



Regional  
Development  
*Australia*  
CENTRAL COAST NSW

# Business Plan



2026 - 27



An Australian Government Initiative

**Signature:**



**Certified by (print name and position):**

**GAIL COTTRILL - CHAIR**

**Date:**

**10 JUNE 2026**



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# OUR PURPOSE

## THE VOICE FOR THE CENTRAL COAST

Regional Development Australia Central Coast strives to strengthen the Central Coast region by connecting local voices, evidence and opportunity facilitating collaboration, aligning regional priorities and advocating for investment that delivers long-term economic and community benefit.

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 1.1. Introduction

Regional Development Australia Central Coast (RDA Central Coast) will continue building on its previous achievements in 2025 -2026 to further develop a strong, connected, resilient economy for the Central Coast region.

The RDA Central Coast Committee is committed to proactively supporting the successful implementation of the Australian Government's Regional Investment Framework (RIF), which guides a coordinated approach to regional development, underpinned by local engagement.

Our staff and Committee members welcome our role in helping to drive economic growth, innovation and entrepreneurship across our region through facilitating investment in community, industry and the environment. RDAs assist to bridge the regional development gaps in regions by working with a broad range of stakeholders across sectors and supporting the delivery of identified Australian Government strategic priorities.

In accordance with the Charter, and as representatives of our local community, RDA Central Coast will:

- Focus our activities and strategy on delivery of the RIF in our region, including investment in people, places, services, and industries and local economies.
- Support regional stakeholders, including local government and the not-for-profit-sector, to seek grant opportunities that advance strategic regional priorities.
- Where possible, support decarbonisation efforts and the transformation to a net zero economy and enable regional linkages between sectors to achieve these aims.
- Build the evidence for economic development, including innovation and diversification strategies.
- Facilitate meaningful engagement across the three levels of government to ensure investments deliver better outcomes for our region.
- Contribute relevant data and local intelligence to support the evidence base to inform regional development strategies, program design and policy responses.

To support the achievement of these objectives RDA Central Coast will continue to work closely with key regional 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 2026-2027 has been developed in consultation with stakeholders and aligns the RDA Central Coast's strategies and initiatives with the Commonwealth Government's 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.

The RDA Central Coast Committee 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 from 2025 - 2026

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:

- 2025 saw a restructure within RDA Central Coast where the CEO John Mouland resigned after 12 years, and a new CEO Dr Lisa Barnes was appointed. Due to decreased revenue from visa applications, the role of administration was also decreased from 5 days a week to 3 days a week. There were also changes made to the RDA Central Coast Committee with 5 members leaving, and 5 new appointments made including the appointment of the Deputy Chair.
- 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. With the new Chair, Deputy Chair, Committee members and CEO appointments, three Strategic Planning days were held to ascertain current purpose and future business plans.
- The Chair and CEO held meetings with the 2 Central Coast federal government members for Dobell and Robertson, as well as the 4 state government ministers for Terrigal, Wyong (including the Minister for the Central Coast), The Entrance and Gosford. Meetings were also held with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and senior members from the Central Coast Council (local LGA).
- The \$17.2M Central Coast Food Manufacturing Innovation hub initiative that was fully funded by the Australian Government is well into construction, with the new regional facility due to open in July 2026. Located at the heart of the Central Coast, just over an hour from Sydney and Newcastle, the Hub positions the region as a national centre of excellence in food and beverage manufacturing — where ideas turn into impact and businesses scale with confidence. It will also be the home of the new RDA Central Coast Manufacturing precinct, led by RDA Central Coast.
- RDA Central Coast were pleased to see the construction and completion (February 2026) of the new \$63.8M Central Coast Campus of the University of Newcastle in the Gosford CBD. The new campus will offer Education, Social Science, Business, and Pathway programs and the Gosford Campus is now expecting 1,300 course enrolments. The campus will actively support the development of the Gosford Education and Employment Precinct as a major development project aimed at revitalizing Gosford's CBD by creating a hub for education and employment opportunities.
- RDA Central Coast collaborated with key regional stakeholders to officially launch the “Central Coast Infrastructure Investment Guide 2025–2030” July 2025. The Central Coast Peak Bodies Alliance consists of RDA Central Coast, Business NSW Central Coast, Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA) NSW, Housing Industry Association (HIA), Central Coast Leadership Forum, Property Council of Australia and Central Coast Industry Connect (CCIC). Together the group created Central Coast Infrastructure Priorities, which is a significant advocacy document that outlines key infrastructure projects needed to unlock the Central Coast’s full potential in housing, employment and transport. From road upgrades and transport corridors to servicing for employment and residential lands and investment in high-density housing precincts, the guide sets a clear list of infrastructure priorities for Government and private sector investment.

