

A Blueprint for a Thriving Wellbeing Economy

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY 2026-2030





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with the assistance of



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Glen Innes Severn Council acknowledges and pays respect to the Ngarabul people as the traditional custodians of this land, their elders past, present and emerging, and to Torres Strait Islander people and all First Nations people.



MAYOR'S MESSAGE



Glen Innes Highlands is entering a decisive phase in its evolution, and the Economic Development Strategy 2026–2030 sets the tone for how we intend to shape that future — confident, evidence-informed, and unapologetically focused on wellbeing as the engine of prosperity. This strategy signals a shift from traditional economic development toward a place-based, wellbeing-driven model that puts people, place, and long-term resilience at the centre of growth and recognises that a thriving economy serves the wellbeing of people, place, and the environment.

The data tells a compelling story. Our community's natural and cultural assets remain among our strongest advantages, our business community is resilient and innovative, and we continue to attract people who value the lifestyle offered here. At the same time, we are facing real pressures: housing availability and affordability is tightening, connectivity and service access have declined, youth engagement is slipping, and social capital — the glue that holds communities together — has weakened. These indicators aren't just data points; they shape the lived experience of our residents and the attractiveness of our region to future families, workers, and investors.

This is why the Strategy places such a strong emphasis on a thriving economy that serves the wellbeing of people, place and the environment. It recognises that long-term prosperity not only depends on business investment or population growth, it requires strengthening all the forms of capital that make a place thrive: human, social, cultural, natural, built, and financial. It means translating growth into community benefit and ensuring the economy works for our people — not the other way around.

A wellbeing economy considers immediate economic gains, and also the long-term health and general welfare of our community and the environment we rely on. It's about finding a balance where economic activity supports our wellbeing today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. In this approach, the economy isn't seen as separate from our wellbeing, but as a tool to enhance it.

The Strategy positions community wealth-building as a practical way to do this. By strengthening local ownership, improving local procurement, supporting small business, and fostering cooperative and community-led models, we can keep more value circulating in the region. This approach is particularly important as we navigate major transitions such as the New England Renewable Energy Zone.

Our focus is clear: secure local benefits, retain wealth locally, and make the most of the once-in-a-generation opportunities emerging around us.

The Strategy is intentionally whole-of-Council. It aligns with our Community Strategic Plan, our Delivery Program, and our resourcing strategies, ensuring economic development isn't isolated to one team but embedded across planning, infrastructure, community services, and culture. The Destination Management Plan sits alongside this as a supporting document, helping drive visitor-economy outcomes that are consistent with our broader economic and wellbeing goals.

Over the next five years, the Strategy commits us to 40 targeted actions across five pillars: strengthening partnerships, supporting innovative and resilient enterprises, building a future-ready workforce, enhancing precincts and liveability, and measuring what really matters. These actions give us a roadmap for achieving our population target of 10,000 by 2035 — not through chance, but through coordinated effort and strategic investment.

This Strategy builds on our historical strengths and recent areas of growth while also encouraging innovation, growth, and investment in areas that will improve community wellbeing and reflects where we are and where we want to be: a confident regional centre known for its vibrancy, its resilience, and its commitment to building prosperity that is genuinely shared. Glen Innes Highlands has the assets, the people, and the ambition to thrive. With this Strategy, we now have the mechanism to turn that ambition into outcomes — and to do so in a way that strengthens both our economy and our wellbeing for generations to come.

Councillor
Margot Davis
Mayor





Le Weekend

linen Picnic Rug	\$189.95
Kitchen friend 3pack	\$69.95
Picnic napkin 4set	\$39.95
The traveller	\$79.95



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Glen Innes Highlands Economic Development Strategy 2026-2030 is Glen Innes Severn Council's five-year blueprint for a thriving wellbeing economy, which will be realised through actions to advance the Glen Innes Highlands' community, cultural and environmental attributes which are inextricably linked with economic success.

