

# FAR WEST

## Regional Action Plan



December 2012

©Crown Copyright 2012  
Department of Premier and Cabinet  
ISBN: 978-0-7313-5435-5

Cover image credit: The Pinnacles on the outskirts of Broken Hill; Broken Hill Tourism

#### **Disclaimer**

While every reasonable effort has been made to ensure that this document is correct at the time of printing, the State of NSW, its agents and employees, disclaim any and all liability to any person in respect of anything or the consequences of anything done or omitted to be done in reliance or upon the whole or any part of this document.

#### **Copyright Notice**

In keeping with the NSW Government's commitment to encourage the availability of information, you are welcome to reproduce the material that appears in the Regional Action Plan for personal, in-house or non-commercial use without formal permission or charge. All other rights reserved. If you wish to reproduce, alter, store or transmit material appearing in the Regional Action Plan for any other purpose, request for formal permission should be directed to the Department of Premier and Cabinet, Regional Coordination Branch, GPO Box 5341, Sydney 2000. You are required to acknowledge that the material is provided by the Regional Action Plan or the owner of the copyright.

## REGIONAL MINISTER'S MESSAGE

The NSW Government understands the importance of regional NSW to the sustainability and vitality of the State. Whether it's supporting jobs, delivering services and infrastructure or tackling the costs of living, we are determined to help communities and industries throughout regional NSW reach their potential.

To achieve this, the NSW Government conducted regional forums to hear directly from communities. These forums helped to identify, with each community, what their issues and priorities are and how the NSW Government can assist in delivering on those priorities.

The feedback we received across the Far West will help us plan to rebuild the local economy, return quality services, renovate infrastructure and strengthen our local environment and communities. This Regional Action Plan responds to the feedback by identifying actions to deliver on the priorities highlighted by Far West communities.

The actions in this Regional Action Plan are aligned to NSW 2021, the NSW Government's ten year plan to strengthen the State. Through the Department of Premier and Cabinet I will monitor and track progress against the plan.



### **The priorities identified by communities within the Far West include:**

**Prosperous and diverse economy with a highly skilled workforce** – The region will use existing and new investments from mining and other critical industries including agriculture to foster economic diversity and create new employment opportunities for local communities. The region will build its skills by encouraging people to gain new qualifications through better access to education and training opportunities in a range of sectors.

**Strong partnerships with Aboriginal communities** – The NSW Government and Aboriginal communities will work together to harness the economic and social opportunities available in the region. This will improve employment options and increase opportunities for social participation.

**Strong communities supported by effective and coordinated service delivery** – All levels of government will work together, and in partnership with the community, to deliver more effective and coordinated human and other critical services to local people. There will be an increased focus on engaging with young people and disadvantaged members of the community to improve school retention rates and increase further education and training opportunities leading to greater opportunities for workforce participation.

### **Sustainable management of our natural resources**

– The region will strengthen its ability to manage resources, including water, to continue to grow its agricultural industries. New industries such as renewable energy and communication technology will also be encouraged and supported. People will continue to come to the Far West to experience our unique cultural heritage and national parks and reserves.

This Far West Regional Action Plan identifies the immediate actions to deliver on the vision. I thank the local community and businesses, regional organisations and local government for sharing their knowledge and ideas which form the basis of the Plan.

As Minister for Western NSW I will work tirelessly to support the region to grow and prosper through local leadership and strong support from the NSW Government.

*The Hon Kevin Humphries MP  
Minister for Western New South Wales*

# Regional Action Plan

## A NEW APPROACH ACROSS NSW

The NSW Government is fulfilling a new agenda to deliver integrated strategic planning for land use, transport and infrastructure investment, backed up by rigorous financial management and is committed to partnering with communities, including Aboriginal communities to improve social and economic outcomes. The long term strategies will align to NSW 2021, the NSW Government's 10-year business plan to rebuild the economy, return quality services, renovate infrastructure, strengthen our local environment and communities, and restore accountability to Government.

The **State Infrastructure Strategy** is the 20-year strategy to identify and prioritise the delivery of critical public infrastructure that drives productivity and economic growth. The Strategy presents the NSW Government with clear and strategic options for delivering infrastructure and market reform in a way that provides best value for taxpayers.

The **NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan** is the 20-year plan to return quality services through a world class transport system for NSW. It includes objectives for transport and identifies the priorities needed to create a transport system that meets a range of needs.

A **New Planning System** is being developed to facilitate NSW being the number one choice for business investment, enable the sustainable growth of our cities and towns as great places to live and ensure that planning and environmental outcomes reflect the expectations of the community.

