

JOBS STRATEGY

Greater Cessnock 2036



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Cessnock City Council acknowledges that within its local government area boundaries are the Traditional Lands of the Wonnarua people, the Awabakal people and the Darkinjung people. We acknowledge these Aboriginal peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our offices and operations are located, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and future. We also acknowledge all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who now live within the Cessnock local government area.

WARNING: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are warned that this document may contain images of people who have died.

WONNARUA
“Lands of hills and plains”



MAYOR'S MESSAGE

'A sustainable and prosperous economy' is one of the aspirations our community has firmly embedded in Cessnock City Council's Community Strategic Plan.

Both Council and our community recognise that positive economic development will have significant impacts on the entire Cessnock Local Government Area (LGA). It will:

- Promote growth and investment
- Provide a more diverse range of employment opportunities
- Diversify our economic base
- Assist us in securing a sustainable and prosperous future
- Enhance and strengthen the overall amenity, resilience and liveability of our community

Council has the opportunity to positively influence many of these outcomes that will improve our overall economic wellbeing and prosperity as a community. It is imperative we take on a strategic leadership role and plan for the future. We are committed to bringing together diverse community interests in ways that will stimulate enterprise and investment. We look to create and maintain a conducive business and social environment through our delivery of services, infrastructure and facilities.

The Greater Cessnock Jobs Strategy 2036 provides a direction and framework guiding us to make decisions and identify opportunities to generate positive economic development. We have worked in collaboration with government agencies, industry associations, local businesses and service providers, as well as the broader community, to inform the Strategy.

The exciting vision set out below is achievable if we work together.

Greater Cessnock 2036 – A city with rural roots, economic diversity & natural beauty that is the envy of the region.

Cessnock is a modern city that has maintained its charm and is the Hunter's only city to be surrounded by national parks, reserves, wine country and world heritage sites. Its residents are bestowed with retail choice, transport routes and ample parking as they undertake meaningful and rewarding employment.

Kurri Kurri has transformed into an energetic and youthful town full of families, in close proximity to all corners of the Hunter. Residents enjoy employment in manufacturing, health, transportation and professional services while being located next to the Hunter's largest Outdoor Adventure Centre where families, friends and visitors can enjoy the clear air and the adrenaline of adventure sports.

Wine Country reinforces its place as Australia's premier wine region and remains an exciting blend of open space and inspiring places. Residents and visitors alike can enjoy mindful relaxation, outdoors activities, indulgence and excitement, all within a short distance. Wine Country has walking and cycling trails that encourage visitors to leave their vehicles at home. Behind the calm and attractive facade, Wine Country is an economic powerhouse producing high quality wines, gin, whisky, beer, olive oil, chocolate and cheese.

The towns of Wollombi and Laguna are more than just their natural beauty, interesting heritage and vibrant tourism. High speed satellite internet and mobile phone coverage has allowed home based financial and professional service businesses to thrive. Residents have found a healthy balance between work and lifestyle and spend more time working from home than in their Sydney offices.

Aboriginal heritage, culture, history and enterprise are showcased via the newly established Hunter Valley Wonnarua Indigenous Cultural Hub and Madoo Museum. Aboriginal business opportunities have not only grown but have become the benchmark in mine rehabilitation, honey manufacture, cultural tourism, bush tucker products and biodiversity management.



Bob Pynsent

Bob Pynsent
- Mayor of Cessnock City

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2. Provide infrastructure that supports economic development			
3. Retain and grow existing businesses			
4. Support and grow agricultural industries			
5. Develop Cessnock Airport into a general aviation hub			
6. Grow the visitor economy			

ABBREVIATIONS

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics	LGA	Local Government Area
CBD	Central Business District	LG ACT	Local Government Act 1993
CCC	Cessnock City Council	LSPS	Local Strategic Planning Statement
CSP	Community Strategic Plan	NSW	New South Wales
EDS	Economic Development Strategy	REDS	Regional Economic Development Strategy
EFTPOS	Electronic Funds Transfer at Point Of Sale	REMLAN	Economic Modelling and Planning System
FER	Functional Economic Region	RMS	Roads and Maritime Services
FTE	Full Time Equivalent	TAFE	Technical and Further Education NSW
GNMP	Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan	TFNSW	Transport for NSW
GPO	General Post Office	WI-FI	Wireless Communications Network
GPS	Global Positioning System		
HJO	Hunter Joint Organisation		
HRP	Hunter Regional Plan		
IP&R	Integrated Planning & Reporting		
LALC	Local Aboriginal Land Council		

DEFINITIONS

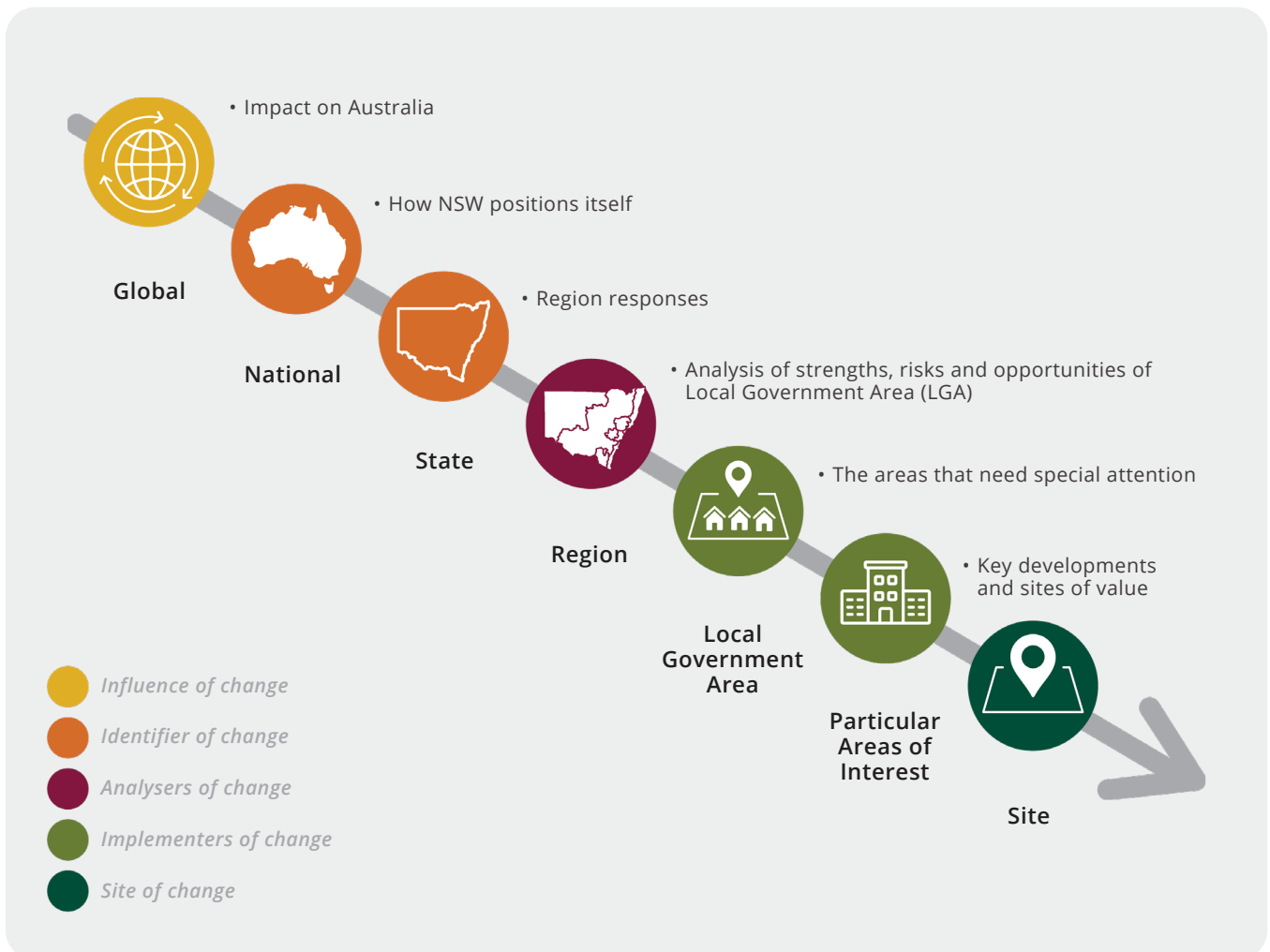
\$	Less than \$20,000	LOW IMPACT	Will create 5 or less jobs
\$\$	\$20,000 to \$99,999	MODERATE IMPACT	Will create between 6 - 20 jobs
\$\$\$	\$100,000 to \$499,999	MEDIUM IMPACT	Will create between 21- 50 jobs
\$\$\$\$	\$500,000 to \$999,999	HIGH IMPACT	Will create 51 or more jobs
\$\$\$\$\$	\$1,000,000 and greater		

ECONOMIC CONTEXT & STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

STRATEGIC CONTENT

The Greater Cessnock Jobs Strategy is part of a hierarchy of strategic documents for the Cessnock Local Government Area (LGA). The Jobs Strategy aligns with actions from the Hunter Regional Plan (HRP) and Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan (GNMP) that are pertinent to our LGA, Cessnock City Council's priorities as set out in the Cessnock Community Strategic Plan (CSP) and other relevant strategies and actions.

The Cessnock CSP identifies the community's main priorities and aspirations for the future and identifies strategies for achieving these goals.



HUNTER REGIONAL PLAN 2016-2036

The Hunter Regional Plan (HRP) outlines the overarching strategic framework to guide the NSW Government's land use planning priorities and decisions in the Hunter Region. The NSW Government's vision for the Hunter is:

THE LEADING REGIONAL ECONOMY IN AUSTRALIA WITH A VIBRANT NEW METROPOLITAN CITY AT ITS HEART.

To achieve this vision, the Government has set four goals for the region:

1. The leading regional economy in Australia

2. A biodiversity-rich natural environment

3. Thriving communities

4. Greater housing choice and jobs.

GREATER NEWCASTLE METROPOLITAN PLAN 2016-2036

The Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan (GNMP) 2036 sets out strategies and actions to leverage and drive investment in aviation, transport, education, health and tourism to deliver sustainable growth across the Greater Newcastle area¹. The GNMP also identifies workforce and employment strategies that are addressed in this Jobs Strategy.

The four GNMP goals to shape Greater Newcastle are:

1. Create a workforce skilled and ready for the new economy

2. Enhance environment, amenity and resilience for quality of life

3. Deliver housing close to jobs and services

4. Improve connections to jobs, services and recreation

¹ The Greater Newcastle area incorporates the Lower Hunter Region (Newcastle, Cessnock, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, and Port Stephens LGAs)

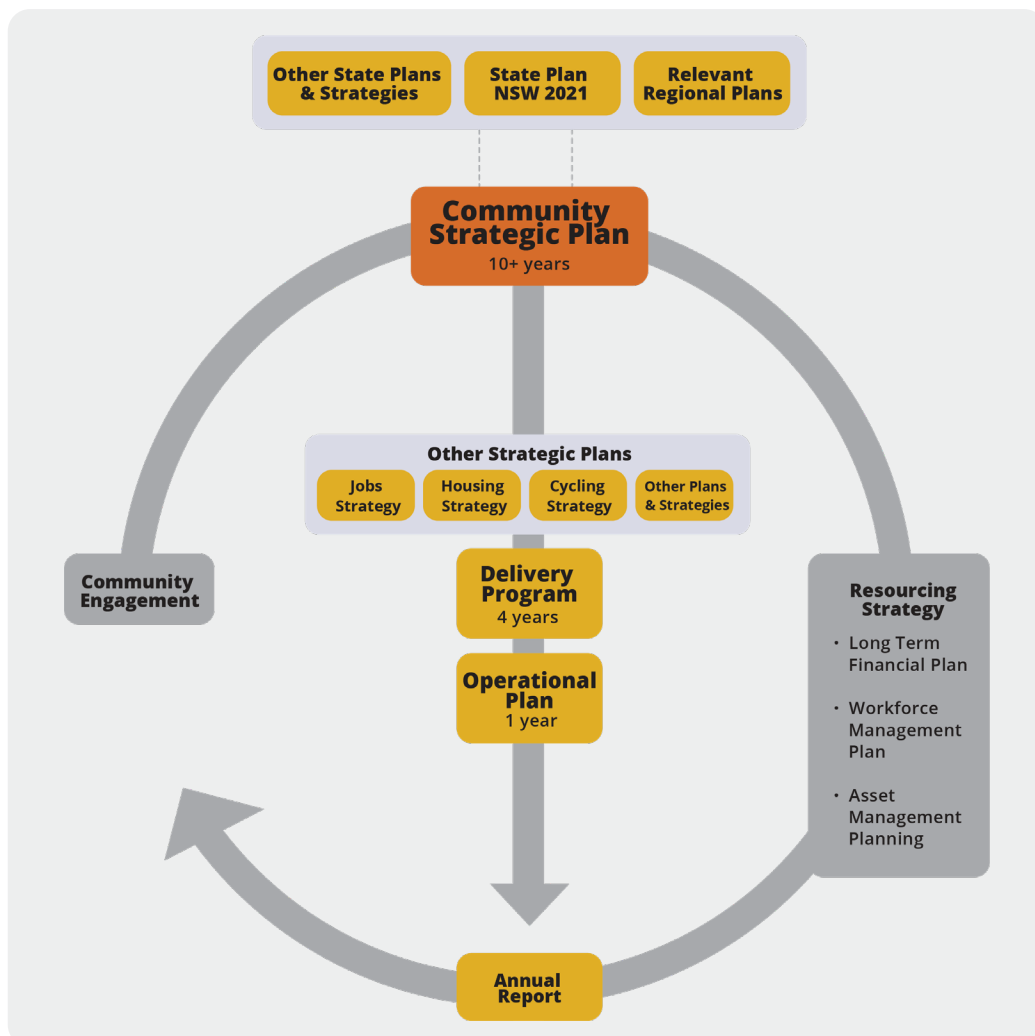
CESSNOCK 2027 COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

The Cessnock City Community Strategic Plan (CSP) is the primary planning document for the LGA. It encapsulates the community's priorities and aspirations for the future of the LGA and provides the direction and framework to achieve this. The planning process considers the issues and pressures that may affect the community and the level of resources that will realistically be available to achieve its aims and aspirations. While Council has a custodial role in initiating, preparing and maintaining the CSP on behalf of the Cessnock LGA, the Plan is implemented in conjunction with a broad range of stakeholders including State government agencies, businesses and community groups.

The Cessnock 2027 CSP strategic themes are:

- 1. A connected, safe and creative community**
- 2. A sustainable and prosperous economy**
- 3. A sustainable and healthy environment**
- 4. Accessible infrastructure, services and facilities**
- 5. Civic leadership and effective governance**

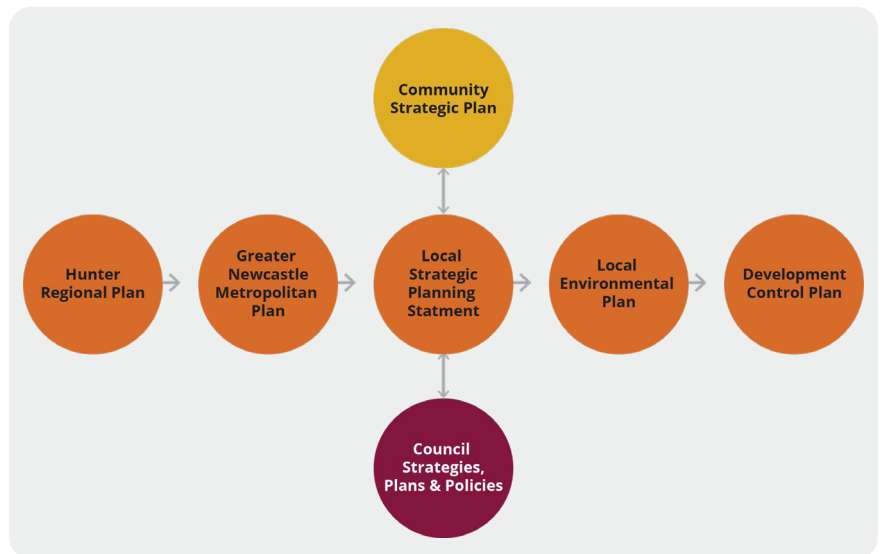
COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN



CESSNOCK LOCAL STRATEGIC PLANNING STATEMENT (LSPS)

The Cessnock LSPS is part of a hierarchy of strategic planning documents for Cessnock LGA. It aligns with the strategic directions and actions of the Hunter Regional Plan and Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan, the Cessnock Community Strategic Plan (CSP) and other relevant strategies and actions.

