

Regional Economic &
Environment Plan 2040

ProspER Northern Rivers Consolidated Recommendations Register

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Project delivery partners



ProspER

NORTHERN RIVERS

Contents

Executive Summary	3
Reading this Register	5
Recommendations by Domains of Action	7
Recommendations at a Glance	8
1. HealthiER	9
2. DeliverER.....	16
3. TogethER	21
4. EnabLER	28
5. EmpowER.....	42
6. AdaptER	49
7. TransformER.....	55
8. PartnER	64
9. DrivER	69
10. CatalysER: Catalyst Projects.....	74

Executive Summary

ProspER Northern Rivers is a business and industry-led Economic and Environment Plan to 2040 for the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire.

It has been developed at a time when the region is facing both significant pressure and significant opportunity. Housing constraints, workforce shortages, infrastructure gaps, climate and disaster risk, changing industry conditions and increasing competition for investment are all shaping the region's future.

At the same time, the Northern Rivers has extraordinary strengths to build from - its people, places, natural systems, creative and entrepreneurial culture, food and agricultural capability, health and education assets, visitor appeal, First Nations knowledge and strong regional identity.

ProspER is grounded in a wellbeing economy approach and shaped around the connection between People, Planet and Place. It recognises that long-term prosperity will not be achieved through economic growth alone. The future of the Northern Rivers depends on the strength of its people, the health of its rivers, catchments, landscapes and natural systems, and the quality and character of its places.

The Plan has been informed by extensive engagement with businesses, industry sectors, councils, government agencies, education providers, First Nations representatives, young people, community organisations and regional leaders. This engagement reinforced that the Northern Rivers is strongest when it works as a connected region, while still respecting the distinct identity and role of each place.

ProspER does not seek to replace existing local, regional or government strategies. Nor does it assume that all work starts from this Plan. Our mandate from the beginning in developing this plan has been an 'and' not an 'or' approach.

Significant activity is already underway across the region. ProspER builds on that foundation by bringing together a shared regional agenda, identifying opportunities for stronger alignment and highlighting where coordinated action, advocacy, investment and partnership can accelerate outcomes.

The Plan is structured around a clear regional logic.

People, Planet and Place provide the foundation. The eight ProspER Principles provide the decision-making compass. The Domains of Action organise the major areas where effort is needed. The Recommendations and Strategic Intent identify priorities for action, advocacy, partnership and investment. The Catalyst Projects highlight visible opportunities that can help turn regional ambition into practical outcomes.

Together, these elements create a connected framework for long-term regional prosperity and aim to deliver on the **ProspER Vision: A connected and collaborative Northern Rivers where people, places, communities and enterprise prosper together to create a regenerative and resilient future for all.**

The recommendations respond to priorities across environment, First Nations, young people enterprise, liveability, health, housing, workforce, transport and freight, industry and transformation. They recognise that the region's most important opportunities do not sit neatly within one sector or organisation.

Housing is connected to workforce. Workforce is connected to transport, education, health, childcare, liveability and industry growth. Environmental resilience is connected to agriculture, infrastructure, water, energy, tourism and healthy communities. Investment attraction is connected to land availability, planning pathways, digital connectivity, regional identity and confidence.

The health of the region's rivers, catchments, landscapes and natural systems is central to this future. Healthy Country, healthy rivers and healthy landscapes support healthy people, productive industries, biodiversity, flood resilience, cultural connection, recreation, visitor experiences and regional identity. For this reason, ProspER recognises that environmental stewardship is not separate from economic development. It is one of the foundations that will determine the region's future prosperity.

ProspER is both ambitious and practical. Some recommendations can be progressed through advocacy or stronger coordination. Some require new partnerships, business cases or investment readiness work. Others are already underway in different forms and can be strengthened through clearer alignment, evidence and shared regional support. The intent is not to deliver every recommendation at once, but to provide a practical framework for staged action, prioritisation and partnership over time.

The Catalyst Projects provide a more visible pathway for action. They identify opportunities where the region can build from existing strengths, unlock under-realised assets, test new approaches, attract investment and demonstrate practical regional leadership. These projects are not the only priorities within ProspER, but they provide important focal points for implementation, collaboration and advocacy.

The next phase of ProspER will focus on moving from plan development to implementation. This will include finalising priorities, engaging delivery partners, testing recommendations with the Advisory Board, identifying catalyst projects for further development and building the investment, advocacy and governance pathways required to turn opportunity into impact. As this work progresses, ProspER will help identify where the region can activate new opportunities, accelerate existing work and align partners around shared priorities.

The Northern Rivers advantage lies in the strength of the region as a whole, a region that is greater than the sum of its parts.

ProspER supports the distinct identity and role of each place/LGA while strengthening the connections between them. It recognises existing work while identifying where more can be achieved together. It values economic opportunity, environmental stewardship, cultural identity, regional liveability and long-term wellbeing as parts of the same future.

ProspER is not the end point. It is a shared regional platform to support clearer decision-making, stronger partnerships and more coordinated action.

It provides a practical agenda to help the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire turn opportunity into impact, and impact into lasting regional advantage.

We are stronger together.

Jane Lavery
Regional Director, Business NSW

Using this Register

The ProspER Recommendations Register provides the detailed structure behind the Plan.

It should be read alongside the Presentation Summary, Theme Guide and ProspER Webpage resources. The Presentation Summary tells the high-level story of the Plan. The Theme Guide provides an alternative way to explore recommendations through areas of interest and regional priorities. The ProspER webpage provides access to supporting materials, updates and related documents.

This Register is designed as a practical reference for partners, government, industry, councils, community organisations, funders and regional leaders. It brings together the recommendations, priority actions, other indicative actions, evidence, Strategic Intent, timelines and investment notes that sit behind the Plan.

The recommendations are intended to be read as a **shared regional agenda**, not a fixed or fully funded delivery program. Many build on work already underway across the region. Others identify opportunities for advocacy, partnership, investment, coordination, business case development or further testing.

The intent is not to deliver every recommendation at once. ProspER provides a staged framework for action, prioritisation and partnership over time.

Understanding the columns

Recommendation

The key area of action identified through ProspER.

Priority Action

The first or most important action to help progress the recommendation.

Other Indicative Actions

Additional actions that may support delivery, partnership development, advocacy or implementation.

Evidence

The rationale, stakeholder insight, data or policy context that supports the recommendation.

Strategic Intent

The outcome each recommendation is designed to support. This column helps readers understand not only what is being recommended, but why it matters for people, places, communities, businesses and the long-term prosperity of the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire.

Timeline

The indicative timeframe for commencement, progression or maturity.

Investment Notes

An indication of the type of effort, funding, partnership or investment likely to be required.

Understanding the Timeline column

Timeline legend

2026 - 2029

Commence during the first ProspER implementation phase.

2026 - 2029, urgent

Commence during the first implementation phase, with early attention required because of immediate regional pressure, risk or opportunity.

2026 - 2029, ongoing

Commence during the first implementation phase and continue as ongoing regional effort.

2026 - 2029; 2030 →

Commence during the first implementation phase, with delivery, scale-up, investment decision, maturity or continuation expected from 2030 onward.

Understanding Catalyst Projects

Catalyst Projects are not the only priorities within ProspER. They are visible focal points for implementation, advocacy, investment readiness and partnership. They are designed to build from existing regional strengths, unlock under-realised assets, test new approaches, attract investment and demonstrate practical regional leadership.

Most importantly, they help turn Strategic Intent into visible regional impact.

ProspER Vision

A connected and collaborative Northern Rivers where people, places, communities and enterprise prosper together to create a regenerative and resilient future for all.

Recommendations by Domains of Action

Translating the Vision into Action – Ten Domains of Action Guiding Recommendations



ProsperER at a Glance - 10 Domains of Action | 56 Recommendations | 12 Catalyst Projects

A connected regional agenda, turning opportunity into impact.



1. HealthiER

Strengthening the health, wellbeing and care systems of people, communities and Country as the foundation of prosperity.

HealthiER recognises that long-term regional prosperity begins with healthy people, healthy communities and healthy Country. It brings together preventative health and wellbeing, specialist services, health investment, health workforce development and care economy growth as foundations of liveability, workforce participation and resilience across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire.

This Domain also recognises that health is connected to Country. The region's rainforests, rivers, catchments and natural systems support wellbeing, cultural connection, social participation and economic confidence. Caring for Country, conservation and restoration are therefore understood as part of the region's health and wellbeing system, not separate from it.

By linking preventative health, Healthy Country, Healthy People, health innovation, specialist services, workforce pathways and the care economy, HealthiER positions health as both a social foundation and a major economic opportunity for the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire.

1. HealthiER

Strengthening the health, wellbeing and care systems of people, communities and Country as the foundation of prosperity.

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
1. Preventative Health & Wellbeing Strengthen preventative health and wellbeing approaches across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire that support healthier people, connected communities, healthy places and long-term regional resilience - integrating health, employment and community outcomes	Advocate for Northern NSW Local Health District and the Primary Health Network to explore a social prescribing or 'compassionate communities' model suited to the Northern Rivers, as exemplified by Frome, UK, where a peer-reviewed study recorded a 14% reduction in unplanned hospital admissions.	- Identify priority preventative health and wellbeing challenges impacting communities in the region. - Link new preventative health initiatives to the Northern Rivers Health & Innovation Precincts (Catalyst Project C1) as they develop. - Convene health providers, councils, education sector, community organisations and industry to shape a shared preventative health approach and strengthen collaboration. - Fund or pilot initiatives that improve physical health, mental wellbeing, social connection and community participation – eg Lead Well initiative with GreenX7. - Business and industry to take a proactive approach and involvement in workplace health and wellbeing initiatives and campaigns. - Apply the People, Planet, Place framework designing and implementing new wellbeing initiatives.	Strong stakeholder feedback on need to shift from reactive to preventative health, links to workforce and community wellbeing, engagement focus on reducing pressure on health systems and communities, with strong links between wellbeing, social connection, workforce participation, community resilience and healthy places.	Create healthier and more connected communities by building on local strengths, encouraging early intervention and reducing long-term pressure on regional health and care systems.	2026 - 2029; ongoing	Attitudinal + Seed

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
2. Healthy Country, Healthy People Recognise the health of Country as a foundation of community health and wellbeing across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire, supporting care, conservation and restoration of the region's rainforests, waterways and natural systems as a genuine investment in people.	Support First Nations organisations, Landcare groups, conservation bodies and landholders to expand Caring for Country programs, recognising them as legitimate health and wellbeing investment alongside their environmental value. And grow Aboriginal ranger, bush regeneration and land management employment pathways in partnership with First Nations organisations, recognising documented wellbeing benefits.	▪ Encourage Northern Rivers businesses to invest in regional conservation and restoration, building on local examples such as the inGrained Foundation's support for Big Scrub Rainforest Conservancy. ▪ Back science-led regional restoration such as Big Scrub Rainforest Conservancy's Science Saving Rainforests program, a world-first partnership restoring genetic diversity across 60 rainforest species. ▪ Promote NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust conservation agreements and similar mechanisms that enable private landholders to protect and restore habitat on their own land. ▪ Connect health services, preventative health and social prescribing initiatives to nature-based and caring for Country programs (Recommendation 1), and to river and catchment health work (Recommendation 37).	Peer-reviewed Australian research links caring for Country to measurable human health outcomes, including lower psychological distress and improved clinical health indicators (Burgess et al., Medical Journal of Australia; Lancet Regional Health Western Pacific, 2023). The region has strong foundations: Big Scrub Rainforest Conservancy has planted over 2.5 million trees and grown the remaining Big Scrub by around 75% in 30 years, working with local businesses including Flow and the inGrained Foundation, and with Aboriginal regeneration teams. Internationally, the IPBES Business and Biodiversity Assessment (2026) identifies biodiversity decline as a systemic economic risk.	Recognise healthy Country as a foundation of healthy people, so care for the region's rainforests, rivers and natural systems is understood and invested in as part of the region's health and wellbeing system.	2026 - 2029; ongoing	Attitudinal + Seed + Partner investment

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
3. Private Health Investment, Specialist Services & Health Enterprise Attract and enable private health investment, specialist services and health related enterprise in regional centres to improve access to care, strengthen regional health capacity and grow health as an economic sector.	Work with Health sector stakeholders (LHD, PHN etc.) to publish an annual regional specialist health service gap analysis for regional centres, to guide and attract private health investment opportunities.	- Identify priority specialist service gaps and private health investment opportunities across regional centres. - Support planning, approvals and investment pathways that enable specialist care and private health provision. - Build partnerships with hospitals, allied health and diagnostic providers to support new specialist service delivery. - Broker health innovation, digital health, research and training partnerships across the region, connecting hospitals, universities, training providers and health enterprises. - Open pathways for health-related enterprise and workforce development linked to regional health infrastructure, feeding into the Health & Innovation Precincts (Catalyst 10.C1). - Actively promote regional health investment opportunities, positioning our health infrastructure as a case for investment.	Gaps in specialist services, pressure on public health systems, population growth and ageing demographics are increasing demand for more accessible regional healthcare options. The region is also seeing major investment in health infrastructure, including the \$723m Tweed Valley Hospital, the largest regional health investment in NSW history, alongside continued demand pressures on hospitals such as Lismore and Grafton. This scale of infrastructure creates a genuine opportunity to attract complementary services, and to build health innovation, research and enterprise.	Increase access to specialist healthcare across the region by attracting complementary private investment and expanding services closer to where people live, while growing the research, innovation and enterprise capability that surrounds them.	2026 - 2029; 2030 →	Partner investment + Attitudinal

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
4. Health Workforce Attraction and Retention Grow and retain the regional health and care workforce through stronger attraction, training, retention and career pathways across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire.	Profile specific and critical health workforce gaps and future skills needs across health and care sectors and partner with education providers to deliver a dedicated program to engage, orient and attract health workers to the region.	▪ Build partnerships between health providers, education institutions and training organisations to open regional workforce pathways, linked to the Health & Innovation Precincts (Catalyst Project 10.C1). ▪ Support development of targeted attraction and retention incentives for health professionals in regional and rural communities. ▪ Connect workforce strategies to housing, liveability, training and career development opportunities. ▪ Align workforce planning with long-term demographic change and regional service demand. ▪ Explore and support new and expanded models of care, such as nurse-practitioner-led clinics, to build on proven local success like Maclean Medical's Access Health Clinic, to improve access across the region and Tenterfield Shire.	Workforce shortages across health, aged care, disability and allied health sectors are impacting regional service delivery, workforce sustainability and community access to care. Pressures are compounded by region-specific barriers - housing affordability and availability for health workers, showing how workforce attraction depends on the wider conditions of housing and liveability that make the region a place people want to build a career and life. New health infrastructure creates fresh demand for skilled health professionals. The region is also demonstrating homegrown workforce innovation: Maclean Medical's nurse-practitioner-led Access Health Clinic shows how new models of care can expand access in rural communities.	Make the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire places where health professionals can build long-term careers, contribute to community life and see a future for themselves and their families.	2026 - 2029; urgent	Attitudinal + Seed

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
5. Care Economy Growth Expand ageing, disability, community care and wellbeing services across the region as a major care economy and employment growth opportunity.	Advocate for and support aged care, disability and community care providers to pilot innovative models of care, new and expanded, that respond to the region's ageing population and future workforce needs.	- Identify opportunities to strengthen care economy capability, workforce and service delivery. - Work with providers to diversify aged care, disability, allied health and community wellbeing services on offer. - Open workforce development, training and enterprise pathways linked to care economy growth. - Support the growth of culturally safe and Aboriginal community-managed aged and community care, recognising the need for care that reflects the region's communities. - Promote care sector careers and training pathways to local people, including school leavers, career changers and those returning to work, building a sustainable care workforce. - Support adoption of technology, assistive innovation and new delivery models that help care services reach rural and dispersed communities more effectively.	Population ageing, increasing demand for disability and community care, and future workforce needs highlight the care economy as a major employment and wellbeing opportunity for the region. The Northern Rivers is ageing faster than NSW as a whole: the North Coast's population aged 65 and over is projected to grow by 18%, with Tweed, Kyogle, Lismore and Ballina among the LGAs expected to exceed even that. Nationally, aged and disability care is projected to be Australia's fastest-growing occupation over the coming decade, positioning the care economy as one of the region's most significant employment growth opportunities, provided the workforce, training and service capacity can be built to meet it.	Recognise the care economy as one of the region's most important future employment sectors and a critical foundation for community wellbeing and ageing with dignity.	2026 - 2029; 2030 →	Attitudinal + Seed + Partner investment

2. DelivER

Delivering the housing, infrastructure and essential services needed to support a growing, resilient and investable region.

