2018-2022

Abercrombie Regional Economic Development Strategy

VISION

To be an innovative and adaptable economic community that is able to leverage the region's key strengths in agriculture, manufacturing and transport, while supporting and growing the tourism sector for long-term economic sustainability

BATHURST REGIONAL COUNCIL

OBERON COUNCIL

The Balmoral Group
Australia

Preface

The NSW Government has worked with local councils and their communities to develop 37 Regional Economic Development Strategies across regional NSW. Each strategy is designed around one or more local government areas that form a functional economic region as defined by economic data and community input.

While the strategies have been developed using a consistent approach, each is a product of detailed data analysis and local community consultation to ensure ownership through a 'bottom-up' process: it sets out a vision for the region, as well as the strategies and early-stage actions required to achieve the vision.

Regional Economic Development Strategies articulate a framework for identifying actions that are crucial to achieving the regional vision. The projects listed in this strategy should be viewed as example projects that have emerged from the initial application of the framework. Adoption of these projects would be subject to further evaluative processes.

The power of a strategy is its ability to be used on an ongoing basis to identify additional high-value projects over time. By complementing existing funding processes, the strategies present new opportunities to strengthen and increase investment in regional development across NSW.

Regional Economic Development Strategies are viewed as the first stage in a process that will assist those with an interest in the economic development of a region, particularly councils, communities and local businesses, in planning a region's future economic activities. These strategies provide a vehicle for engaging the community in a 'conversation' about regional needs and priorities, assist in bringing together key stakeholders and mobilising resources, and in so doing, can facilitate faster access to dedicated NSW Government funding, such as the Growing Local Economies Fund, as well as helping to capitalise on other economic opportunities.

The Abercrombie Regional Economic Development Strategy was prepared by Balmoral Group Australia in collaboration with the Bathurst Regional and Oberon councils, key stakeholders, the broader regional community and the NSW Government's Centre for Economic and Regional Development (CERD).

It is presented in two documents: the *Abercrombie Regional Economic Development Strategy 2018–2022* (this document), which allows the reader to quickly and easily determine key content, and the accompanying *Abercrombie Economic Development Strategy 2018–2022: Supporting Analysis,* which details the methodology, evidence and development process.

For further information about the Regional Economic Development Strategies program please contact the CERD on 02 6391 3025 or CERD@dpc.nsw.gov.au.

Introduction

The Abercrombie Regional Economic Development Strategy 2018-2022 (the Strategy) sets out a long-term economic vision and associated core strategies for the functional economic region (the Region) comprising the Bathurst Regional and Oberon Local Government Areas (LGAs). [1]

The Strategy was developed to identify key economic opportunities that can capitalise on the endowments and industry specialisations unique to the Abercrombie Region (Abercrombie Region). Economic research suggests that regions are becoming increasingly specialised in the key industries[1] that drive their growth, and their relative strengths (endowments) play a key role in determining those specialisations.[2]

The Strategy is based on industry specialisations and opportunities that leverage the Region's key endowments — including its productive agricultural land, manufacturing base, proximity to Sydney and inland NSW, strategic transport infrastructure, a vibrant community and heritage assets — to guide investment and other actions over the period 2018 to 2022.

The Abercrombie Region has a diverse economy, with Health Care and Social Assistance, Education and Training, Retail Trade and Manufacturing as the largest industries in terms of employment. The principal health and education facilities are located in Bathurst city, and both Bathurst and Oberon have substantial manufacturing and tourism assets. The Region is a centre for manufacturing, capitalising on its strong natural resources to produce market-ready timber and food products.

Six core strategies have been identified to capture the opportunities, manage risks and deliver on the Vision for the Region:

INCREASE
Value-adding in agricultural products through innovation

CAPITALISE
on Existing Strengths in Manufacturing

OPTIMISE
Competitiveness in Agriculture, Forestry and Manufacturing through Transportation and Intermodal Networks

OPTIMISE
Growth in the Development of Regional Infrastructure

PROVIDE
Opportunities for Attracting and Retaining Entrepreneurs and Skilled Professionals

DEVELOP
the Region's Brand and Diversify Local Tourism Offerings

[1] For the purposes of regional development, it is useful to classify industries as:
– Engines — industries that bring money into the region (e.g. agriculture) and drive the local economy
– Enabling — industries that support the engines (e.g. veterinary services to agriculture)
– Population-serving — industries that support the local population (e.g. retail).
Typically, the fortunes of the population-serving industries depend on the success of the engines; therefore it is useful to focus on the engine sectors that drive growth.

[2] Regional Economic Growth Enablers Report (2017), Centre for Economic and Regional Development.

Background

The Abercrombie Region is located in Central West NSW, approximately three hours' drive from Sydney on the intersection of the Mitchell and Mid-Western Highways. The Region covers an area of 7,443 square kilometres, with a population in 2016 of 46,601 (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2016 census). The majority of residents live in the centres of Bathurst and Oberon.

The climate is warm and temperate, with four distinct seasons. Average annual rainfall is 638 mm in Bathurst and 841 mm in Oberon. Average temperatures range from 10 to 27 degrees celsius in summer and -0.4 to 12.2 degrees celsius in winter. Snow falls occasionally in winter in many parts of the Region. The topography varies from the western edge of the Blue Mountains and across the Central Tablelands, and much of the Region is over 1,000 metres above sea level.

The Region contains many waterways, the main one being the Macquarie River which has its headwaters originating near Oberon. The River flows northward through the Region, through the city of Bathurst and continues west to eventually join with the Barwon River. Other waterways traversing the Region include the Abercrombie, Campbells, Duckmaloi, Fish and Turon rivers. Water storages include the Ben Chifley and Oberon Dams. In addition to their contribution to water supply for the Region's residents, these waterways provide a substantial opportunity for increased tourism, including fishing, canoeing, fossicking, camping and sightseeing.

The Region's soils and climate are suited to a wide range of agricultural systems, including livestock grazing, broadacre cropping, fodder making, vegetables and fruit (including grapes), as well as dairy and egg production. The soils

and climate, and location, are also well suited to forestry, with 12,260 hectares in the Bathurst Regional and 52,630 hectares in the Oberon LGAs.

The Region has an extensive history, containing many sites of historic interest. Bathurst commenced as Australia's oldest inland (colonial) settlement, being declared a townsite in 1815, and providing a gateway for exploration and development of many areas in inland NSW. The Region lies within the traditional lands of the Wiradjuri people, the largest Aboriginal group in NSW, and the Daruk and Gundangarra tribes also traversed the eastern and south-eastern parts of the Region. As such, there is an abundance of aboriginal history, culture and contribution in the development of the Abercrombie Region. Together with the discovery of gold in the Region in 1851, and its growth and contribution to food, fibre and timber production in the early years of colonial settlement, provide a tapestry of heritage sites and stories. These are a substantial resource for increased tourism in the Region.

The early contribution to the development of much of inland NSW has provided the Region with a strong base of infrastructure, including major road and rail systems, and health and education facilities. Its history has meant that the Region is a hub for major inland roads, including the Great Western, Mitchell, and Mid-Western highways. The main western railway line traverses

the Region. Bathurst has a large hospital which provides services and support for regional towns, and training for new health professionals. The Region is also renowned for education, with large boarding schools, and a variety of public and private schools. Large campuses of Charles Sturt University and NSW TAFE complete the range of high-quality education resources in the Region.

The Abercrombie Region economy is currently supported by industries in the Education and Training, Health Care and Social Assistance, and Retail Trade sectors, which are the largest employing industries. Employment in Manufacturing has declined since 2006 (Figure 2), matching the general downturn in the sector across most of Australia. Many industries have also become less labour-intensive. Tourism is an important industry for the Region, particularly in the Oberon area. This is revealed in the high employment numbers in the Accommodation and Food Services sector, which has experienced steady growth in recent years. Employment in Agriculture declined during the 'Millennium Drought' (2002-10), but the sector has experienced a recent increase in employment. There is also a strong and growing Retail Trade base, with around 11 percent of the Region's workforce employed in this sector.

