



STRATEGIC REGIONAL PLAN 2022 - 2027

Regional Development Australia – Far South Coast

RDA Far South Coast respectfully acknowledges the Indigenous peoples of the Far South Coast, the traditional custodians of the land where we live and work. We pay respects to Elders past, present and future and acknowledge continuous connections and contribution to land, sea and community.



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Regional Development Australia – Far South Coast would like to acknowledge and thank stakeholders from across the Far South Coast region who contributed to this plan through workshops, interviews and submissions.

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Images used in this strategic plan have been provided by Tourism Australia and RDA FSC staff.



REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA – FAR SOUTH COAST

CHAIR'S FOREWORD

It gives me great pleasure, on behalf of the Board of Regional Development Australia Far South Coast (RDA FSC), to present our Strategic Regional Plan 2022-2027.

The RDA FSC Strategic Regional Plan includes input from a wide range of stakeholders and considers regional plans across local, state and federal governments, business and community groups, health and transport analysis and education, training, skills and migration issues.

Our Board has identified and is committed to the following key goals for our region:

- Building a diverse economy
- Improving infrastructure capacity
- Improving our quality of life
- Engaging our community

The following Strategic Regional Plan is a living document that highlights our strategic priorities to achieve these goals. It is adaptable and responsive to enable us to maximise opportunities and meet any challenges in a positive and constructive manner.

The Board and I look forward to working with our stakeholders for the continued benefit of our region.



Rob Pollock OAM
Chair

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Regional Development Australia – Far South Coast Strategic Regional Plan has been developed through discussions and consultation with stakeholders across the region and via desktop analysis of a range of other regional documentation, plans, strategies and policies, as well as analysis of the region’s endowments and opportunities.

This Plan proposes to work collaboratively with other aligned regional strategies, rather than duplicating efforts towards the same outcomes.

Regional Development Australia - Far South Coast (RDA FSC), through its Board, continues to develop partnerships with our regional businesses, our communities and with all levels of government to enhance the economic and social growth and development of the South Coast region. This Plan will actively contribute to building a connected, innovative and sustainable region with a vibrant and prosperous community.

The Far South Coast is known for its natural beauty and is home to over 183,000 people.

The Far South Coast region of NSW is made up of three local government areas from Shoalhaven City in the north, through Eurobodalla Shire to Bega Valley Shire which sits on the NSW and Victorian border.

Geographically, the region covers 14,230 square kilometres of coastal land.

The region is strategically located between Australia’s capital cities of Sydney (approximately 2 – 5 hours), Melbourne (6 – 10 hours) and Canberra (2 hours).

Home to an estimated population of over 183,000 people (ABS, 2021) the region is known for its natural beauty with nearly 400km of pristine coast line.

Its natural endowments include the Sapphire Coast, pristine white sand beaches, lush rainforests and wilderness. The region is also home to numerous vibrant regional centres of Nowra, Jervis Bay, Ulladulla, Batemans Bay, Narooma, Merimbula, Eden and Tilba.

The Far South Coast region is home to a number of unique, innovative and significant industries including a defense manufacturing cluster, dairy and agriculture, biofuel manufacturers, forestry and aquaculture.



In 2019-2020 the region was devastated by the Black Summer Bushfires. These unprecedented and devastating bushfires gained worldwide attention, bringing the worst held fears of climate change impacts to life. The fires burned through close to 10,000 square kilometers (NSW REDS Bushfire Addendum) of the region, devastating most of the forestry and national parks, decimating unknown numbers of native flora and fauna species. Over five thousand properties were also damaged, as well as numerous key pieces of transport, communications and other infrastructure.

As the region transitions from recovery, into longer term resilience it is crucial for all government agencies, including RDA, to work together towards a shared vision of a vibrant and prosperous community.

This strategic plan sets out RDA Far South Coast's key strategies and activities to work in partnerships with stakeholders across the region to achieve this vision.

NSW FAR SOUTH COAST





OUR VISION

A vibrant and prosperous community.



OUR ROLE

Regional Development Australia is a national network of Boards made up of leaders who work with all levels of government, business and community groups to support the economic development of their regions.

RDA Boards have an active and facilitative role in their communities with a clear focus on growing strong and confident regional economies that harness their competitive advantages, seize economic opportunities and attract investment.

Collaborating with other RDA Boards, all levels of government, and the private sector, the RDA Board will:

- a) Facilitate regional economic development outcomes, investment, local procurement and jobs.
- b) Promote greater regional awareness of and engagement with Australian Government policies, grant programs and research.
- c) Improve Commonwealth regional policy making by providing intelligence and evidence based advice to the Australian Government on regional development issues.
- d) Co-ordinate the development of a strategic regional plan, or work with suitable existing regional plans that will align with the Commonwealth's regional priorities.

