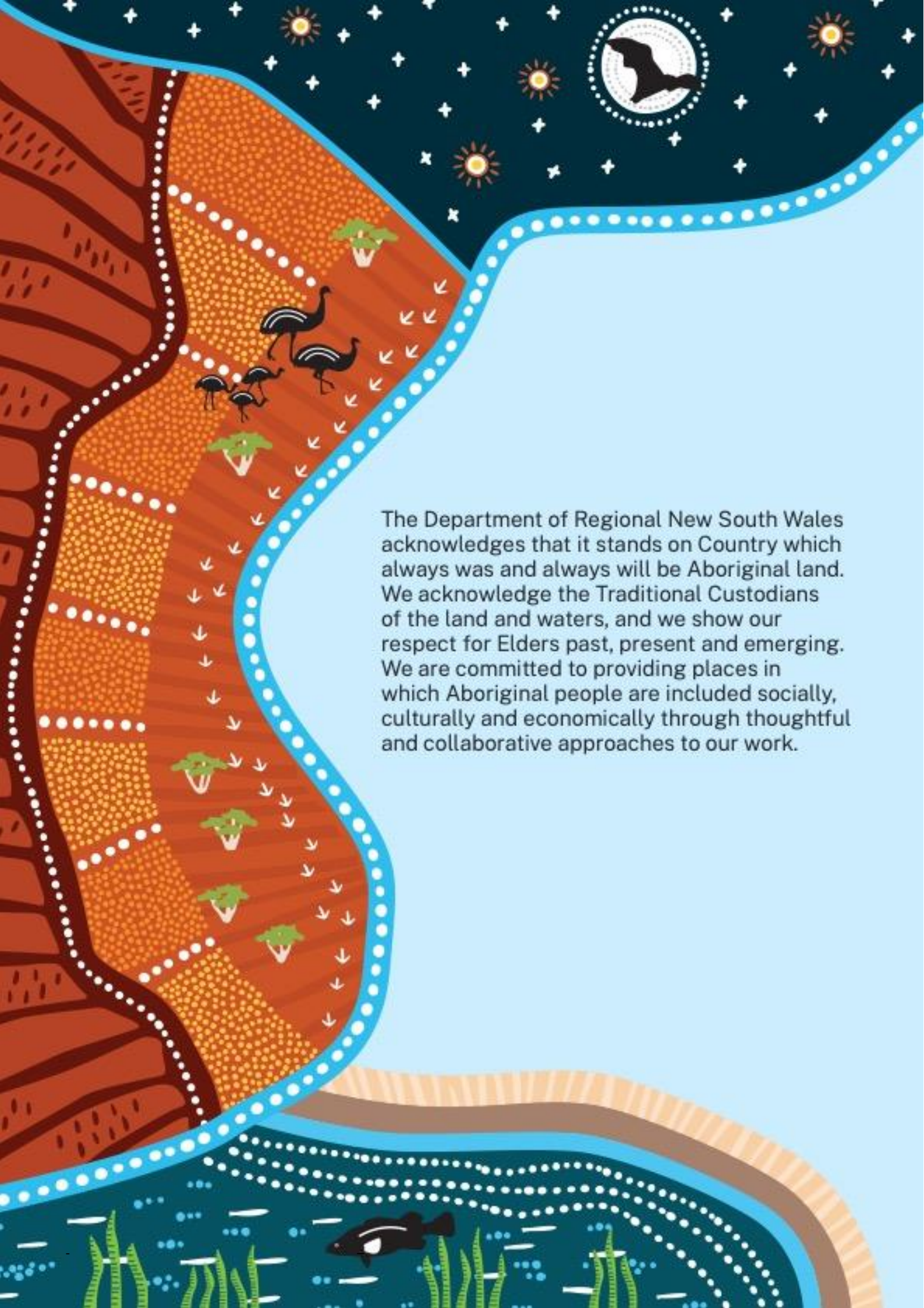


Mid-Lachlan Regional Economic Development Strategy – 2023 Update





The Department of Regional New South Wales acknowledges that it stands on Country which always was and always will be Aboriginal land. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and waters, and we show our respect for Elders past, present and emerging. We are committed to providing places in which Aboriginal people are included socially, culturally and economically through thoughtful and collaborative approaches to our work.

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On Country – Artwork by Mumbulla Creative

"On Country" captures the many different countries located within the Department of Regional NSW footprint. Only part of the image is shown on the Acknowledgement of Country page. The regions included in this partial image are detailed below.

The Far West region of NSW is represented by red earth plains, Mallee scrubs and an abundant emu population. Freshwater countries are referenced by the expansive network of rivers stretching through the regions. The Riverina Murray region is represented by the roots of a river redgum on the banks of a river, and a large Murray Cod can be seen in the river. The night sky features as it plays an important navigational and story-telling role in traditional life.

Cover image: Harvesting in Lachlan Shire. Photo credit: Lachlan Shire Council.

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1. Executive Summary

Changes in the Mid-Lachlan region since 2018

In 2018, the NSW Government developed Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS) for 38 Functional Economic Regions (FERs) across regional NSW. Since publication, regional NSW has endured shocks including bushfires, floods, COVID-19 and the mouse plague, and significant new economic opportunities have emerged. The 2023 REDS Update provides an updated evidence base to guide governments in making policy and investment decisions to enhance resilience and drive sustainable, long-term economic growth in regional NSW.

The Mid-Lachlan region has seen significant investment delivered since 2018, with additional projects in the planning or delivery stages



The **Parkes Special Activation Precinct (SAP)** is set to deliver more than 3,000 jobs in the region, with already more than **\$445 million** in public and private investment.



Newell Highway bypass at Parkes and flood immunity upgrades between West Wyalong and Forbes totalling **\$387 million**.



\$85 million invested into the **Parkes Shire Water Security Program** and the **Condobolin Bores** project.



More than **\$250 million** of planned investment into a number of major **renewable energy projects** across the region

The region has seen unemployment reduce since 2018 and job vacancies increase, while housing vacancy rates are currently very low



Regional population of **29,985** in **2021**.



The proportion of residents **over 55 years** is **35%** of the total population.



Housing vacancy rates sit **below 1%**, with median house prices having risen by an average of **52%** across the region since 2018.



Unemployment sits below the state-wide average, with job vacancies reaching an all-time high of **2,136** in November 2021.

The region's key engine industries have remained resilient despite major shocks since 2018 and are continuing to help fuel economic growth



Agriculture

+6.4% Year-on-Year (YoY) growth from 2011-2020

\$291 million Gross Value Added (GVA) in 2020

2,073 jobs supported in 2021



Mining

-4.2% YoY growth from 2011-2020

\$192 million GVA in 2020

752 jobs supported in 2021



Tourism

+ 1.4% YoY growth from 2011-2020

\$133 million visitor spend in 2021

1,976 jobs supported in 2021



Energy supply (including renewables)

+ 3.5% YoY growth from 2011-2020

\$71 million GVA in 2020

134 jobs supported in 2021

Key themes from local consultation

Stakeholders from the Mid-Lachlan region highlighted enabling growth through long-term planning, economic resilience and smoothing out supply chain constraints as priorities for the region.

Long-term planning



While participants acknowledged the economic opportunities provided by investments in major infrastructure in the region, they emphasised the need to focus on maximising long-term benefits, to smooth growth and ensure it is sustainable and inclusive.

Building resilience



Recent natural disasters, alongside the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on consumer spending and tourism visitation, have brought the need to build principles of resilience into policy, programs and projects to the forefront of many stakeholders' minds.

Supply chain constraints



The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the need for supply chain resilience, with businesses also feeling the impacts of the labour supply shortages. Inland Rail and the Parkes SAP were highlighted as key investments that can play a role in expanding supply chains in the regions.

Mid-Lachlan REDS – 2023 Update strategies and enablers

Strategies	Enablers
<p>Optimise and grow agriculture by improving supply chain efficiency and quality, market access and communication.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate research and development partnerships between local manufacturing and agricultural businesses to enable growth of value-adding manufacturing and the circular economy. Support councils to use the Connectivity Index Tool following its 2023 release to identify priority locations for upgrades to telecommunications infrastructure.
<p>Provide opportunities to expand the mining and energy generation sectors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support investigation of critical mineral mining opportunities and potential for value-add processing activities, including processing and manufacturing of downstream products. Deliver a Regional Housing Delivery Plan which identifies opportunities to increase housing supply in the region, accounting for the impact of major projects on housing demand.
<p>Address energy and water security constraints for the agriculture, mining, manufacturing and tourism industries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support collaboration between land holders, government and Central West-Orana Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) investors to develop integrated supply chain between mining and energy sectors. Strengthen collaboration between local councils and Essential Energy to facilitate more streamlined planning processes and accelerate energy infrastructure delivery.
<p>Improve local training opportunities to attract and retain a skilled workforce and strengthen local benefit from public and private investments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with local businesses to support skill development in agtech, mining, energy, manufacturing, tourism and health care, and investigate options to develop local apprenticeship schemes within the region. Support local businesses by providing guidance on attracting workers through the Regional Skills Relocation Grant.
<p>Improve access to markets for agriculture, mining and manufacturing by investing in intermodal network resilience and reliability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the infrastructure needs required to connect surrounding businesses to the Parkes SAP and the planned Condobolin Warehousing and Logistics Centre.
<p>Grow the visitor economy in the Mid-Lachlan to diversify the economy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support an expanded and diversified visitor economy offering, including investment in agritourism, cultural and events tourism, and ecotourism, and invest in opportunities to promote the region's visitor profile.

2. About the 2023 REDS Update

In 2018, the NSW Government and local councils developed a series of REDS for 38 Functional Economic Regions (FERs) across regional NSW. FERs are made up of one or more Local Government Areas (LGAs) that work together to create smaller economies with strong economic links.

Supporting the *20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW*, the REDS set out a place-based vision and framework for economic development for each FER. The REDS identify each FER's endowments, industry specialisations and key vulnerabilities and opportunities, and outline economic development strategies and actions to leverage these strengths.