Figure 1
Abercrombie Region

Figure 2
Historical Employment in Abercrombie Region
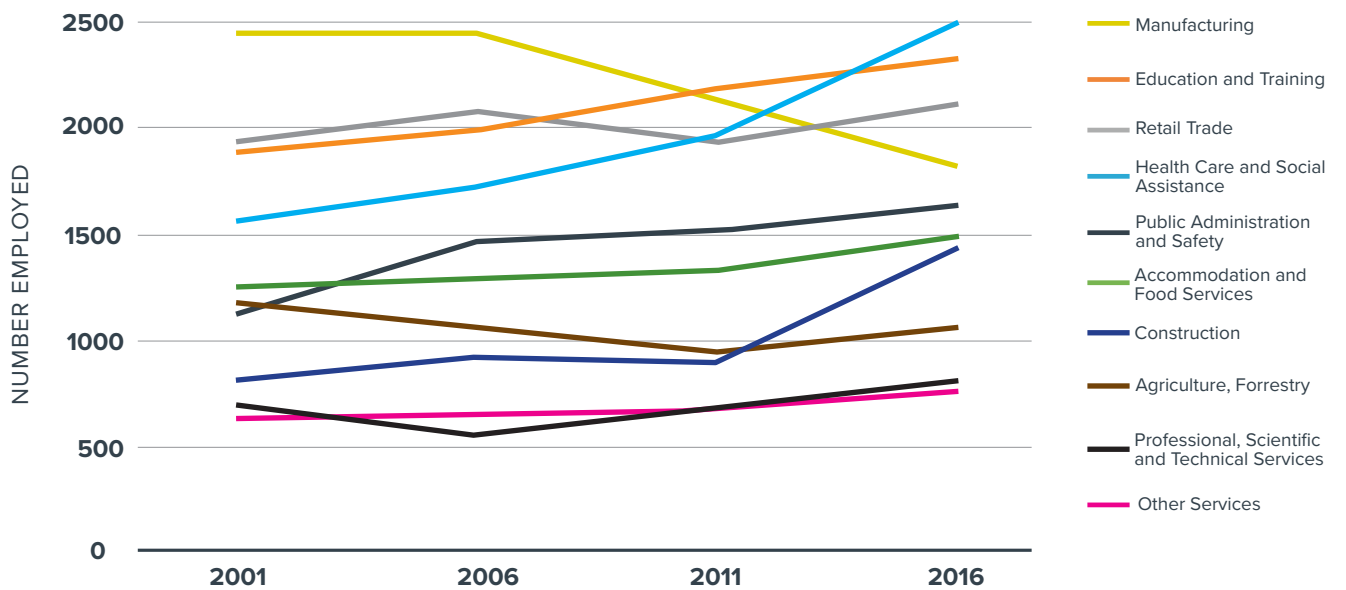
Source: ABS Census data, 2016, 2011, 2006 2001.

Endowments

Endowments are strengths that a regional economy possesses and can capitalise on. Economic principles suggest that endowments play a key role in the economic development of regions.

The Centre for Economic and Regional Development (CERD) in its Regional Economic Growth Enablers Report (2017) found that:

The future of individual regional economies is inexorably linked to their natural endowments and attempts to retain or establish industries without an underpinning endowment are unlikely to succeed.[3]

A region seeking to encourage economic development should concentrate on factors that enable the growth of endowment-based industries. It should build local leadership and institutional capacity and capabilities to facilitate businesses and public agencies so they can capitalise on the opportunities that a region's endowments present. Endowments can lead to opportunities from which commercial and industrial interests may leverage and develop specialisations.

[3] Regional Economic Growth Enablers Report (2017), Centre for Economic and Regional Development.

Natural Endowments

Location

The Abercrombie Region is three hours' drive from Sydney and is well connected by road and rail. Events such as the Bathurst 1000 touring car race help draw visitors from Sydney and its surrounds, and from all over Australia. Improved public transport from Sydney and other regional centres such as Dubbo would encourage more workers and business owners to travel regularly and establish deeper connections between Abercrombie and these large population centres. The area also has popular National Parks, such as the Kanangra-Boyd and Blue Mountains National Parks, which provide special scenic and aesthetic beauty and attract a large number of visitors throughout the year.

Jenolan Caves

The spectacular Jenolan Caves is a major tourist attraction, located two hours (by car) from Sydney, one hour from Bathurst and 30 minutes from Oberon. The Caves attracted 230,000 visitors in 2017 and its associated conservation reserve is one of the eight protected areas that were inscribed in 2000 to form part of the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Greater Blue Mountains Area. The Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust was recently granted $8.5 million in NSW Government funding to upgrade onsite facilities.

Mayfield Garden

The Mayfield Garden is one of the world's largest privately-owned gardens. It is a 65 hectare cool-climate garden that has become another major tourist attraction for the Region. It is specially designed to open year-round for tourism, and also offers a place for seasonal festivals and other events. The Garden attracted 35,000 visitors in 2017, a substantial increase from 16,000 in 2016. The operators have plans to increase its capability to attract visitors further with onsite '4 and 5 star' accommodation.

Pine forests and National Parks

The Oberon area contains a number of NSW State Forests, which supply the raw materials used by the timber processing industry. The area is the base for around 94,000 hectares of pine plantations[4], which provide a large employment and output base for the related manufacturing industry.
Oberon is also surrounded by a number of National Parks. In combination with State Forests, they add to the appeal of the Region as a destination for tourism and recreational activities. Activities include canoeing, fly fishing, scenic trail walks and mushroom picking.

Institutional and Industry Features

Education

The Abercrombie Region is home to a Charles Sturt University (CSU) campus, TAFE Western Bathurst College and 22 primary and seven secondary schools, including four boarding schools. Secondary school enrolments usually exceed 3,000 students per year. The Education industry is an important employer and attracts a young, highly skilled population to the Region. The presence of the University and TAFE provides local industries with opportunities for workforce development and technological innovation.

Tourism

Respondents to the community consultation survey, undertaken as part of the Strategy development process, nominated tourism and related marketing of the Region as the most important strength of the local business environment. The Region's economy relies heavily on tourism with its many offerings, some of which use the natural endowments, such as the Jenolan Caves, State forests and National Parks, and others which are propelled by events, such as Mount Panorama motor racing, Bathurst Winter Festival and Mayfield Garden Winter Festival. Abercrombie tourism strategies are led by the Destination Network Country and Outback products, Bathurst's Destination Management Plan and the Oberon Council Tourism Strategy.

Agriculture

Agriculture has historically been a key industry for the Region's economy, with strengths in livestock, cropping and horticulture. The industry is well-established and provides a strong base for businesses which service the industry. The Oberon area has traditionally produced prime lamb, beef cattle, nut trees and other horticulture. However, recently there has been an emergence of niche agricultural products, including truffle farming and permaculture, along with an emerging growth in vegetable production, tree nurseries, nut tree plantations and bulb farms.
The Bathurst area has predominantly produced sheep (meat and wool), beef cattle and grain crops, and recent growth has predominantly remained with the traditional products of sheep and cattle meat, wool, vegetable production and food product manufacturing. However, some of the niche products listed previously have prospects across the broader Region, as well as other emerging opportunities. For example, hydroponic farming is currently being considered as a future prospect. Opportunities exist to build on the existing mass of the current agricultural industries, based on the Region's productive and extensive land resources, reliable water supply, access to a skilled workforce, availability of road and rail infrastructure and proximity to Sydney and inland NSW.

[4] The Region contains around 65,000 hectares of NSW State forests and has proximity to additional forestry areas in adjacent LGAs.

Manufacturing	Local manufacturing has a legacy of well-established, large-scale timber processing firms, as well as fruit, vegetable and other food product manufacturing companies. There is a diversity of high-level successful manufacturers servicing domestic and global markets, including Simplot, Borg, Devro, Mars Petcare and Carter Holt. The timber processing industry is a key specialised sector, employing more than 650 people in the two largest businesses, Borg and Highland Timber. Wood fibre has underpinned the Region's economic growth, creating opportunities in the timber supply chain for other associated services. Food product manufacturing is important as it is the largest sector in terms of output and exports. Opportunities in this industry capitalise on the Region's local food production including primary processing of broadacre crops and livestock as a current and future prospect. The central location and proximity to Sydney provides potential for growth.

Human Features

Aboriginal history and contribution	The Wiradjuri people inhabited the Region for more than 40,000 years. The interactions between the Wiradjuri and the white explorers and settlers in the early 19th century, particularly the assistance and knowledge provided by many of the tribes, and sadly, some of the conflicts, are important in the historical development of the Region (and inland NSW) . The eastern and south-eastern parts of the Region were also visited by the Darug and Gundungurra tribes, and there is considerable history of the first meetings of the indigenous people and the white settlers. These stories, contributions, and the wealth of indigenous culture, provide opportunities for expanded tourism offerings.
Young and educated population	The Abercrombie Region has a range of tertiary education providers and these provide a substantial contribution to the regional economy in terms of employment, skilled training and business support services. The location of Charles Sturt University (CSU) and TAFE Western campuses in Bathurst has attracted a young population to study. Improved links between these institutions and local businesses could help to better integrate the different sections of the community and retain a larger pool of human capital after students graduate, thus encouraging entrepreneurship and boosting productivity in new and existing industries. Partnerships such as CSU's practical Masters in Engineering Degree and the proposed Australian Centre for Science, Technology and Emerging Industries (ACSTEI) Technology Park will offer valuable opportunities for students.
Strong business community	Many of the survey respondents referred to local networking, word of mouth and strong community support as key regional strengths. This suggests that there are strong links between members of the local business community and residents, facilitating the spread of information and fostering development. The Bathurst Business Chamber and the Oberon Business and Tourism Association are examples of these strong connections.

