

# Coffs Harbour

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Regional City  
Action Plan

**2036**



# Acknowledgement

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land, the Gumbaynggirr, and pays respect to Elders past, present and future. This Plan acknowledges a strong belief amongst Aboriginal people that if we care for country, it will care for us. This is supported by the knowledge that the health of a people and their community is reliant on a strong physical and emotional connection to place.

Conserving Aboriginal heritage and respecting the Aboriginal community's right to determine how it is identified and managed, will preserve some of the world's longest standing spiritual, historical, social and educational values.

## **Coffs Harbour Regional City Action Plan 2036**

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Cover image: *Coffs Harbour Jetty, courtesy of Destination NSW.*  
Left: *Credit Nikita Ridgeway*

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# A Regional City Action Plan for Coffs Harbour

Coffs Harbour is poised for big things. It is transforming from its current role as an important coastal centre into a true Regional City.

The North Coast Regional Plan identified Coffs Harbour as one of four North Coast Regional Cities.

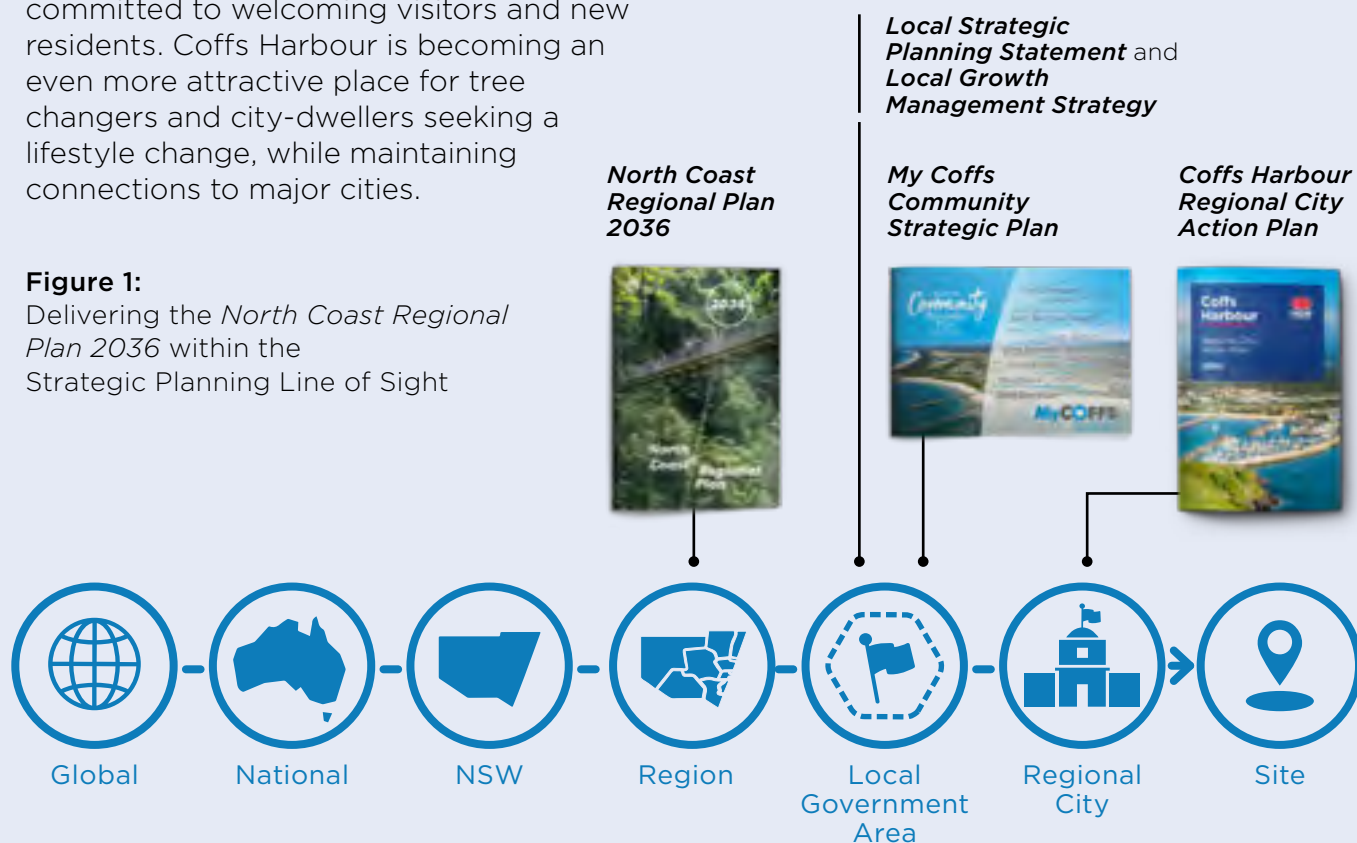
This first ever Regional City Action Plan for Coffs Harbour supports the Vision of the *North Coast Regional Plan*, by capitalising on the opportunities that arise from growth, while maintaining the special appeal of Coffs Harbour through its remarkable environments and attractive communities.

Coffs Harbour has one of the highest and fastest growing levels of cultural diversity in regional NSW, with a community committed to welcoming visitors and new residents. Coffs Harbour is becoming an even more attractive place for tree changers and city-dwellers seeking a lifestyle change, while maintaining connections to major cities.

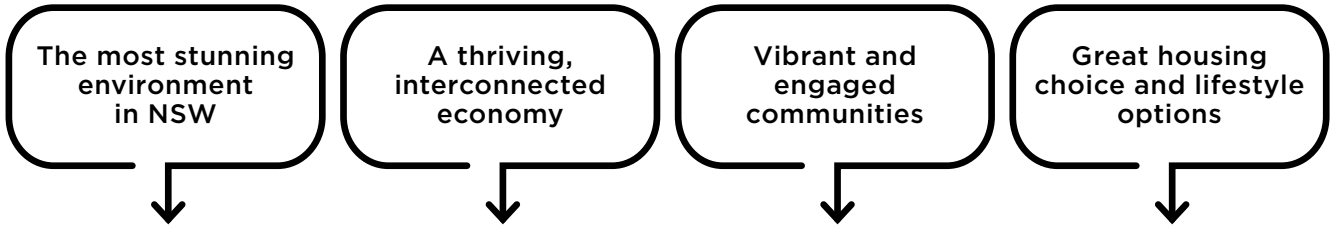
The plan will build on the opportunity created by the Pacific Highway bypass and will redefine links between the north and south and reunite the city's east and west to forge a city of connected communities within a green cradle.

Regional Cities provide high-level services and economic opportunities for their residents and surrounding areas. They are centres of business, governance, and culture, and benefit from critical investments in major infrastructure.

**Figure 1:**  
Delivering the *North Coast Regional Plan 2036* within the Strategic Planning Line of Sight



# North Coast Regional Plan 2036



## Coffs Harbour Regional City Action Plan



GOAL

### Meet

*An inclusive, healthy and cohesive city built from a network of character-filled places.*

OBJECTIVES

- 1** Make the city centre Coffs Harbour's cultural live-work-play hub
- 2** Enhance the distinctive character, heritage and design of the network of places that make up Coffs Harbour
- 3** Create engaging, creative and inclusive spaces
- 4** Cultivate Coffs Harbour's distinctive blue and green open space grid for a healthier city

### Move

*A city of connected communities and a gateway to the wider region.*

- 5** Reimagine the city's spine and reunite east and west
- 6** Create a modern, place-based transport network to connect the Coffs Coast's communities
- 7** Expand the role of Coffs Harbour Airport as a transport gateway
- 8** Grow Coffs Harbour's sub-regional leadership role

### Play

*A playful city with opportunities to be active, inspired and competitive.*

- 9** Celebrate the Jetty Precinct as Coffs Harbour's premier harbourside destination
- 10** Showcase Coffs Harbour's tourism and visitor experiences
- 11** Distinguish Coffs Harbour as a centre of sporting excellence
- 12** Support the local arts, cultural and creative energy of Coffs Harbour

### Work

*A skilled and innovative city blending work-life balance and subregional cooperation.*

- 13** Grow South Coffs Harbour as an integrated enterprise area
- 14** Optimise employment land delivery across the city
- 15** Nurture the Coffs Coast food bowl
- 16** Foster the city's innovation ecosystem through life-long learning and promote new economy jobs

### Live

*A regional exemplar of coastal, cosmopolitan living set within the green embrace of the Great Dividing Range*

- 17** Deliver a city that responds to Coffs Harbour's unique green cradle setting and offer housing choice
- 18** Coordinate infrastructure for new housing release across the Coffs Coast
- 19** Strengthen resilience to natural hazards and climate change
- 20** Strive for a carbon neutral future and enhance local biodiversity

# City drivers

Three factors will influence Coffs Harbour's growth as a truly distinctive, welcoming and networked regional city.



1

## Pacific Highway bypass and city centre revitalisation

The Coffs Harbour Pacific Highway Bypass is an unprecedented opportunity to transform the cityscape, bringing in a new era of movement that will redefine links to the north and south and reunite east and west.

The bypass will redirect through-traffic from the city centre which will reduce congestion, improve connectivity and provide opportunities for the former Pacific Highway to be enhanced by promoting a greater range of uses and street level activity along the corridor.

The city centre can become a place focused on people – a cultural live-work-play destination offering an attractive urban lifestyle, interlinked to green and blue spaces, arts and culture, and opportunities for learning and collaborating. More residents and a creative and entertainment presence will enliven the night-time and weekend economy.

The former Pacific Highway can be used to create a sense of arrival with vibrancy at street level, greenery along the edge and new public transport, cycling and walking links from north to south. New mobility technology, like autonomous vehicles, smart parking, and on-demand and sharing services can be leveraged for a smarter transport network.



2

## A city grown sustainably within its natural boundaries

The proximity of the coast to the Great Dividing Range in Coffs Harbour creates a green cradle for the city's growth and an enviable mountain-to-sea aspect. This setting is at the heart of what makes Coffs Harbour an attractive place to live and demands wise use of the city's existing and future urban areas to balance expected growth with enhanced lifestyle amenity and protection of these assets. As the city grows, its unique geography will be the foundation for renewal, pairing the creation of new jobs and homes with well connected local places.

The unique character of the many places that make up Coffs Harbour will be carried into the future. The Jetty will be a place to engage with nature, eat, relax and come together by the water. Park Beach will offer coastal living close to a lively foreshore, large shopping facilities and entertainment hot-spots. In South Coffs Harbour, the airport will act as a gateway to all the city has on offer and an integrated sports, health and education precinct centred around key knowledge and sporting anchors will support a smarter, healthier city and new economy jobs.



3

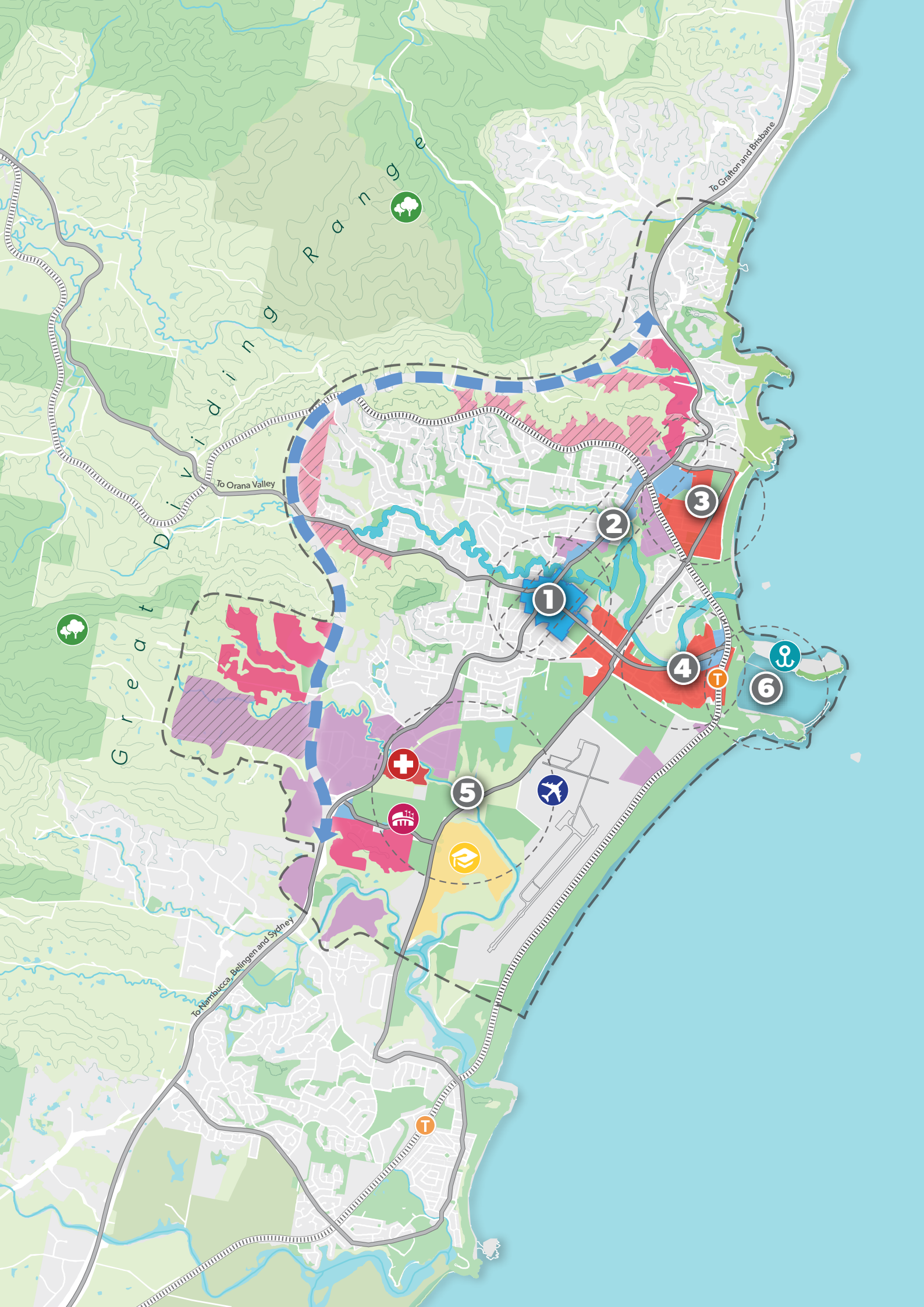
## Sub-regional networking and leadership

Coffs Harbour is a regional hub for the wider LGA and surrounding communities. The higher order services on offer in the city serve a catchment that transcends local government boundaries. Continued investment in the Coffs Harbour Hospital, education campus, international stadium, justice precinct and regional airport will bring more services to the region as a whole.

