Transport for NSW

Draft Illawarra Shoalhaven

Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan

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NSW GOVERNMENT

Acknowledgement of Country

Transport for NSW acknowledges the Dharawal, Dhurga and Dhurga Dharamba-speaking peoples, including the Wodi Wodi, Wandandian, Yuin, and Murramarang Aboriginal people, who are the Traditional Custodians of the unceded land in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and celebrate the diversity and enduring cultures of Aboriginal people and their deep connection to the lands, sky, waters, and seas across NSW.

As we travel south from Sydney to the South Coast or from the mountains to the dunes many of the transport routes we use today – whether rail lines, roads, or water crossings – trace the traditional Songlines, trade routes, and ceremonial paths that Aboriginal people have travelled for tens of thousands of years.

The Illawarra Shoalhaven region is rich in Aboriginal history and historical events still evident today in the natural landscape, dating back to the beginning of time. Aboriginal people continue their spiritual beliefs and cultural obligations to care for Country today. Some examples are Kangaroo Valley, Mount Keira and the Bombo Headland Quarry Geological site that coincides with Dharawal and Yuin traditional Dreamtime stories that correspond with geological timelines. The region is scattered with rock engravings, cave shelters, natural resources and occupational sites, major mountains, wetlands and estuaries that interconnect the Songlines and traveling routes still practised and sung today.

Wide panoramic view across Lake Illawarra towards Mount Kembla and Mount Keira with fog sitting on the escarpment, Wollongong © Shutterstock.com

Cover: Man riding a bike along Wollongong Beach © Destination NSW

The Illawarra is traditionally known as Allowrie – also known and spelt as ‘Elouera’ or ‘Eloura’ – which is derived from Dharawal language meaning ‘pleasant place near the sea’ or ‘high place near the sea’. The similar words ’Illa’, ’warra’ or ’wurra’ mean ’white clay mountain’. Other known traditional words used as modern place names include Ngaroa for Nowra – meaning ‘Black Cockatoo’ – and Cullinghutti for Coolangatta Mountain – Shoalhaven Heads.

While travelling in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region, you are reminded that you are travelling over thousands of years of continued cultural Songlines and dreamtime stories. Like most Dreaming stories there are many layers of information contained within the story like survival, movement, growth, moral and kinship responsibilities.

The following Five Island Dreaming story is told by Aunty Lorraine Browne and her sister Narelle Thomas. In this story told by Wodi Wodi people who lived on Hill 60, Djeera now known as Mount Keira is an incredibly significant women’s place often referred to as ‘Grandmother Mountain’, and connected to the five islands off the coast of Port Kembla:

> On the mountain lived Oola Boola Woo and his six daughters. But one day his daughters were naughty and not listening or behaving. So Oola Boola Woo their father, who was the West wind, blew five of them out to sea and banished them, where they became the five islands. Eventually the five daughters ended up turning into mermaids and they swam around the islands looking for their sixth sister. The remaining daughter was named Geera or Djeera, after which the mountain is now named. Geera fretted for her sisters and sat in one spot on the mountain looking out to sea until she was covered by the leaves and the moss, and she became the top of the mountain.

In preparing this Plan, we acknowledge this heritage and honour the ongoing cultural connection Aboriginal peoples maintain with the region's coastline, hinterland, and the Illawarra Escarpment. Transport for NSW is committed to strengthening these connections and recognising the significant cultural contributions of Aboriginal communities in shaping our shared future.

Minister's foreword

I am pleased to present the Draft Illawarra Shoalhaven Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan, envisioning a connected, equitable, safe, and sustainable transport network for the region.

The Illawarra Shoalhaven, with its stunning Illawarra Escarpment, rolling rural landscape and beautiful coastline, is a place where people choose to live for the lifestyle, and visit as an escape from the city. The region's diverse geography and settlement patterns, from urban Illawarra to rural and coastal Shoalhaven, require a bespoke transport plan.

As the Illawarra Shoalhaven experiences significant growth and change, transport remains a critical determinant of health, education, and employment. Our plan focuses on creating a transport system that supports all communities, especially the most vulnerable.

We aim to improve public transport access and travel times, addressing barriers faced by people with disabilities and senior citizens. Our Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan outlines short to medium-term deliverables while maintaining a long-term vision for the region.

Supporting growth and housing, we will expand public transport options to support transport-oriented development sites. This approach will enable the region to grow, building on the transport system we already have, and we will invest in multimodal connections to foster a vibrant, safe and liveable Illawarra Shoalhaven.

Port Kembla, a key economic hub, faces transport challenges such as managing increased travel demand and improving connectivity. Efficient freight handling and infrastructure support are crucial for economic development.

Safety is paramount. The Government is committed to achieving zero trauma on roads by 2050 and on waterways by 2056. We will improve transport choices, enhance safety infrastructure, and increase heavy vehicle rest stops. Safety is not just about the road target, but also about perceptions of safety in our cities, towns and villages, particularly for women, girls and gender diverse people. Transport has invested in programs such as 'Safer Cities: Her Way', which delivered improved lighting, light installations, landscaping and maintenance, and wayfinding improvements in the Wollongong, Dapto and Port Kembla town centres. Building on such programs, Transport is continuing to invest in programs that enable everyone but particularly women and girls to move freely and alone in their communities within the Shoalhaven Illawarra region.

Our regional and remote roads will benefit from a focus on resilience. The Illawarra Shoalhaven has faced significant natural disasters, and climate modelling suggests this will continue. We need to build resilience into our network to minimise impacts.

We will maintain and improve ageing transport assets, incorporating climate and hazard resilience. Improved technologies will enable efficient emergency response.

Listening to the people and communities of the Illawarra Shoalhaven, we understand the need for better travel options, support for workers and tourism, and improved network resilience. A strategic and integrated approach to transport planning is vital to realising our vision of a well-connected, safe, and sustainable transport network for this beautiful and diverse region.

The Hon. Jenny Aitchison, MP
NSW Minister for Roads and
Minister for Regional Transport

Couple enjoying a paddle on Minnamurra River, Minnamurra south of Kiama © Destination NSW

To the reader of this Draft Plan

Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plans (SRITP) represent the NSW Government's commitment to delivering tailored regional transport plans that contextualise the State's objectives and outlines a targeted program of initiatives for each region's unique needs.

The Draft Illawarra Shoalhaven Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan (Draft Plan) replaces the previous Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Transport Plan with a greater focus on outcomes, aligning closely with the Government's priorities.

Plans are being prepared by Transport for NSW for nine regions across NSW. This will ensure enhanced integration across the plans and their invisible boundaries and provide a streamlined connection between statewide planning and its context within a regional application.

In developing the Draft Plan there has been a focus on ensuring we have identified challenges, opportunities and initiatives, directly informed by insights and evidence gathered from data and stakeholder engagement, ensuring a clear connection between feedback, analysis and action.

This Draft Plan has been built on previous work completed including the Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Transport Plan (2021) and other strategies, plans and programs being delivered by Transport, Local councils and other government partners. The Draft Plan was informed by data and insights, such as the common planning assumptions and what we heard through early engagement and our Have Your Say website. This informed our vision, outcomes and the draft initiatives within this Draft Plan.

The Draft Plan is more than just a single document. It is a collection of resources that reflects the key inputs and outputs that went into the development of the Plan.

To inform your feedback and submissions on the Draft Plan, you can access:

- the Draft Plan
- the Early Engagement Report
- a StoryMap
- engagement resources.

We are now checking we got it right

We are currently seeking to validate the Draft Plan before we finalise it. Your feedback is essential to helping us do this. You can access the Early Engagement Report which outlines who we talked to and what we heard.

We have also developed a StoryMap to share accessible data and insights that has been used to understand current and future transport requirements. You can share your feedback at https://www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/sritp/illawarra-shoalhaven

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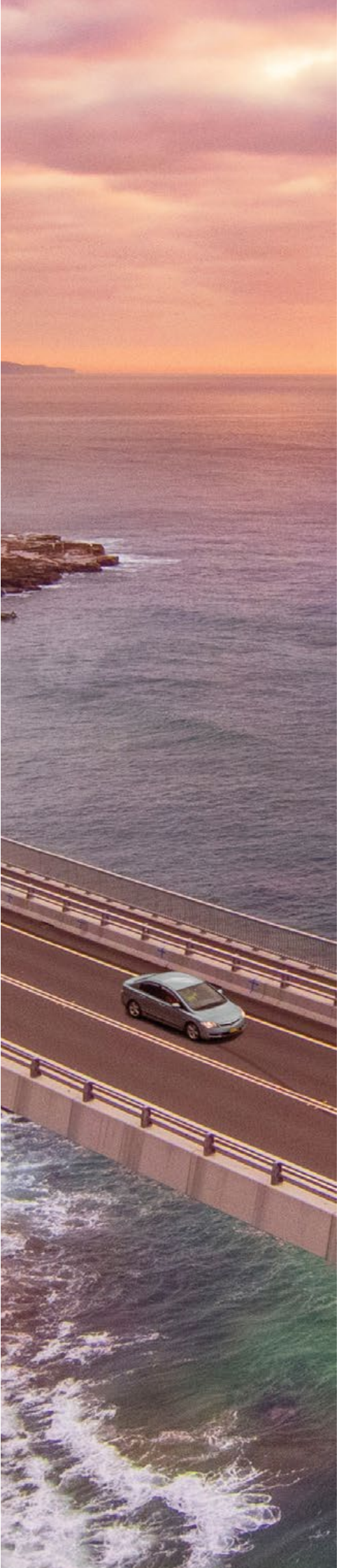


Executive summary

The Illawarra Shoalhaven region, framed by the dramatic Illawarra Escarpment and the expansive Tasman Sea, is distinguished by its stunning coastline, tranquil lakes, and the rolling hills of the Shoalhaven hinterland.

This unique landscape has shaped human settlement and movement for over 60,000 years, fostering a deep and enduring connection to Country. The region's environmental and topographic features have influenced how communities live, move, and interact – creating a distinctive pattern of life between the escarpment and the coast.

The region is structured around the growing Wollongong-Shellharbour metropolitan areas and Kiama to the north, and rural and coastal areas of the Shoalhaven in the south with Nowra at its heart. Inter-regional connections support cross-regional commuting, tourism and trade with the neighbouring areas of southern and south west Sydney, the Southern Highlands and Eurobodalla.

The coastal and rural living options available across the region offer significant lifestyle benefits, which continue to attract new residents and drive economic growth. Rising demand for housing, along with the expansion of supporting industries and services, is accelerating the region's evolution. However, as the region grows and many thrive, it is essential to ensure that vulnerable and disadvantaged communities are not left behind – and that equity remains central to planning and investment.

This Draft has been developed to guide future transport investment across the region. It aligns with NSW Government priorities and serves as Transport for NSW's coordinated response to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure's Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041. The Plan provides a strategic framework to ensure that transport infrastructure and services support sustainable growth, improve connectivity, and enhance liveability for all communities across the region.

This Draft Plan outlines a set of practical and achievable initiatives identified to enhance road and transport options for communities, workers, and visitors across the Illawarra Shoalhaven – both now and into the future. With a future network defined, the initiatives identified will enable transport to respond to the region's expected population growth by improving access to employment hubs, health and education precincts, and key tourism destinations, while preserving strong connections to the region's highly valued natural landscapes and coastal environment.

The scenic coastal drive along Sea Cliff Bridge, Clifton © Destination NSW

The future of transport in the Illawarra Shoalhaven

Our vision is for the region's transport network to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods, and strengthen connections, both within the region and outside to Sydney, Western Sydney, Canberra, and the Southern Highlands. Prioritising sustainable and healthy transport modes, the network empowers residents, visitors, and goods to move seamlessly within the region and beyond with reliable, accessible, frequent, and affordable transport options that respond to diverse community needs. The network focuses on enhancing active and public transport options to support connected communities and the delivery of housing growth and transport-oriented development.

The transport network honours and integrates the rich Aboriginal heritage of the Illawarra Shoalhaven region, ensuring that the cultural significance of the land and the Songlines are preserved and respected. This approach fosters a deep connection to Country, promoting a transport system that is not only functional but also culturally enriching and respectful of the Traditional Custodians of the land.

Respecting the Illawarra Escarpment and landform, the transport network is sensitive to the natural environment, maintaining the ecological integrity and scenic beauty of the region. This commitment to environmental stewardship supports sustainable growth and enhances the quality of life for all residents and visitors.

The transport network is resilient to natural disruptions, offering safe and reliable options, particularly for crossing the escarpment by rail and road, ensuring consistent services even in the face of extreme weather events or other emergencies.

'The Giving River' mural on pier 1 of Bateman's Bay Bridge by mural artists David Cragg, Kim Siew and Nico

Passengers waiting for a train on the platform at Wollongong train station

Challenges for the Illawarra Shoalhaven region

This Draft Plan proposes responses to key challenges that have been identified and prioritised through engagement and analysis. These challenges include:

- forecasts of population growth of 150,000 over 20 years,[1] meaning transport networks and services will need to respond to changing needs of both infill and 'greenfield' development
- addressing transport disadvantage and car dependence due to the lack of viable alternative transport choices in the region, especially public transport services with limited frequency, span of hours, and long end-to-end journey times
- disconnected cycling and walking networks with a lack of separation from vehicle traffic, especially for access to the region's growing centres and precincts, is limiting the use of active transport in the region
- constraints to moving road and rail freight to Sydney and regional NSW via a limited number of high-capacity links with vulnerability to disruption undermining the productivity of the region
- rail capacity constraints on the Illawarra network limiting the ability to increase rail services to meet the region's growing passenger and freight rail demand, which is becoming more important as populations within walking distance of train stations grow
- reducing the incidence of road trauma given a number of factors including the region's challenging geography, road environmental context, current infrastructure and driver behaviour
- the region's needs to develop an adequate and sustainable response to increased traffic and travel demand during times of higher seasonal tourism, weekends and major events, which cause network delays, impact local amenity, and elevated exposure to road safety risks
- threats to transport network resilience such as the region's topography, environmental context and existing infrastructure, which restrict options for the movement of people and goods in and out of the region, and increase its vulnerability to disruption.

1 DPHI 2024 NSW Common Planning Assumption Projections

Key directions

In summary, the following key directions are recommended to realise the Illawarra Shoalhaven vision and meet the objectives of this plan.

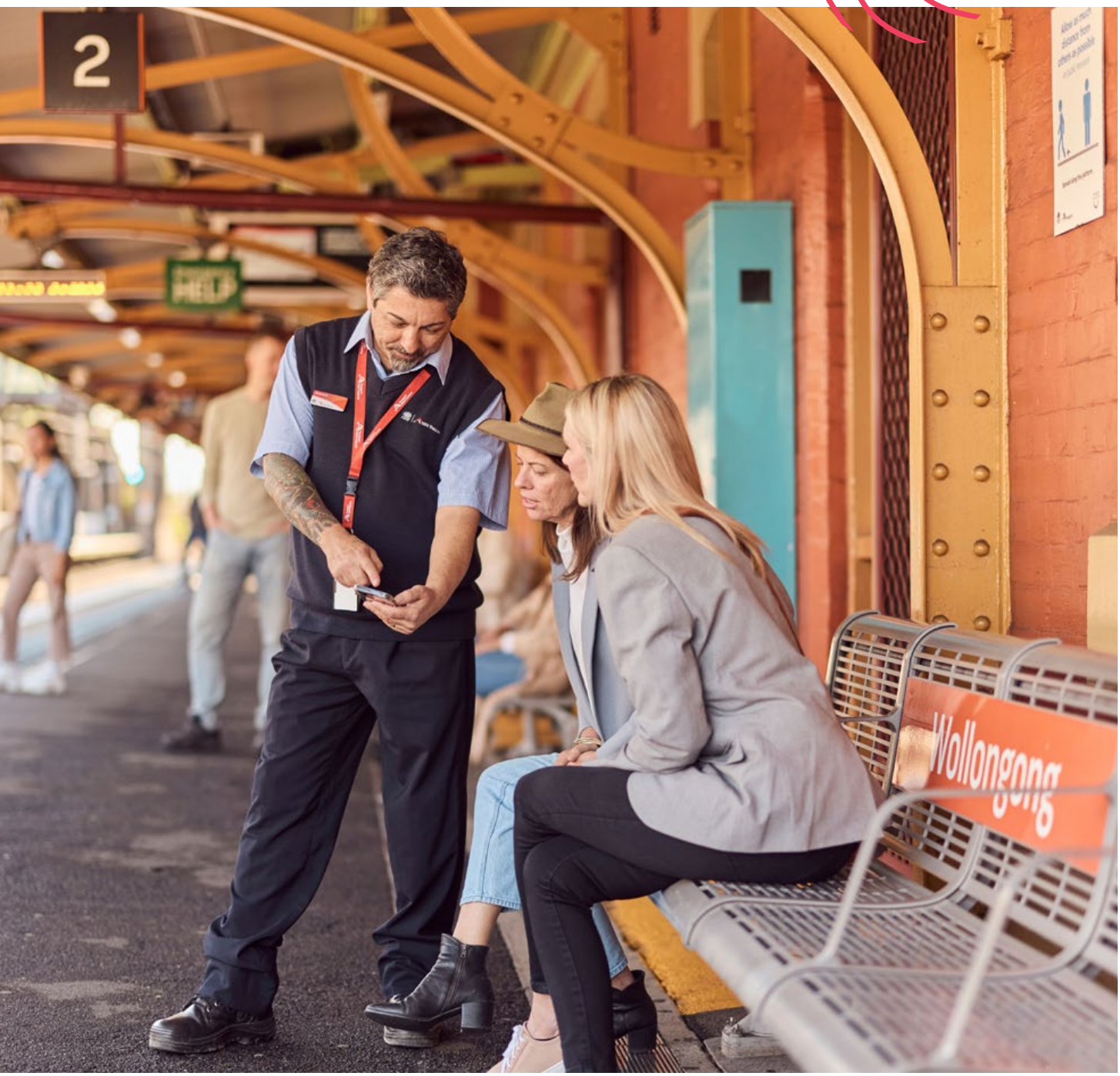
1. **Supporting significant planned housing and jobs growth, through delivery of a program of roads to open doors, including:**
   a. new or upgraded road connections, including new ramps at Dapto on the Princes Motorway, extension of Northcliffe Drive into West Lake Illawarra and upgrade of Moss Vale Road in Bomaderry
   b. enhance utilisation of existing transport networks and supplement with more active and public transport options where needed
   c. support regionally significant growth precincts, and infill and greenfield housing areas, including road connectivity, public and active transport enhancements.
2. **Developing a competitive public transport network focused on supporting significant population growth and meeting evolving travel needs, through:**
   a. more frequent rail services and reduced wait times on the South Coast rail line within Metropolitan Wollongong and between Sydney and Wollongong
   b. establish a network of frequent, all day key bus corridors connecting major centres, facilities and destinations across the region, connecting Wollongong, Shellharbour, Dapto, West Lake Illawarra Growth Area, Albion Park, Warrawong, Shell Cove, Corrimal and Thirroul
   c. extending bus network coverage by providing more frequent and integrated local bus services from early morning to late night, seven days a week
   d. upgrade key rail interchange stations to attractive hubs to support multi-modal journeys and make rail travel more accessible
   e. support key bus corridors with effective road priority measures, upgraded stop amenities, real-time information and wayfinding to enhance the passenger experience.
3. **Enabling the efficient movement of rail and road freight to support the region's manufacturing, mining and agricultural industries, and the growing population, through:**
   a. improvements to inter-regional road links to south-west Sydney, Southern Highlands and Canberra to improve suitability, reliability and safety for heavy vehicles
   b. implementation or investigation of upgrades to road networks within the region, including Princes Highway corridor, targeted intersections and bypasses to remove town centre bottlenecks
   c. improvements to highway rest stops for heavy vehicles and improved routes for over size and over mass vehicles
   d. completion of the Illawarra Rail Resilience Plan to identify options to improve rail reliability and capacity, complemented by future upgrades to rail network capacity for passenger and freight services
   e. planning for the future Maldon-Dombarton rail line linking the region to south-west Sydney.
4. **Building transport network resilience through improved planning, design and management of transport infrastructure, including:**
   a. improvements to east–west inter-regional routes across the Illawarra Escarpment including Picton Road, Mount Ousley Road and progress corridor preservation for the Outer Sydney Orbital
   b. improving road asset management to withstand the impacts of natural disasters including Princes Motorway and Illawarra Highway.

Implementation

This Draft Plan has detailed the steps necessary to turn the identified opportunities into tangible initiatives. Broken down by timeframes, the Draft Plan prioritises the initiatives that are most critical to the Illawarra Shoalhaven, while demonstrating who is responsible and accountable. The Draft Plan will help to manage risks, track progress and ensure that Transport for NSW, councils, state agencies, industry and other partners are aligned, leading to the successful delivery of the outcomes.

The final list of initiatives will be refined to ensure they can be delivered in the timeframes we are working towards. If necessary, additional funding will be sought as part of the Draft Plan finalisation.

New insights and ideas could arise during public consultation that may lead to additional initiatives being added, or existing initiatives being modified to better reflect the needs of the community.



NSW TrainLink staff assisting passengers on the platform at Wollongong train station

Definitions

Term	Definition
Aboriginal community-controlled organisations	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community control is an act of self-determination. Under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap 2020, an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisation delivers services, including land and resource management, that build the strength and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and people, and is: • incorporated under relevant legislation and not for profit • controlled and operated by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people • connected to the community or communities in which they deliver the services • governed by a majority Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander governing body.
Active transport	Includes walking, using a wheelchair or mobility aid, cycling and micromobility
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
AusRAP	The Australian Road Assessment Program assists jurisdictions and local government in maximising road safety and reducing road trauma through effective management and investment in Australian roads.
CALD	Culturally and linguistically diverse
Dharawal	Also known and spelt as Tharawal, Turawal and Thurwal
DPHI	Geographic administration for the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) regions of the Central Coast, Central West and Orana, Hunter, South East and Tablelands, Far West, Illawarra Shoalhaven, New England North West, North Coast, Riverina Murray.
Discrete Aboriginal community	A geographic location, bounded by physical or legal boundaries that is inhabited or intended to be inhabited predominantly (greater than 50 per cent of usual residents) by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people, with housing or infrastructure (power, water, sewerage) that is managed on a community basis.
Employment land	Land that is zoned for industrial or similar purposes in planning instruments. These uses include manufacturing; transport and warehousing; service and repair trades and industries; integrated enterprises with a mix of administration, production, warehousing, research, and development; and urban services and utilities.
EV	Electric vehicle

Term	Definition
EnergyCo	Energy Corporation of NSW a State Government agency developed to oversee the development and implementation of renewable energy zones. EnergyCo is part of the Treasury cluster.
Freight	Goods or cargo transported by heavy vehicles, light commercial vehicles (such as vans and utes), cycle couriers, rail, aircraft, or ship.
FSI	Fatal and serious injury
HPV	High productivity vehicles
ICE	Internal combustion engines
IMT	Intermodal terminal – an area of land used to transfer freight between at least two modes of transport. It is typically used to describe the transfer of international shipping containers from road to rail and vice versa.
LALC	Local Aboriginal Land Council
LGA	Local government area
LSPS	Local strategic planning statement are prepared by councils and set out the planning priorities that meet their community's needs and deliver key State and regional planning objectives. A council's LSPS sets out a 20-year vision for land use and the special characteristics that contribute to local identity.
OSOM	An oversize overmass vehicle is a heavy vehicle that is carrying or specifically designed to carry a large indivisible item.
Passenger	User of public transport
PBS	Performance Based Standards for heavy vehicles
Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)	A strategic document demonstrating an organisation's commitment to create meaningful opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
Regional roads	Regional roads are the lesser trafficked classified roads (which are not State roads) and some of the more important unclassified roads. Councils manage and maintain regional roads with funding assistance from Transport.
REZ	Renewable energy zones – locations in NSW defined by NSW EnergyCo where major generation of wind and solar power can be efficiently stored and transmitted across NSW.
RUM	Road user movement code is a system for recording road crash types by describing the first impact for a road crash.
State roads	State roads form the primary arterial road network. State roads are all classified roads. Transport is responsible for managing the primary traffic function of state roads. This includes funding and determining priorities, as well as regulating the activities of third parties on the road and access to adjoining land to promote road safety and traffic efficiency and to protect the road asset.

Term	Definition
Strategic centre	Strategic centres form part of a strategic land use planning framework used by DPHI, designating centres with significant commercial components and a range of higher-order services.
SRITP	Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plans – STRIPs (including this one) will be delivered for each of the nine DPHI regions of regional NSW to support integrated land use and transport planning in regional NSW for the next 20 years.
Transport	Transport for NSW
TOD	Transport Oriented Development – a NSW government program that encourages sustainable and mixed-used development around transport.
Yuin	Also known as and spelt as Djuwin
ZEB	Zero emission buses provide a cleaner, greener and more comfortable way to travel on public transport. ZEBs don't release carbon emissions or pollutants into the air and instead use electric or hydrogen technology. They are powered by energy from renewable sources such as solar panels and wind farms.

Couple relaxing on lilos on the Shoalhaven River near Nowra © Destination NSW

01 Starting with Country

Hands of woman with orange ochre on them for a ceremony

1.1 Connection with Country

The Illawarra Shoalhaven region is home to the traditional lands of the Dharawal and Yuin peoples, as well as the Dhurga, Wodi Wodi, Wandandian, and Murramarang Aboriginal peoples. As the Traditional Custodians of the land, these communities have deep-rooted connections to the region with unique laws, customs, and cultural practices that continue to influence the landscape today.

Transport for NSW acknowledges the enduring connection of Aboriginal people to the land and their contributions to the cultural fabric of the region. The latest census states that nearly five per cent (22,000 residents) of the region's population have and Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background.[2] In planning and delivering transport infrastructure and services, we are committed to integrating Aboriginal knowledge and perspectives to ensure a deeper understanding of the environmental and cultural impacts on Country. Transport is committed to incorporating Aboriginal knowledge and perspectives, guided by frameworks such as the Connecting with Country approach. This ensures that the environmental and cultural impacts on Country are understood and respected.

Aboriginal peoples in the Illawarra Shoalhaven have a rich history of living with and shaping their environment.

This enduring connection is visible in the cultural landscape, with practices such as firestick farming, traditional fishing techniques, and ceremonial sites preserving biodiversity and environmental resilience. Sacred sites, occupation sites, and Songlines are found across the region,

2 Australian Bureau of Statistics (August 2021), Counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians – estimated resident population [accessed 10 December 2024]

linking the escarpment at Mount Keira, the rolling hills of Jamberoo, and the pristine coastline of Jervis Bay with other parts of the continent. These pathways carry ancient knowledge, stories, and cultural practices, serving as vital trade and ceremonial routes that remain integral to the cultural identity of the region.

The Illawarra Shoalhaven region encompass an array of interwoven travelling routes that interconnect with major landscape areas of interest to Dharawal, Yuin and neighbouring peoples. Mount Keira (Djeera) and Mount Kembla (Djenbella), Mount Ousley and Mount Pleasant just to name a few are littered with creation stories such as The Five Islands Dreamtime legend depicted at Mount Keira. Starting with Country provides an opportunity for deep listening and understanding of Country, embedding historical information throughout transport plans and projects.

Today, many modern transport routes reflect these ancient pathways.

Roads such as the Princes Highway and maritime routes echo the Songlines, trade routes, and ceremonial paths Aboriginal people followed for millennia, continuing a legacy of connectivity across the Illawarra Shoalhaven.

This underscores the importance of integrating culturally responsive transport solutions that honour the traditions and needs of Aboriginal communities.

Scenic view of Byarong Park at the base of Mount Keira, Wollongong © KryptoTheon/Shutterstock.com

1.2 Aboriginal Outcomes

The NSW Government's commitment to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap supports shared decision-making with Aboriginal communities, recognising the importance of their voice in shaping policies and programs that affect them.

Five key reform areas underpin our efforts to foster better outcomes, including shared decision-making, building community sectors, and creating opportunities for economic independence:

1. Formal partnership and shared decision making.
2. Building community sectors.
3. Transforming government organisations.
4. Shared access to data and information at a regional level.
5. Employment, business growth and economic prosperity.

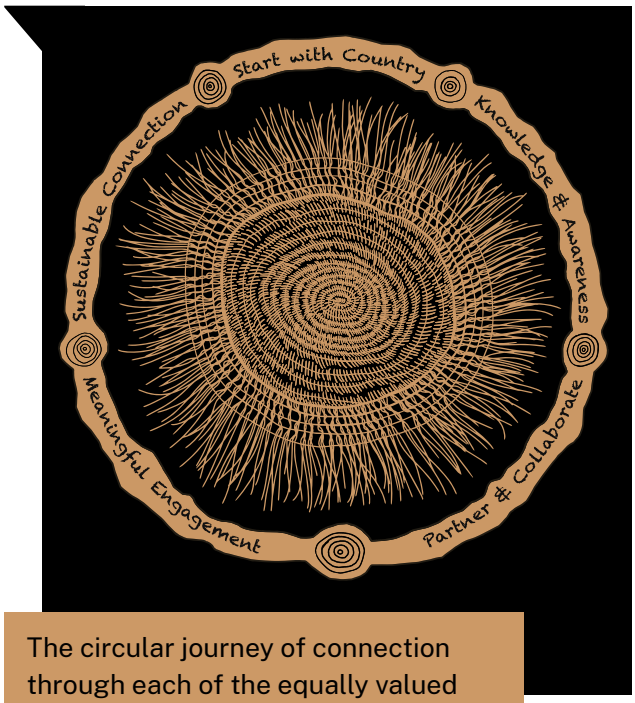
The Draft Plan has adopted four Aboriginal result statements to guide how we respond to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. They are:

- Aboriginal people are connected safely to the economy and socially, through transport solutions.
- Our community and Country is healthy and strong through transport planning and placemaking.
- Aboriginal economic independence is supported by Transport.
- Transport drives transformative action to deliver systemic change.

Development of this Draft Plan has been guided by the Transport for NSW Planning with Country framework and informed by preliminary engagement with Aboriginal stakeholders from across the Illawarra Shoalhaven region. The stories and messages they shared have helped to shape the narrative, challenges, and opportunities.

Planning with Country is Transport's response to the Department of Planning, Housing, and Infrastructure's 'Our Place on Country' and provides a flexible set of guidelines and principles, to ensure emerging and consistent Planning with Country approaches are embedded within Transport's processes.

The framework provides a set of guidelines with five key principles and provides a pathway to equip our practitioners with the cultural competency and tools to engage and advocate for ways they can respond to changes and new directions in planning policy to deliver better outcomes for our Aboriginal communities across NSW.

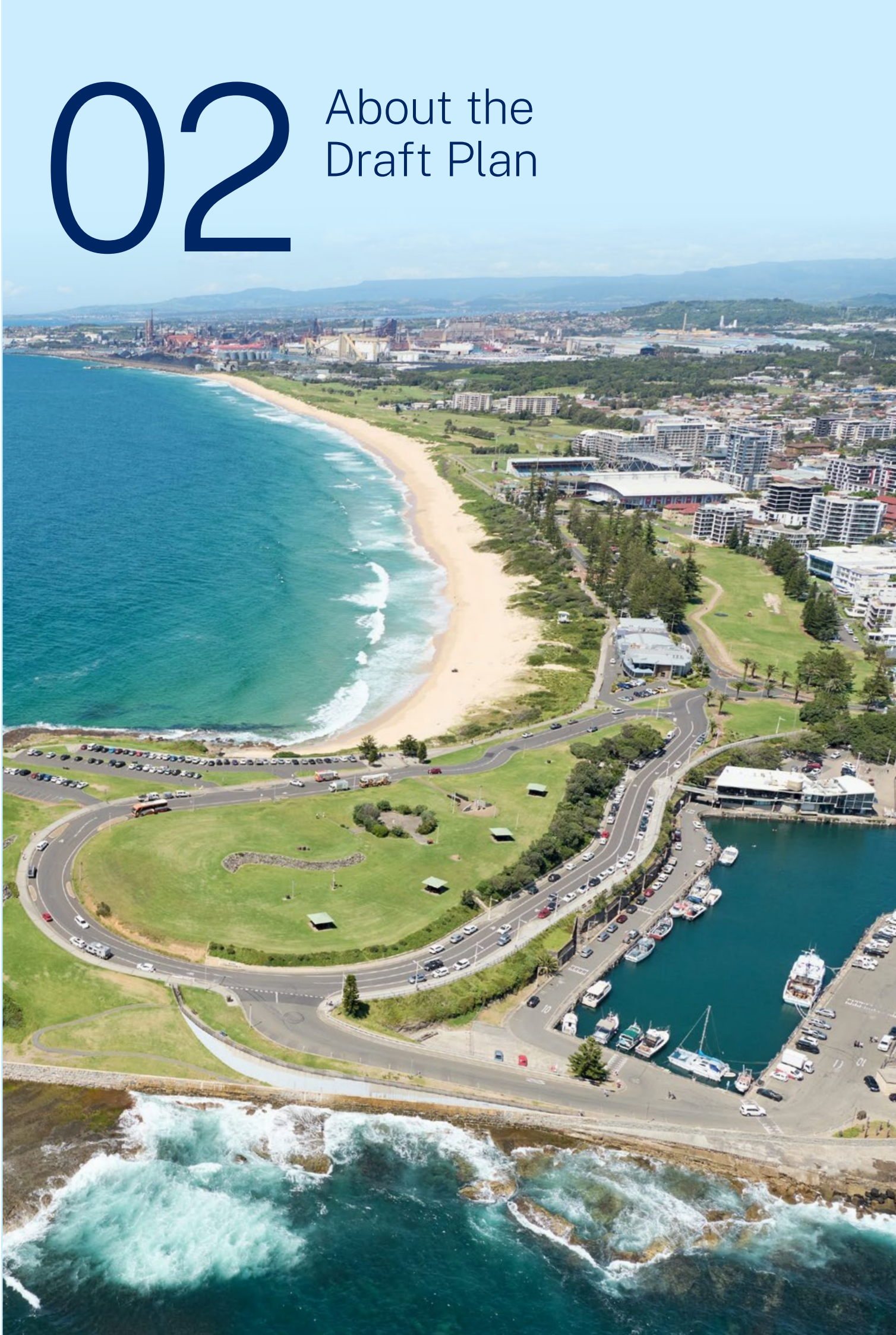


The circular journey of connection through each of the equally valued **5 Principles of Success**, shared through the collaboration, demonstrates the combined strength and resilience of community and Country and their reliance on each other for success.

Figure 1. The woven representation of Planning with Country
© Feather Flower Creative (design by Natalia Baechtold)

People gather on the traditional lands of the Walbunja people, in the Upper Shoalhaven of NSW at Broad Gully in Mongarlowe, to learn some of the secrets of cultural burning. Participants were shown how fire was used by Indigenous Australians to care for Country
© NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

02 About the Draft Plan



2.1 What is a Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan?

2.1.1 Purpose

This Draft Plan is one of nine strategic regional integrated transport plans to be delivered across regional NSW. Rather than a 'one size fits all' approach, the Draft Plan evaluates the transport needs of the Illawarra Shoalhaven's distinctive local government areas to support the specific needs of communities across the region.

Social determinants, such as income levels, education, employment, and housing, are key considerations when planning for the Illawarra Shoalhaven. These factors can influence people's access to and ability to use different transport options. This can be even more challenging in more rural areas of the region. For people on lower incomes, the cost of maintaining a vehicle may prove prohibitive, potentially limiting their ability to access services and employment opportunities. This might be compounded if the community has no or limited public transport alternatives. Consequently, transport barriers may entrench or create social disadvantage.

The Draft Plan aims to address these disparities by providing accessible, reliable, and affordable transport options to connect communities and ensure equitable access is provided. Integrating social determinants into transport planning promotes not only mobility but also social inclusion, economic opportunity, and overall community wellbeing.

A core focus of the Draft Plan has been on the importance of safety across the different transport modes. A safe network is underpinned by a resilient network with Transport creating new draft initiatives to ensure residents, workers, and visitors continue to use the transport network safely in the future.

The Draft Plan provides a 20-year vision with the key transport priorities. It offers staged timing for the planning of government-led services and infrastructure responses based on future needs.

The Draft Plan considers the community's transport needs now and into the future, guiding the delivery of Transport's services and infrastructure delivery program in alignment with government priorities.

In developing the Draft Plan, Transport has worked in partnership with councils, industry, and communities, and considered insights heard through extensive engagement to inform the vision, priorities and outcomes for the region.

To complement and support the Draft Plan, Transport has developed an interactive StoryMap for the Illawarra Shoalhaven region. This data-rich tool offers valuable data and insights that inform the vision, challenges, and opportunities within the Illawarra Shoalhaven region.

Learn more on our Illawarra Shoalhaven StoryMap

Aerial views of Wollongong Head located in Wollongong on the South Coast © Destination NSW

2.1.2 Extent

This Draft Plan applies to the Illawarra Shoalhaven Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) region, which borders Greater Sydney to the north, South East and Tablelands to the west and south, and the Pacific Ocean. It matches the extent of the Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041. The Illawarra Shoalhaven consists of four local government areas – Wollongong, Shellharbour, Kiama, and Shoalhaven – as shown in Figure 2.

Defined by its stunning coastal landscapes and proximity to Greater Sydney, the Illawarra Shoalhaven region features a range of environments from the iconic Illawarra Escarpment and Lake Illawarra to expansive beaches and rich hinterland areas. The region's strong ties to Greater Sydney, the South Coast, and broader regional NSW present both opportunities and challenges across all transport modes and the transport network.

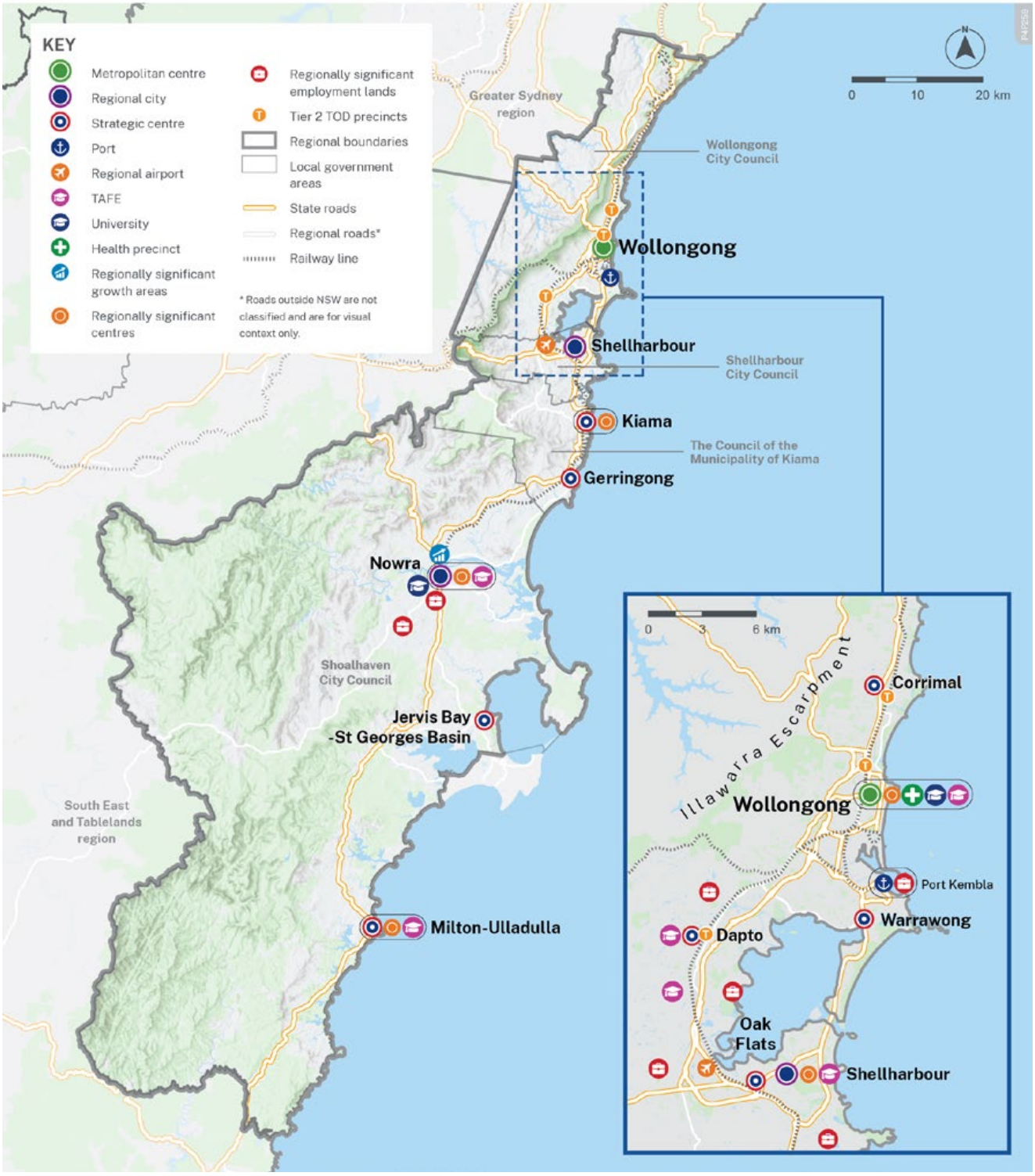


Figure 2. Illawarra Shoalhaven region and surrounds

2.2 Strategic context

State agencies and local government develop plans and strategies that set priorities and strategic directions to inform planning for the future. These plans and strategies set the direction for the transport system. This includes improving connectivity, enabling multimodal mobility, providing equitable access and supporting safer journeys.

2.2.1 Land use and development infrastructure

The DPHI has broad responsibilities for planning and development in NSW, including developing and implementing policies; assessing state-significant infrastructure projects; rezoning land for more housing, jobs and recreation; coordinating with other government agencies; and partnering with councils, stakeholders and the community.

DPHI works to ensure jobs, infrastructure and housing are delivered. DPHI identifies, programs and collects state infrastructure contributions, including negotiating agreements for the direct delivery of state infrastructure on behalf of the Department of Education, NSW Health and Transport. DPHI administers grant funding to help councils and NSW agencies improve essential infrastructure and create or enhance public and green spaces. These programs include the Regional Housing Fund to fast-track supply of land and deliver more homes across regional NSW. The Draft Plan responds to the NSW Government priorities and is the transport response to the DPHI's Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041.

2.2.2 Transport

Transport works closely with other government agencies and independent entities to deliver outcomes for the people of NSW. Transport sets the strategic direction for transport across the state, which involves consolidating the planning, policy, strategy, regulation, resource allocation, and other service and non-service delivery functions for all modes of transport in NSW. This supports the safe and seamless movement of people and goods on roads, rail, buses, point to point transport vehicles, on-demand services, community transport, walking and cycling. Transport oversees the delivery of transport infrastructure across NSW through its project experts and industry partners.

Construction workers at Brookes Reach housing estate in Dapto © NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure/Don Fuchs

Table 1. Key land use and transport legislation, strategies and plans.

