

DRAFT FINAL

FEBRUARY 2023

# DIRECTIONS FOR RICHMOND VALLEY'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Richmond  
Valley  
Council

Discussion Paper  
Prepared  
for Richmond Valley  
Council





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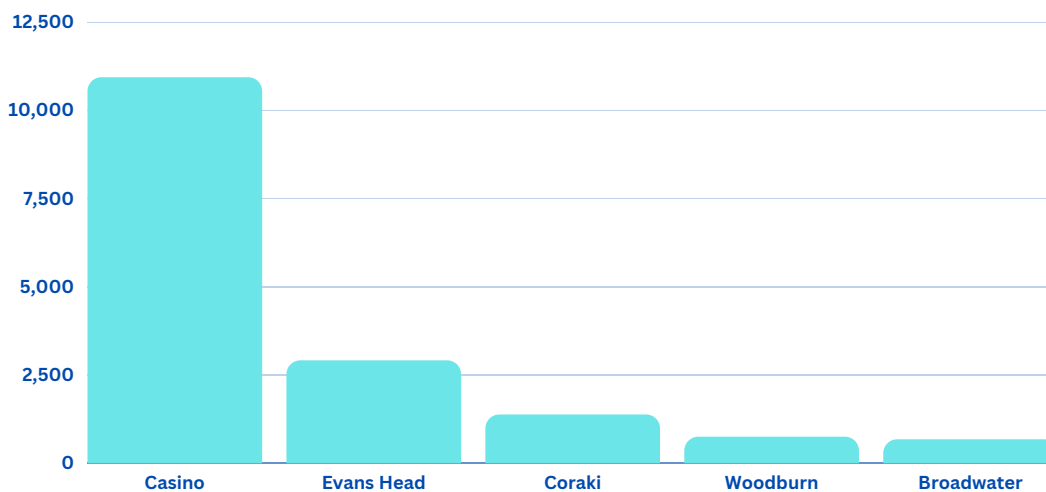
# Executive Summary

## RICHMOND VALLEY & ITS LOCALITIES

The Richmond Valley local government area, located on NSW's far north coast, covers more than 3,000 square kilometres of diverse environments and is home to more than 23,500 people. The Richmond River is both the area's namesake and defining cultural & environmental feature.

Richmond Valley's geography places it at the centre of a much larger region, known as the Northern Rivers. The Northern Rivers consists of seven local government areas spanning from the Clarence Valley to the Tweed at the Queensland border and is home to more than 310,000 residents.

More than 70 per cent of the Richmond Valley population is concentrated in five centres close to its northern boundary: Casino; Coraki; Woodburn; Broadwater; and Evans Head. Evans Head is the only community among these five not immediately situated on the flow of the River. Casino is one of the Northern Rivers' major centres, with the Valley's largest population:



Richmond Valley's *2030 Community Strategic Plan* reflects residents' aspirations for a strong economy, rich with jobs & opportunities. This Discussion Paper offers a Framework & strategic directions for making those aspirations a practical reality.

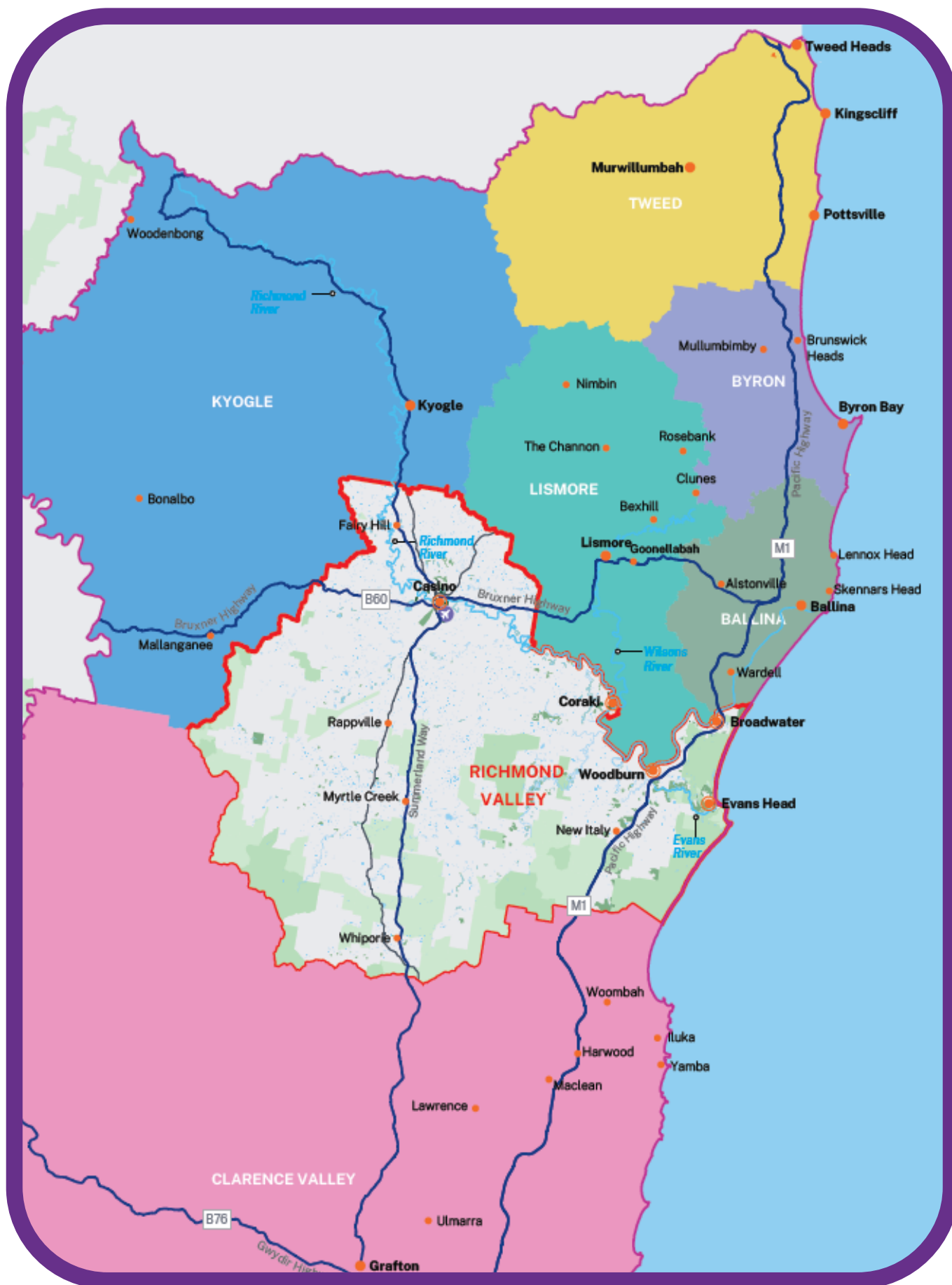
## RICHMOND VALLEY'S ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

Today, Richmond Valley's production approaches \$1 billion annually. In composition, the local economy is becoming increasingly diversified: traditional strengths in agriculture (like cane, cattle & other crops), forestry & related manufacturing (meat, sugar, dairy & wood products) are complemented by expanded population services.

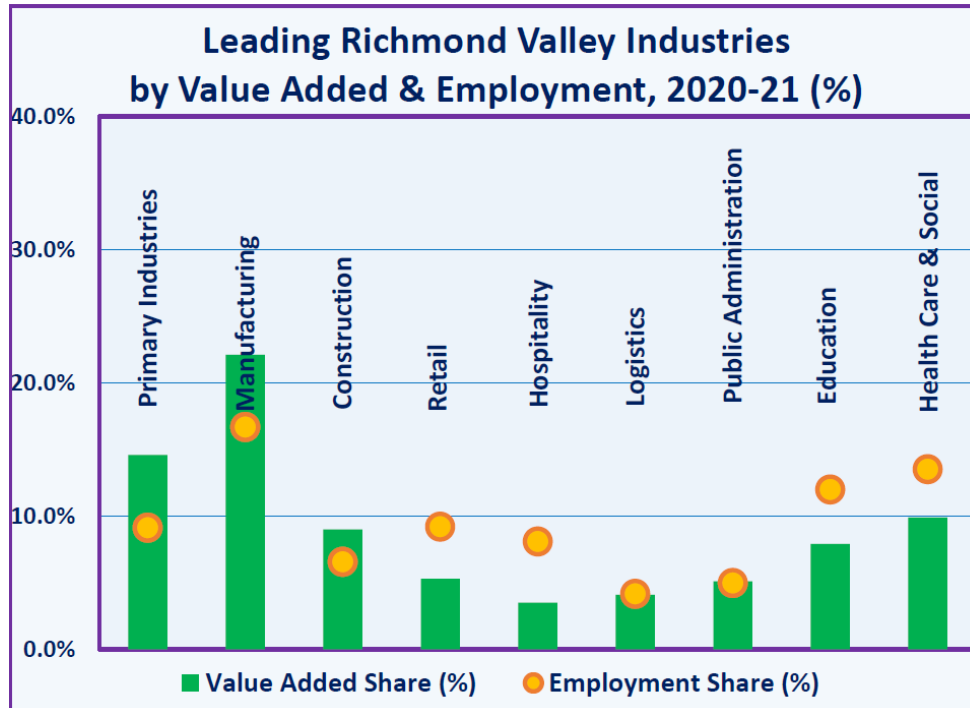
Easy access to a wonderful diversity of natural amenities is a key aspect of what makes Richmond Valley life great. However, recent extremes in the environment have also brought great trauma & adversity to the Valley's communities, with both the 2019 bushfires & 2022 floods imposing tremendous devastation on the homes, businesses & livelihoods of the people of the Valley:

- the bushfires burnt nearly half the land mass and damaged or destroyed 350 homes or structures
- more than 1,300 homes were flooded, with 400 properties severely damaged or destroyed, causing an estimated +\$400 million in damages to critical council assets & lost production.

## THE RICHMOND VALLEY & THE NORTHERN RIVERS



Nine industries, shown below, make up 81 per cent of Valley production & 84 per cent of its jobs.



The 'Engines of Growth', primary industries and manufacturing, remain the leading lights of the Valley. However, recent years have marked a significant shift in the balance of local drivers in growth:

- away from its simpler origins as a source of commodities & produce for markets further afield (like the metro markets of Sydney or Brisbane)
- towards a future with increasing focus on meeting the needs of the Valley's own growing communities through high-quality services.

This shift is relative, not absolute, so Richmond Valley's traditional strengths remain fundamental to local prosperity. Rather, this shift reflects greater sophistication & complexity, increasing Richmond Valley's potential to prosper by attracting more people & resources to it. Patterns in jobs growth by industry between 2006 and 2021 shows the shift towards population-serving & enabling services:

- construction (27 per cent of jobs growth)
- education & training (32 per cent of jobs growth)
- health care & social assistance (24 per cent of jobs growth).

## CRITICAL ISSUES, OPPORTUNITIES & RISKS

Eight key issues must be addressed to ensure Richmond Valley prospers to the full:

- 1.the Northern Rivers is in dire need of extra housing supply to respond to both the floods and a general shortage of supply over the past decade
- 2.additional sewerage treatment capacity & water supply investment is critical to Richmond Valley's capacity to realise more housing & grow its population & labour supply
- 3.the intent to 'build back better' following the floods needs to be harnessed to accelerate & intensify the shift in the economy towards population services
- 4.economy-wide labour shortages must be met to avoid significant costs to production & incomes
- 5.Richmond Valley & the Northern Rivers have seen a groundswell of interest from visitors & newcomers to the region seeking a better-balanced lifestyle
- 6.completing the Pacific Highway's duplication has improved accessibility across the region, enhancing Richmond Valley's particular blend of lifestyle & amenities
- 7.'lifestyle pricing' of rural land is a disconnect from its agricultural use, with implications both for farming & potential housing supply in peri-urban areas
- 8.farms continue to restock with cattle following the bushfires, which will significantly increase demands for labour & services along the supply chain.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

Five strategic priorities are proposed to guide Richmond Valley's development, shown below.