A plan of action for promoting prosperity, this strategy presents a framework to support the vibrancy, liveability and sustainability of the Glen Innes Highlands as a location of choice to live, learn, work and invest, built on a diversity of innovative businesses, competitive industries, a skilled and adaptable workforce and a healthy and resilient community, with the following outcomes:

- Business growth and investment that builds on the Glen Innes Highlands' strengths in a diversity of existing, new and emerging industries;
- A strong and adaptable workforce with a mix of skills required by businesses to innovate and prosper, providing employment opportunities for a growing population; and
- Sustainable population growth in line with Council's and the community's vision for a stronger, more vibrant future, with a population of 10,000 by 2035.

Prepared in the context of Glen Innes Severn's Community Strategic Plan 2025-2035 and Council's broader program of work and strategic objectives, this Strategy underpins Council's commitment to take a lead in the areas where it has greatest control and influence to shape positive economic development outcomes. It also seeks to support others in playing their role in nurturing a thriving wellbeing economy with Council support. Adopting a partnership approach, the strategy supports advocacy and collaboration with Council's neighbours, its partners in industry and the community, as well as the other levels of government.

Strategy implementation will be tracked through measurable outcomes, ensuring accountability and transparency while also providing the opportunity to pivot where circumstances dictate. The strategy will evolve with annual reviews and in line with Council resources and the priorities of the day, with a full update planned for 2030, ensuring it remains relevant and effective. While progress will be measured by changes in levels of investment, employment and income, success will also be defined by improvements in key measures of resilience and wellbeing including the extent to which wealth is built, retained and shared locally.

A man with a long white beard and glasses, wearing a grey suit, sits across from a woman with long blonde hair wearing a blue dress. They are seated at a large wooden barrel table, each holding a glass of amber liquid. The background is a warm, wood-paneled wall with shelves filled with vinyl records. A vintage-style thermometer is mounted on the wall between the shelves. The scene is lit with warm, golden light, creating a cozy atmosphere. In the bottom left corner, there are two overlapping curved shapes, one gold and one white.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Circular Economy

An economic approach that aims to eliminate waste, keep products and materials in use for longer and regenerate natural systems by designing goods, services and business models that reuse, repair, recycle and recover resources instead of relying on a more traditional 'linear' take-make-dispose approach.

Community Wealth-building

An approach to economic development that strengthens local economies by ensuring the value created within a community stays there. It focuses on supporting local business growth, creating secure local jobs, increasing spending on local goods and services and encouraging the reinvestment of locally generated wealth to benefit the community.

Destination Management Plan

A statement of intent to manage a destination to support the visitor economy through measures including branding, marketing, visitor information delivery, infrastructure planning and local business support.

Economic Development

The continuous improvement in a region or locale's level of income and capital (wealth) and the distribution of that wealth (through expenditure and jobs) to the community. Measured by advances in levels of investment, income generation and employment, it is also defined by improvements in education, skills, health, culture, community wellbeing, a sense of place and the natural environment.

GeoRegion

An area that is defined by its special natural features, such as unique rocks, landforms, landscapes, geological history, its heritage and culture. GeoRegions often bring together adjoining communities that share these features so they can protect them and use them to support education, tourism, economic development and community wellbeing.

Geotourism

A form of tourism that focuses on the geological features, landscapes and natural processes that help shape and define a region. Geotourism emphasises understanding and appreciation of the earth's physical characteristics including landforms, rock formations, fossils, soils and natural heritage, while also supporting the conservation of these features.

Place-based Capital / Wealth

The economic resources, assets and wealth that are specific to a geographic location. It emphasises the importance of local assets, including natural resources, infrastructure, human capital and cultural assets, in shaping economic development and community wealth-building.

Prosperity

A community's overall economic wellbeing, where people, businesses and places have the opportunities, resources and conditions needed to thrive.