Planning scale	Land use	Transport
State	*Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* *Local Government Act 1993* *Heritage Act 1977* *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* *Native Title (New South Wales) Act 1994 No 45* National Agreement on Closing the Gap 2020 Low and Mid-Rise Housing Policy 2024	*Transport Administration Act 1988* *Roads Act 1993* Connecting NSW Strategy Net Zero and Climate Change Policy 2023 Active Transport Strategy Towards Net Zero Emissions Freight Policy Planning for Culture NSW Public Spaces Charter Movement and Place Framework Design of Roads and Streets Road User Space Allocation Policy Safe Systems Approach Guide to Transport Impact Assessment 2024 State Infrastructure Strategy 2022 2026 Road Safety Action Plan Maritime Safety Plan 2026 Providing for Walking and Cycling in Transport Projects Policy Heavy Vehicle Access Policy
Region	Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041 Wollongong, Shoalhaven, Shellharbour and Kiama Local Strategic Planning Statements (LSPS)	Draft Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan (this Plan) Strategic Cycleway Corridors Program Regional and Outer Metropolitan Cycling and Micromobility Plan 2025–2035
Local or precinct	Place strategies Structure plans	Transport management and accessibility Plans Movement and place assessments Integrated transport plans / strategies Council-led master plans

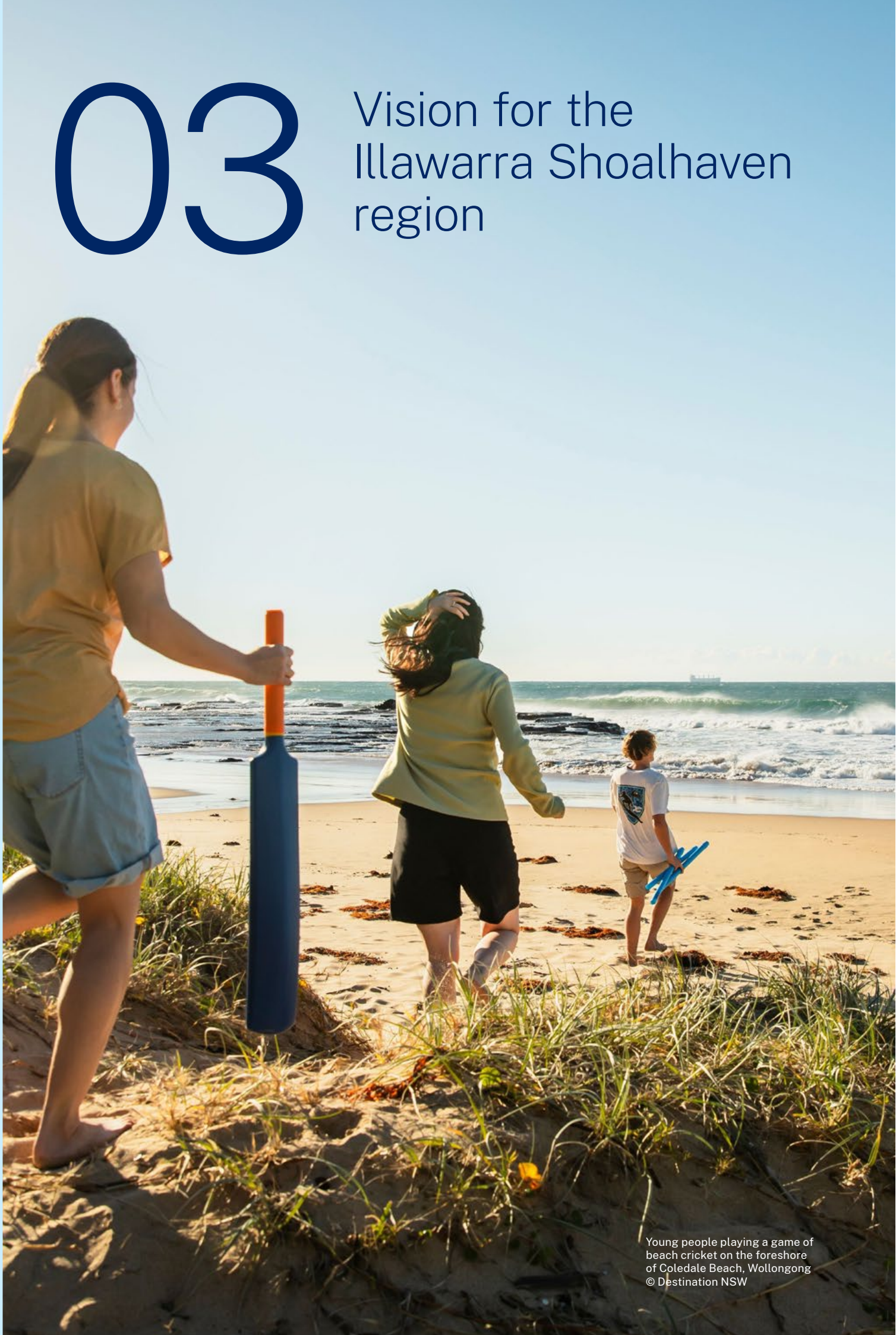
2.2.3 SRITP strategic alignment

The Draft Plan responds to the NSW Government priorities and is the Transport response to the DPHI's draft Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041. The DPHI plan is focused on four key themes:

- A productive and innovative region
- A sustainable and resilient region
- A region that values its people and places
- A smart, connected and accessible region.

A group of cyclists ride across the Sea Cliff Bridge, en route to Wollongong © NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

03 Vision for the Illawarra Shoalhaven region



Young people playing a game of beach cricket on the foreshore of Coledale Beach, Wollongong
© Destination NSW

3.1 Transport vision

The Illawarra Shoalhaven benefits from a safe, connected, sustainable, and resilient road and transport network that seamlessly links communities by supporting the efficient movement of people and freight.

The Illawarra Shoalhaven region's road and transport network enables the safe and efficient movement of people and goods, strengthening connections both within the region and to key destinations including Sydney, Western Sydney, Canberra, the South Coast, and the Southern Highlands.

By prioritising sustainable and healthy transport modes, the network empowers residents, visitors, and industries to move seamlessly with reliable, accessible, frequent, and affordable options that respond to the diverse needs of the community. A strong focus on active and public transport supports key growth areas, housing delivery, and transport oriented development, while enhancing town centres as safe, inclusive, and vibrant places.

The road and transport network is designed with deep respect for the Illawarra Escarpment and natural landforms, ensuring that transport infrastructure is sensitive to the environment, preserves ecological integrity, and protects the region's scenic beauty. This commitment to environmental stewardship supports sustainable growth and enhances quality of life.

Resilience is a core principle, with the network built to withstand natural disruptions and provide safe, reliable connections – particularly across the escarpment – during extreme weather events and emergencies.

Informed by the region's rich Aboriginal culture and heritage, the transport network honours and integrates connections to Country, ensuring that the cultural significance of the land, including its Songlines and sacred sites, is preserved and respected. This fosters a transport system that is not only functional but also culturally enriching and inclusive.

The network supports the emerging and existing travel demands of key industries such as Port Kembla, tertiary education, healthcare, defence, and tourism. Through evidence-based, integrated transport planning, strategic investment continues to drive growth, reduce disruptions, and ensure an equitable and future-ready transport system for all.

The transport vision for the Illawarra Shoalhaven region was developed to respond to the DPHI 2041 long-term land use vision, in close collaboration with our stakeholders and influenced by engagement in the development of this Plan.

The vision is consistent with Australian Government land use and transport policies, NSW Government strategies and has considered Local Government plans. The vision was subsequently mapped back to the outcomes and directions of the Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041, Transport's Outcomes Framework and NSW Government priorities.

This Draft Plan sets out future travel needs against existing transport networks and service capacity, identifying the behavioural and policy changes necessary to support growth that are consistent with the vision. The approach identifies the transport networks and services to support the future demand within the context of behavioural and policy change.

In this way, the Draft Plan recognises and prepares for growth to meet the vision. The vision is validated through a process of identifying future transport networks and services that respond to land use change, are consistent with the Draft Plan vision and meet future demand.

This approach recognises that continuing to accept the current mode share, particularly in urban areas, towns, and centres, and specifically, high levels of private car use, is not going to realise the vision, Rather it will lead to increased road congestion and reduced accessibility for local residents, workers and visitors.

3.2 Objectives and outcomes

The objectives are key concerns fundamental to strategic transport planning, and when met, articulate the realisation of the vision at the regional and local level. The objectives are relatively consistent across all regions, but the outcomes are unique and describe what we want to see in the future in specific places or across the region.

A suite of indicators has been developed. These are how initiatives are chosen based on how they perform against an objective and realise the long-term vision.

The challenges and opportunities, identified through engagement with our broad range of stakeholders as well as data and analysis, are the validation for our priorities for action. A series of initiatives are identified for the short term and, medium term and outcomes for the longer term.

This will enable the program of initiatives to be actioned after the final release of each plan. Implementation of this program over time will be tracked and reported to the community.

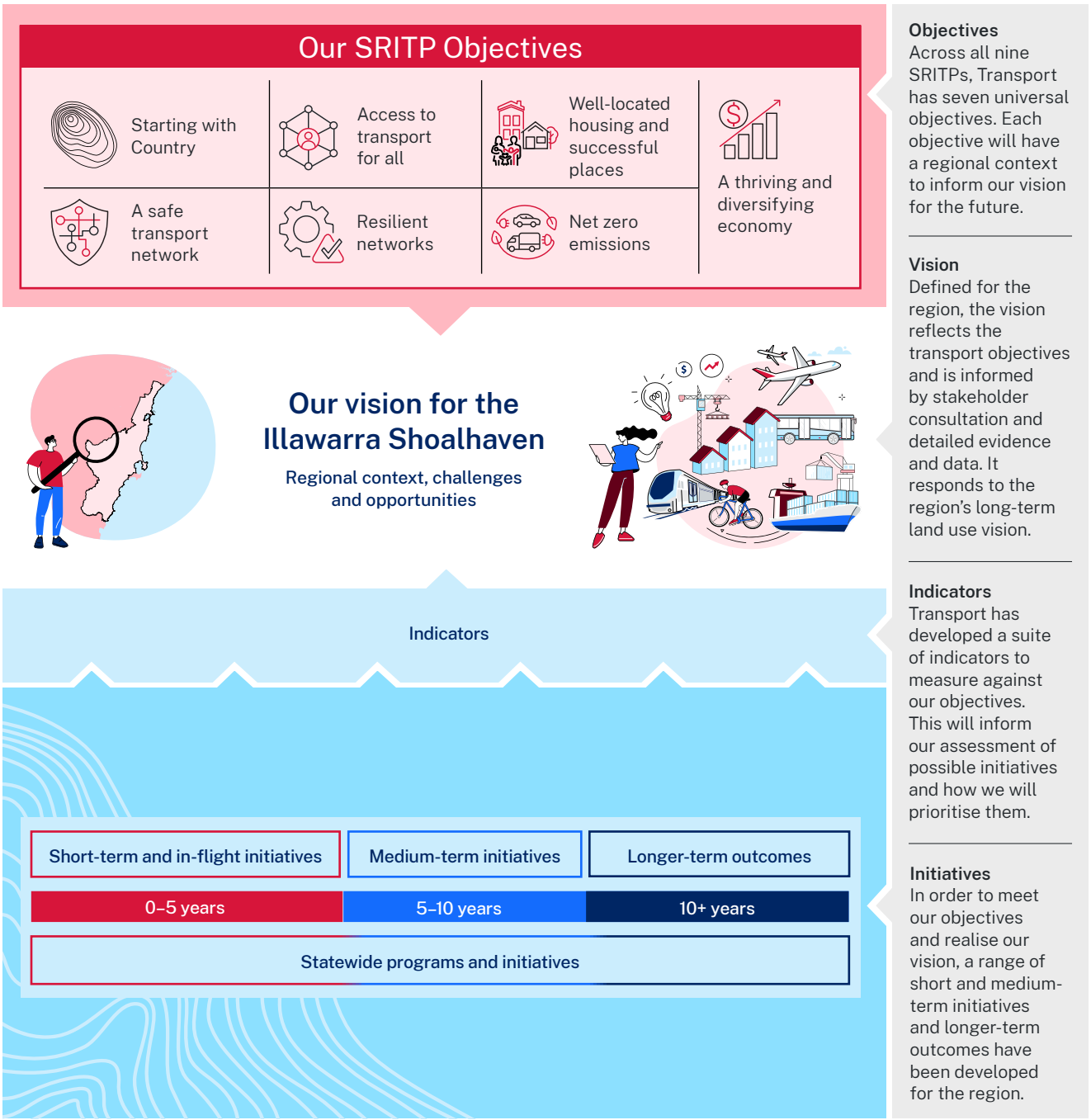
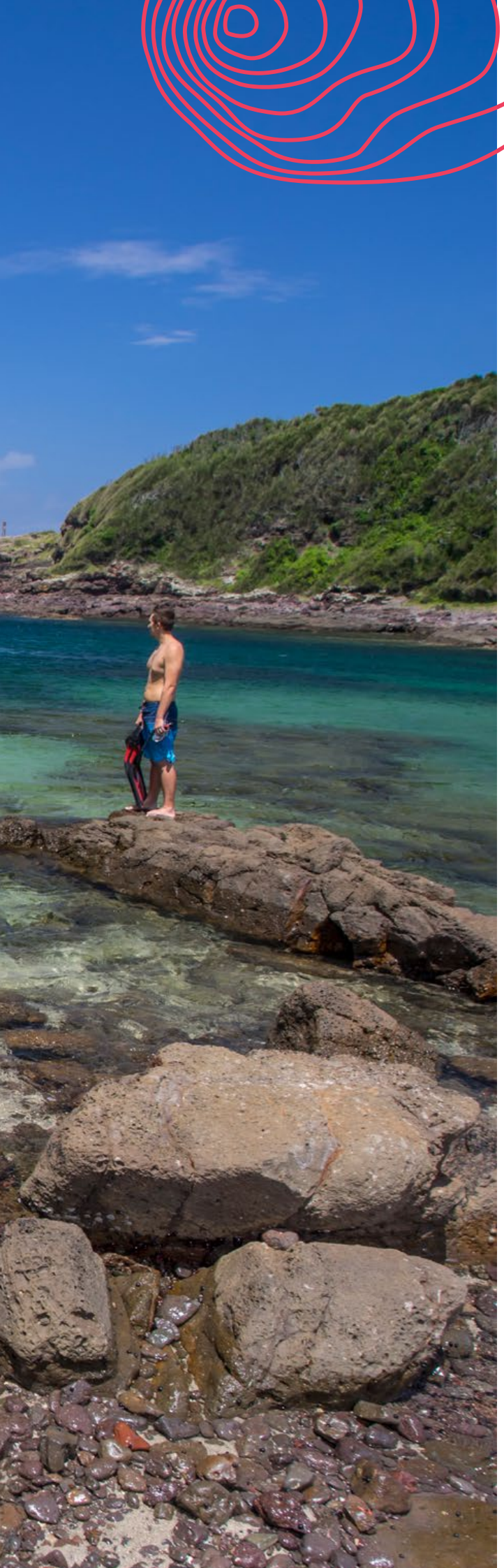


Figure 3. Vision-led transport planning approach

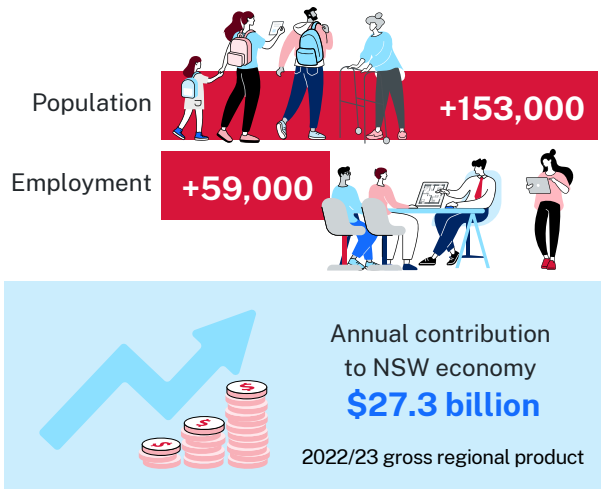
A birds-eye view of a residential subdivision under construction, Tullimbar, near Shellharbour

04 Understanding the Illawarra Shoalhaven region



4.1 People and communities of the Illawarra Shoalhaven region

The Illawarra Shoalhaven region is renowned for its natural beauty, industry, and proximity to Sydney, the Southern Highlands and the South East and Tablelands, attracting many to its lifestyle advantages that continue to drive the region's growth.



Sources: NSW Common Planning Assumptions Population Projections (TZP24) and NIEIR State of the Regions Economic Indicators, 2024.

Figure 4. 20-year growth 2021 to 2041 and gross regional product

First Nations and Aboriginal cultural context

The region is home to over 22,000 Aboriginal people, which at about four per cent of the population is higher than the NSW average, with Shoalhaven and Shellharbour having the highest proportions at eight per cent and six per cent respectively.[3]

Notable areas with high numbers of Aboriginal residents include Bellambi, Berkely-Lake Heights, Koonawarra, Mount Warrigal, Albion Park, Warilla, Bomaderry, South Nowra, Sanctuary Point, and Ulladulla. Discrete Aboriginal communities are located in the Shoalhaven area at Wreck Bay, Ulladulla, Coomaditchie, and Jerrinja-Orient Point.

Couple ready to snorkel in Bushrangers Bay, Shellharbour
© Destination NSW

3 ABS 2021 Census

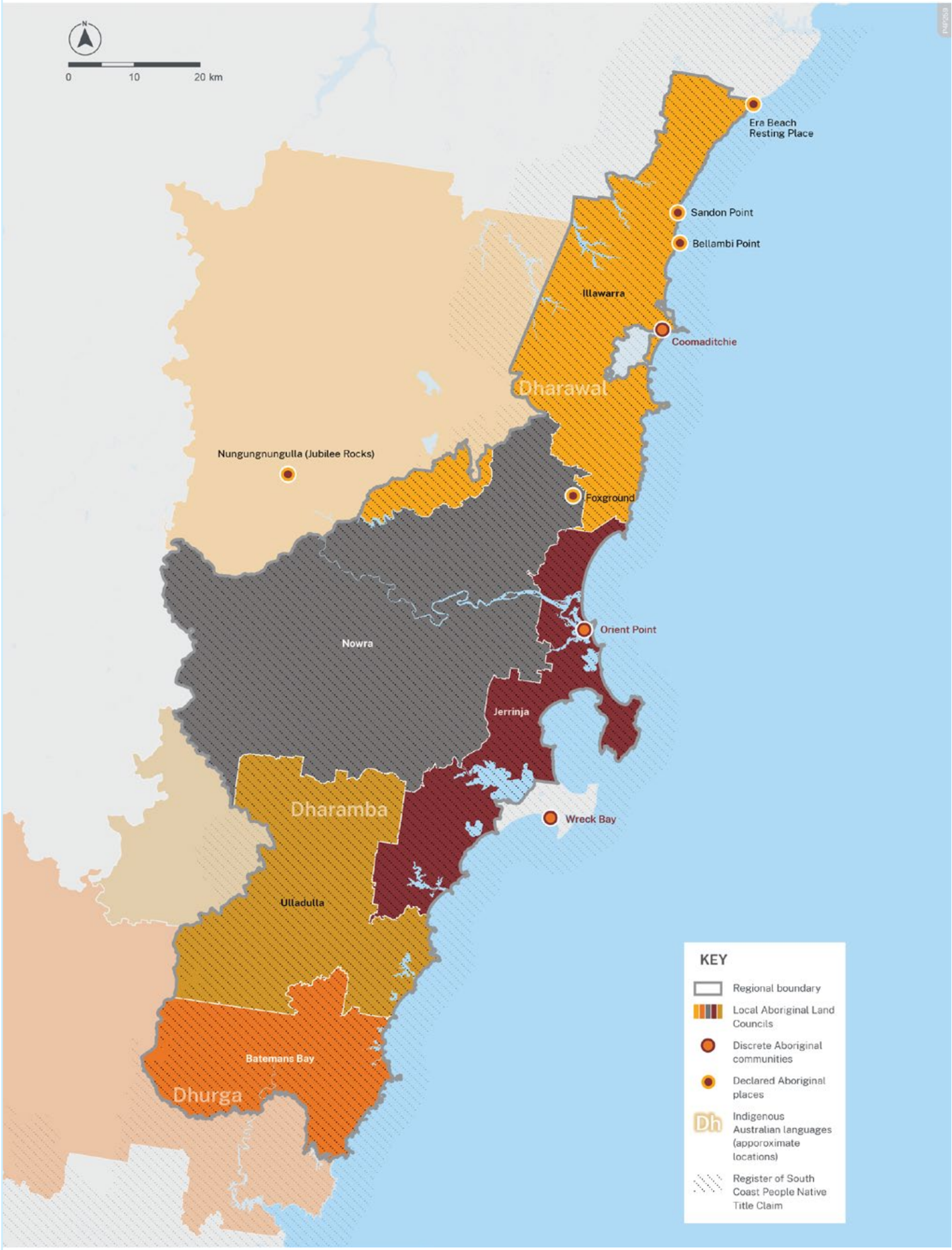


Figure 5. Local Aboriginal Land Councils and discrete Aboriginal communities

A growing and changing population

The region's population is expected to undergo significant growth, from 423,000 in 2021 to 575,000 in 2041, a 36 per cent increase of more than 150,000 people in 20 years. This trend is expected to continue beyond 2041. Wollongong LGA, which includes the region's major urban centre, is projected to grow by 74,000 people to a population of 289,000. Shellharbour LGA is expected to experience the highest relative growth, with a 43 per cent increase to 109,000 people in 2041, followed by Shoalhaven at 40 per cent to 152,000, while Kiama will grow by nine per cent to 25,000.[4]

As the Illawarra Shoalhaven's population grows and changes, the proportion of older people is increasing and the average household size is getting smaller. Between 2021 and 2041, the region's demographic profile is expected to shift, with the most notable change being a 48 per cent increase in the population aged 65 and older, in comparison to 32 per cent and 33 per cent increases in the 0–19 and 20–64 age groups respectively.[5] In relative terms the ageing population is more pronounced in Shoalhaven LGA, with a 61 per cent increase in the 65 and older age group expected over 20 years. Enabling accessible and reliable transport for older adults, particularly those who live in dispersed communities or topographically challenging environments, will be critical in future transport planning.

Seven per cent of the region's population need assistance with core activities.[6] This highlights the need for accessible transport options that cater to mobility-impaired individuals and older residents, particularly in areas like Shoalhaven and Kiama, where the ageing population is more concentrated.

Table 2. LGA populations[7]

Local Government Area	Cities and Strategic Centres	Population 2021	Population 2041	20 year growth	Change
Wollongong	Wollongong, Corrimal, Warrawong, Dapto	215,000	289,000	74,000	34%
Shoalhaven	Nowra, Milton-Ulladulla, Jervis Bay-St Georges Basin	109,000	152,000	44,000	40%
Shellharbour	Shellharbour, Oak Flats	76,000	109,000	33,000	43%
Kiama	Kiama, Gerringong	23,000	25,000	2,000	9%
Total		**422,000**	**575,000**	**153,000**	**36%**

4 Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure 2024 NSW Common Planning Assumption Projections
5 Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure 2024 NSW Common Planning Assumption Projections
6 ABS 2021 Census, data by region, persons who have need for assistance with core activities
7 Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure 2024 NSW Common Planning Assumption Projections

Street scenes along Terralong Street, Kiama © NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure/Don Fuchs

Socio-economic advantage and disadvantage

The Illawarra Shoalhaven displays varied levels of socio-economic advantage and disadvantage across the region. Wollongong, Shellharbour and Shoalhaven LGAs have 80,000 people who are among the 20 per cent most disadvantaged in NSW. Kiama is less disadvantaged than other areas of the region.[8] Suburbs and locations of most significant socio-economic disadvantage in the region include Warilla, Albion Park, Warrawong, Dapto, Bellambi, Unanderra, Nowra, Bomaderry, and Sanctuary Point.

Socio-economic disadvantage can influence individuals' ability to access essential services, employment and education. For many residents in more disadvantaged areas, transport options are often limited. Public transport challenges, such as infrequent services, poorly maintained infrastructure and high dependency on private vehicles, can exacerbate this disadvantage. Car dependency for disadvantaged households may result in household expenditure being vulnerable to cost fluctuations associated with private vehicles.

Transport disadvantage disproportionately affects specific groups, including women, Indigenous Australians, young people, the elderly, and people with disabilities or medical conditions that prevent driving. The region also faces accessibility issues, such as inadequate public transport options, inaccessible bus stops, and limited facilities for people with mobility impairments.

8 ABS Census 2021, Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), NSW, Index of Relative Socio Economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD) by SA1

Many Aboriginal communities in the region face distinct vulnerabilities. With 33 per cent of children aged 0–5 identified as vulnerable and 18 per cent of these identifying as Aboriginal, ensuring reliable and culturally sensitive transport to essential services such as healthcare, early childhood education, and community support is paramount. Furthermore, of about 874 children in out-of-home care in the region, 46 per cent are Aboriginal, reflecting ongoing challenges related to trauma and social disadvantage.[9] These statistics call for a transport network that supports not only connectivity but also social inclusion by reducing barriers to accessing services and fostering community cohesion.

Cultural diversity and migration

The region's culturally and linguistically diverse residents also offer insights into multiculturalism, ethnic diversity and catering to transport needs. Within the region, 14 per cent of residents have a poor English proficiency, which is slightly lower than the NSW average of 16.5 per cent. Within the region, Wollongong LGA has the highest proportion of people with poor proficiency in English (11 per cent), followed by Shellharbour (7 per cent).[10]

Migration patterns also reflect a changing region, with four per cent of the region's population in 2031 expected to have arrived in Australia within the previous decade.[11]

The region needs transport services, including behavioural and licensing programs, that are easily accessed by people from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Our understanding of cultural diversity will also need to be enhanced as part of project specific problem definition and solution design.

Urban form and settlement: city, country, coast

Settlement in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region can be understood as the urban area of the greater Wollongong-Shellharbour metropolitan area in the north, contrasting with the rural areas of Shoalhaven in the south.

In the north, Wollongong stands as the region's major urban centre, featuring a compact city structure with a mix of high-density residential, commercial and industrial land uses. Its well-defined urban core supports a growing population and offers access to employment, education and cultural amenities. Shoalhaven LGA is defined by smaller, dispersed centres such as Nowra, Ulladulla and Milton, set against a predominantly rural backdrop. Notable dispersed coastal settlements of Sanctuary Point, Sussex Inlet, Huskisson and Jervis Bay lie to the south-east of Nowra. These centres are spread across a significantly larger area, with lower population densities and rural landscapes that define their character.

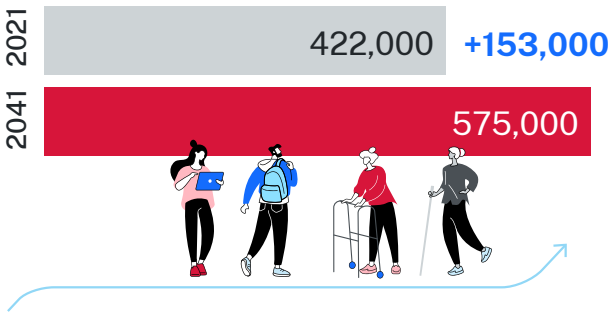
These variations highlight the diverse urban, rural and coastal character of the region. While Wollongong serves as a densely populated hub, Shoalhaven's population is dispersed across numerous towns and villages, reflecting its expansive geography and rural context.

9 NSW Department of Communities and Justice (2024)

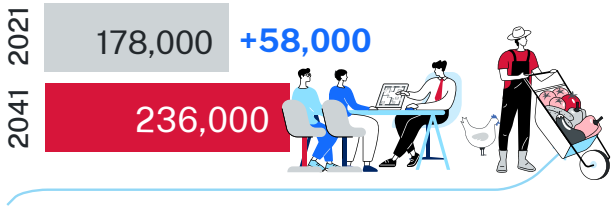
10 ABS Census 2021

11 NSW Common Planning Assumptions Population Projections (TZP24)

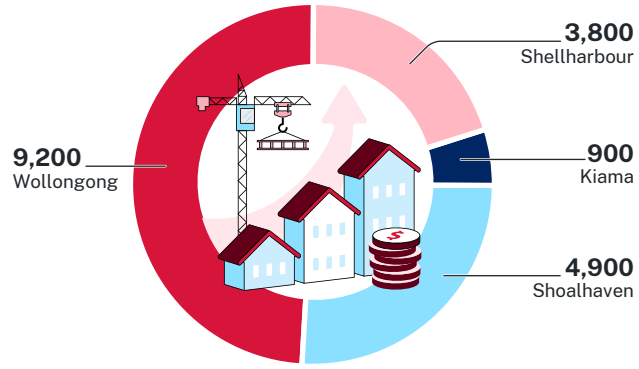
36% Population increase



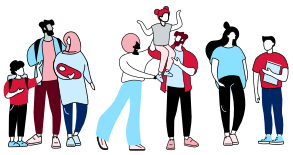
33% Employment increase



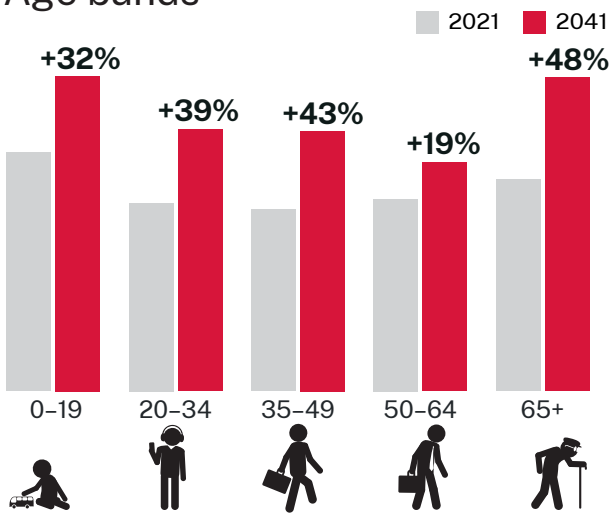
5-year housing target for councils



Population density

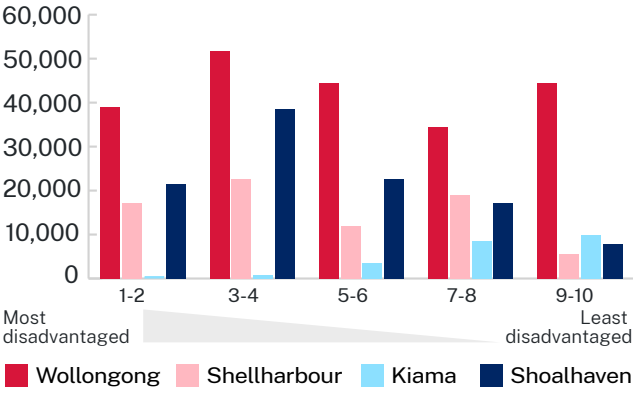


Age bands



The population aged 15-64 will increase by **58,000** people from **284,000** in 2021 to **342,000** in 2041.

Level of disadvantage by LGA



Cultural diversity 2021

People born in non-English speaking countries	**10.8%**
Population of new migrants arrived in Australia between 2011 and 2021	**1.6%**
People reporting English speaking proficiency as: 'Not well or not at all'	**14.4%**
Population identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	**4.3%**
Number of discrete Aboriginal communities	**3**

Sources: SEIFA index of disadvantage 2021.
NSW Government commitment under the National Housing Accord.
TZP24 Employment Projections dataset, TZP24 Population, Housing and Dwelling dataset.
2021 Census Data to ABS 2021 Census [General Community Profile]. NSW CPA Population and Dwelling Projections and NSW Planning and Environment.

Figure 6. Population, housing and demographics of the Illawarra Shoalhaven region

Transport Oriented Developments and emerging precincts

Several emerging large-scale precincts and Transport Oriented Development (TOD) sites have the potential for significant growth in the region, and are expected to re-shape travel patterns and transport networks to support their growth. Major sites include the Corrimal and North Wollongong TODs, the BlueScope Steel site, the Flinders Street corridor in North Wollongong, Shellharbour Hospital (Shellharbour Junction), Shoalhaven Hospital (Nowra), University of Wollongong, and Warrawong.

TOD is a land use planning approach that encourages mixed-use development around rail stations or other areas of high public transport access. The State Government's TOD program aims to create vibrant, walkable communities by providing housing near transport hubs. Housing at these locations will benefit from a quicker approval process, with a new State Environmental Planning Policy in place to increase the capacity for more mid-rise housing and mixed-use development.

The intent for these sites is to support options for more sustainable travel choices, by enabling reduced private car use and reliance, and reduced demand for road space and parking. By 2041 the three TOD precincts in the Illawarra Shoalhaven are expected to accommodate the following increased residents and jobs:

1. North Wollongong TOD: 2400 new residents and 700 new jobs[12]
2. Corrimal TOD: 3000 new residents and 400 new jobs[13]
3. Dapto TOD: 100 residents and 900 jobs.[14]

The NSW Government has also committed $500,000 to investigate the transport infrastructure needed to support the proposed redevelopment of BlueScope's surplus industrial land at Port Kembla. The master plan encompassing 200 hectares adjacent to the steelworks includes a potential new 'super TAFE' to support training and job opportunities in the region.[15]

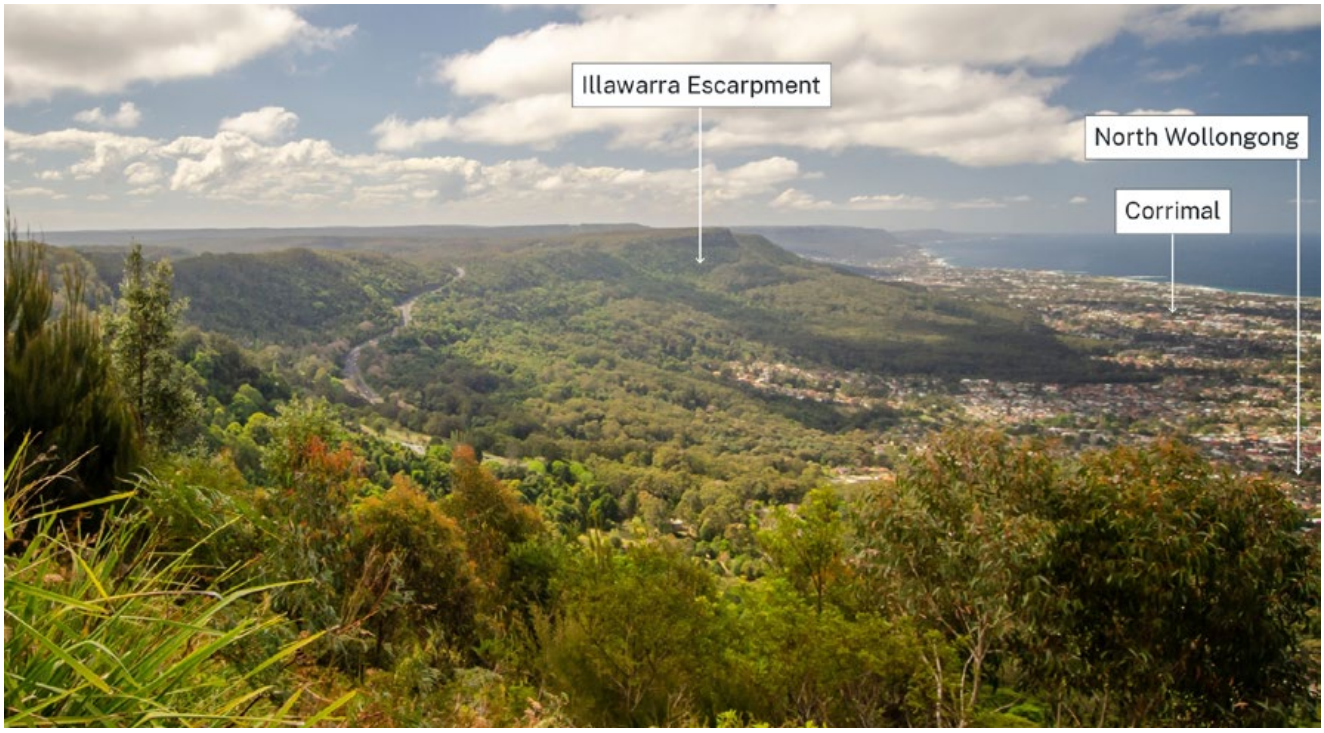
Growth areas

The Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041 identifies three major regionally-significant growth areas at West Lake Illawarra, Nowra-Bomaderry and Bombo, which are planned to accommodate substantial future population and employment growth. The growth areas are places that will be developed through collaboration between developers, councils and government. These precincts are integral to driving housing diversity, job creation and vibrant communities across the region.[16]

The region's largest housing release areas are West Lake Illawarra and Nowra-Bomaderry, which are projected to deliver over 30,000 new homes by 2041, with 17,000 currently zoned for development.[17] West Lake Illawarra encompasses areas of West Dapto, Kembla Grange, Tallawarra and Calderwood. Other major growth areas include Callala Bay, and longer-term development of urban expansion precincts around Kiama including the Bombo quarry and adjoining areas for over 4000 dwellings.[18]

A Housing and Productivity Contribution (HPC) for the Illawarra Shoalhaven is in place to help fund the delivery of infrastructure including in the West Lake Illawarra and Nowra-Bomaderry growth areas. Transport for NSW is working with DPHI, local government and industry to ensure HPC-funded transport infrastructure is proactively delivered to meet anticipated demand.[19]

12 NSW Travel Zone Projections (TZP) 2024, TZ 5641, 5642
13 NSW Travel Zone Projections (TZP) 2024, TZ 5613, 5615
14 NSW Travel Zone Projections (TZP) 2024, TZ 5717
15 https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/news-and-events/media-releases/future-focus-for-transport-connections-to-port-kembla
16 Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041
17 Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041
18 http://www.boral.com.au/borals-bringing-bombo-back, Kiama Draft Local Housing Strategy 2025
19 Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Transport Plan



View from the escarpment, Illawarra Escarpment State Conservation © John Spencer/NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

4.2 Topography, natural environment and climate

Nestled between the Illawarra Escarpment, the coast, and the bush

The Illawarra Shoalhaven region is defined by its natural landscape, including the Illawarra Escarpment, which forms part of the Great Dividing Range, as well as expansive national parks, state forests, and stunning coastline. The escarpment rises steeply behind many of the region's largest cities such as Wollongong, which are nestled between its rugged terrain and the Pacific Ocean.

This geography creates both opportunities and challenges when providing effective safe and low-cost options for public transport and road projects.

The escarpment's steep inclines and limited crossing points restrict critical east-west connections for the delivery of safe, cost-effective public transport and road infrastructure. The stark change in landscapes and topography, and the demand for growth between the northern and southern sides of the region highlight the need for targeted transport solutions that reflect changing needs while responding to the natural environment of the region.

The vast areas of national park and state forest in the Shoalhaven, along with other protected areas spread across the region, safeguard its ecological and scenic values while also influencing the placement of transport corridors.

Weather and climate impacts on the transport system

The climate of the Illawarra Shoalhaven region, from the coastal warmth of Shoalhaven and Shellharbour to the cooler highlands of the Illawarra Escarpment, places significant stress on transport systems, requiring durable materials and consistent maintenance.

The region is highly vulnerable to the impacts of bushfires and is still recovering from the impacts of the 2019–20 bushfires, which devastated many communities especially in the Shoalhaven. A large portion of the region, including the Shoalhaven and Illawarra Escarpment areas, is classified as Category 1 bushfire-prone land, the highest risk category. These areas are characterised by vegetation with the highest combustibility, capable of producing fully developed fires and heavy ember attacks. Urban centres such as northeast Nowra, coastal towns like Gerringong, and parts of Wollongong fall into Category 2, indicating moderate bushfire risks.[20]

Coastal areas are exposed to storm surges and heavy rainfall events, while the escarpment experiences landslides and challenging conditions during severe weather. Intense rainfall and associated flooding can disrupt road and rail connections, particularly in low-lying areas like the Shoalhaven River floodplain. Flooding events in 2021 caused widespread damage to homes and infrastructure in Shoalhaven and Shellharbour. Coastal erosion and storm events may also compromise critical infrastructure along the coastline, particularly in Wollongong and Kiama.

Future climate projections for the region indicate more frequent and intense heatwaves, heavier rainfall and rising sea levels, which have the potential to impact transport networks.

Car trapped in floodwaters, Otford © Melanie Garrick/NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

20 NSW Rural Fire Service 2025

Figure 7. Geographic context of the Illawarra Shoalhaven region

4.3 The changing economy of the Illawarra Shoalhaven region

The Illawarra Shoalhaven region enjoys a diverse and growing $27.231 billion economy.[21] The region's main value-adding industries include manufacturing, education, tourism, information technology, defence, and professional services. Traditionally, the region is known for steelmaking and coal exportation but is diversifying in response to technological advances and environmental policy changes.

Wollongong, as the regional capital, anchors the economy with healthcare, public administration and food services as key industries, alongside retail and education. Its skilled workforce, proximity to Sydney and industry-focused research institutions highlight the need for robust regional and inter-regional transport connections. Port Kembla is central to the region's economy as a state and regional gateway, alongside nearby manufacturing and industrial areas including BlueScope steel manufacturing.

Shellharbour benefits from its location near Wollongong, and coastal features such as Shell Cove Marina, with retail, residential care and recreational amenities driving growth and emerging opportunities in construction and healthcare services. Kiama is characterised by its tourism and agricultural base, supported by iconic coastal attractions and a growing professional services sector.

Shoalhaven leverages its coastal and rural appeal, with its regional capital Nowra and other coastal settlements at Milton-Ulladulla supporting tourism, defence industries at the Royal Australian Navy Bases around South Nowra and Jervis Bay, and healthcare as economic drivers, alongside growing sectors like construction and road freight transport and agricultural products manufacturing including the Manildra Group wheat starch and ethanol plant at Bomaderry.

The Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041 identifies Metro Wollongong, Shellharbour City Centre, Nowra City Centre, Milton-Ulladulla and Kiama for further growth in housing and jobs, positioning these centres as key destinations for employment, education, retail, and services.[22] To sustain economic development, the transport plan must address connectivity challenges, support freight movement and ensure infrastructure aligns with the evolving needs of the region.

Employment

Employment in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region is projected to grow significantly in line with population growth in the coming decades, with an additional 58,600 jobs to a total of 236,100 by 2041, a 33 per cent increase over 20 years. Healthcare and social assistance is expected to lead with a 47 per cent rise, reaching 48,000 jobs by 2041, reflecting the region's ageing population and increasing demand for health services.[23] This expanding workforce emphasises the need for a transport system that connects residents to current and emerging employment clusters, provides access to training and education, and supports emerging industries (Figure 8).

Wollongong has the largest workforce, with 100,500 full-time workers in 2021, with strengths in healthcare and public administration. Shoalhaven's Nowra City Centre supports 9000 jobs,[24] primarily in healthcare, retail, public administration and defence, underscoring its importance as a gateway to the South Coast. Approximately 1600 Defence personnel are based in the Shoalhaven region.[25]

Shellharbour features a city centre with 4500 jobs, driven by retail and healthcare, and opportunities for diversification through smart work hubs and a growing night-time economy. In Kiama, 66 per cent of local jobs are filled by residents, but over half of its workforce commutes elsewhere, highlighting the need for improved inter-regional connectivity.

21 NIEIR State of the Regions 2022–23

22 Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041, DPHIE (2021)

23 ABS 2021 Census [Community Profile]

24 Transport for NSW, Travel Zone Projections 2024, employment projections

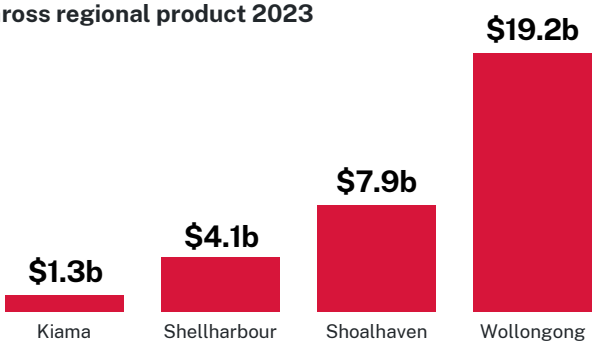
25 ID Profile 2021 https://profile.id.com.au/shoalhaven/defence-service?SWebID=303&WebID=10

Table 3. Employment growth by LGA[26]

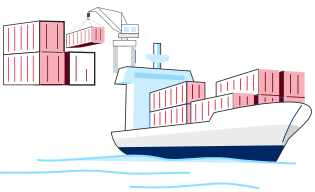
Local government area	2021	2041	Change
Kiama	7,400	9,800	32%
Shellharbour	24,200	34,200	41%
Shoalhaven	45,400	61,100	35%
Wollongong	100,500	131,000	30%
Total	177,500	236,100	33%

Economic contribution

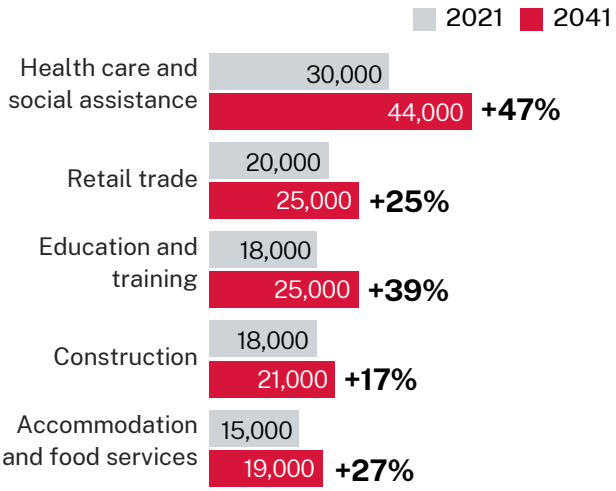
Gross regional product 2023



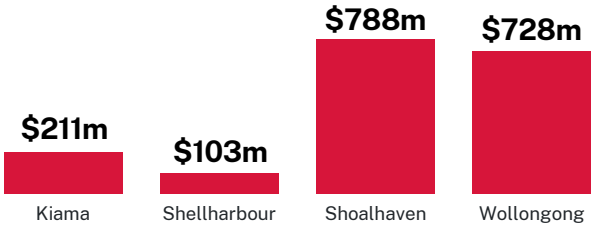
Port Kembla contributes **$2.9 billion** a year to the State economy supporting about **10,000 jobs**.



