

Confidential

**Central Coast Regional Economic Development and
Employment Strategy
(REDES) Report**

August 2009



Contents

Contents	1
Executive Summary	2
1 Introduction	4
2 A Strategy for Economic Development and Jobs	5
2.1 Overview – A Sustainable, Smart and Connected Region	5
2.2 Regional Context	6
2.2.1 The Economy	6
2.2.2 The Environment	7
2.2.3 Community Attitudes	8
2.3 Employment on the Central Coast	9
2.3.1 Employment Structure	9
2.3.2 Job Commuting	10
2.4 The Vision for the Central Coast	11
2.5 Regional Economic Development and Employment Strategy	12
2.5.1 The REDES Strategy	12
2.5.2 REDES Objectives	13
3 Developing the Economy	15
3.1 Strategy 1: Strengthening the Regional Economy	15
3.1.1 Context	15
3.1.2 Opportunities and Priorities	16
3.1.3 Actions Required	18
3.2 Strategy 2: Future Skills	22
3.3 Strategy 2.1: Creating a Learning Region	22
3.3.1 Context	22
3.3.2 Actions Required: S2.1 A Learning Region	23
3.3.3 Actions Required: S 2.2 Boosting Skills	24
3.4 Strategy 3: Knowledge and Innovation	27
3.4.1 Context	27
3.4.2 Actions Required	29
4 Planning the Future	31
4.1 Planning the Future	31
4.2 Strategy 4: Employment Lands	32
4.2.1 Context	32
4.2.2 Actions Required	34
4.3 Strategy 5: Centres Development	36
4.3.1 Context	36
4.3.2 Actions Required	37
4.4 Strategy 6: Infrastructure	39
4.4.1 Context	39
4.4.2 Actions Required	39
5 Supporting the Strategy	42
5.1 Supporting the Strategy	42
5.2 Strategy 7: Marketing the Region	42
5.2.1 Context	42
5.2.2 Actions Required	43
5.3 Strategy 8: Regional Information	45
5.3.1 Context	45
5.3.2 Actions Required	45
5.4 Implementing the REDES	48
5.4.1 Acting on the Strategy	48
Appendix A: REDES Strategies and Actions	50
Appendix B - Economic Development Issues	62
Disclaimer	64

Executive Summary

The Central Coast constitutes a significant regional economy, with a population of 298,000 in 2006 and a total of 86,000 local jobs.

The *Central Coast Regional Strategy* projects the population to grow by a further 100,000 people in the period to 2031, with another 45,000 local jobs being required. Achieving this growth in employment is the major economic development challenge for the region.

The REDES is a long term strategy for sustainable economic development and for securing the necessary jobs growth for the Central Coast.

A detailed analysis conducted of the Central Coast economy has highlighted a number of interrelated issues that need to be addressed by the REDES. These are economic structure, future jobs, key infrastructure, employment lands and the sustainability and connectedness of the Central Coast Region.

While the REDES has a horizon to 2031, an immediate focus in this strategy document is on the next 5 years and actions that can be taken to strengthen the regional economy and to develop and attract new jobs, which build on current advantages. It also includes actions to start building the foundations for those new areas of advantage for the region, which will become the basis for future prosperity over the new two decades. This includes: creating a positive environment for investment; improving the skills system; strengthening business and encouraging innovation; developing new infrastructure; and expanding research activity in the region.

The key themes for the REDES are a regional economy that is *sustainable, smart and connected*, and these capture the vision for a vibrant Central Coast Region.

- The long term economic vision for the region is for a strong and growing Central Coast Economy with an economically and environmentally sustainable industry and employment structure (including more high skill local jobs and larger enterprises). It will be maximising skilled jobs through building on its current advantages, developing key industry clusters and encouraging new industries.
- The region will be connected with efficient transport networks and telecommunications, including high speed broadband. It will have a stronger external focus, with more businesses servicing national and global markets. It would be developing and using new knowledge from local research and innovation in business and at a growing university. This research would be creating new knowledge based businesses. Businesses will be attracted to locate in the Strategic Centres (Gosford Regional City and Tuggerah-Wyong Major Centre) and to other major employment nodes in the region.
- From a social perspective, major inroads would be made into reducing unemployment and lifting workforce participation. There would be more high skill local jobs available, and the commute rate would be stabilised and reduced.
- The region would maintain its key environmental assets (coastal and inland) and be recognised for best practice in resources management and in environmentally sensitive urban planning and design.
- There would be a strong learning culture in the community and in business, with education and training being recognised as life long pursuits. This would be reflected in higher school completion rates, improved transitions to post school education and an increase in the levels of training in all sectors of industry. Business and the education sector would be working together on clear pathways to employment for young people and for persons seeking to re-enter the workforce.
- There would be a strong integration of economic development and planning processes, to ensure the region can be successful in fully realising the opportunities generated by population

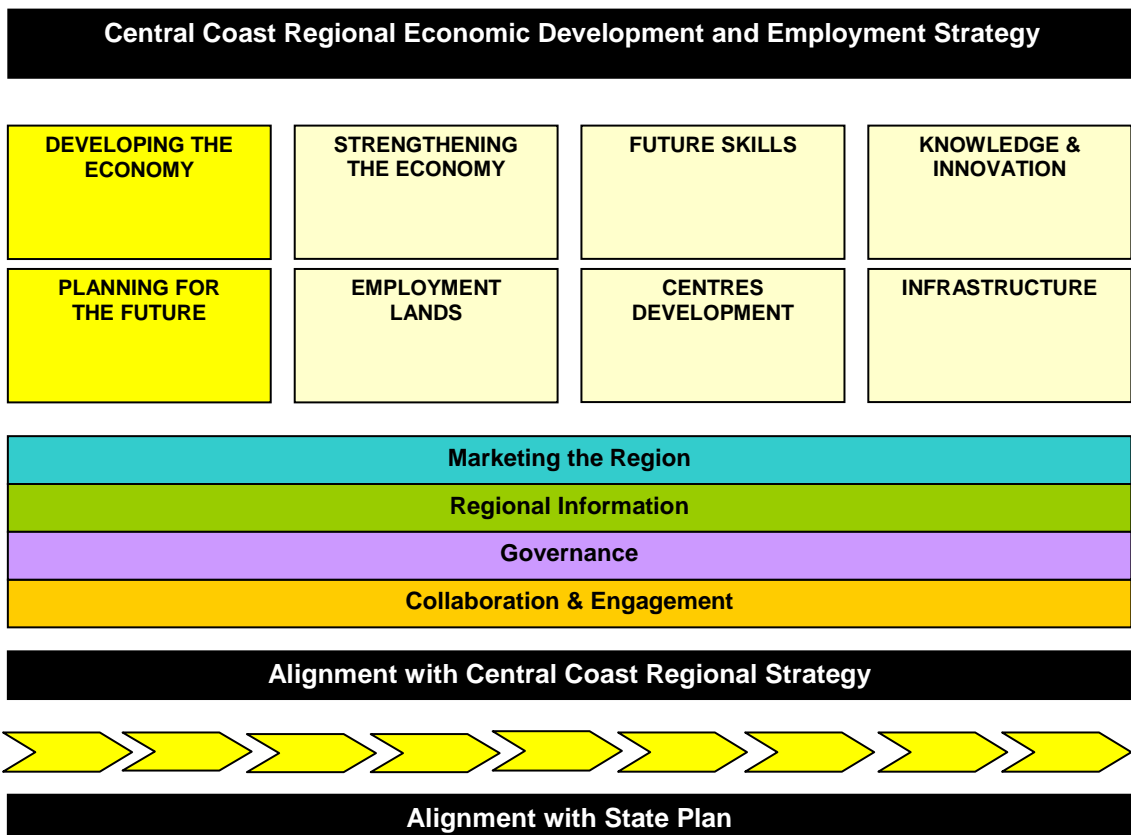
growth, and in capturing new opportunities in a highly competitive world for investment and jobs. Employment lands and key infrastructure would be developed to support industry growth. Infrastructure development will be planned and sequenced to support a growing community and to allow for growth in businesses and jobs.

- Planning processes would ensure that new opportunities for investment, business and jobs can be realised.
- There would be a regional partnership approach, involving all tiers of government and business in facilitating new business and in strengthening existing key sectors. The Central Coast would be recognised as a major economic region and as a good place to do business.
- There would be strong partnerships and networks in place, which would allow business and the general community to work productively together, and to collaborate on regional issues.

There are two major segments of the REDES: *developing the economy* and *planning the future*. The key strategies and actions are in several areas: Developing the Economy: Strengthening the Economy, Future Skills, Knowledge and Innovation; and Planning the Future: Employment Lands; Centres Development; Infrastructure.

The region has a unique opportunity to shape future development in ways, which are sustainable from both an economic and environmental perspective.

The following diagram provides an overview of the structure of the REDES.



1 Introduction

The *Central Coast Regional Strategy (CCRS)* is shaping economic and social development and associated planning policies in the region to 2031.¹ The regional strategy is focused on ensuring land is available in appropriate locations to accommodate the projected population growth and the associated housing, employment and environmental requirements over this period.

This *Regional Economic Development and Employment Strategy (REDES)* provides the economic development and employment strategy to underpin the overall regional strategy for the period to 2031.

This report analyses the key issues affecting the Central Coast, outlines the future directions for the region and articulates a strategy to achieve the growth in activity and jobs that will be needed to secure a sustainable region, and reduce commute rates.

The development of this strategy has drawn on commissioned research on regional information and analysis (demographic analysis) and on education and skills (*Smarter Central Coast Project*); and on research studies and policy papers from government agencies, the Councils and industry groups.² It has also involved extensive consultations with business and the community. Business organisations, including UDIA and the New South Wales Business Chamber have also been active in responding to the *Central Coast Regional Strategy*, and undertaking research on the future of the region.

The Central Coast Regional Strategy aims to accommodate an additional 100,000 persons and to create over 45,000 new jobs in the period to 2031.³ Key issues are the economics of future growth and development; the overall jobs target, and the ways in which these new jobs will be generated. Employment is recognised as a major challenge, and growth has been affected by the economic slowdown experienced in 2009.

The key for the future will be the pursuit of an active and region-wide approach to economic development and employment.

1 *Central Coast Regional Strategy*, Department of Planning, New South Wales 2008

2 *Central Coast Demographic Overview*, Centre for Urban & Regional Studies, University of Newcastle, 2008; Final Report, Smarter Central Coast Project, November 2008 Buchan Consulting.

3 *Central Coast Regional Strategy*, Department of Planning New South Wales 2008 P5
Buchan Consulting

2 A Strategy for Economic Development and Jobs

2.1 Overview – A Sustainable, Smart and Connected Region

The REDES is a long term strategy for the economic development of the Central Coast, which will enable the objectives of the broader *Central Coast Regional Strategy (CCRS)* to be achieved, over the period to 2031.

There are several horizons in the strategy: Horizon 1: 1-5 years - where the economic structure and regional advantages are largely fixed and current planned infrastructure and development projects are underway; Horizon 2: 6-15 years -where it is possible to significantly reshape the economy, create new areas of advantage and new industries, and to develop new infrastructure; and Horizon 3: beyond 15 years - where threshold levels for continued growth in new industries have been achieved.

While the key directions for the strategy cover the period to 2031, an immediate focus in this document is on the next 5 years and on actions that can be taken to strengthen the economy and to develop new jobs, which build on current recognised advantages.

At the same time, it includes the actions needed to start building the foundations for new areas of advantage for the region, and which will create prosperity over the next two decades. This includes: creating a positive environment for investment; improving the skills system; strengthening business and encouraging innovation; developing new infrastructure; and expanding research activity in the region.

The REDES is also designed to be a dynamic document that will be reviewed on a regular basis. A mechanism will be put in place to provide direction and track progress, with a major review to be conducted every 5 years.

The regional economy has a number of characteristics.

- The Central Coast constitutes a significant regional economy, with a population of 298,000 in 2006 and with a total of 86,000 local jobs.⁴ The population is projected to grow by a further 100,000 people in the period to 2031, with another 45,000 local jobs required. The region is integrated through the local jobs market and through businesses that are servicing the regional market. The size of the population and its distribution underpins a significant number of local businesses.
- Demographic trends have been one of the major drivers of economic development and employment growth on the Central Coast. The increase in population has driven regional growth with impacts on activity and employment in a range of sectors including: housing construction, retail, education, health services and community services. As a major region with a growing population, the Central Coast has been attractive to businesses seeking a local labour force in an accessible and cost effective location.
- At the same time, the region - because of its strategic location between Sydney and the Hunter, and the availability of well located and competitively priced employment lands - has attracted food processors, manufacturers and logistics companies that are servicing broader state, national and international markets. Goods-producing sectors (20% of jobs) include manufacturing and construction and are generally servicing broader markets, and transport and logistics accounted for over 5600 jobs (7%) in the region.

⁴ In 2006, there were 86,034 jobs located on the Central Coast (49,684 or 58% in Gosford, and 36,350 or 42% in Wyong. Buchan Consulting analysis of ABS Census 2006, Working Population Data – Gosford and Wyong LGAs.

The outlook for the region is a positive one with the CCRS predicting significant population growth. This growth will generate higher levels of local demand and generate new jobs. The major challenge will be to generate the 45,000 jobs that are needed to accommodate an expanded labour force and to reduce commuting to employment outside of the region.

The key to securing these jobs will be an active economic development strategy combined with effective planning and environmental management, to create a region with a sustainable industry structure, and which is well connected internally and externally.

2.2 Regional Context

2.2.1 The Economy

A detailed analysis of the Central Coast Economy has highlighted a number of interrelated issues that need to be addressed by the REDES.⁵ These are economic structure, future jobs, key infrastructure, employment lands and the sustainability and the connectedness of the Central Coast Region.

The region has a number of characteristics that impact on future economic development and these include the following.

- **Demographic trends:** The Central Coast has experienced a dual pattern of population growth, with older persons being attracted for retirement living and families moving to the region. Families have been attracted to the area by affordable housing and a coastal lifestyle, while still having good accessibility to the Sydney metropolitan area.⁶ This pattern has produced growth at both ends of the age spectrum (mature aged persons and families with school aged children), and this has implications for the future pattern of demand for services (both public and private). The following data provide an indication of ageing. There is an above average concentration of people aged 55+ (28%) when compared to New South Wales (22%) and Australia (22%).⁷ Projections indicate that this trend will continue, and 37% of the Central Coast's population (or 153,940 persons) will be aged 55+ by 2031 (up from 28% now).⁸ This will have implications for future services demand and for the local labour market. At the same time, there is some out-migration of younger persons aged 19-29 years for education and for employment reasons.
- **Industry structure:** The Central Coast economy is comprised of a large number of small and medium sized businesses. At the smaller end, there is a significant number of micro businesses and home based businesses - many of which service localised markets. There are few large employers. Of the 22,500 businesses in the region, only 72 employed 100 or more persons; 750 employed between 20 and 99; 2544 employed between 5 and 19; and 6471 businesses employed between 1 and 4 persons. The larger employers include the health service, local government, several manufacturers, food processors, logistics and distribution centres, clubs, resorts, call centres, large retailers and the education sector (schools, University and TAFE). The region has been successful in attracting larger businesses in goods-producing industries (manufacturers and food processors) and in some goods related services (logistics), with these businesses being part of national or global enterprises. There are only a handful of locally grown large businesses located on the Central Coast.
- **A narrow jobs base:** Compared with other regions, the Central Coast has a narrow jobs base that is highly reliant on population related services (mainly health, retail, construction) and is

5 This has included discussions with over 80 large businesses and regional stakeholders, a survey of 300 SMEs and a survey of 400 individuals.

6 Industry, Councils and key stakeholder are keen for it to be recognised as a major economic region.

7 *Economic Opportunities of an Ageing Population-Part A Draft Report*, NSW Premiers Department, Business Central Coast, NSW Department of State and Regional Development March 2006 SGS. P22

8 *Economic Opportunities of an Ageing Population-Part A Draft Report*, NSW Premiers Department, Business Central Coast, NSW Department of State and Regional Development March 2006 SGS 3

under-represented in knowledge and business services (business services, professional services, technical services, finance) jobs. Many of the Central Coast residents, who are employed in the knowledge and business services sectors, are commuting to jobs in Sydney. In 2006, there were 120,712 employed persons living on the Central Coast and 86,040 jobs located in the Region. This is indicative of the pattern of commuting, with around 38,000 residents commuting to jobs outside the region.⁹ The jobs gap represented around 29% of employed residents (37% for males - 24,000 and 19% for females - 10,600).

