

introduction

chapter 2 | the way forward

2.1 Introduction

Regional planning has been the focus of a multitude of local bodies on the Central Coast since the early 1970s when the Gosford/Wyong Structure Plan was published in 1975. Following the release of "Cities for the 21st Century" in 1995 there was a renewed emphasis on a regional approach to coordinating local development. The year 2000 saw the release of the regional planning strategy, 'Shaping the Central Coast', which aimed to essentially integrate planning across the region's Local and State Government agencies with a broad strategic framework to ensure the region was managed more sustainably over the next twenty years.

2.2 Planning Context

With release of the 'Shaping Our Cities' Metropolitan Strategy (DUAP 1998) there was a renewed commitment from State Government to finalise and release a series of regional planning strategies to more specifically address the significant economic and population changes occurring within each of the greater metropolitan regions and to indicate how the key metropolitan planning principles would be implemented regionally. Shaping Western Sydney and Shaping the Central Coast were subsequently the first of the region's to produce such strategic plans.

2.3 Regional Planning Strategy

The regional planning strategy was prepared to satisfy this requirement and was intended to guide all levels of Government and the community in making future decisions for the region. In addition to providing broad strategic policy directions for the region, the strategy proposed a model for regional management and co-ordination, implementation and review, to ensure that there was an ongoing commitment to regional planning and management by all key stakeholders.

2.4

The regional planning strategy, 'Shaping the Central Coast' was the result of a major and widespread consultation across the Central Coast region and was the first and important step towards identifying and tackling the key issues and priorities for action.

2.5 The Action Plan

The Action Plan seeks to address the region's existing issues and manage the impacts of future growth on the Central Coast with an emphasis on the short term (0-5 years). The Action Plan has assumed the Central Coast region will continue to grow, and as a result, needs to be flexible enough to accommodate a range of growth scenarios.

2.6

The Action Plan draws out the goals highlighted in the regional planning strategy and develops key action points, as part of a realistic regional management framework, looking ahead to the year 2021. The Action Plan acknowledges the key issues confronting the region and makes explicit the relationship between the desired outcomes and the supporting actions necessary to achieve these.

2.7 Methodology

In 2000 PlanningNSW released the Regional Planning Strategy for the Central Coast. (This planning process commenced in 1996). Prior to the adoption of the strategy, PlanningNSW was requested by the regional stakeholders to prepare a detailed Action Plan.

2.8

In 2001 PlanningNSW established the Central Coast Living Centres team to prepare an Action Plan for the regional planning strategy. A draft Regional Action Plan was prepared and distributed to over 200 stakeholders in 2001. The draft plan gathered information to facilitate the actions of three levels of government for the Central Coast and sought to involve the community and key stakeholders in reaching the best economic, environmental and social outcomes for the region.

2.9

In 2001 it was agreed that the region's planning would be best progressed by a partnership of PlanningNSW, Gosford City and Wyong Shire Councils. A steering committee, known as the Local Government Forum consisting of the elected councillors and senior staff of Gosford City and Wyong Shire Councils, the Central Coast Regional Office of PlanningNSW and the Central Coast Regional Coordinator from the Premier's Department was established to guide the finalisation of the Action Plan.

2.10 Technical Advisory Group

This led to a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) being formed (comprising three people: one each from Gosford City and Wyong Shire Councils and PlanningNSW) in January 2002 to work on the development of an agreed Action Plan. This partnership is a practical demonstration of the co-operative approach to regional planning that is required to work towards a better future for the Central Coast region.

2.11

In preparing the Action Plan, the TAG has been guided by a range of technical reports that provide analysis and background information to the issues. The reports of the technical working groups, established as part of the Central Coast regional planning process, covered the following areas:

- Economic Viability;
- Accessibility and Transport;
- Natural Environment and Biodiversity;
- Utilities and Services;
- Human Services and Liveability;
- Urban and Rural Settlements; and
- Rural Land and Industries.