### Richmond Valley's Proposed Economic Development Priorities

- 

1

**1** Increase Economic Scale Through the Flood Rebuild
- 

2

**2** Grow the Population & Labour Force Through New Precincts
- 

3

**3** Foster Lifestyle & Tourism Markets for Stronger Local Services
- 

4

**4** Secure Agriculture's Supply Chains & Pursue Growing Markets
- 

5

**5** Broaden the Valley's Manufacturing & Industrial Base

While all five proposed strategies complement one another, the first two deserve emphasis. Flood recovery remains the immediate priority, but the aspiration should be not just to rebuild, but also to re-position the Valley for a stronger future. Casino is a major centre, larger in scale than Byron Bay or Murwillumbah, deserving much greater focus for government-led population services. Job creation in these key government-led sectors, like health & education, trail the growth enjoyed neighbouring areas - effectively a double constraint on both the local economy & quality of local services.

## MIND THE GAP: UNDERSUPPLY OF GOVERNMENT-LED POPULATION SERVICES JOBS IN RICHMOND VALLEY, 2006 to 2021



**+8.6%**  
increase in population



**+23%**  
increase in jobs in government-led sectors

**-1.5%**  
population growth



**+27%**  
government led jobs

**+2%**  
population growth



**+35%**  
government led jobs

**+10%**  
population growth



**+47%**  
government led jobs

**+19%**  
population growth



**+75%**  
government led jobs

**+20%**  
population growth



**+71%**  
government led jobs

**+17%**  
population growth



**+71%**  
government led jobs

# 1: Introduction

## 1.1 ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

The *Richmond Valley 2030 Community Strategic Plan* expresses community aspirations for a strong local economy rich with jobs & opportunities.

The second of the Plan's four strategic themes is *Growing Our Economy*, supported by two specific objectives:

1. Driving Economic Growth
2. Building on Our Strengths.

The clear intent of the Community Strategic Plan is economic growth is desirable because it provides wealth & employment for residents and the children of the area.

A strong local economy expresses the collective strength of the Richmond Valley - and the capacity of its residents to help ourselves, as well as one another.

Local residents & businesses are inherently self-sufficient & resilient. However, to prosper individually to the full, all the Valley's residents will still rely on one another as:

- strong customers to sell to
- able workers to help produce goods & deliver services, or
- skilful suppliers to help their businesses realise opportunities in their markets.

This Discussion Paper provides the framework & strategic directions required to make the community's aspirations a reality.

## 1.2 METHODOLOGY

The methodology informing this Discussion Paper reflects a five-step approach:

- reviewing the key structural characteristics of Richmond Valley's communities & economy

- reviewing key industry data to evaluate changes & emerging trends
- interviewing key stakeholders across the region for market insights on issues & potential actions, including major employers in Casino, Evans Head, Coraki, Woodburn & Broadwater
- evaluating the critical issues & risks facing the Valley
- formulating strategies respond to the priority strategic actions, together with actions to put the strategies to practical effect.

## 1.3 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Valley's residents deserve to see their local opportunities continue expand as quickly as possible. To achieve this, Richmond Valley Council is applying a three-part framework to maximise local economic potential:

- first: acknowledging the differing drivers of development across industries:
  - 'engines of growth' are export-oriented and largely prosper through responding to demands from markets outside the Valley
  - 'population-serving' industries are oriented towards meeting household needs: sometimes in a market context, in others by government decision. These activities mostly service the Valley's residents, but sometimes also visitors or adjoining areas
  - 'enabling industries' mostly prosper through business-to-business relationships: essentially as links in the supply chains of 'engines of growth' and 'population-serving' businesses.



- second: fostering depth & capacity in six broad-based, closely integrated markets critical to all other industries functioning effectively:
  - population
  - labour pool
  - housing
  - land use
  - infrastructure
  - transport
- third: leveraging & enhancing key advantages & opportunities that reflect the specific characteristics offered by the area's local markets.

Richmond Valley's proposed Framework for Economic Development is summarised on the next page in Figure 1.2.

By building common understanding of each industries' drivers of growth or constraints on local production, this Discussion Paper will sharpen what the priority issues are, and how to address them.

#### 1.4 STRUCTURE OF THIS DISCUSSION PAPER

The remainder of this Discussion Paper follows the Methodology & Development Framework described above, structured in four parts, as summarised below.

**FIGURE 1.1: STRUCTURE OF THIS DISCUSSION PAPER**



# RICHMOND VALLEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

1:  
Identify  
Different  
Drivers  
of  
Growth



## 1 - ENGINES OF GROWTH INDUSTRIES

Export-oriented activities, like manufacturing. Typically, most demand comes from markets & localities elsewhere.

## 2 - ENABLING INDUSTRIES

Activities oriented towards servicing other businesses, like logistics or professional services.

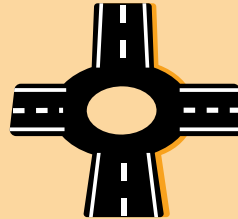
## 3 - POPULATION SERVING INDUSTRIES

Activities oriented towards serving the households of the region, like retail or health & education.

2:  
Foster  
Depth &  
Capacity  
in Key  
Integrated  
Markets



Land Use



Infrastructure



Transport



Housing



Population



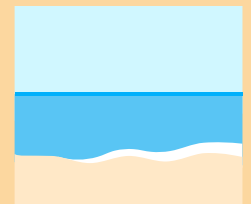
Labour

3:  
Leverage  
Specific  
Local  
Advantages



Built factors

Natural factors



Institutional factors

Human factors



# 2: Richmond Valley & its Localities

## 2.1 THE RICHMOND VALLEY

The Richmond Valley local government area is located on NSW's far north coast, home to more than 23,500 people.

Richmond Valley extends across more than 3,000 square kilometres, taking in a diverse range of geographic features. The terrain features significant tracts of ranges, forests, hinterland, riverine & coastal areas, as well as its cultivated & built environments.

Culturally, the traditional custodians of the lands of the Richmond Valley are the people of the Bundjalung nation, incorporating 20 or more different language groups altogether.

Indigeneity remains a defining cultural feature of the area. About 8 per cent of Richmond Valley residents are indigenous, or about two and a half times the national average.

The defining cultural & environmental feature is the Richmond River, which gives the area its name and connects four of its major communities. The River is the area's key cultural reference point, shaping its social & economic character today.

## 2.2 THE NORTHERN RIVERS

Richmond Valley's geography lies at the centre of a much larger region, known as the Northern Rivers, home to more than 310,000 residents.

The Region spans seven local government areas, spanning from the Clarence Valley to the Tweed at the Queensland border.

Economically, the Northern Rivers localities of greatest significance to Richmond Valley are the near neighbours offering significant job & supply chain opportunities for residents & businesses. Foremost among these are:

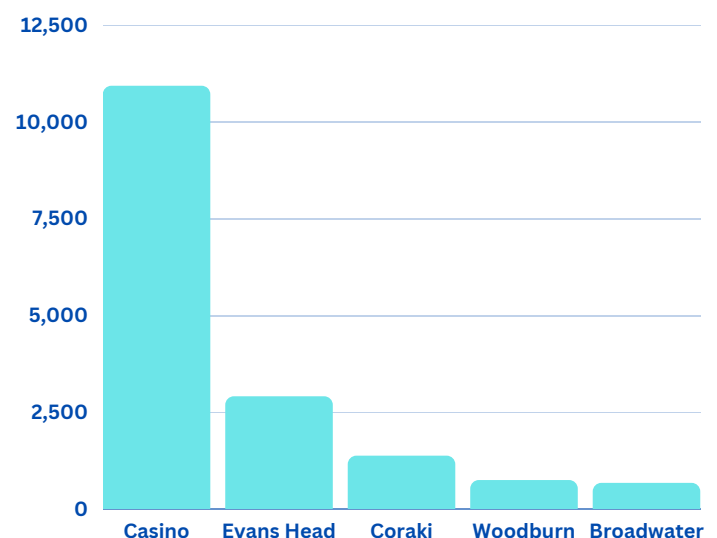
- Lismore
- Ballina
- Kyogle.

Additionally, Clarence Valley's economic base also shares significant commonalities with Richmond Valley, especially in forestry, timber and agriculture.

## 2.3 RICHMOND VALLEY'S MAJOR LOCALITIES

More than 70 per cent of Richmond Valley's population lives in five centres:

- Casino (most westerly centre)
- Evans Head (most easterly centre)
- three lower Richmond River centres, Coraki, Woodburn & Broadwater.



Casino is one of the largest centres of the Northern Rivers, and so markedly larger in scale than the other centres - almost twice the scale of the other four centres put together, with more jobs than resident workers.

These centres are shown in Figure 2.1 and profiled in subsections 2.4 to 2.8 below. The profiles relate to the 2021 Census, with the implication that these reflect the centres as they were prior to the advent of the 2022 floods.

FIGURE 2.1: THE RICHMOND VALLEY'S MAJOR POPULATION CENTRES

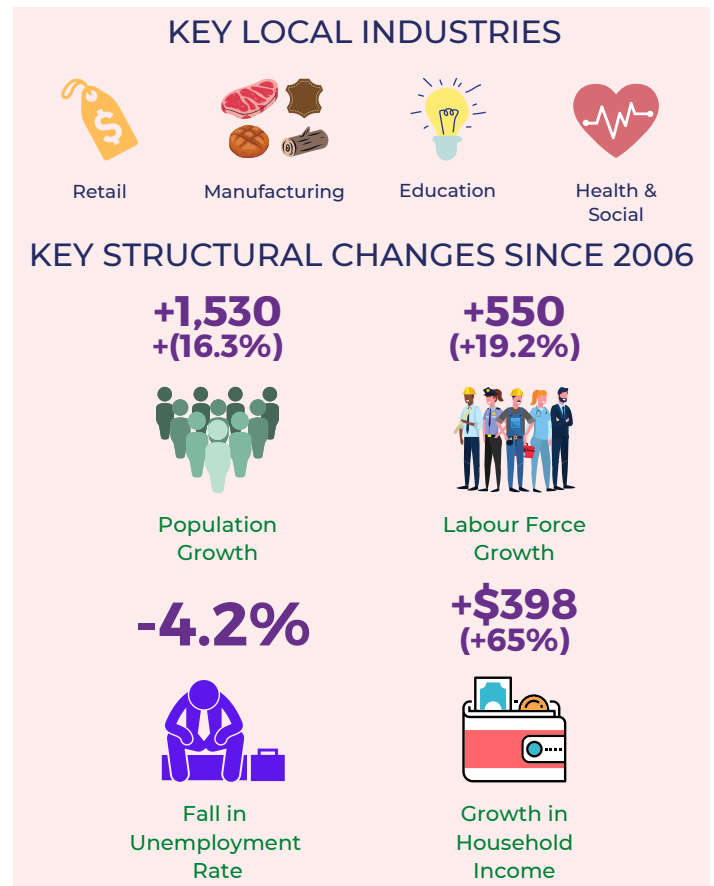


## 2.4 CASINO

Casino is Richmond Valley's largest community, with close to 11,000 people. By car, Casino is about 25 minutes from two major adjoining centres, Lismore (28,000 people) & Kyogle (2,800 people).

Casino realised considerable growth in the 15 years to 2021. Unemployment has come down by about a third, reducing its unemployment rate to 5.4 per cent.