- **Skill levels:** Relative to New South Wales overall and to the Sydney Region, the Central Coast has: lower levels of skills, reflected in lower average education levels and a smaller share of the population with post school qualifications. On an occupation basis, the region tends to have a higher percentage of skilled trades, production and transport and distribution workers. It has less high order *white collar* occupations (including managers, administrators and professionals) compared with the Sydney metropolitan area. Persons in professional and managerial occupations make up a large share of the job commuters.
- **Part time jobs:** There is a higher incidence of part-time employment (Wyong 30% and Gosford 31%) compared with Sydney Statistical Division (26%) and New South Wales (27%). This reflects a number of issues including: the structure of local jobs (there are a large percentage of population driven jobs in services, with much of the part time employment being in retail, hospitality, accommodation and health and community services). This part time employment can mask underemployment, where persons would like more hours or a full time job. The survey of individuals conducted as part of the *Smarter Central Coast Study* showed that 40% of part time and casual employees wanted more hours of work.¹⁰
- **Workforce participation:** The region has lower overall labour force participation rates (Wyong 53% and Gosford 56%) compared with the Sydney Statistical Division (61%) and New South Wales (59%). This reflects the age profile of the region and early retirement by some persons. The share of persons not in the labour force is higher (Wyong 41% and Gosford 36%) compared with Sydney Statistical Division (32%) and New South Wales (34%).
- **Unemployment:** The Central Coast had higher rates of unemployment in 2006 (Wyong 8.2%, Gosford 6.2%) compared with Sydney Statistical Division (5.3%) and New South Wales (5.9%). This reflects a number of factors including: continued high rates of youth unemployment (due to an insufficient number of entry level jobs for young people); social issues and long-term unemployment; and accessibility problems when using public transport within parts of the region. Recent data (December 2008) shows a decline in total employment in the Gosford-Wyong area and an unemployment rate of 6.6% (compared with the Sydney metropolitan area rate 5.2% unemployment).¹¹
- **Knowledge and innovation:** there are relatively low levels of industrial research and development in industry located on the Central Coast. There are some emerging research centres in the University.
- **Connectedness:** There is a lack of internal connectedness due to public transport access issues and the location of jobs and population centres. The Central Coast remains a car dependent region.

2.2.2 The Environment

The Central Coast, like other regions in Australia, faces a number of environmental issues. These issues include: the potential impacts of peak oil on costs and future transport options in what is a car dependent region; the effects of climate change on coastal areas and on water availability; and the requirements for carbon reduction.

⁹ The commute rate is higher than 30,000, as around 9% of jobs (7740) in the Central Coast are held by residents of other LGAs who commute to the Central Coast.

¹⁰ *Smarter Central Coast, Individuals Survey*, Buchan Consulting and NWC Research May 2008

¹¹ *Australian Regional Labour Markets*, December Quarter 2008, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

These environment issues will impact on the way we live, the way we work and the way we travel.

A major issue for the Central Coast is its natural environment and its linkage to lifestyle and to tourism. Management of environmental issues will be important for the region as it experiences sustained population growth over the next two decades. This includes maintaining environmental assets, while also making the region a leader in environmentally sensitive urban planning and sustainable building design.

Looking to the future, the region will be undergoing change that is a result of peak oil, and there will be an increase in the reliance on effective public transport. Consumers and industry will be reducing carbon emissions, through changes in activities and new technologies and processes. These changes have major implications for the future cost structures of all businesses, their production processes and how they operate. It is already impacting on how we build industrial, commercial, retail and community facilities and the types of housing that we are constructing.

While these factors will create challenges for regional planning and environmental management, it will also generate major new business opportunities and green jobs. A range of new jobs are being created in environmental management (natural and built environment); environmental engineering; resources management and in building and construction. It is also requiring a *green reskilling* of other occupations.¹²

Environmental issues will be important in shaping aspects of future economic development of the region.

2.2.3 Community Attitudes

Surveys conducted as part of the development of the REDES, showed that business and the community generally have a positive assessment of the Central Coast and its long term prospects. They wanted action on major issues, and would be supportive of the directions that have been developed in the REDES.

- For business, positive factors shaping the future are workforce availability, accessibility of the location, regional market size and lower business costs. Businesses have concerns about the structure of the economy, the level of skill, internal transport and movement, infrastructure and social issues. The structure of the economy was an issue, and this included there not being enough large businesses in the region. There were also concerns about slowing economy and rising costs impacting on business activity. There was a focus on Gosford and support for a long term revitalisation strategy for the CBD and the waterfront, which needed to be combined with a proactive approach to development. Social concerns included high unemployment, particularly youth unemployment. Internal movement was an issue, and related to the internal road system and a lack of public transport affecting movement and accessibility to jobs and services.
- The community wanted to see more local jobs being created, less commuting and regional infrastructure improved to cope with a growing population. They valued their coastal environment and lifestyle and accessibility to Sydney, and wanted improved public transport. They also wanted action on jobs, which included: attracting more large businesses and government departments and encouraging small business growth, while also boosting regional skills through continued education for young people and more training.

¹² Hunter Institute is already highly active in the area of "Green Skills" and is taking a leadership role in developing its training products and services.
Buchan Consulting

2.3 Employment on the Central Coast

2.3.1 Employment Structure

The employment mix, jobs commuting and the capacity to generate new local jobs are key issues for the REDES.

In 2006 there were 86,000 jobs located on the Central Coast. In the period 2001-2006, the total number of jobs in the region increased by 9054 or 12% (from 76,986). The largest growth was experienced in population related services (in-person services) jobs, including retail (2086), public administration (1407), and health and social assistance (2692). There was some growth in knowledge and business services, and in education and training, and there were falls in areas of goods producing industries and in goods related services.¹³

Over recent years, jobs in the Wyong LGA have been growing at a faster rate than in the Gosford LGA. Between 2001 and 2006 total jobs in Wyong grew by 15% (5431), while jobs in Gosford increased by around half that rate (8% - 3861 additional jobs).

Table 1. Jobs on the Central Coast 2006

Jobs 2006	Total Gosford LGA	Share	Total Wyong LGA	Share	Total Central Coast	Share
	Persons		Persons		Persons	
Goods Producing						
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	524	1.1	309	0.9	833	1.0
Mining	116	0.2	178	0.5	294	0.3
Manufacturing	4,685	9.4	4,334	11.9	9,019	10.5
Electricity, gas, water & waste services	374	0.8	631	1.7	1,005	1.2
Construction	3,062	6.2	2,581	7.1	5,643	6.6
Total	8,761	17.7	8,033	22.1	16,794	19.6
Good Related						
Transport, postal & warehousing	1,357	2.7	1,314	3.6	2,671	3.1
Wholesale trade	1,839	3.7	1,137	3.1	2,976	3.5
Total	3,196	6.4	2,451	6.7	5,647	6.6
Knowledge and Business Services						
Information media & telecommunications	732	1.5	329	0.9	1,061	1.2
Financial & insurance services	1,304	2.6	880	2.4	2,184	2.5
Rental, hiring & real estate services	1,097	2.2	759	2.1	1,856	2.2
Professional, scientific & technical services	2,526	5.1	1,306	3.6	3,832	4.5
Administrative & support services	1,255	2.5	845	2.3	2,100	2.4
Total	6,914	13.9	4,119	11.3	11,033	12.8
In Person Services						
Retail trade	7,844	15.8	6,372	17.5	14,216	16.5
Accommodation & food services	3,943	7.9	3,391	9.3	7,334	8.5
Public administration & safety	3,241	6.5	1,822	5.0	5,063	5.9
Education & training	3,848	7.7	3,284	9.0	7,132	8.3
Health care & social assistance	8,506	17.1	4,618	12.7	13,124	15.3
Arts & recreation services	686	1.4	511	1.4	1,197	1.4
Other services	2,280	4.6	1,410	3.9	3,690	4.3
Total	30,348	61.0	21,408	58.8	51,756	60.2
Inadequately described/Not stated	465	0.9	239	0.7	704	0.8
Total	49,684	100.0	36,350	100.0	86,034	100.0
Share of Central Coast Jobs	57.7		42.3		100.0	

Source: Buchan Consulting Analysis of ABS Census 2006 Working Population Data

Reflecting the settlement patterns in the region, the Central Coast has a spatial distribution of jobs that combines significant concentrations of jobs in a number of major employment nodes and a distribution of local service jobs in dispersed population centres. Jobs are located in a number of areas: in coastal villages and some inland villages; in industrial areas and business parks along the F3 and Pacific Highway; in areas adjacent to the city centres; in the city centres; and clustered around the major retail centres (at Erina and Tuggerah). Around 25% of jobs on the Central Coast are located in areas adjacent to coastal areas. These jobs comprise a combination of those servicing the local population (education, health, local retail and services) and some tourism related jobs. In all, around 13% of jobs are located in industrial areas along the transport corridors (F3 and in areas adjacent to the Pacific Highway). The balance of jobs is in the larger centres and in adjacent areas in and around the main retail centres.

2.3.2 Job Commuting

The extent of job commuting is a major issue for the region. In 2006, there were 120,711 employed persons living on the Central Coast and 86,034 jobs located in the Region. An analysis of journey to work data, shows that Central Coast residents hold 91% of the local jobs (78,252), with 9% held by persons from outside the region (7788 jobs in 2006). Around 35% of employed Central Coast residents hold jobs outside the region, with males accounting for around two thirds of job commuters. Almost 40% of employed males commute to jobs outside the region, compared with around 20% of employed females.¹⁴

While individuals commute across all industry sectors, there are concentrations in several industry clusters - in knowledge and business services, and in some goods producing activities (manufacturing and construction). This pattern reflects: professionals commuting to Sydney; tradespersons working in the northern areas of Sydney; and some workers commuting to manufacturing plants in the Sydney metropolitan area or in the Lake Macquarie and Newcastle areas. The major reason identified by commuters for not working on the Central Coast was a lack of suitable jobs in the region.

Table 2. Location of Jobs of Employed Central Coast Residents 2006

Employed Residents - Residential Location on Central Coast				
Location of Job	Wyong	Gosford	Total Central Coast	%
Central Coast	31786	46364	78252	64.8
Sydney	8952	18283	27235	22.6
Hunter (Newcastle)	2224	755	2978	2.5
Other Areas (adjacent LGAs)	10894	1454	12246	10.1
Total Employed Residents	53856	66855	120711	100.00
Employed in region	31786	46364	78252	64.8
Employed outside region	22070	20491	42459	35.2
Total Employed Residents	53856	66855	120711	

Source: Buchan Consulting Estimates

If major changes are to be made in these commuting patterns, there would need to be significant growth in male intensive industries (eg. manufacturing, transport, logistics), and growth in a range of knowledge based services and business services activities, which are serving broader markets.

This suggests the need for continued attraction of large businesses (in manufacturing, logistics), government agencies and other service business.

¹⁴ Females hold around 65% of local in-person service jobs (eg. health care and social assistance, education and retail), and which make up around 60% of total jobs in the region

2.4 The Vision for the Central Coast

There are a number of future challenges for the region. These include: achieving jobs growth to support economic sustainability of the region; attracting larger businesses to the region; managing growth and ensuring infrastructure, employment lands and planning keeping pace with requirements; improving the connectivity in terms of transport and telecommunications; and lifting skill levels. These are the focus of the REDES.

The REDES will facilitate a stronger and more broadly based regional economy, through an active region-wide approach to economic development, which takes account of economic, environmental, social and spatial dimensions, and which is integrated with planning decisions.

The key themes for the REDES are a regional economy that is sustainable, smart, and connected. These themes capture the vision for a vibrant Central Coast Region.

Sustainable

- The long term economic vision for the region is for a strong and growing Central Coast economy with an economically and environmentally sustainable industry and employment structure (including more high skill local jobs and larger enterprises). It will be maximising skilled jobs through building on its current advantages, developing key industry clusters and encouraging new industries.
- Larger businesses will be attracted to locate in the Strategic Centres (Gosford Regional City and Tuggerah-Wyong Major Centre) and major employment nodes. Smaller service-based businesses will be located in smaller centres across the region.
- The region would maintain its key environmental assets (coastal and inland) and be recognised for best practice in resources management and in environmentally sensitive urban planning, design and construction.
- From a social perspective, major inroads would be made into reducing long term unemployment, lifting workforce participation and reducing commuting.

Smart

- New knowledge from local research and innovation in industry and at a growing university, would be a foundation for new businesses.
- There would be a strong learning culture in the community and in business, with education and training being recognised as life long pursuits. This would be reflected in higher school completion rates and improved transitions to post school education and an increase in the levels of training activity in all sectors of industry.

Connected

- The region will be connected with efficient transport networks and high speed broadband. It will have a stronger external focus, with more businesses servicing national and global markets.
- There would be a strong integration of economic development and planning processes, to ensure that the region can be successful in fully realising the opportunities generated by population growth, and in capturing new opportunities in a highly competitive world for investment and jobs.
- The development of employment lands and key infrastructure development will be planned and sequenced to support a growing community and to allow for growth in business activity and jobs.
- There would a regional partnership approach involving all tiers of government and business in facilitating new business and in strengthening key sectors.

- There would be strong partnerships and networks in place, which would allow business, government and the community to collaborate on regional issues and in encouraging new business and jobs.

2.5 Regional Economic Development and Employment Strategy

The REDES is a long term strategy for the economic development of the Central Coast, to enable the objectives of the broader *Central Coast Regional Strategy* to be achieved.

The region has a unique opportunity to shape future development in ways, which are sustainable from both an economic and environmental perspective.

2.5.1 The REDES Strategy

The REDES aims at delivering a *sustainable, smart and connected* Central Coast. There are two key segments of the strategy: *developing the economy* and *planning the future* and there is a need for strong linkages between these two elements at both a policy and implementation level.

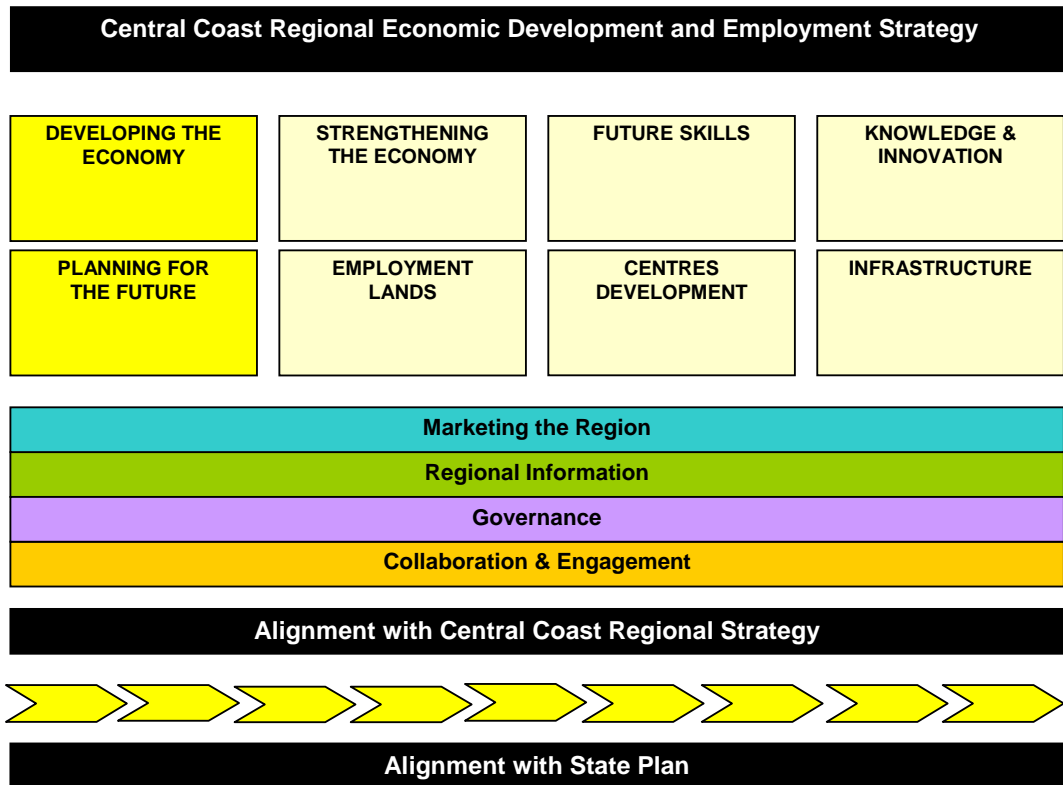
An integrated region-wide approach is needed to ensure that the Central Coast can capture new opportunities in a competitive environment.

From an implementation perspective, there are several factors that will be important for the success of the strategy and these include: targeting programs to specific industry sectors; piloting new innovative programs on the Central Coast; taking a region-wide approach to marketing and business attraction; developing strong regional partnerships; and utilising more co-ordinated approaches that link government programs and their delivery to business.

In pursuing the REDES initiatives, there will be a need for strategic regional policy and industry policy support from government.

The *Central Coast Regional Strategy* recognises the physical requirements for the required jobs growth, including revitalisation of the Strategic Centres and provision of quality office space (for business services); and the development of major industrial areas and employment zones across the region. The CCRS advocates the development of a stronger network of centres across the region. Achieving this will require a clear understanding of the particular requirements of the targeted types of employment (eg. provision of larger lots, in suitable locations, which can cater for larger businesses). It will also require a responsive local planning system that can deliver these requirements in an environment where the Central Coast will be competing with other locations for future investment and jobs.

The following diagram provides an overview of the structure of the REDES and its relationship with the CCRS and the state plan.