Regenerative Agriculture

A method of farming that focuses on improving the health of soil, water, biodiversity and ecosystems while still producing food and fibre. It uses practices such as cover cropping, reduced tilling, diverse planting and managed grazing to restore natural systems, increase resilience and enhance productivity.

Resilience

The capacity of individuals and communities to prepare for, respond to, recover from and adapt to challenges in ways that support healthy levels of wellbeing over the long-term.

Social Capital

The value that comes from relationships between people through goodwill, trust and cooperation that helps communities work well together.

Visitor Economy

A more contemporary definition of tourism, a visitor economy includes people traveling for holidays, education or business and those visiting friends and relatives as well as the diversity of businesses and destinations that serve them.

Wellbeing Economy

A form of economic development that seeks to find a balance, where economic activity supports a community's wellbeing today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. In this approach, the economy isn't seen as separate from community wellbeing, but as a tool to enhance it.

OUR VISION: A THRIVING WELLBEING ECONOMY

A Blueprint for a Prosperous Future

The Glen Innes Highlands Economic Development Strategy 2026-2030 is a visionary, aspirational and practical plan of action to support the economic vibrancy, diversity, resilience and wellbeing of the Glen Innes Highlands over the next five years and beyond.

Holistic in its approach to supporting prosperity, this strategy draws on contemporary wellbeing economy frameworks and the notion that 'economic development' is about the continuous improvement in levels of income and place-based capital (wealth) and the distribution of that wealth (through local expenditure and jobs) to the community.

Designed to influence positive change, this strategy seeks to build on the Glen Innes Highlands' evolving GeoRegion status and further develop its profile as a distinct geographical region as defined by its landscape, geology, natural features, history, heritage and culture. Rooted in principles of sustainability, inclusivity, resilience and prosperity, the strategy pillars and actions have been framed on the premise that economic development in the Glen Innes Highlands will be realised when growth translates into community wellbeing.

A wellbeing economy considers immediate economic gains, and also the long-term health and general welfare of our community, and the environment we rely on. It's about finding a balance, where economic activity supports our wellbeing today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

By articulating our vision for a thriving wellbeing economy, this forward-looking strategy builds on the priorities of the 2025-2035 Community Strategic Plan and Council's commitment to work with the community to shape a stronger, more vibrant future together.



Our Vision to be a Thriving Wellbeing Economy

The Glen Innes Highlands is a vibrant and connected community in which to live, learn, work and invest, celebrated for its unique natural beauty, rich cultural heritage and thriving wellbeing economy.

Economic Development Strategy Outcomes

Informed by research, stakeholder consultation and data analysis, this strategy articulates Glen Innes Severn Council's commitment to take the lead in building a prosperous future.

Strategy outcomes will be realised through the implementation of a suite of initiatives across five strategy pillars that are designed to:

- deliver sustainable population growth in line with Council's and the community's vision for a stronger, more vibrant future, with a population of 10,000 by 2035;
- collaborate through partnerships to build community wealth;
- support innovative industries and prosperous enterprises;
- nurture a future-ready and resilient workforce;
- create vibrant and inclusive precincts and places; and
- measure a sustainable wellbeing economy through shared outcomes.

The strategy underpins Glen Innes Severn Council's commitment to take a lead in the areas where it has greatest control and influence to shape positive economic development outcomes, and to support others in playing their role in nurturing a thriving wellbeing economy with Council support.

2 PILLARS FOR A THRIVING WELLBEING ECONOMY



Wellbeing Economy Pillars and Strategic Intent

The vision for a thriving wellbeing economy will be realised through the delivery of a suite of actions presented across five pillars, each one supported by a statement of strategic intent.



The pillars and their underlying statements of strategic intent frame the initiatives presented in the Economic Development Strategy Action Plan and serve to assist Council in assessing future challenges and opportunities as they arise.

