



Regional
Development
Australia
CENTRAL COAST NSW



BUSINESS PLAN 2024-25



An Australian Government Initiative



Regional Development Australia – Central Coast NSW Inc.

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An aerial photograph of a coastal town, likely Wollongong, Australia. The town is built on a hillside overlooking a large harbor. The harbor is filled with numerous sailboats and a few larger boats. A bridge crosses the harbor, and a railway line runs along the waterfront. The town is densely packed with buildings, and the surrounding hills are covered in lush green forest. The sky is clear and blue.

OUR VISION

THE VOICE FOR THE CENTRAL COAST

We will achieve this by bringing the community together to encourage **discussion, debate** and to **prioritise** the economic development needs of the Central Coast and by **communicating** these priorities, with sound reason/justification and community agreement.

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1. CHAIR'S FOREWARD

1.1. Introduction

RDA Central Coast will continue building on its achievements from earlier years in enabling a stronger economy for the Central Coast region.

In 2023 the RDA Charter was reviewed, which reinforced that Regional Development Australia Committees (RDAs) are critical to implementing the Australian Government's Regional Investment Framework (RIF) and facilitating connections across regional communities and all levels of government to support economic development.

RDAs committees are representative of their communities and provide an important regional voice to the Australian Government. As a network, it supports the Government's ambition of 'no one held back and no one left behind' with a focus on supporting the economic strengths of each region.

As representatives of their local community, and the Australian Government, RDAs:

- Focus on delivery of the RIF, including investment in people, places, services, and industries and local economies.
- Build the evidence for economic development in their regions.
- Operate with integrity and transparency, and
- Coordinate across governments to make investments work better for regions.

The RDAs provide key intelligence on place-based investment in each region, as drawn from their engagement with community and local government. This includes advice on:

- The design and implementation of government policy and programs
- Priority projects for their region that build long-term benefits.
- Significant climate, disaster or economic impacts that challenge the growth of their region.
- Smart innovation and diversification strategies for their region, and
- Data and local intelligence for the State of the Regions report.

Within these responsibilities, RDAs use their expertise to maintain a focus on:

- Working closely with local government representatives
- Meeting the needs of, and providing opportunities for, First Nations people
- Supporting the transformation to a net zero economy and decarbonisation, and
- Supporting gender equality opportunities in their region
- or work with suitable existing regional plans that will align with the Commonwealth's regional priorities.

To support the achievement of these objectives RDA Central Coast will continue to work closely with key stakeholders to identify and clearly understand the current and emerging critical issues and opportunities for

the region and to work with proponents and key regional stakeholders to deliver appropriate economic development outcomes.

The RDA Central Coast Business Plan 2024-2025 has been developed in consultation with key stakeholders and aligns the RDA Central Coast's strategies and initiatives with the Commonwealth Government's developed new Regional Investment Framework. The framework places regions and their people at the centre of decision making – valuing local voices and priorities, listening to, and building on the latest evidence to inform investment, operating with flexibility and transparency, and coordinating across governments to make investment work better for regions.

Priority focus areas -

- Investing in People
- Investing in Places
- Investing in Services
- Investing in Industries and Local Economies

The RDA Central Coast Board and staff are well positioned to drive the development of the economic base of the region, seek out quality development opportunities, creating the environment for jobs growth, proactively attract business investment, identifying enabling infrastructure needs, and the facilitation of whole of region stakeholder collaboration.

This will be achieved through proactively facilitating regional discourse, attracting new business opportunities, supporting growth of existing businesses, attracting government funding, and marketing the Central Coast as an attractive region for business growth and investment.

1.2. Summary of Key Achievements and Learnings from 2023-24

1.2.1. Summary of Significant Events and Outcomes

Much of this work and the success of RDA Central Coast are underpinned by three key aspects:

1. Significant cooperative joint working relationships across all levels of government (as well as with other partners), primarily promoted and driven by the RDA Central Coast office.
2. The establishment of a policy/strategic framework, which provides the basis for future growth and prosperity of the region.
3. Strategic relationships with all regional stakeholders including business leaders, local developers, and investors.

