

# CANBERRA REGION ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



A Prospectus  
for Collaboration  
**June 2022**



### Acknowledgement of Country

The ACT Government acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the Canberra Region and acknowledges that the region remains a significant meeting place.

The ACT Government and community partners are committed to self-determination as the guiding principle in the delivery of programs and services and are working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to address matters that are important to them.



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# Joint Message

The ACT and NSW Governments and the Canberra Region Joint Organisation (CRJO) are proud to present the Canberra Region Economic Development Strategy – A Prospectus for Collaboration.

The development of the Canberra Region Economic Development Strategy (CREDS) is a key priority in the ACT-NSW Memorandum of Understanding on Regional Collaboration signed by the ACT and NSW Governments in June 2020, and the CRJO Statement of Strategic Priorities signed in 2019.

The aim is to define a coordinated approach to activate critical economic development opportunities and realise the full potential of industry, employment and growth across the Canberra region.

This objective has evolved into the Canberra Region Economic Development Strategy – A Prospectus for Collaboration that identifies common pillars for economic development. It reinforces our shared commitment to work together to further develop an economically prosperous region that provides a high quality of life and is resilient, accessible and environmentally sustainable.

The Canberra region is geographically and economically diverse. It possesses a vibrant, mobile and highly skilled workforce across a wide range of engine and emerging industries, providing the foundation for a strong economy based on its extensive natural, human and man-made economic endowments.

The Strategy aligns with and reinforces the key strategic priorities of the ACT and NSW Governments and surrounding Local Government Areas (LGAs), to promote economic development in the Canberra region and identify areas where joint action can benefit the region as a whole.

This includes supporting collaboration through new and existing channels, within these five key pillars for economic development:

- **Growth and Diversification** - Supporting engine and emerging industries in the Canberra region.
- **Skills and Innovation** - Promoting the skills and innovation required to secure the region's long-term success.
- **Visitor Economy** - Continuing to develop visitor economy offering on a regional level.
- **Natural Capital** - Leading on climate action, including increasing resilience to natural hazards and protecting the region's environmental assets.
- **Liveability** - Supporting a vibrant, highly liveable region that prioritises social advancement and community wellbeing, including efforts to improve the affordability and accessibility of housing.

This strategy responds to the needs of the Canberra region as of December 2021. As new challenges arise, the ACT and NSW Governments and the CRJO will continue to work together to ensure the region is building on its unique strengths and economic opportunities.

The NSW, ACT, and local governments regularly update the key strategies and plans that have informed the CREDS. This document should be read in conjunction with updated strategies where they are available. Refreshed documents will inform and underpin a commitment to a regular review of the CREDS.

**Andrew Barr**, Chief Minister of the ACT

**The Hon Paul Toole MP**, Deputy Premier  
Minister for Regional New South Wales and  
Minister for Police

**Clr Russell Fitzpatrick**, Chair, Canberra Region  
Joint Organisation



# Executive Summary

The Canberra region is not immune to the serious challenges facing economic development in Australia. The COVID-19 pandemic, the 2019-20 bushfire season and persistent ongoing issues such as drought have swept through the region, devastating communities and severely impacting local economies.

The NSW, ACT and local government members of the CRJO have prepared a mix of strategies to support recovery and promote economic development in the Canberra region. Although these strategies are tailored to the unique circumstances of each jurisdiction, they aim to address common issues and constraints, providing opportunities for collaboration and shared planning to deliver benefits across the region as a whole.

The Canberra Region Economic Development Strategy (CREDS) is a prospectus that guides further collaboration. It identifies common pillars for economic development from this mix of strategies and reinforces our commitment to work together to foster and grow an economically prosperous region with a high quality of life, that is resilient, accessible and environmentally sustainable.

The CREDS sets the scene with a social and economic profile of the Canberra region. It then establishes the common threads that bind the region together, including our competitive advantages, economic strengths and major challenges to economic development. It then explores the five pillars for economic development that are the focus of this strategy.

1. **Growth and Diversification**
2. **Skills and Innovation**
3. **Visitor Economy**
4. **Natural Capital**
5. **Liveability**

# Pillars for Economic Development

By working together in these critical areas, emerging opportunities to strengthen the economy and attract investment to the Canberra region can be exploited, while securing positive liveability and wellbeing outcomes and a secure future for the region's resident population.







# A Framework for Collaboration

Supporting economic development across the Canberra region means:

## **1. Collaborating on new opportunities**

There are a range of opportunities that span across industries, locations and issues. While many of these opportunities will have localised benefits for individual communities, effective coordination can ensure benefits are maximised across the region.

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The strategy aims to realise greatest value through collaborative action - to address common issues, unlock enhanced economic linkages across the Canberra region, and lead thinking to help address challenges at a regional scale.

## **2. Focusing on pillars for economic development that impact the Canberra region as a whole**

While there are important actions raised in other strategic documents, such as LGA-specific economic development strategies, some relate to specific place-based issues that are relatively self-contained, with limited implications for the rest of the Canberra region.

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This Strategy focuses on pillars for economic development that have the potential to maximise benefits across the whole Canberra region, including the local community, visitors and businesses.



### 3. Taking strategic steps to deliver actions at the appropriate level of government

Some actions under each of these pillars are better suited to the sub-regional or local government level, given place-specific considerations are important. This strategy guides activities that are best delivered through broader, multi-jurisdictional approaches.

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We will focus on actions under the five pillars for economic development, which are appropriate to be delivered across jurisdictions.

### 4. Complementing other efforts to promote economic development in the Canberra region

The wealth of strategic documents and knowledge in the Canberra region, as well as macroeconomic, policy and social trends, set an important foundation for supporting economic development and identifying areas where collaboration can maximise opportunities. There also exist opportunities for future CREDS activities to partner or align with initiatives being delivered by other organisations and stakeholders across the economic development sector.

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The strategy seeks to complement, rather than duplicate or override, other strategic initiatives and activities in the Canberra region by identifying shared priority areas that benefit the region as a whole.





# Canberra Region Overview

The Canberra region is a unique and diverse geographic region, stretching from the South-West Slopes, through the Sydney-Canberra Corridor across the Eurobodalla, down to the Sapphire Coast then up to the Snowy Mountains. Its total land area is 65,646km<sup>2</sup>.

The Canberra region consists of the ACT, Queanbeyan-Palerang, Goulburn Mulwaree, Eurobodalla, Bega Valley, Hilltops, Wingecarribee, Snowy Monaro, Snowy Valleys, Yass Valley and Upper Lachlan. It also has strong relationships with Wagga Wagga and East Gippsland (see Figure 1).

Geographically, the region consists of four diverse sub-regions, providing a unique visitor economy experience within a three-hour drive. This is reflected in the Canberra Region brand, which provides an important foundation to the CREDS.

- **City** - a source of community growth and connectivity, the Canberra/Queanbeyan metropolis is the heart of a diverse region and a launching pad to connect the region to global markets.
- **Coast** - Bega Valley and Eurobodalla are renowned as a year-round wildlife mecca with sandy beaches, lush hinterland, award-winning farm producers, culture and arts.
- **Alpine** - as Australia's only true Alpine wilderness, the Snowy Monaro and Snowy Valleys LGAs are a prime destination for adventure seekers.
- **Tablelands** - Queanbeyan-Palerang, Goulburn Mulwaree, Hilltops, Wingecarribee, Yass Valley and Upper Lachlan are places of natural beauty and vast country landscapes,

offering a range of experiences from award-winning restaurants and cellar doors to historic museums, festivals and farm stays.

The diverse nature of the Canberra region means there are considerable differences in economic composition, socio-cultural demographics, drivers of change and economic opportunities to be leveraged.

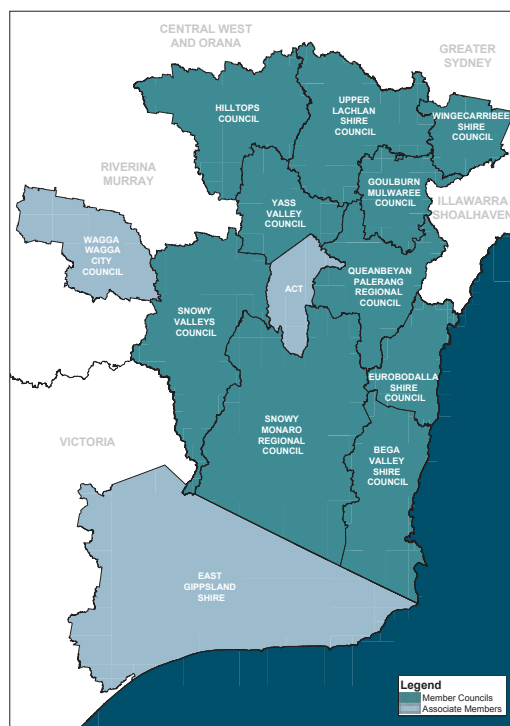


Figure 1 - Map of the Canberra region



# Relationship with Strategic Forums and Policies

## Strategic forums

Two key forums have responsibilities aligned with the intent of the Strategy.

### The Canberra Region Joint Organisation

The Canberra Region Joint Organisation fosters collaboration across the region by providing networking and funding opportunities for its members, helping to drive large-scale and imperative infrastructure projects, investment opportunities and socio-cultural progress.

Queanbeyan-Palerang, Goulburn Mulwaree, Eurobodalla, Bega Valley, Hilltops, Wingecarribee, Snowy Monaro, Snowy Valleys, Yass Valley and Upper Lachlan are members of the Canberra Region Joint Organisation, with the ACT and Wagga Wagga City Council as associate members.

The Canberra region's economic development cannot be promoted without a strong scaffold for regional collaboration and leadership. The CRJO performs that role, providing a valuable forum for collaboration between the ACT and NSW Governments and the member local councils to support the pillars for economic development put forward in this strategy.

### Regional Leadership Executive

The Regional Leadership Executive (RLE) is the principal governance body within the NSW Government's Regional Governance Framework. It drives and supports NSW Government priorities in each region of NSW. The South East RLE membership includes the CRJO and the ACT Government, demonstrating the important relationship between the jurisdictions and levels of government in considering matters, including economic development, in a strategic regional context for the Canberra region.