- The Central Coast Peak Bodies Alliance also created an Infrastructure Priority List for the NSW Parliament for presentation for the 2026-27 state budget December 2025. This was presented to NSW Ministers Tesch, Mehan, Harris and Catley at NSW Parliament House in February 2026. The Central Coast Peak Bodies Alliance also wrote a submission to Central Coast Council supporting their “Delivery Program 2025-29 Operational Plan 2026-27” May 2026.
- RDA Central Coast also wrote a submission to Central Coast Council in support of their draft Economic Development Strategy, endorsed by Council April 2026. RDA Central Coast also wrote a submission to Central Coast Council supporting their “Delivery Program 2025-29 Operational Plan 2026-27” May 2026.
- RDA Central Coast partnered with Central Coast Council and Business NSW Central Coast to release the “Key Enabling Projects: Central Coast Region” publication June 2026. This details significant growth areas on the Central Coast as well as the five key enabling priorities of 1/ Gosford City Centre and waterfront urban renewal 2/ Northern growth corridor and Central Lakes District 3/ Transport and connectivity 4/ Infrastructure upgrades and environmental sustainability 5/ Affordable housing.
- RDA Central Coast continues to lead collaboration and advocacy efforts for improved enabling infrastructure through the updated (from 2025) “Critical Infrastructure Priorities List 2026” (April).
- RDA Central Coast partnered with all 3 levels of government as well as Pacific Link Housing and Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council to create the “Current Infrastructure Projects Central Coast” published April 2026. This lists all current infrastructure projects funded by Federal, State or Local Government, as well as housing developments for social and affordable housing on the Central Coast. It demonstrates the current level of Government commitment to the Central Coast by detailing current projects underway, and future funded projects for the Central Coast region.
- RDA Central Coast researched and created the “Central Coast Classifications by Government Level” May 2026, to enable federal and state government to understand the current confusion in the classification of the Central Coast region by various departments. This confusion often has the Central Coast as part of Metropolitan Sydney, or part of the Hunter region, as well as at times as a stand-alone region. It is hoped this document will assist government going forward to reclassify the region in its own right, rather than include it as part of other regions.
- RDA Central Coast was part of the Central Coast Leadership Forum that delivered the “Blueprint Central Coast: Coming Together” publication in December 2025. This documents a mission orientated approach to growth for the Central Coast including 1/ Supporting Urban Renewal and Activation 2/ Improving Housing and Infrastructure 3/ Regulatory reform and Local Capacity Building 4/ Strengthening local Industry and Tourism and 5/ Building Capacity through Education.
- RDA Central Coast delivered the “2026 Economic Snapshot” in May 2026. This was a document that researched the changes the Central Coast economy has seen since the last 2016 snapshot 10 years prior. This will be presented to Central Coast Council, NSW Central Coast Members of Parliament, as well as the two members of Federal Parliament for the Central Coast.
- RDA Central Coast now publishes quarterly Economic updates using data provided by DataAU. This document contains commentary on the statistics provided, and its direct impact on the Central Coast economy. This will be done alongside the Chair and CEOs “Voice for the Coast” issued quarterly.
- RDA Central Coast attended the SEGRA conference in Lithgow in March 2026. RDA Central Coast has also submitted a paper for the 2026 National Economic Development Conference (NEDC26) to be presented in Tasmania in October 2026 regarding the opening of the Food and Beverage Innovation Hub and the impact on the Central Coast region.

- RDA Central Coast is a proud founding member of the Gosford Strip Precinct, with funding received from the NSW Government to further the 24-hour economy as well as provide better lighting and security within the Gosford City area. The first “Block Party” was held 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2026 in which the main street in Gosford (Mann Street) was blocked off for a whole day for the Community to enjoy free entertainment, markets, demonstrations and café and restaurant access. This event was part of the initiative to reignite Gosford as a cultural precinct.
- RDA Central Coast hosted a delegation from Zhejiang Province China, including the Taizhou Municipal Government. Attendees included senior government representatives, infrastructure, manufacturing, international collaboration as well as agriculture, food and innovation (May 2026). A meeting was held with Dianne Tipping the Chair of Export Council of Australia prior to the delegations’ arrival, to ensure correct protocol was followed.
- RDA Central Coast continues to work with local stakeholders, both not-for-profit and privately owned to help secure grant funding. Letters of support have been written for Newcastle University, WaterBus, Calga Film Studios, InnovateHER, Lasercraft and various other stakeholders to assist them in securing funding.
- RDA Central Coast continues to work with NSW Government Departments such as NSW Planning, Infrastructure, and Investment. We are also working with the High-Speed Rail Authority and Transport for NSW for the delivery of the High-Speed rail network from Newcastle to Sydney, stopping at Gosford station. We are continuing our work with Hunter Central Coast Development Corporation (HCCDC) for the delivery of the Gosford Waterfront upgrade as well as the University of Newcastle for research into the Central Coast region and the newly opened I2H innovation hub for the Central Coast.
- RDA Central Coast is partnering with Planning NSW to assist with the rollout of Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) for the Central Coast. The NSW state government will integrate MMC including flatpaks and prefabricated housing into the Planning Departments approvals system. This is an opportunity to advocate and educate Central Coast businesses on the use of MMC which will fast track housing construction and cut development application wait times.
- RDA Central Coast participated in a podcast by RDA Sydney (April 2026), showcasing the passion and enthusiasm RDA Central Coast has for the capital of the Central Coast the city of Gosford, but also the region as a whole.

Table 1: Current Regional Development Australia Central Coast Committee members.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Appointment Date</b>
Gail Cottrill	Chair	1 April 2025
Nicole Gerschel	Deputy Chair	28 October 2025
Gregory Brownlow	Committee Member	8 December 2025
Amanda Cooton	Committee Member	26 May 2026
Jennifer McGhie	Committee Member	26 May 2026
Mike Goodman	Committee Member	28 October 2025
Courtney Molloy (On leave)	Committee Member	28 October 2025
Chris Smith	Committee Member	1 July 2018
Karen Tucker	Committee Member	5 March 2024

## 2. REGIONAL STRATEGIC CONTEXT (2026 – 2030 FOCUS)

### 2.1. Central Coast Regional Plan 2041 (NSW Government)

#### Regional Snapshot

The Central Coast of New South Wales is uniquely positioned between Sydney and Newcastle, offering a blend of coastal charm and urban potential. With a current population of around 363,4244 people (*i.d. 2024, Population and Household Forecasts*), the region is expected to grow to over 400,000 by 2041. This growth presents both opportunities and challenges, particularly in the areas of housing, infrastructure, employment, and environmental resilience.

#### Strategic Priorities for the Next 3–5 Years

##### 1. Housing Supply, Diversity and Affordability

Housing is a critical focus for the Central Coast. With rising demand and limited supply, the region must address the need for more diverse and affordable housing. Areas such as Greater Lake Munmorah, Warnervale, Wadalba East, Tuggerah-Wyong, and Gosford have been identified as key growth locations. These areas will accommodate new homes and communities, but success will depend on delivering the right types of housing in the right places, supported by adequate infrastructure.

The region faces increasing rental stress and a shortage of social and affordable housing, particularly for older residents, people with disabilities, and essential workers. Addressing these challenges will require new housing models, including dual occupancies, build-to-rent developments, and culturally appropriate housing led by Aboriginal organisations such as the Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council (DLALC). A coordinated approach, including planning incentives and government investment, will be vital.

##### 2. Place-Based Planning and 15-Minute Neighbourhoods

Creating vibrant, walkable neighbourhoods where residents can access everyday needs within 15 minutes is a guiding principle for the region. Strategic centres like Gosford, Tuggerah-Wyong, Warnervale, The Entrance, and Woy Woy are being revitalised to support this goal. By concentrating housing, jobs, schools, shops, and open space in these locations, the region can enhance livability, reduce car dependence, and build stronger local economies.