Key outcomes for the year have included:

- As always, collaboration has been critical to the ongoing success of our region and RDA Central Coast has worked to facilitate this collaboration between all levels of government, industry and our local community.
- Together with Pacific Link Housing and Business NSW, RDA Central Coast utilised the successful Central Coast Housing Forum to continue to address the impact of housing affordability gaps for our region. Central Coast Council has now partnered with Pacific Link Housing in the first stage of council's Affordable Housing Land Proposal program.
- The \$17.2M Coast Food Manufacturing Precinct and Innovation Hub project has now lodged their development application with Council, due to the federal budget allocation for its construction.
- RDA Central Coast and all key regional stakeholders were pleased to see the commencement of the new \$63.8M Central Coast Campus being built in the Gosford CBD.
- RDA Central Coast continued to partner with the Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA) NSW, to host Central Coast Developer Forums, allowed government representatives, regional leaders and local developers to come together to work towards enhanced development outcomes for the Central Coast.
- Following the release of Central Coast Council and RDA Central Coast Key Enabling Projects Prospectus, RDA Central Coast has now commenced developing infrastructure funding priorities for discussion with Central Coast Council once residents elect a new Council in September 2024. RDA Central Coast continues to lead this collaboration and advocacy effort for improved enabling infrastructure through the Critical Infrastructure Priorities List, which has attracted over \$2.5 Billion in infrastructure funding to the Central Coast since its inception.
- RDA Central Coast successfully partnered with the Australia Arab Chamber of Commerce to present the inaugural Regional Innovations, Global Connections event on the Central Coast and interactive workshop, to help regional business owners explore and understand the wealth of trade and investment opportunities that exist in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.
- Regional Development Australia Central Coast proudly hosted the Export Capability Building workshop - Growing your Exports in our region. This NSW Export Capability Building workshop delivered by Investment NSW and Business NSW was aimed at businesses seeking to initiate export activities, or export-ready businesses looking to consolidate their knowledge and maximise long-term export gains.

- RDA Central Coast was pleased to host and support the Telco Roadshow to discuss upcoming improvements to the network, initiatives, and available technology for our region. Better connectivity on the Central Coast will have a number of widespread benefits for our residents and businesses, including improved access to education and training.

1.2.2.Key Learnings and Implications for the Coming Year

RDA Central Coast continued to call on all major stakeholders to recognise that this is a critical time for everyone to work together – it is no longer good enough for separate political, social, and environmental ideologies to limit our future potential. The economic, social and environmental needs of our region must be met collectively, and this will only come through true collaboration, cooperation and negotiation at all levels.

With tens of thousands of people moving to the Central Coast over the next two decades, there is an urgent need for enabling infrastructure, road funding, job creation, transport requirements and housing. We also need to ensure synergies are realised between all major infrastructure projects, to enable our region to reach its full potential. This can only be achieved through strong, effective leadership, and the development of a compelling, strategic narrative that will unite and engage all regional stakeholders.

The RDA Central Coast Board will play a critical role in developing our regional economy and creating local employment opportunities, at a time where it's needed most.

Our role at RDA Central Coast is to make sure all levels of government and industry are working together to attract funding and investment to our region, so that we are achieving the best outcomes possible for the people of the Central Coast.

Despite the challenges of recent years, RDA Central Coast has passionately led the coordinated regional advocacy effort that has resulted in over \$2.5 billion of infrastructure spending on the Coast, successfully deployed the Central Coast Food Innovation Initiative that has delivered numerous local outcomes including the Coast's first ever Australian Food & Agribusiness Doctoral Training Centre (DTC), and has organised and chaired unprecedented roundtable discussions between all sides of government and regional leaders to develop a greater focus on strategic economic issues impacting our region.

RDA Central Coast also looks forward to supporting Central Coast Council following the local government elections in September of this year. As our Council was formally suspended in October 2020, RDA Central Coast Committee looks forward to proactively working with the 15 elected Councillors that will govern our region.

In addition, RDA Central Coast is looking forward to continuing our effective working relationship with all key regional stakeholders in 2024 – 2025 financial year, as we continue to provide joint leadership of economic and social development of the Central Coast.