DelivER focuses on the practical foundations required for people, businesses and communities to thrive in the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire. Housing supply, housing diversity, enabling infrastructure, transport connectivity and essential services all directly influence workforce attraction, business sustainability, investment confidence and everyday quality of life.

This Domain recognises that the region needs more homes, but also the right homes, supported by coordinated housing activation, development-ready land, infrastructure sequencing and regional delivery pathways. Housing must be connected to workforce needs, growth centres, community stability and long-term regional resilience.

DelivER also gives greater weight to essential services and community infrastructure, including childcare, schools, health access, emergency services and community facilities. These are not seen as secondary services for a healthy economy, they are core conditions for retaining families, attracting skilled workers and giving communities confidence that growth and community sustainability can be supported well in the region.

2. DeliverER

Delivering the housing, infrastructure and essential services needed to support a growing, resilient and investable region.

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
6. Regional Housing Supply Acceleration Accelerate housing supply across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire through coordinated housing activation, enabling infrastructure investment and regionally significant housing delivery initiatives.	Build a shared, prioritised regional housing pipeline covering housing-ready land, enabling infrastructure needs and regionally significant projects, feeding directly into the NSW Housing Delivery Authority's fast-track pathway. Coordinate regional advocacy for funding, investment and policy settings that accelerate housing supply and improve delivery certainty.	- Establish a Regional Housing Activation Program that supports the development of a Regional Housing Strategy that identifies, prioritises and coordinates housing-ready land, enabling infrastructure and regionally significant housing projects across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire. - Prioritise regionally significant housing activation projects capable of accelerating housing supply outcomes across the region. - Unlock housing-ready land through targeted investment in water, sewer, transport and enabling infrastructure. - Develop a coordinated regional housing pipeline aligned to workforce needs, regional growth centres and emerging employment opportunities. - Build partnerships between government, industry, community housing providers and institutional investors to co-fund delivery.	Regional housing shortages are constraining workforce participation, business sustainability, community wellbeing and long-term regional prosperity. Housing was consistently identified as one of the region's most urgent economic and social challenges, with impacts being felt across all sectors and communities. The scale of this challenge is formally recognised under the National Housing Accord; NSW has committed to delivering 377,000 new homes by 2029 as its share of the national 1.2m target. The Northern Rivers sits within the NSW target – with no specific local target set (and does not recognise the loss of homes from the 2022 weather event).	Build the homes the region needs to support workforce participation, business sustainability and long-term regional prosperity.	2026 - 2029; ongoing	Attitudinal + Grant funding

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
7. Housing Diversity & Choice Expand housing choice across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire through workforce housing, key worker accommodation, medium-density, missing-middle, rural lands housing, ageing-in-place and other innovative models suited to regional and rural conditions.	Accelerate delivery of workforce housing and key worker accommodation by activating appropriate precinct sites across each LGA (linked to Catalyst 10.C3) to support business, industry and infrastructure projects experiencing critical labour shortages.	▪ Draw on the Northern Rivers Regional Pattern Book (Rec # 18) to speed up delivery of medium-density, missing-middle and rural lands housing typologies suited to regional conditions. ▪ Support development of medium-density and missing-middle housing options in regional centres, town centres and strategic growth locations. ▪ Promote housing models that support ageing-in-place, intergenerational living and changing household needs. ▪ Expand housing options for young people, essential workers and smaller households through targeted housing initiatives. ▪ Encourage innovative housing typologies including adaptable housing, co-housing and community-led housing models that improve affordability and housing choice. ▪ Advocate for planning settings and demonstration projects that support greater housing diversity while maintaining local character and liveability.	Consultation highlighted the lack of housing diversity impacting workforce attraction, affordability, ageing in place and access to appropriate housing options across the region. Stakeholders identified the need for broader range of housing products that better reflect changing demographics, household composition and workforce needs. This is supported by data: the NSW Government's <i>North Coast Housing Market Snapshot</i> shows that studio and one-bedroom homes make up just 5.5% of the region's housing stock, despite lone person and couple only households making up a large and growing share of the region's households. This mismatch is a significant constraint for downsizers and first home buyers.	Provide practical and diverse housing options that support workers, families, older residents, young people and changing community needs to strengthen community sustainability, liveability and workforce participation.	2026 - 2029	Attitudinal + Grant funding

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
8. Housing & Enabling Infrastructure Prioritise enabling infrastructure investment required to unlock housing and employment growth across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire.	Work with the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation (NORJO) to define shared, consistent 'development-ready land' criteria across the region's councils, and profile land against them to prioritise enabling infrastructure investment. Connect infrastructure delivery with long-term settlement, workforce and economic development priorities, housing activation and investment readiness objectives.	- Identify infrastructure bottlenecks and servicing gaps limiting housing and employment land activation. - Prioritise water, sewer, transport, utility and energy infrastructure upgrades required to unlock already zoned development sites. - Activate coordinated infrastructure investment that supports housing supply, industrial growth and regional service capacity. - Support Northern Rivers councils and Rous County Council to access NSW enabling-infrastructure funding, such as the Low Cost Loans Initiative, to bring forward the water, sewer, road and servicing upgrades that unlock housing. - Develop a coordinated regional enabling infrastructure pipeline, sequencing priority projects across the region's councils so investment is targeted where it unlocks the most housing and employment land.	Infrastructure constraints including water, sewer, energy, roads and servicing capacity are limiting housing delivery, employment growth and investment readiness. The upfront cost of enabling infrastructure is one of the biggest barriers to new housing in regional NSW and dedicated NSW programs now exist to help address it, including the Low Cost Loans Initiative which covers half the interest cost on eligible council infrastructure loans and in its current round, is open to the region's councils. Coordinating the region's infrastructure priorities positions the region to compete strongly for this funding and unlock development-ready land at scale.	Deliver the critical infrastructure capacity needed to support housing growth, industrial activation and long-term regional investment confidence.	2026 - 2029; 2030 →	Attitudinal + Major capital

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
9. Regional Transport Connectivity Improve regional transport connectivity and movement corridors to support workforce access, freight efficiency, service access, community and visitor movement and economic participation across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire.	Publish 'key journey' report cards auditing transport service provision for the region's main travel segments (workforce commuters, freight, students and visitors), aligned to the NSW 20 Year Transport Plan (North Coast) to guide priority investment Connect transport improvements to housing growth, economic participation and regional productivity outcomes.	- Identify priority regional transport corridors, movement bottlenecks and connectivity gaps impacting communities and industry. - Prioritise upgrades to key road, freight and transport connections across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire. - Prioritise a connected, resilient intra-regional road network that links the regions towns, villages and centres, supports freight and industry and maintains access during and after natural disasters. - Activate investment in transport infrastructure that improves workforce movement, freight efficiency and service access - Potential upgrades include regional road and freight corridor improvements, regional bus network upgrades, airport and interchange connectivity, and transport investment aligned to housing growth areas identified through regional and local planning.	Stakeholders identified transport constraints impacting workforce mobility, freight movement, service access, visitor connectivity and regional productivity. The Draft North Coast Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan supports this focus through a 20yr framework for public transport, active transport, roads and freight, with priorities including regional connectivity, resilient networks, reduced transport disadvantage and support for the visitor economy. Recent NSW Budget commitments also reinforce the need for continued roads and transport resilience, inc. planning for M1 upgrades from Tweed Heads to Byron Bay and major investment to restore North Coast roads and essential public assets damaged by natural disasters.	Strengthen regional movement, accessibility and economic connectivity by improving transport corridors that support people, businesses, freight, visitors and access to essential services.	2026 - 2029; 2030 →	Attitudinal + Seed + Grant funding

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
10. Essential Services and Community Infrastructure Prioritise essential service and community infrastructure investment required to support population growth, workforce needs and regional liveability across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire, with a focus on strengthening childcare access to retain and attract families and skilled workers.	Initiate and publish a regional essential services and community infrastructure gap analysis, including childcare services, aligned to population growth forecasts, to guide state and local government investment priorities in the region.	▪ Identify essential service and community infrastructure gaps impacting population growth, workforce participation and liveability across the region. ▪ Prioritise investment in childcare, schools, community facilities, emergency services and regional service infrastructure aligned to growth areas and community need. ▪ Activate coordinated infrastructure delivery and sequencing that supports housing growth, workforce attraction and long-term regional service access. ▪ Connect community infrastructure to liveability, economic participation and long-term regional resilience outcomes. ▪ Sequence community infrastructure investment against regional growth areas and settlement plans as they are updated. ▪ Work with local councils, both as direct childcare providers and as the planning authority for new centres, to identify priority sites for childcare expansion across the region.	Growing pressure on childcare, education, health access, emergency services and community infrastructure associated with population growth, housing demand and workforce attraction challenges. Strengthening childcare is a genuine opportunity to help the region retain and attract families and skilled workers it needs, particularly as many regional communities remain underserved for early childhood places. The Commonwealth's Building Early Education Fund and NSW Regional Development Trust are funding childcare expansion in comparable regional areas, and evidence confirms council-run services are effective in supporting regional and vulnerable families.	Ensure the region has the schools, childcare, health access, community facilities and essential services needed to support growing communities, workforce participation and long-term regional confidence.	2026 - 2029; 2030 →	Attitudinal + Seed + Grant funding

3. TogethER

Creating a strong regional identity, shared narrative and sense of belonging that strengthens liveability, community cohesion and long-term regional value.

TogethER recognises that the Northern Rivers' identity, culture, creativity, landscapes and local stories are core regional assets. Liveability is shaped not only by services and infrastructure, but by public spaces, walkability, access to nature, arts, culture, community expression and the everyday experiences that make people feel connected to place.

This Domain supports the distinct identity of each town, village, regional city and LGA while strengthening the shared regional narrative. It reflects the ProspER approach of backing local difference while connecting the region around common purpose, recognising that the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire is stronger when its individual place stories are understood as part of a connected whole.

TogethER also connects regional identity to the visitor economy, creative industries and experience development. Nature-based tourism, Aboriginal cultural tourism, food and provenance experiences, cultural programming and creative industry clusters are part of how the region builds belonging, strengthens community life and creates long-term regional value.

3. TogethER

Creating a strong regional identity, shared narrative and sense of belonging that strengthens liveability, community cohesion and long-term regional value.

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
11. Liveability, Public Spaces & Community Connection Strengthen regional liveability through investment in public spaces, recreation, cultural infrastructure and community connection initiatives across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire.	Work with local councils to identify and prioritise public space, recreation and cultural infrastructure opportunities across LGA's, coordinated regionally through Prosper partners and initiate open planning and investment pathways for public realm improvements. Support Local Councils to secure funding, incl. the Better Open Spaces Program & the NSW Infrastructure Grants program.	▪ Deliver projects that activate community use, wellbeing and place identity across existing public spaces. ▪ Involve communities, particularly young people, directly in the design and activation of public spaces through co-design processes and participatory place-making programs. ▪ Apply Play Australia's <i>State of Play 2025</i> findings and 'risky play' principles when designing new and upgraded public spaces, ensuring children's outdoor play is a genuine priority. ▪ Work with developers and local councils to ensure development contributions for public open space, required as part of housing growth, prioritise high-quality play and community infrastructure, recognising the genuine property and business value that quality public space creates.	Strong community feedback on liveability, public realm, community and wellbeing and the importance of attractive and activated places across the region for wellbeing and community building outcomes. Play is a core neurological development, not just recreation: active play measurably boosts brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF), essential for healthy brain development and linked to long-term mental and physical health outcomes (Play Australia, <i>State of Play 2025</i>).	Create places where people feel connected, active and proud to live by investing in public spaces, community infrastructure and the everyday places that shape wellbeing and belonging.	2026 - 2029; ongoing	Attitudinal + Grant funding

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
12. Walkability, Recreation & Nature Access Enhance walkability, recreation and access to the Northern Rivers' natural landscapes, waterways and open spaces to support healthier communities, stronger connections to place and everyday liveability across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire.	Advocate for and support all stakeholders to work together, including Transport for NSW to develop a 'Cycling Northern Rivers' plan, mapping all cycling routes & associated infrastructure across the region - linking to the Northern Rivers Rail Trail (Catalyst 10. C8) to promote active transport and recreation.	▪ Support councils to strengthen walkability and civic spaces, so residents of all ages and ability can move safely around their towns and reach the places they need. ▪ Prioritise walkable connections to everyday destinations (shops, schools, health, transport and community facilities). ▪ Identify priority walking, cycling, recreation and nature-access infrastructure opportunities regionally. ▪ Open planning and investment pathways for active, inclusive and nature-based infrastructure. ▪ Deliver projects that improve access to parks, waterways, lookouts, trails and natural assets. ▪ Back major regional trail and nature assets, including Angry Bull Trails in Tenterfield Shire, the new Mallanganee Observatory and Northern Rivers Rail Trail. ▪ Build safe walking, cycling and recreation connections within towns, villages and regional centres.	Highlighted the importance of access to parks, waterways, walking and cycling routes, recreation areas and natural assets in supporting active lifestyles, mental health, community connection and regional liveability. The region's landscapes and natural environment are major strengths that shape local identity, wellbeing and visitor appeal. Everyday walkability also matters for inclusion (safe connected civic spaces access). The region already has significant nature-access assets with the realised potential of the 132km of Northern Rivers Rail Trail, the Mallanganee Observatory in Kyogle and Angry Bull Trails in Tenterfield alongside World Heritage listed Gondwana Rainforests and national parks across the region.	Encourage healthier lifestyles and stronger connections to place by making it easier for people of all ages and abilities to walk, ride, recreate and enjoy the region's natural landscapes, waterways and everyday public spaces.	2026 - 2029; 2030 →	Attitudinal + Grant funding + partnerships

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
13. Arts, Culture & Community Expression Strengthen arts, cultural activity, storytelling and community expression across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire to build belonging, celebrate the distinct identity of each place, and tell the shared story of a region that is greater than the sum of its parts to support vibrant, connected communities.	Enable and celebrate the region's cultural voice in all of its diversity, from First Nations storytelling and truth-telling, led by First Nations people as the region's oldest and continuing culture, to the many community, multicultural and young creative voices that make up the region today. Connect arts and cultural activity to wellbeing, participation, visitor economy and place outcomes.	▪ Identify opportunities to strengthen cultural programming, storytelling, community events and local creative participation. ▪ Activate a coordinated calendar of cultural, creative and community experiences through a Regional Experiences hub on the Northern Rivers brand website and social channels, as a central, trusted place to find the region's cultural events, programming and community experiences. ▪ Fund and support local artists, cultural organisations, community groups and event organisers. ▪ Commission storytelling, public art, performance and festival activity to reflect local identity and community voice. ▪ Embed arts, storytelling, public art and cultural interpretation into town centre activation, gateways, arrival experiences and public realm improvements where appropriate. ▪ Align cultural programming with regional identity, First Nations storytelling and local place narratives.	Strong creative and cultural identity across the region, with arts, events, storytelling and community expression playing an important role in community cohesion, local identity, wellbeing, recovery and visitor experience. Stakeholders talked about the value of cultural activity in helping communities gather, participate, share stories and strengthen belonging. An important factor in retaining and attracting people and skilled workers. This aligns with national evidence on the wellbeing and social connection benefits of arts participation, and with NSW Government policy recognising arts, culture and creative industries as central to vibrant communities, regional participation and economic value.	Celebrate the region's creativity, diversity and cultural identity through arts, storytelling and community expression that bring people together, strengthen belonging and give voice to the many stories of place.	2026 - 2029	Attitudinal + Seed

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
14. Nature-Based & Cultural Tourism Strengthen nature-based and Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences that connect visitors with the Northern Rivers' landscapes, stories, stewardship and Country across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire.	Identify priority opportunities for nature-based and Aboriginal cultural tourism development across the region with a focus on First Nations-led experiences, landscape and trail-based visitor experiences, cultural storytelling, regional dispersal and partnerships that support stewardship, enterprise and local benefit.	▪ Support First Nations-led tourism experiences that are culturally appropriate, locally governed and grounded in Country. ▪ Build partnerships with First Nations communities, Local Aboriginal Land Councils, Traditional Owner groups, land managers, tourism operators, councils and industry bodies. ▪ Develop new and enhanced visitor experiences linked to landscapes, waterways, rail trails, walking trails, national parks, cultural stories, food, provenance and local place narratives. ▪ Improve visitor interpretation, wayfinding, journey planning to support region dispersal. ▪ Support product development, mentoring and business capability for nature-based, cultural and First Nations tourism operators. ▪ Connect and align nature-based tourism with stewardship, cultural authority, local employment and regional visitor economy outcomes.	Stakeholders highlighted the region's strong natural assets, distinctive landscapes and growing demand for experience-led tourism grounded in nature, culture and local identity. Opportunities were identified to support First Nations-led tourism, strengthen partnerships with land managers and operators, improve visitor dispersal and create experiences that respect Country, support stewardship and generate regional value. It is recognised that the region's natural and cultural assets are not just attractions. They are living landscapes, stories and places that require respectful, locally led and sustainable approaches to visitor experience development.	Deepen the connection between visitors and the region's nature, culture and Country through experiences grounded in stewardship, learning, respect and connection.	2026 - 2029; 2030 →	Attitudinal + Partner investment

