



Australian Government



Regional  
Development  
*Australia*

NORTHERN RIVERS

## RDA-NR Annual Business Plan – 2025-26



We respectfully acknowledge the Aboriginal peoples of the Northern Rivers – including the peoples of the Bundjalung, Yaegl and Gumbaynggirr nations – as the traditional custodians and guardians of these lands and waters now known as the Northern Rivers and we pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

**Signature:**



**Certified by (print name and position):** Dr Susan Vinnicombe (Chair)

**Date:** 01 July 2025

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## RDA NORTHERN RIVERS BOARD

Position	Name	Email	Current Term Start Date	Current Term End Date
Chair	Dr Susan Vinnicombe	<a href="mailto:chair@rdanorthernrivers.org.au">chair@rdanorthernrivers.org.au</a>	01/04/2025	31/03/2029
Member	Graeme Hargreaves	<a href="mailto:admin@rdanorthernrivers.org.au">admin@rdanorthernrivers.org.au</a>	01/07/2025	30/06/2029
Member	Carolyn Parker	<a href="mailto:admin@rdanorthernrivers.org.au">admin@rdanorthernrivers.org.au</a>	01/07/2025	30/06/2029
Member	Mike Pearce	<a href="mailto:admin@rdanorthernrivers.org.au">admin@rdanorthernrivers.org.au</a>	01/07/2025	30/06/2029
Member	Vaughn McDonald	<a href="mailto:admin@rdanorthernrivers.org.au">admin@rdanorthernrivers.org.au</a>	01/07/2025	30/06/2026
Member	Bianca Spata	<a href="mailto:admin@rdanorthernrivers.org.au">admin@rdanorthernrivers.org.au</a>	01/07/2025	30/06/2029
Member	Byron Wicks	<a href="mailto:admin@rdanorthernrivers.org.au">admin@rdanorthernrivers.org.au</a>	01/07/2025	30/06/2029
Member	Damien Chapelle	<a href="mailto:admin@rdanorthernrivers.org.au">admin@rdanorthernrivers.org.au</a>	01/07/2025	30/06/2029
Member	Amanda Kuhn	<a href="mailto:admin@rdanorthernrivers.org.au">admin@rdanorthernrivers.org.au</a>	01/07/2025	30/06/2029

## CHAIR'S FORWARD

During the 2024/25 period, the organisation underwent a significant leadership transition with the appointment of a new Chair, signalling a renewed focus on strategic direction and regional impact. This change coincided with a comprehensive governance review aimed at strengthening transparency, accountability, and alignment with best practices. As part of this process, a suite of updated organisational policies was developed and formally adopted by the Board, ensuring the organisation is well-positioned to meet current and future challenges.

Alongside these internal developments, the organisation continued to deepen strategic partnerships across all levels of government, industry, and the community. Key collaborations included ongoing work with the NSW Reconstruction Authority to support long-term regional recovery and resilience, and a strategic realignment with the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development to better coordinate efforts in economic development and sustainability. The year also saw significant Board renewal, with four new members appointed and five existing members retained, providing a strong balance of continuity and fresh perspective to guide the organisation's work.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

RDA Northern Rivers' 2025–26 Business Plan is strategically aligned with the Commonwealth Government's national policy agenda and the RDA Charter, ensuring that our regional priorities directly support whole-of-government objectives while responding to the unique needs of our region. Informed by the Regional Investment Framework (RIF), this plan articulates a clear, place-based approach to economic development, underpinned by partnerships, evidence-based planning, and community engagement. The Northern Rivers region faces distinct challenges and opportunities. In response, RDA-NR has prioritised actions that align with key Commonwealth focus areas, including housing reform, climate adaptation, sovereign manufacturing under *A Future Made in Australia*, and job creation.

## STRATEGIC CONTEXT AND REGIONAL PRIORITIES

This business plan builds upon a strong foundation of priorities that are closely aligned with the objectives of the Commonwealth Government and the strategic direction of the Regional Development Australia (RDA) network. In shaping the 2025–26 Annual Business Plan, RDA Northern Rivers (RDA-NR) has drawn on the Regional Investment Framework (RIF) and the RDA Charter to ensure our activities directly support national policy objectives and reflect regional aspirations.

In particular, RDA-NR has aligned its planning with the Commonwealth Government's priority focus areas, including:

- Housing Reform
- Climate Adaptation
- A Future Made in Australia
- Job Creation

In response to both national priorities and the specific needs of the Northern Rivers region, RDA-NR has identified the following key focus areas for 2025–26:

- Housing Availability and Affordability
- Skills Attraction and Development
- Recovery and Regional Rebuild
- Economic advocacy and strategic diversification
- Investment and talent attraction
- Building capacity
- Industry growth

RDA-NR acknowledges that the external environment will continue to influence the delivery of these priorities. Factors such as potential machinery-of-government changes, shifts in agency responsibilities following elections, and evolving strategic agendas of regional bodies such as the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation (NRJO), must all be considered. Accordingly, RDA-NR will maintain a flexible and adaptive approach, ensuring continuity of service and alignment with the region's emerging needs and opportunities.

## REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLANS

In developing our 2025–26 Business Plan, Regional Development Australia Northern Rivers (RDA-NR) undertook a comprehensive review of key strategic planning documents relevant to the Northern Rivers region. This process ensured our priorities are not only regionally informed but also aligned with broader Commonwealth, State, and Local Government objectives.

We specifically consulted a suite of regional and local strategic plans selected for their influence, relevance, and capacity to guide both macro and micro-level outcomes. These documents reflect the strategic direction and shared aspirations across all levels of government and have been instrumental in shaping our regional approach.

### State and Regional Strategic Frameworks

The following plans were key in providing a high-level, cross-jurisdictional perspective of regional growth, economic development, and land use planning:

- **NSW Government North Coast Regional Plan 2041**  
A long-term strategy setting the direction for sustainable growth, housing, infrastructure, and employment across the North Coast, including the Northern Rivers.
- **Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS):**  
Developed collaboratively with the NSW Government, these strategies provide a framework for economic development and investment attraction. RDA-NR reviewed:
  - *Northern Rivers REDS*
  - *Tweed Shire REDS*
  - *Clarence Valley REDS*

These documents provide critical insights into the economic potential, competitive advantages, and future opportunities unique to each sub-region within the Northern Rivers.

### Local Government Strategic Priorities

To ensure our work is deeply grounded in community needs and reflective of local aspirations, RDA-NR analysed the **Community Strategic Plans (CSPs)** from each of the region's seven Local Government Areas (LGAs). These documents articulate long-term goals identified by local communities, providing invaluable context and direction for regional development initiatives. Specifically, we reviewed:

- *Clarence Valley Council – Community Strategic Plan 2032*
- *Richmond Valley Council – Community Strategic Plan 2030*
- *Kyogle Council – Community Strategic Plan 2022–2032*
- *Ballina Shire Council – Community Strategic Plan 2027*
- *Byron Shire Council – Community Strategic Plan 2032*
- *Tweed Shire Council – Community Strategic Plan 2032*

- *Lismore City Council – Community Strategic Plan 2035*

These local plans have provided critical insight into the unique challenges and opportunities within each LGA, as well as community-led visions for sustainable growth, wellbeing, infrastructure, and economic development.

By integrating the strategic priorities from across these diverse planning documents, RDA Northern Rivers ensures that our 2025–26 Business Plan is cohesive, place-based, and responsive to both regional and community-level needs. This alignment strengthens our ability to advocate effectively, attract investment, and deliver measurable outcomes that contribute to a more resilient, inclusive, and prosperous Northern Rivers region.

## REOCCURRING THEMES

Through a comprehensive review of the Northern Rivers’ core strategic planning documents, including the NSW Government’s North Coast Regional Plan 2041, regional REDS (Regional Economic Development Strategy) documents, the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation (NRJO) Strategic Plan, and the Community Strategic Plans (CSPs) of all seven Local Government Areas, Regional Development Australia Northern Rivers (RDA-NR) has identified a series of consistent and interconnected themes. These recurring priorities reflect a strong alignment across all levels of planning and underscore the collective vision for a resilient, prosperous, and inclusive Northern Rivers region.

The strategic convergence across these documents reveals a shared focus on the following key regional development themes:

- **Enhanced Liveability**  
Prioritising quality of life through improved access to services, community infrastructure, open spaces, and cultural amenities.
- **Accommodation and Affordable Housing**  
Addressing acute housing pressures through the delivery of diverse and affordable housing options, particularly for essential workers and low- to moderate-income households.
- **Digital Connectivity**  
Expanding access to reliable, high-speed internet and telecommunications infrastructure to support remote work, education, health, and digital industry growth.
- **Industry Development and Economic Diversification**  
Supporting growth in existing sectors while attracting and nurturing new and emerging industries to strengthen regional economic resilience.
- **Availability of Well-Located Employment Land**  
Ensuring sufficient and strategically positioned employment lands are available to accommodate current and future business and industrial activity.
- **New and Emerging Industries**  
Fostering innovation and investment in forward-facing sectors such as clean energy, advanced manufacturing, creative industries, and agritech.
- **Land Development and Planning Reform**  
Improving the efficiency and responsiveness of land use planning systems to enable timely development aligned with population growth and economic need.

- **Population Growth Management**  
Planning for sustainable population increases by aligning infrastructure, services, and housing development with demographic forecasts.
- **Infrastructure Upgrades and Renewals**  
Modernising critical infrastructure—including transport, energy, water, and community facilities—to meet current needs and future demands.
- **Regional Activation and Investment Attraction**  
Stimulating economic activity and regional revitalisation through place-based activation strategies and targeted investment attraction efforts.
- **Activated and Adaptive Land Use**  
Promoting flexible and responsive land use planning to accommodate changing economic drivers and community needs.
- **Diverse Housing Supply**  
Encouraging the development of a variety of housing types and tenures to meet the evolving needs of different population segments.
- **A Strong and Sustainable Agricultural Sector**  
Supporting agricultural productivity, innovation, and sustainability as a cornerstone of the region's economy and identity.