Since 2018, regional NSW has endured many challenges including drought, bushfires, floods, COVID-19 and the mouse plague. At the same time a range of broader state-wide trends and actions continue to change the economic landscape across regional NSW, including digital transformation, increased remote working and the shift towards net zero. These challenges and trends have altered the landscape of economic development in many regions and created new opportunities for growth.

The 2023 REDS Update provides an updated evidence base to guide governments in making policy and investment decisions to enhance resilience and drive sustainable, long-term economic growth in regional NSW. The objectives of the update are to:

- 1. Highlight progress:** reflect on significant initiatives and investments that have supported progress against the key strategies and actions in the 2018 REDS.
- 2. Capture major changes:** identify and assess the impacts of major changes to regional economies since 2018, including the effect of recent shocks such as bushfires, droughts, floods, mouse plague and the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 3. Identify strategic opportunities:** identify key strategic opportunities and vulnerabilities for engine and emerging industries, as well as any changes to local endowments.
- 4. Set the foundation for the future:** review, affirm and/or adjust the 2018 strategies, including consideration of new strategies to meet emerging priorities, to ensure they remain relevant.
- 5. Identify key enablers to guide future action:** develop a non-exhaustive list of priority enabling actions that will support the 2023 REDS Update strategies.



Figure 1: The CSIRO Parkes Observatory at dusk. Photo credit: Parkes Shire Council.



Figure 2: A sculpture at Utes in the Paddock, Condobolin. Photo credit: Lachlan Shire Council.

3. About the Mid-Lachlan region

The Mid-Lachlan FER is situated in central western NSW, around five to six hours drive from Sydney, and is composed of the Forbes, Lachlan and Parkes LGAs. The largest town in the region is Parkes, with Forbes and Condobolin the other major population centres in the region, alongside a number of smaller towns and villages.

The region's location is the point where the Sydney to Perth railway line will intersect with Inland Rail, which creates a strong comparative advantage associated with freight. The region also has major natural endowments of high quality prime agricultural land and significant mineral resources.

Total area covered (km ²)	25,651
Population (2021)	29,985
Forbes	9,383
Lachlan	6,149
Parkes	14,453
Size of the economy (2020)	\$1.892 billion
Total employment (2021)	12,659

Source: ABS Estimated Resident Population, 2021; REMPLAN, 2020; ABS Census, 2021

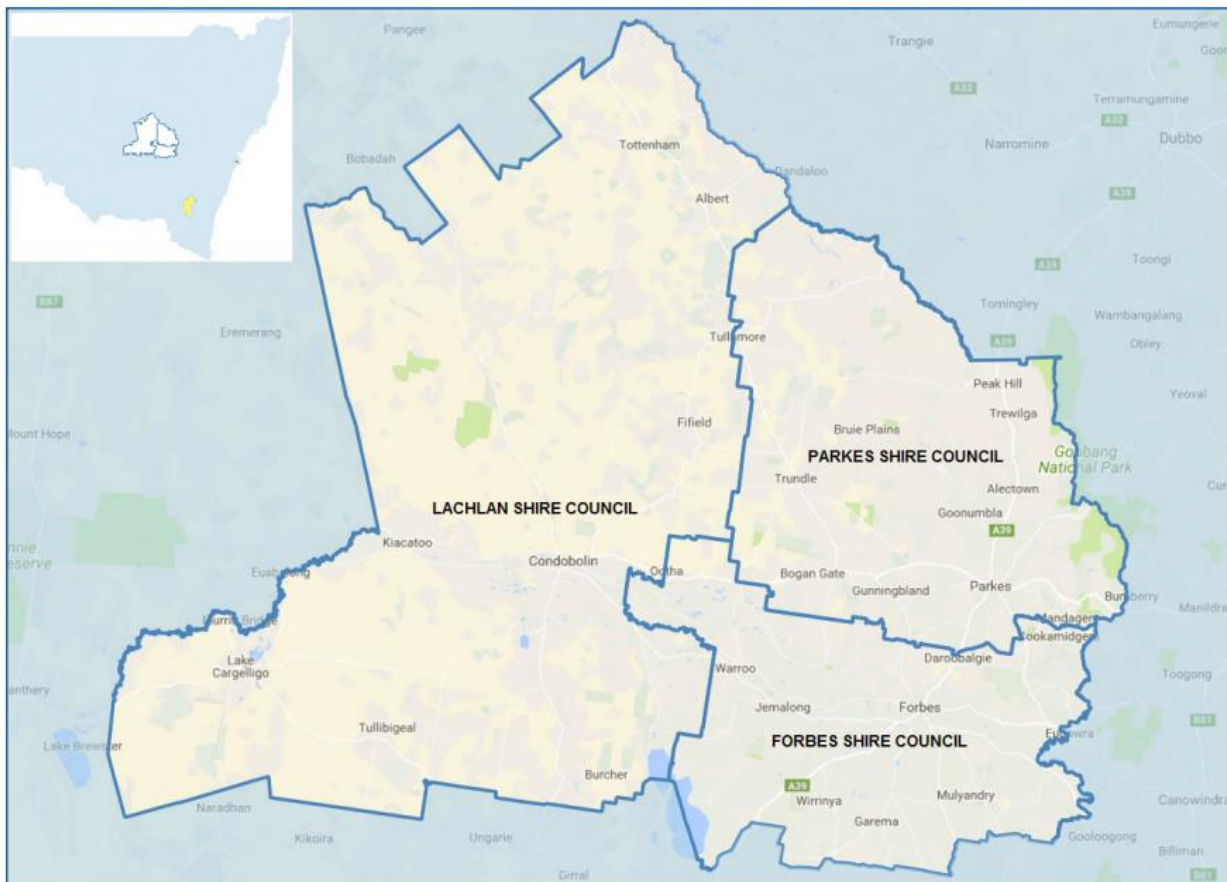


Figure 3: Map of the Mid-Lachlan Functional Economic Region.





4. The 2018 Mid-Lachlan REDS

The 2018 Mid-Lachlan REDS highlighted a wealth of physical, built, institutional and human endowments identified as critical to supporting sustained growth across identified specialisations in agriculture, transport, postal and warehousing, mining and tourism. The 2018 strategies focused on supporting growth in agriculture, mining and tourism, and delivering improvements in key enablers such as enhanced water security, improved skilled labour availability and enhanced access to markets.












2018 Mid-Lachlan region strategies

	Optimise and grow agriculture by improving supply chain efficiency and quality, market access and communication.
	Providing opportunities to expand current and future mining operations.
	Improve water security constraints for the agriculture, mining, manufacturing and tourism industries.
	Improve the availability of skilled labour for high value mining, construction, transport and manufacturing industries.
	Improve access to markets for agriculture, mining and manufacturing by investing in intermodal network resilience and reliability.
	Grow tourism in the Mid-Lachlan region to diversify the economy.

2018 Mid-Lachlan region specialisations

	Agriculture, forestry and fishing
	Transport, postal and warehousing
	Mining
	Tourism

2018 Mid-Lachlan region endowments

Endowments	Relevant 2018 specialisations
Lachlan River	
Lake Cargelligo	
Macquarie Arc Geographical Formation	
Geography and climate: open plains, water access, drought resistant, aquifers	
Human capital	
Culture	
Aboriginal culture	
Institutions: Parkes Chamber of Commerce, Forbes Business Chamber, Growing Lachlan Alliance, TAFE Western Colleges, childcare services, health services, local councils	
Railway and road infrastructure	
Aviation	
Solar energy	

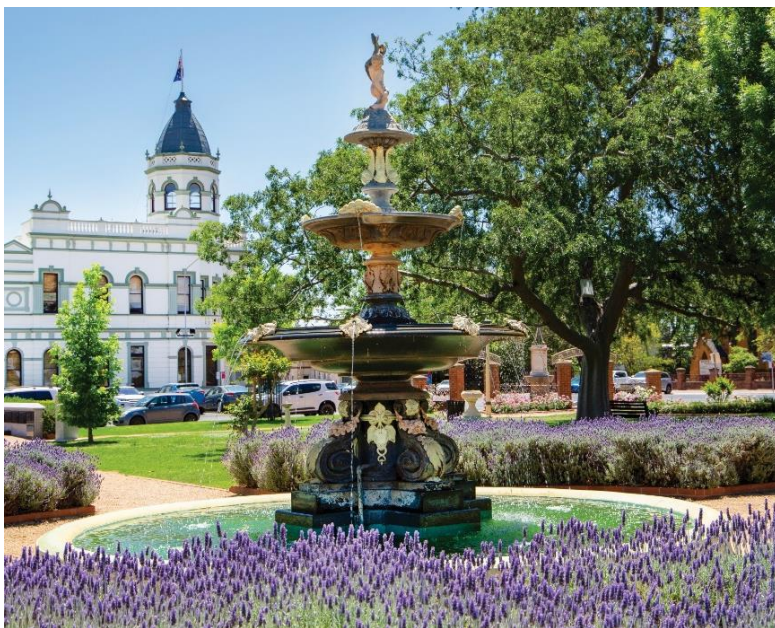


Figure 4: Victoria Park fountain and the Forbes Town Hall. Photo credit: Forbes Shire Council.

5. The big picture: Shocks and trends impacting the Mid-Lachlan region since 2018



Figure 5: Driving cattle in front of the amazing sculpture in the Forbes LGA. Photo credit: Forbes Shire Council.

Significant events impacting major industries

A sustained period of drought, followed by a widespread mouse plague and multiple flooding events had severe environmental and economic impacts on the Mid-Lachlan region. The COVID-19 pandemic also challenged the region, with border and travel restrictions impacting the tourism sector and workforce availability. During the period between 2018 and 2022, the region had 12 disaster declarations^[1] and has received \$23.8 million in disaster recovery grants funding.*^[2] Recovering from these events and undertaking action to enhance industry and community resilience is a key priority.

