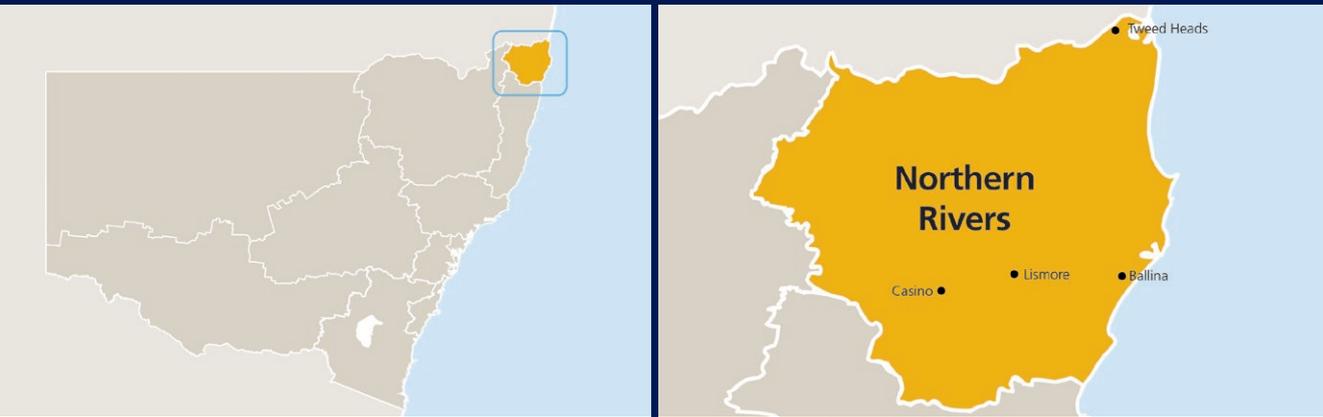


NORTHERN RIVERS

Regional Transport Plan

December 2013



Northern Rivers Regional Transport Plan

December 2013

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Transport for NSW, 2013.

Transport for NSW

18 Lee Street, Chippendale NSW 2008.

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MINISTERS' MESSAGE

When we came to government, one of our first priorities was to develop a clear direction for transport in NSW over the next 20 years.

The *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan* was released in December 2012 to provide a comprehensive blueprint for the future, complete with more than 220 short, medium and long term actions.



To support the Master Plan, we recognise that the state's 14 key regional centres have more specific local transport needs and priorities which should be considered and planned for.

The *Northern Rivers Regional Transport Plan* outlines specific actions to address the unique challenges of the area and includes the things you told us were important to you during consultation in 2012.

The plan looks at population changes in the Northern Rivers region and considers the fact that outside of metropolitan areas, the Northern Rivers region is the fastest growing region in NSW and is also a popular tourist destination.

With major investments to duplicate the Pacific Highway and widening works and upgrades to the Bruxner Highway, the plan ensures Northern Rivers region residents will have better connections to jobs, study and town centres - now and into the future.

The Northern Rivers region will also benefit from an additional crossing of the Clarence River at Grafton and the replacement of the Tabulam Bridge, as well as improvements to bus services including frequency and coverage of the bus network.

Thank you to the community who took the time to contribute to this planning process. We look forward to working with you as we continue to improve and develop our state's transport system.

Gladys Berejiklian
Minister for Transport

Duncan Gay
Minister for Roads and Ports



YOUR REGION

The Northern Rivers region is the north-eastern region of NSW, bordered by the New England and Mid North Coast regions, the east coast, and Queensland to the north (Figure 1).

Travel to, from, and within the Northern Rivers is focused in two north-south corridors along the Pacific Highway, Summerland Way and

the North Coast Rail Line, and an east-west corridor along the Bruxner Highway.

The Port of Yamba services the Northern Rivers District and provides a link to Norfolk Island and the south west Pacific region. Major trades include timber, live animals, manufactured items, kit houses, boats, explosives and general cargo.

Figure 1 The Northern Rivers region



The Coastal Harbours of the Northern Rivers region, which include Iluka, Evans Head, Ballina, Brunswick Heads and Tweed Heads, cater for the commercial fishing industry, local tourism and recreational boating and provide a departure point for charter boats. A limited amount of freight is transported through these coastal harbours.

There are significant social, employment and educational links between the region and South East Queensland through Tweed Heads.

The Northern Rivers region has a population of around 236,500. It is the fastest growing region in NSW, at about 0.9 percent per year.

Significant population growth is expected to continue due to the region's proximity to expected growth and development in South East Queensland.

Approximately 48 percent of the population is concentrated within the four centres of:

- Tweed Heads – 24 percent of region's population (58,000)
- Lismore – 12 percent of region's population (29,000)
- Ballina – seven percent of region's population (17,000)
- Casino – four percent of region's population (10,000).

The Tweed Shire local government area, as the largest centre of population and employment, will be a focus for growth over the next 20 years. It also provides major connections into South East Queensland.

Outside of these centres, the population is dispersed across many smaller settlements. This results in dispersed travel patterns, with the majority of travel to the centres coming from a variety of origins.

Residents of smaller towns and villages are reliant on access to health services, education and employment opportunities located in larger centres.

The region's population is ageing, and the proportion of the population aged 65 or over is expected to increase from 19 percent in 2011 to 28 percent in 2031. This compares to an increase from 15 percent to 20 percent for NSW.

An ageing population will change travel patterns and require improved transport access to health and aged care services in the region's main centres.

The Northern Rivers region has an above average level of social disadvantage compared to the NSW median. The smaller regional centres of Richmond Valley and Kyogle are the most disadvantaged areas, while the larger coastal centres of Byron and Ballina are the least disadvantaged.

Transport services that provide access to education and employment opportunities, health facilities and services, can address social disadvantage.

Employment is largely contained, with 88 percent of commuter trips within the region (Figure 2). Retail, health, education and community services, tourism and hospitality are the major employers in the coastal centres of Tweed Heads, Byron Bay and Ballina.

Inland, the major centre of Lismore contains a major university and hospital, while Casino, located at the junction of the Bruxner Highway and Summerland Way, is an interchange point between coaches and trains connecting the Northern Rivers region with the Mid North Coast and Sydney.

Approximately 10 percent of journeys to work from the Northern Rivers region are to locations within South East Queensland.

Car is the primary mode of transport in the region. Approximately 90 percent of trips to work are by private vehicle. Public transport makes up only one percent of trips to work while walking accounts for five percent.

The limited coverage of public transport options due to small and dispersed populations is a contributing factor to the high level of car travel.



High volumes of through travel occur along the east coast (Pacific Highway) between Ballina and Tweed Heads, particularly for freight and visitors to the region, as well as commuter demand between Ballina and Byron Bay. The Pacific Highway is a significant freight corridor between South East Queensland and Sydney.

Other corridors to experience high travel demand include Ballina to Lismore and Casino (Bruxner Highway), Byron Bay to Lismore (Bangalow Road) and Tweed Valley Way in the north of the region. These are the corridors which will continue to see the most demand for travel.

Demand for access to centres is expected to increase with growth in population and employment, adding to congestion in and around major centres and particularly in coastal towns.

Travel between regions is primarily by road, with rail and air providing alternative options. There is a direct rail line between the southern Gold Coast (Varsity Lakes Station) and Brisbane, with park and ride and bus access from Tweed Heads. The major airports that serve the region are Ballina and the Gold Coast.

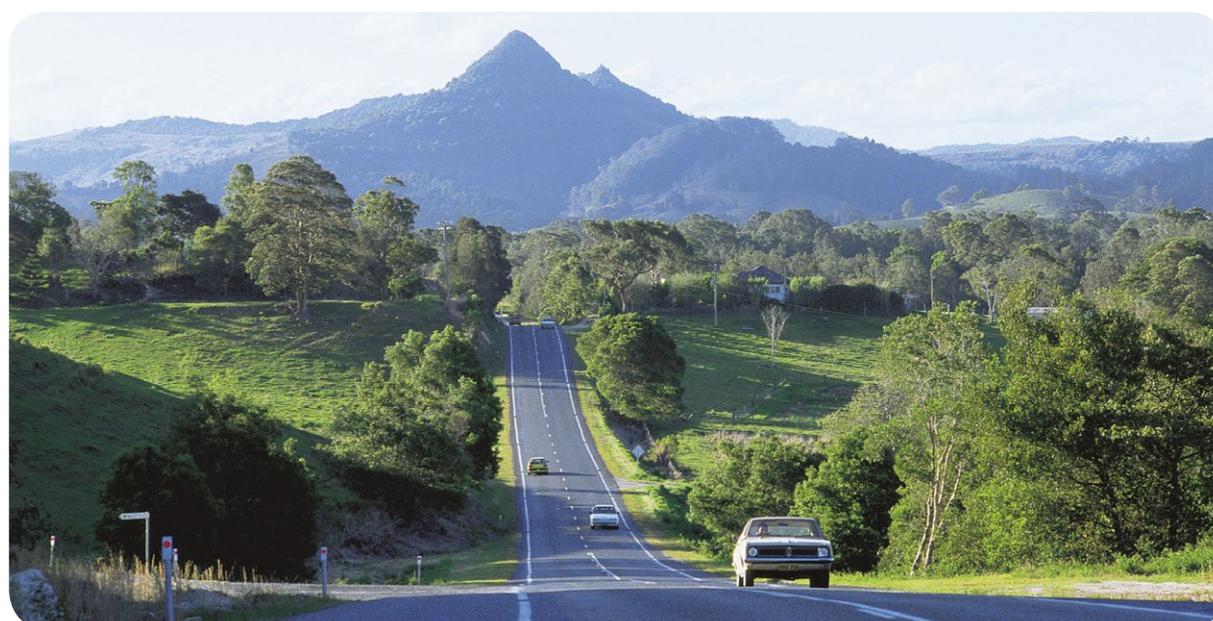
The specific population, employment and land use characteristics of the Northern Rivers region have implications for the transport network, as follows:

Table 1 Transport implications of regional characteristics

Characteristic	Transport implication
Population growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater travel demand as population increases • Requirement for managing demand and operations as a priority, with eventual expansion of infrastructure and services to meet this demand, as required
Ageing population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater demand to travel for healthcare, medical and recreation reasons, and less demand for travel to/from work and within peak periods • Need for more specialist transport services to cater for limited mobility and to reduce social isolation • Need for research and pilot projects to determine the best ways to transition people from cars to public transport and to community transport to reduce car dependency
Social disadvantage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited public transport increases the level of isolation and disadvantage • High proportion of socially and economically disadvantaged people who do not own a car or hold driver licences are further disadvantaged by a lack of public transport options • Higher public transport fares in rural and regional NSW can reduce ability to access jobs and services
Employment clustered in major centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport services to/from major towns and cities are critical



Characteristic	Transport implication
Integration of the Northern Rivers region with South East Queensland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for integrated public transport services • Quality transport links between the two states need to be facilitated jointly by transport jurisdictions
Fast growing coastal communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for public transport opportunities to serve changing travel patterns
Significant population dispersed in small settlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High private car dependency • Dispersed trip patterns that works against public transport • Flexible and innovative arrangements to serve people in small settlements • Need to provide adequate transport for travel within the region
Domestic and international tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seasonal tourism demands can exceed local network capacity which is otherwise adequate for most of the year • Increase in demand and congestion on strategic and local road network during peak holiday travel periods
Road safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy vehicle crashes in the Northern Rivers region are located along the Pacific Highway, predominantly from south of Ballina to Tweed Heads, around Lismore and around Murwillumbah. • Pedestrian casualty crashes are clustered around Lismore, Ballina, Byron Bay, Casino, Alstonville and the Tweed Heads coastal area



DELIVERING CHANGE

Some initiatives already underway in the Northern Rivers region include:

- Ongoing investment in maintenance to improve safety and reliability on the rail network
- The introduction of NSW TrainLink which operates services to the Northern Rivers region, and for the first time provides a dedicated organisation focused on improving services for our rail customers in regional NSW
- Completion of the Casino to Murwillumbah Transport Needs Study
- A commitment of \$389 million to support and improve rural and regional bus services
- Provision of transport services for people whose access to mainstream transport services is limited by physical, social or geographical factors through the Community Transport Program, as part of \$7.5 million in funding to local providers across the state during 2013-14
- Improved road safety through an acceleration of the school zone flashing lights program, to ensure the roads outside
 - every school in NSW have a set of flashing lights by December 2015
- Commencement of construction to the Pacific Highway to duplicate the road to four lanes
- Investment of \$208 million over the next decade to install seatbelts on almost 1,700 dedicated school buses as part of a suite of initiatives to improve school bus safety in regional NSW
- Providing waiting areas and additional lighting at the Ballina transport interchange.
- Providing a new taxi rank and relocation of existing car parking spaces at the transport interchange at Casino
- Delivering an extension of the existing bus shelter, improved lighting and new cycle facilities at Lismore
- Commencement of Stage 1 of the Northern Sydney Freight Corridor program being jointly funded by the NSW and Australian governments. The program will lift freight carrying capacity between Newcastle and Sydney by 50 percent and key infrastructure enhancements will alleviate specific constraints to improve reliability and reduce travel times for freight between Sydney and Brisbane.

2012-13 NORTHERN RIVERS REGION ROAD NETWORK MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

For the 2012-13 financial year we spent \$30.1 million on upgrading and maintaining over 400 kilometres of major roads in the Northern Rivers region, including works on pavement and corridors. We also spent \$5.7 million on upgrading and maintaining over 210 bridges in the Northern Rivers region.

We provided \$11.8 million to the local councils within the Northern Rivers region to assist with road restoration after natural disaster damage and maintenance and improvement of their road network.