The CREDS has been included as a key initiative of the South East RLE's 2021-22 Statement of Intent. The RLE meets quarterly and will oversee delivery of the CREDS from the NSW Government perspective. The work of the Sub Committees and Task Groups of the RLE will be informed by the principles and priorities of the CREDS and demonstrate consistency as a matter of course.







## Strategies and Policies

This strategy builds on existing economic development strategies and policies. For a full summary of how the five pillars for economic development of this strategy align with these, see Appendix – Strategic Alignment in the Canberra Region.

Key overarching strategies include:

### **The NSW-ACT Memorandum of Understanding on Regional Collaboration**

To support ongoing collaboration on regional issues, the ACT Chief Minister and the NSW Premier renewed the ACT-NSW Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Regional Collaboration in 2020.

The MoU sets the overall framework for the ACT and NSW to work together delivering targeted services, economic outcomes and the implementation of policy to cross border communities. The development of this strategy is a listed key priority to define a coordinated approach to activate critical economic development opportunities.

## 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW

The 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW was released in 2018 and sets out the NSW Government's priorities and plans to achieve long-term social and economic success for regional communities. The 2018 Vision was refreshed in February 2021 in response to the changed economic landscape and opportunities that have emerged in regional NSW following the drought, bushfires, floods and COVID-19 pandemic.

The Economic Vision acknowledges that increasing resilience requires increasingly diversified regional economies with a strong competitive advantage, based on local endowments, the right infrastructure and mix of skills in the workforce. The Vision clearly sets out the key enablers of economic growth in regional NSW:

- Infrastructure
- Skills
- Advocacy and promotion
- Economic strength and diversity
- Providing a growth-conducive environment



## CBR Switched On: ACT's Economic Development Priorities 2022-2025

The ACT Government has updated its short and medium term economic development priorities to further strengthen the Territory's economic recovery.

CBR Switched On: ACT's Economic Development Priorities 2022-2025 builds on the 2016 Statement of Ambition with its focus on making Canberra an even more attractive place to live, work, study, do business and invest in.

The 2022-2025 priorities support the continued wellbeing of Canberrans, while building a more diverse, resilient and prosperous economy. The strategy identifies areas of strength in the city and economy that the ACT Government will build on to support the creation of new jobs and more opportunities for Canberrans.

### The updated plan focuses on:

- Developing a city of wellbeing and liveability
- Continuing the world-leading efforts to be city of environmental responsibility and action
- Growing the ACT's knowledge based economy through innovation and responsible investment



A series of local projects have been identified to progress these objectives. These include transitioning to a net zero emissions economy, creating community hubs that provide better access to digital services, or providing venture capital to small business and social enterprise at the right time to encourage growth.

### Regional Economic Development strategies

The NSW Government has assisted LGAs and their communities to develop Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS) for the identified Functional Economic Regions (FERs) across NSW.

REDS provide a clear strategy for long-term economic development in each Functional Economic Region. They set out a vision for each FER's future and profile its local advantages, economic specialisations and risks. From this analysis, a series of actions are set out to guide future investment.

Following the 2019-2020 bushfires, the NSW Government developed Bushfire Addenda to the REDS of impacted areas to take into account the key physical and economic impacts of recent bushfires. This included an analysis of how the bushfires affected key engine industries and economic endowments, an assessment of whether the bushfires have impacted delivery of REDS, and potential short, medium and long-term priorities for recovery. The REDS are being updated in 2022.

# Canberra Region Profile

Developing a thorough understanding of the Canberra region, underpinned by accurate and comparable data across jurisdictions, is central to supporting joined up action, and monitoring and evaluating progress over time. Gaps in up-to-date and consistent data across jurisdictions is a significant challenge and an important area for collaboration that will be supported by this strategy.

## Fast facts



Population (30 June 2020)

ACT **431,380**

CRJO LGAs **298,853**

Aboriginal and  
Torres Strait Islander  
Population (2016) <sup>1</sup>

ACT **1.6%**  
CRJO LGAs

**3.4%** <sup>2</sup>



Population Growth  
(Year to 30 June 2020)

ACT **1.2%**

CRJO LGAs **1.2%**



Median Age (30 June 2019)

ACT **35-39**

CRJO LGAs **45-49**



Median Weekly Rent -  
3 Bedroom House (30 June 2021)

ACT **\$570** <sup>3</sup>

CRJO LGAs **\$463**

<sup>1</sup> 2016 ABS Census.

<sup>2</sup> Canberra Region .id profile website.

<sup>3</sup> March Quarter 2021

<sup>4</sup> From 2016 ABS. CRJO data from .idprofile page



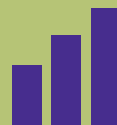
SEIFA Index of Disadvantage (2016)

ACT **1,075**<sup>4</sup>  
CRJO LGAs **1,003**



Annual Increase in Median Weekly Rent  
- 3 Bedroom House (Year to 30 June 2021)

ACT **6.5%**  
CRJO LGAs **17.5%**



Gross Domestic Product  
(\$ billion) (30 June 2020)

ACT **\$40.9**  
CRJO LGAs **\$14.7**



Unemployment Rate (March 2021)

ACT **3.8%**  
CRJO LGAs **4.3%**



Number of employed persons (July 2020)

ACT **233,700**  
CRJO LGAs **146,987**



Largest Industry - Employment (2019/20)

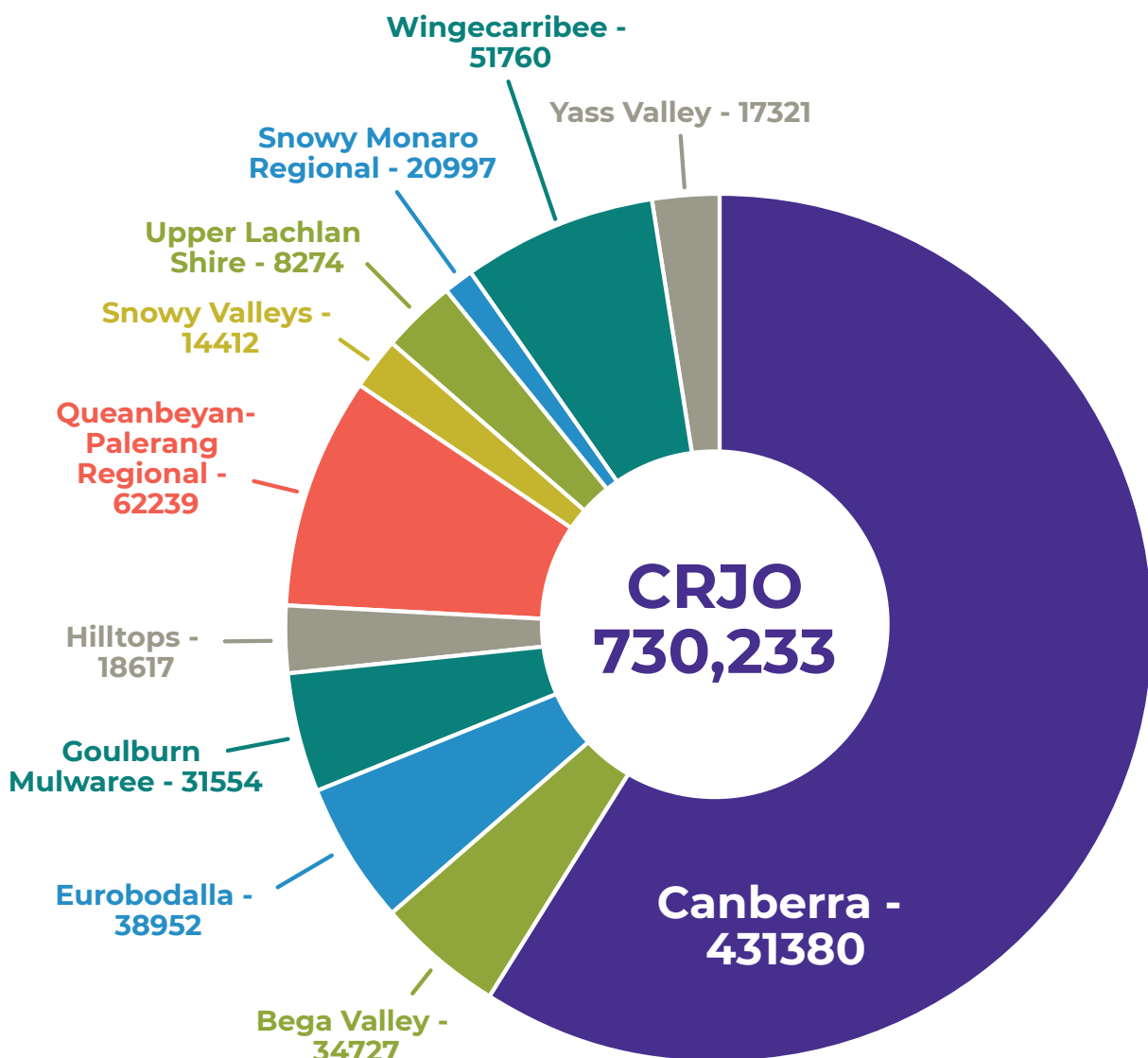
ACT  
Public Administration and Safety

CRJO LGAs  
Health Care and Social Assistance

## Population

The Canberra/Queanbeyan metropolitan area provides a national and international gateway for the whole region, accounting for around 67% of the Canberra region's population (Figure 2).

**Figure 2:** Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021) Regional Population 2019-20.

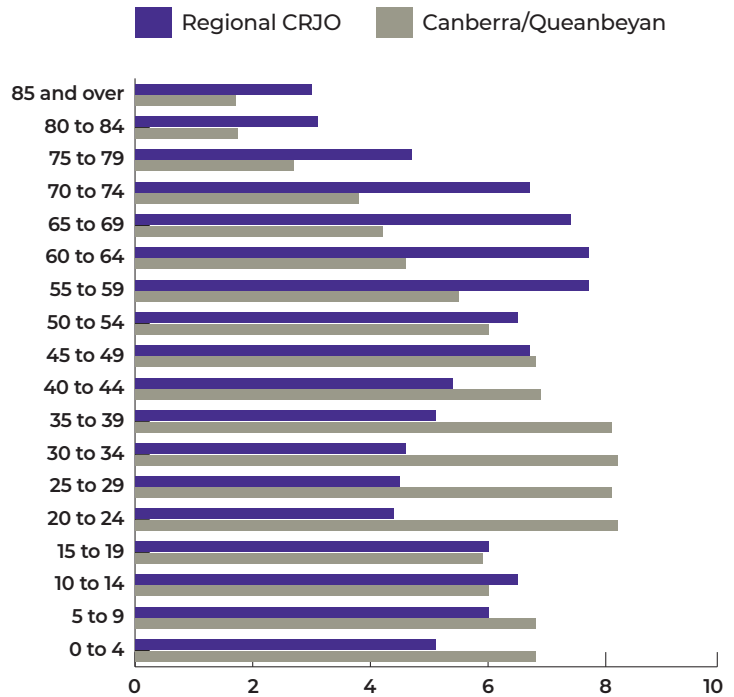




## Age profile

Canberra/Queanbeyan has a significantly higher proportion of younger working aged individuals (aged 15 to 49), while the surrounding LGAs have a significantly larger proportion of current and soon-to-be retirees (aged 65 or older) (Figure 3).

