

Positively

PENRITH

Thrive Penrith

# Penrith Economic Development Strategy 2023–2031



## Statement of Recognition of Penrith City's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage

Council values the unique status of Aboriginal people as the original owners and custodians of lands and waters, including the land and waters of Penrith City.

Council values the unique status of Torres Strait Islander people as the original owners and custodians of the Torres Strait Islands and surrounding waters.

We work together for a united Australia and City that respects this land of ours, that values the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage and provides justice and equity for all.

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# 1

# Message from Penrith City Council

## There has never been a better time to be in Penrith.

Penrith City Council is creating a shared vision to grow the local economy through strong partnerships. We are a city that thrives on balanced growth and innovation, attracting investment and high-quality local jobs, education, and enhanced lifestyle options.

The Draft Penrith Economic Development Strategy (EDS 2031) builds on Council's strong leadership in strategic land use planning, city-building, and investment attraction. Council-led transformative projects over the last five years have demonstrated the city's capacity to be an effective economic driver and enabler of growth.

Federal and state government investments in infrastructure including the Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport and Sydney Metro - Western Sydney Airport are gamechangers. Private and commercial investment in Penrith Central Business

District, St Marys Town Centre and employment lands are supporting Council's sustainable growth objectives.

Penrith is strategically located in one of Australia's fastest growing areas, with plenty of land to develop, and improving connectivity. We have 37% (1028 ha) of future employment lands in Greater Sydney. This provides competitive advantages to attract medium and large-scale freight and logistics, warehousing, modern manufacturing, business park and call centre investment. Penrith is a hub for key road and rail connections including the M4, M7, M12, Northern Road, the T1 Western rail line, and the Western Sydney Airport Metro.

Penrith has an ambitious target to attract 23,000 new jobs by 2031. Without the intervention of Council and its partners only 18,000 jobs will be created through natural growth – the actions outlined in the strategy are important in shaping the economic future of our city. Healthcare and social assistance, retail and hospitality, manufacturing and construction will remain as the biggest employment sectors and will continue to grow.

A myriad of investment opportunities are on offer in the economic triangle connecting Penrith, St Marys and the Western Sydney International Airport including the Quarter Penrith Health and Education Precinct, Mamre Road Precinct, and three new Western Sydney Airport Metro stations. With established connectivity, amenity and opportunity, Penrith is well placed to deliver the dream of a 30-minute City – where people live within 30 minutes of their jobs, educational institutions, healthcare, and great places. Penrith is demonstrably the place for savvy investors.

We are ready and able to build a local, national, and global economy and look forward to you sharing your journey with us.





## 2

# About Our Strategy

This Economic Development Strategy is designed to build on Penrith's strengths through a comprehensive plan of action to support economic growth and sustainable development. The strategy will focus on creating a favourable business environment, diversifying the economy, attracting investment and talent, and investing in infrastructure and services. A key objective is to create more jobs closer to home for our residents.

The objectives of this strategy will be achieved through a focus on **Five Strategic Priorities**:

- Attracting Investment
- Creating Vibrant Centres
- Leveraging Employment Lands
- Nurturing Jobs of the Future
- Inspiring Innovation

Success will be measured through a focus on key industry clusters:

- Transport, Freight and Logistics
- Manufacturing including Agribusiness, Waste Management and Renewable Energy
- Airport and Aerotropolis
- Health and Social Care, Education and Research
- Tourism, Hospitality and Events including Sports and Recreation
- Creative and Cultural

Across these clusters and all sectors, the aim is to create 23,000 new jobs by 2031.

We have collaborated with key stakeholders including local business, industry groups, government agencies and community representatives to build a proactive, living document. It will be regularly reviewed and updated to meet the changing needs of the local economy and supersedes the Penrith Progression Plan developed in 2015 and Economic Development Strategy adopted by Council in 2017.

# 3

## Thrive Penrith

The Thrive Penrith framework is an overarching vision for the key strategies that support and enable a prosperous and vibrant community. The Framework will be the driver to connect Council's Economic Development, Visitor Economy, 24 Hour Economy, and Cultural strategies. The Framework aims to enhance collaborative action and link the opportunities and experiences across Penrith to improve planning and implementation of projects, and deliver the economic, social, and cultural priorities across the city.

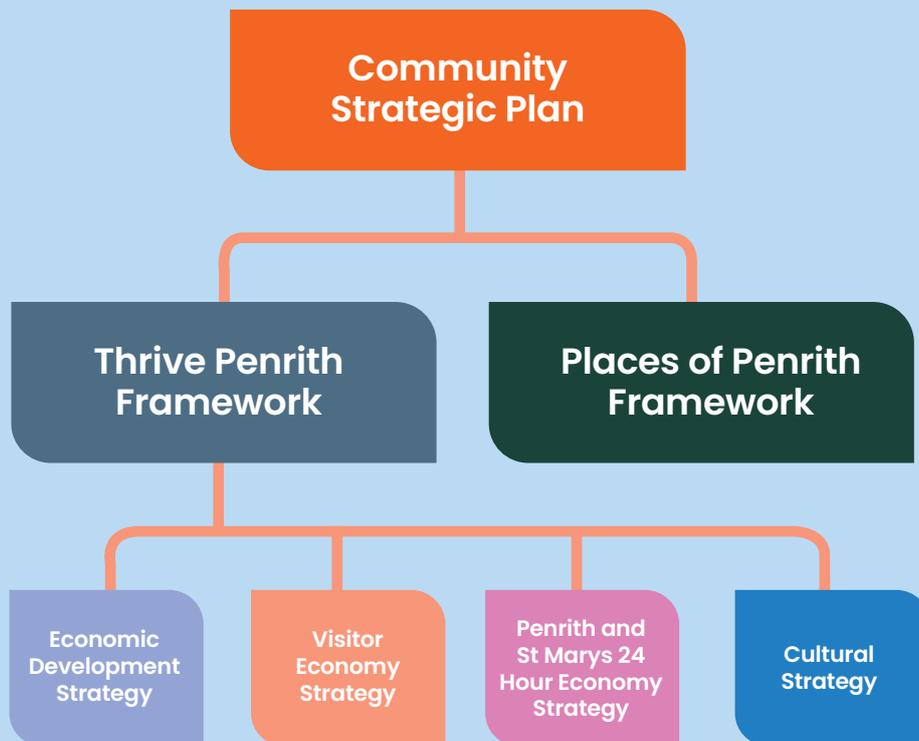
Thrive reflects and strengthens the intent of Council's Community Strategic Plan and Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS).

Council's Community Strategic Plan *Penrith 2036* identifies our community's future aspirations for the city. Based on a strong people and place led framework, it looks beyond the next 15 years. Penrith 2036 sets out long term community outcomes and strategies building future readiness.

Thrive is complimented by Places of Penrith.

Places of Penrith encompasses a suite of city-shaping strategies in line with the Planning Priorities outlined in the Penrith LSPS and the Western City District Plan. Places of Penrith is a strategic framework that will establish the vision and direction for our city, provide direction on areas of change, and create better places for our community to connect, play, learn, work and live. This framework recognises and responds to the challenges and opportunities facing Penrith, and the need to balance growth with protecting the environment and preserving our cultural heritage.





# 4

## Council's Role

An economic development strategy provides Council with a framework to attract investment, support local businesses and create more local jobs.