The LSPS focuses primarily on landuse, the built environment and infrastructure, defining how our LGA will develop and grow. The LSPS provides the framework and direction for revising Council's Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plan informs other Council strategies where they seek to influence land use planning outcomes. The Jobs Strategy is complementary to the LSPS².



HUNTER REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (REDS)

The NSW Government has divided Regional NSW into 37 Functional Economic Regions (FER). Regional Economic Development Strategies have been developed for a 4 year period, with these Strategies providing the vision and direction for economic development within each FER. The Strategies also include possible development opportunities and infrastructure projects.

Cessnock LGA is part of the Hunter FER. The Hunter REDS was developed in collaboration with the Councils within the FER (Cessnock City, Dungog Shire, Maitland City, Muswellbrook Shire, Port Stephens, Singleton and Upper Hunter Shire), key industry groups, the broader regional community and with support from the NSW Government's Centre for Economic and Regional Development.

The vision for the Hunter FER is:

A LEADING REGION IN INNOVATION, RESILIENCE AND DIVERSITY OF OPPORTUNITY, WITH WORLD CLASS INFRASTRUCTURE & DIRECT ACCESS TO INTERSTATE & INTERNATIONAL MARKETS, BOASTING AN ENVIABLE LIFESTYLE.

The REDS has three core strategies which are designed to capture the opportunities, manage risks and deliver on the vision:

- 1. Improve inter and intra-connectivity of the Region to boost business opportunities in the 'engine' industries of Agriculture, Mining and Manufacturing.**
- 2. Manage transitions and risks to the Coal Mining and Electricity Generation sectors and diversify the Region's economy to build resilience.**
- 3. Improve infrastructure, services and amenities to fully realise and sustain the Region's growth potential.**

² The Jobs Strategy has been developed to minimise duplication with the LSPS.

ABOUT THE JOBS STRATEGY

Economic development is the process of improving the economic wellbeing of the community by strengthening local businesses, attracting investment, creating jobs and encouraging sustainable business practices.

The Jobs Strategy outlines economic development priorities and opportunities that will maximise the potential and prosperity of the Cessnock LGA. The strategy articulates the opportunities for the Cessnock LGA to strengthen its position as a desired place of residence, visitation and employment. The Jobs Strategy focuses on the economic prosperity of our community and the opportunities available to deliver this outcome.

The Jobs Strategy has four economic themes: **Productivity**, **Investment**, **Innovation** and **People**.

PRODUCTIVITY

Empower and enable our labour force and businesses to become highly productive. This will be successfully achieved through technological advancement, quality plant, improved equipment, higher education and expert training.

INVESTMENT

Furnish an environment that encourages government funding and private sector investment in facilities, infrastructure and services necessary to support business growth and increased output.

INNOVATION

Empower businesses to collaborate and combine knowledge, technology, land, capital and labour to enhance profits. Innovation requires vision, planning, investment, decision making, efficiency and calculated risk to achieve a successful outcome.

PEOPLE

People and their enthusiasm, passion, skills and expertise are the driving force behind business success. As a region we need to empower, encourage and develop our people to enable delivery of successful outcomes.

Supporting these themes are sixteen economic development priorities and accompanying job creation opportunities.

The Jobs Strategy will be reviewed periodically to ensure emerging opportunities and changing community expectations are incorporated into the strategy. The review will be aligned with Council's 4 year Delivery Program.

FUNDING THE JOBS STRATEGY

The Jobs Strategy will provide Council with economic opportunities that can be incorporated into Council's 4 year Delivery Program and Operational Plan. Grant funding will be sort for projects that are not included in Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan, allowing additional projects to be delivered.

Government agencies, not for profit organisations, businesses and industry bodies are encouraged to support Council in funding and delivering the opportunities identified within the Jobs Strategy. With collaboration the Cessnock LGA can realise its full potential in an efficient and inclusive manner.



VISION

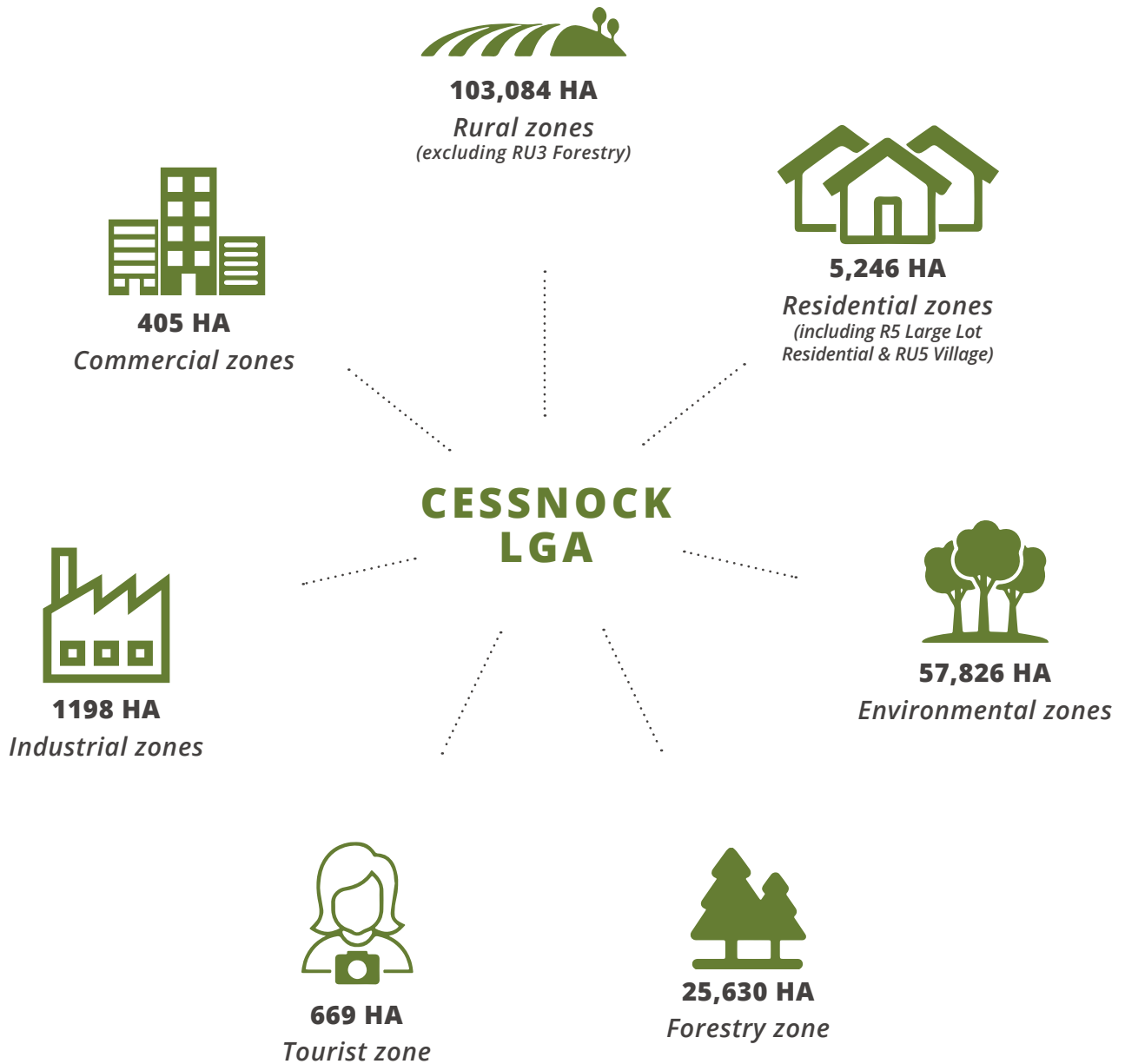
Cessnock will be a cohesive and welcoming community living in an attractive and sustainable rural environment with a diversity of business and employment opportunities supported by accessible infrastructure and services which effectively meet community needs.

Cessnock - thriving, attractive and welcoming



OUR LGA AT A GLANCE

The 195,000 hectares of land within the Cessnock LGA is currently categorised into the following land use zones:



OUR PLACE IN THE REGION

Situated in the Lower Hunter Region, the Cessnock LGA is located across the traditional lands of the Wonnarua people, the Awabakal people and the Darkinjung People. The LGA covers approximately 1,950 square kilometres and forms part of the Lower Hunter. European settlement since the 1820's saw the establishment of pastoral lands, the coal mining industry, the viticulture industry and more recently a thriving tourism industry.

While mining was the principal industrial base and source of employment in the Cessnock Region for the first half of the twentieth century, changes in the mining industry, including deepening coal seams and automation, has led to the closure of mines in the area.

The decline of mining in the Cessnock LGA is in contrast to the success of the Hunter Region's viticulture industry.

The Hunter Valley is Australia's oldest wine region. Colloquially known as Hunter Valley Wine Country, the region is internationally acclaimed, particularly for the shiraz and semillon varietals. With over 150 wineries, the region is home to more cellar doors than any other wine region in Australia. The viticultural industry gives rise to a thriving tourism industry that boasts restaurants, accommodation, events, Hot Air Ballooning, business conferences, galleries and specialty shops.

The Cessnock LGA is currently enjoying substantial growth. Urban development is rapidly expanding within a growth corridor between Cessnock, Kurri Kurri and Maitland, and between Branxton, Greta and Rutherford.



195,000 HA
Land Area



61,256
Residential Population (2020)



22,737
Dwellings (2016)

OUR COMMUNITY

Our Cessnock LGA is home to 61,256 people, the majority of whom reside in a thin urban belt between the townships of Cessnock and Kurri Kurri. The region's rural character and amenity is one of our key strengths. The community values the rural lifestyle, opportunities for large lot residential properties and access to a range of community services and recreation facilities.

The median age of our population is 38, which is consistent with the median age in NSW. This is projected to remain stable in the coming years, with our ageing population offset by younger people drawn to the region's relative affordability, lifestyle and access to employment. This scenario is already playing out in Cessnock's urban release areas, including land at North Rothbury, Branxton and the Cessnock to Maitland Growth Corridor.

The median age at North Rothbury, Cliftleigh and Heddon Greta is 33, 24 and 43 respectively. In contrast, some of our more established localities in our LGA, such as Kurri Kurri and Branxton, are witnessing a rising median age. This may indicate a lifestyle choice by older residents, to live closer to the established commercial centres or within lower maintenance, medium density housing.

The highest employing industry sectors were accommodation and food services, retail trade, health care and social assistance, education and training and manufacturing, with three in every five people employed working in these industries. Employment land at Black Hill, the Kurri Kurri Industrial Precinct and the redevelopment of the former Kurri Kurri Aluminium Smelter site are anticipated to play a pivotal role in providing future local employment opportunities.



2016 - **59,101**
2036 - **70,000 - 80,000**

2016 - **24,000**
2036 - **30,350 - 35,000**

10 year average population growth
Cessnock - **1.8%** | NSW - **1.3%**



New jobs by 2036
5,369

Average household size
Cessnock - **2.57** | NSW - **2.42**

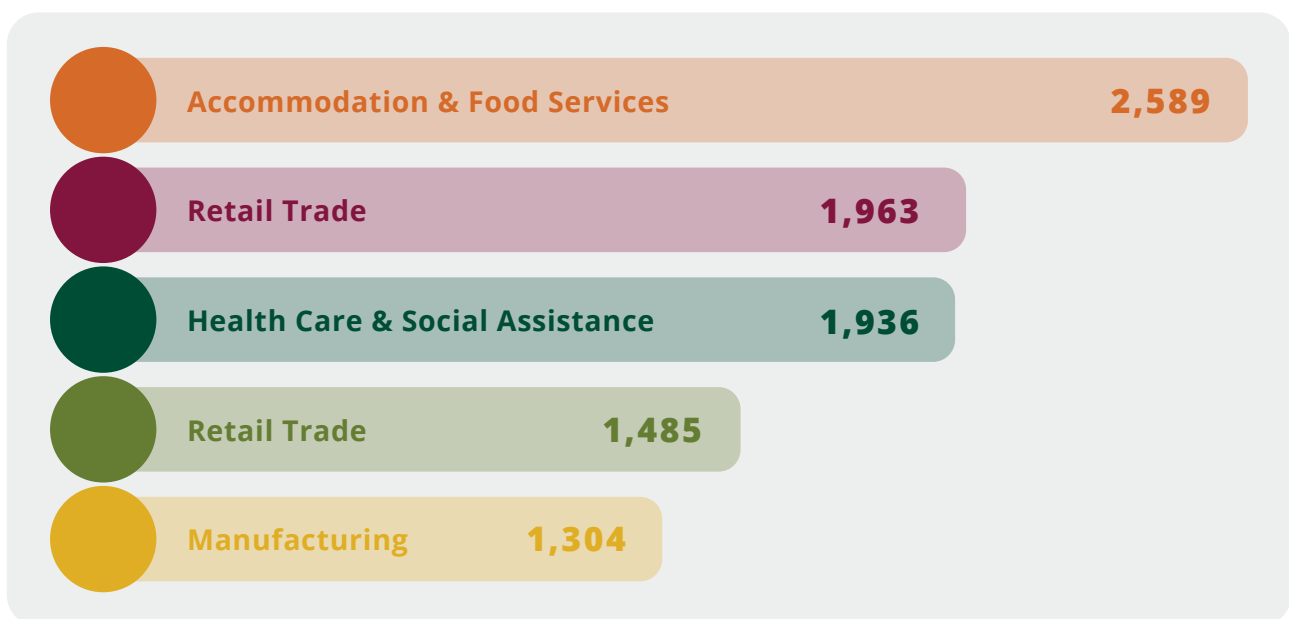
OUR ECONOMY

The gross revenue generated (total sales) by businesses and organisations within the Cessnock LGA in 2019 was \$5.164 billion.

There are 15,494 jobs within the Cessnock LGA and 21,313 workers. The Cessnock LGA has more workers than jobs to the value of 5,819. Workers living outside the Cessnock LGA are most likely to travel from Maitland, Lake Macquarie and Newcastle.

The typical Cessnock LGA employee drives to work (73%), resides in the Cessnock LGA (68%), holds a certificate (33%), works 35-40 hours a week (34%), is female (55%), speaks English at home (99%) and is employed in the Accommodation & Food Services Industry.

The highest employing industry sectors are:



The industry sectors which are the key drivers of the Cessnock LGA's economy in terms of regional exports, employment, value-added and local expenditure on goods and services are³:

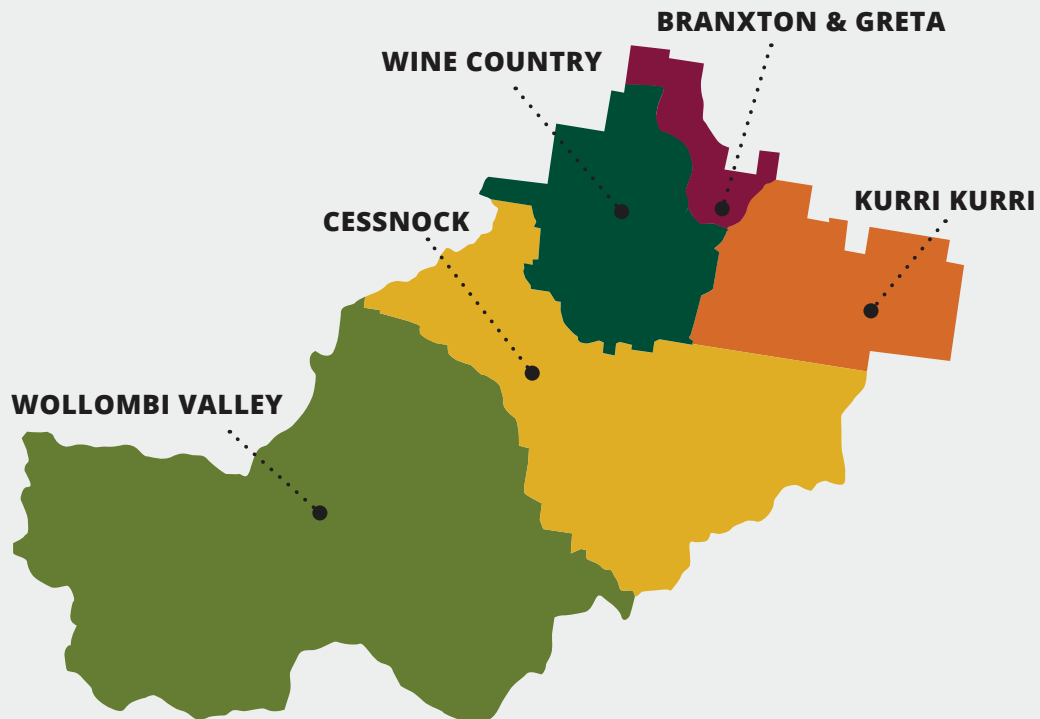


The Cessnock LGA attracted 1,053,000 visitors in 2019, 602,000 day trippers, 440,000 domestic overnight visitors and 12,000 international visitors. On average visitors spent \$312 per trip, arrived for the purpose of a holiday (57%), travelled as a couple (38%), accommodated in a hotel or similar (37%) and stayed 2 nights⁴.