Coffs Harbour will support and be supported by surrounding centres such as Sawtell-Toormina, Bonville, Coramba and Woolgoolga, and the adjoining Bellingen, Nambucca and Clarence Valley communities. Individually, these communities have unique endowments that create a rich tapestry of places that collectively form the wider Coffs Coast.

Building Coffs Harbour as a regional city requires a collaborative approach with these communities to address housing needs, new job opportunities, employment land supply and industry links through tourism, the creative sector and agriculture.







# Vision

--- City Action Plan Area

## Distinctive Place Network:

- ① City Heart
- ② City Spine
- ③ Park Beach
- ④ Jetty Core
- ⑤ South Coffs Enterprise Area
- ⑥ Jetty Foreshore

↔ Future Connectivity

▬ Railway

▬ Main road

--- Distinctive Places

● Environmental

● Parks and reserves

○ Waterway

● City Centre

● Commercial

● Employment Land

▨ Investigation Area - Employment Land

● Existing Urban Release Area

▨ Investigation Area - Urban Release

● Urban Renewal

T Train Station

🎓 Education precinct

⛑ Health precinct

✈ Airport

🏟 Stadium

⚓ Marina

🌳 National Park

On the land of the Gumbaynggirr people and respecting their spiritual connection to country, Coffs Harbour is growing within its spectacular natural setting, cradled between the green embrace of the Great Dividing Range and the blue expanse of the Pacific Ocean.

It is a welcoming city showcasing its signature blend of worldly city buzz, culture and creative energy, a tapestry of places and sustainable agricultural harvest.

As a mid-way point between Newcastle and South East Queensland, it leads through region-shaping civic, tourism, health and education anchors and works with its neighbours.



# Delivery framework

The NSW Government recognises the importance of strong regional cities in supporting the future prosperity of the entire North Coast.

The *Coffs Harbour Regional City Action Plan* will support the vision and goals of the *North Coast Regional Plan 2036* and build on State-wide and local strategic planning. It will inform strategic and operational decision making across NSW Government agencies and local government.

The *Coffs Harbour Regional City Action Plan* establishes the vision, goals, objectives, actions, and collaboration opportunities that will guide growth and change in the city towards 2036 (Figure 3).

The vision guides the plan's five goals – meet, move, play, work and live. These goals shape the objectives for urban development and infrastructure investment that will inform decisions at State and local government levels. Targeted actions highlight areas for collaboration and future work across government.

This Plan will be implemented through the planning and delivery activities of Council and agencies. The collaboration of state and local governments, community groups,

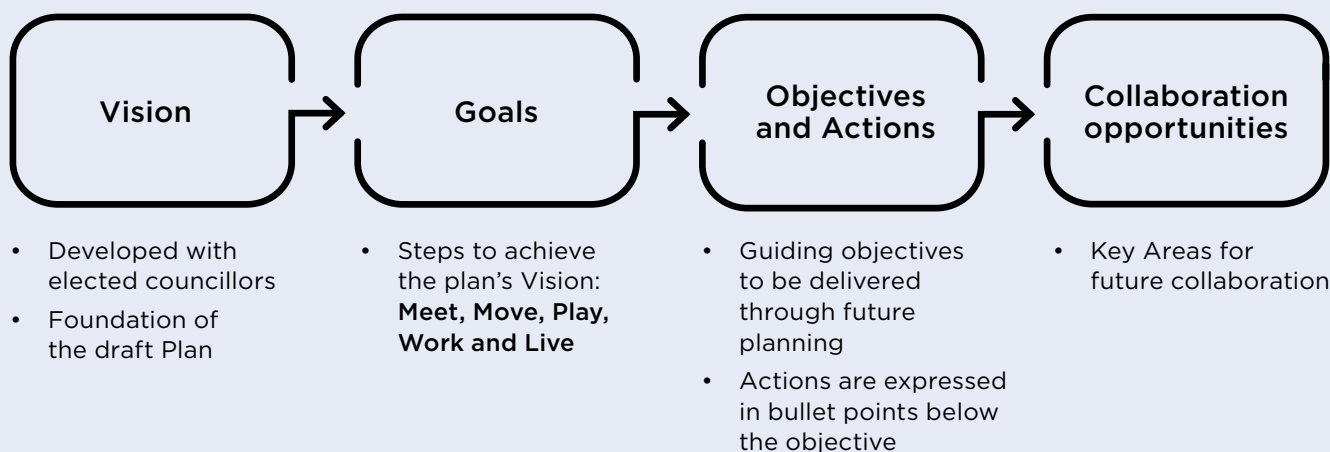
industry groups and other stakeholders will be pivotal to the delivery of the Plan and the identified actions.

Key areas that will require collaboration are identified in Table 1. Key partners are identified for this work; however, other stakeholders will also be engaged where project needs require. Joint Organisations have been established to achieve shared outcomes across local government. The actions in the plan that require collaboration across local government areas are specific to land use planning outcomes only.

The preparation of local growth management strategies and local strategic planning statements will also need to be consistent with the vision and objectives.

Progress will be monitored in conjunction with the wider implementation of the *North Coast Regional Plan 2036* through the North Coast Delivery, Coordination and Monitoring Committee.

**Figure 3:** Regional City Action Plan Structure



**Table 1:** Coffs Harbour Regional City Collaboration Areas

Collaboration area	Partners	Target outcomes
<b>Coffs Harbour City Centre</b> <i>Collaboration opportunity 1</i>	Transport for NSW, Australian Government, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Department for Regional NSW, Coffs Harbour City Council, Create NSW, NSW Department of Health (MNC LHD)	An activated city centre that provides the cultural, civic and entertainment heart of the city, with the aim of delivering a community gathering place and employment opportunities.
<b>City spine renewal strategy</b> <i>Collaboration opportunity 2</i>	Coffs Harbour City Council, Transport for NSW, Government Architect NSW, NSW Department of Health (MNC LHD)	A land use, transport and urban design framework that maximises opportunities from the Coffs Harbour bypass project.
<b>Coffs Harbour future transport plan</b> <i>Collaboration Opportunity 3</i>	Coffs Harbour City Council, Transport for NSW, NSW Department of Health (MNC LHD)	An integrated land use and transport strategy for the city's future movement and place needs.
<b>Jetty Foreshores Precinct</b> <i>Collaboration opportunity 4</i>	Property NSW, Department for Regional NSW, NSW Department of Health (MNC LHD), Coffs Harbour City Council	Enhanced public facilities and amenity, mixed use development, retention of heritage values, and improved access to open space.
<b>South Coffs Harbour Regional Sporting Hub</b> <i>Collaboration opportunity 5</i>	Coffs Harbour City Council, Office of Sport, NSW Department of Health (MNC LHD), State Sporting Organisations	A regional supporting hub in South Coffs Harbour that supports community and elite participation in sport.
<b>Support the local arts, cultural and creative energy of Coffs Harbour</b> <i>Collaboration opportunity 6</i>	Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Department for Regional NSW, NSW Department of Health (MNC LHD), Coffs Harbour City Council, Create NSW	Coffs Harbour is distinguished as a thriving and dynamic cultural sector with cultural infrastructure such as a Regional Performing Arts Centre/theatre.
<b>South Coffs Harbour Enterprise Area</b> <i>Collaboration opportunity 7</i>	Coffs Harbour City Council, NSW Health (MNC LHD), Southern Cross University, University of NSW, Department of Education, Office of Sport, NSW Department of Health (MNC LHD), TAFE NSW, Create NSW	South Coffs Harbour to grow into an integrated enterprise area.

**Figure 4:** Word Cloud from visioning workshops.

These words have been embedded throughout the plan.



# Meet



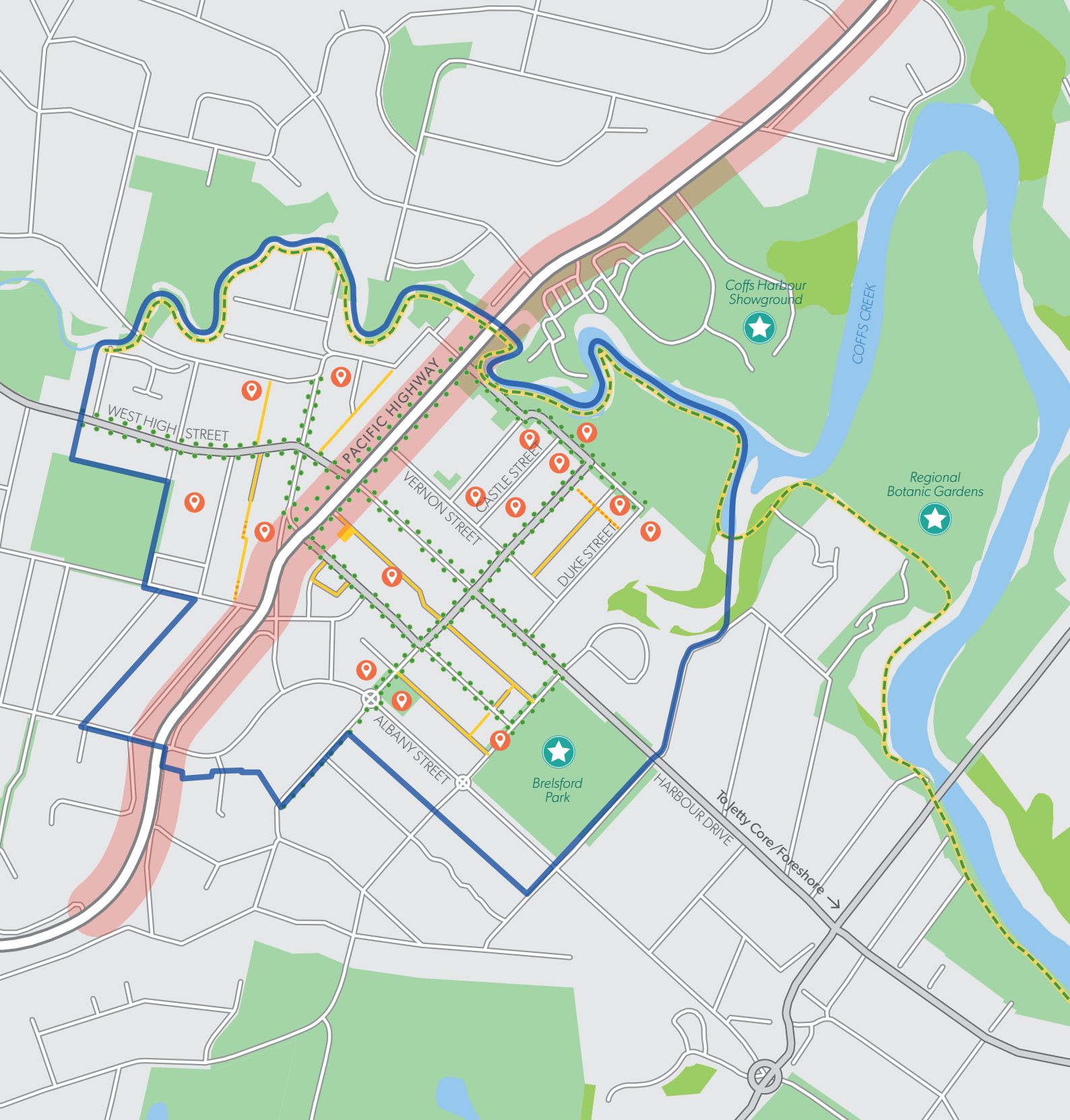
*Cox Lane, Coffs Harbour City Centre*



## Goal:

An inclusive, healthy and cohesive city built from a network of character-filled places





**Figure 5:** City Centre Masterplan - Concepts and Emerging Opportunities

Masterplan Concepts		Emerging Opportunities
Pacific Highway	Coffs Harbour City Centre	Greening
Environmental	Strategic Sites	Coffs Creek - Green Ribbon
Parks and Reserves	Rear Lane Activation - Existing & Long Term	City Spine
Waterway	Rear Lane Activation - New Connection	Accessible Event Spaces

## Objective 1

*Make the city centre  
Coffs Harbour's Cultural  
live-work-play hub*

### Actions

- 1.1 | Promote a range of diverse city centre events including cultural and community events and shared or out-of-hours use of spaces to encourage a night-time economy and extend the city's service role.
- 1.2 | Incorporate Safer-By-Design and accessibility principles into public areas and building design, to create comfortable, active streets, and protect sunlight to city parks, squares and footpaths.
- 1.3 | Make footpaths and laneways more activated, allow al fresco dining, improve lighting in creative ways to ease navigation, whilst ensuring continued local freight, delivery and waste vehicle accessibility.
- 1.4 | Provide incentives for city centre traders and facilitate out-of-hours uses, including residential and tourist accommodation and cultural activities.
- 1.5 | Implement the *Coffs Harbour City Centre Masterplan 2031* and periodically review to account for progress and new challenges or opportunities.
- 1.6 | In partnership with local Aboriginal Elders and community, explore tangible and visible ways to incorporate cultural stories into the design of the city's places to inform and help more people understand the local Gumbaynggirr people's stories, traditions and connection to country.