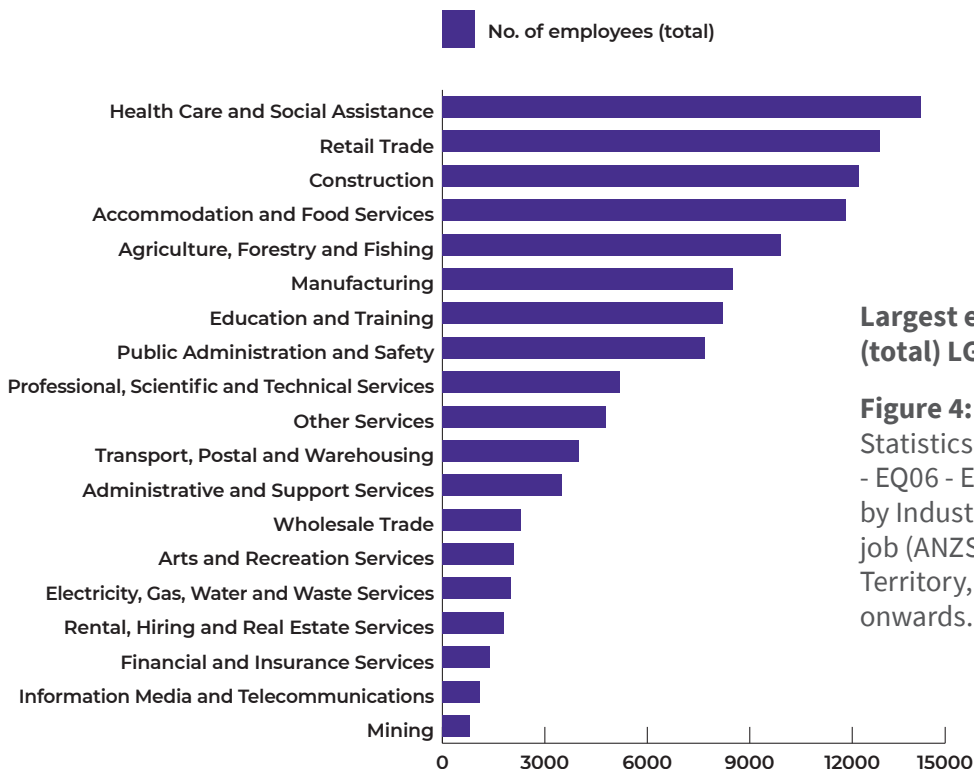
**Figure 3:** Australian Bureau of Statistics Census (2019), 3235.0 Estimated Resident Population by Age.



## A diverse range of engine industries

The Canberra region has a strong and diverse economy, built on key engine industries including public sector employment in Canberra, a high-quality health services network, an education sector that promotes innovation in emerging industries (e.g., space and agri-tech) and a diverse agricultural base.

Providing an overall portrait of the region's economy can be misleading due to the sheer size of the ACT and the significant role of public sector employment in the national capital. Figures 4 and 5 below set out the largest employing industries in the surrounding LGAs and the ACT respectively.

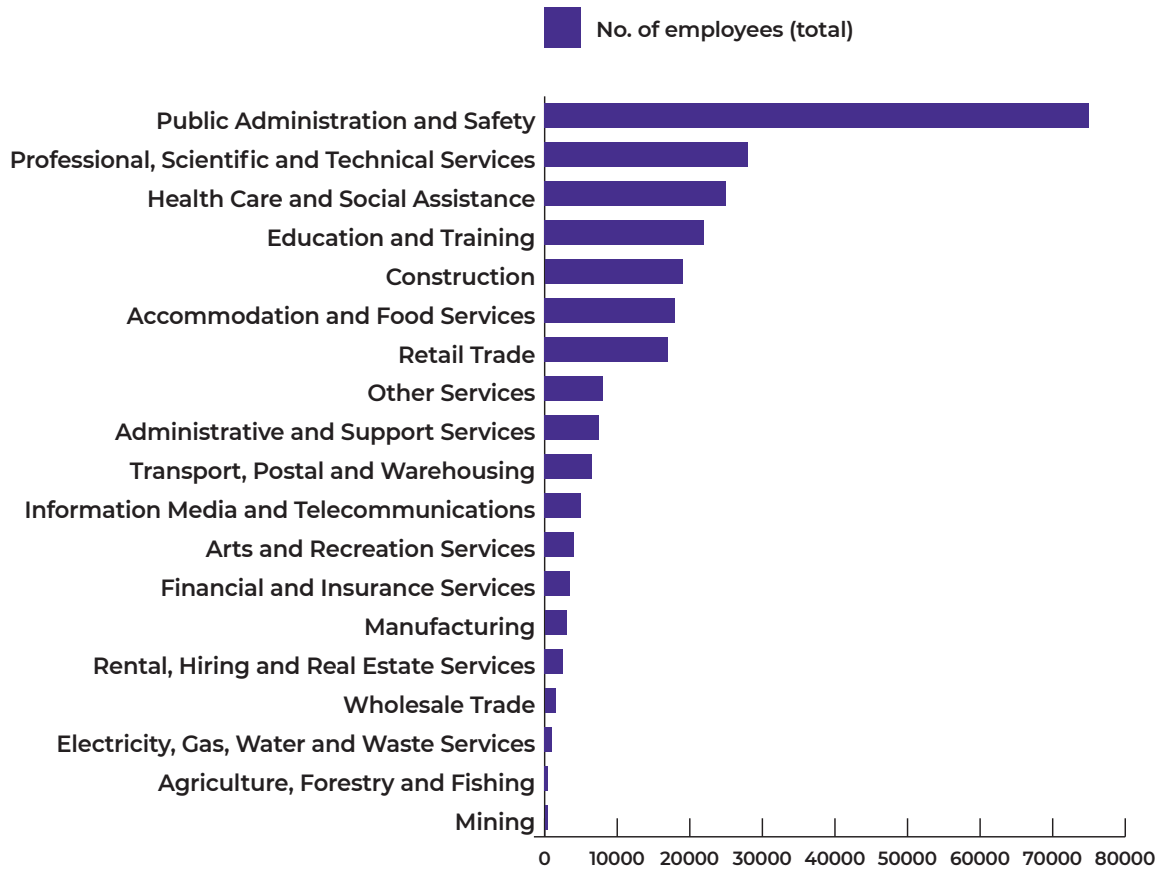


### Largest employing industries (total) LGAs (2019/20)

**Figure 4:** Australian Bureau of Statistics (2020), 6291.0.55.003 - EQ06 - Employed persons by Industry group of main job (ANZSIC), Sex, State and Territory, November 1984 onwards.



**Largest employing industries (total) ACT (2019/20)**



**Figure 5:** Australian Bureau of Statistics (2020), 6291.0.55.003 - EQ06 - Employed persons by Industry group of main job (ANZSIC), Sex, State and Territory, November 1984 onwards



The table below sets out key engine industries for each LGA in 2018-19 by value added, highlighting the scope and diversity of economic development in the Canberra region.

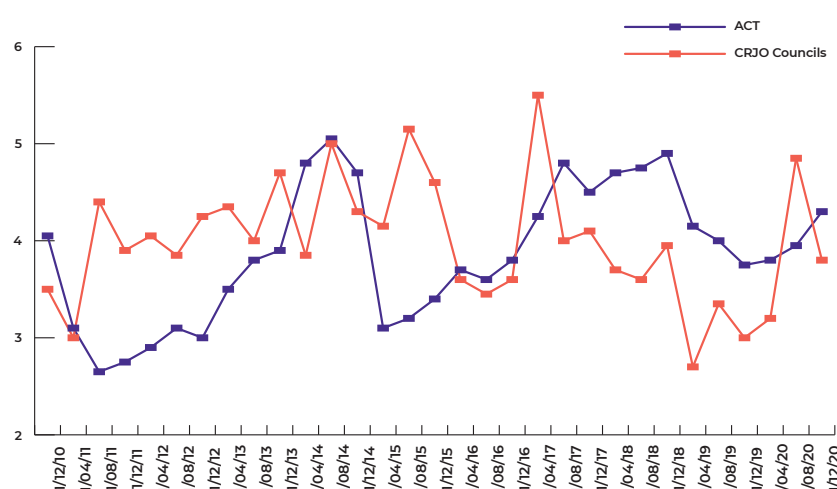
LGA	GRP (\$m)	TOP 3 ENGINE INDUSTRIES
Wingecarribee	2,863	Retail trade, professional scientific and technical services, finance
Queanbeyan Palerang	2,519	Public administration and safety, construction, professional scientific and technical services
Eurobodalla	1,590	Construction, health care and social assistance, retail trade
Goulburn Mulwaree	1,540	Public administration and safety, health care and social assistance, construction
Bega Valley	1,490	Health care and social assistance, construction, agriculture forestry and fishing
Snowy Monaro	1,174	Agriculture forestry and fishing, electricity gas water and waste services, accommodation and food services
Hilltops	987	Agriculture forestry and fishing, mining, health care and social assistance
Snowy Valley	810	Manufacturing, agriculture forestry and fishing, electricity gas water and waste services
Yass Valley	660	Agriculture forestry and fishing, construction, health care and social assistance
Upper Lachlan	349	Agriculture forestry and fishing, construction, health care and social assistance

## Unemployment Rate - CRJO Councils and ACT (%)

### Low rates of unemployment

Both the ACT and surrounding LGAs have historically low unemployment rates, reflecting their significant economic competitiveness. The impact of ongoing lockdowns across Australia in 2021 are yet to be reflected in official data, but will be closely monitored.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021), 6202.0 Labour Force, Australia





## Strong journey to work links

The diversity of landscapes and micro-economies in the Canberra region means there are considerable journey to work (JTW) movements (Figure 8).