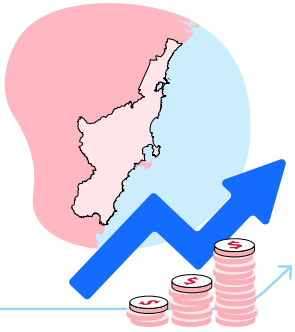
Top 5 employment industries in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region



Tourism spend in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region



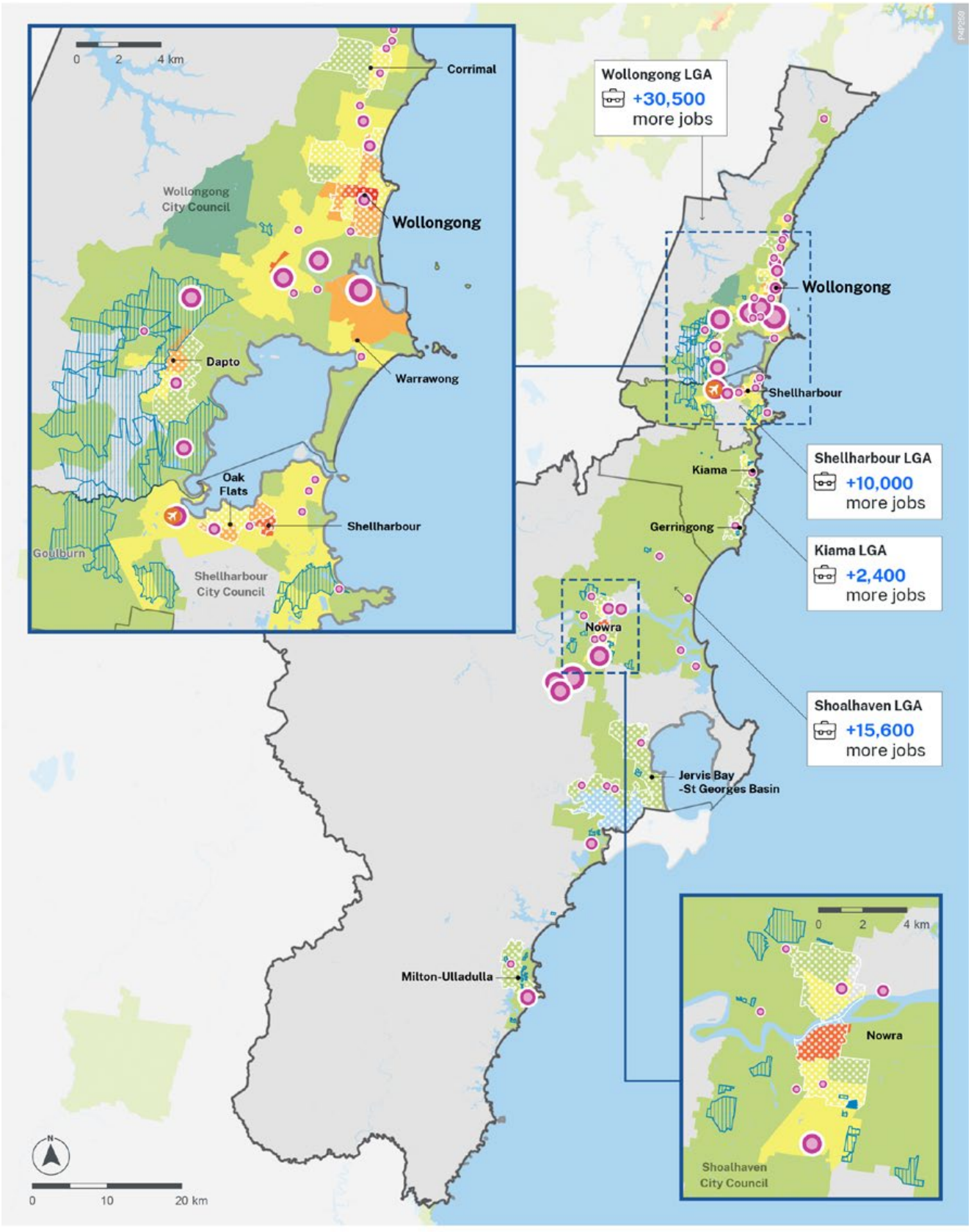
In 2021 **healthcare and social assistance** contributed **$2.6b**, **construction** contributed **$2.2b** and **education and training** contributed **$1.7b** to the Illawarra Shoalhaven economic output.



Sources: Remplan, NSW Ports, Tourism Research Australia, TZP24 Employment Projections dataset and id.com 2024.

Figure 8. Economic summary of the Illawarra Shoalhaven region

26 NSW Common Planning Assumptions Employment Projections (TZP24)



Source: Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, 2022. Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041. Transport for NSW, Travel Zone Projections 2024 Employment, State Government of NSW and NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure 2025, Urban Development Program. Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, Employment Lands Development Monitor 2022.

Figure 9. Employment change from 2021 to 2041

Aerial view of Port Kembla

Port Kembla manufacturing precinct

Port Kembla is NSW's third largest trading port located just south of Wollongong. The port and nearby industrial manufacturing precinct are critical drivers of the Illawarra Shoalhaven economy and a vital link in the NSW supply chain, contributing $2.9 billion annually to the NSW economy and supporting around 10,000 jobs.[27] The precinct's strategic role in freight, logistics and economic growth underscores the importance of transport infrastructure that connects the port efficiently to regional and statewide transport networks, enabling it to adapt to evolving economic demands and future growth.

Port Kembla handled more than 400,000 motor vehicle imports in 2023,[28] and also facilitates the movement of agricultural products, minerals, dry and liquid bulk cargo, and components for state significant projects such as wind turbines, tunnel boring machines and new trains for public transport.

27 NSW Ports corporate brochure

28 NSW Ports corporate brochure

The visitor economy and tourism

Based on 2016–2019 statistics (Table 4), over 15.5million international and domestic visitor days and nights are spent in the Illawarra Shoalhaven each year, representing eight per cent of total visitors to NSW[29] and contributing $1.8 billion to the regional economy each year. Shoalhaven LGA hosts the most overnight domestic and international visitors with almost 4.8 million visitor nights per year, while Wollongong hosts the most day visitors with over three million visitor days per year (Table 4).

The region's national parks and coastal areas are renowned for their recreational activities, attracting visitors and residents alike. Recreational boating, fishing and water sports are popular across the region, including destinations such as Wollongong Harbour, Kiama, Jervis Bay and Ulladulla. Popular destinations include the pristine waters and whale watching at Jervis Bay, the Kiama Blowhole, and historic Berry in undulating dairy country.

Major events at the WIN Sports & Entertainment Centres in Wollongong attract visitors to the region, for events such as 2022 UCI Road World Championships, which was expected to bring $100 million in visitor spending to the region.[30]

Table 4. Visitor economy and Tourism (2016–2019)[31]

Local government areas	Domestic day visits per year	Domestic visitors per year	International visitor nights per year	Tourism spend per year
Shoalhaven	1,540,000	4,530,000	241,000	$787m
Wollongong	3,078,000	1,928,000	1,674,000	$727m
Kiama	797,000	892,000	103,000	$211m
Shellharbour	363,000	266,000	83,000	$103m
Total	**5,778,000**	**7,616,000**	**2,101,000**	**$1,828m**

Illawarra Renewable Energy Zone

The Illawarra Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) is part of the NSW Government's commitment to develop five REZs across the state under the NSW's Net Zero Plan.[32] The Illawarra REZ is aimed at strengthening the region's economy and supporting jobs growth in the coming decades. The region was chosen for its potential to harness significant offshore wind generation and has strong demand for future hydrogen projects, including for future green steel production.[33]

The REZ will use rehabilitated industrial land and port and transport infrastructure, and leverage local skilled workforces to help drive a 50 per cent reduction in emissions by 2030. The Illawarra REZ is unique in its aim to be a 'two-way' REZ, able to supply clean energy into the grid and also store clean energy.[34]

29 Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041 page 36
30 Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041
31 Tourism Research Australia Local Government Area Profiles 2019
32 https://www.energyco.nsw.gov.au/ilw-rez
33 https://www.energyco.nsw.gov.au/ilw-rez
34 No projects in the pipeline for $43 billion Illawarra Renewable Energy Zone – ABC News

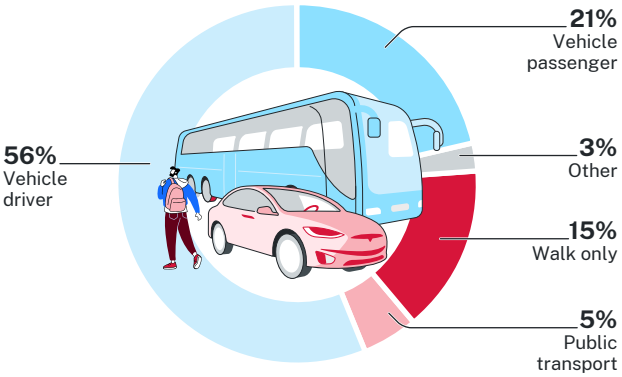
4.4 How people and goods travel in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region

The Illawarra Shoalhaven region has contrasting urban and rural transport systems. Wollongong and Shellharbour in the north exhibit a more urbanised environment, while Shoalhaven and Kiama in the south are predominantly rural and coastal. These differences shape travel patterns, reflecting the distinct needs and networks in each subregion. In urban areas, the higher population density and proximity to services support the potential for public and active transport, whereas rural and coastal settlements face limited public transport options and longer travel distances, often reinforcing reliance on private vehicles.

Traffic driving through Thirroul, near Wollongong © NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure/Dee Kramer

Mode share and car ownership

For large sections of the region, especially in the Shoalhaven region, whether it is personal preference or limited choices, private vehicles are the most common form of transport in the region, with 56 per cent of all trips being undertaken by car as either a driver or passenger in 2023. This reflects private vehicles' convenience and flexibility, particularly for those in rural areas with sparse alternatives. Public transport accounts for just 5 per cent of trips, underscoring its limited role in meeting the region's overall travel needs. Notably, 15 per cent of trips are walk only, reflecting the appeal of active transport for short distances, particularly in urbanised parts of the region.[35]



Source: Transport for NSW, Household Travel Survey 2023/24

Figure 10. Illawarra Shoalhaven mode share[36]

In a survey of travel behaviour in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region conducted for Transport for NSW, respondents indicated they were most likely to use a private vehicle because of its convenience, with participants reporting that their car allowed for easy travel to a greater number of locations, and driving took less time compared to public transport. The availability and pricing of car parking is a major contributor to the convenience of private vehicle use, with 64–72 per cent of respondents agreeing that parking was easy to access, and 75–80 per cent of business owners responding that staff had access to free car parking at their workplace.[37]

Household vehicle ownership further illustrates the region's reliance on cars, with 93 per cent of households owning at least one vehicle and 20 per cent having three or more. For the seven per cent of households without a private vehicle, access to employment, education, medical care and other essential services is a significant challenge, particularly in areas with limited public transport coverage.[38] Addressing this gap is critical to ensuring equitable access to regional opportunities.

35 Transport for NSW, Household Travel Survey, 2023/24
36 Transport for NSW, Household Travel Survey, 2023/24
37 Illawarra Shoalhaven Customer Behaviour Research, May 2024
38 ABS 2021 Census [Community Profile]

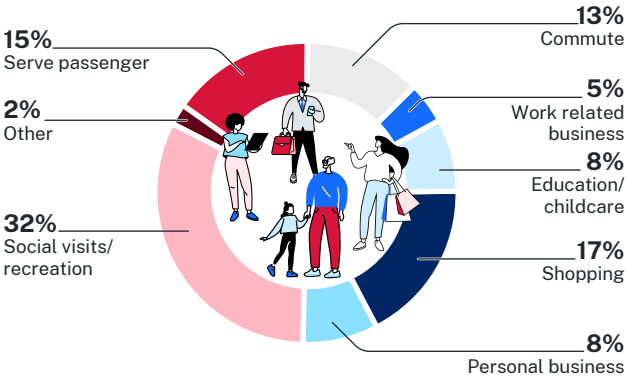
Illawarra Shoalhaven public transport network

3 Outer Sydney Metropolitan Bus Service Contracts + **6** Rural Service Operators

1 NSW TrainLink Coach line

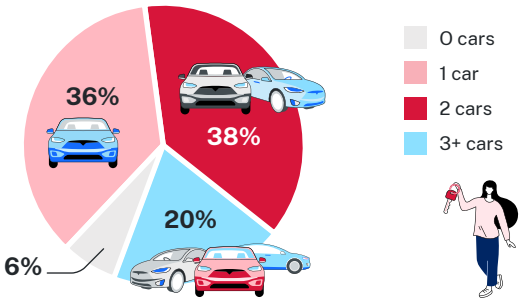
1 Intercity train line, **34** Intercity train stations

Travel purpose



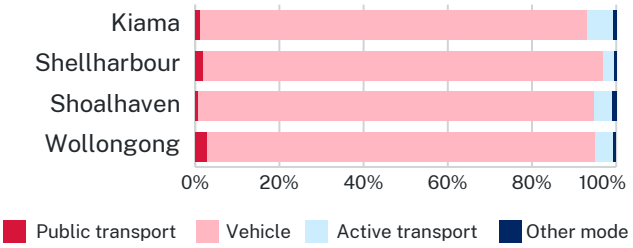
Source: Transport for NSW, Household Travel Survey 2023/24

Vehicle ownership per household



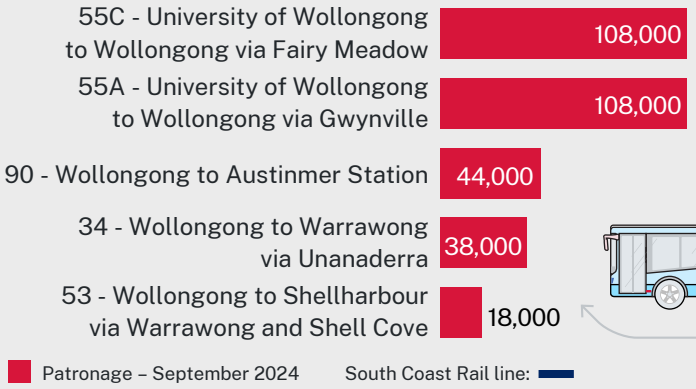
Source: ABS 2021 Census, general community profile

Journey to work mode share

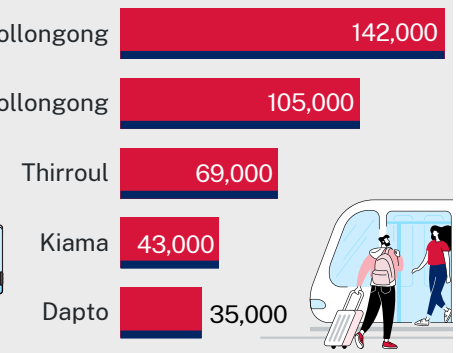


Source: ABS 2021 Census, general community profile

Top 5 patronised bus routes



Top 5 train station entries and exits



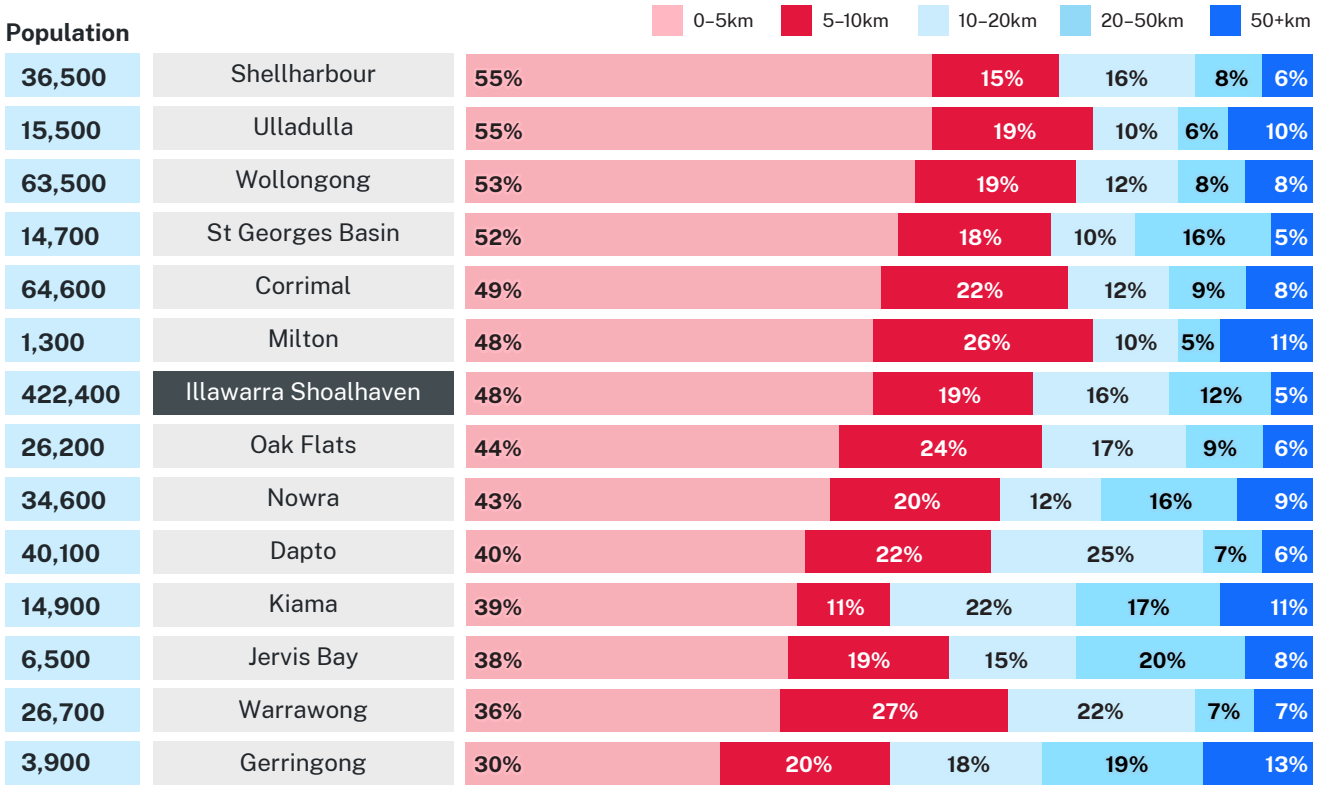
Source: Transport for NSW, Opal patronage data, 2024

Figure 11. How people travel in the Illawarra Shoalhaven

Travel purpose and distance

The main purpose of travel in the region is for social visits and recreation at 31 per cent of all trips, followed by shopping (18 per cent), serving a passenger (15 per cent), and commuting (11 per cent). Overall non-work-related trips comprise 75 per cent of all trips undertaken in the Illawarra Shoalhaven (Figure 11). This demonstrates a strong need for transport infrastructure and services that can met the needs of people travelling to a wide range of purposes, destinations, and times of day.

Trips to and from major centres are a key target segment to serve by active transport and public transport, to support reduced vehicle usage for access to dense and intensifying locations. Analysis of trip lengths from major centres shows that most centres in the region have greater than 40 per cent of trips under five kilometres, including strategic urban centres and regional towns such as Shellharbour, Ulladulla, Wollongong and St Georges Basin which have more than half of trips under five kilometres (Figure 12).



Source: DSpark Mobility Data 2024 and Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021 Census based on place of usual residence.

Figure 12. Length of trips starting in centres across the Illawarra Shoalhaven

Aerial view looking north along the Princes Highway and over Shearwater Way

4.4.1 Road network

The road network in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region supports the movement of people and goods. It supports all modes of travel, the growth of housing and the regional economy, and access to jobs. Spanning diverse subregions from the urbanised Illawarra to the scenic Shoalhaven, roads form critical transport corridors connecting local centres, regional hubs, and neighbouring regions, including Greater Sydney and the South East and Tablelands. Several main routes through the region reflect the historic travel routes used by the Dharawal, Yuin and other Aboriginal peoples.

There has been substantial road network investment over the past decade, with upgrades to the Princes Highway, including the Foxground and Berry bypass which has made the road safer, decreased the time spent for vehicles travelling beyond Berry and improved the attractiveness of Berry for day visitors, with a reduction in traffic movements.

The road network requires ongoing management and investment to ensure safety, efficiency, and reliability. Challenges such as road infrastructure built to old standards, topography, constrained road geometry and alignment, safety risks, and increasing demand necessitate strategic planning to meet future needs. Freight demand is expected to rise particularly for construction materials and steel commodities, emphasising the importance of efficient, well-maintained transport corridors.

The Princes Motorway, continuing as the Princes Highway south of Nowra serves as the backbone of the regional highway network, connecting Sydney to the Far South Coast, and accommodating inter-regional and local traffic. The corridor, along with key east-west connections, is essential for freight movement, linking regional industries to markets across NSW, the ACT and Victoria. The network also supports business, tourism, and leisure travel, reinforcing the region's role as a growing economic and cultural hub. Significant volumes of freight are moved by road, with the Princes Motorway estimated to carry an average of 10,100 heavy vehicle movements per day.[39]

Primary east-west inter-regional connections are Picton Road and Appin Road, providing access to south western Sydney, the Illawarra Highway and Moss Vale Road, connecting to Moss Vale and the Southern Highlands, and the Kings Highway and to a lesser extent Braidwood Road and Nerriga Road, connecting to Canberra.

39 Transport for NSW traffic counts, Princes Motorway near New Mt Pleasant Road, 2025.

KEY

- Metropolitan centre
- Regional city
- Strategic centre
- Port
- Regional airport
- Heavy vehicle rest areas
- Regional boundary
- State roads
- Regional roads

Freight network

- Key rail freight route
- Key road freight route
- Existing intermodal freight terminal

Source: The Key Road Freight route shown is a combination of the National Land Transport Network (NLTN) 2020, National Key/Secondary Freight Routes and the TfNSW Road Freight Hierarchy 2011.

Figure 13. Roads and rail freight network

Family on cargo bike, Bulli © Jeremy Park/NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

4.4.2 Active transport

Walking infrastructure includes networks of footpaths, shared pathways and pedestrian crossings. Urban areas like Wollongong or central Nowra benefit from a relatively comprehensive network, supporting general community access in the urban area, particularly near key destinations such as town centres, schools, and parks. However many areas often face gaps in walking infrastructure, where footpaths to town centres may be limited or absent altogether, creating barriers for residents to safely access essential services or public transport stops. This disparity highlights the need for investment in pedestrian networks to ensure there is adequate access across the region.

Cycling infrastructure in the region continues to grow. Councils and Transport have invested in key cycle corridors such as in Wollongong. Flagship connections in the active transport network include the Thirroul to Wollongong City Centre route, the Southern Coastal route linking Shell Cove to Wollongong, and the Lake Illawarra route.[40] These corridors aim to provide safe and direct routes for commuting, recreation, and access to education and employment.

In the Shoalhaven, notable shared path networks have been developed in Nowra, Ulladulla and Huskisson-Sanctuary Point. However, in many locations these networks have gaps and narrow paths, or involve conflicts with motor vehicles at driveways or road crossings. While the region offers significant opportunities for recreational cycling, topographical challenges and fragmented networks can make cycling for transport less viable. Missing links and limited infrastructure hinder the potential for a mode shift to cycling in these areas, underscoring the need for an expanded and connected network.

The Strategic Cycleway Corridors network for Illawarra Shoalhaven aims to provide safe cycleways for people of all ages and abilities. When delivered it will develop connections between key centres, schools, and other destinations.[41] Twenty-three strategic cycleway corridors have been identified for Illawarra Shoalhaven, forming a proposed 130 kilometre network of routes. As the region continues to grow and change, the strategic network will evolve to meet these changing needs and opportunities, as represented by the corridor extensions to connect communities in the wider area with jobs, health, and education.[42]

40 Draft Wollongong Integrated Transport Strategy, March 2024
41 Strategic Cycleway Corridors Illawarra Shoalhaven 2024
42 Strategic Cycleway Corridors Illawarra Shoalhaven 2024

4.4.3 Public transport

The Illawarra Shoalhaven region contains a variety of public transport services, supporting the movement of people across towns, cities and strategic centres within the region and providing links out of the region to Sydney, south-western Sydney, the Southern Highlands and the ACT. Public transport plays a vital role in providing mobility options for residents and visitors, and connecting its diverse subregions, which include the urban hubs of Wollongong and Shellharbour in the Illawarra and the more dispersed communities of Shoalhaven.

Rail

The South Coast Line is the backbone of the region's public transport system, linking Wollongong, Shellharbour, Kiama, and Bomaderry to Sydney. Stations including Wollongong, North Wollongong, Oak Flats and Dapto are important nodes, connecting passengers to local bus services and providing access to employment, education and regional attractions. Bomaderry, the line's terminus, is a gateway for Nowra and the Shoalhaven.

The South Coast Line along with the branch line to Port Kembla is a shared passenger and freight rail corridor, with 35 stations from Waterfall to Bomaderry and Port Kembla. The rail line is mostly single track south of Coniston and between Coalcliff and Scarborough. It has flat junctions to access Port Kembla and the Moss Vale-Unanderra line and collieries, and has several level crossings with major roads including the Princes Highway near Unanderra. The line is electrified north of Kiama.

During the non-peak period, rail services to Sydney consist of hourly express services from Kiama, hourly all stops services from Port Kembla via a transfer at Helensburgh, and two-hourly services from Bomaderry via a transfer at Kiama. As such most stations within the Wollongong metropolitan area have only an hourly service during the day. Potential improvements to frequency are limited without significant rail infrastructure investment.

There are distinct patronage variations across the region. Wollongong, North Wollongong and Thirroul are the busiest stations on the South Coast Line, with 140,000 total monthly entries and exits for Wollongong. The next busiest stations include Kiama, Dapto and Oak Flats, with up to 30,000 entries and exits per month, reflecting the concentration of activity in the region's urban centres compared to its peripheral areas (Figure 15).[43]

NSW TrainLink staff assisting passenger on the platform at Wollongong train station

43 Transport for NSW, Opal patronage data, 2024

People walking past zero emissions bus stopped at the University of Wollongong Innovation Campus

Bus

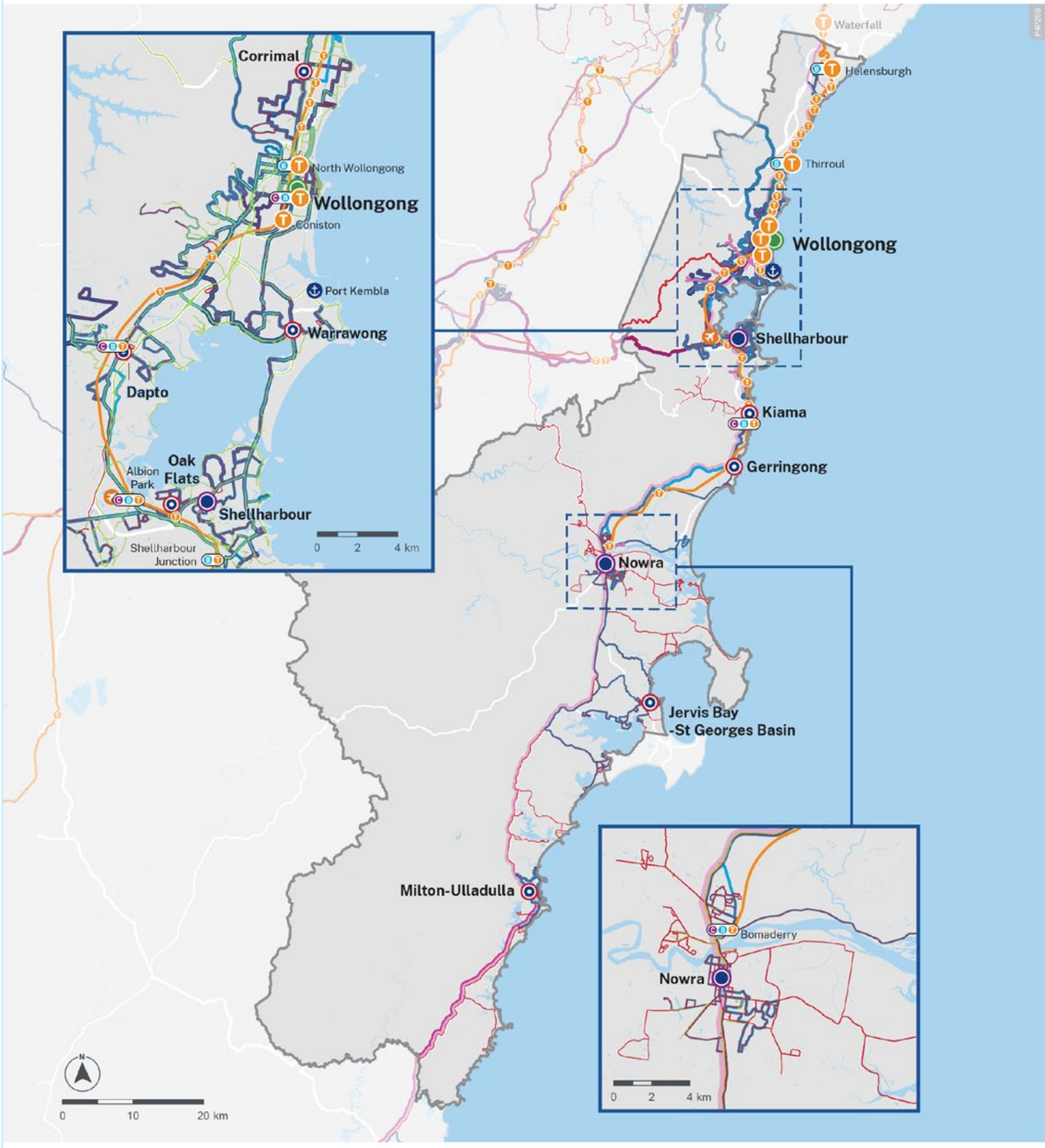
The bus system provides essential connectivity across the Illawarra Shoalhaven region, linking local centres, towns and cities. Buses are especially important to complement the rail network . Areas with highest bus usage include Wollongong, Figtree, Fairy Meadow and Warrawong.[44] However, limited frequencies, particularly on weekends and evenings, create barriers for some users.

The bus network focuses on connections to Wollongong, North Wollongong, University of Wollongong, Shellharbour City Centre, Dapto, Oak Flats, and Nowra. Major linear corridors are along the Princes Highway north of Wollongong, along an 'East Lake Illawarra corridor' between Shellharbour City Centre, Warrawong and Wollongong including Lake Entrance Road, Windang Road and Springhill Road, and along the Princes and Crown Street into Wollongong from the south–west.

In the Shoalhaven, bus services are commonly less frequent and less extensive, reflecting the dispersed population and rural landscape. These limitations restrict access to essential services and employment opportunities for those without private vehicles. Buses in the Shoalhaven area use paper tickets and are not equipped with the Opal ticketing system, which inconveniences passengers making trips across different parts of the region and leads to inconsistency in the availability of travel demand data. Expanding coverage and increasing service frequency in Shoalhaven will deliver improved regional equity and mobility.

Longer distance NSW TrainLink and private coach services complement local bus networks by providing direct connections between Wollongong, the South East and Tablelands, and the ACT. These services are vital for regional and inter-regional travel, supporting tourism, business, and social connections. The On Demand service enables day return travel from Milton-Ulladulla to Canberra.

44 Transport for NSW, Opal patronage data, 2024



Interventions are shown indicatively and may not be to scale.
*Bus trip frequency numbers are calculated based on unique stopping pattern to show most trips and most common routes per typical weekday. Source: Open data GTFS network, February 2025.

Figure 14. Public transport network and service levels

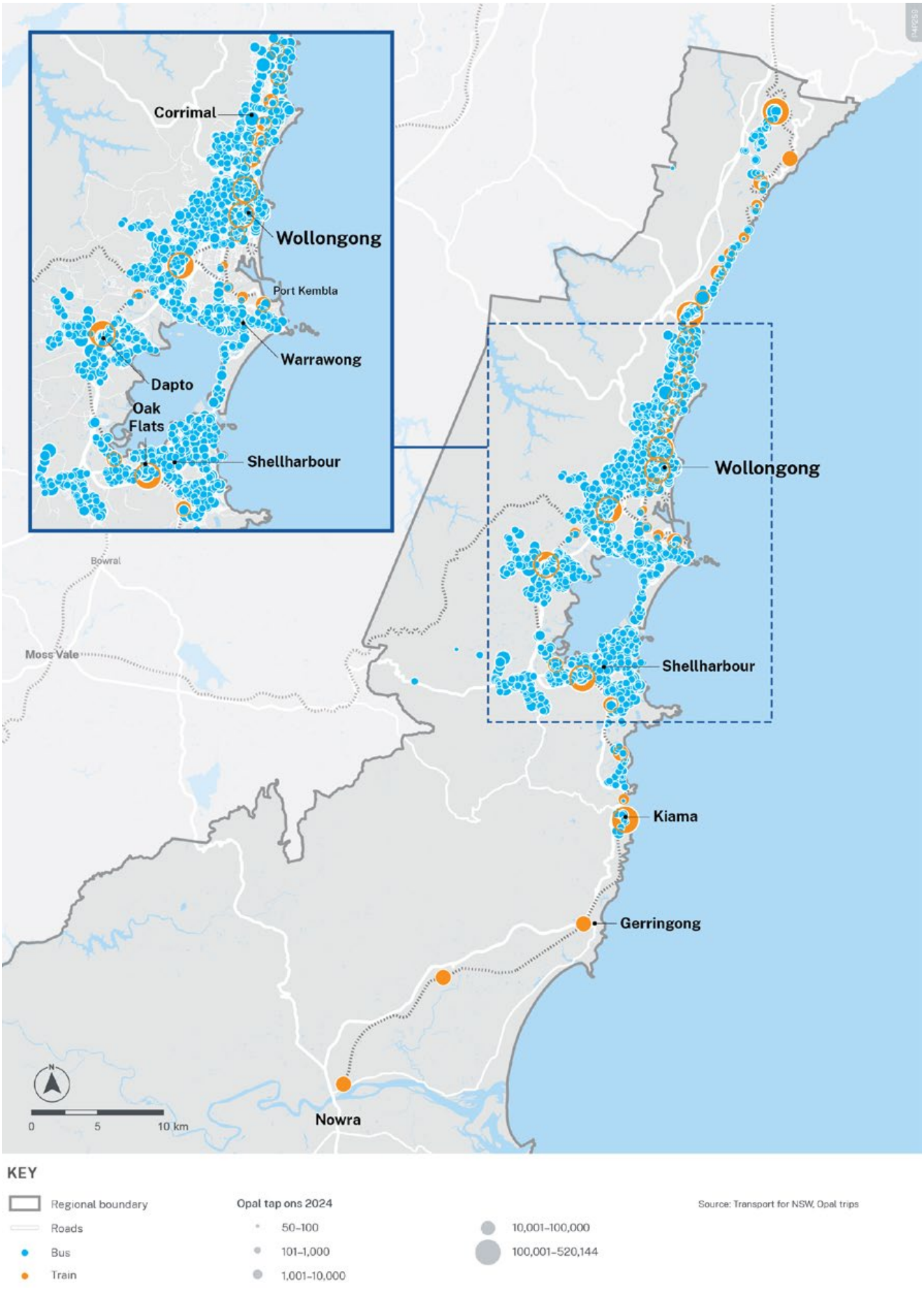
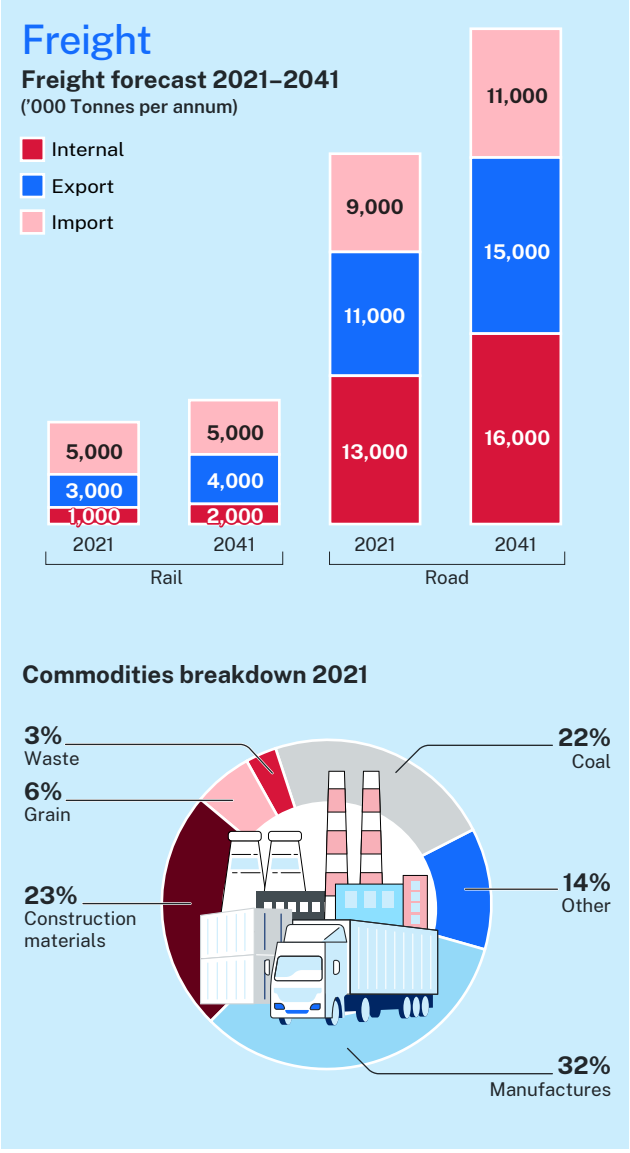


Figure 15. Opal bus and train tap ons 2024 (excludes Shoalhaven buses)

4.4.4 Freight, airports and maritime

The Illawarra Shoalhaven region, anchored by Port Kembla and its associated industrial precinct, plays a state and nationally significant role as a gateway between local industries, regional supply chains, and international markets. These freight movements rely on the region's road and rail networks. The port supports the region's manufacturing economy, handling bulk goods such as steel, coal, and agricultural products. The port also plays a role in automotive imports and emerging renewable energy industries.



Sources: Transport for NSW, Strategic Freight Model v47.

Figure 16. Freight forecasts and commodities breakdown

Almost 33 million tonnes of road freight and nine million tonnes of rail freight were transported through the region in 2021. This is forecast to grow to almost 42 million and 11 million tonnes respectively by 2041.

For road freight the main commodities inbound to the region include manufactured goods, while the main outbound commodities are vehicle imports, manufactured goods and quarry materials. By 2041, inbound road freight volumes through the Illawarra Shoalhaven are anticipated to increase to 11.2 million tonnes. Outbound road freight consisted of 11 million tonnes in 2021 and by 2041 is anticipated to increase to 15.3 million tonnes.[45]

Seventy per cent of rail freight through with the region uses the South Coast Line, with the remaining 30 per cent transported via the Moss Vale-Unanderra Line. The main commodities transported by rail are coal, chiefly for export via Port Kembla, grain products, cement and manufactured steel, contributing to a total outbound rail freight volume of 2.9 million tonnes in 2021.[46]

Large parts of the freight rail network are shared with passenger services, which creates scheduling conflicts that can disrupt both freight reliability and passenger service quality. Scheduling of passenger services takes precedence over freight, which is excluded from operating on shared lines during peak passenger times. As demand grows, these shared networks face increasing pressure, posing risks to network resilience, operational efficiency and economic connectivity.

Shellharbour Airport at Albion Park provides limited regular passenger transport services to Brisbane and Melbourne with flights available two to three days a week.[47] HMAS Albatross near Nowra is a military airport used mainly for helicopter training. The region's proximity to Sydney means that Kingsford Smith Airport is the primary hub for international and broader domestic air travel. Proximity to the future Western Sydney airport will provide additional options for passenger and freight movements for the region.

45 Transport for NSW, 2024, Strategic Freight Model v47

46 Transport for NSW, 2024, Strategic Freight Model v47

47 https://www.shellharbourairport.com.au/at-the-airport/flight-information/

Aerial view of Port Kembla grain terminal

4.5 Current and recently completed projects

The NSW and Australian governments have committed funding for a range of transport infrastructure and service improvements across the Illawarra Shoalhaven region to maintain safe and efficient travel options and to serve the area's growing population. Figure 17 highlights key projects that are being planned, in progress, or recently completed.

Key projects which have been recently completed in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region include the Princes Motorway bypass of Albion Park Rail, construction of the new Nowra Bridge, Transport Access Program upgrades at Bellambi, Dapto, Towradgi and Unanderra stations, and public transport service improvements in Nowra Bomaderry through the 16 Regional Cities Services Improvement Program.

Building upon these, several projects are currently underway including construction of the new interchange at the base of Mount Ousley on Princes Motorway, the upgrade of the passenger rail fleet on the South Coast Line, safety and efficiency improvements in Bulli town centre, and several safety and capacity improvement projects on the Princes Highway, including the Milton-Ulladulla bypass, upgrades between Hawken Road and Sussex Inlet Road, and construction of a new grade-separated intersection at Jervis Bay Road.

Transport is also developing a range of projects to address identified problems on the network and to support NSW Government priorities including increasing housing supply.

Projects such as the Illawarra Rail Resilience Plan, safety and efficiency upgrades on the Princes Highway between Jervis Bay Road and Hawken Road, the Bulli bypass and transport improvements, the Nowra bypass and transport improvements, and strategic cycleway corridor investigations are all progressing through development with community consultation planned or underway to keep people informed and to help refine the solution to better serve the community.

Aerial view of the Nowra Bridge upgrade

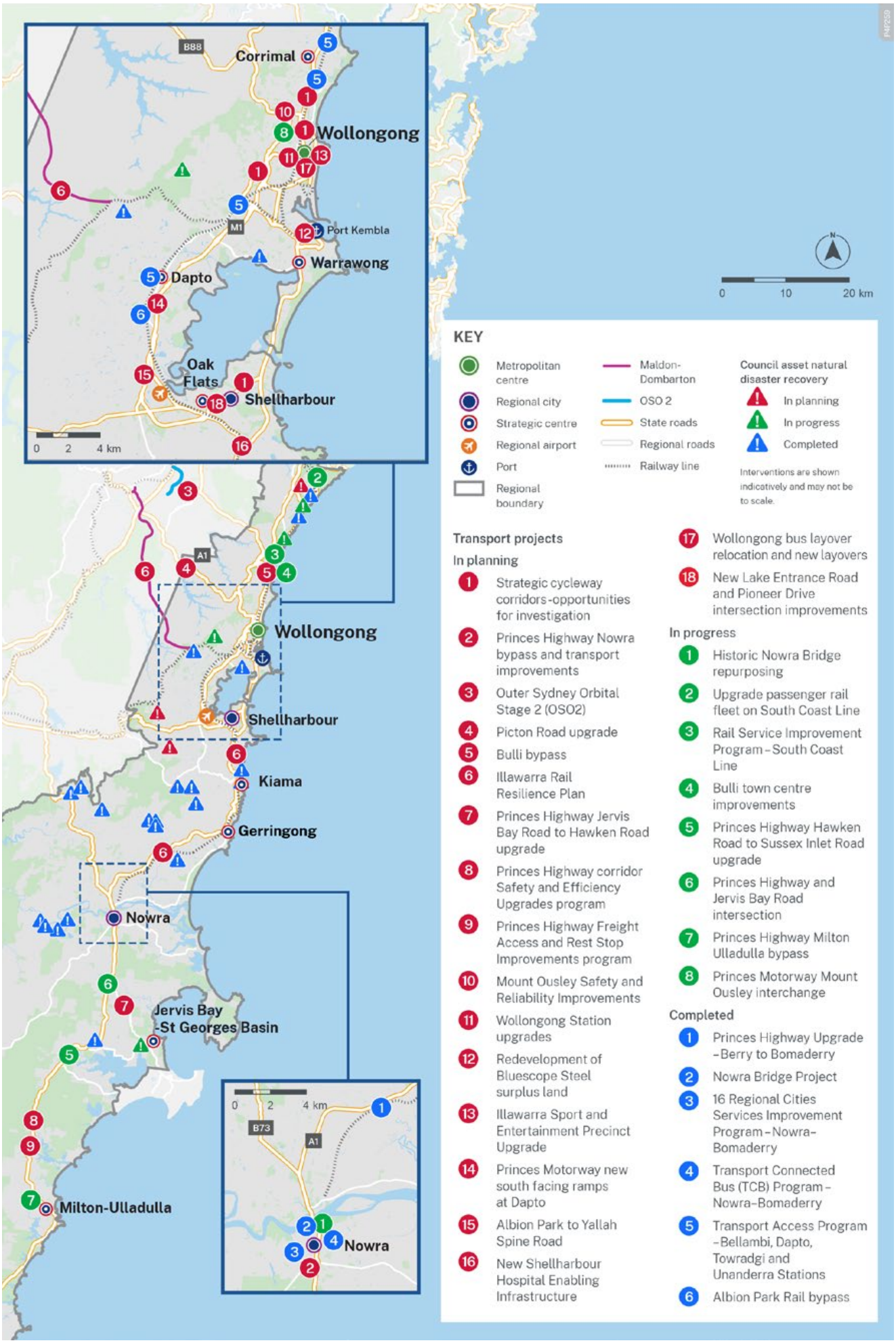


Figure 17. Current, planned and completed projects in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region

05 The transport challenge and opportunity

Open Streets Shellharbour City Council Eco Eats and Beats Street Festival © Amanda Mellor

Transport challenges and opportunities for the Illawarra Shoalhaven region have been identified to guide actions to meet the Plan's objectives.