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
15. Food, Provenance & Regional Experiences Strengthen food, farm, agritourism and provenance-based visitor experiences, including First Nations-led experiences, that connect visitors with the region's producers, landscapes, stories and distinctive local identity.	Re-establish a regional food and provenance network, building on the legacy of Northern Rivers Food, to connect producers, tourism bodies, hospitality, councils and industry partners around shared promotion, events, trails, itineraries, capability building and advocacy.	- Identify and develop food, farm, agritourism and provenance-based visitor experiences across the region. - Build collaboration between producers, tourism operators, hospitality businesses, First Nations enterprises and local communities. - Support agritourism experiences that diversify farm income and showcase regenerative and place-based agricultural practices. - Support First Nations-led food, cultural and provenance experiences where culturally appropriate and locally governed. - Enable local councils to facilitate agritourism development approvals and share planning case studies across the region, reducing approval friction for farm-based visitor experiences. - Support producer and operator readiness to develop bookable, visitor-ready food, farm and provenance experiences that can be packaged through tourism, hospitality and accommodation channels.	Northern Rivers' strong food, farming and provenance identity, growing demand for authentic visitor experiences and opportunities to better connect agriculture, hospitality, tourism and regional storytelling. Engagement identified potential to support farm diversification, local value-add, First Nations-led experiences and visitor experiences grounded in landscape, stewardship and place. This aligns with NSW visitor economy priorities emphasising immersive, high-quality visitor experiences showcasing regional landscapes and produce, and with Destination North Coast priorities to strengthen distinctive food and agritourism offerings as part of a competitive regional visitor economy and work done on the Northern Rivers brand development, place brand story and provenance strengths.	Position the region's identity as a place of quality food, agriculture and authentic experience by connecting visitors more closely to producers, landscapes, stewardship and local stories and leveraging the Northern Rivers place brand and provenance story.	2026 - 2029; 2030 →	Attitudinal + Seed + Partner investment

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
16. Creative Industries, Culture & Regional Identity Strengthen creative industry clusters, Aboriginal artists and cultural enterprises across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire to grow creative employment, cultural expression, enterprise development and regional identity.	Champion Arts Northern Rivers, in partnership with regional creative networks, to build on its sector mapping and strategy work to strengthen creative industry clusters, visibility and enterprise pathways.	- Identify opportunities to strengthen creative industry clusters, cultural enterprise and creative collaboration across the region. - Build networks, partnerships and platforms that support creative practitioners, Aboriginal artists, cultural leaders and creative businesses. - Support initiatives that strengthen creative enterprise development, market access, professional pathways and sustainable creative careers. - Improve visibility of the region's creative industries through coordinated promotion, sector storytelling and regional showcases. - Connect creative industries with tourism, events, education, digital content, screen, design and place-based economic development opportunities. - Commission projects that celebrate local identity, creativity, storytelling and place-based expression.	Stakeholders highlighted the region's strong creative sector, distinctive cultural identity and opportunity to better recognise creativity as both an economic pillar and a defining part of regional life. This aligns with Arts Northern Rivers' sector mapping and strategy work, including <i>Where We Are Now</i> , and highlights opportunities to strengthen collaboration, visibility, enterprise pathways and support for Aboriginal artists, cultural enterprises and creative practitioners. The region is a nationally recognised creative identity, with creative practitioners, cultural organisations, screen and digital content activity, festivals, artists, makers and cultural enterprises contributing to regional distinctiveness.	Grow the creative economy by backing creative enterprise, Aboriginal artists and cultural visibility, while celebrating the stories, ideas and identity that give the region its distinctive spirit.	2026 - 2029; ongoing	Attitudinal + Seed

4. EnabIER

Providing the planning, policy, regulatory and investment conditions that reduce barriers, unlock capital and support sustainable enterprise development and investment.

EnabIER focuses on the systems, settings and market conditions that allow strong ideas to move into delivery. Across the ProspER process, stakeholders consistently identified that housing, employment land, infrastructure, investment and enterprise opportunities can be slowed by planning complexity, fragmented decision-making, unclear pathways and delivery friction and conversely, and be enhanced by courageous leadership, best practice systems and economic confidence.

This Domain seeks to create the conditions for investment readiness and practical delivery. It supports regional housing delivery reform, diverse housing pathways, serviced and flood-resilient industrial land, freight and logistics efficiency, procurement visibility, digital connectivity and coordinated investment intelligence and facilitation.

EnabIER also recognises that place, visitor/creative economy opportunities and local procurement need enabling pathways. City, town and village centre activation, eco-accommodation, visitor infrastructure, accommodation renewal, cross-border mobility and creative production infrastructure all require the right mix of planning, data, investment facilitation and partnership support to move from opportunity to outcome.

4. Enabler

Providing the planning, policy, regulatory and investment conditions that reduce barriers, unlock capital and support sustainable enterprise development and investment.

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
17. Housing Delivery Reform Reform and align regional housing delivery systems to reduce planning friction, improve infrastructure coordination delivery and accelerate housing approvals and development outcomes across the Northern Rivers.	Call on NSW Government, working with NORJO, to establish a Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire Housing Delivery Taskforce with a clear mandate, reporting line and delivery program involving councils, State Government agencies, infrastructure providers and industry and housing delivery partners.	▪ Develop a Regional Housing Delivery Roadmap that aligns housing growth, infrastructure sequencing and investment priorities. ▪ Identify and resolve planning, regulatory and infrastructure barriers delaying housing delivery. ▪ Advocate for streamlined approval pathways for regionally significant housing projects and demonstration precincts. ▪ Case-manage regionally significant housing projects, demonstration precincts and enabling infrastructure constraints. ▪ Pilot regional approaches to housing approvals, infrastructure coordination and project facilitation. ▪ Publish regular housing delivery reporting that tracks approvals, commencements, completions and barriers to delivery.	Engagement identified fragmented planning systems, inconsistent approval pathways, infrastructure bottlenecks and coordination between agencies as major barriers to accelerating housing delivery across the region. Housing also constrained by the need to better align land use planning, infrastructure sequencing, development feasibility, approval pathways and cross-agency decision-making. Without a more coordinated delivery system, housing supply will continue to affect workforce attraction, business confidence, community wellbeing and long-term regional liveability.	Accelerate housing delivery through a coordinated regional system that aligns planning, infrastructure, approvals and investment with community and reflects the distinct needs of regional towns, villages and centres.	2026 - 2029	Attitudinal

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
18. Diverse Housing Pathways Enable diverse, innovative and climate-responsive housing models across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield through new delivery pathways, investment partnerships and scalable housing solutions that better reflect regional conditions, community needs and local character.	Convene a Northern Rivers Housing Innovation and Investment Roundtable with government, institutional investors, housing providers, industry and delivery partners to progress practical housing models, investment pathways and pilot projects. Explore financing and investment models that improve feasibility for workforce, affordable and key worker housing. Leverage public land, government programs and private investment to accelerate housing delivery outcomes and consider public private partnerships.	▪ Develop a Northern Rivers Regional Pattern Book of pre-approved housing typologies and design guidance for climate-responsive, regionally appropriate and scalable housing outcomes, including rural lands housing typologies suited to regional conditions. Advocate for NSW Government to adopt it as the region's approved planning pathway, with the Northern Rivers as the pilot site for testing these models. ▪ Pilot modular prefabricated and Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) to improve delivery speed, affordability and resilience. ▪ Support climate-responsive and adaptable housing models that reduce long-term risk and improve community resilience. ▪ Investigate alternative delivery pathways including workforce housing partnerships, community-led housing and innovative tenure models. ▪ Capture and scale successful regional housing delivery innovations.	Stakeholders identified project feasibility challenges, housing affordability pressures, climate resilience considerations and limitations in traditional housing delivery models as barriers to accelerating housing outcomes across the region. New approaches are needed to improve feasibility, affordability and delivery performance. The Northern Rivers also requires housing models that respond to regional conditions, including flood and climate risk, smaller town and village contexts, rural lands, workforce shortages, ageing populations, key worker demand and the need for housing that supports local character.	Unlock more diverse, affordable and resilient housing choices through new models, partnerships and investment pathways that help people live, work and stay in the region.	2026 - 2029	Attitudinal + Partner investment

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
19. Industrial Land & Servicing Unlock serviced, flood-resilient industrial and employment land across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire to support business expansion, investment attraction, manufacturing, logistics, circular economy activity and future industry development.	Convene councils, state agencies, utilities, landowners and industry to establish a regional pipeline of industrial and employment land, accelerate site readiness and resolve servicing, planning, access and feasibility barriers. Advocate for infrastructure investment and sequencing that unlocks development-ready employment land in priority locations.	- Identify and prioritise a regional pipeline of industrial and employment land aligned to industry demand, flood resilience and strategic growth opportunities. - Map key constraints to activation, including servicing, infrastructure, planning, access, ownership and feasibility barriers. - Coordinate servicing pathways across power, water, sewer, transport access, digital infrastructure and flood-resilient site preparation. - Test employment land priorities with industry to ensure future sites respond to manufacturing, logistics, agribusiness, circular economy and future industry needs. - Support place-based employment precinct planning that connects industrial land, workforce access, freight routes, housing growth and local business ecosystems.	Stakeholders identified that limited serviced and flood-resilient industrial and employment land is constraining business expansion, investment attraction, manufacturing capability and job creation. This aligns with the Northern Rivers REDS, North Coast Regional Plan 2041, NSW industrial lands policy work and the Northern Rivers Employment Land Study, which provide a strong platform to prioritise and unlock a clearer pipeline of employment land aligned to industry demand and future growth opportunities. Businesses want to expand locally. New investment can be attracted, and future industries want realistic, financially sustainable places to establish and grow.	Ensure the region has development-ready, flood resilient, employment land capable of supporting investment attraction, business expansion, manufacturing capability and future industry development that aligns with the regions strengths.	2026 - 2029; 2030 →	Attitudinal + Major capital

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
20. Freight & Logistics Efficiency Improve freight and logistics efficiency across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire to strengthen supply chain reliability, market access and competitiveness for producers, manufacturers and freight-dependent industries.	Advocate for targeted upgrades to freight routes, access points, logistics hubs and supporting infrastructure nodes.	- Identify and map freight bottlenecks affecting key industries, corridors, supply chains, logistics routes and market access. - Build an industry-informed evidence base on freight constraints, costs, delays, reliability and future demand. - Enable coordination between producers, manufacturers, freight operators, councils, state agencies and infrastructure providers. - Improve first and last mile freight connections that support producers, industrial areas, employment lands and regional supply chains. - Identify freight resilience and redundancy priorities for critical corridors, bridges, access points and logistics routes affected by flood, landslip, congestion or infrastructure disruption. - Explore and strengthen cross-border freight and logistics networks linking to South East Queensland, ports, airports and major markets to improve reliability, competitiveness and export pathways.	Freight bottlenecks and supply chain inefficiencies impacting agriculture, food production, manufacturing and other freight-dependent industries identified. This aligns with NSW freight reform, the Draft North Coast Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan, the Northern Rivers REDS and the North Coast Regional Plan 2041, and highlights opportunities to improve freight reliability, logistics coordination, market access and regional competitiveness. The region's dispersed settlement pattern, exposure to natural disasters and reliance on cross-regional and cross-border connections make freight reliability, route resilience and first and last mile access critical to business competitiveness.	Enable Northern Rivers and Tenterfield businesses to move goods more efficiently to regional, national and international markets while improving supply chain reliability, export capability and regional competitiveness.	2026 - 2029; 2030 →	Attitudinal + Grant funding

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
21. Local and Regional Procurement Participation Strengthen regional procurement pathways, project visibility and local participation settings across local government, state government and publicly supported investment to increase opportunities for Northern Rivers and Tenterfield businesses maximising long-term regional value.	Business leaders and support networks to collaborate with local and state government, councils, agencies and major delivery partners to improve visibility of upcoming project pipelines, procurement opportunities and funding programs, and create clearer pathways for regional business participation. Establish early market engagement, supplier briefings and industry capability sessions for major projects and funding rounds.	- Strengthen procurement settings and participation pathways that support regional businesses to engage directly and indirectly in publicly funded projects. - Share lessons, procurement approaches and successful participation models across the region to strengthen future delivery. - Improve visibility of upcoming public and publicly supported project pipelines, procurement opportunities and funding programs. - Support tender readiness, compliance, capability building and supply chain participation for local SMEs and regional enterprises. - Improve coordination between government agencies, councils, delivery partners and industry to strengthen local participation outcomes. - Share successful procurement approaches, participation models and local content outcomes across the region.	Engagement identified that limited visibility of future work, procurement complexity and inconsistent pathways into larger and publicly supported projects can reduce regional business participation and make it harder to sustain local employment and workforce capability between project cycles thus impacting regional capability to grow skills and retain workforce. Regional businesses need earlier visibility of project pipelines, clearer procurement pathways and stronger capability support to compete for work, participate in supply chains and retain skills locally. Improving procurement participation ensures government and publicly supported investment creates lasting value for the region.	Increase regional participation and long-term regional value by strengthening procurement pathways and enabling local businesses and industry to contribute to and benefit from government and publicly supported investment.	2026 - 2029; ongoing	Attitudinal

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
22. Regional Investment Intelligence & Opportunity Platform Establish a shared Northern Rivers Regional Investment Intelligence & Opportunity Platform that strengthens regional investment visibility, improves access to strategic data and supports coordinated promotion of investment-ready opportunities across the region.	Develop a shared regional investment intelligence platform that brings together councils, State Government agencies, Destination North Coast, RDA Northern Rivers, Business NSW, Local Chambers and other regional partners around consistent data, opportunity profiling and investment messaging. This work can build on scoping already been undertaken by Business NSW]	▪ Improve visibility of strategic sites, catalyst projects, industry strengths and investment-ready opportunities across the region. ▪ Develop consistent regional investment messaging, profiling and promotion aligned to the Northern Rivers place brand and Prosper priorities. ▪ Integrate regional information relating to land availability, infrastructure, workforce capability, housing and industry opportunity areas. ▪ Build accessible and investor-friendly regional data, mapping and opportunity insights that improve investment confidence and decision-making. ▪ Create a shared evidence base for advocacy, grant applications, investment attraction and major project development. ▪ Maintain a coordinated pipeline of catalyst projects and investment-ready opportunities that can be updated as projects mature.	Stakeholders identified opportunities to strengthen regional coordination, improve visibility of investment opportunities and create a more connected approach to investment attraction across the region. Existing regional initiatives provide a strong foundation to build greater alignment, collaboration and regional impact. At present, information about strategic sites, infrastructure, workforce, housing, industry strengths, catalyst projects and investment opportunities is spread across multiple organisations and platforms. A shared regional intelligence approach would help reduce duplication, strengthen investment confidence and ensure the region presents a more coordinated view of future opportunities.	Provide investors, governments and regional partners with clear, accessible intelligence about the Northern Rivers, so decisions are made with confidence and opportunities are easier to see, support and activate.	2026 - 2029	Seed + Grant funding

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
23. Regional Investment Facilitation & Concierge Service Establish a coordinated Northern Rivers Regional Investment Facilitation & Concierge Service that connects investors, businesses and delivery partners with strategic opportunities, support pathways and regional investment networks.	Establish a shared regional investment facilitation and concierge model involving councils, NSW State Government, RDA Northern Rivers, Business NSW, Destination North Coast and local chambers of commerce with clear roles, referral pathways and a coordinated approach to investor and business expansion enquiries.	▪ Coordinate investor enquiries, project referrals and support pathways across participating regional organisations. ▪ Connect investment-ready projects and regional opportunities with appropriate funding sources, partners and delivery support. ▪ Strengthen collaboration between industry, government and regional stakeholders to improve responsiveness and reduce investment friction. ▪ Support tailored investor engagement, business expansion support and strategic project facilitation across priority sectors. ▪ Explore opportunities for shared governance, data-sharing and coordinated regional investment servicing arrangements. ▪ Use the Regional Investment Intelligence and Opportunity Platform to match enquiries with strategic sites, catalyst projects, industry strengths and investment-ready opportunities.	Stakeholders identified a need for clearer investment pathways, stronger coordination between organisations and more proactive regional support for investment-ready projects and business expansion opportunities. At present, investment and business expansion enquiries can move through multiple organisations, councils, agencies and support pathways. A coordinated concierge model would help reduce friction, improve responsiveness and make it easier for the region to support good investment, business growth and strategic projects that align with ProspER priorities.	Make the Northern Rivers easier to invest in by connecting people, projects and opportunities through a coordinated and collaborative regional facilitation service that helps good ideas find the right pathway, partners and support.	2026 - 2029	Seed + Grant funding