1.3. Overview of Committee Members and Staff

1.3.1. Committee Members

Name	Position	Expiration of Term
Mr Lawrie McKinna	Chair	30 June 2025
Ms Anna Cruckshank	Deputy Chair	30 June 2025
Ms Sarah El-Moselhi	Committee Member	30 June 2025
Mr Michael Dowling	Committee Member	30 June 2025
Mr Ian Lynch	Committee Member	30 June 2025
Mr Adam McEwen	Committee Member	30 June 2025
Mr Chris Smith	Committee Member	30 June 2025
Ms Karen Tucker	Committee Member	30 June 2025

1.3.2. Staff

Name	Position
Mr John Mouland	Chief Executive Officer
Ms Elizabeth Saltwell	Office Manager

2. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

2.1 The “One Central Coast” Vision for Our Region

One Central Coast, connected to Country, where people live near their work in sustainable 15-minute neighbourhoods or the region’s vibrant capital.

Central Coast communities are connected:

- Physically connected by infrastructure.
- Socially connected through relationships and a shared sense of unity.
- Always connected to Country.

The Central Coast is a desirable place to grow up, raise a family and retire. With thriving hospitality and entertainment industries, people can feel part of their community through a range of quality social and cultural activities.

The Aboriginal community enjoys equal access to local economic, employment and education opportunities. Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) has leveraged its Aboriginal land so that Aboriginal people can determine their own economic, cultural, and social outcomes.

From this, residents, workers, and visitors have a deeper understanding of Country and its connections.

Gosford City Centre is the social and economic heart of the Central Coast. Regional economic gateways provide a diversity of industrial and high-tech jobs, while small and large businesses connect local communities, meaning people can access goods and services within 15 minutes of their doorstep. Productive agricultural and resource lands continue to support the state’s growing population and booming economy.

A series of inter-connected coastal and active open spaces and national parks act as the lungs of the region. They are the backdrop to the Central Coast as a premier destination for environmental and cultural tourism, listed on the list of top-10 places to visit in Australia.

The green infrastructure network supports the natural environment, which enriches the experience of living in the region, sustains the region’s water supply, supports clean air, protects biodiversity, promotes community resilience, and is integrated into building design.

People enjoy a greater choice of housing in existing and new communities, close to jobs, services, public transport and walking and cycling options. More housing has reduced the upward pressure on house prices.

With more people living in urban areas, public transport is safe, reliable, and frequent and people can access public open spaces, shops, cafes, childcare, affordable housing and arts and cultural spaces.

One Central Coast allows us to plan in a way that builds capacity to adapt to changes in climate, housing markets and the economy. Residents, workers, and organisations actively minimise resource use, reduce waste and look to new technologies to reduce their environmental footprint.

RDA Central Coast proactively supports the “One Central Coast” vision for our region.

2.2 The Seven Agreed Priorities for the Central Coast Region

The region has agreed on seven priorities for the Central Coast City to grow jobs, industry, connectivity, and opportunities for the community.

Jobs for the future

1. Driving innovation and industry collaboration.
2. Unlocking employment land and accelerating employment precincts.

Health & Education

3. Activating a university campus in a revitalised Gosford CBD.
4. Building on the Gosford Health and Wellbeing Precinct.

Precinct Connectivity

5. Improving transport within the Central Coast and with Sydney and Newcastle.
6. Delivering a high-speed internet network.

Planning

7. Improving planning processes to accelerate development approvals.

Focusing on these priority areas will assist key regional stakeholders deliver the 72,000 new jobs needed to meet the predicted increase in population by 2040, as identified in the Central Coast Council's Economic Development Strategy and will assist in delivering 9,400 new completed homes by 2029 as mandated by the NSW Government.

2.3 Central Coast at a Glance

Based on growth estimations by Central Coast Council, by 2040 the Central Coast will need to accommodate 88,000 new residents, will need to grow its economy by \$21 Billion and create an additional 72,000 jobs.

The Central Coast's economic strengths lie in its location & affordability, innovation, health and education precincts, food and advanced manufacturing hubs, economic and business assets, public spaces, natural places and tourism, and its First Nations Peoples & heritage.

The region is also required to deliver 9,400 new completed home by 2029 to accommodate existing and new demand in the region.

Location

A relaxed lifestyle and unique natural assets make the Central Coast City an idyllic place to live, work, study and do business.