³ REMPLAN

⁴ Travel Research Australia

The Cessnock LGA has the advantage of containing five distinctly different economic regions that are suited to businesses of all shapes, sizes and industry sectors.



Cessnock LGA has multiple business zones, an established professional services network, strong retail and food sector, is on the doorstep of Hunter Valley Wine Country and offers big town living in a rural setting. Cessnock City generates an impressive \$1.6 billion in annual economic output and is home to 28,965 people.

Kurri Kurri has an industrial heart, is located on regional transport links, has a growing population and has been identified for additional residential and industrial growth within the Hunter Regional Plan 2036.

Wine Country is focused on viticulture, agriculture, tourism, business conferences, food and entertainment but behind the sophisticated façade produces an impressive economic output of \$878 million each year. Wine Country will continue to grow into a seven day a week diversified economy with nature and open space as the emotive attraction.

Branxton, Greta and Huntlee are growth areas with 7,500+ new homes approved for development. In an area where the Hunter's newest town of Huntlee meets the retro feel of Branxton and Greta, there is more than 100 hectares of greenfield business zoned land available.

Wollombi Valley has a strong tourism and organic food brand and marketplace awareness, and is an established destination for the Sydney drive market. New high speed satellite internet services make Wollombi Valley a viable and attractive location for people looking to work remotely.

Investment within Greater Cessnock is based on the three pillars of having excellent economic enabling infrastructure; lifestyle opportunities that provide work-life balance; and a broad range of support service to assist businesses to establish and grow.

INVESTMENT PILLARS

ENABLE

- Excellent transport infrastructure
- Positioned on transport routes
- Proximity to Port of Newcastle
- Proximity to Newcastle and Cessnock Airports
- Population growth
- Workforce availability

LIFESTYLE

- Wine Country
- National parks
- Liveability
- Beaches/lakes
- Lower cost of living
- Diverse employment opportunities

SUPPORT

- University of Newcastle
- Learning network
- Seven TAFE campuses
- Excellent health system
- Council development services
- Investment attraction concierge
- Four Business Chambers
- Regional Development NSW Business Concierge

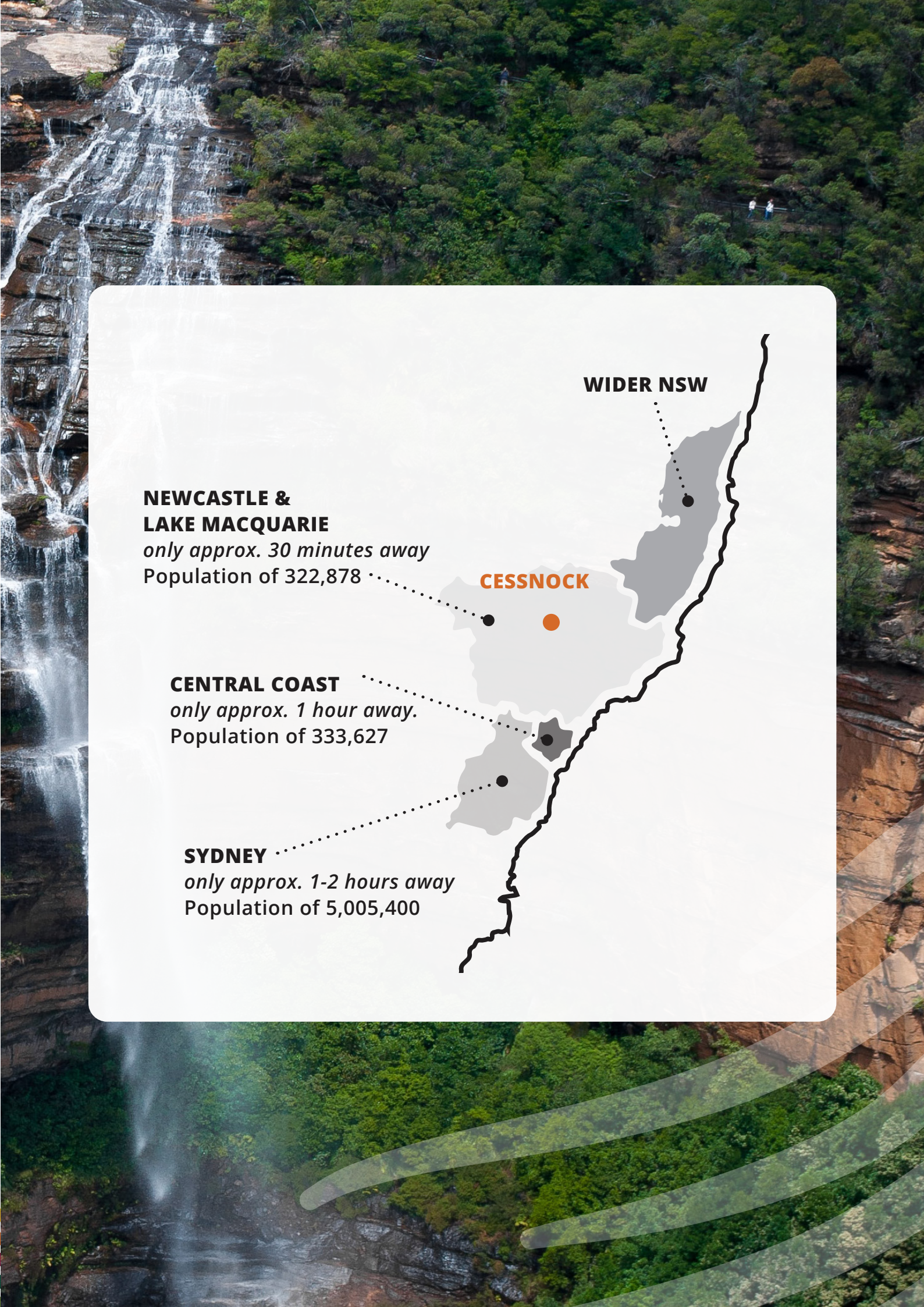


ECONOMIC ENDOWMENTS

Endowments are strengths that a regional economy possess and are able to capitalise upon to attract and support economic development.

The endowments and competitive advantages of the Cessnock LGA are:

- Proximity to Sydney, Newcastle and the major centres in the Hunter and Central Coast regions. Access to more than **5.4 MILLION PEOPLE** residing within a 2.5 hour drive of Cessnock LGA.
- The 10 year average population growth is 1.8%, **0.5% HIGHER THAN NSW**.
- **RAPID URBAN GROWTH** is occurring between Cessnock, Kurri Kurri and Maitland, and between Branxton, Greta and Rutherford.
- Close proximity to the **PORT OF NEWCASTLE**.
- Close proximity to **NEWCASTLE AIRPORT**, with domestic air services at the Airport being expanded and international flights introduced.
- **CESSNOCK AIRPORT** is located 5 minutes from Cessnock and has 10 hectares of unencumbered land zoned for aviation activities.
- Excellent access to **M1 MOTORWAY, M15 HUNTER EXPRESSWAY, NEW ENGLAND HIGHWAY** and other arterial roads.
- **HUNTER VALLEY WINE COUNTRY** is an established tourist destination and one of the highest profile wine districts in Australian, attracting around 1.053 million visitors per annum.
- Hunter Valley visitor expenditure has **GROWN BY AN AVERAGE OF 6%** over the last 5 years.
- Cessnock LGA is an **ENTERTAINMENT NODE** – Vineyard concerts, business conferences, events and home to the Cessnock Performing Arts Centre, Hope Estate, Hunter Valley Gardens, Bimbadgen and Roche Estate.
- **SPECIALIST TRAINING FACILITIES** / Centres of Excellence in the areas of hospitality, heavy machinery operations and maintenance, viticulture, wine-making and horticulture.
- Significant biodiversity values with **NATIONAL PARKS AND STATE FORESTS** (Werakata, Wollombi, Yengo, Sugarloaf and the Watagans) covering 40 per cent of the Cessnock LGA land area (78,769 hectares).
- The Cessnock LGA offers a **RURAL LIFESTYLE AND SETTING** in contrast to the increasing urbanisation of other LGAs in the lower Hunter.



**NEWCASTLE &
LAKE MACQUARIE**

only approx. 30 minutes away
Population of 322,878

CENTRAL COAST

only approx. 1 hour away.
Population of 333,627

SYDNEY

only approx. 1-2 hours away
Population of 5,005,400

WIDER NSW

CESSNOCK



THE ROLE OF COUNCIL IN JOB CREATION

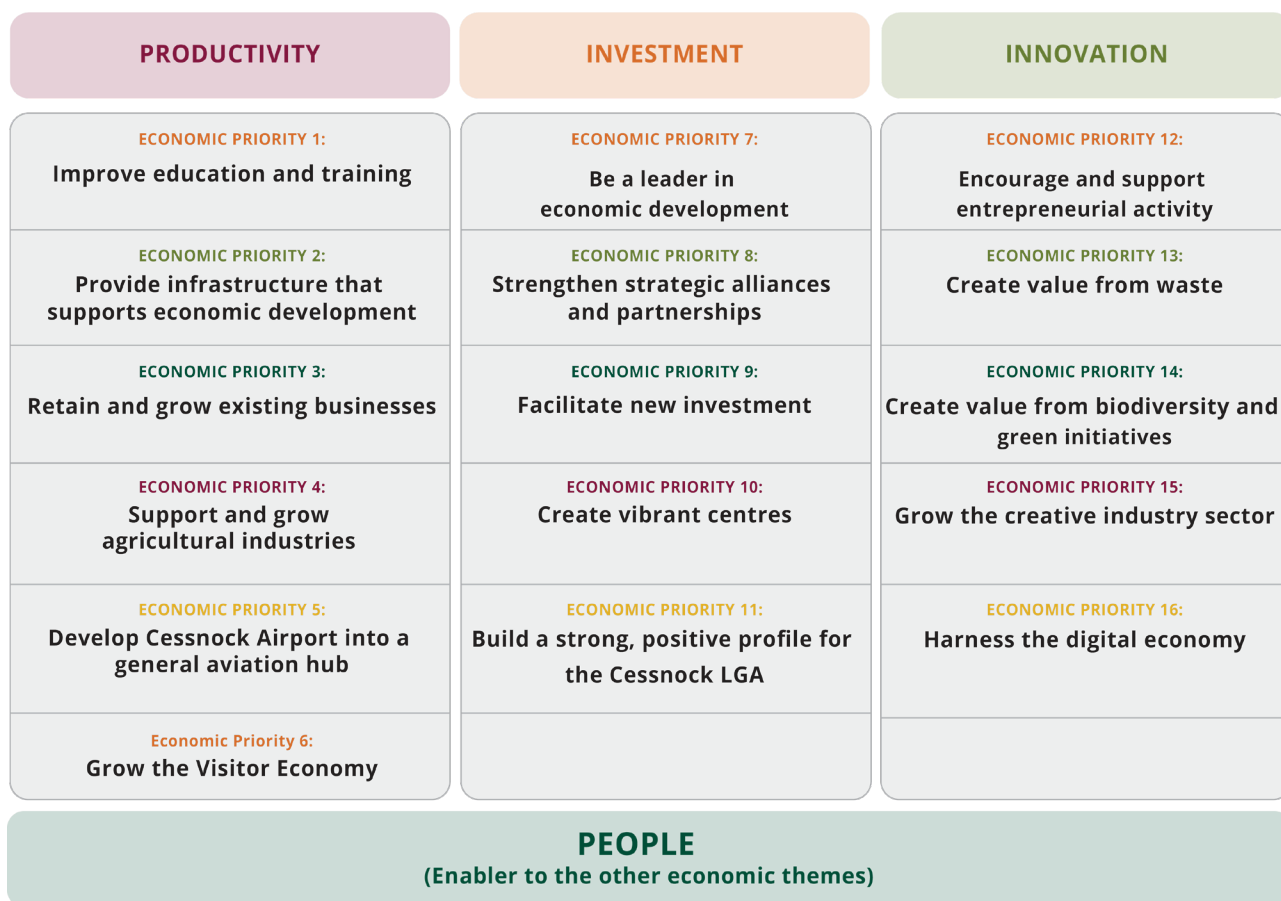
Private sector businesses, the Federal Government, NSW Government and Local Government remain the most significant contributors to the Cessnock economy via investment in plant and equipment, infrastructure, training, skills and education.

Council's overarching role is to provide the appropriate environment to enable sustainable economic development, with Council being:

- A **LEADER** in economic development
- An **INVESTOR** in local infrastructure
- A **COLLABORATOR** with local businesses, stakeholders, networks and community groups
- A **PROVIDER** of services to the local community
- An **ADVOCATE** on behalf of the community to achieve improvements and benefits within the community
- A **COMMUNICATOR**, by raising awareness around issues and opportunities
- A **REGULATOR**, by implementing legislative provisions such as waste management, development controls, environmental management, energy and water reduction measures
- An **EMPLOYER** of significance in the region

ECONOMIC THEMES & PRIORITIES

OUR FUTURE CESSNOCK ECONOMY IS BUILT ON...