Above: Al fresco dining in the city centre

The city centre is critical to Coffs Harbour's success as a regional city. As a civic and cultural hub, it will act as a community gathering place and will host a significant share of the city's jobs and businesses, act as a community gathering place and offer arts and culture, as well as opportunities for learning and collaborating, and professional and civic services for the larger regional catchment.

The design of new buildings should avoid overshadowing along Harbour Drive and in public squares and open space, and promote accessible, lively frontages.

The Regional City Action Plan aligns with Council's *City Centre Masterplan 2031*, which contains a number of strategies and projects that support key priorities that were identified with the community. The Masterplan is progressively being implemented throughout the city centre.

The Masterplan also identifies a number of strategic sites. These sites have been identified for their potential to contribute to a more vibrant centre by acting as catalysts for wider renewal, providing opportunity for joint ventures and leveraging public domain enhancements. They will be further investigated to determine the best land use and design provisions to achieve these outcomes.



Above: Coffs Harbour City Centre

Other key emerging opportunities for the city centre, as shown on Figure 5, include:

- Renewal of the Pacific Highway corridor, once bypassed.
- Promoting the Coffs Creek as a green ribbon that celebrates nature in the city and serves as a passive recreation link with the wider city.
- Recalibrating city greening to promote a cohesive landscape scheme that links with the city's blue and green grid.
- Positioning the city centre, Botanic Gardens, Showgrounds and Brelsford Park as connected and accessible event spaces.
- Continued commercial activation of hidden public spaces such as rear laneways in the CBD.
- Investigation of the Regional Performing Arts Centre, City Square Public Revitalisation and event space to attract regional festivals and events

Events, regular markets and a renewed City Square offer a reason to visit the city centre beyond its traditional service function, as will the renewal of City Square on Harbour Drive.

Increasing the number of homes in the city centre and introducing a stronger creative and entertainment presence will extend the city centre's employment and service offering and underpin a richer night-time and weekend energy.

A greater range of uses and activity at night-time will also bring the city centre to life. The local planning framework provides scope for a range of land uses including residential and tourist accommodation and the new cultural precinct that will encourage people to visit out-of-hours.

## Collaboration opportunity 1

Council, with advice from stakeholders, will

- clustering major arts and cultural infrastructure in the city centre to bring life to the city and make better use of public transport, taxi services, parking and ancillary services like cafes and restaurants
- opportunities for flexible and adaptive uses to live, work and play within the city centre
- the utilisation of existing spaces to increase opportunities for activation through a range of community cultural arts, creative and economic activities

**Timing:** Medium



## Objective 2

*Enhance the distinctive character, heritage and design of the network of places that make up Coffs Harbour*

### Actions

- 2.1 Reinforce the character of places by developing local character statements for the City Centre, Jetty Core and Park Beach that determine the values and objectives for each place.
- 2.2 Apply innovative approaches to tell the heritage stories of places and sympathetically adapting heritage buildings for new uses.
- 2.3 Implement local plans that enhance the design quality of places through key site, design excellence and design advisory provisions.

In Coffs Harbour's early years, the local population was small, local industry was transitory and the focus of the city divided between the coast and the Pacific Highway. As a result, growth was sporadic, with discrete precincts making up the wider city.<sup>1</sup> Few areas in Coffs Harbour are distinctive to a single period of development and contemporary contributions are equally diverse, reflecting subtropical and coastal influences and colour.

The character and history of these places must be reflected in the city's renewal and to complement the character and appeal of other areas in the broader Local Government Area such as Sawtell, Woolgoolga, Coramba and Nana Glen. Design affects how spaces and places function, how they integrate, what they contribute to the broader environment, and the people they support or attract. Focussing on the design and renewal of each of Coffs Harbour's distinct places will pair change with strong ties to each of place's story and character.

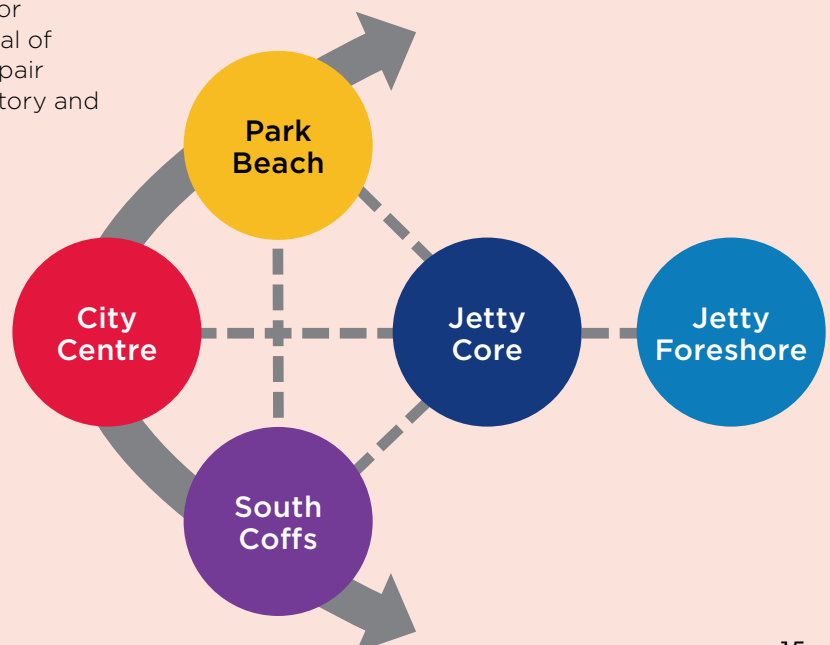
The *Urban Design for Regional NSW – A guide for creating healthy built environments in regional NSW* has been prepared specifically for regional NSW. Through the guide, objectives from the Government Architect NSW's *Better Placed, the integrated design policy for the built environment of NSW*, will be applied to NSW's regions. The guide also supports the object of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* to 'promote good design and amenity of the built environment'. Council should consider the guide when developing local plans.

Using the city's green and blue backdrop, local heritage and climate will create a stronger sense of character. Building design for a subtropical climate leverages orientation, landscape features, lighter materials and colours whilst engaging with indoor/outdoor transition. Design that celebrates these attributes will be more energy and water efficient and will suit the city's lifestyle.

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will assist Council to develop local character statements that establish the desired future character for the City Centre, Jetty Core, and Park Beach.

Council's local heritage studies identify, protect and manage heritage items. Council is also working with NSW Environment, Energy and Science to develop cultural mapping.

Incorporating cultural stories into the design of the city's places, can help more people to celebrate Gumbaynggirr stories and artisan craft. Artworks incorporated into the development of the Coffs Harbour Justice Precinct, facilities upgrade of Fitzroy Oval and the Jetty Foreshore upgrades illustrate what can be achieved. Partnerships with Aboriginal communities and companies like the National Aboriginal Design Agency based in Coffs Harbour can link Aboriginal artists and manufacturers to develop Aboriginal products that draw on a unique design aesthetic and stories. Heritage assets can also be adapted to create new, unique places.



**Figure 6:** Coffs Harbour distinctive place network



## Place Character Strategies

### City Centre

- Green cycling and walking links along Harbour Drive and Hogbin Drive will connect to the city centre, Brelsford Park, Coffs Creek and South Coffs Harbour.
- Development provides a mix of housing types, respects local heritage and character.
- Brelsford Park is a safe and accessible city park with plenty of sunshine and activity.



### Jetty Core

- A mix of uses link the Jetty Foreshore with new public areas along Harbour Drive, and street activity such as outdoor dining.
- New development responds to heritage features and the coastal environment.
- With a mix of housing types, more people can enjoy the lifestyle, while activated laneways enhance the character of the area.



### Park Beach

- Ocean Parade is remigned as a coastal esplanade destination for Park Beach.
- Park Beach Road, Arthur Street and Hogbin Drive are subtropical boulevards, where enhanced street and landscaping treatments make it easy for people to get to shops, open space and the foreshore on foot or by bike.
- Development considers coastal hazards and processes and offers a mix of medium to high density housing, which can contribute to housing choice and affordability. Design and landscaping is focused on people.
- Investigate changes to the intersection of Orlando Street and Ocean Parade to create a new gateway into Park Beach from the south.

Images from above:  
*City Centre, Jetty Core, Park Beach*  
 Right: *Coffs Harbour Jetty.*





Above: Artist's impression of subtropical meeting places  
Below: Artist's impression of city heart laneway activation



## Objective 3

*Create engaging, creative and inclusive spaces*

### Actions

- 3.1 Facilitate greater use of public areas for interim and temporary uses, arts, events and creative activities.
- 3.2 Adopt a strategic approach to creative place-making and public art to benefit local artists and showcase indigenous community arts, culture and dance.
- 3.3 Promote the live music and performance sector by identifying places for live music and performance.
- 3.4 Promote accessibility and inclusion for all ages, abilities and cultural groups in public areas and as part of facility upgrades.
- 3.5 Engage Local Aboriginal Land Councils early in planning and decision-making processes.

Coffs Harbour has one of the highest and fastest growing levels of cultural diversity in regional NSW, with a community committed to welcoming visitors and new residents alike.

As a designated migration resettlement area, Coffs Harbour has a larger proportion of people speaking a language other than English at home compared to other cities on the North Coast and regional NSW.<sup>2</sup> Migration as a driver of population growth requires broader social considerations to support cultural inclusiveness and resettlement.

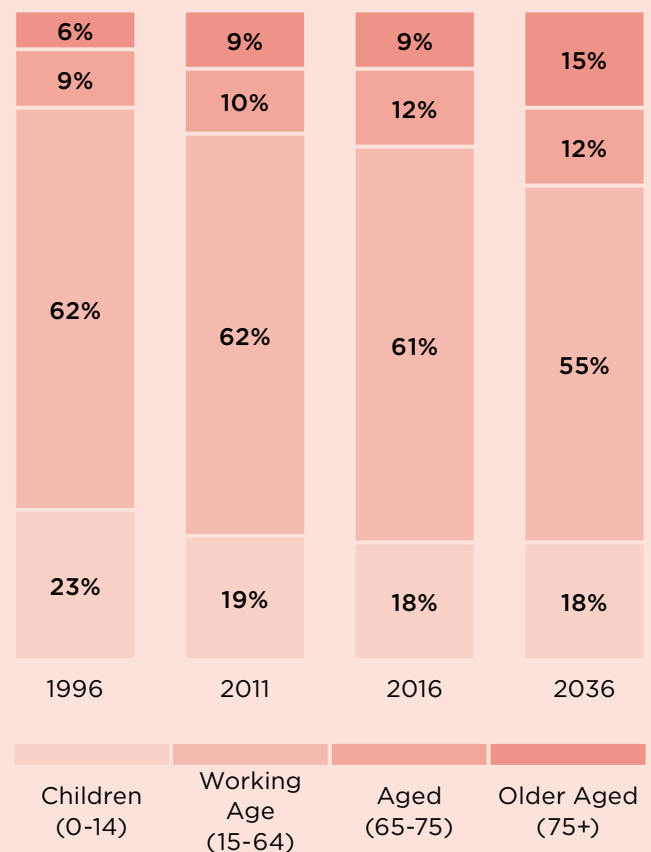
Investment in arts and culture can help create jobs, foster learning and attract tourism.<sup>3</sup> Council is a principal provider of cultural facilities and physical space has been identified as a limiting factor for a number of these facilities. High quality public art is free to view and accessible for all and can transform how people use and enjoy public spaces.

The *NSW Cultural Infrastructure Plan 2025* includes strategies and actions for regional NSW. Relevant actions include the development of cultural infrastructure design principles, benchmarks and metrics for cultural infrastructure and a NSW Public Art Strategy. This can be used by council in its cultural infrastructure and public realm planning.