Council works with its community to build long-term plans and strategies that foster economic growth. As the local government authority, we develop and execute planning approvals, zonings, and regulations that enable sustainable investment in Penrith.

We undertake a range of core functions to support and enable favourable economic conditions. Council values our connection to our local businesses, workers, residents,

and visitors. Through engagement and consultation, we find out what our community wants and use this feedback to shape the decisions that Council makes.

A catalyst for change, Council will work in partnership with key stakeholders in industry, community, and government to build on Penrith's strong economic credentials and desirable lifestyle. Council will market the city, attract investment, and work with our partners to grow local jobs. We take a balanced approach to encouraging growth while enhancing Penrith's unique natural and cultural assets.

We will continue to provide and maintain critical infrastructure and services and invest in creating and maintaining vibrant town centres along with beautiful city parks, safe and walkable tree-lined streets. We work with local business and creatives to encourage activation in our centres day and night.

A thriving economy will be achieved through collaboration and partnerships – Council will work with the NSW Government, strategic partners, our Town Centre Corporations and the Penrith Valley Chamber of Commerce to attract investment and nurture favourable conditions for businesses to thrive.





**We are turning big ideas into reality, building a strong economy, and creating opportunities for a thriving future for all by attracting the right investment, leveraging our employment lands, and nurturing our local businesses and our people.**



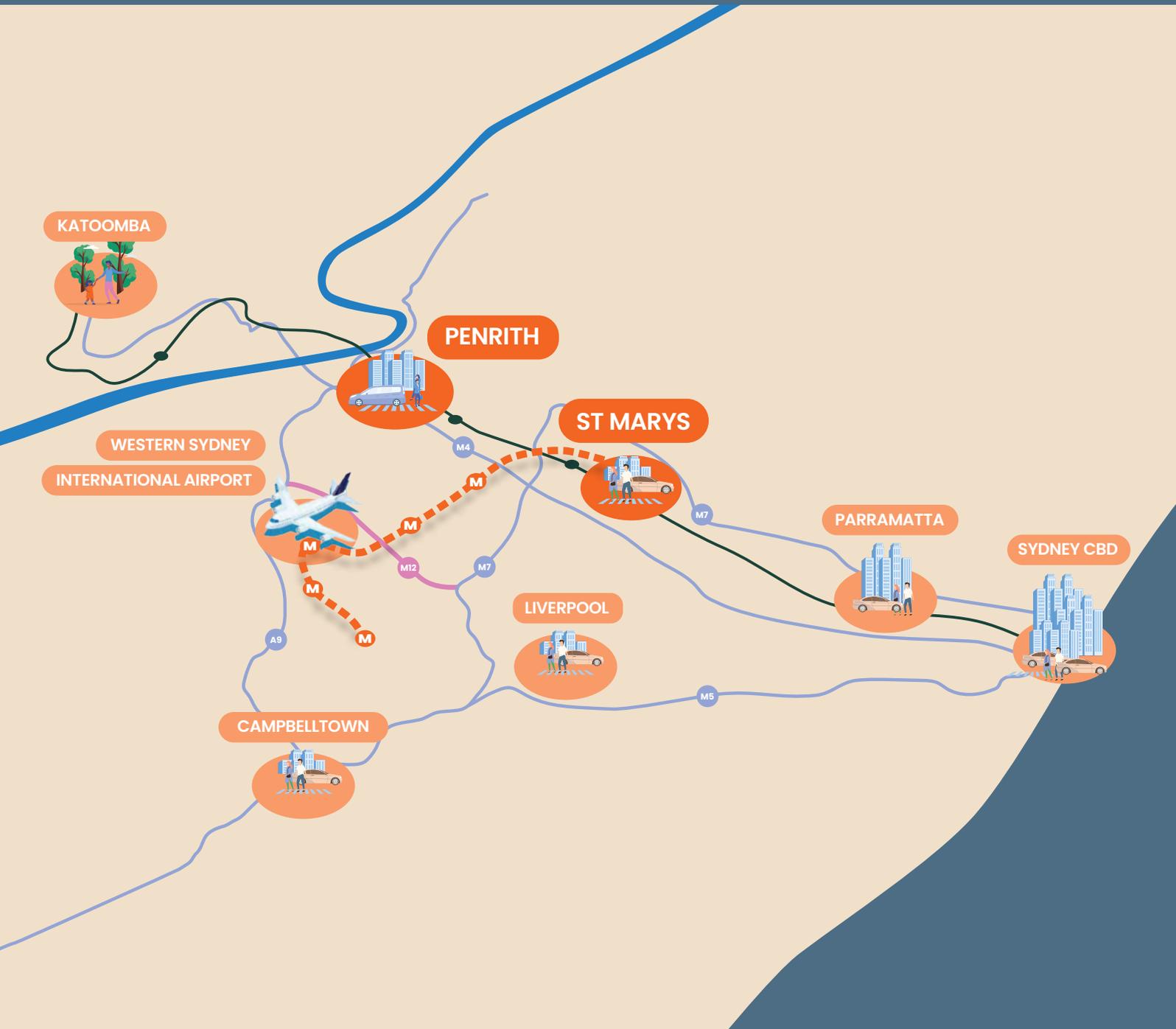
# 5

## Our Place

Penrith is in Global Sydney and is a key strategic centre in the Western Parkland City, one of the fastest growing areas in Australia. The Western Parkland City is part of the six cities metropolis, which includes the Eastern Harbour City and the Central River City (based around Parramatta).

Penrith is incredibly well placed to continue to deliver sustainable economic growth while nurturing a high level of urban amenity for residents, workers, visitors, and students. The Penrith Local Government Area (LGA) is serviced by two well connected commercial centres at Penrith and St Marys, and numerous local centres providing convenience for residents across our suburbs. City Park at Penrith and Central Park at St Marys will enhance the attractiveness of both centres for workers, residents, and visitors. People who live and work in Penrith will love it.

# Penrith's position in Global Sydney



# Penrith Economic Indicators 2022

Gross  
Regional  
Product



**\$12.19<sub>b</sub>**

Employed  
Residents



**115,173**

Exports



**\$5.1<sub>b</sub>**

Local  
Jobs



**84,000**

Skilled  
Labour Pool



**62.8%**

Building  
Approvals



**\$1<sub>b</sub>**  
in the 2022-23  
Jan FYTD

Local  
Businesses



**16,388**

Employment  
Capacity



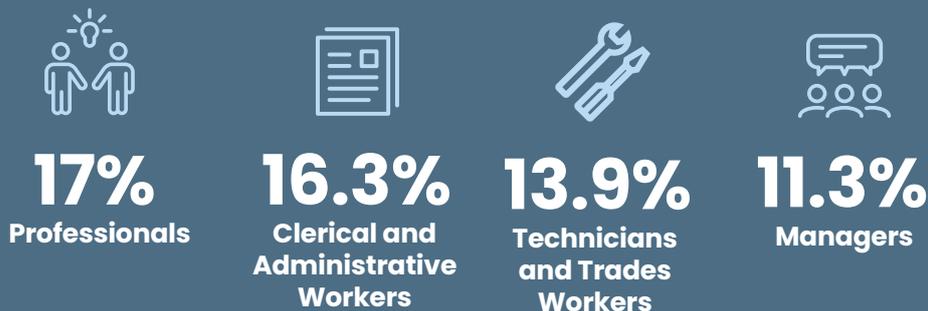
**0.80**  
(Jobs to  
local working  
resident ratio)

Sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2021, REMPLAN 2022.