The works undertaken on major roads and bridges included resurfacing of over 279,000m² of roads and rebuilding of 51,000m² of roads at a cost of \$3.1 million and \$5.6 million respectively.

Other major works undertaken in the Northern Rivers region included the repainting of Wardell Bridge over the Richmond River on the Pacific Highway, repairing the Glebe Bridge over Richmond River on Coraki-Lismore Road at Coraki and stabilising the slope on Summerland Way 35km north of Kyogle.



Country Passenger Transport Infrastructure Grant Scheme

LGA	Improvement	Year	Cost (\$)
Lismore	Installation of new community shelter complying with disability standards for accessible public transport	2011-12	28,975
	Transport signage upgrade at Lismore Transit Centre; bus signage upgrade at seven locations	2012-13	8,146
Tweed Heads	Tweed Shire best practice passenger timetable and bus stop network map initiative	2011-12	9,720
Richmond Valley	Safety lighting and seating installation at Canterbury Street	2012-13	20,000

Transport Access Program

Focus Area	Location	Projects	Completion date	Status
Interchanges	Ballina	Interchange upgrade	Anticipated September 2014	Planning
	Casino	Interchange upgrade	Anticipated December 2014	Planning
	Lismore	Interchange upgrade	Anticipated December 2014	Planning

Traffic Management and Road Safety Program

LGA	Projects	Financial year	Status	Cost (\$)
Active transport				
Lismore	Cycleway Ballina Street, Lismore	2012-13	Completed	223,000
	Cycleway Dawson Street from Ballina Road to Orion Street	2011-12	Completed	110,000
Tweed Heads	Construction of a cycleway on Kennedy Drive, Boyds Bay Bridge to Norman Street, Tweed Heads	2012-13	Completed	536,000



LGA	Projects	Financial year	Status	Cost (\$)
Richmond Valley	Stage 3 construction of a 2.5 metre wide concrete off-road walking and cycling path along northern side of the Bruxner Highway from Hotham Street to Sexton Hill Road (500 metres)	2013-14	Anticipated start late 2013	122,000
	Design and construct a 2.5 metre off-road walking and cycling path along the northern side of Woodburn-Evans Head Road between Banksia Street, Evans Head and Wallum Drive, Doonbah (Stage 2)	2013-14	Anticipated start May 2014	300,000
Ballina	Design and construct a 2.5 metre off-road walking and cycling path on the western side of Coast Road from North Angels Beach roundabout to Headlands Drive, Skennars Head	2013-14	Anticipated start March 2014	300,000
Railway level crossings				
Richmond Valley	Railway level crossing program, Summerland Way near Nammoona	2013-14	Anticipated start June 2014	221,000
Bus priority on strategic corridors				
Richmond Valley	Bus stop remedial - Richmond Valley	2012-13	Completed	161,821
Road freight safety and productivity				
Richmond Valley	Upgrade of the receival area of the Regional Livestock Exchange at Casino - project two	2013-14	Anticipated start March 2014	256,000
	Upgrade of the delivery area of the Regional Livestock Exchange at Casino - project one	2013-14	Anticipated start March 2014	380,000
Road safety				
Ballina	Safety improvements at Ross Lane and West Coast Road, Tintenbar	2011-12	Completed	304,100
	Road safety works on Main Road 7734 (Tintenbar-Wollongbar), Rifle Range	2011-12	Completed	1,314,000
	Road surface improvements at Wardell Road and Bagotville Road to Lumleys Lane, Meerschaum Vale	2011-12	Completed	137,795

LGA	Projects	Financial year	Status	Cost (\$)
Road safety				
Ballina	Road safety improvements at Eltham Road, Alstonville	2013-14	Anticipated start late 2013	233,000
	Upgrade road to non-skid surface and improve delineation along various lengths of Byron Bay Road, Ballina	2013-14	Anticipated start February 2014	637,000
Kyogle	Road safety works at East Taverns Road in Kyogle	2012-13	Completed	674,000
	Widen road, install guardrail and curve warning signs at Lions Road, Cougal	2012-13	Completed	522,500
	Improve the road width and alignment along Ettrick Road, Kyogle	2013-14	Anticipated start May 2014	140,000
	Install curve advisory markers and signage and road shoulder widening at Clarence Way and 700 metres north of Martins Road, Kyogle	2013-14	Anticipated start late 2013	210,000
Byron Bay	Install curve and speed advisory signs and mark barrier line along Federal Drive, Eureka	2012-13	Completed	186,000
	Install additional guideposts and curve alignment markers on specific outside curves at Coolamon Scenic Drive and Myocum Road and Wilsons Creek Road, Mullumbimby	2011-12	Completed	473,035
	Improve sign and line marking at Gulgan Road and Mullumbimby Road, Mullumbimby	2011-12	Completed	270,000
	Widen road shoulders at Myocum Road and McAuleys Lane and Dingo Lane, Myocum	2011-12	Completed	359,101
	Shoulder widen, Main Arm Road and Settlement Road and Coopers Lane Main Arm Road Main Arm	2011-12	Completed	223,000
	Install a raised median to separate oncoming traffic, construct a right turn lane and through lane, with a give way including splitter island Byron Bay	2013-14	Commenced September 2013	210,000



LGA	Projects	Financial year	Status	Cost (\$)
Road safety				
Richmond Valley	Install curve markers, remove trees and roadside vegetation, speed advisory signs, and resurface with skid resistant at Naughtons Gap Road and 400 metres south of Stones Road, Casino	2013-14	Anticipated start late 2013	112,450
Lismore	Road safety works at Lismore to Woodburn Road	2011-12	Completed	184,388
	Road safety works at Blue Knob Road, north of Nimbin	2012-13	Completed	620,400
	Road safety works relating to decommissioning of fixed speed cameras at Bangalow Road, Clunes	2012-13	Completed	381,900
	Curve realignment at Lismore Road, Woodburn	2012-13	Completed	610,000
	Road safety works at Wharf Road, Dungarabba	2011-12	Completed	310,000
	Install safety barrier, curve alignment markers and sealed shoulders at Nimbin Road and Bishops Creek Road, Lismore	2012-13	Completed	420,000
	Install intersection improvements between William Blair Avenue and Invercauld Road, Lismore	2013-14	Anticipated start late 2013	1,000,000
	Install safety barrier and clear zone works between Richmond Hill Road to Alphadale Road, Richmond Hill	2013-14	Anticipated start late 2013	250,000
	Road safety improvements at Wyrallah Road, Tuckurimba	2013-14	Anticipated start late 2013	100,000

LGA	Projects	Financial year	Status	Cost (\$)
Road safety				
Tweed Heads	Install roundabout at Wommin Bay Road, Chinderah	2011-12	Completed	185,000
	Intersection improvements at Fraser Drive and Leisure Drive, Tweed Heads	2012-13	Completed	261,354
	Install roundabout at Frances Street and Beryl Street, Tweed Heads	2012-13	Completed	220,000
	Install centre wire barrier fencing, Tweed Valley Way, Riverside Road to Cudgen Creek, Tumbulgum	2011-12	Completed	2,000,000
	Install guardrail, Numinbah	2011-12	Completed	520,000
	Install guardrail, Scenic Drive, Bilambil Heights	2011-12	Completed	198,000

Better Boating Program

LGA	Improvement	Year	Cost (\$)
Ballina	East Wardell boat ramp stage 2 - Richmond River	2012-13	148,750
	Cawarra Park boat ramp carpark upgrade, Ballina (North Creek, Richmond River)	2011-12	27,500
	Emigrant Creek boat ramp upgrade (Pontoon), West Ballina	2011-12	34,500
Lismore	North Woodburn boat ramp, Woodburn	2011-12	10,000
Richmond Valley	Evans Head boat ramp pontoon upgrade, Evans River	2012-13	35,344
Tweed	Chinderah - new pontoon, Chinderah - Tweed River	2012-13	60,000
	Lakes Drive pontoon replacement, Tweed Heads	2011-12	26,004
	Slipway cradle refurbishment, Tweed Heads	2011-12	6,925



CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED IN THE NSW LONG TERM TRANSPORT MASTER PLAN

The *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan* identified the major transport challenges facing regional NSW as:

- Delivering better transport links to and within regional cities
- Improving accessibility through a better mix of transport options across regional NSW
- Providing convenient, reliable and safe travel in regional areas by modernising and making best use of our transport networks – especially our bus, rail, and taxi services
- Making sure our state roads in the regions support the needs of customers, communities and regional industries
- Finding workable transport solutions that will preserve the vitality, amenity and character of country towns
- Making walking and cycling easier and safer and giving customers choice when travelling within their towns
- Facilitating access to vital services for an ageing regional NSW population and people with disabilities
- Identifying and preserving key transport corridors.

SPECIFIC ACTIONS FOR THE NORTHERN RIVERS REGION IN THE NSW LONG TERM TRANSPORT MASTER PLAN

Short term

- We will complete the duplication of the Pacific Highway (A1 Pacific Highway and M1 Pacific Motorway) and widening works and upgrades to the Bruxner Highway.
- We will release the Casino to Murwillumbah rail corridor investigation and consider its recommendations.
- We will renew bus service contracts and improve outcomes for bus users in the region. We will consider possible new routes, additional services and greater integration of services to give the region a higher level of bus services and take into account customer priorities.
- We will work with the Queensland Government on cross-border issues that relate to transport regulation and infrastructure that supports travel into South East Queensland, such as cross-border bus services or Gold Coast Airport.

Medium to longer term

- We will commence the necessary road network planning for upgrades to support the growth of Lismore, Ballina and the Tweed Coast, and we will address congestion and capacity issues as they emerge.
- We will provide an additional crossing of the Clarence River at Grafton to improve access to the Northern Rivers region and provide an alternative route to the Pacific Highway.
- We will replace the Tabulam Bridge across the Clarence River in part two of the Bridges for the Bush Program.
- We will improve bus services, including frequency and coverage of the bus network, to reduce social disadvantage, particularly for a growing and ageing population. We will work with local bus operators and the community to consider possible new routes, additional services and greater integration of public transport to create better accessibility to services for the Northern Rivers region. This will also include potential new connections to improve integration between the Northern Rivers region and South East Queensland.



PUTTING THE CUSTOMER FIRST

The NSW Government is committed to putting the customer first by delivering a transport system that:

- Provides more reliable services
- Gets people in NSW's regions where they need to go
- Delivers a safe, clean and comfortable public transport environment
- Provides a safer road transport system
- Provides integrated timetables and more frequent and reliable public transport services to match customer needs
- Reduces travel times for all travellers
- Enables businesses and services to operate efficiently and prosper in regional areas.

This plan will ensure that the transport system in the Northern Rivers region is effective in meeting the needs of the community by responding to the goals expressed by them, tackling transport challenges and addressing the implications of the expected changes over the next 20 years.

The plan will pursue this vision by developing actions around the three key themes of:

- 1 Providing better transport services
- 2 Ensuring effective regulation
- 3 Improving transport infrastructure

The *Northern Rivers Regional Transport Plan* will improve the customer experience for travel to and from other regions, within the region, within towns and centres and for visitors to the region.

Demand management and infrastructure solutions focused on the region's road network will enable customers to reach their destination more reliably and more safely.

For public transport users, passengers will see service improvements and better connections to key destinations.

This plan includes actions and projects that will deliver better transport services; ensure effective regulation; and improve transport infrastructure over the short (0-5 years), medium (5-10 years) and long (10-20 years) term.

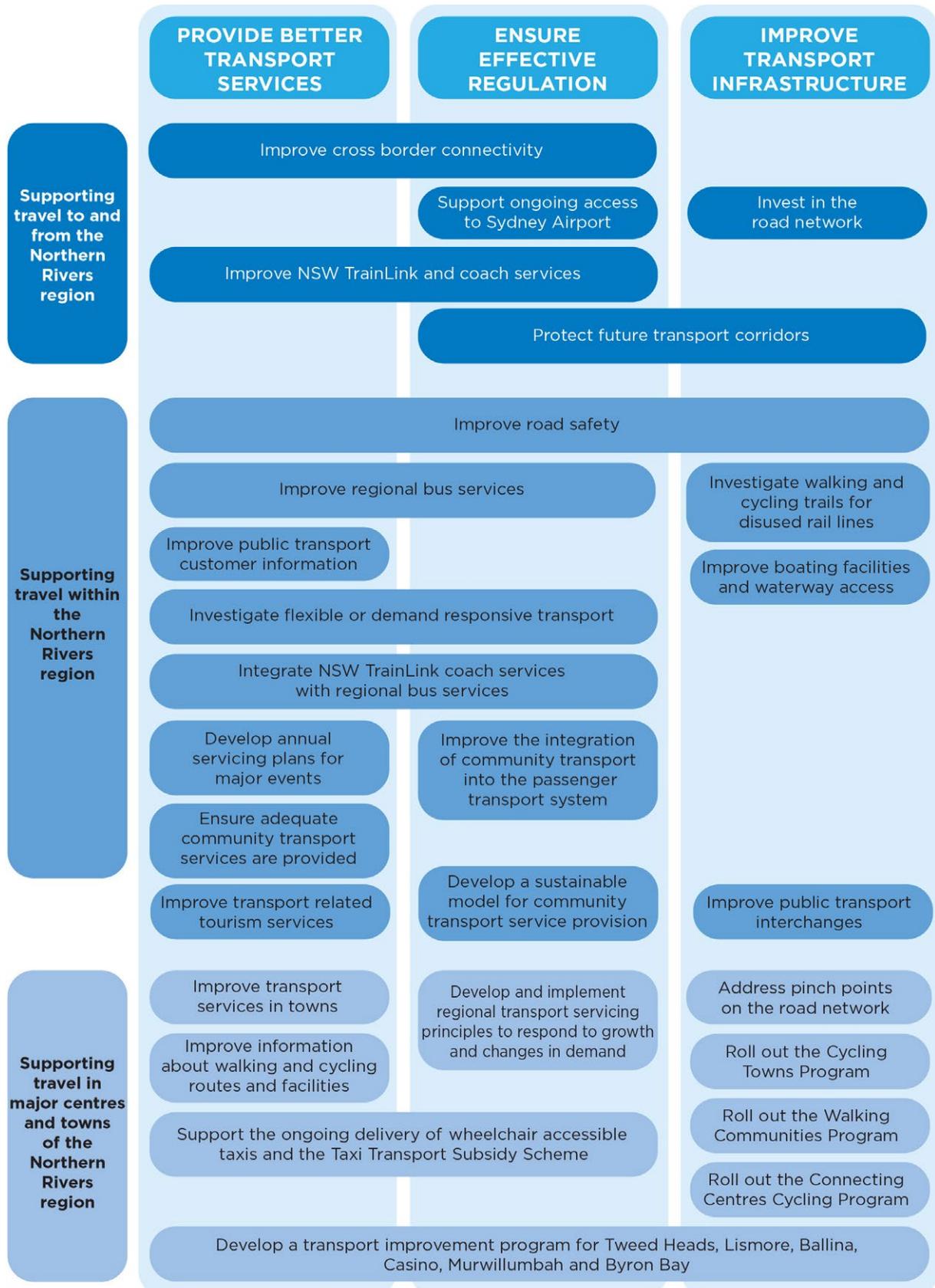


WHAT YOU TOLD US

You told us there is a common set of goals for transport in regional NSW. While the priority of these goals varies for each region, these goals are:

- Improving accessibility to transport for everyone
- Addressing cross-border connectivity issues
- Appreciating the importance of intra and inter regional connectivity
- Recognising the importance of air travel
- Making sure that the transport solutions for the regions support growth and development, whilst protecting the viability and amenity of centres and towns
- Recognising the growing freight task and its impact.