Existing road and rail connections facilitate travel in and out of the Central Coast. The completion of the NorthConnex and announcement by the NSW Government of potential faster rail initiatives will further enhance the attractiveness of the Central Coast City for families and professionals.

Innovation, Health and Education

Gosford Hospital's redevelopment, with the addition of the University of Newcastle Central Coast Clinical School and the Central Coast Research Institute for Integrated Care, will drive investment and jobs in allied health and research.

The addition of a university campus will enshrine the Gosford CBD as a health and education innovation district with linkages to the University of Newcastle Central Coast Clinical School and the Central Coast Research Institute for Integrated Care prominence in the Gosford CBD.

Food Manufacturing and Advanced Manufacturing

The Central Coast is home to major food manufacturing enterprises including McCain Foods, Sara Lee, Mars, Sanitarium, Life Health Foods, ABC Filling and George Weston Foods.

The prominence of these international food manufacturing businesses on the Central Coast is a drawcard for further investment in this area.

Advanced manufacturing, in areas such as food production, high tech software and hardware, fabricated metal products and other specialised manufacturing industries offer many employment opportunities.

Economic and Business Assets

Central Coast Council's Economic Development Strategy identifies the need for 72,000 new jobs on the Central Coast by 2040.

The Strategy identifies several assets that could be activated to deliver these jobs for the future including the Central Coast Airport as well as employment and industrial lands in Mount Penang, Somersby, and Warnervale. In February 2022, the NSW Government announced a Hunter-Central Coast Renewable Energy Zone that will connect multiple renewable energy generators and storage projects (such as batteries and pumped hydro) and play a critical role in replacing the State's ageing coal-fire power stations.

It will ensure the Central Coast has a key role in a renewable energy future, powering existing industries and supporting economic growth, including emerging technology in green hydrogen, ammonia and metal production, electric vehicle fleet operations and electrification of industrial processes.

Activation could catalyse growth in aviation, aircraft manufacturing, maintenance and service operations as well as fill the need for more health products, advanced manufacturing and food production, transport and logistics, renewable energy, and waste recycling.

Public Spaces, Natural Places and Tourism

The natural beauty of the Central Coast is well known and its most enduring attraction.

National parks, state forests, bushland, beaches, and waterways occupy more than half the city's area and their enhancement and protection, as well as the area's recent certification as an Ecotourism destination, make for a thriving visitor economy.

The Central Coast already has a vibrant tourism economy, surpassing the \$1b mark for visitor expenditure in 2019 and continuing to grow each year. There is great potential to renew and activate foreshore tourist areas, including the beach villages and Gosford Waterfront, to enhance their accessibility and attraction.

Peat Island also represents a significant opportunity for additional open space, improved public access to the foreshore as well as new tourist facilities including hotel accommodation.

Celebrating First Nations Peoples

The Central Coast City's First Nations population has grown to 17,047 people (2021 figures).

The Darkinjung are the traditional custodians of the land identified as the Central Coast City. The Darkinjung peoples are represented by the Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) with significant landholdings in Lake Munmorah, Somersby, Wallarah and Kariong.

2.4 Regional Challenges

Central Coast Council

Central Coast Council was suspended on 30 October 2020 and the formal Public Inquiry led to the postponement of the local government election for Central Coast Council, which was originally scheduled for September 2021.

In March 2022, the Minister for Local Government tabled the report into the Public Inquiry into Central Coast Council, and took action to terminate all suspended Councillors, effective immediately.

In June 2022, the Minister for Local Government announced the local government election for Central Coast Council (i.e., the return of Councillors) will be held on 14 September 2024.

Over this period, an Administrator has acted as the Council, effectively replacing the role previously performed by the Mayor and Councillors.

Although many residents supported the above remedial process, it is now critical that our region has 15 elected Councillors governing our region following the election in September 2024 to assist our region to plan and to fulfill its full potential.

RDA Central Coast looks forward to proactively working with the 15 elected Councillors that will govern our region.

Our Regional Brand

Central Coast has a vibrant economy and incredible potential, but this 'regional brand' is not yet fully developed and leveraged to attract new investment, talent, and innovation to the region.

RDA Central Coast will continue to advocate that regional branding is a critical priority for the region.