GLEN INNES HIGHLANDS SOCIO-ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT

The Glen Innes Highlands Economy

Situated across the Great Dividing Range in the heart of the New England High Country, the Glen Innes Severn local government area, otherwise known as the Glen Innes Highlands, is home to the Ngarabul people.

Positioned at the crossroads of the New England and Gwydir Highways, well-connected to Brisbane, Sydney, Outback Australia and the NSW North Coast, the Glen Innes Highlands is the ideal place to live, learn, work and invest, offering opportunities for prosperity and wellbeing. With a population almost 9,000, the area is surrounded by productive agricultural land and stunning national parks. The Glen Innes Highlands' status as a pilot georegion – one of only three in Australia – reflects its point of difference, one that integrates landscape, landform, culture, biodiversity, geology and the region's night skies.

Home to 1,109 businesses, a workforce of 3,178 and 3,266 local jobs, the Glen Innes Highlands has a predominantly rural-based economy driven by its agricultural sector. Other industries that drive and support economic activity in the Glen Innes Highlands include health care and social assistance, education, public administration, retail trade and an evolving tourism sector.

While these industries will continue to underpin local economic activity, an ambitious plan to grow a stronger, more vibrant community, with a population of 10,000 by 2035, means that a more diversified industrial base is needed to drive future prosperity. This can be achieved by leveraging local comparative and competitive advantages, including the Glen Innes Highlands' strategic location, its natural features, housing land availability, its agricultural capabilities, tourism assets and its appealing regional lifestyle offer.

Emerging sectors or those that have potential for growth include professional services, controlled environment horticulture, renewables, bio-energy, circular economy activities, the arts and creative industries and the visitor economy.

The Glen Innes Highlands' natural beauty, vibrant community, local industries and cultural richness offer exciting opportunities for sustainable economic development. Looking ahead, there is enormous potential to enhance quality of life, promote sustainable population growth and support local businesses to foster a thriving and connected community. To do so requires a considered understanding of both the challenges and opportunities for economic development.

Sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021 and 2025), Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (June 2025), REMPLAN (2025) and Tourism Research Australia (2025)

Glen Innes Highlands' Key Economic Metrics at a Glance



Population

8,978



Median Age

50

(compared to 39 for NSW)



Av. persons per Household

2.1

(compared to 2.6 for NSW)



Local Jobs

3,266

(compared to 3,178
working residents)



Unemployment

2.9%

(compared to 4.3% for NSW)



Indigenous Population

7.6%

(compared to 3.4% for NSW)



Businesses

1,109

(two-thirds of which
are non-employing)



Tourism Jobs

7.9%

(compared to 5.9% for NSW)



Gross Regional Product (GRP)

\$652m

(up 3.0% pa over 5 years)



4 | CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Priority Challenges and Opportunities for Economic Development

The preparation of this Economic Development Strategy is informed by an assessment of key strategic documents and data, the findings of a business and community survey and targeted consultation with key stakeholders. The findings of the research, consultation and analysis points to some key needs and opportunities, which require attention, some of which fall within Council's role and influence and others that require collaboration with, or action by broader government and industry. In summary, these include:

Business & Industry:

- Capitalise on our agricultural expertise and capacity for innovation
- Leverage agricultural, forestry and industrial assets to develop renewable energy, bio-energy and circular economy industries including the production of biochar and synthetic gas
- Leveraging our agricultural capabilities to explore opportunities for regenerative agriculture
- Explore opportunities to add value to agriculture through investment in food processing
- Encourage new industry opportunities such as controlled environment horticulture
- Develop key service sectors including, for example, the care economy and the arts and creative industries
- Grow a vibrant nature-based visitor economy anchored by our geotourism assets
- Support our small business to survive and thrive including Indigenous businesses
- Attract and grow the professional services sector (knowledge workers and their families)
- Support the responsible development of critical minerals sector, including opportunities for local procurement, downstream processing and service industries linked to these projects
- Support local procurement opportunities (REZ, critical minerals, anchor institutions – Council, hospital, schools)
- Explore opportunities for aviation-related industry at Glen Innes Airport (e.g. Unmanned Aerial Vehicles)
- Support community-owned / social enterprises