##### 3. Economic Growth and Employment

As the Central Coast grows, providing local job opportunities is essential to reducing out-commuting and building a more self-sustaining economy. Employment precincts such as Somersby, Warnervale Business Park, Tuggerah, and Gosford are key drivers of economic development. There is also a strong focus on supporting Aboriginal-led enterprises, particularly on land identified by the Darkinjung LALC. Infrastructure, digital connectivity, and land activation are needed to attract investment and unlock the region's full economic potential.

##### 4. Infrastructure-First Growth

Coordinated infrastructure delivery is critical to supporting population growth. Key corridors like Warnervale to Lake Munmorah and the Tuggerah Interchange are priority areas for new roads, public

transport, schools, and utilities. The establishment of an Urban Development Program Committee will help ensure that land use and infrastructure planning are aligned, allowing growth to occur in a logical and sustainable way.

## **5. Environmental Protection and Climate Resilience**

Protecting the Central Coast's unique natural environment is a central goal of the regional plan. The Tuggerah Lakes Catchment, coastal erosion areas, and a newly designated Strategic Conservation Plan area (covering over 3,000 hectares) are key priorities. By embedding green infrastructure and biodiversity corridors into urban planning, and designing for flood and bushfire resilience, the region can ensure long-term environmental sustainability.

### **External Influences and Challenges**

The success of the Central Coast's future planning will be shaped by several external factors. Population growth will continue to drive demand for housing and services, while rising housing costs and rental pressures will require stronger policy responses on affordability. Climate change brings risks such as flooding, bushfires, and sea-level rise, particularly in vulnerable coastal areas. Additionally, changes in planning policy and investment in renewable energy and digital infrastructure will influence the pace and direction of regional development.

### **Summary**

The next three to five years are pivotal for the Central Coast. The region must respond proactively to growth by unlocking land for housing, ensuring timely infrastructure delivery, creating employment opportunities close to home, and preserving the natural environment. With the right strategic focus and strong partnerships across government, industry and community, the Central Coast can grow in a way that enhances livability, sustainability and opportunity for all the community.

## 2.2. RDA Central Coast's Major Strategic Priorities for the Upcoming Year

The following is a summary of the major strategic priorities that RDA Central Coast will undertake in the 2026 – 2027 period and which Australian Government regional priorities category that it directly supports.

Australian Government Priority Focus Areas	RDA CENTRAL COAST Regional Priority
Contribute to and drive local economic development planning and strategy development	Continued delivery of the Central Coast Regional Enabling Infrastructure Priority List (2025, 2026 and future 2027). Also continued collaboration with the Central Coast Peak Body Alliance to advocate for Infrastructure funding from the State and Federal governments.
Contribute to and drive local economic development planning and strategy development	The Development of a Unified Regional Identity as a strategic tool for economic development, community building, and external engagement. This will be done in conjunction with Central Coast Council.
Contribute to and drive local economic development planning and strategy development	Support the development of innovative regionally led solutions to address the constrained supply of diverse housing options that is having significant impact upon housing affordability and industry growth. Research a Central Coast Liveability Strategy.
Facilitate regional economic development outcomes, through industry investment	Implementation of the Central Coast Food Hub Innovation Region Initiative including establishing a new Precinct. Creation of an education platform for building innovation methods for Central Coast building and construction stakeholders.
Facilitate regional economic development outcomes, through investment in skills and local leadership	Actively support the development of the Gosford Education and Employment Precinct (University of Newcastle and TAFE NSW) as a major development project aimed at revitalizing Gosford's CBD by creating a hub for education and employment opportunities. Researching a Central Coast Higher Education Strategy.
Support regional stakeholders, including local government and the not-for-profit-sector, to collaborate, and seek funding opportunities that advance strategic regional priorities	RDA Central Coast will lead or be a key representative of regional roundtables and stakeholder groups to encourage all key stakeholders (including the 3 levels of government) to discuss regionally significant issues, challenges, opportunities, and roadblocks.

## 2.3. RDA Central Coast Business Plan Alignment with Local, State and Regional Plans

The 2026-27 RDA Central Coast Business Plan is 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 2026-27 RDA Central Coast Business Plan supports the following existing planning strategies, policy and objectives for our region.

[Australian Government Regional Investment Framework](#)

[NSW Government's Central Coast Regional Plan 2041](#)

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

[Smart Central Coast \(Transport NSW\)](#)

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

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

[A Plan for the Central Coast Urban Growth and Environment](#)

[Central Coast Council Airport Master Plan](#)

[Central Coast Regional Key Enabling Infrastructure](#)

[Central Coast Council Local Housing Strategy](#)

[Central Coast Council Night-Time Economy](#)

[Central Coast Council Special Entertainment Precinct](#)

[RDA Central Coast Regional Enabling Infrastructure Priorities List 2026/7](#)

[RDA Central Coast Regional Snapshot 2026](#)

[RDA Central Coast Quarterly Economic Update](#)

### 3. ANNUAL WORK PLAN

#### 3.1 Background & Context

The RDA Central Coast annual work plan is intended to proactively support the successful implementation of the Australian Government’s Regional Investment Framework, which guides a coordinated approach to regional development, underpinned by local engagement.

The annual work plan has been developed to drive economic growth, innovation and entrepreneurship across our region through facilitating investment in community, industry and the environment. RDA Central Coast will endeavour to bridge the regional development gaps in our region by working with a broad range of stakeholders across sectors and supporting the delivery of identified Australian Government strategic priorities.

Priorities, activities, and performance measures for 2026-2027 were informed by the following factors:

- Identified regional priorities
- The Australian Government’s Regional Investment Framework and RDA Charter
- Available funding & resourcing
- Identified gaps in economic development activities in the region
- Strategic intent of other regional stakeholders including Central Coast Council
- Initiatives commenced in previous years
- Priorities identified by the elected Commonwealth and State Governments

Priorities, projects and activities were refined after consultation with key regional stakeholders.