The region's significant forecast population growth of 150,000 over 20 years[48] takes into account infill development around selected train stations and precincts, as well as 'greenfield' development of new suburbs. Transport networks and services will need to respond to the growing and changing needs of the region.

Limited viable public transport options, limited frequency, span of hours, and long end-to-end journey times, mean that transport disadvantage is a challenge for people without access to a motor vehicle. The region's dependence on private vehicle transport also limits efficient access to increasingly dense urban centres due to traffic congestion and delay.

Rail capacity constraints on the Illawarra network are a major challenge preventing significant increases in passenger and freight rail services. Increased rail services, particularly within the Wollongong and Shellharbour metropolitan areas, will become more important as the region's population grows. However, substantial uplift in rail services will depend on significant upgrades to rail infrastructure.

For active transport, a lack of quality bicycle routes to access major destinations, with adequate separation from vehicle traffic and pedestrians limits the uptake of cycling for everyday transport. Conditions for walking in the region's urban areas and towns are restricted by a combination of narrow or lacking footpaths, exposure to traffic on major roads, and limited crossing points across major road, rail or other barriers.

The forecast increases in road and rail freight between the Illawarra Shoalhaven, Sydney, and regional NSW is essential to supporting the region's economy. These movements rely on a limited number of high-capacity links across the Illawarra Escarpment, which are vulnerable to disruption from environmental events and traffic incidents.

For road safety, working towards zero road deaths and reduced road trauma remain a challenge, due to combined effects of the region's geography, road environmental context, current infrastructure, and driver behaviour.

Seasonal patterns of transport demand are a particular challenge, as visitors and tourists are attracted to the region during times of higher seasonal tourism, weekends and major events. The region needs to develop an adequate and sustainable response that manages network delay, impacts on local amenity, and elevated exposure to road safety risks. Transport network resilience in the region is challenged by the region's topography and environmental context and existing infrastructure, which restricts the options for movement of people and goods in and out of the region and leaves it vulnerable to disruption.

48 Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure 2024 NSW Common Planning Assumption Projections for year ending 30 June

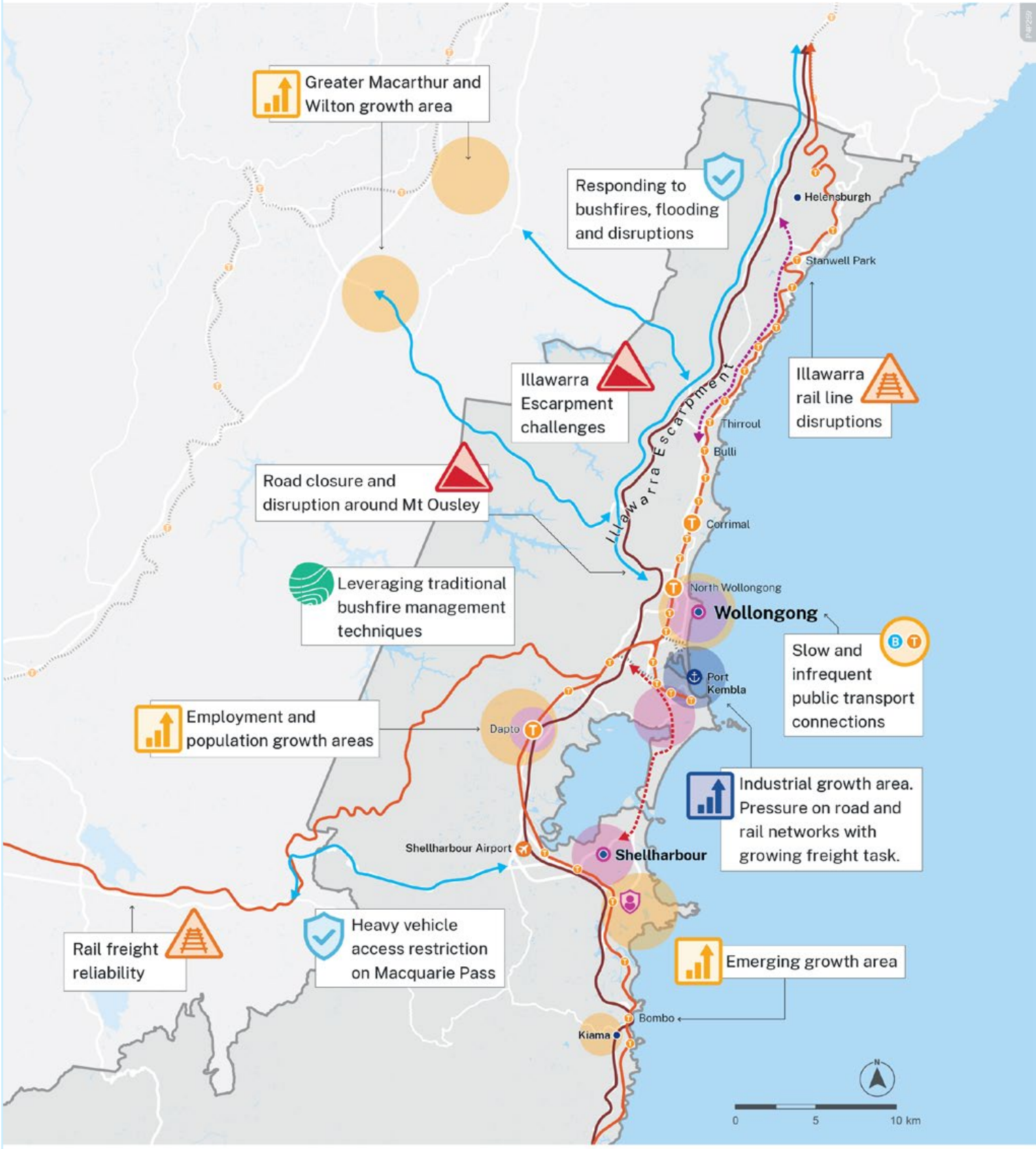


Figure 18. Challenges and opportunities: North

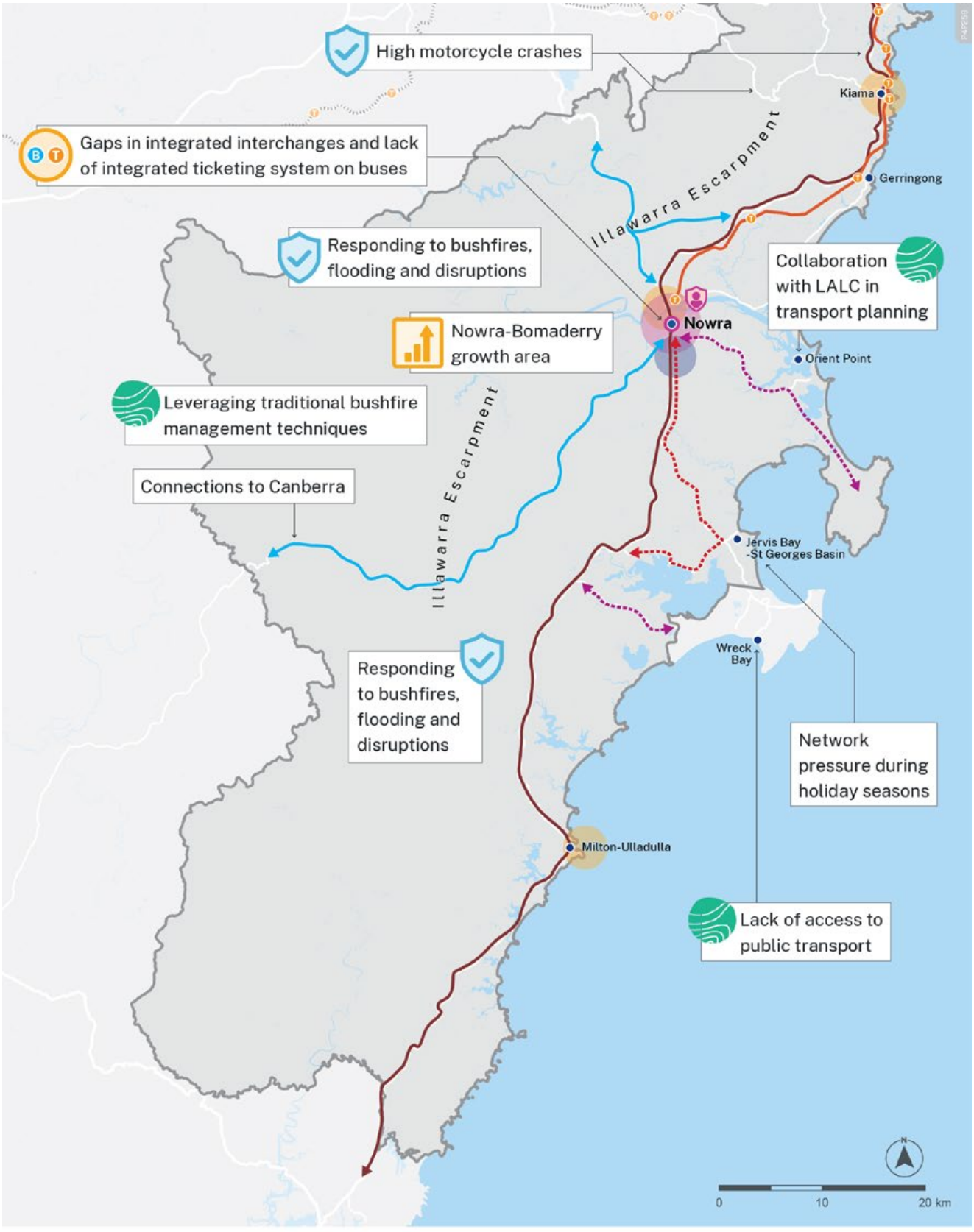
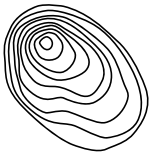


Figure 19. Challenges and opportunities: South

5.1 Starting with Country



All investments in the transport network, services, policy and technology take a Country-centred approach

Transport plays a vital role in improving access to essential services, including healthcare, education, training, and employment. Reliable and culturally sensitive transport solutions are needed to ensure that Aboriginal communities can maintain connections to their heritage and cultural practices while also supporting access to points of significance such as health and education services.

What we heard

- There needs to be more understanding of Aboriginal customers and their needs, and of access issues for discrete Aboriginal communities such as Wreck Bay.
- Aboriginal patients rely on community service providers, family and friends to drive them to medical appointments at the hospital or other services.

More feedback from the Aboriginal community will be sought during engagement on the Draft Plan.

5.1.1 Aboriginal communities experience high levels of transport disadvantage

Inadequate public transport for cultural and social connectivity

Discrete Aboriginal communities at Wreck Bay, Coomaditchie and Orient Point are designated areas where Aboriginal people live and maintain their cultural practices and traditions, providing essential cultural continuity and connection to heritage and land. For these communities, reliable transport is vital not only to support everyday needs but also to enable participation in cultural and social activities, keeping residents connected to their broader cultural networks. Despite recent improvements, such as the introduction of Route 111 offering two to three services per day between Orient Point-Culburra and Nowra-Bomaderry, many Aboriginal communities, like Wreck Bay, remain under-served by public transport.

Aboriginal residents in rural areas often face challenges accessing essential services and employment opportunities, with the first or last legs of their journeys posing significant barriers. Addressing these gaps in public transport services is crucial for ensuring equitable access and connectivity for these communities.

The 2021 ABS Census found that 8.4 per cent of households with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person(s) have no motor vehicles, compared to 6.5 per cent of non-Indigenous households.[49] This disparity underscores the reliance on public transport for many Aboriginal communities, yet access remains inadequate. For Wreck Bay, the cross-border governance aspect as part of the Jervis Bay Territory presents additional complexity, as it is administered by the Commonwealth rather than the State Government, creating jurisdictional challenges in addressing transport needs.[50]

Opportunities

- Work with Aboriginal communities to define specific transport needs, in particular for discrete Aboriginal communities such as Coomaditchie and Orient Point, to strengthen social and cultural connectivity and empower the delivery of transport solutions that sustain and create equity of access to essential services.
- Expand on existing routes (Such as Route 111 between Orient Point-Culburra and Nowra-Bomaderry) and identify opportunities to address the 'last leg' transport barriers that hinder full access.
- Expanding community transport initiatives, modelled on successful collaborations in other parts of NSW, for example the Aboriginal Funeral Transport Program, to bridge critical gaps in mobility.

5.1.2 Institutional and other barriers to Aboriginal people accessing the transport system

Systemic barriers, including challenges with obtaining and maintaining driver licenses, higher rates of driver offences, and limited access to registered vehicles, further restrict mobility and independence.

Aboriginal communities in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region face significant disadvantages, not only due to limited access to transport but also in areas like health, employment, and education. High rates of unemployment, poorer health outcomes, higher incarceration rates, and lower levels of education all contribute to ongoing challenges.[51]

Responding to this includes addressing barriers like the cost of transport, ensuring coordination between transport and key services, and promoting community-led transport initiatives that cater to the unique needs of Aboriginal people.

By providing accessible, affordable, and safe transport options, the region can work toward eliminating disadvantage and ensuring equal opportunities for Aboriginal communities.

Opportunities

- Directly address barriers to health, employment, and education by ensuring seamless connections to essential services and culturally significant locations. Coordinate transport routes with healthcare facilities, educational institutions, and employment hubs to improve attendance and outcomes for Aboriginal people. This includes addressing cost barriers, increasing coordination between transport and essential services, and promoting community-led transport initiatives that cater to the specific needs of Aboriginal people.
- Partner with Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALC), community transport providers, and programs like the Driver Licensing Access Program to reduce systemic barriers, enabling more residents to obtain licences, access registered vehicles, and improve independence.

49 ABS Census 2021

50 https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/territories-regions-cities/territories/jervis-bay-territory/governance-administration#:~:text=In%201995%20the%20Wreck%20Bay,Division%20of%20Fenner%20(ACT)

51 Clapham, K., Winch, S., Harwood, V., Kelly, P., Chandler, P., Senior, K., & Wu, D., Caring for Community, University of Wollongong (2024), Illawarra Aboriginal community profile: a snapshot of an urban Aboriginal community, (2016)

5.1.3 Lack of Aboriginal cultural recognition and safety on the transport network

The Illawarra Shoalhaven region holds a rich and diverse heritage, with deep connections between Aboriginal communities, the coast and the escarpment. However, these cultural ties and Aboriginal heritage remain largely unrecognised on the transport network, contributing to a sense of disconnection for many Aboriginal people. Cultural recognition on the transport network can reflect the history and identity of these communities, enhancing not only their visibility but also fostering pride and a stronger sense of belonging and cultural safety.[52]

Cultural safety is about creating socially, emotionally, physically and spiritually safe space where there is no challenge or denial of a person's identity. For Aboriginal people this means feeling safe, valued and able to participate in their cultural, spiritual and belief systems, free from racism, discrimination and lateral violence. About 46 per cent of Aboriginal men and 66 per cent of Aboriginal women report feeling unsafe in public spaces at night, compared to 31 per cent and 59 per cent of the wider population.[53]

Aboriginal people are twice as likely to be killed on NSW roads as non-Aboriginal people and are four times more likely to be involved in crashes on country roads. Transport for NSW works closely with Aboriginal communities to promote programs and initiatives under the 2026 Road Safety Action Plan.[54]

The inclusion of cultural identification creates positive outcomes and is central to self-determination aspirations and actions. Educating non-Aboriginal people that traditional knowledge systems and ways of being are valuable resources that can be used to educate and enrich all communities and foster a shared belonging.

Opportunities

- Collaborate with Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALC), such as those in Illawarra, Nowra, Ulladulla, Jerrinja and Batemans Bay, to ensure that cultural markers and Aboriginal heritage are meaningfully integrated into the region's transport network. This could include incorporating Aboriginal languages, artworks, and place names into signage and infrastructure, providing an opportunity to generate economic value through cultural tourism while also promoting cultural self-determination. Working with LALCs to build capacity for shared knowledge and foster collaborative relationships will help ensure that the transport network reflects and respects the cultural heritage of the region.[55]
- The transport network in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region has the potential to reflect and celebrate Aboriginal cultural heritage, fostering pride and a sense of belonging. Collaborate with LALCs to integrate Aboriginal languages, artwork, and place names into transport signage and infrastructure can enhance cultural visibility and recognition. This includes introducing cultural markers such as place names, artwork, and language in signage and bus routes. This can help make the transport network more inclusive and reflective of the region's cultural identity, promoting a sense of belonging and cultural pride.
- Support Aboriginal land management on Transport lands and assets, such as through cultural burns and hazard reduction along roadways being carried out in collaboration with Aboriginal community organisations. Develop a framework that identifies opportunities, structures and collaborative activities to support the introduction and integration of traditional Aboriginal cultural land management practices that will improve the resilience of the transport corridor network.
- Expand cultural education to the wider community, using the Planning with Country Guidelines and Government Architect's Connecting with Country framework, to inform planning and delivery.

52 Martin K, Mirraboopa B, Ways of knowing, being and doing: a theoretical framework and methods for Indigenous and Indigenist re-search. Journal of Australian Studies 27: 203–214, (2003)

53 TfNSW Safer Cities Report, 2023

54 NSW Road Safety Action Plan 2026

55 Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041

Young people visiting Diggies Cafe in Wollongong © Destination NSW

5.2 Access to transport for all

A transport network that provides a range of travel choices to all people living and working in or visiting the Illawarra Shoalhaven region

A primary objective of this Draft Plan is for the transport system to offer convenient access for all people living and working in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region. This is especially important for areas of transport disadvantage, and for people without access to a motor vehicle.

Challenges for many journeys are that public transport takes much longer than the equivalent journey by car, or that limited services are available in some areas and times of day, which limits the types of activities that people can reasonably carry out during the day. Walking and cycling may be viable alternatives, however, options for safe, separated, convenient and direct cycle routes into key destinations are limited. This Draft Plan identifies opportunities to improve public transport, walking and cycling options to provide access for all in the region.

The Illawarra Shoalhaven's geographic position, separated from Sydney and the Southern Highlands by the Illawarra Escarpment, means that overcoming barriers to connect with neighbouring areas has long been a theme for development of the transport network in the region. Other barriers stem from the region's extent encompassing both urban and rural areas, with aspects of the transport networks having historically been managed separately in these different contexts.

What we heard

- Public transport is perceived as unattractive, owing to limited options after peak hours (even as early as 6pm), feeder bus services often being the 'weakest link' for public transport users to connect with the trains, and the need to transfer between trains in Kiama acting as a deterrent for some customers to use rail services to connect to Sydney. In contrast, people prefer the car for its convenience, ease and speed.
- There is a desire for additional funding to support active transport initiatives, to address missing active transport links to connect with trains going towards employment hubs such as Sydney, Port Kembla and Nowra, and to address the lack of long distance bicycle paths for recreation.
- There is high demand for University of Wollongong students from south-west Sydney to attend campus in Wollongong, and vice versa. However, there are limited and unsuitable public transport options and a lack of last-mile active transport infrastructure.
- The absence of a taxi service in Kiama means there are fewer choices for local travel, including connecting to trains.
- Cars parked at entrances to towns such as Sussex Inlet show that people are getting other modes into the centre.
- There is a need for active transport links between Milton and Ulladulla, potentially connecting existing cycleways at both ends, to improve safety for cyclists, pedestrians and drivers, as well as potentially reduce the number of cars on the highway by enabling a healthy and safe alternative.
- The absence of public transport services to the discrete Aboriginal communities at Wreck Bay causes transport isolation.
- The lack of fare system integration, such as with Opal, prevents multimodal interchange in Shoalhaven, particularly for bus trips from Bomaderry rail.
- Owing to low frequency and long journey times on public transport, commuters from Illawarra Shoalhaven drive and park at stations with higher frequency services to Sydney, such as Waterfall and Sutherland, which in turn leads to localised congestion in these suburbs.
- There is a need for improved public transport connectivity to southwest Sydney, which is currently only serviced by bus route 887, which is primarily focused on connecting to the University of Wollongong campus, and not as useful for other trip purposes.

Traffic driving through Thirroul, near Wollongong © NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure/Dee Kramer

5.2.1 Transport disadvantage and car dependence due to lack of viable alternative transport choices

Barriers to accessing transport can significantly impact a person's ability to participate in employment, education, social, healthcare, and leisure activities. Examples of those who face significant barriers include older people, residents in rural and regional areas, individuals with disabilities or temporary injuries, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and people travelling with dependents.

> 'Making sure that basic footpath infrastructure and crossing points are in place is absolutely vital.'[55]

There is significant transport disadvantage across the Illawarra and Shoalhaven, with the capacity of community members to move across the region negatively impacted by both socio-demographic and geographic factors. Most notably, there are parts of the region, such as Shoalhaven, Bellambi and around Lake Illawarra, that often have poor service availability.

In addition, the transport system does not always meet the needs of the community, particularly women and girls, economically disadvantaged groups, people with disabilities, the elderly and children. As such, there is potential to increase use of public and active transport in the region by improving transport availability and usability for these vulnerable groups, which would improve health and social outcomes for the community.[57]

56 Illawarra focus group participant

57 Illawarra Shoalhaven Customer Behaviour Research, May 2024

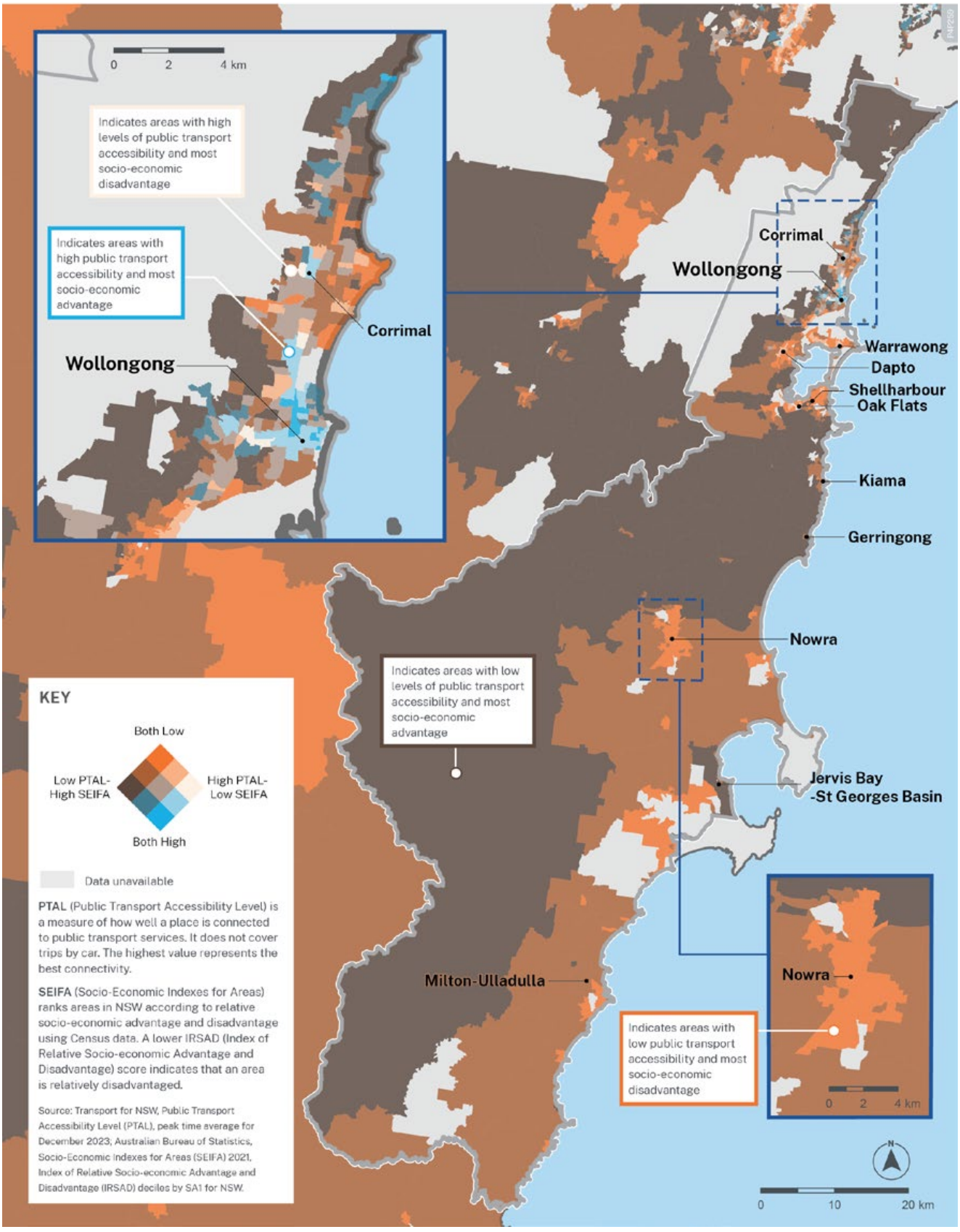


Figure 20. Transport disadvantage

The 2022 NSW Household Travel Survey suggests that private transport by car tends to be much faster than public transport in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region. On an average weekday, the average distance travelled by car is 10 kilometres, with an average drive time of 16 minutes. In comparison, the average distance travelled using public transport is only around five kilometres more, but the average on-board travel time is half an hour.[58]

In Shoalhaven and Kiama, there is a high proportion of people aged 65 years and above compared to the rest of NSW,[59] highlighting the importance of public transport solutions that cater to the mobility challenges of an ageing population.

The mode split for movements around Wollongong is approximately 72 per cent for private vehicle, with 16 per cent for walking and only four per cent for buses.[60]

Opportunities

- Leverage existing rail and bus networks to improve public transport availability, especially in areas of transport and socio-economic disadvantage and to major destinations.
- Improve active transport connections, including strategic cycle corridors and walking access to major destinations.
- Continue to leverage land use intensification and greenfield development planning processes to improve walking, cycling and public transport access.

5.2.2 Infrequent, slow and unreliable services detract from the convenience of public transport

Inadequate frequency and span of hours

Frequency of services is a primary driver of customer in satisfaction and use of public transport. However, few public transport routes and corridors in the Illawarra Shoalhaven offer convenient service frequencies that can support flexible 'turn up and go' travel in the region.

With 85–90 per cent of all journeys in the Illawarra taken by car, surveys show that this is due to public transport being seen less as convenient and flexible. A major factor in convenience is the frequency of services. Trip duration is reported as a key disincentive to using public transport instead of driving, with only 12–15 per cent of people agreeing that public transport was quicker than driving.[61]

For rail, challenges with the current service offering include slow rail journey times between Illawarra and Sydney, and infrequent rail services through Wollongong's greater metropolitan area and further south to Kiama and Bomaderry. This results in bus and train services not being available at the frequency required by people who need them the most, leading to a preference for private car use.

While bus network coverage extends to most populated areas of the region, many bus services in regional areas operate infrequently such as every two hours, and some do not operate on the weekend or at night. As the urbanised areas of the region continue to grow, the availability of viable public transport options is becoming increasingly important to the region's economic and social prosperity.

Poor all day train frequency in the greater Wollongong metropolitan area limits the viability of public transport for travel within the region. The potential for mode shift is limited without public transport services that can meet the needs of the community.

58 Illawarra Shoalhaven Customer Behaviour Research, May 2024
59 Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure 2024 NSW Common Planning Assumption Projections for year ending 30 June
60 Draft Wollongong Integrated Transport Strategy, March 2024
61 Illawarra Shoalhaven Customer Behaviour Research, May 2024

As per the NSW Bus Industry Taskforce's recommendations relating to service planning, it is essential to expand service coverage and frequency to address the current gaps. Importantly, the number and spread of school bus services – currently 57 per cent of all bus services – across regional NSW mean that additional regular passenger services outside the morning and afternoon peak may be provided without the need for additional buses and depots.[62]

With the exception of key routes on corridors accessing the Wollongong and Shellharbour city centres, many bus routes are indirect, with slow journeys and low frequencies. At interchanges, passengers often experience inconvenience or long wait times due to poor quality passenger facilities, inconvenient walking routes between services, and issues such as a lack of passenger information and lighting around stations and interchange facilities. Many bus routes have multiple variations and take circuitous routes, making the network difficult to understand and navigate, especially for new users.

Gaps in coverage

Particularly in suburban areas, complicated bus timetables and routes, and route networks with limited coverage or connectivity gaps, make the network difficult for passengers and new users to understand, and result in long journey times. Bus service gaps or long wait times in the evening, off peak and weekends limit the utility of the bus network to support the night-time economy and shiftwork into the late evenings, especially for key employment areas in defence, industry, and health.

A lack of safe and comfortable walking and cycling routes to access bus stops or stations can also reduce the effective reach and availability of the public transport system.

Challenging topography or narrow streets can limit the practical options for bus routes through some areas. For example, in Kiama there are limited public transport options available, except for hourly trains and occasional buses. Taxis do not operate in the area, which limits transport options for access to Shellharbour and other destinations.

Access to education, employment, health and essential services

Public transport provides an essential means to access education, employment and essential services, which is especially critical for people without access to a motor vehicle. In the Illawarra Shoalhaven, these people are heavily reliant on the bus network.

The University of Wollongong's main campus and Innovation Campus at North Wollongong are both reliant on bus access as their primary public transport option. Public transport is essential to providing student and staff access to these growing destinations. There is a growing importance of public transport options for access to TAFE campuses as course types and hours are diversified. Connectivity gaps for students and staff are a challenge to providing access to university and other tertiary destinations in the region.

Transport services are vital for ensuring students have safe and reliable access to education, including those eligible for subsidised travel under the NSW School Student Transport Scheme. However, the NSW Bus Industry Taskforce identified several issues with the current provision of regional school services, such as excessively long bus trips and poorly aligned timetables, which have led to some students arriving late for their first class.[63]

There is currently no defined process for schools to liaise with their local bus operator to identify solutions to school bus transport issues. This was recognised as a priority for Transport for NSW by the NSW Bus Industry Taskforce.

Public transport access to the region's growing and emerging health services clusters is becoming increasingly important, with major investments in the Wollongong Health Precinct and Nowra and Shellharbour hospitals. Public transport access to these precincts for staff, visitors and patients is essential to support network efficiency and to ensure that people with transport disadvantage can access these facilities and services.

62 Submission by BusNSW – December 2024

63 Bus Industry Taskforce Third Report May 2024, Submission by BusNSW – December 2024

Students on site at Innovation Campus, University of Wollongong © Destination NSW

Opportunities

- With 11 per cent of residents in the region and almost 40 per cent of residents north of Wollongong living within 15 minutes' walk of a train station,[64] there are opportunities to leverage the rail corridor spine through the greater Wollongong Shellharbour metropolitan area to offer more convenient and reliable passenger transport options for access to rail-based destinations within the metropolitan area and improve rail journey times between the region and Sydney.
- Improve public transport to address the challenge of infrequent and unreliable services, including by developing a 'primary' network of highly legible, frequent and convenient bus routes to provide better competition with car travel.
- Carry out area-based bus network reviews to deliver more available, efficient and reliable bus services, especially in suburban and rural areas and further south such as at Shoalhaven.
- Expand bus services to provide consistent evening, late-night and weekend coverage to ensure that options are available for a wider range of travel purposes including shift work and increasingly extended hours for retail trade, after hours educational classes, and general purpose activities.
- Improve school bus planning and service delivery, including with effective and practical school service planning guidelines, which need to be an important part of the broader SRITPs program. Collaboration between Transport, operators, and schools can unlock opportunities to improve safety and efficiency through thoughtful service planning, ensuring transport solutions not only meet student needs but also align with the broader community's expectations for school transport.[65]
- Work with the University of Wollongong and TAFE to inform bus networks and service design to support improve public transport access to campuses.
- Improve wayfinding and awareness of available bus services,routes and where to catch buses.
- Improve travel choice awareness through programs such as Travel Choices delivered in Greater Sydney, which work with major employers and education institutions to implement targeted awareness and travel behaviour initiatives to understand current behaviour and help participants upskill their travel planning ability and shift to targeted mode, time or route.

64 Travel time spatial analysis and ABS Census 2021

65 Submission by BusNSW – December 2024

Bike riding at Blue Mile, Wollongong © NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure/Don Fuchs

5.2.3 Disconnected cycling and walking networks limit the viability of active transport

> The shared bike track is such a positive asset. It gets a lot of vehicles off the road and lots of people get out and about improving their health and social interactions.[65]

The Illawarra Shoalhaven region's diverse topography and settlement patterns present unique challenges for growing the use of walking and cycling for transport, due to a lack of continuous connectivity or safe conditions with adequate separation from vehicle traffic. Lack of suitable, safe cycling infrastructure is a consistent barrier to increased cycling in the community, with surveys showing that seven in 10 people would ride a bicycle more often if they had access to safe cycling routes.[67] One third of parents have said they would let their children walk to school more often if there were improved footpaths and additional pedestrian crossings.[68]

For the region's urban centres, towns and rural and coastal communities, walking and cycling infrastructure varies significantly in availability and quality. These differences influence the extent to which residents can safely and conveniently access services, employment and recreation by active transport modes.

In the Wollongong, Shellharbour and Kiama areas, there are numerous barriers of hilly topography, and major transport links that disconnect movements across the region. There are major gaps or limited fit-for-purpose infrastructure that meets the needs of pedestrians, bike riders and users of emerging micromobility types such as e-scooters and e-bikes. Much of the existing bicycle network consists of paths shared by pedestrians and bicycles, which introduces conflicts and discomfort between users especially when use increases. In future it will be important to develop dedicated infrastructure for bicycles.

Around many major centres and precincts, the network is characterised by inadequate connectivity and poor amenity to support pedestrian access. Particular issues and gaps in the active transport network include a lack of

66 Illawarra Shoalhaven Customer Behaviour Research, May 2024

67 NSW Cycling Customer Value Proposition Research 2013

68 Active travel to school in NSW, 2024, www.nsw.gov.au/driving-boating-and-transport/get-kids-active/

separated cycleways and dedicated footpaths to the Wollongong CBD, Wollongong University and Shellharbour City.

In areas of the Shoalhaven and regional parts of the network, with dispersed settlement patterns and an ageing population, walking and cycling networks are needed to connect communities, support the visitor economy and connect to town centres, schools and other destinations. Further barriers to pedestrians include limited suitable crossing points across major roads such as the Princes Highway in the town centres of Nowra, Milton and Ulladulla. Missing links or the absence of connections between towns as well as on routes supporting holiday and recreational use limit activities in many holiday destinations for example between Kiama and Gerringong, and to the centre of Kiama.

> 'I wouldn't say there are paths down here in Ulladulla. Even my daughters often said, 'Can I ride to school?'. But she'd have to ride along the highway to get there, and it's just not feasible.'[68]

Cycling remains overwhelmingly a recreational activity rather than a means of transport, with only 32 per cent of regional NSW residents who cycle on at least a monthly basis riding for transport, compared to 88 per cent for recreation.[70] Transport for NSW will play a key role in collaborating with local governments to develop an active transport network and strategy.

The evolving micromobility transport sector, which includes electric bikes, electric scooters and shared e-bike services, offers alternatives for short distance journeys and for first and last-mile travel between homes and key public transport hubs. The challenging topography makes e-mobility particularly relevant in many parts of the region. In recent years the popularity of e-bikes has increased including among high school age children, which has highlighted various safety and legislative concerns, that are considered in the Government's recent E-micromobility Action Plan.[71]

Accessing and using public transport via bicycle can be challenging, particularly in regional and outer metropolitan NSW.[72] A lack of suitable end-of-trip facilities to support bicycle and micromobility trips to centres and stations, such as secure parking at stations and the inability to bring bikes on buses, can inhibit uptake of cycling as a practical and accessible mode of transport across the region.[73]

Opportunities

Develop strategic cycleway corridors that offer safe and convenient connections to major centres in the region. Support the Strategic Cycleways Corridor program to deliver priority corridors focusing on connections to major centres and destinations.

Work with councils and developers to deliver safe cycling routes, particularly between key areas such as Kiama and Gerringong, and provide peripheral cycling facilities like secure parking at stations and the ability to bring bikes on buses, which can offer a viable alternative to car travel.

Expand footpaths and cycle paths that connect public transport, schools, university and TAFE, residential areas and key destinations.

Leverage the relatively flat topography and grid-based street network in Nowra to provide a safe and convenient bicycle network for the city.

Explore placed-based opportunities to reallocate road space to walking and cycling on main streets following the principles of the Transport for NSW Road User Space Allocation Policy.

Investigate how micromobility devices and shared e-bike or e-micromobility schemes can be safely accommodated into the transport network to provide customers with more choice and greater flexibility.

69 Shoalhaven focus group participant
70 National Walking and Cycling Participation Survey 2023
71 NSW E-micromobility Action Plan, 2024
72 Strategic Cycleway Corridors Illawarra Shoalhaven 2024
73 Illawarra Shoalhaven Vision, Objectives, Challenges workshop Sep 2024

5.2.4 Dispersed settlement patterns are difficult to service with public transport

> 'For people without cars, who live in the smaller coastal villages, there are very few options for getting to the train line.'[73]

There is a lack of seamless public transport connectivity between the major regional centres of Wollongong, Shellharbour and Nowra, and the wider Illawarra Shoalhaven region. The current public transport network is often fragmented, with limited interconnectivity between different modes and services, making it difficult for passengers to travel easily across the region.[75]

The rail service to Shoalhaven has several issues, including the remote location of the rail terminus at Bomaderry, infrequent services and long journey times, and the need for most passengers to change at Kiama to make onward journeys to Wollongong or Sydney.

NSW TrainLink coach services are crucial in connecting rural and regional communities to urban centres, effectively bridging transport gaps in areas where rail services are unavailable. These services not only provide vital links for residents but also support the economic and social fabric of regional communities. Strengthening these connections through the SRITPs is fundamental to ensuring equitable access to essential services, including healthcare, education and employment opportunities.[76]

Dispersed coastal and lakeside settlements east of Nowra such as Sanctuary Point, Huskisson, Culburra and Sussex Inlet have very limited regular public transport connections and are difficult to efficiently service due to low population densities and limited access roads connecting these settlements.

The cessation of taxi services in Kiama in 2023 has resulted in an increased workload on community transport which is struggling to cope with demand. Unlike many other community transport organisations, Kiama Community Transport is unable to provide longer-distance services, such as to Sydney, travel for social events or any weekend services. Its sphere of operations is limited to the Kiama LGA and specific destinations in Nowra or the Illawarra.

Demand for community transport drops with distance from main centres, so it is centred on major towns. Shoalhaven medical services are a common destination, but community transport also provides transport to major cities like Wollongong and Sydney for higher-end medical services.

Access to essential services for dispersed communities, particularly in smaller centres outside Nowra, is vital to providing equitable transport options and reducing isolation for residents.[77]

Opportunities

- Expand and enhance public transport services that connect growing residential areas in the region with employment and activity hubs. This can reduce reliance on private vehicles and improve access to work opportunities, particularly in new growth areas.
- Ensure active transport options are available to growth areas and smaller, dispersed settlements, that recognise the importance of mobility scooters to the elderly in many of these areas.
- Develop integrated public transport and community transport services for suitably assessed areas such as for Kiama or coastal settlements east of Nowra.[78]

74 What we've heard so far, Bronze Document Engagement
75 Illawarra Shoalhaven Vision, Objectives, Challenges workshop Sep 2024
76 Submission by BusNSW – December 2024
77 Illawarra Shoalhaven Vision, Objectives, Challenges workshop Sep 2024
78 Illawarra Shoalhaven Vision, Objectives, Challenges workshop Sep 2024

5.2.5 Barriers to universal access to public transport for people of all ages and abilities

Ensuring inclusivity in public transport is essential to improving the independence and quality of life for individuals with disabilities or limited mobility. Accessible transport options impact the ability of these individuals to participate fully in society and avoid discrimination. Research indicates that one in six people aged 15 years and over with a disability face difficulties using public transport.[79] Inequitable access to public transport not only limits independence but can also exacerbate financial burdens due to reliance on costly alternatives such as private vehicles or taxis when accessible public transport is unavailable. Other barriers include a lack of confidence in using the system and poor community attitudes toward people with disabilities.

> 'I use a wheelchair and many bus stops are not accessible as they are on grass or cracked/ uneven pavements that are not connected.'[79]

Improving transport accessibility would encourage greater use of public and active transport among people with disabilities, helping to foster independence and reduce reliance on external assistance. This is particularly important in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region, where nearly seven per cent of residents require help or assistance with core activities, which is higher in comparison to the State average.[81]

Currently, the transport system in the Illawarra Shoalhaven network is not fully equipped to meet the needs of vulnerable groups, including people with mobility restrictions the elderly and young families. Accessible transport requires the integration of well-designed infrastructure, including safe and continuous access routes to stops or interchanges, adequate passenger facilities, and on-board conditions that meet universal design standards.

Challenges include significant gaps in integrated interchanges particularly footpath networks, which hinder access to public transport stops, and inadequate or non-existent facilities at many bus stops, especially in the Shoalhaven. This is problematic in both high-demand areas, where crowding exacerbates accessibility issues, as well as areas where most bus stops often fail to meet accessibility standards.

The lack of accessible transport options has far-reaching consequences, including reduced independence for people with mobility restrictions, limited opportunities for social inclusion, and increased costs for alternative transport options. Addressing these barriers will not only increase the use of public and active transport but will also contribute to improved health, equity, and social outcomes for the entire community.

Opportunities

- Ensure all public transport stops and services meet the 'Disability Standards for Access to Public Transport are compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act, and are accessible for people of all ages and abilities.
- Support the provision of alternative services like on-demand transport, community transport or taxi services for suitably assessed lower density areas, improve wayfinding for public transport users, and establish dedicated bus stops with amenities to increase accessibility in smaller centres such as Kiama and across Shoalhaven.
- Enhance community transport access by better integrating these services with public transport to expand access for people in Kiama, Wollongong, Helensburgh, Shoalhaven and remote areas.
- Improve the availability and awareness of driver licence access and skills development programs.
- Explore car sharing programs at train stations to enable a wider range of trips to be taken by public transport.

79 Discussion paper—2022 Review of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002, Australian Federal Government

80 Illawarra Shoalhaven Customer Behaviour Research, May 2024

81 ABS 2021 Census, data by region, persons who have need for assistance with core activities

5.2.6 Lack of integrated ticketing and network management for public transport

Bus services in the southern parts of the region currently operate with a separate ticketing system to the train network and buses in the north. The inability to seamlessly transfer between some services in the region on a single ticket adds cost and requires additional pre-planning for people taking public transport journeys.[82]

Integrated planning, information and delivery of bus services are also challenges in parts of the region where services are contracted to be delivered by different bus companies. Bus services are often split by contract area, which creates challenges for passengers who need to travel between regions. This disjointed system hampers seamless travel, as people are required to navigate different operators with separate payment methods, fare structures and service schedules.[83]

Opportunities

- Introduce integrated ticketing and payment methods across the region's transport services, enabling streamlined passenger movement between regional bus contract areas. This should include bus services in Kiama and Shoalhaven to enable passengers to travel across the region's public transport network with a single payment.

Resident Profile: Russell*
Age: 40s
Location: Huskisson
Occupation: Social worker
Transport use: Car, occasional bus, train to Sydney, walking for local trips

* Resident names have been changed. Profile image generated using Adobe Firefly.

Russell walks his kids to primary school three mornings a week. Since his family downsized to one car, he's been thinking more about alternative ways to get around. He'd love to cycle more, but without safe, connected bike paths, it's not a realistic option for him, especially if he's out with his kids.

For longer trips to places like Wollongong or Sydney, he tries public transport but feels it could be more user friendly. Buses from Huskisson are infrequent, the journey is longer than by car, and train connections don't always line up. While he's noticed small improvements, like changes to the timetable and newer buses, he would like to see a simple integrated payment system as he travels between bus and train.