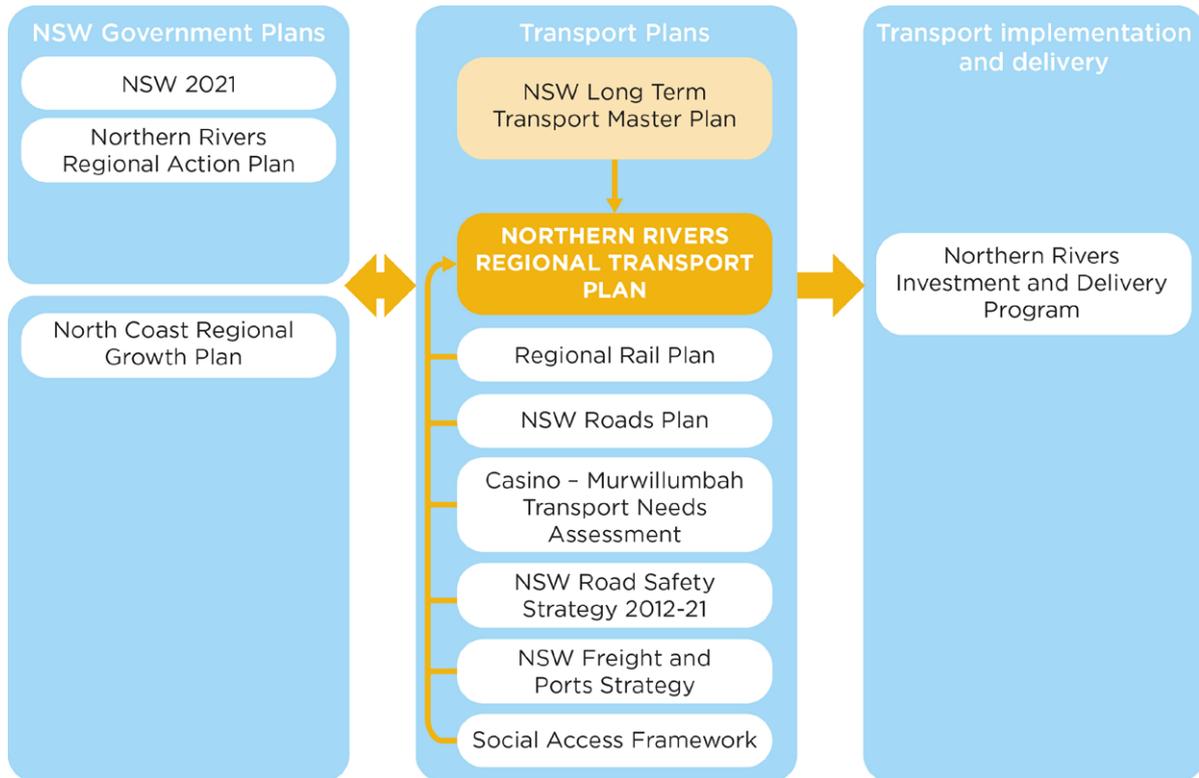
Figure 3 Themes and actions summary



The NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan sets the strategic direction for transport in the state. The Northern Rivers Regional Transport Plan provides more detail for the region.

The Regional Transport Plans link to other plans, including NSW 2021, Northern Rivers Regional Action Plan and the Far North Coast Regional Growth Plan (Figure 4).

Figure 4 Inter-relationships of plans



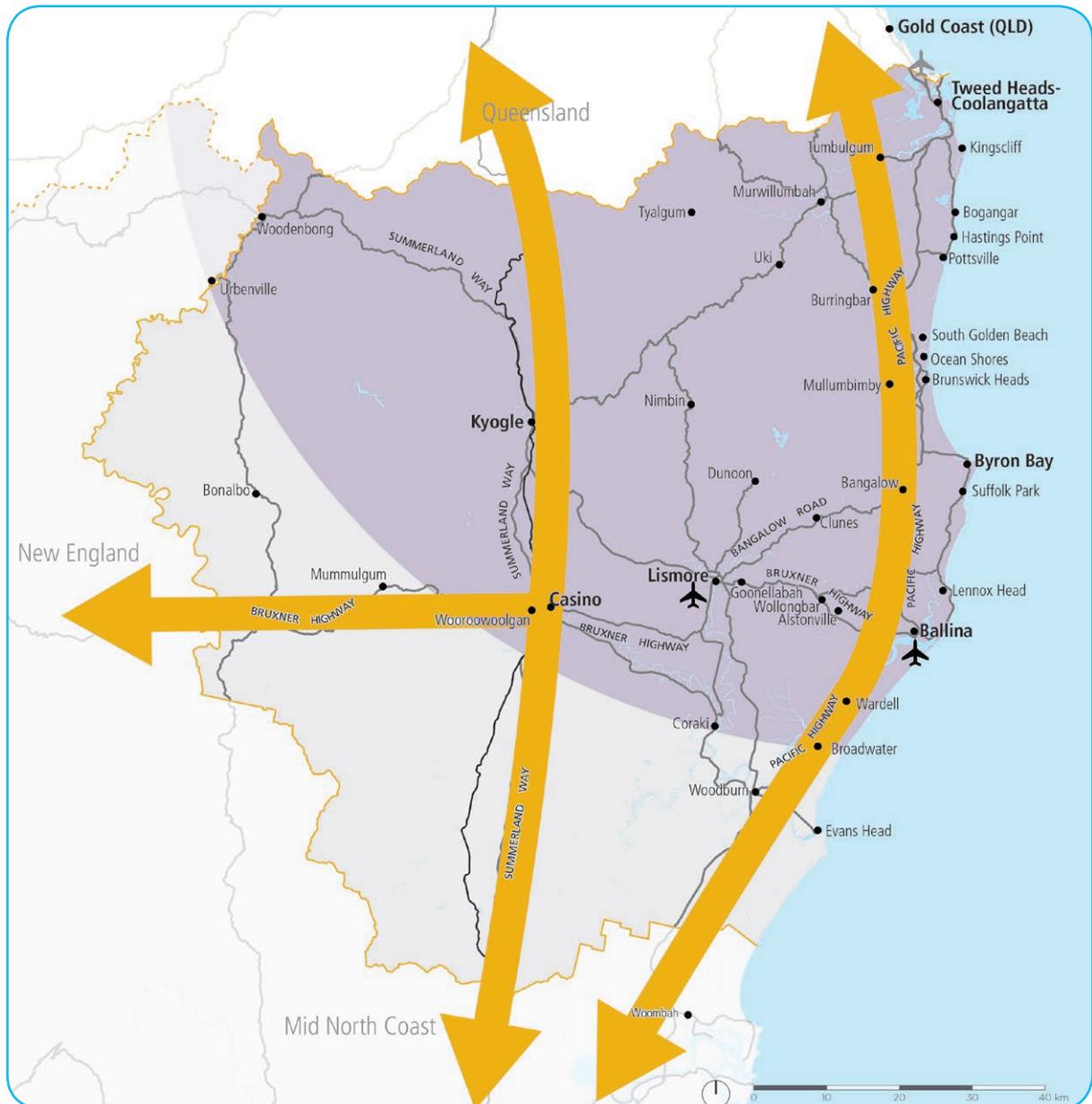
TRAVEL TO AND FROM THE NORTHERN RIVERS REGION

The Northern Rivers region has strong links to the NSW regions of New England (via the Bruxner Highway) and the Mid North Coast (via the Pacific Highway).

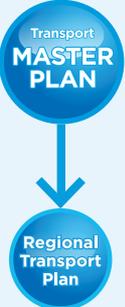
It also has strong links to South East Queensland (via the Pacific Motorway),

particularly between the Tweed and Gold Coast local government areas. Approximately 10 percent of journeys to work from the Northern Rivers region are to locations within South East Queensland.

Figure 5 Major corridors to and from the region



	Travel to and from the region		Town or city		100km Catchment for Tweed Heads / Gold Coast
	Rail with passenger services		Airport with commercial passenger services		
	Roads				



The main airport is the Ballina Byron Gateway, providing flights to Newcastle, Sydney and Melbourne.

Gold Coast Airport is located on the border of Queensland and NSW and is Australia's fastest growing airport. Located only five kilometres north of Tweed Heads, it provides flights to major Australian cities as well as international destinations. A multi-modal transport interchange is currently being planned at the airport.

Transport challenges for travel to and from the Northern Rivers region are:

- Facilitating cross-border travel into Queensland, with bus or taxi travel hindered by differing state industry regulations and fare systems
- Providing safer roads
- Providing road capacity and infrastructure to enable and support growth
- Coordinating regional coach services to meet train services to Brisbane
- Maintaining regional flight slots at Sydney Airport.

The actions to support travel to and from the Northern Rivers region are:

- Improve cross-border connectivity
- Invest in the road network
- Improve NSW TrainLink and coach services
- Support ongoing access to Sydney Airport
- Identify and protect future transport corridors.

Our actions will focus on making the most of our existing assets by managing demand and operations as a priority. Expansion of infrastructure and services will be planned for over time, in line with growth in population and industry within the region.

Action: Improve cross-border connectivity

We will work with the Queensland Government to align state regulation and cooperation to make cross-border travel more customer-focused.

Social, employment and educational links between the Northern Rivers region and South East Queensland are significant, particularly in the Tweed Shire.

Travel between the states is a key driver of economic growth and prosperity for Northern Rivers region.

In many cases the nearest education, health and key services, such as Gold Coast Airport, are located in Queensland.

Cross-border travel into Queensland by taxi is hindered by industry regulations being different in each state.

There is also potential to improve bus connections across the border, harmonise fares and ticketing arrangements and fully integrate services from the Gold Coast and Tweed.

We will continue to work closely with the Queensland Government to improve:

- Cross border bus services
- Coordination of fares and ticketing
- Taxi regulation
- Access to Gold Coast airport
- Integrated transport, land use and planning strategies.



Action: Invest in the road network

We will continue our program of upgrades to the Northern Rivers region road network, focusing on improving safety, increasing accessibility and enhancing freight efficiency.

There is a shared commitment from the Australian Government and NSW Government to complete the Pacific Highway upgrade. The most recent upgrade is the section between Tintenbar and Ewingsdale, scheduled for completion by mid-2014. This significant transport investment will help to meet increasing demand for travel generated by population growth, tourism and the movement of road freight.

The national highway network supports road freight movements, primarily on the Pacific Highway, Bruxner Highway and Summerland Way. The road infrastructure supports the use of higher productivity freight vehicles. The key B-double routes include Summerland Way, Bruxner Highway (between Casino and Ballina only) and the Pacific Highway.

A number of rural bridges across NSW are ageing, of low strength and struggling to keep up with increasing loading demands from road freight.

The Bridges for the Bush Program is a NSW Government commitment of \$145 million to upgrade or replace regional bridges to improve the resilience and freight capacity of the regional road network.

In the Northern Rivers region, replacement of the Tabulam Bridge is included in the Bridges for the Bush Program and planning is currently underway. When complete, this will connect 230 kilometres of continuous Heavy Mass Limit road access.

We will also investigate opportunities to provide walking and cycling facilities as part of the bridge replacement project.

Action: Improve NSW TrainLink and coach services

We will develop a future NSW TrainLink servicing plan for the Northern Rivers region and incorporate this into a long term plan for regional rail. The plan will be aligned with coach services operating in the region.

One daily XPT passenger rail service connects the Northern Rivers region to Brisbane, serving Casino and Kyogle in the early hours of the morning.

An early evening service from Sydney terminates at Casino, and returns overnight to Sydney. Casino is one of the busiest stations on the NSW TrainLink network, with a high proportion of people using TrainLink coach services to/from Lismore, Byron Bay, Murwillumbah, Tweed Heads, the Gold Coast and Brisbane.