This planning needs to ensure the right mix of local services, programs and infrastructure will be provided to meet changing community needs. For example, Coffs Harbour is becoming a more intergenerational city. This will require more age-friendly built areas, libraries and community spaces, public areas that are easy to access and mobility options so that older residents can access services and be part of the community.

People of all ages and abilities need to be able to access schools, sports grounds, community services, open space, halls and creative spaces, including by walking and cycling. The co-location or shared and flexible use of under-utilised facilities can respond to the different needs of residents and encourage better use of, and access to, infrastructure and services.

**Figure 7:** Coffs Harbour LGA Age Structure, 1996-2036



Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 1996-2016, DPE 2016 Population Projections

## Objective 4

*Cultivate Coffs Harbour's distinctive blue and green open space grid for a healthier city*

### Actions

- 4.1 | Use the blue and green grid to create a network of diverse, inclusive, accessible, quality open spaces and protected environmental and cultural areas.
- 4.2 | Enhance the blue and green grid with an initial focus on embellishment of Brelsford Park and Coffs Creek.
- 4.3 | Embrace opportunities for greening and applying water sensitive urban design principles early in the planning for new development.
- 4.4 | Establish and maintain a canopy of trees along transport corridors and open spaces.
- 4.5 | Plan new neighbourhoods with sufficient quantity and quality of open space.
- 4.6 | Prioritise walking and cycling in areas around schools, health services and aged care facilities.

Coffs Harbour's green cradle setting, coastline, bushland areas and creek system integrate with urban areas and support recreation, social interaction and the city's biodiversity, health and resilience.

Making places easier to walk and cycle around and supporting opportunities for recreation and leisure will contribute to a healthier and happier city. The city's blue and green grid offers opportunities for the community to retreat and be reinvigorated, getting more people out and about and coming together in parks and playgrounds or along coastal walks. Encouraging activity at street edges such as community gardens and/or edible landscapes, retaining sunlight access and greening to key open space locations and making these places safe and accessible is essential. There are a range of resources available to guide planning for a healthy built environment including, NSW Health's *Healthy Urban Development Checklist*, the Department's *Urban Design Guide for Regional NSW* and the *Mid North Coast Childhood Obesity Prevention and Management Action Plan, 2018-2023*.

Greening should be integrated into local planning and balanced with safety priorities. Investment in Brelsford Park as a city park and supporting the Regional Community Gardens, Botanic Gardens and cultural-based tourism will bring people together, support the living culture of the Gumbaynggirr people and local food production.

The Coffs Creek is the city's urban lungs and its enhancement will improve biodiversity and water quality, promote activity and create an off-road pedestrian and cycle link between the city centre, Jetty and Park Beach that could extend to link the city's west. Enhancements should focus on navigating to the creek walk and bringing more people to the creek's edge with low-impact lighting, drinking stations and seating. Respecting the cultural significance and ecosystem of the creek and its interface with the Solitary Islands Marine Park is also important. Masterplanning of Park Beach Reserve must balance these activities against the risk of coastal erosion.



Left: *Coffs Coast, NSW*  
Courtesy of Destination NSW  
Right: *Artist's impression of engagement with the blue and green grid.*



# Move

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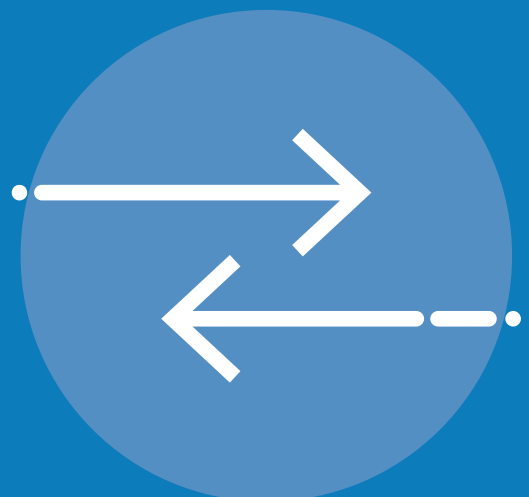
*Coffs Harbour Airport, Seen Australia, courtesy of Coffs Harbour City Council*





## Goal:

A city of  
connected  
communities and  
a gateway to the  
wider region





## Objective 5

*Reimagine the city's spine and reunite east and west*

### Actions

- 5.1 Renew the post-bypass City Spine to promote a place and people focussed streetscape with a greater range of uses, street level activity and amenity and integrated transit, pedestrian and cycling options.
- 5.2 Integrate the Coffs Harbour bypass route with the urban area by securing access to existing and proposed release areas and mitigating noise and visual impacts.

The Pacific Highway has shaped Coffs Harbour's identity and emergence as a city. The rise of car use and road upgrades after the 1950s saw the city centre shift to its current location to take advantage of activity on the route. Since then, transport and freight demand between Brisbane and Sydney have grown exponentially and has divided the city's business and service heart from east to west.

The relocation of the Pacific Highway presents a transformative opportunity for the city that can see the corridor reimaged from an interstate freight and transport link to a place focused city spine.

A renewed city spine can offer a sense of arrival and welcoming through entry statements that showcase public art and creativity and an engaged streetscape that promotes street level activity and offers green links to the city's wider blue and green open space grid. Opportunities for mixed use renewal can be provided along the corridor in buildings that showcase design character that the community can be proud of. Links to communities in the city's north and south can be redefined and east and west reunited to forge a city built on connected places where integrated transit, pedestrian and cycling options leverage the latest in mobility technology.

A city spine renewal strategy to map and leverage these opportunities once the bypass is approved and a final design confirmed.

The proposed bypass route is located within the

city's green frame, on the fringe of the urban area and transects or borders areas identified for future urban development. Balancing this proximity with effective integration from an amenity and accessibility perspective will be critical as the bypass is designed and delivered.

New east-west gateways into the city should also reinforce a sense of arrival and promote ease of access between the coast and the hinterland once the bypass has been completed.

### Collaboration opportunity 2

Council, in partnership with Transport for NSW, and other stakeholders will develop a City Spine Renewal Strategy to maximise opportunities from the Coffs Harbour bypass project by:

- creating a sense of arrival and place through entry statements, public art, creative place-making and streetscaping that reinforces the city's popularity as a visitor destination and regional hub
- greening the corridor to link with the city's blue and green open space grid
- integrating public transport, pedestrian and cycling options with an emphasis on east-west links
- allowing for enhancements in mobility technologies
- reinforcing the corridor as an economic spine that hosts diverse economic land use and connects the city's employment areas

**Timing:** Short to Medium, linked to Coffs Harbour Bypass planning and delivery.

Left: *Artist's impression of reimaged city spine*



## Objective 6

*Create a modern, place-based transport network to connect the Coffs Coast's communities*

### Actions

- 6.1 | Integrate land use planning with transport service planning.
- 6.2 | Plan for easy and safe pedestrian movement in activity nodes.
- 6.3 | Create a legible, connected and accessible network of pedestrian and cycling paths and facilities, particularly between the City Centre, Jetty Foreshore, Park Beach and South Coffs.
- 6.4 | Plan for accessible and convenient public transport stops and interchanges that integrate with the active transport network.
- 6.5 | Include new development and employment areas in future contracts for the public transport network.
- 6.6 | Embrace and encourage active transport use by incorporating end of trip facilities (secure bicycle parking, showers, lockers) in the planning for new major trip generating and office development.

Understanding the community's movement patterns when making transport decisions can improve connectivity, public transport, and walking and cycling opportunities.

Transport for NSW's *Future Transport 2056* establishes a movement and place framework that can balance safe, efficient and reliable journeys for people and freight with enhanced liveability and amenity of places.

Enhancing pedestrian amenity and increasing active and public transport use will reduce demand on the road network and encourage more sustainable and healthier trips. Prioritising active and public transport capacity between the city's key activity nodes – the City Centre, Jetty, South Coffs and Park Beach, will service a large volume of visitors, residents and commuters. As the city's population gets older, transport facilities will require access for all ages and abilities as well as seating and shade.

The Coffs Harbour Railway Station provides a regional connection to the Jetty Foreshore Precinct. The reach and responsiveness of public transport

services from these types of regional connections to the city centre and other precincts should be enhanced. New development in and around activity nodes will increase the population densities needed to support the viability of more regular public transport services. Considering the scope for reduced parking requirements in renewal areas can also encourage public and active transport use.

Emerging transport technologies and trends such as electric bikes, autonomous vehicles and ride sharing offer compelling alternatives to private car use that can make better use of transport investments to connect communities, transform service delivery and enhance the customer experience. Coffs Harbour is already engaging with emerging transport technologies by hosting the first regional trial of automated vehicles.

### Collaboration opportunity 3

Council, in partnership with Transport for NSW and other stakeholders will develop a future transport plan for the Coffs Harbour LGA by:

- implementing the outcomes of the Regional NSW Services and Infrastructure Plan by applying the movement and place framework
- developing a long-term vision to guide investments in transport infrastructure that improves liveability and road safety and expands the public and active transport network
- establishing an active transport network by identifying missing links, increased traffic and pedestrian safety around schools, initiatives for behavioural change and targeting funding program guidelines for active transport
- identifying travel demand management policies and tools to support car sharing and to assist workers and employers to better manage travel demand
- adopting the strategies and actions of the Future Transport Technology Roadmap

**Timing: Short**

## Objective 7

*Expand the role of Coffs Harbour Airport as a transport gateway*

### Actions

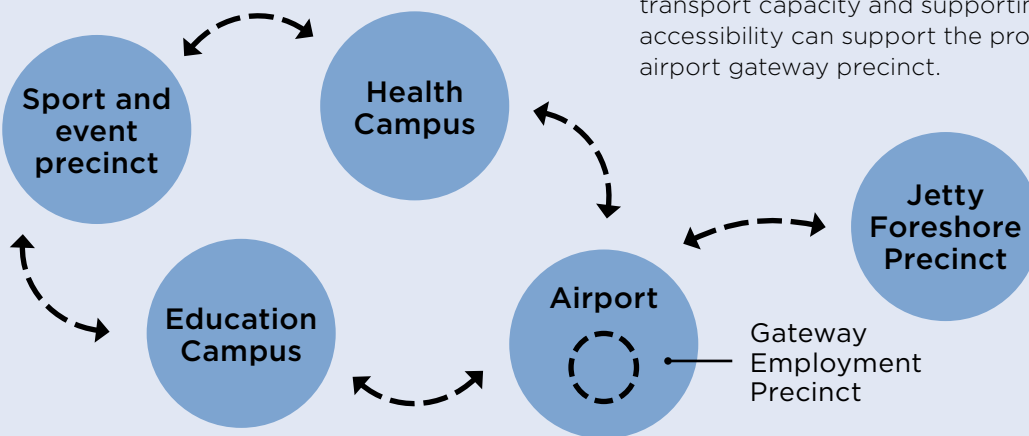
- 7.1 | Apply zoning and development controls to develop the airport precinct as a regional gateway and to minimise land use conflicts which could limit future growth.
- 7.2 | Provide efficient access and connections for passengers and freight, and land for aviation-related activities, as the airport grows.
- 7.3 | Use development in the airport precinct to boost tourism and agriculture and integrate it with the wider city.

Coffs Harbour Airport is one of the largest in regional NSW, offering flights to Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane and acting as a regional gateway for business, tourism and personal travel, as well as high-value freight. The airport also has capacity for international freight exports to support agricultural production and growing agribusiness links.

Investments in runway apron expansion works and terminal upgrades were completed in late 2017 to create an additional 25 per cent of floor space, and improved passenger facilities and amenities.

The vacant lands adjoining the airport can be utilised. These lands are likely to support smart manufacturing, emerging technologies and agribusiness that take advantage of the changing world economy. Employment lands near airports also typically attract supporting industry, with regional and remote airports generating about 25 per cent of revenue from non-aeronautical sources.<sup>4</sup> Employment uses that support the airport's gateway role and offer new local jobs must be balanced against operational needs. The airport precinct should avoid businesses and uses more appropriately located in the city centre and other existing employment areas.

Improving public transport access for visitors and links between the airport and the Jetty Foreshore precinct will strengthen the area as a tourist and night-time economy destination. Current load restrictions along Hogbin Drive limit freight transport capacity and supporting freight accessibility can support the productivity of the airport gateway precinct.



## Objective 8

*Grow Coffs Harbour's sub-regional leadership role*

### Actions

- 8.1 | Recognise Coffs Harbour's sub-regional role and harness economic opportunities across the North Coast Region.
- 8.2 | Improve east-west connectivity via the Waterfall Way, Coramba Road, the Gwydir Highway, Bucca Road, Orana Way and Gleniffer Road to link productive growing areas, agritourism and rural communities with the city.

Coffs Harbour's success as a regional city will align with the success of its wider region. As the most central of the North Coast's regional cities, Coffs Harbour performs an important service role to surrounding communities and can leverage growing connectivity with both Sydney and Brisbane. Strategic infrastructure investments can help to unlock these opportunities.