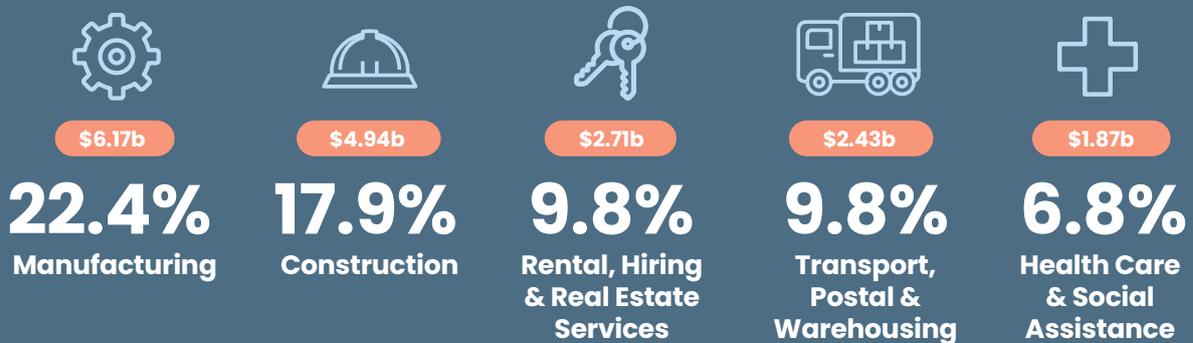
## Top Employment



## Most Popular By Occupation



## Top Industries by Output \$ Contribution



## Method of Travel to Work 2021

TRAVEL TYPE	PERCENTAGE
By car	<b>51.3%</b>
Public transport	<b>3.1%</b>
Bike or walking	<b>1.3%</b>
Work from home	<b>26.3%*</b>
Did not go to work	<b>16%</b>
Other	<b>2%</b>
Total	<b>100%</b>

\*Note that at the previous Census in 2016, 71.4% of Penrith workers travelled to work in a private car; the number reported in 2021 is much lower because of fewer people travelling during this time.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2021 and REMPLAN 2022.

# Penrith's Economic Triangle

With more than 5000 hectares of existing zoned and potential employment land in the city, Penrith City has a once in a lifetime opportunity to be a leading generator of Greater Sydney's future productivity.

Penrith's existing and future employment precincts are within the three arcs that connect Penrith Central Business District and St Marys Town Centre to the Western Sydney International Airport. This area will help reinforce current industry sectors, such as Tourism, Health and Social Care, Manufacturing, and emerging industry sectors like Waste and Renewable Energy, Cultural and Creative industries, and Agribusiness.

The corridors that make up the Penrith economic triangle include key infrastructure projects that will unlock developable land, bolster job growth and result in improvements to community wellbeing and liveability.

These corridors are:

- **The East-West Corridor** from St Marys through to Emu Plains is anchored by the two commercial centres of Penrith CBD and St Marys Town Centre, connected by the T1 Western rail line, the Great Western Highway, and the M4 Motorway.
- **The North-South Corridor** forms a new enterprise arc from St Marys to the Western Sydney International Airport and the Aerotropolis. The Corridor is connected by Mamre Road with future connections along the Metro rail line and the Outer Sydney Orbital.

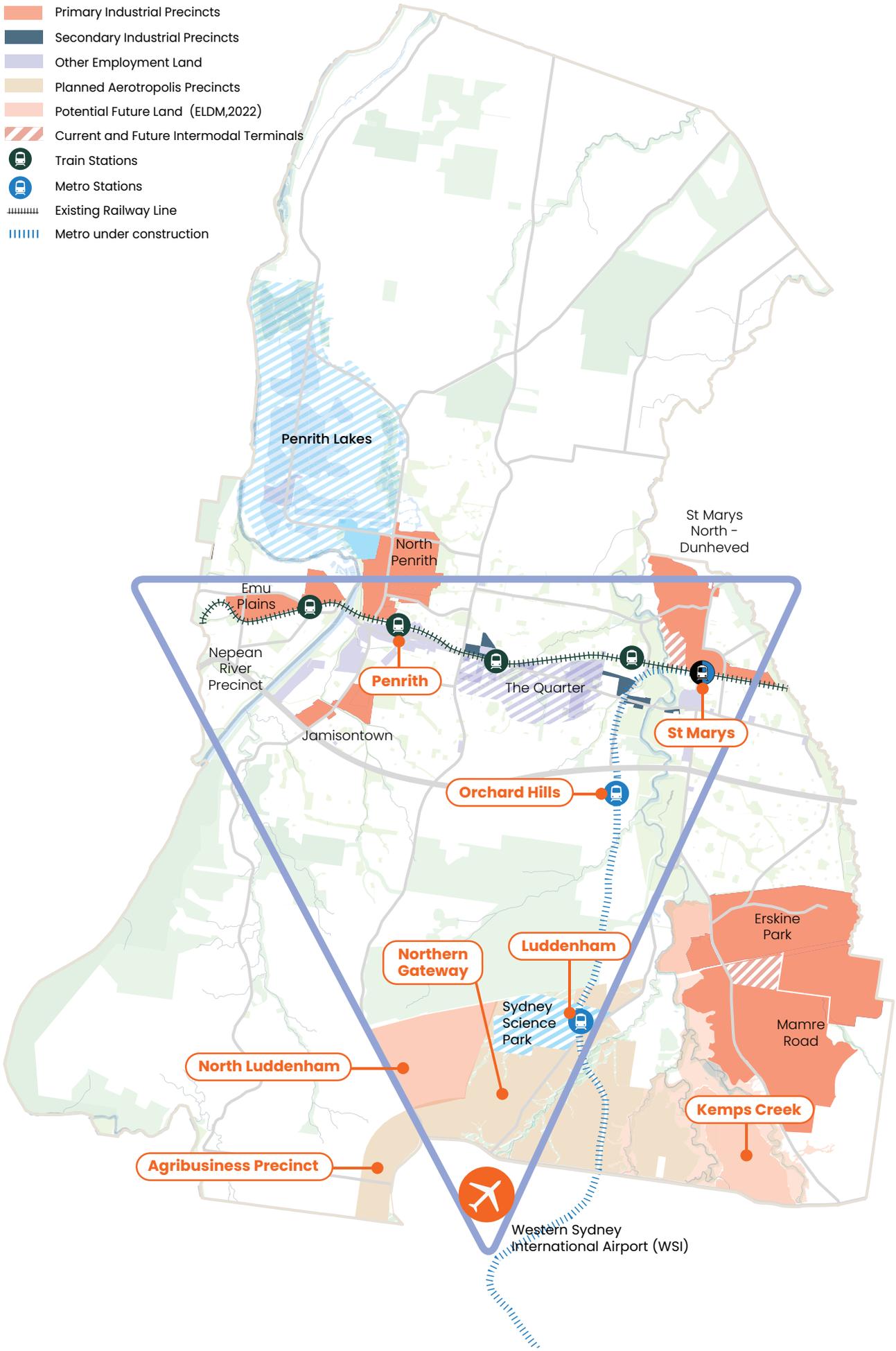
- **The Western Scenic Corridor** that connects Western Sydney International Airport north to Penrith Lakes following the Nepean River along Mulgoa Road, where it intersects with the East West Corridor, then extends further north along Castlereagh Road.