CESSNOCK LGA 2036 ECONOMIC AND JOB CREATION OBJECTIVES

	2036 GOAL
Cessnock employment rate vs NSW	Same or better than NSW
Median weekly household income vs NSW (NSW \$1,486)	Same or better than NSW
Year 12 education obtained	Same or better than NSW
University degree attainment	15% or higher
CBD and commercial building occupancy rate	85% or higher
Jobs for local residents	Same amount of jobs as workers
Mobile Blackspots	0 (reduced from 54)
Total Jobs	21,695 (2% growth)
Population	77,261 (1.5% growth)
Average tourism spend per trip (3% growth)	\$546 (3% growth)
Average domestic tourist stay	3 days (1 day longer)
Average international tourist stay	9 days (2 days longer)

PRODUCTIVITY

ECONOMIC PRIORITIES

1. IMPROVE EDUCATION & TRAINING

2. PROVIDE INFRASTRUCTURE THAT SUPPORTS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

3. RETAIN AND GROW EXISTING BUSINESSES

4. SUPPORT AND GROW AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES

5. DEVELOP CESSNOCK AIRPORT INTO A GENERAL AVIATION HUB

6. GROW THE VISITOR ECONOMY

ECONOMIC PRIORITY 1

Improve education & training

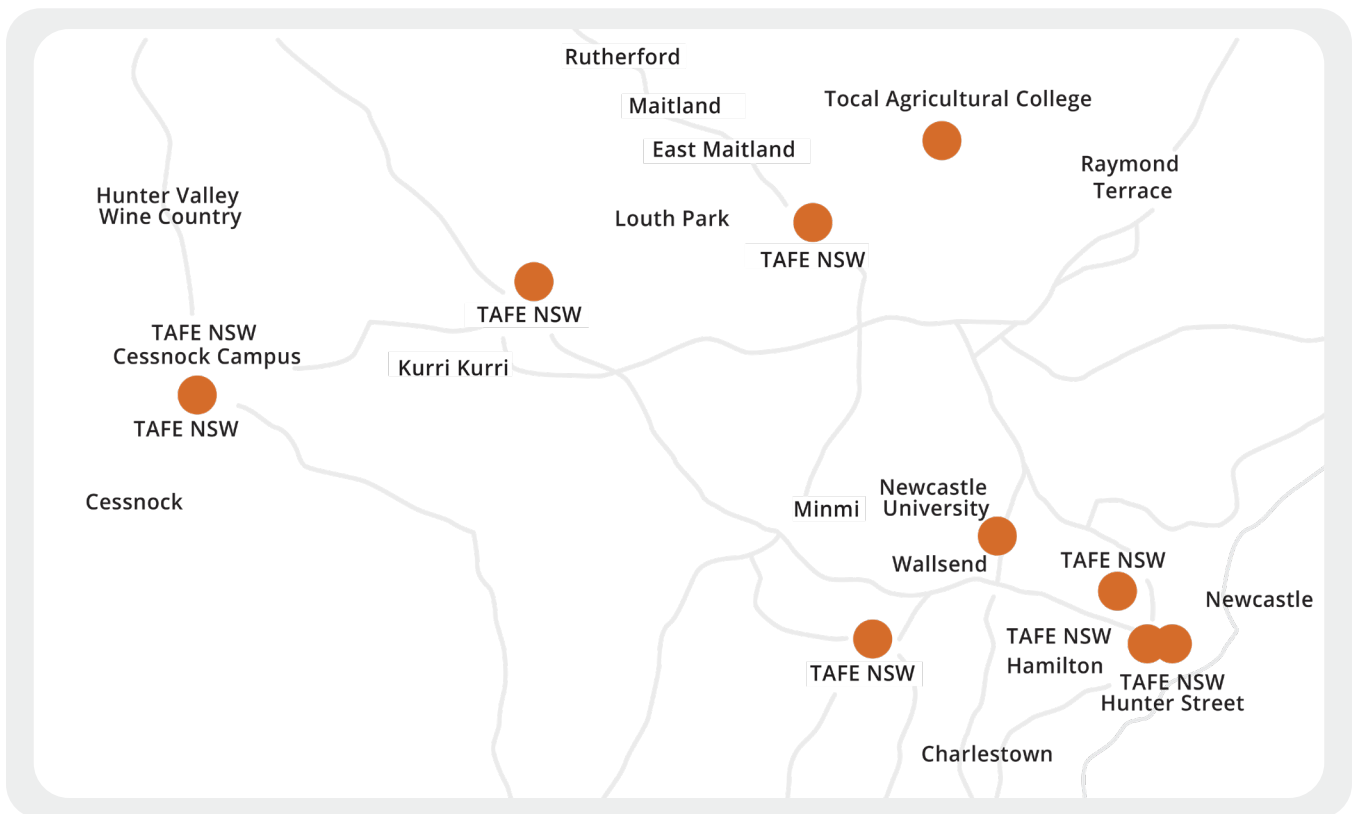
Education is an enabler and is a key fundamental building block for economic development. Education enriches lives, provides 'work ready' foundation skills, raises productivity and creativity, promotes entrepreneurialism and is the force behind technological advancement and technical expertise.

Cessnock LGA is observing significant changes in the jobs available and the skills needed. There has been a shift away from jobs in traditional industries such as mining and manufacturing, to service and knowledge industries, particularly hospitality and aged care. Lower levels of educational and higher-level tertiary attainment is limiting the ability of our community to meet the demand for a more diversified, higher skilled workforce.

CESSNOCK LGA EDUCATION ATTAINMENT COMPARED TO NSW

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	CESSNOCK LGA	NSW
Degree or higher	8.3%	23.4%
Diploma /Advanced Diploma	6.7%	8.9%
Certificate IV	4.0%	2.8%
Certificate III	19.6%	12.0%
Year 12 or below	61.4%	52.9%

While the LGA is well serviced by public and private schools, University of Newcastle, significant TAFE facilities in Cessnock and Kurri Kurri and specialist training centres such as Komatsu and the Hunter Valley Hotel Academy at Kurri Kurri TAFE and Hunter Plant Operator Training School in Cessnock, entrenched generational challenges arising from disadvantage is limiting the ability of many students from acquiring the foundation skills and social confidence needed to access training opportunities and/or enter the workforce.



The University of Newcastle is 45km East of Cessnock City and is renowned for its medical, engineering and architecture faculties and is a significant leader in policy development, regional employment transition planning and business development. Council and business should seek to leverage the skills and expertise within the university to develop products that are not possible without thorough research and analysis.

As a leader in the Cessnock community, Council wishes to lead by example and demonstrate our commitment towards improving education and training within our community.

Council's employment pathway initiatives include:

- The Mayoral Academic Scholarship program – Council partners with local businesses and industry groups to provide financial support to assist residents access higher education. The Program is a catalyst for developing the skills and knowledge of our residents to allow them to obtain gainful employment within Cessnock LGA.
- Skills Development – Council participates in work experience programs, offers traineeships and apprenticeships as dedicated positions within Council, and ensures that all staff have access to ongoing training and development opportunities. Through Advance Cessnock City, Council also encourages other employers to do likewise.

In addition to employing over 300 people, Council has a role to play in encouraging improved educational and training outcomes by:

- Advocating for improved education and training programs and support services.
- Providing and supporting activities, programs and services targeted to stimulating young minds and broadening horizons.
- Working with the high schools to promote career pathways and training opportunities.
- Bridging the gap between industry and training providers by identifying industry needs and skill gaps and working with training providers to address these issues.
- Providing training and career pathways by offering apprenticeships, traineeships and scholarships.

**LET'S BECOME THE TRAINING GROUND FOR THE HUNTER,
CREATE PATHWAYS FOR OUR STUDENTS FROM HIGH SCHOOL
TO SUCCESS AND BUILD OUR COLLECTIVE KNOWLEDGE TO
ENSURE REGIONAL SUCCESS AND PROSPERITY.**

JOB CREATION OPPORTUNITIES

#	Opportunity Description	Cost	Impact
1.1	Deliver, promote and expand the Mayoral Academic Scholarships Program, collaborating with local businesses and industries to increase the number of residents assisted.	\$	Moderate
1.2	Provide traineeships and apprenticeships within Council and encourage local businesses and industries to do likewise.	\$\$\$	Medium
1.3	Advocate for the NSW Government to support the proposal by Wonnarua Nation Aboriginal Corporation to establish a Training and Research Precinct at Neath, for the purpose of developing skills and creating employment opportunities in the areas of mine rehabilitation, fencing, construction, weed and pest eradication, wildlife management, fire management and bush tucker horticulture.	\$	High
1.4	Lobby and advocate both state and federal governments for a major injection of public funds into early intervention, child-care, school and transition to work programs to change the culture and provide young people with the confidence and foundation skills needed to transition into employment.	\$	High
1.5	Organise an annual careers expo to showcase employment and post-school training opportunities and career pathways.	\$	Moderate
1.6	Advocate for specific career advisory funding to address low retention rates at Cessnock LGA schools.	\$	Medium
1.7	Advocate for training fee subsidies to encourage and facilitate participation in post-school training programs and tertiary education.	\$	Moderate
1.8	Encourage the development of a flexible training system that meets the needs of employers.	\$\$	Moderate
1.9	Provide expert support to setup tailored training and development programs for businesses.	\$\$\$	Moderate
1.10	Continue to work with local businesses, industries and training providers to identify and address skill gaps and training needs.	\$	Low
1.11	Promote and support train the trainer courses.	\$	Low

ECONOMIC PRIORITY 2

Provide infrastructure that supports economic development

Quality infrastructure is a vital enabler in improving economic, social and liveability outcomes. Infrastructure considerations for the Cessnock LGA are based on the current condition and future capacity of transport routes, healthcare facilities, education facilities, justice and social support facilities, policing facilities, communication networks, water and waste infrastructure, open spaces and recreation facilities.

Cessnock is benefiting from NSW Government investment of \$13.5 million in a two-storey police station that will allow space for Hunter Valley Police District detectives, District Superintendent, Highway Patrol and Corrective Services officers to work under one roof. This new, state-of-the-art facility will house approximately 100 staff and be able to service the Cessnock area for at least 50 years.

All three levels of government funded the construction of the \$4.0 million Bridges Hill Park playground, which includes swings and climbing decks, an enclosed toddler play space, a nature play area with balance beams and timber logs, a children's bike circuit and obstacle course, shade trees around the bike track, a basketball hoop, Yarning Circle and sensory bush tucker garden, fitness station, three large shade sails, BBQ and picnic areas.

The NSW Government is investing \$6.6 million and Council \$2.2 million in upgrading Cessnock Airport. This project involves the rehabilitation of the runway, widening and resealing of taxiways, upgrading the landing approach system and development of parking areas to allow a wider array of aircraft to land. A water and sewer connection will be established at the western side of the airport as enabling infrastructure for the 10 hectares of land zoned for aerospace and aviation activities.

Prioritisation of infrastructure for economic development is based on the economic and social benefits that will result from a project. To assist with prioritisation, engine industries and the most important economic locations within the Cessnock LGA must be identified.

The Cessnock LGA high value engine industries and key drivers of the economy are (in descending order from most significant) Manufacturing, Accommodation and Food Services, Construction, Health Care and Social Assistance and Mining. Of these key industries the following are growing or have a specialisation; **Accommodation and Food Services, Manufacturing (wine & beverage, explosives and chemical) and Health Care and Social Assistance.**

Geographically the most influential economic locations within the Cessnock LGA are Cessnock, Kurri Kurri and Wine Country (refer Table 2 below).

TABLE 2: ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS BY GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

Economic Area	Business Count	Jobs	Output \$M	Population	Top Industries by Output	Infrastructure Considerations
Cessnock	3382	8567	\$2,157	22,872	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rental & Real Estate Services Accommodation & Food Services Public Administration 	Light vehicle transport Heavy vehicle transport High speed internet Mobile phone coverage
Kurri Kurri	2508	4294	\$1,330	18,168	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction Rental & Real Estate Services Manufacturing 	Heavy vehicle transport High speed internet Mobile phone coverage
Wine Country (Pokolbin, Lovedale, Rothbury)	627	2687	\$878	1,655	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manufacturing Accommodation & Food Services Agriculture 	Heavy vehicle transport Light vehicle transport High speed internet Mobile phone coverage Agricultural Water
Branxton, Greta, Huntlee, North Rothbury	1019	1,037	\$347	7,118	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction Rental & Real Estate Services Transport 	Heavy vehicle transport High speed internet Mobile phone coverage
Cessnock Country (South East)	429	688	\$508	7,248	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mining Rental & Real Estate Services Construction 	Heavy vehicle transport High speed internet Mobile phone coverage Agricultural Water
Greater Wollombi Valley	282	190	\$64	1,276	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction Rental & Real Estate Services Accommodation & Food Services 	High speed internet Mobile phone coverage Agricultural Water

TABLE KEY:

Green – Quality Infrastructure

Yellow – Constrained or limited access

Orange – Infrastructure has current or future limitations

Red – Poor quality or limited access

Factors that need to be taken into consideration in determining infrastructure priorities are:

- **HIGH VISITATION LEVELS:** In 2019 the Cessnock LGA attracted 1,053,000 visitors, 602,000 day trippers, 440,000 domestic overnight visitors and 12,000 international visitors⁵.
- 92% of visitors are domestic, of which 88% are from New South Wales, 6% from Queensland, 2% from Western Australia and 1% from each of the other States and Territories.
- Of the New South Wales visitors, 57% are from the Sydney region, 44% of which specifically come from the northern areas of Sydney.
- **10,850 RESIDENTS TRAVEL OUTSIDE THE CESSNOCK LGA FOR WORK.** The most popular destinations are Newcastle, Singleton, Maitland and Lake Macquarie.
- **5,031 PEOPLE TRAVEL TO THE CESSNOCK LGA FOR WORK** from other local government areas. The most popular departure destinations are Maitland, Lake Macquarie, Newcastle and Singleton.
- **STRONG POPULATION GROWTH:** The Cessnock LGA annual population growth for the last 10 years was 1.8% with the population forecast to grow by 1% per annum until 2036.
- The **M15 HUNTER EXPRESSWAY** and associated interchanges are accelerating growth and development in the surrounding areas.
- Visitors traveling from Sydney typically access Cessnock LGA via the M1 Motorway, either taking the Freemans Waterhole exit and traveling along the B82 through the rural and residential areas of Freemans Waterhole, Brunkerville, Mulbring and Kearsley or via the M15 Hunter Expressway.
- Visitors from Newcastle approach from the east via the M15 Hunter Expressway, George Booth Drive or John Renshaw Drive while access from the north is typically through Maitland or Branxton.
- Another popular access point for visitors is via **TOURIST DRIVE 33**, which enters Cessnock LGA at Laguna and winds through to Branxton.
- **NBN SATELLITE SERVICES** are now delivering faster and more reliable broadband speeds to regional Australia.
- No agricultural water supply systems are planned to be built within the Cessnock LGA by WaterNSW⁶.
- **ELECTRICITY NETWORK ACCESS:** The 330 kV Liddell to Newcastle and 132 kV Rothbury to Newcastle transmission lines provide viable grid connection opportunities for power generation projects or high energy user access.
- **MINDARIBBA LOCAL ABORIGINAL LAND COUNCIL** is a landowner of significance within the Cessnock LGA.
- The Cessnock LGA currently has **12 ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING LOCATIONS** available for public use (2021).

As electric vehicles become more affordable and improved battery technology delivers longer range and shorter refuelling times, there will be an increase in electric vehicles on NSW roads. These vehicles are cheaper, cleaner and quieter to run, bringing significant economic and environmental benefits⁷. The NSW Government Electric and Hybrid Vehicle Plan is seeking to encourage investment in fast chargers and commuter car park slow chargers within regional NSW.

The following areas of community or social infrastructure are considered outside the scope of this strategy; Electricity, Sewer, Social Support, Law, Law Enforcement and Emergency Services.

The 2036 infrastructure priorities identified in the opportunities below will have the highest economic and social benefit to residents of the Cessnock LGA, Hunter Valley, NSW and Australia.

⁵Tourism Research Australia Local Government Area Profiles 2018

⁶Greater Hunter Regional Water Strategy 2018

⁷NSW Future Transport 2056

JOB CREATION OPPORTUNITIES

#	Opportunity Description	Cost	Impact
2.1	Advocate for RMS to provide purpose built park and ride facilities (car parks) at the M15 exit points of B86 John Renshaw Drive, Main Road Kurri Kurri and A43 at Branxton.	\$\$\$\$\$	Moderate
2.2	Design, fund and construct a shared path/cycleway in Wine Country that connects major attractions to Cessnock, the Hunter Valley Visitor Information Centre and Cessnock Airport.	\$\$\$\$\$	High
2.3	Advocate for the reduction of mobile black spots across the LGA and improved data transfer capacity for existing towers located within Wine Country. This is critical infrastructure to support the 'Hunter Event Economy' and tourism customer satisfaction outcomes for the Hunter Valley.	\$\$\$\$\$	Moderate
2.4	Construct the Richmond Vale Rail Trail with support and assistance from landowners, NSW Government and Australian Government.	\$\$\$\$\$	Medium
2.5	Collaborate with the HJO and member councils to create a 'Shiraz to Shore' cycle network.	\$\$\$\$\$	High
2.6	Create a fast and efficient transport link from Cessnock to the M15 Hunter Expressway that can carry heavy vehicles (B-Double). The average speed along B68 Cessnock Road is 52km/h for the 16km journey.	\$\$\$\$\$	High
2.7	Create a fast and efficient four lane (two lanes in each direction) transport link between Kurri Kurri and Maitland (Lang Street, Main Road and Cessnock Road).	\$\$\$\$\$	High
2.8	Prioritise the upgrade, maintenance and visual amenity of high volume tourist entry points to the Cessnock LGA. These roads include Freemans Drive, Leggetts Drive, Lake Road, Lovedale Road, Wine Country Drive and Wollombi Road.	\$\$\$	Moderate
2.9	Prioritise the upgrade, maintenance and visual amenity of M15 Hunter Expressway heavy vehicle access points to Weston and Kurri Kurri. These roads include Hart Road, Government Road, Mitchell Ave, Lang Street and Main Road.	\$\$\$\$\$	Moderate
2.10	Advocate for the approval of Port of Newcastle's Multi-Purpose Deepwater Container Terminal. This container terminal will reduce freight double handling, reduce transport times, reduce transport costs and generate local employment.	\$\$\$\$\$	High
2.11	Advocate for Australian and NSW Government funding to upgrade Newcastle Airport to Code E status, allowing provision to accommodate long-range, wide-bodied aircraft.	\$\$\$\$\$	High
2.12	Increase utilisation of South Maitland Railway by establishing a container transfer facility at the Weston Industrial Park or the planned Hydro Industrial Park (to reduce heavy vehicle traffic and transport costs).	\$\$\$\$\$	High
2.13	Support Mindaribba Local Aboriginal Land Council in establishing a cultural and economic hub within the Cessnock LGA that provides positive socially, emotionally and economic outcomes.	\$\$	High
2.14	Upgrade Cessnock Airport navigation aids for all weather approach.	\$\$\$	Moderate
2.15	Widen Cessnock Airport taxiways to allow Code B aircraft to operate.	\$\$\$\$\$	Moderate
2.16	Maintain the Cessnock LGA road network to a standard that allows safe and efficient traffic movement.	\$\$\$\$\$	High
2.17	Collaborate with the NSW Government and industry to create a network of electric vehicle charging locations that will facilitate widespread usage of electric vehicles within the Hunter Valley.	\$\$\$\$\$	High
2.18	Establish Council electric charging infrastructure that supports an electric vehicle fleet.	\$\$\$\$\$	Moderate
2.19	Advocate for the future Newcastle Fast Rail Station to be located at Cameron Park (adjacent to M15 Hunter Expressway and M1 Motorway interchange).	\$\$\$\$\$	High

ECONOMIC PRIORITY 3

Retain and grow existing businesses

Existing businesses are the backbone of a strong local economy, providing jobs and contributing to the economic vitality and social fabric of our community.