These thematic priorities form the strategic backbone of RDA Northern Rivers' 2025–26 Business Plan and reinforce our commitment to working collaboratively with all levels of government, industry, and community to deliver outcomes that align with the region's shared vision for the future.

### **Adaptive and Collaborative Delivery**

RDA-NR acknowledges the importance of maintaining flexibility in the face of external drivers, including potential changes in government structure or agency responsibilities. Our adaptive approach ensures that service delivery remains responsive to emerging opportunities, while our strong stakeholder relationships across all levels of government, business, and the community sector enable shared regional outcomes.

### **Conclusion**

Through a focused, evidence-based, and collaborative strategy, RDA Northern Rivers will continue to serve as a trusted regional development partner—supporting government objectives while delivering targeted, measurable outcomes that build long-term resilience, economic opportunity, and social inclusion across the Northern Rivers region.



# ANNUAL WORK PLAN

RDA-NR's key strategic focus areas for 2025–26 are:

- Housing Availability and Affordability
  - Skills Attraction and Development
  - Recovery and Regional Rebuild
  - Economic advocacy and strategic diversification
  - Investment and talent attraction
  - Building capacity
  - Industry growth
- 
- **Housing Availability and Affordability** – Advocating for diverse, affordable, and well-located housing to support essential workers and sustainable population growth.
  - **Skills Development and Workforce Attraction** – Building a resilient workforce through skills audits, training pathways, and strategic partnerships.
  - **Recovery and Regional Rebuild** – Supporting post-disaster recovery and preparing industry to capitalise on major infrastructure investments.
  - **Economic Advocacy and Industry Diversification** – Advancing policy-informed advocacy to reduce reliance on vulnerable sectors.
  - **Investment and Talent Attraction** – Promoting the region's liveability to attract skilled professionals and aligned industries.
  - **Local Capacity Building** – Strengthening entrepreneurship, innovation, and youth retention.
  - **Industry Growth and Future Readiness** – Enabling scale-up of high-potential sectors such as clean energy, agritech, and knowledge services.

## Core Regional Priorities

From this strategic synthesis, five core priorities have been identified to guide RDA-NR's work in 2025–26:

1. **Workforce Development and Attraction**  
Identifying future skills needs and supporting education, training, and regional workforce initiatives to meet cross-sector labour demand.
2. **Housing Delivery and Strategic Land Use**  
Facilitating housing supply and planning reform to enable population growth and affordability, including mixed-use and employment-adjacent developments.
3. **Industry Attraction and Development**  
Supporting economic diversification through investment facilitation, sector innovation, and enabling infrastructure.
4. **Infrastructure Enhancement and Expansion**  
Advocating for and supporting the delivery of connectivity, utility, and social infrastructure critical to regional liveability and productivity.
5. **Building Local Capacity**  
Empowering community and business capability, particularly youth and SMEs, to drive inclusive, locally-led development.

A strategic and deliberate approach underpins our efforts to optimise resources and deliver maximum regional impact. Informed by a thorough analysis of regional strategic plans, RDA Northern Rivers has distilled key themes into five core priorities that will guide our work in 2025–26:

**1. Enhancing Housing Availability and Affordability**

RDA-NR will contribute to addressing the region’s critical housing shortfall by advocating for increased supply across both short- and long-term accommodation options. A particular emphasis will be placed on improving access to affordable housing for essential workers, young people, and vulnerable residents—ensuring the region’s workforce and population growth can be sustainably supported.

**2. Skills Development and Workforce Expansion**

To respond to regional workforce shortages, RDA-NR will lead and support targeted skills needs assessments, training pathways, and attraction strategies. This includes strengthening regional labour force capabilities, supporting upskilling initiatives, and facilitating partnerships with training providers to build a resilient and future-ready workforce.

**3. Recovery and Regional Rebuild**

While some areas of the Northern Rivers have made significant progress since major disruptions in recent years, others remain on the path to recovery. RDA-NR will continue to support local businesses and communities by coordinating rebuilding efforts, promoting economic stimulus initiatives, and preparing local industry to capitalise on major infrastructure and reconstruction projects forecast to peak in 2026–27.

**4. Economic Advocacy and Strategic Diversification**

RDA-NR will advance a robust regional advocacy agenda focused on securing investment, informing government policy, and promoting industry diversification. Our goal is to reduce over-reliance on vulnerable sectors and to cultivate a more balanced and shock-resilient economy.