*Future Transport 2056* emphasises the focus on a 'hub and spoke' network model radiating out from regional cities and centres to capitalise on the role that regional cities and centres play as hubs for employment and services such as retail, health, education and cultural activities. Transport for NSW will develop a regional transport plan for the North Coast that will provide further local context to *Future Transport 2056* and the *Regional NSW Services and Infrastructure Plan* by offering strategic guidance for the region's transport network that will inform investment.

Safe and efficient transport corridors and last-mile delivery options will influence competitiveness and contribute to the State and national freight task. The efficiency of accessing markets and receiving goods influences the competitiveness of doing business from and within the subregion. This includes the location of freight transport facilities and using functioning connections and road networks to efficiently move goods and services.

The Coffs Harbour bypass will enhance the freight efficiency and travel safety gains provided by the Pacific Highway upgrade to date while creating new networks between Coffs Harbour, its wider region and global markets. Coffs Harbour is unlikely to have sufficient available land to support freight distribution activities, whereas adjoining areas such as Nambucca and Grafton can offer proximity to road and rail links including the Pacific Highway, North Coast Rail Line, Gwydir Highway and Summerland Way offer advantages for freight transport and logistics that will benefit the wider region and the regional city of Coffs Harbour.

East-west connections like the Waterfall Way will link productive growing areas, hinterland agritourism and rural communities with the city. Maximising these connections will help build new opportunities for these areas and Coffs Harbour to attract new economic development. The Waterfall Way traverses the World-Heritage listed Dorrigo National Park and idyllic hinterland landscapes and is a tourism asset for the Coffs Coast. Enhancements to the Waterfall Way to support this role will be determined by Transport for NSW.

Left: *The Coffs Harbour airport*  
Below: *Pacific Highway*



# Play

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*Coffs Harbour Skate Park*





## Goal:

A playful city with opportunities to be active, inspired and competitive



## Objective 9

*Celebrate the Jetty Foreshores Precinct as Coffs Harbour's premier harbourside destination*

### Actions

- 9.1 | Strengthen the precinct's identity as an outstanding recreation and tourism destination through enhanced public facilities, amenity, place activation and environmental quality.
- 9.2 | Protect the operational access and facility needs of the marina and international port.
- 9.3 | Improve connectivity and character links with the Jetty Foreshores Precinct to support mixed use development, active frontages to streets, outdoor dining and enhanced heritage character.

Coffs Harbour's timber jetty is an icon of the city's shipping heritage and a popular place to fish, watch seabirds, marine life, fishing boats, paddlers and cruising yachts. It is the place where people come to explore along boardwalks, the parklands, beaches, local markets and hospitality.

The fishing fleet and boats go about their daily routine, while people dine at cafes and restaurants or snack on fish and chips. People trek along the breakwall to Giidany Miirlarl-Muttonbird Island where they can learn about the Island's and the area's significance to the Gumbaynggirr people and enjoy 360-degree views of the ocean, islands, marina and mountains.

The Jetty Foreshores Precinct has significant potential for renewal. Nurturing and enlivening these experiences will be central to creating an iconic destination. The renewed Jetty Foreshores Precinct will be a harbourside playground and marina, with a range of outdoor dining, active street frontages and art displays.

Community engagement in relation to the appropriate land use mix for the Jetty Foreshores Precinct suggests there is scope for appropriately scaled mixed uses in some areas of the Precinct. This will be done in areas not affected by coastal hazards, or with the implementation of suitable coastal protection measures, and will activate areas of the Precinct, improve parking and the links to the wider Jetty area, including the Jetty Core.

As the site of the original township of Coffs Harbour, the Jetty Core has strong historical and contemporary links to the Jetty Foreshores Precinct. Investing in the Jetty Core, enhancing the gateway entry to the foreshore at Jordan's Esplanade and exploring opportunities for greater connectivity across the railway, will improve pedestrian and transport mobility and the character of both the Jetty Core and Jetty Foreshores Precinct.

### Collaboration opportunity 4

Property NSW and Council will continue to work with stakeholders and the community to develop and refine a concept plan for the Jetty Foreshores Precinct that supports the community vision, is financially viable and is able to be implemented by:

- enhancing public facilities and amenity
- determining opportunities for appropriately scaled and located mixed use development
- establishing and maintaining landscape features ahead of built form
- enhancing the environmental quality, sustainability and long-term access of open space in relation to coastal processes
- incorporating and reaffirming the foreshore's heritage story and celebrating Gumbaynggirr cultural meaning
- ensuring amenities provide shade, shelter and comfort from the heat and wind to maximise people's enjoyment of the Jetty Foreshores Precinct
- investigating an additional pedestrian and traffic link into the Jetty Foreshores precinct to facilitate movement and connectivity and the relocation of the Solitary Island Lighthouse lens to a secure area within the precinct.

**Timing: Short**



## Objective 10

### Showcase Coffs Harbour's tourism and visitor experiences

#### Actions

- 10.1 | Align local plans with relevant directions of the city's tourism and event strategic plans.
- 10.2 | Support the capacity of the event and tourism facility network with appropriate infrastructure and supporting uses and mitigate land use conflict.
- 10.3 | Promote culturally appropriate Aboriginal tourism opportunities.
- 10.4 | Incorporate transport planning into local plans to serve the transport access needs of tourists.
- 10.5 | Promote boutique commercial, cultural, tourist and recreation activities in rural landscape areas where they do not conflict with primary production.

There is strong competition for tourism market share in regional Australia, and Coffs Harbour will need to build on its reputation as a visitor destination to remain competitive.

The *Coffs Coast Tourism Strategic Plan 2020* was developed by the Destination Coffs Coast Committee for the Coffs Harbour and Bellingen Shires. Opportunities for increased ecotourism, more visitor accommodation options, enhancing transport connections and packages of events and activities exist. Larger and more frequent events and festivals, the increased use of wayfinding or integrated technology solutions, as well as support for the night-time economy and live music can also attract more tourists.

There is also scope to better support cultural, nature-based and agritourism. The Gumbaynggirr have a rich cultural heritage. Consultation with local Aboriginal people could help to celebrate and recognise this rich cultural heritage, which in turn could provide opportunities to economically empower local Aboriginal communities. Destination NSW's *Aboriginal Tourism Action Plan 2017-2020* aims to support these opportunities. Support is also available through the NSW Aboriginal Tour Operators Council (NATOC), a peer-to-peer program to support Aboriginal tour operators.

The green rolling hills, fertile farmlands and historic towns of hinterland areas like the Orara Valley offer a scenic and cultural contrast to the buzz of the city. Boutique commercial, tourist and recreation

activities that do not conflict with primary production could diversify the rural economy.

The city's natural assets are a key driver for visitation and provide opportunities for further product and experience development. Destination NSW Regional Event Development unit supports many events on the Coffs Coast. In conjunction with Destination NSW, Coffs Harbour has won the IFEA World Festival and Event City Award for 5 years running.

Ageing tourism infrastructure has been identified as a constraint on further growth of visitation. Grant funding opportunities and the development of local incentives can support investment in new facilities. Ongoing support will target opportunities, identify capabilities and promote opportunities in the city.

The *Coffs Coast Events Strategy 2020* aims to attract new and repeat visitors to Coffs Harbour, while also providing a vibrant backdrop of activity, entertainment, education and well-being for residents of the broader Coffs Coast. The city has a network of event spaces and public events including the Coffs Harbour Showground, Brelsford Park, Park Beach Reserve, the Jetty Foreshores, Regional Botanic Gardens and International Stadium. Promoting and ensuring sufficient capacity at these venues is key to the Events Strategy.

The Gumbaynggirr people have occupied the Mid North Coast from Nambucca to the Clarence River and west to the Great Dividing Range since the Yuludarla or the Dreaming. Drawn to the area for its climate and abundant resources, they formed one of the largest coastal Aboriginal nations in NSW and became known as 'sharing people' because of their openness to sharing resources.<sup>5</sup> Gumbaynggirr people continue this culture by showcasing their cultural and spiritual connection to ancestral country.

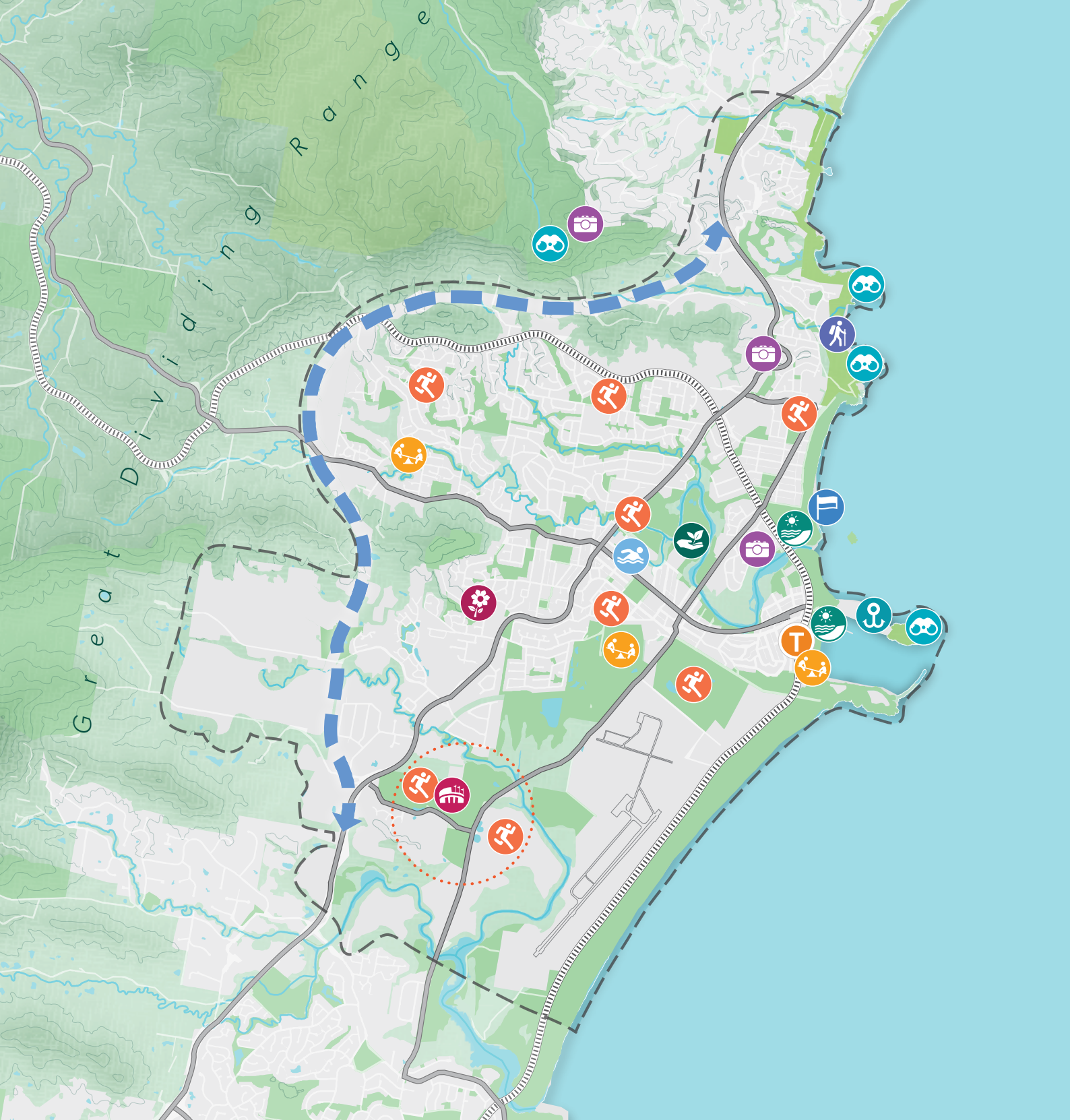
#### Coffs Harbour Tourism impact 2019

Over  
**1.7M**  
Visitors





















Spending  
**\$576M**  
In the Local  
Economy



Source: *Tourism Research Australia, Local Government Area Profiles, 2019*



**Figure 8:** Coffs Harbour City - Recreation Assets

 City Action Plan Area	 Environmental	 Sports/Leisure	 Community Garden
 Regional Sports Hub	 Parks and Reserves	 Lookout	 Aquatic Centre
 Railway	 Train Station	 Regional Playground	 Stadium
 Main road	 Marina	 Foreshore	 Greening
 Waterway	 Patrolled Beach	 Hiking/Walking	 Tourism

Coffs Harbour International Stadium



Coffs Harbour International Stadium



## Objective 11

*Distinguish Coffs Harbour as a centre of sporting excellence*

### Actions

- 11.1 | Consider the changing needs of the community and sports sector, participation demand for sports and the facility requirements and standards as indicated by the governing body for each sport in open space and facility planning.
- 11.2 | Identify the scope for shared use of sport and recreation facilities to increase community access and enhance sustainability and delivery efficiencies.
- 11.3 | Plan for supporting infrastructure at new active recreation spaces, such as lighting, wayfinding and amenities.
- 11.4 | Apply facility design that considers universal, inclusive and Safer-By-Design principles to recreation facilities.

Coffs Harbour's network of indoor and outdoor sporting facilities as well as natural stages for surf, mountain biking, triathlons and boating events allow spectators and competitors to be part of many regional, state, national and international competitions.