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
24. Advancing Digital Connectivity Strengthen future-ready digital and telecommunications connectivity across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire to support business capability, remote work, education, service delivery, visitor experience, emergency resilience and regional competitiveness.	Advocate for priority digital connectivity projects across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire, backed by a published gap analysis of mobile coverage, internet reliability, network resilience and connectivity needs across communities, business precincts, key corridors, visitor destinations and emergency-prone locations. Identify digital connectivity needs linked to future industries, remote work, creative and digital enterprise, agribusiness, health services and investment attraction.	- Advocate for targeted investment in mobile coverage, high-speed internet, network redundancy and resilient digital infrastructure. - Build an evidence base on business, workforce, education, health, visitor economy and emergency resilience impacts to support investment cases. - Map connectivity gaps affecting town centres, villages, industrial land, visitor destinations, transport corridors, health and education precincts and disaster-prone communities. - Enable collaboration between telecommunications providers, councils, government agencies, major employers, education providers and communities on priority connectivity upgrades. - Support digital inclusion and capability initiatives that help businesses, workers and communities make better use of digital infrastructure.	Stakeholders identified that uneven digital connectivity, mobile coverage and network reliability can limit business operations, remote work, education, service access and emergency resilience. Stronger digital infrastructure is an important foundation for the region's knowledge economy, investment attraction, productivity and participation in future opportunities. Digital connectivity is also a resilience issue. Communities, businesses and visitors rely on reliable communications during natural disasters, road disruptions and emergency events. Improving connectivity would support day-to-day productivity while also strengthening the region's capacity to prepare, respond and recover.	Create a more connected, resilient and future-ready region by improving access to reliable digital infrastructure that supports business, learning, remote work, service delivery and future economic opportunity.	2026 - 2029; 2030 →	Attitudinal + Grant funding

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
25. City, Town and Village Centres Strengthen city, town and village centres across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire as vibrant hubs of local business, community life, visitor activity and place identity through coordinated investment in public domain, placemaking, activation and local enterprise.	Partner with local councils, local chambers of commerce, business communities and place-based stakeholders to develop city, town and village centre revitalisation plans aligned to local identity, economic role community priorities and visitor experience. Strengthen local business, hospitality, creative, cultural and visitor economy opportunities within centres and main streets.	- Invest in public domain improvements including streetscapes, lighting, shade, seating, wayfinding, accessibility and walkability. - Activate centres through events, markets, cultural programming, night-time economy activity and local business participation. - Support the development of events and conferencing spaces (including outdoor) to support local and visitor economy opportunities in town centres. - Encourage mixed-use development, shop-top housing and adaptive reuse that supports centre vitality, housing choice and local character. - Support vacant shop activation, pop-up enterprise, creative use of underutilised spaces and initiatives that bring people back into centres. - Align centre revitalisation with transport access, parking, active transport, public spaces, housing, tourism and local economic development priorities.	Place-based engagement highlighted the importance of town centres, village main streets and local precincts to economic activity, community connection, visitor experience and local identity. Opportunities to support renewal, activation, walkability, housing choice and stronger alignment between public realm investment, local business growth and place-based outcomes. Where people experience the region most directly and shape first impressions, support businesses, provide places for people to gather and influence whether communities feel active, safe, welcoming and full of possibility. Investing here is both an economic development priority and a community wellbeing priority.	Strengthen city, town and village centres as places where business, community life, creativity and local identity come together to create vibrant, welcoming and economically active communities.	2026 - 2029; 2030 →	Attitudinal + Grant funding

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
26. Eco Accommodation & Sustainable Visitor Infrastructure Enable appropriate investment in high-quality eco-accommodation and sustainable visitor infrastructure that supports regional dispersal, visitor yield and nature-based experiences while respecting the Northern Rivers' landscapes, values and long-term stewardship priorities.	Work with Destination North Coast, councils, land managers, tourism operators and investment partners to identify priority gaps, sites and investment opportunities for eco-accommodation and sustainable visitor infrastructure across the region. Identify priority locations, infrastructure gaps and investment opportunities that support nature-based visitor experiences, regional dispersal and visitor yield.	▪ Enable planning, approvals and investment facilitation pathways for high-quality, low-impact tourism development. ▪ Support accommodation and visitor infrastructure that improves access to nature-based experiences while respecting landscape, cultural and environmental values. ▪ Activate investment aligned to environmental stewardship, design quality, local character and long-term place outcomes. ▪ Build investor confidence by clarifying regional priorities, enabling infrastructure needs and expectations for appropriate development. ▪ Connect eco-accommodation and visitor infrastructure opportunities with nature-based tourism, Aboriginal cultural tourism, food and provenance experiences, trails, villages and regional dispersal priorities.	Stakeholders identified growing demand for high-quality, sustainable visitor infrastructure that supports experience-led tourism, regional dispersal and stronger connections to landscape, nature and place. Opportunities exist to attract appropriate investment that strengthens visitor yield while respecting environmental stewardship, local character and long-term place outcomes. The region has strong visitor appeal and the opportunity is to support the right kind of visitor infrastructure in the right places, so that tourism investment strengthens local economies, protects what people value and deepens connection to the region's landscapes and communities.	Grow visitor experiences that reflect the Northern Rivers' landscapes, values and sense of place while supporting appropriate investment, regional dispersal, long-term environmental stewardship and sustainability.	2026 - 2029; 2030 →	Attitudinal + Partner investment

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
27. Accommodation Renewal & Quality Uplift Strengthen and diversify accommodation across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire through renewal, repositioning and quality uplift initiatives, including “Lifting the Stars” as a Catalyst Project (10.C9), to support private investment and improved visitor experience, longer stays and stronger alignment with the region’s brand and values.	Build on Destination North Coast research to identify priority locations, accommodation segments and existing assets for renewal, repositioning, diversification and quality uplift.	▪ Build an evidence base on accommodation gaps, visitor demand, yield, quality expectations, sustainability opportunities and investment barriers. ▪ Enable refurbishment, repositioning and investment pathways for accommodation providers seeking to upgrade, diversify or improve visitor appeal. ▪ Activate "Lifting the Stars" (10. C9) and related quality uplift initiatives in partnership with Destination North Coast, councils, accommodation providers and industry stakeholders to improve sustainability, accessibility, design quality and visitor appeal. ▪ Support diversification of accommodation types that reflect local character, market demand and regional experience strengths.	Visitor economy engagement identified ageing and uneven accommodation stock, growing demand for diverse and high-quality accommodation experiences, and opportunities to improve visitor yield, sustainability, brand alignment and regional dispersal. Renewal of existing assets can strengthen visitor appeal while supporting private investment and local business viability.	Lift the quality, character and diversity of regional accommodation so visitor experiences better reflect the Northern Rivers, support longer stays and strengthen local business viability.	2026 - 2029; 2030 →	Attitudinal + Partner investment

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
28. Cross Border & Regional Mobility Strengthen cross-border rail, public transport and integrated regional mobility opportunities across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire to improve access to employment, education, services, visitor experiences and economic participation while better connecting communities with key regional centres and South East Queensland.	Advocate for improved cross-border rail service frequency, timetable alignment integrated transport planning between NSW and Queensland, for workforce, education, visitor needs and employment opportunities (Kyogle place-based example). Align mobility planning with housing growth, workforce needs, visitor economy priorities, town centre activation and access to essential services.	▪ Enable coordination between NSW and Queensland transport agencies on cross-border connectivity and regional mobility priorities. ▪ Activate evidence gathering on regional mobility demand, usage patterns, workforce access, visitor movement and economic opportunity. ▪ Explore integrated public transport and mobility solutions that improve access between communities, centres, employment areas, education providers, health services and key destinations. ▪ Support intraregional movement solutions that improve access within and between communities, centres and regional destinations. ▪ Strengthen active transport opportunities including safe cycling, walking and connected movement networks that support healthier and more accessible communities.	Place-based engagement (particularly Kyogle) identified opportunities to improve access to employment, education and services through stronger connectivity with South East Queensland. Feedback highlighted workforce mobility constraints, visitor economy opportunities, public transport limitations and the importance of improving movement both between and within communities, centres and key destinations. Emerging state and local transport planning reinforces integrated mobility approaches that combine public transport, active transport, housing and place outcomes.	Better connect people, places and opportunity through regional and cross-border mobility that improves access, participation and everyday liveability across the Northern Rivers.	2026 - 2029; 2030 →	Attitudinal + Grant funding

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
29. Creative Production Infrastructure Support creative production spaces, studios and cultural infrastructure that strengthen the Northern Rivers' creative economy and enable investment, production capability and long-term growth across creative industries.	Use the Regional Investment Intelligence and Opportunity Platform to map existing and potential creative production spaces, studios, cultural infrastructure and supporting assets as a sector-specific data layer, identifying gaps, priority locations and investment opportunities. Support flagship creative production initiatives and demonstration projects that attract investment, showcase capability and accelerate development of the region's creative production ecosystem.	- Identify gaps in affordable, fit-for-purpose creative production spaces, studios, rehearsal spaces, fabrication spaces, recording facilities, screen production infrastructure and cultural infrastructure. - Enable planning, funding and partnership pathways for creative infrastructure investment across councils, cultural organisations, education providers, private landowners, creative businesses and government. - Activate development of studios, hubs, shared production spaces and cultural production facilities supporting creative enterprise and collaboration. - Support adaptive reuse of vacant, underutilised or strategically located buildings for creative production, cultural enterprise and community-facing creative activity. - Support affordable access, shared-use models and long-term tenure arrangements that help artists, makers, producers and creative businesses.	Stakeholder engagement and Arts Northern Rivers' work on Who We Are identified strong demand for affordable and fit-for-purpose creative production spaces, studios and supporting infrastructure to strengthen regional production capability, cultural enterprise and long-term sector growth. Creative industries in the region are constrained not only by market access and visibility, but by the availability of affordable, suitable and secure places to produce work. Strengthening creative production infrastructure would support creative enterprise, retain talent, enable collaboration, attract investment and help convert the region's creative identity into long-term economic and cultural value.	Enable the spaces, studios and infrastructure creative people need to make work, grow enterprises and build the Northern Rivers' reputation as a region of creativity, production and cultural innovation.	2026 - 2029	Attitudinal + Seed

5. EmpowER

Building the skills, workforce, leadership and entrepreneurial capability needed for people, businesses and communities to thrive.

EmpowER recognises that long-term prosperity depends on people having the capability, confidence and opportunity to participate in the region's future. Workforce shortages, skills gaps, leadership development, business capability, youth retention and entrepreneurship all emerged as central priorities through the ProspER process.

This Domain strengthens pathways between education, training, industry, employment and enterprise. It supports school-to-work connections, apprenticeships, traineeships, work-integrated learning, future skills, lifelong learning and clearer regional career pathways across key industries and emerging sectors.

EmpowER also recognises that capability is about aspiration, belonging and leadership. By supporting young people, young professionals, founders, small businesses, established leaders and emerging leaders, the region can build a stronger pipeline of people who choose to stay, return, start businesses, build careers and steward long-term regional outcomes.

5. Empower

Building the skills, workforce, leadership and entrepreneurial capability needed for people, businesses and communities to thrive.

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
30. Workforce Pathways & Industry Connections Expand and better connect workforce pathways across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire by building stronger connections between schools, training providers, universities, employers and industry to support local career opportunities, apprenticeships, traineeships, work placements and industry-connected learning.	Business NSW and regional education and training providers to map existing workforce pathway initiatives, programs and partnerships across schools, TAFE, Community Colleges universities, employers and industry groups identifying gaps, duplication and opportunities for stronger coordination.	- Identify workforce pipeline needs across key regional industries, growth sectors and essential services. - Map and strengthen connections between existing school-to-work, traineeship apprenticeship, work-integrated learning, work experience and industry placement opportunities. - Develop industry-informed career pathway maps for priority sectors, showing local study, training, work experience and employment options. - Coordinate education providers, employers, councils, industry groups and government to improve visibility of and access to local pathways. - Strengthen referral and support pathways for people at risk of falling through workforce gaps, including support to overcome transport and driver licence barriers that limit access to training, work experience and local employment.	Stakeholders identified strong foundations across education, training, industry and workforce development initiatives, alongside opportunities to create clearer and more connected pathways between learning and employment. Engagement showed the importance of strengthening alignment between industry demand, future skills needs, workforce development, local career visibility and long-term regional participation. Business and Industry want to play a greater role in supporting groups like Connect Northern Rivers and make pathways easier to see and navigate, help engage earlier and more consistently.	Create clearer and more accessible pathways into meaningful regional employment and participation by strengthening connections between industry, education, training and local career opportunities.	2026 - 2029; 2030 →	Attitudinal

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
31. Youth Participation & Regional Futures Strengthen youth participation, leadership and decision-making opportunities across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire so young people have a genuine voice in shaping the region's future.	Establish a Northern Rivers Regional Youth Cabinet or Youth Futures Assembly, supported by government and regional partners, using a deliberative citizen-jury style model to provide structured youth input into regional priorities and long-term decision-making.	▪ Industry and education partners to launch a Regional Work Experience Program, self-funded and securing high-value placements with preparatory pre-placement work, to build a cohort of young people for ongoing regional engagement. ▪ Identify opportunities for stronger youth participation across regional planning, leadership and economic development initiatives. ▪ Embed youth input into regional priorities, future planning, implementation activities and major initiatives that will shape the region to 2040. ▪ Support youth-led initiatives and opportunities to test ideas and influence outcomes. ▪ Establish youth engagement pathways across councils, industry, education and community organisations. ▪ Build a continuing cohort of young people who can contribute to ProspER implementation, regional advocacy, leadership development and future planning.	ProspER Youth engagement showed strong interest in contributing to regional decision-making, leadership and future opportunities alongside the need for clearer pathways to remain connected to the region over time. This aligns with broader evidence showing that young people want to be active contributors to decisions that affect their lives and communities. NSW Government's regional youth research consulted 2,000 young people across regional NSW and emphasised the importance of placing young people's voices at the centre of decision-making. Nationally, the 2025 National Youth Survey found that 98% of young people think it is important that government considers their views when making decisions.	Give young people a genuine voice in influencing regional decision-making and shaping the region's future, while strengthening leadership, belonging and long-term connection to place.	2026 - 2029	Seed + Partner investment

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
32. Young Professionals & Talent Retention Strengthen attraction, retention and professional opportunities for young professionals and emerging leaders across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire by connecting career pathways, professional networks, enterprise opportunities, leadership development and regional lifestyle strengths.	Validate barriers and opportunities relating to attraction, retention, career progression and leadership development for young professionals and emerging leaders across the region, including through existing professional networks, employers, industry groups and education partners.	▪ Build on existing professional networks, leadership programs, mentoring and peer communities across industries. ▪ Strengthen the Northern Rivers Young Professionals Network as a regional platform for connection, professional development, and leadership exposure. ▪ Develop mentoring and leadership pathways that connect emerging leaders with senior business, industry, government and community leaders. ▪ Pilot initiatives connecting, entrepreneurship, employment, lifestyle, leadership and community participation. ▪ Support employers to improve career progression, workplace flexibility, professional development and retention strategies for emerging talent. ▪ Promote regional career stories and role models that show young professionals building meaningful careers, enterprises, lives and leadership contribution in the region.	Stakeholders identified opportunities to strengthen career pathways, professional networks and place-based opportunities that encourage young professionals to build their lives, careers, enterprises and leadership contribution within the region. The Regional Australia Institute's 2026 research found that Gen Z is now the most likely cohort to consider moving to regional Australia, with 49% of surveyed metro-based Gen Z respondents contemplating relocation. Career and lifestyle factors are central to this decision, with salary increase, relocation support and faster career progression identified as key factors that would persuade younger workers to take a regional job.	Retain and attract emerging talent by strengthening career opportunity, professional connection, leadership pathways and belonging, so people can build meaningful lives, careers and contribution in the region.	2026 - 2029; 2030 →	Attitudinal + Partner investment