Physical Infrastructure

Railway and road infrastructure	Bathurst's location on the Mitchell and Mid-Western Highways, and access to the Sydney train network make it a key logistics hub. Oberon's roads provide vital transportation links for regional industry, specifically, timber processing and manufacturing. It is critical that these roads are regularly maintained and improved for these industries to remain competitive and to benefit the regional economy as a whole. In the Oberon area, there are a number of proposals for upgrading infrastructure. These proposals include the Meadows Road Infrastructure upgrade, and upgrades to Shooters Hill Road and Arkstone Road. An upgrade of the Tablelands Way is also considered by local businesses as an important future investment. This would open up the Region to the Canberra markets for tourism and agricultural produce.
Aviation	Bathurst Regional Airport is owned and operated by Bathurst Regional Council. It is currently serviced by Regional Express Airlines (REX), providing improved access to the Region for tourists and businesses. The Airport offers three flights daily to Sydney as well as flights from Bathurst to Parkes (averaging two flights per week). The Aerodrome serves 24,000 customers, with 8,000 landings annually.
Mount Panorama Motor Racing Circuit	The Mount Panorama Motor Racing Circuit hosts the 'Bathurst 1000', which is the largest event on the Australian motorsports calendar and has historically attracted crowds of up to 200,000. The Bathurst Light Car Club also holds events throughout the year. Businesses, such as the National Motor Racing Museum, have capitalised on the Region's role in the history of Australian motorsports by offering supporting experiences for visitors. The impact of the major events held at Mount Panorama was estimated at almost $69 million in 2008–2009, with retail trade and hospitality industries being the highest beneficiaries.[5]

5 Economic Impact of Mount Panorama, Western Research Institute, 2009, available at: https://www.bathurst.nsw.gov.au/images/stories/council/studies/E5_economic_impact_mt_Pan_WRI.pdf

Specialisations

Obtaining an understanding of a region's specialisations[6] and competitive advantages involves identifying those industry sectors that substantially support regional employment and which generate large Gross Regional Product (GRP).

The former can be achieved using Location Quotient (LQ) analysis, while the latter can be achieved through regional Input-Output (I-O) analysis. Both of these have been used to arrive at the findings for the Abercrombie Strategy.

Location Quotient Analysis

Location Quotients measure the employment concentration in industry sectors[7] within a regional economy, compared with the same sectors in NSW. The higher the LQ, the more specialised a region is in that industry relative to NSW. An LQ of 1.25 or greater is considered an indicator of regional competitive advantage in the industry – the industry may be a regional specialisation.

Figure 3 provides an indication of size,

growth and potential specialisation of industries in the Region.

Key points are:

• Relative employment growth is the (per cent) growth in the local (Region's) industry net of the average employment growth for that industry in NSW over the 2011-16 period. i.e. if local Retail employment grew by 16% and Retail employment averaged for all NSW grew by 10%, then the relative employment rate used here is 6% (16% – 10%)

• The horizontal axis (relative employment growth) crosses the vertical axis (LQ) at the LQ value 1.25.Industries above the horizontal axis are more specialised when compared to NSW, and industries below the axis are less specialised

• 'Bubble' size represents the size of the industry in terms of number employed (in 2016)

• Bubble location (within one of the four quadrants), together with colour, highlights industries that: appear to be specialisation industries and have increased employment during the 2011-16 period (blue), industries that may be specialisations but employment has reduced (red); industries that are not specialisations and employment has also reduced over the 2011-16 period (grey); and industries that are not specialisations, but where employment has grown, and which could be 'potentially emerging industries' (green).

Figure 3. Location Quotients and Employment Growth for Industries in the Abercrombie Region
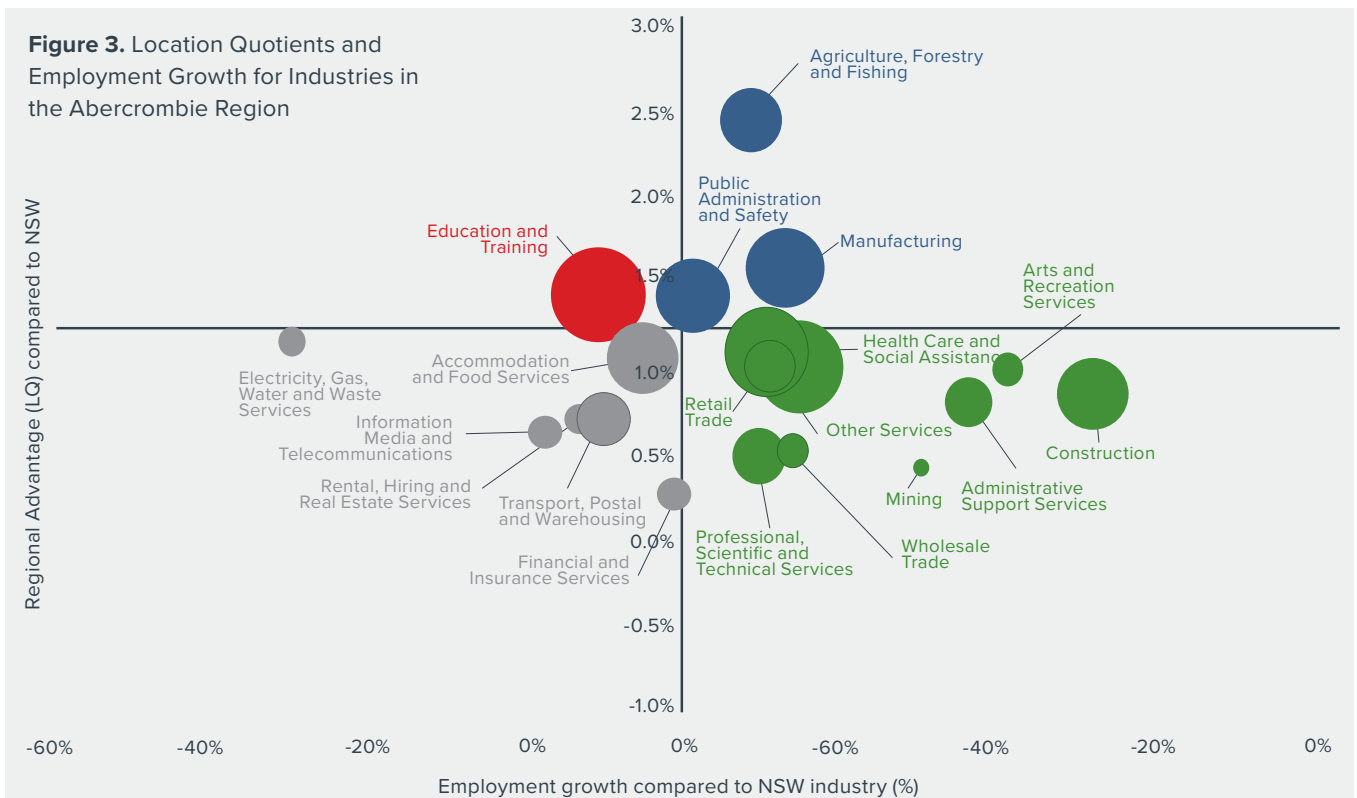
Source: ABS Census 2016 and Sensing Value analysis.

[6] A region's competitive advantage for an industry includes its ability to produce goods and services at a lower cost or differentiate its product from other regions, along with access to external factors which enhance business and operations / minimise risk (Stimson, Stough and Roberts, 2006).

[7] Industry sectors are defined in the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industry Classification (ANZSIC).

Health Care and Social Assistance is the largest industry in the Region (employing 12.8% of the Region's workforce in 2016). Education and Training and Accommodation and Food Services employed 11.9% and 7.6% (respectively) of the Region's workforce in 2016, but employment growth during the 20011-16 period was relatively lower than the NSW average employment growth in each industry. Construction experienced the fastest employment growth during the 2011-16 period (35%). Professional, Scientific and Technical Services and Construction appear to be emerging industries. Manufacturing is a large employer, although employment grew at a slower rate in Abercrombie than it did across NSW during the period 2011 to 2016.

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing

The Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing sector is the Region's strongest specialisation, with an LQ of 2.46 in 2016. Employment in the Agriculture sector grew between 2011 and 2016, driven by Beef Cattle Farming (specialised) and Sheep Farming (specialised), which indicates that these industries remain strong. However, mainstream agriculture – beef, sheep and cropping – is continually adjusting, adopting cost-saving innovations and improving the efficiency of supply chains.