Casino's economy supports 4,750 jobs, 9.5 per cent above 2006 levels. Its role as a regional centre is seen in the fact it provides 15 per cent more jobs than the number of workers who call it home.



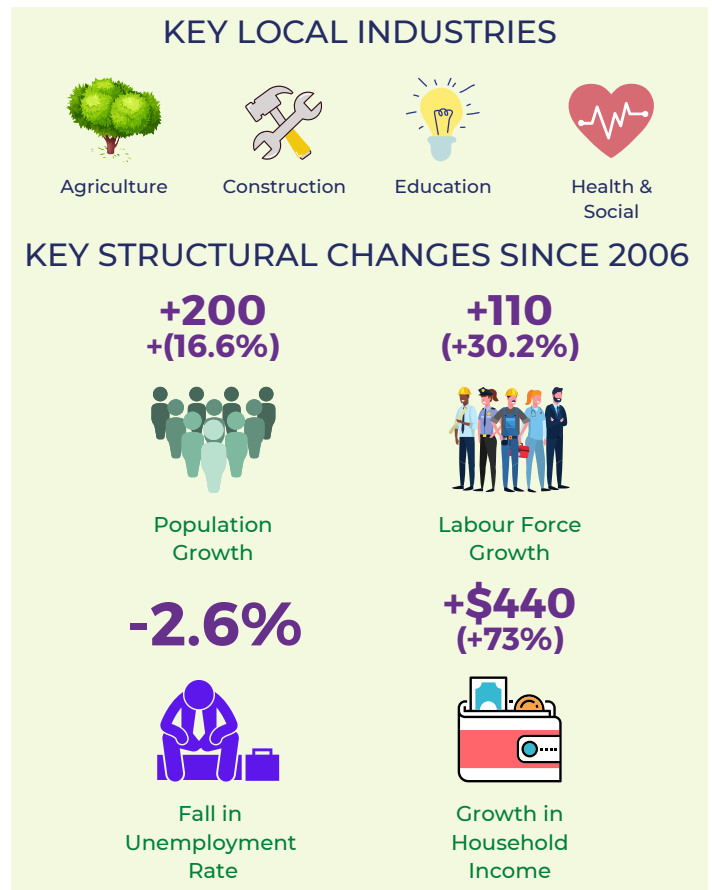
## 2.5 CORAKI

Coraki is a community of about 1,400 people downriver of Casino, at the junction of Wilsons & Richmond Rivers.

Over the 15 years to 2021, Coraki saw marked growth in its head count & workers. The rate of increase in workers exceeds the population growth rate. The unemployment rate has also come down over time - from 9.8 per cent in 2006, to 7.2 per cent in 2021.

Coraki's local economy supports 300 jobs.

Household incomes have grown over time, to the point they are now higher than in Casino & Broadwater.

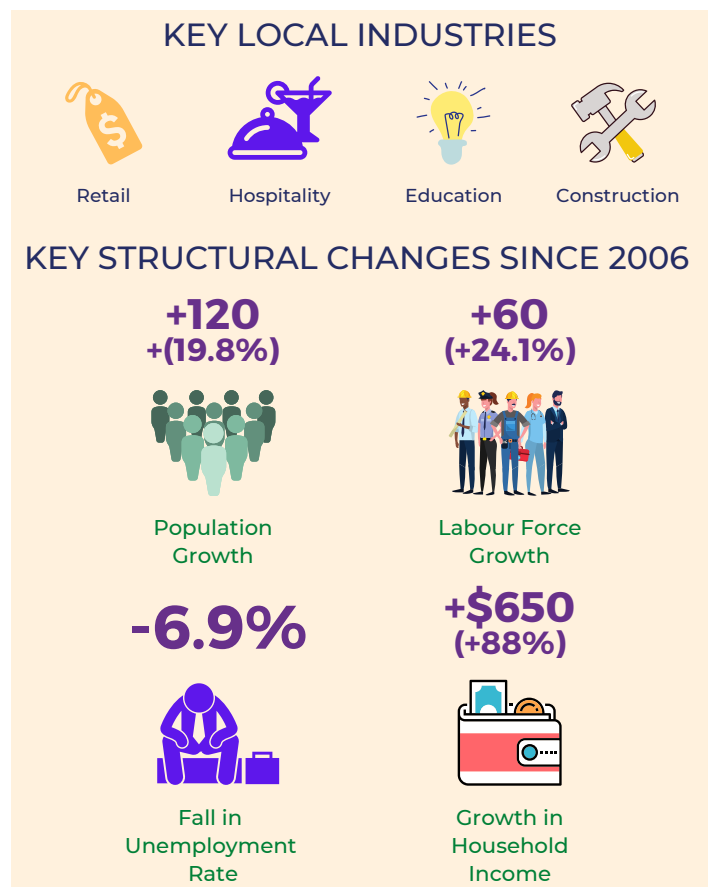


## 2.6 WOODBURN

Woodburn is a community of about 750 people, on the lower Richmond River, close to the Pacific Highway.

Over the 15 years to 2021, Woodburn saw moderate growth in its population & labour force. Over the same period, Woodburn also saw the largest fall in its unemployment rate, to just 3.5 per cent, the lowest rate in the Valley today.

The Woodburn economy supports about 200 jobs, mostly in hospitality, retail, education & construction. Household income in Woodburn is 30-40 per cent higher than in the Valley's other communities.

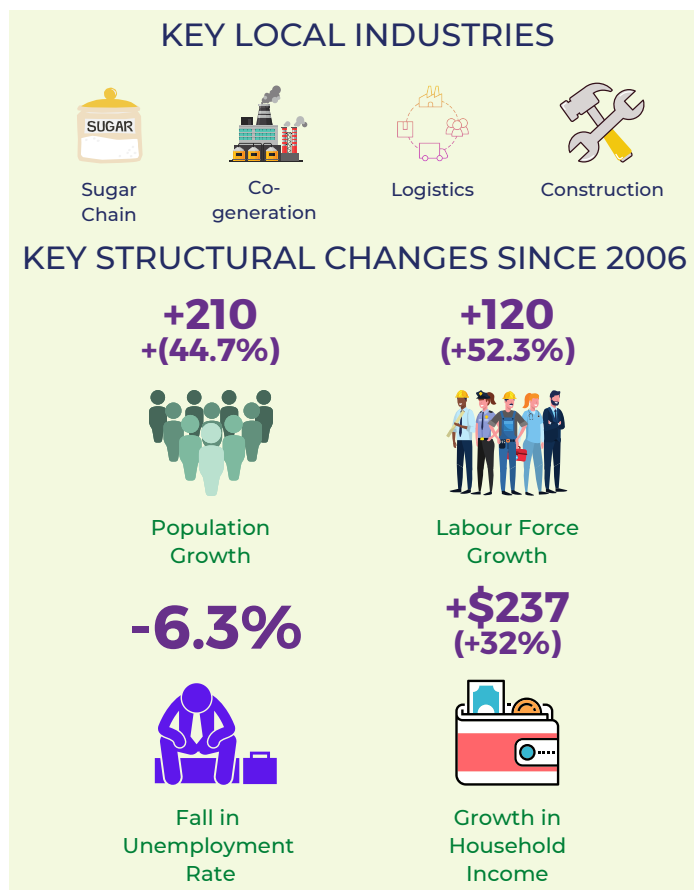


## 2.7 BROADWATER

Broadwater is a community of about 670 people, on the lower Richmond River, near the Pacific Highway.

Broadwater's demographics have shifted considerably in the 15 years to 2021, with the Valley's fastest rates of population & worker growth & second largest fall in its unemployment rate.

Broadwater's growth in household incomes was slower than elsewhere, even the increase in labour force participation was much greater. 70 per cent of Broadwater's 200 jobs are in construction, the sugar chain & related co-generation & logistics activities.



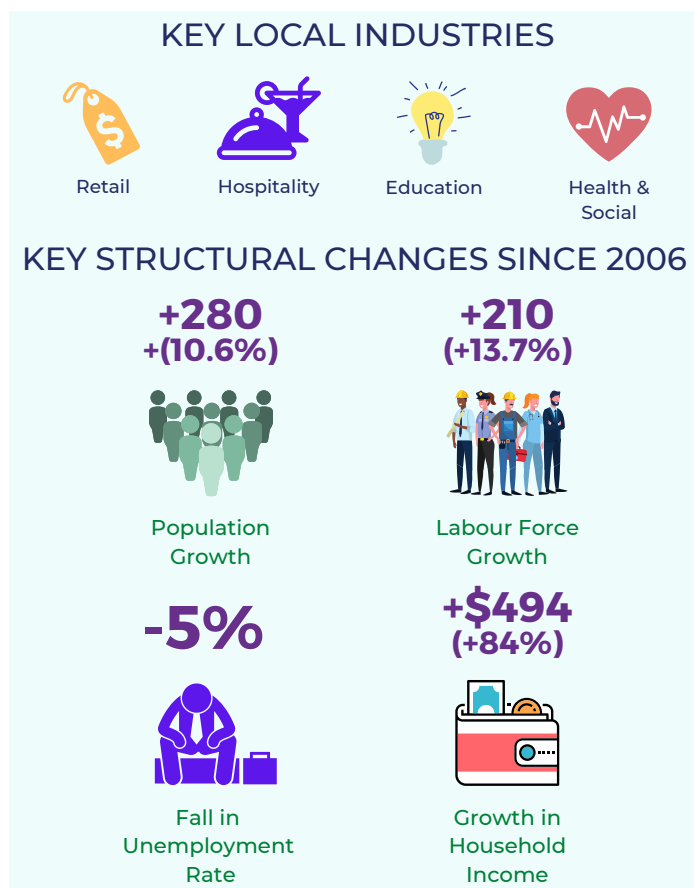
## 2.8 EVANS HEAD

Evans Head is a community of about 2,900 people, set on the Pacific Ocean close to Richmond Valley's eastern extent.

Over the 15 years to 2021, Evans Head has seen steady growth in its population & labour force.

The local unemployment rate has come down significantly over time, from 9.5 per cent in 2006, to 4.5 per cent in 2021.

The local economy of Evans Head supports around 770 jobs, concentrated in hospitality, education & training, health & social services and retail.



# 3: Richmond Valley's Growth Trajectory

## 3.1 RICHMOND VALLEY ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

Prior to the 2022 floods, Richmond Valley's economy was approaching \$1 billion, reflecting steady growth in local production over time.

Since 2017-18, annual production in the Valley had exceeded \$900 million a year, substantially greater than its \$700 to \$750 million scale in the early 2000s:

- average annual production in the decade to 2010-11 was \$830M - or 13 per cent above 2000-01 levels
- average annual production in the decade to 2020-21 was \$885M - 21 per cent above 2000-01 levels and 7 per cent higher than the average for the decade to 2010-11.