The railway timetable and the timetables of connecting coach services are currently focused on connections to Sydney, despite Brisbane being much closer.

We will examine opportunities to realign rail and coach timetables to:

- Improve connections and service frequency
- Improve the range of travel opportunities - particularly for access to Brisbane
- Improve customer access to printed and electronic timetable and travel information for regional rail and coach travel
- Improve the integration between local and regional bus services and TrainLink train services at Northern Rivers region's stations.

We will also continue to work with the Queensland Government and ARTC to improve connections to Brisbane, along with the Department of Planning and Infrastructure to investigate a future rail corridor to the Gold Coast via Tweed Heads.



We will invest in improvements to the NSW TrainLink fleet to improve service levels and customer experience. Actions will include:

- Reviewing fleet maintenance and stabling locations, to improve overall reliability and availability of the fleet
- Ensuring the current NSW TrainLink fleet receives maintenance to ensure reliability
- Fleet replacement to help boost flexibility in the design of services and offer greater passenger comfort. This will be managed in line with a *NSW TrainLink Fleet and Maintenance Strategy* that will program future rolling-stock investment.

Action: Support ongoing access to Sydney Airport

Regional flight slots at Sydney Airport determine the convenience of air travel for regional communities accessing Sydney by air.

We will support maintenance of the 20 percent of flight slots allocated to regional NSW services and will seek a greater allocation in the peak periods.

In 2011, over five million passengers passed through Gold Coast Airport, over 300,000 through Ballina Airport and over 45,000 through Lismore Airport, boosting the Northern Rivers already strong tourism sector.

Charter and private flights from Northern NSW's regional airports allow those who work and live

outside the major cities to access the specialist health, education, commercial and recreational facilities that are not economically available where they normally reside; allow travel by health professionals to the regional community; and, enable regional residents to maintain relationships with distant families and friends.

Action: Identify and protect future transport corridors

We will continue to work with the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure, and the Australian Government Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, to identify and protect a future high speed rail corridor between Brisbane, the Northern Rivers region and Sydney.

The second phase of the High Speed Rail Study (April 2013) identified a potential future station in the Northern Rivers region at Casino, with other stations nearby at Grafton (Mid North Coast) and the Gold Coast (Queensland). High speed rail may eventually connect these centres directly to Brisbane, Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne.

Opportunities to be considered include convenient connections to regional and local public transport services.

Other potential future corridors that may be investigated in the long term include extending rail from the Gold Coast south along the coastal corridor.



TRAVEL WITHIN THE NORTHERN RIVERS REGION

Key connections within the region include those between:

- Lismore and Ballina
- Lismore and Byron Bay
- Ballina and Byron Bay
- Murwillumbah and Tweed Heads
- Casino and Lismore.

Improving transport outcomes for travel within the Northern Rivers region relies on effective integration and management of the system.

Buses, taxis, community transport, active transport, trains and roads play a part in the transport system. Each component has strengths that help meet the transport needs of the region.

Transport challenges for travel within the Northern Rivers region are:

- Providing safer roads
- Improving connections between smaller towns and regional centres
- Existing transport networks entrench car dependence and do not meet the needs of non-drivers or those with no access to a motor vehicle
- Existing regulatory arrangements impede transport efficiency
- The lack of a single comprehensive source of public transport information
- High transport fares in comparison to those in metropolitan areas
- Catering for seasonal tourism that generate peak transport demands between towns in the region and cause congestion.

The actions to support transport within the Northern Rivers region include measures to:

- Improve road safety
- Improve boating facilities and waterway access
- Improve regional bus services
- Integrate NSW TrainLink coach services with regional bus services
- Improve public transport customer information
- Improve public transport interchanges
- Investigate flexible or demand responsive transport
- Ensure adequate community transport services are provided
- Improve the integration of community transport services into the passenger transport system
- Develop a sustainable model for community transport service provision
- Develop annual servicing plans for major events
- Improve tourism-related transport services
- Support proposals to investigate walking and cycling trails including disused rail lines.



Figure 6 Major corridors within the Northern Rivers region



Action: Improve road safety

We will continue to progress the actions of the *NSW Road Safety Strategy 2012-21* to achieve the *NSW 2021* target of reducing fatalities to 4.3 per 100,000 population by 2016. In the Northern Rivers region, our priority actions are to:

- Provide safer roads by implementing treatments that target head-on and run-off crashes, including clear zones, installation of guardrail, shoulder widening and upgrade to seal on Kyogle Road
- Continue targeted safety works programs for infrastructure works including clear zones, safety barriers, highway route reviews
- Provide safer road infrastructure on state and local roads leading to Aboriginal communities
- Address the safety needs of vulnerable road users through infrastructure and traffic management treatments, including lower speed limits and traffic calming measures
- Work with NSW Police to strengthen random breath and drug testing programs including a focus in rural NSW
- Develop revised education communications and programs, to address drink driving including alcohol interlocks
- Address light vehicle driver fatigue
- Support enforcement activities to deter speeding through high visibility police enforcement and automated speed camera activities
- Target crash risk assessment on higher volume roads, using the route safety review process across the key freight routes
- Improve heavy vehicle compliance through targeted enforcement to address speeding, fatigue, drug impairment and distraction
- Provide rest areas to meet heavy vehicle needs on major routes
- Supplement heavy vehicle driver fatigue programs with a strategy to address light vehicle driver fatigue.

In addition to specific black-spot treatments, the *NSW Road Safety Strategy 2012-21* will address more systemic challenges. This strategy recognises that road geometry is only part of the challenge and it aims to achieve safer vehicles, safer speeds and safer people, in addition to safer roads.

Other programs including targeted safety works, rural highway upgrades, major arterial road upgrades in growing areas, and bypasses of town centres will contribute to major improvements in road safety.

Action: Improve boating facilities and waterway access

We will develop a new Boating Infrastructure Partnership Program to build on the Roads and Maritime Services' successful Better Boating Program. The new funding program will provide grants to local councils and will be informed by a comprehensive audit of waterways to identify priority boating safety, access and infrastructure projects.

Action: Improve regional bus services

We will work in partnership with local bus operators to introduce a more robust contractual framework for local and regional buses.

We will work with the bus operators to develop routes and timetables which improve services for customers. We will develop a service framework that matches routes, coverage, hours of operation and vehicles with specific local needs.

Bus services provide the majority of public transport services for travel within the Northern Rivers region. These regional bus services provide connections to the region's major centres from towns and villages (such as Lennox Head to Ballina, Mullumbimby to Byron Bay) and between the major centres (Casino to Lismore, Lismore to Ballina/Byron Bay).



Our new framework for inter-town buses will target improvements designed to:

- Improve the frequency and hours of operation for inter-regional routes
- Define base service requirements for village to town services including at least morning, afternoon and early evening return trip opportunities
- Consolidate routes to increase the range of destinations provided without the need to transfer between services
- Create a connected network of intra-regional services supported by local services within each centre and by connections to smaller villages.

Improvements to the bus network will include consideration of routes 603, 605, 640, 661, 662 and 637 as recommended in the Casino to Murwillumbah Transport Study.

Bus services for school children in the Northern Rivers region will continue to be provided as these services are an essential public transport service in the region.

Action: Integrate NSW TrainLink coach services with regional bus services

We will review timetables and service levels for train and coach services as part of the long term plan for regional rail. This will identify opportunities to incorporate improved intra-regional connectivity in addition to long distance train connections.

Coach services are primarily part of a system that provides for travel to destinations outside the region. However, in using the major roads in the region, they also make connections to major centres. The long term plan for regional rail will advance planning for the integration of these services.

We will aim to use coach services as part of the regional bus system as well as serving travel to destinations outside the region.

We will investigate the potential for NSW TrainLink coach services to pick up and set

down at multiple key destinations in the major towns and cities. These might include the airport and the main shopping centre as well as the traditional stop at the railway station.

Action: Improve public transport customer information

We will improve web based customer information for the Northern Rivers region.

The Country Transport website provides bus timetable information town by town, but there is no single information point for bus trips that require an interchange, or map that describes services across the Northern Rivers region.

We will develop an integrated and comprehensive source of transport timetables, maps, fares and information to help customers understand options for travel in and around the Northern Rivers region.

Action: Improve public transport interchanges

Interchanges are important as part of the public transport network. In the Northern Rivers region, the primary transport interchange is at Casino.

We will ensure that major transport interchange points across NSW are assessed and benchmarked against interchange standards. We will develop a program of interchange improvement works to ensure that our interchanges meet customer needs.

Interchange upgrades are currently being planned for Ballina, Casino and Lismore.

We will make interchanging between public transport services easier by taking a customer centred view.

We will work to integrate public transport services by:

- Ensuring major interchanges are clean, well lit, with comfortable seating, and shelter for passengers
- Ensuring that services are available at interchanges
- Coordinating timetables to make interchange seamless between all modes, including buses and trains



- Improving wayfinding, signage and the physical cues people use to find their way around interchanges
- Improving customer information including service information, ticketing and timetables
- Making it easier to pay for, and interchange between, services by rolling out the Opal electronic ticketing system.

We will also continue to roll out Country Passenger Transport Infrastructure Grants.

Country Passenger Transport Infrastructure Grants

Transport for NSW administers annual rounds of the Country Passenger Transport Infrastructure Grants Scheme (CPTIGS), which provides support funding to projects that improve the amenity of passenger transport infrastructure for rural, regional and remote communities of NSW.

Local government, incorporated community groups, transport operators and other interested organisations with a current Australian Business Number can apply. To be successful the proponents must demonstrate the proposal:

- Would benefit non-private vehicle, rural and regional transport passengers
- Is financially and economically sound and has sufficient community support
- Can be part-funded or materially contributed to by other parties
- Is likely to obtain relevant approvals, especially local government
- There is adequate capacity to design, deliver and maintain the infrastructure
- The proposal overall is credible and comprehensive.

Action: Investigate flexible or demand responsive transport

We will investigate the applicability of flexible or demand responsive transport solutions for the Northern Rivers region, and work to identify and implement these services in appropriate locations.

Flexible transport services are likely to be most useful in the smaller towns and villages in the Northern Rivers region. However, it may also meet particular needs in major towns and cities, and may be applicable in Ballina, Casino, Murwillumbah and Byron Bay.

We will investigate a range of delivery models for flexible transport to determine what works best for different areas of the Northern Rivers region. These delivery models may include:

- Fully demand responsive services, providing a door to door service for pre-booked trips
- Partially demand responsive services, providing a door to door service, with pre-bookings as well as 'turn up and go' at designated times and places
- Standard route services with the capacity to divert within designated areas on request
- Services operating on a fixed route from, for example, a town centre to a designated point, after which they provide a flexible 'roaming' service across a designated zone
- Services operating at set times to/from a designated point, but to a variable, non-fixed route which is dependent on pre-bookings and determined by the driver.

We will work with local bus operators, taxi operators and community transport providers to make the best use of available transport resources, and to provide the most appropriate mode and delivery model for different needs, and for different times of the day or week.

We will also support local initiatives that provide flexible transport opportunities, such as Northern Rivers Carpool.

Action: Ensure adequate community transport services are provided

We will continue to work with community transport providers to ensure that future demand for community transport can be met.

The growing and ageing population of the Northern Rivers region is likely to increase future demand for community transport services.

We need to provide adequate services to support the mobility of people who are experiencing transport disadvantage, providing them with access to services and facilities across the region.

Action: Improve the integration of community transport services into the passenger transport system

We will work to better integrate community transport services into the overall transport system to more efficiently meet a broader range of needs.

The NSW Government funds several community transport programs including:

- Community Transport Program
- Regional Transport Coordination Program
- Country Passenger Transport Infrastructure Grants Scheme
- Home and Community Care Program (jointly funded NSW and Australian government initiative).

Public transport in the region should be understood in the broadest sense to include local taxi services and community transport, to ensure that an alternative to private car use is identified and provided to all residents, including people who experience transport disadvantage and have limited access to services in more isolated areas.

The Northern Rivers Carpool

The Northern Rivers Carpool is a free, online service designed to encourage Northern Rivers region residents to share their journey with others to commute to and from locations within the region. It has over 1,600 members. The program also provides designated carpool spaces in public car parks.

The program is supported by local councils, the North Coast Area Health Service, North Coast TAFE and Southern Cross University.

www.nrcarpool.org

More efficient operation of these services may allow a high level of service and greater flexibility. Examples of these services range from a local community mini-bus that takes older people who are frail or people with disabilities to social activities, through to small charter aircraft provided to fly specialist doctors to a town on a regular basis.

We will work with community transport providers, taxi operators and with traditional bus operators to help deliver a fully integrated transport system for the Northern Rivers region. This integration effort will focus on how we can deliver the most appropriate type of service.

Action: Develop a sustainable model for community transport service provision

Along with integrating community transport into the overall transport service offering, we will work with local organisations, councils and the Australian Government to ensure the long term viability of the community transport sector. We will investigate options that allow the transport task to be carried out by the providers who are best placed to do so, regardless of mode.



With a growing and ageing population and in response to individually-based service delivery that will flow from reforms such as Disability Care Australia, we will work with our customers and providers to ensure an appropriate level of service is provided in an operationally sustainable manner.

Action: Develop an annual festival servicing plan for major events

We will work with local councils and festival organisers to develop service plans to encourage public transport use to connect to festivals in the Northern Rivers region.

The Northern Rivers region is host to many annual festivals including the East Coast Blues and Roots Festival, Splendour in the Grass, and 'schoolies' activities.

Festival and event service plans will be developed in conjunction with local councils, festival organisers and transport providers (including airports).

Service Plans will outline the services required for festivals and events, and the responsibilities of all parties.