2.12

In addition, the Action Plan incorporates information from various other sources:

- Community consultations during the development of the regional planning strategy,
- The region's existing strategies and plans from a range of stakeholders (including Central Coast Moving Forward, the draft Central Coast Catchment Management Blueprint etc.),
- Written submissions from State and Local Government agencies and regional stakeholders commenting on the first draft Action Plan distributed in August 2001; (Appendix 1)
- Original pieces of research such as the Central Coast Infrastructure Assessment;
- Up to 140 interviews and briefings with groups and individuals January - November 2002; (Appendix 2) and;
- Written submissions from State and Local Government agencies commenting on the first preliminary draft Action Plan distributed in September 2002. (Appendix 3)

2.13

During the preparation phase the TAG presented progress reports to the Local Government Forum, the Central Coast Regional Office of PlanningNSW and the Central Coast Regional Coordinator from the Premier's Department.

2.14

Consultations with the key regional stakeholders have been an integral part of the preparation of the Action Plan and they will continue to be an essential part of the public exhibition and in its successful implementation.

2.15 Structure of the Action Plan

The Action Plan is set out in the following way:

Chapter 1 provides an Executive Summary.

Chapter 2 sets out the purpose of the Action Plan and provides a vision for the region in the year 2021. It asks how we will get there and who should be involved?

Chapter 3 describes the regional context of the Central Coast and identifies the issues and the opportunities that will arise from the growth and development of the region.

Chapter 4 takes the vision for the region and translates it into what Central Coast residents want to achieve for the region, that is, the goals, desired outcomes, related themes and guiding principles.

Chapter 5 discusses the current state of the region's infrastructure and its capacity to support both the existing and the future population.

Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9 are organised around ten related themes. Each theme identifies desired outcomes together with the action points to deliver those outcomes. The action points are drawn together in the Action Program found in the Implementation chapter, Chapter 10.

Chapters 10 and 11 identify the tools required to implement the Action Plan, the roles of the players, and the monitoring and review process to be used.

Chapter 12 identifies the detailed supporting actions the region needs to take in the short term (with an emphasis over the next 5 years) to build the foundation for a sustainable and dynamic Central Coast over the next twenty years.

2.16 Vision of the Central Coast

The vision for the Central Coast for the year 2021 is: *A sustainable Central Coast – A prosperous and vibrant region where people want to live, work, visit and invest.* The regional vision was articulated during the consultation process of the Moving Forward Strategy in 2000/2001.

2.17

While recognising the vision represents an ideal state, the Action Plan promotes the regional community working together to ensure the Central Coast region is moving towards this vision. The Action Plan acknowledges that modifying and changing current directions is a big challenge, but one the region must undertake.

2.18 The Goals

The Action Plan is based on a set of goals highlighted in the regional planning strategy and generally endorsed by a majority of the regional stakeholders. That is:

- Competitive and Adaptable Economy;
- Healthy and Sustainable Environment;
- Vibrant and Liveable Communities; and
- Regional Governance.

2.19 Goal 1: Competitive and Adaptable Economy

A competitive and adaptable economy will be characterised by:

- A diverse, well-developed and efficient infrastructure oriented around a rail and, to a lesser extent, road system;
- Improved transport links and new information technologies (broadband network) to expand employment opportunities;
- Having the resources to maintain existing infrastructure assets and finance new works;
- A well-trained workforce with a wide range of skills and commitment to leading technology and continuing training and education;
- Serviced stocks of land for sustainable industries;
- Development of Gosford, Erina and Wyong-Tuggerah as key regional commercial and retail centres; and
- Opportunities for small business and home-based industries.

2.20

A competitive and adaptable economy will contribute substantially to many aspects of the region's sustainability goals, particularly jobs, access and improved quality of life.

2.21 Goal 2: Healthy and Sustainable Environment

Devising effective solutions to environmental challenges is now an integral part of urban and regional management.

2.22

A healthy and sustainable environment will be characterised by:

- Air that is healthy for people to breathe and that maintains healthy ecosystems;
- Less need to travel, particularly by car, and shorter trips;
- Water that is safe to drink, and rivers, beaches and lakes that can sustain ecosystems and are safe to use for recreation;
- Reduced levels of waste and facilities that allow environmentally secure disposal;
- Less consumption of non-renewable resources such as fossil fuels and many building materials;
- The use of recycled materials in buildings and manufacturing; and
- Conservation of the region's biodiversity, natural land systems and high value native flora and fauna.

2.23 Goal 3: Vibrant and Liveable Communities

The community expects that planning and development, at every level, will add to people's quality of life.