**+\$900 MILLION**




Richmond Valley Council

of local economic production in Richmond Valley, 2017-18 to 2020-21

Rising levels of local production in the Valley

**\$885M**

average production across the decade to 2020-21

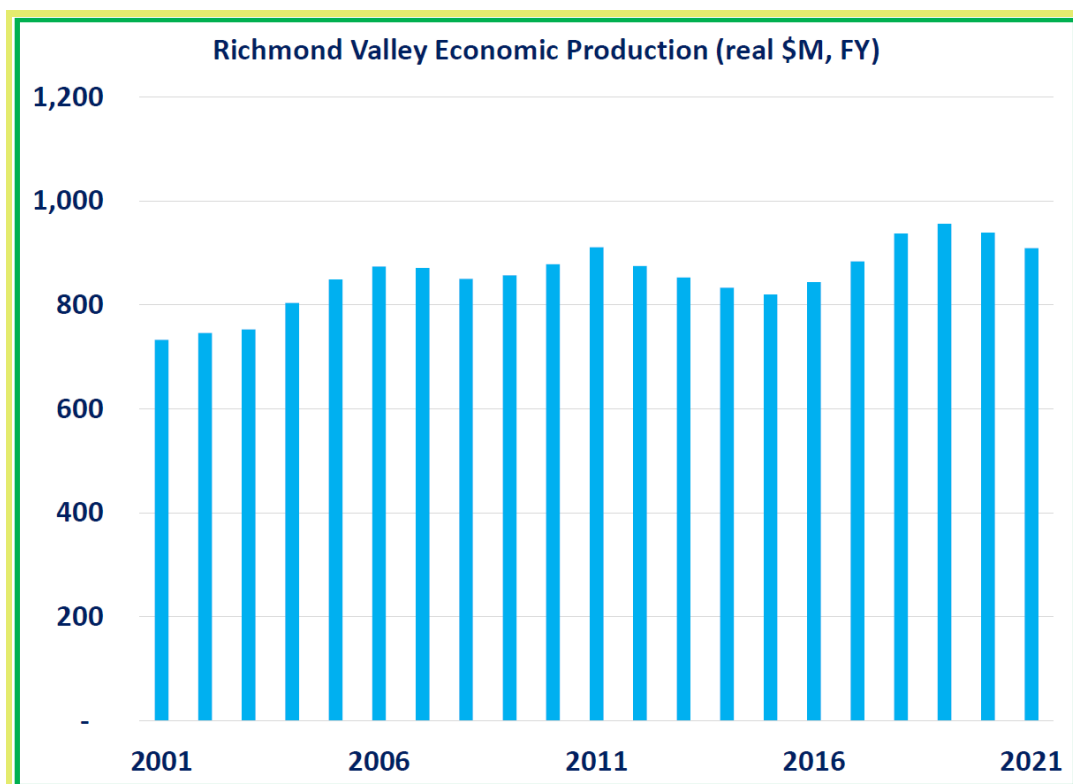


**\$830M**

average production across the decade to 2010-11

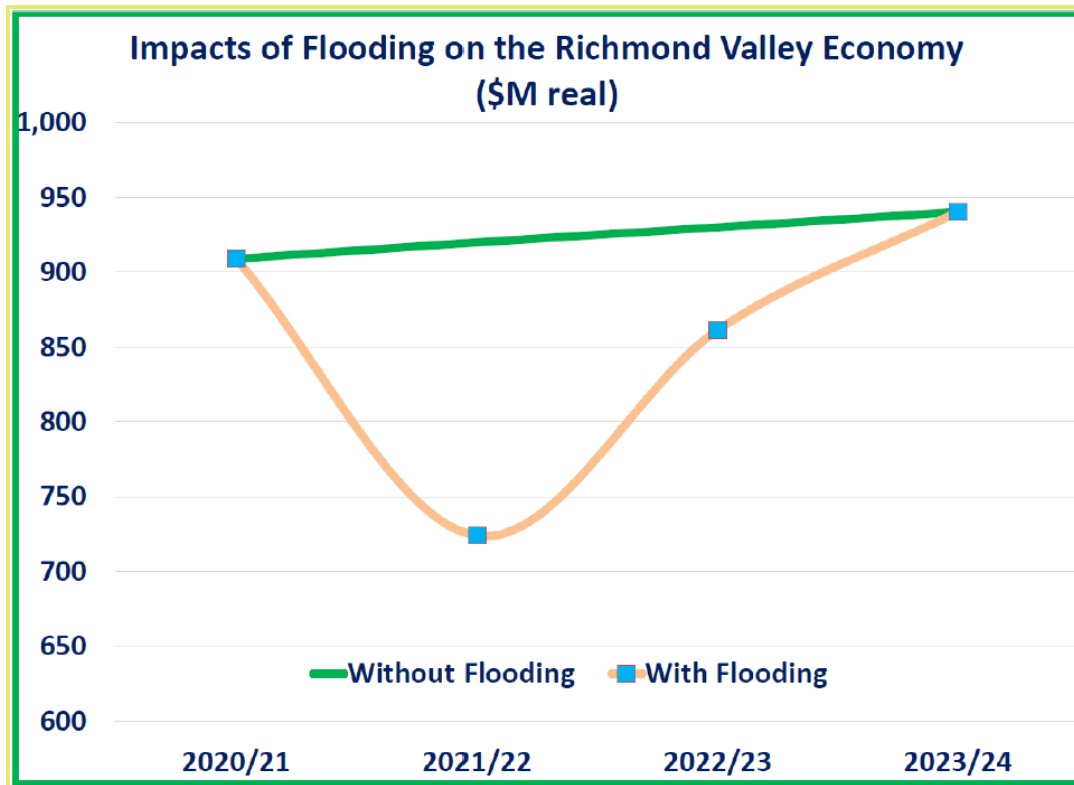
Bushfire & flood impacts will disrupt Richmond Valley production for some time to come.

FIGURE 3.1: THE RICHMOND VALLEY ECONOMY, 2000-01 TO 2020-21



Source: National Institute of Economic & Industry Research (NIEIR) for population.ID

## FIGURE 3.2: PROJECTED FLOOD IMPACTS ON THE VALLEY ECONOMY



Source: Sea & Star Advisory analysis of NIEIR data

On top of their trauma & cost to life, the 2019 bushfires burnt nearly half the Valley's land mass, damaging 350 homes & structures.

Then In February 2022, the Richmond River saw flooding of a scale unprecedented in recorded history. Of the 1,300 properties flooded, more than 400 properties were severely damaged, with many remaining abandoned today.

- impacts were concentrated in downriver communities like Coraki, Woodburn & Broadwater, with widescale destruction of assets continuing delay recovery.
- more than 1,300 homes were flooded, with 400 properties severely damaged or destroyed, causing an estimated +\$400 million in damages to critical council assets & lost production.

These disasters were extremes, but underline the inherent volatility of the local economy:

- the Valley heavily emphasises primary production & related manufacturing, so local conditions can heavily disrupt production
- the Valley's commodities & products are widely traded, so market conditions elsewhere bear on price yields in the Valley.

**RICHMOND VALLEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTIONS**





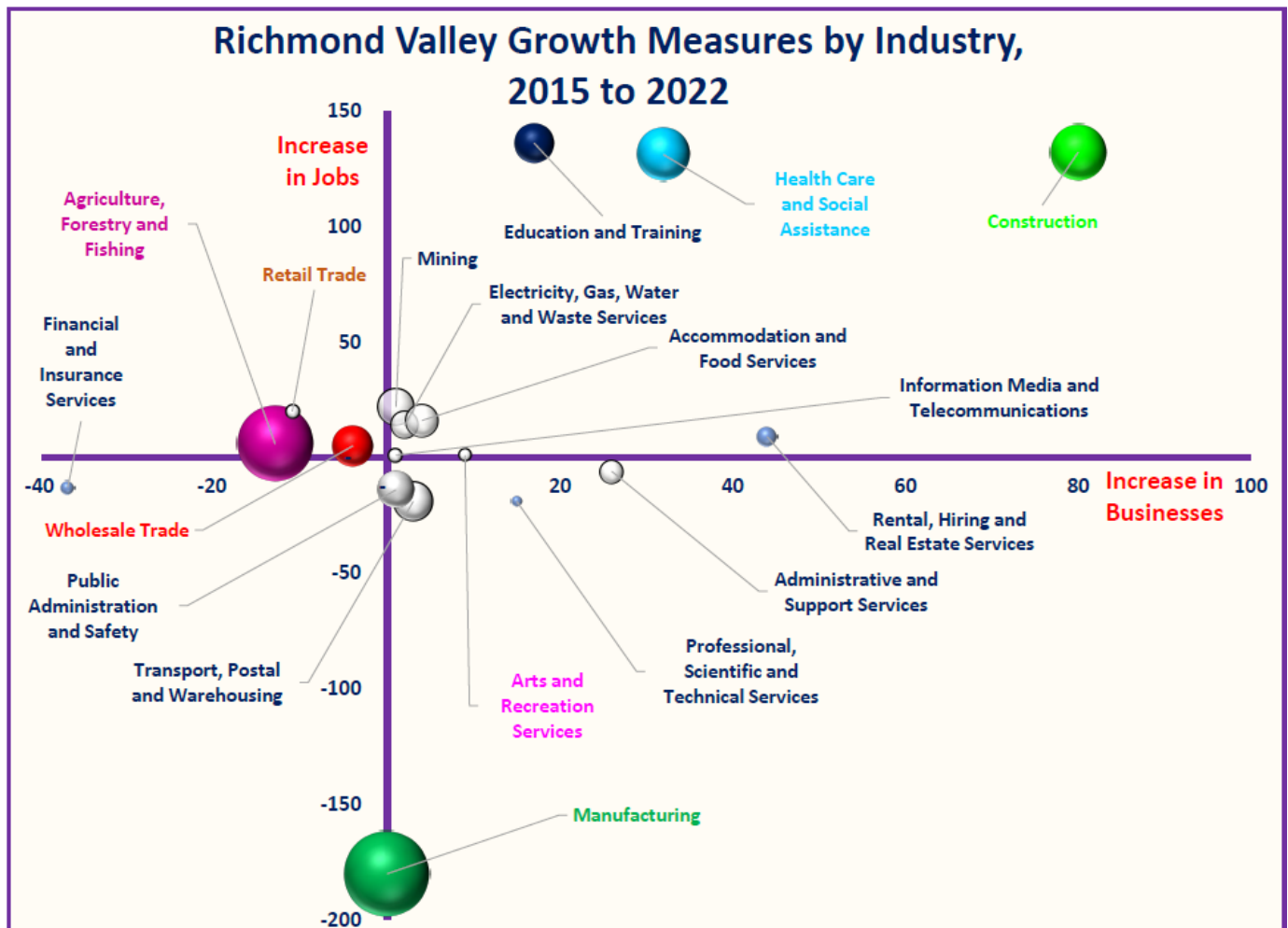
Figure 3.3 depicts the variation in profile since 2015 across industries and three different measures of economic expansion:

1. Measure one is net increase in businesses in an industry - specifically, how many more local businesses in each sector in June 2022 than in June 2015. The further to the right a 'bubble' on the chart is, the more additional businesses Richmond Valley has gained
2. Measure two is net increase in local jobs in each industry - specifically, the number of local jobs identified in each sector in the 2021 Census against 2016 Census levels. The further up the page a 'bubble' is, the greater the increase in local jobs in the sector
3. Measure three is net increase in local production by industry - specifically, the change in output for each sector in 2020-21 when measured against their 2015-16 levels. The larger the 'bubble', the greater the increase in local production.

Review of Figure 3.3 reveals a number of prominent features:

1. For any of the three measures, the net changes tend to be concentrated in a handful of industries. This can be seen in the numerous small 'bubbles' clustered very close to where the axes intersect
2. The net increase in businesses is dispersed across several industries. Construction is the leading contributor to net business creation, with property, admin services, health care & social and education, next best. Together, these five industries have seen a combined net increase of almost 200 businesses
3. Construction, Health Care & Social Assistance and Education and Training are the stand-out sectors for net job creation, with about 400 jobs created across the three sectors.
4. Manufacturing & Agriculture dominated the production gains supporting growing local income, but shed jobs & businesses doing so.

**FIGURE 3.3: GROWTH IN OPPORTUNITIES BY INDUSTRY, 2015 TO 2022**



Source: Sea & Star Advisory analysis of Australian Bureau of Statistics & National Institute for Industry & Economic Research data

### 3.4 LEADING INDUSTRIES

Figure 3.3 below captures the scale & significance of the largest industries in the Richmond Valley.

Together, these nine industries account for more than 81 per cent of the Valley's production and 84 per cent of its jobs.