Action: Improve tourism-related transport services

The influx of visitors during holiday periods puts temporary pressure on transport systems and services. There is an opportunity to develop a holistic approach to providing transport services for holiday periods through initiatives such as:

- Branding of public transport services
- Raising awareness of travel options through brochures and websites
- Seasonal transport options such as holiday bus services and/or park and ride services.

Cross-regional connections will also be considered and provided, if demand requires.

We will work with local council to investigate opportunities to use seasonal parking fares to subsidise better local tourist public transport services, drawing on the experience of other tourist areas around Australia.

Action: Support proposals to investigate walking and cycling trails including disused rail lines

We will support an investigation into the feasibility of a walking and cycling trail along the disused sections of the Casino-Murwillumbah rail line to the north-west of Byron Bay.

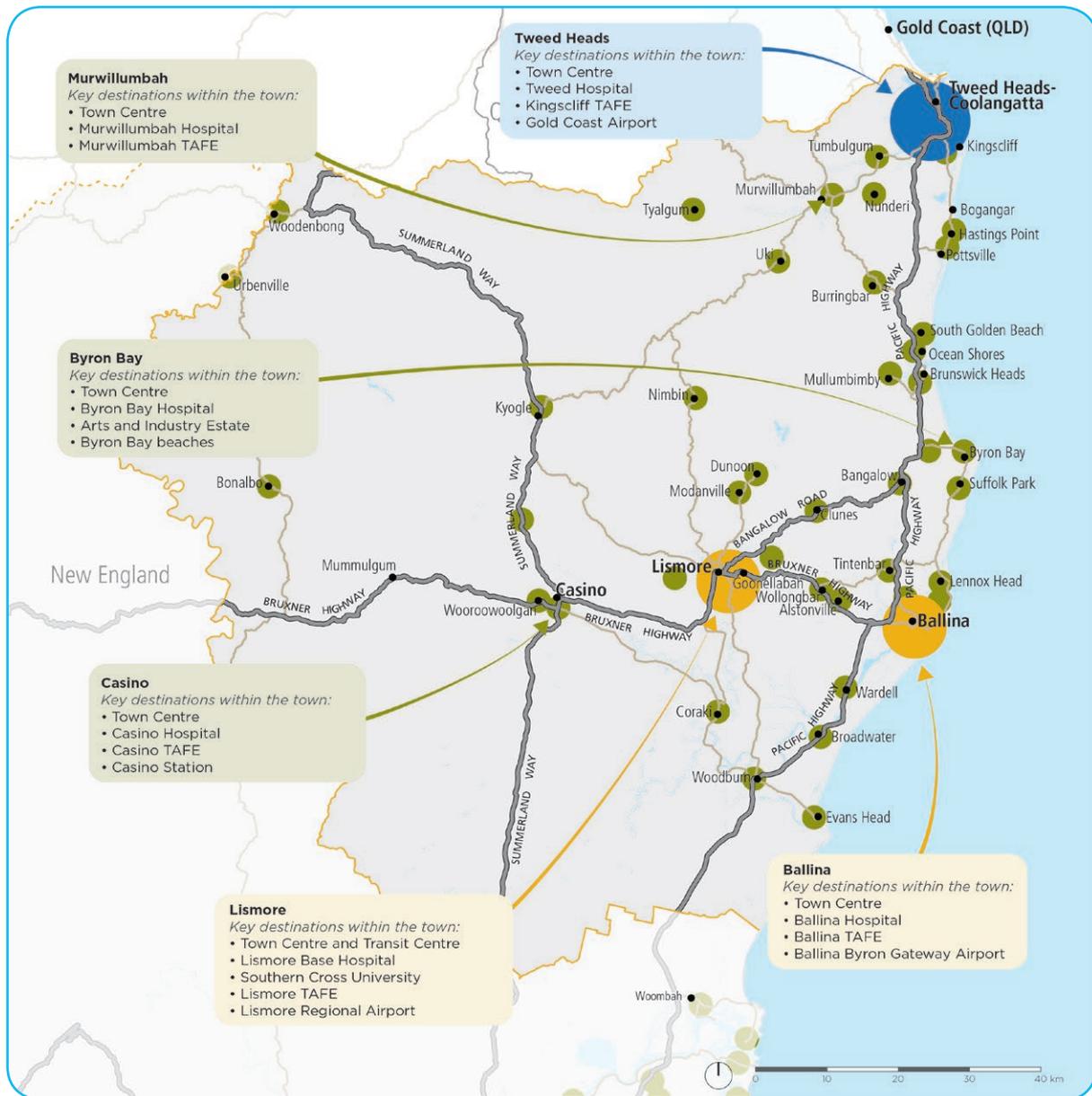
This investigation will be subject to community and business interest in advancing this proposal.



TRAVEL IN MAJOR CENTRES AND TOWNS

Major centres and towns in the Northern Rivers region, and the key destinations within them, are illustrated in Figure 7. These towns act as regional focal points, providing access to jobs, shops, education, community services, health care and tourism facilities.

Figure 7 Major centres and towns in the Northern Rivers region



Transport challenges for travel within the major towns and centres are:

- Localised congestion in and around major towns and cities is increasing
- Varying levels of public transport provision between major towns and cities
- Low public transport uptake, with only one percent of journey to work trips in regional NSW taken by bus
- Population growth and the increasing geographic footprint of towns in the region requires expansion of existing transport networks.

Actions to support travel within the major towns and centres are:

- Address pinch points on the road network
- Improve transport services in towns
- Develop and implement regional transport servicing principles to respond to growth and changes in transport demand
- Support the ongoing delivery of wheelchair accessible vehicles and the Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme
- Roll out the Walking Communities Program
- Connecting Centres Cycling Program
- Roll out the Cycling Towns Program
- Improve information about walking and cycling routes and facilities.

Action: Address pinch points on the road network

We will work with local councils and to develop solutions for addressing localised congestion points on the road network. We will align local environmental planning with transport goals.

Increasing traffic volumes around regional towns associated with growth are creating localised pinch points which impact on the movement of people around the region and reduce the efficiency of freight movements.

Addressing the congestion impacts of growth requires an integrated transport planning response that includes improvements to bus services, and walking and cycling networks.

Pinch points create additional congestion during peak tourist season when traffic volumes increase significantly. It is not efficient to build additional road capacity for a limited period of the year. This issue is best addressed by specific management plans during tourist peaks.

Action: Improve transport services in towns

Over the next few years, we will renew bus service contracts across regional NSW. As we do this we will work with operators to improve the services we provide to our customers. We will work with local transport operators and councils to develop transport service improvement programs for the major towns of the Northern Rivers region. Service improvement programs will focus on serving the unique characteristics of each of the towns.

Town bus routes operate in Tweed Heads, Lismore, Ballina, Casino, Byron Bay and Murwillumbah. In each of these towns there are opportunities to improve the accessibility of bus services, improve service frequencies and improve the attractiveness of public transport. Table 2 summarises the broad service levels of bus routes currently provided in the Northern Rivers regions.



Table 2 Current bus service levels for towns in the Northern Rivers region

Centre or Town	Weekday				Saturday				Sunday		
	No. of routes	Trips	Trips per route	Span	No. of routes	Trips	Trips per route	Span	Trips	Trips per route	Span
Tweed Heads	6	135	23	6-20	6	81	14	8-18	81	14	8-18
Lismore	4	36	9	7-18	4	14	4	8-14	0	0	0
Ballina	4	36	9	7-17	4	12	3	8-15	0	0	0
Casino	4	12	3	9-16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Murwillumbah	4	19	5	9-16	4	8	2	9-12	0	0	0
Byron Bay	2	20	10	8-18	2	12**	6	8-17	6**	3	8-16

** Byron Bay town services on weekends are provided by diversions of route 640, Ballina Airport to Mullumbimby

Action: Develop and implement regional transport servicing principles to respond to growth and changes in transport demand

Regional transport servicing principles will provide a strategic framework to underpin the services provided to regional centres and towns. These principles will inform ongoing improvements to services and service plans that will be regularly updated to meet the changing travel needs of each town. In turn, the strategic framework will inform the development of any future integrated transport service planning guidelines.

We will work with local transport providers to develop and apply the regional transport servicing principles to put the customer first and continue to work to broaden the range of services to meet local travel needs, with similar service standards applied to towns of broadly similar size and urban form.

Based on the regional transport planning principles, we will update the current service guidelines for town services to set a clearly defined target for service coverage (that 85 percent of households within the town are within 400 metres of a bus route), without prescribing the span of hours or route frequencies weekend or late night servicing requirements. We will also examine opportunities to simplify the service guidelines by categorising town routes in accordance

with their function and the market they serve, rather than by distance from the town centre.

The principles will simplify the current arrangements where separate guidelines apply where the terminus of a route is less than two kilometres from the town centre, compared to those where the terminus is more than two kilometres from the centre.

Through the process of contracting bus services, we will identify short-term priorities for each major town or city, including changes to services. Beyond the five year horizon, the transport services planning principles will identify medium to longer-term service needs, ongoing integration of services with land use and any supporting infrastructure.

Action: Support the ongoing delivery of wheelchair accessible vehicles and the Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme

The 24 hour nature of the taxi network, and its ability to provide an immediate response to individual needs, provides opportunities not afforded by bus. To ensure that this service is available across the community we will continue to support the provision of wheelchair accessible vehicles in the taxi fleets in towns in the Northern Rivers region. We will maintain the Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme and support the better availability of services on weekends and outside core business hours.



Walking and cycling

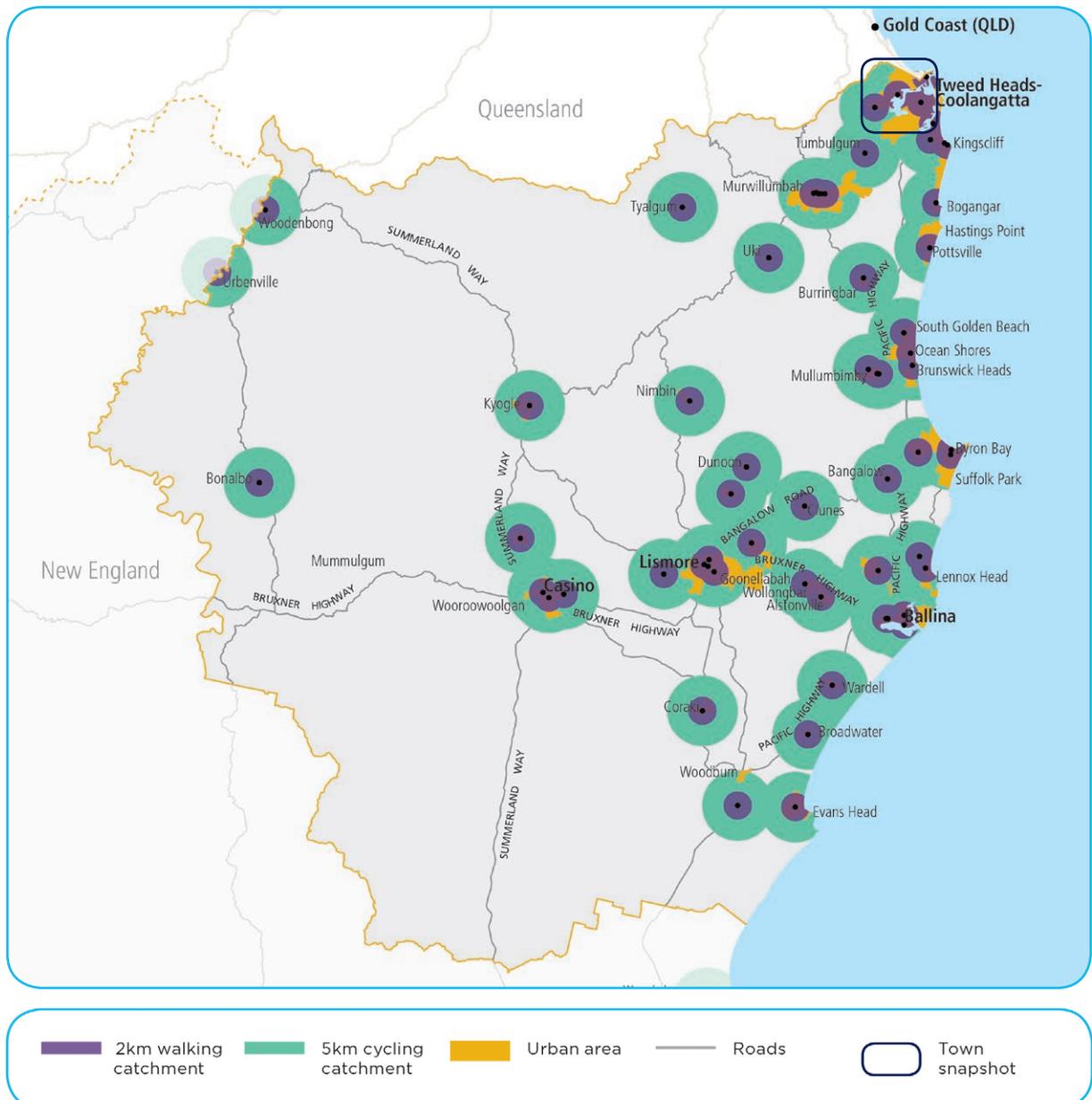
Many regional towns in NSW are ideal for walking and cycling for transport. Almost 90 percent of people in regional NSW live within easy walking or cycling distance of a local centre, with access to shops, schools, and workplaces.

Wider streets, lower traffic volumes and safe routes in regional centres will make walking and cycling safer and more convenient transport options.

We will work to ensure that any transport project or land use development includes appropriate provision for walking and cycling from the design stage.

We will also assist councils to integrate walking and cycling into their ten-year Community Strategic Plans to ensure there is more provision for walking and cycling and promote this approach with Regional Organisations of Councils.