Housing Affordability

Although the Central Coast has historically been an affordable area, a range of factors has made the area less affordable than Greater Sydney for residents, with higher rates of housing stress and higher rates of growth of primary homelessness and those who are marginally housed. This provides challenges in the local demographic and housing market context.

Although housing in the Central Coast is still cheaper than the Greater Sydney average, the incomes of local people are also much lower than average largely due to the very high rate of older people on pensions and benefits, the high concentration of very low income renters, the influx of lower income households from Sydney seeking affordable housing and improved lifestyle, and high levels of overall social disadvantage, particularly in the former Wyong LGA.

The constrained supply of diverse housing options is having a significant impact upon housing affordability in the context of a rapidly aging population, increasing demand from the Sydney market and an increase in long-term rental among families and older people who can no longer afford home purchase.

The lack of affordable housing is also hindering industry growth and filling employment vacancies due to workers not being able to afford accommodation close to their place of work.

RDA Central Coast will continue to work with all key regional stakeholders find innovative solutions to address housing supply and housing affordability on the Central Coast.

Available Employment Land

A lack of “development ready” serviced commercial and industrial land is hindering the regions’ ability to attract large businesses to the region. Land use challenges also extend to creating clear, consistent, and appropriate land zoning for manufacturing, commercial and housing development to achieve job growth and additional dwelling targets that will be required to service forecasted population growth in the region.

RDA Central Coast will continue to lead the review of the Central Coast Regional Infrastructure Priorities List.

Delays and Uncertainty in Planning & Development Matters

Concerns consistently raised by developers and landowners in regard to development application delays and difficulties resolving planning matters is reducing confidence levels within the regions development sector.

RDA Central Coast will continue to proactively assist in unlocking stalled / delayed job creation / investment producing developments in the region.

Wide Socio-economic Gap

4 out of the 10 Central Coast postcodes ranked in top 10% most disadvantaged, and 6 out of the 10 are ranked in the top 30% most disadvantaged communities in NSW (out of the 621 localities).

RDA Central Coast will continue to work with all key regional stakeholders to find innovative solutions to address social equity on the Central Coast.

Public Transport

The Central Coast has a range of mobility and public transport challenges which constrain local movement and economic opportunity. We must work with our geography, address infrastructure gaps, and seek solutions to transit affordability to be future-ready.

RDA Central Coast will continue to work with all key regional stakeholders to find innovative solutions to address transport issues across our region including high speed / higher speed rail transport between the Hunter and the Central Coast.

Youth Population Retention

There are more than 50,000 young people aged 12-24 years living in the Central Coast Region, representing around 14.9% of our total population. A major challenge for our region will be to retain our youth population, as they are key productive contributors to industry, innovation, and new business start-ups.

RDA Central Coast will continue to advocate that as a region we need to consult and listen to our young people to hear their thoughts, attitudes, opinions and ideas that are vital to the future of our Region.

Daily Commuters

36,355 (24.1%) working residents of Central Coast NSW travel outside the area to work, which leads to significant work/life balance and community challenges.

RDA Central Coast will continue to work with all key regional stakeholders to find innovative solutions to create more employment opportunities in our region and to advocate for more decentralisation opportunities for regional NSW.

2.5 RDA Central Coast Business Plan Alignment with Local, State and Regional Plans

The 2023-24 RDA Central Coast Business Plan aligned with the strategic priorities and needs of the region over the next 3-5 years and the potential impacts of external influences (such as local, national, and international market forces and public policy changes) on these. It also forms part of a much broader policy context, reflecting the wider perspective and aspirations for our region.

The development of the 2023-24 RDA Central Coast Business Plan is aligned with and supports the following existing planning strategies, policy and objectives;

[Australian Government's Regional Investment Framework](#)

[NSW Government's Central Coast Regional Plan](#)

[NSW Government's – Central Coast & Lake Macquarie Regional Economic Development Strategy](#)

[NSW Government's Draft Central Coast Regional Transport Plan](#)

[Greater Cities Commission's Central Coast Strategy](#)

[Central Coast Council's Economic Development Strategy](#)

[Central Coast's Council's One – Central Coast, Community Strategic Plan](#)

[Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council's Interim Development Delivery Plan](#)

2.6 Summary of RDA Central Coast Major Strategic Priorities for the Upcoming Year

The following is a summary of the key business activities that RDA Central Coast will undertake in the 2024 – 2025 period and which Australian Government regional priorities category that it directly supports.