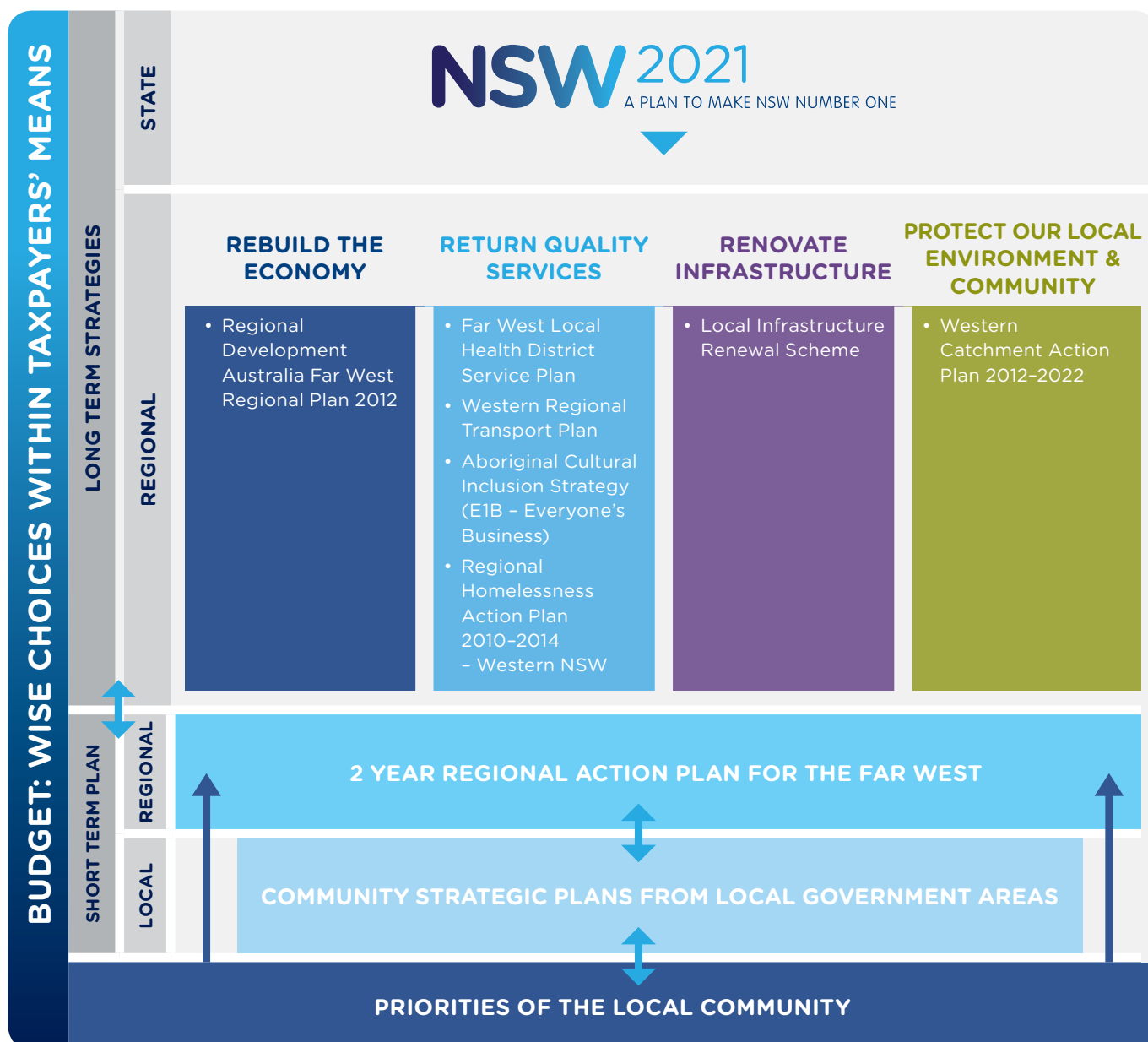
The **NSW Government's Strategic Regional Land Use Policy** sets out a range of initiatives to better balance growth in the mining and coal seam gas (CSG) industries with the need to protect important agricultural land and water resources. For the first time, the impact of mining or CSG activities on agricultural lands will be taken into consideration before exploration activities are approved. All new exploration activities requiring a Review of Environmental Factors will be required to produce an Agricultural Impact Statement prior to approval.

The new **Aboriginal Affairs Strategy** represents the NSW Government's commitment to improving Aboriginal people's social and economic wellbeing. The Strategy is intended to make real differences in the lives and opportunities of Aboriginal people and change the way government works in partnership with Aboriginal communities. Regional Action Plans and the governance supporting the plans, including Aboriginal communities, Regional Leadership Groups and Aboriginal Affairs, will be key in delivering the Strategy locally.

Our progress in implementing these plans will be reported to the community with clear and honest explanations about how we are performing. They will also inform Budget priorities so that we can make the right choices to provide value for money. To sustain our State's finances and maintain our AAA credit rating, we need to identify the community's priorities amongst competing requests for funding.

## Integrated planning for Far West NSW

The Far West Regional Action Plan identifies the immediate actions the NSW Government will prioritise. These will complement both the long term strategies being developed for NSW and existing regional strategies outlined below. The unwavering focus on delivery of these plans will ensure we respond to the priorities of local people.



# Regional Action Plan

## ABOUT OUR REGION



Area  
146,979km<sup>2</sup>

The Far West encompasses the semi-arid lands of western NSW and shares borders with South Australia and Queensland. The region is known for the Barrier Ranges in the west and the Darling River which flows through Western NSW to the Murray River.

There is a strong mining industry, historically centred in Broken Hill, with strong prospect for expansion within the region. It is also known for the pastoral industry based on merino wool production.

The Far West includes the Local Government Areas of Central Darling and Broken Hill, and also the Unincorporated Area.