OUR BOARD



Rob Pollock
Chair



Graham Peachey
Acting Deputy Chair



Dr Catherine Dale
Board Member



Joanna Gash
Board Member



Stephen Dunshea
Board Member



Anthony McMahon
Board Member



Michael Britten
Board Member

OUR REGION

PEOPLE

183,292
2021 POPULATION

Home to an estimated population of over 183,000 people.¹

+8,958
PEOPLE BY 2041

The Estimated Regional Population (ERP) for the Far South Coast predicts an increase of 8,958 additional people according to NSW DPIE population projections, 2019. ²

50.6%
FEMALES

The population is evenly distributed across gender.³

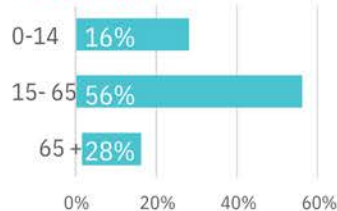
49.4%
MALES

INDIGENOUS POPULATION (2016)



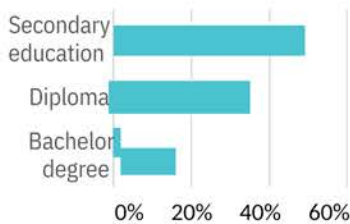
The Far South Coast is home to a higher proportion of the population identifying as Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or both than all of NSW.⁴

AGE PROFILE



The population of the Far South Coast is ageing. The proportion of people aged 65 and older is predicted to rise, while the working age population (15-64) is predicted to decline by 2041. ⁵

EDUCATION



The Far South Coast has a higher percentage of the population with a Cert III to Diploma qualification as their highest qualification, than for all of NSW (28%).⁶

\$36,399
AVG. ANNUAL INCOME

The average household income is lower in the Far South Coast than the average for all of NSW (\$45,819).⁷

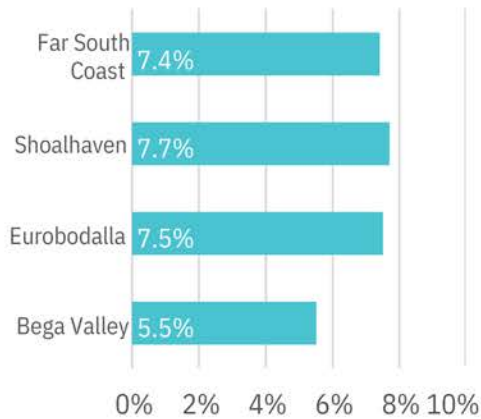
ESTIMATED POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Region	2021	2041
Shoalhaven	106,712	119,072
Eurobodalla	37,625	35,625
Bega Valley	33,955	32,553
Far South Coast	178,292	187,250

Population projections from the NSW Department of Planning Industry and Environment were obtained for each LGA and aggregated for the Far South Coast region between the years 2021 and 2041. Overall the population for the Far South Coast is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 0.25%.⁸

WORKFORCE

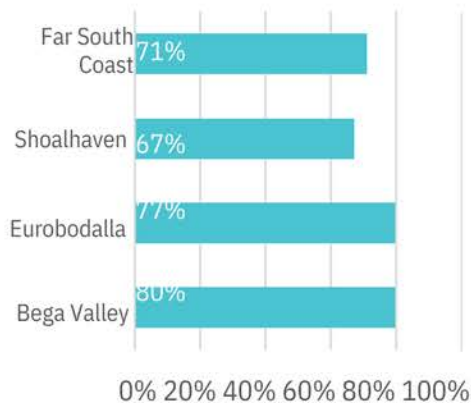
LEVEL OF UNEMPLOYMENT



Unemployment in the Far South Coast was highest in Shoalhaven and lowest in Bega Valley for the four quarters of 2020.

This indicates that not all labour is being employed in the region and an opportunity for new jobs and training to help employ the surplus potential labour in the region.⁹

PARTICIPATION RATE



In 2019 the participation rate for the Far South Coast is highest in Bega Valley at 80%, and as low as 67% for Shoalhaven.