A significant percentage of the working population in Queanbeyan-Palerang and Yass Valley travel to the ACT for work; 63 percent and

50 percent respectively. This includes 16,000 people from Queanbeyan working in the ACT.

In turn, 5,000 travel from the ACT to Queanbeyan for work. Goulburn Mulwaree and Upper Lachlan also have moderate work linkages with the ACT, with 7 per cent and 10 per cent respectively traveling to the ACT for work.

Place of work	Place of usual residence										
	Bega Valley	Eurobodalla	Goulburn Mulwaree	Hilltops	Queanbeyan-Palerang	Snowy Monaro	Snowy Valleys	Upper Lachlan	Wingecarribe	Yass Valley	ACT
Bega Valley	88%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Eurobodalla	2%	86%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Goulburn Mulwaree	0%	0%	77%	0%	0%	0%	0%	20%	1%	0%	0%
Hilltops	0%	0%	0%	83%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Queanbeyan-Palerang	0%	0%	2%	0%	31%	1%	0%	1%	0%	2%	2%
Snowy Monaro	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	82%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Snowy Valleys	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	88%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Upper Lachlan	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	55%	0%	1%	0%
Wingecarribe	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	70%	0%	0%
Yass Valley	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	38%	0%
ACT	1%	2%	7%	2%	63%	7%	0%	10%	0%	50%	93%
CRJO	92%	90%	91%	87%	94%	91%	89%	89%	72%	92%	96%
Other	8%	10%	9%	13%	6%	9%	11%	11%	28%	8%	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: ABS Census 2016 Note: LGA percentages rounded



# Economic Strengths

## Visitor economy

The Canberra region is one of the most diverse and unique visitor economy destinations in Australia, as reflected in the 'CBR – Canberra Region' brand. It highlights opportunities for visitors to experience Australia's capital, the coast, the alpenes, premier food and wine regions and the rural beauty of the tablelands, all within three hours of each other.

In 2019-20, the agriculture sector was one of the largest industries in the Local Government Areas of the Canberra region, totalling value added of \$852.5 million or 7.6% of the economy.

The size of the ACT's visitor economy peaked in 2019, when the total value of overnight visitor expenditure was \$2.59 billion for the year ending September 2019.

The total overnight visitor economy for the CRJO local government areas was \$2.1 billion at the end of 2019.

## Agriculture

Agriculture and food production are major economic drivers for the region, and were both significantly impacted by the 2019-20 bushfires, drought, floods and COVID-19 pandemic, and will require extensive support to fully recover.

Diverse agriculture products are produced, ranging from dairy cattle farming and dairy product manufacturing in Bega Valley, dairy and beef cattle farming and viticulture in Wingecarribee, viticulture in Hilltops, aquaculture in Eurobodalla, apples and other orchard fruits from the Snowy Valleys, sheep, lamb and alpaca farming in Yass Valley and the Upper Lachlan and wood product manufacturing in the Snowy regions.

## Healthcare

The region has a major health network, including the Canberra Hospital, University of Canberra Hospital and Calvary Hospital, extending to the South-East Coast and other major health assets such as the South East Regional Hospital and the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital.

This network is set to expand with the \$500m expansion of Canberra Hospital (formerly known as the SPIRE project).

In 2019-20, the agriculture sector was one of the largest industries in the region's Local Government Areas, with a value of \$852.5 million or 7.6% of the economy.



## Education

The Canberra region is renowned both nationally and internationally for its research and education institutions, attracting talent from across the globe and creating the most highly skilled workforce of any region in the country.

Many of these institutions undertake significant research leveraged and connected to local emerging industries, including science and technology, agri-tech, defence, space, cybersecurity and creative industries.

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The Canberra region is home to world-leading tertiary and vocational training institutions, including the Australian National University, the University of Canberra, University of Wollongong, University of NSW, Australian Catholic University, Charles Sturt University, Canberra Institute of Technology and several Country University and TAFE campuses.

## Defence

Canberra is Australia's defence capital with the largest concentration of defence and national security agencies, assets, organisations, diplomatic networks and industry bodies in the nation. NSW's Defence and Industry Strategy, the ACT's Defence Industry Strategy and the Canberra Region Defence Industry Capability Directory provide a platform for continued collaboration in the Canberra region.

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KPMG estimates the current total economic contribution of the defence industry to the ACT economy and surrounding region is \$4.3 billion in GSP (gross state product) and contributes to 25,300 jobs in defence and other sectors.

## National capital – International gateway

Canberra is the nation's capital and the seat of government. This results in a range of intrinsic benefits including providing consistent demand for skilled workers in key engine and emerging sectors, such as public administration and defence. As a major population centre, Canberra provides a deep workforce to draw from and opportunities for the development of innovative, knowledge-based economic clusters that require significant numbers of businesses and people.

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As the national capital, Canberra is also home to a number of culturally significant icons and attractions such as Parliament House and the National Gallery of Australia, drawing visitors and acting as a source of differentiation from other cities and regions in Australia.

Canberra International Airport is a major piece of transport infrastructure serving as an international gateway for the Canberra region and generates expanding opportunities for global passenger and freight connectivity.



## Freight and export links

The Canberra region's future prosperity relies on an efficient transport network to support a diverse economy and growing population.

As the region grows, continued investment in road and rail freight routes (including inland rail) is required to boost safety, increase access to markets and enable private sector investment in supply chain and logistics infrastructure. Investment in key enabling infrastructure is critical to supporting positive housing and land management outcomes, as well as enabling communities' access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities across the region.

There are several key transport links in the Canberra region for passenger movements, freight and export. These links have enabled the region's economy to thrive.

Key transport links include Canberra International Airport, Badgery Creek Aerotropolis, the Port of Eden, Canberra to Sydney rail corridor, and road infrastructure including the Federal, Barton, Snowy Mountains, Hume, Princes, Kings and Monaro Highways.

The ACT and NSW Governments and CRJO will continue to work with Canberra International Airport and the Commonwealth to realise the freight potential of the airport as a 24-hour curfew free international transport hub.

The airport is uniquely positioned to connect the Canberra region to expanding domestic and global markets. Continued and coordinated investment in the road networks surrounding the airport will enable efficient movement of goods, increase access to markets and enable private sector investment in supply chain and logistics infrastructure.

## Special Activation Precincts

The Snowy Mountains Special Activation Precinct (SAP) is within the Canberra region. Investigations for the precinct cover over 70,000 hectares, focusing on the Jindabyne town centre and areas of high tourism interest within Kosciuszko National Park, including Thredbo, Perisher and Charlotte Pass. The adjacent Wagga Wagga SAP is also an important opportunity to promote economic development, bringing manufacturing, agribusiness, and freight and logistics to Wagga Wagga.

The South Jerrabomberra Regional Job Precinct (RJP), an extension of the NSW SAP program, will leverage opportunities associated with the Poplars Innovation Precinct to create a hub of defence, space, cyber-security, information technology and scientific research.

The precinct complements the airport with land-based freight transport facilities and further amplifies connectivity and employment opportunities through improved and streamlined planning pathways.

Cross border collaboration will be key to realising the benefit of the opportunity, with this key transport hub providing a critical economic growth connection to our diverse region.

Similarly, the Snowy Mountains Special Activation Precinct is set to position the Snowy Mountains as a year-round, world-class destination through integrated master planning and key enabling infrastructure funded by the NSW Government.

## Entrepreneurship and innovation

Canberra has a business ecosystem that supports entrepreneurs, social enterprises and start-ups, and a local innovation network that actively encourages a growth mindset. The ACT Government is committed to strengthening relationships between higher education institutions and research sectors, the business community and government, recognising and leveraging opportunities for growth.

The ACT Government provides \$1.2 million annually to the Canberra Innovation Network (CBRIN) to develop an integrated local innovation ecosystem that encourages and supports entrepreneurs, start-ups and high-growth potential businesses.

Across regional NSW there are multiple organisations and hubs fostering regional innovation and entrepreneurship, such as the

Bega Valley Innovation Hub, Snowy Mountains Innovation Network, Goulburn Innovation Network, and the future Queanbeyan Poplars development, which is set to become the home for a Learning Precinct and Innovation Hub. The Southern Highlands Innovation Park will also provide a regionally significant employment and innovation hub, within the important Sydney to Canberra corridor.

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CBRIN is an initiative of the ACT Government, supported by six foundation members and sponsors including the ANU, Canberra Institute of Technology, CSIRO, Data61, University of Canberra and UNSW Canberra, and corporate partners Optus, PWC and ActewAGL.

## Renewable energy

The ACT's nation-leading commitment to 100 per cent renewable electricity generation, supported by similar regional targets and the success of large-scale wind, solar and battery projects, provide a strong basis for future investment in renewable energy in the Canberra region.

The Canberra region supports a robust renewable energy industry capacity that attracts and sustains a strong flow of new project investment. The opportunity exists to attract innovative new enterprises and high-value jobs.

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While Snowy Hydro 2.0 is a major infrastructure project and will form a major part of the renewable energy and storage network, the Canberra region is also home to a number of solar and wind farms that leverage consistent sunshine and airflows. As battery technology evolves, the potential to store this energy production could form the basis of a more persistent network throughout the region.







## Space

Canberra is the driving force behind Australia's space industry. It has the infrastructure, businesses, research strengths and education and training systems to support civil, commercial and defence space applications.

The ACT Government has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Australian Space Agency to strengthen the national space industry.

The Canberra Deep Space Communication Complex managed on behalf of NASA by CSIRO, is one of only three NASA Deep Space Network Facilities in the world and currently supports more than 30 deep space missions.

The ACT Government will build on the establishment of the Canberra Cyber Hub and Canberra Innovation Network by delivering a new Cyber, Space and Advanced Technology Hub that will enhance the capabilities in the ACT and region.

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The Space Tracking Treaty with the USA was recently extended to 2043 and is expected to deliver nearly \$400 million to Canberra's economy.