Education & Employment:

- Support greater engagement in school education, training and employment pathways
- Invest in higher education and training locally to build workforce capacity and wellbeing
- Invest in worker attraction and retention to improve workforce capacity
- Advocate for and support education, training and career pathways linked to the New England REZ and critical minerals sector to build a skilled local workforce and retain young people in the LGA

Sustainability & the Environment:

- Protect, sustain and leverage our natural features and landscape (agri-tourism, positive impact geotourism)
- Reduce waste and promote reuse (circular economy) including reviewing opportunities for post-mine land use development
- Leverage opportunities in renewable energy / REZ for local community wealth-building

Enabling Infrastructure:

- Prioritise road transport infrastructure upgrades including the provision of EV charging stations
- Facilitate connections to rail and air transport
- Support continual investment in digital connectivity (phone and Internet)
- Plan for REZ short-term workforce impacts on local infrastructure and services
- Address industrial land shortfalls / opportunities
- Utilise the Highlands Hub co-working space to support business growth and wealth creation

Housing & Cost of Living:

- Housing opportunities to prospective regional movers
- Limited housing availability/diversity
- REZ short-term worker accommodation needs and impacts
- Explore innovative housing solutions to meet current and future needs

Health & Wellbeing:

- Appropriate access to, and sustained investment in, health care infrastructure and services to meet the needs of both the current community and future population growth. Affordable aged care, with an adequate number of facilities to support aging in place
- More affordable childcare, supported by sufficient local childcare facilities
- Support community mental health and wellbeing
- Attract and retain health care workers and their families

Community Infrastructure & Assets:

- Investment in health care infrastructure and services
- More investment in arts and cultural facilities
- Invest in opportunities to utilise our sport and recreation infrastructure (indoor sports centre)

Community, Lifestyle & Liveability:

- Promote our location and lifestyle advantage to prospective investors
- Invest in our town centres and villages (place-making) and retail (and hospitality) revitalisation
- Explore opportunities to activate the night-time economy
- Invest in social connectivity and belonging (sporting and community clubs/associations)
- Invest in and support local festivals and events
- Celebrate our European history and Celtic heritage and the region's mining heritage
- Celebrate our Indigenous cultural heritage and connection to Country
- Support local arts and the creative sector
- Foster equitable access to economic opportunity



5 COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Strategic Alignment and Implementation Partners

Glen Innes Severn Council is committed to providing the foundations for prosperity by working to strike a balance between economic opportunity and community wellbeing. The economic development planning and delivery function of Council sits within its Place and Growth Unit.

Through the delivery of the actions presented in this strategy, it supports and guides economic development using its levers in regulation, planning and place management; local business engagement and support; tourism promotion and visitor servicing; support for workforce planning and development; advocacy and partnership-building; and investment attraction.

Economic development sits at the intersection of economy, community, culture and environment. This means that Council's commitment to promoting a thriving wellbeing economy does not occur in isolation, and key to supporting economic development is strong connections across departments within Council.

Designed to support its commitment to build a prosperous future for all communities of the Glen Innes Highlands, this strategy is aligned with and supports the Community Strategic Plan, other key Council strategies including the Regional Drought Resilience Plan and the Destination Management Plan, as well as other local and regional strategies external to Council's operations.

Equally important as connections across departments within Council is strong partnerships between Glen Innes Severn Council and other key agencies and organisations throughout the Shire and surrounding areas.

Council promotes a collaborative approach to the implementation of this Economic Development Strategy through the development and maintenance of strong partnerships with its neighbouring councils, State and Federal Government agencies, regional development organisations, tourism bodies, business chambers and trader associations community groups, and education and training providers.