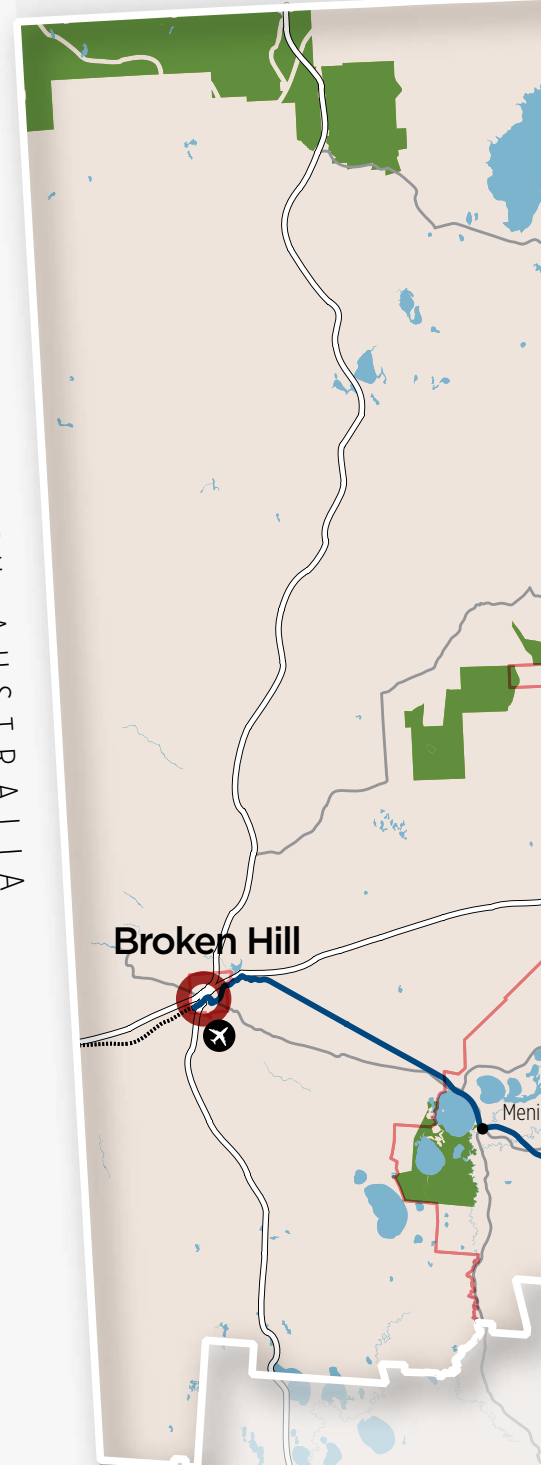
### Regional overview

- Agriculture is the major industry in the Far West. Irrigated agriculture has increased in importance along the Darling River, with the Menindee area an important source of fruit and fibre production
- Successful opal mining industry at White Cliffs
- Emerging industries include tourism, heritage, mining and alternative energy production
- Creative arts-based initiatives such as film making and painting have a strong local, national and international reputation.

### Competitive advantages

- Significant mineral wealth
- Climate that allows early harvest of produce
- Good transport infrastructure
- Located close to the major markets of Adelaide in South Australia
- Unique natural resources
- Iconic National Parks
- Potential for organic food production.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA





# FAR WEST



**Population**  
**22,349**  
(2011)



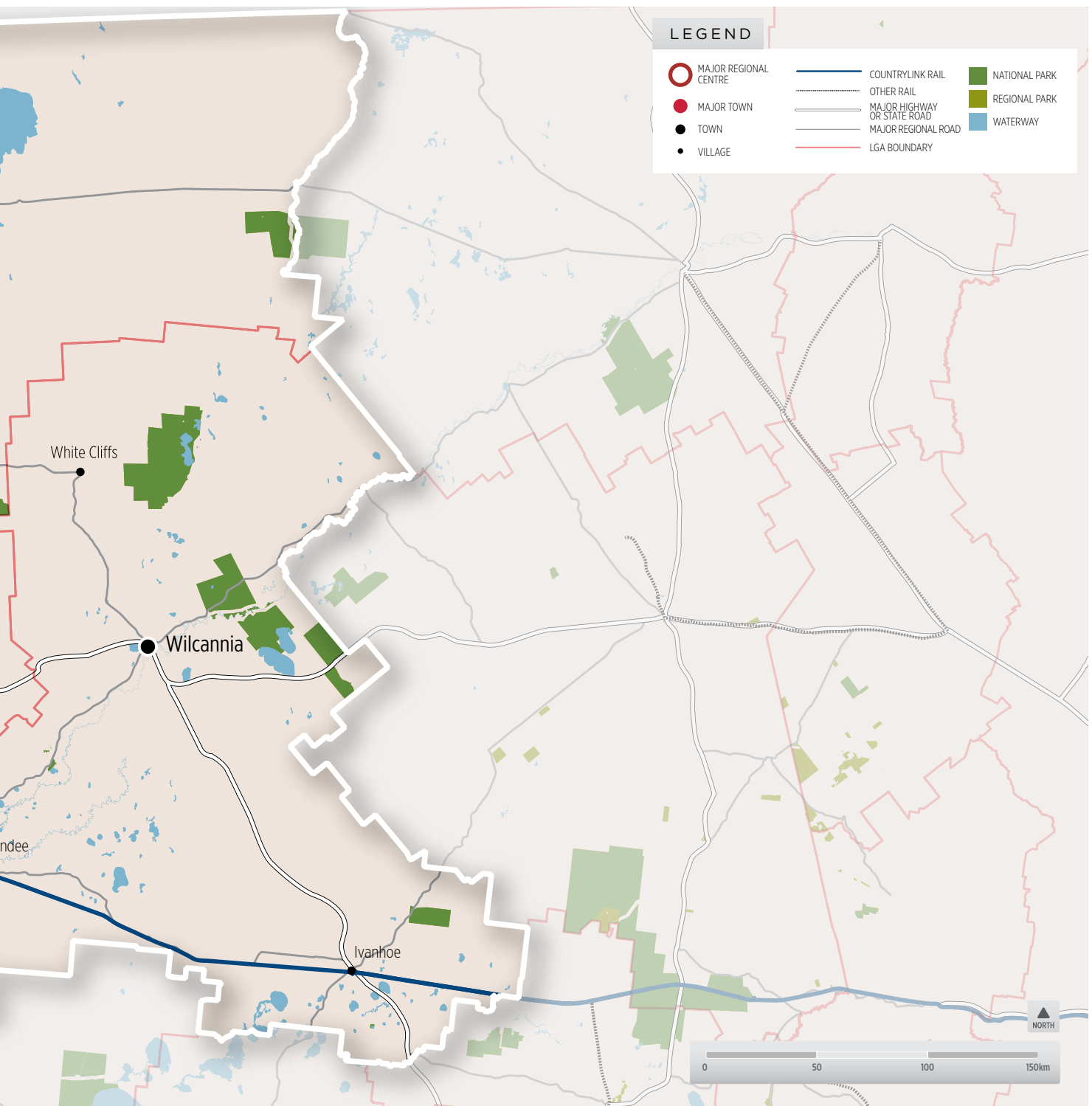
**16,700**  
(2031\*)



**Housing**  
**11,400**  
(2011)



**8,900**  
(2031\*)



\*projection

## REGIONAL PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS



### Support sustainable economic growth

The Far West has a strong economy based on mining industries, agriculture and tourism, however unemployment is much higher than the NSW average and household incomes are relatively low. There is a need to diversify the economy within the region to support the smaller communities which characterise the region.