Figure 8 Northern Rivers region walking and cycling catchments



Action: Roll out the Walking Communities Program

The Walking Communities Program will deliver state infrastructure investments and contribute to local government initiatives to help boost rates of walking.

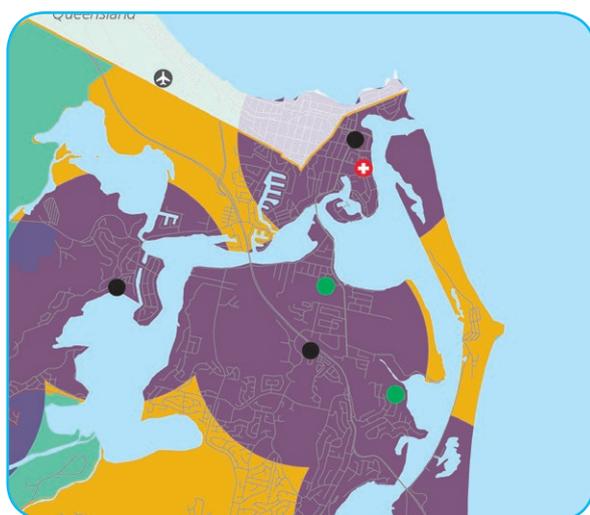
We will provide dedicated funding to help local councils improve walking infrastructure within two kilometre catchments of centres and transport interchanges.

Action: Connecting Centres Cycling Program

We will work with councils and other stakeholders to identify bicycle network gaps and pinch points in the five kilometre catchments that surround regional towns.

The Connecting Centres Program will help councils to complete local cycle networks to regional centres in partnership with local councils. We will also work with councils and bicycle user groups to get more people riding on this network and provide better information to customers.

Figure 9 Tweed Heads walking and cycling catchments



Action: Roll out the Cycling Towns Program

The Cycling Towns Program will focus bicycle infrastructure provision and encouragement in a small number of regional centres with the aim to rapidly increase rates of cycling in these areas.

Two regional centres will be selected for initial investment in the Cycling Towns Program by the NSW Government, to be delivered in partnership with local councils. Candidate towns must demonstrate that a range of destinations is within easy cycling distance from their residential centres. They will require political support, and a commitment to maintain new infrastructure and complementary promotion measures.

Cycling Towns Programs may include bicycle network construction and bicycle parking facilities, complemented by local government funded encouragement programs, and support for tourist routes and information for visitors.

Action: Improve information about walking and cycling routes and facilities

We will get people walking and cycling more by promoting the benefits of active transport, improving customer information, and developing guidelines and resources for local government. This will include improved on-line resources, such as trip planning, as well as other programs to promote walking and cycling for transport.

We will also continue to sponsor events and community programs, such as NSW Bike Week, which promote active transport.



Tweed Heads

Tweed Heads is a Major Regional Centre in the Northern Rivers region. It provides high levels of services, employment and housing for the region.

The *Far North Coast Regional Strategy* suggests that the revitalisation of Tweed Heads CBD could make it a stronger focal point for the Tweed Urban area. It also sets a target for an additional 19,000 dwellings within the Tweed local government area by 2031.

Action: Improve public transport services

A public transport service improvement program for Tweed Heads will support the growth of Tweed Heads and its role by identifying:

- Opportunities for improved service frequencies to key destinations
- Opportunities for extending hours of operation to include earlier and later services on weekdays, and later services on weekends
- Opportunities to improve the integration between connecting town services and with bus services to key destinations in South East Queensland (for example Gold Coast Airport and Varsity Lakes Station)
- Opportunities to improve the infrastructure that supports public transport services, such as bus stops and shelters, terminal facilities and customer information.

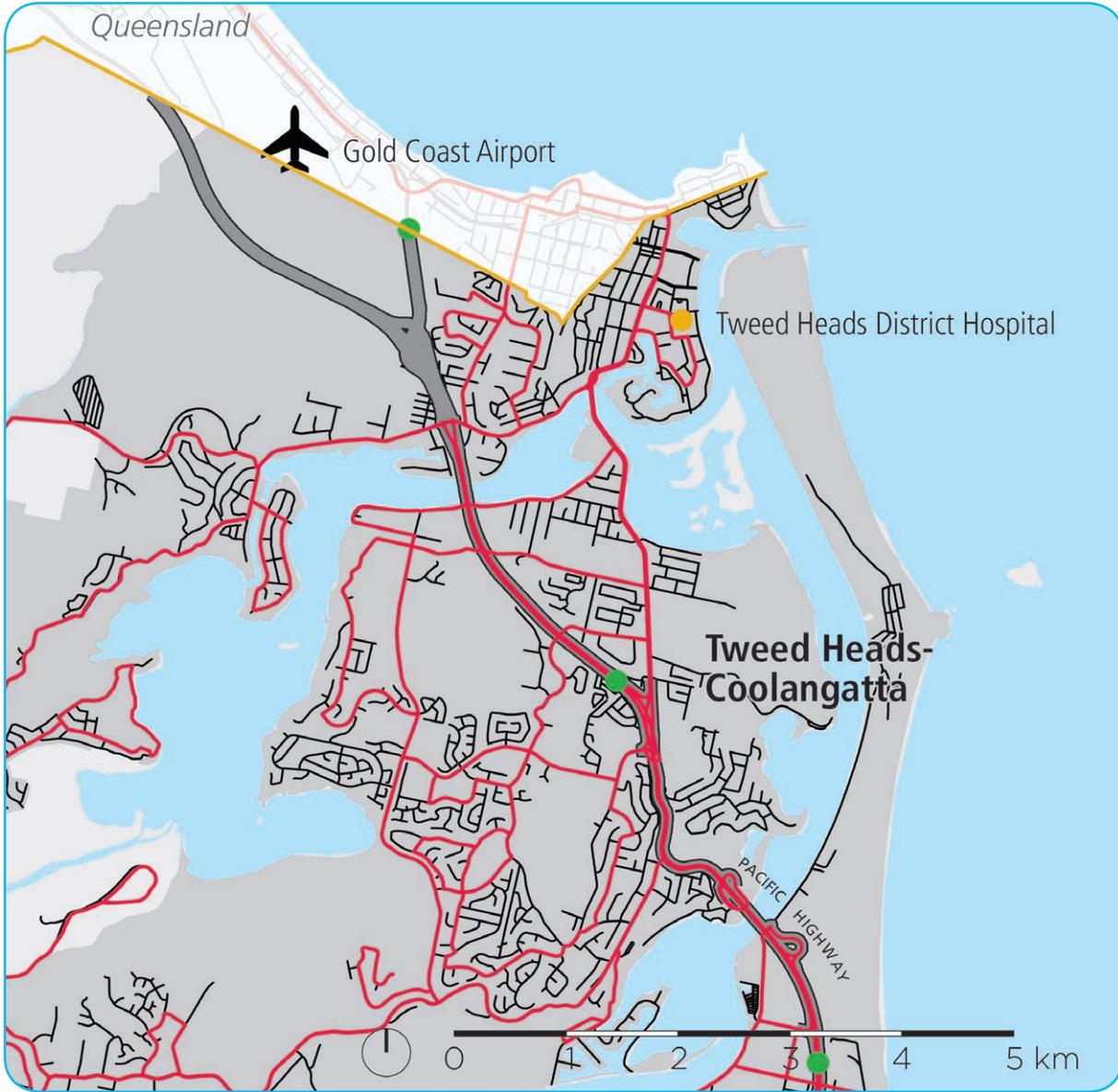
Action: Improve opportunities for walking and cycling

We support the implementation of better facilities for walking and cycling, including the provision of cycle parking facilities at transport interchanges, centres, schools and hospitals.

Tweed Shire Council also has opportunities to seek support for new links through our funding mechanisms.



Figure 10 Tweed Heads town map



Transport
**MASTER
 PLAN**



Regional
 Transport
 Plan

Lismore

Lismore is a Major Regional Centre in the Northern Rivers region. It is a regional hub for creative industry and cultural activities, education, health and retail. It is also an important business centre for the region.

The *Far North Coast Regional Strategy* sets targets for an additional 8,000 dwellings in the Lismore local government area by 2031.

Action: Improve public transport services

A public transport service improvement program for Lismore will support the growth of Lismore and its role as a Major Regional Centre.

It will identify initiatives which will improve the attractiveness of public transport for customers, and which will bring service standards closer to those of the region's other Major Regional Centre of Tweed Heads.

These initiatives may include:

- Improvements to route consistency
- Opportunities for the introduction of clock-face timetables for buses, departing at the same minutes past the hour and regularly spaced across each hour of operation. For example, at 5 minutes, 20 minutes, 35 minutes and 50 minutes past the hour.
- Improvements to route directness and legibility
- Improvements in service frequency to key destinations

- Improvements to connections and the spacing of services to Southern Cross University
- Extended hours of operation with earlier and later services on weekdays, and later services on Saturdays
- Potential introduction of Sunday services
- A less circuitous core network of routes
- Improvements to the infrastructure that supports public transport services, such as bus stops and shelters, terminal facilities and customer information.

We will also support workplace travel planning initiatives undertaken by key destinations such as the Lismore Hospital.

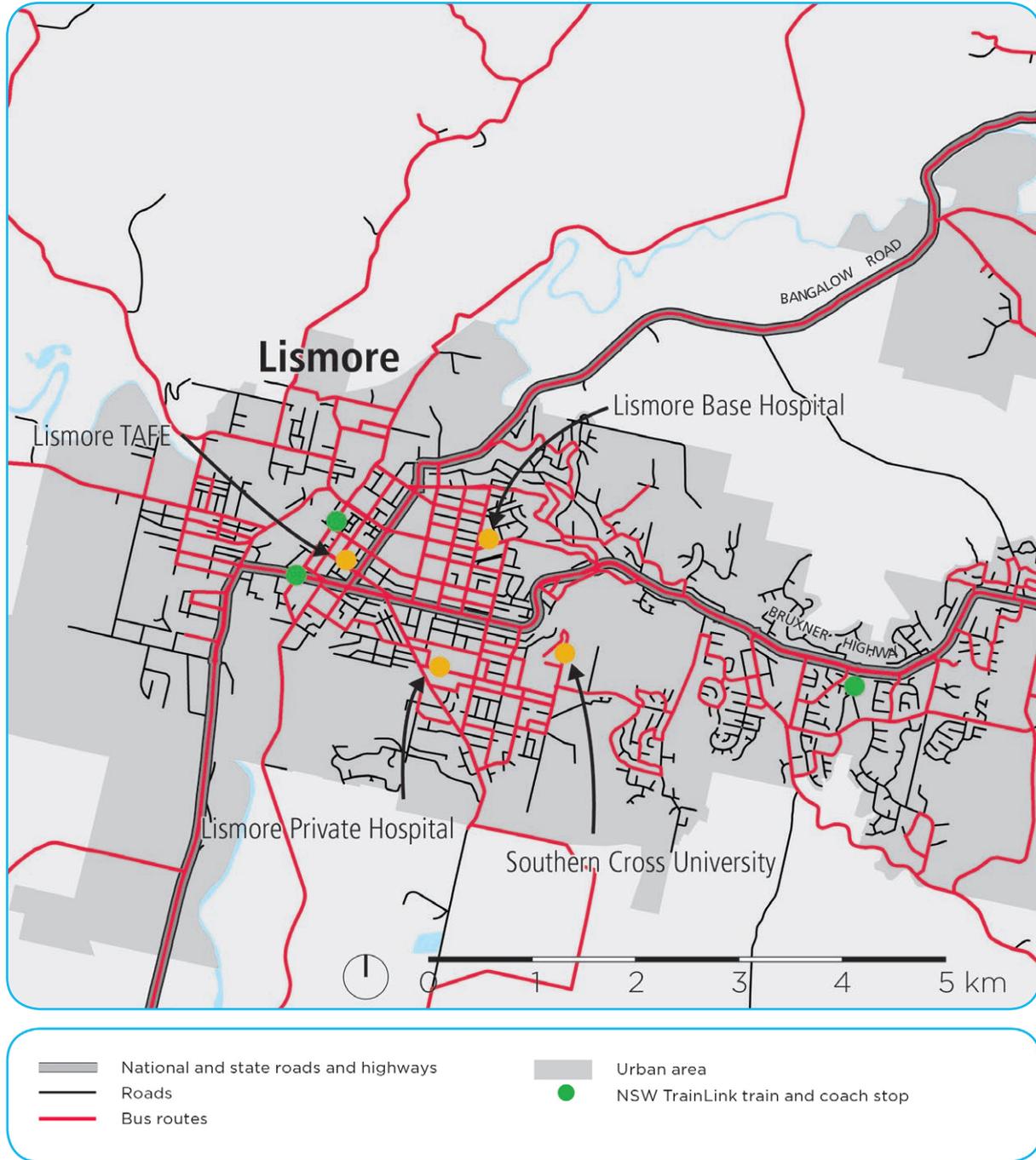
Action: Improve opportunities for walking and cycling

We support the implementation of better facilities for walking and cycling, including the provision of cycle parking facilities at transport interchanges, centres, schools and hospitals.

Lismore City Council also has opportunities to seek support for new links through our funding mechanisms.



Figure 11 Lismore town map



Ballina

Ballina is a Developing Major Regional Centre. It is a regional hub for employment, tourism and retail.

The *Far North Coast Regional Strategy* sets targets for an additional 8,000 dwellings in the Ballina local government area by 2031. There are land release and growth areas close to Ballina, in Lennox Head and Cumbalum.

Action: Improve public transport services

A transport service improvement program for Ballina will support the growth of Ballina and its role as a Developing Major Regional Centre.