6 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY ACTION PLAN



Economic Development Planning Framework

This Economic Development Strategy contains 40 actions across the five pillars and are designed to realise the stated priorities under each. The actions are presented in the following pages, under each of the five pillars.

Our Vision: To be a Thriving Wellbeing Economy



STRATEGIC PILLAR 1

**Collaborating
Through
Partnerships to
Build Community
Wealth**



STRATEGIC PILLAR 2

**Supporting
Innovative
Industries and
Prosperous
Enterprises**



STRATEGIC PILLAR 3

**Nurturing a
Future-Ready,
Inclusive
and Resilient
Workforce**



STRATEGIC PILLAR 4

**Creating Vibrant
and Inclusive
Precincts and
Places**



STRATEGIC PILLAR 5

**Measuring a
Sustainable
Wellbeing
Economy through
Shared Outcomes**

40 Individual Actions

The Action Plan

Reflecting Glen Innes Severn Council's key focus areas for economic development, the individual actions represent 'Council-led' initiatives that involve specific tasks and an allocation of the organisation's human, physical and financial resources. They include key advocacy initiatives, where delivery relies on a partnership approach.

Designed to capitalise on the unique character and features of the Glen Innes Highlands, to help fulfil the vision for a thriving wellbeing economy, the actions are outcomes-focussed with an emphasis on what needs to be done to promote positive economic development outcomes throughout the Glen Innes Highlands.

The action plan balances accountability with agility, providing our businesses, the community and our implementation partners with enough detail about our approach to ensure alignment and to address the challenges and opportunities for a wellbeing economy, without providing so much detail that we lock ourselves into activities that become outdated.

All of the actions will be implemented over the course of this five-year plan in line with determined priorities and the availability of resources to progress the initiatives identified. Some are designed to build on or continue initiatives already in place, some are already resourced while others require additional resourcing.

Each action is assigned a level of priority / timing according to whether it is a high (short-term) measure (to be implemented in Year 1), a medium-term initiative (Years 2 and 3) or a longer-term initiative (Years 4-5). Implementation partners are also identified.

Through its key economic development support functions and guided by this strategy, Council is committed to the implementation of the initiatives presented in the action plan to fulfill its vision for a thriving wellbeing economy.



STRATEGIC PILLAR 1 – ACTION PLAN

Collaborating Through Partnerships to Build Community Wealth

Foster shared governance, coordinated investment and collaboration that builds local ownership, resilience and inclusive prosperity

ACTIONS	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	TIMING
1.1 Develop a GROW Glen Innes Economic Development Forum to be held yearly from late-2026 to collaborate with business and community leaders on implementing the strategy, developing ideas, and progressing wellbeing economy initiatives.	Business and community leaders	Short
1.2 Develop a First Nations Partnership Framework by mid-2026, co-designed with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal organisations, to embed cultural and economic self-determination across all strategy pillars.	Traditional Owners; Glen Innes Local Aboriginal Land Council	Short
1.3 Develop and host regular local procurement forums and workshops to support greater awareness of local suppliers and identify opportunities for increased local purchasing.	Major employers; anchor institutions including schools and health care providers; Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development; Glen Innes Business Chamber	Short
1.4 Pursue partnerships with regionally focused innovation and research organisations to build the Highlands Hub's research and innovation centre capability by 2027.	Glen Innes Highlands Hub partners	Short
1.5 By 2028, attract partnership support from at least 2 industry, research and / or infrastructure organisations to improve regional wellbeing and resilience in the Glen Innes Highlands.	Glen Innes Highlands Hub partners; universities	Medium
1.6 Consistent with the findings and recommendations of the Regional Drought Resilience Plan, establish a drought resilience working group by 2027 to coordinate Council, GLENRAC, and community efforts on water management, farm support and volunteer mobilisation during drought.	GLENRAC; universities, businesses and community groups	Medium
1.7 Advocate for the development of a REZ Cumulative Impact Data Dashboard, tracking the social, housing, healthcare and workforce impacts of renewable energy development to inform coordinated responses.	REZ stakeholders	Medium
1.8 Explore opportunities for aviation-related industry at Glen Innes Airport.	Industry stakeholders	Long