Drought

Between 2017 and 2020, the Mid-Lachlan region experienced one of the worst droughts on record. The Lachlan Valley experienced its worst period of storage inflows for any two year period for Wyangala Dam, recording 30% below the previous lowest record set during the millennium drought.^[3]

In July 2019, the Lachlan Valley was declared to be in Stage 3 – severe drought, with Wyangala Dam dropping to a water storage level of just 8% by February 2020. Progressively tighter restrictions were also placed on water allocations in the Lachlan Valley as the drought progressed.^[3]

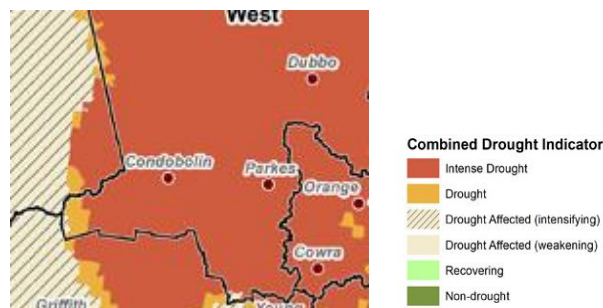


Figure 6: Combined Drought Indicator, 12 months to 31 December 2019 (Department of Primary Industries (DPI), 2022).

* This amount does not include major natural disaster recovery payments.

The prolonged and severe nature of the drought placed significant pressure on the region, with significant financial pressure for primary producers as production dwindled and a surge in unemployment in 2018 and 2019 (see page 23).

^[4] The lack of rainfall also had significant environmental impacts, such as a major reduction in dissolved oxygen and organic material that culminated in fish kill events in the region's rivers.^[3]

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on business activity across the Mid-Lachlan region, with 48% of businesses reporting that COVID-19 had negatively impacted their business operations.^[5] In the acute phase of the pandemic, there was also a strong impact on the labour market, with a sustained increase in income support recipients; Jobseeker recipients rose by 42% while health care card holders rose by 18% from March to June 2020.^[6]

A key flow-on impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the closure of international borders for an extended period has created challenges filling both skilled and unskilled roles in the agricultural sector, in particular during the labour-intensive harvest period.^[7]

Mouse plague

The 2021 mouse plague impacted both households and the agriculture sector across the Mid-Lachlan region. As many as 94% of farmers reported having to bait for mice, and a third reported significant negative financial impacts, given the increase in baiting costs, damage to infrastructure and equipment, and the loss of stored grain and fodder.^[8] The mouse plague also damaged business machinery and infrastructure and had health impacts on residents, particularly mental health.^[9]

To support impacted communities, the NSW Government made available up to \$95 million for primary producers in financial need, and \$45 million for the Small Business and Household Mouse Control Rebate.^[10] 4,131 small businesses and households in the Mid-Lachlan region received a total of \$1.78 million through the rebate program.^[11]

Floods

Since 2018, 10 of the 12 natural disaster declarations for the Mid-Lachlan region have involved flooding, six of which have occurred since the beginning of 2021. Very heavy rainfall across the Lachlan River catchment in late 2021 led to significant sustained flooding of low lying areas across the Lachlan Valley, including in Forbes and Condobolin, with inundation of low lying businesses and houses, and extensive damage to crops and agricultural land.^[12]

Multiple floods in November 2022 also impacted the entire region. Storms caused flash flooding in the Parkes area that inundated hundreds of homes, seriously damaged road infrastructure and washed away crops and livestock.^[13] Record spills from Wyangala Dam of up to 230,000 megalitres a day contributed to sustained major flooding along the Lachlan River, with two major flooding events in the space of a fortnight.^[14]


Forbes was split by the floods, with more than 1,000 residents evacuated and hundreds of homes and businesses being damaged.^[15] Record floods in Condobolin saw the town completely cut off. While a makeshift levee reduced the impact on the town's CBD, extensive flooding occurred in lower lying areas, with properties damaged, agricultural crops destroyed and major damage to key infrastructure across the region.^[16]

The impact on public assets was also extensive. Major highways such as the Newell Highway experienced extended road closures which impacted key industries and supply chains.^[17] Major damage to railway infrastructure forced the main western line to be closed for an extended period, seriously impacting freight and passenger movements.^[18] The costs to repair local roads and infrastructure will also be substantial, with road network damage alone in the Lachlan Shire LGA estimated to cost \$25 million to fix.^[19]

Macroeconomic trends shaping the region’s future

Macroeconomic trends related to climate and migration have played a significant role in the Mid-Lachlan region since 2018 and are likely to continue to have a strong influence on its future. With a growing population of remote workers, the impacts of successive natural disasters, and an increasingly central role in the progression to net zero, the region faces a need to build resilience against key challenges, and to maintain focus on leveraging opportunities in new and emerging sectors.

Trend	Opportunities and risks	
 <p>Digital Transformation</p>	<p>The COVID-19 pandemic has bolstered the ability to work remotely in many industries, which has seen more people taking advantage of a regional lifestyle while maintaining metro-based employment. This is evident in the population shift in 2020-21, with regional NSW gaining an additional 26,800 residents while Sydney declined by 5,200.^[20]</p> <p>Investment in improved telecommunications infrastructure since 2018 through the Connecting Country Communities program, including two new mobile phone towers at Bedgerabong has assisted with enabling this trend.</p> <p>A continued focus will be needed on additional infrastructure investment to meet ever growing digital demand from the community, business and industry.</p>	<p>Accelerated digital transformation will open up online opportunities for businesses to scale up e-commerce capability to access new markets.</p> <p>The surge in demand for data and connectivity will increase pressure on digital infrastructure potentially creating reliability and service quality issues.</p>
 <p>Changing Migration Patterns</p>	<p>Increased COVID-19 related migration to the region is a contributing factor in increased demand for enabling infrastructure, in particular housing. The nature of COVID-19 related migration means population growth does not necessarily translate into a local labour force with residents living in a region, but working in jobs based elsewhere.</p> <p>Recent significant infrastructure investment in the region is increasing demand for skilled workers. Successfully retaining younger people in the region will require a focus on high-quality placemaking and amenity, as well as actions to ensure employment opportunities can compete with out-of-region offerings.^[21]</p>	<p>Population growth can boost local economic activity and attract new businesses and industries to the region.</p> <p>Population increases pressure on service provision and key infrastructure, especially in key population serving sectors such as education and health.</p>
 <p>Towards Net Zero</p>	<p>The region will encounter both opportunities and challenges as a result of the shift towards decarbonisation and net zero. The region’s high emitting industries, such as agriculture, will need to adapt to net zero targets.</p>	<p>Opportunity exists for the region to leverage the Parkes SAP to play a key role in meeting manufacturing and logistics requirements associated</p>

Trend	Opportunities and risks	
	<p>The region has significant critical minerals resources, placing it in an advantageous position to support electrification and the renewable energy sector.</p> <p>The Central West-Orana Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) in the surrounding region will support significant expansion of the renewable energy sector and present opportunities for industry to access new sources of renewable energy.</p> <p>The Parkes Special Activation Precinct Master Plan outlines goals for it to become Australia’s first eco-industrial precinct, which presents significant opportunities for the region to become a leader in circular economy processing.^[22]</p>	<p>with construction of the Central West REZ.</p> <p>Local government can also be key leaders in the shift towards net zero, as demonstrated by Lachlan Shire Council’s renewable energy projects that won the Sustainable Infrastructure Award at the Local Government NSW (LGNSW) Excellence in the Environment Awards.</p>
 <p>Rising Uncertainty</p>	<p>With the frequency and intensity of natural disasters anticipated to increase in coming decades,^[23] there is a need to enhance climate and economic resilience in the region. Building both community and infrastructure resilience will be crucial to the region’s future.</p> <p>Large-scale projects such as the Parkes SAP can bring major investment and employment opportunities to the region. However, they can add to workforce and housing market challenges, which can reduce the long term value they provide to the community. A focus is needed during the planning phase for major projects on ensuring benefits to local communities can be maximised.</p>	<p>Rising uncertainty presents an opportunity to support investment in local supply chain so to enhance supply chain resilience, especially for key sectors, such as agriculture and energy.</p> <p>Rising uncertainty places upward pressure on inflation, driving up input costs and increasing business costs.</p>

6. Responding to change: Initiatives and investments since 2018



Figure 7: The statue of Sir Henry Parkes in Parkes. Photo credit: Parkes Shire Council.

Since 2018, local councils, the NSW Government and other key organisations have delivered new and updated strategic documents and plans that help guide economic and community development in the region. These documents support the development of local enabling actions that contribute towards progress against key REDS priorities and strategies.

Strategies and plans	Relevant 2018 strategies
<p>The Central West and Orana Regional Plan 2041 sets out the strategic framework for the region's land use, centred around the three major investments of Inland Rail, Parkes SAP and Central West/Orana REZ.</p>	
<p>All three LGAs have revised their respective Local Strategic Planning Statements since 2018, aligning them with the Central West and Orana Regional Plan, as well as revised their Community Strategic Plans, which set out the councils' key objectives and how they will seek to respond to aspirations of the community.</p>	
<p>Other more targeted areas of policy development by councils since 2018 include the Lachlan Shire Council's Industrial and Rural Lands Strategy 2021-2041 and Youth Strategy 2021-2031, Parkes Shire Council's Housing Strategy 2021, and Forbes Shire Council's Youth Strategic Plan 2021-2031, Resilience Plan 2020-2030 and Agricultural Strategy 2018-2030.</p>	
<p>The Parkes SAP Master Plan seeks to expand the region's transport and logistical specialisations, so to realise the vision of the precinct as an inland port that transfers export ready goods to all major cities and freight centres.</p>	

<p>The Central NSW Joint Organisation Economic and Social Environmental Scan reviewed relevant strategic documents across government and the private sector to identify key risks, opportunities and challenges for the region.</p>	
<p>The draft Future Transport 2056 Central West and Orana Regional Transport Plan provides a blueprint for how Transport for NSW will respond to the transport needs of the region. Key goals include boosting alternative transport (walk, cycle, public transport) and improving access to day return services to major destinations</p>	
<p>The draft Central West Destination Management Plan 2022-2030 seeks to establish a collaborative framework to guide growth of the visitor economy, with key objectives of supporting industry recovery, building a regional brand, investing in major events and attracting investment into tourism in the Central West.</p>	
<p>The Lachlan Shire Destination Management Plan (DMP), Parkes DMP and Bypass Strategy (currently under development) and the Forbes Council Tourism Plan 2020-2030 all have a focus on actions and strategies aimed at developing and enhancing the region’s visitor economy.</p>	
<p>The draft Lachlan Regional Water Strategy, which bring together the best and latest climate related evidence will help create an ongoing focus on delivering long term water security across the region that can support liveability for residents, and support ongoing prosperity for businesses and industry.</p>	



Figure 8: Solar panels in the Lachlan shire. Photo credit: Lachlan Shire Council.