This is also the situation with the Forestry sector. The Region is particularly specialised in Forestry and Logging, which had an LQ of 16.88 in 2016. This sector experienced positive employment growth between 2011 and 2016 (13.6% actual growth, 1.8% above the NSW average for the sector) and provides key inputs for the timber processing industry.

An outcome of industry adjustment is often a reduction in direct labour (such as on-farm and direct employment in logging). However, the adjustment can also result in job growth in the value-add and services industries. As a whole, Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing remains an engine of growth that underpins the Region's economy. With estimated net exports of $116 million in 2015–16, the sector is the second largest contributor to the Region's income (after manufacturing).

Based on the industry's contribution to the Region's economy, and the potential for increased employment in value-adding and related services, the Regional Economic Development Strategy should include actions that will encourage the expansion of value-adding enterprises and activities, and the efficiency of the engine industries.

Manufacturing

Manufacturing has played a key role in the historical development of the Region's economy, and the sector continues to employ 9.3% of the population (in 2016). Wood Product Manufacturing and Food Product Manufacturing are two of the Region's strongest specialisations, with LQs of 8.53 and 2.81, respectively. As with Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing, these industries experienced fluctuations in employment the past two decades. However, simple employment numbers are not the best indicator of industry health in manufacturing, unlike the more labour-intensive sectors of health care and education. Often a move to a smaller, more highly-skilled workforce, with greater automation of production can generate significant productivity gains and increase the number of high-paying jobs. Other, less prominent forms of manufacturing also grew in size over the 2011-16 period, with employment in Primary Metal and Metal Product Manufacturing increasing by 79.9%, primarily due to regional factors. As a whole, the sector accounted for net exports of $287 million in 2015–16. Approximately $224 million of this was in the Food Product Manufacturing and Wood Product Manufacturing sectors, representing significant value-add for agriculture and forestry.

Education

Education, particularly Tertiary Education, is an important specialisation in the Abercrombie economy. In 2016, 862 persons (4.4% of the Region's workforce), worked in Tertiary Education, resulting in an LQ of 2.21. These primarily worked at Charles Sturt University and TAFE Western Bathurst campuses. Bathurst exports these services to domestic and international markets. Preschool and School Education is also an important and growing industry in the Region, with 22 primary and secondary schools employing 1,317 people (6.71% of the workforce). Employment in Preschool and School Education grew 11% during 2011–2016. As a whole, the sector accounted for net exports of $74 million.

Health Care and Social Assistance

Health Care and Social Assistance is not a specialisation industry in the Abercrombie Region. However, it is the Region's largest employer. The industry has grown in recent years and added 542 jobs to the Abercrombie economy over the 2011–2016 period. Residential care services is a particularly strong area of growth. Employment in this sector increased 40.9% between 2011 and 2016 and has more than doubled since 2001. As the population ages there will be a corresponding increase in the demand for aged-care services. The Region is positioned to supply services for the surrounding areas, with existing facilities, access to skilled graduates from Charles Sturt University and Bathurst TAFE, and the Region's accessibility and location (particularly, its proximity to Sydney). As the Region's largest employer, and second largest in terms of GRP total output, the sector accounted for net exports of –$22.4 million in 2015–16, indicating that it is reliant on imported goods and services.

Strategy

The Strategy for the Abercrombie Region builds upon the opportunities presented by its endowments and specialisations while also aiming to address some of the key risks facing the Region.

It is a product of economic analysis and community consultation. There are six elements in the Strategy. These are outlined below in order of relative importance. The order of importance was determined using Bathurst Regional and Oberon councils' priorities, linkages with ongoing infrastructure projects, and the extent to which they are immediately actionable by Council, Bathurst Business Chamber, the Oberon Business and Tourism Association and other relevant institutions.

Each element is accompanied by a set of early actions, which should be interpreted simply as examples derived from the preliminary application of the Strategy framework. It is expected that, over time, other actions capable of contributing to the attainment of the Region's vision will be identified. An action's alignment with the Strategy is the primary strategic consideration. Future proposed actions will be subject to further qualitative and quantitative evaluative processes.

Increase Value-adding in agricultural products through innovation
Capitalising on value-adding factors in the Agriculture industry supports innovation and drives efficiency.

Capitalise on Existing Strengths in Manufacturing
Developing industry clusters and capitalising on opportunities through greater access to foreign markets.

Optimise competitiveness in Agriculture, Forestry and Manufacturing through Transportation and Intermodal Networks
Optimising and advocating for the improvement of transportation and intermodal networks strengthens these core industries.

Optimise Growth in the Development of Regional Infrastructure
Increased development of regional infrastructure acts as a catalyst for a positive business environment.

Provide Opportunities for Attracting and Retaining Entrepreneurs and Skilled Professionals
Facilitating partnerships between local companies and educational providers improves the business environment for skilled professionals.

Develop the Region's Brand and Diversify Local Tourism Offerings
Promoting the Region as an attractive area to visit with a wide range of tourist offerings, increased visitation and greater relocation into the Region.

Increase value-adding in agricultural products through innovation

Value-adding and competitiveness are seen as key strategic growth areas for agriculture in Abercrombie. This will further stimulate growth in the regional economy. Most efficient agricultural industries are engaged in domestic and export-driven sales, much of which supports local employment and the enabling industries' optimisation of value-adding opportunities. This Strategy element can ensure a sustainable and diverse agricultural industry that can take advantage of the changing global landscape.
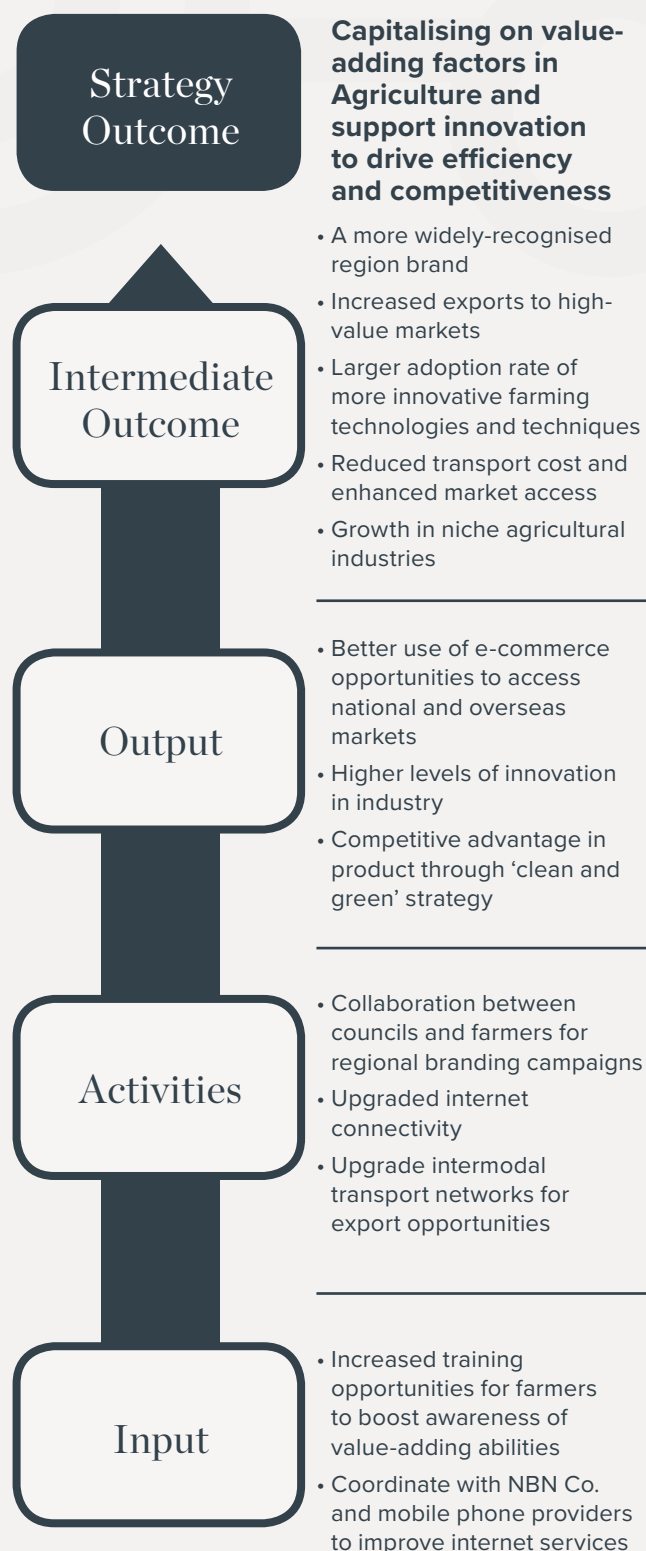
Infrastructure Priorities

The Region's main focus should be the adoption of the 'farming smarter' approach, with the use of biotechnological advancements highlighted in the Central West RDA Value Adding to Agriculture in Central West NSW report.[8] In particular, this opportunity exists in functional foods, protein and animal feed, as well as bioenergy. For functional foods, biotechnology can play a role through the development of agricultural products with better health benefits. In protein and animal feed, the rapid growth in Asian markets has created a priority to scale up sustainable feed innovation to meet consumer demand.