It will identify service initiatives which will improve the attractiveness of public transport, and which will bring service standards closer to those of the Major Regional Centre of Lismore.

These initiatives may include:

- Improvements to route consistency
- Opportunities for the introduction of clock-face timetables
- Improvements to route directness and legibility
- Opportunities for improved service frequencies to key destinations
- Opportunities to extend hours of operation to include earlier and later services on weekdays, and later services on Saturdays
- The potential for the introduction of Sunday services
- Opportunities for flexible or demand responsive service models to fill coverage gaps
- Opportunities to expand services to growth areas
- Opportunities to improve the infrastructure that supports public transport services, such as bus stops and shelters, terminal facilities and customer information.

Action: Improve opportunities for walking and cycling

We support the implementation of better facilities for walking and cycling, including the provision of cycle parking facilities at transport interchanges, centres, schools and hospitals.

Ballina Shire Council also has opportunities to seek support for new links through our funding mechanisms.

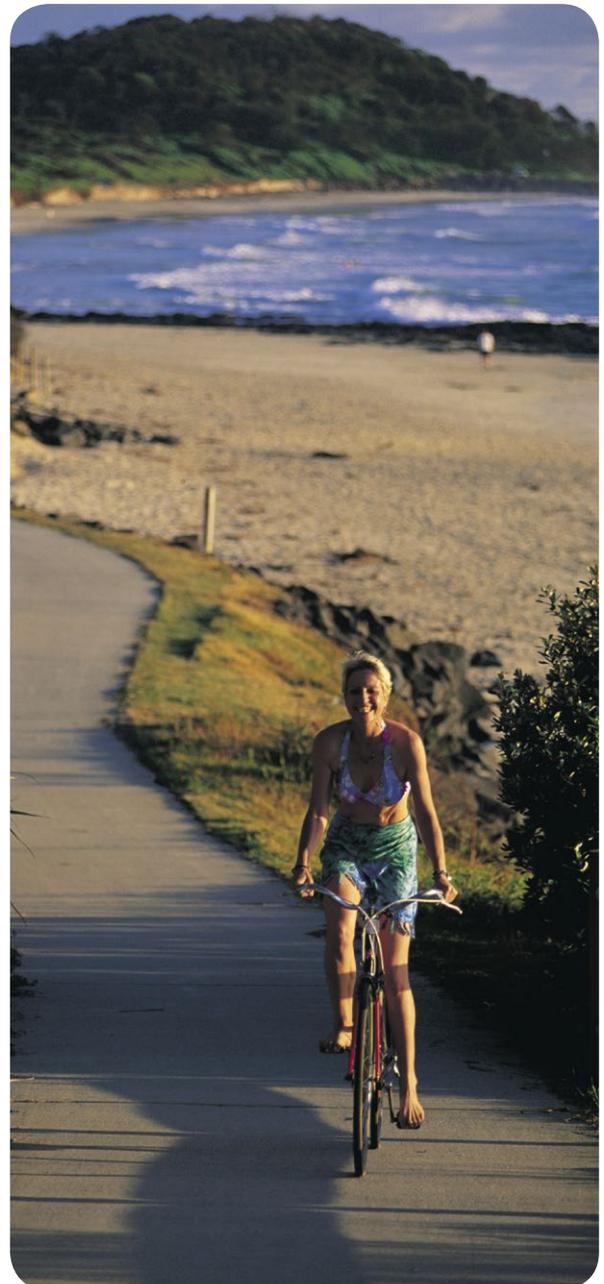
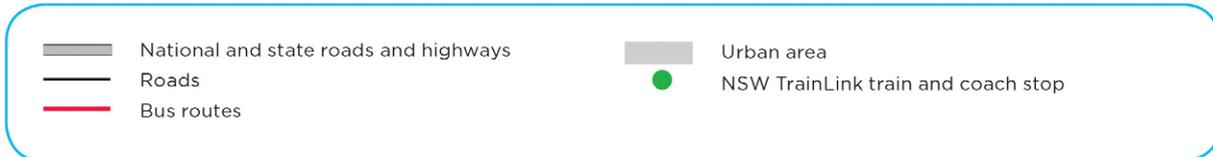
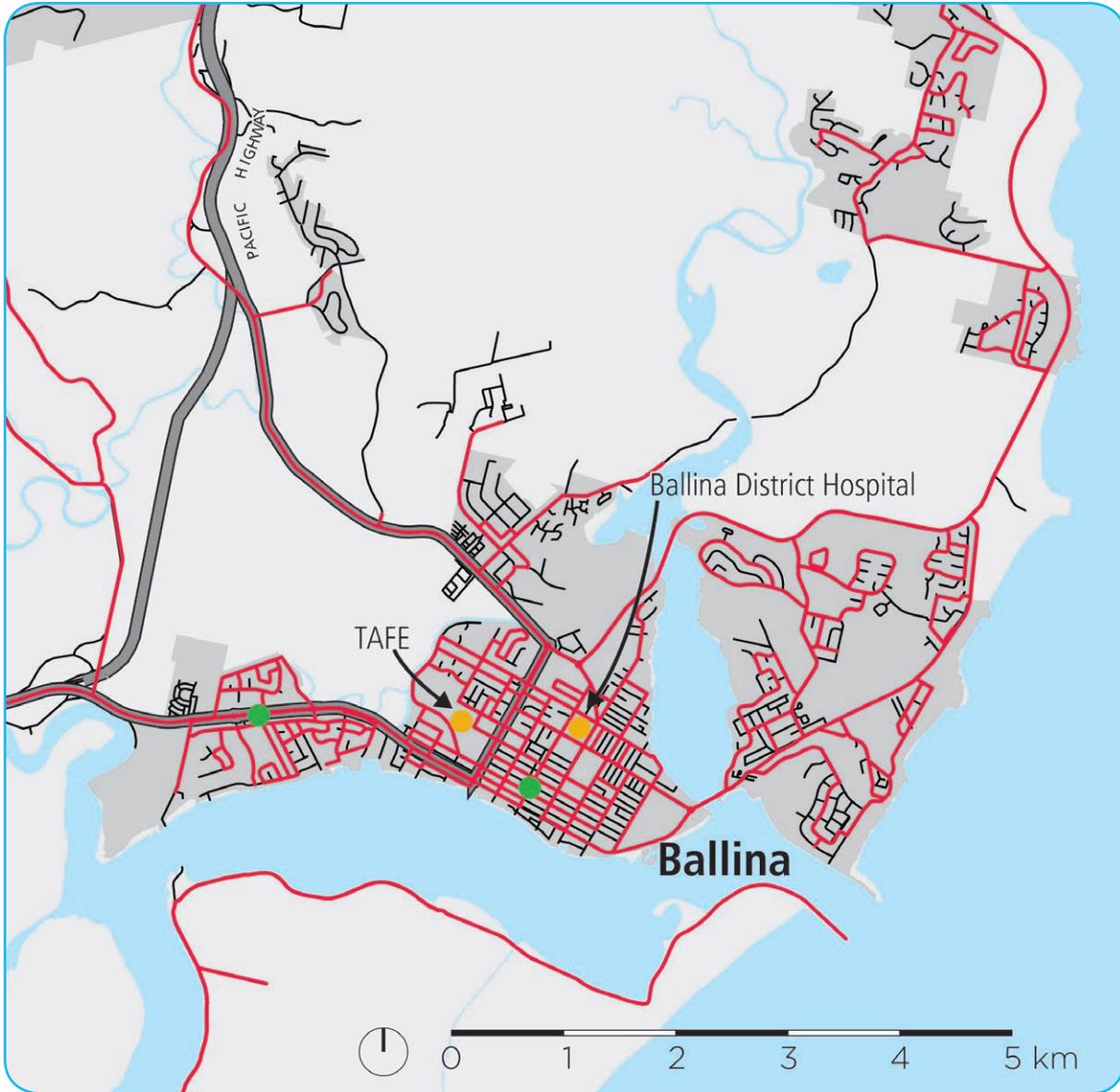


Figure 12 Ballina town map



Casino

Casino is a Major Town in the Northern Rivers region and is the main service centre for the agricultural industries within the Richmond Valley. It is expected that Casino will continue to experience population and housing growth.

Action: A transport service improvement program for Casino

A transport service improvement program for Casino will support the role of Casino as a Major Town.

It will identify transport initiatives which will improve the attractiveness of public transport.

These initiatives may include:

- Improvements to route consistency
- Improvements to connections between town services and with services to/from larger regional towns
- Opportunities for services to operate before and after school travel times
- Improvements to service frequencies to key destinations
- Opportunities for flexible or demand responsive service models to fill coverage gaps
- Opportunities to extend hours of operation to include earlier and later services on weekdays, and later services on Saturdays
- Opportunities to improve the infrastructure that supports public transport services, such as bus stops and shelters, terminal facilities and customer information.

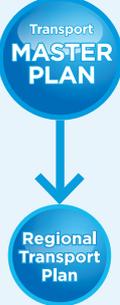
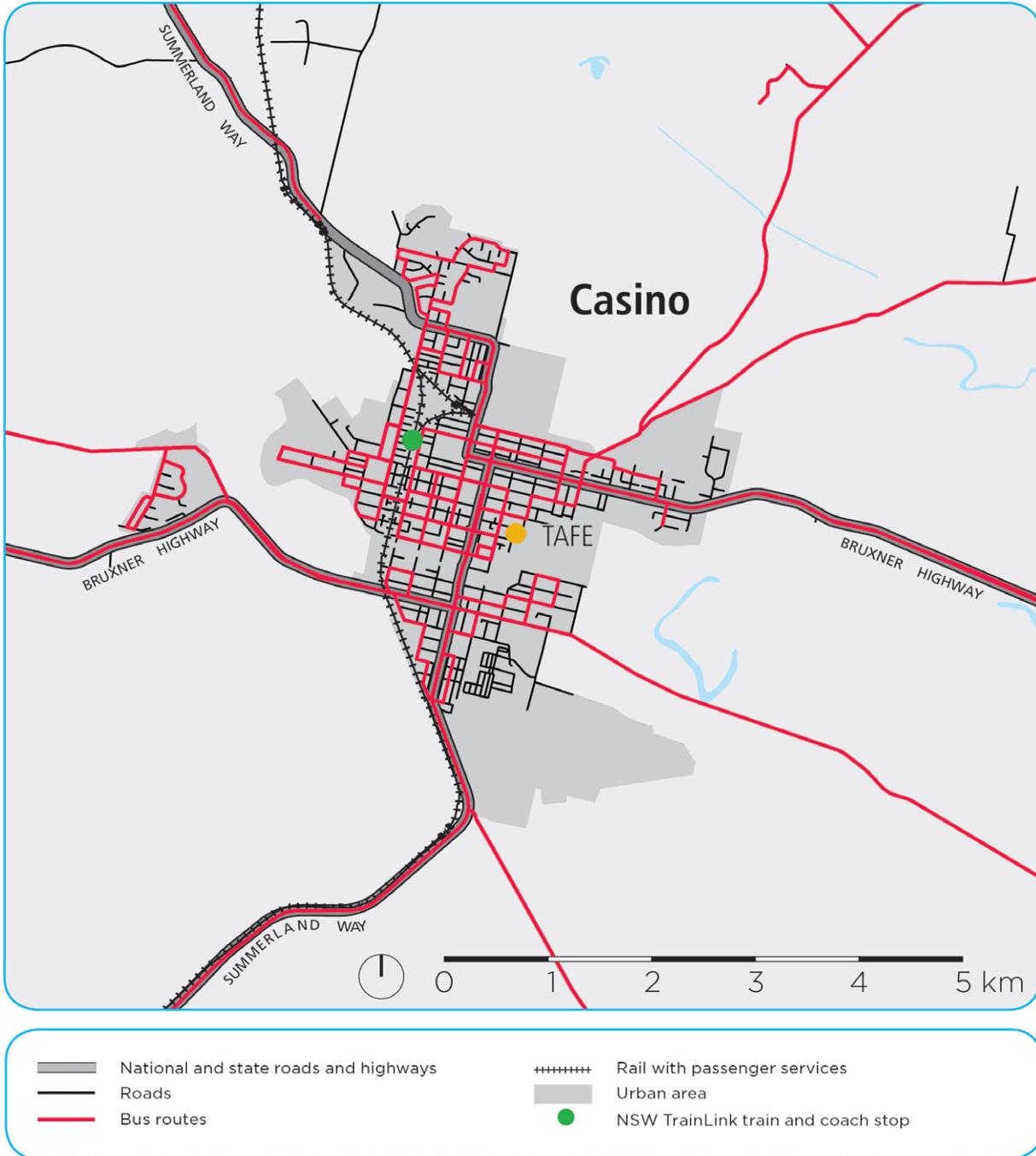
Action: Improve opportunities for walking and cycling

We support the implementation of better facilities for walking and cycling, including the provision of cycle parking facilities at transport interchanges, centres, schools and hospitals.

Richmond Valley Council also has opportunities to seek support for new links through our funding mechanisms.



Figure 13 Casino town map



Murwillumbah

Murwillumbah is a Major Town in the Northern Rivers region, which provides retail, hospitality, agriculture, construction and tourism services.

Action: A transport service improvement program for Murwillumbah

A transport service improvement program for Murwillumbah will support the role of Murwillumbah as a Major Town.

It will identify transport initiatives which will improve the attractiveness of public transport. These initiatives may include:

- Improvements to connections between town services and with services to/from larger regional towns
- Opportunities for services to operate before and after school travel times
- Improvements to service frequencies to key destinations
- Opportunities for flexible or demand responsive service models to fill coverage gaps
- Opportunities to extend hours of operation to include earlier and later services on weekdays, and later services on Saturdays
- Opportunities to improve the infrastructure that supports public transport services, such as bus stops and shelters, terminal facilities and customer information.