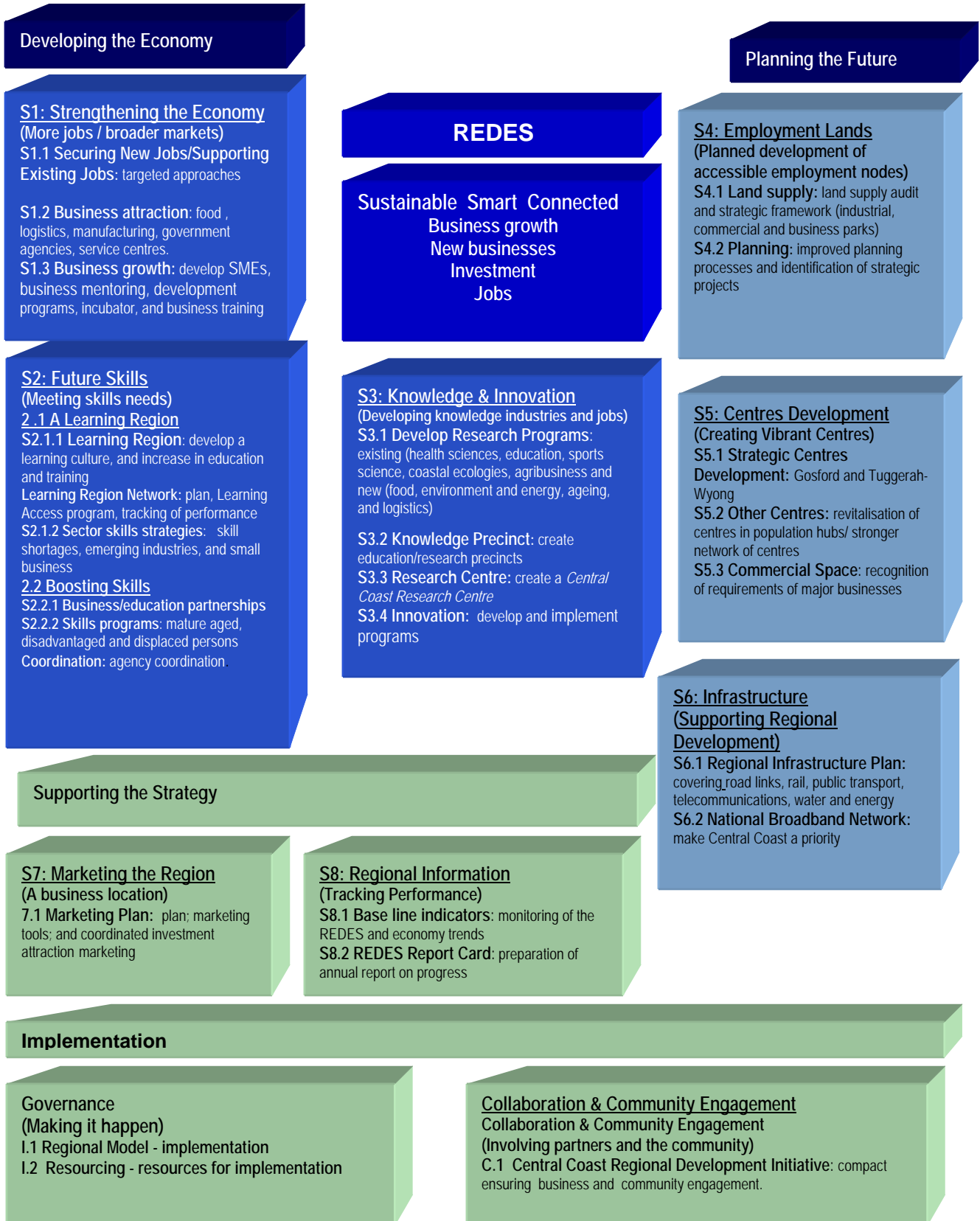
2.5.2 REDES Objectives

The REDES supports the regional development directions outlined in the CCRS and provides: a unified region-wide vision for the future economy; identifies new opportunities for growth and more jobs; and outlines the actions required to realise these opportunities

The key objectives of the REDES are:

- To develop a more robust and sustainable regional economy.
- To deliver more than 45,000 new jobs by 2031, to increase the region’s level of employment self-containment and to provide jobs for a growing population.
- To build skills for the future, through a stronger learning culture and targeted skills programs.
- To shape new areas of advantage and business opportunity through increasing the level of research and innovation in the region.
- To ensure the delivery of key infrastructure necessary to support ongoing employment growth.
- To encourage employment growth in key employment nodes, including strategic centres, employment lands and smaller centres.
- To create economic development partnerships between business and government.
- To provide effective mechanisms for coordinating the strategy.

The following diagram outlines the key directions and programs that make up the REDES.



3 Developing the Economy

Developing the economy comprises three key strategies: strengthening the regional economy; developing future skills; and encouraging knowledge and innovation.

3.1 Strategy 1: Strengthening the Regional Economy

S1: Strengthening the Regional Economy

S1.1 Securing New Jobs/Supporting Existing Jobs

(Targeted approaches)

Facilitate population driven jobs

Building on advantages: food, logistics, manufacturing, tourism

Creating new advantages: clusters - health, green industries, ageing

S1.2 Business attraction: food, logistics, manufacturing, government agencies, service centres

S1.3 Business growth: develop SMEs, business mentoring, development programs, incubator, and business training programs. Link programs into a *Business Growth Initiative*

3.1.1 Context

The strategy of strengthening the economy is designed to develop a sustainable economy and industry and employment structure that has additional higher skill jobs, and which is less reliant on population driven growth. It is based on increasing the number of businesses that are servicing markets beyond the Central Coast area.

The employment challenge is significant. The combined impacts of the projected population growth and the related housing construction would be an estimated 25,000 additional jobs by 2031 or around 55% of the future jobs that are required. These jobs would be in service areas including: retail, community services, health, aged services, education and training, property and business services, and hospitality services. The larger population will also increase the scale of some local businesses and provide a foundation for them to extend their activities to broader markets.

An active approach to economic development will be required to create the additional jobs that are needed, and this is one of the main focuses of the REDES. Generating new jobs involves both building on current advantages and creating new areas of advantage. This combined approach is required to meet the target of 45,000 jobs and provide a diversity of employment opportunities.

This strengthening has a number of components:

- Facilitating continued growth in those employment areas that are linked to population growth, and this includes ensuring that employment lands/sites are available.
- Building on the current industries that are driven by location advantages of the Central Coast. These include: food, logistics, manufacturing, and tourism.
- Creating new areas of advantage in knowledge based activities including: health research, green industries and ageing.
- Continuing to attract large businesses and government agencies into the region.

3.1.2 Opportunities and Priorities

Opportunities

A major part of strengthening the regional economy is a focus on sectors with growth potential.

The following table summarises opportunities in several categories: population driven growth; building on current advantages; creating advantages; and attraction targets. There is no single sector or narrow band of sectors that will deliver the total jobs that are needed in the future. The industry development strategy has several components with targeting of some sectors within each component.

- Category 1: Facilitating jobs growth in those sectors that will be driven by population growth in the region. This includes strengthening existing SMEs and their capacity to grow through securing business in broader markets.
- Category 2: Building on current areas of advantage through a supply chain approach to deliver additional jobs. Priorities are food, logistics, manufacturing and tourism.
- Category 3: Developing new areas of industry specialisation, which provide the opportunity for an increase in knowledge industry jobs. Priorities are health, green industries, and ageing. With the extent of development and new housing, there is an opportunity to apply new environmental systems and green technologies within new developments. Green technologies are also being applied in industrial operations and processes.

A recent study conducted for the *Central Coast NSW ACC* also identified some of these activities as priorities for the region.¹⁵

These sectors have several characteristics and these include: they provide direct jobs and indirect jobs through cluster and supply chain impacts; they have a higher knowledge component; and they are sustainable in the longer term in a changing environment and a carbon neutral economy.

While these key sectors (Category 2 and Category 3) will deliver new jobs (which are mostly higher skill jobs), they will not deliver a sufficient number of jobs to meet the gap between the overall target (45,000 jobs) and the 55% of jobs that will be delivered by population and market growth. There is also a need to continue to pursue business attraction targets of larger business services companies and government agencies (Category 4).

¹⁵ Central Coast Economy – Focus on Business, Report prepared for Central Coast NSW ACC and NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet, Centre for Agriculture Regional Economics, November 2008 P31-32
Buchan Consulting

Table 3. Identified Opportunities for Central Coast 2010-2031

Category 1: Population / Market Driven	Category 2: Building on Current Advantages	Category 3: Creating New Advantages – Knowledge Based	Category 4: Large Service Organisations
These sectors will be driven by population growth. The focus of economic development needs to be on facilitating jobs growth, including strengthening SMEs. In combination these sectors will deliver around 55% of the jobs targets.	These are based on sustainable advantages. Priorities for action are: food cluster; logistics cluster; manufacturing cluster and tourism. These remain priorities for sector development and business attraction and have the potential to deliver additional jobs.	These are based on research and knowledge. Priorities are: health research and education; green industries cluster and ageing cluster. These sectors will increase the number of knowledge based jobs in the region.	These sectors will deliver a significant number of service jobs and need to be targets for attraction to meet the overall jobs targets for the region
Health and Community Services: health services, aged care, community support services	Logistics cluster: distribution centres, intermodal hubs, warehousing and storage, and road transport services, education and training.	Health cluster: health research centres; health education centre; health precinct	Business services: call centres, back office functions, support centres
Construction: housing, industrial and commercial and building trades.	Food cluster: manufacturing, packaging, refrigeration, distribution, maintenance services, research and development.	Green industries cluster: environmental R&D, water management, sustainable energy; architecture, urban planning. ¹⁶	Government: government agencies – regional head quarters, administrative offices, regional service centres
Education: from early learning to higher education and training	Manufacturing cluster: building materials, modular components, products, green building products, and engineering.	Ageing cluster: expanded provision of aged services; research centre on ageing issues, including health, lifestyle, education, aged care	
Retail: food retail and specialty retail	Tourism cluster: (short stays, conferences, eco-tourism and events) accommodation, hospitality, cultural services, retail.	Agribusiness cluster: large scale glass house production – food, flowers, seed; DPI Research Centre; support activities	
Business and professional services – financial, legal, employment, technical services	Sports cluster: sports training, sports science, business programs, consulting, and events management.	Creative industries cluster: music performing arts, digital content, design, marketing and advertising, publishing	
Food services and hospitality	Education cluster: expanded higher education and VET provision, including international students.	Research Centres: university and industry based centres, university/industry knowledge precinct	
Arts and recreational services			

¹⁶ For example in manufacturing, businesses are managing energy and water use, minimising the environmental impact of processes and products, increasing efficiency of raw material use and managing waste and emissions. In building and construction designers are applying sustainable design principles to the design of the built environment: assessing life cycle impacts; conserving energy use and developing efficient and sustainable structures.

Priorities

While there are opportunities across a range of sectors, the Councils and Government Agencies need to focus their efforts and resources in several areas, with the potential to yield major returns. These are listed below.

Table 4. Priorities for Action

Category	Priority Sectors	Reason	Timing	Actions
Category 2: Building on Advantages.	Food, logistics, manufacturing, tourism	Key sectors based on recognised local advantages. There is potential for further expansion in these sectors. There are significant jobs in activities that are providing services to these sectors.	2010-2015	Assessment of facilities requirements (employment lands). Coordinated business attraction.
Category 3: Creating New Advantages	Health, ageing, green industries	These sectors can deliver high skill/knowledge jobs for the region. They represent major issues for the future of the region (health, ageing, and environment). There is a capacity to develop research activities that can lead to new industries and jobs.	2010-2020	Develop research capability in these sectors Develop education/business research partnerships
Category 4: Large Services Organisations	Business services, government agencies	These are usually large organisations and can deliver significant number of jobs. These are targets for the Strategic Centres (Gosford City and Tuggerah Wyong).	2010-2015	Coordinated business attraction

By way of example, Hunter Institute is already active in “*green skills*” and is taking a leadership role in developing its training products and services. This involves development of new courses and embedding environmental components into a wide range of courses. These cover fields including: conservation land management; water management; renewable energy; environmental management; environmental monitoring; architecture; building design; and construction and building trades.

However even within this priority approach, the region also needs to remain flexible to opportunities in other sectors. This is particularly the case in the current economic slowdown, where the region needs to maximise the take up of government initiatives.¹⁷

3.1.3 Actions Required

There are several components to this strategy of strengthening the economy: business attraction and business development.

To achieve the employment targets, there will be a need: to facilitate population driven business and jobs growth; to encourage growth in existing businesses by a widening of markets; to continue to attract large businesses and organisations to the region; and to develop new local businesses (including knowledge based businesses).

¹⁷ A number of these initiatives have implications for the Central Coast and these include: securing funding for community infrastructure projects; school buildings projects; social housing programs; the use of the Major Investment Attraction Scheme
Buchan Consulting

Business Attraction

There will need to be an implementation of a sustained program of business attraction based on region-wide approach, and involving government agencies, local Councils, industry organisations and developers in partnership.

This would include targeting manufacturers and logistics and service businesses and government agencies that could be attracted into the area.

A long term and sustained attraction program involving *Industry & Investment NSW* (I&I NSW) and the economic development units of the two of the Councils is required.¹⁸ As part of building on regional specialisations, a supply chain approach can be taken which takes account of industry linkages (eg. food, packaging and logistics).¹⁹ Major services businesses attracted to the Central Coast will in the main be located in the Strategic Centres. Major decision factors for service businesses are: a suitable skilled and professional workforce; the availability of quality office accommodation in an attractive environment; and the availability of support services.

Business Development

The structure of industry in the Central Coast is characterised by a relatively small number of large businesses and a large number of small businesses.

There is a need for an active program of business development covering: new business start ups; small business advice and training; and the business incubator and mentoring. There also needs to be recognition of home based businesses, through providing access to business networks and business advice. There needs to be better targeting of programs to emerging innovative businesses.²⁰ This program would make more effective use of the range of programs available to support business development, including the *Business Enterprise Centre* and *I&I NSW* programs.

A major focus needs to be on better linking business programs (government and industry provided) and marketing them to enterprises in the region. There is a lead role in this process for regional business organisations, including the *New South Wales Business Chamber* and the local chambers.

As part of a focused strategy for the region, business programs would be linked as the *Business Growth Initiative*. As well as securing support from the New South Wales Government, the initiative would also seek support from relevant Australian Government programs (eg. AusIndustry). With the size of the region, there is the potential to develop and pilot approaches and programs on the Central Coast.

The *Business Growth Initiative* would require ongoing strong links to the business community (including support from larger employers and from the Chambers), and would need to be actively marketed to small businesses in the region.

¹⁸ There is a need to recognise that business attraction is a long-term initiative. For many large enterprises or government agencies, relocation decisions will often have minimum 5-year horizons from initial contact to the final implementation.

¹⁹ *Central Coast Economy – Focus on Business*, Report prepared for Central Coast NSW ACC and NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet, Centre for Agriculture and Regional Economics, November 2008

²⁰ The examples of Ballarat and Sunshine Coast illustrate what can be achieved, for new emerging businesses, through University linked incubators and knowledge precincts and linking them to appropriate strategic support from government programs.

	Actions	Objectives	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Measuring Progress
	Strategy 1: Strengthening the Regional Economy	Creating a more robust and sustainable regional economy, with new employment opportunities.				
S1.1	Securing New Jobs/Supporting Existing Jobs - Sector Targets					
	<p>Recognise that jobs growth will be in a range of sectors. Adopt a targeted approach to industry development which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitates employment growth associated with regional population growth. Develops other jobs based on an industry cluster approach to industry development, with a focus on those sectors, which will deliver sustainable higher skill jobs. <p>Industry/Job Categories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Category 1: Jobs in sectors that will be driven by population growth in the region. (Strengthening existing SMEs and ensure appropriate commercial and industrial space is available). Category 2: Build on current advantages through a supply chain approach to deliver additional jobs. (Priorities are: food, logistics, manufacturing, tourism). Category 3: Develop new areas of industry specialisation, which increase knowledge jobs. (Priorities are health, green industries and ageing). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Ensure jobs growth targets are met. -Build jobs on current sustainable advantages. -Create new regional advantages and higher skill jobs. 	I&I NSW	Councils Chambers Developers RDA-CC Businesses	<p>Category 1 and 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Implement program 2010 – 2014. -Major review of program 2014. -Implement 2015 – 2031 (with 3 year reviews). <p>Category 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Develop sector strategies 2010-2011. -First stage implementation 2011-2014 -Major review of program 2014. -Implement 2015 – 2031 (with 3 year reviews). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Total number of new jobs created. -Increase in number of higher skill jobs. -Progress on developing industry clusters.

	Actions	Objectives	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Measuring Progress
	Strategy 1: Strengthening the Regional Economy	Creating a more robust and sustainable regional economy, with new employment opportunities.				
S1.2	Business Attraction					
	<p>Implement an active program of business attraction which targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses in Category 2: food, logistics, manufacturing, tourism • Category 4: Business services (call centres, support centres, back office functions). • Category 4: Government agencies. <p>The program would be based on a partnership approach between government, industry groups and developers.</p>	<p>-Secure new larger businesses in key focus areas.</p> <p>-Securing larger employers in business services and government.</p>	I&I NSW	<p>Councils Chambers Developers RDA-CC</p>	<p><u>Category 2 and 4</u></p> <p>-First stage implementation 2011-2014</p> <p>-Major review of program 2014.</p> <p>-Implement 2015 – 2031 (with 3 year reviews).</p>	<p>-Number of businesses attracted.</p> <p>-Number of jobs in attracted businesses.</p>
S1.3	Business Growth					
	<p>Enterprise Development Program</p> <p>Implement a structured innovation and enterprise development program for SMEs.</p> <p>-The program would better focus the delivery of current business assistance programs to SMEs and would develop new programs.</p> <p>-The initiative would link business development programs (State Government and Australian Government) under the umbrella of the <i>Business Growth Initiative</i>.</p>	<p>-Develop stronger local businesses and facilitate growth.</p> <p>-Ensure more effective delivery of programs to business.</p>	I&I NSW	<p>Chambers TAFE NSW-HI RDA-CC CCSBI BEC UoN-CC AusIndustry</p>	<p>-Develop program 2010</p> <p>-First stage implementation 2010-2014</p> <p>-Major review of program 2014.</p> <p>-Implement 2015 – 2031 (with 3 year reviews).</p>	<p>-Increase take up of business programs.</p> <p>-Development and delivery of new programs.</p> <p>-Success of SMEs in developing new markets.</p>

3.2 Strategy 2: Future Skills

Future Skills involves designating the Central Coast as a *Learning Region* and implementing targeted strategies to boost skills.