For bioenergy, an opportunity exists to provide future biofuels through agricultural product residues and biomass. Inadequate telecommunications capability is limiting the capacity for farmers to gain from IT-enabled control strategies and e-commerce opportunities. This restricts movement and increases the freight costs of exports. Upgrades to regional telecommunications infrastructure are needed to optimise value-adding opportunities and improve competitiveness.

Organisational Priorities

Although Agribusiness is continually striving to achieve cost efficiencies through digital and technological enhancements, the main demand trend in Asia is for high-quality produce. Therefore, the Region's focus should be on assisting traditional industries to target this growing market and compete on quality and place of origin. The Region can contribute to value-adding through collaboration between local businesses to ensure quality and authenticity is traced and verified. An example is Mayfield Gardens, where they have developed a farm-to-plate supply chain, growing their own meat, fruit and vegetables onsite. Success in these areas can encourage agricultural diversification and expanded product offerings through different innovative goods.

Regional farmers and councils should support campaigns such as Unearth Central West run by Central NSW Tourism, and the 'Value Adding to Agriculture in Central NSW' report from RDA Central West. The adoption and promotion of these campaigns would create further competitive advantage for the Region and build on its strong reputational value among overseas buyers of Australian products.

Strategy Outcome

Intermediate Outcome

Output

Activities

Input

Capitalising on value-adding factors in Agriculture and support innovation to drive efficiency and competitiveness

- A more widely-recognised region brand
- Increased exports to high-value markets
- Larger adoption rate of more innovative farming technologies and techniques
- Reduced transport cost and enhanced market access
- Growth in niche agricultural industries

- Better use of e-commerce opportunities to access national and overseas markets
- Higher levels of innovation in industry
- Competitive advantage in product through 'clean and green' strategy

- Collaboration between councils and farmers for regional branding campaigns
- Upgraded internet connectivity
- Upgrade intermodal transport networks for export opportunities

- Increased training opportunities for farmers to boost awareness of value-adding abilities
- Coordinate with NBN Co. and mobile phone providers to improve internet services

8 http://www.rdacentralwest.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/RDACW-Value-Adding-to-Agricultureweb.pdf

Capitalise on existing strengths in manufacturing

Manufacturing is the largest industry by employment in the Abercrombie Region, yet faces significant challenges from the changing context of local, national and global economics. Demand and competition from emerging economies presents both challenges and opportunities, with demand for higher-value goods and services from export-focused industries. Maintaining, fostering and facilitating export opportunities from the Region will be critical to the success of this strategy.

Infrastructure Priorities

The Abercrombie Region's location and existing transport infrastructure already provides it with a competitive advantage in accessing national and international markets. Stakeholders voiced the need for the upgrade and development of key transport links to the Region in order to better access these markets. This includes the Bells Line of Road, upgrade to road infrastructure throughout the Region, and upgrade of rail infrastructure between Lithgow and Bathurst to support effective development of the food and timber manufacturing industries.

Identifying ways for regional businesses to capitalise on the prosperous manufacturing sector must also be a top priority. The Borg Timber Manufacturing Plant is of particular importance, as a recent $106 million expansion was approved in 2017 for development. With the upgrades to the existing Borg facility underway and the continual focus on best practices and value-adding in the industry, the near future looks secure. The regional flow on effects are key to growth in the surrounding economy for all industries and businesses. A strengthening of the alliance by the Region's Councils to partner or better associate with large companies such as Borg, will support higher economic growth.

Organisational Priorities

Technical and skilled partnerships can also ensure a steady supply of and continued investment into regional workers. The Region's councils can engage with local institutions by playing an important role as facilitators and connectors for this strategy element. For example, they can link CSU, NSW TAFE and other educational providers with local businesses to provide necessary skills that drive innovation.

With a reliable water supply, skilled workforce, affordable land, proximity to Sydney and appropriate infrastructure (road and rail), opportunities exist to build on the existing critical mass in food manufacturing. The Region's Councils can facilitate the creation of industry cluster groups in manufacturing with the aim of sharing resources and strengthening supply chains to build on this already strong industry.

The timber industry is a key industry for the Region, particularly for Oberon and surrounding regional towns'. The industry employs nearly one-fifth of Oberon's population, so there needs to be a streamlined partnership between the Council and the large timber manufacturers. A better collaboration between government and industry leaders is needed for productive regional growth and the flow-on effects to local businesses that service the timber industry.`

Strategy Outcome

Developing industry clusters and capitalising on opportunities through greater access to foreign markets

Intermediate Outcome

- Increased access to higher-value markets
- Creation of industry cluster groups in manufacturing
- Higher amount of skilled workers equipped to meet labour market demands

Output

- Increased appeal of the Region to the manufacturing industry
- More accessible transport infrastructure
- Better collaboration between councils and manufacturing industry

Activities

- Coordinate partnerships with education providers to develop skilled workers
- Upgrade key infrastructure networks for export capabilities and transport links
- Coordinate partnerships with leading manufacturing companies
- Facilitate creation of manufacturing cluster groups

Input

- Address workforce training needs among local businesses
- Collaboration with larger industries for employment and training needs e.g. Borg manufacturing plant and Simplot

Optimise competitiveness in Agriculture, Forestry and Manufacturing through Transportation and Intermodal Networks

Priorities can include infrastructure projects that expand the Region's capacity to act as a business, cultural and freight hub. The Region provides logistics opportunities, through its proximity to Sydney. It is one of the main regional transport hubs in NSW.

Infrastructure Priorities

Advocating the upgrading of the rail networks that link Bathurst with Port Botany, including the expansion of regional intermodal terminals and the capacity of the Central West Line, will see the Region play an increased role in freight transport in NSW. The Region's councils can support the need for this development to occur.

Economic growth in the Region also relies on the movement of goods through road freight networks, and so the national road system is a key area. There are constraints from Higher Mass Limit (HML) restricted bridges and access restrictions over the Blue Mountains. Priorities include lobbying for infrastructure enabling full size B-double trucks to move over the Blue Mountains. This is a way of reducing the repackaging costs and barriers to productivity from road freight.

With further plans to construct a third intermodal terminal in the Kelso Industrial Estate, the reduced freight costs will see strategic advancement in both the mining and agricultural industries in terms of value-adding opportunities. This is in conjunction with NSW Government's plans for upgrades to the Bells Line of Road and the Great Western Highway. These projects will reduce freight costs and access restrictions into and out of the Region for most industries.
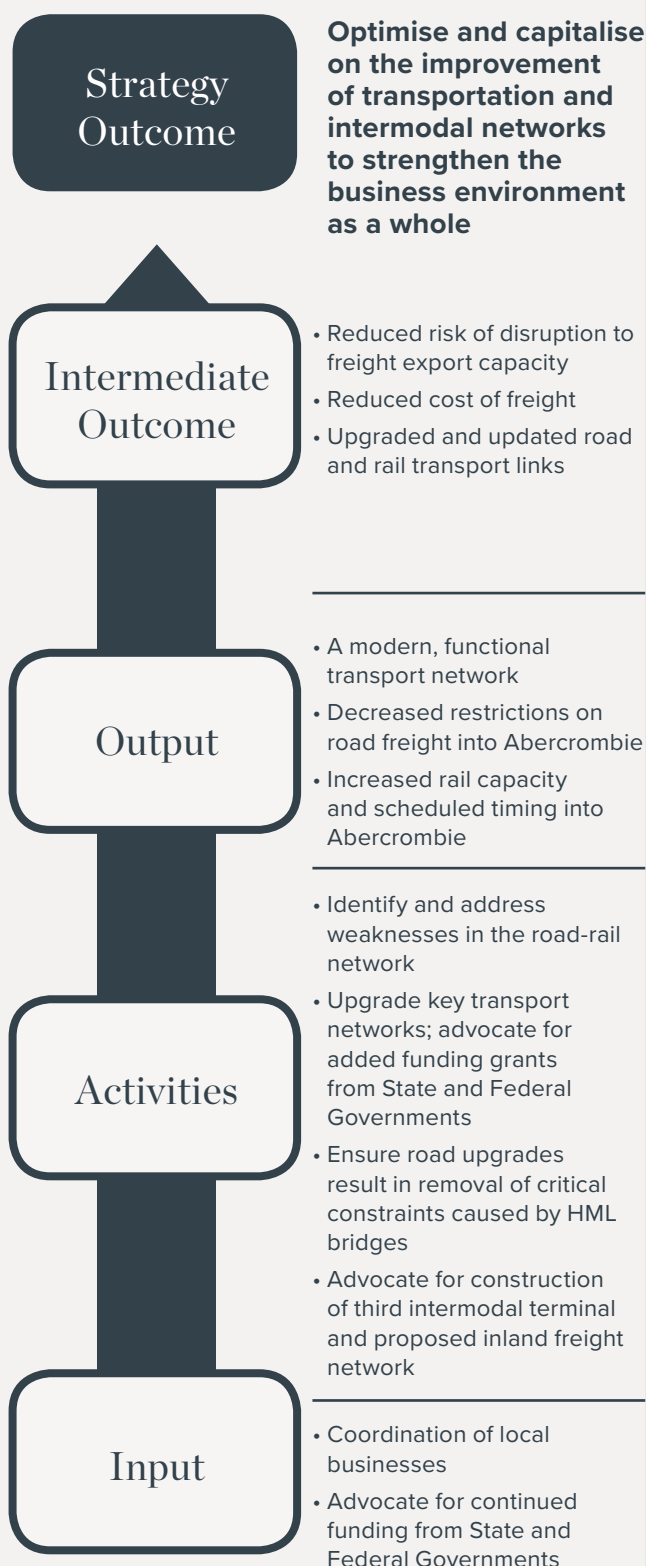
Other projects that should increase productivity and competitiveness include the upgrade of the Bathurst Regional Airport. This will make it a strategic hub with a supporting business precinct to attract aviation-related investment and future demand. This is a key area in building the Region's economic prosperity through transportation connectivity.