STRATEGIC PILLAR 2 – ACTION PLAN

Supporting Innovative Industries and Prosperous Enterprises

Strengthen enterprise diversity, innovation and sustainability through local ownership and shared prosperity

ACTIONS	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	TIMING
2.1 Establish a dedicated Glen Innes Highlands Business Concierge Service by mid-2026 to welcome prospective businesses, showcase suitable locations within the LGA, and act as a central conduit to guide them through council planning, regulatory and approval requirements to establish their business.	Business NSW; Service NSW	Short
2.2 Engage with local businesses to facilitate access to government-sponsored small business grants, information and advisory / support services.	Glen Innes Business Chamber; community groups; Business NSW; Glen Innes Highlands Hub partners	Short
2.3 Collaborate with the Ngarabul people and other First Nations groups to connect First Nations businesses with programs designed to build Indigenous business capacity and capabilities in the Glen Innes Highlands.	Glen Innes Local Aboriginal Land Council	Short
2.4 Develop and deliver a Digital New Resident and Business Investment Attraction web portal (prospectus) by 2027, providing relocation, housing and employment resources to support enterprise attraction.	State Government	Short
2.5 Establish an Industrial and Innovation Precinct Partnership Program using the online prospectus to attract investment aligned with circular economy and sustainable manufacturing principles.	State Government	Medium
2.6 Support local industry partners to progress a renewable industry development strategy focussed on applications for biochar and synthetic gas.	Industry partners	Medium
2.7 Provide digital tools, training and workshops for business growth, exporting and innovation adoption via the Highlands Hub, in partnership with universities, coworking spaces and regional innovation networks.	Glen Innes Business Chamber; Business NSW	Medium
2.8 Conduct business information sessions on Council's Purchasing Policy to inform local businesses of opportunities to supply to the organisation. Encourage other anchor institutions to follow suit.	Glen Innes Business Chamber	Medium
2.9 Promote and support local business uptake of the Industry Capacity Network Gateway, developed by EnergyCo and the Department of Industry and Regional Development, to connect with New England REZ supply opportunities and ensure at least five local businesses are registered by 2027.	EnergyCo; project proponents; Glen Innes Business Chamber	Medium
2.10 Develop a vacant shop activation program to fill at least 30% of the vacant Glen Innes CBD shops by 2028, supporting emerging businesses.	GLENRAC; State Government	Medium



STRATEGIC PILLAR 3 – ACTION PLAN

Nurturing a Future-ready and Resilient Workforce

Grow, attract and retain a diverse workforce while enhancing community connection, access and wellbeing

ACTIONS	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	TIMING
3.1 Prepare a Glen Innes Highlands Workforce Attraction and Retention Education and training Strategy by 2027 to identify skills gaps in key sectors such as healthcare, critical minerals and renewable energy to; businesses strengthen local job pipelines and coordinate partnerships across sectors.	Education and training sectors; businesses	Short
3.2 Partner with TAFE, schools and Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) to expand school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, ensuring local youth can learn and earn in the Glen Innes Highlands.	TAFE NSW; schools; RTOs; businesses	Short
3.3 Co-design at least one flexible childcare solution by 2027, such as mobile or cooperative models, to support workforce participation and family wellbeing	Childcare service providers; State Government	Short
3.4 Design and deliver by 2028, a program of careers expos, mentoring and leadership development training for young people aged 12 to 24, to showcase local training and employment pathway opportunities.	TAFE NSW; schools; RTOs; Glen Innes Business Chamber	Short
3.5 Explore options and then advocate for improved public and community transport across Glen Innes, including both stronger connections within the LGA and to external destinations, to better support residents accessing specialised healthcare, training and essential services.	State Government; service providers	Medium
3.6 Support programs to attract, connect and retain essential health care and community service workers and other professional workers, through marketing, mentoring, and relocation initiatives.	RDA Northern and Inland NSW	Medium
3.7 Develop a Professional Forum through the Highlands Hub to build networks, peer learning and leadership pathways for regional professionals.	Glen Innes Highlands Hub partners	Medium
3.8 Work with government, industry, and education and training providers to assess the demand and feasibility for a Country Universities Centre (CUC) in the Glen Innes Highlands by 2027, and, if viable, seek funding to prepare a detailed business case.	State Government; Federal Government; education and training sectors; industry stakeholders	Long