#### 3.2 Summary of RDA Central Coast’s Top 5 Central Coast Major Strategic Priorities for the Upcoming Year

The following is a summary of the major strategic priorities that RDA Central Coast will undertake in the 2026 – 2027 period and which Australian Government regional priorities category that it directly supports.

#### **CONTRIBUTE TO AND DRIVE LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT**

##### **1. Delivery of the Central Coast Regional Enabling Infrastructure Priority Lists**

a) The purpose of the “RDA Central Coast Regional Enabling Infrastructure Priority List 2026-27” clearly defines the priority infrastructure projects as recommended by RDA Central Coast that will create jobs and drive further investment into the region. The priority list also directly supports joint regional advocacy and effort to secure Government funding for regionally significant infrastructure projects. The first RDA Central Coast specific list was released in 2025 (June). This has now been updated and the 2026-27 list was released April 2026. This will be reviewed annually by the RDA Central Coast Committee, scheduled April 2027 delivery.

b) The “Key Enabling Projects: Central Coast Region” (May 2026) is the fifth version of the Central Coast Key Enabling Projects jointly coordinated by Central Coast Council, Regional Development Australia Central Coast, and Business NSW 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. Next reiteration is due May 2027.

c) The Central Coast Peak Body Alliance comprising RDA Central Coast, Business NSW Central Coast, Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA) NSW, Housing Industry Association (HIA), Central Coast Leadership Forum, and Property Council of Australia and Central Coast Industry Connect (CCIC), collectively drafted the “Central Coast Pre-budget Submission FY26” which was presented to the 4 Central Coast Region NSW Parliament Ministers (Wyang, Gosford, The Entrance and Terrigal) in February 2026 at NSW Parliament House. It is anticipated that this would be reviewed for another submission after the 2027 March State Government election for the FY 2027.

## 2. The Development of a Unified Regional Identity and Liveability Strategy

The NSW Central Coast is home to diverse strengths — from advanced manufacturing and agriculture to tourism, food, education, and creative industries. Yet despite this richness, we lack a cohesive, recognisable regional identity. As a result:

- Our products, innovations, and experiences are not associated with the Central Coast by consumers, businesses, or investors.
- Local pride and cohesion remain fragmented, influenced by lingering historical divides (e.g., Gosford vs. Wyong).
- We miss economic opportunities tied to place branding — whether in tourism, export positioning, talent attraction, or investment.

As a region we are producing value across sectors, but we are not telling a shared story about where it all comes from. This multi-year initiative proposes the development of a unified regional brand — a flexible identity framework that:

- Starts with manufacturing and local products
- Expands to food and beverage, tourism, services, and experiences
- Communicates that the Central Coast is a birthplace of innovation, creativity, and quality

This is not simply a label or logo. It is intended to become a strategic tool for economic development, community building, and external engagement. Like “Made in Melbourne” or “Barossa. Be Consumed.” — our Central Coast brand would signal provenance, pride, and value. RDA Central Coast has identified there are essentially two branding issues a) The Central Coast as a Region b) Gosford as the Capital City of the Central Coast Region. See details below.

### a) The Central Coast as a Region

RDA Central Coast is now partnering with Central Coast Council to research and progress Central Coast as a brand. Initially, RDA Central Coast was attempting to research and engage stakeholders to review the challenges of the lack of branding for the Central Coast. However, as Central Coast Council had allocated funding to the initiative, RDA Central Coast has moved aside to allow them to take the lead on the initiative. RDA Central Coast is still a founding member of the stakeholder engagement group and will continue to monitor and support the initial findings and recommendations made by Central Coast Council.

### b) Gosford as the Capital City of the Central Coast Region

RDA Central Coast is a partner of Business NSW Central Coast in conducting round table discussions and events around the promotion of Gosford as the Capital city of the Central Coast region. The City Shaping Summit held May 2026 gathered all levels of government, business leaders, University of Newcastle and Central Coast residents to discuss the future of Gosford. It has been identified that there is a lack of regular public transport, lack of signage and lighting within the city, which Council has now identified in their Destination and Event Strategies (2026). RDA Central Coast will continue to work with the leadership partners in 2026-27.

As part of this brand identity, RDA Central Coast will research a Central Coast Liveability Strategy to encourage people to continue to live, work and play in the Central Coast Region. RDA Central Coast will also continue to work with Australian High Speed Rail Authority in its research and implementation of the High-Speed Rail from Newcastle to Sydney, stopping at Gosford on the Central Coast.

### **3. Implementation of the Central Coast Food Manufacturing Precinct.**

The Central Coast Food Manufacturing Precinct initiative is a critical economic development initiative developed and led 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. RDA Central Coast has continued to support the rollout of the Central Coast Food Innovation Region initiative, and the business case development, design and stage one delivery of the Central Coast Food Manufacturing Precinct and Innovation Hub.

In April 2025, construction commenced on the long-anticipated Food Manufacturing Innovation Hub and it's expected that this transformative \$17.14 million project, fully funded by the Australian Government, will position the Central Coast as a premier destination for food manufacturing. The building is due to open July 2026. The facility is designed to support both established and scale-up food and beverage businesses and will also include pilot and training spaces dedicated to driving product development, skills training, and innovation.

Once completed in mid 2026, the heart of the hub will be the newly established Manufacturing Advancement Centre. This Centre will offer a holistic, pragmatic approach to business improvement for both food and non-food manufacturers. Some of its offerings will include:

- Technical and product development support.
- Management and shop floor training programs.
- Access to a network of specialised service providers where needed.
- Services will be tailored to meet the needs of businesses of all sizes.

Once the building is fully operational, RDA Central Coast will commence working with Central Coast Industry Connect to create initially a precinct out of the 8 businesses operating out of the new building. This will then be expanded to other manufacturing businesses operating across the Central Coast to share information, learnings and create innovation.

### **4. Support the development of innovative regionally led solutions to address the constrained supply of diverse housing options**

RDA Central Coast will continue to work with key regional stakeholders to 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 significant impact upon housing affordability and industry growth.