Investment in the Oberon road network to provide a suitable standard for industry transportation needs are vitally important. The cost of transportation of raw timber and processed product is closely related to the quality of roads used for access. Typically, the poorer the quality of road, the higher the transportation costs. These costs have significant impacts on the competitiveness of industries that depend on road freight, particularly agriculture and forestry industries, but also on tourism growth and general travel across the Region.

Organisational Priorities

The establishment and development of an infrastructure partnership program between neighbouring LGAs is a critical area that should be addressed. It will provide a transparent 'road map' for large transportation and infrastructure projects, and will facilitate improved information flow and communication between the Region's councils, including combined effort to advocate for future government funding.

The Councils should support the development of the proposed inland freight network. This development could reduce rail freight and timing costs for the Region's industries. It could also reduce the number of large trucks using local roads, and increase value-adding opportunities, particularity in Agriculture and Manufacturing.

Strategy Outcome

Optimise and capitalise on the improvement of transportation and intermodal networks to strengthen the business environment as a whole

Intermediate Outcome

- Reduced risk of disruption to freight export capacity
- Reduced cost of freight
- Upgraded and updated road and rail transport links

Output

- A modern, functional transport network
- Decreased restrictions on road freight into Abercrombie
- Increased rail capacity and scheduled timing into Abercrombie

Activities

- Identify and address weaknesses in the road-rail network
- Upgrade key transport networks; advocate for added funding grants from State and Federal Governments
- Ensure road upgrades result in removal of critical constraints caused by HML bridges
- Advocate for construction of third intermodal terminal and proposed inland freight network

Input

- Coordination of local businesses
- Advocate for continued funding from State and Federal Governments

Optimise Growth in the Development of Regional Infrastructure

Infrastructure can be a major catalyst for economic growth and sustainability. A push for greater hard and soft infrastructure development will have a positive effect on the Region.

Infrastructure Priorities

Advocacy is needed for development of Mount Panorama, including a second circuit and industrial precinct. Investment in the new infrastructure would deliver economic benefits for the Region through jobs growth and increased tourism. The second circuit would be accompanied by a business park catering for added research and development, coupled with commercial business opportunities.

Existing infrastructure owned and managed by local government should be evaluated in accordance with cultural vision plans. This could include upgrades of multiple facilities, or the development of a Collections Management and Storage Facility and additional museums. Through this, Councils would enhance social and cultural outcomes for the Region's community.

Of similar economic importance are upgrades to existing industrial precincts, to provide further industrial-related employment and growth, including: the Kelso Industrial Estate (KIE) and the Bathurst Trade Centre (BTC). These facilities offer venues for business clusters that enable and facilitate economic development. These are strategic centres that can assist regional business growth.

A concern arising from the stakeholder interviews was the need for better internet connectivity associated with the 'NBN Rollout'. The lack of a sufficient internet connection (or any connection for some) creates a barrier preventing business expansion and growth online. Similarly, industrial parks in the major towns within the Region require access to technology to operate in an efficient and productive manner. There is a need to investigate current NBN infrastructure available for businesses and determine need for the expansion of NBN fibre to the premises at industrial and residential precincts in the Region.

Organisational Priorities

Progressing Abercrombie's regional infrastructure opportunities and development is limited by the coordination of multiple LGAs. Partnerships between the neighbouring local governments, should enable better discussions and decisions about infrastructure improvements. This will provide a forum for an ongoing review of relevant current and future developments.

Strategy Outcome

Increase development of regional infrastructure to act as a catalyst for economic growth

Intermediate Outcome

- Secured funding for development and upgrade of Mount Panorama; leading to increased tourism, economic growth and regional flow on effects
- Increased telecommunications usage through business community

Output

- Telecommunications gap filled
- Increased use of industrial precincts and added business growth
- Increased attractiveness of the Region

Activities

- Connect industrial parks to NBN and service mobile phone black spots
- Promotion and advertisement of Industrial parks as business hubs
- Upgrade and development of cultural facilities; inclusive of a Collections Management and Storage Facility and the Bathurst Railway Museum
- Advocate for continual funding, upgrade and development to Mount Panorama; second circuit and Industrial Precinct
- Seek funding for upgrades to mobile towers and construction of new ones

Input

- Coordinate with NBN Co.
- Coordinate partnership between regional LGAs
- Attract funding and resources for Mount Panorama and Bathurst Regional Airport from State Government

Provide Opportunities for Attracting and Retaining Entrepreneurs and Skilled Professionals

One of the key requirements for sustained economic growth is the development and maintenance of a skilled workforce. This was identified as very important by business stakeholders in the Strategy interviews and workshops. There are opportunities for the Region to capitalise on exiting education institutions (CSU, Flannery Centre[9] , TAFE NSW and other educational providers) to further develop workforce skills

Infrastructure Priorities

Existing infrastructure owned and managed by the councils should be examined to identify where training can be provided to support local businesses. An example is the successful creation by the NSW Government of the Bathurst incubation hub 'Upstairs' as a driver for business opportunity. Development of programs like this requires strong input from interested parties to support entrepreneurial and business excellence. Growth in this endeavour then attracts skilled workers. It also helps retain workers that would otherwise leave the Region.

Support for the existing business base, in combination with investment in new and emerging businesses, is of key importance to the Region. Addressing this challenge needs to be a priority, as professional-skills shortages limit the capacity for the Region to innovate, grow and attract new businesses. The redevelopment of existing 'culturally aesthetic' buildings would facilitate the attractiveness of urban areas and improve the 'liveability' of the Region and could help draw in new skilled workers and families and retain local youth. This will also enhance workers' motivation to look for opportunities in the Region.

Organisational Priorities

The Councils need to play a stronger role as facilitators and connectors between local institutions, people and operations to develop the local skills base. This aligns with the Councils' Community Strategic Plans – to attract and generate investment and strengthen new economic development opportunities.

Local firms should collaborate closely with education providers (CSU and TAFE NSW) on initiatives aimed at filling specific skills gaps and on how best to retain local youth. The partnership between CSU and IBM to provide 33 scholarships for Business Information is a key example. Recently, regional businesses have worked with leading educational providers to sponsor students to meet critical job needs through scholarships, technical internships and the integration of class projects. The Flannery Centre is also a provider of training and education, with a focus on the Region as a strong business hub. The Councils should facilitate greater contact between the education providers and local businesses to promote training and development opportunities.

There is potential for the Region's education providers to broaden course offerings to meet future regional demands. This will promote the Region as an education centre of excellence. Promotion of greater educational facilities in partnership with business opportunities will be key to retaining youth and marketing the area as an innovative and entrepreneurially driven Region.

Strategy Outcome

Optimise and capitalise on the improvement of transportation and intermodal networks to strengthen the business environment as a whole

Intermediate Outcome

- Extra skilled workers equipped to meet labour market demands
- Improved business community

Output

- Improved local participation in education and training
- Attracted and retained skilled professionals
- Ensured tertiary education offerings are tailored to regional communities

Activities

- Encouraging collaboration between educational facilities and regional businesses
- Making use of existing buildings to host training and skills workshops
- Developing and promoting business hubs and incubators for education and entrepreneurialism
- Upgrading cultural buildings to increase attractiveness of the Region

Input

- Attract funding and resources for local education facilities
- Identify local business leaders within the community to lead support for work / training programs
- Direct partnerships between local businesses and educational facilities
- Continue to attract funding for Smart City and 'Smart Region' Projects

[9] The Flannery Centre is Skillset's Green Skills centre, providing training and education about sustainability. Skillset currently provides training to Apprentices and Trainees throughout inland NSW.