**5. Leveraging Liveability to Attract Investment and Talent**

The Northern Rivers is one of the most desirable regions in Australia, known for its natural beauty, lifestyle, and community vibrancy. RDA-NR will work to promote these unique regional advantages to attract aligned industries, skilled professionals, and long-term investment that supports inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

**6. Building Internal Capacity and Supporting Local Enterprise**

Fostering entrepreneurship and small business growth is essential to long-term regional prosperity. RDA-NR will support capability building within local enterprises, enhance youth retention strategies, and provide pathways for regional innovation—ensuring development is driven by local strengths and talent.

## **7. Driving Industry Growth and Economic Resilience**

Future-proofing the Northern Rivers economy will require focused support for emerging industries such as clean energy, regenerative agriculture, circular economy initiatives, and knowledge-based services. RDA-NR will play a key role in identifying growth sectors, facilitating cross-sector partnerships, and enabling businesses to scale and diversify.

RDA Northern Rivers is committed to working collaboratively across all levels of government, industry, and community to deliver measurable, long-term outcomes for the region. Our strategic focus for 2025–26 reflects both the unique strengths of the Northern Rivers and the shared commitment of our partners to a more inclusive, resilient, and prosperous regional economy.

**Attachment 3.A.1 – Outcomes and Performance Indicators Tables for Regional RDAs**

Use the funding agreement outcomes and performance indicators as the starting point for detailing activities and reporting performance.

This Attachment provides the means for a Committee to advise of its intended activities and performance indicators (as part of the **business plan**) and to report on those activities and performance indicators (as part of the **annual report**).

Please add/delete Activity lines for each Outcome as required, ensuring the numbering of Activities remain sequential.

**All Committees are required to provide a brief summary of their key strategic priorities and business activities, and complete the Outcomes and Performance Indicators tables provided below.**

Please complete the following:

For the Annual Business Plan and Budget only: Summary of top 5 strategic priorities for upcoming year:

1. [Housing Availability and Affordability](#)
2. [Skills Development and Workforce Attraction](#)
3. [Recovery and Regional Rebuild](#)
4. [Economic Advocacy and Industry Diversification](#)
5. [Investment and Talent Attraction](#)
6. [Local Capacity Building](#)
7. [Industry Growth and Future Readiness](#)

For the Annual Business Plan and Budget only: Summary of top 5 key business activities for upcoming year:

1. [Workforce Development and Attraction](#)
2. [Housing Delivery and Strategic Land Use](#)
3. [Industry Attraction and Development](#)
4. [Infrastructure Enhancement and Expansion](#)
5. [Building Local Capacity](#)

For the Annual Report on Outcomes only: provide summary of top 3 key achievements for the year:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