The mining sector is a major contributor to the Far West's economic prosperity and provider of jobs for local people. There is significant potential for mining expansion and opportunities to grow the service sector which will support expanded mining operations.

Other sectors with the potential for growth include tourism and creative arts, alternative energy, and new types of agricultural and horticultural production.

Local delivery of training to support these emerging and growth industries is required to make sure local people, including Aboriginal people and young people, have the skills to compete for new job opportunities.

NSW 2021 Goal 3 – Drive economic growth in regional NSW

NSW 2021 Goal 6 – Strengthen the NSW skill base

### PRIORITY ACTIONS

#### **Leverage opportunity for the Far West from the growth within the mining sector**

The Department of Premier and Cabinet will convene a regional taskforce of leaders from industry, local government and State agencies to report to Government on actions that could maximise the net social and employment benefits from mining growth, focused on housing availability, local skill formation and jobs, and maintenance and improvement of roads and community infrastructure.

Funding from Restart NSW will be investigated as a way to assist regional communities to improve the local infrastructure required to support the growth in population associated with mining.

The Western NSW Taskforce will be established by March 2013 and will report to Government every six months, commencing December 2013.

Lead Agency: Department of Premier and Cabinet

#### **New Frontiers Program to stimulate mineral and petroleum investment**

The New Frontiers Program is an exploration initiative to stimulate mineral and petroleum investment in under-explored areas. It is a successful program that has led to a number of large discoveries in NSW and is of significant benefit to explorers.

A new funding model from July 2012 will raise approximately \$6.5 million annually. Information including new geophysical, geochemical and mapping data will be provided as a result of this initiative to benefit coal, gold and other mineral exploration activities in the Far West and other regional areas.



Rare Earth Elements (REE) have been identified as being of key global strategic importance. Parts of the Far Western Region are particularly prospective for rare earth elements. The Mineral Systems group of the Geological Survey of NSW has commenced the first systematic geological assessment for the potential for REE in NSW. The results of this work will determine the prospectivity of rocks in the Broken Hill area to host REE deposits thus reducing exploration risk and providing information for land use planning.

The Land Use team in the Geological Survey provides advice to council and state planners regarding the location of known resource lands and areas with resource potential to avoid sterilisation of state resources and potential land use conflicts. The team has provided Resource Audit reports and datasets to Broken Hill, Central Darling councils and to Western Lands Commissioner for the Unincorporated area.

**Lead Agency:** NSW Trade & Investment

## **Support the alternative energy industry**

Broken Hill will be one of two sites (along with Nyngan in the Orana region) home to a \$450 million large-scale solar photovoltaic project. The NSW Government is contributing \$65 million towards the project, which is being built under the Commonwealth Solar Flagships program and developed by AGL and First Solar. The project will create up to 185 jobs in Broken Hill and up to 300 in Nyngan. The project is the first of its kind in Australia and one of the largest solar power projects in the world. It will help lay the foundations for a large-scale solar industry in Australia. Construction is planned to commence in 2014, and the plant is expected to be commissioned by December 2015.

**Lead Agency:** Office of Environment and Heritage

## **Regional Industries Investment Fund to drive economic growth**

The Regional Industries Investment Fund (RIIF) has been established to drive economic growth in regional NSW. Some financial assistance will be available under this Fund for projects across regional NSW that result in or promote economic outcomes for regions. The RIIF can be used in the Far West to fund investment projects that contribute to regional job creation, local infrastructure projects that address infrastructure barriers to business investment, and economic development projects.

Earlier in 2012, funding was provided to assist the expansion of the Outback Women's Health and Family Practice which is expected to create 12 new jobs in the region.

**Lead Agency:** NSW Trade and Investment

## **Provide support to local businesses**

Small Biz Connect provides comprehensive, high-quality support and advisory services for small businesses across the State, especially those in regional NSW including the Far West. There is a strong emphasis on encouraging small businesses to embrace innovation as a means of establishing and sustaining their business as well as improving competitiveness. Tailored face-to-face support for small businesses is provided and there will be an overhaul of the NSW Small Biz Toolkit and an online learning tool will be developed. Small Biz Connect rolled out in 2012. Broken Hill Enterprise Development Centre will provide services in the Far West.

Regionally based Aboriginal Business Managers will continue to provide a range of services to meet the needs of Aboriginal enterprises and enhance their sustainability and growth potential.

**Lead Agency:** NSW Trade & Investment

## **Identify and resolve cross border issues which impact opportunities for business, communities and economic growth**

The NSW Government has appointed a Cross-Border Commissioner to provide advocacy for businesses, organisations and residents in border communities. The Cross-Border Commissioner will identify, monitor and seek solutions to cross-border issues that adversely impact opportunities for business, communities and economic growth.

**Lead Agency:** NSW Cross Border Commissioner

# Regional Action Plan

## Support primary industries

The Department of Primary Industries will continue to partner with industry associations, universities and national funding bodies to conduct over 900 research and extension projects to support agriculture, fisheries and forestry across all areas of the State. Research is conducted regionally and extended locally through grower groups, agribusinesses and government extension officers. Biosecurity officers work with regional partners to protecting primary industries from pests and disease through surveillance programs and educating communities. The Rural Support Worker program will continue to assist Far West communities respond to future shocks and challenges.