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
33. Future Skills & Workforce Adaptability Strengthen future skills, workforce adaptability and lifelong learning across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire to support people, businesses and communities to respond to technological, demographic, climate, market and industry change, and participate confidently in emerging opportunities.	Convene a Northern Rivers Future Skills Forum, bringing together industry, education and training providers, Local Chambers, employers, councils and workforce partners to translate Business NSW's Skills Report findings into practical upskilling, reskilling and workforce adaptability priorities for the region.	▪ Use Business NSW's Skills Report as a shared evidence base to align education, training, industry and workforce partners around priority upskilling, reskilling and workforce adaptability actions. ▪ Build stronger links between employers, training providers, industry groups and communities to widen access to future skills pathways. ▪ Build on existing education, training, workforce and industry programs that support upskilling, reskilling and lifelong learning. ▪ Support practical future skills pathways in areas such as digital capability, AI adoption, leadership, business productivity, care, construction, climate adaptation, net zero transition, agrifood and advanced manufacturing. ▪ Promote flexible, place-based and lifelong learning options for workers, small businesses, young people, career changers and older workers.	Stakeholders identified the importance of building adaptable capability across industries and communities as technology, climate, markets and workforce needs continue to change. Engagement highlighted opportunities to strengthen digital capability, upskilling, reskilling and practical pathways that support participation in future industries and economic transition. The NSW Skills Plan identifies six critical skills areas: construction, net zero and energy transition, digital and cyber, care and support, agriculture and agrifood, and advanced manufacturing.	Prepare people, businesses and communities to adapt confidently to change and participate in future opportunities through practical skills, lifelong learning and industry-connected capability.	2026 - 2029	Attitudinal + Seed

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
34. Entrepreneurship & Business Capability Strengthen the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire entrepreneurial ecosystem and business capability to support founders, small businesses and emerging enterprises to start, adapt, grow, innovate and contribute to long-term regional prosperity.	Strengthen and scale active founder, entrepreneur and peer-learning networks across the Northern Rivers, including tech, creative, food, agribusiness, regenerative enterprise and small business communities, to accelerate mentoring, investor connection, capability building and enterprise growth. Establish a directory of the networks and their focus areas.	▪ Build on existing business support, mentoring, accelerator, chamber, industry and peer network activity. ▪ Improve access to mentoring, business advice, enterprise development, leadership support and peer learning for founders and small businesses. ▪ Support innovation adoption, digital capability, AI readiness, financial confidence and productivity uplift across sectors. ▪ Target capability support at agribusiness, food manufacturing, creative industries, regenerative enterprise and export-focused businesses. ▪ Strengthen investor readiness, market access and scale-up pathways for high-potential startups, founders and small businesses. ▪ Identify capability gaps and support needs affecting startups, founders, small businesses and emerging enterprises across the region.	Stakeholders highlighted entrepreneurship as a defining regional strength, with strong capability across small business, creative enterprise, food and agribusiness, professional services, regenerative enterprise and emerging industries. Engagement also identified opportunities to build business confidence, innovation adoption, digital capability, mentoring, peer connection and pathways that support enterprise growth, resilience and investment readiness.	Build the confidence, capability and support networks needed for people and businesses to start, adapt and grow enterprises that contribute to regional prosperity.	2026 - 2029; 2030 →	Attitudinal + Seed

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
35. Leadership, Stewardship & Regional Capability Strengthen regional leadership, stewardship and institutional capability across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire so communities, organisations, businesses and regional institutions can collaborate, adapt and shape the region's long-term future.	Create connected leadership and stewardship opportunities across government, community, business, industry, education and regional institutions, enabling emerging and established leaders to build capability, share insight and contribute to long-term regional priorities.	- Strengthen leadership capability and succession pathways across sectors, places and generations. - Run initiatives that build collaboration, strategic thinking, systems leadership and regional problem-solving capability. - Expand pathways for leadership development across business, community, government, education, First Nations leadership and future regional industries. - Build institutional capability and long-term stewardship across organisations, communities and regional networks. - Create opportunities for emerging and established leaders to connect across sectors, places and generations and contribute to region-shaping challenges and opportunities. - Improve participation and representation across First Nations, youth, community, business, industry, government and place-based leadership networks.	Stakeholder engagement reinforced the importance of strong regional leadership, institutional capability and cross-sector collaboration to support succession strengthen the region's capacity to respond to future opportunities and challenges over time. The opportunity to build a deeper, more diverse leadership pipeline across the region, while strengthening institutional and cross-sector capability to navigate complexity, work across boundaries and steward long-term decision.	Build the leadership, stewardship and institutional capabilities needed to sustain regional collaboration, strengthen succession and shape the long-term future of the region for people, planet and place.	2026 - 2029; ongoing	Attitudinal

6. AdaptER

Strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity to respond to climate, environmental and disaster risks while securing communities, business and investment.

AdaptER recognises that resilience is a defining requirement for the Northern Rivers. Flood recovery, climate risk, disaster preparedness, infrastructure vulnerability, energy reliability, water security and business continuity all shape community confidence, investor confidence and long-term regional prosperity.

This Domain supports stronger alignment between ProspER, the Northern Rivers Disaster Adaptation Plan and future infrastructure, settlement and design decisions. It is focused on embedding climate and disaster readiness into the way the region plans, invests, builds and grows.

AdaptER also places river and catchment health, renewable energy, energy reliability and water security at the centre of regional resilience. Healthy rivers, secure water systems, reliable energy and adaptive infrastructure are not separate environmental or utility issues. They are the living and operating systems that support people, communities, industries and future investment.

6. AdaptER

Strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity to respond to climate, environmental and disaster risks while securing communities, business and investment.

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
36. Climate Adaptation & Resilient Infrastructure Embed climate adaptation, disaster preparedness and resilience into infrastructure investment, settlement, business continuity and design decisions across the region, drawing on the evidence, risk insights and actions emerging through the Northern Rivers Disaster Adaptation Plan process.	Maintain alignment between ProspER priorities and the Northern Rivers Disaster Adaptation Plan process, ensuring regional economic development, infrastructure, housing, employment land, business continuity and investment decisions are informed by emerging climate and disaster risk evidence.	▪ NSW Reconstruction Authority, councils and regional partners to work together with infrastructure providers and land managers on adaptation planning, investment priorities and business continuity needs. ▪ Support a Council and Industry Resilience Capability Program that helps councils, businesses and industry partners apply emerging DAP risk insights to planning, investment, asset management, business continuity and local economic resilience. ▪ Identify infrastructure vulnerabilities and adaptation priorities across key regional assets, employment lands, transport routes, town centres, utilities and essential services. ▪ Enable resilient infrastructure planning, design and demonstration opportunities that protect communities, support businesses and strengthen future investment confidence.	Flood recovery experience, increasing climate risk and business continuity pressures reinforced the importance of aligning regional adaptation approaches with long-term resilience, economic participation and future regional capability. Stakeholders identified the need to better integrate climate and disaster risk into long-term infrastructure planning, investment, settlement and growth decisions to strengthen continuity, improve coordination and reduce future disruption across the region. The DAP is currently being developed as NSW's first regional multi-hazard DAP, w to include a regional risk profile across nine hazards.	Build a more adaptive and future-ready region by embedding climate and disaster resilience into infrastructure, planning and investment decisions that protect communities, support business continuity and strengthen long-term regional prosperity.	2026 – 2029; ongoing	Attitudinal

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
37. River & Catchment Health Protect and restore the health of the region's rivers and catchments, starting with the Richmond River, where independent monitoring has graded ecological health C- in every assessment since 2023, recognising rivers and catchments as foundations of the Northern Rivers' culture, identity, agriculture, industry and economy.	Formally support and help scale the Richmond River Ecological Health Program as a leading river health monitoring and reporting model, and explore how its approach can inform monitoring, restoration and reporting across other major Northern Rivers catchments.	▪ Develop a region-wide "Mighty Northern Rivers" education program for schools and communities, building shared understanding of the role every person, place and industry plays in river and catchment health. ▪ Translate river health monitoring findings into practical, supported land use, farming, urban, industry and restoration actions. ▪ Work with Landcare, Local Land Services, councils, industry, landholders, researchers and community partners to prioritise catchment restoration, riparian repair and aquatic habitat improvement. ▪ Ensure Aboriginal cultural knowledge, leadership and Caring for Country principles are embedded in river and catchment health monitoring, restoration and education. ▪ Use river health reporting to strengthen advocacy, investment cases and community accountability for long-term catchment restoration.	Stakeholder and agribusiness roundtable engagement consistently identified the health of the region's rivers and catchments as foundational to community, cultural and economic wellbeing, with participants noting that without healthy Country, the region cannot sustain healthy people, agriculture or industry. The Richmond River Ecological Health Program has graded the river's ecological health C- in each of its three assessments since 2023, citing ongoing impacts from the February 2022 floods, historical land use and compromised aquatic habitat across the catchment.	Restore the health of the region's rivers and catchments as living systems that sustain culture, Country, agriculture, community wellbeing and long-term regional prosperity.	2026 – 2029; ongoing	Attitudinal + Grant funding

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
38. Renewable Energy Pilots Pilot local renewable energy generation, storage, microgrid and embedded network models that strengthen regional energy resilience, reduce vulnerability and demonstrate new economic opportunities for communities, businesses and industry.	Establish a Northern Rivers Local Energy Group (bringing together LGA based groups) to support the Prosper Catalyst Project (10.C2), providing a coordinated regional voice, knowledge-sharing platform and practical pathway for regulatory flexibility, network settings, investment models and pilot opportunities in local energy generation, storage and distribution innovation.	- Identify priority locations and use cases for renewable energy, storage, microgrid and embedded network models, including business precincts, industrial land, essential services, housing developments and state-owned development sites. - Support rooftop solar and storage uptake across business and industry sites, including opportunities for streamlined approvals, group buying, landlord engagement and shared regional support. - Enable partnerships between councils, energy network operators, businesses, energy providers, landholders, developers, research partners and communities. - Support and promote innovative demonstration and investment projects that showcase resilience, local economic value, emissions reduction, business benefit and community benefit. - Explore shared value and local benefit mechanisms so communities hosting renewable energy infrastructure receive lasting regional value.	Engagement identified strong interest in local energy generation and embedded network approaches that improve resilience, strengthen local energy security and support economic opportunity. This aligns with strong local renewable energy uptake, with NSW Government data showing Ballina, Lismore, Tweed and Clarence among the top ten NSW electorates for rooftop solar installations. Broader NSW energy policy is also moving toward more renewable generation and storage, with the NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap targeting at least 12 GW of new renewable generation and 2 GW of long-duration storage by 2030.	Demonstrate how locally generated, stored and distributed energy can improve resilience, reduce vulnerability and create long-term economic and community benefits.	2026 - 2029	Seed + Partner investment

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
39. Energy Reliability & Continuity Strengthen regional energy reliability, continuity, network capacity and connection pathways across communities, businesses, essential services, housing growth and employment lands to support resilience, investment confidence and long-term economic development.	The regional energy network operator, councils, industry and government to coordinate practical projects and partnerships that improve energy continuity during disruption and address network capacity, connection and approval barriers affecting housing, employment land, essential services and regional investment.	▪ Identify critical energy vulnerabilities and continuity risks across communities, businesses, employment lands, emergency facilities and essential services. ▪ Map energy network constraints, connection barriers and upgrade priorities affecting housing delivery, industrial development, business expansion, essential services and regional investment opportunities. ▪ Improve early visibility of future energy demand, connection needs and investment triggers linked to housing growth, industry development, essential services and major projects. ▪ Support regionally coordinated approaches to backup power, storage, microgrids and local energy resilience where they improve reliability and continuity during disruption.	Stakeholders consistently identified energy reliability, network capacity and continuity as increasing constraints to regional growth, housing delivery, business confidence and essential service resilience. The Energy scoping work also identified high energy costs, pricing volatility, capex barriers, approval delays, network capacity constraints and disaster preparedness as key issues affecting businesses, communities and future investment. The Northern Rivers electorates among the top 10 in NSW for installations, reinforce the need for a future-ready distribution network that can manage changing load, local generation, storage, EV infrastructure and new development.	Ensure the region has reliable, resilient and future-ready energy infrastructure that supports communities, essential services, housing growth, business continuity and long-term economic development.	2026 - 2029; 2030 →	Attitudinal + Major capital

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
40. Water Security, Efficiency & Environmental Capacity Strengthen water security, efficient water use, catchment resilience and environmental capacity across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire to support communities, agriculture, industry, housing growth, environmental stewardship and long-term regional prosperity.	Align ProspER priorities with existing regional water strategies, utility planning, catchment planning and environmental management processes, ensuring future growth, industry development, housing, agriculture and resilience priorities are informed by transparent, evidence-based water security and environmental capacity considerations.	▪ Coordinate water security and management approaches across councils, utilities, industries, agriculture, communities, First Nations interests and natural systems. ▪ Identify water security, servicing and environmental capacity constraints affecting housing growth, employment land, agriculture, industry, town centres and future investment. ▪ Support practical water resilience initiatives, including demand management, efficiency, reuse, recycling, leakage reduction, stormwater opportunities, drought preparedness and fit-for-purpose water use. ▪ Build partnerships that improve catchment resilience, environmental health and shared regional outcomes across places, sectors and water systems.	Flood and drought experience, climate variability and increasing pressure on natural and built systems reinforced the importance of strengthening water security and catchment resilience to support future regional productivity, liveability and environmental stewardship. Water security is a business, community and environmental issue. Government sees the need to consider water supply, reliability and security for growing populations through research, analysis and consultation with industry, communities and water managers. Rous County Council's Future Water Project frames water security around meeting community needs to 2060 and beyond, noting the combined pressure of population growth and a changing climate.	Strengthen the water systems, infrastructure and environmental capacity that support communities, business, agriculture, liveability and long-term prosperity, while protecting the natural systems the region depends on.	2026 – 2029; ongoing	Attitudinal + Grant funding

7. TransformER

Transitioning industries, skills and economic systems toward a regenerative, knowledge-driven and innovation-led regional economy.

TransformER recognises that the Northern Rivers is already changing through shifting markets, technology, climate pressures, workforce expectations and new economic opportunities. The aim for ProspER is to build from the region's existing strengths and values in ways that support future industries and long-term opportunity.

This Domain focuses on advanced manufacturing, value-added agriculture and food systems, circular economy, clean technology, knowledge-intensive enterprise, digital and professional services, innovation, entrepreneurship and university-industry collaboration. It supports a more productive, resilient and future-focused regional economy.

TransformER also recognises the opportunity to position the Northern Rivers as a distinctive regenerative and knowledge-enabled economy. Native foods, regenerative agribusiness, circular bioeconomy opportunities, research commercialisation and future-focused enterprise can help the region create value in ways that benefit people, planet and place.

7. TransformER

Transitioning industries, skills and economic systems toward a regenerative, knowledge-driven and innovation-led regional economy.