Significant investments since 2018

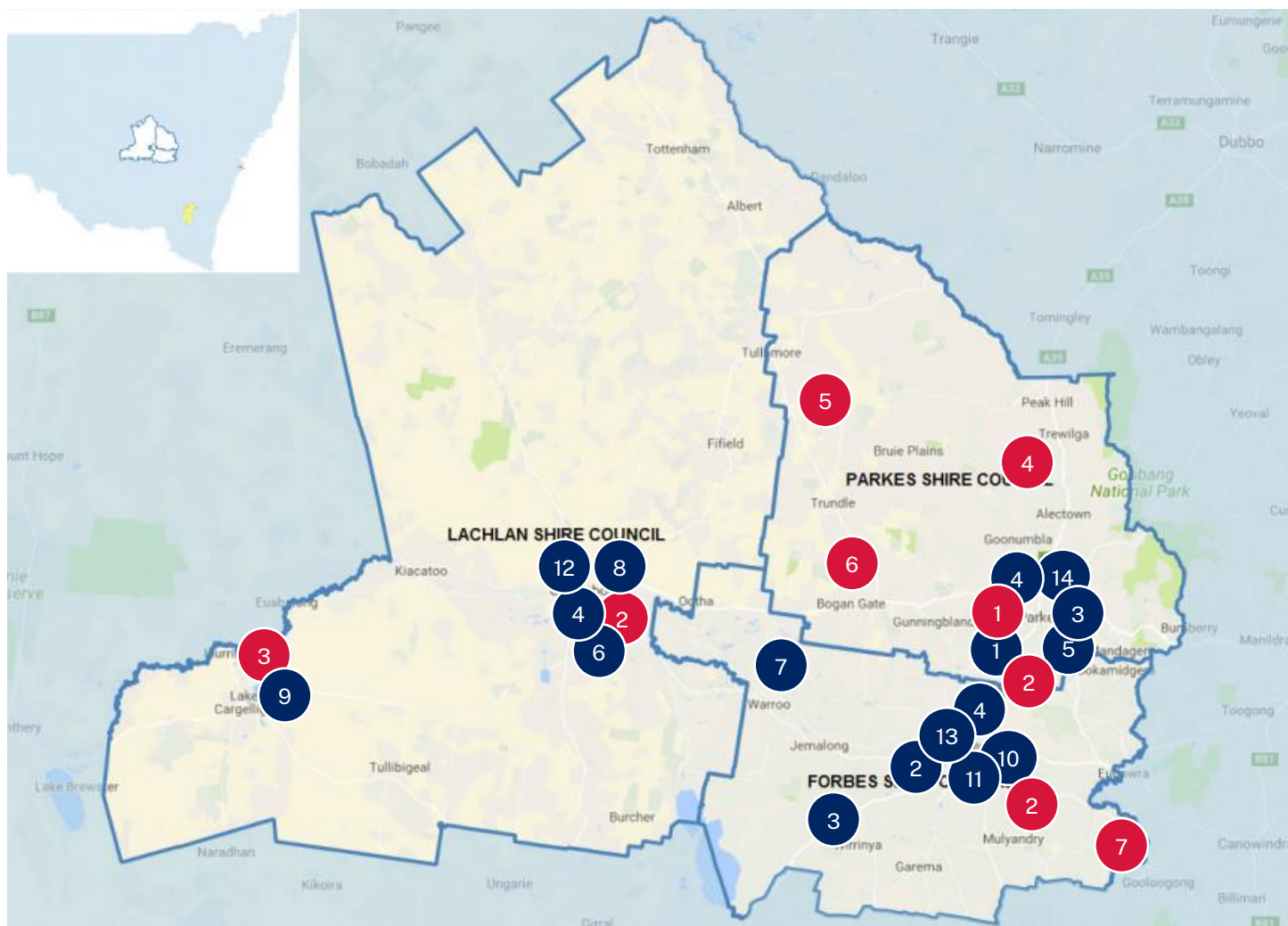







Figure 9: Significant investments in the Mid-Lachlan region since 2018.










Since 2018, the region has seen significant local, state and federal funding, as well as private investment, with a key focus on developing major infrastructure to support growth in the region's industry clusters. There has also been a strong focus on investment to deliver water security and community infrastructure that can support increased local amenity. The list below highlights some of the key investments that have occurred in the region since 2018.

Major private investment since 2018






Investment	Estimated total project value	Relevant 2018 strategies
1 Brightmark Recycling Facility	\$260 million	
2 Renewable energy projects -Condobolin Solar Farm, Daroobalgie Solar Farm, Peninsular Solar Power Station, Ridgely Creek Battery Storage	>\$250 million	

3	Graphite Energy Lake Cargelligo Energy Storage Centre - green hydrogen project ¹	\$19.6 million	
4	Northparkes E44 Rocklands project	\$90 million	
5	Sunrise Battery Materials project	\$2.4 billion	
6	Platina Scandium project	\$68 million	
7	Moxey Farms upgrades	>\$50 million	

Major public investment since 2018

Investment	Estimated total project value	Relevant 2018 strategies
1 Parkes SAP	\$185 million	
2 Forbes Central West Industrial Park	>\$14 million	
3 Newell Highway upgrades - Parkes bypass and West-Wyalong to Forbes flood immunity project	\$387 million	
4 Major road infrastructure upgrades - Five Chain Lane, Lachlan Valley Way/The Gipps Way intersection, Camp Street Bridge, Warroo Bridge Replacement, Forbes Iron Bridge Upgrade	>\$70 million	
5 Parkes Water Security Program	\$65 million	
6 Condobolin Bores Project	\$20 million	
7 Boosting the Lachlan Valley Economy Art Project - Sculptures Down the Lachlan art trail	\$7.2 million	
8 Condobolin Visitor Information Centre and tourism precinct road upgrades	\$10.2 million	
9 Lake Cargelligo Tourism Activation Project	\$2.8 million	

¹ Supported by a grant through the Commonwealth Government's Modern Manufacturing Initiative.

10	Central West Livestock Exchange expansion	\$3.4 million	
11	Forbes Homemakers Centres Stage 2	\$5.4 million	
12	Gum Bend Lake Walkway project	>\$0.8 million	
13	Lake Forbes upgrades	>\$1 million	
14	Parkes Library and Cultural Centre expansion	\$2.2 million	

Regional grant programs

The region has received \$69.6 million in grant funding approved since 2018. Key programs in the region have included the Stronger Country Communities Fund and the Resources for Regions program, which have funded a range of local projects including upgraded sports facilities, community infrastructure and tourism related initiatives.

Grant category	Approved funding
Community	\$29.84 million
Economic	\$15.95 million
Disaster recovery	\$23.81 million

Note: Total grant funding outlined above only includes programs managed by the Department of Regional NSW, accurate as at January 2023.



Figure 10: 'Varanus' by Australian sculptor Glen Star, part of the Sculpture Down the Lachlan Trail. Photo credit: Forbes Shire Council.

7. Mid-Lachlan region 2023 economic snapshot

The Mid-Lachlan region has an ageing population demographic, which may present challenges in meeting future labour demand associated with population serving sectors and major project delivery

The strong demand for labour associated with significant major projects has created favourable conditions for strong population growth going forward in the region. There is a need to focus on developing social infrastructure, which can support attraction and retention of skilled workers.

Population growth

The Mid-Lachlan region recorded an average population growth of -0.45% between 2011 and 2021 (see Figure 11). Since 2018, this translates to a decline in population from 30,610 residents to 29,985 in 2021.

However, with a range of major projects and transformative investments underway in the region, there are strong prospects for sustained positive population growth in coming years across the Mid-Lachlan region.

To support future growth, a continued focus will be required on investment to deliver enabling infrastructure to support development, and on upgrading of social and community infrastructure that can enhance liveability and assist with skilled workforce attraction and retention.

Demographic profile

The proportion of the population over 55 years old in the Mid-Lachlan region is 5.3% higher than the NSW benchmark, as shown in Figure 12.

When combined with a lower proportion of the population in the primary working age cohorts suggests future challenges in meeting increased labour demand associated with major projects and growth in key industry sectors.

While the region has a relatively large proportion of the population in the 0 to 19 years bracket, this drops off from 20 years old onwards. This suggests younger people may be moving away from the region for post-school study and to begin their careers. A focus on initiatives to build and expand pathways for younger people into further education in the region and local careers could assist with meeting increased demand for skilled labour in the region.

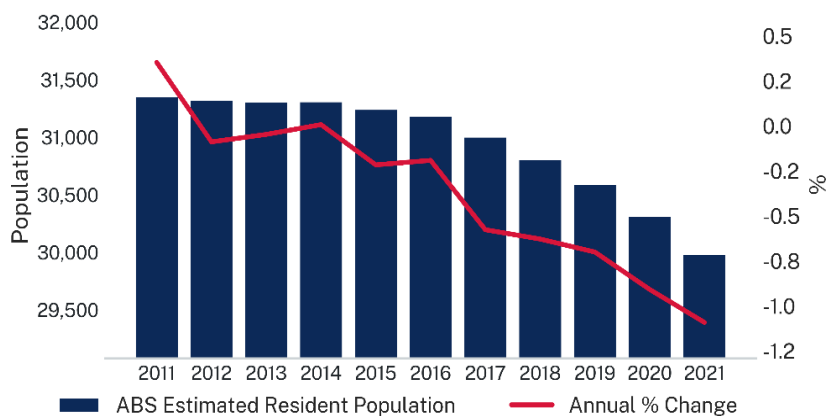


Figure 11: Mid-Lachlan FER population growth, 2011-2021 (ABS ERP, July 2022).