## Competitive Advantages

- The status of Canberra as the nation's capital and an important national and international gateway for passenger movement, freight and export opportunities for the region as a whole.
- A diverse agricultural base incorporating dairy cattle farming and dairy product manufacturing in Bega Valley, dairy and beef cattle farming and viticulture in Wingecarribee, viticulture in Hilltops, aquaculture in Eurobodalla, apples from the Snowy Valleys, sheep, lamb and alpaca farming in Yass Valley and the Upper Lachlan and major softwood plantation in the Snowy Valleys and Bombala.
- A unique visitor economy allowing visitors to experience the city, coast, alpine and tablelands, world-class cultural events and high-quality produce in a single visit.
- A solid foundation of public sector employment in the nation's capital and regional cities of south east NSW.
- A highly innovative, knowledge-based economy leveraging Canberra's world-class educational institutions and leading scientific research institutions, such as CSIRO and Data61.
- A head start in emerging industries driven by innovation, such as defence, cyber security, space and renewables.
- A solid foundation in high-skilled industries that foster innovation, including education and training, health care and social assistance.
- New innovative ways of promoting long-term economic development, including the development of Special Activation Precincts in regional NSW to revitalise local economies.
- An advantageous geographic position with the Hume Highway linking Sydney and Melbourne, Australia's most active business markets and population centres. Key transport linkages across the region, including the Canberra International Airport, northern connections with Greater Sydney and the Illawarra region, future Badgerys Creek Aerotropolis, Port of Eden, Canberra to Sydney rail corridor and road infrastructure including the Federal, Snowy Mountains, Hume, Princes and Monaro Highways.
- Strong connection to the Greater Sydney region through the Canberra to Sydney corridor. The aligned commercial corridor of Bowral, Mittagong and Moss Vale presents a significant opportunity as a lifestyle centre within commuting distance of Greater Sydney, the Western Sydney Aerotropolis and the Illawarra region.
- A solid pillar for regional collaboration and problem solving to address regional issues in the form of the Canberra Region Joint Organisation and the ACT NSW Memorandum of Understanding for Cross Border Collaboration.



# Major Challenges

## COVID-19

The long-term impacts of major events in the region since August 2019, including bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic, will require ongoing monitoring. Impacts already being seen include:

- The mental health and wellbeing of local communities has been significantly impacted by the cumulative impact of COVID-19, the 2019-20 bushfire season and other natural events.
- International border closures have had major implications for demand in the tertiary education sector and visitor economy.
- The trend towards remote working has had unexpected flow on impacts to the availability and affordability of housing in regional areas.
- Business confidence may take time to bounce back particularly if COVID-19 restrictions are ongoing, reducing investment in the Canberra region.



Our communities are on the road to recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. We can support this by creating more jobs, supporting the development of new skills and innovation, encouraging visitors back to the Canberra region and promoting business investment.

There are also opportunities to capitalise on a renewed focus on work-life balance. With quality of life and opportunities on offer, Canberra and the region is uniquely placed to meet that need.

### ACT

**On 27 August 2020, the ACT Government released the ACT Jobs and Economic Recovery Plan and the revised ACT Recovery Plan in December 2021.**

The 2021 Plan sets out an ambitious agenda for growing the ACT's economy to 250,000 jobs by 2025. This includes an ambitious \$4 billion infrastructure investment program. The program will see more than \$1 billion invested in transport and active travel projects, including over \$300 million extending light rail, more than \$900 million on health infrastructure, including the \$624 million Canberra Hospital Expansion, and more than \$400 million to build and upgrade our schools.

### NSW

**In July 2020, the NSW Government released the COVID-19 Recovery Plan.**

The Plan includes a \$100 billion infrastructure pipeline over 4 years to drive economic growth and help create 88,000 direct jobs, \$1 billion to five regional Special Activation Precincts, \$6.7 billion to deliver more than 190 new and upgraded schools across the state, and \$1.6 billion in the Digital Restart Fund to provide more digital services and improve customer service.

By promoting collaboration on growth and diversification, this strategy will support the Canberra region's economic recovery and resilience.

## Skills shortages

The Canberra region is experiencing shortages in current and future skills required to support business growth and innovation. This is reflected in the ACT's Skill Needs List 2021-22 and ongoing skills shortages in trades in NSW.

Migration of skills out of regional areas is also an ongoing challenge, with anecdotal evidence suggesting younger people are leaving Local Government Areas to pursue education and employment opportunities in larger cities.

Solutions to these challenges will require collaboration on clear skills pathways to jobs within the Canberra region, including access to vocational education and training (VET) and consideration of micro-credentials as a potential method for delivering, assessing and certifying skills and training.



## Skilling for Recovery

Under the NSW Government's Skilling for Recovery initiative hundreds of fee-free training courses are available for school leavers, young people and job seekers across the state. NSW has committed \$320 million to delivering 100,000 fee-free training places for people to reskill, retrain and redeploy in a post COVID-19 economy.

## Rebuilding the visitor economy

The events of 2020 had a significant effect on the Canberra region's visitor economy, leading to a dramatic drop in the number of visitors, decimating the tourism industry and the businesses that support the sector, resulting in the loss of thousands of jobs.

In 2019, NSW overnight visitor expenditure was at record levels of \$35 billion and on track to achieve its 2020 target set out in the NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030. Similarly, the

ACT had a thriving \$2.5 billion visitor economy. The tourism industry is interlinked within the Canberra region, with around 65 percent of domestic visitors to the ACT coming from NSW.

As the region emerges from the COVID-19 crisis, rebuilding our tourism industry will be a vital pillar of economic recovery, requiring renewed efforts to support business, grow spend and visitation, offer quality events and experiences, and restore access following lockdown periods.



### **Building resilience to climate change, natural hazards and disasters**

In 2018, NSW fell into the worst drought on record with 100 percent of the state affected. Many parts of NSW, including areas of the Canberra region, faced the lowest rainfall and driest conditions in 120 years. Regional communities were placed under immense pressure as water shortages worsened and farmers were forced to downscale their operations to survive.

The drought contributed to the catastrophic 2019-20 bushfire season. More than 5.5 million

hectares of land was damaged, with over \$1.1 billion damage to agriculture, forestry and horticulture sectors alone. Localised floods exacerbated the impacts of the bushfires in some areas, further damaging property and impacting the natural environment.

While some LGAs were more affected than others, the long-term impacts of these natural disasters and the increasingly severe impacts of climate change will be profound and varied, requiring new efforts to build resilience, protect important environmental assets, enhance biodiversity connections, mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and secure water resources.

### **Affordability and accessibility of housing**

The accessibility and affordability of housing is an increasing barrier across the Canberra region. This strategy emphasises the interconnected nature of the region's housing market, and the importance of addressing regional housing constraints not just to grow and diversify the economy, but to deliver positive liveability outcomes.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a dramatic and unexpected knock-on effect to some regional NSW housing markets as people from metropolitan areas swapped the city for the many benefits of regional life. This demand has created supply and affordability problems. In some communities, locals are having to move away to search for better value.

The ACT is also experiencing significant challenges with affordability and accessibility of housing. The rental vacancy rate continues to sit around 1 percent and rental prices are the most expensive in Australia. This impacts surrounding Local Government Areas such as Yass Valley and Queanbeyan-Palerang, as Canberra residents seek alternative housing options. The broader region is similarly experiencing challenges relating to housing availability and affordability, including but not limited to the Snowy Monaro and Wingecarribee LGAs.

While each jurisdiction plans for its own population growth and accompanying infrastructure and service delivery, the unique NSW-ACT cross-border relationship requires both jurisdictions to plan for a greater population than that within their own boundaries. Rather than isolated land releases, a more strategic approach to housing will make the best use of existing infrastructure and maximise investment in planned infrastructure.

The ACT and NSW Governments have committed to working together on regional housing issues, including development of a cross-border land and housing monitor and framework under the MoU. The NSW Government has also established a regional housing taskforce to investigate housing shortages.

Ongoing collaboration on housing issues will be critical to ensuring the Canberra region is delivering high quality of life outcomes and is an attractive option for young families and skilled workers.





## Population challenges

Although the whole Canberra region has a similar age profile to the NSW state average, the LGAs have a significantly larger proportion of current and soon-to-be retirees (aged 65 or older) than the Canberra/Queanbeyan metropolitan area.

An increasing portion of retirees demographically may lead to a proportionally smaller workforce in relation to the region's population. This may result in a lack of desired workers in not only emerging industries where

a competitive advantage can be obtained, but also engine industries that form the backbone of LGA economies.

The complexities of inward migration as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic on these population challenges is yet to be fully observed. Collaborating on the development of this evidence base and considering solutions as they arise will be critical to securing long-term economic development.



# Pillars for Economic Development

Following an analysis of existing economic development strategies against the current profile and challenges faced by the Canberra region, five pillars for economic development have been identified as key priorities for collaboration and shared planning:

1. **Growth and Diversification** - Supporting engine and emerging industries in the Canberra region.
2. **Skills and Innovation** - Promoting the skills and innovation required to secure the Canberra region's long-term success.
3. **Visitor Economy** - Continuing to develop visitor economy offering on a regional level.
4. **Natural Capital** - Enhancing climate action in the Canberra region, including increasing resilience to natural hazards and protecting diverse environmental assets.
5. **Liveability** - Supporting the Canberra region as a vibrant, highly liveable region that prioritises social advancement and community wellbeing, including efforts to improve the affordability and accessibility of housing.







# 1. Growth and Diversification

## Summary

The ACT and surrounding NSW LGAs that make up the Canberra region each have their own unique immediate and long-term needs, competitive and comparative advantages, economic endowments and potential. It is because of these unique economic profiles that each area has its own strengths and opportunities and has also been impacted by current challenges in differing ways.

There are opportunities for the Canberra region to leverage its unique competitive advantages to ensure the regional economy retains its strong backbone of engine industries and cements emerging industries, including key emerging industries recognised in the 20 Year Vision for Regional NSW:

- Agriculture will remain a key part of the Canberra region's economy. There are significant opportunities to build on this

by developing and diversifying the region's agricultural potential through opportunities in agri-tech, urban food and farm to table initiatives, low food miles and sustainable local food markets, and increased agri tourism and farm gate activities.

- Defence is a notable industry both the ACT and NSW Governments have committed to supporting (including through the MoU). The South East and Tablelands Regional Plan identifies defence as a priority growth area for developing 'a connected and prosperous economy'.
- Advanced manufacturing poses an opportunity for regional diversification and adaptation of businesses, as identified in the 20 Year Vision for Regional NSW, the ACT's Economic Development Priorities 2022-25 and several REDS.