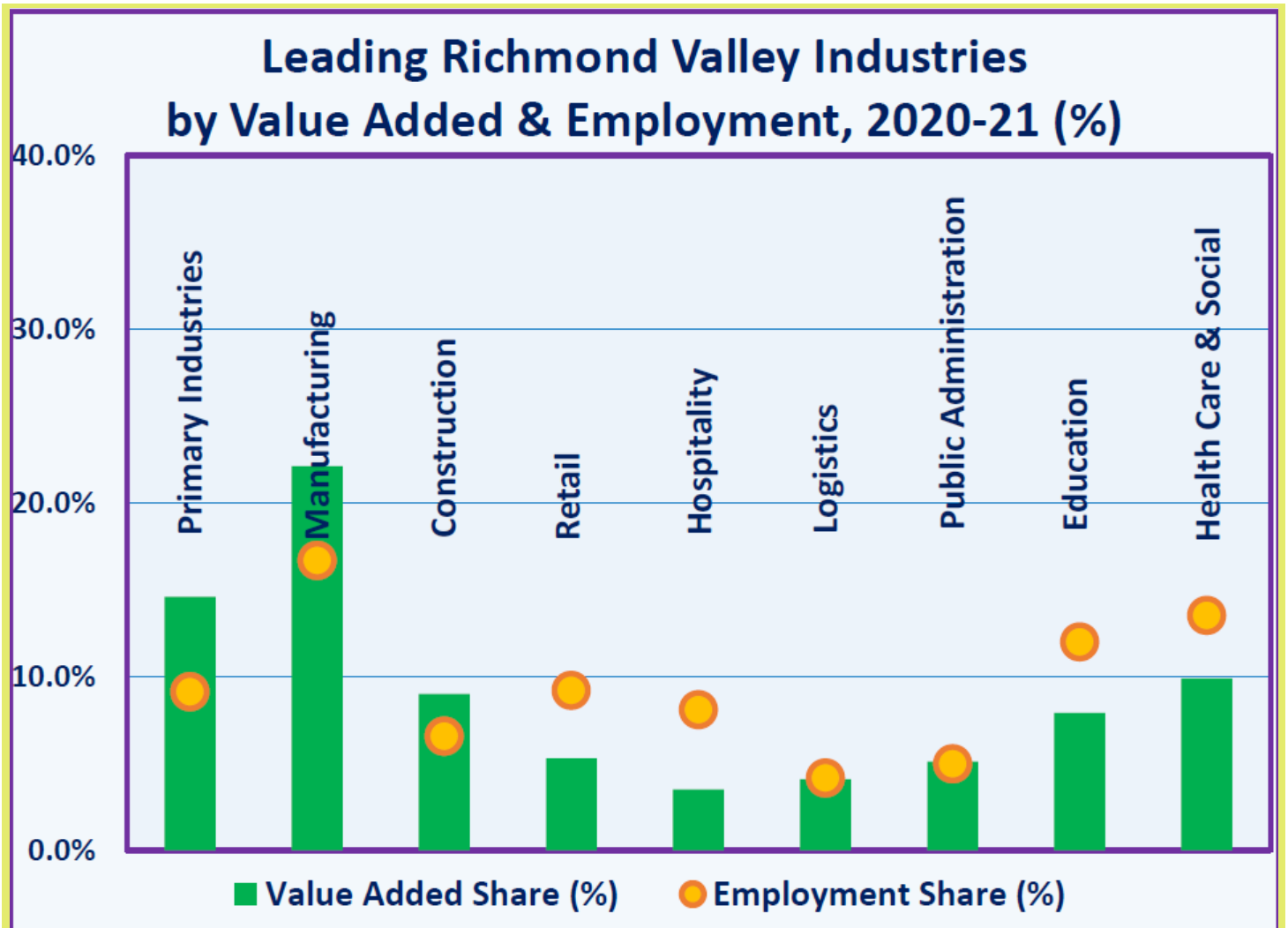
The figure captures industry shares of the local economy by both value of production & scale of employment. For sectors that are relatively labour intensive, the green columns are below the orange dots, with the reverse applying to capital-intensive industries.

The engines of growth, primary industries and manufacturing, remain the leading lights of the Valley. However, industry contributions to overall jobs growth between 2006 & 2021 shows how the economy has been rebalanced towards population-serving & enabling services:

- construction (27 per cent of jobs growth)
- education & training (32 per cent)
- health care & social assistance (24 per cent).

These sectors are further explored in subsequent chapters.

FIGURE 3.3: LEADING INDUSTRIES OF RICHMOND VALLEY, 2020-21



Source: Sea & Star Advisory analysis of National Institute for Economic & Industry Research and Australian Bureau of Statistics' Census data

# 4: Key Integrated Markets of Richmond Valley

## 4.1 OVERVIEW

The previous chapter introduced a three-part framework for promoting Richmond Valley's economic development. The first element introduced was a typology for the varying individual industry drivers of growth.

Applying this element offers richer insights into how businesses & workers' prospects stem from:

- serving the residents of the Valley
- clients in markets beyond the Valley's boundaries
- business-to-business opportunities
- government operational or procurement decisions, or
- conventional market forces.

We saw more than 80 per cent of Richmond Valley's economy is concentrated in nine key sectors.

This chapter considers the second element of the three-part development framework: the key integrated markets providing the success factors essential to any expanding economy.

## 4.2 ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE OF INTEGRATED MARKETS

Some markets are so significant in scale they are best considered as 'factors of production' for the overall economy, not just a sector to themselves. The traditional factors of production are land, labour, capital & enterprise, with businesses also using a much broader range of goods & services as inputs.

For the purposes of Richmond Valley's framework, this element focuses on integrated markets as the broad factors most relevant to underpinning overall economic potential, identified as:

1. population
2. housing
3. labour force
4. land use
5. infrastructure
6. transport.

These factors have been singled out, as:

- other factors of production like capital & enterprise vary at industry level (as seen in the next chapter)
- each of the six markets has points of integration with others, as reflected in Figure 4.1 on the next page
- the broad, ready availability of each factor underpins economic potential
- these factors are generally within policy scope & influence for councils, making them particularly relevant to local economic development policy.

Developments in each integrated market are outlined in sections below.

### 4.3 POPULATION

Richmond Valley & its markets are growing strongly, supporting rising quality of life & opportunity for an increasing number of residents.

Chapter 2's locality profiles show population growth in the Valley has been broad-based. Most centres saw 10-20 per cent increases over 15 years, topped by +45 per cent in Broadwater.

While smaller communities have seen population declines, the Valley's overall population increase is a significant +1,860 over 15 years - or +8.6 per cent.

The significance of Richmond Valley's steady expansion is seen in comparison with near neighbours.



Both Kyogle & Lismore contracted in the decade to 2020-21, with only Lismore seeing modest growth of just +1,000 (+2.3 per cent) over the extended 15 year period.

### 4.4 LABOUR FORCE

Richmond Valley has steadily increased its local supply of workers, supporting increased economic activity across the Northern Rivers.

The rate of growth in the Valley's labour force exceeded the population growth rate, reflecting increased labour force participation over time.

Across the Valley's major localities, labour force growth rates varied considerably. The unemployment rate fell 4.1 per cent over the 15 year period, led by Woodburn & Broadwater.

Increased labour force participation & lower unemployment also contributed to strong growth in median household incomes.



Over the 15 years, the gain in median weekly income was close to \$500 (+75 per cent), with Woodburn residents enjoying the largest gains.

## 4.5 LAND USE

Northern Rivers property markets began to realise a strong uplift in valuations since 2016, well ahead of COVID impacts on regional migration.

While the exact timing of impact varies, the uplift in land pricing is broad-based, affecting all Northern Rivers LGAs across multiple categories of land use.

In Richmond Valley, residential prices essentially 'flatlined' between 2012 & 2016. However, prices appreciated by around 63 per cent - or 10.3 per cent a year - in the 5 years to July 2020-21. For the land component only, the 5 year increase was 74 per cent. These increases reflect gains in wealth for home owners, but reduced affordability for prospective buyers.

### 5-Year Residential Property Price Growth to 2020-21



**+\$154,000 (+63 %)**

Large 5-year increases also eventuated in the Valley's other land markets:

- Rural (+44 per cent)
- Commercial (+30 per cent)
- Industrial (+62 per cent).

## 4.6 HOUSING STOCK

Steady growth in Richmond Valley's housing stock over the past 15 years has supported larger markets, a larger population & rising local prosperity.

Increases in the Valley's housing stock over time have been steady, rather than spectacular. In 2022, the Valley's dwellings count approached 10,750, an increase of about 1,250 since 2006.

Increases in the housing stock since 2016 have been heavily focused on the two largest centres Casino, (accounting for 42 per cent of the increase) and Evans Head (39 per cent).

Overall, the Valley's exhibits relatively limited housing diversity.

### Growth in Dwellings since 2005-06



**+1,250 dwellings (+13%)**

Casino has around 570 townhouses or apartments, with around 520 in Evans Head, with about 30 across the remaining three centres.

## 4.7 INFRASTRUCTURE

Richmond Valley Council's investment program & capacity has expanded considerably since the mid 2000s.

While infrastructure investment is lumpy from year-to-year, Council's program is characterised by significant growth over a sustained period.

On trend measures that allow for volatility, Council's annual program capacity has expanded nearly threefold since 2006.

Council's total investment program between 2005-06 & 2021-22 exceeds \$300M, with assets that directly enable increases in population & housing capacity, like roads, water & sewer, the major components.

### Growth in Annual Investment since 2005-06



**+\$15 M pa  
(+290 per cent)**

Other major investments in economic & social assets include the Northern Rivers Livestock Exchange, Showground, pool & library.

## 4.8 TRANSPORT

Freight & commuter movements are integral to the Valley's economy.

Transport for NSW data reflects manufacturing supply chains for meat, milk, forestry & other foods account for 67 per cent of all of the Northern Rivers' freight movements.

Commuting patterns reflect the Valley's highly mobile labour force commutes extensively across the Valley, with just 33 per cent working where they live.

The Ballina-Byron & Gold Coast airports, both among Australia's largest, also play a critical role in bringing visitors to the region, while allowing local businesses to connect to major markets elsewhere.



**33% work where they live**

**25% work elsewhere in the Valley**

**33% work elsewhere in the Northern Rivers**

Ballina-Byron's recovery in volumes post COVID was much faster than for others.

# 5: Key Local Advantages & Focus Industries

## 5.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter profiles the key sources of local advantage & dominant sectors providing a focus for economic policy:

- section 5.2 describes the Richmond Valley economy's enduring sources of advantage & prosperity
- sections 5.4 to 5.7 describe key industries & opportunities offering a focus for development policy.

## 5.2 SOURCES OF ADVANTAGE

Figure 5.1 on the next page maps out the key endowed advantages that can be taken to be inherent to Richmond Valley's local operating environment. These endowed advantages are important for policy, as they offer sustainable sources of economic advantage that can be deepened or complemented over time.

The endowments are classified against the headings of:

- natural environment
- built environment
- human factors
- institutional features.

Foremost among Richmond Valley's endowed advantages are:

- central location within the Northern Rivers & access to Queensland
- suitable development sites
- numerous flood-free development opportunities
- generally high-quality infrastructure, including for freight & passenger transport connections to external markets
- Casino Food Co-op & Northern Rivers Livestock Exchange.

- extensive economic integration with adjoining communities & economies
- a proactive Council and strong community support for balanced development in the Valley.

## 5.3 FOCUS INDUSTRIES & OPPORTUNITIES

Sections 5.4 to 5.7 profile four key focus areas that are central to policy considerations for Richmond Valley's economic future:

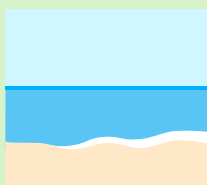
- Manufacturing
- Agriculture (Primary Industries)
- Population Services
- Housing Supply.