Cessnock LGA has just over 3,000 businesses spread across all industry sectors. 97.1% are small businesses, with 54.9% being sole traders and 42.2% employing between 1 and 19 employees. During the period 2017 to 2019 the number of businesses in the LGA increased by 7.5% with 125 new sole traders and 103 new small businesses⁸.

“Local Councils are an essential part of the small business ecosystem, offering a supportive environment to local entrepreneurs to enable them to start and grow.”

- Damien Tudehope, NSW Minister for Finance and Small Business

Retaining and growing our existing businesses is critical to the LGA's economic stability, resilience and growth. Growth will increase employment opportunities and inject dollars into our local community. It will also allow for business capabilities to be leveraged to deliver more value-add opportunities and attract additional investment. Nurturing our local businesses will encourage local residents looking to start a business venture and to businesses looking to relocate to the area, that the LGA has a positive investment climate and their venture will be welcomed and supported.

Council's on-going consultation with local businesses has highlighted that businesses are generally optimistic, proactive, engaged and seeking to prosper. By understanding and supporting our local businesses, Council can assist to provide the environment, resources and tools that will assist them achieve their goals.

⁸Australian Bureau of Statistics (2020) Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exits

Key activities that are fundamental to retaining and growing our local businesses include:

- Demonstrating to local businesses that the community appreciates their **CONTRIBUTION TO THE LOCAL ECONOMY**.
- **PROACTIVELY ENGAGING WITH LOCAL BUSINESSES** – building strong and lasting relationships.
- Encouraging and promoting industry **COLLABORATION AND INNOVATION**.
- Understanding the challenges that businesses face and formulating and **IMPLEMENTING STRATEGIES** to overcome these issues.
- Encouraging businesses to **GROW AND PROSPER** by providing access to information and support services, and simplifying and streamlining the planning, development and investment process.
- **IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITIES** that can be leveraged by local businesses.
- **LEADING BY EXAMPLE** – with Council purchasing locally where possible.

Employment land at Black Hill, the Kurri Kurri Industrial Precinct and the redevelopment of the former Kurri Kurri Aluminium Smelter site are anticipated to play a pivotal role, in providing future business growth and local employment opportunities. These developments are logistically well-placed to take advantage of three major road networks - the Hunter Expressway, the New England Highway and the M1.



JOB CREATION OPPORTUNITIES

#	Opportunity Description	Cost	Impact
3.1	Council, NSW Government and applicable government agencies are to prioritise the processing of the 'Hydro' Planning Proposal (highest planning processing priority for the Cessnock LGA).	\$	High
3.2	Council, NSW Government and applicable government agencies are to prioritise the processing of the 'Black Hill Employment Area' Planning Proposal.	\$	High
3.3	Provide development certainty for the Hunter Economic Zone (HEZ). Investigate the extent of industrial zoning within the HEZ in consultation with landowners and NSW Government agencies and rezone significant environmental lands to an appropriate environmental zone.	\$\$	Low
3.4	Increase Council's engagement with local business associations and business operators through a variety of channels (forums, newsletters, surveys and face-to-face contact), inviting businesses to meet with Council to discuss opportunities and address challenges.	\$	Low
3.5	Encourage collaboration with local business associations by offering a grants and sponsorship program for supporting business growth.	\$\$\$	Moderate
3.6	Encourage and assist local businesses to access government mentoring, business support and funding programs, including the NSW Small Business Concierge Program.	\$	Moderate
3.7	Identify and communicate potential opportunities for business growth and diversification with the business community.	\$	Low
3.8	Encourage and promote business collaboration and co-operation.	\$	Low
3.9	Build effective links between education providers and business to assist with recruitment, training and up-skilling staff.	\$	Low
3.10	Identify and support businesses that want to expand into the global marketplace to become export ready.	\$	Moderate
3.11	'Buy local' – ensuring that Council buys locally ⁹ where possible and encourages the development of local business-to-business supply chains.	\$\$	High
3.12	'Buy local' – promote local products and encourage residents to buy locally.	\$\$	Moderate
3.13	Showcase innovative and successful local businesses.	\$	Low

⁹ Council procurement procedures must comply with the Local Government Act and other legislative requirements.

ECONOMIC PRIORITY 4

Support and grow agricultural industries

Emerging opportunities for agribusiness development for regional NSW is one of five key industry sectors providing Australia's strongest prospects for sustainable economic growth based on predicted global demand. New free trade agreements, and other market developments, combined with natural competitive advantages in the Hunter such as access to markets, skills and smart technologies underpin these opportunities. This is particularly relevant with the continuing urban expansion of the Sydney region creating potential conflicts with existing agribusinesses and processing plants. Newcastle Airport, Port of Newcastle and transport infrastructure links between Sydney and the Hunter region provide an added mechanism for promoting regional development.

The agribusiness industries identified at national and state level as having major opportunities in global markets include industries that are currently major activities (beef and dairy) and sectors that are small in the region (oil seeds, legumes) but have potential to expand. New opportunities that could be introduced or expanded include additional food processing plants such as eggs and poultry and production linked to a regional food and wine experience and the tourism market¹⁰.

Although the Cessnock LGA contains 103,084 hectares of rural zoned land, employment in the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing sector has remained largely flat over a decade, at 2.5% of total employment. The Cessnock LGA generates a diverse mix of agricultural products for local, regional and national consumption, with gross revenue from these enterprises in excess of \$150 million in 2019 (excludes wine and beverage manufacture). However, the proportional value of products within the agriculture, forestry and fishing sectors that are imported into the Cessnock LGA are 40% higher than the broader Hunter Valley. This coupled with higher levels of imports in the accommodation and food services sector relative to the region, suggests opportunities exist for increasing the level of locally sourced food.

Excluding the income from food and beverage manufacturing, Cessnock LGA has a much lower agricultural output per hectare than Sydney-Baulkham Hills. If the Cessnock LGA increased production to 50% of the value per hectare as Sydney-Baulkham Hills, then an additional \$226 million in agricultural output would be achieved annually. From a direct increase in agricultural output of \$226 million the corresponding creation of jobs is estimated at 744¹¹.

Lack of growth in the value of agricultural production since 2011 is linked to two key drivers¹²:

1. An increase in absentee land ownership. Absentee landholders are primarily from Sydney and surrounds seeking 'lifestyle blocks.' Lacking the time and expertise these owners will often leave their land under-utilised, or in some cases lease it to neighbouring residents for various agricultural pursuits.
2. The rising value of land and small block sizes. Increasing urban and semi-urban demand within the LGA is driving this change, which has restricted the scale of production and thereby diminished the profitability of conventional agricultural pursuits, evidenced by the halving of agricultural income derived from beef cattle since 2011.

¹⁰ Greater Hunter Regional Water Strategy 2018

¹¹ REMLAN

Food, agriculture and tourism has the potential to play a critical role in the growth ambitions for the Cessnock LGA in the decades ahead. There are positive trends around economic growth, changing consumer preferences, work and leisure patterns of individuals and families all favourable to the Cessnock LGA and the wider Hunter region. This includes the proximity to key consumer and tourism markets in Sydney and Newcastle along with a rich tapestry of existing and potential agricultural pursuits and associated activities from food manufacturing through to agritourism.

The most prominent and a key driver of economic success has been the globally regarded Hunter Valley wine industry with the potential to leverage this into other diversified activities that complement and enhance the current offering in the region.

The strategic location of Cessnock Racecourse provides an opportunity to play a larger role in the Hunter Valley thoroughbred industry. Increased collaboration with Scone Race Club and Newcastle Jockey Club could see the establishment of training facilities that compliment and support the Hunter Valley thoroughbred industry.

JOB CREATION OPPORTUNITIES

#	Opportunity Description	Cost	Impact
4.1	Prepare a Feasibility Study to determine how agricultural water security and water reliability can be achieved to support increased agricultural production.	\$\$\$	Low
4.2	Explore opportunities to convert exhausted mine sites and quarries into dams and reservoirs to support local wildlife and offer alternative destinations for both locals and tourists.	\$\$\$	Low
4.3	Create a Hunter Olive Industry commercial strategy, focused on investment and on-going support to transform the existing industry and enable sustained growth.	\$\$	Medium
4.4	Determine current fruit and vegetable production limitations and restrictions with regard to, under-utilised land, under-developed land, transport infrastructure, water availability, water access, labour and technical expertise.	\$\$	Low
4.5	Determine high value agricultural opportunities within the Cessnock LGA.	\$\$	Low
4.6	Develop and promote a Cessnock Fruit and Vegetable Expansion Guide.	\$	Low
4.7	Promote onsite water retention and reuse.	\$	Low
4.8	Seek opportunities to increase farm automation and farm robotics.	\$\$	Moderate
4.9	Develop a Hemp production business case and economic model that details economically sustainable production, including managing waste and by-products.	\$\$	Medium
4.10	Provide a clear and attractive 'Welcome Mat' to be rolled out, including to those in the adjacent Hawkesbury LGA that are under pressure from competing land use, primarily urban development.	\$\$\$	Moderate
4.11	Create a standard Environmental Impact Statement for establishing a goat dairy (aimed at reducing the cost for market entry).	\$\$	Moderate
4.12	Establish an Indigenous food 'bush tucker' production capability through providing support, information, expertise and investment.	\$\$\$	Medium
4.13	Provide support and information to Local Aboriginal Land Council's (landowner of significance) in their pursuits to create agricultural employment opportunities in areas such as honey production, biodiversity management, cultural burning and cultural tourism.	\$\$	Medium
4.14	Assist Racing NSW and Cessnock Racecourse in any plans to expand training and racing facilities.	\$\$\$\$\$	High

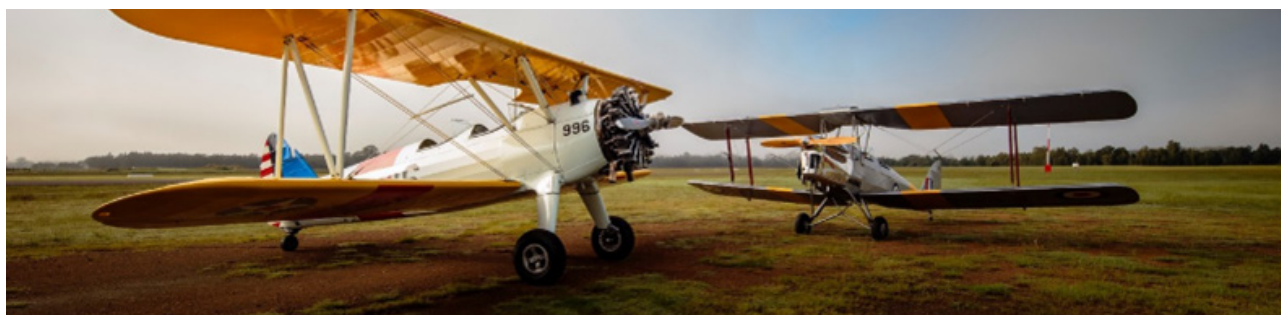
¹² Hunter Valley Agribusiness Cluster Plan 2020

ECONOMIC PRIORITY 5

Develop Cessnock Airport into a general aviation hub

Located in the heart of Wine Country, Cessnock Airport is licensed for general aviation and supports recreational flying, charter air services, emergency services, tourism and mining sectors. The airport is home to four flying schools, the Wirraway Aircraft Museum and the Hunter Recreational Flying Club. It is a hub for aviation tourism offering scenic fixed wing and helicopter flights over the vineyards as well as adrenalin-pumping aerobatic and jet flights. The airport also caters for recreational flying and passenger charter services.

Well positioned in the Hunter Region, Cessnock Airport is primed for growth and is ready to leverage opportunities arising from the impact of the Western Sydney airport on general aviation airports (e.g. Bankstown) and activities in the Sydney region and from growth in Regular Public Transport (RPT) and Defence traffic at Newcastle Airport. It is also ideally situated to attract general and recreational aviation activities and businesses that will be displaced by the expected future close of the Warnervale, Belmont and possibly Rutherford airports.



The airspace within Cessnock LGA is unencumbered and uncongested; well removed from the controlled airspace around Sydney, Western Sydney and Newcastle airports and the Defence no-fly zones. This, combined with favourable topography and climatic conditions, renders the airport highly suitable for flight training activities. The airport has two airpark estates which have the capacity for further growth, with 10 hectares of serviced land available for aviation related businesses.

JOB CREATION OPPORTUNITIES

#	Opportunity Description	Cost	Impact
5.1	Implement the Cessnock Airport Strategic Plan to facilitate improvement of the runway, upgrading of passenger facilities and the development of aviation and aviation-tourism based businesses.	\$\$	Low
5.2	Recognise the importance of Cessnock Airport for tourism, the broader economy and air freight in the Hunter Valley Destination Management Plan.	\$	Low
5.3	Subdivide the airport into commercial lots that will allow lease agreements and easy identification.	\$\$	Medium
5.4	Determine the air traffic capacity of the airport and develop commercial operations within this capacity.	\$	Low
5.5	Implement the Cessnock Airport Upgrade Project (runway rehabilitation, improved navigational aids, wider taxiways, improved parking and upgrade terminal).	\$\$\$\$\$	High
5.6	Position and promote the airport as a hub for flight training and aviation-based tourism for both fixed wing and rotary aircraft.	\$\$	Medium

ECONOMIC PRIORITY 6

Grow the visitor economy

As a visitor destination, the Hunter Valley is Australia's oldest and most visited commercial wine region. The Cessnock LGA has the advantage of being geographically close to the two largest urban populations of NSW - Sydney and Newcastle, yet seen as a clean and green visitor escape. This advantage with its wine and food experiences has translated into a well-developed visitor economy driven by a large day trip market and a growing reputation for entertainment events.

The Hunter Valley Destination Management Plan stressed that the destination needs to have more experiences to keep visitors in the region longer and to encourage them to spend more, and that these experiences need to be consistent with the current brand position for the destination so they can leverage the primary marketing focus of the destination, which is primarily a wine/food experience.



The current brand essence for the Hunter Valley is 'simple sophistication - a Hunter way of life'.

The psychographic target markets for the Hunter Valley are:

- Pampadours - an indulger sector who seek food and wine experiences, wellness programs, golf and leisure sports; and
- True Travellers - an immersive and physical activity sector who seek agritourism activities, heritage (industrial history, convict trail, village life), nature, soft adventure (e.g. mountain biking), culture, arts, entertainment, and Indigenous tourism.