Addressing these longer term skill issues will require an integrated skills strategy and the key elements comprise: developing a stronger learning culture in the region; continuing to strengthen education and industry links; maintaining skills development during the recession; better linking of post secondary education to future employment needs; building of regional centres of excellence in education and skills development; and using education and training initiatives to provide disadvantaged persons with new skills. It will also require the continuation of strong partnerships between providers and business, with business taking the lead in developing training plans for their sectors.

3.3 Strategy 2.1: Creating a Learning Region

S2: Future Skills (Meeting Skill Needs)

Developing Skills for the Future

2.1 A Learning Region

Learning Region: develop a learning culture, community awareness and an increase in take-up of education and training

Learning Region Network: plan, Learning Access program, tracking of regional performance

S2.1.1 Sector skills strategies: covering skill shortages, emerging industries, and small business

2.2 Boosting Skills

S2.2.1 Business / education partnerships

S2.2.2 Targeted skills programs: mature aged, disadvantaged (advice, training, mentoring), and displaced persons

Coordination: agency coordination

3.3.1 Context

Skill Levels

The level of skills and knowledge required for all types of jobs is increasing. Future work opportunities in all sectors now require high levels of skills, and this is the case in local businesses and in the businesses that will be attracted into the area.

Detailed research on skills, education and knowledge issues was undertaken during 2008 as part of the *Smarter Central Coast Study*.²¹ This research showed that the Central Coast has lower average levels of education and qualifications compared with other regions, and that school retention rates though improving were lower than the New South Wales average. There are disadvantaged groups in the area, who lack skills and a connection to the workforce.

The research also identified the lack of a fully developed learning culture in the region. There is also a view that many residents do not value education and training, and there is not a clear commitment to lifelong learning approaches. School retention rates, though improving, are still among the lowest in the State.

Lower levels of schooling and qualifications are a major issue. For example only 26% of the Wyong population aged 15 years and over had completed Year 12, compared with 36% in Gosford, 49% in Sydney and 42% in New South Wales.

The share of persons (age 15 years and over) with post school qualifications on the Central Coast is lower than that for Sydney and for New South Wales.²² In the case of Gosford, only 12% had a

²¹ In the Smarter Central Coast Study, employment, skills and training issues were examined in detailed interviews with 50 of the largest employers in the region and in a sample survey of 300 mainly small and medium sized businesses.

²² *Central Coast Demographic Overview*, Centre for Urban & Regional Studies, University of Newcastle, 2008 P94-95

bachelor degree or higher qualification, compared with 20% for Sydney and 17% for New South Wales. In Wyong, university degree/postgraduate degree holders were only 7% of persons aged 15 years and older. Both Gosford (20%) and Wyong (22%) had a higher share with certificate level qualifications, compared with Sydney (15%) and New South Wales (17%).

The research also showed that in 2008, there were critical skill shortages in skill trades and in areas of professional employment.²³ Some of the identified skill shortages were in sectors in which the region had a comparative advantage (manufacturing, logistics) and in areas of business services. While the economic slowdown has taken some of the pressure off, these are still critical skills for future growth. There are programs being implemented to maintain training activity during the recession.

Another area identified was the need for small and medium businesses to increase training for their employees and for owners to develop their own business management skills.²⁴

Future Demand

The Central Coast is a significant regional market for school education and for post school education and training. There is good education and training infrastructure, relative to other regions, comprising the combined Central Coast Campus at Ourimbah (Newcastle University-Central Coast, TAFE NSW-Hunter Institute and the Central Coast Community College) and the TAFE campuses at Gosford and Wyong.

The predicted population growth will increase the demand for education services from early learning through to higher education.

This education growth will have some spatial dimensions and can contribute to the development of strong centres and a settlement pattern that can be better serviced by public transport. This could include: improved integration of the Ourimbah Campus with the surrounding Ourimbah Village and provision of better public transport; and university facilities could be developed in the Strategic Centres (eg. Gosford Regional City, Tuggerah-Wyong Centre) and other locations where specialised education/research centres are established (eg. marine studies/research centre in Terrigal). With the overall growth in the region, other higher education and training opportunities may emerge, with other providers (public or private) establishing in the region.

3.3.2 Actions Required: S2.1 A Learning Region

Developing the Central Coast as a *Learning Region* is an important part of creating a stronger future for the region through harnessing the region's considerable education and training assets. This approach is consistent with the views of the two Councils, which in their economic development and community strategies have recognised the importance of education.²⁵ To be successful this initiative requires active and ongoing participation by business.

The *Learning Region Strategy* would be the vehicle: to develop and embed a learning culture in the community and in business; to better link education and training programs and improve their coordination; to develop improved pathways for all individuals from learning to employment; to identify specific regional problems and to develop local solutions; and to actively engage business, government and the education sector in partnerships to develop new skills.

The strategy comprises: designating the Central Coast as a *Learning Region*; establishing a *Learning Network* with a coordinated plan; implementing a *community access program* to increase awareness of and the take-up of education and training options; developing new programs; and tracking performance.

²³ Skill shortages in: skilled trades, particularly metals, engineering and electrical trades; professionals, including engineers, production managers, software engineers; and some management positions. There were some difficulties in recruiting professional and managerial staff into the Central Coast.

²⁴ For many SMEs, there is not an existing culture of training, with many businesses seeking to take on, as employees, persons who are already trained. Few businesses have a training plan and many have limited resources for training. Training is often limited to the minimum necessary for OHS reasons or for other regulation compliance.

²⁵ For example Wyong Council has been active on these learning issues and has articulated a vision for a learning community in the *Draft Wyong Shire Community Plan 2008-2013*. Education is seen as an investment in the economic and social sustainability of the region. See *Wyong Shire Community Plan 2008-2013 (Draft)*, Wyong Council July 2008 P237

3.3.3 Actions Required: S 2.2 Boosting Skills

Boosting skills involves a better harnessing of existing education and training resources and the development of new skills programs.

It covers:

- Sector skill strategies, which are led by business and that are aimed at: critical skill areas; emerging industries; small business; and developing skills during the recession. A major focus for a skills strategy is better targeting in the use of available programs and encouraging industry partnerships to develop tailored solutions for specific sectors.
- Targeted programs for young people, mature aged persons and disadvantaged persons to enable their workforce participation.
- A recognised need to improve the co-ordination of the wide range of skills programs that are available.

As a first stage this will involve mapping existing programs and identifying ways of improving these initiatives. A major focus should be more effective use of government programs that support training. There are also opportunities to pilot new innovative approaches to skills development on the Central Coast, with the region becoming a recognised leader in the development of skills for the future.

	Actions	Objectives	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Measuring Progress
	Strategy 2: Future Skills	Building skill levels of the community through a stronger learning culture, which recognises the value of education and training.				
	S 2.1 A Learning Region					
S2.1.1	Designate the Central Coast as a Learning Region					
	<p>Establish a Central Coast Learning Region Network, with the involvement of business, Councils, Government agencies, education and training providers, and community organisations.</p> <p>The network would work on developing a Regional Learning Plan and a Learning Access Program - a community marketing program to promote education and training options, and to increase education and training participation rates.</p> <p>Funding to support the Learning Network would be sought from government and business.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Create a learning culture. -Lift educational attainment in the region. -Improve skills in the region. -Build stronger partnerships 	DET-Schools (in partnership with I&I NSW)	Businesses Chambers Councils UoN-CC TAFE NSW-HI RTOs DEEWR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Establish Network 2011. -First stage implementation 2011- 2014. -Major review of program 2014. -Implement 2015 – ongoing (with 3 year reviews). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Number of business involved in the Learning Network. -Increase in school retention rates. -Increase in numbers of young people in higher education and VET. -Increase in training activity in small businesses. -Increase participation in community education programs.
S2.1.2	Sector Skills Programs					
	<p>As part of the Regional Learning Plan, there would be a focus on skills for key sectors, through action plans (covering priority sectors including: food, manufacturing, logistics, tourism and health; and other sectors: including construction).</p> <p>These would focus critical skills shortages, emerging industry skills and skills for small business.</p> <p>A focus of these action plans should be on maintaining skills during the recession and providing skills for long term recovery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Develop industry focused solutions to long term skill needs. -Maintain skills development during the recession. -Better utilise government training support programs 	DET-STs	TAFE NSW-HI Businesses Chambers RDA- CC DEEWR I&I NSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Develop first sector plan as a pilot in 2010 -First stage implementation 2010- 2014 -Major review of program 2014. -Implement 2015 – ongoing (with 3 year reviews). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Number of sector skill plans developed and implemented. -Increase in training activity by business -Increase in number of skilled employees.

	Actions	Objectives	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Measuring Progress
	Strategy 2: Future Skills	Building skill levels of the community through a stronger learning culture, which recognises the value of education and training.				
	S2.2 Boosting Skills					
S2.2.1	Business/Education Partnerships					
	<p>As part of a Learning Region, develop stronger business/education sector partnerships to improve school completion rates and pathways to education/training and employment.</p> <p>Map existing partnerships between education and business and develop a more cohesive approach.</p>	<p>-Increase business engagement with schools.</p> <p>-Ensure that young people develop skills for future employment.</p> <p>-Increased uptake of VET in schools programs, work experience and apprenticeships.</p>	DET-Schools (with Chambers)	<p>Businesses</p> <p>Youth Agencies</p> <p>Schools</p> <p>RTOs</p> <p>I&I NSW</p> <p>DEEWR</p>	<p>-Map existing partnerships 2009</p> <p>-Develop a new model 2010</p> <p>-Implementation 2011- 2014</p> <p>-Major review of program 2014.</p> <p>-Implement 2015 - ongoing (with 3 year reviews).</p>	<p>-Number of businesses participating.</p> <p>-Increase in school completion rates</p> <p>-Increase in number of students undertaking VET programs.</p>
S2.2.2	Skills Programs					
	<p>As part of a Learning Region, there is a need to develop skills of persons with low skills levels.</p> <p>Map existing programs and identify ways of better focusing programs for target groups, including mature workers, disadvantaged persons and displaced workers.</p>	<p>-Reskilling of mature workers</p> <p>- Providing work skills to disadvantaged persons.</p> <p>- Developing new skills for displaced workers.</p>	DET-STs	<p>Chambers</p> <p>JSA</p> <p>DEEWR</p> <p>I&I NSW</p> <p>TAFE NSW-HI</p> <p>UoN-CC</p>	<p>Map existing programs</p> <p>-Develop program as a pilot in 2010</p> <p>-First stage implementation 2010- 2014</p> <p>-Major review of program 2014.</p> <p>-Implement 2015 - ongoing (with 3 year reviews).</p>	<p>-Number of persons trained.</p> <p>-Number of persons returning to the workforce</p> <p>-Reduction in number of unemployed persons.</p>

3.4 Strategy 3: Knowledge and Innovation

S3: Knowledge and Innovation

Increasing Research and Innovation

S3.1 Develop Research Programs: existing (health sciences, education, sports science, coastal ecologies, agribusiness and new (food, green industries - environment and energy, ageing and logistics)

S3.2 Knowledge Precinct: create education/research precincts at Ourimbah and in Strategic Centres.

S3.3 Research Centre: create a Central Coast Research Centre.

S3.4 Innovation: develop and implement programs.

3.4.1 Context

Relative to many other regions, the extent of the knowledge economy and research and development activity on the Central Coast is limited.

Developing a *smarter region* goes beyond skills, education and training, and includes the innovation activity in the region. This covers the development of knowledge and its transfer and application in business and in the community. This generation of new knowledge can be: in a university; from R&D activity in larger companies; in the health sector; and from innovative small and medium sized businesses. New knowledge can also flow from partnerships between these entities.

The University of Newcastle - Central Coast forms a major centre of research on the Central Coast. The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Horticultural Research Institute (a Centre of Excellence for Market Access and Greenhouse Horticulture) is moving its operations to the University.²⁶ The Central Coast Marine Discovery Centre (CCMDC) at Terrigal will be a working research hub linking the education, business and tourism.²⁷ The Central Coast Research Foundation based at the Hunter Valley Research Foundation (HVRF) conducts some research on regional indicators and undertakes consulting activities, mainly for local government.²⁸

In the health area, the Central Coast has limited research activity at present. There are no research centres receiving National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) funding, which are based at the Central Coast hospitals.²⁹ There have been some research projects undertaken in neurology, and the North Sydney Central Coast Health Service has plans to increase research activity in future.

Within the business sector, there is limited research and development activity occurring currently on the Central Coast. Many of the larger businesses are satellite manufacturing plants (eg. in the food sector), with product development and research activity occurring at other locations. Among the medium sized businesses, there were several examples of innovation and product development identified during the consultation phase. These examples were in the areas of ICT, marine products and in plant breeding.

Knowledge and innovation are important foundations for the long term strengthening of the Central Coast economy, for developing new areas of advantage and new sustainable businesses and jobs. The longer term horizon of the REDES allows for the creation of new areas of competitive advantage and the development of new research specialisations.

²⁶ The Centre has a total of 60 researchers, and is a national centre of applied research.

²⁷ The Faculty of Science and Information Technology are researching the biology of marine and estuarine organisms, the ecology of coastal lagoons, and the social impacts of marine resource management.

²⁸ The *Centre for Urban and Regional Studies* at Callaghan has conducted a major demographic review of the region as part of the development of the *Central Coast Regional Economy Regional Strategy*.

²⁹ The hospitals and health centres are managed by the *North Sydney Central Coast Health Service*.

Research centres are important for the direct knowledge industries employment that they provide, together with the capacity they provide for developing new products, services and sectors (through commercialisation and knowledge transfer). Importantly, new applied knowledge can come from partnerships between businesses and universities. Innovation drives competitiveness and the development of new products and services.

The University of Newcastle - Central Coast is moving into a third phase of its development with active research groups that have links to the community and to business on the Central Coast.³⁰ With the Central Coast's combined campus model, and the integration of higher education and vocational education, there are unique opportunities for applied research to be readily transferred into practice: via linkages with business/research partners; through the content of education and training programs; and through business development programs.

While the University of Newcastle is the primary centre of research activity at present, future development of the region may see other universities enter the region through the delivery of education or research programs (eg. another university developing research linkages with the health service or with specific businesses in the region).

Innovation in industry is also important. This is often based on industry links, with interactivity in innovation through business collaboration and networks.³¹ New industries have higher knowledge components, including design, technology and business systems. Factors such as quality of place and precincts, industry clustering and university research links are important for their development. New facilities can provide the opportunity for co-location of research centres and businesses.

Innovation in industry can be encouraged through special programs including: incubators, industry networks, clusters, mentoring and training programs.³² Innovation has been a focus of New South Wales Government policy. The Government's policy has 5 strategies for innovation: improve human capital; upgrade knowledge and information infrastructure; reduce the cost to business of utilising science and technology; encourage capital allocation to invest in innovation; and reduce regulatory barriers to innovative New South Wales companies.³³

There are a number of foundation elements that are already in place on the Central Coast: emerging areas of research; the well established combined Central Coast Campus model and the breadth of its education and training programs; and the *Central Coast Small Business Incubator*. There are also a range of innovation programs that are delivered by government agencies and by industry associations.³⁴ However, a major issue is that these elements are not linked-up in the way that they are in other regions. There is potential to better link these activities, to enable existing businesses to be strengthened and to start the emergence of new innovative enterprises.

³⁰ *Campus Directions Statement 2009-2012-2020, Discussion Paper August 2008*, University of Newcastle - Central Coast and TAFE NSW Hunter Institute

³¹ *Presentation to Wyong Council Forum 2008*, Prof Ed Blakely University of Sydney Planning Research Centre 2008

³² *Finding New Economic Drivers for Sea Change (Coastal) and Similar Rapidly Growing Communities*, Prof Ed Blakely Uni of Sydney Planning Research Centre 2008 (Presentation to Wyong Council Forum).

³³ Innovation is a focus of government policy, NSW Statement on Innovation, 2007.

³⁴ For example the New South Wales Business Chamber and Australian Industry Group deliver a range of programs and provide advice to businesses.

3.4.2 Actions Required

There are several areas of focus for future research and these include:

- Further development of research specialisations in: agribusiness (DPI Horticultural Research Institute and the co-location at the University); allied health; sports science; education; and coastal ecologies.
- Development of new research specialisations and centres in areas, which are of increasing importance to the region and these include health and ageing.
- Development of research activity linked to industry sectors and clusters, including food, logistics and green industries.
- Establishment of a multidiscipline *Central Coast Research Centre (with a focus on innovation, business development and regional development)* to provide ongoing research support and policy advice for the *REDES*.

All of these research activities will require strong business involvement and partnerships.