In profiling each of these four areas, consideration is given not only to the industries themselves, but also their:

- upstream & downstream supply chain linkages & opportunities
- sources of demand (from the framework introduced in chapter 3)
- relationships to the key integrated markets (from chapter 4)
- prospects for development within the Northern Rivers' regional context.

FIGURE 5.1: KEY ADVANTAGES (ENDOWMENTS) FOR RICHMOND VALLEY

## Natural Endowments



- Amenable, productive coast strips & hinterlands
- Central geographic location within the Northern Rivers
- Proximity to Queensland
- Flood-free land & developable sites

## Built Endowments



- Duplicated Pacific Highway
- Easy access to Ballina-Byron & Gold Coast Airports
- Regional Job Precinct
- Northern Rivers Livestock Exchange

## Human Endowments



- Manufacturing skills base
- High labour mobility
- Strong community unity & identity
- Community support for balanced development

## Institutional Endowments



- Proactive Council
- Grower co-ops
- Large private investors
- Close linkages with the Lismore, Kyogle, Ballina & Clarence Valley economies



## 5.4 MANUFACTURING

Manufacturing remains the Valley's economic lifeblood, with production continuing to grow over time.

Food is the outstanding manufacturing strength of Richmond Valley, making up 83 per cent of all local production by value, with meat, poultry, dairy & raw sugar the major sub-categories.

Relative to the state & regional economies, the Valley is also specialised in wood products (trusses, frames & saw mill products), chemicals (including tea tree oil) and textiles & clothing.

Consultation suggests labour supply is a common critical issue for the Valley's leading manufacturers.

Richmond Valley's manufacturing supply chains reflect considerable integration 'upstream', but far less 'downstream' than might be expected:

- Transport for NSW freight forecasts suggest at least two-thirds of Northern Rivers' freight task relates to manufacturing supply chains central the Valley's economy, like livestock, forestry, meat & milk
- yet Richmond Valley's local business revenues & production for logistics are the region's second-lowest, despite its related local demands, central geography & direct access to all major road corridors (Pacific, Bruxner & Summerland Way).

Other activities suitable for local integration, like timber & agricultural wholesaling, are underrepresented.

## 5.5 PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

Richmond Valley's great strength in manufacturing is underpinned by its strong local supply of primary production inputs.

Leading primary industry activities are:

- cattle & calves
- forestry & logging
- milk
- oilseeds
- sugar cane.

Primary production reflects volatility from year-to-year, due to factors like:

- structural changes in individual industries, like poultry & forestry

- successive natural disasters - drought, fire & flood - destroying stock & disrupting production.

This volatility carries implications not only for primary producers, but also downstream activities. **Integrated value chains with local downstream processing is key to primary producers realising the full value from their output, especially through grower co-ops processing & marketing produce.**

Primary input prices are typically just fractions of production value for meat (livestock is two-thirds of total value), dairy (one-third) & sugar and timber products (one-fifth each).

## 5.6 POPULATION SERVICES

Local population services activities have grown along with the Valley's population - although increases are not as sharp as in neighbouring locations.

As the title implies, population-serving activities should generally increase as the number of local residents grows. However, variations are not entirely straightforward & vary depending on who & how services are provided::

- **market-led population-serving activities:** e.g. 90 per cent of retail demand comes from households, serviced by private businesses
- **government-led population-serving activities:** e.g. government procurement accounts for a majority of demand in:
  - health & social assistance (68 per cent of demand from government)

- education & training (52 per cent)
- public administration (84 per cent)
- **tourism-associated population-serving industries:** some industries derive demand from visitors & locals:
  - 29 per cent of hospitality (accommodation & food services) relates to visitors
  - 14 per cent of arts & recreational services relate to visitors.

Government procurement decisions mean Richmond Valley has:

1. fewer such jobs than its neighbouring areas, relative to its population
2. seen smaller job increases in such jobs than neighbouring areas for its rate & level of population growth.

## 5.7 HOUSING SUPPLY

Since well before the 2022 floods, the Northern Rivers has been suffering from a chronic undersupply of housing.

In a typical market, higher prices should lead to increases in both housing approvals & completions. Yet in the Northern Rivers' case, both housing approvals & supply have contracted, as prices have increased.

In the Northern Rivers' hinterland, most new housing comes from 'greenfield' development, with land value half or more of the value of the property. Sharp rises in rural land values over the past five years - faster than residential increases - have undermined the economics of housing supply.

'Lifestyle' pricing of rural lands, unrelated to agricultural uses, has caused most of the shock to housing supply economics. This has reduced affordability, with not all residents able to absorb the higher costs.

With some priced out of the market, a further implication of sharp increases in the price of both residential & rural lands is that dwelling configurations that economise on the amount of land required are likely to serve budget-conscious households particularly well.

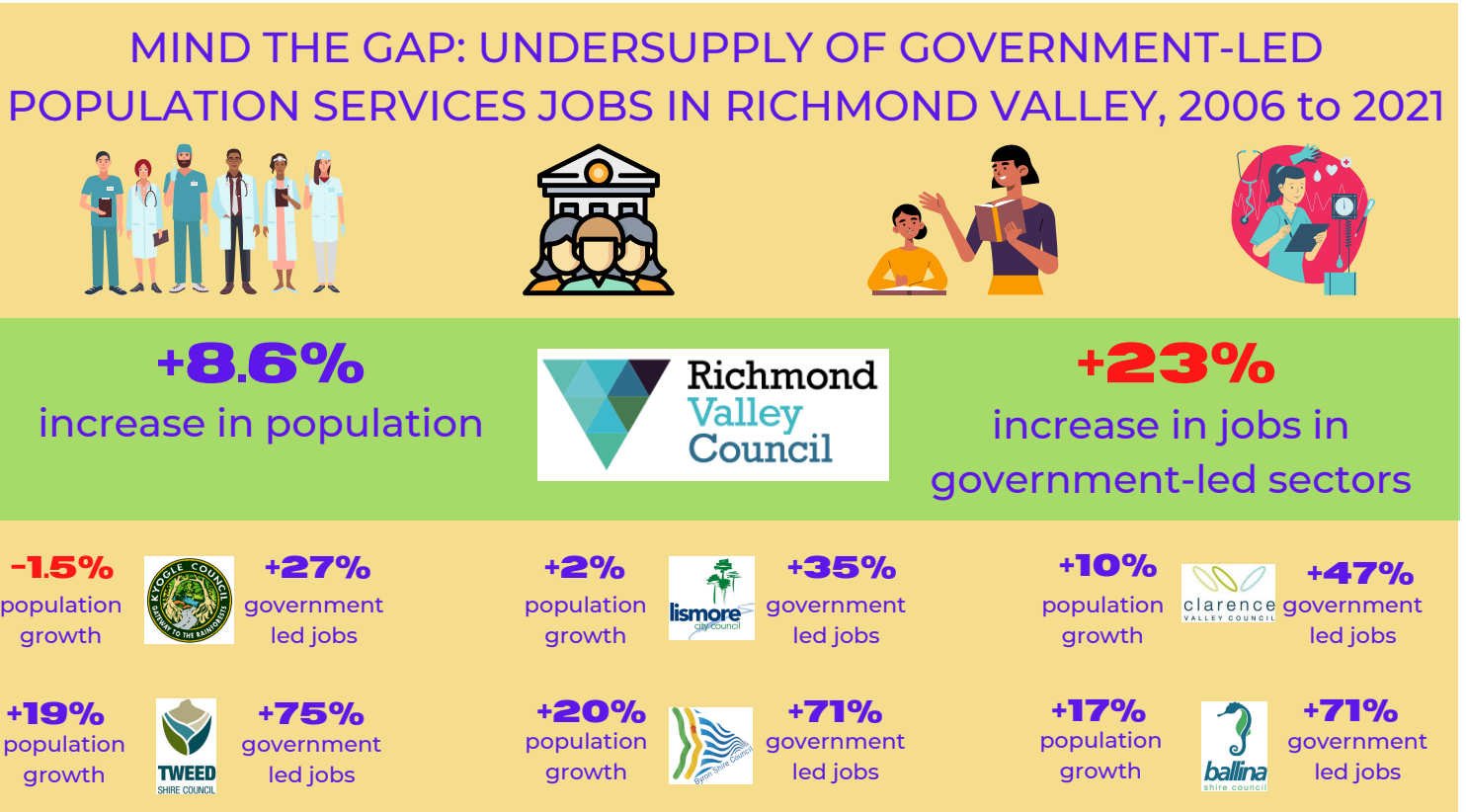
While small in scale relative to other areas, the Valley's construction sector has also increased in significance to the local economy since 2006 & can expand further with the right policy support.

FIGURE 5.2: NORTHERN RIVERS JOBS IN GOVERNMENT-LED SECTORS, 2021

LGA	PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION	EDUCATION & TRAINING	HEALTH CARE & SOCIAL ASSISTANCE
Richmond Valley	350	825	925
Ballina Shire	900	1,700	3,300
Byron Shire	500	1,425	1,950
Clarence Valley	1,900	1,675	3,150
Kyogle	125	350	350
Lismore City	1,125	2,650	5,525
Tweed Shire	1,650	3,200	6,475

Source: Sea & Star Advisory analysis of Australian Bureau of Statistics' Census data

FIGURE 5.3: GROWTH IN GOVERNMENT-LED JOB SECTORS RELATIVE TO POPULATION GROWTH, NORTHERN RIVERS, 2006 TO 2021



Source: Sea & Star Advisory analysis of Australian Bureau of Statistics' Census data

# 6: Key Issues, Risks & Opportunities

## 6.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter describes the critical aspects of the operating environment for Richmond Valley to attain its full economic potential.

The issues identified in this chapter have been identified through reviewing the simple development framework identified in chapter 1:

- 'Engines of Growth', focused on exporting to external markets
- 'Population Serving Industries', focused on the needs of the local population
- 'Enabling Industries', providing business-to-business services
- 'Integrated Markets', governing overall economic potential.

The identification & analysis in this chapter also reflects consultation with local businesses & stakeholders.

## 6.2 CRITICAL ISSUES, RISKS & CONSTRAINTS

A total of 19 risk, issue & constraint factors were identified, with four aspects especially significant:

- the Northern Rivers is in dire need of extra housing to address both the flood impacts & a structural undersupply over the past decade
- 'lifestyle pricing' of rural land reflects a disconnect from farm productivity, to the cost of both farming & housing supply
- extra sewerage treatment & water supply capacity is critical to realising more housing & growing local markets
- shortages of labour risk significant losses of local production & incomes.

## 6.3 CRITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

In total, 41 opportunities were identified, with four factors especially significant:

- the intent to 'build back better' following the floods should be harnessed to accelerate & intensify the structural shift towards greater population services activities
- Richmond Valley & the Northern Rivers have seen a groundswell of interest from visitors & newcomers to the region seeking a better-balanced lifestyle
- completing the Pacific Highway duplication program has improved accessibility & reliability across the region, enhancing liveability & the extent of the available market
- farms are continuing to restock following the drought & bushfires, which should be a boon along the local beef value chain and profits & incomes across the community.

The full detail of the identified risks & opportunities can be found at Appendix A & Appendix B to this Discussion Paper.

# 7: Richmond Valley Economic Development Strategy

## 7.1 RICHMOND VALLEY'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES AT A GLANCE

The challenges of floods, drought, bushfire & COVID-19 have tested the capacities & resilience of the people, businesses & communities across Richmond Valley.

In coming through the worst of the crises, not only is a full recovery available, but also a chance to prosper more than previously possible.