Australian Government Regional Priority	RDA Central Coast Activity
Investing in People	Work with all regional stakeholders to find innovative solutions to address housing supply and affordability
Investing in Places	Identification and advocacy of critical infrastructure investments needed to support economic development and growth in our region
Investing in Industries and Local Economies	Support of modern manufacturing & innovation Initiatives to position the region as a centre of manufacturing excellence Supporting regional stakeholders to address labour shortages in the tourism industry
Investing In Services	Participate in and support initiatives to enhance the accessibility, connectivity, and equity of the services in our region
Regional Leadership, Collaboration & Information Provision	Provide leadership & participation in government and key regional stakeholder collaboration in the region

3 ANNUAL WORK PLAN

3.1 Background & Context

Priorities, activities, and performance measures for 2023-24 were informed by the following factors:

- Identified regional priorities.
- The revised RDA Charter
- Available funding & resourcing
- Identified gaps in economic development activities in the region.
- Strategic intent of other regional stakeholders
- Initiatives commenced in previous years
- Priorities identified by the newly elected Commonwealth and State Governments

3.2 Summary of the Top 5 Business Activities for the 2023-24 year:

Investing in People

RDA Central Coast will work with all key regional stakeholders find innovative solutions to address housing supply and housing affordability on the Central Coast.

The purpose of this initiative is to support the development of innovative regionally led solutions to address the constrained supply of diverse housing options that is having a significant impact upon housing affordability and industry growth.

Investing in Places

Finalisation of the review of the Central Coast Key Enabling Infrastructure Priority List will occur in the 2024 – 2024 year following the Central Coast local government elections.

The purpose of the Central Coast Key Enabling Infrastructure Priority List is to clearly define the priority infrastructure projects that will create jobs and drive further investment into the region. The priority list also directly supports joint regional advocacy and efforts to secure Government funding for regionally significant infrastructure projects.

This will be the fourth version of the Central Coast Regional Infrastructure Priorities List coordinated by Regional Development Australia Central Coast. This initiative has directly assisted the region in securing in excess of \$2.5 billion of State and Federal enabling infrastructure funding since the commencement of the initiative in 2016.

An additional role for Regional Development Australia Central Coast will be to proactively assist in unlocking stalled / delayed job creation / investment producing developments in the region.

Investing in Industries and Local Economies

The Central Coast Food Innovation Region initiative is a critical economic development initiative developed by RDA Central Coast. The initiative was developed to leverage the NSW Central Coast's underlying existing strengths and realizing economic benefit through growing and innovating the local food, beverage, and agricultural industry.

The overarching objective of this initiative is to grow jobs, build regional business competitiveness, develop export opportunities, and encourage national and international trade through innovation, education, and

research and by utilizing a best practice innovation model developed by Newcastle Institute for Energy and Resources (NIER).

In 2018, a formal partnership between RDA Central Coast, the University of Newcastle (including NIER) and Central Coast Industry Connect was established to build the Central Coast's reputation as an internationally renowned centre of excellence in food innovation. \$17.2M Coast Food Manufacturing Precinct and Innovation Hub project at Lisarow has now been committed by the Australian Government for its construction.

RDA Central Coast will continue to support the rollout of the Central Coast Food Innovation Region initiative, and stage one of the delivery of the Central Coast Food Manufacturing Precinct and Innovation Hub.

Central Coast / Hunter International Hotel School initiative was developed by The University of Newcastle, Australia, TAFE NSW and regional stakeholders including RDA Central Coast to address labour shortages in the tourism industry.

It also has the added benefit of allowing students to undertake a hybrid tertiary education model to achieve both an Advanced Diploma and a bachelor's degree within just three years.

This innovative initiative will create more education pathways and fast-track employability opportunities within our region.

RDA Central Coast will continue to support the deployment of the Central Coast / Hunter International Hotel School over the next period.