<b>Outcome 1:</b> Facilitate regional economic development outcomes, through investment in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills and local leadership</li> <li>• Opportunities for First Nations people</li> <li>• Infrastructure</li> <li>• Connectivity</li> <li>• Decarbonisation</li> <li>• Industry growth.</li> </ul>					
<b>PART 1 – FOR THE ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN</b>					<b>PART 2 – FOR THE ANNUAL REPORT ON OUTCOMES</b>
<b>What will we do?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dot-point the activities you plan to undertake to meet Outcome 1.</li> </ul>	<b>Initiative type:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills and local leadership</li> <li>• Opportunities for First Nations People</li> <li>• Infrastructure</li> <li>• Connectivity</li> <li>• Decarbonisation and/or</li> <li>• Industry Growth.</li> </ul>	<b>RDA’s anticipated role:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead/championed – heavily involved with the outcome</li> <li>• Contributed to – moderately involved with the outcome</li> <li>• Otherwise assisted – marginally involved with the outcome.</li> </ul>	<b>Timeframe of activity:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Estimated start and end date of each activity.</li> </ul>	<b>Expected outcomes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the activity align with your top 5 strategic priorities?</li> <li>• What do you expect to come from this activity?</li> <li>• How will this outcome benefit the RDA and region?</li> <li>• Estimated percentage of budget allocated to activity</li> <li>• Provide measurable expected outcomes.</li> </ul>	<b>What did we do?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a description of each activity during the reporting period, and how these activities contributed to your RDA’s addressing of outcome 1. Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Description of work undertaken against the activity</li> <li>○ The actual outcomes</li> <li>○ Whether the activity is complete, not complete, or ongoing</li> <li>○ Explanation of how the work for this activity contributed to the outcome/s</li> <li>○ Whether there were any unexpected outcomes or impacts</li> <li>○ Confirm the RDA’s role (lead/championed, contributed to or otherwise assisted)</li> <li>○ Provide measurable information, e.g. dollars and / or numbers for the initiative type; meetings /workshops/forums that you have hosted or attended; jobs created; the number of website views and/or the stakeholders reached.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Activity 1 Industry and workforce development</b>					
Activity 1.1: Continue to pursue a comprehensive skills audit for the Northern Rivers region	Skills and local leadership	Lead  Partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Northern Rivers Workforce Steering Committee</li> <li>• Business NSW</li> <li>• NSW Reconstruction Authority</li> <li>• Healthy North Coast</li> <li>• NSW Health</li> <li>• NSW Education Department</li> <li>• NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development</li> <li>• Private industry</li> </ul>	June 2026	A report documenting the current skills in the Northern Rivers and identification of where gaps exist by industry task and location.	
Activity 1.2: Promote and assist supply chain for Brisbane Olympics	Industry growth	Contributor  Partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Chambers of Commerce</li> <li>• Industry Capability Network</li> <li>• Business NSW</li> <li>• Local Industry</li> <li>• Industry Groups</li> </ul>	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform on Infrastructure Developments</li> <li>• Continue to Monitor Official Channels for Procurement Opportunities</li> <li>• Engagement with Local Business Networks</li> <li>• Prepare business and industry for Compliance and Standards</li> <li>• Represent Northern Rivers at Information Sessions and Workshops</li> <li>• Provide information to suppliers within the region on potential opportunities.</li> </ul>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Destination North Coast</li> </ul>			
<b>Activity 2 Digital Connectivity</b>					
Activity 2.1: Conduct connectivity roadshows	Connectivity	Contributor  Partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NBN Co</li> <li>Essential energy</li> </ul>	November 2025	Roadshows across the region per LGA advising the community of options for upgrades on connectivity in the region	
Activity 2.2: Work with industry network and service providers	Connectivity	Lead/Contributor  Partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Telecommunication providers</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Leverage funding opportunities when available to support and promote expansion, service development and network improvements which will aid in a reduction in the region's blackspots and improved network capability to respond to disaster through installation of resilient infrastructure	
Activity 2.3: Information and intelligence gathering	Connectivity	Lead  Partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development</li> <li>Telecommunication providers</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Provide intelligence to government on telecommunication gaps, performances and investment opportunities where possible	
<b>Activity 3 Investing in people</b>					
Activity 3.1: Create and establish a mentorship program for 10 young women of the Northern Rivers	Skills and leadership	Lead  Partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identified and willing mentors</li> <li>Successful application on 10 mentees</li> </ul>	Commencement February 2026 in alignment with the NSW school year.	Increased opportunity and education for 10 senior secondary young women from across the Northern Rivers Region.	
Activity 3.2: Northern Rivers Photography competition	Skills and local leadership	Lead  Partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Selected representatives from regional arts groups</li> <li>Recognised experts in photography</li> <li>Local businesses within the region</li> </ul>	March 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Celebrating creativity and storytelling through photography.</li> <li>Recognition of amateur photographers</li> <li>Provide a platform for participants to showcase their talent, share compelling visual narratives, and receive recognition for their work.</li> </ul>	

<b>Outcome 2:</b> Support regional stakeholders, including local government and the not-for-profit-sector, to seek grant opportunities that advance strategic regional priorities.					
<b>PART 1 – FOR THE ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN</b>					<b>PART 2 – FOR THE ANNUAL REPORT ON OUTCOMES</b>
<b>What will we do?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dot point the activities you plan to undertake to meet Outcome 2, e.g.:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drafting applications</li> <li>Providing letters of support for grant/funding applications</li> <li>Reviewing submissions</li> <li>Helping with application submissions</li> </ul> </li> <li>Providing guidance on application processes.</li> </ul>	<b>Initiative type:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skills and local leadership</li> <li>Opportunities for First Nations People</li> <li>Infrastructure</li> <li>Connectivity</li> <li>Decarbonisation and/or</li> <li>Industry Growth.</li> </ul>	<b>RDA’s anticipated role:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead/championed – heavily involved with the outcome</li> <li>Contributed to – moderately involved with the outcome</li> <li>Otherwise assisted – marginally involved with the outcome.</li> </ul>	<b>Timeframe of activity:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Estimated start and end date of each activity.</li> </ul>	<b>Expected outcomes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does the activity align with your top 5 strategic priorities?</li> <li>What do you expect to come from this activity?</li> <li>How will this outcome benefit the RDA and region?</li> <li>Estimated percentage of budget allocated to activity</li> <li>Provide measurable expected outcomes.</li> </ul>	<b>What did we do?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a description of the activities undertaken during the reporting period, and how these activities contributed to your RDA addressing Outcome 2.</li> <li>Dot point the nature of the support you provided to stakeholders, including the number of stakeholders supported through assisting with (but not limited to):               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drafting applications, (and number subsequently successful),</li> <li>The number of letters written to support applications, (and number subsequently successful),</li> <li>Reviewing submissions (and number subsequently successful)</li> <li>Providing advice about an application submission</li> <li>Providing guidance about application processes</li> <li>Number of other instances information/advice was provided to stakeholders</li> </ul> </li> </ul> The outcomes of grant applications that you assisted with.
<b>Activity 4 Building local Capacity</b>					
Activity 4.1: Collaborate with LGAs	Skills and local leadership	Contributor  Partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarence Valley Council</li> <li>Tweed Shire Council</li> <li>Byron Shire Council</li> <li>Lismore City Council</li> <li>Ballina Shire Council</li> <li>Kyogle Shire Council</li> <li>Richmond Valley Council</li> </ul>	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend Northern Rivers Joint Organisation meetings and inform councils of potential and relevant funding programs and support their endeavours to access funding.</li> <li>Attend General Managers Advisory Committee meetings, advocating for region wide approaches where possible</li> </ul>	
Activity 4.2 Provide economic data sets	Skills and local leadership	Lead	Ongoing	Provide a fee for service in economic data sets for specific impacts as identified by applicants	
Activity 4.3 Information dissemination	Skills and local leadership	Lead	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distribute monthly e-newsletters and utilise RDA-NR website and social media to promote policies and grant opportunities</li> <li>Undertake monthly reviews of the RDA-NR website to ensure up to date and relevant information.</li> <li>Enable stakeholders to leverage “Live Northern Rivers” platform showcasing the liveability of the region</li> </ul>	
Activity 4.4 Collaboration with government agencies and the promotion of and support of Commonwealth programs for regional Australia	Skills and local leadership	Contributor  Partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development</li> <li>Service NSW</li> <li>AusIndustry</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Meet monthly to join with other agencies to jointly promote government opportunities in grants and assistance to regional communities.  Promote Commonwealth Government programs for regional Australia through monthly e-newsletters, website and social media, and through attendance at all stakeholders meetings throughout the year	