The overall participation rate for the Far South Coast is 71%.¹⁰

JOB VACANCIES



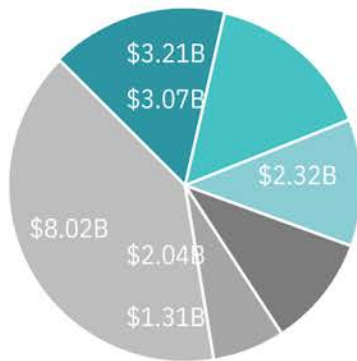
The Internet Vacancy Index (IVI) shows job vacancies listed online have increased 142% between June 2020 and June 2021 in the Far South Coast and surrounding region.

This increase represents averaged increases for the combined regions of the Illawarra and South Coast and Southern Highlands and Snowy.¹¹

INDUSTRY

ECONOMIC OUTPUT BY INDUSTRY

- Construction
- Manufacturing
- Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services
- Public Administration and Safety
- Health Care and Social Assistance
- Other



In terms of economic output generated in the Far South Coast, Construction (16%), Manufacturing (15%) and Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services (12%) make up the top three industries by Output.

Public Administration and Safety (10%) and Health Care and Social Assistance (7%) are also key industries.

The remaining 14 industries comprise the remaining 40% of the economic output of the region.¹²

EMPLOYMENT CONCENTRATION BY INDUSTRY



Industries with the highest concentration of employment within the Far South Coast region, compared to all of NSW indicate a region's specialisations and competitive advantages, and can also highlight industries at risk.

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing has the highest employment concentration, particularly in the Bega Valley Shire.

High concentration in accommodation and food services, and retail trade poses a risk, as these industries have proven to be vulnerable to seasonality and external shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic and bushfires.¹³

TOURISM

\$1.604B



2019 ANNUAL
TOURIST
EXPENDITURE

Tourism is a key industry in the Far South Coast attracting over 5.3 million visitors in 2019. The region is home to 2,258 tourism businesses.¹⁴

STRENGTHS & OPPORTUNITIES

Through stakeholder consultation a number of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and priorities have been identified. These identified factors align with strategic plans for regional development stakeholders in the region.

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tourism Manufacturing Industry Natural Beauty and Amenity Public Administration and Safety Industry 	<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tourism initiatives and a growing visitor economy Government funding and infrastructure projects Business development opportunities Liveability and amenity projects Recovery and resilience initiatives
<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of inter-agency government co-ordination Low yield tourism visitor economy Infrastructure and transport constraints Housing shortages Skills shortages 	<p>PRIORITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defined role for RDA Government co-operation Support and advocacy for regional priorities

“We have some incredible local producers and local industries, they are high tech and live off the retired community who are highly skilled”
 – Shoalhaven City Council staff





COMMONWEALTH PRIORITIES

In 2020, the Australian Government outlined updated key priorities for regional Australia. The plan is based on six priorities, aimed at stimulating growth:

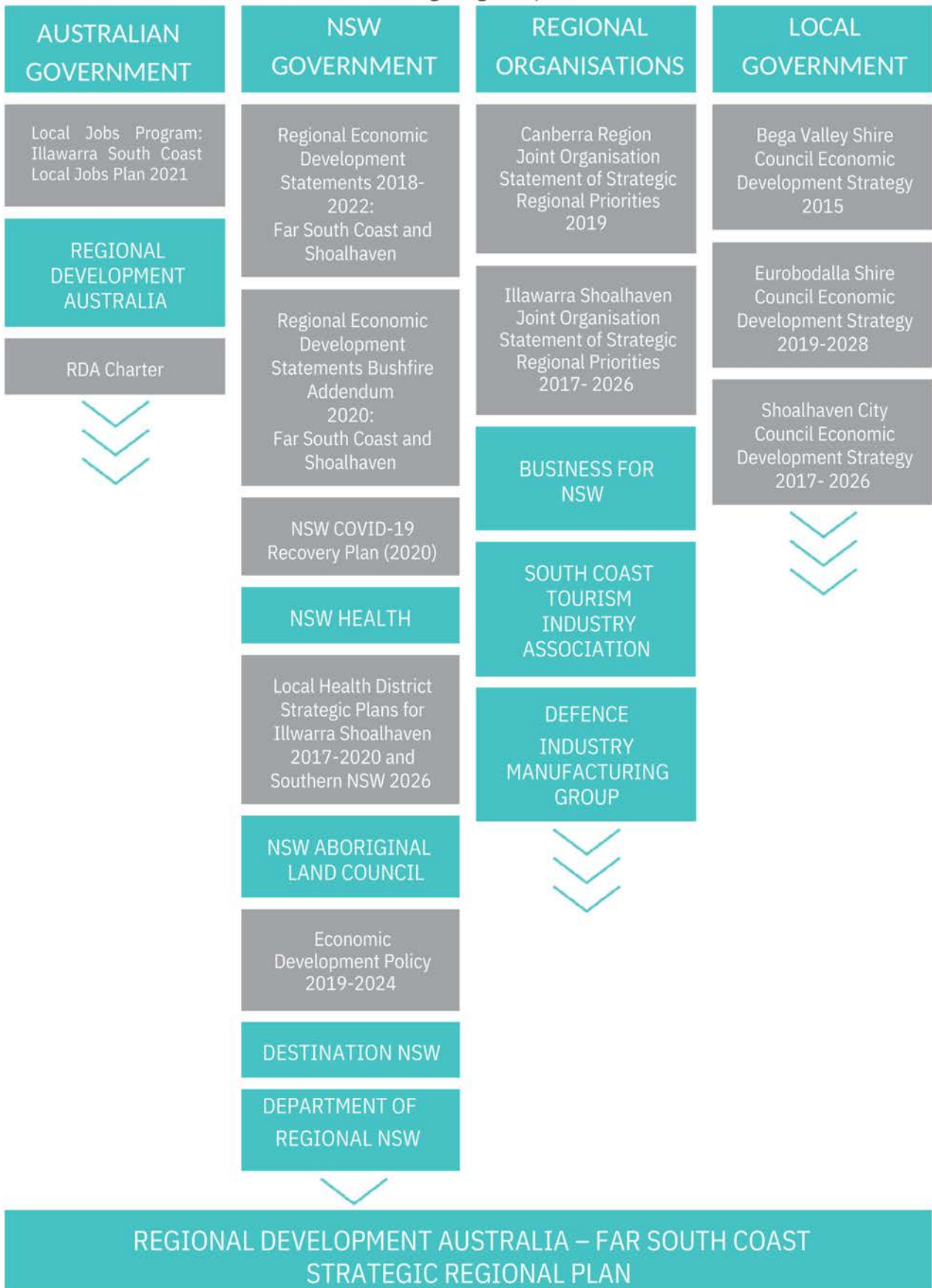
1. **Connectivity and Infrastructure** incorporating digital connectivity, transport links, and freight and supply chain infrastructure.
2. **Human Capital and Skills** to provide skilled and adaptable workforces, Regional Universities and training, and schooling.
3. **Regional Employment and Business** to develop regional businesses and industry, local R&D and innovation and a strategic regional vision.
4. **Leadership and Collaboration** by investing in regional leadership, capable local government and the Indigenous community.
5. **Amenity and Liveability** providing services, facilities and liveability, and support for local priorities.
6. **Sustainable Natural Resources** to build future resilience, ensure sustainable foundations and provide economic opportunities and jobs.

GOALS AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

GOALS	STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	ALIGNMENT WITH COMMONWEALTH PRIORITIES
Building a diverse economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving digital connectivity Targeting small business opportunities Attracting and retaining skilled workers Maximising training and skills acquisition opportunities for our people Improving transport Promoting and supporting regional tourism Supporting investment opportunities 	1,2,3,4
Improving infrastructure capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving digital connectivity Improving transport Supporting investment opportunities Developing RDA FSCs own skills and resources 	1,2,3,5,6
Improving our quality of life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving digital connectivity Maximising training and skills acquisition opportunities for our people Improving transport Supporting youth development Raising awareness 	1,2,3,4,5,6
Engaging our community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving digital connectivity Targeting small business opportunities Attracting and retaining skilled workers Supporting youth development Strengthening strategic alliances Promote government programs and services 	1,2,3,4

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

This strategic plan has been informed by consultation with stakeholders from across all tiers of government as well as regional business and industry stakeholders. Existing strategic plans prepared by these stakeholders have also informed this strategic regional plan.





REFERENCES

1. Australian Bureau of Statistics, Regional Population by Age and Sex, Australia, 2019
2. NSW Government Department of Planning Industry and Environment, NSW 2019 population projections
3. Australian Bureau of Statistics, Regional Population by Age and Sex, Australia, 2019
4. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016 Census
6. Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 Census
7. Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 Census
8. NSW Government Department of Planning Industry and Environment, NSW 2019 population projections
9. Australian Government, Small Area Labour Markets, March quarter 2021
10. Australian Government, Small Area Labour Markets, March quarter 2021
11. Australian Government, Regional Internet Vacancy Index, June 2021
12. Remplan economy, 2021
13. Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 Census
14. Tourism Research Australia, Local Government Area profiles, 2019



**Regional
Development**
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F A R S O U T H C O A S T



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