Develop the Region's Brand and Diversify Local Tourism Offerings

The Region's tourism offerings are a major source of economic growth and future sustainability. The Region contains a range of natural and built endowments, including the Jenolan Caves, State parks and forests, scenic streams, the Mayfield Garden and many historic sites, as well as events-focused attractions, including Mount Panorama's motor racing and Bathurst Winter Festival. A regional branding strategy as part of tourism development is needed to help grow this industry.

Infrastructure Priorities

Local stakeholders have expressed growing concerns about the need to upgrade basic infrastructure. In particular, transport links into and out of the Region are important for enticing people to visit or relocate to the Region. Strategy element 3 has already mentioned the need for upgrades to the Bells Line of Road, Central West rail system into and out of Bathurst, and the maintenance of the Bathurst Regional Airport. Upgrading Tablelands Way has been identified by major tourism operators as important in opening up access to the ACT visitors. Addressing these needs requires funding support to ensure the accessibility of the Region and that its economy is able to reach a wider audience and maximise attractions.
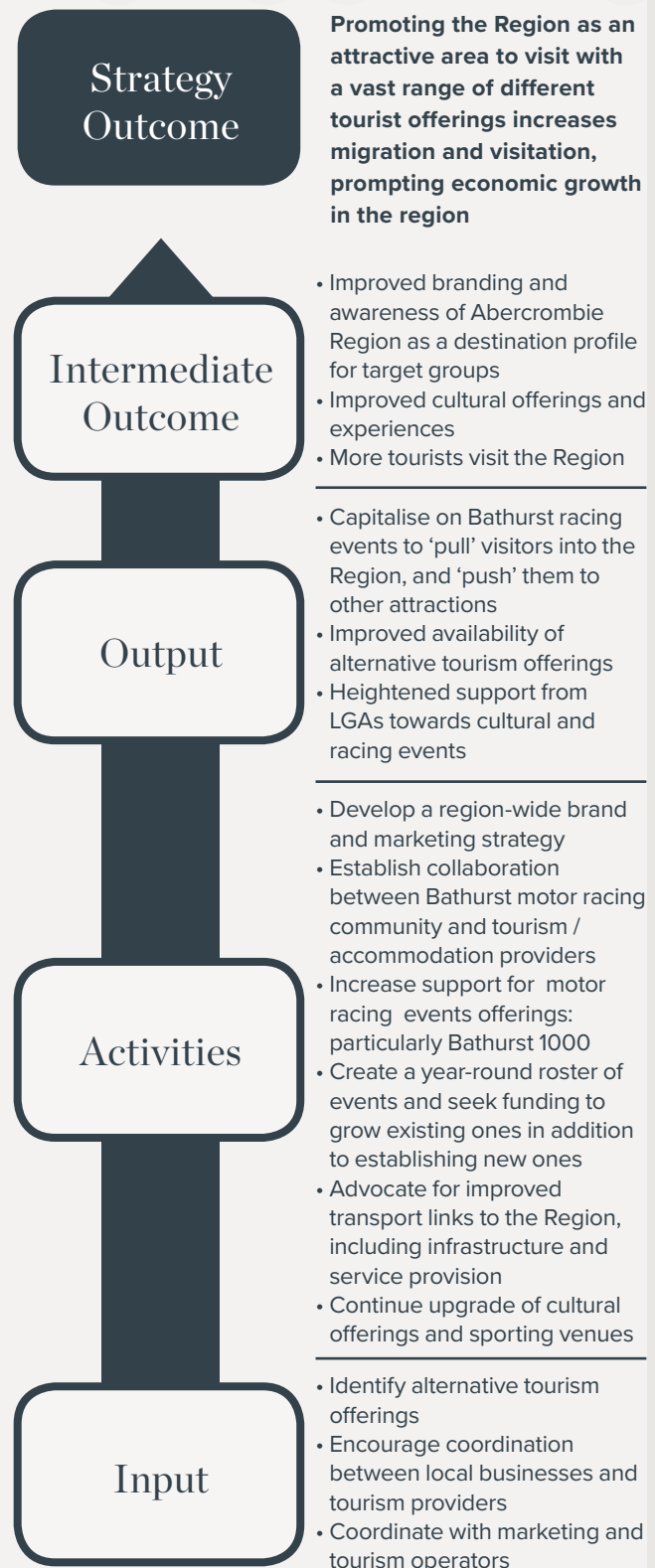
Operating capacity in the accommodation sector has been identified as an issue, particularly in Oberon. There is a growing concern from local stakeholders that the lack of accommodation to meet tourism growth is detrimental to the Region's economic sustainability. A suggested project would be to increase the synergy between accommodation and tourism providers. A diversification of the tourism sector could also help in leading to a more even spread of visitors throughout the year and promote the need for added and upgraded local accommodation sites.

Organisational Priorities

As a priority, a coordinated brand approach for the Abercrombie Region should be developed and marketed widely. Marketing efforts should be two-pronged: promoting the Region as an area focused on lifestyle and business, as well as a place for tourism. As part of this promotion campaign, billboards and signage on multiple highways that cross the Region can be utilised for visual stimulus and encouragement.

More promotion of attractions – including ecological, agricultural, cultural and educational – requires coordination with local providers in developing a comprehensive schedule of offerings. The LGAs should develop a consistent roster of events to capitalise on the Region's significant drawcards, such as the Winter Festival in Bathurst and the Mayfield Garden season festivals near Oberon. These events should also be designed to cater to current residents and enhance the benefits of the Region's lifestyle for them. As such, the local community should be consulted on events and used as a key motivator in helping where possible as a valuable resource to enhance the overall attractiveness of the Region.

Of particular importance is the Bathurst racing events, such as the Bathurst 1000, and the Jenolan Caves in Oberon. Together, they attracted approximately 230,000 people to the Region in 2017. Strong marketing campaigns and collaboration between the event coordinators and local businesses is vital for effectively target potential visitors and to increase visitation. Well-coordinating marketing can boost awareness and help to push visitors to alternative offerings. This is also aligned with the current strategies of the Destination Network Country and Outback NSW.

Strategy Outcome

Promoting the Region as an attractive area to visit with a vast range of different tourist offerings increases migration and visitation, prompting economic growth in the region

Intermediate Outcome

- Improved branding and awareness of Abercrombie Region as a destination profile for target groups
- Improved cultural offerings and experiences
- More tourists visit the Region

Output

- Capitalise on Bathurst racing events to 'pull' visitors into the Region, and 'push' them to other attractions
- Improved availability of alternative tourism offerings
- Heightened support from LGAs towards cultural and racing events

Activities

- Develop a region-wide brand and marketing strategy
- Establish collaboration between Bathurst motor racing community and tourism / accommodation providers
- Increase support for motor racing events offerings: particularly Bathurst 1000
- Create a year-round roster of events and seek funding to grow existing ones in addition to establishing new ones
- Advocate for improved transport links to the Region, including infrastructure and service provision
- Continue upgrade of cultural offerings and sporting venues

Input

- Identify alternative tourism offerings
- Encourage coordination between local businesses and tourism providers
- Coordinate with marketing and tourism operators

Strategies and Actions

Enablers	Increase Value-adding in agricultural products through innovation	Capitalise on existing strengths in Manufacturing	Optimise competitiveness in Agriculture, Forestry and Manufacturing through Transportation and Intermodal Networks	Optimise Growth in the Development of Regional Infrastructure	Provide Opportunities for Attracting and Retaining Entrepreneurs and Skilled Professionals	Develop the Region's Brand and Diversify Local Tourism Offerings
People and skills	• Encourage a 'farming smarter' approach to increase the adoption rate of new technology and techniques – including improved training opportunities • Establish a regional branding campaign – 'clean and green' strategy – to further develop the Region's reputation for high quality agricultural products	• Establish partnerships between business and industry leaders and education providers to improve the link between employment needs and training opportunities • Further improve the Region's competitiveness in high quality manufactured products through shortened and more efficient supply chains	• Build partnerships between local agriculture, forestry, manufacturing and transport businesses to identify constraints and opportunities in the Region's transport and freight networks	• Build partnerships between local businesses and KIE and BTC for business growth • Build partnerships between the local LGAs in the Region	• Establish partnerships with educational facilities; CSU and TAFE with local businesses • Strengthen campaign for Evocities and CENTROC's relocation programs • Promote Bathurst further becoming a 'smart city' and the Region as a 'smart region'	• Establish partnerships between accommodation and tourism providers • Further promote Bathurst's cultural and racing events • Develop region-wide brand and marketing campaign
Government, regulation and information	• Establish partnerships between government and agricultural processing companies to ensure local industries remain competitive	• Create manufacturing cluster groups • Advocate for government to support better trade agreements and export capabilities	• Advocate support from governments for: proposed inland freight network, increased rail frequency, upgrades to major transportation (rail and road) infrastructure and networks • Establish LGA partnerships for larger projects in need of funding	• Advocate for funding for development and upgrade of Mount Panorama; commercial and industrial precincts • Advocate for funding to support development of KIE, BTC and Bathurst Airport	• Advocate for more Government funding for incubator-type programs and facilities ('hubs') • Provide government-funded scholarship programs for CSU/TAFE, and establish bridging courses with local businesses • Seek continual funding for the 'Upstairs Start-up Hub'	• Develop a long-term vision for regional tourism consistent with current and future demands • Align the tourism strategy with cultural heritage plan • Build a calendar of events to promote the Region • Further upgrade the Region's natural offerings as tourist and recreational attractions • Attract funding to grow local and regional events