Richmond Valley's economy has increased in complexity - reflecting increased potential, not just losses of simple but effective ways to do business. In previous chapters, we saw some emerging trends & needs deserving close review, including prospects for:

- extra housing for a larger population, deeper markets & better services
- the chance to 'build back better' and accelerate the shift towards more local population services
- address 'lifestyle pricing' impacts on both farming & housing supply.

Five policy imperatives are identified to respond to the Valley's challenges & opportunities and accelerate prosperity for its communities.

## Richmond Valley's Proposed Economic Development Priorities



1

Increase Economic Scale Through the Flood Rebuild



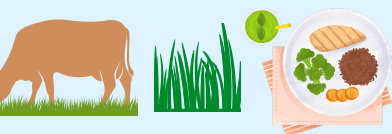
2

Grow the Population & Labour Force Through New Precincts



3

Foster Lifestyle & Tourism Markets for Stronger Local Services



4

Secure Agriculture's Supply Chains & Pursue Growing Markets



5

Broaden the Valley's Manufacturing & Industrial Base

## STRATEGY 1:

# INCREASE LOCAL ECONOMIC SCALE THROUGH THE FLOOD REBUILD



*Enhance Richmond Valley's economic potential through fostering much deeper local markets & intensifying the local shift in demand towards population services*

### STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Following the devastating floods of early 2022, governments & the community have shared a conviction to not just restore the Northern Rivers, but also to 'build it back better', for a stronger, more prosperous future.

As well as resourcing from within the Northern Rivers, the State & Federal Governments have committed \$3.5 billion to flood recovery.

A key opportunity in the rebuild is accelerating the shift in economic scale & focus:

- moving from a local economy focused on agribusiness only
- towards a larger economy of greater scale, diversity & regional significance, offering a broader range of local services & amenities - as well as more people to contribute in agribusiness activities.

### KEY NEED OR OPPORTUNITY

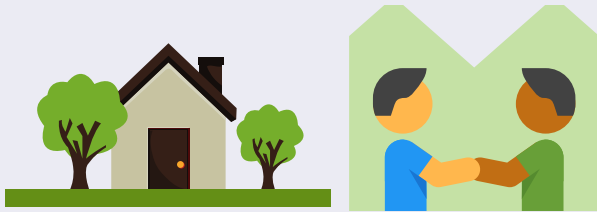
- Facilitate population growth to enhance amenities & services
- Increase economic development & input availability for agricultural, manufacturing & logistics activities
- Leverage increased ease of access to major metropolitan markets
- Align digital network needs with regional connectivity programs
- Take advantage of the "Great Resignation" & "Great Relocation" shifts of working-age households
- Expand provision of rental housing so more incoming residents can residents can "try before they buy" the Richmond Valley lifestyle

### PRIORITY ACTIONS & INITIATIVES

1. Develop a Growth Infrastructure Funding & Servicing Strategy, identifying key opportunities to increase capacity cost effectively
2. Engage with the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation to promote the Growth Infrastructure Funding & Servicing Strategy
3. Engage with the Department of Regional NSW to establish if the Regional Job Precinct technical investigations can be accelerated to align with the flood rebuild.

## STRATEGY 2:

# GROW THE POPULATION & LABOUR FORCE THROUGH NEW PRECINCTS



*Meet a dire need for new Northern Rivers housing supply options through a 'step-change' in the scale & rate of development in new Richmond Valley residential precincts*

### STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Available labour supply & the extent of consumer demand is a critical issue for many Richmond Valley businesses. Realising new neighbourhoods through precincts can not only bring great amenity for residents, but also a step-change in opportunities for business.

Traditionally, the Valley's housing supply has been incremental. However, the new National Housing Accord builds on State initiatives for the

Regional Housing Taskforce, Regional Job Precincts, Regional Housing Development, Accelerated Infrastructure Fund & key worker housing. In implementing its new Growth Management Strategy & place plans, the Valley can shift its scale through partnerships for:

- greater diversity of supply to market
- better integration with services, facilities, open space & community infrastructure.

### KEY NEED OR OPPORTUNITY

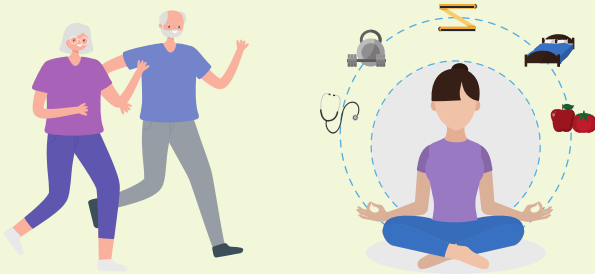
- Facilitate development in key precincts accommodating new residents
- Identify services & infrastructure necessary to enable development
- Work with the development industry to examine the feasibility of supply options providing greater dwelling diversity & increased affordability
- Pilot the Urban Design for Regional NSW policy in Richmond Valley housing supply & services precincts

### PRIORITY ACTIONS & INITIATIVES

1. Collaborate with NSW Government agencies to reduce the costs of enabling infrastructure
2. Undertake a strategic housing feasibility study in collaboration with local developers
  - a. determining if rising rural land prices are inhibiting commerciality of housing supply
  - b. smaller block sizes reducing costs
  - c. smaller configuration dwellings, including 'missing middle' low rise, medium densities
  - d. potential repurposing of publicly-owned sites suitable for medium density options
  - e. identify potential renewal sites
3. Use strategic feasibility outcomes to identify servicing needs for new housing precincts
4. Engage with the NSW Government Architect & Placemaking NSW to pilot NSW frameworks.

## STRATEGY 3:

# FOSTER LIFESTYLE & TOURISM MARKETS FOR BETTER LOCAL AMENITIES & SERVICES



*Leverage the tree- & sea- changer shifts to position Richmond Valley as a high-amenity, high-value lifestyle hub for both short-term visitors & migrating households seeking a better work-life balance.*

### STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Community demands for housing are increasing, yet the profile of their demands is becoming more diverse. Key unmet demands include:

- compact dwellings & smaller block sizes
- housing better integrated with amenity & services, like childcare
- greater opportunities to 'age in place'
- better integration of community spaces & places with our homes

- innovative options for freeing up existing dwellings & residential land.

Richmond Valley has grabbed the attention of many people in recent years considering affordable options for a 'sea-change' or 'tree-change' more closely than before. Implementing the Sustainable Communities Strategy & related initiatives can enhance the region's amenity & productivity & attract further talent to the Valley.

### KEY NEED OR OPPORTUNITY

- Enhance liveability with better services & easier precinct access
- Adopt a 'place-based' approach to integrating community investment opportunities
- Improve digital coverage to better leverage Richmond Valley's work-life balance & increase attractiveness to highly productive 'sea-changers' & 'tree-changers'
- Enhance the Valley's offering of digital-friendly smart precincts
- Refine a compelling destination brand, aligned with the Visitor Economy Strategy's five principles

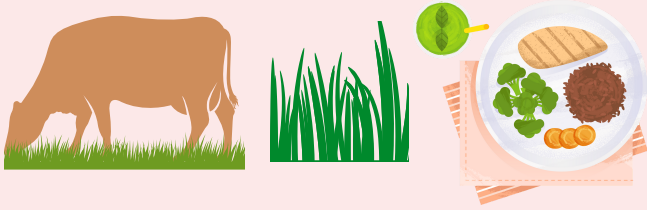
### PRIORITY ACTIONS & INITIATIVES

1. Liaise with DPE to identify 'place-based' & 'place plan' investment & activation opportunities
2. Develop a Housing Strategy complementing the Urban Growth Strategy, focused on: affordable & community housing; 'missing middle' dwelling options; barriers to more rental supply; and retirement living & aged care needs.
3. Undertake a rapid desktop review of smart centres & precincts frameworks & funding
4. Subject to the desktop review, develop a Smart Centres Prospectus for business relocations
5. Refresh the Destination Management Plan, in aligning with the NSW Visitor Economy Strategy
6. Explore opportunities to integrate Richmond River food, natural & cultural tourism initiatives with Byron Bay's high-end tourism market.



## STRATEGY 4:

# SECURE AGRICULTURE'S SUPPLY CHAINS & PURSUE GROWING MARKETS



*Use new partnership models to put the Valley's traditional powerhouse agribusiness producers at the forefront of technology, getting from 'paddock to plate' with greater efficiency & security.*

### STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Food manufacturing is Richmond Valley's defining strength. Few industries are as export-oriented, both for domestic & overseas markets, as the Valley's major food producers.

In some respects, Richmond Valley's agricultural sector has emerged from the chain of recent disasters in a remarkably strong position. For example, following a prolonged drought, cattle have been restocked extensively.

Both manufacturing and agriculture have realised significant gains in the value of production through adapting techniques that realise significant improvements in productivity.

The immediate priority should rest on exploring opportunities to further enhance the efficiency & security of supply, especially through applying technology & supply chain integration.

### KEY NEED OR OPPORTUNITY

- Flexibly manage potential land-use conflicts
- Capitalise on restocking in the beef industry
- Engage with the State & Federal Governments to underpin the resilience of Richmond Valley's key agricultural sectors
- Undertake sector specific studies in partnership with industry to demonstrate co-investment opportunities to increase labour productivity

### PRIORITY ACTIONS & INITIATIVES

1. Commission a Rural Land Use Strategy to:
  - a. support & grow the agricultural sector & resolve pressure from alternative land uses pre-emptively
  - b. identify a key enablers study for emerging agricultural crops
  - c. emerging opportunities for high-productivity ag-tech applications
2. Undertake sector-specific supply chain analyses for:
  - a. cattle
  - b. sugar
  - c. tea tree
  - d. macadamias
3. Investigate the ongoing resilience and feasibility of the sugar supply chain in the Northern Rivers.

## STRATEGY 5:

# BROADEN THE VALLEY'S MANUFACTURING & INDUSTRIAL BASE



*Take advantage of low-cost land, excellent transport infrastructure, can-do Council & recent State & Federal policy shifts to realise new industries & investment partnerships in the Valley.*

### STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Manufacturing has long been a key strength of Richmond Valley, with distinctive strengths in:

- meat
- milk & dairy
- poultry
- sugar milling
- wood products
- leather goods.

Most local manufacturers have seen significant recent disruptions, up & down supply chains, and not only because of natural disasters.

However, not all developments are unfavourable:

- government policy is now more open to supporting manufacturing
- large-scale local solar investment has arrived
- exchange rates are lower.