Following the significant insights gained from the 2022 'State of Affordable Housing on the Central Coast' report, Regional Development Australia again partnered with Pacific Link Housing to release an updated statement emphasising the continued and urgent need for accelerated efforts in the provision of affordable and key-worker housing. The 2024 statement details a significant mismatch between the demand for affordable housing and the existing supply available for residents across the Coast falling into the affordable and key-worker income categories. This shortage, along with a long-standing undersupply of social housing in the area, has contributed to a 60% rise in homelessness over the past year based on the NSW Government's Statewide Street Count, providing further evidence of a housing market in crisis. RDA Central Coast will also proactively support Pacific Link Housing to deliver the first stage of Central Coast Council's Affordable Housing Land Proposal program.

RDA Central Coast has also had initial meetings with Planning NSW on various forms of Modern Methods of Construction (MMC). This was introduced to NSW Parliament to be endorsed in early May 2026. RDA Central

Coast will co-ordinate between peak bodies such as UDIA, Property Council of Australia, Housing Institute of Australia and the Master Builders Association to understand current offerings of MMC on the Central Coast, and potential offerings going forward, taking a co-ordinated advocacy position.

**5. Actively support the development of the Gosford Education and Employment Precinct as a major development project aimed at revitalizing Gosford's CBD by creating a hub for education and employment opportunities (Higher Education Strategy).**

RDA Central Coast will continue to actively support the development of the Gosford Education and Employment Precinct as a major development project aimed at revitalizing Gosford's CBD by creating a hub for education and employment opportunities. The precinct includes a new University of Newcastle (UoN) campus (costing \$67.3M of federal, state and UoN funds), a TAFE NSW campus (\$44M allocated over a 4 year period across 3 Central Coast campuses – announced February 2026), and a Clinical School and Research Institute, all strategically located to enhance educational pathways and attract investment. The precinct is designed to integrate with the existing hospital, public transport, and other amenities, fostering a thriving urban centre. The precinct is intended to play a key role in the Gosford Revitalisation strategy, aiming to attract investment, create jobs, and improve the overall quality of life in the area.

Central Coast Council has also recently sold two blocks of land (one vacant the other an old Council building) on Mann Street in Gosford to the University of Newcastle, which will be turned into 127 units of safe, affordable student accommodation. The project includes studio and shared apartments, student support services, the Wollotuka Institute, and a multipurpose event room, aiming to boost the local economy and support Gosford's CBD revitalisation.

The University of Newcastle has also opened its Central Coast Integrated Innovation Network (I2N) which is an entrepreneurship and venture development unit that helps students, researchers, and founders turn ideas into businesses. It provides startup programs, accelerator workshops, and co-working spaces in Newcastle and the Central Coast to foster regional economic growth. The Central Coast chapter is housed in the new Central Coast Regional Library in Gosford (opened late 2025).

RDA Central Coast will support the precinct through strategic advocacy—championing the precinct as a catalyst for economic growth and social advancement. The RDA Central Coast Committee members will work in collaboration with state and federal government stakeholders to reinforce the case for continued investment in enabling infrastructure, digital connectivity, and placemaking. Our advocacy efforts will be informed by regional data and aligned with broader regional economic development strategies, reinforcing the importance of the precinct in achieving shared goals around skills development, workforce attraction, and innovation.

RDA Central Coast will also play a role in regional promotion by researching and writing a Central Coast higher Education Strategy—highlighting the precinct's opportunities to potential investors, entrepreneurs, and residents. By supporting marketing and branding initiatives that position Gosford as a liveable, innovative, and connected urban centre, we help to attract talent, students, and new businesses to the area. In doing so, we strengthen the precinct's potential to drive long-term revitalisation and contribute meaningfully to the economic resilience of the Central Coast.

## 4 OUTCOMES AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS TABLE

### Summary of top 5 strategic priorities for upcoming year:

1. **Delivery of the Central Coast Regional Enabling Infrastructure Priority Lists.**
2. **The Development of a Unified Regional Identity and Central Coast Liveability Strategy.**
3. **Implementation of the Central Coast Food Manufacturing Precinct.**
4. **Support the development of innovative regionally led solutions to address the constrained supply of diverse housing options.**
5. **Actively support the development of the Gosford Education and Employment Precinct as a major development project aimed at revitalizing Gosford's CBD by creating a hub for education and employment opportunities and Central Coast Higher Education Strategy.**

### Summary of top 5 key business activities for upcoming year:

1. Delivery of the 2027 RDA Central Coast Regional Enabling Infrastructure Priority List and continue to support Central Coast Council with their Key Enabling Projects list, and the Central Coast Peak Body Alliance Infrastructure Budget for NSW Parliament 2027.
2. The Development of a Unified Regional Identity as a strategic tool for economic development, community building, and external engagement, working with Central Coast Council as the lead. Research of Central Coast Liveability Strategy and continued support for the High-Speed Rail Station in Gosford.
3. Engage with stakeholders to create the Central Coast Food Manufacturing Precinct, initially in the Food and Beverage Innovation hub, but expanding to include other Central Coast Manufactures.
4. Support the development of innovative regionally led solutions to address the constrained supply of diverse housing options that is having significant impact upon housing affordability and industry growth, working with Planning NSW on innovative housing solutions for the Central Coast.
5. Actively support the development of the Gosford Education and Employment Precinct as a major development project aimed at revitalizing Gosford's CBD by creating a hub for education and employment opportunities and research a Central Coast Higher Education Strategy.

<b>Outcome 1: Delivery of the Central Coast Regional Infrastructure Priority Lists (3)</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infrastructure</li> <li>• Industry growth.</li> </ul>				
<b>PART 1 – FOR THE ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN</b>				
<b>What will we do?</b>	<b>Initiative type:</b>	<b>RDA’s anticipated role:</b>	<b>Timeframe of activity:</b>	<b>Expected outcomes</b>
1. RDA Central Coast Regional Enabling Infrastructure Priority List 2027	Infrastructure Industry	1. RDA Central Coast Committee and CEO	1. 2026 start, release May 2027.	The purpose of the Central Coast Key Enabling Infrastructure Priority Lists are to clearly define the priority infrastructure projects that will create jobs and drive further investment into the Central Coast region.
2. Key Enabling Projects: Central Coast Region 2027	Infrastructure Industry	2. In conjunction with Central Coast Council and Business NSW Central Coast	2. 2026 start, release April 2027.	The priority lists also directly supports joint regional advocacy and efforts to secure Government funding for regionally significant infrastructure projects.
3. Central Coast Peak Alliance Body Infrastructure Budget 2027 (NSW and Federal Parliament)	Infrastructure Industry	3. RDA Central Coast, Business NSW Central Coast, Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA) NSW, Housing Industry Association (HIA), Central Coast Leadership Forum, Property Council of Australia and Central Coast Industry Connect (CCIC)	3. 2026 start, release December 2026.	An additional role for RDA Central Coast will be to proactively assist in unlocking stalled / delayed job creation / investment producing developments in the region.