Activity 5 - Housing and Accommodation development					
Activity 5.1 Advocacy and information dissemination	Infrastructure	Contributor	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collate a list of ‘shovel ready’ residential projects throughout the region, per LGA identifying the required infrastructure needs of each project.</li> <li>Support improved land use options and advocate for wholesale planning reform to improve the process of development approval through attendance at NRJO and GMAC meetings</li> </ul>	
Activity 5.2: Leverage employment land audit	Infrastructure	Contributor	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage LGAs to leverage completed employment land audit to promote and encourage growth through attendance at both quarterly NRJO and GMAC meetings</li> <li>Encourage LGAs to consider mixed use housing developments in conjunction with or adjacent to employment lands through attendance at both quarterly NRJO and GMAC meetings</li> </ul>	

Outcome 3: Contribute to, and where appropriate, drive local economic development planning and strategy development.					
PART 1 – FOR THE ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN					PART 2 – FOR THE ANNUAL REPORT ON OUTCOMES
<b>What will we do?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dot point the activities you plan to undertake to meet Outcome 3, e.g.:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The development of local plans and strategies, specifying the lead stakeholders</li> <li>Other activities you anticipate supporting to drive regional economic development</li> </ul> </li> </ul> Plans to facilitate or be a member of local leadership groups/forums and/or any other assistance you provide.	<b>Initiative type:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skills and local leadership</li> <li>Opportunities for First Nations People</li> <li>Infrastructure</li> <li>Connectivity</li> <li>Decarbonisation and/or</li> <li>Industry Growth.</li> </ul>	<b>RDA’s anticipated role:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead/championed – heavily involved with the outcome</li> <li>Contributed to – moderately involved with the outcome</li> <li>Otherwise assisted – marginally involved with the outcome.</li> </ul>	<b>Timeframe of activity:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Estimated start and end date of each activity.</li> </ul>	<b>Expected outcomes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does the activity align with your top 5 strategic priorities?</li> <li>What do you expect to come from this activity?</li> <li>How will this outcome benefit the RDA and region?</li> <li>Estimated percentage of budget allocated to activity</li> <li>Provide measurable expected outcomes.</li> </ul>	<b>What did we do?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a description of the activities during the reporting period, and how these activities contributed to your RDA addressing Outcome 3.</li> <li>Dot point the nature of the support you provided, including (but not limited to):               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The development of local plans and strategies (specify the lead stakeholders)</li> <li>Provision of evidence to support regional economic development</li> <li>Facilitation or membership of local leadership groups/forums and/or other assistance provided</li> <li>Whether there were any unexpected outcomes or impacts</li> </ul> </li> </ul> Whether the activity is complete, not complete, or ongoing.
Activity 6 Identification of critical investments and relationships needed to drive economic development in the region					
Activity 6.1: Advocate and promote regional significant projects	Infrastructure	Contributor  Partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development</li> <li>Northern Rivers Joint Organisation of Councils</li> </ul> Destination North Coast	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend Northern Rivers Rail Trail meetings to assist with promotion and extension of the trail</li> <li>Promote and support for business case of the Great North Coast Trail at all stakeholder meetings</li> <li>Attend quarterly meetings as part of the membership and contribute to the Southern Cross University ReCirculator project</li> <li>Advocate through appropriate government Ministers for the advancement of ready transformation projects</li> </ul>	



