual document that details a clear strategy or plan for the physical transformation of a place, supported by financial, economic, and social policy documents which outline delivery mechanisms and implementation.
O	
Of its place	A building, place, or space that relates to its surrounds.
Open space	Land that has no buildings or other built structures, including green space.
Outcome	The result of a process, generally having a final product.
P	
Passive design	Design that takes advantage of the climate to maintain a comfortable temperature range for the occupants or users of a building or space.
Place	A social and a physical concept – a physical setting, point, or area in space conceived and designated by people and communities. In this sense, place can describe different scales of the built environment – for example, a town is a place and a building can be a place.

Precinct	A designated area, within real or perceived boundaries, of a specific building, place, or space. A precinct can be of various scales and often relates to a study area of a particular location.	Spatial framework	A design and research document that is produced to provide background understanding and analysis for a particular area or place. It is completed before traditional design stages or master plan phases of a project. The framework follows a process of analysis, data collection, and reporting in order to propose a delivery strategy and vision for the area being analysed.
Program	A schedule of uses and functions specific to a building, place, or space, which is outlined in the briefing stage of a project.	Spatial geography	The distribution or placement of people, assets, and built outcomes. It is the broadest scale applying to the social context, natural environment, and economic framing that combine as the competing forces impacting a precinct, city, site, or building.
Public space	The collective, communal part of urban areas, with shared access for all. It is the space of movement, recreation, gathering, events, contemplation, and relaxation. Public space is made of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> —public domain: land owned and controlled by the local, State, or Federal government —public realm: any publicly owned streets, pathways, parks, open space and any public or civic buildings. 	Spatial practice	The action of understanding, responding, and thinking spatially across interrelated disciplines and scales and for multiple users with varying needs and aspirations. Urban design brings together multiple disciplines, scales, and users in a dynamic spatial practice.
Q			
Quality	The standard of something, measured comparatively against things of a similar kind. “Quality” can also describe something that is high grade, and of superior excellence.	Strategy	A plan of action designed to achieve an aim, vision, or outcome.
R			
Resilient	A building, place, or space that can withstand or recover from difficult conditions.	Strategic framework	A statement of aims and objectives for the physical regeneration of large areas of land or parts of the urban area. It may consider a much wider area than a master plan. It functions as the brief for the spatial layout. It is based on analysis of baseline data and may incorporate potential implementation processes.
Responsive	Buildings, places and spaces that react positively to place and local character and context.	Strategic urban design	The framing and solving of problems at a strategic level, intended to influence decision-making across design, planning, development, and government. It embeds good design and establishes the frameworks for better built outcomes.
S			
Safe	A building, place, or space that protects its people from harm or risk of harm.	Sustainable	Relates to the endurance of systems, buildings, spaces, and processes – their ability to be maintained at a certain rate or level, which contributes positively to environmental, economic, and social outcomes.
Scale	The relative size or extent of something – scale is a device used to quantify objects in a sequence by size; for example a city scale, or a building scale. In architecture, scale is also used to describe a ratio of size in a map, model, drawing, or plan.	T	
Scenario	A range of possible configurations of spaces and places based on an understanding of the needs of a project location. Scenarios present an understanding of the situation, rather than trying to predict the future.	Topography	The spatial configuration of the natural and artificial physical features of an area.
Shop-top housing	One or more dwellings located above ground-floor retail premises or business premises.	Typology	The comparative study of physical or other characteristics of the built environment and their classification into distinct types.
Social infrastructure	Social infrastructure can be broadly defined as the construction and maintenance of facilities that support social services. Types of social infrastructure include healthcare (hospitals), education (schools and universities), public facilities (community housing and prisons) and transportation (railways and roads).	U	
Social value	Social value relates to how scarce resources are allocated and used for social, economic, and environmental wellbeing, and collective benefit – when they are of value to people in society. Social value can be broadened from considerations of sustainable procurement into design quality in built outcomes and their potential impact.	Urban design (traditional)	An interdisciplinary practice that draws together elements of many built environment professions, including landscape architecture, urban planning, architecture, civil and municipal engineering.
V			
		Value (of design)	A measure of what design is worth. Value is not merely related to economics, but includes an understanding of social and environmental factors as components contributing to the value of good design.

6.

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Appendix: Regional profiles

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- 2017 **Better Placed: An integrated design policy for the built environment of NSW**
- 2017 **Start with the Place**
- 2018 **Evaluating Good Design**
- 2018 **Implementing Good Process**
- 2018 **Design Guide for Heritage: Implementing the Better Placed policy for heritage buildings, sites, and precincts**
- 2020 **Greener Places: An urban green infrastructure design framework for New South Wales**
- 2020 **Greener Places Design Guide**

GANSW advisory notes

GANSW advisory notes are part of the Better Methods series of documents that provide specific advice on ways to improve design processes; they include the following detailed urban design advice:

- Overview: Creating better places
- How to develop a design brief
- How to select consultants
- Collaboration
- Place Analysis
- When to get design advice
- Good design and design excellence in the planning system
- Overview: master planning process
- Strategic visioning
- Strategic frameworks
- Urban design frameworks
- Master plans
- Implementation plans
- Green infrastructure spatial framework
- NSW SDRP pilot program: Guidelines for project teams

For a complete list of advisory notes, visit governmentarchitect.nsw.gov.au

NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment publications

Regional plans

- 2016 Central Coast Regional Plan 2036
2017 Central West and Orana Regional Plan 2036
2017 Far West Regional Plan 2036
2017 Hunter Regional Plan 2036
2015 Illawarra–Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2036
2017 New England North West Regional Plan 2036
2017 North Coast Regional Plan 2036
2017 Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2036
2017 South East and Tablelands Regional Plan 2036

2015 **State Environmental Planning Policy No 65 – Design Quality of Residential Apartment Development**

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