<p><b>Activity 1.1:</b></p> <p>RDA Central Coast Regional Enabling Infrastructure Priority List 2027.</p>	<p>Infrastructure Industry</p>	<p>RDA Central Coast</p>	<p>Start 2026 Release May 2027</p>	<p>RDA Central Coast CEO &amp; Subcommittee feedback incorporated into final priority list. Draft priority list presented to Board for approval and release.</p>
<p><b>Activity 1.2:</b></p> <p>Key Enabling Projects: Central Coast Region 2027</p>	<p>Infrastructure Industry</p>	<p>In conjunction with Central Coast Council and Business NSW Central Coast</p>	<p>December 2026 start, release April 2027</p>	<p>A proactive advocacy plan is developed with key regional stakeholders Proactive advocacy effort commenced</p>
<p><b>Activity 1.3:</b></p> <p>Central Coast Peak Alliance Body Infrastructure Budget 2027 (NSW and Federal Parliament)</p>	<p>Infrastructure Industry</p>	<p>RDA Central Coast, Business NSW Central Coast, Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA) NSW, Housing Industry Association (HIA), Central Coast Leadership Forum, Property Council of Australia and Central Coast Industry Connect (CCIC)</p>	<p>June 2026 start, delivery December 2026.</p>	<p>Central Coast Peak Body Alliance meets every second month to review Infrastructure list. To add or delete projects in preparation for a December 2026 submission to both Federal and State Governments prior to Budget releases May 2027.</p>

Outcome 2: The Development of a Unified Regional Identity and Liveability Strategy	People, Places and Local Economy
<p><b>What will we do?</b></p> <p>The following dot-points are the activities we plan to undertake to meet Outcome 2.</p> <p>1/ The Central Coast as a Region</p> <p>2/ Gosford as the Capital City of the Central Coast Region</p>	<p><b>Expected outcomes</b></p> <p>As a region we are producing value across sectors, but we are not telling a shared story about where it all comes from. Working with Central Coast Council as a funding stakeholder of this initiative, this process started late 2025 and will continue to evolve into a draft initial proposal mid 2026, with at least a 2 year rollout.</p> <p>This multi-year initiative proposes the development of a unified regional brand — a flexible identity framework that communicates that the Central Coast is a birthplace of innovation, creativity, and quality</p> <p>This is not simply a label or logo. It is intended to become a strategic tool for economic development, community building, and external engagement. Like “Made in Melbourne” or “Barossa. Be Consumed.” — our Central Coast brand is intended to signal provenance, pride, and value.</p> <p>The draft Liveability strategy will be a document based on research and consultation with relevant stakeholders.</p>
<b>Activity 2 Development of a Unified Regional Identity and Liveability Strategy</b>	
<p>Activity 2.1</p> <p>Develop project scope with Central Coast Council Identity branding team</p> <p>1/ The Central Coast as a Region (Part A)</p> <p>2/ Gosford as the Capital City of the Central Coast Region (Part B)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stage one project research completed</li> <li>• Project scope completed</li> <li>• Project scope to be endorsed by Sub-committee 2026, to be rolled out over 2 years by Central Coast Council.</li> <li>• Part A Central Coast Region</li> <li>• Part B Gosford as Capital City of Central Coast Region</li> </ul>
<p>Activity 2.2</p> <p>RDA Central Coast to be part of a steering group of local producers, tourism stakeholders, business leaders, Central Coast Industry Connect, University of Newcastle and Central Coast Council representatives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steering group meeting organised</li> <li>• Clarify and co-develop the vision – continuing in 2026</li> <li>• Potential draft release 2026 with rollout to commence late 2027.</li> </ul>
<p>Activity 2.3</p> <p>Development of 3-year action plan and funding opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community and industry consultation to develop a unifying vision and values completed</li> <li>• Draft 3- year action plan endorsed by steering group and Central Coast Council</li> </ul>
<p>Activity 2.4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft strategy to Subcommittee</li> </ul>

Research and write Liveability Strategy for the Central Coast region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and present at Committee</li> <li>• Release to Stakeholders</li> </ul>
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### Outcome 3: Implementation of the Central Coast Food Manufacturing Precinct. Places, Services, Industries and Local Economies

#### PART 1 – FOR THE ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN

##### What will we do?

The following dot-points are the activities we plan to undertake to meet Outcome 3.

##### Expected outcomes

The Central Coast Food Innovation Region initiative is a critical economic development initiative developed and led 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.

In April 2025, construction commenced on the long-anticipated Food Manufacturing Innovation Hub and it's expected that this transformative \$17.14 million project, fully funded by the Australian Government, will position the Central Coast as a premier destination for food manufacturing.

The facility is designed to support both established and scale-up food and beverage businesses and will also include pilot and training spaces dedicated to driving product development, skills training, and innovation.