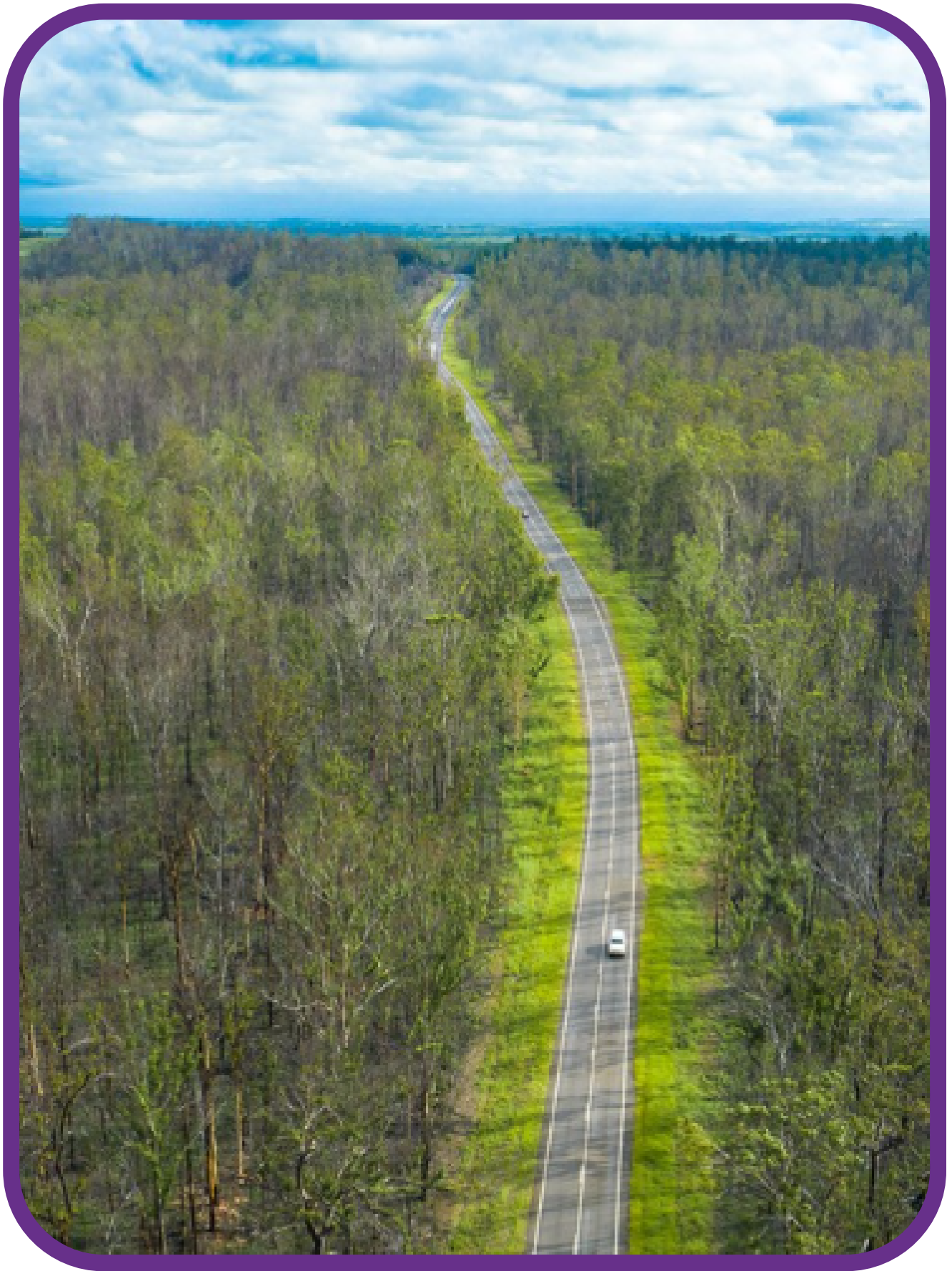
Richmond Valley should seize these shifts & relative advantages in industrial land costs to broaden its manufacturing base, extend supply chains & pursue opportunities from the Regional Jobs Precinct & other industrial policies.

### KEY NEED OR OPPORTUNITY

- Harness the region's strategic advantages in available & potential supply of employment lands
- Leverage Pacific Highway connectivity improvements to increase trade across the North Coast & South East Queensland
- Co-locate more of the Northern Rivers' supply chain in the Valley to increase local jobs & productivity
- Investigate opportunities to collaborate with the NSW Government to attract flagship investments to the Richmond Valley
- Facilitate large-scale renewables investments in suitable settings

### PRIORITY ACTIONS & INITIATIVES

1. Work with Regional NSW & DPE on a whole-of-North Coast Employment Lands Audit
2. Following the Employment Lands Audit, undertake rapid assessments of job precincts' infrastructure servicing requirements & costs
3. Undertake a detailed North Coast supply chain analysis to identify high-yield industries that might re-locate to Richmond Valley
4. Collaborate with the Department of Regional NSW in investigating opportunities to:
  - a. service new employment precincts
  - b. co-locate the North Coast supply chain
  - c. attract flagship investments to the Valley
5. Collaborate with large-scale State Significant Development proponents to identify the Valley's specific advantages & opportunities.



## APPENDIX A: KEY RISKS, ISSUES & CONSTRAINTS

ISSUE, RISK OR CONSTRAINT	DESCRIPTION
<b>Housing Supply Gap</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Northern Rivers needs additional housing to respond to both the floods &amp; general undersupply over the past decade.</li> </ul>
<b>Housing Diversity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The housing supply is insufficiently diverse, with respect to block sizes, dwelling type &amp; tenure type</li> </ul>
<b>House Price - Supply Mismatch</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing approvals &amp; completions have diminished, even with prices increasing</li> </ul>
<b>Enabling Infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enabling infrastructure, especially additional sewerage treatment capacity, is critical to population &amp; market growth</li> </ul>
<b>Rural Lands</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Lifestyle pricing" of rural lands has created a disconnect from agricultural productivity, with implications for both farming &amp; housing supply</li> </ul>
<b>Rental Availability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rental housing availability has diminished considerably</li> </ul>
<b>Land Use Conflicts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rural land uses are in potential conflict with residential &amp; other urban uses</li> <li>Present land use regulation may not appropriately reflect the balance of social benefits, costs &amp; risks</li> </ul>
<b>Precinct Integration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing precinct &amp; community amenities integration is limited</li> </ul>
<b>Labour Shortages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Labour shortages across the economy put significant production &amp; incomes at risk, especially in areas of traditional strength</li> </ul>
<b>Agricultural Resilience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Producers are more exposed to risks than necessary due to insufficient partnerships across industry &amp; government</li> </ul>
<b>Livestock Exchange</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Barriers &amp; inefficiencies may be hampering volumes at the Northern Rivers Livestock Exchange</li> </ul>
<b>Corridors &amp; Connectivity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 2016 Draft Corridor Strategy for Summerland Way was never translated into a final Strategy to guide road investment</li> <li>A Bruxner Highway corridor strategy has not been developed</li> </ul>
<b>Development Feasibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development feasibility is undermined by rising land acquisition costs &amp; potential uncertainties about enabling infrastructure</li> </ul>
<b>Freight Movements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Freight movement patterns &amp; network issues are not well-understood across industry &amp; levels of government</li> </ul>
<b>Logistics Sites Close to the Pacific Highway</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Available industrial lands suitable for logistics operations located close to the Pacific Highway are in short supply</li> </ul>
<b>Supply Chain Reliability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited rates of technology adoption may expose local supply chains to excessive risks of disruption.</li> </ul>
<b>Land Acquisition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rising rural land acquisition costs suitable for rezoning hamper housing supply, population &amp; local consumer demand</li> </ul>
<b>Migration Enablers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor digital coverage may discourage businesses &amp; residents who might otherwise relocate here</li> </ul>
<b>Population Attraction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gaps in, or a lack of integration between, housing precincts &amp; local amenities may diminish the Valley's attractiveness as a destination for relocation</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX B: EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES

EMERGING OPPORTUNITY	DESCRIPTION
Accelerate Diversification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accelerate the Valley's economic transformation &amp; attainment of greater economic scale &amp; diversity</li> </ul>
Lifestyle Shifters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capture the groundswell of interest in the Northern Rivers' blend of markets &amp; lifestyle</li> </ul>
Regional Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leverage the enhanced regional accessibility provided by completion of the Pacific Highway duplication program</li> </ul>
Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>'Build back better' with large scale, high capacity investments</li> </ul>
Population Scale Step Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pursue a 'step change' in the Valley's housing supply, population &amp; economic potential</li> </ul>
Demographic Shifts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Harness the potential of the "Great Resignation" &amp; "Great Relocation" demographic shifts</li> </ul>
Housing Supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Realise the housing supply increases necessary to rapidly expand the Valley's economic potential</li> </ul>
Housing Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pursue new opportunities for housing partnership between industry, community organisations &amp; across governments</li> </ul>
Funding Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defray costs through a Growth Infrastructure Funding &amp; Servicing Strategy</li> </ul>
Industry Scale Step Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate with the NSW Government to attract flagship investments attaining a step change in local industry scale</li> </ul>
Population & Business Attraction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refresh the Investment Prospectus to enhance the Valley's pitch for population &amp; business attraction, emphasising its lifestyle, environment &amp; transport gateways &amp; investment climate</li> </ul>
Smart Centres Investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate a Smart Centres Investment Program</li> </ul>
Precinct Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate with NSW Government agencies to apply placemaking &amp; design frameworks in a regional context</li> </ul>
Innovative Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance the Valley's innovative capacity</li> </ul>
Development Precincts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop residential, industrial &amp; commercial precinct strategies</li> </ul>
Homeowner Profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate with industry to enhance understanding of the drivers of migration, population growth &amp; local housing demand</li> </ul>
Accelerate Change by 'Building Back Better'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Harness the intent to "build back better" accelerate &amp; intensify the shift towards population services</li> </ul>
Catalyse a Step Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attract a larger population to expand consumer demand &amp; support a broader range of services, amenities &amp; lifestyles</li> <li>Harness the "Great Resignation" &amp; "Great Relocation" shifts of working age households from metropolitan to regional areas</li> </ul>
Grow the Labour Pool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accelerate population growth to serve the Valley's traditional industry strengths &amp; support population serving industries</li> </ul>
Precinct Acceleration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopt a precinct &amp; place approach to investment to secure better amenities &amp; new funding opportunities for the Valley</li> </ul>
Deeper Markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pursue population growth to increase local economic resilience &amp; diversity through deeper markets &amp; larger labour pools</li> </ul>
Housing Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extend the logic of the Urban Growth Management Strategy to a precinct level &amp; demonstrate the value of new urban amenities</li> </ul>
Cattle Restocking Flood Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to capitalise on beef restocking following the 2019 drought</li> <li>Align Regional Job Precinct initiatives with flood recovery</li> </ul>
Labour Productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maximise labour productivity in manufacturing in response to labour shortages</li> </ul>
Global Market Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exploit favourable developments in trade policy &amp; global market trading conditions</li> </ul>
Commodity Supply Chains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Re-evaluate the subregional catchments &amp; supply chains of traditional &amp; emerging agricultural commodities</li> </ul>
Destination Brand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a compelling destination brand, aligned to regional visitation hubs &amp; state strategic priorities</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX B: EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES (CONT'D)

EMERGING OPPORTUNITY	DESCRIPTION
<b>Food &amp; Agritourism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasise opportunities for local food tourism &amp; agritourism</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism Investment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a catalogue of local tourism co-investment opportunities</li> </ul>
<b>Gateway Access</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leverage high quality passenger gateway connections to metropolitan markets</li> </ul>
<b>New State Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pursue Regional Growth Fund co-investment opportunities</li> </ul>
<b>Manufacturing Partnerships &amp; Policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pursue new approaches to partnership across industry &amp; levels of government</li> </ul>
<b>Supply Chain Efficiency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help producers get to market with greater efficiency &amp; security of supply</li> </ul>
<b>Industry Clustering</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pursue opportunities to increase economic clustering &amp; supply chain integration in Richmond Valley</li> </ul>
<b>Employment Lands</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a 'whole of region' perspective of employment lands development opportunities</li> <li>• Take advantage of the Valley's low-cost industrial land, central location in the Northern Rivers &amp; good transport infrastructure</li> </ul>
<b>Regional Markets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilise Pacific Highway connectivity enhancements to expand enabling services across the Northern Rivers</li> </ul>
<b>Housing Diversity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate the feasibility of more affordable dwelling configurations</li> </ul>
<b>Digital Networks &amp; Precincts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore opportunities to enhance the quality of the Valley's digital services &amp; branding</li> </ul>
<b>Renewables Precincts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance Richmond Valley's status &amp; branding as a leading centre of renewables investment</li> </ul>
<b>Investment Climate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leverage the strong local investment climate &amp; recent shifts in state &amp; federal industry policy to increase local investment</li> </ul>