**Lead Agency:** Department of Primary Industries

## Support economic and population growth through effective regional strategic land use planning

Develop a Strategic Regional Land Use Plan for Western NSW to balance strong economic growth with the sustainable management of natural resources and the protection of agricultural land. Development of the Plan is scheduled to commence in 2013:

- Maps strategic agricultural land based on comprehensive, rigorous criteria and provide improved regulatory processes for mining and coal seam gas activity on this land
- Provides a strategic framework for other key issues in the region that enables government and councils to prepare local growth management strategies that address infrastructure provision, housing supply and affordability, economic growth and environmental protection.

The Strategic Regional Land Use Plan will be complemented by a range of other initiatives under the Government's Strategic Regional Land Use Policy, including the establishment of the Land and Water Commissioner. The Commissioner will have an unfettered oversight and community advisory role with respect to exploration activities in NSW and will oversee the implementation of a standard land access agreement for exploration.

**Lead Agency:** Department of Planning and Infrastructure

## Develop and establish tourism and recreational experiences

More tourists will be encouraged to visit the region by promoting the cultural aspects and recreational opportunities in locations such as Sturt National Park and Mutawintji National Park in partnership with Destination Management Organisations and private sector partners such as commercial tour operators.

The NSW Government's response to the Visitor Economy Taskforce Report forms the foundation for regional NSW to contribute to the goal of doubling overnight visitor expenditure by 2020. Funding for existing programs will continue to 30 June 2013, to provide the regional tourism sector with certainty while the Government implements its response to the Taskforce's Report. This includes:

- The Regional Flagship Events Program which provides funding to help market and promote events in Regional NSW by offering one-year grants of \$10,000 or grants of \$20,000 each year for three years
- The \$5 million Regional Tourism Product Development Program – under Stream 1 the amalgamated Inland organisations (representing New England North West, Outback and Capital Country) received \$750,000 through Destination NSW. Under Stream 2 – the remaining \$1.75 million was made available to successful applicants from the tourism industry for large scale projects that significantly benefited Regional NSW.

**Lead Agencies:** Office of Environment and Heritage, Destination NSW

## Employment Strategy for Wilcannia

An Employment Strategy for Wilcannia will be developed by March 2013 to increase business investment and employment opportunities for people in smaller remote communities. This will be a partnership with the Central Darling Shire Council, Commonwealth Government and the private sector through the COAG Remote Service Delivery program.

**Lead Agency:** Department of Premier and Cabinet



## Support Aboriginal communities to implement effective governance structures

The Far West has a significant Aboriginal population compared to the NSW average, including a number of large Aboriginal communities such as Wilcannia and Menindee.

Aboriginal people in Far West NSW are requesting respectful partnerships and engagement practices by government and service providers. Management of successful initiatives and implementation of new initiatives is required to foster strong resilient Aboriginal communities.

NSW 2021 Goal 26 - Fostering opportunity and partnership with Aboriginal people

### PRIORITY ACTIONS

#### **Support Aboriginal community governance**

The NSW Government is committed to supporting Aboriginal communities to improve governance arrangements. Through the NSW Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs (MTAA) the government is working in partnership with the Aboriginal community and the Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations (CAPO) to develop improved models of local decision making and coordination.

**Lead Agency: Department of Education and Communities**

# Regional Action Plan



## Improve regional infrastructure

Providing quality regional infrastructure is critical to supporting economic growth and providing services to remote communities. Significant investment is required to improve, repair and maintain the road and logistics networks.

Development of local strategies to manage the impacts associated with the implementation of the Murray Darling Basin Plan is required to provide certainty for the community.

NSW 2021 Goal 19 – Invest in critical infrastructure

NSW 2021 Goal 21 – Secure potable water supplies

### PRIORITY ACTIONS

#### Upgrade and maintain the road network

- Sealing of the Silver City Highway south of Packsaddle will be carried out in 2012–13. Further funding will be used to progressively extend the existing seal north of Broken Hill or to target those unsealed sections, which would minimise the length of road closure following rain events. Roads and Maritime Services will liaise closely with the local community to determine the highest priority locations for future sealing.
- Widening and pavement strengthening of the Silver City Highway 32 to 46 km south of Broken Hill which is a vital link between Broken Hill and a major sand quarry. Work will be carried out over the 2012–13 and 2013–14 financial years.
- Contribute \$1 million from the Regional Infrastructure Investment Fund towards the proposed heavy vehicle haulage road in Broken Hill. The bypass road will connect Perilya's Potosi mine to a processing plant on the other side of the city and would create an opportunity to expand operations at the Broken Hill airport.

Lead Agency: Transport for NSW

#### Develop the NSW Freight and Port Strategy

The NSW Freight and Ports Strategy will inform the preparation of subsequent Regional Transport Plans identified in the Long Term Transport Master Plan. A draft of the strategy is out for consultation and the final strategy will be completed by mid 2013.

Working with local councils to improve freight access has already commenced through stakeholder engagement with local government in preparing the NSW Freight and Ports Strategy. As part of this, NSW will explore options for improving the sustainability of regional infrastructure and means of facilitating private investment.

The Commonwealth Government has allocated \$300 million to start acquiring land for the Inland Rail Corridor. The inland route will be considered as part of a NSW Freight and Ports Strategy.

Lead Agency: Transport for NSW

#### Develop effective air travel between regional centres and capital cities

As part of the commitment to drive economic growth in regional NSW, the NSW Government is offering licences that will provide operators with exclusive access to lower volume air routes for a five-year period. This will provide certainty for communities and smaller regional airlines.