He doesn't feel comfortable leaving his car at Bomaderry Station as it's isolated so he usually drives to Kiama instead. This can save him time and avoids the hassle of changing trains.

> **'You have to pay cash. There's no tapping of cards or anything like that. You've put money on your Opal card and then you can't use it on all the local services.'**

82 Illawarra Shoalhaven Vision, Objectives, Challenges workshop Sep 2024
83 Illawarra Shoalhaven Vision, Objectives, Challenges workshop Sep 2024

5.2.7 Challenges with the safety and reliability of inter-regional transport connections to Sydney, Canberra and the Southern Highlands

'The road connection to Canberra is a fundamental link for the economic prosperity of the Shoalhaven and Illawarra.'[83]

'If I have to go to Sydney for a medical appointment, it's a whole weekend rather than just go in and come back. There's basically no public transport that's quick enough to actually execute what you want to do.'[84]

The natural geographic barrier of the Illawarra Escarpment, and the resultant constraints on road and rail connections out of the region, present a limitation on ease of connectivity to adjoining areas.

Despite the existing rail connection, many people from the Illawarra Shoalhaven drive to Sydney due to the slow and inefficient public transport options. Rail services between Wollongong and key employment centres like Bankstown, Campbelltown-Macarthur or Liverpool are indirect to reach by public transport, which increases travel times relative to car travel.[86]

The relative proximity of Wollongong to the growth areas of Greater Macarthur and Wilton in south-west Sydney presents an opportunity to the region for economic growth driven by improved connections to this area. The Campbelltown and Wollondilly LGAs are anticipated to grow to a total population of 327,000 and 109,000 jobs by 2041.[87] This committed investment in Western Sydney, and associated population growth, will necessitate a multi-modal transport response to ensure travel between the regions is safe, efficient, and reliable, and facilitates an economic exchange.[88]

In the southern areas of the region, connections to Canberra are important to support trade, access to services, and tourism. The susceptibility of these connections to the effects of bushfire, flood, and traffic disruption impacts regional resilience, and reliability of transport connections between Nowra, Ulladulla and Canberra.

Opportunities

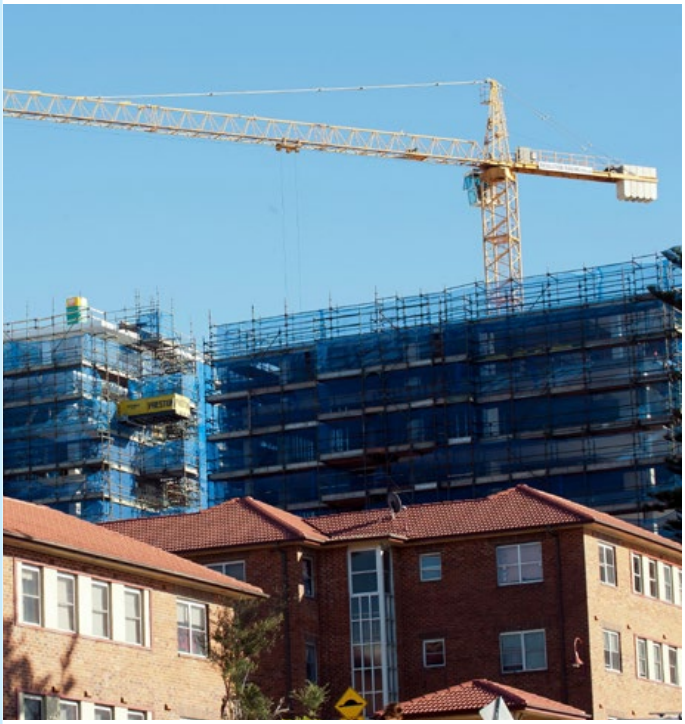
- Leverage the Illawarra Shoalhaven Joint Organisation, Regional Development Australia's Western Sydney and Illawarra Shoalhaven Roadmap to Collaboration' and partnerships with Western Sydney stakeholders to align transport planning with land use strategies to accommodate growth and improve accessibility for people travelling between the two regions.
- Review and improve connections to Sydney, the Southern Highlands and Canberra, to improve resilience during significant incidents such as closures on Mount Ousley or Macquarie Pass.
- Develop and improve connections to the Greater Macarthur and Wilton growth areas in south-west Sydney to leverage economic opportunities from the relative proximity of these areas to metropolitan Wollongong.

84 What we've heard so far, Bronze Document Engagement
85 Sourced from different participants from a Shoalhaven focus group
86 Illawarra Shoalhaven Vision, Objectives, Challenges workshop Sep 2024
87 86 Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure 2022 NSW Common Planning Assumption Projections for year ending 30 June
88 Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Transport Plan 2021

5.3 Well-located housing and successful places

Support the delivery of well-located housing and successful places through sustainable transport options to address growth in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region

The Illawarra Shoalhaven's population is estimated to increase by approximately 153,000 to 575,000 people by 2041, a 36 per cent increase over 20 years.[89] Intensification of urban development and urban expansion into new residential neighbourhoods present several transport challenges. There is a need for an integrated transport plan to support housing development in the Illawarra Shoalhaven and public transport services from the outset.



Apartments construction, Wollongong © NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure/Don Fuchs

What we heard

- Active transport links for new schools support growth and encourage sustainable travel choices for school trips.
- Planned growth and current development plans are not adequately supported by uplifts to public transport services.
- Increasing transport capacity around future housing locations is important, with a focus on key road corridors.
- There is a need to consider the impacts of Transport Orientated Development (TOD) sites on the existing train stations such as Dapto.
- Traffic congestion along the Princes Highway and Lawrence Hargrave Drive affects suburbs between Bulli and Stanwell Tops.
- There is an opportunity to leverage the future Milton-Ulladulla bypass project for improved place outcomes in both Milton and Ulladulla.
- Local traffic congestion on the Princes Highway in Nowra and Bomaderry should be addressed with consideration for a potential future bypass of Nowra.

89 Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure 2022 NSW Common Planning Assumption Projections for year ending 30 June

5.3.1 A transport network and service response is needed to support infill development and land use intensification

Urban infill development around major centres and stations has the potential to increase urban productivity and enable greater use of public and active transport for daily travel needs. However, infill development presents a range of challenges. There are gaps in public transport service frequency and the span of hours to support a wide variety of travel purposes, with constrained road space and capacity available to prioritise public and active transport services.

Key infill locations identified in the Illawarra Shoalhaven include housing density in key urban centres such as Warrawong, Shellharbour, and inner Wollongong. The planned Transport Oriented Development (TOD) sites in Corrimal, North Wollongong and Dapto, and other locations identified in the Low to Mid Rise Housing Policy[90] may require the upgrade and reconfiguration of transport networks and services to improve accessibility for residents in these key growth precincts.

> 'One issue that some of the young people raised at Wollongong train station is that if they don't make the 4.30 train from school, then they have to wait a further one and a half to two hours... So they're there until after dark.'[90]

These locations of land use intensification within the greater metropolitan Wollongong area present challenges to retaining and improving transport access for all, as increased travel demand and traffic congestion impacts public transport journey times. Bus services to the growing residential, employment, education, health and other activities clustered around centres and precincts will become increasingly delayed in the absence of solutions to maintain journey times and limit the impacts of traffic congestion.

In Shellharbour substantial forecast infill development around the city centre, Flinders and Calderwood will need improved connectivity, including support for accessible transport options and the management of Shellharbour Airport's role in the region. Existing east-west connections are slow and unreliable between Shellharbour City and the Albion Park growth area and between Warrawong and Dapto.[92] Connections between towns and local strategic centres at Dapto, Warrawong, Oak Flats and Corrimal offer limited or circuitous services, or leave network gaps.[93] Relatively strong existing public transport usage in these areas presents opportunities to better meet local demand.

Rail capacity constraints limit the provision of frequent and reliable passenger services through greater metropolitan Wollongong. In Wollongong, the South Coast Line caters for suburban, interurban (Sydney) and freight services but is unable to offer an uplift in passenger services without infrastructure improvements and upgrades, particularly along the single-line track section south of Coniston.

These bottlenecks significantly limit the ability to operate more frequent and reliable services. This lack of capacity has resulted in infrequent rail services, which discouraging commuter trips to Wollongong or Sydney and contributing to increased demand for road-based travel.[94]

90 Low to Mid-Rise Housing Policy (2025)
91 Government stakeholder
92 Illawarra Integrated Service Plan (ISP) Problem Definition Report, March 2022
93 Illawarra Integrated Service Plan (ISP) Problem Definition Report, March 2022
94 Wollongong LSPS 2020

Local access and place amenity in centres and infill housing development areas can also be improved by addressing gaps in walking and cycling networks.

Opportunities

- Support targeted housing and population growth by providing high-quality transport options including frequent and reliable public transport services, active transport infrastructure and multi-modal connections at future TOD and midrise housing locations in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region.
- Bus priority upgrades, including intersection upgrades, improve bus reliability and journey time performance, focusing on the primary bus network.
- Review and optimise bus and traffic operations in the central Wollongong area, including access to Burelli Street and Wollongong Station, to support improved bus reliability, journey times and passenger experience.

5.3.2 Suburban land release areas will need transport infrastructure and services

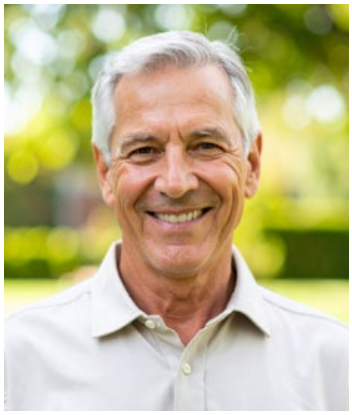
Major new greenfield residential growth areas in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region are expected to account for a substantial proportion of the anticipated population increase by 2040. Despite this anticipated land use change, early transport infrastructure, such as public transport and walkways, remains underdeveloped, creating a risk that the area's rapid growth may outpace the delivery of critical transport services.

Extending transport infrastructure and services to these land release areas is essential to the success of these communities and the wider region. However, the location of these greenfield land releases in areas removed from the rail network presents additional challenges to achieving efficient and convenient public transport connectivity.

The largest growth precinct is West Lake Illawarra, which includes plans for 19,500 new dwellings over the next 40–50 years. This is expected to require private and State investment. Major road upgrades will be needed to provide access to the state road network and to deliver an integrated core and local bus network with supporting infrastructure to provide connections through the area. Cycling connections to stations and adjoining urban areas will be essential to support a range of transport options for future communities.

The constrained single-track rail line south of Coniston limits options for rail services to Dapto and Oak Flats stations to provide access for the West Lake Illawarra growth area. Existing bus interchanges at these stations may need to be reconfigured to accommodate future services.

Areas such as South Nowra that have been developed in recent years, have a backlog of transport infrastructure and public transport services to support their populations. Other major greenfield development areas include the Moss Vale Road Urban Release Area, and new estates near Ulladulla and Milton. Future expected development in Kiama includes potential longer-term development at Bombo Quarry.



Resident Profile: Colin*
Age: 60s
Location: Shellharbour
Occupation: Retired
Transport use: Walks and drives for local trips, train to Sydney

* Resident names have been changed. Profile image generated using Adobe Firefly.

Colin loves living in Shellharbour as he can walk to the parks, marina and golf course. For other local trips he uses his car as there aren't bus stops close to home. He doesn't ride a bike anymore, but he'd like to see more designated bike paths separating cyclists and electric scooters from pedestrians.

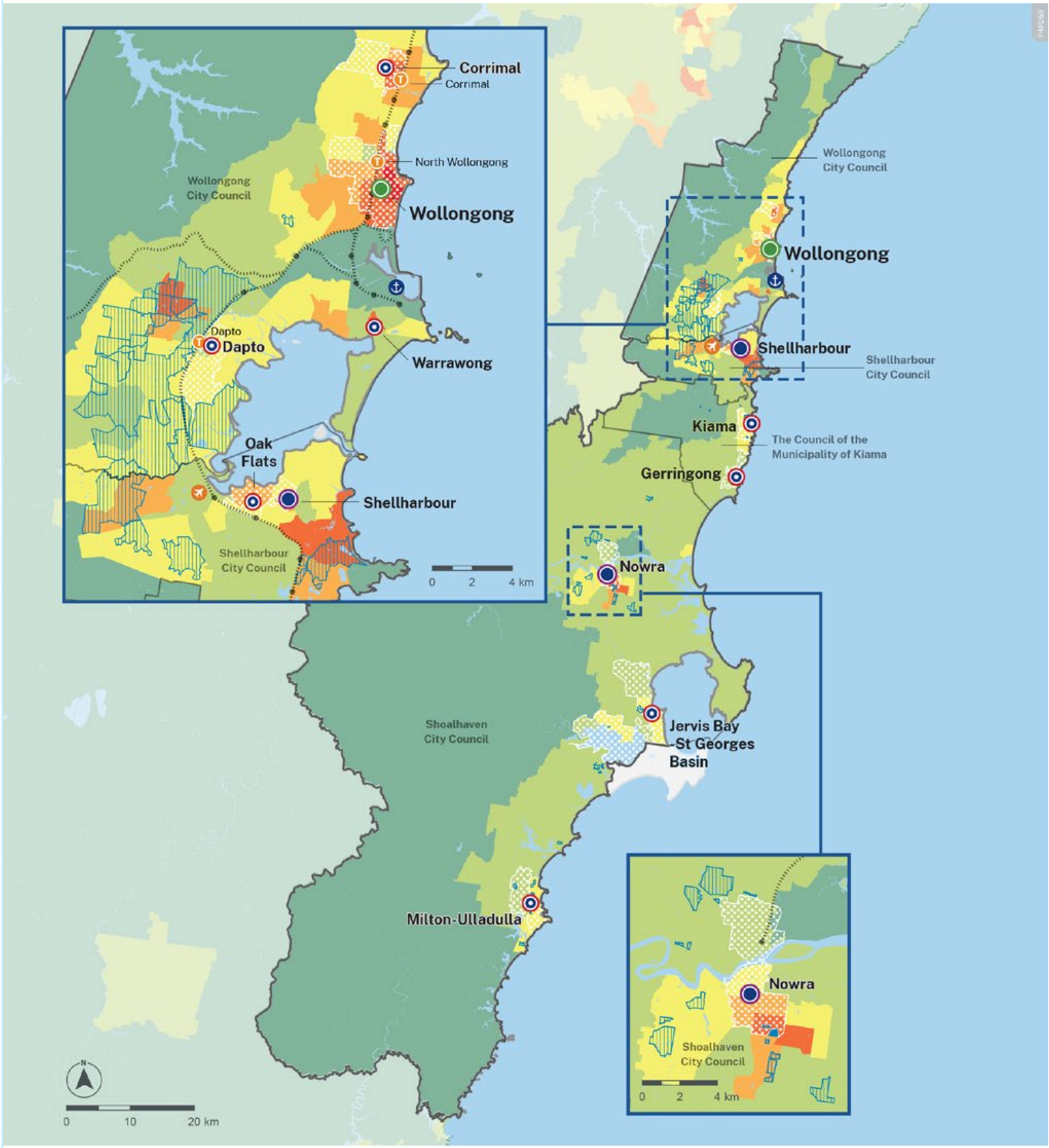
He catches the train to Sydney because it's an affordable option as a senior, but he won't leave his car at the station as he's concerned about vandalism. Instead, he walks 20 minutes to the station from home. He has experienced significant travel delays when the single rail track has been temporarily suspended. He'd like to see more than one rail track to reduce delays when the network is impacted.

Colin would like to see more integration between bus and train services at train stations, as well as better services to connect the growing populations of Calderwood, Yellow Rock and Tullimbar.

> **'There's only one train line from Nowra all the way to Dapto... I was stuck on the train for an hour and a half. There are difficulties with the train services which can be fixed.'**

Opportunities

- Ensure public transport planning is available from the outset by integrating transport services into the planning urban land release areas. By providing sustainable transport access from day one, these areas will be better equipped to handle population growth and reduce car dependency, rather than retrofitting transport solutions after residential growth has occurred, including working with councils and across government to coordinate infrastructure for new urban release areas.
- Address the transport needs of greenfield developments by ensuring that transport infrastructure is planned and delivered alongside housing. This approach will help manage the expected population growth and provide seamless access to transport services, promoting sustainable growth in new housing areas.
- Coordinate transport infrastructure development with housing targets around key centres such as Nowra-Bomaderry to ensure that future infill developments and urban release areas are well-served by public and active transport options from the beginning. This approach will support higher-density development and sustainable mobility. The best opportunity to provide housing with the most travel choices is to focus, in the short term, on development around existing transport infrastructure.



Source: Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, 2022, Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041, Transport for NSW, Travel Zone Projections 2024 Population.
State Government of NSW and NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure 2025, Urban Development Program.

Figure 21. Population change and growth areas

5.3.3 Road traffic impacts place amenity in some towns and centres

Traffic travelling through towns and centres, combined with poor pedestrian environments, can impact vibrancy and reduce amenity and local economic activity. Road congestion through centres can also be a source of significant travel delay for major road corridors through the region. Through-traffic hampers efforts to create pedestrian-friendly environments that promote local businesses and community activities.

Town centre improvements may also be needed to respond to poor connectivity, safety, and wayfinding, which limits walking as a viable or attractive transport option within centres.

Locations of conflict between traffic and place-based activities include Milton and Ulladulla, where heavy traffic on the Princes Highway reduces the pleasantness of public spaces, especially during busy holiday periods. This is proposed to be addressed by the federal and NSW Government funded Milton-Ulladulla bypass project, which will deliver a Princes Highway bypass around these towns.

Other similar locations include the Princes Highway in Nowra and Bomaderry; along the Princes Highway and Lawrence Hargrave Drive affecting suburbs between Bulli and Stanwell Tops; and Albion Park town centre and Tongarra Road/Illawarra Highway.

Other issues affecting the amenity and vibrancy of town centres that can be influenced by the transport system include the streetscape impacts of on-street car parking, pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, and the presence of wayfinding to guide and support visitation. This disconnection between spaces limits the potential for an inviting and cohesive city centre, reducing the attractiveness of the area for visitors and the community.

Opportunities

- Improve place amenity in towns and centres by reducing traffic impacts on town centres by working with councils to develop and implement holistic transport plans that apply the Transport for NSW Road User Space Allocation Policy and Movement and Place Framework.
- Prioritise improvements to local public and active transport networks, including upgrades to pedestrian infrastructure, bike paths and public transport accessibility to create vibrant, liveable places that offer sustainable transport choices in line with population growth.
- Reduce network and place impacts of last-mile freight and deliveries, while optimising the efficiency of freight movement, including with the introduction of micro distribution freight centres to service high demand locations.

Case study: Foxground and Berry bypass (2015–2018)

The Foxground and Berry bypass opened to traffic in 2018. It provides a four-lane highway (two lanes in each direction) with median separation for 12.5 kilometres of the Princes Highway between Toolijooa Road and just south of Andersons Lane.

The upgrade included a bypass of the existing winding highway at Foxground and a bypass of Berry with access ramps to the north and south of the town.

Benefits of the project include improved safety and amenity within the historic town and main street of Berry, which saw a reduction in through traffic when the bypass opened. For traffic on the Princes Highway, the project has reduced travel times, and improved reliability and safety.

www.transport.nsw.gov.au/projects/current-projects/foxground-and-berry-bypass

People enjoying the long weekend at Berry, June 2019
© Constantin Stanciu/Shutterstock.com

5.4 A thriving and diversifying economy

Provide an efficient transport network to support a diversifying and growing economy including tourism, freight movements and enabling renewable energy zones

Challenges to developing a thriving and diversifying economy in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region include delivering inter-regional connectivity despite the topographical barrier of the Illawarra Escarpment, responding to and accommodating seasonal visitation and tourism, accommodating increased freight and heavy vehicle traffic, and supporting the ongoing shift in industry composition and location of employment to be more concentrated in town and city centres and major institutional precincts.

Small business owners working in a fish and chips shop
© Sylvia Liber/ NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

What we heard

- The road network experiences increased pressure during holiday seasons due to an influx of tourists and visitors. For instance, Lawrence Hargrave Drive often becomes heavily congested, particularly on peak summer days.
- There is non-compliance with heavy vehicle load limits on some local roads due to alternative routes being unavailable to freight generators.
- Continued investigations into a freight rail line connecting the Illawarra and south-west Sydney are needed.
- Improved reliability and access on the rail network is needed to enable freight movements between Port Kembla and Sydney via the South Coast Line as well as the Unanderra-Moss Vale Line, including to Bomaderry.
- There is increasing travel demand to the future BlueScope TAFE campus.
- There is an opportunity for tourist-focused public transport services from south-west Sydney to beaches in the Illawarra to capitalise on visitor demand in a sustainable manner.
- Higher order public transport services across the Shoalhaven River to Nowra would support greater choice for regional jobs, and enable access to other essential services.

5.4.1 Increasing demand for access to activity clusters is not being efficiently met by the transport network

The Illawarra Shoalhaven region is undergoing an industry transition that is seeing growth in employment and passenger travel demand towards emerging precincts in services, health and education. Notable precincts include the Wollongong CBD, university, and health precinct; Shellharbour city centre, hospital and TAFE precinct, and the proposed BlueScope TAFE and employment precinct.

These employment clusters support higher-order employment and industries transitioning from traditional sectors. The transition reflect broader economic shifts, with industries focusing on technology, service sectors, and tourism-related businesses, creating new transport needs for workers, goods and services.

As the population grows and health services commensurately expand, there will be increased demand from residents accessing these services by public transport. Additionally, these precincts draw workers from across the region, further compounding the need for transport solutions that connect residential areas with health and employment hubs.

Challenges for access to these precincts include limited public transport connectivity, service frequency and span of hours, impacting the future growth and success of these precincts and the wider regional economy.[95] Many of these locations lack efficient public transport connections, and connected walking and cycling networks to support access to concentrated locations where road capacity and land available for car parking may be limited.

The free Gong Shuttle Bus (routes 55A and 55C) is an example of a successful public transport initiative in the region. The Gong Shuttle Bus carries over 215,000 passengers per month and runs between the University of Wollongong, Wollongong Innovation Campus, the Wollongong CBD and the hospital precinct, with buses conveniently operating every 10 minutes from 7am–9pm on weekdays.[96]

Opportunities

- Develop an improved passenger rail spine through the Wollongong-Shellharbour metropolitan area offering convenient travel to rail-based destinations in the region.
- Develop a network of priority bus corridors with high frequency services to access density centres and precincts. This would include the proposed East Lake Illawarra priority corridor connecting Shellharbour, Warrawong and the Wollongong CBD.
- Support cycling and walking to city centres and employment precincts to reduce dependence on private car travel, especially for shorter trips.

95 Illawarra Integrated Service Plan (ISP) Problem Definition Report, March 2022

96 Illawarra Shoalhaven Customer Behaviour Research, May 2024

5.4.2 Difficulties moving road freight in and out of the region is undermining productivity

The natural barrier of the Illawarra Escarpment, with steep grades and relatively few crossing points, limits the efficient movement of freight in and out of the Illawarra Shoalhaven region to Sydney and regional NSW. This includes freight movements to and from the region's industrial areas and through Port Kembla. Connections between the Illawarra Shoalhaven and Sydney, the Hume corridor, and Canberra all rely on routes through the Illawarra Escarpment. This natural barrier complicates freight logistics and contributes to slower travel times, reduced efficiency, and increased safety risks, especially during times of natural disasters and severe weather events.

Current forecasts project that the regional road freight task in the Illawarra Shoalhaven will increase at an annual rate of 1.4 per cent over the next 20 years, from 32 million tonnes in 2021 to 42 million tonnes by 2041. This substantial growth will place additional pressure on the region's road and rail networks, necessitating strategic investments in infrastructure to accommodate and move freight efficiently (Figure 22).[97]

Roads across the escarpment into mid and southern parts of the region have very tight turns and steep grades through challenging terrain. This restricts the types of trucks and vehicles that can use these routes and makes them susceptible to disruption due to vehicle failure or natural disasters and severe weather. These freight routes frequently experience issues such as truck breakdowns, lane closures due to weather or heavy traffic and delays during peak times or resulting from incidents. The steep inclines and narrow passes make infrastructure upgrades costly and technically challenging, resulting in long lead times for improvements.

Key roads where access is challenged include vehicle restrictions on Jamberoo Mountain Road, the Illawarra Highway at Macquarie Pass, Moss Vale Road and Bulli Pass. Access challenges also extend to ageing assets such as the Hampden Bridge, where load limit restrictions impact the community's business and freight needs. Higher standard roads where vehicle breakdowns or incidents regularly impact reliability are Picton Road, Appin Road and the Princes Highway south of Nowra.[98]

Existing access barriers to the expanded use of high productivity vehicles (HPV), particularly south of Kiama, means that larger road freight accessing the region must approach from the north via either the Princes Motorway or the Hume Motorway and Picton Road.

The implications of an overburdened freight network are felt differently across the Illawarra Shoalhaven subregions. In the Illawarra, delays or inefficiencies in freight movements directly affect industries in manufacturing and logistics, which are heavily reliant on timely access to Port Kembla. In the Shoalhaven, disruptions to freight corridors hinder the movement of agricultural products and goods, impacting local economies and regional supply chains. The broader impact extends beyond the region, affecting the State's ability to support the growing freight demands of Western Sydney, especially with the development of the Western Sydney International Airport.

Road and rail connections within the Illawarra Shoalhaven region, especially those servicing Port Kembla, industrial areas, and agricultural producers, are essential to supporting the movement of goods within the region and access to markets beyond the region. Current road and rail capacity are a constraint on freight efficiency and regional economic growth.

Port Kembla is a significant driver of freight demand in the region and freight volumes through the port are expected to increase in future. The port is anticipated to serve as the future location of a second NSW container terminal when Port Botany reaches capacity.[99] As an international port, its ability to efficiently connect with Sydney, exporters and intermodal freight hubs is central to the region's economic development.

97 Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Transport Plan

98 Transport for NSW Traffic Management Centre, 2024–25

99 www.nswports.com.au/port-kembla

Delays in delivering freight in and out of Port Kembla can impact freight capacity and costs, directly affecting local industries and the wider economy.

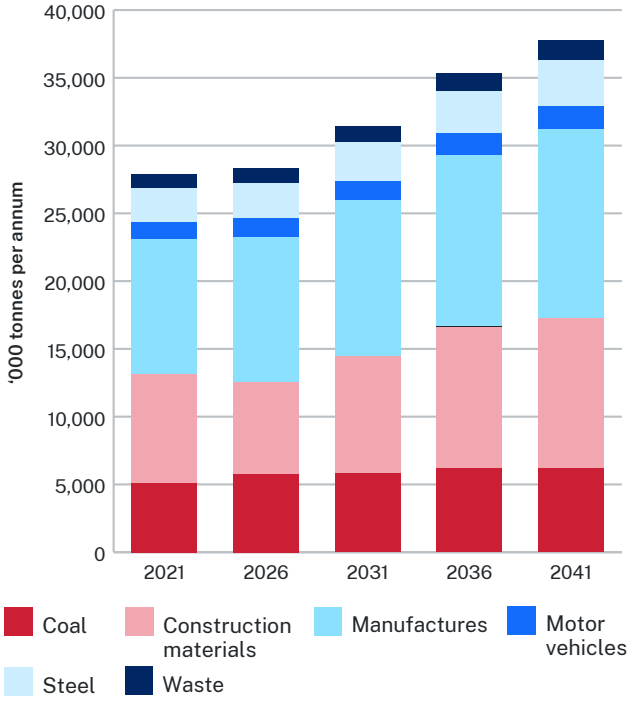
Internal road networks within the region support freight movements. However, the efficiency of moving freight on these networks is challenged by increasing delay and disruption due to traffic growth and land use changes. The most important corridors are the Princes Highway and Princes Motorway, forming the central north–south road corridor through the region.

In the absence of strategic investment in these key road corridors, the region will struggle to keep up with increasing freight demand, particularly as Western Sydney grows as a logistics and manufacturing hub. This creates a bottleneck for industries in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region, limiting access to broader markets and reducing competitiveness.

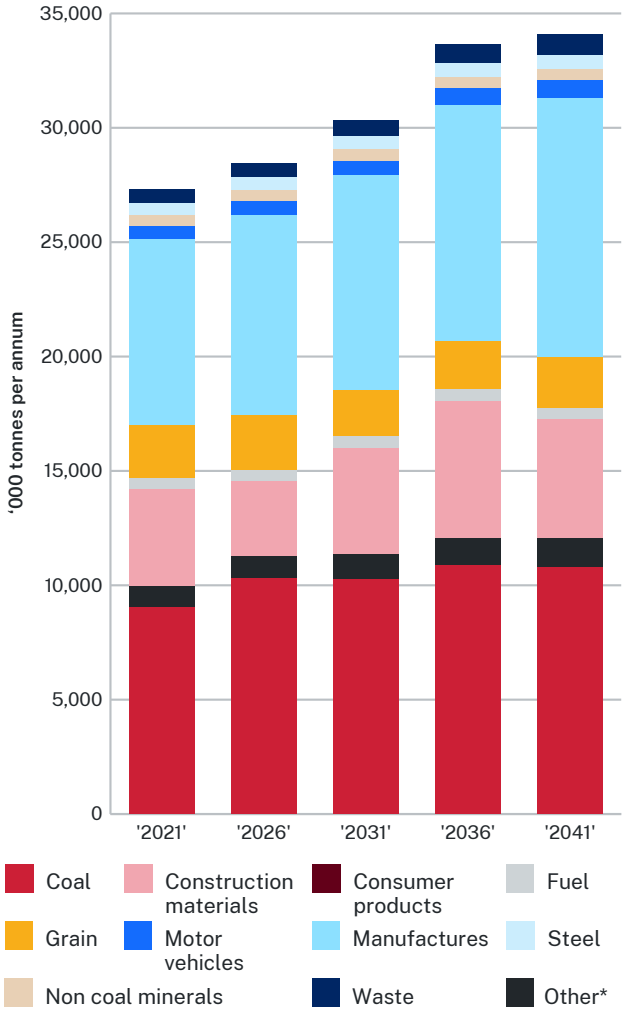
Opportunities

- Enhance road freight corridors for efficient goods movement Prioritise upgrades to key road corridors across the Illawarra Escarpment connecting the Illawarra Shoalhaven to markets and population centres. Corridors such as Picton Road, Mount Ousley Road, and the Princes Highway could be upgraded to handle increasing freight demand. These improvements would support efficient freight movement between Port Kembla and Sydney, enhancing the region's economic competitiveness.
- Identify and assess potential from the Outer Sydney Orbital corridor to the Illawarra region.
- Continue expand and improve the operational management of strategic road connections in and out of the region.
- Leverage Port Kembla's role in regional economic growth by strengthening transport links between Port Kembla and other parts of NSW to support freight diversification and ensuring the port can efficiently handle increased volumes as a future container terminal and key export and import hub for the region.

Freight generated in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region



Freight destined for the Illawarra Shoalhaven region



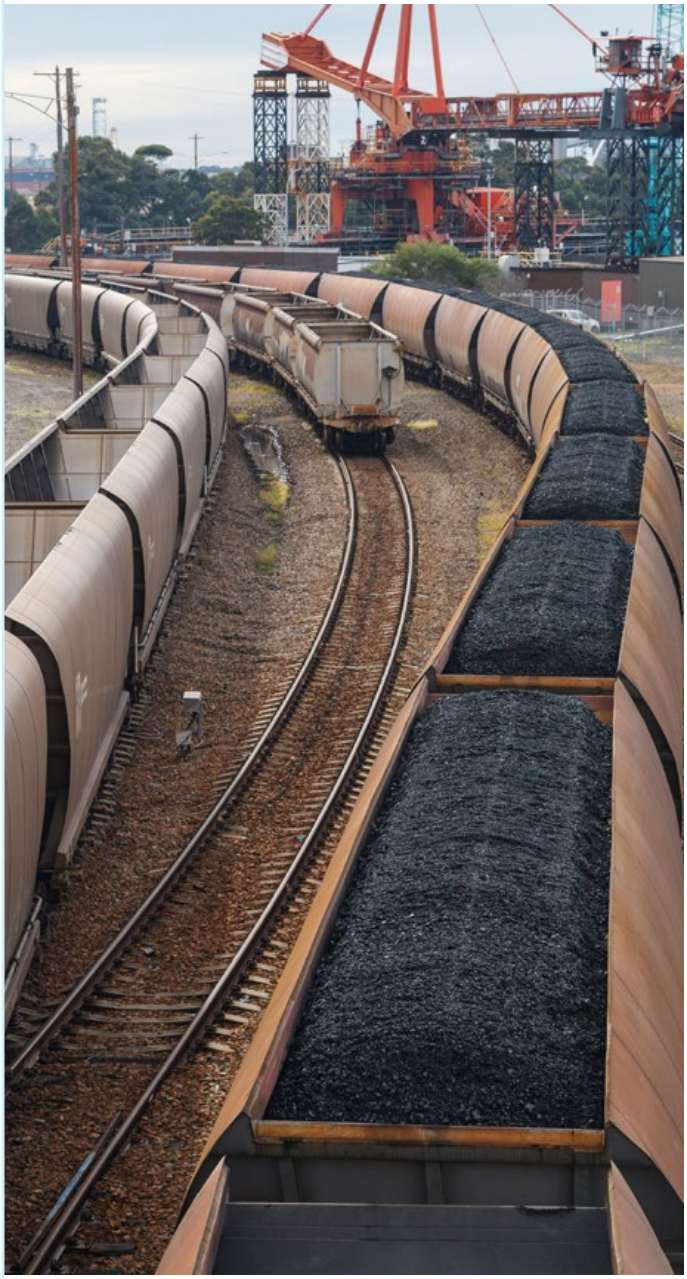
*Other is a combination of oilseeds, consumer products, dairy, forestry, grapes, wine and meat.

Source: Transport for NSW Strategic Freight Model (SFM) v47.

Figure 22. Freight volume by sector generated and received in the region

5.4.3 Rail capacity constraints limit the ability to meet the region's growing passenger and freight rail demand

The Illawarra rail system presently lacks the capacity to support significant uplift in passenger services and freight rail capacity, to meet the changing and growing demand in the region. The strong growth in regional population, with its corresponding growth in passenger transport demand, is not being adequately met by existing or committed future rail services.



Freight trains with loaded and empty coal carriers at Port Kembla, Wollongong

Effectively servicing future passenger and freight demand is a key enabler of future prosperity for the region.

The South Coast Line has a duplicated main line track north of Unanderra junction, with only a single track to the south, and a lack of passing loops to augment line capacity. There are a large number of flat junctions such as the non grade-separated junctions at Port Kembla and Unanderra junctions), many of which necessitate complex 'conflicting' train movements Trains cannot progress along the line until other trains crossing or merging with their path have either passed through the junction or have been held back from entering the junction. The congestion at these junctions substantially reduces the capacity and reliability of all lines feeding into the junctions.

Recent and future growth to the south of the Wollongong-Shellharbour metropolitan area, in areas around West Lake Illawarra and Shellharbour, is generating increased travel demand south of Wollongong. Concentration of growth into Transport Oriented Development Precincts at Wollongong, Corrimal, North Wollongong and Dapto will further contribute to increased passenger demand.

Large parts of the Illawarra and Shoalhaven rail networks operate with shared passenger and freight rail, which means the overall potential of the system to deliver increased capacity, reliability, and efficiency is constrained by interdependencies between passenger and freight operations with varying levels of complexity. The South Coast Line and branches are managed by Sydney Trains, while the Unanderra-Moss Vale Line is managed by Australian Rail Track Corporation.

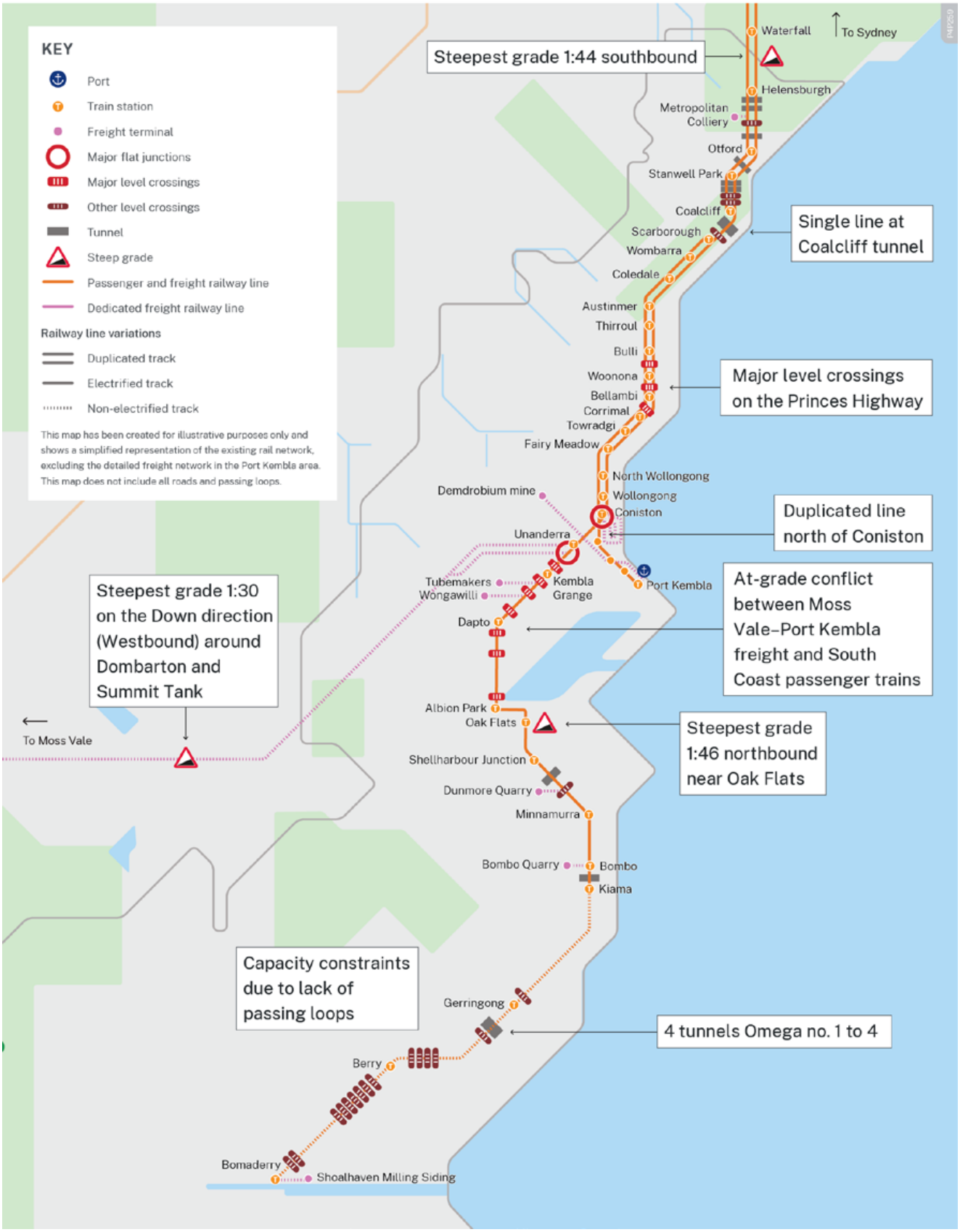


Figure 23. Rail network configuration and constraints in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region

Most stations in the Wollongong-Shellharbour metropolitan area are serviced by just one train per hour in the non-peak periods, with the exception of major stations north of Port Kembla junction which enjoy one additional express service an hour.

The transport of freight via the shared rail network is constrained by the needs of passenger transport, particularly during morning and afternoon passenger peaks. Freight trains may be held for up to 11 hours as passenger services are given priority.[100] Constrained freight rail capacity is a limiting factor on volume of freight moved by rail in the region.[101]

The shared use of the South Coast Line by passenger and freight services places additional pressure on the network. Freight movements are vital for supporting the region's manufacturing and export economy but can impact passenger rail scheduling, reliability and journey time. Addressing this operational challenge is a key focus for the strategic transport plan, which seeks to balance freight and passenger demands while improving service quality.

Growth and increasing diversification of freight demand, especially for freight using the network to access Port Kembla, is challenging to meet with existing freight paths and network configuration. In a commercial freight operating environment, competitively attracting freight demand to rail depends on the availability of suitable and reliable freight paths. In the absence of increased rail capacity the availability of such paths is likely to become a limiting factor on the uptake of freight rail, especially as passenger services are increased over time.

Future demand for rail freight will continue to be mainly reliant on access to Port Kembla and surrounding industrial areas, with the main movements orientated to and from Sydney to the north and via Moss Vale to the west. The Manildra wheat starch and ethanol plant at Bomaderry will continue to be a significant generator of rail freight south of Unanderra.

There are two routes to access Port Kembla: the South Coast and Unanderra-Moss Vale rail lines are critical for freight movement, particularly for connecting the region's industries to markets in Sydney and beyond. However, line capacity limitations, and complexities of shared freight and passenger operations, pose significant challenges for increasing the volume of freight moved by rail. This constraint reduces reliability for freight operators, who must contend with delays and competition for track space with passenger services.

Opportunities

- Review passenger and freight network configuration and operations on the Illawarra network, to identify opportunities to optimise operations and a strategy to meet future demand.
- Review distribution of passenger services between the Port Kembla line and the South Coast main line south of Coniston to optimise reliability and respond to future demand.
- Work with freight network managers and operators to optimise the use of available freight paths.
- Investigate of strategic rail corridor upgrades, including the Maldon-Dombarton freight rail line to enable improved freight capacity to Wollongong and the Illawarra Shoalhaven region. This includes improved strategic coordination between Transport, councils, and the DPHI to ensure that freight networks align with future land use and industrial growth areas.
- Improve the Unanderra-Moss Vale Line to address reliability issues and improve connections to western NSW and the national rail network.[102]

100 Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Transport Plan 2021

101 Illawarra Shoalhaven Vision, Objectives, Challenges workshop Sep 2024

102 Illawarra Shoalhaven Vision, Objectives, Challenges workshop Sep 2024

5.4.4 Local access pressures hinder support for the visitor, tourism and events economy

Tourism and visitation are major contributors to the Illawarra Shoalhaven economy. However, traffic volumes on the Princes Highway in Ulladulla during the annual peak holiday month of January are 10–15 per cent higher than the monthly average.[103] Seasonal traffic generated by tourism and visitors is a major challenge for the region, where increased demand generates congestion, delays to public transport services, and increased safety risks. This conflict between tourism-driven economic growth and inadequate transport services poses a long-term challenge for both the local community and the region's economy.

'The biggest problem for me here, is that we tend to get gridlocked with traffic during any kind of peak holiday, Easter, Christmas, really any weekend in summer, because of congestion … and the backing up of cars [in the area].'[103]

Across the Illawarra Shoalhaven, seasonal disruption is usually driven by visitation during long weekends, school holidays and summer weekends. Understanding when these disruptions are likely to occur enables us to plan ahead to minimise impacts to local businesses and communities while giving visitors a better travel experience.

The tourism sector heavily relies on visitors travelling by car, with very few public transport options available to cater to tourists. This puts a considerable burden on the road network, particularly during peak periods. In Wollongong, tourists heading to northern suburbs for local attractions face limited public transport options, adding to road congestion and traffic-related challenges. Holiday season beachgoers and tourist visitation further contribute to traffic congestion.[105]

Opportunities

- Expand public transport and multimodal access improvements to support seasonal visitation and tourism Invest in multimodal transport options, including cycling paths, pedestrian walkways, and integrated public transport connections, to provide alternative access for tourists visiting key attractions. This aims to reduce pressure on local roads and offer sustainable transport solutions aligned with tourism growth.
- Explore temporary traffic control measures in locations of high seasonal activity, such as temporary speed restrictions or cautionary road signs.