Once completed in mid 2026, the heart of the hub will be the newly established Manufacturing Precinct. This Precinct will offer a holistic, pragmatic approach to business improvement for both food and non-food manufacturers. Some of its offerings will include:

- Technical and product development support.
- Management and shop floor training programs.
- Access to a network of specialised service providers where needed.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services will be tailored to meet the needs of businesses of all sizes.</li> </ul> <p>The ongoing intent of this initiative is to foster the development of a thriving Food, Agriculture and Beverage Industry that contributes to the social and economic development of the NSW Central Coast.</p>
<b>Activity 3 Central Coast Food Manufacturing Precinct</b>	
<p>Activity 3.1 Continue to provide office accommodation and administrative support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of two serviced offices</li> <li>• Provision of internet and photocopying facilities</li> <li>• Provision of administrative support</li> <li>• Provision of Boardroom and meeting spaces</li> <li>• Provision of use of training rooms</li> </ul>
<p>Activity 3.2 Provide support for the timely completion and opening of the Food Manufacturing Innovation Hub</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The provision of advice, assistance and advocacy when required to assist with the construction and completion of the Central Coast Food Manufacturing Innovation Hub</li> <li>• Expected opening July 2026</li> </ul>
<p>Activity 3.3 Development of a Central Coast Food Manufacturing Precinct</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The provision of advice and assistance when required to assist with the development of a Central Coast Food Manufacturing Precinct.</li> <li>• The provision of advice and assistance when required to assist with the attraction of industry partners and required investors to establish the Central Coast Food Manufacturing Precinct.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Outcome 4:</b> Support the development of innovative regionally led solutions to address the constrained supply of diverse housing options. People, Places, Services, Economic Development.</p>	
<p><b>PART 1 – FOR THE ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN</b></p>	
<p><b>What will we do?</b> The following dot-points are the activities we plan to undertake to meet Outcome 4.</p>	<p><b>Expected outcomes</b> RDA Central Coast will continue to work with key regional stakeholders to find innovative solutions to address housing supply and housing affordability on the Central Coast.</p> <p>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 significant impact upon housing affordability and industry growth.</p> <p>RDA Central Coast intends to hold a Pilot “Build Central Coast” information session with key regional stakeholders to bring together key business leaders, developers, and government representatives to discuss current progress addressing more affordable housing needs and the future of housing development on the Central Coast.</p> <p>This Information session will focus on promoting infill, medium to high-density housing projects, with an emphasis on affordable housing, infrastructure needs, and potential site - specific opportunities. The initiative seeks to align regional development with national and state housing strategies, fostering partnerships and highlighting funding opportunities.</p> <p>These activities will allow RDA Central Coast to gain and share relevant data and local intelligence to support the evidence base to inform regional development strategies, program design and policy responses.</p>
<p><b>Activity 4 Address the Constrained Supply of Diverse Housing Options</b></p>	
<p>Activity 4.1 Collaborate with all key regional stakeholders to address the mismatch between the demand for affordable housing and the existing supply available for residents across the Central Coast including the affordable and key-worker income categories.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that addressing the mismatch between the demand for affordable housing and the existing supply available for residents across the Central Coast including the affordable and key-worker income categories is included in regional round table discussions and relevant key stakeholder meetings.</li> <li>• Ensure that addressing the need for affordable and key-worker income categories is included in relevant RDA Central Coast messaging and advocacy efforts.</li> </ul>
<p>Activity 4.2 Gather information on diverse housing options for the Central Coast Council’s Affordable Housing Land Proposal program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The provision of information and research to Council and for funding applications to address the mismatch between the demand for affordable housing and the existing supply available for residents across the Coast. Research Planning NSW recommendations for affordable housing options.</li> </ul>

<p>Activity 4.3 Conduct a pilot program called “Build Central Coast” to demonstrate current diverse housing options with key regional stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery pilot “Build Central Coast” information session with key regional stakeholders to understand the existing supply available for builders etc. across the Central Coast including the affordable and key-worker income categories.</li> <li>• Share relevant data and local intelligence resulting from these activities to support the evidence base to inform regional development strategies, program design and policy responses.</li> </ul>
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**Outcome 5:** Actively support the development of the Gosford Education and Employment Precinct as a major development project aimed at revitalising Gosford’s CBD by creating a hub for education and employment opportunities and Central Coast Higher Education Strategy.

**PART 1 – FOR THE ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN**

**What will we do?**

The following dot-points are the activities we plan to undertake to meet Outcome 2.

**Expected outcomes**

RDA Central Coast will continue to actively support the development of the Gosford Education and Employment Precinct as a major development project aimed at revitalizing Gosford's CBD by creating a hub for education and employment opportunities. The precinct includes a new University of Newcastle campus, a modernised TAFE NSW campus, and a Clinical School and Research Institute, all strategically located to enhance educational pathways and attract investment. The precinct is designed to integrate with the existing hospital, public transport, and other amenities, fostering a thriving urban centre. The precinct is intended to play a key role in the Gosford Revitalisation strategy, aiming to attract investment, create jobs, and improve the overall quality of life in the area.

RDA Central Coast will support the precinct through strategic advocacy—championing the precinct as a catalyst for economic growth and social advancement. The RDA Central Coast Committee members will work in collaboration with state and federal government stakeholders to reinforce the case for continued investment in enabling infrastructure, digital connectivity, and placemaking. Our advocacy efforts will be informed by regional data and aligned with broader regional economic development strategies, reinforcing the importance of the precinct in achieving shared goals around skills development, workforce attraction, and innovation.

RDA Central Coast will also play a role in regional promotion—highlighting the precinct’s opportunities to potential investors, entrepreneurs, and residents. By supporting marketing and branding initiatives that position Gosford as a liveable, innovative, and connected urban centre, we help to attract talent, students, and new businesses to the area. In doing so, we strengthen the precinct’s potential to drive long-term revitalisation and contribute meaningfully to the economic resilience of the Central Coast.