Central to the East-West Corridor lies Penrith's health and education precinct, The Quarter, which includes Nepean Hospital, Western Sydney University Kingswood and Werrington campuses, TAFE NSW Western Sydney Institute's Kingswood Campus and several private health facilities and clinics. This precinct serves as an innovation core to support quality healthcare, educational opportunities, and knowledge jobs in Penrith.

Beyond the three centres, the corridors that connect Penrith City Centre and St Marys Town Centre to the Western Sydney International Airport offer critical opportunities to leverage existing improvements in road and rail infrastructure to integrate transport, place activation, amenity, and local services. Getting the balance right in integrating housing, labour supply, supply chains and connectivity, including digital, will remain fundamental to the area's ongoing success.



- Primary Industrial Precincts
- Secondary Industrial Precincts
- Other Employment Land
- Planned Aerotropolis Precincts
- Potential Future Land (ELDM,2022)
- Current and Future Intermodal Terminals
- 🚆 Train Stations
- 🚇 Metro Stations
- Existing Railway Line
- Metro under construction





## Penrith's Competitive Advantages

### A Place to Call Home

Penrith offers an enviable lifestyle, nestled at the foot of the Blue Mountains, with beautiful natural assets like the Nepean River, parks and natural bushland, together with accessible cycleways, walking paths and sporting facilities.

A thriving dining and bar scene is complemented by well-loved and established cultural attractions, including performance, music and visual arts. A strong night-time economy supports residents and visitors with a variety of options to indulge their entertainment needs without travelling into the central Sydney region.

Accessible and convenient shopping is available throughout the LGA with Westfield Penrith located next to Penrith Train Station and bus stops, and local shopping centres servicing suburban areas of the LGA.

Penrith is a place where people choose to live, work and study.

### Talented People

Our people are ambitious and hardworking, skilled, educated and connected by a sense of community pride. 34.3% of Penrith City's resident workers have a tertiary qualification and this number is increasing year-on-year. TAFE and Western Sydney University campuses provide opportunities for Penrith residents to participate in post-school education.

## Premier Recreation, Tourism, and Adventure Destination

Penrith attracts 1.64 million visitors per year (Source: Tourism Research Australia –2022) and our visitor economy currently contributes \$367M per year to the local economy. Penrith boasts many unique destinations including iconic Penrith Whitewater stadium, Indoor Skydiving, Cables Water Park, Jet Pack Adventures and Ninja course. An increasing number and variety of short-stay accommodation options is improving Penrith's attractiveness as a destination for overnight stays. The EDS 2031 is built recognising the close relationship and shared goals for our local tourism industry outlined in the Penrith Visitor Economy Strategy 2023–2030.

## Housing Choice

Penrith offers a rare diversity of housing choice. There are few local government areas in Australia that offer the full set: rural properties, new and established suburban housing estates, high and medium density apartments in and near well serviced town centres. Our real estate options – both sale and rentals – are relatively affordable and attainable when compared to eastern Sydney.

## Variety of Jobs

With a variety of small and medium enterprise, government departments, manufacturing and transport, freight and logistics, Penrith has workforce options that rival major centres. The Quarter Penrith offers a range of jobs in education and health care. Penrith is home to a significant number of retail and hospitality jobs clustered around our major centres. Health care and social assistance, construction, and retail are the three largest employment sectors in Penrith (ABS 2022). Add to our proximity to the Western Sydney International Airport and the opportunities are boundless.

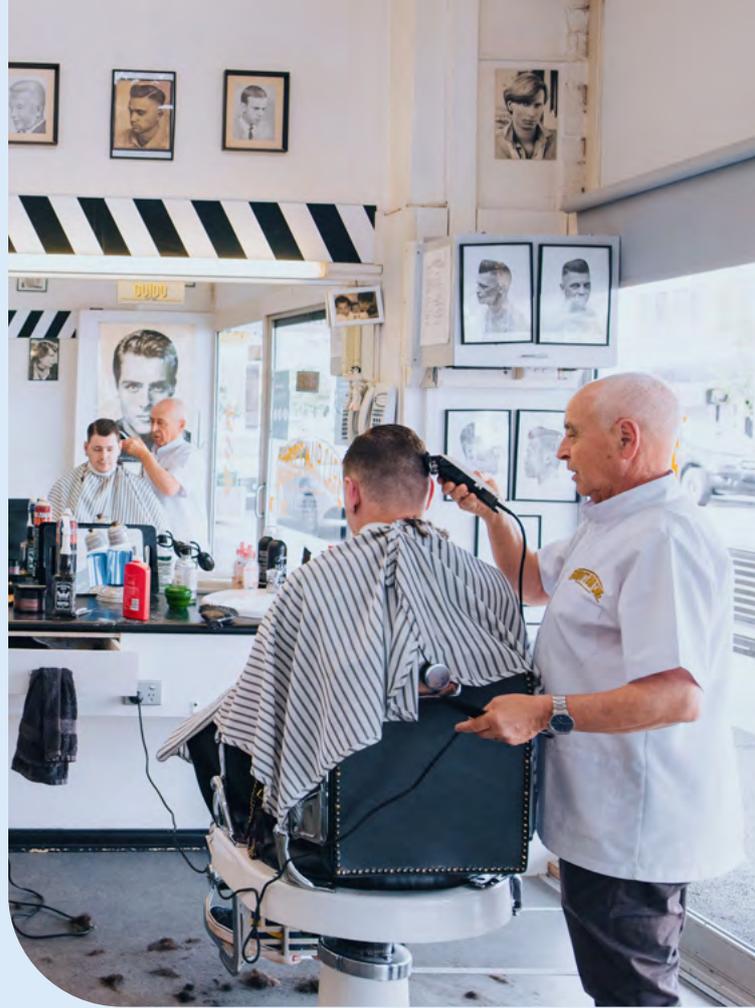


## Employment Lands

Penrith has the largest area of zoned employment land in Greater Sydney. According to 2022 Employment Lands Development Monitor (ELDM) data Penrith's existing zoned employment lands cover a total area of 3,972 hectares, including 2,757.7 hectares of undeveloped land. With a further 1,028 hectares of potential future employment land, Penrith's total employment lands stock is just over 5,000 hectares.