Stakeholder consultation suggests that Peer Group travellers (particularly women and family reunions) are also strong markets, due to their preparedness to stay overnight and spend freely.

Over the past few years, there has been a shift among local governments and regional tourism organisations, from predominantly marketing and promotion to destination development and management involving the development of attractions, activities and experiences and provision of visitor infrastructure, facilities and services.

The marketplace is changing with consumer demands, needs and expectations increasingly driving product development. The challenge for mature destinations, such as the Hunter Valley, is to re-invigorate mature products and develop new activities and experiences. Destinations need experiences that offer a 'wow' factor to bring visitors into the area as well as a strong second tier of local attractions and activities that encourages travellers to explore, stay longer, spend and return.

'Wow' factor experiences are those that are so distinctive that consumers' view them as the primary motivator to visit a region – in essence a region's iconic product. The delivery of a 'wow' factor experience should so surprise and excite the consumer, that it motivates them to do it again or at least strongly recommend it to their peers.

The on-line environment, particularly social media, has changed the way that consumers research destinations and products, plan and book travel and communicate their experience to others. Businesses that are responsive to changing consumer needs and expectations and have embraced digital marketing and social media are seeing increased turnover and profitability. At the same time the increased competition has resulted in a winnowing of the worst reviewed businesses – so that overall quality of delivery is lifting significantly.

JOB CREATION OPPORTUNITIES

#	Opportunity Description	Cost	Impact
6.1	Increase collaboration between Hunter Valley Wine and Tourism Association and Council in providing tourism information and services.	\$	Low
6.2	Increase the amount of bookable tourism products that can be purchased online and in destination.	\$\$	Medium
6.3	Ensure the Hunter Valley Destination Management Plan is updated every 5 years.	\$\$	High
6.4	Investigate and prioritise options to diversify the Hunter Valley tourism offering.	\$\$	Moderate
6.5	Create and deliver a 'Hunter Valley Host' training course that details local history, attractions and standard customer service practices.	\$\$	Low
6.6	Provide quality in destination visitor services and visitor information.	\$\$\$	Medium
6.7	Create a safe and family friendly network of walking and cycle trails within Wine Country (connecting tourism experiences).	\$\$\$\$	Medium
6.8	Strengthen the Hunter Valley's brand and reputation through marketing and promotion.	\$\$	Moderate
6.9	Establish the role of Hunter Valley conference coordinator to facilitate conference bookings, develop promotional material, market products and respond to inquiries.	\$\$\$	Medium
6.10	Establish the role of event coordinator to promote, de-conflict and support local events.	\$\$\$	Moderate
6.11	Encourage and assist in expanding offerings in heritage tourism, cultural tourism and agritourism.	\$\$	Moderate
6.12	Advocate to Destination NSW for consistent financial support to market and promote the Hunter Valley	\$\$	Moderate
6.13	Create an attraction at the Hunter Valley Visitor Information Centre (including surrounding grounds) that is independent of visitor services and visitor information.	\$\$\$\$	Low
6.14	Use lighting to enhance existing tourism assets or to create new tourism products.	\$\$\$\$	Moderate

INVESTMENT

ECONOMIC PRIORITIES

7. BE A LEADER IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

8. STRENGTHEN STRATEGIC ALLIANCES & PARTNERSHIPS

9. FACILITATE NEW INVESTMENT

10. CREATE VIBRANT CENTRES

11. BUILD A STRONG, POSITIVE PROFILE FOR THE CESSNOCK LGA.

ECONOMIC PRIORITY 7

Be a leader in economic development

Growing and diversifying the LGA's economy requires strong, proactive and sustained leadership from Cessnock City Council. Leadership builds confidence, which in turn encourages and facilitates investment in existing and new businesses and in the infrastructure and services needed to support and sustain growth.

Stimulating economic development starts with a 'can do', welcoming attitude by Council. Encouraging existing businesses to invest in growth and attracting new business, requires making the planning, development and investment process as simple as possible and providing business assistance where it is needed most.

Fundamental to economic development is identifying business opportunities and understanding the challenges that businesses face. Understanding the business environment provides Council with the ability to play a supportive and effective role. Council must assist in developing strong and lasting relationships with and between the multitude of government, industry, business and community stakeholders who play a vital part in economic development.

As a leader, Council's role in economic development will include:

- Being 'open for business': providing a high standard of customer service and strong customer service image to assist business expansion and attract business investment.
- Communication and coordination: bringing together and coordinating the activities of diverse stakeholders including Government agencies, business and industry associations, business operators, service providers and the broader community to deliver targeted economic outcomes.
- Delivering business support services: providing information, assistance, referral and support to existing business, new start-ups and relocating businesses.
- Developing strategic partnerships to ensure that the hard and soft infrastructure needed to facilitate, support and sustain economic development is in place.
- Working in partnership with key stakeholders to leverage opportunities, encourage and progress initiatives and respond to challenges and threats.

JOB CREATION OPPORTUNITIES

#	Opportunity Description	Cost	Impact
7.1	Position and promote Cessnock City Council as a leader and driver of economic development, with Council having a strong 'can do' culture and a clear consistent and coordinated approach that is focused on achieving business and industry investment.	\$\$	Moderate
7.2	Ensure that Council's customer service procedures for handling development and investment enquiries are 'best practice' – welcoming, streamlined, helpful and customer focused; with systems in-place to follow-up and monitor and report on 'leads' and opportunities.	\$\$	Moderate
7.3	Continue to deliver comprehensive, quality business support services – providing information, advice, introductions and referrals.	\$\$	Moderate
7.4	Build effective networks and communication channels, proactively engage and communicate with key stakeholders and facilitate opportunities for business and investment networking.	\$	Low
7.5	Continue to build strategic relationships and work collaboratively with government agencies, service providers and other LGAs within the Hunter Region to support and deliver the projects, soft and hard infrastructure and services needed to facilitate, support and sustain economic development.	\$	Medium
7.6	Work in partnership with key stakeholders to leverage opportunities, encourage and progress initiatives and respond to challenges and threats.	\$	Low



ECONOMIC PRIORITY 8

Strengthen strategic alliances & partnerships

To deliver on our full economic potential, Cessnock City Council will need to create strategic alliances and leverage the skills within the NSW Government, Australian Government, regional development organisations, local industry bodies, business associations and community groups.

The Department of Regional NSW provides economic development assistance to local governments through Business Development Managers allocated to each region. Regional NSW Business Development Managers provide information regarding grant opportunities, an Investment Attraction Concierge Service, economic development training for Council staff and access to experts within the NSW Government.

To support the growth of regional NSW, the NSW Government has created the Regional Growth Fund to invest in projects that facilitate regional development and deliver new and upgraded local amenities. This fund aims to enhance local sporting facilities, support arts and culture, improve regional voice and data connectivity, invest in mining-impacted communities, spur job creation and deliver local infrastructure.

To boost global exports, the NSW Government has created Global NSW to position NSW as Australia's global centre of excellence, bringing together the expertise of people representing industry and innovation, trade and investment, and precinct development. Global NSW is a government-wide plan to diversify trade, stimulate new business investment, foster innovation and boosting industry competitiveness in our cities and across the regions. NSW Government Export Advisors support Councils through information sharing, industry training, grants and business development support.

The Australian Government supports regional economic development through programs such as the Building Better Regions Fund aimed at creating jobs, driving economic growth and building stronger regional communities. Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources Customer Service Managers provide the point of contact for these grant opportunities with excellent business support resources available on the www.business.gov.au website.

The Hunter Valley has a diversity of skilled and knowledgeable business people, business chambers, member associations, government agencies and educators. The challenge is to leverage and utilise the skills that exist outside our immediate area of influence and in doing so create value for all parties and the region.

JOB CREATION OPPORTUNITIES

#	Opportunity Description	Cost	Impact
8.1	Utilise the Hunter Valley Wine and Tourism Alliance to identify and deliver tourism projects that support visitation within the Hunter Valley.	\$	Moderate
8.2	Collaborate with Hunter Valley Wine and Tourism Association to provide effective and efficient services to the Hunter Valley Tourism Industry.	\$\$	Moderate
8.3	Build strong relationships with the Department of Regional NSW and Global NSW for the purpose of grant funding attraction, business investment attraction, training support and expert assistance.	\$	High
8.4	Actively participate in relevant forums and workshops run by State and regional agencies and respond to invitations to comment on draft plans, strategies and inquiries.	\$	Low
8.5	Identify opportunities for clustering, strategic alliances and partnerships within and between industry sectors and businesses (e.g. Wine, Olive and Culinary Associations).	\$	Low
8.6	Encourage and facilitate opportunities for business networking and knowledge sharing.	\$\$	Moderate
8.7	Continue to engage, support and partner with Advance Cessnock City Partners (business chambers, tourism associations and community groups) for the purpose of strengthening the Cessnock LGA business environment.	\$\$\$	Low
8.8	Explore opportunities to partner with education and research institutions.	\$	Low
8.9	Identify opportunities to support and assist the Hunter Valley Olive Association in their aspirations to grow the Hunter olive industry.	\$\$	Medium
8.10	Collaborate with the HJO and Hunter Councils to deliver projects that have regional significance.	\$\$\$\$\$	High



ECONOMIC PRIORITY 9

Facilitate new investment

Economic growth is dependent on attracting new investment into the LGA, with investment secured through grants; decisions made by existing businesses to upgrade, expand and/or diversify; and by attracting new businesses through start-ups and relocation.

Billions of dollars of grant funding is made available each year by State and Federal government, regional organisations, peak industry groups and philanthropists. Cessnock City Council actively applies for grants to fund the development of infrastructure and facilities and deliver a diverse range of programs and activities. Council also assists not-for-profit organisations, local industries and businesses to secure grant funding. Cessnock City Council makes funding available under its Dollar-for-Dollar Grant Scheme to support community, cultural, sporting and environmental projects that improve and enhance the liveability of our LGA. These grants also recognise the invaluable contribution that community groups make to our social well-being and the vibrancy and vitality of our community.

Initiatives to retain and grow existing businesses (Economic Priority 3) will also encourage investment dollars into the LGA. Through leadership and providing business support services, Council's priority is to create a positive investment climate.

Investment in new businesses, both start-ups and businesses relocating from other areas, will inject new dollars into the LGA's economy; help drive innovation, productivity and competitiveness; and create jobs. New investment also has the potential to strengthen business confidence in the LGA.

Council is adopting a strategic approach to new business attraction concentrating on businesses that create significant employment opportunities; contribute to the supply chain of an existing industry sector; has potential flow on benefits to other sectors and/or localities; and/or is a service that is needed locally.

JOB CREATION OPPORTUNITIES

#	Opportunity Description	Cost	Impact
9.1	Ensure that Council provides a positive investment environment, including streamlining the planning process, reducing red tape where possible and continuing to deliver business support services.	\$\$	Medium
9.2	Continue to pursue grant funding opportunities to deliver infrastructure, facilities and services.	\$	High
9.3	Continue to support and assist community groups and other organisations to apply for grant funding.	\$	Medium
9.4	Explore options to strengthen the Dollar-for Dollar-Grant Scheme to support community, cultural, sporting and environmental projects that will enhance the liveability of the LGA.	\$\$	Moderate
9.5	Monitor investment activity, business trends, locational and infrastructure requirements to assist in investment targeting, attraction and support services.	\$	Low
9.6	Promote grant and other funding opportunities (e.g. Hunter Angels, Hunter iF) for industry sectors and local businesses, providing assistance and support to access these opportunities.	\$	Low
9.7	Formulate an Investment Attraction Policy to provide Council with the strategic context and governance platform to support its business attraction and investment activities, including possible incentives.	\$\$	Moderate
9.8	Formulate and implement a Business Attraction and Investment Strategy.	\$\$	High
9.9	Produce and disseminate information, marketing and promotional collateral that showcases the LGA's endowments, opportunities available and positions Cessnock LGA as a location of choice for business investments.	\$	Low
9.10	Build / strengthen the relationships (internally and externally) to identify and access 'leads' for existing and new businesses looking to invest.	\$	Low
9.11	Continue to participate in State and regional investment attraction initiatives, including Pilot Programs and partnership / co-investment projects.	\$	Low



ECONOMIC PRIORITY 10

Create vibrant centres

Cessnock's places have the opportunity to grow further as thriving centres within the region. Place activation is an opportunity to look at what is already here and make the most of it. This means thinking differently about what can make places vibrant, and how to extend day trips into longer stays, afternoon/night economy opportunities, new attractions for the visitor economy, and increased activities by locals.

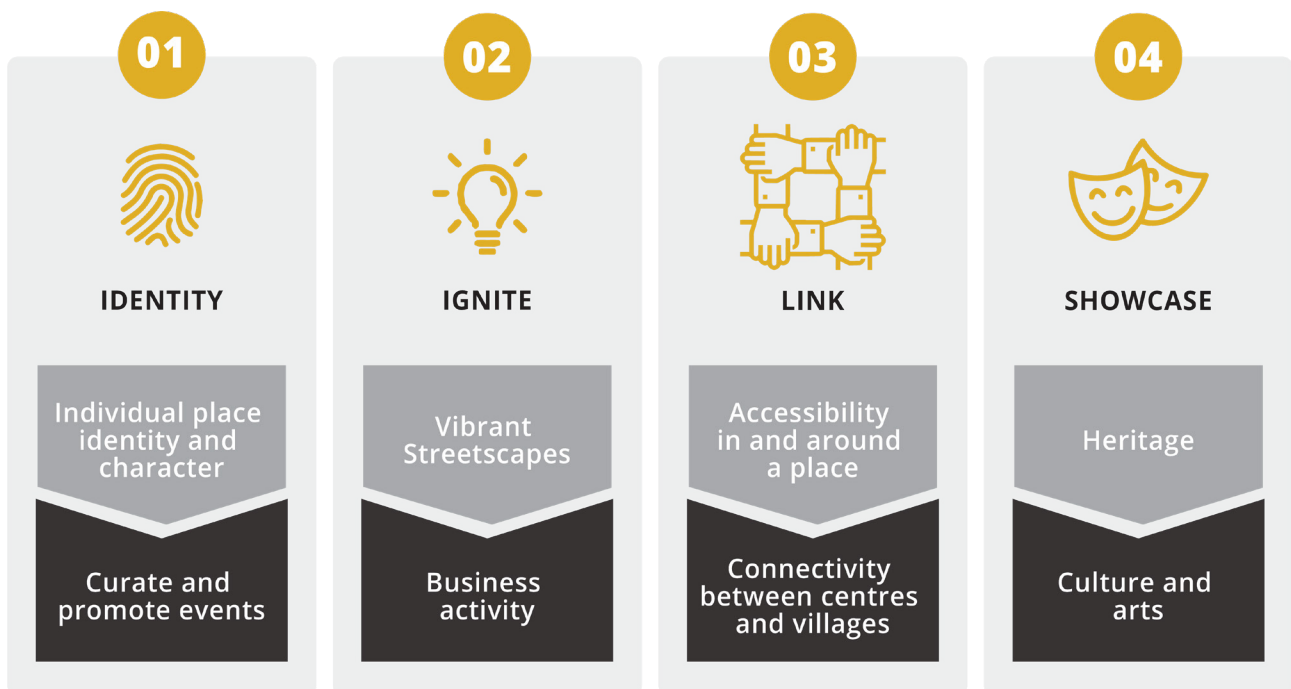
The role of domestic activity and repeat visitation from local visitors is central to the successful place activation within the Cessnock local government area.

Place activation is about reimagining public spaces and streets, with people at the centre. It involves animating what makes each place distinctive – their 'sense of place'. This sense of place is created by the unique character of the landscape, places of interest, the visitor experience, and the character and attitude of residents and businesses.

Place activation is also about creating new opportunities – to look at different ways to support local economic activity and improve local and visitor experiences. Sometimes these are small, low-cost interventions – like pop-up shops or the addition of public art. Other times, they are big ambitious plans for new infrastructure.

Focus areas for action

Four focus areas have been developed to guide the activation of centres and villages.



Placemaking initiatives and projects are designed to illuminate local character and provide citizens with economic opportunities and choice.



IDENTITY

The top line approach for place activation is to build the profile, identity and character of towns, villages and main streets. This involves identifying what are common characteristics for the area, and what is distinctive for each place, using this to inform signage, local events and tourism information.