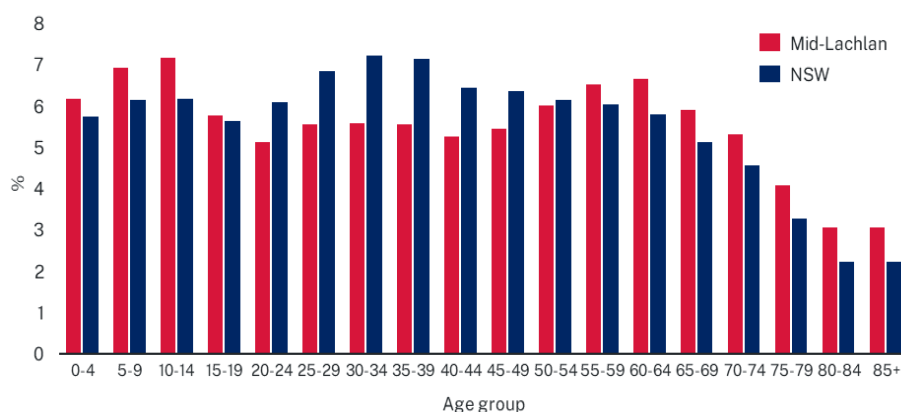


Figure 12: Mid-Lachlan FER population by age, 2021 (ABS Census, 2021).

Housing availability has tightened in the Mid-Lachlan region since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic

The region has faced a tightening housing market since 2018, with low housing availability playing a factor in property price growth in recent years. Demand brought about by major projects in the region will likely see this trend continue.

Housing availability

Residential vacancy rates in the Central West region have dropped from a peak of 2.7% in December 2018 to just 0.7% in August 2022 (see Figure 13). The residential vacancy rate dived during the acute phase of the pandemic (May 2020) and has remained below 1% since, placing significant pressure on the housing market and acting as a barrier for people trying to move into the region.

Meanwhile, residential building approvals in the Mid-Lachlan region have remained relatively stable, with some sustained increase seen in the first part of 2022. Local councils have been proactive in supporting and developing residential land in recent years, which has resulted in local housing market shortages being less severe than other areas. For example, the Goldridge Estate in Forbes will see 221 lots developed over nine stages, which will support increased housing supply in the area out to 2032.^[24]

Housing affordability

Between June 2018 and June 2022, median house prices in Forbes increased by 68% to \$420,000, by 47% in Parkes to \$368,000, and by 40% in Lachlan to \$210,000.^[25] While this represents significant growth in prices across the region, the estimated price-to-income ratio in 2021 for the Mid-Lachlan region was 4.18, just over half the NSW benchmark average of 8.12.^[26] This highlights a relative cost of living advantage compared to other regions despite the strong recent growth in house prices.

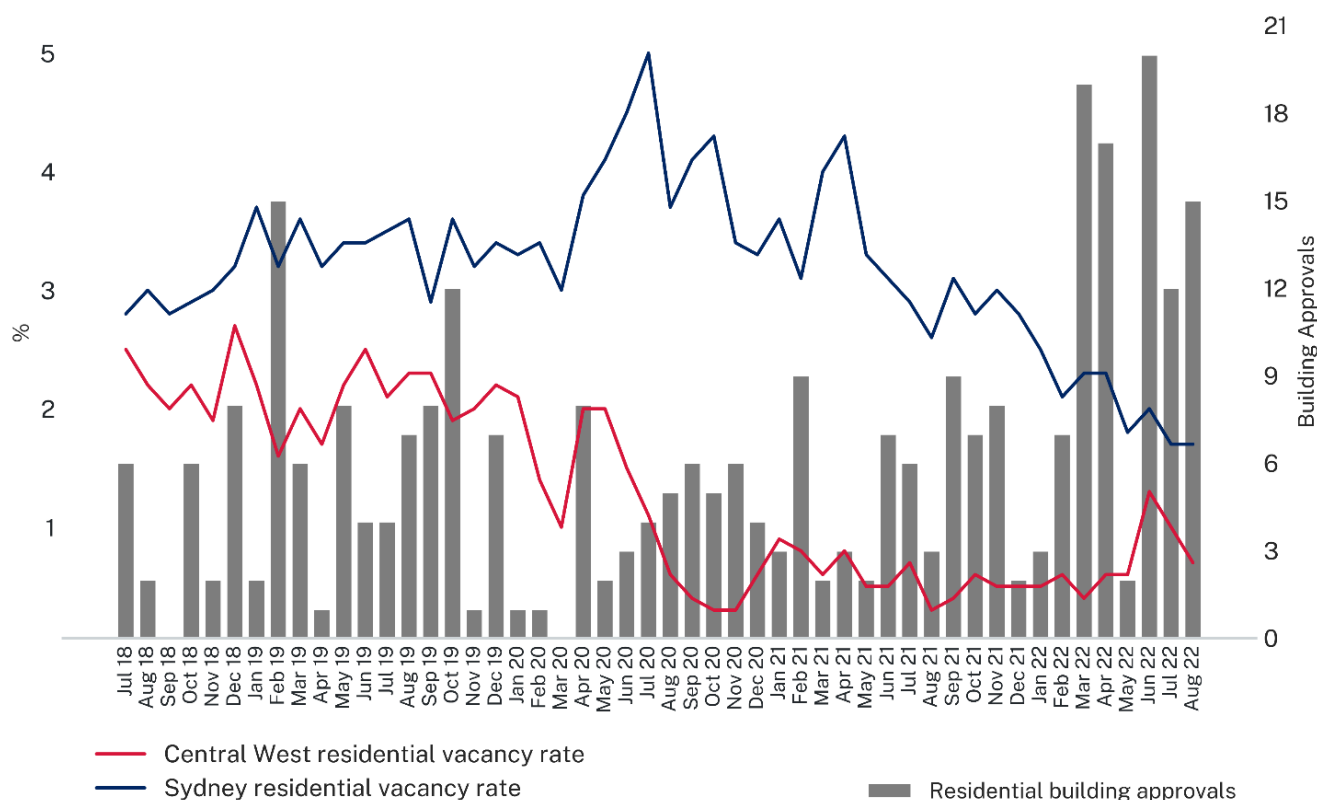


Figure 13: Mid-Lachlan FER vacancy rate and building approvals, 2018-2022 (REINSW, 2022).

Note: REINSW vacancy data collection is not aligned with the FER boundary map, resulting in an overlap with other FERs. These results are therefore intended to provide an indication of housing vacancies in the region.

The Mid-Lachlan region has seen unemployment fall since 2018, but job vacancies have also tripled, indicating a tight labour market

A constrained labour market has been a key issue for the region since 2018, with job vacancies tripling despite major shocks to industry and significant reductions in unemployment. A continued focus on skilled workforce attraction and retention initiatives will be critical given major projects in the region.

Employment

As at June 2022, the unemployment rates across the Mid-Lachlan region were 2.6% in Forbes, 3.3% in Parkes and 3.4% in the Lachlan Shire (see Figure 14). This signifies a very tight labour market across the region, nearing on full employment, and a significant reduction in unemployment since the peak recorded at the height of the drought in late 2018, and reflects stakeholder feedback that indicated many businesses and local Government were facing significant challenges finding staff to fill roles.

Job vacancy data, displayed in Figure 15, supports the stakeholder feedback, with job vacancies across the broader Blue Mountains, Bathurst and Central West region tripling from a low in May 2020 to reach a historical high in August 2022 of 2,523. The top vacancies sat in the health sector with carers and aides (236 vacancies) in demand, while retail (206) and administrative roles (167) are facing significant challenges in filling vacant positions.

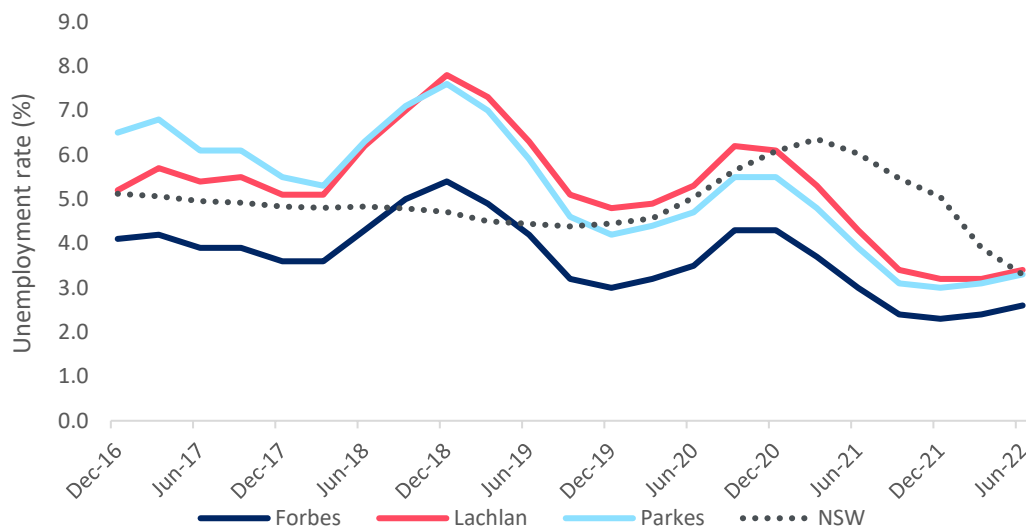


Figure 14: Mid-Lachlan FER unemployment rates (%), 2016-2022 (National Skills Commission, 2022; ABS Labour Force, 2022).