103 SCATS Site #1940 and #5082, Princes Highway and Wason Street Ulladulla and Milton, 2024.

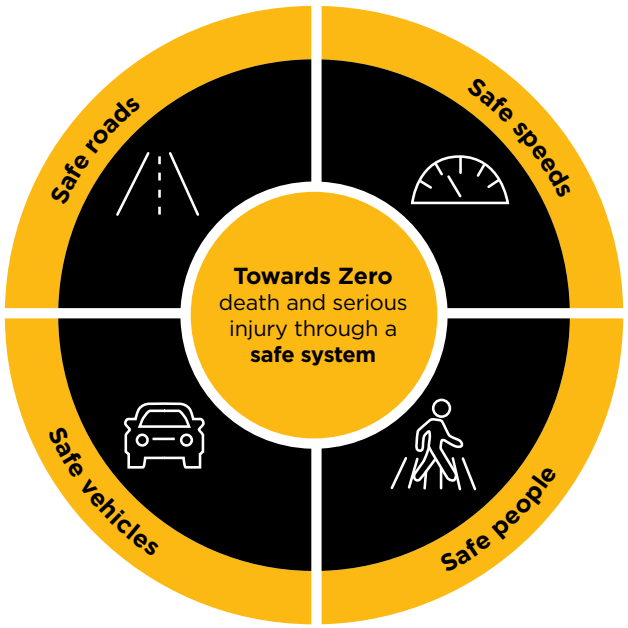
104 Shoalhaven focus group participant

105 Illawarra Shoalhaven Vision, Objectives, Challenges workshop Sep 2024

5.5 A safe transport network

Reduce fatalities and serious injuries on the transport and waterways network and address personal safety concerns for public transport passengers

Transport for NSW is committed to achieving zero fatalities and serious injuries on the road network by 2050 and on waterways by 2056.[106] The NSW Government has adopted the internationally recognised Safe Systems approach to transport safety. This approach recognises that users and those who design, maintain and regulate the transport network share responsibility for reducing risk. It acknowledges that people make mistakes and machines can fail. The Safe Systems approach helps users reduce both the risk of incidents and the consequences should they occur. The four pillars of the Safe Systems approach are safe road users and driver behaviour, safe speeds and regulation, safe vehicles, and safe infrastructure.



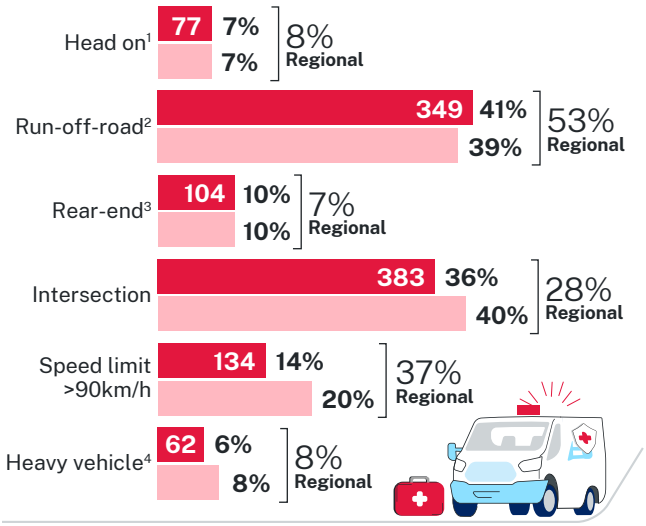
What we heard

- Safe, comfortable and accessible public transport interchanges are needed, with a focus on addressing the lack of footpaths, safe crossings, lighting and shelter.
- School students should be recognised as vulnerable road users.
- Frequent truck breakdowns on Mount Ousley Road and Illawarra Highway at Macquarie Pass often lead to safety incidents for other road users and create hazards.
- Consider lowering speed limits to 30 km/h or 40 km/h in some neighbourhoods, town centres and villages to improve safety for all road users and improve traffic flow.
- Concerns with e-scooter trials should be addressed, including road safety concerns related to speeding, trip hazards and rider intoxication.
- Missing links in bicycle network should be completed to address safety concerns, including from Wollongong CBD to University of Wollongong campus and safe paths for bike riders to exit the Royal National Park.
- A safety efficiency program, advocating for a multi-year program of targeted safety upgrades should be developed.

Across the Illawarra Shoalhaven region, 70 people lost their lives and 989 people suffered serious injuries in road crashes in the five years from 2019 to 2023. The highest fatal and serious injury (FSI) crash type was run-off-road crashes at 41 per cent, followed by intersection crashes at 36 per cent. Thirty-seven per cent of FSI crashes involved a single vehicle only.

106 Transport for NSW 2026 Road Safety Action Plan, Transport for NSW Maritime Safety Plan 2026

FSI crash types 2019–2023



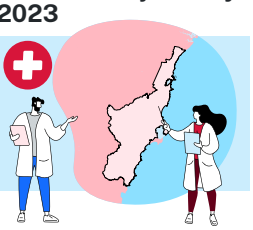
Illawara Shoalhaven region – FSI Crash type as % of all crashes

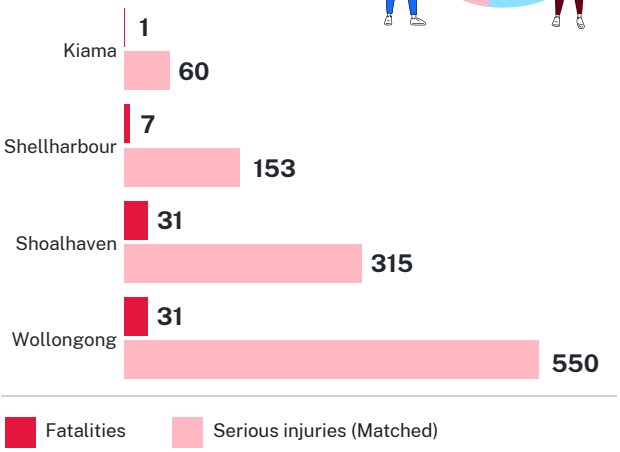
NSW – FSI Crash type as % of all crashes

1. RUM codes 20 & 50
2. RUM codes 70–73 & 80–87
3. RUM codes 30–32
   https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2023/definitions_notes_0.pdf
4. The 'Heavy vehicle' types of vehicle comprise: Articulated truck; B-double (truck); Heavy bus; Heavy rigid truck; Heavy truck; Heavy vehicle; Road train/B-triple (truck); Semi-trailer.
   https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/roadsafety/statistics/interactive-crash-statistics/heavy-vehicle-statistics-definitions-and-notes

Illawara Shoalhaven fatalities and serious injuries by local government area, 2019 to 2023

The Illawarra Shoalhaven region accounts for **7% of all fatalities** and **11% of all serious injuries** across Regional NSW.





Fatalities Serious injuries (Matched)

Source: Transport for NSW

Behavioural factors in Illawarra Shoalhaven fatalities, 2019-2023

	Speeding[1]	Tired drivers and riders[2]	Drink driving	Seatbelt non-usage	Illicit drugs present
All regional NSW	44%	20%	20%	19%	25%
Illawarra Shoalhaven	**37%**	**13%**	**16%**	**7%**	**27%**

1. Speeding is recorded as a contributing factor in a crash if at least one motor vehicle in the crash was speeding.
2. Fatigue is recorded as a contributing factor if at least one motor vehicle controller in a road crash was fatigued.

Source: NSW Centre for Road Safety www.transport.nsw.gov.au/roadsafety

Figure 24. Road crash types, injuries and behavioural factors

There are distinct differences between the more urbanised parts of the region, in Wollongong and Shellharbour, compared to the predominantly rural areas of the Shoalhaven. Within the region, Shellharbour had the highest number of FSI's where alcohol was a factor (29 per cent compared to 25 per cent for regional NSW), and illicit drugs were a factor in 29 per cent of FSIs in both Shellharbour and the Shoalhaven, compared to 25 per cent for regional NSW.

Run-off-road crashes account for 41 per cent of FSI crashes in the region, especially on high speed regional roads and winding mountain roads. These are often caused by excessive speed or driver inattention. Motorcyclists are over represented in this category, leading to serious injuries or fatalities. Intersection crashes account for 36 per cent of FSI crashes and are a significant challenge including in urban areas due to complex traffic movements, limited visibility, and high vehicle speeds. From 2019 to 2023, 383 FSI crashes occurred at intersections across the region.

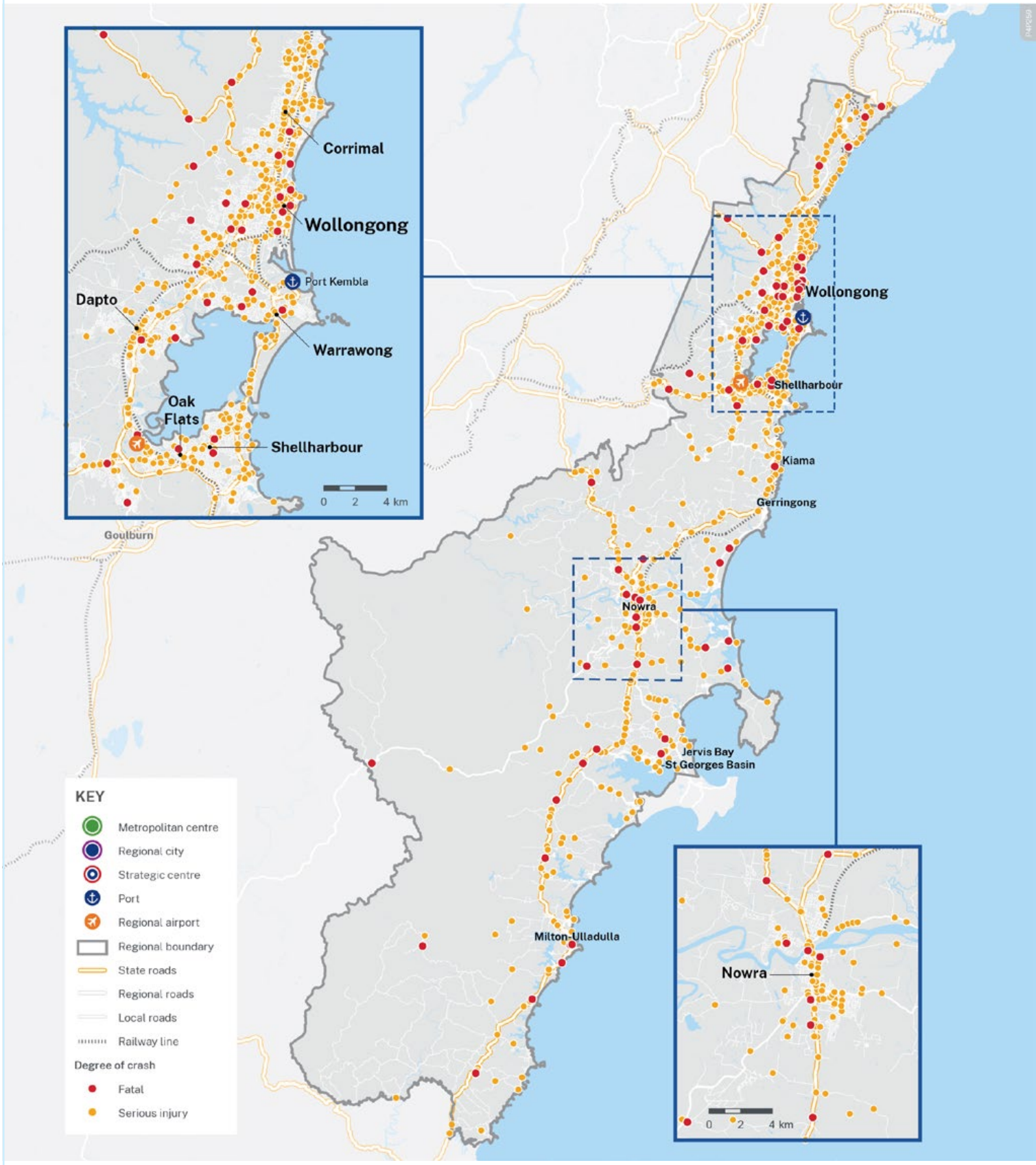


Figure 25. Road crash injuries 2019–2023

5.5.1 The region's challenging geography, environmental context and road infrastructure creates road safety risk

The Illawarra Escarpment's rugged terrain results in steep slopes, sharp corners, and narrow roads. These features make important inter-regional routes such as Macquarie Pass on the Illawarra Highway and Jamberoo Mountain Road hazardous, particularly for motorcyclists, who are drawn to the challenging terrain. Unfortunately, these roads experience a higher crash rate due to these risks, especially among motorcyclists for whom factors such as speed, limited visibility and traction on tight curves, as well as conflict with other vehicles, can all lead to greater risks.

This geographic and roadside environment creates a range of road safety challenges, compounded during adverse weather conditions such as rain and fog. The rural nature of much of the region increases the risk of vehicles striking wildlife within the road corridor, including koalas, kangaroos, wallabies, and wombats.

Continued growth in traffic across the region, and the increasing popularity of the region as a tourist destination, result in a large weekend and seasonal influx of visitors, many of whom may be unfamiliar with the road environment. This increase in traffic creates a challenging user context that increases road safety risk exposure in the region.

Limited availability of viable alternative routes increases the risk of secondary crashes when traffic incidents occur on major roads. For example, when the Illawarra Highway closes at Macquarie Pass, light vehicles are often diverted to Jamberoo Mountain Road, a local road with challenging hairpin bends that is unsuitable for high traffic volumes. Similarly, crashes and other incidents on Moss Vale Road force traffic onto narrow, winding roads like Kangaroo Valley Road, which presents additional safety hazards.

Key roads such as the Princes Motorway, particularly the Mount Ousley section and the Princes Highway are vulnerable to disruptions, especially given the high traffic volumes and limited alternative routes. When a crash occurs, it can take significant time to clear the incident as well as the backlog of traffic, increasing the likelihood of secondary crashes occurring.

Road corridors constrained by challenging terrain make the delivery of road safety infrastructure upgrades, such as median separation or edge barriers costly, and difficult to engineer. There is a legacy of high speed and winding road designs particularly on rural roads such as those between the Princes Highway and coastal villages in the Shoalhaven. These roads often have limited separation between vehicles travelling in opposing directions, a lack of safety barriers, and narrow shoulders, and are often lined by trees and other hazards. Within this context of physical constraints, appropriate speed zoning is an important measure to enhance road safety.

Opportunities

- Develop and prioritise road upgrade projects that target safety risks on roads.
- Improve driver awareness of risky locations and conditions on roads, including through onsite awareness of locations of high risk, the use of general awareness campaigns and the provision of real-time information to communicate traffic incidents.
- Review speed limits to reduce safety risks, and implement reduced speed limits and associated speed reduction measures for high-risk locations, high pedestrian areas, and residential neighbourhood streets.

5.5.2 High-risk driver behaviour is a contributor to road trauma in the region

Speeding and inappropriate speed for conditions remains the leading contributor to crashes in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region. From 2019 to 2023, speeding was identified as a factor in 40 per cent of fatal crashes, and 32 per cent of serious injury crashes. Speeding was a factor in 52 per cent of all FSI crashes in the Kiama LGA, and 31 per cent of all crashes in the Shoalhaven, 26 per cent of crashes in Shellharbour and 22 per cent of crashes in Wollongong.

Speed increases the risk of having a crash, the severity of the crashes, as well as the risk to other road users. Speeding is not only defined as exceeding the posted speed limit but also driving too fast for the conditions. This can be seen in wet weather crashes on the Princes Highway at the Kiama Bends, around sharp bends such as Macquarie Pass, on key freight routes such as Picton Road, and on steep descents such as Mount Ousley. This is of particular importance on rural roads, where drivers often underestimate the danger of high-speed driving in these challenging environments.

Motorcyclists are particularly vulnerable to road trauma. From 2019 to 2023, 282 motorcycle riders and passengers were killed or seriously injured in the region, with motorcyclists involved in 48 per cent of fatal and serious injury (FSI) crashes in the Kiama LGA which includes the Jamberoo Mountain Road route that is popular with motorcyclists, Motorcyclists were also involved in 30 per cent of FSI crashes in Shellharbour, 25 per cent in Shoalhaven and 20 per cent in Wollongong.

Drink driving and the use of illicit drugs were contributing factors in 34 per cent of FSI crashes in the region from 2019 to 2023. Other high risk driving behaviours, such as crossing road centre lines on tight curves, overtaking in dangerous areas, and driving for long distances without taking a break also contributed to crashes across the region.

Opportunities

- Develop behaviour change, safety and awareness campaigns targeted towards specific road safety issues in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region, including motorcycle safety, vulnerable road users, and key crash types.
- Support road safety enforcement and fines, including for speeding and other vehicle monitoring activities.
- Explore collaboration with councils and other safety partners to reduce drink and drug driving, including targeted safety campaigns and alternative transport options.

5.5.3 Pedestrians, bike riders and vulnerable road users are at high risk

Pedestrians and bike riders are also at risk in the region, with 106 pedestrians (nine per cent of all FSI crashes) and 104 bike riders (nine per cent of all FSI crashes) killed or seriously injured between 2019 and 2023.[107]

The region's network of high-speed rural roads and established and expanding urban areas create significant challenges for pedestrian and bike rider safety. In particular, the lack of segregated infrastructure and suitable road crossings for these vulnerable road users contribute to these higher injury rates. Improving intersection design, providing safer crossing options for vulnerable road users and managing vehicle speeds are critical in reducing these types of crashes. Fatalities and serious injuries for vulnerable road users are most prevalent in the urbanised LGAs of Wollongong and Shellharbour.

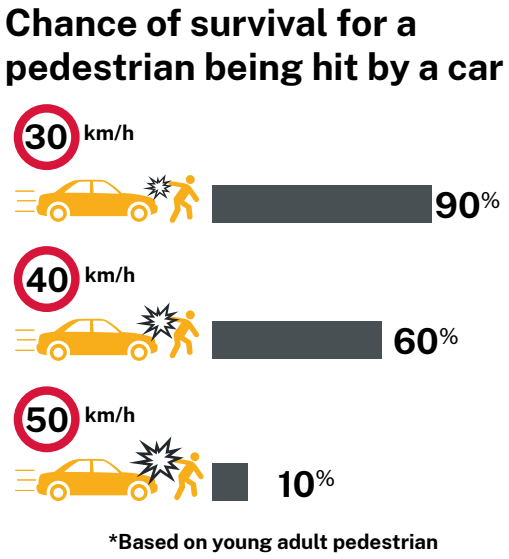


Figure 26. Pedestrian chance of survival[108]

Widespread application of 50km/h or higher speeds on urban residential streets presents a safety risk with pedestrians or other vulnerable road users having very low chances of surviving in the event of collision (Figure 26).

The increasing prevalence of micromobility devices, such as e-bikes, e-scooters, and new mobility devices used by delivery companies, adds another layer of complexity that will need to be addressed using the Safe System approach to road safety to ensure vulnerable road users do not adversely impact crash trends.

Opportunities

- Improve suitable walking and cycling infrastructure with a focus on safety and separation from motor vehicle traffic moving at speeds dangerous to vulnerable road users.
- Develop information campaigns to promote suitable routes for vulnerable road users, including onsite indication of routes to school and other key walking and bicycle routes.
- Work with councils to introduce reduced speed limits and associated traffic calming treatments to reduce pedestrian and bike rider injuries on residential streets.
- Improve the safety of vulnerable road users, including pedestrians, bike riders, motorcyclists and children travelling to and from school[109] by providing more pedestrian crossings, improved footpaths on streets near schools, and 'safe streets' upgrades on residential streets with appropriate speed limits to encourage and enable more walking and cycling.

107 NSW Centre for Road Safety www.transport.nsw.gov.au/roadsafety

108 NSW Centre for Road Safety www.transport.nsw.gov.au/roadsafety,

109 Illawarra-Shoalhaven Regional Transport Plan Consultation Summary Report, Aug 2021

5.5.4 Planning for road safety in a growing region

The region's road network is facing increased pressure as the population of the Illawarra Shoalhaven continues to grow, along with an increasing number of day and overnight visitors drawn to the region. The region's road safety risks are likely to rise with higher traffic volumes, including freight, but will be mitigated through planned and in progress safety upgrades on key corridors such as the Princes Highway and Picton Road, and by localised safety upgrades on the local road network. Visitors may be unfamiliar with or largely unprepared for driving on challenging regional routes such as Macquarie Pass. Conversely, drivers are familiar with the roads, may be less cautious and may be prepared to take greater risks.

As roads such as the Princes Highway are progressively upgraded to facilitate safer travel, sections such as the Kiama Bends between Kiama and Gerringong will continue to present risks to motorists who are accustomed to travelling on high-quality, high-speed, and lower-crash-risk road sections for many kilometres on either side. Large sections of the regions state and regional roads have low safety star ratings that reflect the increased safety risk in travelling on these routes.

Long sections of high-speed rural roads servicing coastal communities in the Shoalhaven present a particular challenge for road safety. These roads are often the only way in and out of coastal communities. Maintenance backlogs and the relative burden of these roads on available local government funding are a challenge to improving road safety.

Opportunities

- Upgrades to strategic sections of the road network will be necessary to accommodate future growth and to address the road safety risks.
- To help mitigate the road safety risks associated with increased traffic from new development and visitors to the region, the expansion of public transport options, such as improving the rail network for both passengers and freight, is crucial.
- Providing better alternatives to driving, especially in high-traffic areas, will help reduce congestion and lower the likelihood of crashes.
- Creating segregated infrastructure for vulnerable road users, including bike riders and pedestrians, will help make the roads safer for all.

Jervis Bay Road and Princes Highway intersection project

The intersection upgrade will improve safety for all transport customers, reduce congestion, improve access to local roads and growing tourist and residential areas, improve network resilience, support active and public transport users and support the growth of regional economies.

The Jervis Bay Road and Princes Highway intersection has the highest volume of vehicle movements on the highway between Nowra and the border with Victoria. A safer and more reliable intersection will support pedestrians, bike riders, and public transport customers to travel safely.

The project will deliver the $164 million Jervis Bay Road intersection upgrade. Early work began in late 2023 with major construction commencing in early 2024. It is expected to take around four years to complete.

www.transport.nsw.gov.au/projects/current-projects/jervis-bay-road-and-princes-highway-intersection

5.5.5 Poor perceptions and risk to personal security is a barrier to using public and active transport

Concerns over personal safety can hinder travel behaviour change across all transport modes. Fear of crime while using public transport or active transport can deter the use of these modes, especially at night, and is a particular concern for female customers. Safety needs concerning trains in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region have previously been recognised as being poorly met.[110]

Safety concerns at night are a particular barrier to public transport use, especially for women, with just 22 per cent of women reporting feeling safe at night, compared to about 60 per cent of men. Women have reported avoiding the train entirely at night because of fears for their personal safety.

Perceptions of safety and personal security for people walking and bike riding have a real impact on their choices for whether, where and when they travel. Over half of people surveyed (and higher for women) are more likely to walk , catch public transport and go out during the day and after dark if they feel safer in public spaces.[111]

Other transport disadvantaged groups include the elderly, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, for whom public transport could be culturally unsafe, and victims and survivors of domestic violence. Young people also reported preferring to catch taxis or rideshares at night due to safety concerns. Families were seen to be especially cognisant of safety, with a stakeholder explaining, 'If you do have a child, you're not usually going to go on public transport at night'.[112]

Table 5. Perceptions of safety using public transport[113]

	Males 18–59	Females 18–59	Males 60+	Females 60+
I feel safe using public transport at night (net agree)				
Illawarra	64%	22%	56%	24%
Shoalhaven	33%*	23%	58%*	27%*
I feel safe using public transport during the day (net agree)				
Illawarra	74%	75%	88%	74%
Shoalhaven	67%*	68%	92%*	79%*

* Note: Low sample size

110 Illawarra-Shoalhaven Customer Behaviour Research, May 2024
111 NSW Safer Cities Survey Report, 2024, pp. 18
112 Illawarra-Shoalhaven Customer Behaviour Research, May 2024
113 Illawarra-Shoalhaven Customer Behaviour Research, May 2024

Resident Profile: Amaya*
Age: 20s
Location: Wollongong
Occupation: Student
Transport use: Walks, regular bus and train user

* Resident names have been changed. Profile image generated using Adobe Firefly.

Amaya moved to Wollongong from overseas seven months ago to study. Without a car, she relies on public transport – mainly the free Gong Shuttle Bus for uni and work, and trains to visit Sydney on weekends.

At first she didn't feel the need for a car, but public transport service delays and cancellations have made her late for work and forced her to take costly alternatives.

The lack of evening and weekend buses impacts her social life and getting home from the beach on the weekend.

Most of her trips are short, so she walks. While she's considered cycling, she doesn't own a bike and her workplace lacks bike parking. She appreciates accurate, real-time bus updates to help her plan for trips.

> **'Security cameras do help. I've seen some marshals roaming around on train stations. I think if something like that... would also make me feel safer at night.'**

The low frequency of services was also commonly noted as a barrier to public transport use in the evenings, especially to transport disadvantaged groups such as women and young people, infrequent services lead to long wait times and mean that commuters can be stranded or isolated at night.

Concerns about safety extend beyond public transport services and stations, as people report concern about leaving their cars parked at various train stations in the region, particularly Bomaderry.[114]

Opportunities

- Improve public lighting at bus stops, trains stations and parking areas. This includes installing bright lights as well as decorative and atmospheric lighting to ensure that waiting areas are well-lit and visible, deterring crime and increasing passenger comfort.
- Ensure train staff members are easily visible and accessible throughout the journey. This can be achieved by providing bright and distinct uniforms and enhancing the lighting in trains and stations. Additionally, security measures such as surveillance cameras and emergency call buttons should be implemented to enable passengers to report any issues quickly and effectively.
- Emphasise women's safety and security during night-time hours. This includes implementing well-lit waiting areas with seating, offering security escorts for women travelling alone, and ensuring staff are present at interchanges and onboard services. Establishing dedicated hotlines or support services for women can further enhance their sense of safety.
- Adopt the principles of 'Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design' when designing walking and bicycle networks, including by ensuring routes have adequate passive surveillance and lighting, and avoiding the potential for concealment and entrapment.
- Support the development of vibrant town centres, especially in connection with transport hubs, bus stops and parking areas.

114 Illawarra-Shoalhaven Customer Behaviour Research, May 2024

Women sitting on lit up street furniture and fairy lights installed at MacCabe Park Wollongong as part of the Safer Cities Her Way program
© Wollongong City Council

Case study: Safer Cities, 'Her Way' Program

The program has three aims, which are aligned with the United Nations Safer Cities for Girls program:

- Increasing women and girls' safety and access to public spaces.
- Enabling women and girls to move freely and alone in their community.
- Increasing women and girls' engagement with how the spaces around them are designed and managed.

The program engages with women, girls and gender diverse people to understand their perspectives and co-design place-based approaches to improve perceptions of safety when walking to, through and within public spaces including our streets.

Transport for NSW is working collaboratively with delivery partners within the NSW Government and with 10 local councils including Wollongong City Council to trial place-based interventions and activations that will deliver on the aims of the program.

Safer Cities: Her Way aims to improve perceptions of safety when travelling to, through and within public spaces and transport hubs. The project is trialling how to make public spaces feel safer through pilot projects focused on the Wollongong CBD and the Port Kembla and Dapto town centres.

www.transport.nsw.gov.au/industry/cities-and-active-transport/cities-revitalisation-and-place/festival-of-place-0

5.5.6 Maritime safety in the region

The Illawarra Shoalhaven region is known for its extensive coastline, rivers and waterways. The region attracts recreational boating and commercial maritime operations but faces safety challenges due to rising visitor numbers and local maritime traffic. Issues include crowded waterways during peak periods, increasing demand to access boating infrastructure and the need for better safety awareness among both recreational and commercial users.

The Illawarra Shoalhaven region, combined with the South Coast region, reported five fatalities on its waterways in 2021–22.[115]

Providing safe and sustainable access to waterways is also critical to delivering the economic and social benefits of boating for the region. Programs such as the $44 million Boating Infrastructure and Dredging Program and initiatives under the Marine Estate Management Strategy, for which Transport is a partner agency, help to ensure boaters can access the water safely while minimising environmental impacts.

Opportunities

- Support the Maritime Safety Plan 2026, which outlines the strategic directions for maritime safety in four priority areas[116] safer lifejackets and equipment, safer boating through technology, safer waterway access and infrastructure, and a safer boating culture.
- Improve education on water safety skills and knowledge to ensure all community members can enjoy the water safely.
- Improve education on vital water safety skills and knowledge, particularly the beach, inland waters and rock fishing safety which are is essential to ensuring all community members can enjoy the water safely.

A birds-eye view of Ulladulla Harbour, Ulladulla © NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure/Dee Kramer

115 New-South-Wales-Coastal-Safety-Report-2023.pdf
116 Transport for NSW Maritime Safety Plan 2026

5.6 Resilient networks

Reduce the impact of transport network shocks and stresses to service and network interruptions, and proactively plan for future impacts

The Illawarra Shoalhaven region transport system has vulnerabilities due large areas of bushland, the steep escarpment topography and rainfall patterns, and network reliance on individual transport corridors with few alternative options available. Improving network resilience requires a combination of measures including how network infrastructure is designed and having appropriate risk management, incident management and response procedures in place. Part of Transport's ability to build resilience and minimise network disruption is anticipating and appropriately planning for disruption.

What we heard

- The unreliability of rail infrastructure restricts efficient freight movement to Port Kembla and associated industrial precincts.
- Limited escarpment crossings lead to low levels of resilience for travel across the Illawarra Escarpment during severe weather events and natural disasters.
- The transport network needs to be more resilient to severe weather events For example, the 2022 major rain event led to closure of all the major roads in and out of Wollongong and the Illawarra due to flooding and landslips.
- There is a need to address impact of flooding on some roads and industrial developments that are located in a floodplain.
- Several communities that rely on single roads for access, risk being cut off during fire events and floods.

5.6.1 The Illawarra Escarpment and regional geography present challenges for resilience for the Illawarra Shoalhaven

The Illawarra Escarpment in Wollongong acts as a physical barrier, separating the region from Sydney to the north and the Southern Highlands to the west.

There are limited road and rail routes through the escarpment, such as Bulli Pass, Mount Ousley Road, Moss Vale Road and the Illawarra Highway, which are vulnerable to disruptions from accidents, road maintenance, and adverse weather conditions.

The steep and rugged terrain of the escarpment complicates transport improvements, as key routes must navigate constrained pathways between the escarpment and the coast, creating frequent bottlenecks.[117] The lack of redundancy in the network highlights the region's vulnerability to disruptions. Parts of the region's road and rail connection to Sydney are also vulnerable to coastal erosion, sea storm surges and flooding. Road closures and disruptions on these critical routes cause significant transport disruptions often with regional impact.

For rail, the South Coast Line and the Unanderra-Moss Vale freight line both traverse the escarpment. These key corridors link the Illawarra Shoalhaven region with Western Sydney and the wider rail network, but face challenges in enhancing safety and access due to the geography. As population and freight demand grow, these routes require significant investment and planning to overcome their limitations.

Public transport routes are similarly affected by the geography noting that the combination of the escarpment, lakes, and limited number of access roads to some coastal settlements constrains public transport options and reduces flexibility in route planning.

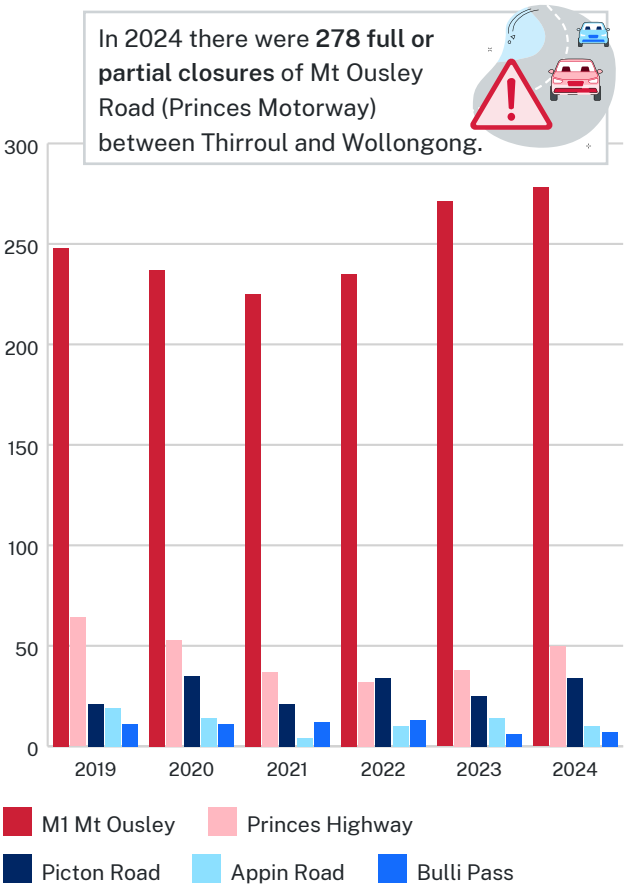
117 Illawarra Shoalhaven Vision, Objectives, Challenges workshop Sep 2024

In the long term, addressing the transport challenges posed by the escarpment will require significant investment and infrastructure upgrades. Ongoing and proposed projects, such as upgrades to the Princes Highway and Princes Motorway, and investigations into increasing rail resilience in the Illawarra, are critical to improving regional connectivity. These projects aim to provide more reliable and resilient connections, particularly for freight and passenger movements across the escarpment.

The region's multiple mountainous passes represent vulnerabilities to resilience. Macquarie Pass is unsuitable for large vehicles evidenced by the number of incidents, such as trucks getting stuck on the hairpin bends and truck crashing, causing it to close. Mount Ousley, Picton and Appin roads are all susceptible to breakdowns and crashes as well as weather events, severing access to the region.[118] Strategic road corridors like the Princes Motorway, particularly the Mount Ousley section, and the Princes Highway are vulnerable to disruptions, especially given the high traffic volumes and limited alternative routes. Lane closures on these corridors frequently cause long disruption and delays, with Mount Ousley Road (Princes Motorway) between Thirroul and Wollongong having over 270 incidents that caused lane closures in 2024 due to traffic crashes or vehicle breakdowns.

Road Construction in Gerringong © NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure/Don Fuchs

Incidents causing lane closures
Includes traffic incidents and environmental hazards.



Source: Live Traffic NSW website.

Figure 27. Incidents causing lane closures (2024)

Opportunities

- Build on and deliver the recommendations of the Illawarra Rail Resilience plan to improve rail resilience in the region.
- Develop a program of infrastructure upgrades to improve the resilience of the region's strategic transport connections, especially those vulnerable to the effects of fire, flood and landslides.
- Improve real time monitoring and information sharing to communicate the operational status of inter-regional routes to commercial transport operators and the public.

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5.6.2 Illawarra Shoalhaven transport network is susceptible to shocks and disruption

The proximity of the Illawarra Escarpment to the coast has resulted in a limited number of north-south road and rail lines serving the urban and rural parts of the region, with few options for corridor widening or for additional corridors to be established. This limited space results in narrow transport corridors that can easily become congested, especially as the region's population grows and travel demand increases. In these cases expansion or improvements to increase road resilience will require significant engineering interventions.

The Princes Highway is a critical north–south road link for both passenger and freight transport for the region but suffers from frequent congestion and reliability issues, particularly during peak periods and holiday seasons, which disruptions from accidents or road maintenance often reduce its reliability.

The road network in northern Wollongong is similarly constrained, with Lawrence Hargrave Drive being the only viable road connection through the northern suburban area. Accidents or roadworks on this route, particularly at key chokepoints like the Thirroul rail bridge, can cause major disruptions, as it is the only connection between north and south Thirroul. This lack of alternative routes exacerbates congestion and reduces the reliability of the network during peak periods or in case of emergencies.

A number of rail level crossings on the South Coast Line increase vulnerability to both rail and road networks in the event of incidents at level crossings. Several level crossings between Corrimal and Bulli, and between Unanderra and Albion Park are critical to maintaining local road network resilience, providing gateway access routes on local suburban roads and along the Princes Highway at Unanderra.

Many coastal and lakeside settlements in the Shoalhaven region are similarly reliant on a single road access point, many of which are in areas prone to bushfire or flood risk. This lack of redundancy creates significant risks in the event of road closures due to crashes, bushfires, or other natural hazards, leaving communities isolated. Examples include Culburra Beach and Callala Beach, which have only one entry and exit road, making evacuations or emergency response highly vulnerable during catastrophic events.

Rail line disruptions due to maintenance or incidents further complicate efforts to maintain reliable transport links, especially given the already limited rail capacity. Improving the resilience of both road and rail infrastructure is crucial to reducing the impact of such closures and ensuring reliable access across the region.[119]

Opportunities

- Invest in local road networks to alleviate traffic congestion by improving local road networks to reduce dependence on the Princes Highway for short-distance trips. This would ease congestion and provide alternative routes during emergencies. It would enhance the network's resilience against bottlenecks caused by geographic constraints such as the Illawarra Escarpment and improve overall connectivity across the region.
- Plan redundancy for critical transport corridors and the region's vulnerable infrastructure, such as the single rail line and single road access points that service many communities. This is especially critical for routes like Macquarie Pass, where frequent truck incidents and weather events sever access. Ensuring backup routes or improving resilience along these corridors will mitigate the risk of isolation during emergencies and provide more reliable connections for freight and passenger movement.

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- Upgrade ageing transport assets to enhance resilience and reduce the need for ongoing maintenance. This includes reinforcing key roadways and transport hubs against environmental threats posed by the escarpment's natural barriers, such as landslides and erosion, as well as improving the durability of infrastructure against climatic challenges like floods and fires.
- Improve public and active transport resilience by incorporating climate-resilient infrastructure such as bus shelters that provide adequate protection from rain, sun and wind, and sheltered paths to promote walking and cycling in all weather conditions. This will improve both safety and comfort, encouraging greater uptake of sustainable transport options.
- Use technology to improve resilience, such as by promoting the use of services like the Live Traffic NSW website to keep customers informed during network disruptions and to avoid network congestion and delays. Use innovation and new technologies that have the potential to provide new tools and opportunities to benefit responders, decision-makers and the community in understanding and responding to network disruptions and to alert customers of changes to their journeys as they happen in real time. Monitoring network assets using drones and CCTV can improve situational awareness for daily operations and management, minimise disruption impacts and deliver more reliable journeys. Investigate new ways in which technology can be used to enable customers to make informed decisions in real time and respond to planned and unplanned events.

5.6.3 Vulnerability to natural hazards, weather events and disruptions

The existing infrastructure in the region, especially the road network, remains highly susceptible to disruptions. This is a critical issue as natural disasters such as bushfires, floods, sea-level rise and the increasing impacts of climate change (Figure 28), which frequently affect the region, can sever access to entire communities, significantly impacting their safety and connectivity.

The region is particularly vulnerable to bushfires, with some communities only having a single road in and out, such as Moss Vale Road. During fire events, this lack of alternative routes presents major risks to residents, emergency services, and transport operations. Additionally, the mountainous terrain and limited road connections between settlements make it difficult to ensure network resilience across the region (Figure 29).

The catastrophic bushfires that impacted the region in the 2019–20 fire season severely impacted key transport routes across the Illawarra Shoalhaven. One of the lessons learnt from the event was that management of land adjacent to the transport network is a major factor in the severity of the impact of fires on the network.[120]

Heavy rainfall and flooding often result in the closure of rail lines, particularly in low-lying areas, disrupting services and requiring significant time for water to recede and infrastructure to be repaired. Prolonged wet weather creates challenges for rail maintenance crews, as track repairs and upgrades are delayed, resulting in accumulated backlogs that can exacerbate long-term disruptions to services. Flood-prone areas along key arterial roads, including parts of the Princes Highway, lead to road closures during severe weather, disrupting access and causing lengthy detours.

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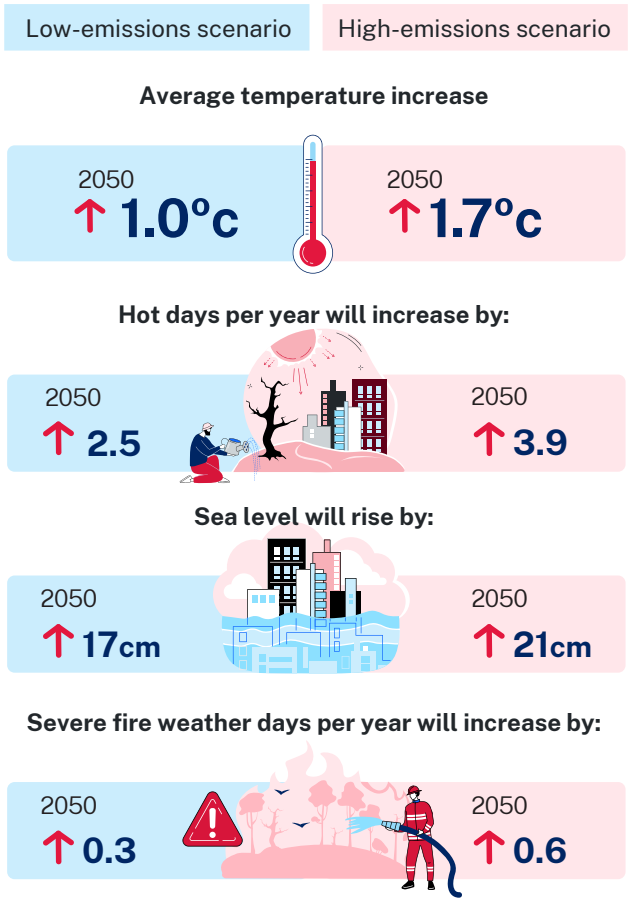
Topographical challenges such as steep gradients exacerbate poor visibility during foggy conditions, especially on routes like Mount Ousley Road, increasing the likelihood of accidents and network closures. Frequent adverse weather events, such as, heavy rainfall, fog and coastal storms reduce visibility and increase crash risks on key road corridors such as the Princes Highway, leading to traffic delays and congestion.

Opportunities

- Conduct resilience planning and risk assessments for severe climate, weather and catastrophic events to better respond to the increasing frequency and severity of weather events such as bushfires, floods, heatwaves and storms that threaten the region's transport infrastructure. This includes assessment of critical routes such as Mount Ousley, Picton and Appin roads to minimise closures due to breakdowns, crashes and adverse weather, as well as ensuring Moss Vale Road is equipped to handle bushfire evacuation with multiple access points.
- Improve the resilience of existing infrastructure by making it more able to withstand environmental conditions. Examples include upgrades to meet higher standards of flood attenuation or replacing road surfaces, safety barriers or burnt culverts with new pipes that are more capable of withstanding future bushfires.
- Implement practices to better manage land adjacent to the transport network to ensure that these impacts are mitigated in the future, including clearing additional vegetation in high-risk areas.[121] Actions may include planting wind and fire-resilient trees along major routes and ensuring roads are flood resilient to maintain connectivity during severe weather events.[122]

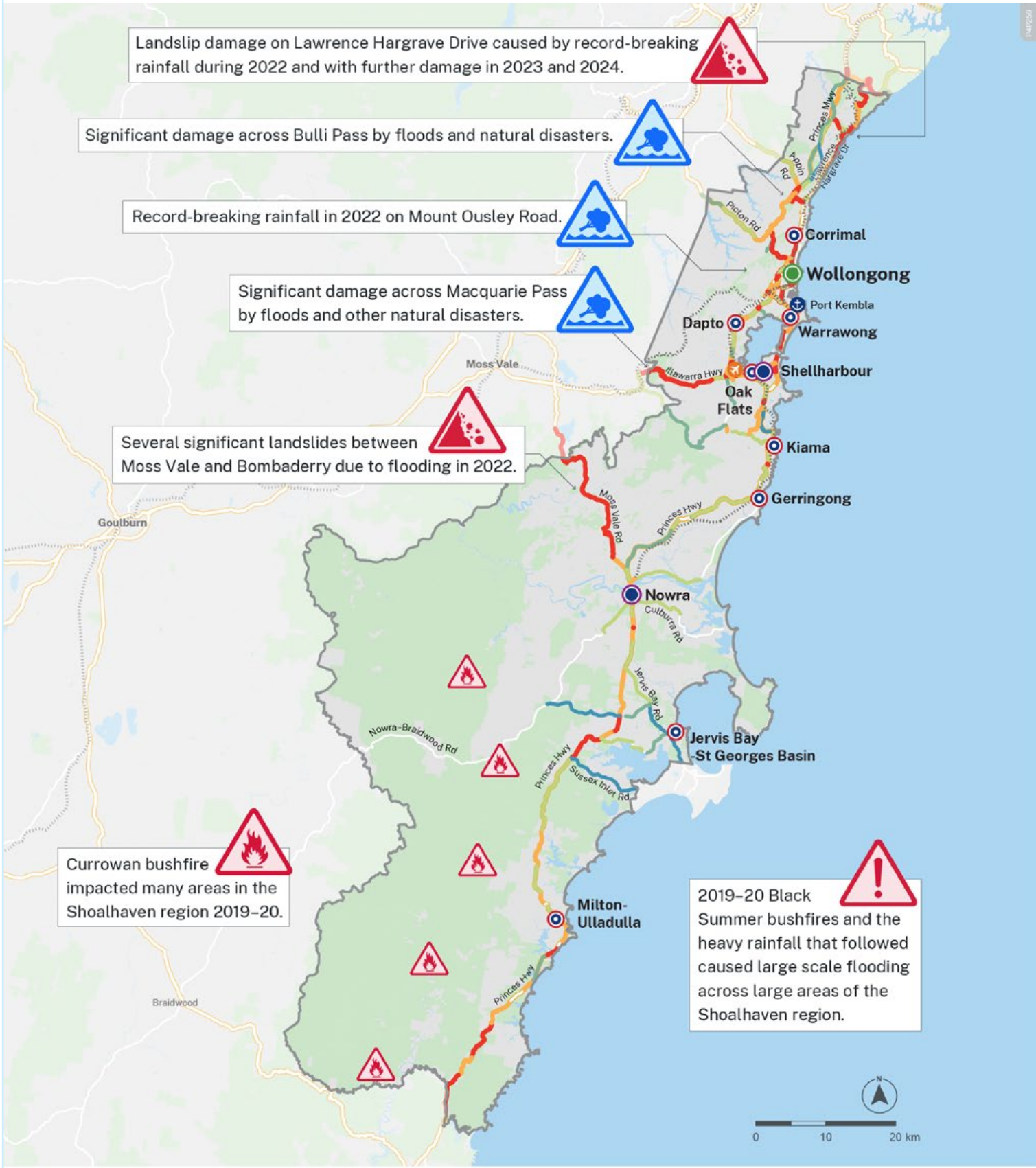
Landcare Cultural Burning © NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water



Source: Data is based on NARCliM2.0 (2024) projections for SSP1-2.6 (low-emissions) and SSP3-7.0 (high-emissions) and is presented relative to the historical climate baseline of 1990–2009.
The projections for 2050 represent averaged data for 2040–2059. Values presented are averages across the NARCliM2.0 model ensemble, and do not represent the full range of plausible climate futures. Regional climate change impacts are used to highlight how the region is likely to be affected by climate change, and impacts are not limited to the examples provided. Sea-level rise data is from the IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report is presented relative to a baseline of 1995–2014.