There is already a distinctive regional offering, with characteristics linking places:

- Centres with main street/high street
- Old pubs in each village
- Walking and cycling opportunities in National Parks and State forest
- Links to local produce, headlined by Hunter Valley vineyards but including agribusiness
- Boutique and eclectic retail: op shops, second hand shops, and retro/antique shops

Identity and character are built from history and heritage. For Cessnock, this involves keeping a sensitive balance between Aboriginal cultural heritage and custodianship, colonial heritage, and industrial heritage.



IGNITE

Place activation focuses on improving the experience of streetscapes. Igniting activity in the streets will create incentives for people to explore main street shops and side streets. The aim is to create a place experience in the activation areas that people will visit, enjoy, and then visit again – bringing in locals, regional visitors, and those from further afield.

The best incentive to bring activity to the streets is ease of pedestrian experience: as simple as making sure people can walk from one place to another in a town or village, including crossing the road. A better walking experience can be improved by greening and shading, green infrastructure and tree canopy. This gives people something to look at as they walk through a place, gives them a reason to stop, and provides shade against heat.



LINK

Both locals and visitors need to be able to access each centre, know what to find and where, and how to get around. The aim of making centres more accessible is to encourage visitors to walk from one place to another.

Connectivity can be improved with better signalling and wayfinding – especially important for visitors so they have prompts for where to go next. Connectivity between places as part of a tourist offering is already happening – Tourist Drive 33 via Wollombi and the Hunter Valley Retro Trail between Branxton and Greta are two good examples.

SHOWCASE

Cessnock has a rich history and many heritage buildings from European settlement in its town Centres. Turn of the Century architecture characterises the streetscapes, exemplified in the local pubs. Local architecture is showcased through Kurri Kurri's Nostalgia Festival. Residents and businesses have long connections to place, with generational ties. This is something distinctive to the area and something to be celebrated.

The region has a rich Aboriginal history and a strong Indigenous cultural identity. Aboriginal cultural heritage is diverse and includes places, art, artefacts, burials, grinding grooves, potential archaeological deposits, scarred trees, stone arrangements, and ceremonial locations. The regions Aboriginal Cultural Heritage can be showcased in the town centres in consultation with the local Aboriginal people and groups.

The culture and arts in Cessnock's centres and villages is immediately apparent: from Wollombi's galleries and bespoke main street in the south, to Kurri Kurri's Town of Murals in the west. The Cessnock Performing Arts Centre is one of the largest in the Greater Newcastle region and is home to a variety of events, performers and shows.

Temporary art makes streetscapes interesting and invites curiosity. Walls and shopfronts can be canvases and temporary art in shop windows can also create interest and could be linked to festival or event themes.

JOB CREATION OPPORTUNITIES

#	Opportunity Description	Cost	Impact
10.1	Develop a local character statement for each town to inform place activation and development.	\$\$	Moderate
10.2	Develop heritage colour and material palette options for buildings along the main street which integrates with the street furniture and signage strategy.	\$\$	Low
10.3	Bring together events into a curated calendar, developing themes, places of interest and event destinations.	\$\$\$	Medium
10.4	Identify and trial opportunities in streetscape for pop-up shops and other tactical urbanism.	\$\$\$	Low
10.5	Install main street automated colour lighting to increase nightlife, movement and economic activity.	\$\$\$	Medium
10.6	Identify and trial opportunities for introducing temporary art into streetscapes and shopfronts.	\$\$\$	Low
10.7	Investigate incentives such as exemptions (e.g. from rates) or grants as well as appropriate planning controls as a means to either reduce the cost of maintenance or to encourage a higher standard of building presentation.	\$\$	High
10.8	Improve the visual amenity of public domains and commercial centres by implementing masterplans in Cessnock, Kurri Kurri, Branxton and other strategic locations.	\$\$\$\$	High
10.9	Explore opportunities to utilise smart city technology in main centres such as free Wi-Fi, e-bike charging, movement tracking, way finding assistance, smart lighting and other technologies.	\$\$\$\$	Moderate
10.10	Utilise street pole banners in activation areas to promote upcoming activity, events, landmarks to community and visitors.	\$	Low
10.11	Invest in the growth of Cessnock's local arts scene by funding new artworks annually.	\$\$	Low
10.12	Develop an incentive program that encourages and assists community led place-making.	\$\$\$	Moderate
10.13	Identify and implement events within the CBD that reactivate the centre at night and day e.g. both buskers, evening street markets, weekend food markets, concerts, swap markets, street fairs and art events.	\$\$\$	Medium
10.14	Work with the Hunter Joint Organisation to develop an event approval process that is standardised across the Greater Newcastle and Hunter Valley region.	\$\$\$	High
10.15	Collaborate with Hunter Water to beautify and naturalise Cessnock CBD drainage channels so they are transformed into a visual and social asset for the community.	\$\$\$\$	High

ECONOMIC PRIORITY 11

Build a strong, positive profile for the Cessnock LGA

The Cessnock LGA is located on regional transport routes, has a population of 6 million people within a two hour drive, contains two of the 13 Hunter Valley hospitals, has two TAFE campuses and is home to Hunter Valley Wine Country which receives 1.1 million visitors each year¹³.

Positively promoting Cessnock LGA as a place to live, play and invest is imperative to attracting investment ahead of surrounding regions. Improvements in the presentation of the LGA coupled with a range of marketing and promotional initiatives will assist in re-positioning the LGA and raising awareness of its strengths and attributes.

INVESTMENT ATTRACTION BRAND

Investment attraction requires a consistent brand and a clear understanding of the economic advantages the Cessnock LGA has in comparison to neighbouring areas.

With the resources the Cessnock LGA has available, we cannot compete with larger regions with regard to investment attraction. For this reason, a targeted and focused investment attraction approach is required.

Greater Cessnock has business diversity within a small geographical area and a lifestyle offering that has enjoyed above average population growth over the last 5 years. An Investment Attraction Brand for Greater Cessnock must highlight individual township strengths but at the same time make it clear to the investor that each town is part of a wider business community and support network.

The Greater Cessnock Primary Logo provides the link between the wider area and the townships within the Hunter Valley. Each line represents a different township within the area. They can be used together as per the Primary Logo, or individually when representing a specific township. The lines represent the mountains of the region, and how each township is unique, but the combination of the townships leverage each others' strengths.

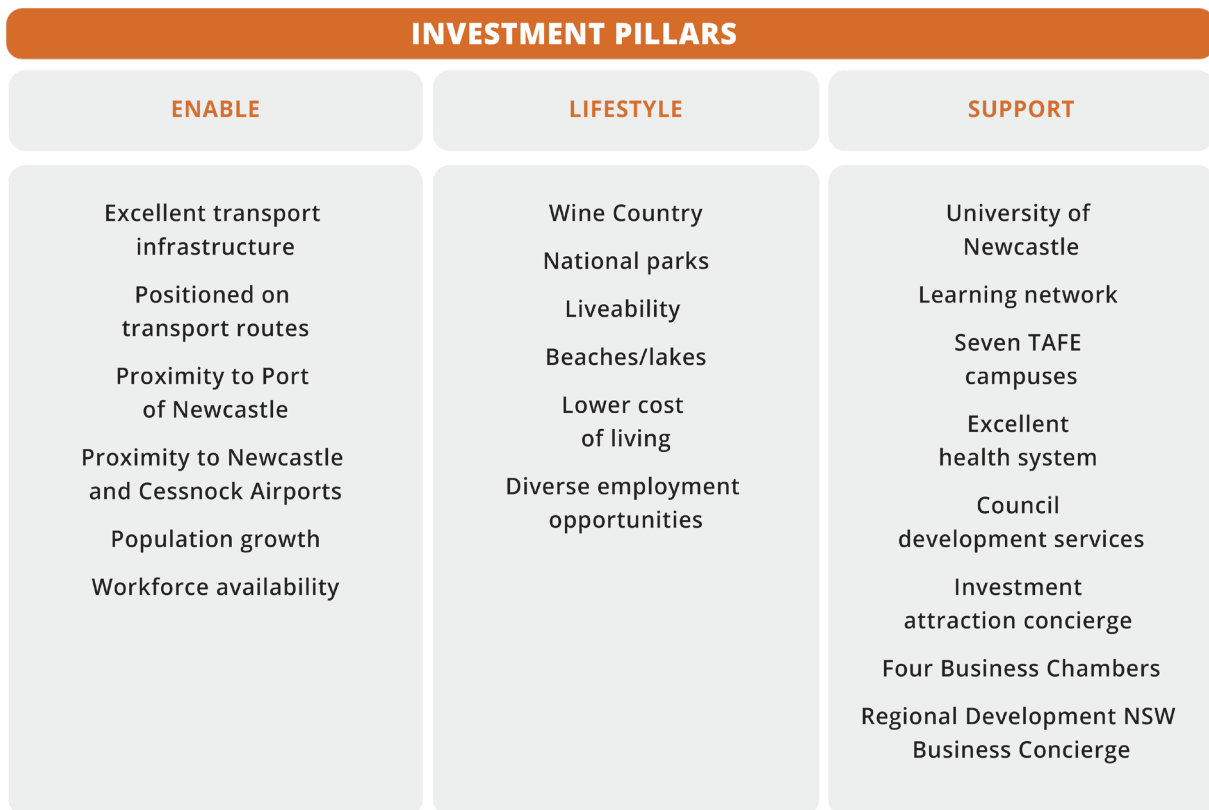


¹³ Tourism Research Australia – 2018 Tourism Demographics

INVESTMENT ATTRACTION STRATEGY

The aim of the investment attraction strategy is to attract high value and sustainable jobs to the Cessnock local government area. To achieve this aim, investment attraction will be based on three pillars - Enable, Lifestyle, Support.

Economic data and regional competitive advantages show that the industries with the greatest potential to create high value jobs within the Cessnock LGA are Manufacturing, Health Care and Associated Industries, Agriculture, and Aerospace and Aeronautical Industries.



KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND ADVANTAGES

Investing attraction opportunities and advantages within Greater Cessnock are:

Key Opportunities - Cessnock City

- Just a step away from Wine Country which attracts 454,000 overnight visitors each year.
- 65 hectares of existing B3 Commercial Core and B4 Mixed Use zoned land.
- Located 5 minutes from Cessnock Airport.
- Has a surrounding population of 28,965 people.
- 20 hectares of greenfield B7 Business Park zoned land.
- 10 hectares of greenfield Aviation zoned land that will benefit from the \$8.8 million airport upgrade.
- 13 hectares of IN2 Light Industrial and 10 hectares of IN3 Heavy Industrial zoned land.
- An annual economic output of \$1.6 billion.



Key Opportunities - Kurri Kurri

- Established industrial recycling cluster and Ecology Park.
- 64 hectares of IN3 Heavy industrial zoned land - greenfield and brownfield sites available.
- Strategically located within the heart the of the Hunter Valley, adjacent to the M15 Hunter Expressway and has a growing population of 21,034 people.
- 216 hectares of IN2 Light Industrial zoned land at Black Hill.
- Potential redevelopment of the former Hydro Aluminium Smelter into 329 hectares of Industrial, Business and Residential zoned land.
- New urban release areas of Cliftleigh and Heddon Greta



Key Opportunities - Branxton & Greta

- Create a business along the Branxton to Greta retro trail.
- Access the Upper and Lower Hunter Valley via the M15 Hunter Expressway.
- 100+ hectares of greenfield B4 Mixed Use zoned land.
- \$110 million in annual construction activity.
- 600+ jobs in construction, accommodation & food services, education & training and retail trade.
- New urban release areas at Huntlee and Greta (7,500+ new homes).



Key Opportunities - Wine Country

- Create your own history in Hunter Valley Wine Country.
- Wine Country has an annual economic output of \$878 million.
- An established concert, conference and business event destination.
- 669 hectares of tourism zoned land allowing entertainment, food, drink, agriculture, recreation, tourism and functions etc.
- Hunter Valley visitor expenditure has grown by an average of 6% over the last 5 years.
- 2,687 jobs in accommodation, food, manufacturing, agriculture and other industries.
- Home to some of the oldest vine stock in the world, with vineyards dating back to 1860.
- Wine Country receives 1.1million visitors each year (day and overnight).



Key Opportunities - Wollombi

- Join the 306 businesses making Wollombi Valley their home.
- High speed satellite internet makes working from Wollombi Valley a viable office location.
- Wollombi Valley is an established tourist destination for the Sydney drive market.
- 1 hour and 50 minutes from Sydney CBD and 1 hour and 20 minutes from Castle Hill.
- Wollombi Valley and the Hunter Valley have strong tourism and organic food brand awareness.
- A secondary income can be achieved from agriculture, luxury accommodation, events and adventure/nature activities.



JOB CREATION OPPORTUNITIES

#	Opportunity Description	Cost	Impact
11.1	Develop an investment attraction brand and marketing strategy to boost the profile of Cessnock LGA locally, regionally and beyond.	\$	Moderate
11.2	Develop and maintain an investment attraction prospectus that will promote greater Cessnock economic opportunities.	\$	Moderate
11.3	Establish an image and film gallery that encourages the use of quality content that are consistent with the positioning and branding of the LGA.	\$	Low
11.4	Implement the public domain and CBD masterplans.	\$\$\$\$\$	High
11.5	Implement the Wine Country Sign Strategy.	\$\$\$\$\$	Moderate
11.6	Implement the Cessnock Sign Strategy.	\$\$\$\$\$	Moderate
11.7	Collaborate with Destination NSW and Destination Sydney Surrounds North to promote Cessnock LGA based tourism products.	\$\$	Moderate
11.8	Deliver investment attraction marketing consistent with the investment attraction brand and strategy.	\$\$	Medium
11.9	Protect natural assets and scenic landscapes of the LGA through planning controls and policies.	\$\$	High
11.10	Optimise the presentation of the main travel routes into and LGA.	\$\$\$\$\$	Moderate
11.11	Work with the National Parks & Wildlife Service and the Forestry Corporation of NSW to preserve significant biodiversity and habitat value within the LGA.	\$\$	Low



INNOVATION



ECONOMIC PRIORITIES

12. ENCOURAGE & SUPPORT ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITY

13. CREATE VALUE FROM WASTE

14. CREATE VALUE FROM BIODIVERSITY & GREEN INITIATIVES

15. GROW THE CREATIVE INDUSTRY SECTOR

16. HARNESS THE DIGITAL ECONOMY

ECONOMIC PRIORITY 12

Encourage & support entrepreneurial activity

Entrepreneurs ‘think outside the box’. They are creative, innovative and forward thinking, contributing to society by finding innovative solutions to practical, financial and social issues. Entrepreneurs can change the way we live and work. Entrepreneurial ventures can generate new wealth, with new and/or improved products, services and technologies creating new business opportunities and new markets, stimulate supply-chain businesses and create employment. Entrepreneurship can also help businesses ‘break the glass ceiling’ enabling them to move away from obsolete systems and technologies.

Fresh thinking, new ideas and innovative solutions to problem solving will assist businesses & communities to thrive.

Research has shown that regions with a high level of entrepreneurship deliver higher levels of output and productivity, than those lacking entrepreneurship.

Council aims to encourage a strong entrepreneurial culture that welcomes new ideas, and where the knowledge, resources and skills are available to enable potential entrepreneurs to identify and pursue business opportunities.

Within the Hunter Region, there are a range of programs to assist entrepreneurs realise their ideas. In Cessnock, St Philips Christian College is working with local businesses to deliver the Young Entrepreneur Scheme which aims to assist students with ideas and/or skill sets that result in thriving businesses.