	The recent opening of the new University of Newcastle Campus in Gosford (February 2026), as well as the opening of the Innovation Hub (I2N) at the new Regional Library (March 2026) and the recent purchase (April 2026) of a building and vacant block by the University of Newcastle on Mann Street in Gosford to provide for 127 bed student affordable accommodation, will further enhance the vibrancy of the Higher Education Precinct. An estimated allocation of \$44M from the State Government has also been allocated over 4 years to improve the 3 TAFE Campuses on the Central Coast.
People, Places and Services	<b>Activity 5:</b> Actively support the development of the Gosford Education and Employment Precinct as a major development project aimed at revitalising Gosford's CBD by creating a hub for education and employment opportunities.
Activity 5.1 Support the new precinct through strategic advocacy – championing the precinct as a catalyst for economic growth and social advancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gosford Education and Employment Precinct is reinforced as a major development project aimed at revitalizing Gosford's CBD by creating a hub for education and employment opportunities.</li> <li>• RDA Central Coast will continue to work with Higher Education providers to support on going infrastructure works for both the UoN and TAFE NSW.</li> </ul>
Activity 5.2 Work in collaboration with state and federal government stakeholders to reinforce the case for continued investment in enabling infrastructure, digital connectivity, and placemaking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RDA Central Coast has worked in collaboration with state and federal government stakeholders to reinforce the case for continued investment in enabling infrastructure, digital connectivity, and placemaking.</li> <li>• Research a Higher Education Strategy based on the University of Newcastle's new Gosford Campus, purchase of land for student accommodation and TAFE NSW \$44M commitment over 4 years to revitalise the Gosford, Ourimbah and Wyong Campuses.</li> <li>• RDA Central Coast will conduct Research into a Higher Education Central Coast strategy, by continuing to work with local education providers.</li> </ul>
Activity 5.3 Highlight the precinct's opportunities to potential investors, entrepreneurs and residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The precinct's opportunities to potential investors, entrepreneurs, and residents have been highlighted in events that RDA Central Coast attends as a key regional stakeholder.</li> <li>• RDA Central Coast will engage with stakeholders such as Central Coast Council to help create a "Placemaking Plan" for the next 20 to 30 years for the Gosford CBD.</li> </ul>

## 5 BUDGET TABLE

<b>RDA name:</b>	Central Coast
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GST exclusive amounts	RDA program funding (incl. all \$ in FA and schedules)		
	Budget 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027	Actual to 30 June 2027	
<b>Income</b>			
Surplus funding carried forward from previous financial year			
Funding for this period	\$334,015	( 1 )	
Interest on Commonwealth funds			
Supplementary funding (if any) #			
Interest Income			
[Other category as required]			
[Other category as required]			
<b>Total RDA program income (A)</b>	\$334,015		\$0
<b>Expenditure - major budget items ^</b>			
Employee salaries	\$218,652		
Employee entitlements	\$26,238		
Other employee expenses			
Office lease and outgoings	\$35,652		
Vehicle costs			
Operational	\$20,125		
Financial, legal and professional	\$8,950		
Marketing	\$4,682		
Asset acquisition	\$6,000		
Committee costs	\$13,716		
Supplementary funding (if any)			
[Other category as required]			
[Other category as required]			
[Other category as required]			
<b>Total RDA program funding expenditure (B)</b>	\$334,015		\$0
<b>Surplus / Deficit of RDA program funding (A - B)</b>	\$0	( 2 )	\$0

## 6 COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

### Background

Regional Development Australia Central Coast (RDA Central Coast) 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

RDA Central Coast 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 2026/27, RDA Central Coast 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, in line with the Regional Investment Framework, which focuses on priority areas of People, Places, Services and Industries and Local Economies.

### Objectives

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

### Target Audiences

#### Primary

- 363,424 Central Coast residents
- 27,066 registered Central Coast businesses

*(Source: i.d. 2024 Population and Household Forecasts. Central Coast Council Area Forecast Population. Key Enabling Projects: Central Coast Region April 2026).*

#### Secondary

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

### Key Stakeholders

- Regional Federal and State Members of Parliament
- Central Coast Council
- NSW and Australian Government
- Hunter & Central Coast Development Corporation
- NSW Business Chamber and Local Chambers of Commerce
- Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council
- Newcastle University Central Coast Campus & Campus Partners
- Central Coast Area Health
- Pacific Link Housing
- Bara Barang Alliance

### Project Partners

- Food Innovation Initiative: Central Coast Industry Connect, University of Newcastle, Newcastle Institute for Energy & Resources (NIER)
- Central Coast Peak Bodies Alliance: Business NSW Central Coast, Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA) NSW, Housing Industry Association (HIA), Central Coast Leadership Forum, Property Council of Australia and Central Coast Industry Connect (CCIC)

### Key Messages

- RDA Central Coast is a leader in regional economic development, responsible for facilitating collaboration between all key stakeholders to the benefit of the Central Coast.
- RDA Central Coast is a key driver in creating long-term, sustainable economic growth, local job creation and skills development opportunities on the Central Coast.
- RDA Central Coast actively participates in programs, activities and events designed to promote innovation and development and increase opportunities for all Central Coast residents.
- RDA Central Coast effectively positions the Central Coast as a premium investment and lifestyle option.
- RDA Central Coast proactively supports regional stakeholders, including local government and the not-for-profit-sector, to seek grant opportunities that advance strategic regional priorities.

### Media Spokespeople

RDA Central Coast has nominated spokespersons approved to speak on behalf of the organisation across all projects and initiatives. These are:

- RDA Central Coast Chair, Gail Cottrill
- RDA Central Coast Deputy Chair, Nicole Gerschel
- RDA Central Coast Chief Executive Officer & Director Regional Development, Dr Lisa Barnes

### Project Spokespeople

- RDA Central Coast Central Coast Regional Enabling Infrastructure Priority Lists: Lisa Barnes (RDA Central Coast)

- Research into the Development of a Unified Regional Identity and Liveability Strategy: Gail Cottrill (RDA Central Coast),
- Central Coast Food Manufacturing Precinct Initiative: Gail Cottrill (RDA Central Coast), Lisa Barnes (RDA Central Coast), Frank Sammut (CCIC), Alan Broadfoot (NIER & University of Newcastle),
- Diverse Housing Initiatives: Gail Cottrill (RDA Central Coast), Lisa Barnes (RDA Central Coast)
- Development of the Gosford Education and Employment Precinct and Higher Education Strategy: Gail Cottrill (RDA Central Coast), Lisa Barnes (RDA Central Coast)

### Primary Communication Channels

- RDA Central Coast website [RDA Central Coast.org.au](http://RDA Central Coast.org.au) –This site is regularly updated with current and relevant information.
  - Social Media: Facebook, Instagram, RDA Central Coast LinkedIn.
  - Quarterly electronic newsletter (EDM) delivered to subscriber database, housed on website, and promoted via social media channels (Voice of the Coast).
  - Quarterly Economic Update delivered to subscriber database, housed on website, and promoted via social media channels.
  - Local/industry media outlets as recipients of targeted campaign messaging.
  - Quarterly and monthly face-to-face meeting between RDA Central Coast representatives and key stakeholders.
- 