Figure 28. Climate change in the Illawarra Shoalhaven

121 Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Transport Plan 2021
122 Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Transport Plan 2021



KEY

- Metropolitan centre
- Regional city
- Strategic centre
- Port
- Regional airport
- Regional boundary
- State roads
- Regional roads
- Railway line

Incident frequency – Total incidents on each road segment divided by kilometres

- <0.2
- 0.2–0.4
- 0.4–1
- 1–2
- >2

Source: Transport for NSW, Live Traffic. Road hazards from 2015 to 2025 including fallen tree, fire/smoke, landslide/rock fall, snow/ice, other adverse weather and other hazard. In lower populated areas, incidents may not always be reported in Live Traffic.

Figure 29. Environmental hazards and network vulnerability

5.7 Net zero emissions

Contribute to achieving the emissions reductions targets as outlined in the Net Zero and Climate Change Policy

Transport for NSW is committed to achieving net zero emissions consistent with Australia's commitment under the 2016 Paris Agreement. This involves achieving a series of decarbonisation targets, as shown in Figure 30. Transport sector activities account for 19 per cent of NSW's emissions. However, by 2030 it is projected to be the largest single source of emissions.[123] The Illawarra Shoalhaven region accounts for about five per cent of the total transport sector emissions of NSW.[124] Achieving net zero emissions in the transport sector will require a coordinated and determined change in the way that Transport operates and in the way that customers across NSW carry out their journeys.

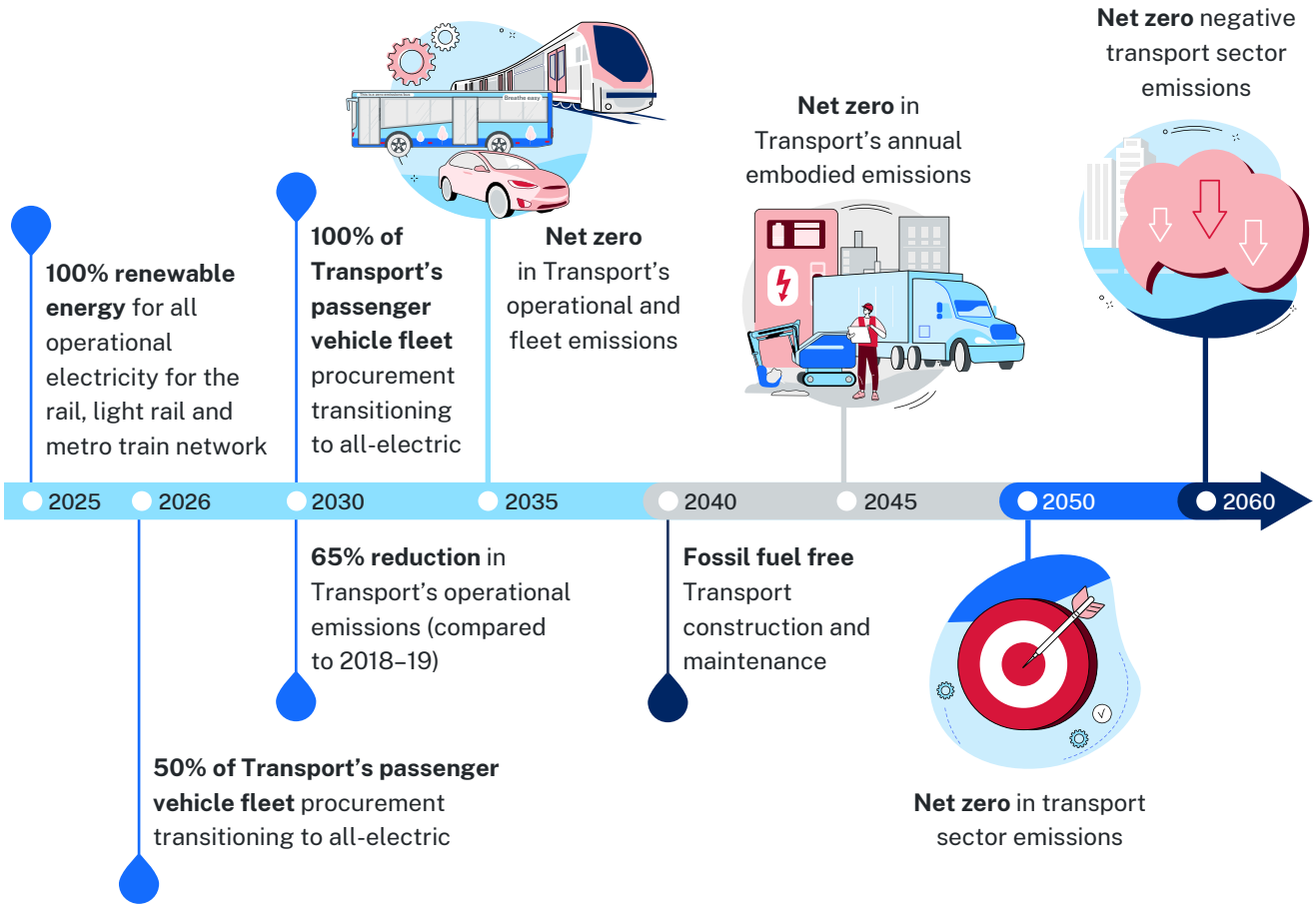


Figure 30. Transport Net Zero and Climate Change Policy targets

123 Transport Sustainability Report 2022–23

124 NSW Net Zero Emissions Dashboard

What we heard

- More electric vehicle (EV) chargers are needed to enable trips to Shoalhaven and other places outside the region and to encourage further uptake of EVs among drivers.
- Consider opportunities associated with the planned production of five gigawatts of green hydrogen at Port Kembla.
- Improving timetable integration of public transport services would reduce commuters' reliance on cars for short trips to stations like Wollongong, North Wollongong and Thirroul.
- Potential restrictions and constraints on the road network would facilitate efficient transport for wind REZ equipment.
- There is an opportunity for key attractors such as University of Wollongong to achieve carbon targets by shifting travel choice to more active transport, including by allowing people to take bikes on trains and potentially other public transport modes connecting to the train.
- More bike racks are needed to securely park bikes when cycling around town.
- There is an opportunity to encourage more active travel using e-bikes which make hilly terrain more manageable and commutable in places like Kiama.

5.7.1 Reducing passenger and freight vehicle fleet emissions

Transport sector emissions, including from passenger and freight vehicles accounted for 19 per cent of NSW's greenhouse emissions in 2021. However, by 2030 transport is projected to be the largest single source of emissions.[125] In 2024, Illawarra Shoalhaven made up four per cent of the total NSW registrations in either battery electric or hybrid / PHEV vehicles. In 2021, around 13 per cent of all journeys to work within the Illawarra Shoalhaven region were less than 2.5 kilometres.[126]

The importance of freight and heavy vehicle trucking to the region's economy means that a transition to lower emissions trucking will be essential to reach the region's emissions targets. However, low emissions trucking technology is not widely in use and growing the sector may take significant policy support.

Replacing the use of cars for short and medium length trips with public and active transport is a way that transport sector emissions can be reduced. In Wollongong LGA on weekdays, 39 per cent of short trips under one kilometre are made by private vehicles. This increases to 82 per cent for trips between one and two kilometres.[127] Over 20 per cent of all journeys to work within the Illawarra Shoalhaven area were less than 2.5 kilometres.[128]

125 Transport Sustainability Report 2022–23
126 ABS Census 2021, distance of travel to workplace (DTWP)
127 Draft Wollongong Integrated Transport Strategy, March 2024, Household Travel Survey 2018–19
128 NSW Household Travel Survey (HTS)

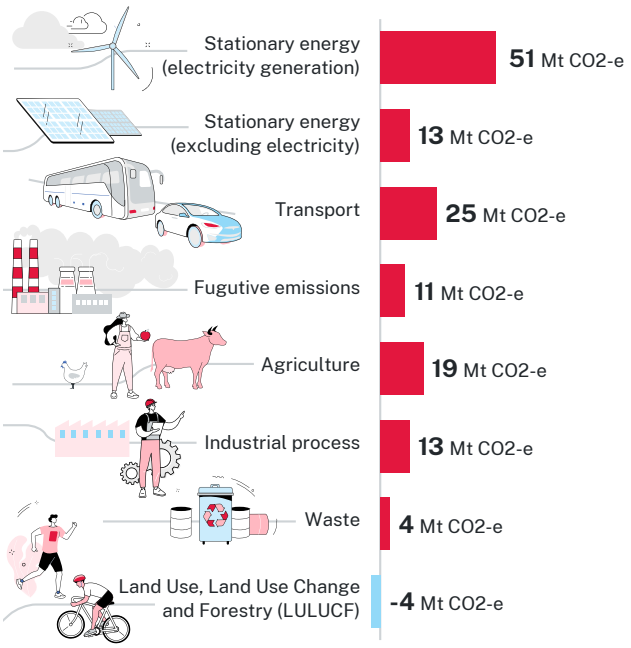


Figure 31. NSW emissions by sector, 2021[129]

Opportunities

- Increase investment in safe active transport infrastructure to realise a step-change in cycling, walking and micromobility to support zero emissions growth and reduce short car trips. Focus on completing the Strategic Cycleway Corridor projects and expanding the Wollongong e-scooter trial to more locations. This will promote sustainable travel within towns and centres while reducing the dominance of car-based travel for short distances.
- Support actions to improve public transport availability and take-up.
- Support localised actions of the Transport for NSW Towards New Zero Emissions Freight Policy, including the increased movement of freight by rail, transition to electric and low-emission trucks, and reduced or more efficient freight batching and distribution.
- Manage demand by removing the need to travel and support remote work and remote access to services.

5.7.2 Ensuring the transport network supports the transport needs of the Governments net zero policy

The Illawarra region has been identified by the NSW Government as the location for a declared renewable energy zone (REZ). The region already hosts major energy, port, and transport infrastructure, has a skilled workforce, has the potential to harness significant offshore wind generation and has a strong demand for future hydrogen projects, including for future green steel production.[130]

The transport network will need to respond to changing demands from renewable energy infrastructure development to support the activities of EnergyCo in delivering the Illawarra REZ.

The transition from coal to renewable energy may result in changes to rail freight demand and adjustments to the rail freight network, which currently supports coal exports. This transition is likely to result in changing distribution of demand and may change the needs for port infrastructure.

Opportunities

- Use port and transport infrastructure to access export markets for green hydrogen, ammonia, and metal production.[131]
- Support the development of Illawarra REZ by improving transport services and road infrastructure.

129 Towards Net Zero Emissions Freight Policy
130 Illawarra Renewable Energy Zone
131 Energising the Illawarra, 2022

5.7.3 Bus fleet, depots and workforce adaptation to support the ZEB program

NSW public transport operational emissions account for three per cent of the overall transport sector's emissions.[132] Under the Net Zero and Climate Change Policy, Transport has committed to achieving a 65 per cent reduction in operational emissions by 2030 and net zero operational and fleet emissions by 2035. A breakdown of Transport's emissions is shown in Figure 32.

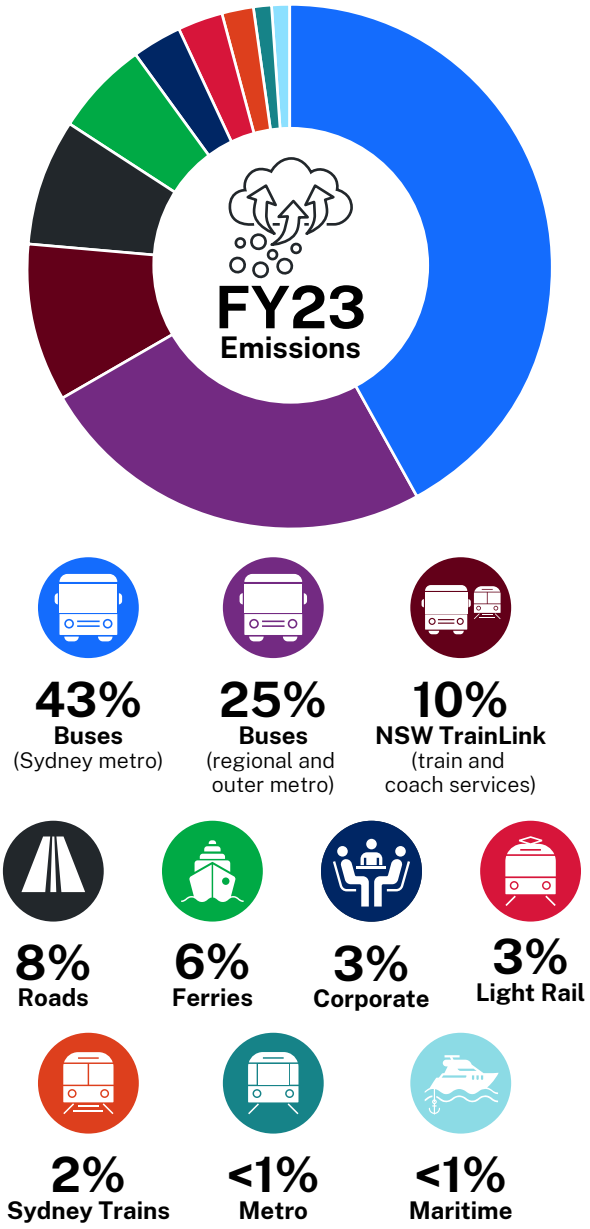


Figure 32. Transport for NSW operational emissions, FY2023[133]

Buses currently account for the greatest single source of Transport's emissions, with buses in regional and outer metropolitan NSW accounting for a quarter of Transport's total operations emissions. While buses are an efficient transport mode, there is a significant opportunity to reduce their emissions. Under the Zero Emission Buses (ZEB) Transition Plan, Transport is aiming for all buses in the Illawarra to be ZEBs by 2040 and in Shoalhaven by 2047.

These buses are likely to use battery electric or fuel-cell electric technology powered by renewable energy. They would also have added benefits including contributing to better air quality, more comfortable journeys and quieter operation. A hydrogen fuel-cell bus trial was successfully undertaken in the Central Coast in 2023 to test hydrogen as a fuel source and help deliver valuable learnings.

Aside from buses, a significant challenge for Transport will be to achieve net zero emissions for other modes such as ferries, non-electrified trains and roads. Transport is continuing to partner with industry to run trials and prioritise the rollout of zero emissions technology for these operations.

Gas equipment manufacturer BOC in Port Kembla is working with local bus operators on hydrogen bus trials and raised interest in ZEB trials within the Illawarra Shoalhaven. The transition to ZEBs is seen as a necessary step toward decarbonising public transport, but challenges remain in terms of charging infrastructure and fleet conversion strategies.

132 Transport Sustainability Report 2021–22
133 Transport Sustainability Report 2022–23

Opportunities

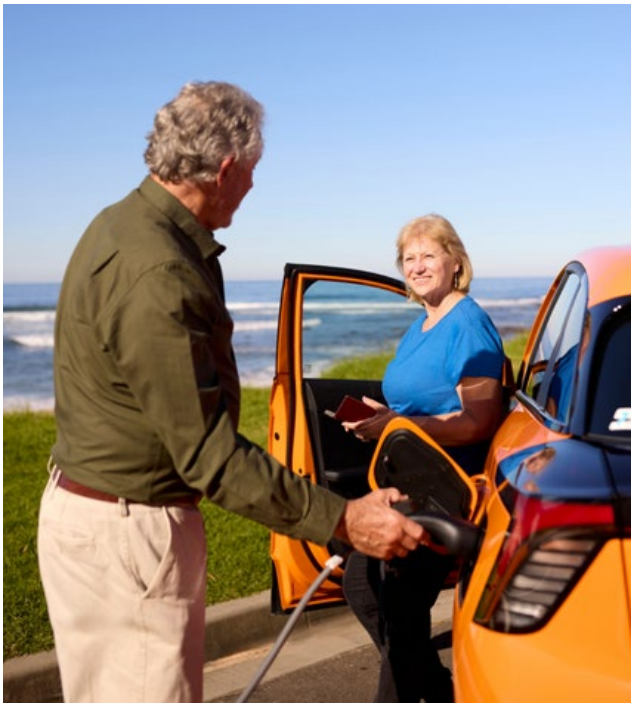
- Deliver infrastructure for zero-emission public transport by prioritising the development of charging and refuelling stations for ZEBs, including both electric and hydrogen-powered vehicles. This will support the energy transition and expand the ongoing hydrogen bus trials in collaboration with Port Kembla and local operators. The investment will also help address the need for an integrated ZEB fleet conversion strategy.
- Expand ZEB trials across the region by building on current hydrogen and electric bus trials by expanding them across the Illawarra Shoalhaven region. This will help address the challenge of supporting the slow uptake of low-emission vehicles and increase the adoption of sustainable public transport options, making the transition to a zero-emission public transport fleet more achievable.

People walking past hydrogen-powered zero emissions bus parked at Wollongong train station bus stop

5.7.4 Limited access to electric vehicle charging stations across the region

With electric vehicles forecast to reach upfront price parity with traditional combustion engine vehicles in Australia from 2024,[134] combined with the NSW Government's aspirational target for hydrogen to make up 10 per cent of the total gas network by 2030, the region will need to transition towards a future where electric and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles become the norm rather than the exception.

To boost the commercialisation of low-emissions hydrogen production and applications, the NSW Government has set an aspirational target for hydrogen to comprise up to 10 per cent of the gas network by 2030.[135] In combination with Port Kembla being identified as a potential hydrogen hub,[136] these commitments will likely deliver associated benefits for the transport sector and open opportunities for hydrogen fuel cell vehicles within the Illawarra Shoalhaven and across NSW.



Retirees charging EV, Austinmer © Jeremy Park/NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

The lack of widespread EV charging infrastructure hinders efforts to promote EV adoption in the region.[137] Without sufficient access to charging stations, particularly in rural and remote areas, many residents are unlikely to switch from conventional vehicles to EVs, which impacts the region's ability to reduce emissions.

Uneven distribution of charging stations in regional and rural areas of Illawarra Shoalhaven results in reduced access for residents in remote locations, further limiting EV adoption and contributing to peak-period bottlenecks in more central areas.

Opportunities

- Establish a comprehensive electric vehicle (EV) charging network across the region, addressing the limited access to charging infrastructure. Collaborate with local councils and private partners to ensure charging stations are strategically located, well-maintained, and meet growing demand. This will accelerate the transition to low-emission vehicles and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.
- Facilitate the transition to low-emission freight vehicles by collaborating with industry stakeholders on the rollout of charging and refuelling infrastructure for electric and hydrogen-powered trucks. This opportunity aligns with the broader energy transition and helps reduce emissions from freight transport, contributing to the region's overall sustainability goals.

134 Department of Planning, Industry and Environment 2020, Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020-2030, DPIE, Sydney
135 Department of Planning, Industry and Environment 2020, Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020–2030, DPIE, Sydney
136 Department of Planning, Industry and Environment 2021, Net Zero Industry and Innovation Program
137 www.nswmaps.evenergi.com

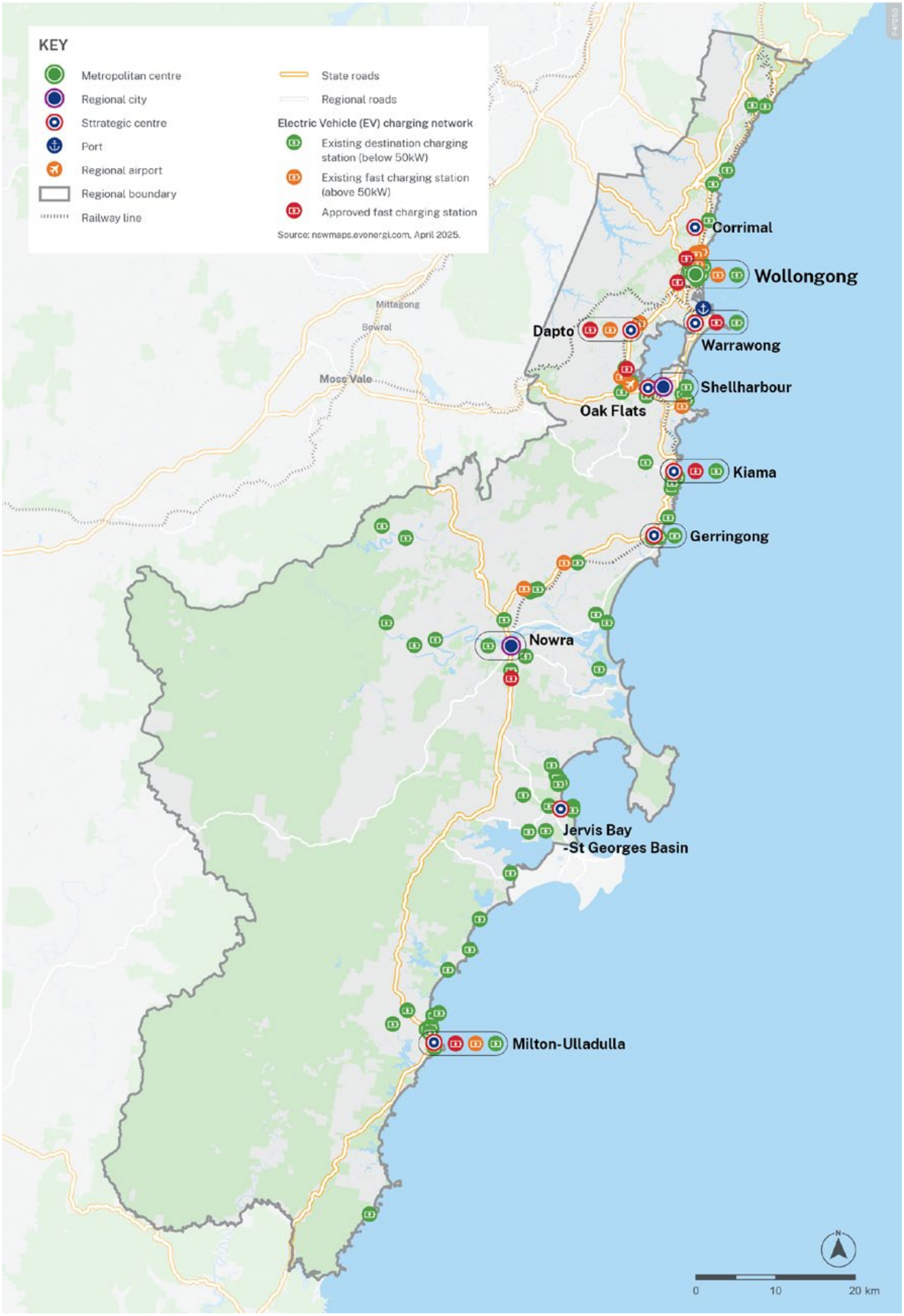


Figure 33. Current and future electric vehicle charging stations

06 Realising the vision

In summary, the following key directions are recommended to realise the Illawarra Shoalhaven vision and meet the objectives of this plan.

Supporting significant planned housing and jobs growth in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region

Transport for NSW will focus on providing higher order transport options to support the federal and State Government priority of increasing the supply of well-located housing. To achieve this, we will deliver program of roads to open doors and enhance the use of existing transport networks, and supplement them with more active and public transport options where needed. The aim is to support both infill growth precincts such as the designated Transport Oriented Development (TOD) sites and greenfield housing areas, and regionally significant growth precincts through public and active transport enhancements. This will ensure that new residential developments have access to a range of transport modes, promoting sustainable and efficient mobility for residents.

In conjunction with supporting people where they live, we will also focus on providing improved transport options to connect people with employment hubs and education centres. This will help in establishing a sustainable regional economy, so communities can live, play, work and thrive within the region.

Festoonlighting installed in Port Kembla transforms the main street as part of the Safer Cities Her Way Program © Wollongong City Council

Developing a competitive public transport network in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region

Improvements to public transport with more frequent rail services and a redesigned and more frequent bus network will offer a more viable alternative to private vehicles. An enhanced public transport network will focus on supporting significant population growth and meeting evolving travel needs.

Rail network upgrades will enable more frequent rail services to deliver reduced wait times and more reliable connections within the Wollongong and Shellharbour metropolitan area, as well as to and from Sydney. Increasing late night and off peak frequencies will support a wider range of travel requirements, including supporting the night-time economy. Upgrading key interchange stations to attractive hubs will support multi-modal journeys and make rail travel more available to a larger catchment.

A core network of frequent, all day key bus corridors will connect major centres, facilities and destinations across the region. Operating from early morning to late night, seven days a week, this network will offer easy to understand and convenient options to move around the region seamlessly, with reduced end-to-end journey times. Supporting the key bus corridors with effective road priority measures, upgraded stop amenities, real-time information and wayfinding will further enhance the passenger experience.

More frequent, integrated local bus services in both the Illawarra and Shoalhaven will support key bus corridors with improved access to areas beyond main roads and centres, extending the network to offer better coverage for the whole region.

Enabling the efficient movement of rail and road freight to support the Illawarra Shoalhaven economy

The freight task in the Illawarra Shoalhaven is forecast to grow by about one third by 2041, with the movement of freight through the region performing a critical role in the regional and NSW economy. Key drivers of freight demand are imports and exports through Port Kembla, the region's manufacturing, mining and agricultural industries, and the growing population.

Actions in support of freight movement recommended in the Illawarra Shoalhaven SRITP include short and longer-term improvements to both the rail and road networks. The Illawarra Rail Resilience Plan is underway to explore options to improve rail reliability and capacity. Future upgrades to rail network capacity and a review of passenger and freight rail operations will improve the viability of sending more freight by rail. Planning work will be carried out for the future Maldon–Dombarton rail line linking the region to south-west Sydney.

Upgrades in support of road freight include improvements to inter-regional road links to south-west Sydney, the Southern Highlands and Canberra to improve the suitability, reliability and safety of these roads for heavy vehicles. Improvements to road networks within the region include the Princes Highway corridor upgrade, intersection upgrades, and exploring bypasses to remove bottlenecks through town centres. The plan supports improvements to highway rest stops for heavy vehicles and improved routes for oversize and overmass vehicles.

Building transport network resilience through improved planning, design and management of transport infrastructure

Network resilience and the ability to withstand the shocks and impacts of natural disasters or traffic incidents are a real consideration in the Illawarra Shoalhaven, which has had several periods of major disruptive network closer due to floods and bushfires in recent years. Challenging terrain and conditions leave major roads vulnerable to regular events of vehicle crashes or breakdowns.

The main initiatives supporting resilience are improvements to east–west inter-regional routes across the Illawarra Escarpment, investigation into rail system improvements to add redundancy and new inter-regional rail links to south-west Sydney, various road upgrades and road asset management changes to improve road capacity at regional bottlenecks and to withstand the impacts of natural disasters.

6.1 Overview

The future transport network maps are designed to provide a clear and tangible representation of the long-term plans for key modes of transport in the region. Key considerations in the development of these transport networks include creating an integrated, multimodal transport network and adopting a multi-layered and multi-faceted approach to address the challenges facing the Illawarra Shoalhaven region.

6.1.1 Future network: Road

The existing road network in the Illawarra Shoalhaven connects communities, enhancing access to essential services such as healthcare, education and employment. Engagement with stakeholders highlighted key congestion and conflict points of movement and place and resilience issues in times of shocks. Improved connectivity is also required to support tourism, making it easier for visitors to explore the region.

Key features of the proposed road network include:

- a defined hierarchy of primary links supporting regional travel, and secondary links providing access to regionally significant centres and employment precincts, while diverting high-volume through movements around centres
- road user space reallocation to walking, cycling and public transport to enhance the efficiency and reliability of the network
- direct connections to key employment areas from the primary road network
- upgrades to the regional highway network to address safety deficits and enhance network resilience.

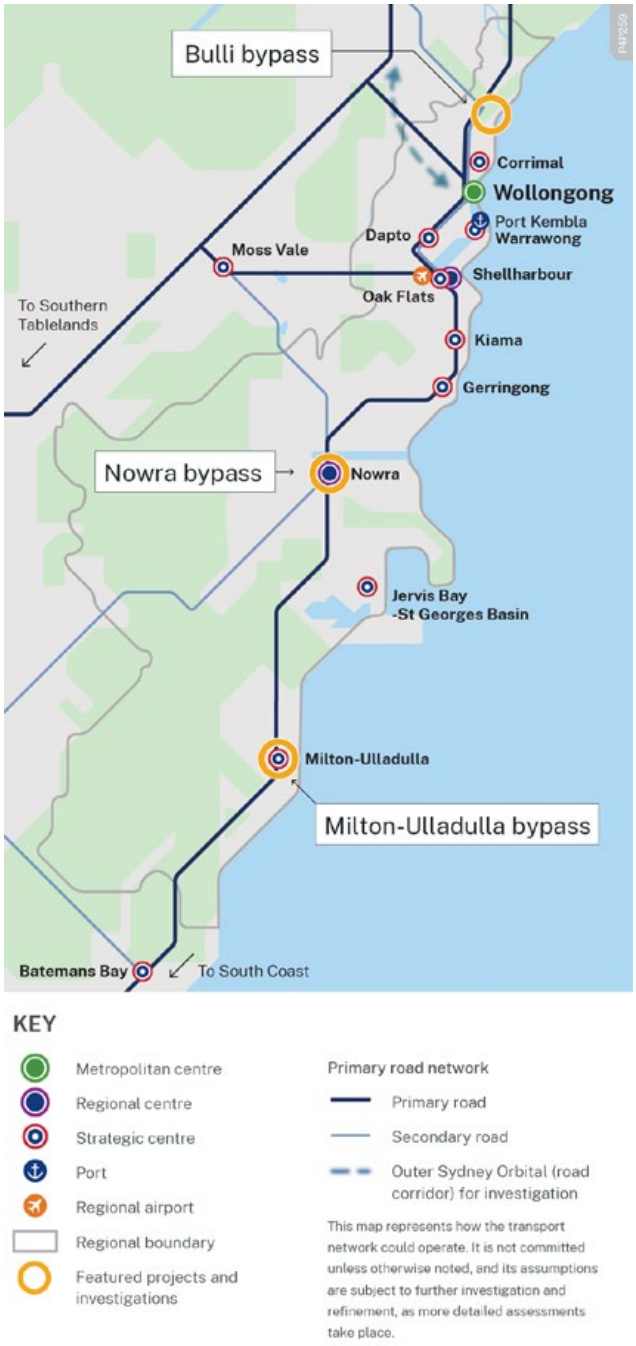


Figure 34. Future network: Road

Retirees with bikes, Austinmer © Jeremy Park/NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

6.1.2 Future network: Active transport

Early stakeholder engagement highlighted a strong preference for increased walking and cycling as key modes of transport. This feedback emphasised the need for a connected and active transport network to support this mode shift. As a result of this consultation and feedback, the following visionary network for cycleways has been adopted.

Key features of the proposed future active transport network shown in Figure 35 include:

- building primarily on strategic cycleway corridors program and identified corridors in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region
- filling gaps in the existing bike riding network and improving facilities across the Illawarra Shoalhaven region to support seamless multimodal journeys
- cycleways that connect effectively with public transport hubs, including secure bike parking facilities for enhanced accessibility
- the inclusion of safe cycleways as an integral part of city and precinct-shaping projects across the region.

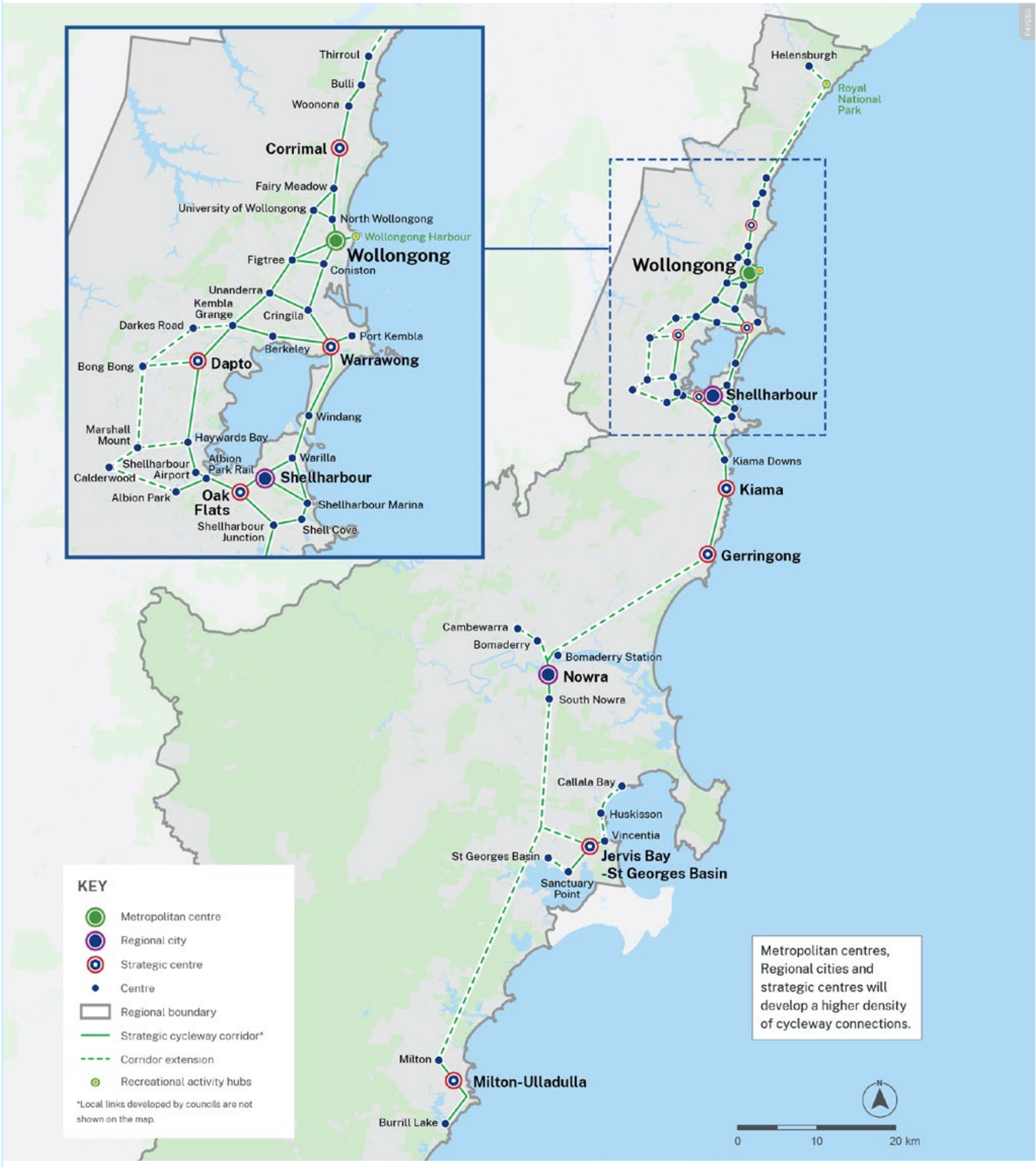


Figure 35. Future network: Strategic cycleway corridors

6.1.3 Future network: Public transport

The existing transport network in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region comprises rail, road, and maritime infrastructure and services, providing a foundation for future improvements. Engagement with stakeholders, along with an assessment of current movement patterns and projected land use, highlighted the need for a connected, metropolitan-style network. This future network (as shown in Figure 36) features a clear hierarchy of services and supporting infrastructure to ensure equitable access to education, services, employment opportunities, tourism destinations and cultural events.

Key features of the proposed public transport network include:

- an integrated multimodal network combining rail, bus and on-street services connecting Shoalhaven, Illawarra and Greater Sydney centred on the regional south–north spine
- a tiered public transport network connecting to, from and within the Illawarra Shoalhaven region and providing 24-hour operations, supporting shift workers and the night-time economy
- a metropolitan Wollongong rail network offering more frequent local rail services between Thirroul and Shellharbour Junction
- more frequent and reliable rail services to Greater Sydney as well as improved rail services to Kiama
- frequent, all-day key bus corridors, supported by targeted widening and road user space reallocation
- an enhanced and integrated local bus network
- the expansion of services to outlying communities, tourist destinations and emerging growth areas
- a network that connects regionally significant centres and proposed growth areas along the west and east of Lake Illawarra to Wollongong and Shellharbour cities
- upgrades to interchanges and supporting urban renewal in surrounding precincts such as at Wollongong, Shellharbour City and Bomaderry.

Passenger tapping Opal card on Opal reader on hydrogen-powered zero emissions bus in Wollongong

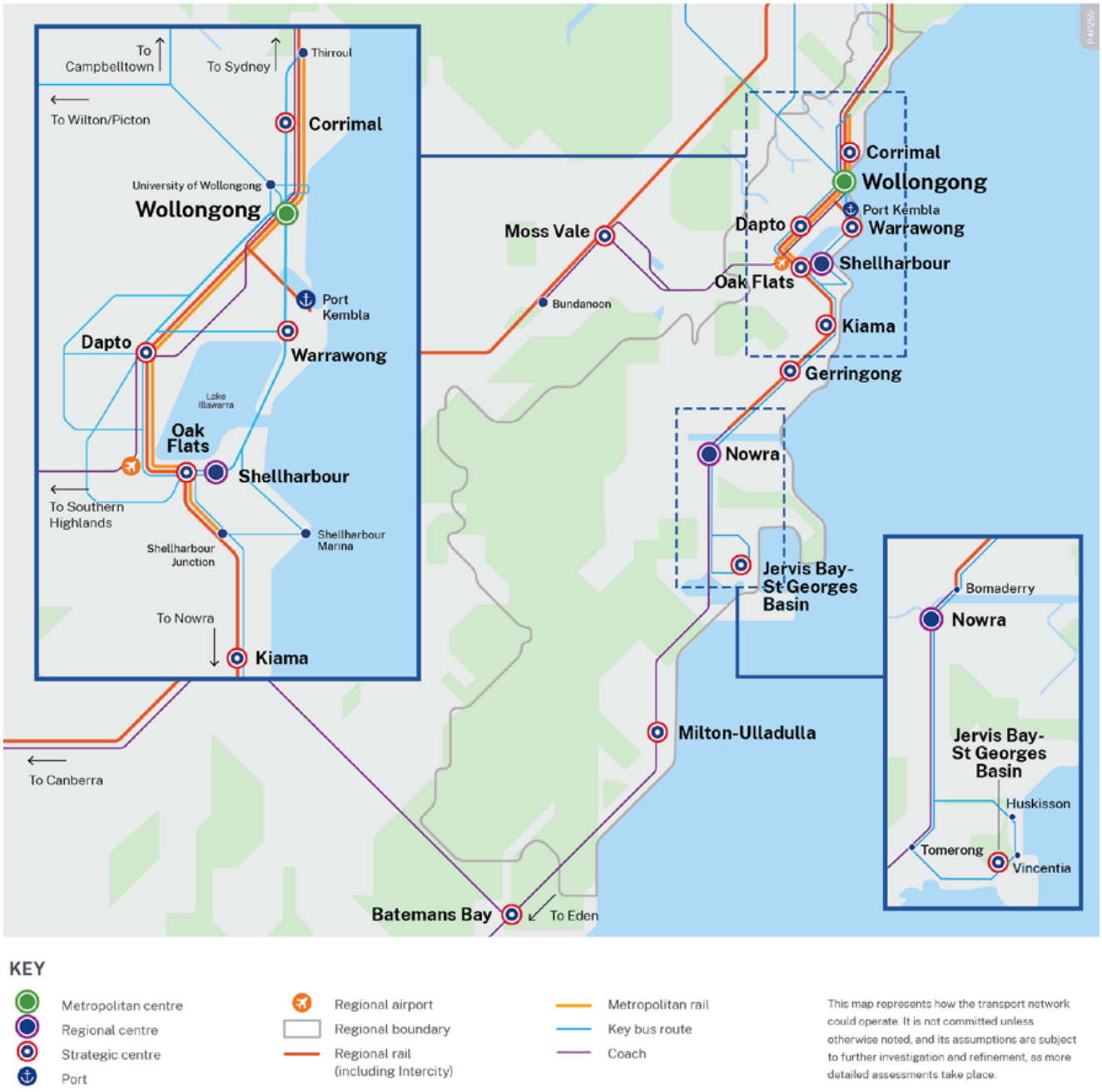


Figure 36. Future network: Public transport

This future network offers services every 10 minutes in the Illawarra linking Wollongong, the University of Wollongong, Shellharbour City, Dapto, the West Dapto growth area, Albion Park, Warrawong, Shell Cove, Corrimal and Thirroul.

Longer-distance connections between Bomaderry and the Bay and Basin area will be supported by services every 10 minutes.

Rail improvements between Bomaderry, Wollongong and Greater Sydney will enable:

- passenger rail services every 15 minutes between Shellharbour Junction and Thirroul
- passenger rail services every 30 minutes between Kiama and Sydney
- passenger rail services every 60 minutes between Bomaderry and Sydney via Kiama
- optimised freight path allocation and use to Port Kembla.

Leveraging a combination of bus and rail services, the future network will enable services every 30 minutes between Shoalhaven and Illawarra.