## Our commitment

The ACT and NSW Governments, and the CRJO members will collaborate through new and existing channels to identify strategic opportunities to promote growth and diversification across the Canberra region economy.

## Supporting strategies

- ACT and NSW Memorandum of Understanding for Regional Collaboration 2020
- ACT Recovery Plan 2021-2022
- Canberra Switched On: ACT's Economic Development Priorities 2022-2025
- 20 Year Vision for Regional NSW
- NSW Regional Economic Development Strategies
- South East and Tablelands Regional Plan
- NSW Regional Economic Development Framework

## 2. Skills and Innovation

### Summary

The Canberra region has a strong base of world-leading tertiary and vocational training institutions. More support is required to ensure current and future skills needs are being met, including consideration of micro-credentials as a preferred method of delivering, assessing, and certifying skills and training.

Building a skilled workforce is key for an agile and competitive region. This is achieved by supporting a borderless approach to education and training, such as flexibility in skills and qualifications, creating opportunities for better access and more flexible offerings from VET providers, co-developing courses and learning models that meet local workforce needs, and promoting digital and cybersecurity capabilities in the region.

The ACT and NSW Governments and CRJO members recognise that building workforce capability is a vital mechanism for activating the economic potential of the Canberra region, and for ensuring workforce mobility by positioning it as an attractive place to live and work. We will collaborate to address skills gaps and support innovation, including consideration of micro-credentials and digital capability.

CREDS activities will also build on existing strong connections with Regional Innovation Networks, Regional Development Australia Committees and other key sector entities to support the growth and capacity of entrepreneurs, start-ups, social enterprises and local businesses for the benefit of the region.

### Supporting strategies

- ACT Recovery Plan 2021-22
- 20 Year Vision for Regional NSW
- Canberra Switched On: ACT's Economic Development Priorities 2022-2025
- Skilled to Succeed: Skills and Workforce Agenda for the ACT
- ACT Priority Investment Program
- NSW Regional Economic Development Strategies
- NSW Regional Economic Development Framework
- South East and Tablelands Regional Plan





## 3. Visitor Economy

### Summary

In 2015, the ACT and NSW Governments and surrounding LGAs collaborated to develop the 'Canberra Region' brand. The brand provided a shared vision of the region, celebrating its diverse offerings and providing a single platform to promote the Canberra region as a destination of choice for visitors, as well as a great place to live and work.

The region's visitor economy is well-placed to return to pre-COVID visitation levels by leveraging its existing strengths. There are opportunities to utilise the limits on international tourism to speak to a domestic Australian market. Through collaborative planning and shared marketing, the Canberra Region can be promoted locally as a diverse and unique visitor experience.

Investment in the development, diversification and growth of the visitor economy across the Canberra region will support the recovery of our communities through job creation. Potential areas for collaboration to maximise recovery include but are not limited to:

- Restoring major access routes
- Offering quality events and experiences
- Supporting local and regional businesses
- Growing spend and visitation
- Accelerating digital innovation
- Collaborating with industry

### Our commitment

The ACT and NSW Governments, and CRJO members will work together to identify opportunities for collaborative planning and shared marketing to support the recovery of the Canberra region's visitor economy.

### Supporting strategies

- ACT Framework for Recovery of the Visitor Economy 2020-21
- ACT VisitCanberra Destination Marketing Strategy 2021
- ACT 2022 Action Plan for Recovery
- ACT 2020 Tourism Strategy: Growing the Visitor Economy 2014-2020
- ACT Recovery Plan 2021-2022
- NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030
- Destination Southern NSW Destination Management Plan 2018-2020
- Tourism Partnership Framework for the Destination Southern NSW Region and the ACT
- 20 Year Vision for Regional NSW
- NSW Regional Economic Development Strategies







## 4. Natural Capital

### Summary

The Canberra region has an incredibly diverse natural environment, encompassing a wide range of landscapes for tourism offerings and primary production systems, including in agriculture, fisheries and forestry. The environmental, social and economic values of these landscapes underpin the region's character and liveability, as well as its economic development potential and visitor economy viability.

The Canberra region is already experiencing the effects of climate change, with the 2019-20 bushfire season having a devastating impact. The region is also predicted to experience more heatwaves, intense storms and an increasing severity of droughts.

### Our commitment

The ACT and NSW Governments, and CRJO members will work together to support the diversity and resilience of the natural environment within the Canberra Region, including through identifying opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase resilience to natural hazards, and achieve effective biodiversity and land management outcomes.

### Supporting strategies

- ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019-25
- Canberra Switched On: ACT's Economic Development Priorities 2022-2025
- ACT-NSW Memorandum of Understanding on Regional Collaboration
- ACT Bushfire and Flood Recovery Plan
- South East and Tablelands Regional Plan 2036
- NSW Climate Change Policy Framework
- NSW Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020-2030
- NSW Wildlife and Conservation Bushfire Recovery: Medium-term Response Plan

Protecting important environmental assets, enhancing biodiversity connections, protecting coastal environments, increasing resilience to natural hazards, mitigating and adapting to climate change, and securing water resources are key steps to maintaining and protecting the region's natural capital.

The NSW Government is working towards reaching net zero emissions by 2050, aiming to deliver a 50 per cent cut in emissions by 2030 compared to 2005 levels. The ACT Government's targets are to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (from 1990 levels) by 65-75 per cent by 2030 and achieve net zero emissions by 2045.



## 5. Liveability

### Summary

Growing vibrant places to live, work and study is critical to achieving sustainable economic growth that improves quality of life for the community.

There is a suite of complex issues to address to ensure economic development in the Canberra region is supporting community wellbeing. The most pressing of these issues is ensuring housing is affordable and accessible for residents, with the COVID-19 pandemic having a dramatic and unexpected knock-on effect to some regional NSW housing markets, as people from metropolitan areas swap the city for the many benefits of regional life.

Population challenges will remain a complex issue for regional areas, with anecdotal evidence suggesting younger people leave regional areas to pursue education and employment opportunities in larger cities, and inward migration from retirees who view the region as an attractive retirement destination. The impact of people from metropolitan areas

swapping the city for regional life on this general trend will be more visible over time.

Creating vibrant places to live also means understanding the health and wellbeing needs of the community, and actively monitoring those needs as new policy approaches are designed and implemented. Existing strategies such as the ACT Wellbeing Framework and the 20 Year Economic Vision for NSW will help guide new initiatives that seek to promote broader wellbeing.

A focus on strategies that improve the attractiveness of the Canberra region as a place to live and work for young families and skilled workers will be key to securing its long-term economic development. However, flow-on effects of attracting new residents and economic opportunities on existing residents will need to be carefully managed – such as, but not limited to, changing demand for services and housing.

### Our commitment

The ACT and NSW Governments, and CRJO members will collaborate in areas that are critical to support positive wellbeing outcomes and liveability in the Canberra region, including consideration of immediate challenges such as the affordability and accessibility of housing.

### Supporting strategies

- ACT Wellbeing Framework
- Canberra Switched On: ACT's Economic Development Priorities 2022-2025
- ACT Planning Strategy 2018
- ACT Jobs and Recovery Plan 2021-2022
- Prospectus for a Canberra Region deal
- NSW Regional Economic Development Framework
- NSW Regional Economic Development Strategies
- 20 Year Vision for Regional NSW
- South East and Tablelands Regional Plan
- Housing 2041: NSW Housing Strategy



# Supporting Community Wellbeing

Economic development is important to broader wellbeing. A strong economy, business and innovation sector creates opportunities for all Canberrans and surrounding Canberra region communities to access and share in the wealth of our region.

The ACT Government has released the ACT Wellbeing Framework to support action on improving wellbeing for all Canberrans and has policies and projects that create a city where people can lead lives of personal and community value. The ACT Wellbeing Framework comprises twelve domains of wellbeing, reflecting key factors that impact on the quality of life of Canberrans. Indicators – the way progress will be measured – are grouped under each domain and will help identify where wellbeing is improving or diminishing in the ACT over time. While an indicator sits under one domain, many are also relevant to multiple domains.

We are committed to ensuring our efforts under these five pillars for economic development help foster and grow an economically prosperous region that provides a high quality of life and is resilient, accessible and environmentally sustainable.

The NSW Government's Outcome Budgeting puts the needs of the people at the centre of investment decision making. It recognises the allocation of public resources should be based on the achievement of priority outcomes for the people of NSW. The NSW Human Services Outcomes Framework specifies seven wellbeing outcomes for the NSW population: Safety, Home, Economic, Health, Education and Skills, Social and Community, and Empowerment. This cross-agency framework ensures a focus on driving improvement in the range of wellbeing outcomes that matter for the community.





# Appendix – Strategic Alignment in the Canberra Region







## Growth and Diversification

A key pillar and strategic element across multiple Regional Economic Development Strategies across the Canberra region:

### **Far South Coast Regional Economic Development Strategy**

Continue to grow the sector's agriculture, aquaculture and food production sectors. Aquaculture is emerging as a potential sector of competitive advantage for the region, which offers a range of distinctive and differentiated products (such as the Sydney Rock and Angasi Oysters).

### **Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Economic Development Strategy**

Further develop specialised agriculture, with a listed action to explore opportunities that ag-tech advancements offer the region to boost capacity, efficiency and innovation in the sector.

### **Snowy Monaro Regional Economic Development Strategy**

Cultivate the region's 'Engines of Growth' specialisations in agriculture, forestry and wood products through supporting innovation and collaboration within local industry.

### **Snowy Valleys Regional Economic Development Strategy**

Support the growth of the forestry and timber processing and agriculture sectors through improving access to and the reliability of infrastructure.

### **Southern Tablelands Regional Economic Development Strategy**

Sustain the region's agricultural and agricultural processing advantage, build on the region's core strength in energy generation and natural resource extraction, and drive growth in the transport, access and logistics sector.

### **South West Slopes Regional Economic Development Strategy**

Support and grow the agriculture, food production and mining sectors as the key drivers of the region's economy, particularly in generating value of output and growing exports.

### **Wingecarribee Regional Economic Development Strategy**

Facilitate the development of agriculture as a key strength, strengthen the region's manufacturing base and monitor opportunities in the mineral resource sector.