Expressions of Interest for new air licences to connect Sydney (Kingsford Smith) Airport to regional areas in NSW were released in July 2012. The new licences will start in March 2013.

Regional airlines can apply for both existing and new routes. Regulated routes include services from Sydney to Broken Hill and Cobar.

Lead Agency: Transport for NSW

## **Improve access to community transport**

Funding of community transport has been increased to provide disadvantaged people with improved access to vital transport services.

Transport for NSW is currently developing a model to allocate the increase in community transport program funding equitably across NSW, including in the Far West region. This increased funding will improve the level of bus transport that is suitable for the elderly and people with disabilities.

The Regional Transport Coordination program addresses transport disadvantage in the region through the development of trial transport initiatives. Programs will be developed within the next two years that can support existing Community Transport operations to improve the level of suitable bus transport.

Transport for NSW will also support an audit in the next 18 months as part of an existing project in unmet community transport needs with a view to increasing funding and improving services.

A regional public transport guide has been developed and distributed to 22,000 residents. The guide includes information for older residents and people with a disability about accessing public transport. This guide was developed in partnership with Regional Development Australia and nine local councils.

**Lead Agency:** Transport for NSW

## **Improve water security**

The Office of Water is working with the Commonwealth Government on options to improve the efficiency of the Menindee Lakes system including the water supply to Broken Hill and Menindee. A preferred option will be determined by March 2013.

A feasibility assessment of the existing Wilcannia Weir is being undertaken and will be completed by March 2013.

**Lead Agencies:** Office of Water, Department of Primary Industries and Department of Premier and Cabinet

# Regional Action Plan



## Deliver coordinated services to support safe and healthy communities

Improving social and health outcomes is an important priority for communities in Far West NSW. Some communities experience higher levels of disadvantage and homelessness and have difficulty accessing housing and healthcare, including specialist services.

Services must be tailored to meet the needs of remote communities including Aboriginal communities, people with a disability, youth and families in need. Initiatives to improve community safety are also needed.

A key element for moving forward is agreement on service need and service response in the Far West communities. Strong partnerships with local government will be essential to achieve these outcomes.

NSW 2021 Goal 12 – Provide world class clinical services with timely access and effective infrastructure

NSW 2021 Goal 13 – Better protect the most vulnerable members of our community and break the cycle of disadvantage

### PRIORITY ACTIONS

#### **Investigate whole of community Integrated Government Service delivery**

The Department of Premier and Cabinet will lead regional taskforces of leaders to investigate and consult with communities, the three tiers of Government and the Not for Profit sector to clarify the needs and develop new methods of integrated government service delivery in the disbursed rural and remote communities of Western NSW.

**Lead Agency:** Department of Premier and Cabinet

#### **Increase support and funding for non government organisations to deliver services**

The NSW Government will support the development of an integrated network of services designed to support and assist the most vulnerable members of our community. This will be done in partnership with the Commonwealth Government, local councils, non government organisations and the community.

The NSW Government has invested in Workforce and Industry Development strategies to build the capacity of the workforce and overall competency of the non government sector. Ageing, Disability and Home Care is building upon and developing its partnerships with non government organisations that will assist the disability service system to reconfigure and realign its services to meet needs and adapt to a person-centred service delivery program. This will be delivered through the Stronger Together Two program which reflects the need for individualised support packages and improved service delivery.

Additionally, the Department of Family and Community Services is gradually transferring responsibility for Out of Home Care (OOHC) service delivery to the non government sector, and is working to build sector capacity.

Regional Implementation Groups (RIGs) have been established and are the regional driving force to ensure successful transition at a local level. They are co-chaired by the Regional Directors from Community Services and a non government organisations nominated representative, with membership from all OOHC non government organisations providing services in the area.

**Lead Agency:** Department of Family and Community Services



## **Increase the level of services to Aboriginal people with a disability**

The focus of Stronger Together Two is to ensure that people with a disability and their families are at the forefront of decision making about their lives. The NSW Government is strongly committed to a more person centred approach, with the introduction of individualised funding by 1 July 2014. Extensive consultations have been undertaken with communities (Living Life My Way) to get the input of the community on the delivery of this commitment.

Stronger Together Two will also deliver greater collaboration with the non government sector, mainstream services and the community, including a continued shift to prevention and early assistance and more efficient service delivery to get the maximum benefit from this investment.

The Far West region will benefit from these reforms and in 2012-13 the Orana/Far West local planning area will receive approximately \$58.6 million for disability services.

Between 2011 and 2016 the NSW Government will deliver additional Aboriginal specific programs under Stronger Together Two:

- Services Our Way will deliver 180 intensive packages with \$24 million in funding over 5 years
- A total of \$9 million of new growth funding for supported accommodation will be delivered to Aboriginal people across NSW via a variety of support models, such as: drop-in support; Individual Accommodation Support packages; and, Supported Living Fund packages
- 8 Aboriginal positions under the Aboriginal Early Start program will provide direct support to Aboriginal families with a child with a disability or developmental delay.

**Lead Agency: Department of Family and Community Services**

## **Better protect the most vulnerable members of our community and break the cycle of disadvantage**

- Housing NSW is implementing the NSW Homelessness Action Plan (HAP) the blueprint for our prevention and early intervention approach to reduce homelessness in NSW. Between 2009 and 2014, HAP aims to achieve state-wide service reform through more than 100 projects, including 40 funded under the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness.
- Housing NSW is leading a program of reform to strengthen and improve the specialist homelessness service system – Going Home Staying Home. A key objective of this reform is to ensure that clients receive the right assistance at the right time in the right place and are far less likely to require assistance again. The reform will be supported with industry and workforce development strategies and funding as well as an innovation fund.
- The Sustaining Tenancies Following Exits from Correctional Facilities project is a project that aims to prevent homelessness and reduce recidivism by providing long term accommodation to people exiting correctional facilities in Broken Hill with a focus on Indigenous people.