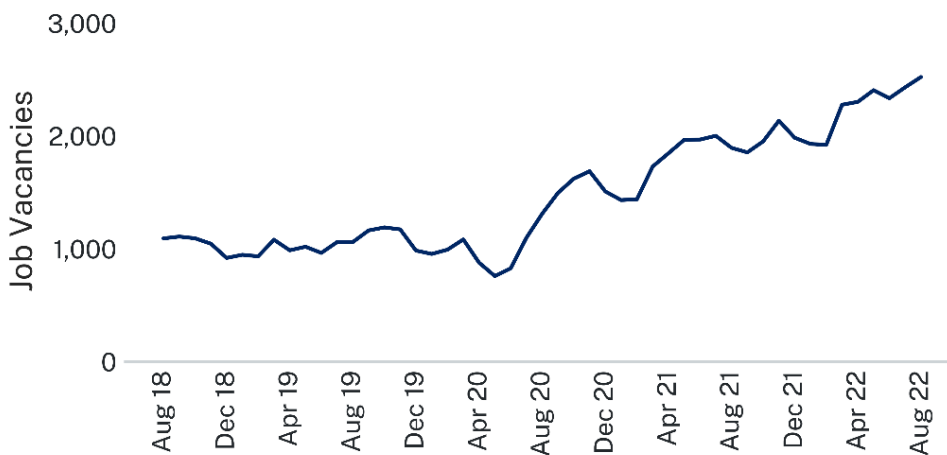


Figure 15: Job vacancies, Blue Mountains, Bathurst and Central West (2018-2022) (Regional IVI, National Skills Commission, 2022).

Note: The regional IVI – National Skills Commission job vacancy data collection is not aligned with the FER boundary map, resulting in an overlap with other FERs. Job vacancy data only includes online job vacancies. These results are therefore intended to provide an indication of job vacancies in the region.

Aboriginal employment

The Aboriginal unemployment rate in the Mid-Lachlan region has dropped significantly from 20.1% in 2016 to 12.4% in 2021. However, the rate remains above the NSW Aboriginal unemployment rate of 9.8% and the NSW unemployment rate of 4.9%. While this improvement highlights increased economic development opportunities for the Aboriginal community in recent years, an ongoing focus on supporting Aboriginal economic participation is needed to achieve further progress.

Major projects can present a key opportunity for supporting increased economic participation and development for the Aboriginal community. A sustained collaborative effort is needed between governments, local land councils and representatives of the Aboriginal community, businesses and stakeholders to explore the potential opportunities that may be available related to the delivery of major projects in the region.

Aboriginal unemployment rate: Mid-Lachlan	2011	16.5%
	2016	20.1%
	2021	12.4%
NSW Aboriginal unemployment rate	2021	9.8%
NSW unemployment rate	2021	4.9%

Source: ABS Census 2021



Figure 16: Children perform traditional dances in Lachlan LGA. Photo credit: Lachlan Shire Council.

Mid-Lachlan 2023 engine and emerging industries

The Mid-Lachlan region has a \$1.89 billion economy. Despite of significant shocks since 2018, the Mid-Lachlan region's engine industries have remained a source of stability by maintaining consistent growth. The relative strength of key industries is highlighted in the location quotient (LQ) analysis¹ shown in Figure 17, in which the size of the bubbles correlates with industry size.

Engine industries

Agriculture (LQ of 7.77) in the Mid-Lachlan region grew by an average rate of 6.4% per year between 2011 and 2020, with GVA growing from \$167m in 2011 to \$291m in 2020. Core specialisations in the Mid-Lachlan region are sheep, beef, grains and dairy cattle (LQ of 13.5) and agriculture-related support services (LQ of 7.4).

Mining (LQ of 2.21) is the second largest industry by GVA, adding \$192 million to the local economy in 2020. The specialisation is derived from non-ferrous metal ore (LQ of 26.7) and mining and exploration support services (LQ of 4.1). The specialisation in exploration services will be vital to supporting potential future growth in emerging mining markets, in particular critical minerals.

Continued growth in these key sectors will increase opportunities for local supply chain growth, with significant opportunities associated with advanced manufacturing that could deliver high value-add activities associated with agriculture and mining. The Parkes SAP will also help deliver transportation and logistics efficiencies in moving goods from the region to key markets.

While **transport, postal and warehousing** currently sits to the left of the specialisation bar in Figure 17, the industry already makes a sizeable contribution to the Mid-Lachlan economy, adding \$90 million to GVA in 2020. The specialisation is driven by rail (LQ of 3.1) and road (LQ of 1.4) transport. Inland Rail and the Parkes SAP will be expected to support significant growth in this sector in future years.

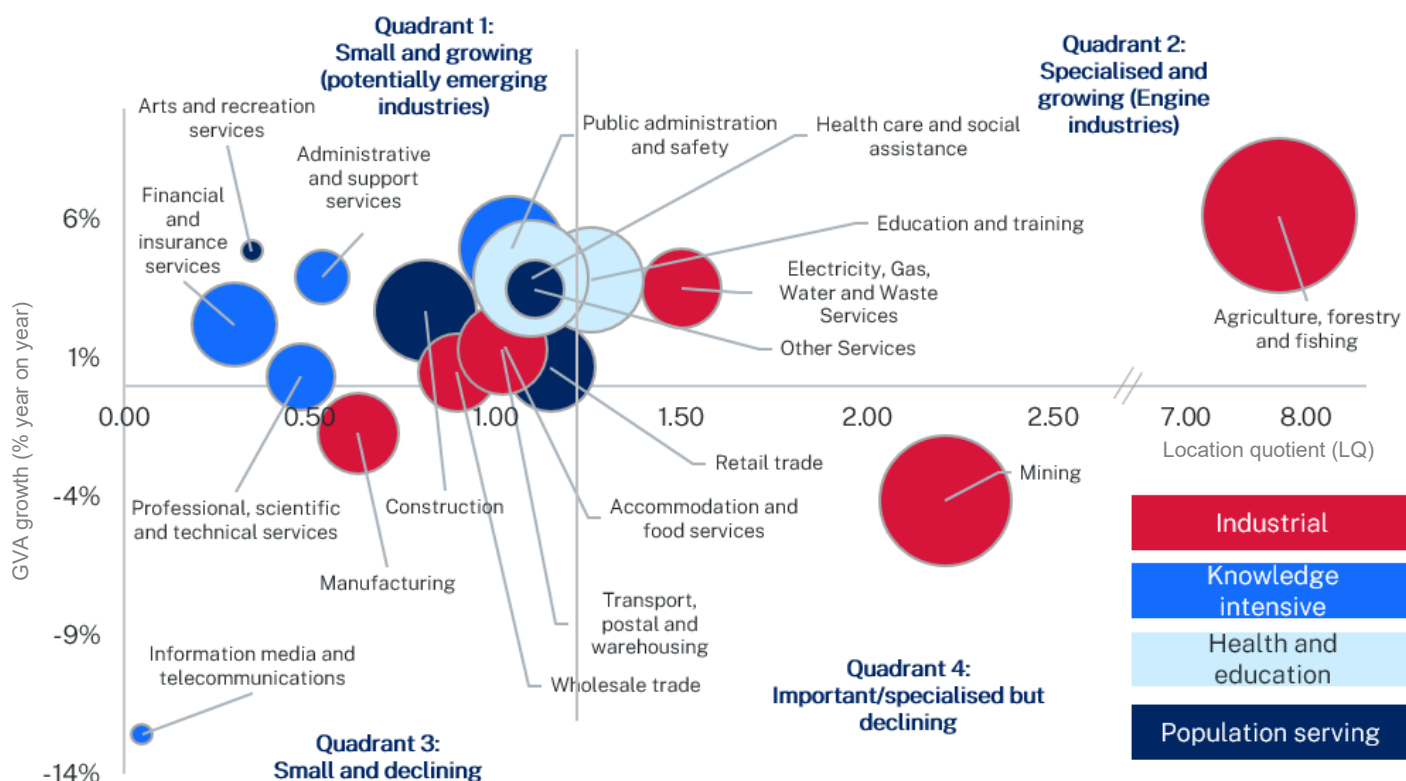


Figure 17: Location Quotient (LQ) Analysis by GVA, 2011-2020 (REMPAN, 2020).

Note: While the 2018 REDS used employment data as the basis for LQ analysis, the 2023 Update has used Gross Value-Add (GVA) data. This allows for a clear demonstration of the changing economic impact of both engine and emerging industries across the regions.

¹ LQ analysis is used to measure industry specialisation by comparing the relative size of an industry in the region versus the whole of NSW.

Emerging industries

The region’s emerging specialisations have remained largely consistent since the 2018 REDS. However, administrative and support services have not kept up with statewide growth, while electricity, gas, water and waste services has outpaced statewide growth to become an emerging industry (see Figure 18).

Electricity, gas, water and waste services (which includes renewable energy generation) has grown by an average annual rate of 3.5% in the Mid-Lachlan region since 2011, outpacing the average growth rate across NSW. The emerging specialisation is broad-based with electricity generation (LQ of 1.6), water supply, sewerage and drainage services (LQ of 1.6), electricity distribution (LQ of 1.6) and gas supply (LQ of 1.3) all playing a role in the sector’s growth. Growth in renewable energy generation also has significant potential to support a range of circular economy processing opportunities in the region.

Arts and recreation services remain an emerging industry, as highlighted in the 2018 REDS. The industry has experienced an average annual GVA growth of 4.9% since 2011. This growth is being supported by new investments into local arts infrastructure, including the Sculptures Down the Lachlan art installations along the Lachlan River.