## 20-Year Vision for Regional NSW

“The ten ‘engine industries’ that will drive regional NSW economies over the next 18 years include seven established sectors, and three emerging sectors that are gaining ground in their share of the regional economy.”

In the 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW, a priority action under Tertiary Education and Skills is to boost regional NSW’s knowledge economy and excellence in innovation, particularly in agricultural technology, aged care, energy, aerospace, logistics, advanced manufacturing and other areas linked to the future of regions.

### ACT Recovery Plan 2021-2022

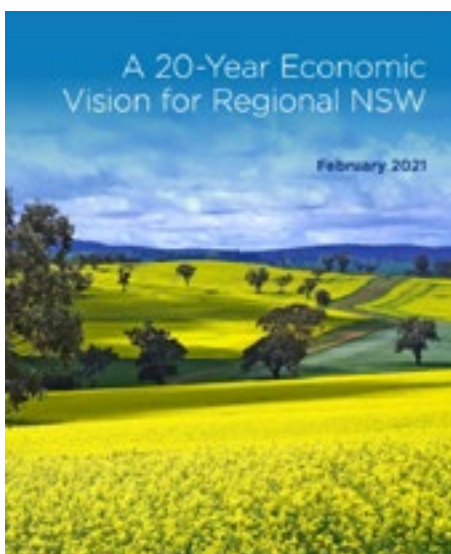
As Canberra emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic, the ACT Government is investing in projects and programs to support our recovery.

The ACT Government’s focus is building our economic, social and community recovery - which will be rapid because of our successful health response, giving people and businesses the confidence to spend and invest.

This ACT Recovery Plan brings together government’s key measures to make our recovery strong, sustainable and equitable.



ACT Recovery Plan  
2021 - 22



### 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW

Our vision is to create the economic terms needed for our services, manufacturing, resources and agriculture sectors to recover quickly and return to growth, while also positioning regional economies to further specialise in innovation and technology focussed industries.

Looking forward, investments that put downward pressure on energy prices, such as increased supply and access to renewable energy and gas, could encourage energy-intensive industries, including advanced manufacturing, to set up new facilities in regional NSW.





## Canberra Switched On: ACT's Economic Development Priorities 2022 - 2025

“Now, we are focusing on our strength as the knowledge capital. We are building on our track record in innovation and entrepreneurship and our commitment to sustainability, inclusion and wellbeing.”

### South East and Tablelands Regional Plan

This Regional Plan focuses on the following priority growth sectors to diversify the economy:

- tourism
- agriculture and aquaculture
- freight and logistics
- health, disability and aged care
- public administration and defence
- education and training
- renewable energy

### ACT and NSW Memorandum of Understanding for Regional Collaboration 2020

“NSW’s Defence and Industry Strategy, the ACT’s Defence Industry Strategy and the Canberra Region Defence Industry Capability Directory provide a platform for continued collaboration in the Canberra region. The Defence Industry Advocates for NSW and the

ACT collaborate on regional initiatives, enhancing industry opportunities and capabilities. The ACT and NSW will work together to identify and align activities to enhance defence industries and supply chains in the Canberra region.”



## Skills and Innovation

A key pillar and strategic element across multiple Regional Economic Development Strategies across the Canberra region:

**Queanbeyan-Palerang:** Improve the digital connectivity to harness the innovative capacity of the workforce.

**Snowy Monaro:** Promote skills acquisition and land development to strengthen the region's employment base.

**Snowy Valleys:** Boost and sustain the supply of skilled workers for the region's core industries with regional skills development and initiatives to attract new residents.

**Southern Tablelands:** Sustain the region's agriculture and agricultural processing advantage, especially in livestock. Strategies and early stage actions listed include building

on current programs aimed at increasing supply of staff for intensive livestock and attracting agricultural education to the region.

**South West Slopes:** Drive economic growth in the region's core sectors by upskilling the workforce and facilitating innovation.

**Wingecarribee:** Grow the education sector, with actions listed including developing a collaboration plan for UOW and TAFE Illawarra and working with TAFE to determine willingness to expand local trade training.



## ACT Recovery Plan 2021-22

“We will invest in growing emerging industries and continue to invest in the role Government can play in supporting innovation by creating and shaping future markets. This investment will include targeted skills development and partnering with our world-leading tertiary sector to train the workforce of the future.”

“The Government is investing to deliver skills that leverage digital transformation opportunities and support growth in emerging industries. This will secure Canberra’s status as Australia’s leading knowledge economy, address skills shortages and help people retrain and upskill.”

In order to support growth in the tertiary education, training and research sector, the ACT Government is committed to:

- Investing to provide access to support young people aged 17 to 24 and job seekers to access free training in areas of current and emerging need.
- Supporting the new UNSW Canberra City campus, continuing strong collaborative partnerships with ANU and UC, and expanding our higher education campuses including a new CIT in Woden.



## 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW

“Principle 5: A skilled labour force for current and future needs of the regions. Helping people reskill, upskill and reinvent careers is essential for regional workforces to exploit future opportunities. This includes investing in research and development for jobs of the future.”

- In the next five years we will investigate and work with industry to enhance alignment between regional skills and demand by:
- Accelerating the development of flexible models to acquire job-oriented skills and qualifications as additional career pathways.
- Creating opportunities for better access and more flexible offerings from VET providers, including TAFE NSW and universities for regional students.
- Support redeployment, reskilling and



upskilling measures, including regional skills and employment brokerage, that focus on immediate recovery and long-term workforce planning.

- Co-developing courses and learning models that meet local workforce needs.
- Promoting digital and cybersecurity capabilities in regional communities and businesses.

## Canberra Switched on: ACT's Economic Development Priorities 2022-2025

“Canberra has emerged as the knowledge capital of Australia and a hub for innovation and creativity. In an environment of constant disruption and change, our ability to adapt and innovate sets us apart. So does our commitment to values-driven economic development.”

### NSW Regional Economic Development Framework

One of the mechanisms to support further growth under the Framework is to build regional workforce capacity.

“The NSW Government is building capability in the workforce through developing the skills of workers for the jobs of tomorrow.”

“The NSW infrastructure program offers the opportunity to improve productivity through infrastructure investment in transport, utilities, health and education. The Department of Industry’s Skills Legacy initiative will increase the skills base to meet the needs of the growing economy, make NSW a leader in the global marketplace and an attractive place to do business.”

“The Department of Industry is working with the construction industry to help build their future skills base by engaging their workers in skills development programs.”



### ACT Priority Investment Program

Knowledge and infrastructure assets within the tertiary education and research sector are primary drivers of attracting investment into Canberra. Finding innovative ways to collaborate and activate these assets will lead to long term wealth and wellbeing through economic diversification and growth in jobs.

The Priority Investment Program (PIP) aims to enable collaboration between the ACT Government, industry, research and the tertiary sectors to attract investment and grow established and emerging priority sectors of Canberra’s economy.

The PIP targets sectors of the ACT’s economy that warrant a priority for investment including but not limited to cyber security, space, defence, renewable energy, agri-technology and plant sciences, healthy and active living and education, where Canberra has known and established strengths to capitalise on the rapidly growing global opportunities.



### 20-Year Vision for Regional NSW

“There is also a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to capitalise on growth in domestic tourism by supporting regional areas to transform into iconic, must-see destinations.”

## Visitor Economy

A key pillar and strategic element across multiple Regional Economic Development Strategies across the Canberra region:

**Far South Coast:** Support the development, diversification and growth of the region’s tourism sector.

**Queanbeyan-Palerang:** Further develop specialised food and cultural tourism.

**Snowy Monaro:** Develop the region’s year-round tourism offering and accessibility from major markets.

**Snowy Valleys:** Continue to develop and grow the tourism sector to diversify the region’s economy.

**Southern Tablelands:** Enhance the liveability of the region and grows its Visitor Economy.

**South West Slopes:** Continue to develop and grow the visitor economy.

**Wingecarribee:** Enhance the liveability of the Wingecarribee region to attract visitors and grow tourism.

## NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030

“The visitor economy is one of NSW’s major exports, contributing \$38 billion to our Gross State Product and employing almost 300,000 people. The presence of visitors adds to the state’s prosperity and liveability, enhancing the vibrancy of our public spaces and the lifestyle of local residents.”

“Growing the visitor economy of regional NSW is also key to the vision. Regional NSW is already the largest, most diverse regional economy in Australia, and further Government investment in the visitor economy will accelerate its growth and diversification. New products and experiences based on the unique character of each region will create distinctive and compelling visitor destinations throughout the state.”

### The guiding principles for the strategy are to:

- Put the visitor first.
- Accelerate digital innovation.
- Lead with our strengths
- Move fast, be responsive and agile.
- Collaborate with industry and government.



## Tourism Partnership Framework for the Destination Southern NSW Region and the ACT

“For a partnership to be successful, it must demonstrate the value of collaboration to encourage commitment and participation. Collaborating on funding and grants projects, training, information sharing and skills exchanges will yield better outcomes and have more widespread impact.”

### The goals outlined in the strategy include:

- To establish mechanisms for collaborative planning and decision making between key government stakeholders responsible for tourism in NSW and the ACT.
- To develop a program of shared research insights, data and evaluation demonstrating the value of collaboration for decision makers.
- To establish a practice of cooperation and coordination for joint funding applications and projects.
- To determine a shared narrative that promotes a consistent and approved way of describing the region and puts the customer at the centre of the offer.
- To encourage regional capacity building, training and skills exchanges.
- To leverage the whole region as a value proposition when marketing established, new and emerging products.





## ACT Framework for Recovery of the Visitor Economy 2020-21

“The Territory is well-placed to support a return to pre-COVID visitation levels. Before the bushfires and the pandemic, our visitor economy was strong, resilient and diverse. The Canberra region has much to offer travellers, for both leisure and business. We will leverage these strengths in recovery.”

To support the recovery of the ACT visitor economy, we will focus on four key priority areas. These areas are critical to address the widespread downturn impacting our tourism industry.

- Restoring major access routes.
- Offering equality events and experiences.
- Growing spend and visitation.
- Supporting Canberra businesses.



## Destination Southern NSW Destination Management Plan 2018-20

The Destination Southern NSW Regional Destination Management Plan identifies and informs strategic directions and themes that will encourage growth of the region’s visitor economy. It focuses on coordination, influence, advocacy, and action priorities.