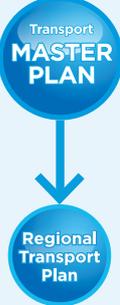
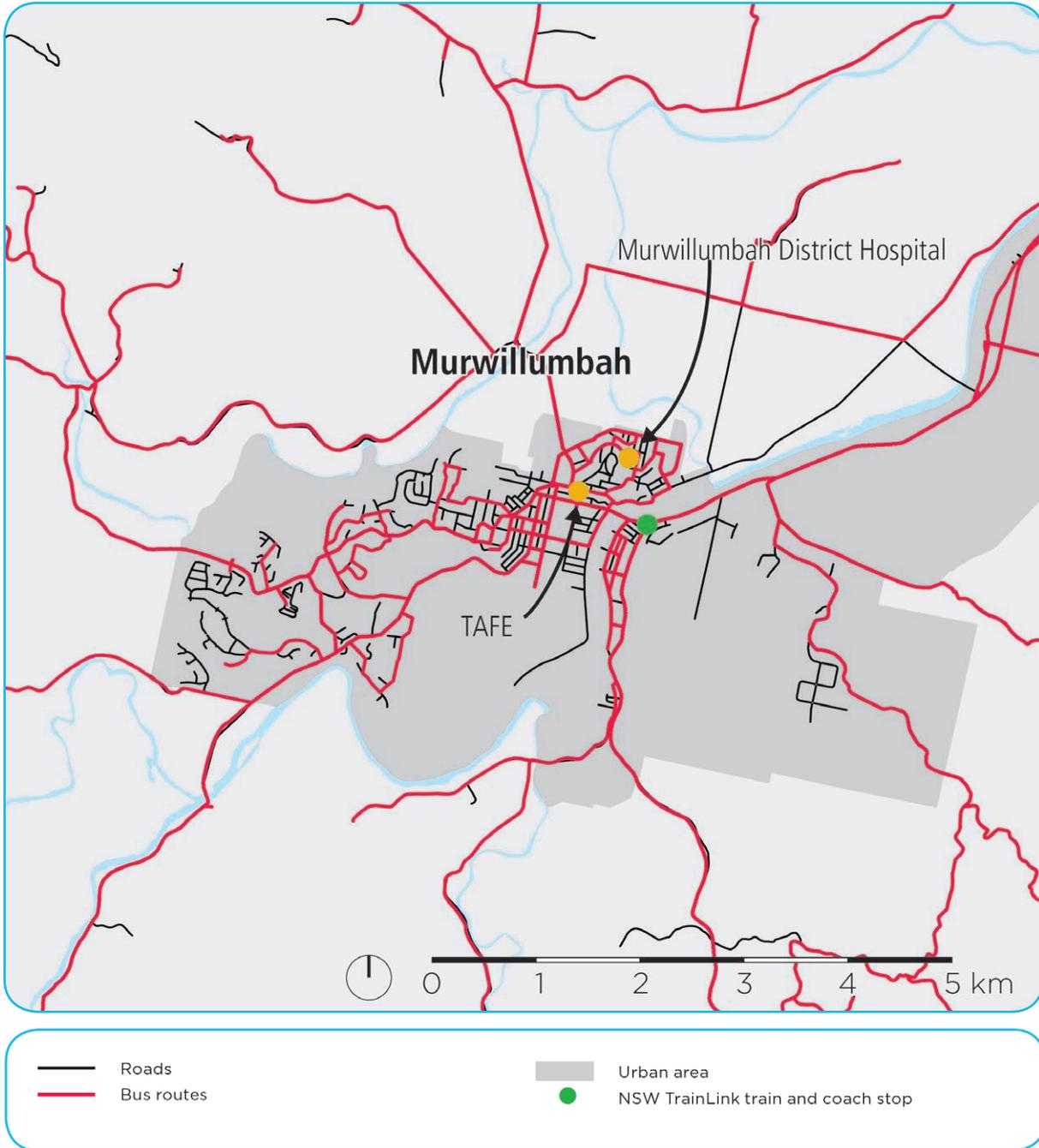
Action: Improve opportunities for walking and cycling

We support the implementation of better facilities for walking and cycling, including the provision of cycle parking facilities at transport interchanges, centres, schools and hospitals.

Tweed Shire Council also has opportunities to seek support for new links through our funding mechanisms.



Figure 14 Murwillumbah town map



Byron Bay

The town of Byron Bay is Australia's most easterly point and is a significant tourist destination. It has a strong arts and creative industries sector and supports many health, well-being and alternative lifestyle businesses.

There are many popular beaches in the Byron Bay area, stretching from Broken Head to Brunswick Heads.

The *Far North Coast Regional Strategy* limits future land release for residential development within coastal areas, but sets a target for an additional 2,600 dwellings in the Byron Bay local government area by 2031.

A hospital development has been proposed in Byron Bay, and transport and the ability to provide transport services to the facility will be a consideration of this proposal.

Tourism around Byron Bay and its proximity to the expanding conurbation north of the border is posing increased traffic problems in the Byron Bay township. Options for traffic management and/or a bypass of the Byron town centre will be examined by Roads and Maritime Services.

Action: Deliver public transport improvements

A transport service improvement program for Byron Bay will support access within Byron Bay, and improve the transport services offered for seasonal visitors.

It will identify transport initiatives which will improve the attractiveness of public transport. These initiatives may include:

- A consistent and regular town loop service, capable of meeting peak visitor demands
- Improvements to connections between town services and with services to/from larger regional towns

- Opportunities for flexible or demand responsive service models to fill coverage gaps
- Opportunities to extend hours of operation to include earlier and later services on weekdays, and later services on Saturdays
- Opportunities to improve the infrastructure that supports public transport services, such as bus stops and shelters, terminal facilities and customer information.

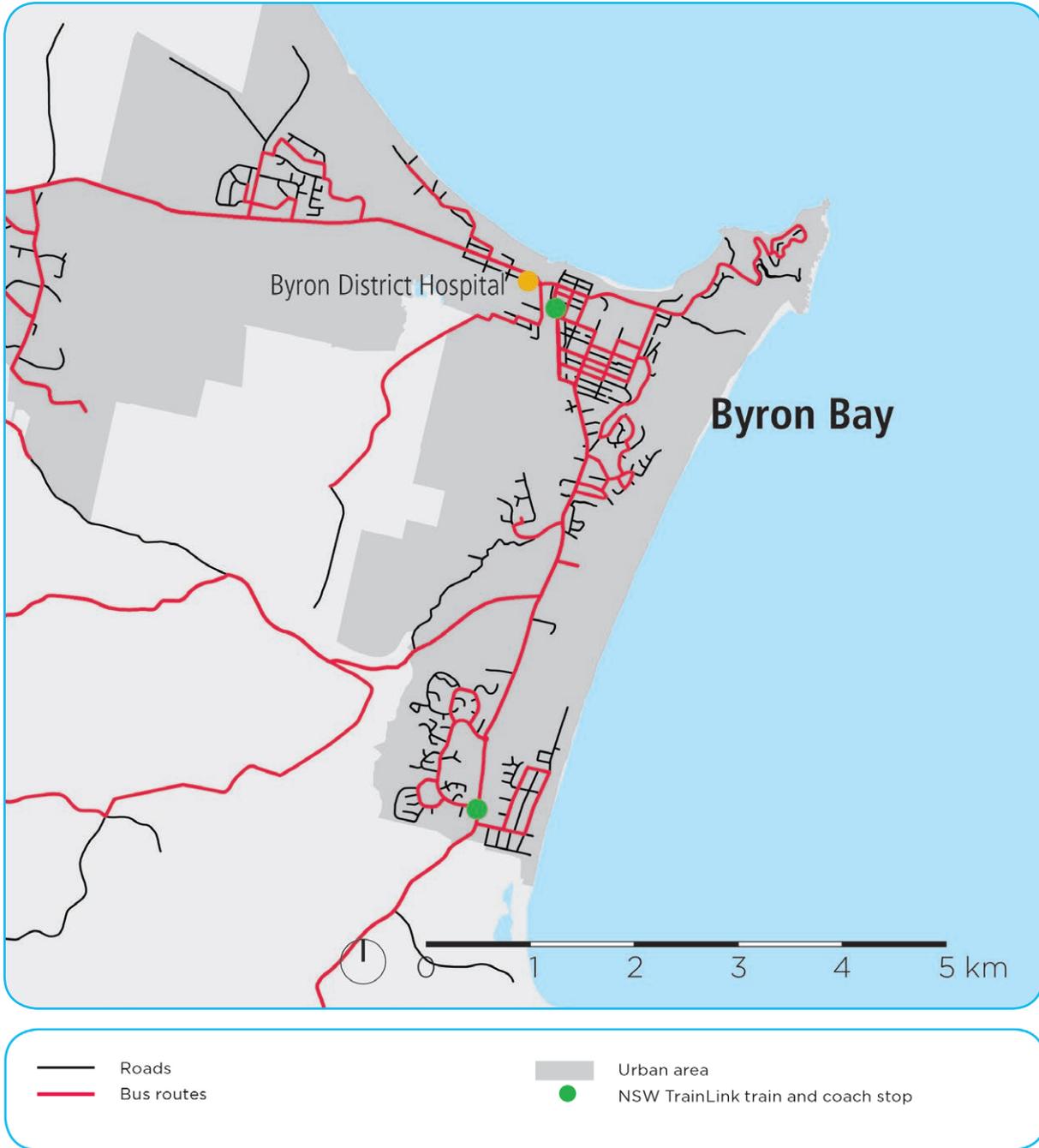
Action: Improve opportunities for walking and cycling

We support the implementation of better facilities for walking and cycling, including the provision of cycle parking facilities at transport interchanges, centres, schools and hospitals.

Byron Shire Council also has opportunities to seek support for new links through our funding mechanisms.



Figure 15 Byron Bay town map



IMPLEMENTATION AND DELIVERY

An Implementation and Delivery Plan will be developed to support this Regional Transport Plan.

This will provide the detail to inform how the Regional Transport Plan is being delivered.

As well as the Implementation and Delivery Plan, the NSW Government will continue to invest in transport infrastructure as part of our ongoing investment program.

Investing in the region

Delivering improvements to transport will require sustained investment. This investment will come from the NSW Government, from local councils and from the Australian Government in major projects.

Transport for NSW will continue to work in partnership with local government and the Australian Government on delivering transport improvements.

Delivering for the region

The *Northern Rivers Regional Transport Plan* supports the *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan*, released in December 2012.

The Northern Rivers Regional Transport Plan is as much about planning and investing for the long term as it is about short term action. Work is already underway and detailed planning and design on many of these projects has already commenced. In addition, we will continue to work to identify and prioritise actions for the future, so that they may be delivered as funding becomes available.

The *Northern Rivers Regional Transport Plan* will be closely aligned to the new draft *Northern Rivers Regional Growth Plan* currently being developed by the Department of Planning and Infrastructure.

Inputs will include future road corridor definitions and other programs to support future changes in land use, population and development.

The NSW Government is working hard to ensure that our regional land use and transport plans are aligned, to deliver the greatest benefit from our investment and for our transport customers.

Taking action

Consistent with the *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan*, Transport for NSW will focus on delivering the *Northern Rivers Regional Transport Plan*.

This focus on delivering the planning will include:

- Providing an annual update of the Regional Transport Plan, including detailed reports on the progress of implementing the initiatives contained in this plan
- Reviewing the Regional Transport Plan every five years
- A commitment to ensure decisions are founded on a solid evidence base
- Continued collaboration with Northern Regional Organisation of Councils, Northern Rivers Regional Development Australia and other stakeholders to support delivery of the Regional Transport Plan and to respond to future planning needs
- A commitment to extensive community engagement and customer consultation as we develop the initiatives in the Regional Transport Plan.



WE LISTENED

Our commitment to customers involves listening to people in the Northern Rivers region. The feedback we have includes the extensive consultation that informed the *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan* and direct customer feedback through the pilot of the Regional Household Travel Survey. Submissions to the Casino-Murwillumbah Transport Needs Study have also assisted in informing this plan.

NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan

More than 1,200 submissions were received during the development of the *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan* including specific submissions identifying transport issues in the Northern Rivers region. A Northern Rivers Regional Forum was also held in Lismore on 21 March 2012, with over 65 members of the community in attendance. In addition, meetings were held with local, state and Australian government representatives during mid 2013.

Through the Casino to Murwillumbah Transport Study process, we had regular and consistent consultation with more than 100 major stakeholders, including government agencies, councils, business and tourism

groups, state regional bodies, service providers, representative and interest groups and community members.

Specific suggestions were made throughout this consultation process to improve transport within the Northern Rivers region, including:

- Gathering more information to better understand the region
- Recognising the importance of the cross border relationship with Queensland
- Increasing capacity within the existing bus system
- Thinking about alternative ways to transport people
- The importance of the road network to enable growth and opportunity.

This Regional Transport Plan builds on these directions and identifies a number of more detailed actions necessary to enable growth within the Northern Rivers region.

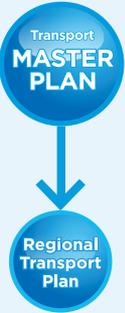


REGIONAL HOUSEHOLD TRAVEL SURVEY PILOT

The Regional Household Travel Survey Pilot was undertaken by Transport for NSW during 2012 to help understand what influences the transport decisions of people in the Northern Rivers region.

This survey was a pilot with a relatively small sample size. However, the results provide insight that informed this plan.

In the Northern Rivers region the main reasons people travel are for social and recreational purposes (34 percent of trips) and shopping (25 percent). Trips to work are important but are only 14 percent of trips.







For more information, visit www.transport.nsw.gov.au