Looking over the medium term horizon (5-15 years) there is potential for new knowledge industries/research clusters/precincts to be established. These precincts may be adjacent to the Ourimbah Campus or as part of the revitalisation of Gosford City Centre and the development of the Tuggerah-Wyong Major Centre.

There are also opportunities to encourage innovation in business, through new programs and by linkages with business incubators (eg. *Central Coast Small Business Incubator* located on the Ourimbah Campus and other incubators that could be established in the region). As part of new industry development, a second stage innovation facility could be created for emerging businesses in the region, which progress from business incubators.

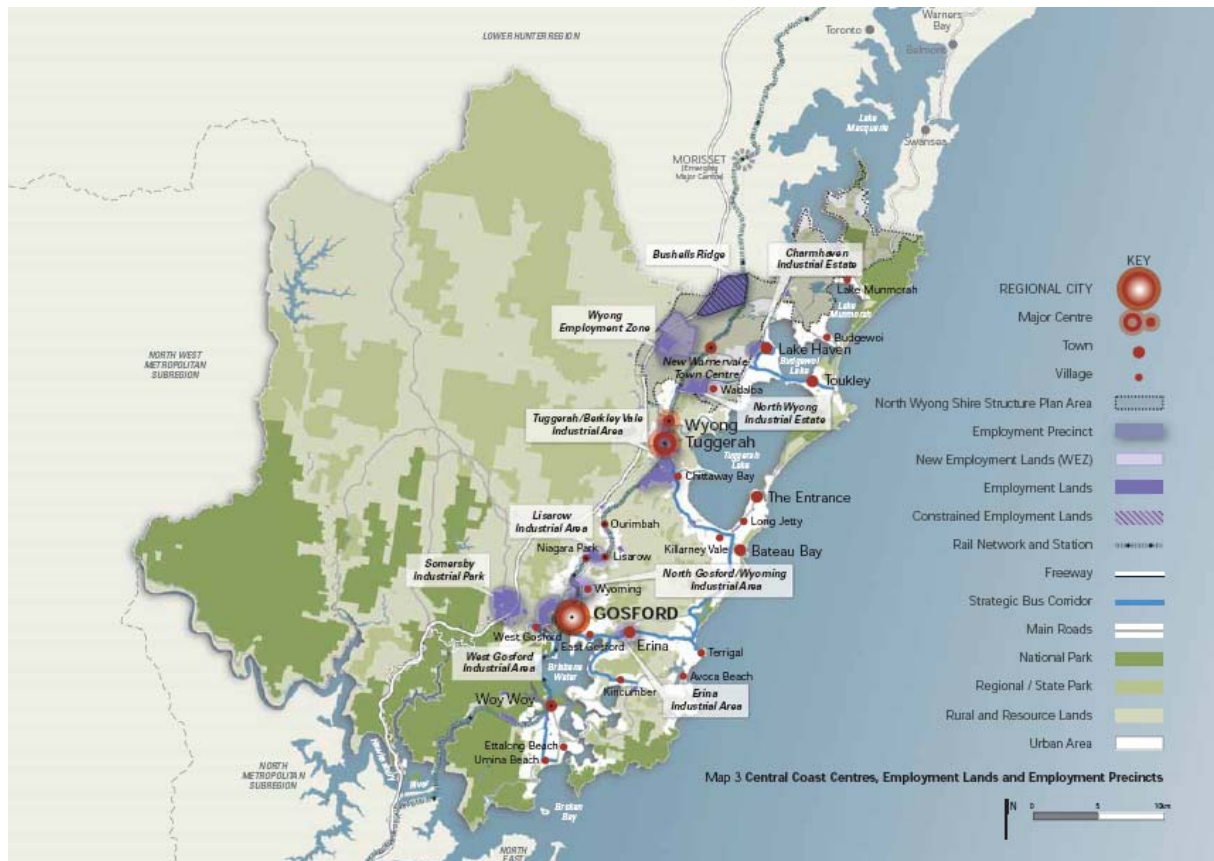
The development of this research role and its extension into new areas will require a range of funding support from the University, from government and from business. This support includes: competitive research grants; funding from businesses and other research partners; government funding for specific research positions; and undertaking commissioned research and consultancies.

	Actions	Objectives	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Measuring Progress
	Strategy 3: Increasing Knowledge and Innovation	Developing the knowledge economy by increasing the level of research and development and innovation in the region.				
S3.1	Develop Research Programs					
	Continued development of research programs in: health sciences, education (including distance e-learning and early childhood learning), sports science, coastal ecologies, and agribusiness (eg. DPI Centre). Development of new industry linked research programs in areas including: food; environmental and energy research; ageing and aged care; and logistics.	-Increasing knowledge development that is linked to key sectors. -Developing university/business links in research and innovation. -Creating new areas of comparative advantage.	RDA-CC (and UoN-CC)	I&I NSW Businesses Chambers Councils	-Continued development of existing programs 2010-ongoing. - Development of new research programs 2012 – 2020, then ongoing.	-Number of research programs. -Number of persons involved in research centres. - Number of industry research partnerships.
S3.2	Knowledge Precincts					
	Develop knowledge precincts that combine university education/ research programs with industry research in emerging sectors. -Health- development of research within the Gosford Health Precinct. -Other higher education/research precincts may develop in the longer term in the Strategic Centres (Gosford Regional City and Tuggerah Wyong Major Centre).	-Increasing knowledge development that is linked to key sectors. -Developing university/business links in research and innovation. -Creating new areas of comparative advantage	RDA- CC	DoP Councils I&I NSW Businesses Universities Chambers	-Development of research precincts 2015- 2025	-Increase in industry research in the region. - Number of industry/education research partnerships. -Creation of research precincts.
S3.3	Central Coast Research Centre					
	Establish a multi-discipline Central Coast Research Centre, which focuses on business innovation and sustainable business development. -The centre would undertake research, monitor trends and develop and deliver programs to the region. -A centre would need to be supported by a combination of university, government and business funding.	-Create a knowledge centre in the region. -Facilitate innovation in local businesses, through research linkages and new programs. -Monitor trends in the region.	RDA-CC	I&I NSW Businesses Universities Chambers Councils	-Develop Research Centre 2011 -Implement research programs 2011-2014 -Major review 2014 - Implement 2015 – ongoing (with 3 year reviews).	- Establishment of the centre. - Programs developed and implemented.
S3.4	Innovation					
	Develop and implement innovation programs for SMEs, including innovation networks, clusters and business training programs. -Strengthen the Small Business Incubator. -Investigate establishment of a second stage innovation facility.	-Create new knowledge businesses. -Develop and strengthen innovative businesses. -Develop business linkages.	I&I NSW	Businesses TAFE NSW-HI UoN-CC Chambers Councils BEC RDA-CC	-Develop initial programs 2010 -Implement 2010-2012 -Review and revised programs 2012 - Implement 2015 – ongoing (with 3 year reviews). Investigate innovation facility 2012.	- Number of businesses participating in programs. - Number of new businesses utilising the incubator. - Growth performance of innovative businesses

4 Planning the Future

4.1 Planning the Future

Planning the future has three components: the development of employment lands; centres development; and regional infrastructure development.



Source: *Central Coast Regional Strategy 2006-31*, Department of Planning New South Wales 2008

The *Central Coast Regional Strategy* sets the regional planning framework and outlines a number of guiding principles and requirements relevant to land supply. This includes: establishing employment capacity targets (by broad employment type and location); identifying key industrial areas; establishing a clear centres hierarchy; and establishing requirements for the location and protection of employment lands. It also requires that all Local Environmental Plans (LEPs) are consistent with the Regional Strategy. The Central Coast Strategy is also linked to the broader New South Wales Government's *Action Plan for Sydney's Employment Lands*, which is aimed at increasing new business investment and employment.³⁵

The two Councils in the region have been active in shaping the future of their cities. Both Gosford and Wyong Councils have developed their strategic visions.³⁶ The Council visions recognise the importance of economic development, employment creation, skills development and education, and infrastructure planning. These Council strategies are consistent with the REDES and provide strong underpinnings for the implementation of a coordinated approach. These strategies are being further developed in the context of the *Central Coast Regional Strategy*, through the development of new Local Environmental Plans (LEP).

³⁵ The NSW State Plan goal *NSW Open for Business*, which seeks to double the level of new business investment from around \$40 billion per annum in 2006 to around \$80 billion per annum in 2016.

³⁶ Gosford Council has the *Gosford Vision 2025* and Wyong Council has completed its Strategic Vision – *Our Future Your Future*.

It is important for future growth that employment land is in the right places and has the right characteristics to attract business and to allow for expansion. This will require that planning strategies are regularly updated to ensure that a range of employment types are provided for across the region.

4.2 Strategy 4: Employment Lands

S4: Employment Lands

Ensuring Land Supply

S4.1 Land supply: land supply audit and strategic framework(industrial, commercial and business parks)

S4.2 Planning: identification of strategic projects and implementation of streamlined processes

4.2.1 Context

Employment Lands Principles

Employment lands encompass clusters of business use including: construction, manufacturing, light industry, logistics and storage activities. They include distribution centres, factories, warehouses and other industrial uses that require good access to major strategic transport corridors.

The development of Central Coast employment lands is set within the broader context of the *Employment Lands for Sydney Action Plan* which includes: facilitation of release of greenfield employment land; identification and classification of employment land; monitoring the release of employment land; and strengthening of existing employment nodes.

The CCRS establishes a number of guiding principles that relate to employment lands in the Region:

- Where feasible, existing zoned employment land should be utilised before new employment lands are developed. However the land must be suitably located for the proposed employment activity.
- The rezoning of employment lands to residential and other non-employment uses should not be approved unless supported by an employment lands strategy.
- Opportunities for expansion of existing nodes for employment purposes, where they are approaching full development should be investigated.
- The North Wyong Shire Structure Plan will consider the future supply areas of employment lands and their relationship with other uses in that area.
- Employment lands should have appropriate buffers to residential areas.

The CCRS highlights that, to remain competitive with other regions, the Central Coast must continue to provide land for a diversity of employment activity over the next 25 years, including business parks.

Development of employment lands will: strengthen existing employment nodes and activity centres (within what is a coastal region, with some dispersion in population and existing jobs); ensure that supply meets or exceeds demand for employment land; provide the type of land/space to accommodate new industries; adapt land supply to reflect needs of emerging industry; and allow for the creation of specialised industry clusters.

Future Job Locations

The Central Coast will need to be able to accommodate a distributed mix of employment, which would comprise concentrations in the major employment nodes, in smaller nodes, and some distributed local service jobs.

In future, increased jobs are likely in: Gosford City as part of the redevelopment of the city centre and waterfront areas; in the Gosford Health Precinct; in the Tuggerah-Wyong major centre (commercial and retail) and in business parks in the Tuggerah-Wyong area; in the Warnervale Town Centre; and in coastal areas (associated with local population growth and tourism development). Industrial employment (manufacturing, transport and logistics) will be focused in the employment lands that are earmarked for expansion.

Looking out to 2031, there will be some other trends at work, including: a continued growth in home based employment and the movement of some emerging service businesses out of home to local office space. A trend toward localisation of employment may lead to an increase in demand for office accommodation in and around smaller centres, and this would could contribute to a revitalisation and increase in development around these smaller nodes.

The employment targets suggest that 60% of these jobs will be in the Wyong LGA and 40% in Gosford LGA and are spread across the strategic centres (Gosford Regional City and Tuggerah-Wyong Major Centre), in others centres and in employment lands.

Table 5. Employment Targets Central Coast - Regional Strategy

Centre type	Gosford LGA employment capacity targets	Wyong LGA employment capacity targets
Regional City (Gosford)	6000 (33%)	
Major Centre (Tuggerah-Wyong)		5500 (20%)
Other Centres (Town Centres, Villages, Neighbourhoods)	9000 (50%)	9000 (33%)
Employment Lands	3000 (17%)	2000 (7%)
North Wyong Structure Plan Area		10,500 (40%)
Total	18,000 (100%)	27,000 (100%)
Regional Total	45,000	

Source: *Central Coast Regional Strategy 2006-31*, Department of Planning New South Wales 2008 P29

Looking to the future, there will be some continued growth in manufacturing, warehousing and logistics activities in the region. This is based on the advantages of location factors and lower land cost. This growth will require the development of new employment lands in industrial estates.

The age structure of the population will increase demand for health services, community services and aged care. Population and business growth will increase the demand for services including retail, business services and other services. This will drive demand for commercial space in the larger centres.

The attraction of major employers in business services, and knowledge industries will require the development of ICT infrastructure (optical fibre network and high speed broadband) and high quality office accommodation. There is also substantial potential to develop the tourism sector in the coastal zones and in Gosford.

A major element to support this growth is the delivery of future employment lands in the region that: keep pace with the overall future demand for space; provide the type of land/space to accommodate new industries in the area; reflect the future requirements in terms of industries, technologies and future work organisation; allow for some specialisation and agglomeration of clusters; build on existing employment nodes and activity centres (within what is a coastal region, with some dispersion in population and existing jobs); encourage the development of jobs in closer proximity to where people live; and have good linkages to transport people to jobs and services and products to market.

The Central Coast operates in a highly competitive environment for business and investment attraction, and it will be important that clear strategies are implemented to ensure that the timing of development of employment lands aligns with patterns of industry demand.

There are a number of issues that have impacted on the attractiveness of Central Coast employment land stocks for development. These include: fragmentation of land that is under different ownership and in small lots; lack of adjoining parcels of land for consolidation; inefficient transport access to some sites; potential for conflicts with other adjoining uses; limited potential to develop economies through developing industry clusters; and limited numbers of highly visible sites.

Demand analysis has indicated that demand would remain strong as activities continue to move out of higher cost Sydney sites. However a lack of development of new supply could see demand outstrip supply and prices rise.

4.2.2 Actions Required

There are some specific requirements to plan for the future. This includes undertaking a land supply audit and developing a strategic framework for the delivery of employment lands on the Central Coast, which is linked to future industry requirements. The land audit would involve the Department of Planning and the two Councils in partnership.

The information from the study can be used to assess land capacity against future requirements of new industries and businesses that could be attracted to the area. In addition to the supply study, regular assessments need to be made of future demand for employment land and its likely timing.

The information will be used for planning and to support ongoing activity by the State Government and the Councils on employment attraction.

Accommodating future requirements of larger businesses would include: additional employment land to be provided by both expanding existing employment nodes, particularly those that support the Strategic Centres and F3 Interchanges, and by the development of new employment nodes in the north part of the Wyong LGA, which provide for a variety of lot sizes.

Key medium term actions would include:

- Working on the establishment of Wyong Employment Zone and identifying future staged expansion opportunities (as the area develops) as part of the North Wyong Shire Structure Plan.
- Identifying opportunities to expand existing employment areas across the region, including areas that are fully developed and those that surround Gosford Regional City and Tuggerah-Wyong Major Centre.
- Investigating opportunities to further develop employment nodes with good access to the F3 Freeway (eg. Somersby, Ourimbah, Bushells Ridge).

SMEs servicing a growing regional market would tend to locate in existing employment nodes; in the larger centres; and within a strengthened network of smaller employment areas, across the region (eg. Erina, Kincumber, Berkley Vale, Charmhaven). There is a need to investigate the capacity of these current nodes to accommodate business growth.

From a business and investor perspective, there is a need for greater clarity in land use strategies and a continued streamlining of approval processes to enable employment lands development to keep pace with emerging business requirements.

	Actions	Objectives	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Measuring Progress
	Strategy 4: Employment Lands	Ensuring the efficient provision of infrastructure and effective planning processes that will support ongoing employment growth and community growth.				
S4.1	Employment Lands Strategy					
	<p>Stage 1 Employment Lands Audit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a comprehensive employment land audit to identify potential supply and site requirements for larger businesses. Establish processes for the land supply information to be kept up to date. <p>This study would involve the Department of Planning and the two Councils, with industry participation.</p> <p>Stage 2 Strategic Framework</p> <p>Develop a strategic framework for the delivery of employment lands on the Central Coast.</p>	<p>-Provide for an up to date assessment of current and future land supply.</p> <p>-Provide clarity on future delivery of employment lands.</p>	DoP (partnership with Councils)	I&I NSW UDIA Developers	<p>-Complete audit- 2010.</p> <p>- Develop strategic framework - 2010</p> <p>-Maintain database – 2011 – ongoing</p> <p>-Implement strategic framework 2010-2014.</p> <p>-Major review in 2014.</p> <p>-Implement 2015 – ongoing (with 3 year reviews).</p>	<p>- Up to date information available on future employment lands stocks.</p> <p>- Planning processes delivering an adequate supply of employment lands.</p>
S4.2	Planning Processes					
	<p>Identification of priority projects, with major regional economic and employment impacts.</p> <p>Implementation of the State Government's improved planning processes, and fast tracking of major projects (rezoning and DAs) that will deliver significant employment outcomes.</p>	<p>-Create a priority for all major regional projects with significant economic development impacts.</p> <p>-Reduce time taken for assessing major projects.</p> <p>-Provide greater clarity in planning policies and processes to investors and developers.</p> <p>- Shorten timeframes for rezoning processes.</p>	DoP (partnership with Councils)	I&I NSW UDIA Developers	<p><u>Strategic Projects</u></p> <p>-Identification of strategic projects – 2010 and then ongoing.</p> <p><u>Planning Processes</u></p> <p>-Implement new processes for 2010-2014.</p> <p>-Major review 2014.</p> <p>-Implement 2015 – ongoing (with 3 year reviews).</p>	<p>- Number of DA applications for f major regional development projects.</p> <p>- Time taken to process development applications.</p> <p>- Time taken to process rezoning applications.</p>

4.3 Strategy 5: Centres Development

S5: Centres Development

Creating Vibrant Centres

S5.1 Strategic Centres Development: Gosford and Tuggerah- Wyong

S5.2 Commercial Space: recognition of requirements of major businesses.