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
41. Advanced Manufacturing & Production Capability Strengthen advanced manufacturing and production capability across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire by accelerating innovation, technology adoption, modern production methods, shared infrastructure and higher-value regional production.	Develop regional advanced manufacturing pilots and shared capability hubs that test and scale higher-value production capability in areas of emerging regional strength, including Modern Methods of Construction for housing, hemp and natural products, food manufacturing and clean technology.	▪ Support adoption of modern production methods, automation, digital technologies, low-carbon production and productivity-enhancing practices. ▪ Identify priority advanced manufacturing subsectors, regional strengths and future growth opportunities. ▪ Build on existing manufacturing capability, innovation networks, industry partnerships and business support activity. ▪ Enable access to technology, infrastructure, investment, technical advice and industry capability support. ▪ Activate collaboration between manufacturers, researchers, training providers, supply chains and industry partners. ▪ Explore shared infrastructure and collaborative manufacturing arrangements that improve productivity and scale.	Engagement highlighted opportunities to increase productivity, resilience, sovereign capability and value-add manufacturing through technology adoption, innovation and collaboration. Stakeholders identified strong regional foundations in high-quality production (brand value), sustainability, entrepreneurial capability and specialised manufacturing, with opportunities to grow investable strengths in areas such as food, health, natural products, clean technology and niche production.	Build a more productive, resilient and future-focused manufacturing sector by accelerating innovation, technology adoption and regional production capability, turning emerging strengths into higher-value products, stronger supply chains and long-term economic opportunity.	2026 - 2029; 2030 →	Seed + Partner investment

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
42. Value-Added Agriculture, Food & Bio-Based Systems Support transition toward high-value regenerative agribusiness, food manufacturing, bio-based products and circular bioeconomy industries across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire	Support the transition toward high-value regenerative agribusiness, food manufacturing, bio-based products and circular bioeconomy industries across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire, increasing regional value capture from the region's agricultural, food and natural product strengths (linked to Catalyst Project 10. C5).	- Identify priority opportunities for local processing, manufacturing and product diversification across key commodities, food systems, fibre, natural products and bio-based materials. - Enable the infrastructure, investment, technical capability and industry partnerships required to support value-added production. - Activate partnerships between producers, processors, manufacturers, researchers, distributors, retailers and export partners. - Back innovation pathways for premium food, functional food, health, fibre and natural product opportunities that build on the region's provenance and natural advantages. - Support circular bioeconomy opportunities that use agricultural, food and organic waste streams to create new products, materials and manufacturing inputs.	Stakeholders highlighted the region's strong agricultural production base and identified opportunities to increase local processing, product innovation and regional value capture while responding to growing demand for premium and value-added products. Regional data shows food manufacturing in the Northern Rivers is a \$400 million value-add industry, with regional exports exceeding \$1.1 billion. At the NSW level, agrifood is also a major focus sector, with food and beverage production generating \$38.9 billion in annual output and supporting more than 62,000 workers.	Increase regional value capture and industry resilience by expanding local processing, product innovation and market development linked to regenerative agriculture, bio-based products, export growth and future manufacturing opportunities.	2026 - 2029; ongoing	Attitudinal + Partner investment

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
43. Circular Economy & Clean Technology Enable circular economy manufacturing, clean technology, regenerative systems innovation and low-carbon enterprise opportunities across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire, helping businesses reduce waste, improve resource efficiency and create new value from existing materials, by-products and emerging technologies.	Activate demonstration projects, pilot initiatives and cross-sector partnerships focused on resource recovery, clean technology, low-carbon production, climate adaptation solutions and waste-to-value opportunities.	▪ Identify priority circular economy, clean technology and low-carbon enterprise opportunities across key regional industries. ▪ Enable market conditions, procurement pathways, infrastructure and investment that support regenerative production systems, clean technology adoption and climate innovation. ▪ Support circular bioeconomy industries that transform agricultural, food, organic and other regional waste streams into new products, materials and manufacturing opportunities. ▪ Explore circular economy opportunities linked to construction materials, solar panels, batteries, packaging, food waste, organics and other priority regional waste streams. ▪ Support businesses to adopt resource-efficient, low-emissions and waste-reduction practices that improve productivity, resilience and competitiveness.	Industry engagement identified growing interest in circular production, clean technology and regenerative business opportunities that reduce waste, improve resource use and support long-term regional sustainability and industry transition. This aligns with energy scoping work that identified opportunities in training, recycling and reuse of older solar panels and batteries, as well as stronger advocacy for circular economy initiatives linked to future energy systems. Circular economy can move from principle to practice by supporting demonstration projects, procurement pathways, infrastructure, industry capability and investment that turn waste streams, by-products and low-carbon technologies into new regional enterprise opportunities.	Move circular economy and clean technology from principle to practice by supporting businesses to reduce waste, improve resource efficiency, lower emissions and create new regional value from materials, by-products and emerging technologies.	2026 - 2029; 2030 →	Seed + Grant funding

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
44. Northern Rivers Knowledge & Regenerative Economy Grow the Northern Rivers' knowledge-intensive and regenerative economy, including research commercialisation, clean technology, digital enterprise, sustainability services and future-focused business models, into a distinct and investable sector for the region.	Support flagship demonstration initiatives that showcase regional capability, connect industry with research and innovation partners, and accelerate knowledge-intensive enterprise development.	▪ Strengthen pathways between industry, education, research, entrepreneurship and investment to support applied innovation and commercial outcomes. ▪ Support commercialisation pathways that enable ideas, products, services and business models to scale within the region. ▪ Build stronger connections between existing industries and emerging technologies, research capability, digital innovation and regenerative enterprise. ▪ Encourage cross-sector collaboration that accelerates knowledge transfer, capability building and value creation. ▪ Promote regional leadership in regenerative business models, sustainability, clean technology and future economy opportunities. ▪ Improve visibility of the Northern Rivers as a region where knowledge-intensive, regenerative and future-focused enterprises can start, grow and invest.	The Northern Rivers continues to attract talent and enterprise through its lifestyle advantages, strong values around sustainability and diverse industry base. Stakeholders identified opportunities to better connect capability across industry, education and research to accelerate commercialisation and increase impact. Business data shows Professional, Scientific and Technical Services now the 3 rd largest business sector by business count in the region, with 3,445 registered businesses in 2024, an increase of 131 businesses from 2023 pointing to a growing base of knowledge-intensive enterprise such as consulting, design, engineering, technical services, digital capability, research, professional advice and services.	Build lasting economic value for the region by growing knowledge-based, regenerative and future-focused industries into a genuine growth sector alongside the region's traditional strengths.	2026 - 2029; → 2035	Attitudinal + Partner investment

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
45. Digital, Professional & Technical Services Enable the growth, visibility and regional positioning of digital, professional, technical and knowledge-intensive services as a high-value Northern Rivers industry sector that supports service exports, remote work, business productivity and economic diversification.	Support export, market development and collaboration opportunities for service-based businesses, connecting regional firms to national and global markets through industry networks, procurement pathways, digital platforms and professional service clusters.	▪ Identify opportunities for expansion of digital, professional, technical and knowledge-intensive services across the region. ▪ Strengthen access to skilled workforce, digital infrastructure, collaborative business networks and flexible workspaces that support service-based enterprise. ▪ Connect regional firms with national and global service markets through trade, procurement, industry and professional networks. ▪ Encourage clustering, collaboration and visibility of high-value service sectors, including consulting, design, engineering, digital, technical, advisory and specialist business services. ▪ Support service-based businesses to adopt digital tools, AI, cyber security, productivity systems and new service delivery models.	Growth in digital capability, remote work and professional services presents an opportunity to expand high-value employment, attract talent and strengthen regional economic diversification. It was recognised that Digital, Professional & Technical Services businesses are an important part of the region's future economy, and bring specialist expertise, support business productivity, create high-value employment, enable remote and hybrid work, and provide services that can be sold beyond the region without relying only on local population growth. Strengthening this sector helping diversify the economy while giving skilled people more reasons to build careers and enterprises in the region.	Grow the Northern Rivers' digital, professional and technical services sector as a high-value contributor to employment, innovation, business productivity and economic diversification.	2026 - 2029; ongoing	Attitudinal

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
46. Innovation & Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Strengthen the Northern Rivers innovation ecosystem by creating clearer pathways between regional challenges, research capability, industry needs, founders, investors and enterprise support, helping ideas move into commercialisation, investment readiness and scalable regional solutions.	Map and coordinate the region's innovation ecosystem, including incubators, accelerators, research partners, investors, mentors, industry networks, government programs and enterprise support providers, to improve navigation, reduce duplication and strengthen pathways from idea to market. Link ecosystem activity with the EDGE Catalyst Project 10. C6	- Identify gaps in ecosystem coordination, commercialisation support, early-stage investment pathways and innovation infrastructure. - Turn regional challenges and industry needs into a pipeline of innovation opportunities, pilot projects and investable enterprise solutions. - Connect founders, researchers, industry partners, investors and support providers around practical commercialisation and scale-up pathways. - Support innovation challenges, demonstration projects, pitch events and market validation activities that help ideas test, attract partners and progress toward investment. - Improve visibility of the Northern Rivers as a region where innovation-led businesses can test solutions, connect with partners and grow.	Engagement across sectors highlighted opportunities to strengthen pathways from ideas and innovation through to scalable enterprise, investment readiness and practical commercial outcomes. This complements broader business capability work by focusing on the ecosystem around innovation. Innovation-led enterprises need more than business advice. They need clear pathways to research capability, industry problems, pilot environments, customers, investors, demonstration opportunities and commercialisation support. Strengthening this ecosystem would help turn regional challenges and entrepreneurial ideas into scalable solutions, investment-ready ventures and future industry opportunities.	Create stronger pathways from ideas, research and regional challenges through to scalable enterprise, investment readiness and future industry growth across the region.	2026 - 2029; ongoing	Attitudinal + Seed

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
47. University-Industry & Applied Research Collaboration Strengthen collaboration between education providers, research institutions and industry to accelerate applied innovation, workforce capability, commercialisation and future regional enterprise development across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire.	Southern Cross University, TAFE NSW, industry partners, regional businesses and government to identify priority applied research and industry collaboration opportunities aligned to ProspER priorities, and pursue suitable funding pathways including CRC-P, CRC, industry grants, partner investment and other collaborative research programs.	▪ Support collaborative projects that connect education, research and industry to applied innovation, enterprise and regional outcomes. ▪ Identify priority opportunities for collaboration between education providers, researchers and industry aligned to regional strengths and future opportunities. ▪ Strengthen alignment of training, applied research and innovation activity with current and emerging industry needs. ▪ Enable pathways that connect students, researchers, educators and industry with regional employment, entrepreneurship and commercial opportunities. ▪ Build stronger mechanisms for knowledge exchange, commercialisation and shared problem solving across sectors. ▪ Support industry access to education and research capability to accelerate workforce development, innovation and business growth.	Stakeholders identified opportunities to strengthen connections between education, research and industry and build on existing regional capability, including Southern Cross University, TAFE NSW and education partners, to increase collaboration, applied innovation and regional impact. Regional businesses are looking for practical pathways to access research capability, students, technical expertise, training, testing, commercialisation support and collaborative funding. Stronger collaboration can help solve real regional problems, support workforce development, accelerate innovation adoption and turn regional knowledge into commercial and community outcomes.	Translate regional education, research and industry capability into stronger workforce outcomes, applied innovation, commercialisation and future enterprise opportunities.	2026 - 2029	Grant funding + Partner investment

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
48. Native Foods & Botanicals Development Support development of a Northern Rivers native foods and botanicals industry through First Nations-led partnerships, cultural governance, regenerative production, product innovation, processing capability and market development.	Activate pilot enterprises, regenerative cultivation projects and product innovation pathways linked to native foods and botanicals, developed with First Nations leadership and cultural authority.	- Identify priority native food and botanical production, cultivation, processing, product development and market opportunities across the region. - Enable partnerships between First Nations organisations, Traditional Owner groups, Local Aboriginal Land Councils, producers, researchers, hospitality operators, food businesses and market partners. - Support culturally appropriate stewardship, knowledge-sharing and regenerative land management approaches linked to Country. - Develop pathways for First Nations-led enterprise development, training, mentoring, product development and market readiness. - Support processing, branding, provenance, quality assurance and distribution pathways that protect cultural knowledge and strengthen Indigenous economic participation.	Growing interest and demand for native food products and strong alignment with First Nations, enterprise, regenerative production, provenance and visitor economy opportunities identified potential to strengthen Indigenous-led economic participation and future industry development. Native foods and botanicals are connected to Country, culture, knowledge, stewardship and identity. Development of this industry must therefore be First Nations-led, culturally governed and designed to create long-term economic participation, while protecting cultural knowledge and supporting regenerative land and enterprise outcomes.	Support Indigenous-led enterprise development and cultural stewardship by building a native foods and botanicals industry grounded in Country, cultural governance and long-term economic participation.	2026 - 2029; 2030 →	Seed + Partner investment

8. PartnER

Building trust and collaboration across sectors, communities and governments, with a focus on First Nations and cross-border collaboration.

PartnER recognises that the scale and complexity of regional challenges cannot be addressed by any one organisation, sector or level of government alone. ProspER is built on collaboration over competition and seeks to strengthen the relationships, trust and shared action required to deliver long-term outcomes.

This Domain gives practical shape to First Nations leadership, enterprise and cultural stewardship through a proposed Northern Rivers First Nations Economic Development Group and stronger pathways for First Nations-led enterprise across tourism, food, land management, creative industries, procurement and other sectors.

PartnER also strengthens the region's cross-border reality. The Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire share economic, workforce, service, freight, visitor and investment relationships with South East Queensland. Stronger cross-border partnerships and systems alignment can reduce barriers, improve access to opportunity and build regional advantage.

8. PartnER

Building trust and collaboration across sectors, communities and governments, with a focus on First Nations and Cross Border collaboration.

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
49. First Nations Economic Development Group Establish a Northern Rivers First Nations Economic Development Group as a First Nations-led regional mechanism to strengthen economic participation, enterprise development, investment pathways and First Nations leadership in regional planning, decision-making and implementation.	Establish a formal Northern Rivers First Nations Economic Development Group with appropriate First Nations leadership, regional representation, cultural authority, terms of reference and resourcing, including Traditional Owner, Local Aboriginal Land Council, Aboriginal organisation, enterprise and community perspectives.	▪ Enable structured engagement with government, industry, councils, investors and regional stakeholders on economic development priorities. ▪ Partner with the Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce, Business NSW and other business support organisations to strengthen First Nations enterprise development, procurement readiness, mentoring, capability building and investment pathways. ▪ Connect First Nations perspectives and leadership to regional planning, infrastructure, investment and decision-making processes. ▪ Direct programs, partnerships and investment opportunities toward First Nations priorities identified through the Group. ▪ Build mechanisms that strengthen long-term First Nations participation in regional leadership, implementation and economic development.	First Nations Roundtable participants identified strong interest in ongoing leadership, grounded local input and structured engagement to strengthen enterprise development, investment pathways and long-term participation in regional economic opportunities. The Advisory Board championed that a First Nations-led economic development group would provide a stronger regional mechanism for leadership, partnership, cultural authority and practical economic participation.	Create stronger and more coordinated pathways for First Nations leadership, economic participation and decision-making across regional development, investment and enterprise initiatives.	2026 - 2029	Attitudinal

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
50. First Nations Enterprise & Cultural Stewardship Enable growth of First Nations-led enterprise, cultural stewardship and economic participation across key sectors, grounded in Country, cultural authority, community benefit and long-term economic self-determination.	Identify priority opportunities for First Nations-led enterprise across tourism, food and native foods, land and water management, creative industries, procurement, cultural education, caring for Country and other emerging sectors.	▪ Enable access to business support, procurement pathways, partnerships, mentoring, capability building and investment opportunities. ▪ Activate culturally grounded projects and enterprise initiatives led by First Nations communities, organisations and businesses. ▪ Support cultural stewardship, knowledge-sharing and regenerative land and water management approaches linked to Country. ▪ Strengthen pathways for First Nations businesses to participate in regional supply chains, major projects, visitor economy opportunities and public procurement. ▪ Support approaches that protect cultural knowledge, respect cultural authority and ensure benefits flow to First Nations people, organisations and communities.	Roundtable discussions identified opportunities to strengthen First Nations-led enterprise across sectors including tourism, food, land management, procurement and creative industries while supporting cultural stewardship and long-term economic participation. First Nations enterprise development is about cultural authority, stewardship, Country, intergenerational knowledge, economic participation and self-determination and should be First Nations-led and developed in ways that protect cultural knowledge, build capability, strengthen procurement and market access, and create long-term benefit for First Nations people and communities.	Support long-term First Nations economic participation by strengthening enterprise opportunities connected to culture, Country, stewardship, procurement and regional industries.	2026 - 2029, ongoing	Attitudinal + Seed

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
51. Cross-Border Economic Partnership Strengthen cross-border economic partnerships between the Northern Rivers, Tenterfield Shire and South East Queensland (SEQ) to improve business growth, workforce access, investment attraction, industry development and shared regional prosperity.	Reinstate a Cross-Border Leaders Forum, bringing together key regional stakeholders, councils, business and industry groups, regional institutions and the NSW Cross-Border Commissioner to strengthen ongoing economic partnership, advocacy and investment coordination across the Northern Rivers, Tenterfield Shire and SEQ.	- Identify priority cross-border economic opportunities, investment partnerships and shared regional growth sectors with SEQ. - Enable structured collaboration between councils, governments, business groups, education providers, industry bodies and regional institutions across jurisdictions. - Activate joint initiatives focused on workforce mobility, transport connectivity, freight, investment attraction, visitor economy opportunities and industry development. - Coordinate joint advocacy on cross-border opportunities of shared significance. - Strengthen the region's positioning as part of a broader cross-border economy connected to SEQ, while retaining the distinct identity and advantage of the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire.	Stakeholders consistently identified strong economic interdependence with SEQ through workforce movement, investment, freight, service access and shared industry opportunities, creating opportunities for greater coordination and regional advantage. Business, workers, supply chains, visitors, students, investors and services already move across the NSW and Queensland border. A stronger cross-border economic partnership would help the region work more strategically with SEQ, identify shared opportunities, coordinate advocacy and position the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire within a larger economic geography without losing their own regional identity.	Leverage the Northern Rivers' and Tenterfield Shire's proximity to South East Queensland to create stronger economic partnerships, improve regional competitiveness and deliver better outcomes for businesses, workers and communities.	2026 - 2029	Attitudinal

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
52. Cross-Border Systems & Workforce Alignment Improve cross-border workforce mobility, service coordination, training access and policy alignment between the Northern Rivers, Tenterfield Shire and South East Queensland to reduce practical barriers affecting businesses, workers and communities.	Work with the NSW Cross-Border Commissioner, Queensland Government counterparts, councils, employers, education providers and regional organisations to identify and resolve priority workforce, policy, training, transport and service delivery barriers affecting businesses and communities across the border.	▪ Enable collaboration between governments, employers, education providers, councils and regional organisations on practical cross-border solutions. ▪ Identify priority barriers affecting workforce mobility, skills recognition, training access, transport, service delivery and business operations across the border. ▪ Activate coordinated advocacy and implementation initiatives focused on workforce access, training, transport connectivity and service delivery. ▪ Connect cross-border workforce coordination initiatives to emerging Brisbane 2032 workforce, procurement and supply chain opportunities. ▪ Improve information-sharing and referral pathways so businesses, workers and communities can better navigate cross-border services, programs and requirements.	Workers, businesses and communities experience practical barriers relating to workforce mobility, training access, policy differences and service delivery across the border, alongside emerging workforce and infrastructure pressures associated with the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games opportunity. Cross-border alignment is a strategic partnership that can affect everyday business operations, workforce availability, access to training, transport connections, service delivery and the ability of workers and employers to move between jurisdictions efficiently. Addressing these practical barriers would help businesses access skills, workers access opportunities, and communities benefit from stronger regional coordination.	Reduce cross-border barriers that impact businesses, workers and communities while improving regional access to jobs, services, training and economic opportunity.	2026 - 2029; 2030 →	Attitudinal

9. DrivER

Providing governance, accountability and coordination through clear leadership, transparent reporting and shared regional direction to maintain regional trust and momentum.