**Lead Agency: Department of Family and Community Services**

## **Improve mental health outcomes**

The Far West Local Health District is currently reviewing all aspects of mental health and drug and alcohol service delivery to optimise access to services and the quality of the service provided. The establishment of a 10 bed Sub-Acute Unit at Broken Hill Hospital will provide care for people across the Far West.

The review of the current mental Health and Drug and Alcohol services is to be concluded by the end of January 2013 with implementation of changes resulting from the review to occur by 30 June 2013.

**Lead Agency: Far West Local Health District**

# Regional Action Plan

## **Build a strong health workforce to deliver quality health services**

The Far West Local Health District is working collaboratively with Regional Development Australia to develop a series of cadetships in areas such as finance, human resources and general management across industries in Broken Hill.

In addition the Local Health District, Royal Flying Doctor Service, Maari Ma and University Department of Rural Health are collaborating around specific health workforce strategies.

A Medical Workforce Strategy was finalised in December 2011 and is currently being implemented. This will see interns operating in Broken Hill from 2013, development of a rural generalist training program also from 2013 and establishment of strategic links with a metropolitan Local Health Districts to support stable medical consultant staff living in Broken Hill.

A Nursing Workforce Strategy is to be considered by the Board and centre for Remote Health in February 2013 with implementation to commence by April 2013. Similarly an Allied Health Workforce Strategy is in the early stages of develop and is due to be completed by June 2013.

An Aboriginal Health Workforce Strategy is being developed to complement work already implemented by Maari Ma. A document is due for presentation to the Local Health District Board in March 2013.

As part of the NSW Government's commitment to employ more Clinical Nurse/Midwife Educators and Clinical Nurse/Midwife Specialists, the Far West Local Health District received \$113,000 in the 2012-13 Budget for a new full time position.

The Far West Local Health District also received funding of \$38,000 for 0.6 FTE to support a more reasonable workload for nurses, which may translate to more nurses as some will elect to work part-time.

The 2012-13 Budget also included funding of a further \$3.2 million to provide more sub-acute general rehabilitation, geriatric and mental health services at Broken Hill, bringing the total annual commitment to \$6.4 million.

**Lead Agency:** Far West Local Health District

## **Increase community safety**

The NSW Government will support further high visibility policing and crime prevention activities by employing an additional 859 police officers across the State between March 2011 and August 2015.

The NSW Police Force has established the 'Eyewatch' program to bring neighbourhood watch online.

A Facebook page has been set up for the Barrier Local Area Command which provides a forum for community engagement and participation with police activities focusing on crime prevention and community safety.

The NSW Police Force also undertakes regular high visibility policing tasks, using proactive teams such as the Dog Squad to target crime hot spots in the Western NSW region, including break enter and steal offences, motor vehicle theft and anti social behaviour.

**Lead Agency:** NSW Police Force

## **Crime prevention in Indigenous communities**

A key crime prevention initiative is the Wilcannia Safe Aboriginal Youth program (SAY), a community-based night patrol that operates a safe transport and outreach service for young people who are on the streets late at night. It is designed to reduce offending and victimisation by transporting young Aboriginal people home or to another safe place, or by referring them to a support service.

**Lead Agency:** Department of Attorney General and Justice

## **Improve awareness and participation in Work and Development Orders**

Work and Development Orders (WDOs) allow vulnerable people to clear outstanding fines debt through unpaid work, vocational, educational or life skills courses and medical or mental health treatment programs. People are eligible for a WDO if they have a mental illness, intellectual disability, cognitive impairment, are homeless, have a serious addiction or who are experiencing acute economic hardship. WDOs are sponsored by approved not for profit organisations, government agencies or health practitioners. Non government organisations and Department of Attorney General and Justice agencies in Broken Hill are participating in the WDO scheme.

**Lead Agency: Department of Attorney General and Justice**

## **Increase knowledge and availability of resources to assist Aboriginal people to obtain driver licences**

Increase awareness of resources to support to Aboriginal people to obtain drivers licences, in particular, the Aboriginal Driver Knowledge Test and Listen and Learn tool kit. The tool kit, released in July 2012, includes an audio CD and written materials. The tool kit has been developed to address the under-representation of the Aboriginal community in the state's driver licensing and vehicle registration system.

In this region we will promote the awareness of this tool kit amongst government and non government agencies and in the community.

**Lead Agency: Transport for NSW**

# Regional Action Plan



## Improve education and training opportunities for young people

Increased school retention is essential to improving employment and social outcomes. Early engagement with families to ensure preschool enrolment and ongoing participation during school aged years is required to improve the region's school retention rates for Years 11 and 12, particularly for Aboriginal students.

There are opportunities for employment growth as a result of the new industries in the region. Identification of skills needs and the delivery of targeted training will be required to meet growing employment demand and make sure local people, particularly young people, are able to take advantage of new job opportunities.

NSW 2021 Goal 6 – Strengthen the NSW skill base

NSW 2021 Goal 15 – Improve education and learning outcomes for all students

### PRIORITY ACTIONS

#### Access to apprenticeship and training opportunities

State Training Services actively promotes apprenticeships and traineeships across western and remote NSW. Officers work with employers and businesses to address their training and workforce needs.

As of 1 July, State Training Services will be a provider of the Australian Apprenticeship Support Services. This service will be in addition to existing services offered by State Training Services. Employers and learners will be provided with a holistic one-stop-shop service for all their needs from sign up to completion of training.