S5.3 Other Centres: revitalisation of centres in population hubs/ stronger network of centres

4.3.1 Context

The Central Coast Regional Strategy establishes a hierarchy of centres, which classifies larger centres and articulates the expected roles, scale of development and functions of centres across the region. The hierarchy consists of Gosford Regional City, Tuggerah-Wyong Major Centre, Town Centres (eg. Woy Woy, Erina, The Entrance and Lake Haven), Villages (eg. Avoca, Terrigal, Long Jetty and Ourimbah) and Neighbourhoods.

The CCRS seeks to focus a high percentage of population and employment growth in a network of vibrant and accessible centres, across the Central Coast. The identified hierarchy of centres includes the expected uses, scale and nature of development expected for each level within that hierarchy. The CCRS targets 65% of all future employment and 59% of all future dwellings to be developed in centres. This is expected to be achieved by: the revitalisation of Gosford Regional City; extended development of the Tuggerah-Wyong Major Centre; and the development/redevelopment of some other centres across the region.³⁷

The CCRS highlights that, in order to remain competitive with other regions, the Central Coast must continue to provide land for a diversity of employment activities over the next 25 years, including business parks. The CCRS requires that new retail and commercial development is located in centres and that development within business parks must have a minimum warehouse component (and/or manufacturing/warehousing), a total maximum percentage of office floor space (to be established by local planning) and to be accessible by public transport, walking and cycling.³⁸

The benefits of concentrating growth and activities in centres include: improved access to and coordination of retail, office, health, education, leisure, entertainment and cultural facilities, and community and personal services; collaboration, competition and innovation-sharing among clustered businesses; more productive use of existing infrastructure (state and local); better returns and outcomes for public and private investment; opportunities for increased sustainable transport options such as public transport, walking and cycling, and enabling people to carry out a number of activities in one location; strengthened and revitalised centres; and the protection of sensitive and non-urban locations, including agricultural and resource lands.

Future population growth and the associated growth in services demand will be major drivers of centres development, as will be the attraction of new businesses into the region. Centres development will be focused on the revitalisation of existing centres, the creation of new centres, and development around employment and service nodes.

A major issue is ensuring that the strategic centres are able to provide the space needed for new larger businesses. These centres will be important sites for delivering the jobs that are required to meet the *Central Coast Regional Strategy* employment targets.

³⁷ Towards a Sustainable NSW Central Coast Region, NSW Business Chamber in partnership with 10 000 Friends of Greater Sydney

³⁸ There are considerable benefits of consolidating operations into a single site that combines head office, back office, manufacturing, warehouse and distribution activities.

4.3.2 Actions Required

The largest scale regional initiative is the revitalisation of Gosford Regional City as a regional administrative, business and cultural capital with expanded retail, employment and residential concentrations.³⁹ The planning for Gosford, as a Regional City, was commenced by Gosford City Council and the Regional Cities Taskforce, and the Council is now continuing this work as part of the *Gosford Challenge*. The *Gosford Challenge* involves a major redesign and renewal of the city centre and a partnership between Council and the Department of Lands.

The focus is on a creating a vibrant city centre that offers more choices in employment, education, entertainment and culture. The regeneration will transform the city centre and its economy - increasing activity, visits and employment and creating a high quality and integrated urban environment. The aim is to achieve 10,000 m² of A grade office space and 1200 new dwellings in the next 5 years.⁴⁰ It also recognises that there is a major Health Precinct (centred on the hospital), which has the capacity to expand health care and medical research (that is linked to universities).

Significant development will also occur in the Tuggerah-Wyong Major Centre, with a need to ensure that large land holdings in Tuggerah are connected, and that their development contributes to the formation of a centre focus for that area, which will include better connections to Tuggerah Station and improved pedestrian amenity. The Minister for Planning recently declared the Tuggerah Centre as a *State Significant Site* and the Department of Planning is working with Wyong Council to advance planning for that centre.

For other centres, there is the need to consider the potential for development of more retail and commercial floor space to support an increased population and the revitalisation and redevelopment of a range of centres, across the region. Growth of these other centres will be important in delivering the targeted job growth, and in meeting the State Plan targets for more jobs being located closer to home.

Smaller businesses, servicing local area markets would be located in a stronger network of revitalised and new centres, across the region providing local jobs. This would be in line with the centres hierarchy and is recognised in the CCRS. Any new centres would compliment the overall centres hierarchy and be capable of being efficiently serviced.

The incidence of home based employment and telecommuting will increase over time and this needs to be supported as part of the future employment mix.⁴¹ This would be reflected in planning policies, urban design and in housing policies.

A combination of the Gosford Regional City redevelopment, Tuggerah-Wyong Major Centre and other centres will offer a range of location options for new businesses.

39 The Gosford Challenge, Document A: Request for Proposals from Potential Design Partners. Gosford City Council & Department of Lands.

40 The Gosford Challenge, Document A: Request for Proposals from Potential Design Partners. Gosford City Council & Department of Lands. P55

41 Telecommuting may involve persons holding jobs in Sydney working from home for part of the week.

	Actions	Objectives	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Measuring Progress
	Strategy 5 Centres Development	Developing a network of active, mixed use centres, across the Region that provide a range of living, retail, service and employment opportunities for their respective catchment areas.				
S5.1	Strategic Centres Development					
	Priority will be placed on the development of the Strategic Centres of Gosford Regional City and Tuggerah-Wyong Major Centre, as major employment hubs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Create sustainable centres as major employment hubs. - Ensure that these strategic centres develop in accordance with the Central Coast Regional Strategy 	Councils (partnership with DoP)	I&I NSW UDIA Developers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commence strategic centres development 2011-2014. - Ongoing development 2015-2031. - Business attraction to Centres – ongoing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Staged development of strategic centres underway. -Floor space developed and occupied. - Major employers attracted to the strategic centres -Number of new jobs in the centres. - Regional strategy job targets met.
S5.2	Other Centres					
	Centres development will also allow for development of some commercial space to support the revitalisation of other centres.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Develop a stronger network of centres across the region -Revitalise centres around population clusters. -Provide suitable locations for small businesses. - Ensure that these other centres develop in accordance with the Central Coast Regional Strategy 	Councils (partnership with DoP)	I&I NSW UDIA Developers	- Planned development of centres 2011- ongoing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Commercial space developed in local centres. -Number of jobs in local centres.
S5.3	Space Requirements					
	Planning for all of the larger centres will take account of the specific space requirements of major businesses, and those activities that can be attracted to these locations. Planning will also take account of requirements in smaller centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Ensure that suitable commercial space is available to attract larger employers to the region. - Provision of suitable commercial and retail floor space in lower order centres. 	Councils (partnership with DoP)	I&I NSW UDIA Developers	- Monitoring of trends in space requirements of business types 2010 – ongoing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Space developed and occupied. -Number of large new employers. -Total new jobs attracted.

4.4 Strategy 6: Infrastructure

S6: Infrastructure

Supporting Regional Development

S6.1 Regional Infrastructure Plan: covering road links, rail, public transport, telecommunications, water and energy.

S6.2 National Broadband Network: making Central Coast a priority region.

4.4.1 Context

Infrastructure development is important to the region: to provide for an increased population; to accommodate environmental issues; and to support future jobs growth.

There are several issues in relation to infrastructure. The first element is to maximise the use of existing infrastructure. This provides both environmental and investment benefits. Increasing residential and employment uses within a stronger network of Strategic Centres (eg. Gosford Regional City and Tuggerah-Wyong Major Centre) and existing employment nodes will deliver a number of business benefits and reduced environmental costs by building on existing infrastructure. The second element is to plan for the delivery of critical infrastructure. These infrastructure issues have been examined in several recent studies.⁴²

The Central Coast has a number of major infrastructure requirements. Due to the importance of the movement economy (supply chains for manufacturers and logistics) road and rail are important. The dispersed population also places a major priority on roads and improved public transport, which connects to major employment nodes and activity centres. Access to reliable energy supply and water are also issues identified by business and by the community.

Telecommunications are important for the future of the region and this includes optical fibre networks and the development of high speed broadband. These are major infrastructure requirements to underpin future community and business growth in the region.

4.4.2 Actions Required

Critical economic infrastructure that will support future employment growth includes: road linkages and the development of employment lands around the F3 interchanges; the development of rail freight facilities (rail freight sidings and dedicated freight track); and high speed telecommunications to support the growth of service industries; and improved public transport, including faster rail services.

With the planning and delivery of this key infrastructure (combined with effective land use planning), the Central Coast has the opportunity to develop in a way that maximises jobs growth, while improving the region's environmental sustainability. Non delivery may risk the development of the employment lands and the achievement of the job targets for the region.

There is a need for a regional infrastructure plan to be developed.

⁴² The *Sustainable Central Coast* report focused on transport issues and linkages in creating a sustainable coast, which links communities, improves transport and strengthens local communities through housing, jobs and services. *Towards a Sustainable NSW Central Coast Region* NSW Business Chamber and Andrews Neil Urban Design Group. May 2008. Recent infrastructure submissions by the Central Coast ACC also highlighted these issues and proposed: a high speed rail link Sydney to Newcastle with stops at Gosford and Wyong; increased F3 capacity and improved highway network connections; a dedicated freight line from Sydney to Newcastle.

High speed broadband is also a priority for the region. It will be a driver of business communication, e-business activities, telecommuting, e-learning, e-health, community access to information and access to online entertainment.

The Australian Government has announced a *National Broadband Network* to provide broadband access to 90% of homes, schools and businesses through an optical fibre connection (delivering speeds of up to 100 megabits per second).⁴³ For rural and remote areas (with populations below 1000), next generation wireless and satellite connections will be provided.

The Central Coast has a poor broadband service, it is a major growth centre, has a dispersed population and some dispersion of employment centres. There is substantial green fields development occurring, which allows for the installation of optical fibre to home sites and business sites. There will be major development in the Strategic Centres (Gosford and Tuggerah-Wyong).

It is important that the Central Coast establishes itself as a priority region for the roll out of the national network. High speed broadband is fundamental for the future development of the region as a connected and smarter region.

The Central Coast Regional Strategy recognises that there are several infrastructure areas that could, at some time in the future, potentially constrain the capacity for growth in the region. Future reviews of the CCRS (as part of the 5-yearly review cycle) will include an assessment of the Central Coast's water supply, road and rail infrastructure and its capacity to support the projected growth in population and employment.

⁴³ This is around 100 times faster than the speeds those currently used by many households and businesses.
Buchan Consulting

	Actions	Objectives	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Measuring Progress
	Strategy 6: Infrastructure to Support Economic Growth	Ensuring the efficient provision of infrastructure and effective planning processes that will support ongoing employment growth and community growth.				
S6.1	Regional Infrastructure Plan					
	<p>Prepare a regional infrastructure plan that is linked to the economic development requirements for the region.</p> <p>Infrastructure to support employment growth includes: road linkages and the development of employment lands around the F3 interchanges; the development of rail freight facilities; and high speed telecommunications to support the growth of service industries; and improved public transport.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Ensure that infrastructure development aligns with future industry development and population growth. -Identification of strategic infrastructure requirements. -Identification of potential constraints. 	RDA-CC	I&I NSW DoP DPC T&I NSW Councils UDIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare Plan 2010 - Action on the plan 2011-2014 - Major review of plan (2015) -Implement 2015 - ongoing (with 3 year reviews). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Key infrastructure gaps identified. -Staged implementation of the infrastructure plan. - Level of investment in infrastructure.
S6.2	National Broadband Network					
	<p>Establish Central Coast as a priority area for the National Broadband roll out.</p> <p>-Central Coast is a large region with dispersed population centres. Broadband will deliver major opportunities for education and training, for business , for e-health , for telecommuting and giving households access to information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make the Central Coast a second pilot project for the roll out - Deliver improved broadband access and speeds in the region. 	RDA- CC	I&I NSW DoP DPC Councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish Central Coast as a priority area 2010 - Roll out 2011-2012 	<p>Central Coast made a priority area. Roll out completed</p>

5 Supporting the Strategy

5.1 Supporting the Strategy

Supporting the REDES comprises regional marketing, regional information and tracking and governance arrangements.

5.2 Strategy 7: Marketing the Region

S7: Marketing the Region

A Business Location

7.1 Marketing Plan: Central Coast as a business location; development of marketing tools; and coordinated investment attraction marketing.

5.2.1 Context

There is a need to more actively market the Central Coast as a business location. The Central Coast is a major economic region. The area now has a population of over 290,000 and with the predicted growth this will increase to over 400,000 by 2031. The region is competing with other regions for population, investment and jobs and many of these areas are active in marketing their region for resident attraction, investment and jobs.

The need for a more active approach to business attraction and the promotion of the region as a business location has been identified as a major issue by Central Coast businesses. The marketing efforts need to be built around the recognised advantages of the region and take account of the areas the Central Coast is competing with. The REDES will provide a vehicle for coordination of regional marketing and business attraction.

Comparative Advantages

The major advantages of the Central Coast Region for business are: a strategic and accessible location between Sydney and Newcastle, which provides efficient access to these two major markets; a good export location with road, rail and port access; workforce - a stable workforce; lower business costs relative to metropolitan locations; continued population growth; and regional market size and access to broader markets.

Employment lands are an advantage, with sites available for development, which have F3 or rail corridor access and which can be tailored for particular industries.

It also has a number of industry advantages, with several industry clusters having developed on these strengths. These clusters include: a specialisation in food and beverage production; a logistics hub for food products and for other products being distributed to East Coast markets (12 hour access to Brisbane and Melbourne); building products production and light industry. The predicted growth in population will create a larger regional market for services.

For the community, the major advantages were: the coastal lifestyle; central location and access to Sydney and Newcastle; the environment; and affordable housing options.

Some of the major areas of competition for the Central Coast, include Greater Western Sydney (Parramatta, Blacktown, Penrith) and areas in the Lower Hunter Region, particularly Newcastle and Lake Macquarie. These areas are competing for the location of manufacturing, transport and logistics, service businesses (including back office functions) and government agencies (in the case of Parramatta and Newcastle). Each of these areas has seen success in their business attraction and has industrial and commercial sites available to be able to attract businesses. The Central Coast is in a

position to secure new businesses through a focused region-wide approach to business and investment attraction.

5.2.2 Actions Required

In business attraction, the Central Coast needs to take a region-wide approach rather than an individual LGA approach. In combination, the Central Coast is a large and growing region with a number of strong positive elements. The *Central Coast Regional Strategy* is shaping the future population settlement patterns, and the development of strategic centres and other areas. This regional approach needs to be reflected in a regional business brand, marketing collateral and targeted industry approaches.

There is a need to develop a Central Coast brand for business attraction and resident attraction (particularly to attract managers and professionals). While the brand could utilise the existing Central Coast brand identity, a whole brand language needs to be developed with a focus on economic development. The current brand identity should be assessed as part of the development of the marketing strategy and business brand. Success with a new brand would enable it to be extended as a place brand and to be used by others as a co-brand (eg. government, developers and businesses) for major projects and initiatives.

The key themes for marketing the region could be: *Moving ahead* - a growing region with good prospects from population growth and market size; *Accessible* - a strategic location with access to Sydney and Newcastle and national markets; *Liveable* - a quality coastal environment and lifestyle; *Affordable* - affordable business locations and housing; *Productive* - a skilled workforce and support businesses; and *Open for business* - proactive and receptive to new business.

The regional marketing effort should be built around a number of elements. The newly established RDA – Central Coast could take the lead role on this strategy.

Action	Description
Development of tools	Development of tools - update of the Regional Prospectus (as the regional business credentials document); and a Central Coast business and investment website.
An evidence based approach	Providing investors with high quality information and with tailored follow up information that is relevant to their sector. In addition to the use of industry and regional data, there should be <i>real experience</i> , with the use of case studies and testimonials from businesses operating in the region.
Prospect contact	Prospect contact - active approaches to businesses in the targeted sectors and to government agencies, which have the potential to locate on the Central Coast.
Coordinated approach	Coordinated approaches to business targets, involving government in partnership with developers operating in the region.
Partnering	Partnering with business organisations, including the NSW Business Chamber, UDIA and the local area chambers.
Keeping contact	Keeping contact with businesses in the area to develop additional case studies and to use businesses to advise potential investors.

	Actions	Objectives	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Measuring Progress
	Strategy 7: Marketing the Region	Creating a more robust and sustainable regional economy, with new employment opportunities.				
S7.1	Marketing Plan					
	<p>Develop and implement a Central Coast Region Marketing Plan to position the region as a business location.</p> <p>The plan would include a place brand and development of marketing tools (prospectus, website). This would include information that is tailored for key industry sectors.</p> <p>Implement a coordinated investment marketing program that involves government agencies, business groups and developers and which is linked to business attraction activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Build an economic identity for the Central Coast. -Develop investor and industry recognition of the Central Coast as a business location. -Ensure a coordinated approach to business attraction. 	RDA-CC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I&I NSW Councils Chambers Developers UDIA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop strategy and tools 2010 - Implement plan 2010-2014 - Major review of plan (2015) -Implement 2015 - ongoing (with 3 year reviews). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Business recognition of Central Coast as a good business location. - Coordinated investment attraction program implemented. - Increase in number of business inquiries. - Number of new businesses attracted.