DrivER focuses on how ProspER moves from strategy to implementation. It recognises that regional plans only create value when there is clear ownership, transparent accountability, coordinated delivery and an agreed process for review and adaptation over time.

This Domain supports the governance and implementation framework required to maintain momentum. It includes shared leadership, clear roles, regional coordination mechanisms, collaborative working groups, implementation pathways and partnership structures that connect councils, industry, institutions, government and community stakeholders around shared priorities.

DrivER also ensures ProspER remains a living regional framework to 2040. Transparent monitoring, reporting, adaptive review, a digital platform and an ongoing activation and evolution process will help track progress, test what is working, respond to changing conditions and keep regional partners engaged over time.

How the DrivER recommendations work together

The DrivER domain provides the operating system for ProspER. These recommendations work together to establish clear governance, coordinate delivery, track progress and keep the plan active, visible and responsive over time.

Recommendation	Role	
#53 ProspER Governance and Implementation Framework	Establishes governance, accountability, roles and decision-making pathways.	Who is responsible for what?
#54 Regional Coordination and Shared Delivery	Supports practical coordination, partnership development and shared delivery.	How do partners work together without duplicating effort?
#55 Regional Monitoring, Reporting and Adaptive Review	Tracks progress, supports transparency and enables evidence-informed review.	How do we know what is working and what needs to change?
#56 ProspER Regional Activation and Evolution Process	Builds engagement, storytelling, ownership and keeps ProspER alive over time.	How do we keep people connected to the plan?

9. DrivER

Providing governance, accountability and coordination through clear leadership, transparent reporting and shared regional direction to maintain regional trust and momentum.

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
53. ProspER Governance & Implementation Framework Establish a ProspER Northern Rivers Governance & Implementation Framework that provides clear accountability, shared leadership, decision-making pathways and coordinated oversight to support implementation and long-term regional outcomes.	With the ProspER Advisory Board as a reference, establish governance structures, leadership roles, terms of reference and implementation responsibilities aligned to ProspER priorities, recommendations and catalyst projects.	▪ Define roles, responsibilities and decision-making pathways across councils, industry, institutions, government, community stakeholders and implementation partners. ▪ Establish accountability mechanisms linked to ProspER recommendations, catalyst projects and regional outcomes. ▪ Formalise partnership mechanisms that connect councils, industry, institutions and communities around shared priorities. ▪ Support transparent communication and regular stakeholder engagement throughout implementation. ▪ Build shared ownership and stewardship of regional outcomes among partners. ▪ Enable governance processes that can adapt as priorities, partnerships and regional conditions evolve.	Stakeholders identified the importance of clear leadership, shared accountability and long-term coordination to maintain regional alignment and support implementation and ongoing evolution of ProspER across councils, industry, institutions and community stakeholders. This makes responsibilities visible, supports shared decision-making and gives partners confidence about how priorities will be progressed and provide enough structure to maintain accountability and regional trust, while remaining flexible enough to adapt as implementation progresses.	Give ProspER a clear structure for accountability, shared leadership and decision-making, so partners understand their roles and can work together with confidence.	2026 - 2029	Attitudinal + Seed

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
54. Regional Coordination & Shared Delivery Establish a regional coordination and shared delivery approach that strengthens collaboration, implementation readiness and partnership development across councils, industry, institutions, government, community stakeholders and delivery partners to support Prosper priorities.	Establish regional coordination mechanisms, such as implementation forums, working groups or a shared secretariat function, to support practical collaboration, partnership development and delivery of Prosper priorities across councils, industry, institutions, government and community stakeholders.	▪ Identify and secure seed and partner resourcing to support regional coordination, facilitation, project scoping, business case development and shared implementation pathways. ▪ Support regular implementation forums, working groups and collaborative leadership networks aligned to priority opportunities. ▪ Coordinate stakeholder engagement to validate, refine and prioritise recommendations, catalyst projects and delivery pathways over time. ▪ Facilitate partnerships, investment opportunities and catalyst activation. ▪ Support development of business cases, funding submissions, project scoping and regional investment opportunities. ▪ Promote collaboration over competition through shared initiatives, practical delivery pathways and clear partner alignment.	Stakeholders consistently identified opportunities to strengthen regional coordination, collaboration and shared implementation approaches that maintain momentum, support partnerships and accelerate delivery across councils, industry, institutions, communities and implementation partners. Regional delivery will require practical coordination between partners, clear pathways for collaboration, shared understanding of priorities and the ability to bring the right organisations together around specific opportunities. Strong coordination will help reduce duplication, align effort and turn shared priorities into practical projects, partnerships and investment.	Turn Prosper's shared priorities into coordinated delivery by helping partners align effort, reduce duplication and work together through practical implementation pathways.	2026 - 2029; ongoing	Attitudinal + Seed+ Partner investment

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
55. Regional Monitoring Reporting & Adaptive Review Establish transparent monitoring, reporting and adaptive review processes that track progress, strengthen accountability and support continuous improvement across ProspER priorities and implementation activity.	Develop a ProspER monitoring, reporting and adaptive review framework that defines indicators, reporting cycles, evidence sources and review processes linked to Domains, Recommendations, Actions, Strategic Intent and Catalyst Projects.	▪ Establish regular reporting and review cycles that track implementation progress, emerging priorities, barriers and outcomes. ▪ Support development of a ProspER digital platform and interactive Recommendations Register that strengthens visibility, participation and implementation transparency. ▪ Support transparent public reporting that strengthens accountability and stakeholder confidence. ▪ Enable adaptive review processes that allow priorities and delivery approaches to evolve over time. ▪ Promote regional learning and continuous improvement through evaluation, collaboration and shared evidence.	Stakeholders identified the importance of maintaining transparency, measuring progress and ensuring ProspER remains responsive to changing conditions, emerging opportunities and long-term regional priorities. Monitoring will help partners understand what is working, where barriers are emerging, where effort needs to shift and how the plan should evolve as regional conditions change over time.	Make ProspER's progress visible, evidence-informed and accountable, so partners can track what is working, respond to what is changing and adapt the plan with confidence.	2026 - 2029; ongoing	Attitudinal + Seed

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
56. ProspER Regional Activation & Evolution Process Establish an ongoing activation and evolution process that supports continued engagement, shared ownership, regional storytelling and long-term refinement of ProspER as a living regional framework to 2040.	Launch the first iteration of the ProspER Plan as a completed regional framework and establish a clear activation process that supports continued engagement, partnership development, visibility and refinement over time.	▪ Deliver targeted engagement and promotion activities to build ownership, understanding and participation across stakeholder groups. ▪ Develop regional positioning and storytelling assets under the ProspER Northern Rivers platform. ▪ Establish feedback and participation pathways that allow recommendations, catalyst projects and actions to evolve as opportunities, partnerships and regional conditions change. ▪ Support development of partnerships, investment opportunities and implementation pathways. ▪ Use implementation experience, regional demonstrations, catalyst activity and success stories to strengthen engagement, investment attraction and ongoing participation.	Stakeholders consistently highlighted the importance of maintaining ownership, visibility and practical pathways that transition ProspER from strategy into implementation while supporting continued engagement and evolution over time. ProspER should not be treated as a static document. Its value will come from how it is used, shared, updated and activated over time. Ongoing engagement, storytelling and visible implementation will help partners and communities understand the plan, see progress, contribute to emerging opportunities and keep the regional framework relevant to 2040.	Keep ProspER visible, relevant and actively used as a living regional framework to 2040, building shared ownership, participation and confidence as regional priorities, partnerships and opportunities evolve.	2026 – 2029; 2030 → 2040	Attitudinal

10. CatalysER

Activating bold, high-impact projects and investable initiatives that unlock system-wide value, demonstrate progress and attract further investment.

CatalysER recognises the importance of visible, high-impact action. Catalyst Projects provide focal points for implementation, advocacy, investment readiness and partnership. They are not the only priorities within ProspER, but they help demonstrate what is possible when the region works together around shared opportunities.

This Domain focuses on projects that can unlock broader system value across health, housing, energy, skills, food and fibre, creative industries, visitor economy, infrastructure, cross-border opportunity, investment attraction and future industries. These projects are designed to build from existing regional strengths, activate under-realised assets, test new approaches and create confidence in delivery.

CatalysER is about turning strategic intent into practical momentum. It provides a pathway to move from opportunity to impact, and from impact to lasting regional advantage.

Catalyst Projects reflected in the Register:

1. Northern Rivers Health & Innovation Precincts
2. Northern Rivers Local Energy & Resilience Pilot
3. Housing on the Ground Demonstration Network
4. Northern Rivers Regional Trade Training Centre
5. Northern Rivers Food, Fibre & Regenerative Industries Hub
6. Northern Rivers EDGE
7. Northern Rivers Film & Content Foundations
8. Northern Rivers Rail Trail Completion & Activation
9. Lifting the Stars Accommodation & Visitor Economy Revitalisation Initiative
10. Transformational Demonstration Projects - The ProspER Demonstration Engine
11. Brisbane 2032 Regional Transformation Initiative
12. Northern Rivers Strategic Investment Campaign

10. CatalysER: Catalyst Projects

Activating bold, high-impact projects and investable initiatives that unlock system-wide value, demonstrate progress and attract further investment.

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
C1. Northern Rivers Health & Innovation Precincts Develop connected Northern Rivers Health & Innovation Precincts that attract investment, grow specialist health services, support health enterprise, strengthen workforce pathways and position the region as a leading centre for healthcare, research and innovation.	Engage Northern NSW Local Health District, health providers, Southern Cross University, councils, industry and government partners to develop a connected Tweed-Lismore-Clarence Health & Innovation Precincts governance model, with clear pathways for research collaboration, specialist service growth, workforce development and health-related enterprise.	- Establish a dedicated enterprise zone or investment pathway for private investment in specialist health services, allied health, digital health and health-related enterprise. - Enable co-location and collaboration between healthcare, education, research, training, commercial innovation and community health activity. - Support health-focused startups, digital health initiatives, innovation pathways and enterprise partnerships linked to regional strengths. - Align workforce development pathways with emerging health, care economy, specialist service and innovation sector needs. - Promote the Northern Rivers nationally as a destination for regional healthcare innovation, research, specialist services and health enterprise development.	The Northern Rivers has significant health infrastructure and service assets, including major investment in Tweed Valley Hospital and established health infrastructure in Lismore and Grafton. These assets create an opportunity to build a connected regional health and innovation ecosystem with broader economic, workforce and enterprise benefits. Current C1 evidence also identifies Westmead Health Precinct as a transferable governance model, anchored by a health district foundation partner and operating under a signed Charter.	Turn the region's existing health infrastructure into a connected platform for specialist services, research, workforce development and health enterprise, strengthening health outcomes while growing a future-focused regional industry.	2026 - 2029 governance and partnership model; 2030 → enterprise and investment pathway	Attitudinal + Partner investment → Major capital

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
C2. Northern Rivers Local Energy & Resilience Pilot Establish a Northern Rivers local energy and resilience pilot that demonstrates locally generated, stored and shared renewable energy systems capable of reducing costs, strengthening reliability, supporting industry growth and improving regional resilience.	Leverage the Northern Rivers Local Energy Group established through Recommendation #38 to identify and secure pilot location(s) capable of demonstrating integrated local energy generation, storage, sharing and resilience models for businesses, communities, essential services, housing or employment precincts.	▪ Pilot embedded network, microgrid, community battery and local storage models that support industrial precincts, housing developments, mixed-use areas, essential services or business clusters. ▪ Form a delivery partnership between local government, energy network operators, energy providers, landholders, developers, businesses, research partners and communities to advance the pilot and secure establishment funding. ▪ Advocate for regulatory flexibility, network settings and connection pathways that support local energy generation, storage, sharing and distribution innovation. ▪ Test how local energy models can reduce costs, improve business continuity, strengthen energy reliability and retain local benefit for communities and industry. ▪ Capture and share lessons relating to resilience, affordability, reliability, local benefit, regulatory barriers and future regional scalability.	Energy engagement identified strong interest in local energy generation, storage and embedded network approaches that improve resilience, strengthen local energy security and support economic opportunity. This aligns with strong rooftop solar uptake across the region and growing interest in models that can reduce costs, improve reliability and retain local benefit. The pilot also responds to energy reliability, network capacity and continuity challenges affecting regional growth, housing delivery, business confidence and essential service resilience. It provides a practical opportunity to test local energy models that strengthen resilience while creating a scalable regional example.	Prove that locally generated, stored and shared energy can reduce costs, improve reliability and strengthen resilience for regional businesses, communities and essential services, creating a practical model that other regional networks could replicate.	2026 - 2029	Seed + Partner investment (regional energy network operator) + Grant funding

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
C3. Housing on the Ground Demonstration Network Deliver a coordinated network of housing demonstration precincts across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire that trial new approaches to housing delivery, enabling infrastructure, construction, financing, procurement and workforce development to accelerate housing outcomes and inform broader regional and state reform.	Identify, secure and establish demonstration precincts with local councils, NSW Government, developers, community housing providers and industry partners, drawing on flood-resilient, infill and diverse housing scenarios already mapped through regional design work as a starting reference, not a delivery mechanism.	▪ Pilot integrated planning, enabling infrastructure sequencing and project delivery approaches that accelerate housing outcomes and improve implementation efficiency. ▪ Test innovative housing delivery models including modular, prefabricated, Modern Methods of Construction, low-carbon, workforce, key worker and diverse housing approaches. ▪ Enable delivery partnerships between councils, industry, education providers, community housing organisations, government agencies, developers and investors. ▪ Activate workforce development pathways linked to housing delivery, including apprenticeships, student-built housing projects and industry-led training opportunities. ▪ Trial innovative procurement, financing and delivery models that improve feasibility, affordability and scalability, while capturing lessons that can be shared across participating locations.	Stakeholders consistently identified the need to move beyond traditional housing approaches and demonstrate practical solutions that can accelerate delivery, reduce cost and improve resilience. Existing regional design and research work, including Living Lab Northern Rivers' Look Ahead project, provides flood-resilient, infill, co-housing, house-raising and urban village scenarios that can be drawn on as a starting point. This Catalyst turns that design thinking and post-flood rebuilding knowledge into delivered demonstration precincts that test planning, infrastructure, construction, financing and partnership models in practice.	Turn regional housing ideas, design scenarios and post-flood rebuilding knowledge into delivered housing precincts that demonstrate how regional Australia can build faster, smarter, more resiliently and at greater scale.	2026 - 2029 (first precinct); 2030 → (network)	Partner investment + Grant funding + Major capital