JOB CREATION OPPORTUNITIES

#	Opportunity Description	Cost	Impact
12.1	Promote regional, State and National entrepreneur support and mentoring programs (e.g. Hunter Futurepreneurs program, the Australian Governments Entrepreneur Program) to local business associations and businesses.	\$	Low
12.2	Organise an annual innovation / entrepreneurship expo, showcase local entrepreneurs, provide introductions to program providers and provide a ‘shark tank’ style opportunity for residents and businesses to pitch ideas.	\$\$	Low
12.3	Assess the potential to host ‘hackathons’ to address challenges facing the local community and/or local industries and businesses.	\$\$	Low
12.4	Formulate a ‘hobby to micro-business’ program to encourage local residents to generate revenue from their hobbies.	\$\$	Low
12.5	Support the St Philip’s Christian College Youth Entrepreneur Scheme and explore opportunities to introduce similar initiatives in other high schools and/or through the Cessnock Youth Centre and Outreach Services.	\$	Low
12.6	Assess opportunities for introducing traineeships and/or sponsorship for young entrepreneurs.	\$	Low
12.7	Recognise entrepreneurship in the Cessnock business awards.	\$	Low
12.8	Support the Hunter Region Business HUB in providing a facility and business environment that reduces risk and provides support for start-up businesses and entrepreneurs.	\$\$	Moderate

ECONOMIC PRIORITY 13

Create value from waste (circular economy)

Each year, 90 billion tonnes of primary materials are extracted and used globally, with only 9 per cent recycled (United Nations Environment Programme, 2019). While this is unsustainable, the nature of the mainstream 'make-take-dispose' consumer model also has significant detrimental impacts on human health, climate change and the environment. A 'circular economy' has been identified as a major (up to \$4.5 trillion: World Business Council for Sustainable Development) commercial opportunity and could support the development of new industries and jobs, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing efficient use of natural resources (including energy, water and materials)¹⁴.

The principles of the circular economy are to keep resources in use for as long as possible, create maximum value from them, then recovering and recreating products and materials at the end of their useful life. Material and energy loops should be circular or closed where possible so that valuable materials and products are retained within the economic system.

Within a circular economy, materials and waste streams are not destroyed, but are used to make new products that have an economic value. This involves 'circular' product lifecycles through greater up cycling, recycling and re-use. The objective of a circular economy is to create a resource-efficient and sustainable economy that will provide long-term employment, healthy environments and improved outcomes for our community.

Circular economy sectors could include:

- Renewable and clean energy
- Water and waste water reduction
- Re-use and recycling
- Sustainable agriculture
- Environmental remediation and management
- Biotechnology research and innovation

Agriculture, aquaculture, forestry, water and renewable energy are non-traditional inputs into the circular economy, but have potential to play a fundamental role in reducing waste and finding value from discarded organic products. Creating value from organic materials is often referred to as the bio-economy.

The circular economy can use renewable biological resources from land and sea, including the use of materials wasted in a linear economy to make value added products, such as food, feed, building materials, packaging, nutrients, vitamins and supplements and energy.

Kurri Kurri is home to the Hunter Ecology Park that includes a growing cluster of waste and recycling industries. Existing businesses include Central Waste Station who is a leader in resource recovery in the Hunter and Central Coast Regions, Australian Native Landscapes is Australia's largest compost manufacturer and Weston Aluminium is a services company that provides innovative recycling solutions to the aluminium and steel industries as well as pharmaceutical waste processing.

The Hunter Ecology Park has a vision to double in size over the next decade.

¹⁴ <https://www.csiro.au/en/Research/Environment/Circular-Economy>

JOB CREATION OPPORTUNITIES

#	Opportunity Description	Cost	Impact
13.1	Use a common language when discussing the Circular Economy and Bio-economy.	\$	Low
13.2	Collaborate with government and industry to create a detailed regional agricultural bio-resource map.	\$\$	Moderate
13.3	Investigate joining the CSIRO ASPIRE program to match waste streams with businesses that can reuse or repurpose products.	\$	Moderate
13.4	Collaborate with Industry and Newcastle University in developing innovative ways to reduce and obtain value from waste.	\$\$	Medium
13.5	Work collaboratively with the Hunter Joint Organisation of Councils to undertake research and development to identify ways to convert surplus materials into valuable products.	\$	Moderate
13.6	Investigate the use of regenerative farm practices within the Cessnock LGA.	\$	Low
13.7	Work with industry to develop processes that can support the transition to domestic recycling of lithium-ion batteries (If recycled, 95 per cent of components can be turned into new batteries or used in other industries).	\$\$\$	Medium
13.8	Collaborate with industry and Hunter local governments to develop a viable recycling strategic policy position to ensure the community's recycling expectations are met.	\$\$	Moderate



ECONOMIC PRIORITY 14

Create value from biodiversity and ‘green initiatives’

The Cessnock Local Government Area (LGA) is rich in biodiversity, including a number of threatened woodland birds such as the Regent Honeyeater, Swift Parrot, Brown Treecreeper, Grey-crowned Babbler, and the Turquoise Parrot.

The flat terrain around the Cessnock township contains some of the largest remaining remnants of valley-floor vegetation in the Hunter Valley. National parks, state forests and environmental zones cover 40% of the Cessnock LGA land area (78,769 hectares). The national parks include Werakata, Wollombi, Yengo, Sugarloaf and the Watagans.

Yengo National Park forms part of the listing for the UNESCO Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. The listing was made in recognition of the extraordinary natural values that the area contains, including unique plants and animals and associated communities.

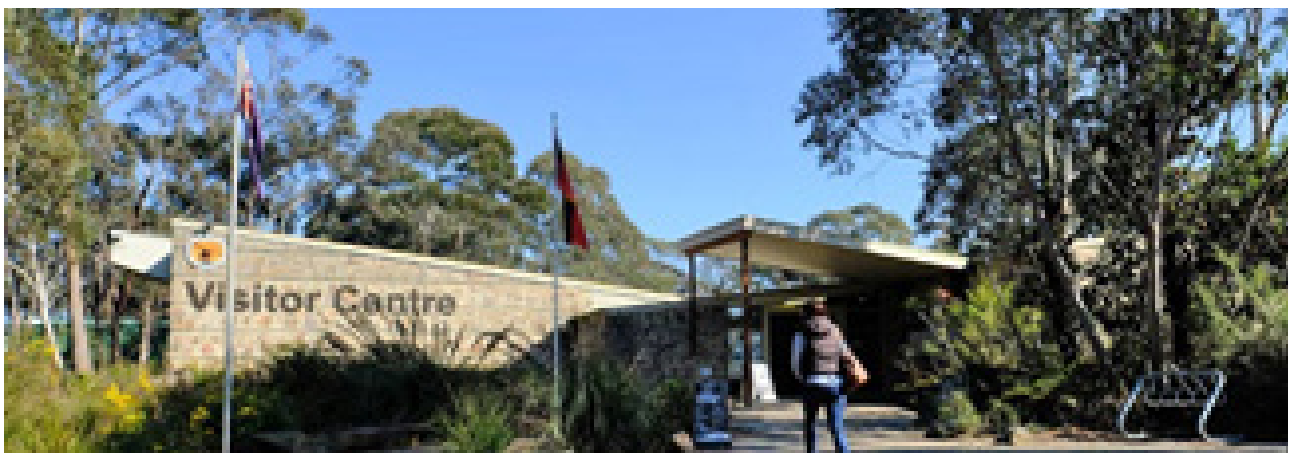
Due to the type and size of the natural environment within the Cessnock LGA an opportunity exists to establish a local outdoor, adventure and nature based tourism sector. This new sector should be based around a key attraction, with additional information provided to promote satellite attractions within the region.

Examples of successful outdoor adventure businesses are:

- Scenic World, Blue Mountains,
- National Arboretum, Canberra, and
- Skyline, Queenstown, New Zealand,
- Blue Mountains Heritage Centre.
- The Redwood Forest, Rotorua,
New Zealand,

BLUE MOUNTAINS HERITAGE CENTRE

The Heritage Centre hosts the permanent ‘Outside In’ exhibition where you can learn about local Indigenous culture, plants and animals and the fantastic walking tracks around the stunning Grose Valley. There is also a gallery and theatre for hire and a unique virtual reality experience.



THE REDWOODS FOREST, ROTORUA NEW ZEALAND

The Redwoods are well known for the network of superb mountain biking, walking and horse riding tracks and the magnificent stand of Californian Coast Redwoods.

The Redwoods economic activities include:

- Visitor gift shop,
- An open air function space covered by shade sails,
- Photography and filming,
- Horse riding treks,
- Bike hire, e-bikes hire and bike tours,
- Rope, climbing and flying fox activities,
- Guided walking tours, and
- Mountain bike coaching.



An outdoor adventure centre based within the Cessnock LGA that leverages the 78,769 hectares of National parks and native vegetation could create income from the following activities:

- Gift shop,
- Café,
- Function space,
- Photography and filming,
- Horse riding treks,
- Bike hire, e-bike hire and bike tours,
- Rope, climbing and flying fox activities,
- Guided walking tours,
- Bird watching tours,
- Native tree sales,
- Bush tucker experiences,
- Bee keeping and honey manufacture,
- Weed management,
- Feral animal control,
- Sponsorship and advertising, and
- Mountain bike coaching.

Biodiversity stewardship agreements and NSW Nature Conservation Trust conservation agreements are used to conserve biodiversity in-perpetuity by registering the deed of agreement on the land title. In return owners are compensated financially for the purpose of improving the biodiversity value of the land covered by the agreement. A reduction in rates may also be possible for land covered by a biodiversity stewardship agreement.

Depending on the biodiversity value of the land, income per year per hectare varies greatly. Landholders with funded agreements are typically being paid between \$21 and \$423 per hectare per annum to manage these conservation areas. Some agreements in Port Macquarie are receiving as much as \$1,182 per hectare per annum¹⁵.

Protecting 10,000 hectares of land with biodiversity stewardship agreements could result in an annual income of \$4.2 million, creating 10 jobs in agriculture/forestry and a further 6 jobs through the supply chain and consumption¹⁶.

JOB CREATION OPPORTUNITIES

#	Opportunity Description	Cost	Impact
14.1	Map significant areas of biodiversity within the Cessnock LGA.	\$	Low
14.2	Inform the community about their biodiversity obligations, share information regarding biodiversity stewardship agreements and communicate permissible economic opportunities within each of the rural and environmental zones.	\$	Low
14.3	Determine the economic feasibility of developing biodiversity offset agreements within the Cessnock LGA.	\$\$	Moderate
14.4	Investigate the viability of establishing an outdoor adventure centre for the purpose of facilitating nature based tourism, cultural tourism, heritage tourism and other complementary activities.	\$\$	Moderate
14.5	Review the permissible uses within the environmental and rural land use zones to ensure economic activities associated with nature based tourism are included.	\$	Moderate
14.6	Assist and encourage indigenous groups and tourism businesses to develop bush tucker and cultural experiences within the Cessnock LGA.	\$	Moderate
14.7	Collaborate with government and industry to establish an outdoor adventure centre within the Cessnock LGA.	\$\$\$\$	High
14.8	Fund a Biodiversity Officer to support biodiversity stewardship agreements, biodiversity management and other nature based economic activities.	\$\$\$	Moderate

¹⁵Biodiversity Conservation Trust www.bct.nsw.gov.au

¹⁶REMPPLAN

ECONOMIC PRIORITY 15

Grow the creative industry sector

The Cessnock LGA recognises and embraces creative industries as fundamental to liveability and future growth. Our cultural heritage, artistic practice and creativity are intrinsically valuable and integral to our identity, wellbeing and lifestyle.

Creative industries are a growing part of our economy, generating and supporting jobs and investment. Broadly this sector includes heritage and cultural activities, design, media and innovative technology. While definitions vary, the sector includes activities that produce, promote and/or distribute content derived from creative, cultural and/or heritage origins¹⁷.

Creative businesses operate where the marketplace and creativity intersect, drawing on the creative skills and talents of our workforce and broader community to drive new ideas and change. Creativity is the key to innovation; driving increases in productivity, sustainability and prosperity, as well assisting industries and businesses to adapt to future challenges.

Council will facilitate, support and advocate for our creative industries and endeavour to empower our creative community. New creative businesses will also be welcomed and nurtured.

CREATIVE INDUSTRIES				
HERITAGE	THE ARTS	DESIGN	MEDIA	INFORMATION & TECHNOLOGY
Indigenous and European heritage Historic sites and buildings Museums	Performing Arts Visual Arts Literature	Architecture Engineering Industrial Design Fashion Design Graphic Design Advertising and Marketing	Publishing Radio Television Film Digital	Software Hardware Games Robotics Artificial Intelligence

¹⁷Adapted from the UNESCO definition of cultural industries.

JOB CREATION OPPORTUNITIES

#	Opportunity Description	Cost	Impact
15.1	Work with traditional owners to better understand our history and culture and formulate opportunities for cultural and creative expression.	\$\$	Low
15.2	Embed a creative approach in Council's policies, procedures, plans and programs.	\$	Moderate
15.3	Incorporate creative elements into place-making and infrastructure projects.	\$	Low
15.4	Apply for funding to upgrade and expand cultural facilities, services and infrastructure.	\$	High
15.5	Facilitate opportunities for the creative community to meet, work together and present in public, private and virtual spaces.	\$\$	Low
15.6	Identify and explore opportunities to grow audiences and markets for visual and performing arts, events and other creative enterprises.	\$\$	Moderate
15.7	Support and showcase innovative and entrepreneurial creative businesses and activities.	\$\$	Moderate
15.8	Leverage opportunities afforded by regional, State and National programs to grow the creative industries sector.	\$	Low
15.9	Identify creative ambassadors willing to promote industry opportunities.	\$\$	Low



ECONOMIC PRIORITY 16

Harness the digital economy

The digital space is evolving rapidly and changing the way we live, work and do business. For businesses, these technologies offer opportunities to develop new products, access new markets, participate in E-commerce, work efficiently and profitably, understand and target customers and deliver safer working environments. Technology enables businesses to compete globally. It also reduces business start-up costs and allows people and businesses to work remotely, from locations of their choice. This provides significant opportunities for the Cessnock local government area (LGA), both in terms of improving the output of existing businesses and attracting new businesses.

“Businesses that are digitally engaged grow faster, employ on average two more people & earn more revenue per employee.”

- Deloitte Access Economics

Accompanying changing technology is a change in the skills required. Traditional jobs are disappearing and new jobs emerging. Businesses are increasingly looking for staff with a combination of transferable digital skills, strong communication skills, innovative thinking and creative problem-solving skills. Nearly all jobs now require basic digital skills.

The challenge for Cessnock LGA is to address the cohort of residents with no or poor access to the internet and/or who lack the education and skills to use this technology. Exclusion from the digital world is exacerbating other forms of social exclusion including isolation, unemployment, low education, inability to access services and poverty. Bridging the digital divide is critical to growing our workforce and improving quality of life.

Also critical is having reliable and fit-for purpose mobile, fixed telephone, broadband services and location-based (GPS) technologies. Location-based technologies are needed to support location-based searches for businesses, goods and services as well as emerging applications such as automated vehicles, drones, sensors and probes, which are supporting innovation in the agricultural, mining, construction, transport and logistic sectors.

Digital infrastructure in parts of the Cessnock LGA is poor, with mobile blackspots, lack of NBN access and/or reliable high-speed internet. Our rural areas, including Hunter Valley Wine Country, are reliant on satellite and mobile-based internet solutions which are often costly, ineffective and not competitive with fixed broad-band services. During major events and other peak visitation periods, Wine Country businesses are often not able to take EFTPOS transactions due to the limited capacity of the mobile network.

JOB CREATION OPPORTUNITIES

#	Opportunity Description	Cost	Impact
16.1	Continue to encourage local businesses to harness the digital economy and upskill their workforce.	\$	Low
16.2	Continue to advocate for improvements in digital infrastructure, remove mobile blackspots and increase the capacity of the mobile network and provide fast, reliable and affordable broadband services. Priorities include Wine Country, Wollombi and Laguna mobile service upgrades and improved coverage.	\$	Medium
16.3	Continue to facilitate improvements in digital literacy by providing access to computers and WiFi and offer digital training activities for local residents through the LGA's libraries and other outlets.	\$\$\$	Moderate
16.4	Work with TAFE, schools and the business community to place IT students with local businesses to provide work-place experience and transfer of knowledge and skills.	\$	Low
16.5	Continue to encourage and assist local businesses to register on Council's Vendor Panel Marketplace, and other vendor panels for listing and inclusion on relevant on-line directories.	\$	Medium
16.6	Assist local businesses to access grant funding and programs for technology development and upgrades, training and skills development.	\$\$	Moderate
16.7	Use digital technology (e.g. virtual reality) to showcase local businesses to students, investors and visitors.	\$\$\$	Moderate



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