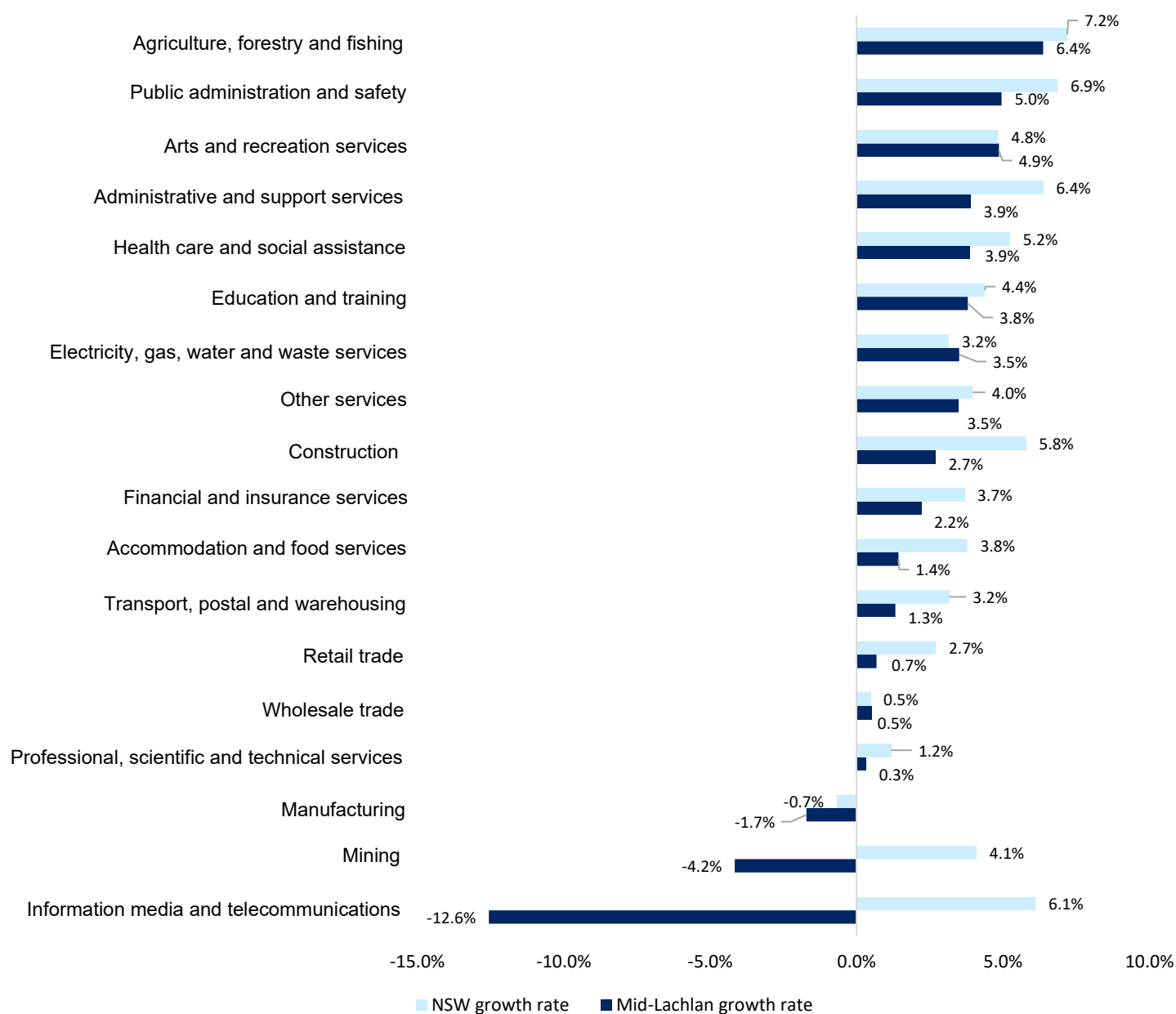


Figure 18: Change in GVA by Industry (% YOY), 2011-2020 (REMPLAN, 2020).

Mid-Lachlan 2023 endowments

Review of the 2018 endowments

The 2018 REDS identified a diverse range of endowments underpinning Mid-Lachlan’s economy and regional competitiveness (see page 11). Despite recent shocks impacting many key endowments, consultation and analysis confirmed they remain valid, with key endowments including:

- Lachlan River
- Lake Cargelligo
- Macquarie Arc Geographical Formation
- Geography and climate
- Human capital
- Aboriginal culture
- Institutions
- Railway and road infrastructure
- Aviation, including regular commercial flights
- Solar energy

New endowments

While not yet reflected in the employment and industry specialisation (LQ) analysis, recent investments and policy efforts have led to the creation of new endowments which will underpin new economic opportunities and future specialisations.

+ Parkes SAP	The Parkes SAP will be a critical asset to attracting new businesses to the region, developing enhanced freight and logistics sectors, and exploring opportunities associated with circular economy processing.
+ Enhanced water security	Significant investments into water infrastructure are bolstering the Mid-Lachlan’s overall water security.
+ Expanded visitor economy offering	Investment into new tourist attractions such as Sculptures Down the Lachlan and Utes in the Paddock, as well as improvements to sporting, community and arts infrastructure and revitalisation of CBDs has expanded the region’s visitor economy offering.

8. Looking ahead: Strategic opportunities for growth, resilience and liveability

Opportunities and vulnerabilities in engine and emerging industries

Mining

Mining continues to make a significant contribution to the Mid-Lachlan region economy. Future growth can be supported with the presence of critical minerals in the region.

GVA (2020, \$m)	192
Employment (2021)	752
LQ score (2020)	2.21
LQ Non-ferrous metal ore mining (2020)	26.7
LQ Exploration and mining services (2020)	2.7

Strengths

- The Macquarie Arc Formations provide a rich natural endowment for the region with a strong supply of metal ore deposits, in particular gold and copper.
- The region also has significant critical minerals deposits including cobalt, scandium and other platinum group minerals.
- Strong transport links to major ports and facilities via the railway network provide a strong comparative advantage, which will be further enhanced by Inland Rail and the Parkes SAP.
- The Mid-Lachlan region's specialisation in mining is currently derived from non-ferrous metal ore (copper and gold), which accounts for 93% of the local economy's industry GVA.

Vulnerabilities

- While still a large producer of value-add in the region's economy, the industry has shrunk over the past decade. Since 2011, the industry has experienced an average decline of 4.2% per year.
- Major mining projects in the region continue to face challenges associated with securing the skilled workforce needed to deliver major projects.
- Challenges also lie in gaining or holding land rights in the face of increased competition for land use with agricultural and industrial expansion.

Opportunities

- A key future opportunity is growth of the critical minerals sector. With many projects being developed in the region, including major projects such as Platina Scandium and Sunrise Battery Materials, the region is well placed to take advantage of increased demand associated with new age technology and growth in the renewable energy sector.^[27]
- The comparative advantages associated with Inland Rail and the Parkes SAP can support potential opportunities for the region to develop a key role in minerals processing.
- There are opportunities to further improve access to markets and streamline transport linkages by increasing resilience of key transport links, for example by flood proofing the Newell Highway.

Agriculture

The Mid-Lachlan region continues to leverage its significant natural endowments, supported by significant built infrastructure to support sustained growth in the agriculture sector.

GVA (2020, \$m)	291
Employment (2021) ^a	2,073
LQ score (2020)	7.77
LQ sheep, grains, beef and dairy (2020)	13.5
LQ agricultural support services (2020)	7.4

^a ANZSIC 1 digit Agriculture, forestry and fishing.

Strengths

- Mid-Lachlan's specialisation in the agriculture sector is centred on sheep, grains, beef and dairy cattle and agricultural support services.
- The region's geographical traits of open plains and above average rainfall, together with substantial built infrastructure assets, such as large scale farms like Moxey Farms and the Central West Livestock Exchange, facilitate the region's specialisation.
- The Forbes Shire benefits from good water availability, while significant investment continues to be made to improve water security in both Parkes and Lachlan LGAs.

Vulnerabilities

- Externalities have impacted the industry significantly since 2018, evident in the multiple shocks in the form of bushfires, floods, drought, the mouse plague and COVID-19.
- Many major farms are heavily reliant on water supply from the Lachlan River. As seen during the 2017-2020 drought, prolonged dry spells can significantly reduce agricultural output and productivity.
- Recent inflationary pressures have placed upward pressure on key input costs such as production and freight transport (4.7% jump in service price in 2021-22). Freight costs represent a significant share of gross value of farm production, with grains (27.4%) and beef (6.4%) relatively high-cost sectors.^[28]

Opportunities

- Opportunities exist to expand value-add opportunities and sustainable agricultural processes by wider adoption of productivity raising practices in biotechnology (e.g. biofuels, cleaning and processing grains/legumes), agtech, increased mechanisation and precision farming.^[29]
- An increased focus on leveraging well-established agricultural expertise provided by entities including Central West Farming Systems, Local Land Services, NSW Farmers' AgInnovators and the tertiary education sector can support enhanced research and development in the region.
- The Lachlan Valley effectively operates as a closed river system, given no surface water from the Lachlan is counted in trades under the Murray Darling Basin Scheme.^[30] Opportunities exist to explore innovative and transformative farming techniques such as the Dutch Model, focused on increased yield and productivity through advanced use of agtech.^[31]

Tourism

The Mid-Lachlan region's significant natural endowments and an increasingly diverse visitor economy can help deliver sustained growth in the sector, supported by ongoing collaboration.

Visitor spend (2021, \$m) ^[32]	133
Employment (2021) ^a	1,976
LQ score (2020) ^b	1.02
LQ Accommodation and food services (2020)	1.4

a Summation of ANZSIC 1 digit Retail trade, Accommodation and food services and, Arts and recreation.

b LQ for Accommodation and food services

Strengths

- The Mid-Lachlan region is home to nationally significant water assets including the Lachlan River and Lake Cargelligo, making the region a natural hub for nature-based tourism.
- Regular commercial passenger flights in and out of Parkes Regional Airport is a significant strength for both the tourism industry and business development in the region.
- The region has a significant and growing range of unique built attractions, including the Sculptures Down the Lachlan, Utes in the Paddock, Gum Bend Lake and the CSIRO Parkes Observatory.
- The region has an established range of cultural events and festivals, headlined by the Parkes Elvis Festival, along with a range of emerging events including the Trundle ABBA Festival, Astrofest, food events including Grazing Down the Lachlan and Taste on Templar, and the Central West's largest celebration of Aboriginal culture, Condo Skyfest Miima Warrabinya.