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
C4. Northern Rivers Regional Trade Training Centre Establish a flagship Northern Rivers Regional Trade Training Centre that delivers industry-connected pathways into construction, infrastructure, renewable energy and emerging trade sectors while supporting the region's long-term housing and workforce needs.	Develop and advocate the investment case for the Northern Rivers to access National Skills Agreement funding, or equivalent Commonwealth-State skills infrastructure funding, to establish a Regional Trade Training Centre aligned to housing, infrastructure, renewable energy and Brisbane 2032 workforce needs.	- Establish the Trade Training Centre in a strategically connected location with strong transport, industry, school and education access. - Develop integrated pathways from school into apprenticeships, traineeships and long-term regional employment. - Create a highly aspirational and industry-led training environment that positions trades and technical careers as exciting, future-focused professions. - Align training delivery with regional housing pipelines, infrastructure projects, renewable energy initiatives, Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) and emerging industry demand. - Embed modern construction, renewable energy and digital trade technologies into training delivery. - Enable partnerships between schools, TAFE, universities, industry, unions and government to strengthen workforce coordination, training pathways and career visibility.	Stakeholders identified significant workforce shortages across construction, housing and infrastructure, alongside a genuine opportunity to build a stronger, future-facing trades industry spanning traditional construction, renewable energy and Modern Methods of Construction. The region also identified strong demand for more aspirational, industry-connected training pathways that engage young people and connect education directly to regional employment. Brisbane 2032 adds urgency, with evidence noting projected construction workforce shortfalls in Queensland and a directly comparable Queensland Construction Tech Centre of Excellence funded through the National Skills Agreement.	Build a flagship Trade Training Centre that turns the region's housing, infrastructure and renewable energy pipeline into a genuine, future-facing career pathway, attracting young people into skilled trades and meaningful careers in the Northern Rivers.	2026 - 2029; 2030 →	Grant funding + Major capital

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
C5. Northern Rivers Food, Fibre & Regenerative Industries Hub Establish a Northern Rivers Food, Fibre and Regenerative Industries Hub that accelerates value-add manufacturing, export growth, circular bioeconomy opportunities, native food development and regenerative agribusiness innovation across the region.	Scope and establish the preferred Northern Rivers Food, Fibre and Regenerative Industries Hub model, including potential options such as an SCU-anchored facility, shared-use infrastructure, a distributed regional network or a hybrid model linked to producers, manufacturers, First Nations enterprises, researchers, export partners and enterprise networks.	▪ Test suitable governance, ownership and investment models, including university partnership, community ownership, equity-based investment, shared-use infrastructure and industry-led delivery options. ▪ Enable shared-use processing, packaging, cold storage, product development and export support infrastructure that improves regional value capture. ▪ Support value-add manufacturing across food, fibre, ingredients, botanicals, nutraceuticals, sustainable materials and native food industries. ▪ Establish business innovation, incubation, market access and export readiness pathways for producers, agribusiness startups and emerging manufacturers. ▪ Support circular bioeconomy, agritech, climate-adapted farming and First Nations enterprise aligned to regenerative production and cultural governance principles.	Agribusiness engagement identified a strong regional production base and opportunities to increase local processing, value-adding, export growth and regional value capture. Food Connect Shed in Brisbane offers a replicable model for addressing the “missing middle” between farm production and market-ready product through shared infrastructure and community-backed investment. This responds to ideas identified across value-added agriculture, circular bioeconomy, native foods, regenerative production and export readiness, helping turn agricultural, food and natural product strengths into higher-value industries, stronger enterprises and future manufacturing opportunities.	Position the Northern Rivers as a recognised regenerative agribusiness region by strengthening local processing, manufacturing, export capability, native food development and enterprise pathways that capture more value from what the region grows and creates.	2026 - 2029	Seed + Partner investment + Grant funding, including community equity where appropriate

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
C6. Northern Rivers EDGE Build Northern Rivers EDGE (Enterprise, Discovery, Growth and Environment) as a nationally distinctive platform for a regenerative, knowledge-enabled regional economy, using the flagship Northern Rivers 100 initiative to identify, accelerate and showcase 100 future-economy ideas, enterprises, pilots and demonstration projects by 2040.	Establish the Northern Rivers EDGE Partnership and launch the inaugural EDGE Challenge, focused on the theme of 'Regeneration: the way we do things', to identify the first cohort of Northern Rivers 100 ideas, enterprises and demonstration opportunities.	▪ Launch Northern Rivers 100 to identify, support and showcase 100 future-economy ideas, enterprises, pilots and demonstration projects by 2040. ▪ Deliver annual EDGE Challenge rounds aligned to strategic regional opportunities including regeneration, food and fibre, housing and construction, health and wellbeing, energy, creative industries and circular economy. ▪ Develop pathways that connect EDGE ideas and enterprises with mentoring, applied research, commercialisation support, pilot environments, industry adoption and investment readiness. ▪ Create an investment and showcase platform that connects ideas and enterprises with capital, partners, procurement opportunities and markets. ▪ Ensure Northern Rivers 100 includes a dedicated pathway for Aboriginal-led innovation and enterprise, developed in partnership with First Nations leadership.	The Northern Rivers has shown growth in professional, scientific and technical services and continues to attract talent, entrepreneurs and values-aligned enterprise due to its lifestyle advantages, sustainability leadership and industry diversity. Stakeholders identified an opportunity to strengthen pathways between industry, research, entrepreneurship, education and investment and position the region as a living demonstration of future regional prosperity. EDGE provides a practical platform to turn that opportunity into visible activity by identifying future-economy ideas, supporting enterprise pathways, showcasing innovation and connecting emerging opportunities to partners, capital and markets.	Demonstrate how a regional economy can build long-term prosperity by connecting enterprise, discovery, growth and environmental stewardship into a visible pipeline of future-economy ideas, enterprises and opportunities.	2026–2029 partnership and launch; 2030 → ongoing to 2040	Attitudinal + Seed + Partner investment + Grant funding

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
C7. Northern Rivers Film & Content Foundations Develop the Northern Rivers Film & Content Foundations initiative to attract major investment, expand production infrastructure and grow the region as a nationally competitive screen, digital content and creative production ecosystem.	Support the establishment and expansion of Foundation Studios and associated regional production infrastructure, while strengthening the workforce, enterprise, supplier and cross-border partnerships needed to grow a sustainable Northern Rivers screen and content industry.	- Secure public and private investment to establish nationally competitive studio, screen and production infrastructure. - Partner with Screenworks to expand crew development, training pathways and industry capability, building on its existing Regional Crew Development Fund. - Strengthen cross-border links with the South East Queensland and Gold Coast production ecosystem. - Expand regional capability across screen production, post-production, digital content, emerging creative technologies and local production services. - Build workforce and enterprise pathways with SCU, TAFE, SAE, local education providers, creative businesses, suppliers and production partners. - Encourage sustainable and low-impact production models aligned to the Northern Rivers' environmental and creative identity.	The Northern Rivers has one of the largest concentrations of creative workers in NSW outside Sydney, alongside a growing creative business sector, strong cultural participation and increasing alignment between creative industries, tourism and regional identity. The region has hosted major international and domestic screen productions. Stakeholder engagement identified strong demand for further creative infrastructure, production facilities, cultural spaces and industry pathways. This Catalyst builds on the region's proven production track record by strengthening infrastructure, workforce capability, local enterprise pathways and cross-border connections with the SEQ screen ecosystem.	Turn the region's creative talent, production track record and screen infrastructure potential into a sustained screen and content industry that creates jobs, grows local enterprise and strengthens the Northern Rivers' national creative profile.	2026 -2029	Partner investment + Grant funding + Major capital

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
C8. Northern Rivers Rail Trail Completion & Activation Complete and activate the remaining sections of the 132km Northern Rivers Rail Trail, building on the 54km already open between Murwillumbah and Lismore, as a proven visitor economy, community connection and place activation asset for the region.	Develop a renewed State and Federal investment case for completing the remaining sections of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail, informed by feedback from the unsuccessful May 2026 application and focused on whole-of-corridor economic, social, visitor and place outcomes.	▪ Coordinate delivery approaches that maximise regional economic, community and visitor outcomes across participating LGAs. ▪ Strengthen business activation, accommodation investment and visitor experience development along the Rail Trail corridor. ▪ Improve transport connections, signage and supporting infrastructure that increase accessibility and regional dispersal. ▪ Support town centre activation, gateway improvements and public realm enhancements that strengthen local identity and visitor experience. ▪ Capture and communicate economic, social and place outcomes to support future investment and long-term regional value. ▪ Embed Aboriginal cultural interpretation, local stories, rail heritage and environmental education along the corridor, developed with Traditional Owners and local communities.	The Northern Rivers Rail Trail's open sections have already attracted more than 300,000 visitors to the Tweed section alone since opening and described as among the nation's leading rail trails. A joint \$42 m Federal application by Byron Shire and Lismore City Councils to extend the trail was unsuccessful in May 2026, reinforcing the need for a renewed regional funding case that builds from proven demand and strengthens the investment proposition. The full 132km corridor would create a signature regional asset with benefits beyond tourism, including town centre activation, small business growth, community connection, active transport, heritage interpretation and stronger dispersal of visitors across participating LGAs.	Complete the Northern Rivers Rail Trail as a signature 132km regional asset that links communities, activates town centres, supports business growth and delivers lasting economic, social and place value.	2026 - 2029 (funding case); 2030 → (delivery)	Seed + Grant funding + Major capital

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
C9. Lifting the Stars Accommodation & Visitor Economy Revitalisation Initiative Deliver the 'Lifting the Stars' initiative to uplift accommodation quality, diversity and investment readiness, stimulate visitor economy investment and strengthen the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire as a high-quality, experience-led destination.	Deliver 'Lifting the Stars' in partnership with Destination North Coast, councils and industry stakeholders, including a prioritised accommodation uplift, investment readiness and visitor economy implementation pathway.	- Identify and prioritise strategic accommodation and visitor economy investment opportunities across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire. - Support accommodation quality, diversity and investment readiness, including boutique, eco-tourism, hinterland, agritourism and experience-led accommodation. - Enable planning, infrastructure and investment pathways that accelerate accommodation and tourism development in priority locations. - Strengthen tourism precincts, experience nodes and regional dispersal opportunities linked to food, nature, culture and agritourism. - Advocate for regional accommodation and visitor economy projects to access the NSW Government's Regional Tourism Activation Fund and other Crown Lands and tourism infrastructure funding mechanisms already backing comparable regional projects.	Research commissioned by Destination North Coast identified significant gaps in accommodation quality, investment readiness and higher-yield visitor infrastructure across the region. Stakeholders highlighted opportunities to strengthen eco-tourism, agritourism, hinterland experiences and destination-based visitation through coordinated accommodation reinvestment and visitor economy development. The Quality Tourism Framework (QTF) Star Rating system is the accreditation benchmark used across regional NSW tourism awards, giving 'Lifting the Stars' a concrete, measurable target: increasing the number and level of Star-Rated properties.	Lift the quality, diversity and investment readiness of accommodation and visitor infrastructure across the region to increase visitor yield, support regional dispersal and strengthen long-term economic value.	2026 - 2029	Grant funding + Partner investment

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
C10. Transformational Demonstration Projects - The ProspER Demonstration Engine Establish the ProspER Demonstration Engine through a series of place-based transformational projects that test new planning, governance, investment and delivery models capable of accelerating regional outcomes and enabling system-level change across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire.	Business and Industry leaders to working with NORJO (Councils), NSW Government and delivery partners, to Identify a first tranche of place-based demonstration projects that test integrated approaches to housing, energy, infrastructure, transport, resilience and economic development.	▪ Select priority demonstration projects with clear systems-change potential, not only sector-specific outcomes. ▪ Pilot new partnership, governance and delivery models that improve coordination across councils, government agencies, industry, investors and communities. ▪ Trial accelerated planning, infrastructure sequencing, approval and investment facilitation approaches, including use of existing mechanisms such as Special Activation Precincts. ▪ Test innovative funding, procurement and public-private partnership models capable of supporting long-term regional development. ▪ Capture, evaluate and share successful demonstrations so they can inform broader regional policy, investment and delivery reform. ▪ Share the outcomes and lessons of Northern Rivers demonstration projects nationally, contributing tested models to regional planning and delivery practice beyond the region.	Stakeholders consistently expressed a strong desire for practical, visible examples of new planning, investment and delivery models, rather than further strategy documents. The intent is to prove that government, industry and regional partners can plan, approve, fund and deliver differently, not simply that a particular sector can innovate. This Catalyst is a systems testbed, distinct from sector-specific innovation. Successful models tested through the ProspER Demonstration Engine could be applied across housing, energy, infrastructure and other regional priorities, helping reduce delivery friction and build confidence in collaborative regional implementation.	Create visible, region wide, place-based demonstrations of new planning, governance, investment and delivery models that accelerate regional outcomes, reduce institutional friction and build confidence in collaborative approaches to economic and community development.	2026 – 2029 scoping and first demonstration /s; 2030 → 2035 Scale and replication	Seed+ Partner investment + Grant funding

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
C11. Brisbane 2032 Regional Transformation Initiative Position and mobilise the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire to capture long-term economic, workforce, visitor economy and investment opportunities associated with the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.	Establish a Northern Rivers 2032 Business Taskforce and launch a Northern Rivers 2032 Ready program to coordinate regional engagement, advocacy, business capability, procurement readiness and cross-border collaboration. Support businesses to become Brisbane 2032 procurement, supply chain, workforce and investment ready.	- Establish collaboration between the NSW and Queensland Cross-Border Commissioners, local councils, regional tourism and development bodies, industry groups and the Brisbane 2032 Organising Committee. - Promote the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire as a visitor economy, accommodation and experience destination linked to Games-time and legacy tourism opportunities. - Align workforce development, trade training and business capability initiatives with Brisbane 2032-related demand and long-term regional opportunity. - Advocate for complementary NSW-side transport, connectivity and enabling infrastructure investment linked to Games-era growth and legacy outcomes. - Embed long-term legacy planning into all regional Brisbane 2032 engagement activities from 2026 onwards.	The Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games represent a once-in-a-generation opportunity for Northern Rivers businesses and industry to build capability, participate in major supply chains, grow workforce pathways, expand the visitor economy and attract long-term investment, provided the region prepares and engages early. The current evidence also notes confirmed engagement from the Brisbane 2032 Organising Committee and identifies the NSW and Queensland Cross-Border Commissioners as natural points of coordination for regional business and industry as this work progresses.	Use Brisbane 2032 as a catalyst to strengthen regional business capability, cross-border collaboration, workforce readiness, visitor economy growth and long-term economic positioning across the Northern Rivers and Tenterfield Shire.	2026 - 2029 readiness and coordination; 2030 → 2032 + legacy	Attitudinal + See+ Partner investment + Grant funding

Recommendation	Priority action	Other indicative actions	Evidence	Strategic intent	Timeline	Investment required
C12. Northern Rivers Strategic Investment Campaign Launch a Northern Rivers Strategic Investment Activation Campaign that positions the region nationally as a destination attracting the next generation of enterprise, talent and investment aligned to long-term regional prosperity, sustainability and advantage.	Develop and launch a Northern Rivers Strategic Investment Activation Campaign, including a flagship regional prospectus, investment narrative, ambassador network and showcase program aligned to catalyst projects, strategic industries and Enabler investment facilitation activity.	▪ Deliver an ambitious Northern Rivers NSW brand campaign that builds on existing brand equity while strengthening value for business, industry, investment attraction and regional sustainability. ▪ Develop a flagship Northern Rivers Regional Prospectus showcasing catalyst projects, strategic industries and investment opportunities. ▪ Appoint respected regional ambassadors and industry champions to promote the region through investment, industry and leadership networks. ▪ Deliver strategic investment showcases, forums and engagement opportunities linked to regional catalyst projects and emerging industries. ▪ Align campaign activity with regional investment intelligence, concierge support and investment facilitation initiatives delivered through Enabler recommendations. ▪ Leverage Brisbane 2032, regional storytelling and place positioning to strengthen nation and international visibility.	Stakeholders identified a need for stronger regional positioning, coordinated investment attraction and greater national visibility of the Northern Rivers as a future-focused regional economy. The region already has a foundation to build on through the Northern Rivers NSW brand, developed since 2019, launched in 2020 and now used by more than 600 registered businesses. A global brand best practice business case confirms the brand is ready for a bigger role, with stronger mutual value between the brand and the businesses that carry it, deeper connection to the region's sustainability credentials and a more ambitious investment attraction campaign.	Use the Northern Rivers NSW brand as a platform for a stronger investment attraction campaign that lifts the region's national visibility, showcases catalyst projects and connects enterprise, talent and capital to long-term regional opportunity.	2026 - 2029	Attitudinal + Seed + Partner investment

ProspER is a shared regional platform, and its success will depend on continued participation, collaboration and partnership.

For more information, to discuss the Plan or to explore opportunities in bringing **ProspER** to life, please contact:

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NOTE: The Recommendations Register is complemented by the ProspER Summary Presentation, the ProspER Themes Guide and ProspER website