Investing in Services

RDA Central Coast will continue to support Central Coast Local Health District, University of Newcastle Central Coast Clinical School, and the Central Coast Research Institute for Integrated Care Gosford to deliver a Health and Wellbeing Precinct in Gosford and associated outcomes that can be implemented throughout the region.

RDA Central Coast will continue to work with the community and telecommunication providers to strengthen regional connectivity.

Regional Leadership, Collaboration & Information Provision

RDA Central Coast, will continue to deliver workshops and direct assistance to all regional stakeholders to access available government programs and funding opportunities.

4 OUTCOMES AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS TABLE

PART 1 – FOR THE ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN			
What will we do?	RDA's anticipated role	Timeframe	Expected outcomes
Strategic objective 1 – Investing in People			
Activity 1.1 Work with all regional stakeholders to find innovative solutions to create more affordable housing in our region	Lead / Partner	Ongoing throughout the 2024 – 2025 financial year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The release of a joint regional document that will identify the current state of affordable housing in the region, the projected demand, and potential solutions to address the affordable housing shortage
Activity 1.2 The creation of a key stakeholder housing alliance in the region	Partner	By June 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In partnership with Business NSW create a housing alliance of key regional stakeholders to proactively address housing issues in the region
Strategic objective 2 – Investing in Places			
Activity 2.1 Identification and advocacy of critical infrastructure investments needed to support economic development and growth in our region	Lead / Partner	By June 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft list of current priorities completed Consultation is completed with Central Coast Council 2024 - 2028 Central Coast Key Enabling Infrastructure Priority List is formally launched
Activity 2.2 Continue to proactively assist in unlocking stalled / delayed job creation / investment producing developments in the region	Lead / Partner	Ongoing throughout the 2024 – 2025 financial year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation with all regional key stakeholders completed Consultation completed with local developers and investors Recommendations provided to regional stakeholders

Strategic objective 3 – Investing in Industries and Local Economies			
Activity 3.1 Support the delivery of the Central Coast Food Innovation Region Initiative	Partner	Ongoing throughout the 2024 – 2025 financial year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proactively support delivery of stage 1 of the Innovation Hub Proactively support the creation Central Coast Food Manufacturing Precinct
Activity 3.2 Support the deployment of the Central Coast / Hunter International Hotel School	Partner	Ongoing throughout the 2024 – 2025 financial year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the Central Coast / Hunter International Hotel School to connect with industry Support the Central Coast / Hunter International Hotel School to connect with prospective students
Strategic objective 4 – Investing in Services			
Activity 4.1 Support the development of Health and Wellbeing Precinct in Gosford and associated outcomes throughout the region	Partner	By June 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proactively support the develop a Health and Wellbeing Precinct in Gosford and associated outcomes throughout the region
Activity 4.2 Continue to work with the community and telecommunication providers to strengthen regional connectivity	Partner	By June 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver two forums with key regional stakeholders, community members & telecommunication providers to strengthen regional connectivity and productivity through AI
Strategic objective 5 – Regional Leadership, Collaboration & Information Provision			
Activity 5.2 Deliver workshops and direct assistance to all regional stakeholders to access available government programs and funding opportunities	Lead / Partner	Ongoing throughout the 2024 – 2025 financial year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist local organisations to access funding opportunities available to the region Deliver events within the region to discuss significant regional issues and opportunities and to promote regional collaboration opportunities

5 BUDGET TABLE

RDA name:	Central Coast
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	RDA program funding (incl. all \$ in FA and schedules)			
	Budget 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024	Actual to 30 June 2025		
GST exclusive amounts				
Income				
Surplus funding carried forward from previous financial year				
	Funding for this period	\$317,880	(1)	
	Interest on Commonwealth funds	\$7,100		
	Supplementary funding (if any) #			
	Interest Income			
	[Other category as required]			
	[Other category as required]			
Total RDA program income (A)	\$324,980		\$0	
Expenditure - major budget items ^				
Employee salaries	\$267,657			
	Employee entitlements	\$57,323		
	Other employee expenses			
	Office lease and outgoings			
	Vehicle costs			
	Operational			
	Financial, legal and professional			
	Marketing			
	Asset acquisition			
	Committee costs			
	Supplementary funding (if any)			
	[Other category as required]			
	[Other category as required]			
	[Other category as required]			
Total RDA program funding expenditure (B)	\$324,980		\$0	
Surplus / Deficit of RDA program funding (A - B)	\$0	(2)	\$0	

6 COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Background

Regional Development Australia Central Coast (RDACC) is part of a national network of committees dedicated to growing strong and economically viable regional communities.