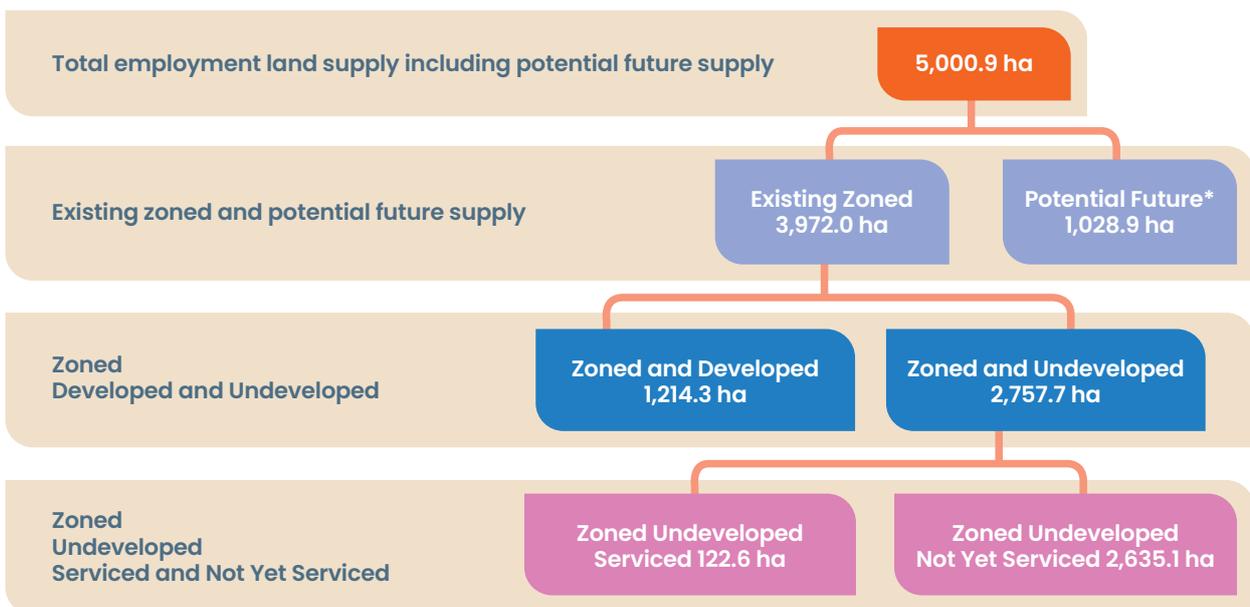
These lands represent 22% of Greater Sydney's existing zoned and serviced land, 40% of Greater Sydney's zoned, undeveloped and serviced land and 37% of Greater Sydney's potential future employment land (ELDM, 2022). With around 2,500ha of undeveloped, zoned employment land located in the new precincts of the new Western Sydney International Airport and Aerotropolis, including Mamre Road and the Northern Gateway, Penrith promises unparalleled opportunity for investors.

A lower price point per square metre than the Eastern Harbour City and the Central River City area to our east make Penrith CBD a competitive place for property investment and business relocation.



### Penrith employment lands stock

As at January 2022



Department of Planning, Employment Lands Development Monitor, as at January 2022



# 6

## Building the Strategy

### **A collaborative approach**

Council consulted with our community, local businesses, industry, Government agencies and key stakeholders to prepare this Strategy to unlock potential opportunities and respond to future challenges. More than 50 organisations shared their insights, knowledge, and aspirations for Penrith through consultation, conversation, online interviews, and business visits.

We talked to local businesses, commercial real estate agents, landowners, developers, business networks, government agencies, non-government organisations, creative and educational groups, some of our key collaborators and key internal stakeholders. Themes identified by stakeholders helped shape the five priority areas and industry targets outlined in this strategy.

During these conversations, we were told strong growth has been observed in industrial sectors. There was a recognition of the role of Council in getting the balance right between enhancing local amenity and creating an environment for businesses to flourish. There is the opportunity to capitalise on Penrith having the largest remaining supply of employment land in Greater Sydney, particularly within the Northern Gateway, Mamre Road, Kemps Creek and Erskine Park precincts.

## Here is what else we have heard

- Our growing population is outpacing locally available jobs
- Build and diversify our economy to attract more executive, managerial, and professional jobs
- Improve retention of young people with higher level qualifications
- Access to a skilled workforce has been challenging in a competitive marketplace for talent and exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic
- We need affordable housing in and around key precincts and centres
- The impact of COVID-19 pandemic has slowed residential construction and population growth affecting the local economy
- Established visitor economy and domestic day-trip market, with opportunity expand into international markets once the new airport opens
- Market the city to improve perceptions and attract investment

## Analysis

Mecone and Atlas Urban Economics were commissioned by Council to review the 2017 jobs target in relation to the immediate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and to propose strategies and actions for the EDS 2031.

The review focused on Council's efforts in attracting industries, creating an attractive environment for investment, and marketing the local area. The Strategy is shaped by industry and government data, analysis, and insights. It reflects and builds on the objectives set in important strategies developed by Council over the last five years. Key inputs include:

- Transport for NSW travel data
- Economic modelling from REMPLAN and Atlas Economics
- Macro-economic trends
- Economic Analysis – commercial, industrial, and retail outlook
- Industry trends
- Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS – 2018) and the Employment Lands Strategy (2022)
- Structure of regions and local government areas
- NSW Department of Planning data, job insights and projections



- Forecasts provided by government and educational institutions
- Plans developed by State and Federal agencies

The study of the existing industry, occupation and skills mix of business clusters around other airport destinations reveals demand for a more educated, highly skilled workforce (Source: EY – WSA Economic Enhancement Strategy: Strategy and Action Plan 2018). Generating job opportunities while offering an attractive lifestyle could entice the types of workers required for these jobs to both live and work in Penrith rather than coming from areas outside of Penrith and Western Sydney.



### **Economic Development Strategy 2017**

Penrith Progression (2015) focused on the Penrith City Centre. The EDS 2017 featured a city-wide approach to economic development and focused on job growth and enhancing the economic and social wellbeing of residents.

The EDS 2017 identified 6 target sectors for jobs growth and areas of focus to stimulate economic development across the key precincts and centres, as well as the broader region.

A number of initiatives arose from these two strategies, including a focus on The Quarter as a health and education precinct and building the visitor economy with a focus on the Nepean River as a tourism and jobs attractor. The 'New West' campaign and Council commitments to investment in community infrastructure including City Park in the Penrith CBD strengthened the local economy.

### **Council Strategic Plans**

Since the adoption of EDS 2017 there have been significant policy developments that impact the Penrith economy including the release of the Greater Sydney Region Plan – A Metropolis of Three Cities (now the Six Cities Region – June 2022), the Western Sydney City Deal, the Penrith Local Strategic Planning Statement, Employment Lands Strategy 2021 and Local Housing Strategy (2022).

## Economic Indicators 2016 – 2021

The table below examines key economic indicators sourced from National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR 2020) and Census (2021) data to identify changes in the local Penrith economy since the EDS 2017 was published. The evidence shows that the Penrith economy continued to grow during this period.

INDICATOR	2016	2021/2022	IMPACT AND ANALYSIS
<b>Population</b>	201,897	219,149 (2022)	Annual population growth in the Penrith LGA was 1.8% compared to Greater Sydney at 1.7%
<b>Gross Regional Product (GRP)</b>	\$10.21 billion	\$12.19 billion (2022)	The Penrith economy grew by \$1.98 billion in the five years to 2021
<b>Key Industries (Employment)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health Care and Social Assistance (11,480 or 14.4%)</li> <li>Construction (9,950 or 12.5%)</li> <li>Retail (9,337 or 11.7%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health Care and Social Assistance (16,713 or 17.8%)</li> <li>Construction (13,776 or 14.7%)</li> <li>Retail (9,490 or 10.1%)</li> </ul>	<p>The top three employing industries in 2016 remained unchanged in 2021 – health care and social assistance, construction, and retail.</p> <p>Accommodation and food services along with transport, postal and warehousing recorded growth over this period</p>
<b>Key Industries Value Added (measures the productivity of an industry and how it contributes to the local economy)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construction (\$1.040 billion or 12.2%)</li> <li>Manufacturing (\$975.5 million or 11.4%)</li> <li>Transport, Postal and warehousing (\$904.4 million or 10.4%)</li> <li>Health Care/Social Assistance (\$828 million or 9.7%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construction (\$1.25 billion or 12.2%)</li> <li>Manufacturing (\$1.16 billion or 11.3%)</li> <li>Transport, Postal and warehousing (\$1.2 billion or 11.8%)</li> <li>Health Care/Social Assistance (\$1.13 billion or 11%)</li> </ul>	Health, construction and retail remained strong to 2021 with increases in visitor economy, transport and manufacturing indicated
<b>Local Jobs</b>	68,597	82,000	<p>Local jobs refers to the number of people who were employed in the week prior to Census Night and who were working in Penrith LGA.</p> <p>Growth in local jobs is a good indicator of a thriving economy.</p>
<b>Employment Capacity (Local jobs ratio)</b>	0.76	0.79	Employment capacity measures the number of local jobs against the number of working residents in a local economy. A ratio of less than 1 means that there is an undersupply of local jobs for working residents. A ratio greater than 1 means that there is more than one job for every working resident
<b>Skilled Labour Pool</b>	53.2%	62.8%	The number and proportion of residents in Penrith with formal qualifications increased, with significant growth in residents with a Bachelor or higher qualification