2.24

Vibrant and liveable communities will be characterised by:

- A range of employment, education, training, culture, recreation, entertainment, shopping, health and community services that all residents can access;
- A choice of housing that meets the needs of the full range of existing and future households in terms of quality, quantity, type, affordability and distribution;
- Access to a range of transport and communication services, including modern telecommunications systems;
- Neighbourhoods where a mix of land uses are possible, and which are designed for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users; are visually and functionally attractive; and safe and energy efficient;
- Well designed town centres offering a range of opportunities for working, living, shopping and entertainment, which are easy to get to by public transport; and
- Accessible foreshores, useful and safe urban spaces, and open spaces.

2.25 Goal 4: Regional Governance

Integrated regional management depends for its success on all sections of the community and government agreeing to a shared vision for the region and working towards this in their actions and decisions.

2.26

An integrated approach to governing the affairs of the Central Coast will be characterised by:

- A renewed partnership between the three levels of government and the community;
- A strong link between planning and financing infrastructure and service provision;
- Reporting mechanisms designed to measure the progress towards a more sustainable region; and;
- The existence of, and ongoing commitment to, a regional data bank and geographic information system.

2.27 Key Players & Relationships

All government and regional stakeholders on the Central Coast have a stake in the Action Plan and in its delivery. It sets the agenda for all stakeholders for the next twenty years and indicates the key priority actions that need to be undertaken to implement the regional vision.

2.28

The Action Plan provides a framework for all government and regional stakeholders to manage the economic, environmental and social issues that currently exist and that will arise as a result of future growth across the region. The strategies and plans of the region's key stakeholders will need to be developed to give effect to the Action Plan at a more detailed and local level. 9.45.225

2.29 The Partners

Implementation of the Action Plan will require the commitment and co-operation of the local Councils, State and Federal Government agencies, other regional stakeholders and the community. The co-ordination and relationships between and within these stakeholders will be critical to the ongoing success of the Action Plan. All key players involved in the Action Plan, in particular Local and State Government, appreciate that their actions and decisions have a major impact on the direction and success of the Action Plan. Those contributing to the implementation of the plan will be encouraged to view this as an investment in the future of the region. 9.45.226

2.30 Primary Partners

Agencies responsible for infrastructure and service delivery are particularly important to the successful implementation of the Action Plan. It is for this reason that the primary responsibility for the Action Plan lies with State and Local Government. As the primary partners responsible for the implementation of the Action Plan they will be asked to adopt a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) emphasising commitment to the vision, outcomes and principles in the Plan. 9.45.223

2.31 State Government

While the Action Plan is coordinated at the regional level, it is crucial that state government agencies are committed to the vision and process of implementation. This must involve a close and effective relationship between State and Local Government. An integrated approach by State Government in dealing with its Central Coast based policy advice and service provision responsibilities is critical. PlanningNSW is the lead state government agency responsible for the co-ordination and preparation of the Action Plan.

2.32 Local Government

The effectiveness of the Action Plan depends on the continued commitment of the region's two local councils. Gosford City and Wyong Shire Councils have demonstrated their commitment to this process by working in partnership with PlanningNSW and other state government agencies in the preparation of the Action Plan.

2.33 Regional Stakeholders

The commitment of industry associations, non-government organisations, key regional and local interest groups and the business and private sector to the Action Plan is critical to the region's success. Their expertise will be vital in the implementation and ongoing review of the Action Plan.

2.34 The Private Sector

The private development and business sector is ultimately responsible for most development and investment decisions on the Central Coast. The private sector includes landowners, utility corporations, infrastructure providers, finance companies, large and small businesses and their employees. A major focus of the Action Plan is to provide certainty through a strategic regional framework within which the market can operate efficiently and with flexibility.

2.35 Non-Government Organisations

The contributions of the Non-Government sector to the implementation of the Action Plan will be vital. These organisations include those that receive funds from a range of sources including Federal, State and Local Government, charitable organisations and churches, business groups and service clubs. The funds are usually non-recurrent (that is they are time limited to between 1-3 years usually) and continuation of funds from year to year requires funding submissions to the funding body. The services provided by the Non-Government sector are auspiced by people from the community who give up their time to sit on management committees and boards.

2.36 The Community

The Action Plan is about how the people of the Central Coast will live and work. Without the commitment of the Central Coast community, the Action Plan will not succeed. During the public exhibition process the TAG will continue to seek public input, feedback, involvement and commitment to the Action Plan.