It is currently seeking to establish its position as a regional leader and effective conduit between all three levels of government, increase stakeholder engagement, and promote its active participation with key stakeholders and the wider community across all target audiences.

Situational Analysis

RDACC has implemented a successful communications strategy to increase visibility across its audiences, promote recognition and understanding of its activities, and actively celebrate its successes with all key stakeholders and the broader community.

In 2024/25, RDACC aims to build on this strong foundation to:

- Actively position itself as a regional leader in economic development;
- Promote and disseminate information on Australian Government policies and grant programs to state and local governments and industry, business and community sectors;
- Effectively facilitate collaboration and lead discussions between all levels of government, industry and the wider community to successfully advocate on behalf of our community; and
- Strengthen stakeholder engagement and increase promotion of active community participation.

This Communications Strategy details an integrated suite of activities and measurable deliverables to achieve these organisational aims.

Objectives

- Implement clear and strategic communications activities to support the achievement of RDACC objectives.
- Provide direct, quick access for all stakeholders to accurate, up-to-date information about RDACC, its programs and initiatives.
- Continue to effectively utilise social media to broadly promote the functions of RDACC and reach new audiences.
- Effectively position RDACC and raise awareness about its critical role in the future prosperity of the Central Coast.

Target Audiences

Primary

- 352,000 Central Coast residents
- 21,000 registered Central Coast businesses

Secondary

- Residents and businesses outside of the Central Coast region.
- Other RDA Committees and regional organisations across Australia.

Key Stakeholders

- Central Coast Federal and State Members
- Central Coast Council
- NSW Government
- Hunter & Central Coast Development Corporation
- State and Local Business Chambers of Commerce
- Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council
- Newcastle University Central Coast Campus & Campus Partners
- Central Coast Area Health

7. Project Partners

- Food Innovation Initiative: Central Coast Industry Connect, University of Newcastle, Newcastle Institute for Energy & Resources (NIER)
- Affordable Housing Summit & Taskforce: Business NSW Central Coast, Pacific Link Housing

Key Messages

- RDACC is a leader in regional economic development, responsible for facilitating collaboration between all key stakeholders to the benefit of the Central Coast.
- RDACC is a key driver in creating long-term, sustainable economic growth, local job creation and skills development opportunities on the Central Coast.
- RDACC actively participates in programs, activities and events designed to promote innovation and development, and increase opportunities for all Central Coast residents.
- RDACC effectively positions the Central Coast as a premium investment and lifestyle option.

Media Spokespeople

RDACC has nominated spokespeople approved to speak on behalf of the organisation across all projects and initiatives. These are:

- RDACC Chairman, Mr Lawrie McKinna
- RDA Deputy Chair, Ms Anna Cruckshank
- RDACC Chief Executive Officer & Director Regional Development, Mr John Mouland

Project Spokespeople

- Critical Investments Needed to Drive Economic Development in the Region: Lawrie McKinna (RDACC), John Mouland (RDACC)
- Central Coast Food Innovation Initiative: John Mouland (RDACC), Frank Sammut (CCIC), Alan Broadfoot (NIER),
- Affordable Housing Summit & Taskforce Initiative: John Mouland (RDACC), Paula Martin (BNSWCC), Ian Lynch (PLH)
- Leadership of the Central Coast Key Stakeholder Group Initiative: Lawrie McKinna (RDACC), John Mouland (RDACC)

Primary Communication Channels

- RDACC website rdacc.org.au –This site is regularly updated with current and relevant information.
 - Social Media: Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn.
 - Quarterly electronic newsletter (EDM) delivered to subscriber database, housed on website, and promoted via social media channels (also fulfils quarterly reporting requirements).
 - Local/industry media outlets as recipients of targeted campaign messaging.
 - Quarterly and monthly face-to-face meeting between RDACC representatives and key stakeholders.
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