## The population of Penrith in 2031

The 2021 Census data shows a decline in previously projected resident population growth. The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant negative impact on population growth due to dispersion to regional centres, and lower migration to Australia. Using a matrix of data sources including the ABS 2021 Census and NSW Government Department of Planning (2022) data, Council predicts that Penrith's population will grow from 219,000 in 2022 to 260,000 by 2031. This forecast is reviewed each year.

The table below tracks changes in our population between 2016 and 2021 and forecasts out to 2041 (Australian Bureau of Statistics Census and NSW Government Department of Planning data).

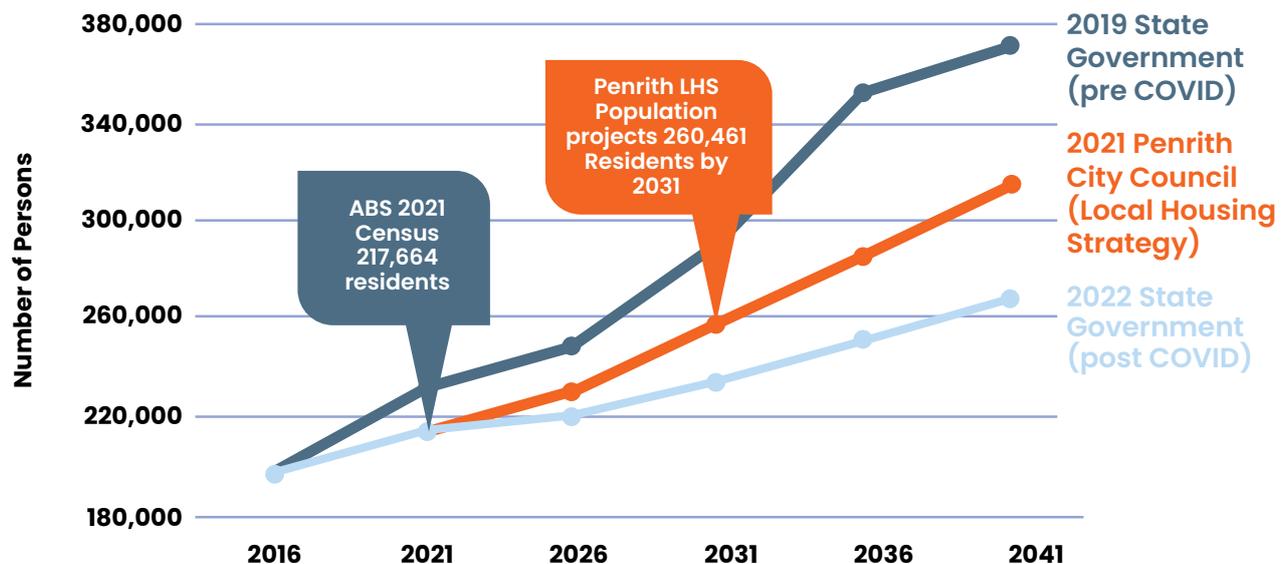
The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on population growth has continued and therefore there is significant revision downwards of population forecasts, which will affect employment growth.

Setting a target of 23,000 additional jobs by 2031 is ambitious. Assuming a population of 260,000 by 2031, and no major economic disruptors like a pandemic or recession, we are likely to see a baseline of 18,000 jobs delivered in Penrith by 2031, based on market trends. But that is not enough. There still will not be enough jobs available in Penrith for our resident workers.

Analysis of both population and industry growth projections indicates an aim of 23,000 new jobs by 2031 is achievable through a combination of:

- natural jobs growth (18,000 jobs) and
- economic development actions of Council and its partners (+5,000 additional jobs).

## Population growth and its relationship to job creation



### Key Assumptions – baseline of 18,000 additional jobs by 2031

Natural growth of 18,000 jobs by 2031 is based on latest economic modelling revised in 2023 and underpinned by the following assumptions:

- The population of Penrith will be 260,000 by 2031.
- Natural growth will occur to meet the needs of our growing population – specifically in the Health Care and Social Assistance, construction, retail and hospitality sectors.
- Western Sydney International Airport operating by December 2026
- Western Sydney Airport Metro operating from 2026
- Known development applications.
- Employment land developed and not developed.

## Local jobs ratio (Employment Capacity) – Measuring the number of jobs available in Penrith.

We know that in 2022 we did not have enough available jobs for every working resident in Penrith. When we divide the number of local jobs (84,000) by the number of resident workers (105,000) the ratio is 0.80. At less than 1 to 1, this means, that everyday, residents leave Penrith to for work outside our area due to insufficient jobs available locally. Having more jobs in Penrith means that residents can spend more time with their families and in their community and spending less time (and money) travelling to and from workplaces outside of our area.