5.3 Strategy 8: Regional Information

S8: Regional Information

Tracking Performance

S8.1 Base line indicators: monitoring of the REDES and economy trends

S8.2 REDES Report Card – preparation of annual report on progress.

5.3.1 Context

The REDES needs to be supported by high quality information and regional analysis. This includes business information to track trends in the region and analysis to identify business opportunities and targets. Information is also required to track performance against the plan. This involves: commissioning appropriate studies to provide an evidence base for key decisions; conducting a regular business survey to understand issues, trends and performance; and analysing regional economic indicators. Information on jobs and development trends will be critical base line information.

A key element will be sharing this information across government and business. This will contribute to an improved understanding of the region's economy and will allow supporting strategies to be responsive to change when necessary.

5.3.2 Actions Required

Information and Monitoring - Base Line Information

There is a baseline of information that needs to be collected to support the REDES and to monitor employment growth and development trends. As well as tracking performance, this information will be useful for potential investors and relocating businesses.

There are a number of components to this data: employment - monitoring of employment trends in key sectors and in new jobs created; land supply - keeping the regional employment lands data base up to date; floor space- monitoring of available floor space (occupied and vacant); and development trends - new development including investment value and the uptake of space.

This baseline data would be made available to government and business, to aid investment decisions and to track performance of the REDES. This information will also provide a better evidence base understanding regional trends and future opportunities.

The data to be utilised is a mix of generally available data, data from Councils, and information to be collected in local surveys and studies. In addition a range of qualitative information and intelligence can be obtained from ongoing contact with businesses in the region. Processes will be established for the collection and update of this baseline data and its distribution.

Other Indicators

There is a range of quantitative and qualitative indicators that are relevant to economic development and the monitoring of the local economy. These indicators include data on: population, unemployment and jobs, property, tourism, and investment. There is also a need to track the economic development performance through information on investment and jobs facilitated (eg. both new entrants and from growth of existing businesses).

Data is available from a number of sources and these include Councils' data, government information, industry surveys, regional studies and ABS data. As part of monitoring the REDES, a regular survey of business in the region could be conducted, along with the preparation of a regular report on Central

Coast Indicators.⁴⁴ This research and analysis role could be contracted to the proposed *Central Coast Region Research Centre*.

Table 6. Economic and Business Indicators

Indicator	Description
Population and Jobs	
Population	Population age structure and growth trends
Employment	Employment structure and jobs growth trends
Labour force	Labour force characteristics and growth trends
Unemployment	Unemployment rate and trend
Income	Income levels (households and individuals), trends and comparisons
Housing	
Housing Sales	Median prices and trend
Housing Rental	Median rent and trend
Building Approvals	DAs approved by category (residential, commercial, industrial)
Value of buildings approved	Value by category (residential, commercial, industrial)
Housing	Number of dwellings under construction and completions
Tourism	
Visitor numbers	Quarterly trends by category (day, overnight, international)
Accommodation	Ave occupancy rates
Investment	
Business investment	Investment levels by major companies
Attitudes	
Business	Business confidence and attitudes
Community	Community attitudes to economic development
Facilitated Business	
Investment	Investment by businesses attracted in Investment by existing businesses
Jobs	Number of jobs in businesses attracted in Number of jobs in existing businesses expanding
Employment Lands	
Land Available	Database on land available for development and being developed
Developed Land	Monitoring of land developed and its uptake
Floor Space	Available floor space, including take up and vacancies by location
Education and Training	
Schools	Enrolments and retention rates
Higher Education	University enrolments
Vocational Education	VET enrolments
Apprenticeships	Apprenticeship numbers
Training Programs	Numbers undertaking training
Business indicators	
	Regional indicators and qualitative information including number of businesses, new businesses registered business closures, business expansion.

This information would be utilised in preparing an annual report card on the REDES. The annual State of the Shire Reports would also be drawn on in developing the Report Card.

44 This would be broader than the current *Central Coast Economic Indicators - September Quarter 2007*, Central Coast Research Foundation. Buchan Consulting

	Actions	Objectives	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Measuring Progress
	Strategy 8: Information and Monitoring	-Providing a framework through, which economic development, investment, planning, and governance can be coordinated.				
S8.1	Base Line Indicators					
	<p>Establish a set of base line indicators for monitoring of the REDES and prepare a regular report.</p> <p>This data would cover: employment trends in key sectors and new jobs created; land supply, floor space – (occupied and vacant) and development trends including investment value and the uptake of space. This baseline data would be made available to government and business, to aid investment decisions and to track performance of the REDES. This role could be contracted to the proposed Central Coast Region Research Centre (S3.3)</p>	<p>-Monitor baseline indicators for the REDES to assess performance and make adjustments to the strategy.</p> <p>-Monitor and track trends in the regional economy.</p> <p>-Make better information available to government and business decision makers.</p>	RDA-CC	I&I NSW DoP Councils UoN-CC	<p>-Develop indicators and prepare first report 2010.</p> <p>- Major review of 2011 Census data 2012</p> <p>- Tracking of indicators 2011- ongoing.</p>	<p>-Indicators report prepared and information shared with business and government.</p> <p>- Indicators used to monitor the REDES.</p>
S8.2	REDES Report Card					
	Prepare an annual report card on the region and the REDES, using the baseline data and other regional information.	<p>-Monitor trends in the region.</p> <p>-Monitor progress on the REDES.</p>	RDA-CC	I&I NSW DoP Councils UoN-CC	<p>- Prepare first REDES Report Card 2011.</p> <p>- Report Cards (annual) 2012- ongoing.</p>	- Report Card prepared and acted on.

5.4 Implementing the REDES

Implementation
Governance (Making it happen) I.1 Regional Model: an appropriate model I.2 Resourcing: resources to support implementation
Collaboration & Community Engagement (Involving partners and the community) C.1 Central Coast Development Initiative: compact ensuring business and community engagement.

5.4.1 Acting on the Strategy

The Regional Economic Development and Employment Strategy (REDES) is a long-term strategy, which will shape future economic development and employment growth on the Central Coast. The REDES needs to be *owned* by key stakeholders in the region, if there is to be a unified approach to maximising economic opportunities for the Central Coast.

Implementation of the REDES will involve cross agency collaboration in government; the adoption of a region-wide perspective; and active involvement by business and the education sector in a wide range of areas of the strategy. This requires a visible commitment to the REDES by the key organisations in the region.

The best way of securing this commitment, ensuring involvement and gaining public visibility is through organisations signing a *regional compact for economic development*. The regional compact would be a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the organisations in relation to economic development and the long term future of the Central Coast.

The compact could be designated as the *Central Coast Regional Development Initiative*. It would: be signed at Minister/CEO level; commit organisations to work together on securing a sustainable future for the region, based on a number of key principles; and create opportunities for organisations to actively participate in the implementation of the strategy.

A governance model will be established to ensure overall direction, coordination, delivery and continuity of the REDES. This model will be supported by arrangements for ongoing collaboration and engagement.

It will also be involved in reviewing the REDES. The review cycle will comprise: every year - a report card on progress; every two years – an assessment of specific initiatives and their relevance to current circumstances; and every 5 years – a major review of the REDES.

Appropriate resources will be provided through RDA-CC and government agencies to support ongoing implementation.

	Actions	Objectives	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Measuring Progress
	REDES Implementation	-Providing a framework through, which economic development, investment, planning, and governance can be coordinated. -Creating strong economic development partnerships between business and government.				
I.1	Governance					
	An appropriate governance model to oversee the REDES will be established.	-Ensure overall direction of the REDES. -Monitor performance. -Ensure coordination of government agencies. -Conduct reviews of the REDES.	I&I NSW DoP Councils Chambers RDA-CC	-Development of mechanism 2010 - Implementation 2010-2014 - Major review 2014 - Implementation 2015-ongoing	-Development of mechanism 2010 - Implementation 2010-2014 - Major review 2014 - Implementation 2015-ongoing	- An effective model adopted. - Active involvement of the partners. - Annual tracking of performance. - 5 year reviews conducted.
I.2	Resourcing					
	Resources will be provided through participating agencies to support governance and implementation of the REDES.	-Ensure that implementation and coordination takes place.	I&I NSW Councils Chambers Developers	-Provision of resources 2010-2014. - Major review 2014 - Implementation 2015-ongoing	-Provision of resources 2010-2014. - Major review 2014 - Implementation 2015-ongoing	- Adequate resources provided for implementation.
C.1	Regional Compact					
	Commitment to the REDES will be established through a <i>regional compact for economic development</i> .	-Ensure industry, government and community commitment to the REDES -Ensure ongoing participation in implementation of the strategy.	DPC Councils I&I NSW UDIA Chambers Developers	- Develop compact 2009 - Implement compact 2009 – ongoing.	- Develop compact 2009 - Implement compact 2009 – ongoing.	-Government, business and community cooperation established.

Appendix A: REDES Strategies and Actions

Organisations Involved in the REDES

Acronym	Organisation
BEC	Business Enterprise Centre
Businesses	Major businesses in the region
CCSBI	Central Coast Small Business Incubator
Chambers	NSW Business Chamber, Area Chambers of Commerce
Councils	Gosford City Council, Wyong Shire Council
DEEWR	Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations (Australian Government)
DET-Schools	Department of Education and Training – Schools Division (NSW)
DET-STS	Department of Education and Training – State Training Service (NSW)
Developers	Major developers active in the region
DoP	Department of Planning New South Wales
DPC	Department of Premier and Cabinet (NSW)
I&I NSW	Department of Industry & Investment (NSW)
JSA	Jobs Services Australia Providers
RDA - CC	Regional Development Australia Central Coast
RTOs	Registered Training Organisations
TAFE NSW - HI	TAFE New South Wales – Hunter Institute
T&I NSW	Transport and Infrastructure NSW
UDIA	Urban Development Institute of Australia (Central Coast)
UoN – CC	University of Newcastle - Central Coast
Universities	Other universities

The following tables outline all of the strategies and actions in the REDES.

	Actions	Objectives	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Measuring Progress
	Strategy 1: Strengthening the Regional Economy	Creating a more robust and sustainable regional economy, with new employment opportunities.				
S1.1	Securing New Jobs/Supporting Existing Jobs - Sector Targets					
	<p>Recognise that jobs growth will be in a range of sectors. Adopt a targeted approach to industry development which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitates employment growth associated with regional population growth. Develops other jobs based on an industry cluster approach to industry development, with a focus on those sectors, which will deliver sustainable higher skill jobs. <p>Industry/Job Categories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Category 1: Jobs in sectors that will be driven by population growth in the region. (Strengthening existing SMEs and ensure appropriate commercial and industrial space is available). Category 2: Build on current advantages through a supply chain approach to deliver additional jobs. (Priorities are: food, logistics, tourism, manufacturing). Category 3: Develop new areas of industry specialisation, which increase knowledge jobs. (Priorities are health, green industries and ageing). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Ensure jobs growth targets are met. -Build jobs on current sustainable advantages. -Create new regional advantages and higher skill jobs. 	I&I NSW	Councils Chambers Developers RDA-CC Businesses	<p>Category 1 and 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Implement program 2010 – 2014. -Major review of program 2014. -Implement 2015 – 2031 (with 3 year reviews). <p>Category 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Develop sector strategies 2010-2011. -First stage implementation 2011-2014 -Major review of program 2014. -Implement 2015 – 2031 (with 3 year reviews). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Total number of new jobs created. -Increase in number of higher skill jobs. -Progress on developing industry clusters.

	Actions	Objectives	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Measuring Progress
	Strategy 1: Strengthening the Regional Economy	Creating a more robust and sustainable regional economy, with new employment opportunities.				
S1.2	Business Attraction					
	Implement an active program of business attraction which targets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses in Category 2: food, logistics, manufacturing, tourism • Category 4: Business services (call centres, support centres, back office functions). • Category 4: Government agencies. The program would be based on a partnership approach between government, industry groups and developers.	-Secure new larger businesses in key focus areas. -Securing larger employers in business services and government.	I&I NSW	Councils Chambers Developers RDA-CC	Category 2 and 4 -First stage implementation 2011-2014 -Major review of program 2014. -Implement 2015 – 2031 (with 3 year reviews).	-Number of businesses attracted. -Number of jobs in attracted businesses.
S1.3	Business Growth					
	Enterprise Development Program Implement a structured innovation and enterprise development program for SMEs. -The program would better focus the delivery of current business assistance programs to SMEs and would develop new programs. -The initiative would link business development programs (State Government and Australian Government) under the umbrella of the Business Growth Initiative.	-Develop stronger local businesses and facilitate growth. -Ensure more effective delivery of programs to business.	I&I NSW	Chambers TAFE NSW-HI RDA-CC CCSBI BEC UoN-CC AusIndustry	-Develop program 2010 -First stage implementation 2010-2014 -Major review of program 2014. -Implement 2015 – 2031 (with 3 year reviews).	-Increase take up of business programs. -Development and delivery of new programs. -Success of SMEs in developing new markets.

	Actions	Objectives	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Measuring Progress
	Strategy 2: Future Skills	Building skill levels of the community through a stronger learning culture, which recognises the value of education and training.				
	S 2..1 A Learning Region					
S2.1.1	Designate the Central Coast as a Learning Region					
	<p>Establish a Central Coast Learning Region Network, with the involvement of the business, Councils, Government agencies, education and training providers, and community organisations.</p> <p>The network would work on developing a Regional Learning Plan and a Learning Access Program - a community marketing program to promote education and training options, and to increase education and training participation rates.</p> <p>Funding to support the Learning Network would be sought from government and business.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Create a learning culture. -Lift educational attainment in the region. -Improve skills in the region. -Build stronger partnerships 	I&I NSW	Businesses Chambers Councils DET-Schools UoN-CC TAFE NSW-HI RTOs DEEWR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Establish Network 2011. -First stage implementation 2011- 2014. -Major review of program 2014. -Implement 2015 – ongoing (with 3 year reviews). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Number of business involved in the Learning Network. -Increase in school retention rates. -Increase in numbers of young people in higher education and VET. -Increase in training activity in small businesses. -Increase participation in community education programs.
S2.1.2	Sector Skills Programs					
	<p>As part of the Regional Learning Plan, there would be a focus on skills for key sectors, through action plans (covering sectors including manufacturing, construction, retail, tourism).</p> <p>These would focus critical skills shortages, emerging industry skills and skills for small business.</p> <p>A focus of these action plans should be on maintaining skills during the recession and providing skills for long term recovery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Develop industry focused solutions to long term skill needs. -Maintain skills development during the recession. -Better utilise government training support programs 	DET-STS	TAFE NSW-HI Businesses Chambers RDA- CC DEEWR I&I NSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Develop first sector plan as a pilot in 2010 -First stage implementation 2010- 2014 -Major review of program 2014. -Implement 2015 – ongoing (with 3 year reviews). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Number of sector skill plans developed and implemented. -Increase in training activity by business -Increase in number of skilled employees.

	Actions	Objectives	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Measuring Progress
	Strategy 2: Future Skills	Building skill levels of the community through a stronger learning culture, which recognises the value of education and training.				
S2.2.1	Business/Education Partnerships					
	<p>As part of a Learning Region, develop stronger business/education sector partnerships to improve school completion rates and pathways to education/training and employment.</p> <p>Map existing partnerships between education and business and develop a more cohesive approach.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Increase business engagement with schools. -Ensure that young people develop skills for future employment. -Increased uptake of VET in schools programs, work experience and apprenticeships. 	I&I NSW	Businesses Youth Agencies Schools Chambers DET-Schools RTOs DEEWR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Map existing partnerships 2009 -Develop a new model 2010 -Implementation 2011- 2014 -Major review of program 2014. -Implement 2015 – ongoing (with 3 year reviews). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Number of businesses participating. -Increase in school completion rates -Increase in number of students undertaking VET programs.
S2.2.2	Skills Programs					
	<p>As part of a Learning Region, there is a need to develop skills of persons with low skills levels.</p> <p>Map existing programs and identify ways of better focusing programs for target groups, including mature workers, disadvantage persons and displaced workers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Reskilling of mature workers. - Providing work skills to disadvantaged persons. - Developing new skills for displaced workers. 	DET-STS	Chambers JSA DEEWR I&I NSW TAFE NSW-HI UoN-CC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Map existing programs -Develop program as a pilot in 2010 -First stage implementation 2010- 2014 -Major review of program 2014. - Implement 2015 – ongoing (with 3 year reviews). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Number of persons trained. -Number of persons returning to the workforce -Reduction in number of unemployed persons.