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STRATEGIC PILLAR 4 – ACTION PLAN

Creating Vibrant and Inclusive Precincts and Places

Strengthen the Glen Innes Highlands' natural, social, built and economic capital to enhance liveability, resilience and place identity

ACTIONS	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	TIMING
4.1 Deliver, by 2027, an Industrial Land and Infrastructure Prospectus, mapping supply, demand and investment readiness to guide industrial growth and diversification.	State Government	Short
4.2 Review and update Council's Housing Strategy by 2027 and set agreed targets for new dwellings by 2030, with a focus on affordability, sustainability, and key-worker housing.	Business and community stakeholders	Short
4.3 Develop an Ageing-in-Place Strategy by mid-2027, aligning housing, healthcare and community services to support older residents' independence and wellbeing.	Health care and community service providers; State Government	Short
4.4 Develop by 2028, sustainable town and village centre improvement and activation plans addressing place-making priorities such as drought-resilient streetscaping, art installations, walkways, retail pop ups and promotion.	Glen Innes Business Chamber; local businesses	Short
4.5 Advocate for the establishment of a 'regional health training hub' at the Glen Innes Hospital which strengthens medical training to deliver enhanced services throughout the region.	State Government	Medium
4.6 Work with service providers to prioritise mobile phone blackspots, determine solutions and deliver improvements.	Service providers; businesses and the community	Medium
4.7 Identify and advocate for funding for priority road infrastructure upgrades throughout the Glen Innes Highlands.	State and Federal Governments	Medium
4.8 Investigate the feasibility of the development of a Local Energy Network model by 2027 where renewable energy generated in the Glen Innes Highlands is harnessed, shared and reinvested locally, supporting business competitiveness and community wealth. If viable, proceed to development.	Businesses and community groups	Long
4.9 Engage First Nations organisations to identify opportunities to reflect culture in all infrastructure planning.	Glen Innes Local Aboriginal Land Council; other First Nations representatives	Long
4.10 Support local artists and creatives with place-based ideas to enhance cultural vitality and community wellbeing.	Local artists and other creatives	Long



STRATEGIC PILLAR 5 – ACTION PLAN

Measuring a Sustainable Wellbeing Economy through Shared Outcomes

Monitor, evaluate and sustain Glen Innes Highlands' progress towards a thriving wellbeing economy

ACTIONS	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	TIMING
5.1 Create a unified Glen Innes Highlands Wellbeing Economy Dashboard by 2027, aligned with Measuring What Matters and OECD wellbeing frameworks and linking all Economic Development Strategy outcomes to measurable wellbeing and sustainability indicators.	State Government; Federal Government; research partners	Short
5.2 Establish a Glen Innes Highlands Community Resilience Index to monitor State Government; financial, social and environmental indicators annually, using NSW Early Insights for More Resilient Communities data set as a template.	State Government; Federal Government; research partners	Short
5.3 Publish an annual Glen Innes Highlands State of Wellbeing and Economy Report combining economic, environmental and social data to inform decision-making, advocacy and continuous improvement.	State Government; Federal Government; research partners	Medium
5.4 Integrate wellbeing measurements into Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework, ensuring every project and investment is assessed for its contribution to intergenerational equity, local wealth, community resilience and wellbeing.	State Government; Federal Government; research partners	Medium





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