Activity 6.2 Formation of Northern Rivers Economic Committee	Skills and leadership	Lead  Partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development</li> <li>Private industry Representatives from LGAs</li> </ul>	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a unified regional economic voice for advocacy to State and Federal Governments.</li> <li>Identify and progress transformative projects that deliver region-wide economic outcomes.</li> <li>Enhance collaboration between councils, business organisations, and government agencies.</li> <li>Strengthen information sharing and strategic alignment across the region's economic stakeholders.</li> </ul>	
Activity 6.3: Northern Rivers Brand	Connectivity	Contributor  Partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development</li> <li>Destination North Coast</li> <li>Business NSW</li> <li>Northern Rivers Joint Organisation of Councils</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Attend Northern Rivers Brand meetings as convened by Business NSW to advocate and promote use of the Northern Rivers Brand across the region	
Activity 6.4: Formation and delivery on a specific “Buy Local” campaign	Industry growth	Lead  Partners Interested LGAs willing to partner	March 2026	Implementation of a ‘Buy Local’ campaign, loosely modelled on the successful UK program Totally Locally	
Activity 6.5 Continued delivery of Th Welcome Experience	Industry Growth	Lead  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Essential workers and their families relocating to the region</li> <li>Employers of essential workers</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Delivery of prescribed “The Welcome Experience” with a dedicated “Local Connector”	
Activity 6.6: Redevelopment of RDA Northern Rivers website	Infrastructure	Lead	December 2025	Redevelopment and design of RDA Northern Rivers website to make it more contemporary and easier to navigate	

<b>Outcome 4:</b> Contribute relevant data and local intelligence to support the evidence base to inform regional development strategies, program design and policy responses.					
<b>PART 1 – FOR THE ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN</b>					<b>PART 2 – FOR THE ANNUAL REPORT ON OUTCOMES</b>
<b>What will we do?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dot point the activities you plan to undertake to meet Outcome 4. Outline the nature of the data and local intelligence you intend to provide to the Australian Government e.g.:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Online or in-person briefings</li> <li>Meetings with Members of Parliament</li> <li>Submissions to Parliamentary enquiries</li> <li>Participating in departmental surveys and submissions</li> </ul> </li> <li>Additional contributions of local information as appropriate.</li> </ul>	<b>Initiative type:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skills and local leadership</li> <li>Opportunities for First Nations People</li> <li>Infrastructure</li> <li>Connectivity</li> <li>Decarbonisation and/or</li> <li>Industry Growth.</li> </ul>	<b>RDA’s anticipated role:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead/championed – heavily involved with the outcome</li> <li>Contributed to – moderately involved with the outcome</li> <li>Otherwise assisted – marginally involved with the outcome.</li> </ul>	<b>Timeframe of activity:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Estimated start and end date of each activity.</li> </ul>	<b>Expected outcomes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does the activity align with your top 5 strategic priorities?</li> <li>What do you expect to come from this activity?</li> <li>How will this outcome benefit the RDA and region?</li> <li>Estimated percentage of budget allocated to activity</li> <li>Provide measurable expected outcomes.</li> </ul>	<b>What did we do?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a description of the activities during the reporting period, and how these activities contributed to your RDA’s addressing of outcome 4.</li> <li>Dot point the nature of the data and local intelligence provided, e.g. number of:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Online or in-person briefings provided to the relevant Minister and Government</li> <li>Meetings held with or attended by Members of Parliament to discuss regional matters</li> <li>Submissions made to Parliamentary enquiries</li> <li>Participation in departmental surveys and submissions</li> <li>Additional contributions of local information provided</li> </ul> </li> <li>Other support provided to Government.</li> </ul>
<b>Activity 7 Investing in people</b>					
Activity 7.1: Provide regional intelligence to Federal Government on disasters impacting the region	Skills and Local leadership	Lead	Ongoing	Providing information on regional impacts to ensure Government is aware of critical events impacting the region’s economic development  Outcomes – critical events effecting regions are recognised and supported Benefits the region by bringing attention to local issues and increases the RDAs reputation by providing on the ground information to Government	
Activity 7.2: Share intelligence for Northern Rivers region to RDAC for state submissions	Local skills and leadership	Contributor	Ongoing	Providing information to represent NSW RDAs submissions and reports  Outcomes – ensure Northern Rivers is included and represented  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Benefits include the RDAs reputation across New South Wales</li> </ul>	
Activity 7.3: Meeting with LGAs, Mayors, local member to understand government priorities and align activities	Local skills and leadership	Contributor	Ongoing	Sharing information and supporting local government  Outcomes – provide intelligence to assist with priorities for the region  Benefits include increasing RDAs reputation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	

## Communications Plan

RDA Northern Rivers continues to be a voice for our region, providing access to information about Government programs, local initiatives and opportunities for growth.

Over two years have passed since catastrophic weather events impacted the area, however, rebuilding of our communities continues, with an eye to recovery and beyond. RDA Northern Rivers plays a vital role in ensuring the distribution of information while working closely with agencies involved in the rebuild. Our communication activities include the Jobs and Live Northern Rivers platforms.