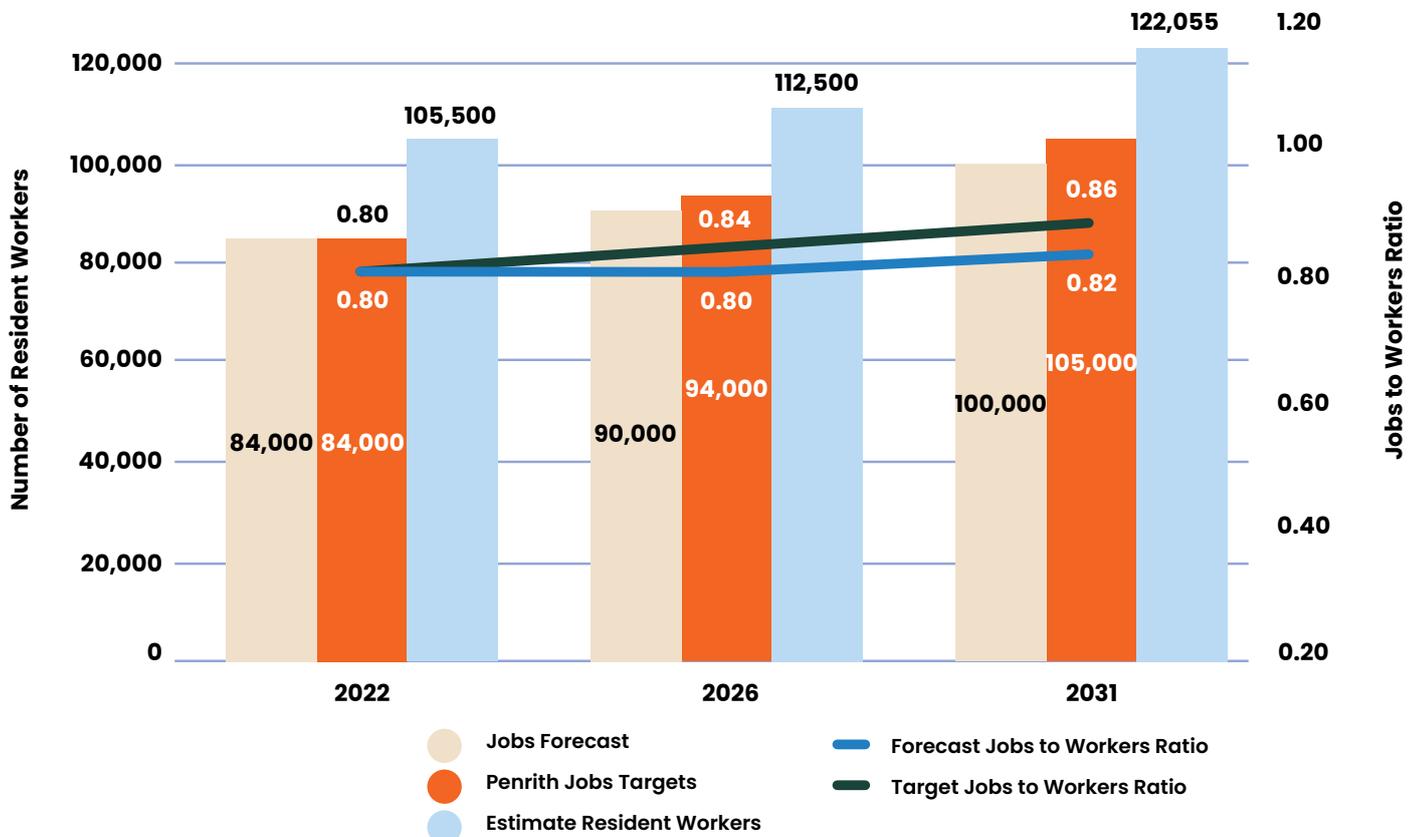
Natural growth will deliver an additional 18,000 jobs by 2031, improving our local jobs ratio to 0.82. (100,000 local jobs divided by 122,055 resident workers). The aim of the EDS 2031 is to stimulate the economy to deliver more jobs above the natural jobs growth baseline and achieve a local jobs ratio of 0.86 by 2031. This requires an additional 5,000 jobs on top of the baseline of 18,000 jobs to be created between 2021 – 2031.

In summary;

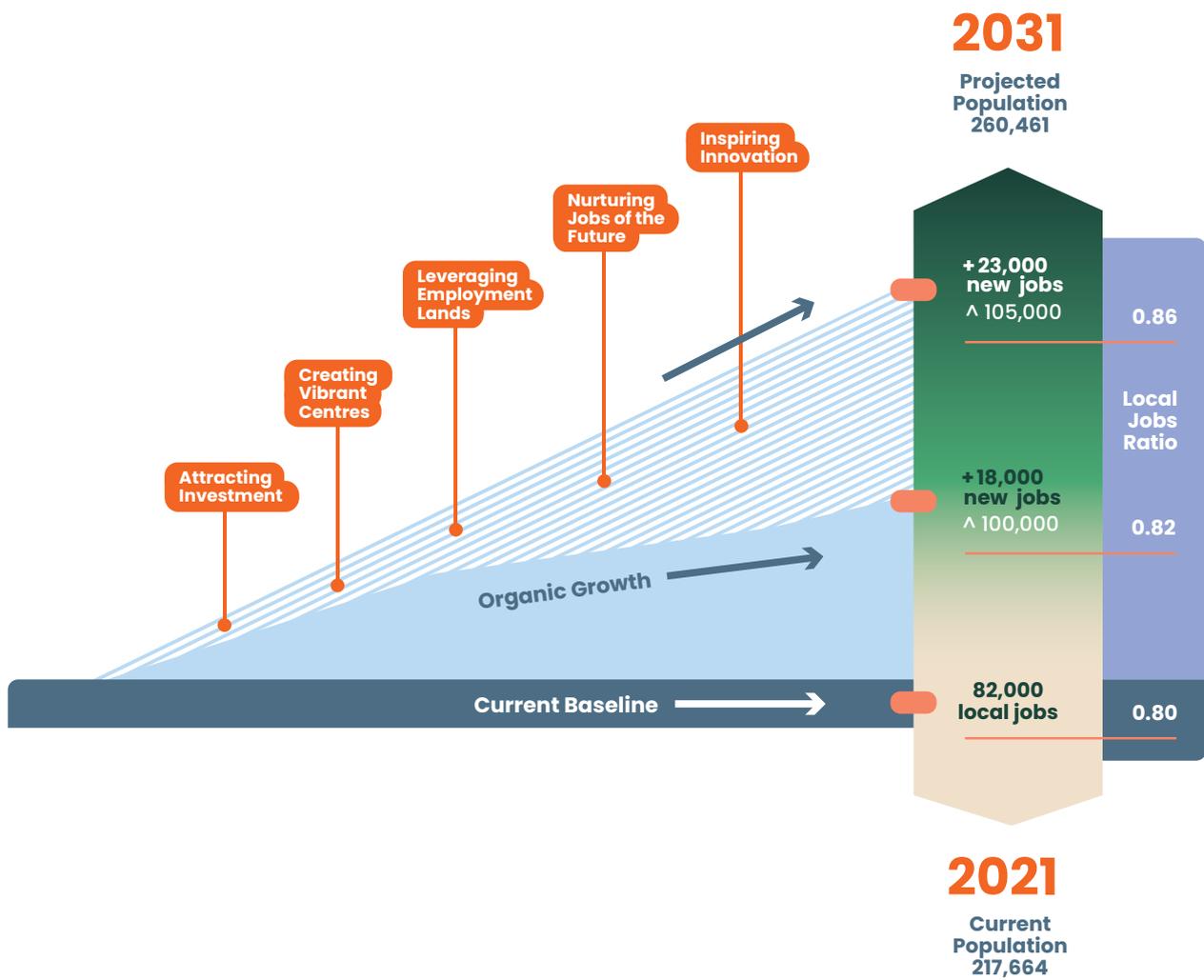
- Baseline projections of natural jobs growth would deliver minimal improvement in the Local jobs ratio from 0.80 in 2022 to 0.82 in 2031.
- **With intervention** by Council and its partners through actions in the EDS, 23,000 new jobs will be delivered by 2031.
- To achieve parity of one job for every resident worker, 38,000 additional jobs would need to be delivered by 2031.

One job available for every working adult is a local jobs ratio of 1:1, and this remains a long-term target. Actions in the EDS 2031 bring us closer to this ambition. As a regional city we recognise the complimentary roles and strengths of the eight local government areas in the Western Parkland City, and the job opportunities that the airport and aerotropolis will bring for our residents.

## Penrith Jobs to Workers Targets



# Jobs Targets – the positive impact of Economic Development Initiatives



## 7

# Global and Local Context, Challenges, Opportunities

Penrith is well placed to deliver the modern office environment workers are looking for – flexible, close to home and located in attractive, well serviced town centres.

The economic landscape post COVID-19 is vastly different to before. Systemic changes in how we work are unlikely to be reversed. The commercial office market will continue to evolve as hybrid work-from-home arrangements are likely to be retained in many industries, particularly government, bank, or any sector with a heavy weighting to staff working in an office environment.