The International Stadium in South Coffs Harbour hosts around 120-140 event days a year, attracting 15,000-20,000 participants and similar spectator numbers. The stadium hosts elite-level matches for the A-League, NRL, NFL, AFL, BBL, National and international Cricket Women's Ashes Series and FIA World Rally.

The stadium is the largest facility of its kind on the North Coast and services a wide area. There are associated opportunities for allied sports science industries in conjunction with Southern Cross University to establish in the stadium area and capacity to support sports tourism. The Office of Sport has developed the draft North Coast Sport and Recreation Plan which recognises Coffs Harbour as a Regional Sporting Hub. South Coffs Harbour already supports many of the facilities identified by the Plan as essential to hub development, and existing synergies can be leveraged.

Community sports infrastructure, in addition to supporting physical activity, offer opportunities for employment, volunteering, community pride and connectedness. Council's Open Space Strategy and Coffs Harbour Sports Facility Plan 2016 prioritises community sporting facilities.

Future planning must align the objectives of Council and the sport sector, while increasing participation, contributing to economic growth and delivering sustainable assets that are well used and designed for all.

### Collaboration opportunity 5

Council, in conjunction with Office of Sport and other stakeholders, will deliver a regional sporting hub at South Coffs Harbour by:

- Building on the Stadium and Regional Sports Hub, and new Allied Health Centre, to expand transport and connectivity opportunities and Regional Indoor Sports Centre
- exploring opportunities for group and tourist accommodation in the precinct to support the stadium and sports-science hub

**Timing:** Medium

## Objective 12

*Support the local arts, cultural and creative energy of Coffs Harbour*

### Actions

- 12.1 | Integrate cultural infrastructure planning with land use and precinct planning.
- 12.2 | Improve digital connectivity and innovation among the region's artists and creative industries.
- 12.3 | Support capacity building, training and growth of regional creative industries.

Culture is recognised as the fourth pillar of sustainability, with arts and culture playing a vital role in building strong, resilient and cohesive communities. Cultural vitality is essential to a healthy sustainable society as arts and culture are key drivers in the growth and development of the region. This is reinforced by the Australia Council for Arts in which 85% of Australians surveyed agreed that the arts make for a more rich and meaningful life.

The Regional City Action Plan aligns with Council's *Creative Coffs Culture Strategic Plan 2017-2022* and *City Centre Masterplan 2031*, which contain a number of goals, strategies and projects that support key priorities that were identified by the community. The Cultural Strategic Plan and Masterplan are progressively being implemented throughout the city.

A robust network of infrastructure and facilities are needed to maintain a thriving arts and culture sector. This enables people to come together to learn, share, create, store, practice, purchase, sell or experience culture. This includes hard infrastructure such as art galleries and museums as well as soft infrastructure like networks of industry associations, parks and other public spaces.

Coffs Harbour is home to rich and unique cultural identities and communities that should be preserved honoured and celebrated. Coffs Harbour is home to the Saltwater Freshwater Arts Alliance, a unique organisation bringing together representatives of 10

land councils. Coffs Harbour also has multi tourism award winning Aboriginal Cultural Tourism operators such as Giingan Gumbayngirr and Wajanna Yam Gumbayngirr plus the Yarrowarra Aboriginal Cultural Centre and Gallery. It has two National Museums: the National Cartoon Gallery and the Sikh Heritage Museum of Australia as well as the Coffs Harbour Regional Museum, Jetty Memorial Theatre and the Coffs Harbour Regional Gallery.

The *Cultural Infrastructure Plan 2025+* provides the strategic framework for how the NSW Government will invest in and support cultural infrastructure across the state until 2025 and beyond. There are significant opportunities for cultural infrastructure to support the NSW Government's commitment for regional economic and social development by creating jobs, attracting visitors and making regional cities more liveable.

Creative industries hold significant importance locally for; tourism, cultural and regional identity, social and community inclusion and economic benefit. By interlacing cultural infrastructure into the fabric of the community and taking advantage of the green and blue grid attraction of our environment, the stories of our indigenous, maritime, colonial and modern life can be told while preserving and celebrating Coffs Harbour for future generations.

Investment in cultural infrastructure and creativity such as a Regional Performing Arts Centre will help create jobs, bring people together, attract tourism and support placemaking, to ensure Coffs Harbour is distinguished as a thriving and dynamic cultural sector and an appealing place to live and work.

### Collaboration opportunity 6

Regional NSW, Create NSW and Council will continue to work with stakeholders and the community to undertake further planning and investigation around the feasibility for a Regional Performing Arts Centre/Theatre that supports the community vision.

**Timing:** Ongoing





# Work

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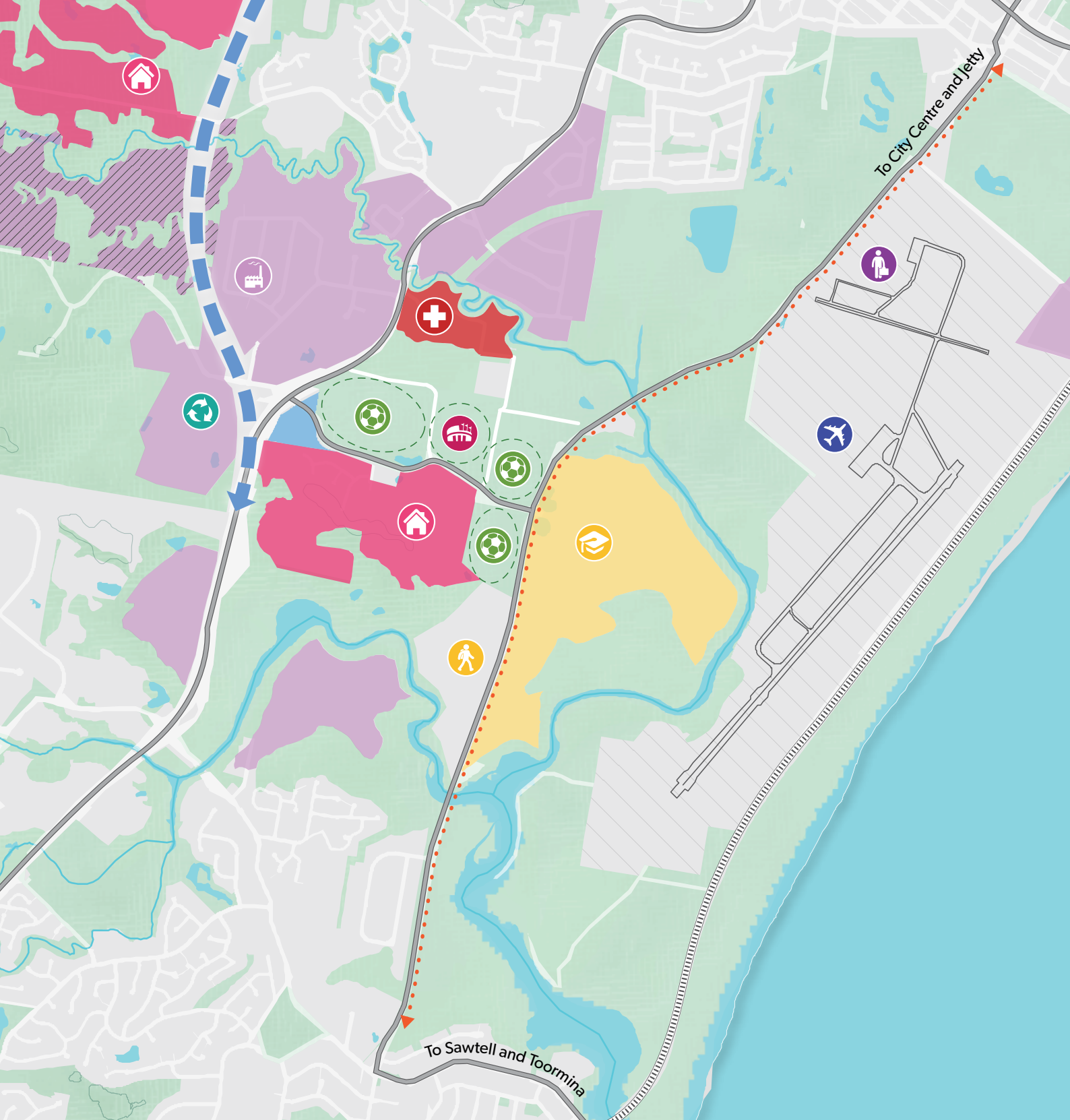
*Coffs Harbour Justice Precinct*



## Goal:

A skilled and innovative city blending work-life balance and subregional cooperation





**Figure 9:** South Coffs Enterprise Area

Future Connectivity	Environmental	Education Precinct	Gateway Employment Precinct
Railway	Parks and Reserves	Existing Urban Release Area	Sports Fields
Main road	Employment Land	Coffs Harbour Airport	Stadium
Pedestrian/Cycleway Access	Investigation Area - Employment Land	Isles Drive Industrial Park	Health Precinct
Waterway	Existing Urban Release Area	Regional Waste Facility	School

## Objective 13

*Grow South Coffs Harbour as an integrated enterprise area*

### Actions

- 13.1 | Improve precinct character by establishing a clearly defined centre, greater housing mix and integration of public areas and open space.
- 13.2 | Secure expansion and innovation capacity of employment anchors.
- 13.3 | Enhance internal and external connectivity.
- 13.4 | Encourage co-location of compatible uses and activities to maximise land usage and infrastructure.

South Coffs Harbour hosts a cluster of economic and employment anchors and health, education, aviation and sporting facilities. Each anchor has capacity to grow and expand with public and private investment. Where planned effectively, the economic productivity of clusters like those at South Coffs Harbour can increase substantially over time as independent institutions act as 'anchors' for agglomerating and supporting uses and generate economies of scale.

Fostering the growth of South Coffs Harbour as an integrated enterprise area will generate enduring career opportunities and higher paid jobs and drive high-value and high skill employment opportunities. A clearly defined centre and better physical connections between anchors can help achieve this outcome.

Opportunities will be maximised by appropriate internal and surrounding land uses, connectivity, student and key worker housing, future expansion opportunities, effective land use interface and local infrastructure needs including walking and cycling paths and public domain improvements. Transport to activate night-time economy places and events will also be important. The precinct will be attractive for residents, workers and visitors. Collaborative governance arrangements will facilitate growth and development of the enterprise area.

### Collaboration opportunity 7

Council, in conjunction with Southern Cross University, University of NSW, TAFE NSW, NSW Health (Mid North Coast Local Health District) and the Department of Education will collaborate to grow South Coffs Harbour as an integrated enterprise area by:

- supporting shared use in service and facility planning
- reviewing the location and scale of a neighbourhood centre to create a more dynamic heart
- offering a mix of land uses and diversity of housing, including medium density housing options around a neighbourhood centre, seniors housing, affordable key worker housing and student accommodation
- improving connections within the precinct and considering opportunities from the Coffs bypass
- considering opportunities for events that activate the precinct and offer activities for South Coffs residents
- planning for integrated public areas, facilities and open space
- planning for safe places to walk with improved lighting

**Timing:** Medium

*Coffs Harbour Hospital*



# South Coffs Harbour Employment Anchors

## Health

Health care and social assistance is the highest value industry and employment sector in Coffs Harbour. Coffs Harbour Hospital is the major referral hospital for the Coffs Network of the Mid North Coast Local Health District with specialist medical and surgical services for the Coffs Harbour, Bellingen and Nambucca LGAs. The hospital site also supports university teaching facilities and a separate private medical centre.<sup>4</sup>

The NSW Government has committed \$194 million to enhance the hospital. Consistent take-up of floor space suggests a market for new medical, specialist and allied health uses. Increases in building height and density may be needed and medium or long-term expansion options should be investigated, including increased development densities, underground car parks, expansion to the north, and connections across Newport's Creek or expansion to the B5 zoned land west of the Pacific Highway. Development viability and environmental constraints including flooding should be considered.

## Sport

The regional sports fields and international stadium at the centre of the precinct along Stadium Drive, opposite the South Coffs residential urban release area, must be integrated with wider planning for the precinct (see Objective 11).

*Coffs Harbour Education Campus*

## Education

Education employs around 2,700 people in Coffs Harbour with an industry value add of \$209.8 million. Coffs Harbour Education Precinct, including Southern Cross University, TAFE NSW and Coffs Harbour Senior College is a focal point for the city's strong education presence. Southern Cross University supports tech-based business and growth at the Coffs Harbour Innovation Centre and TAFE NSW support technical industry and trade opportunities at the TAFE Trades Hub. There are also strong links between health, sport and education anchors particularly with the new allied health facility at the education campus.

Tertiary education providers are rethinking their land use requirements, with students learning outside traditional lecture theatres. Future planning of the education precinct can build on existing strengths and services and respond to these needs by offering a broader range of supporting uses such as startups, events or community uses.

## Aviation

Coffs Harbour Airport is a strategic gateway asset that can better fulfil its role as a regional gateway for business, tourism and personal travel (see Objective 7).