## VisitCanberra Destination Marketing Strategy 2021

The listed goals include:

- Showcase Canberra’s unique personality.
- Challenge beliefs and perceptions about our city.
- Lead the ACT and capital region tourism industry to create unforgettable experiences.
- Let curious travellers from near and far know Canberra and our region is open for business, ready to explore, and to convince them to come and stay for a few nights.

# Natural Capital

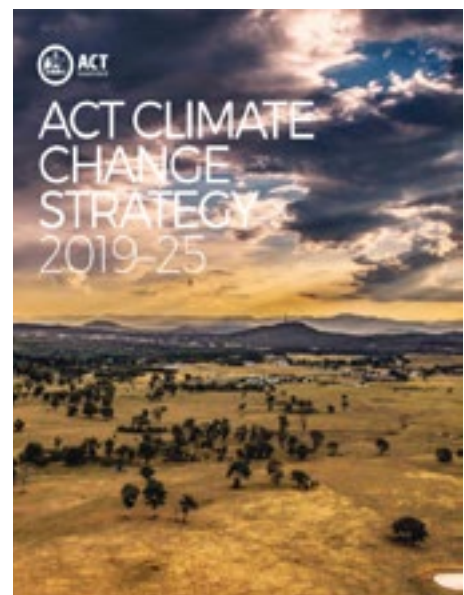
## ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019-25

“By 2045 the ACT will be a leading net zero emissions territory demonstrating a healthier, smarter future is possible.”

To protect our habitats and ecosystems from future effects of climate change, we need to consider maintaining and enhancing our living infrastructure and biodiversity assets, and improving landscape connectivity and resilience, as part of urban planning and development processes.

### Among the many goals put forward by the strategy are:

- Encouraging community-driven solutions to climate change.
- Reducing urban heat and improving liveability.
- Reducing risk in a changing climate.
- Leading by example as a public service.
- Collaborating for increased ambition.
- Protecting local species and habitats.
- Sequestering carbon in the landscape.
- Encouraging sustainable and resilient farming.
- Promoting a zero emissions economy.





## NSW Climate Change Policy Framework

“Most effective climate change adaptation occurs at a local level through the actions of individuals, businesses and communities in response to locally-specific climate change impacts. The NSW Government will help NSW adjust to a changing climate by supporting local adaptation actions, managing climate change risks to its own assets and services and removing market, regulatory and governance barriers to the private sector and local government adapting effectively.”



### Under the policy directions of the framework are:

- Create a certain investment environment by working with the Commonwealth to manage transition.
- Boost energy productivity and put downward pressure on household and business energy bills.
- Capture co-benefits and manage unintended impacts of external policies.
- Take advantage of opportunities to grow new industries in NSW.
- Reduce risks and damage to public and private assets in NSW arising from climate change.
- Reduce climate change impacts on health and wellbeing.
- Manage impacts on natural resources, ecosystems and communities.

### South East and Tablelands Regional Plan 2036

One of the goals put forward by this plan is ‘A diverse environment interconnected by biodiversity corridors’.

#### The directions discussed under this goal are:

- Protect important environmental assets.
- Enhance biodiversity connections.
- Protect the coast and increase resilience to natural hazards.
- Mitigate and adapt to climate change.
- Secure water resources.

The South East and Tablelands is the first region in NSW to implement a regional response within government to climate change, and this process has been adopted across NSW. The opportunity to work with the ACT Government (which undertook a parallel regional adaptation planning process and set similar policy targets) will allow the region to leverage the transition to a low emissions economy and prepare for climate change.





## NSW Wildlife and Conservation Bushfire Recovery: Medium-term Response Plan

“The NSW Government’s approach to bushfire recovery recognises and addresses the need to consider many interacting pressures on species and ecosystems, including drought, climate change and the impacts of pests and weeds. This plan is focused on improving species’ and ecosystems’ resilience to these threats over the long term.”

### The aims of the plan are:

- Improve the trajectories of at-risk and threatened species and ecological communities by mitigating threats in the post-fire environment.
- Wherever possible, facilitate the natural recovery of plants, animals and ecological communities by mitigating the impact of fire and other threats.
- Promote landscape and ecosystem health in bushfire recovery recognising the multiple benefits that healthy landscapes provide. Looking beyond the medium term, we know bushfires are likely to become more frequent and severe. Importantly, the actions in this plan will help build the skills, knowledge and systems that governments, landholders, wildlife carers and scientists will need to meet the longer-term conservation challenges we face.

### NSW Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020-2030

The Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020-2030 is the foundation for NSW’s action on climate change and goal to reach net zero emissions by 2050. It outlines the NSW Government’s plan to protect our future by growing the economy, creating jobs and reducing emissions over the next decade.

The plan aims to strengthen the prosperity and quality of life of the people of NSW, while helping achieve the State’s objective to deliver a 50 percent cut in emissions by 2030 compared to 2005 levels. The plan will support a range of initiatives targeting energy, electric vehicles, hydrogen, primary industries, technology, built environment, carbon financing and organic waste.





## ACT-NSW MOU on Regional Collaboration

“The joint approach to the NSW and ACT Regional Climate Model (NARClIM) demonstrates the value of cross-border collaboration in developing modelling to assess the climate impacts on the Canberra region. However, there are further opportunities for the ACT and NSW Governments to work together to allow the region to leverage the transition to a low emissions economy and adapt to the impacts of climate change.”

## ACT Planning Strategy 2018

One of the key themes under the ACT Planning Strategy is ‘Sustainable and Resilient Territory’. The directions underpinning this theme are:

- Transitioning to a net zero emissions city through the uptake of renewable energy, improved building design and transport initiatives.
- Reduce vulnerability to natural hazard events and adapt to climate change.
- Integrate living infrastructure and sustainable design to make Canberra a resilient city within the landscape.
- Plan for integrated water cycle management to support healthy waterways and a liveable city.
- Protect biodiversity and enhance habitat connectivity to improve landscape resilience.

## Canberra Switched On: ACT’s Economic Development Priorities 2022-2025

The ACT Government is committed to taking science-based action to transition to net zero emissions and mitigate and adapt to climate change, while ensuring all can benefit from a zero-carbon future.

“We’re responding to climate change as an economic opportunity to attract innovative new enterprises and high-value jobs”.







## Liveability

A key pillar and strategic element across multiple Regional Economic Development Strategies across the Canberra region:

**Far South Coast:** Support the development, diversification and growth of the region's tourism sector and overall lifestyle appeal.

**Queanbeyan-Palerang:** Grow the population and internal markets of the region.

**Snowy Monaro:** Grow the population to deepen the region's internal markets for goods, services and labour.

**Snowy Valleys:** Boost and sustain the supply of skilled workers for the region's core industries with regional skills development and initiatives to attract new residents.

**Southern Tablelands:** Enhance the liveability of the region and grow its visitor economy.

**South West Slopes:** Enhance the liveability and grow the population of the South West Slopes region.



## 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW

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One of the goals put forward is to “Grow vibrant places to live, work and study to encourage business and population growth.”

### **In order to do this, within five years we will investigate:**

- Accelerating economic activity by supporting existing businesses to expand, and attracting growing businesses likely to enjoy a competitive advantage in regional NSW, by development programs to incentivise businesses to invest, innovate and hire in regional NSW.
- Increasing wellbeing and liveability with:
  - » Local neighbourhoods supported by urban systems and amenities, that can support preferences for short local journeys and remote working.
  - » Opportunities to coordinate local planning and investment in cultural and social networks, active transport and open space infrastructure to grow liveability.
  - » Investment in quality green, open public spaces that are walkable, safe, connected and accessible.
  - » Maximised social, economic, environmental and cultural benefits of the marine estate.

## ACT Planning Strategy 2018

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“New residents are attracted to Canberra for the education, jobs and lifestyle opportunities created by our strong economy and attractive natural and social assets.”

One of the key themes underpinning the ACT Planning Strategy is ‘Liveable Canberra’.

This includes:

- Creating cohesive communities through good design, amenity and connectivity.
- Being socially and culturally inclusive.
- Supporting housing diversity for greater choice.

“Ensuring every Canberran has good access to community facilities and opportunities for social interaction is a key feature of liveable, inclusive and resilient communities.”





### Canberra Switched On: ACT's Economic Development Priorities 2022-2025

“Canberra is planned intentionally to offer connections and a sense of liveability not found in larger cities. By offering a lifestyle like no other, employers have a key selling point to attract and retain their workforce.”

### NSW Regional Development Framework

The Framework will be based around a model of investment in regional NSW that:

1. Provides quality services and infrastructure in regional NSW – ensuring a baseline set of services across regional NSW.
2. Aligns efforts to support growing regional centres, acknowledging the needs of areas with strong growth in population and jobs.
3. Identifies and activates economic potential by looking across regional NSW for opportunities to change the economic outlook and activate local economies.





## Prospectus for a Canberra region deal

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“The NSW and ACT Governments share a relationship built on the unique circumstances of delivering economic growth and services to the cross-border region. As one of three global gateway cities identified to support NSW, Canberra is ideally positioned to realise the vision of a growing and prosperous NSW.”

To realise this ambition, the NSW Government has a key role to play in supporting initiatives under a Canberra region deal that can:

- Enhance market access opportunities through investments in key air, freight and rail connections, which will yield productivity gains.
- Deliver targeted services to meet the needs of the region, informed by careful planning and strong cross-border collaboration.
- Support quality community infrastructure that strengthens the wellbeing of the region while building productive, liveable communities that ease population pressures on Sydney and its surrounding cities.

## South East and Tablelands Regional Plan

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“A range of housing options, especially in areas sharing a border with the ACT, will support the growing population. Local housing strategies and high-quality urban environments will promote healthy communities.



The special connection to the ACT requires a close relationship with the ACT Government to seamlessly manage cross-border servicing, infrastructure provision, transport, freight networks and housing. The ACT and NSW Memorandum of Understanding formalises ongoing collaboration between the two governments to deliver outcomes for the broader Canberra region.”

### Directions discussed in the plan include:

- Strengthen cross-border connectivity.
- Enhance access to goods and services by improving transport connections.
- Increase access to health and education services.
- Build socially inclusive, safe and healthy communities.
- Environmentally sustainable housing choices.
- Focus housing growth in locations that maximise infrastructure and services.
- Deliver more opportunities for affordable housing.





Produced by Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate.



**Regional  
NSW**