	Actions	Objectives	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Measuring Progress
	Strategy 3: Increasing Knowledge and Innovation	Developing the knowledge economy by increasing the level of research and development and innovation in the region.				
S3.1	Develop Research Programs					
	Continued development of research programs in: health sciences, education (including distance e-learning and early childhood learning), sports science, coastal ecologies, and agribusiness (eg DPI Centre). Development of new industry linked research programs in areas including: food; environmental and energy research; ageing and aged care; and logistics.	-Increasing knowledge development that is linked to key sectors. -Developing university/business links in research and innovation. -Creating new areas of comparative advantage.	RDA-CC (and UoN-CC)	I&I NSW Businesses Chambers Councils	-Continued development of existing programs 2010-ongoing. - Development of new research programs 2012 – 2020, then ongoing.	-Number of research programs. -Number of persons involved in research centres. - Number of industry research partnerships.
S3.2	Knowledge Precincts					
	Develop knowledge precincts that combine university education/ research programs with industry research in emerging sectors. -Health- development of research within the Gosford Health Precinct. -Other higher education/research precincts may develop in the longer term in the Strategic Centres(Gosford Regional City and Tuggerah Wyong Major Centre).	-Increasing knowledge development that is linked to key sectors. -Developing university/business links in research and innovation. -Creating new areas of comparative advantage	RDA- CC	DoP Councils I&I NSW Businesses Universities Chambers	-Development of research precincts 2015- 2025	-Increase in industry research in the region. - Number of industry/education research partnerships. -Creation of research precincts.
S3.3	Central Coast Research Centre					
	Establish a multi-discipline Central Coast Research Centre, which focuses on business innovation and sustainable business development. -The centre would undertake research, monitor trends and develop and deliver programs to the region. -A centre would need to be supported by a combination of university, government and business funding.	-Create a knowledge centre in the region. -Facilitate innovation in local businesses, through research linkages and new programs. -Monitor trends in the region.	RDA-CC	I&I NSW Businesses Universities Chambers Councils	-Develop Research Centre 2011 -Implement research programs 2011 - 2014 -Major review 2014 - Implement 2015 – ongoing (with 3 year reviews).	- Establishment of the centre. - Programs developed and implemented.
S3.4	Innovation					
	Develop and implement innovation programs for SMEs, including innovation networks, clusters and business training programs. -Strengthen the Small Business Incubator. -Investigate establishment of a second stage innovation facility.	-Create new knowledge businesses. -Develop and strengthen innovative businesses. -Develop business linkages.	I&I NSW	Businesses TAFE NSW-HI UoN-CC Chambers Councils BEC RDA-CC	-Develop initial programs 2010 -Implement 2010-2012 -Review and revised programs 2012 - Implement 2015 – ongoing (with 3 year reviews). Investigate innovation facility 2012.	- Number of businesses participating in programs. - Number of new businesses utilising the incubator. - Growth performance of innovative businesses

	Actions	Objectives	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Measuring Progress
	Strategy 4: Employment Lands	Ensuring the efficient provision of infrastructure and effective planning processes that will support ongoing employment growth and community growth.				
S4.1	Employment Lands Strategy					
	<p>Stage 1 Employment Lands Audit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a comprehensive employment land audit to identify potential supply and site requirements for larger businesses. Establish processes for the land supply information to be kept up to date. <p>This study would involve the Department of Planning and the two Councils, with industry participation.</p> <p>Stage 2 Strategic Framework Develop a strategic framework for the delivery of employment lands on the Central Coast.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Provide for an up to date assessment of current and future land supply. -Provide clarity on future delivery of employment lands. 	DoP (partnership with Councils)	I&I NSW UDIA Developers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Complete audit- 2010. - Develop strategic framework - 2010 -Maintain database – 2011 – ongoing -Implement strategic framework 2010-2014. -Major review in 2014. -Implement 2015 – ongoing (with 3 year reviews). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Up to date information available on future employment lands stocks. - Planning processes delivering an adequate supply of employment lands.
S4.2	Planning Processes					
	<p>Identification of priority projects, With major regional economic and employment impacts.</p> <p>Implementation of the State Government's improved planning processes, and fast tracking of major projects (rezoning and DAs) that will deliver significant employment outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Create a priority for all major regional projects with significant economic development impacts. -Reduce time taken for assessing major projects. -Provide greater clarity in planning policies and processes to investors and developers. - Shorten timeframes for rezoning processes. 	DoP (partnership with Councils)	I&I NSW UDIA Developers	<p>Strategic Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Identification of strategic projects – 2010 and then ongoing. Planning Processes -Implement new processes for 2010-2014. -Major review 2014. -Implement 2015 – ongoing (with 3 year reviews). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of major regional development projects processed. - Time taken to process development applications. - Time taken to process rezoning applications.

	Actions	Objectives	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Measuring Progress
	Strategy 5 Centres Development	Developing a network of active, mixed use centres, across the Region that provide a range of living, retail, service and employment opportunities for their respective catchment areas.				
S5.1	Strategic Centres Development					
	Priority will be placed on the development of the Strategic Centres of Gosford Regional City and Tuggerah-Wyong Major Centre, as major employment hubs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Create sustainable centres as major employment hubs. - Ensure that these key centres develop in accordance with the Central Coast Regional Strategy 	Councils (partnership with DoP)	I&I NSW UDIA Developers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commence strategic centres development 2011-2014. - Ongoing development 2015-2031. - Business attraction to Centres – ongoing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Staged development of strategic centres underway. -Floor space developed and occupied. - Major employers attracted to the strategic centres -Number of new jobs in the centres. - Regional strategy job targets met.
S5.2	Other Centres					
	Centres development will also allow for development of some commercial space to support the revitalisation of other centres.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Develop a stronger network of centres across the region -Revitalise centres around population clusters. -Provide suitable locations for small businesses. - Ensure that these key centres develop in accordance with the Central Coast Regional Strategy 	Councils (partnership with DoP)	I&I NSW UDIA Developers	- Planned development of centres 2011- ongoing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Commercial space developed in local centres. -Number of jobs in local centres.
S5.3	Space Requirements					
	Planning for all of the larger centres will take account of the specific space requirements of major businesses, and those activities that can be attracted to these locations. Planning will also take account of requirements in smaller centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Ensure that suitable commercial space is available to attract larger employers to the region. - Provision of suitable commercial and retail floor space in lower order centres. 	Councils (partnership with DoP)	I&I NSW UDIA Developers	- Monitoring of trends in space requirements of business types 2010 – ongoing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Space developed and occupied. -Number of large new employers. -Total new jobs attracted.

	Actions	Objectives	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Measuring Progress
	Strategy 6: Infrastructure to Support Economic Growth	Ensuring the efficient provision of infrastructure and effective planning processes that will support ongoing employment growth and community growth.				
S6.1	Regional Infrastructure Plan					
	<p>Prepare a regional infrastructure plan that is linked to the economic development requirements for the region.</p> <p>Infrastructure to support employment growth includes: road linkages and the development of employment lands around the F3 interchanges; the development of rail freight facilities; and high speed telecommunications to support the growth of service industries; and improved public transport.</p>	<p>-Ensure that infrastructure development aligns with future industry development and population growth.</p> <p>-Identification of strategic infrastructure requirements.</p> <p>-Identification of potential constraints.</p>	RDA-CC	I&I NSW DoP DPC T&I NSW Councils UDIA	<p>- Prepare Plan 2010</p> <p>- Action on the plan 2011-2014</p> <p>- Major review of plan (2015)</p> <p>-Implement 2015 - ongoing (with 3 year reviews).</p>	<p>-Key infrastructure gaps identified.</p> <p>-Staged implementation of the infrastructure plan.</p> <p>- Level of investment in infrastructure.</p>
S6.2	National Broadband Network					
	<p>Establish Central Coast as a priority area for the National Broadband roll out.</p> <p>-Central Coast is a large region with dispersed population centres. Broadband will deliver major opportunities for education and training, for business , for e-health , for telecommuting and giving households access to information</p>	<p>- Make the Central Coast a second pilot project for the roll out</p> <p>- Deliver improved broadband access and speeds in the region.</p>	RDA- CC	I&I NSW DoP DPC Councils	<p>- Establish Central Coast as a priority area 2010</p> <p>- Roll out 2011-2012</p>	<p>Central Coast made a priority area.</p> <p>Roll out completed</p>

	Actions	Objectives	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Measuring Progress
	Strategy 7: Marketing the Region	Creating a more robust and sustainable regional economy, with new employment opportunities.				
S7.1	Marketing Plan					
	<p>Develop and implement a Central Coast Region Business Marketing Plan to position the region as a business location.</p> <p>The plan would include a place brand and development of marketing tools (prospectus, website). This would include information that is tailored for key industry sectors.</p> <p>Implement a coordinated investment marketing program that involves government agencies, business groups and developers and which is linked to business attraction activities.</p>	<p>-Build an economic identity for the Central Coast.</p> <p>-Develop investor and industry recognition of the Central Coast as a business location.</p> <p>-Ensure a coordinated approach to business attraction.</p>	RDA-CC	<p>I&I NSW Councils Chambers Developers UDIA</p>	<p>- Develop strategy and tools 2010</p> <p>- Implement plan 2010-2014</p> <p>- Major review of plan (2015)</p> <p>-Implement 2015 - ongoing (with 3 year reviews).</p>	<p>- Business recognition of Central Coast as a good business location.</p> <p>- Coordinated investment attraction program implemented.</p> <p>- Increase in number of business inquiries.</p> <p>- Number of new businesses attracted.</p>

	Actions	Objectives	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Measuring Progress
	Strategy 8: Information and Monitoring	-Providing a framework through, which economic development, investment, planning, and governance can be coordinated.				
S8.1	Base Line Indicators					
	<p>Establish a set of base line indicators for monitoring of the REDES and prepare a regular report.</p> <p>This data would cover: employment trends in key sectors and new jobs created; land supply, floor space – (occupied and vacant) and development trends including investment value and the uptake of space.</p> <p>This baseline data would be made available to government and business, to aid investment decisions and to track performance of the REDES.</p> <p>This role could be contracted to the proposed Central Coast Region Research Centre (S3.3)</p>	<p>-Monitor baseline indicators for the REDES to assess performance and make adjustments to the strategy.</p> <p>-Monitor and track trends in the regional economy.</p> <p>-Make better information available to government and business decision makers.</p>	RDA-CC	I&I NSW DoP Councils UoN-CC	<p>-Develop indicators and prepare first report 2010.</p> <p>- Major review of 2011 Census data 2012</p> <p>- Tracking of indicators 2011-ongoing.</p>	<p>-Indicators report prepared and information shared with business and government.</p> <p>- Indicators used to monitor the REDES.</p>
S8.2	REDES Report Card					
	Prepare an annual report card on the region and the REDES, using the baseline data and other regional information.	<p>-Monitor trends in the region.</p> <p>-Monitor progress on the REDES.</p>	RDA-CC	I&I NSW DoP Councils UoN-CC	<p>- Prepare first REDES Report Card 2011.</p> <p>- Report Cards (annual) 2012-ongoing.</p>	- Report Card prepared and acted on.

	Actions	Objectives	Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Measuring Progress
	REDES Implementation	-Providing a framework through, which economic development, investment, planning, and governance can be coordinated. -Creating strong economic development partnerships between business and government.				
I.1	Governance					
	An appropriate governance model to oversee the REDES will be established.	-Ensure overall direction of the REDES. -Monitor performance. -Ensure coordination of government agencies. -Conduct reviews of the REDES.	DPC	I&I NSW DoP Councils Chambers RDA-CC	-Development of mechanism 2010 - Implementation 2010-2014 - Major review 2014 - Implementation 2015-ongoing	- An effective model adopted. - Active involvement of the partners. - Annual tracking of performance. - 5 year reviews conducted.
I.2	Resourcing					
	Resources will be provided through participating agencies to support governance and implementation of the REDES.	-Ensure that implementation and coordination takes place.	RDA-CC	I&I NSW Councils Chambers Developers	-Provision of resources 2010-2014. - Major review 2014 - Implementation 2015-ongoing	- Adequate resources provided for implementation.
C.1	Regional Compact					
	Commitment to the REDES will be established through a regional compact for economic development.	-Ensure industry, government and community commitment to the REDES. -Ensure ongoing participation in implementation of the strategy.	RDA-CC	DPC Councils I&I NSW UDIA Chambers Developers	- Develop compact 2009 - Implement compact 2009 – ongoing.	-Government , business and community cooperation established.

Appendix B - Economic Development Issues

The following are issues identified in industry surveys and consultations:

Key Economic Issues - Central Coast

Issues
Industry Structure
A narrow industry structure with relatively few large enterprises, and large numbers of small businesses servicing local markets.
A major gap with few home-grown mid-size to large businesses operating in national markets.
A small knowledge industries sector and a limited business services sector – creating a narrow range of professional jobs in the area.
A dominance of local market (population) driven industries, which creates ongoing vulnerabilities to during economic downturns.
The current structure (population driven industries) is not able to create enough jobs to keep up with population growth and a growing labour force.
Skill levels tend to be lower in some of these population driven industries. There is a narrow range of professional jobs in the region.
Weaknesses have been masked by a boom economy (mining and Sydney's job growth) and success in business attraction. It is now being exposed in the slowdown.
New innovative businesses are not emerging on the Central Coast.
The high workforce commuting rates create associated environmental, social and community impacts.
There is a need to build some strong industry specialisations as the foundation for sustainable growth.
Infrastructure and Planning
Internal mobility problems – limited public transport availability and frequencies that affect access to jobs, education and some services for young people and those without cars. The Central Coast remains a car dependent region.
Upgrading of regional infrastructure is needed to improve the Central Coast as a competitive business location.
Gosford City needs to be revitalised to be able to attract new businesses and jobs to the city centre.
Long term planning of employment lands is needed to ensure that they can meet future requirements.
Regional Identity
A lack of regional identity – whether the Central Coast is an outer metropolitan area or an economic region.
Central Coast is not well marketed as a business location, compared with other regions.
Employment
There is a need for a high rate of job creation to be maintained over the long term.
Employment is weakening as the recession impacts on the region.
There were significant ongoing skill shortages in the region (for professionals, managers and skilled trades). Some of these will re-emerge in the recovery.
There are business concerns about the unsuitability of many applicants due to poor skills or, lack of experience.
There are some difficulties in attracting professionals and managers (in health, business services and manufacturing) to the Central Coast.
Workforce
High unemployment rates – unemployment rates are high for youth and in some specific locations. Unemployment is now increasing with the economic slowdown.
There is evidence of under-employment with some persons currently working in part-time/casual jobs wanting more hours.
There are few entry-level employment opportunities for young people, including first year apprenticeships.
Education and skills levels are lower – the region continues to have lower average skill levels/qualifications relative to the Sydney metropolitan area.
There is an ageing workforce in some sectors (including health and local government) with concerns about future replacement as baby boomers begin to retire.
There are a significant number of people who want to return to the workforce but who face constraints of low skill levels.
There are industry concerns about work culture and attitudes among lower skilled employees in the region.

Source: Based on surveys and regional economy analysis in 2008/09 by Buchan Consulting.

The following are some indicators of a sustainable, smart and connected region:

Indicators of a Sustainable, Smart and Connected Central Coast Region

Theme	Indicators
Industry Structure	
	More knowledge based businesses located in the region.
	More mid-sized businesses that are operating in national and international markets.
	More emerging innovative businesses in the region.
	A strong and growing small business sector.
	An industry structure that takes account of the environmental challenges associated with climate change and changes in energy prices.
Employment Mix	
	Higher job self-containment rates and lower commute rates.
	A faster rate of job creation in the region.
	More high skill and professional jobs being created in the region.
	Fewer skill shortages in the region.
	Higher retention of young people in employment in the region.
	Higher skill levels and more professionals working in the region.
	Greater flexibility in working arrangements (for mature workers, women and others) to enable a return to employment.
Environment	
	Environmental assets (coastal and inland) maintained.
	Improved resources management (energy and water)
	Implementation of environmentally sensitive urban planning, design and development.
	Increase in public transport use.
Education and Training	
	Higher Year 11 and 12 retention rates in schools.
	Increased university qualifications in the population.
	Increased VET enrolments.
	Higher rates of participation in VET in school programs.
	Strong education/industry partnerships in place.
	Improved education/ work pathways and transitions for young people.
	Increased business spending on training programs.
	Business and community commitment to lifetime learning.
Knowledge and Innovation	
	More local businesses engaged in research and innovation.
	Industry research centres established in region.
	A broader suite of university research centres and programs.
	Regional industry/university research partnerships established.
	Development of research precincts
Social	
	A lower average unemployment rate and youth unemployment rate.
	A reduction in the number of long term unemployed persons.
	Increased participation in the workforce
	Higher average income levels.
	Reduced numbers on income support programs.
Planning	
	Vibrant city centres with more jobs.
	Businesses attracted to Strategic Centres.
	Planned development of employment lands in strategic locations.
	Revitalised local centres.
	Strong integration of economic development and planning decisions.
Infrastructure	
	Planned infrastructure development that is aligned with the industry growth profile.
	Improvements in the road network and public transport options.
	Extension of telecommunications corridor and high speed broadband access.
	Improvements in key utilities – power and water availability.

Disclaimer

This report is for the use only of the party to whom it is addressed and for the specific purposes to which it refers. We disclaim any responsibility to any third party acting upon or using the whole or part of the report and its contents.

This report (including appendices) is based on estimates, assumptions and information sourced and referenced by Buchan Consulting. These estimates, assumptions and projections are provided as a basis for the reader's interpretation and analysis. In the case of projections, they are not presented as results that will actually be achieved.

The report has been prepared on the basis of information available at the time of writing. While all possible care has been taken by the authors in preparing the report, no responsibility can be undertaken for errors or inaccuracies that may be in the data used.