2.37 Relationships with other Strategic Documents

There are a number of important documents that can reinforce the Action Plan. They are important tools for its implementation at a strategic and local level. They include:

- Central Coast Moving Forward Strategy 2001;
- Future Jobs on the Central Coast 2002;
- How Young People are Faring: Learning, Work and in Between 2001;
- Central Coast Transport Action Plan 2002;
- Draft Central Coast Integrated Catchment Management Plan (Blueprint) 2002;
- Lower Hunter Central Coast Regional Environmental Management Strategy (LHCCREMS);
- Central Coast Infrastructure Assessment 2002;
- Gosford Wyong Councils Water Authority Review of Scheme and Formulation of Options for Further Investigation 2002;
- Gosford City Community Plan 2001;
- Wyong Shire Council Community Plan 2002;
- Gosford City Council Population Profile 1999;
- Wyong Shire Council Population Profile 1999;
- Community Support & Human Services Strategy for Warnervale Wadalba 2002;
- Central Coast Health Facilities Plan 1999;
- Central Coast Regional Sport and Recreation Facilities Strategy 2002;
- Gosford City Council Residential Development Strategy 1996;
- Wyong Shire Council Draft Residential Development Strategy 2002.

2.38 How to get to 2021?

The key strength of the Action Plan is the political commitment to the vision, desired outcomes and related themes contained in Chapters 2 and 4 and to the implementation process and methods contained in Chapters 10 and 11. Creating and maintaining this commitment will involve an ongoing process of consultation, discussion, debate and political decision-making.

2.39 Co-ordination and Integration

It will be imperative to the success of the Action Plan for regional forums to ensure that policy and programs are co-ordinated and integrated across the Central Coast. Some of the key forums already in place on the Central Coast include: 9.45.226

- Central Coast Advisory Group: under the Moving Forward Strategy;
- Central Coast Economic Development Organisation;
- Central Coast Regional Co-ordination Management Group: under the auspice of the Premiers Department;
- Central Coast Catchment Management Board; under the auspice of Department of Lands and Water Conservation; and the
- Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils.

2.40 Regional Leadership

To ensure there is integrated planning and decision-making in the region a regional leadership forum will be established under PlanFIRST to work in parallel with the Central Coast Advisory Group (CCAG) to act as the co-ordinating bodies responsible for the Action Plan. 9.45.224

2.41 PlanFIRST

PlanFIRST is a Government initiative to modernise the plan making system across NSW. It is about implementing a whole-of-government approach, (including Local Government), to make sure that plans are more effective in co-ordinating actions and giving confidence in the future. The plan making system will be simplified by reducing the number and layers of plans applying to land and making those easy to find and understand.

PlanFIRST in NSW will:

- Simplify the current complex web of plans and processes;
- Provide greater certainty to business and the community and accessible information to users;
- Co-ordinate decisions and actions that shape the future of neighbourhoods and environments;
- Recognise the diversity and dynamic nature of our neighbourhoods and environment by managing whole places, drawing together different issues into a single plan;
- Better involve the community and key interest groups including those that are often marginalised: older people, young people, and ethnic groups and indigenous communities;
- Produce strategies and plans that are up-to-date and actively implemented, and have measured results; and
- Produce strategies and plans that help to deliver:
 - sustainable management of our resources;
 - environmental protection;
 - jobs and infrastructure;
 - suitable and affordable housing;
 - healthy and vibrant communities; and
 - neighbourhoods that are attractive and safe.

2.42

The Action Plan is a dynamic document that will be refined and developed, with continued input from the regional community and stakeholders, throughout its lifetime.

2.43

The Central Coast of the year 2021 will be determined by the decisions made now. As such, the adoption of the Action Plan is an essential step for the region to manage its future.

-
- **Central Coast Moving Forward Strategy 2001-2002**
 - Department of Urban Affairs and Planning **Shaping Our Cities: The Planning Strategy for the Greater Metropolitan Area of Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong and the Central Coast 1998**
 - Department of Urban Affairs and **Planning Cities for the 21st Century 1995**
 - Department of Urban Affairs and Planning **Regional Planning Strategy Shaping the Central Coast 1999**
 - Department of Urban Affairs and Planning **PlanFIRST Review of plan making in NSW White Paper 2001**
 - Department of Urban Affairs and Planning **Draft Regional Action Plan Shaping the Central Coast 2001**