**Lead Agency:** Department of Education and Communities

#### Helping children and young people to get more out of their education

Connected Communities is a new approach to delivering essential services to the most vulnerable and isolated Aboriginal communities in NSW. It will be rolled out in two schools in Far West NSW from the beginning of 2013 including Wilcannia Central School and Menindee Central School.

The Connected Communities strategy will build on the current strengths in schools and communities and will reflect the community's vision and aspirations for young people in the community.

Schools will establish a formal partnership with a university and a TAFE Institute and will also work with other agencies to deliver some services directly from the school site. Schools will also have increased flexibility to meet the needs of students.

School partnerships with the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group will be strengthened and their advice and support will continue to be sought.

**Lead Agency:** Department of Education and Communities

# IMPLEMENTATION

## PRIORITY 1

### Support sustainable economic growth

Actions	Delivery Lead	Delivery Partners	Timeframe
Convene a taskforce to report on actions that could maximise benefits from mining growth	Department of Premier and Cabinet	Industry, local councils, NSW Government agencies	Taskforce will be established by March 2013 and report to Government every 6 months
New Frontiers Program to stimulate mineral and petroleum investment	NSW Trade & Investment	Industry	Ongoing
Solar Flagships Program	Office of Environment and Heritage	Commonwealth Government, NSW Trade & Investment	Construction to commence in 2014, Plant commissioned by December 2015
Regional Industries Investment Fund to drive economic growth	NSW Trade & Investment	Local government, industry associations	Ongoing
Support primary industries	Department of Primary Industries		Ongoing
Develop a Strategic Regional Land Use Plan for Western NSW	Department of Planning and Infrastructure	NSW Trade & Investment	Scheduled to commence in 2013
Develop and establish tourism and recreational experiences and an outback marketing campaign	NSW Trade & Investment, Destination NSW	Destination NSW, Inland Regional Tourism Organisation, private sector partners	June - July 2013 and 2014
Aboriginal Business Development Services	NSW Trade & Investment	Local government, Small Business Commissioner	Ongoing
Development an employment strategy for Wilcannia	Department Premier and Cabinet	Central Darling Shire Council, Commonwealth Government, private sector	March 2013

# Regional Action Plan

## PRIORITY 2

### Support Aboriginal communities to implement effective governance structures

Actions	Delivery Lead	Delivery Partners	Timeframe
Support Aboriginal community governance through the work of the Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs	Department of Education and Communities		The Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs will report to Government by March 2013

## PRIORITY 3

### Improve regional infrastructure

Actions	Delivery Lead	Delivery Partners	Timeframe
Western Regional Transport Plan	Transport for NSW		Following the release of the NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan in late 2012
Upgrade of Silver City Highway	Transport for NSW	Roads and Maritime Services, Local Council	June 2013
Broken Hill Heavy Vehicle Bypass Road	Transport for NSW	Regional Development Australia Fund, Broken Hill City Council, Roads and Maritime Services	Mid 2013
Develop a NSW Freight and Port Strategy An inland freight corridor will be considered as part of the Strategy	Transport for NSW	Commonwealth Government	Mid 2013
Develop effective air travel between Regional Centres and Capital Cities	Transport for NSW	Commonwealth Government	EOI for new air licences released in July 2012. The new licences will start in March 2013
Improve access to community transport	Transport for NSW	Regional Development Australia and nine local councils	Ongoing
Improve water security: • Improve the efficiency of the Menindee Lakes system	Office of Water, Department of Primary Industries	Local government, Commonwealth Government	Menindee Lakes system feasibility study by March 2013



## PRIORITY 4

### Deliver coordinated services to support safe and healthy communities

Actions	Delivery Lead	Delivery Partners	Timeframe
Investigate whole of community Integrated Government Service delivery	Department of Premier and Cabinet	Local government, Commonwealth Government	2013
Transfer Out of Home Care to non government sector	Department of Family and Community Services		2016
Deliver Aboriginal Specific programs under Stronger Together Two	Department of Family and Community Services		2015-2016
Implement Homelessness Action Plan	Department of Family and Community Services		2014
Implement reforms to the specialist homelessness system in NSW to improve client outcomes	Department of Family and Community Services		Ongoing
Improve mental health outcomes	Far West Local Health District		2012-13
Build a strong health workforce to deliver quality health services	Far West Local Health District	Royal Flying Doctor Service, Maari Ma, Health Education and Training Institute	2012-2016
Increase community safety	NSW Police Force		Ongoing
Crime prevention in Indigenous communities	Department of Attorney General and Justice	NSW Police Force	Ongoing
Improve awareness and participation in Work and Development Orders	Department of Attorney General and Justice	Aid NSW, Aboriginal Legal Service NSW/ACT, WDO sponsors, State Department of Finance and Services, and other government agencies and non government organisations supporting socially and economically disadvantaged people	Ongoing
Aboriginal Driver Knowledge Test and Listen and Learn tool kit	Roads and Maritime Services	Legal Aid, Aboriginal Legal Service NSW/ACT, Community Legal Centres, Libraries, local councils, Aboriginal Land Councils, Aboriginal Medical Services and non government organisations supporting Aboriginal clients and TAFEs	2013

# Regional Action Plan

## PRIORITY 5

Improve education and training opportunities for young people

Actions	Delivery Lead	Delivery Partners	Timeframe
Access to apprenticeships and training opportunities	Department of Education and Communities		Ongoing
Connected Communities Program in Wilcannia and Menindee	Department of Education and Communities		2013

FAR WEST



**CONTACT DETAILS:**

**Regional Coordination Branch  
Department of Premier and Cabinet**

**T** (02) 9228 5555

**E** [regionalcoordination@dpc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:regionalcoordination@dpc.nsw.gov.au)

Level 39  
Governor Macquarie Tower  
1 Farrer Place  
Sydney NSW 2000

**[www.2021.nsw.gov.au](http://www.2021.nsw.gov.au)**