Infrastructure

- Upgrade transport networks for improved export capabilities and accessibility

- Upgrade rail and road transport infrastructure and networks for improved export capabilities and accessibility

- Upgrade transport infrastructure into and out of Region – Bells Line of Road, Central West Rail, Bathurst Regional Airport
- Ensure road upgrades result in removal of critical constraints caused by HML bridges
- Construct a third intermodal terminal

- Upgrade and develop cultural buildings for enhanced attractiveness
- Continue to upgrade the Bathurst Regional Airport, Mt. Panorama and development of a second circuit
- Continue to upgrade local sporting facilities

- Proactively use government buildings for workshops, trainings and networking events
- Upgrade existing buildings to enhance the attractiveness of the Region as a place to live and work
- Attract funding for smart city infrastructure projects

- Improve regional transport networks for easier accessibility
- Upgrade and develop existing cultural buildings to enhance the attractiveness of the Region
- Improve passenger rail services to and from Sydney
- Develop Oberon projects from government grants; e.g. skate park, grandstand upgrade, resurface of football ground

Utilities

- Advocate for continued improvements to telecommunications networks – NBN, internet and phone network providers

- Advocate for continued improvements to telecommunications networks

- Connect industrial parks to the NBN and service mobile phone black spots

- Advocate for continued improvements to telecommunications networks

Implementation

This document sets out a vision for the Abercrombie Region, as well as the strategies and actions that can enable the region to achieve this vision.

This Strategy was formed in collaboration with the Bathurst Regional and Oberon Councils, business representatives, the Abercrombie Region's community and Balmoral Group Australia. Further detail about the strategy, actions, economy and endowments of the region can be found in the 2018–2022 Abercrombie Regional Economic Development Strategy – Supporting Analysis. The completion of this document is intended to be the first stage of an ongoing process where new specific actions to further progress towards the vision are identified through application of the framework.

Regional Action Plan Implementation Review Process

This document includes strategies and actions that will be operated by the Bathurst Regional and Oberon Councils, other organisations (such as the Bathurst Business Chamber (BBC) and the Oberon Business Tourist Association (OBTA)), as well as private businesses and the Local, State and Federal Governments.

It is therefore recommended that an Advisory Committee be appointed, consisting of representatives from each Council, other institutions and industry leaders to monitor the progress of the Regional Action Plan. This Advisory Committee will meet quarterly to track the progress of actions identified in the Action Plan and apply the Strategy's

framework to identify new actions to be added to the Action Plan.

After two years, the Advisory Committee will conduct a formal review of the Action Plan and produce a brief report card to be published as an addendum to the Regional Economic Development Strategy. This will also provide an opportunity to update the Action Plan for new or modified actions.

After four years, the Advisory Committee will also begin the process of updating or refreshing the Regional Economic Development Strategy.

Strategy	Task	Council	BBC	OBTA	Other
Develop and Diversify the Region's Brand and Local Tourism Offerings	Develop a region-wide branding and marketing strategy	Support	Lead	Support	Tourism providers; support
	Improve branding awareness of Abercrombie as a destination profile		Co-lead	Co-lead	
	Establish a collaboration between the race community, tourism and accommodation providers	Support	Lead		Bathurst race event organisers; Support
	Improve the availability of alternative tourism offerings and events	Support	Co-lead; focus on Bathurst	Co-lead; focus on Oberon	Industry; support
	Focus efforts on promoting race events	Lead and support	Support		Race organisers; lead
	Develop a year-round roster of events		Co-lead	Co-lead	Tourism providers; support
	In Oberon, develop projects if State Government Grants are successful, including the Skate park, Footpath and Cycle ways, covered grandstand at Rec ground, Resurface of Football Ground, Black Springs playground upgrade	Lead; Oberon Council specific		Support council	State Government; support
	Develop a year-round roster of events	Lead	Support		Community, businesses; support
	Develop new accommodation facilities for tourism industry		Support	Support	Local businesses; lead
Provide Opportunities for Attracting and Retaining Entrepreneurs and Young Skilled Professionals	Develop and promote business hubs and incubator programs for educational an entrepreneurial purposes and support	Support	Lead	Support	Community members; support
	Redevelop existing cultural buildings to enhance attractiveness	Lead	Support	Support	Local businesses; support
	Establish partnership between educational facilities (CSU, TAFE and other educational providers) and local businesses; disseminate training and development opportunities for economic growth		Support	Support	CSU, TAFE NSW and others to identify opportunities; Lead
	Introduce and broaden course offerings in many different fields at educational facilities to meet local and regional demands				CSU, TAFE NSW and others; lead
	Market the area as an innovative and entrepreneurial driven 'smart region' to attract skilled professionals	Support	Lead	Support	Local businesses; support
	Participate in relocation marketing campaigns that include Evocities and CENTROC's Beyond the Range program	Lead	Support	Support	
	Develop and implement Smart City Plans	Lead	Support	Support	Local businesses; support
	Attract funding for Smart City Infrastructure	Lead			State Government; support

Strategy	Task	Council	BBC	OBTA	Other
Optimise Regional Transportation and Intermodal Networks	Upgrade and develop the rail networks to Port Botany; expand regional intermodal terminals and capacity on the Central West Line	Support	Support	Support	State Government; Lead
	Remove the HML bridge restrictions and constraints	Lead	Support	Support	State Government; Support
	Construct a third intermodal terminal in Kelso Industrial Park	Support	Support		Businesses; Lead
	Upgrade the Bells Line of Road and Great Western Highway	Support	Support	Support	CENTROC; lead, State government; support,
	Upgrade and continue to develop the Bathurst regional airport	Lead	Support		Local businesses, State government ; Support
	Lobby and support the development of the proposed inland freight network	Support	Support	Support	State government ; Lead
	In Oberon, upgrade Meadow Road, Shooters Hill Road and Arkstone Road if State Grants are successful	Lead; Oberon Council		Support council	State Government; support
Optimise Growth in the Development of Regional Infrastructure	Continue to fund and support the development of Mount Panorama; second circuit and industrial precinct	Lead	Support		Major stakeholders; support
	Upgrade and develop multiple existing cultural facilities, such as the Collections Management and Storage Facility and Bathurst Railway Museum	Lead	Support	Support	Tourism providers; support
	Build collaboration between local LGAs	Lead			All LGAs in Region; lead and support
	Promotion and support for The Bathurst Trade Centre, Kelso Industrial Park and Oberon Industrial areas	Lead	Lead		Local businesses; support
Encourage Value-Adding in Agriculture	Adopt 'farming smarter' strategy by using biotechnological advancements		Support	Support	Key stakeholders; lead, including CWRDA
	Build collaboration between local businesses and councils	Support			Local businesses; lead
	Create a locational branding campaign		Support	Support	Key stakeholders, local businesses; lead
	Upgrade transport and rail networks and links for export capacity	Support	Support	Support	Key stakeholders; businesses, Government Lead
	Upgrade telecommunications capabilities, including the NBN network and infrastructure	Lead	Support	Support	Key stakeholders CENTROC, CWRDA
Capitalise on Existing Strengths in Manufacturing	Create industry cluster groups	Support	Co-lead; focus on Bathurst City	Co-lead; focus on Oberon	Industry stakeholders; support
	Build partnerships between councils and major industry leaders	Support	Co-lead; coordinat	Support	Industry leaders; support
	Educational facilities and local businesses collaborate to provide workers with necessary skills for employment gaps		Support	Support	CSU, TAFE NSW + educational providers; lead
	Upgrade transports (rail and road) networks and links for export capacity	Support			Key stakeholders, local businesses

BATHURST REGIONAL COUNCIL

OBERON COUNCIL

The **Balmoral** *Group*
Australia

NSW GOVERNMENT

Developed with the support of the NSW Government as part of the Regional Economic Development Strategies program to assist local councils and their communities in regional NSW.