Vulnerabilities

- Externalities strongly influence industry performance. This has been demonstrated by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which reduced total visitor expenditure by \$40 million on 2019 levels, and led to the postponement of a number of major events. ^[32]
- The tourism and hospitality sector continues to experience challenges associated with workforce attraction and retention, as many workers shifted to other industries due to the impact of job losses during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Opportunities

- The success of Sculptures Down the Lachlan highlights how a collaborative approach to the development of significant new tourism attractions can boost the visitor economy across the entire Mid-Lachlan region.
- Ongoing enhanced collaboration between the three councils can help ensure potential visitors view the region as a major multi-day destination, with a wide range of attractions across the region. This can help maximise the value visitors add to the regional economy.
- There is significant scope to continue to diversify the visitor economy offering in the region through increasing nature- and events-based tourism, exploring opportunities to develop agritourism offerings and supporting further development of Wiradjuri cultural tourism in the region.

Electricity, gas, water and waste services (including renewable energy)

The Mid-Lachlan region has been able to leverage its natural endowments and infrastructure investments to support growth in the utilities sector. Significant opportunities exist for further growth in the sector associated with major projects across the region.

GVA (2020, \$m)	71
Employment (2021)	134
LQ score (2020)	1.50
LQ Electricity distribution (2020)	1.6
LQ Water supply, sewerage and draining services (2020)	1.8

Strengths

- The emerging specialisation in the utility sector is broad, with high LQs in electricity distribution (LQ of 1.6), water supply, sewerage and drainage services (LQ of 1.8), electricity generation (LQ of 1.6) and gas supply (LQ of 1.3).
- There has been significant ongoing investment in water security projects across the region which can aid increased drought resilience and support growth across key industries.
- A number of new renewable projects in the Mid-Lachlan region are in various stages of planning or approval, including the Daroobalgie Solar Farm, Peninsular Solar Power Station and the Ridgely Creek Battery Storage project.
- As home to the Parkes SAP, and in close proximity to the Central-West Orana REZ, the region is well placed to capitalise on the shift towards renewable energy generation and the increased focus on developing circular economy processing opportunities as part of the shift towards net zero.

Vulnerabilities

- Delays to establishing energy connections for new residential and industrial developments hamper economic development in the region. Streamlining processes and improving timeliness would support efforts being undertaken to increase housing supply.
- With the expansion of renewable energy generation and transmission increasing demand for large-scale rural land for projects, the potential for land use conflicts with a range of different industrial and agricultural uses may place pressure on land values and availability of land.^[33]

Opportunities

- The NSW Government is investigating how hydrogen production, distribution and use will be integrated into the development of the SAPs. The region may be an optimal location for associated projects, as demonstrated by the Graphite Energy Storage Centre investment in Lake Cargelligo.
- Implementation of key actions proposed in the draft Lachlan Regional Water Strategy would assist with addressing key water security constraints, improve reliability of supply and support efforts to enhance flood mitigation measures across the region.
- A focus on supporting renewable energy generation can have cross-sectoral benefits, especially for the Parkes SAP and circular economy processing opportunities.

Key themes in stakeholder consultation

Stakeholders outlined that key engine industries such as agriculture continue to record sustained growth despite significant shocks, while investment into emerging strengths such as tourism are supporting diversification of the economy. Stakeholders highlighted a proactive focus on supporting housing development and increased industrial land supply, so to help ensure major investments, such as the Parkes SAP, can be a catalyst for sustained population growth. The collaborative approach of the three councils towards pursuing a shared vision of high quality economic growth was also highlighted.

Taking a long-term view on major projects

While stakeholders acknowledged the economic opportunities provided by transformative investments into major infrastructure and precinct-based developments, the need to ensure such investment delivers long-term benefits to the whole community was highlighted. A particular focus is needed on smoothing growth over time so to ensure it is sustainable and can deliver benefits to all parts of the community.

Building resilience

Recent natural disasters, alongside the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic brought the need to build community, economic and infrastructure resilience to the forefront of many stakeholders' minds. Stakeholders highlighted as key priorities the need to diversify the economic base through expansion of the visitor economy, and to ensure ongoing significant investments are made to enhance water infrastructure to boost water security and reduce the impacts of droughts and floods in the region.

Supply constraints

Stakeholders outlined that the COVID-19 pandemic had highlighted the fragility of industry supply chains, placing an increased focus on the need to build supply chain resilience. Stakeholders highlighted that local businesses and industry are increasingly looking to onshore more manufacturing capabilities and supply chain inputs to increase resilience and reliability. Stakeholders also highlighted that the region has also been heavily impacted by major labour supply challenges, with businesses, industry and the local government sector all struggling to fill a range of vacancies across the economy.

Mid-Lachlan REDS - 2023 Update strategies

While regional stakeholders noted that the 2018 strategies remained relevant, there was a desire expressed to update parts of the strategies to better reflect the current economic context for the region. Changes to the strategies have been made to:

- reflect the opportunities associated with expansion of the energy generation sector;
- include a focus on addressing energy supply constraints that are impacting key industries;
- include a new strategy focused on improving local training opportunities as a way to support skilled workforce development and maximise local benefits from major investments in the region.

Reflecting the changes outlined above, the 2023 REDS Update strategies for the Mid-Lachlan are listed below (amendments made to existing 2018 strategies are highlighted in **bold**):

Existing	Optimise and grow agriculture by improving supply chain efficiency and quality, market access and communication
Amended	Provide opportunities to expand the mining and energy generation sectors

Amended	Address energy and water security constraints for the agriculture, mining, manufacturing and tourism industries
New	Improve local training opportunities to attract and retain a skilled workforce and strengthen local benefit from public and private investments
Existing	Improve access to markets for agriculture, mining and manufacturing by investing in intermodal network resilience and reliability
Amended	Grow the visitor economy in the Mid-Lachlan to diversify the economy.*

**Note: This amendment reflects the change in language used by the NSW Government between 2018 and 2022. Visitor economy is now the preferred term to capture the broad range of reasons for visitation, while tourism is generally only used when referring to the tourism sector.*

Key enablers of economic growth

A number of key enablers have been identified to assist with delivering each of the strategies. This list is non-exhaustive, with a focus on identifying priority short- to medium-term enablers. Responsibility for implementation of these enablers sits with various levels of government, and in some cases may also include business, industry or non-government bodies. Collaboration across these entities at a local level will be key to achieving results.

Strategy	New Enablers		Lead and support	Rationale
Optimise and grow agriculture by improving supply chain efficiency and quality, market access and communication.	People and skills	Facilitate research and development partnerships between local manufacturing and agricultural businesses to enable growth in value-adding manufacturing and the circular economy.	Department of Regional NSW (DRNSW) , industry groups, Investment NSW	The Parkes SAP provides an opportunity to leverage increased value-add for agricultural outputs and develop circular economy manufacturing capabilities.
	Infrastructure	Support councils to use the Connectivity Index Tool following its 2023 release to identify priority locations for upgrades to telecommunications infrastructure.	NSW Telco Authority , DRNSW, local councils	Improved digital connectivity across the region can enhance business and industry capability and help meet increased demand.

Strategy	New Enablers		Lead and support	Rationale
Provide opportunities to expand the mining and energy generation sectors.	Government, regulation and information	Support investigation of critical minerals mining opportunities and potential for value-add processing activities, including processing and manufacturing of downstream products.	DRNSW , Investment NSW, local councils, Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) - Planning	The region's mining industry has strong growth potential, particularly in the critical minerals sector.
	Infrastructure	Deliver a Regional Housing Delivery Plan, which identifies opportunities to increase housing supply in the region, accounting for the impact of major projects on housing demand.	DRNSW , local councils, DPE Planning	Low housing availability needs to be addressed to facilitate sustained population growth that can support engine industries.
Address energy and water security constraints for the agriculture, mining, manufacturing and tourism industries.	Government, regulation and information	Support collaboration between land holders, government and Central West-Orana REZ investors to develop an integrated supply chain between the mining and energy sectors.	Local councils ; Energy NSW, mining companies, Department of Primary Industries (DPI)	Stronger integration between the mining (engine) and emerging energy sectors can facilitate mutual growth.
	Infrastructure	Strengthen collaboration between local councils and Essential Energy to facilitate more streamlined planning processes and accelerate energy infrastructure delivery.	DRNSW , Essential Energy, local councils	There is a need to improve connectivity to land viable for residential development, and improve timeliness of required upgrades and installations.
Improve local training opportunities to attract and retain a skilled	People and skills	Engage with local businesses to support skill development in agtech, mining, energy, manufacturing, tourism and health care, and investigate	Training Services NSW , TAFE NSW, Transport for NSW (TfNSW), EnergyCo,	Building local skills capability across the workforce, especially young workers can

Strategy	New Enablers		Lead and support	Rationale
workforce and strengthen local benefit from public and private investments.		options for developing local apprenticeship schemes within the region.	Commonwealth Department of Infrastructure, Transport Regional Development, Communications and the Arts, Country Universities Centre	maximise the long-term benefit of major infrastructure projects like the Parkes SAP, Inland Rail and renewable energy projects.
	Government, regulation and information	Support local businesses by providing guidance on attracting workers through the Regional Skills Relocation Grant.	Local councils, local business chambers, DRNSW	Improve the region's capability to attract workers to fulfil the strong demand for labour.
Improve access to markets for agriculture, mining and manufacturing by investing in intermodal network resilience and reliability	Infrastructure	Investigate the infrastructure needs required to connect surrounding businesses to the Parkes SAP and the planned Condobolin Warehousing and Logistics Centre.	DRNSW, TfNSW, DPE, local councils, Infrastructure NSW, Australian Rail Track Corporation	Transport investment in road and rail will boost productivity of industrial cluster and maximise benefits of the SAP across the region.
Grow the visitor economy in the Mid-Lachlan region to diversify the economy	Services	Support an expanded and diversified visitor economy offering, including investment in agritourism, cultural and events tourism, and ecotourism, and invest in opportunities to promote the region's visitor profile.	Local councils, Destination Central West NSW, DPE, local business chambers.	A diverse visitor economy increases appeal and can assist with improving economic resilience in the region.

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