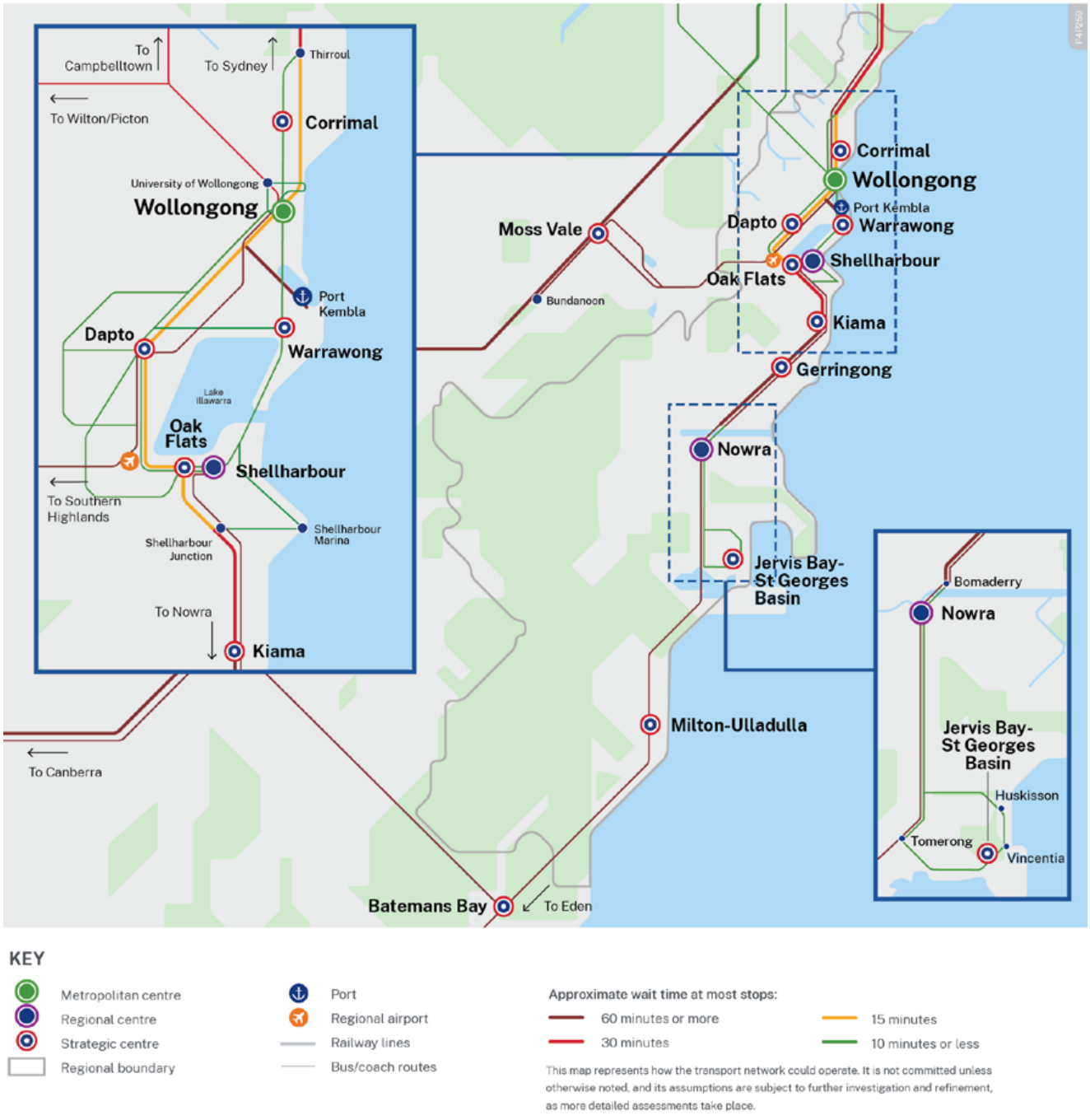


Figure 37. Future network: Public transport level of service

6.1.4 Future network: Freight

Stakeholders highlighted the critical role of the Illawarra region as a significant contributor to the NSW economy, with key industries heavily reliant on efficient freight transport. Maintaining the viability of these industries necessitates the development of an increasingly integrated transport network.

Key features of the proposed freight network include:

- the progressive increase in network efficiency on the South Coast Line to improve reliability of freight services while supporting additional passenger services
- a resilient rail freight network featuring a new east–west rail connection through the proposed Maldon to Dombarton rail link
- a tiered network for road freight to inform targeted road upgrades to support freight access to destinations like Manildra's Shoalhaven starches plant, BlueScope and Port Kembla, and to divert high-volume, road-based through-freight away from centres
- a tiered network for road freight, enhancing the resilience and reliability of the overall freight movement within the region and beyond.

Figure 38. Future network: Freight

Traffic on a road in the port area, Wollongong © NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure/Dee Kramer

Children ride along a seaside path, Reddall Reserve, Lake Illawarra © NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure/Dee Kramer

6.2 Short and medium-term initiatives

The draft Illawarra Shoalhaven SRITP has identified 45 actions to address the region's challenges and leverage its current and future opportunities. The actions are organised by committed projects currently underway, short-term (0–5 year) and medium-term (5–10 year) timeframes. These actions respond to the headings under the focus areas in the 'Transport challenges' section and will support the achievement of long-term outcomes in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region.

Starting with Country	Access to transport for all	Well-located housing and successful places	A thriving and diversifying economy
A safe transport network	Resilient networks	Net zero emissions	

6.2.1 Currently committed projects underway

LGA	Action	Link to future initiatives
All LGAs	**Illawarra Rail Resilience Plan** would examine all infrastructure along the South Coast Line and determine options to improve, upgrade, and rebuild sections of the line to enhance the resilience of connections with Port Kembla, Southwestern Sydney, and the South Coast.	#3
Wollongong, Shellharbour, Kiama	**Rail Service Improvement Program:** Continue delivery of the Rail Service Improvement Program on the South Coast line (formerly More Trains, More Services) to increase services between Sydney and Wollongong and improve local connectivity within Metropolitan Wollongong. A rail timetable review will inform the roll out of future train timetables, as well as identify service improvements to ensure we are getting the best out of the train network for passengers.	#4
Wollongong, Shellharbour, Kiama	**Mariyung intercity rail fleet:** Finalise preparation and roll-out new state-of-the-art intercity fleet on the South Coast line. The new fleet will provide improved accessibility, enhanced safety, improved comfort and modern features such as charging ports, dedicated space for luggage, prams and bicycles, and improved digital customer information screens and CCTV security.	#5
All LGAs	Illawarra and Shoalhaven bus service improvement programs: Progress planning and implementation of short and medium-term improvements to local bus services across Illawarra Shoalhaven to provide better connectivity to services, education, employment, recreation, and other transport modes by expanding services outside peak hours and on weekends, straightening-out routes, aligning with rail timetables and increasing service frequencies.	#9
Wollongong	**New south-facing ramps at Dapto on the Princes Motorway:** Finalise preparation of a business case for new south-facing ramps at Dapto to improve access to the Princes Motorway and reduce traffic on the Princes Highway and local roads.	#16
Shoalhaven	**East Nowra Sub-Arterial Road (ENSA):** Progress development for a new road connection in Nowra between the Princes Highway and Greenwell Point Road to relieve pressure on Kalandar Street and the Princes Highway.	#17
Wollongong	**Bulli bypass and transport improvements:** Progress a business case to determine the feasibility of a bypass of Bulli town centre and identify further opportunities to improve safety, accessibility, vibrancy, and efficiency on Princes Highway through Bulli.	#20
Shellharbour	**Road space reallocation of Illawarra Highway in Albion Park town centre:** Progress investigations to repurpose road space on the Illawarra Highway through Albion Park to capitalise on the upcoming completion of the extension of Tripoli Way which will provide a partial bypass of Albion Park town centre.	#23
Shoalhaven	**Regional Growth Initiatives:** $5 million for footpaths across South Coast - Invest $5 million allocation to Shoalhaven Council over four years to help build footpaths in Kioloa, Callala, Dolphin Point, Myola, Narrawallee and on Old Southern Road in Nowra.	–

6.2.2 Short-term initiatives (0–5 year timeframe)

#	LGA	Objective alignment	Action	Lead	Source
1	All LGAs		**Planning and designing with Country:** Develop Local Aboriginal Transport Plans (LATP) through co-design with key stakeholders and Aboriginal communities for the Illawarra, Nowra, Jerrinja, Ulladulla, and Batemans Bay Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALC). The LATPs will identify and deliver the best fit transport services and infrastructure for Aboriginal people, to cater to all trip purposes including health, employment, education and to places of significance.	Transport for NSW	Internal Transport investigation
2	All LGAs		**Caring for country:** Deliver through co-design with key stakeholders and communities an Aboriginal cultural landscape management program for the Illawarra Shoalhaven to use traditional and cultural land and water management to build resilience to natural disasters into transport infrastructure.	Transport for NSW	Internal Transport investigation

#	LGA	Objective alignment	Action	Lead	Source
3	All LGAs		**Illawarra Rail Resilience Plan:** Finalise the Illawarra Rail Resilience Plan and initiate detailed investigations that support a more resilient South Coast rail network for passengers and freight. These investigations will focus on improving capacity, safety, reliability, and operational efficiency through a resilience lens. Projects and/or Programs to be investigated as part of the plan, but not limited to, include: • Electrification of the South Coast Line to Bomaderry • Construction of passing loops near Toolijooa (between Kiama and Berry) • Progression of the Maldon–Dombarton rail link • Bi-modal train deployment • Level crossing removals • Culvert upgrades • Targeted track duplication.	Transport for NSW	Internal Transport investigation Illawarra Rail Resilience Plan Election commitment
4	Wollongong, Shellharbour, Kiama		**Rail Service Improvement Program:** Continue delivery of the Rail Service Improvement Program on the South Coast line (formerly More Trains, More Services) to increase services between Sydney and Wollongong and improve local connectivity within Metropolitan Wollongong. A rail timetable review will inform the roll out of future train timetables, as well as identify service improvements to ensure we are getting the best out of the train network for passengers.	Transport for NSW	Rail Service Improvement Program

#	LGA	Objective alignment	Action	Lead	Source
5	Wollongong, Shellharbour, Kiama		**Mariyung intercity rail fleet:** Finalise preparation and roll-out new state-of-the-art intercity fleet on the South Coast line. The new fleet will provide improved accessibility, enhanced safety, improved comfort and modern features such as charging ports, dedicated space for luggage, prams and bicycles, and improved digital customer information screens and CCTV security.	Transport for NSW	Mariyung Fleet
6	All LGAs		**Improvements to Illawarra Shoalhaven rail services:** Commence planning and implementation of additional short and medium-term improvements to the passenger rail services, timetabling, and infrastructure on the Illawarra Shoalhaven rail network to increase frequency and improve coordination of passenger and freight services.	Transport for NSW	Internal Transport investigation
7	All LGAs		**Investigate rail level crossing safety improvements:** Continue investigations to address pedestrian, cyclist, and road vehicle safety issues at existing rail level crossings across Illawarra Shoalhaven.	Transport for NSW Local councils	Internal Transport investigation
8	Wollongong, Shellharbour		**New bus layovers :** Complete development of additional layovers at Wollongong and Oak Flats Stations to support additional bus services in the Illawarra.	Transport for NSW	Request from Wollongong City Council

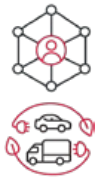
#	LGA	Objective alignment	Action	Lead	Source
9	All LGAs		**Illawarra and Shoalhaven bus service improvement programs:** Progress planning and implementation of short and medium-term improvements to local bus services across Illawarra Shoalhaven to provide better connectivity to services, education, employment, recreation, and other transport modes by expanding services outside peak hours and on weekends, straightening-out routes, aligning with rail timetables and increasing service frequencies.	Transport for NSW	Medium Term Bus Plan (EMBARGO pending public release)
10	Wollongong, Shellharbour		**Illawarra high-frequency core bus network:** Commence early planning for the prioritisation and implementation of high-frequency, all-day bus corridors and supporting infrastructure to connect key centres and destinations across the Illawarra, offering attractive service levels and an enhanced passenger experience. The planned corridors would connect Wollongong CBD, University of Wollongong, Shellharbour City, Dapto, West Lake Illawarra growth area, Albion Park, Warrawong, Shell Cove, Corrimal and Thirroul. Supporting infrastructure upgrades include road priority measures, additional corridor capacity, intersection upgrades, and bus stop improvements.	Transport for NSW	Internal Transport investigation Medium Term Bus Plan (EMBARGO pending public release)
11	Shoalhaven		**Contactless Ticketing Program:** Implement the Contactless Ticketing Program to offer contactless payment solutions to all Shoalhaven bus services.	Transport for NSW Bus operators	Internal Transport Investigation Contactless Ticketing

#	LGA	Objective alignment	Action	Lead	Source
12	Wollongong		**Public transport connections with Western Sydney:** Strengthen public transport connectivity with Western Sydney by introducing new and improved bus services between Wollongong CBD and South-Western Sydney and surrounds including Campbelltown, Appin, Picton and Wilton.	Transport for NSW	Internal Transport investigation
13	All LGAs		**Active transport micromobility parking at stations and interchanges:** Expand and improve micromobility parking and end-of-trip facilities at stations and major bus interchanges in the Illawarra Shoalhaven, including upgrades to bicycle secure storage facilities, to support increased uptake of active transport as part of longer distance journeys.	Transport for NSW	Internal Transport investigation
14	All LGAs		**Active and public transport behaviour change:** Develop and implement behaviour change programs, events and activities to support and encourage greater uptake of active and public transport in the Illawarra Shoalhaven. This initiative aims to increase the popularity, competence and familiarity with using active and public transport for Illawarra Shoalhaven communities.	Transport for NSW	Internal Transport investigation
15	Wollongong, Shellharbour		**Strategic Cycleway Corridors:** Progress the development and implementation of a network of high-quality cycleway corridors separated from vehicle traffic to broaden the attractiveness and improve the safety of cycling for access to key centres and corridors, including: • University of Wollongong to North Wollongong • Bulli to Wollongong city centre • Wollongong city centre to Figtree	Transport for NSW Local councils	Strategic Cycleway Corridor program

#	LGA	Objective alignment	Action	Lead	Source
16	Wollongong		**New south-facing ramps at Dapto on the Princes Motorway:** Finalise preparation of a business case for new south-facing ramps at Dapto to improve access to the Princes Motorway and reduce traffic on the Princes Highway and local roads.	Transport for NSW Local councils	New ramps at Dapto election commitment
17	Shoalhaven		**East Nowra Sub-Arterial Road (ENSA):** Progress development for a new road connection in Nowra between the Princes Highway and Greenwell Point Road to relieve pressure on Kalandar Street and the Princes Highway.	Transport for NSW Local councils	East Nowra Sub-Arterial road election commitment
18	Shoalhaven		**Milton-Ulladulla bypass:** Complete development and commence delivery of the Princes Highway bypass of Milton and Ulladulla town centres.	Transport for NSW Local councils	Princes Highway upgrade program Nowra bypass election commitment Bulli bypass election commitment
19	Shoalhaven		**Nowra bypass and transport improvements:** Progress early planning to determine the feasibility of a bypass of Nowra-Bomaderry and identify further opportunities to ease congestion and improve safety and connectivity to benefit communities, small businesses, tourism, and local employment.	Transport for NSW Local councils	Nowra bypass election commitment Upgrade program Nowra bypass election commitment Bulli bypass election commitment
20	Wollongong		**Bulli bypass and transport improvements:** Progress a business case to determine the feasibility of a bypass of Bulli town centre and identify further opportunities to improve safety, accessibility, vibrancy, and efficiency on Princes Highway through Bulli.	Transport for NSW Local councils	Bulli bypass election commitment

#	LGA	Objective alignment	Action	Lead	Source
21	Wollongong		**Northcliffe Drive Extension:** Continue development of an extension of Northcliffe Drive westward over the Princes Highway and the South Coast rail line to support West Lake Illawarra Growth Area with more efficient and reliable connectivity to the Princes Motorway.	Transport for NSW	Northcliffe Drive Extension strategic business case by Wollongong City Council
22	Shoalhaven		**Moss Vale Road intersection and capacity improvements:** Support growth in Bomaderry with improved safety, capacity, and active transport infrastructure on Moss Vale Road, between Cambewarra Village and Princes Highway, including completion of a business case.	Transport for NSW Local councils	Internal Transport investigation
23	Shellharbour		**Road space reallocation of Illawarra Highway in Albion Park town centre:** Progress investigations to repurpose road space on the Illawarra Highway through Albion Park to capitalise on the upcoming completion of the extension of Tripoli Way which will provide a partial bypass of Albion Park town centre.	Transport for NSW	Internal Transport investigation
24	Wollongong		**Road space reallocation of Princes Highway in North Wollongong and Wollongong city centre:** Commence investigations to best utilise the existing road corridor, including Crown and Flinders streets, through North Wollongong and Wollongong city centre to meet future transport needs with improved active and public transport connectivity and supporting emerging land uses.	Transport for NSW	Internal Transport investigation

#	LGA	Objective alignment	Action	Lead	Source
25	Shellharbour		**Road space reallocation of Princes Highway through Albion Park Rail:** Commence investigations to repurpose road space on the Princes Highway through Albion Park Rail to capitalise on the recent completion of the Albion Park Rail bypass and forthcoming south-facing ramps at Dapto.	Transport for NSW	Internal Transport investigation
26	Wollongong		**Picton Road upgrade:** Progress development of business cases for safety and capacity improvements on Picton Road between Nepean River and Princes Motorway, including the interchanges at the Hume Motorway and Princes Motorway.	Transport for NSW Local councils	Picton Road upgrades
27	Shoalhaven		**Princes Highway and Forest Road intersection:** Commence investigations to upgrade the intersection of Princes Highway and Forest Road to improve safety and support growth in the towns and villages on Forest Road.	Transport for NSW Local councils	Internal Transport investigation
28	Shoalhaven		**Princes Highway between Jervis Bay Road and Hawken Road:** Complete development and commence delivery of safety and efficiency improvements on the Princes Highway between Jervis Bay Road and Hawken Road.	Transport for NSW	Princes Highway upgrade program
29	Kiama, Shoalhaven		**Princes Highway safety and efficiency improvements:** Progress improvements on the Princes Highway, including: • safety and efficiency improvements between Hawken Road and Sussex Inlet Road • safety and efficiency improvements at Kiama Bends, south of Kiama • Princes Highway freight access and rest stop improvements.	Transport for NSW	Princes Highway upgrade program

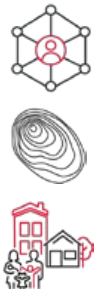
#	LGA	Objective alignment	Action	Lead	Source
30	Wollongong		**Mount Ousley safety and reliability improvements:** Investigate options and progress a business case to improve the safety, reliability and resilience of the M1 Princes Motorway between Picton Road and the Mount Ousley interchange at the base of Mount Ousley.	Transport for NSW	Internal Transport investigation
31	Wollongong, Shellharbour		**Princes Motorway capacity and reliability improvements:** Progress investigations to prioritise and develop capacity and reliability improvements on the Prince Motorway between Mount Ousley Road, Keiraville, and Shellharbour Road, Flinders. Key areas of the corridor to be investigated include West Wollongong, Figtree, Berkeley, and Dapto.	Transport for NSW	Internal Transport investigation
32	Wollongong		**Princes Highway and Mount Ousley Road intersection:** Commence investigations to upgrade the intersection of Princes Highway and Mount Ousley Road in Fairy Meadow to continue providing efficient connectivity with the Princes Motorway and improved active and public transport access.	Transport for NSW	Internal Transport investigation Mount Ousley interchange
33	Shellharbour		**Oak Flats network improvements:** Continue developing improvements and a business case for the Oak Flats Interchange and New Lake Entrance Road and Pioneer Drive intersection to reduce congestion and improve reliability and active transport safety and connectivity.	Transport for NSW	Internal Transport investigation
34	Shoalhaven		**Natural disaster repairs:** Complete natural disaster and land slip repairs on roads in the Illawarra Shoalhaven, including Moss Vale Road.	Transport for NSW	Statewide natural disaster recovery response

#	LGA	Objective alignment	Action	Lead	Source
35	Shoalhaven		**Freight capacity upgrades for Hampden Bridge, Kangaroo Valley:** Progress the immediate installation of a temporary bridge and planning for a long-term solution to provide 42.5 tonne vehicle load limit on the Illawarra Highway over Kangaroo River at Kangaroo Valley.	Transport for NSW	Hampden Bridge load reductions
36	All LGAs		**Improve resilience on east-west corridors:** Undertake an investigation to identify and prioritise future upgrades on existing east-west corridors including Bulli Pass, Mount Ousley Road, Illawarra Highway, Moss Vale Road, Jamberoo Mountain Road and Nerriga-Braidwood Road.	Transport for NSW	Internal Transport investigation
37	Wollongong		**Outer Sydney Orbital corridor preservation:** Continue investigations and corridor preservation for a future road connection between the Hume Motorway at Menangle and the Illawarra region.	Transport for NSW	Outer Sydney Orbital
38	All LGAs		**Support additional housing in the Illawarra Shoalhaven:** Support NSW Government and local councils to unlock additional housing in growth areas, including: • West Lake Illawarra • Kiama-Bombo • Moss Vale Road, Bomaderry • Transport Oriented Development sites near Corrimal, North Wollongong, and Dapto stations.	Transport for NSW Local councils	Internal Transport investigation Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan

#	LGA	Objective alignment	Action	Lead	Source
39	Wollongong, Shellharbour, Shoalhaven		**Support NSW Government's regionally significant initiatives with multimodal connectivity:** Support NSW Government and local councils to improve transport connectivity with regionally significant projects by enabling people to visit these destinations by a range of multimodal transport options. Examples of regionally significant initiatives include: • the new Shellharbour hospital • the Shoalhaven hospital redevelopment • the Wollongong health precinct • the Illawarra Sports and Entertainment Precinct • the redevelopment of BlueScope land in Port Kembla and Kembla Grange • the Nowra Riverfront Activation.	Transport for NSW NSW Health NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure Venues NSW Local councils BlueScope	Internal Transport investigation
40	All LGAs		**Road freight network capability improvements:** Increase the supported size and coverage of Performance Based Standards vehicles on the following key freight corridors: • Princes Motorway and Highway • Picton Road • Appin Road • Nerriga-Braidwood Road between Nowra and Braidwood • Illawarra Highway.	Transport for NSW Local councils	Internal Transport investigation

#	LGA	Objective alignment	Action	Lead	Source
41	All LGAs		**Road freight safety and connectivity improvements:** Improve road freight safety and connectivity in the Illawarra Shoalhaven, including: • with more efficient connectivity to Port Kembla by upgrading the intersections of Springhill Road with both Masters Road and Five Islands Road • by reducing oversize overmass vehicle restrictions on the state road network • by upgrading the frequency and facilities of rest stops for light and heavy vehicles to meet national guidelines and provide drivers with regular and high-quality opportunities for rest, including investigating new rest areas on the Princes Highway south of Nowra and in the Nowra-Bomaderry area.	Transport for NSW Local councils	Internal Transport investigation
42	Wollongong, Shellharbour, Shoalhaven		**Support NSW Government's regionally significant employment precincts:** Support NSW Government with the implementation of identified regionally significant employment precincts at Port Kembla, West Dapto, Tallawarra, Shellharbour Airport, Shell Cove, South Nowra and Albatross Aviation and Technology Park.	Transport for NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure Local councils	Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041

6.2.3 Medium-term initiatives (5–10 year timeframe)

#	LGA	Objective alignment	Action	Lead	Source
43	All LGAs		**Illawarra Shoalhaven key bus interchanges:** Improve key bus interchanges to offer passengers seamless connections between rail, local bus services, and the proposed high-frequency bus network to support intuitive end-to-end journeys and enhance the passenger interchange experience. This may include upgraded shelters, seating, lighting, clearer wayfinding, real-time information and improved pedestrian access. Reconfigured layouts to accommodate changes to bus routing or service levels could also deliver more efficient operations and passenger access.	Transport for NSW	Internal Transport investigation
44	All LGAs		**On-demand and community transport services and programs:** Expand the coverage of on-demand and community transport services across the Illawarra Shoalhaven region to connect difficult to access, developing, and discrete Aboriginal communities to the wider public transport network.	Transport for NSW	Internal Transport investigation
45	Wollongong		**Wollongong Station precinct:** Progress the implementation of the Wollongong Station Precinct Master Plan to improve connectivity with Crown Street, the CBD, and the Wollongong Health Precinct to support improvements to the bus networks and the vibrancy of west Wollongong city.	Transport for NSW	Wollongong Station Precinct Master Plan

6.3 Statewide initiatives

These are statewide priorities for action that will be of benefit to our customers and communities across the Illawarra Shoalhaven, but do not currently have specifically identified projects within this geography so they are included here as statewide initiatives that will be delivered over the life of the Plan.

#	Objective alignment	Initiative	Lead	Source
i		Work with industry and the public research sector to support the transition of the NSW bus fleet to 100 per cent zero emission buses by 2040 for Outer Metropolitan regions and by 2047 for Regional NSW.	Transport for NSW	Zero Emission Buses Transition Plan
ii		Deliver on the four priority safety areas of the Maritime Safety Plan to guide the delivery of actions to work towards zero fatalities and serious injuries on NSW waterways by 2056, including reducing conflicts between recreational watercraft and access to ports.	Transport for NSW	Maritime Safety Plan 2056
iii		Real time travel information across the state.	Transport for NSW	Transport Connected Buses Program
iv		Work with industry to increase the number of electric vehicle charging stations within regional areas to reduce the need for the community to purchase long range vehicles.	Transport for NSW EV Industry	Internal Transport investigation
v		Establish an integrated ticketing solution to provide a consistent public transport payment system across the region. This is likely to require a statewide approach for an integrated system.	Transport for NSW	Internal Transport investigation
vi		Implement consistent ways of communicating the status of network disruptions during major events and natural disasters, including real time journey information relating to disruptions.	Transport for NSW	Internal Transport investigation Customer Coordination Centre State Disaster Mitigation Plan 2024–2026 Customer Journey Resilience Plans
vii		Partner with freight companies to support increased uptake of low-emissions freight vehicles.	Transport for NSW Freight Industry	Towards Net Zero Emissions Freight Policy

#	Objective alignment	Initiative	Lead	Source
viii		Support opportunities for Aboriginal organisations to have access, management and use of culturally significant lands and waterways and ensure that transport projects have considered access to cultural sites and lands, for example, provision for cultural burns along transport corridors.	Transport for NSW Councils In consultation with Aboriginal stakeholders and community, Local Aboriginal Land Councils	Internal Transport investigation
ix		Partner with Councils and the NSW Police Force to deliver road safety programs that aim to reduce road trauma by deterring unsafe behaviours across the road network and support police compliance activities.	Transport for NSW Councils NSW Police Force	2026 Road Safety Action Plan – Towards Zero
x		Undertake speed zone reviews and apply safer speed zone settings following the principles and guidance in the NSW Speed Zoning Standard, including for suitable local streets and state road and highway networks, to improve road safety and conditions for walking and cycling on local streets.	Councils Transport for NSW	NSW Speed Zoning Standard Movement and Place Framework
xi		Identify and address safety issues at existing private and public at-grade rail level crossings through improved management of conflict with pedestrian and motor vehicles.	Transport for NSW Rail operators	Internal Transport investigation Stakeholder engagement
xii		Work with Councils and State Agencies to improve the perception and safety of people walking, cycling and using public transport, particularly for women, girls and gender diverse people. This includes lighting and visibility improvements, infrastructure improvements, amenity at bus stops and train stations, and activating places to extend the time people spend in a place across different times of the day.	Councils Transport for NSW Other NSW Government agencies	Transport Safer Cities Survey Report July 2023 Stakeholder engagement

6.4 Longer-term outcomes

Objective	Longer-term outcomes	How we make it happen	Triggers that would change priority
Starting with Country All investment in the transport network, services, policy and technology takes a Country-centred approach	Planning with Country practices are embedded at every stage of planning, development and delivery to result in Country-centred design.	**Policy** • Deliver regional Aboriginal transport data through open-source dashboard sharing • Increase the number of Aboriginal businesses on approved prequalified panels and schemes. **Services** • Improve access to education, health, employment and cultural places for Aboriginal communities.	

Wollongong Botanic Garden, Wollongong © Destination NSW

Objective	Longer-term outcomes	How we make it happen	Triggers that would change priority
Access to transport for all  A transport network that provides a range of travel choices to all people living, working in or visiting the Illawarra Shoalhaven region	• Transport disadvantage is reduced across the entire Illawarra Shoalhaven region and people are able to access their regular destinations with a variety of transport choices for all trips purposes • Public transport and active transport are seen as safe, reliable and convenient transport options for most journeys within as well as outside the region • There is a significant long-term reduction in private vehicle dependency • All people within 60 minutes of the Illawarra Shoalhaven regional boundary are able to seamlessly access all their regular destinations within the Illawarra Shoalhaven area, with a variety of transport choices.	**Policy** • Use the Road User Space Allocation Policy to prioritise more sustainable travel modes • Implement the strategic regional framework. **Services** • Support better bus and coach services connecting to education and health throughout the Illawarra Shoalhaven Region • Provide services that support housing development • Support better bus services that connect to education, employment, shopping centres and health for communities across state and administrative boundaries • Provide public transport integrated ticketing. **Infrastructure** • Build a connected active transport network throughout the Illawarra Shoalhaven region • Deliver upgrades to improve the performance of the all-day frequent 'core' bus network and enhance the passenger experience through road priority measures, additional corridor capacity, intersection upgrades and bus stop improvements • Create an active transport network that links the border communities • Support an integrated road and rail network.	• New schools • New health services • Development of future housing growth areas • Project work for the Illawarra Rail Resilience Plan.

Objective	Longer-term outcomes	How we make it happen	Triggers that would change priority
Well-located housing and successful places  Support the delivery of well-located housing and successful places through sustainable transport options to address growth in the Illawarra Shoalhaven	There is an integrated public transport network that achieves a 30-minute city through: • frequent and reliable public transport services to health, education, employment and tourism locations • a connected active transport and micromobility network • first and last-mile freight access.	**Services** • Provide better bus services to support university travel • Increase bus and rail services across the day and week • Ensure that vehicle travel is stabilised in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region and that there is sufficient capacity to support travel demand for all trip purposes. **Infrastructure** Roads to open doors, to: • Make local connections part of development • Connect critical road corridors • Monitor network capacity change as a result of growth • Provide local cycleways and footpaths to support short trips sustainably • Progress investigations for Milton-Ulladulla, Nowra and Bulli to improve the place value and reduce travel times, noise and pollution in town centres. **Public transport infrastructure** • Provide additional stations • Introduce bus priority measures • Upgrade train stations, bus stops, light rail stops and ferry wharfs, including with accessibility, information and corridor crossings.	• A rapid uptake of midrise housing around train stations.

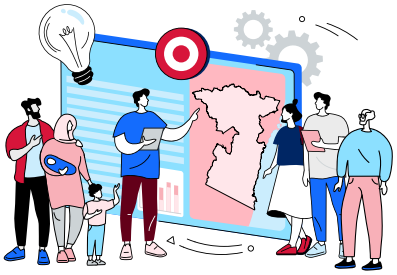
Objective	Longer-term outcomes	How we make it happen	Triggers that would change priority
A thriving and diversifying economy  An efficient transport network to support a diversifying and growing economy, including tourism and freight movement	• Road and rail freight network efficiency is improved to support and enable economic growth • Freight is safe, productive and sustainable, which incorporates freight movements in and between places.	**Policy** • Support more efficient and safer freight vehicles • Support the decarbonisation of freight • Improve freight accessibility (vehicle type and access) • Support agribusiness • Deliver the Heavy Vehicle Access Policy 2024, enabling high productivity vehicles on critical freight corridors across the Illawarra Shoalhaven region, ensuring connectivity to points of economic purposes, such as Port Kembla. **Infrastructure** • Provide infrastructure that enables the diversifying and growing demand for freight and heavy vehicle rest areas • Protect land for future freight corridors • Increase network access for high-productivity vehicles • Introduce network and structure improvements to support this.	• Repurposing of land at Port Kembla.
A thriving and diversifying economy  An efficient transport network to support a diversifying and growing economy, including tourism and freight movement	Transport networks connect visitor and tourism destinations, including with: • transport that responds to seasonal demands • services and infrastructure that improve the uptake of public transport.	**Services** • Provide bus connections for tourism workers to workplaces across the Illawarra Shoalhaven region. **Infrastructure** • Continue to implement bus priority measures on key corridors • Upgrade train stations, bus stops and ferry wharfs, including with accessibility and information about accessing the tourist area. Consider vehicles suitable for the needs of tourists, including luggage.	• Planning advances faster than anticipated.

Objective	Longer-term outcomes	How we make it happen	Triggers that would change priority
A safe transport network  Reduce fatal and serious injuries on the transport network and address safety concerns for public transport passengers	We have safer roads, transport and waterways, with: • reduced road and waterway trauma • safer level crossings • improved safety for vulnerable users • improved personal safety and security for transport users • improved perceived personal safety for transport users • safer, more sustainable access to transport networks for the safe and productive movement of goods.	**Policy** • Support safer vehicles • Support safer drivers • Introduce lower speed limits in targeted locations • Promote public transport station/stop location activation (passive surveillance/activity). **Services** • Enhance onboard surveillance and safety. **Infrastructure** • Improve rail level crossing safety • Improve road network safety • Upgrade train stations and bus stops.	• Changes to crash patterns. • New crash clusters.
Resilient networks  Reduce the impact of network shocks and stresses to service interruptions and proactively plan for future impacts	Transport networks are maintained and improved in a changing climate through: • continuous improvement of asset management processes • Improved journey reliability in response to external events.	**Policy** • Continually review asset management processes • Review asset problem identification and response procedures • Provide community information about asset practices. **Infrastructure** • Design infrastructure for a changed climate with more extreme weather and temperatures • Use resilience as a determinant in prioritising delivery programs (alternative routes and paths).	• Extreme weather events occur more frequently than forecast and require a reprioritisation of response.

Objective	Longer-term outcomes	How we make it happen	Triggers that would change priority
Net Zero emissions  Contribute to achieving the emissions reductions targets as outlined in the Net Zero and Climate Change Policy	• 50% of Transport for NSW light passenger vehicle fleet procurement is transitioned to all-electric by 2026 • 100% of Transport for NSW light passenger vehicle fleet procurement is transitioned to all-electric by 2030 • There is a 65% reduction in Transport for NSW operational emissions by 2030 (compared to 2018–19) • Net zero in Transport's operational and fleet emissions is achieved by 2035 • Transport for NSW construction and maintenance is fossil fuel-free by 2040 • Net zero in Transport for NSW annual embodied emissions is achieved by 2045 • Net zero in transport sector emissions is achieved by 2050 • Net negative transport sector emissions is achieved by 2060. Achieving net zero emissions also leads to cleaner, quieter and more liveable neighbourhoods, healthier and more resilient communities.	• Support the Illawarra Shoalhaven REZ • Transition the NSW public transport fleet to zero emissions (including with the zero emission bus fleet roll out) • Transition the Transport for NSW vehicle fleet to zero emissions.	

07 Next steps and implementation

7.1 Community engagement and Plan finalisation



Transport wants to hear from communities, stakeholders, businesses and transport operators who live, work or travel through the Illawarra Shoalhaven region. What we hear during engagement will influence the final Plan's content. The final list of initiatives will be refined and further developed to ensure that what is shown in the Plan can be delivered in the timeframes we are working towards. If necessary, additional funding will be sought as part of the Plan finalisation.

7.2 Plan governance

Establishing a transport vision for the Illawarra Shoalhaven and identifying priority actions to deliver the vision are the first steps in the planning process.

Transport for NSW is responsible for the implementation and ongoing management of the final Plan, with collaborative partnerships established for those initiatives that require support and input from key stakeholders like local government, relevant government agencies, industry and community representatives.

7.3 Progress reporting

The final Plan will be a living document to be continually updated as the area changes, technology evolves, legislation adjusts and new opportunities emerge. Transport for NSW will provide status updates on the initiatives every 12 months and undertake a review of the final Plan every five years to ensure the long-term outcomes are realised.

The refresh will consider progress on the priority actions, as well as identify potential new initiatives and consider triggers that may be necessary to respond to future user needs, emerging technologies, changing land uses, or new service and infrastructure commitments proposed over the next five years. The refresh will also provide an opportunity to review progress towards the long-term outcomes.

7.4 Funding and delivery

The Draft Plan comprises 28 initiatives. While some initiatives are already in planning, new initiatives will require further investigation to determine their feasibility.

Transport will work collaboratively with key stakeholders to identify opportunities to fund the initiatives outlined in the Draft Plan, including possible Australian Government and private sector financing. This includes ensuring private development and industry operations align with the long-term outcomes for the Illawarra Shoalhaven region.

A woman at a lookout at Saddleback Mountain, near Kiama

08 Appendix

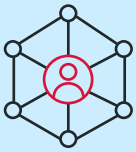
Objectives and outcomes

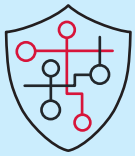
The following tables include details on the objectives for the Draft Illawarra Shoalhaven Plan, which addresses the characteristics of the Illawarra Shoalhaven region and defines how the vision will be realised across the region.

The outcomes define what will be achieved if the objectives are met, and the indicators define the metric for assessing success and prioritising initiatives and actions.

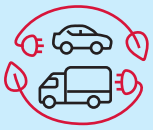
Young people camping on the grassy knoll above Coledale Beach, Wollongong © Destination NSW

Objective	Outcomes	Measuring success
Starting with Country  All investments in the transport network, services, policy and technology take a Country-centred approach	Aboriginal economic independence supported by Transport: • increase opportunities for Aboriginal community-controlled organisations ownership, access, management and use of land and waterways • increase the number of Aboriginal businesses on approved prequalified panels and schemes, delivering greater employment and business opportunities in communities to build a sustainable future • achieve greater Aboriginal driver licence independence and support. Aboriginal people are connected safely to the economy and socially, through transport solutions: • address Aboriginal road trauma incidents occurring on NSW roads and achieve safer transport outcomes for Aboriginal communities • address both physical safety and psychosocial incidents occurring on public transport services, so Aboriginal people feel safe and inclusive when travelling. Transport drives transformative action to deliver systemic change: • deliver regional Aboriginal transport data, to spotlight where Transport needs to be improved for our Aboriginal communities • embed cultural awareness and inclusiveness training programs across our transport industry partners, in delivering lasting cultural change. Our community and Country are healthy and strong, through transport planning and place making: • Aboriginal outcomes are embedded within each SRITP, supported by flexible transport solutions that prioritise improved access to education, health, employment, and cultural places for Aboriginal communities. Embedding Aboriginal place making activities including cultural landscapes management, asset access parity, and all-encompassing transport asset Aboriginal branding that supports story telling across Transport projects.	↗ Engagement and partnership with Aboriginal community-controlled organisations and land councils ↗ Aboriginal employment and Aboriginal businesses on approval prequalification panels and schemes ↗ Aboriginal outcomes embedded into project initiatives as part of project scope and assessment ↗ Number of Aboriginal placemaking activities ↘ Aboriginal road trauma incidents ↗ Transport accessibility for Aboriginal communities, particularly to employment, health and education facilities ↗ Data sharing with Aboriginal communities ↗ Inclusiveness training participation for Transport staff and industry partners ↗ Aboriginal community's sense of cultural identification and representation, inclusion and safety on the transport network

Objective	Outcomes	Measuring success
Access to transport for all  A transport network that provides a range of travel choices to all people living and working in or visiting the Illawarra Shoalhaven Region	Transport will work to achieve this objective by ensuring transport disadvantage is reduced across the entire Illawarra Shoalhaven region and all people can seamlessly access their regular destinations with a variety of transport choices for all trip purposes. This means: • improved public and active transport choices to access essential services where they are currently absent for regional and rural communities including discrete Aboriginal communities • increased usage of public transport and active transport choices to employment and essential services • improved first and last-mile connectivity in local towns and centres by providing new or enhanced transport options • improved active transport links to support car free travel within towns and strategic centres. • safe, convenient and connected active transport routes to support car-free travel • areas of socio-economic disadvantage are well serviced by public transport • improved transport connections between Illawarra Shoalhaven region and Sydney, the Hume corridor, and Canberra • improved transport connections between Wollongong and the Shoalhaven hinterland • improved integration of strategy, policy, infrastructure, and services between NSW and the ACT • a standardised and unified fare payment system across the region's public transport network.	↗ Frequency of services ↘ Overall travel times on public transport to Western Sydney and Sydney ↗ 30-minute catchment to essential services and strategic centres, including 15-minute walking and 30-minute cycling catchments ↗ Number of improved footpath, micromobility and cycleway network projects ↗ Public transport service to Sydney, Western Sydney and the Southern Highlands ↗ Public transport services and operation hours in existing areas ↗ 100% of completed dwellings within new neighbourhoods are serviced in accordance with service planning guidelines. ↘ Journey times of public transport services ↗ Day return services ↘ Gaps within the strategic road network ↗ Standard and unified ticketing solution that applies across fare and contract administrative regions ↗ Public transport services to Sydney, the Southern Highlands and Tablelands

Objective	Outcomes	Measuring success
Housing and successful places  Support the delivery of well-located housing and successful places through sustainable transport options to address growth in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region	Transport will work to achieve this objective by ensuring transport infrastructure and services support the delivery of well-located housing by ensuring that: • housing and employment lands are serviced by sustainable transport options including public transport and active transport infrastructure to reduce private vehicle dependence • connectivity to strategic centres from smaller towns, accessibility and social connectivity is improved • the overall liveability of towns and villages is improved with enhanced social connectivity of communities, improved amenity, balanced with the movement needs for all road users • connectivity from Transport Orientated Development sites of Corrimal, North Wollongong and Dapto to strategic centres • new growth areas in Shoalhaven have services to main public transport hubs.	↗ Public transport usage in catchments within 800 metres of a public transport interchange ↗ Number of people with improved walking and cycling connections to urban centres – Traffic volumes in urban areas and regional centres ↗ Public and active transport usage in existing and new growth areas ↗ Place amenity based on the Movement and Place Framework ↗ Population within a train catchment of 800–1200 metres
Safe transport network  Reduce fatalities and serious injuries on the transport and water network and address safety concerns for public transport passengers	The outcomes for achieving this objective in the short-term include: • existing high-risk crash locations are treated • consistent safety treatments are rolled out across regional road networks • safer speeds are implemented on local and low-volume rural roads (80 km/h) • people drive observing the speed limit on country roads • personal safety is improved on the public transport network • boaters are more aware of the dangers on our waterways and choose to wear life jackets more regularly. Intermediate safety outcomes include: • fatalities on the road network are reduced by 50 per cent by 2030 • serious injuries on the road network are reduced by 30 per cent by 2030. Long-term outcomes include: • zero trauma on the road network is achieved by 2050 • zero fatalities and serious injuries on navigable waterways is achieved by 2056.	↘ Number of people killed and seriously injured in crashes ↘ Number of people killed and seriously injured in crashes involving vulnerable road users, in speed-related crashes and in run-off-road crashes ↘ Number of people killed on navigable waterways and coastlines ↘ Public transport safety incidents ↗ Number of public transport stops or stations with lighting, wayfinding, and surveillance ↗ AusRAP star rating on state roads ↗ Perception of public transport being an unsafe space night and day ↘ Conflict points through intersections ↗ Safer movements through intersections

Objective	Outcomes	Measuring success
A thriving and diversifying economy  Provide an efficient transport network to support a diversifying and growing economy including tourism, freight movements and enabling renewable energy zones	The outcomes for achieving this objective will focus on supporting the increasing and changing freight, passenger demand across the Illawarra Shoalhaven region. Key outcomes include: • the transport network efficiently supporting the movement of people and goods to and from international, national and state gateways in Sydney and Wollongong (Port Kembla) • Transport for NSW monitoring and planning for continuing growth in the heavy and commercial vehicle movements required to support economic activity, including the Princess Motorway • heavy vehicle operators being satisfied and informed with the network, and rest stops being available to ensure adequate safe breaks, as well as pinch points or constraints on the network for freight accessibility and efficiency • main freight corridors being protected and preserved for dedicated freight movements • supporting tourism with transport services and effectively managing holiday peak periods across the network • new employment, education and health precincts being supported by network access • access for smaller freight vehicles being considered as part of the total freight chain • timely and reliable public transport journey times on the trunk network to major destinations and attractors (supports on-road priority) • frequent and convenient passenger rail services on the South Coast Line.	↗ Walking, cycling, e-micromobility and public transport choices available to key locations including tourism destinations ↗ Management of heavy vehicle access to the road network ↗ Planned capacity for key freight road and rail corridors across the Illawarra Shoalhaven ↗ Heavy vehicle rest areas to meet the requirements of the freight industry ↗ Number of reliable rail freight paths available on the network ↗ Medium and light commercial deliveries to urban centres ↗ Public transport services to key holiday destinations during seasonal highs

Objective	Outcomes	Measuring success
Resilient networks  Reduce the impact of transport network shocks and stresses to service and network interruptions, and proactively plan for future impacts	The outcomes for achieving this objective in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region will improve the resilience of the transport network through: • identifying time and cost exposure to shocks and stresses on critical areas of the network • identifying the vulnerability of the network and undertaking risk assessment • identifying appropriate treatment on critical areas of the network • building in more resilience for road and rail corridors that cross over the Illawarra Escarpment • supporting transport network users to know how to plan for shocks and stresses.	↗ Network access to bushfire risk areas ↗ Availability and accessibility of real-time journey information ↗ Alternate and reliable detour road routes at pinch points to support movement in shock events ↗ Reliability of rail freight ↗ Reliability of passenger rail services ↘ Instances of access being lost due to natural events ↘ Clearance time for incidents on road and rail
Net zero emissions  Contribute to the net zero emissions 2050 target	The outcomes for achieving this objective in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region will align with key targets including: • 100% net zero energy sources for all Transport for NSW public buses by 2040 in Illawarra and by 2047 in Shoalhaven • net zero in annual embodied emissions for Transport for NSW construction projects by 2045 • achieving net zero transport sector emissions by 2050 and net negative by 2060 • supporting or enabling transport requirements of renewable energy zones and the net zero transition.	↗ Number of zero emission buses serving the Illawarra Shoalhaven ↗ Number of Transport projects built with reduced or net zero emissions ↗ Number of EV charge stations and locations ↗ Percentage of heavy vehicles registered in Illawarra Shoalhaven passenger vehicle fleet with zero emissions ↗ Extend the oversize overmass network to support necessary movement to service REZs

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