## Objective 14

*Optimise employment land delivery across the city*

### Actions

- 14.1 | Characterise employment areas in local plans to reflect their strategic employment role.
- 14.2 | Enhance employment land stock by restricting encroachment of non-compatible uses and identifying infrastructure needs including suitable freight and transport access.
- 14.3 | Coordinate employment land delivery to secure sufficient employment land supply.
- 14.4 | Maximise the competitive and natural advantages of employment precincts.

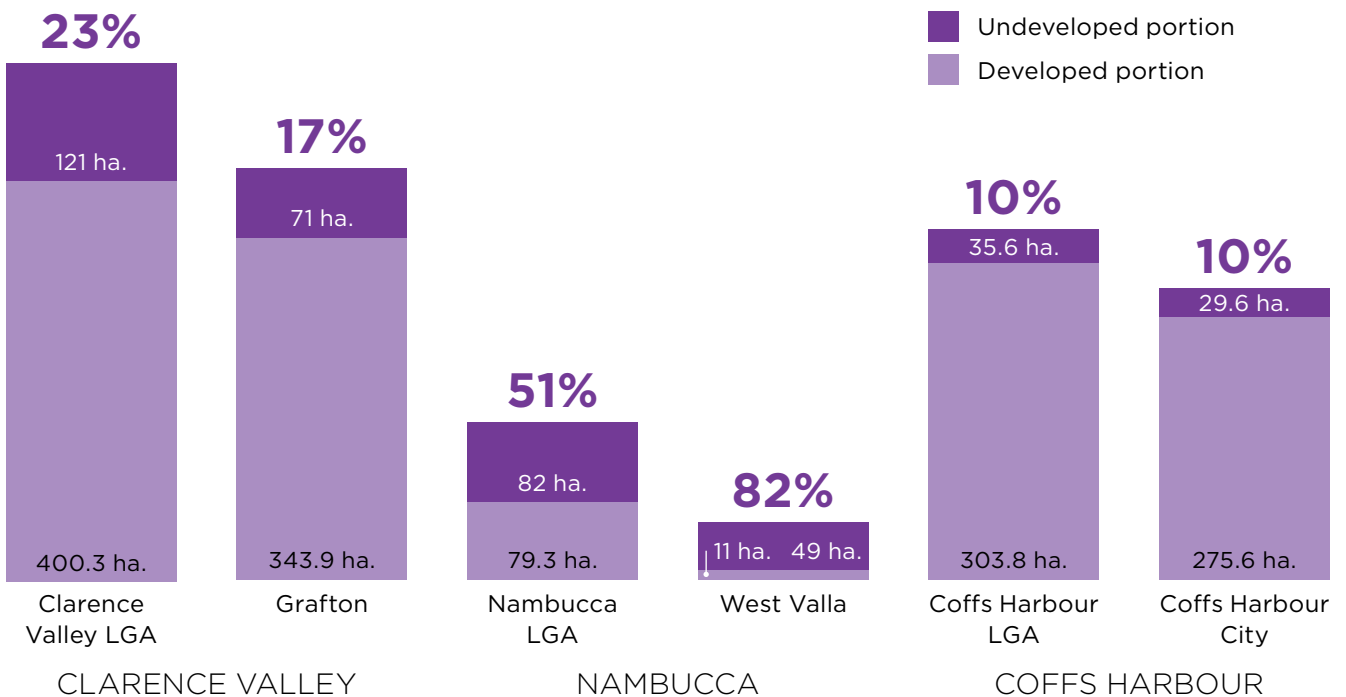
The availability of industrial land provides capacity for new job opportunities, research and development, new industries in areas such as data storage, transfer and technology that take advantages of the city's high quality National Broadband Network and the expansion of existing operations. Readily available and suitable industrial land can also help maximise economic and employment growth in emerging environmental, energy and circular economic fields.

The capacity of existing and future employment land will be increased by better defining the role and mix of employment areas and providing scope for additional building height under local plans. The yield of available employment land will be limited by the need for infrastructure servicing, mitigating and managing hazards, and protecting environmental values.

Investigation areas such as West Woolgoolga have been identified, however, these sites face servicing and environmental constraints that may affect development yield and viability. Lands adjoining Coffs Harbour Airport could offer space for jobs, subject to an appropriate local planning framework.

The adjacent Clarence Valley and Nambucca LGAs have significant areas of large floorplate industrial land available to help serve the subregional needs of the North Coast. Opportunities exist for Coffs Harbour to grow and prosper as a central processing, logistics and employment hub as these lands are developed.

**Figure 10:** Employment land availability, 2016-17



Source: DPE 2019, North Coast Housing and Land Monitor

## Objective 15

### Nurture the Coffs Coast food bowl

#### Actions

- 15.1 | Promote the Coffs Coast Harvest brand and expand the Mid North Coast Food Forum to showcase regional produce and leverage education and industry links to grow agri-tech.
- 15.2 | Manage the interface between agricultural production areas and other land uses by adopting provisions in local plans that avoid conflicts with residential, rural residential and sensitive environmental areas.
- 15.3 | Develop commercial, tourist and recreation activities in locations that complement and promote the agricultural sector.

As a city that was built against a backdrop of bananas, Coffs Harbour's economy continues to be supported by agriculture. The agri-food economy is vital and the components that service the sector can be extended through value chains to include packagers, distributors, processors, retailers, restaurants and food outlets.

Agribusiness is entering a technological and logistics boom, with integrated intensive farming methods using blockchains, Internet of Things, artificial intelligence and robotics. These technologies are exciting for agribusiness and for Coffs Harbour's suppliers who can compete in this space. Current logistics connections between Brisbane, Newcastle and Sydney means products from this area can be produced, packaged then moved to markets by air and road.

A Coffs Coast Harvest brand can be an economic driver for the wider region. Export produce in Coffs Harbour is focussed on fruit and vegetables and seafood harvesting. The wider subregion offers a supplementary range of produce, including dairy, beef and nuts, that can be part of this brand and diversify the sector. Additional value will be driven through the agriculture sector with the research and development of value-add manufacturing.

A strategic approach is required to avoid land use compatibility issues, protect the long-term viability of production areas and expand rural sectors and communities. The blueberry harvest coincides with seasonal tourism and increases temporary populations - placing pressure on housing and accommodation supply. Opportunities for short-term workers' housing may be a viable alternative to expanding permanent housing stock.

Source: Coffs Harbour City Council, 2017, Coffs Harbour Economic Development Strategy 2017-2022

Below: Fresh produce on display at local market.

#### Coffs Harbour LGA blueberry production



**92%**

of NSW's Blueberry Production



**70%**

of local Agricultural production





## Objective 16

*Foster the city's innovation ecosystem through life-long learning and promote new economy jobs*

### Actions

- 16.1 | Enable and promote a greater range of employment-generating uses in employment and business areas and provide local incentives that support innovation in target sectors.
- 16.2 | Promote a greater diversity of uses in retail centres, including housing and recreation to provide for changing retail activities.
- 16.3 | Promote local start-ups and entrepreneurs through business and investment support tools and skill development.

A changing and growing regional city needs to provide capacity for innovation, adaptability and resilience in preparing for future needs. New economy businesses support productivity and require an innovation ecosystem to drive economic development. Wider societal shifts will also influence the needs of industry, requiring a more agile approach to business that meets the needs of the new economy.

The city's fibre-to-the-premises communications infrastructure provides an advantage for new economy sector development. Access to the National Broadband Network (NBN) has encouraged a shift towards remote working and business operations that can interact with national and international markets. Further support for emerging entrepreneurialism will draw on links with education to develop an entrepreneurial culture, digital or otherwise.

The city can also leverage its natural advantages to support innovative enterprises such as the National Marine Science Centre that attract young and older people alike to live, work or study. The centre was established in Coffs Harbour in 2001 and has become a national leader in marine science and management due to its ability to undertake research in the Solitary Islands Marine Park where both tropical and temperate currents meet.

Coffs Harbour offers a wide-range of education services spanning pre-school through to tertiary options. These facilities are critical for youth retention and the promotion of life-long learning that can support productivity and innovation.

The importance of retaining young people in the city and facilitating career pathways or education in

digital technologies for young people requires partnerships between the NSW Government, education facilities and Council to give young people the knowledge and skills to link with training and job opportunities.

Leveraging local strengths and responding to emerging trends in established sectors will support a more dynamic economy. This dynamic economy will include a range of new creative industry sectors including those based on technology such as gaming, augmented reality and virtual reality. Changing consumer behaviours and technologies are shifting retailing preferences and may influence land use needs. The retail sector is the city's second largest employer and services a wide catchment. Redevelopment opportunities that activate streets and bring more amenity and mixed uses will support retail areas by diversifying retail-focused centres without undermining the strength of the city centre.

### Education technology pioneers

Coffs Harbour-based IT company Janison is a new-economy success story. Founded in 1998 with the vision of taking the delivery of education into the future and beyond, today, Janison are an award winning, industry leader recognised for bold and pioneering solutions. The company listed on the Australian Stock Exchange in 2017 and ranks among the Australian Financial Review's Top 100 Most Innovative Companies in Australia and New Zealand.

Janison's primary office is located in Coffs Harbour, where early access to the national broadband rollout and work-life balance allowed it to attract and nurture talent and pursue innovative solutions.

Delivering digital learning and online assessment solutions for global corporations, governments and education bodies in more than 100 countries, Janison are at the forefront of using the latest technology to revolutionise learning. This includes, closing the digital divide via solutions to deliver online exams uninterrupted in locations across Australia and the world with poor or zero internet connectivity and by partnering with Microsoft and Google to harness the next boundary-breaking solution to transform learning for millions of people.

This year, Janison was praised for a world-first by successfully delivering NAPLAN Online to more than 200,000 students across Australia. This figure will more than double next year and will rise to almost one million students by 2020. Internationally, the company's work for the British Council has seen their assessment solution deliver life-changing English language proficiency exams in remote regions in Nepal, India and South America.

# Live

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*Coffs Harbour*



## Goal:

A regional exemplar of coastal, cosmopolitan living set within the green embrace of the Great Dividing Range



## Objective 17

*Deliver a city that responds to Coffs Harbour's unique green cradle setting and offer housing choice*

### Actions

- 17.1 | Promote a sustainable growth footprint and enhance place-specific character and design outcomes.
- 17.2 | Implement incentives to support increased residential opportunities in the city centre and priority urban renewal areas through infill development.
- 17.3 | Promote low-rise medium density housing opportunities that maintain the scale and character appropriate of existing neighbourhoods and are in areas with access to services and public open space.
- 17.4 | Support a greater variety and supply of affordable housing.

The coastal escarpment provides a distinct green cradle that offers a visual connection to nature or agricultural pursuits. This unique geography requires a careful approach to growth that balances protection of biodiversity and the sensitive coastal strip, the best use of resources and delivery of a wider range of housing options with the creation of places that foster a strong local identity.

Remaining land available for residential development is diminishing and new areas for housing are limited

*The Summit, North Coffs Harbour*

by the city's natural frame. This requires renewal of existing areas to cater for new housing, creating a more compact urban form.

The city centre and priority urban renewal areas have been identified (Figure 12) where access to existing infrastructure, active and public transport and the blue and green open space grid can support greater housing choice. Guiding objectives for the growth of these areas should pair renewal with place-specific outcomes. Local plans can support renewal objectives by exploring minimum density targets, site consolidation and housing diversity mechanisms.

Coffs Harbour is an extremely desirable place to live and continues to attract new residents which is putting pressure on housing supply and in particular rental accommodation. Offering greater housing choice and supply will help address these issues and will also cater for shifting housing demand, people's lifestyle needs, changing budgets and the types of housing needed for young families, older people and singles.

The following areas should be considered for low-rise medium density housing opportunities that maintain the scale and character of neighbourhoods:

- transitional areas between urban renewal precincts and existing neighbourhoods;
- land near local centres or connected by walking and cycling links;
- lower density areas undergoing replacement of older housing stock;
- areas of social housing that could be renewed and with good access to services, transport and jobs, and
- areas with access to public open space.

A range of tenures, price points, rental housing for lower-income households and affordable and social housing is equally important. Housing diversity and choice will improve affordability and help to meet demographic and household changes.



## Objective 18

*Coordinate infrastructure for new housing release across the Coffs Coast*

### Actions

- 18.1 | Progress North Boambee Valley as a priority housing release area through coordinating infrastructure delivery.
- 18.2 | Accelerate new housing by identifying key infrastructure investment needs.

The city's growing and changing population is expected to generate the need for additional dwellings by 2036. As the city becomes more compact, adequate land and greenfield options will still be needed to offer housing choice and to influence housing affordability. Coordinated investment in servicing urban release and investigation areas will support new housing supply in proximity to the city.

Council has reviewed the Coffs Harbour *Local Growth Management Strategy* to identify adequate land capacity. Investigation areas for future residential development have been identified at West and North Coffs Harbour. These areas are an extension to existing urban areas and can leverage proximity to services, infrastructure and jobs.

North Boambee Valley is the city's largest urban release area and has the capacity to provide at least 10 per cent of the LGA's projected housing needs to 2036. This is a priority housing release area and will need further infrastructure planning and delivery to accelerate supply.

Outside the Plan footprint, additional releases at the fringe of Woolgoolga and a new settlement at Bonville can provide longer-term greenfield opportunities.