This communications strategy aims to provide an integrated model for maintaining important communication channels between local industry and community and government agencies to support recovery and foster resilience and growth in our region.

We will do this through focusing on our key priority areas of:

### High Priority

- Accommodation and housing
- Business and industry growth
- Identification of enabling infrastructure requirements
- Local buy and supply chain development

### Medium Priority

- Domestic import/export analysis
- Employment and workforce development
- Identification of new and emerging industries for the region

### Low Priority

- CBD and main street redevelopment

## Connecting our region with Government Programs

Government programs that target recovery are essential to the rebuilding of our region. We will continue to disseminate information and promote opportunities available to local government, business and industry through government and other programs.

- Communicating Government initiatives and opportunities for local government, business, industry and community
- Promoting regional success with government funding and support
- Sharing information and content from local and other agencies to improve business opportunities including funding and upskilling opportunities.
- Working with on the ground government services e.g. Northern Rivers Recovery Corporation, to promote opportunities for engagement and support

Our communication strategy is focused on supporting recovery and building resilience across our region. This includes promoting and participating in activities to support recovery and improve local supply chain within the region and communicating and supporting activities to reach out to youth and displaced workers in relation to retraining, career, education and employment opportunities and education providers.

Our strategy maintains a strategic focus to deliver key messages across various platforms and with key stakeholders. Our website will hold key information and links to a range of government initiatives including funding programs, flood recovery, COVID information and consultations. A social media calendar will be developed to ensure messages are delivered effectively across our identified platforms of Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Google Business, and coordinated with monthly e-News and other targeted email campaigns.

Priority Area	Target Audience	Activities	When	Comms Medium
Accommodation and Housing	Affected community, flood recovery groups and orgs, NFP's, construction industry, NSWRA, Service NSW, NCCH.	Participation in working groups along side industry leaders, government agencies, local council	Ongoing	Targeted email campaigns Social media Monthly e-News Media releases Website Supporting relevant workshops & events In person advocacy
Business and Industry Growth	Business community, Industry groups, Business NSW, business chambers, AusIndustry, Service NSW, NSWRA	Grants information, support and assistance Participation in relevant business and industry forums Participation in working groups alongside industry leaders, government agencies, local council	As required	Targeted email campaigns Web page with targeted campaigns Monthly e-News Media releases Supporting relevant workshops & events In person advocacy Ministerial teleconferences Good news and hotspots
Identification of enabling infrastructure development	NSWRA, business and industry, local government	Leverage of Lands Audit Investigate collaboration opportunities with local councils, NRJO, NSWRA	Ongoing	Targeted email campaigns Supporting relevant workshops & events In person advocacy
Local buy and supply chain development	Local business and industry, producers, gov agencies, NSWRA	Establishment of a local supply chain policy Consultation with local council/NRJO, NSWRA Promotion of supply chain opportunities for 2032 Olympics	October 2024  Ongoing	Targeted email campaigns Social media Monthly e-News Website Supporting relevant workshops & events In person advocacy
Domestic import/export analysis	Local business and industry, Business NSW, business chambers, AusIndustry, NSWRA, NSWDPIRD	Establish Import/Export working group to oversee study Release findings to relevant audiences	June 2025	Targeted email campaigns Website Supporting relevant workshops & events In person advocacy
Employment and workforce development	Local business/employers, Jobs Network, Jobs Local, local government, Training NSW	<i>Jobs Northern Rivers</i> website promoted through dedicated	Ongoing  As required	Jobs NR Platform Social media inc Jobs+Live FB/IG

		social media (FB/IG) and email campaigns Participation in careers events and expos Implementation of education program for industry effective tendering	June 2025	Targeted email campaigns Monthly eNews/updates
Regional Skills Audit	Local business and industry, local government, NRJO, government agencies, Training NSW, TAFE NSW, tertiary & secondary education providers	Chair NR Workforce Steering Committee Participation in North Coast Local Jobs Program Taskforce Engage consultants for skills survey/audit	Ongoing  Ongoing  June 2025	Targeted email campaigns Web posts and updates Monthly e-News In person advocacy
Identification of new and emerging industries in the region	Local business incubators, business and industry, business chambers, AusIndustry	Consultation with local business incubators and business chambers	Ongoing	Targeted email campaigns Social media Monthly e-News/updates In person advocacy
CBD and main street redevelopment	NSW Govt, business and industry, local government	Participation in working groups along side industry leaders, government agencies, local council	Ongoing	Participation in relevant working groups Social media Monthly e-News Website
Government Programs	Local community, business and industry, local government	Targeted email campaigns Social media Monthly e-News Supporting relevant workshops & events In person advocacy Participation in Ministerial teleconferences Monthly round up and timely reports to Department re good news and hotspots	As required Ongoing  As required  Ongoing As required  Monthly & as required	Targeted email campaigns Social media Monthly e-News/updates Supporting relevant workshops & events In person advocacy Ministerial teleconferences Good news and hotspots