Lifestyle housing options in adjoining LGAs complement the city's housing offering, are within commuting distance and are, in some cases, more affordable. Journey to work data shows that the relationship between Coffs Harbour, Bellingen and Nambucca is particularly strong. Other release areas in adjoining LGAs at South Urunga and Valla will supplement greenfield housing supply, but infrastructure servicing capacity is a constraint.

### Figure 11:

Estimated residential land availability\*, 2016-17

#### Coffs Harbour



#### Coffs Harbour LGA



#### Coffs Harbour City

■ Undeveloped portion   ■ Developed portion

\*These totals do not include land rezoned for residential purposes at North Boambee Valley (approximately 94 hectares). The yield of this land will be further limited by the need to provide for infrastructure servicing, mitigate and manage hazards and protect environmental values. Source: DPE 2019, North Coast Housing and Land Monitor

*West Coffs Harbour*



1

## City centre and surrounds

- Investigate increased development capacity that delivers additional residential living opportunities and retains amenity and increases all-hour activity within the city centre to foster its growth as a live-work-play heart.
- Implement strategies to realise planned capacity outside the city centre.
- Foster stronger engagement with the city centre and links to the Coffs Creek.
- Support delivery of Cultural and Regional performing arts infrastructure.

2

## Park Beach

- Redefine Ocean Parade as a mixed-use activity hub.
- Investigate increasing development capacity alongside the creation of subtropical avenues.
- Foster stronger legibility and connectivity throughout the precinct.
- Respond to emerging coastal and flooding hazards.

3

## Jetty

- Enhance the Jetty Core as a mixed-use centre.
- Implement strategies to realise existing zoned capacity.
- Enhance local character and sense of place by leveraging the area's existing street pattern and laneway network, promoting view sharing and engaging with the area's historic features and coastal character.
- Integrate the Jetty Core and redeveloped Jetty Foreshores areas.

4

## South and North Coffs release areas

- Investigate suitability for low-rise medium density housing.
- Investigate student, key worker and aged accommodation in the South Coffs release area to support the precinct's enterprise and sporting function.

5

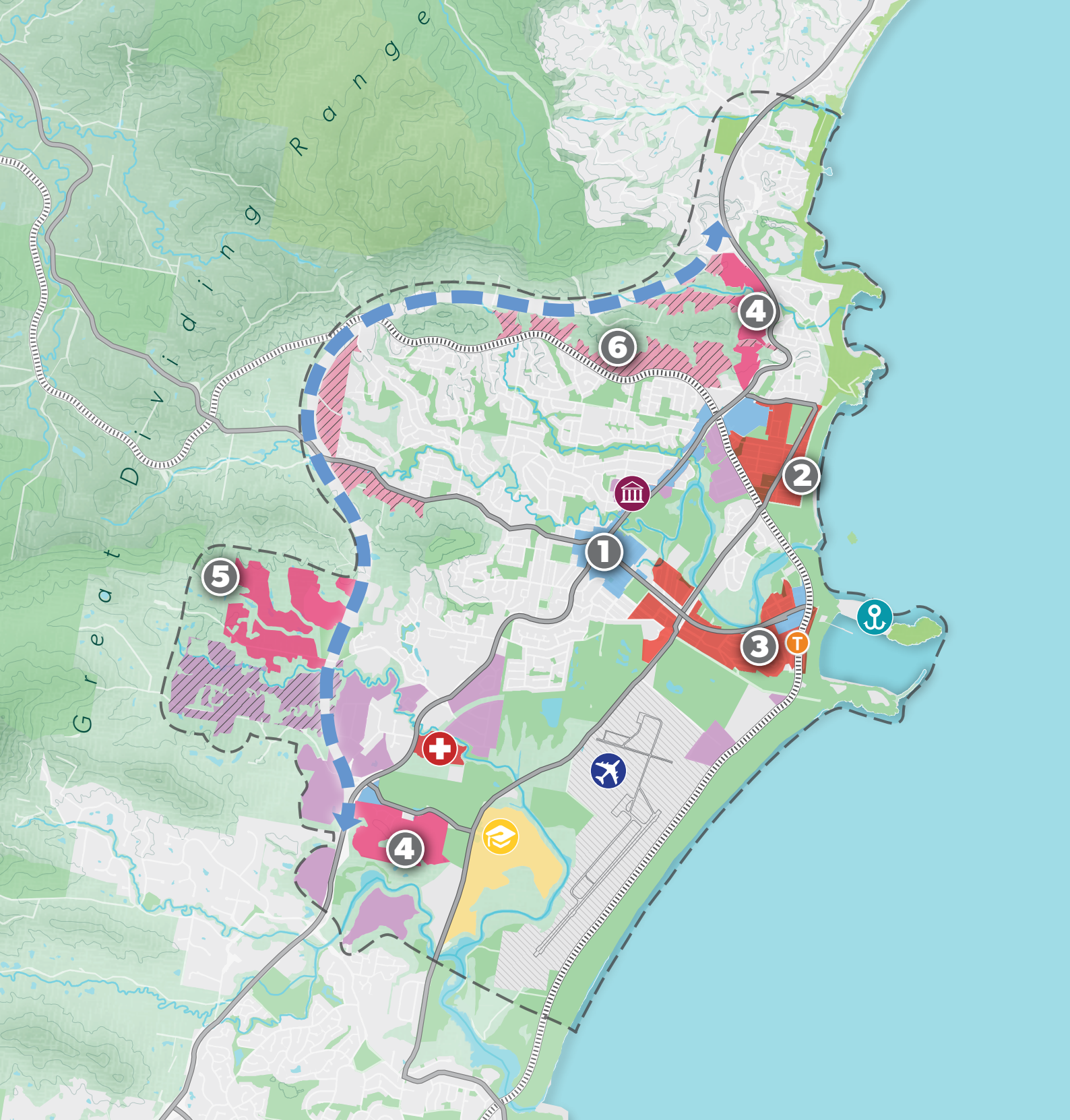
## North Boambee Valley

- Progress as a priority housing release area.
- Integrate with adjoining urban area.
- Support infrastructure delivery for flood storage and road access.
- Investigate scope for higher development yields.

6

## West and North Coffs Harbour investigation areas

- Plan for greenfield housing options.
- Clarify servicing feasibility.
- Integrate with adjoining urban area.



**Figure 12:** Coffs Harbour City - Urban renewal and release areas



## Objective 19

### *Strengthen resilience to natural hazards and climate change*

#### Actions

- 19.1 | Employ risk-responsive land use controls to avoid new development in high-risk areas and build local resilience.
- 19.2 | Mitigate natural hazards and incorporate resilience measures with triple bottom line benefits into coastal development.
- 19.3 | Consider sea level rise, flooding and coastal hazards when planning for infrastructure and incorporate resilient design and materials to reduce reconstruction and recovery costs.
- 19.4 | Incorporate evacuation considerations to manage risks in existing developed areas.

Coffs Harbour is prone to natural hazards, including bushfires, coastal erosion, rising sea levels, storms, floods, acid sulfate soils and landslips. Climate change is exacerbating some of these hazards. Within built-up urban areas, risk-responsive land use zoning and planning controls can minimise exposure and improve the built environment's resilience to natural hazards and climate change.

The city's geography and subtropical climate means that flooding and coastal hazards are an essential consideration for future growth. Council has invested in a flood mitigation programme to help reduce the effects of flash flooding in the city. The *Coffs Harbour Coastal Zone Management Plan* has been certified and gazetted by the NSW Environment Minister and will integrate with *SEPP (Coastal Management) 2018* to manage coastal hazards.

Incorporation of evacuation planning into strategic land use planning and development controls will minimise risk to life, while reducing the burden on emergency management personnel during and following natural hazard events, including floods. Future planning will take account of appropriate evacuation strategies where practicable.

The city's blue and green open space grid will also build resilience to natural hazards by complementing other natural hazard policies for flooding, storm surge, coastal erosion and sea-level rise. The grid contains natural vegetation susceptible to bushfire that will be managed to avoid encroachment by urban development.

Thermal and energy-efficient buildings, greenways and stormwater re-use should be incorporated into the design of developments and subdivisions and local planning controls. Land that is prone to hazards should not be developed unless the hazards can be managed appropriately.

*North Wall Beach, Coffs Harbour*





## Objective 20

*Strive for a carbon neutral future and enhance local biodiversity*

### Actions

- 20.1 | Contribute to NSW Government aspirational target of net zero emissions by 2050.
- 20.2 | Support waste recycling and management facilities and promote innovative solutions to reduce the volume of waste and reduce waste transport requirements.
- 20.3 | Protect scenic and cultural landscapes and iconic species such as the koala.
- 20.4 | Enhance local biodiversity and green assets across the city and sustainably manage the edge effects of urban development.

The NSW Government's Climate Change Policy Framework has set a target for NSW to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. This Plan will support this target by integrating land use and transport planning and limiting urban sprawl. Coffs Harbour's annual Sustainable Living Festival and Waste Conference promotes sustainable living and waste reduction.

Coffs Harbour City Council has set targets for its own operations of 100% renewable energy by 2030 and 50% emissions reduction (on 2010 levels) by 2025. Council's next steps include a plan for net zero emissions and engaging with the community to set targets for emissions reduction and renewable energy.

Additional policy measures can be taken to transition towards a carbon neutral future including the investigation of local incentives for green buildings, supporting small-scale renewable energy generation measures into the design of new

development and providing employment lands for research and development opportunities.

The planning and design of new developments must support the sustainable and effective collection and management of waste, including new approaches for re-using waste materials and resources within a circular economy. The Coffs Coast Resource Recovery Facility has been a leader in promoting re-use of organic waste and recycling to reduce landfill volumes. The facility services the Coffs Harbour, Bellingen and Nambucca LGAs and is approaching capacity. A new site will be identified through existing partnership arrangements.

Buildings can be more energy efficient and reduce costs for owners. Sustainable design must extend beyond individual buildings and low-carbon initiatives should apply to wider precincts.

In urban areas, selected tree species and understorey plants for parks and street planting can support wildlife movements and connections between habitat areas. Remnant vegetation should be incorporated into the planning and design of neighbourhoods; for example, in parks, school grounds and as street trees. Pockets of vegetation within urban areas provide habitat, help cool the environment and support cleaner waterways and air.

The *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* provides a framework and tools to avoid, minimise and offset impacts on biodiversity through the planning and development assessment process. Tools to protect biodiversity on private land include biodiversity stewardship agreements, conservation agreements and wildlife refuge agreements.

The New South Wales Government is also committed to ensuring koalas thrive in and around Coffs Harbour for generations to come. The New South Wales Koala Strategy has been developed to support this vision. Directing growth to identified investigation areas will help direct development away from the city's koala habitat and ease pressure on the natural environment that supports and protects koalas. New development must also ensure that it does not adversely impact on koalas or their habitat.

*City of Hope, sustainable housing, Coffs Harbour*



# Glossary

## Agri-tech

Technology used in agriculture, horticulture, and aquaculture to improve yields, efficiency and profitability. Agri-tech can be products, services or applications derived from agriculture that improve various input/output processes.

## Employment lands

Land zoned for industrial or similar purposes (i.e. land zoned B5 Business Development or B7 Business Park in planning instruments). These are generally lower density employment areas containing concentrations of businesses involved in manufacturing; transport and warehousing; service and repair trades and industries; integrated enterprises with a mix of administration, production, warehousing, research and development; and urban services and utilities.

## Greenfield housing

A new housing development area that has not been previously developed or used for other urban purposes.

## Green and blue grid

The network of green spaces, natural systems and semi-natural systems including parks, rivers, bushland and private gardens that are strategically planned, designed and managed to support good quality of life in the urban environment.

## Growth management strategy

A plan prepared to support effective and integrated planning across a local government area. Prepared as a single, whole of local government area document, or a series of related components, a local growth management strategy guides the development of new local environmental plans and development control plans to implement policy.

## Local plans

Statutory and non-statutory plans prepared by council for a local government area to guide planning decisions by local councils. Through the use of land zoning and other development controls, a local plan is typically the main mechanism for determining the type and amount of development which can occur on each parcel of land in NSW. Local plans are the main planning tool that shapes the future of communities and ensures local development is appropriate.

## Local incentives

The financial and planning incentives offered by local government to support the delivery of target development outcomes.

## Mixed use centres

Centres that facilitate a mixture of commercial, retail, residential and other land uses based on market demand and investment confidence rather than single land use zone boundaries.

## Public realm/domain

Public spaces, used with little or no restriction each day by the community, including parks, plazas, streets and public infrastructure.

## Subregion

A subset of the wider North Coast Region. The subregion was determined through consideration of land use relationships with Coffs Harbour as a regional city which extend to parts of the Clarence Valley, Bellingen, and Nambucca LGAs. This reflects the community of interest areas identified under the *North Coast Regional Plan 2036*.

# Endnotes

1. Coffs Harbour City Council, NSW Heritage Council & Office of Environment & Heritage, 2015, *Coffs Harbour Heritage Study 2015*.
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4. Hill PDA 2018, *Coffs Harbour Employment Anchor Analysis and Actions*.
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