Technological transformation of the Australian economy will continue with a focus on Artificial Intelligence, software development and data analysis. The Quarter Health and Education precinct anchored by the Nepean Hospital, Western Sydney University and TAFE is strategically placed to attract jobs and investment in these growing sectors.

Manufacturing has a renewed focus in Australia with the pandemic exposing risks in the reliance on overseas production and supply chains. There are opportunities for Penrith to contribute to producing key products in Australia (including defence, electronics, medicines, and pharmaceuticals). Freight, logistics and warehousing are more important than ever as online shopping continues to boom. Penrith benefits from significant competitive advantages in these sectors:

- Available and affordable industrial land
- Comparative affordability
- Proximity to regional centres at Parramatta and Liverpool.

- Road and rail connectivity to the Western Sydney International Airport

Economic headwinds with the potential to negatively impact the Penrith economy include rising interest rates, lack of access to credit, high levels of debt in the community and housing affordability. The Australian economy grew solidly over the second half of 2022, before slowing in 2023 as higher consumer prices, rising interest rates and cost of living pressures weigh on consumer confidence. While the GDP growth for Australia is forecast to be 1½ per cent over 2023 and 2024 (Reserve Bank of Australia, February 2023), Penrith GDP continues to show an upward trajectory.

Natural disasters are a significant risk to the local economy. Our changing climate is causing more frequent and severe fires, storms and floods in the Penrith valley. Pragmatic and realistic planning, policy and mitigation are required to minimise the risks to the local economy. Council's *Cooling the City Strategy* relies on a strong research base to understand urban heat within the Penrith LGA and to develop a broad range of actions that will work together towards mitigating the summer heat in Penrith. Strong sentiment to manage the changing climate and opportunities for 'green economy' projects will continue to evolve over the next five years. Council's Strategic Priorities (2023) report highlights a number of projects including the Castlereagh Connection, that will strengthen our economy and make our region more flood resilient.



## 8

# Target Industry Clusters

Analysis in preparation of this strategy identified six industry clusters that have the potential for new investment and strong employment growth. These are both established and emerging, and build on Penrith's competitive advantages. Two established commercial centres, The Quarter Penrith Health and Education Precinct, a healthy supply of industrial land and proximity to the new airport offer many opportunities across these six clusters.

The EDS 2031 will work to strengthen and support our high growth industries through a series of capacity building initiatives and targeted programs by:

- marketing the city to attract investment that leverages proximity to the Western Sydney International Airport and aerotropolis
- identifying opportunities in public and private landholdings to attract investment and encourage redevelopment
- promoting industry development and encouraging clusters of related and supporting industries

The identified job targets have been set based on population projections, industry modelling and trends, known and expected infrastructure investment and approved developments.

Six industry clusters have been identified as key growth areas:

- Transport, Freight and Logistics
- Manufacturing including Agribusiness, Waste Management and Renewable Energy
- Airport and Aerotropolis
- Health and Social Care, Education and Research
- Tourism, Hospitality and Events including Sports and Recreation
- Creative and Cultural



# 9

# Our Strategic Priorities

The following five key priorities focus the attention of Council and its strategic partners to nurture a strong, sustainable, adaptive, and thriving city economy.

As they complement each other, these should be read in conjunction with the priorities and actions outlined in the other Thrive Penrith strategies including the Penrith Visitor Economy Strategy 2023–30, and the forthcoming Penrith and St Marys 24 Hour Economy and Cultural strategies.



## Strategic Priority 1

# ATTRACTING INVESTMENT

### Objectives

- Proactively position Penrith to attract investment.
- Build, nurture and leverage strategic partnerships.
- Facilitate sustainable development, business relocation and investment.

NO.	ACTIONS	COUNCIL'S ROLE	TIMEFRAME
1.1	Develop an Investment Attraction Framework and plan with a focus on the six industry clusters identified in the EDS 2031	Deliver	Short
1.2	Develop and execute a City Marketing Plan	Deliver	Short
1.3	Assess industry data and market intelligence to identify investment opportunities and guide investment attraction campaigns.	Facilitate Promote	Ongoing
1.4	Conduct research and analysis to determine investment opportunities created by Penrith's proximity and connectivity to the Western Sydney International Airport	Collaborate Deliver	Ongoing
1.5	Develop an investment attraction campaign that emphasises Penrith's proximity and connectivity to Western Sydney International Airport	Facilitate Promote Collaborate	Ongoing
1.6	Develop a feasibility study to establish a business concierge function to support and nurture new business and investment opportunities	Facilitate Promote	Medium
1.7	Leverage the influence of our strategic partners to promote Council's Strategic Priorities	Facilitate Promote Collaborate	Unfunded



## Strategic Priority 2

# CREATING VIBRANT CENTRES

### Objectives

- Continue to provide highly desirable amenity and favourable conditions for business growth and resilience in our centres.
- Facilitate inclusive, diverse, and sustainable development in our centres.
- Create a vibrant night-time, visitor, and cultural economy.
- Implement key objectives in the Penrith and St Marys 24 Hour Economy, Visitor Economy, and Cultural Strategies.

NO.	ACTIONS	COUNCIL'S ROLE	TIMEFRAME
2.1.	Support placemaking and place marketing activities as tools for investment attraction, business retention and resilience.	Collaborate	Ongoing
2.2	Align investment attraction and city marketing campaigns to support objectives of the St Marys Town Centre Masterplan	Collaborate	Medium
2.3	Commission a study to assess opportunities and recommend actions that encourage investment in the Penrith City Centre	Deliver Facilitate	Medium
2.4	Improve pathways, public spaces and connections to encourage pedestrians and cyclists in St Marys, Penrith and adjoining employment lands.	Deliver Collaborate	Medium
2.5	Implement the relevant economic development actions endorsed in the (proposed) Penrith and St Marys 24 Hour Economy Strategy	Deliver Collaborate	Medium
2.6	Implement the relevant economic development actions endorsed in the Penrith Visitor Economy Strategy 2023-30	Collaborate	Medium
2.7	Support economic development strategies and actions that grow our cultural economy	Collaborate	Medium



### Strategic Priority 3

## LEVERAGING EMPLOYMENT LANDS

### Objectives

- Build resilience and support sustainable growth in Penrith’s industrial economy.
- Advocate for infrastructure and services that enable growth in our industrial lands.
- Promote competitive advantages of industrial land in Penrith
  - supply, affordability, and connectivity.

NO.	ACTIONS	COUNCIL’S ROLE	TIMEFRAME
3.1.	Attract clusters of related and supporting businesses in target industry clusters, as well as identifying and accessing supply chain opportunities	Facilitate Collaborate	Ongoing
3.2	Proactively promote the availability of industrial land in identified precincts across the six industry clusters identified in the EDS 2031	Facilitate Promote	Ongoing
3.3	Advocate for improved transport connections between key employment precincts and Western Sydney International Airport	Advocate Plan	Short
3.4	Support economic development actions identified in Council’s Employment Lands Strategy	Deliver Support	Ongoing

## Strategic Priority 4

# NURTURING JOBS OF THE FUTURE

## Objectives

- Create a thriving environment for local businesses to grow and opportunities for training and career development.
- Position Penrith as an attractive destination for knowledge-based jobs.
- Attract education, research, and training providers to Penrith.

NO.	ACTIONS	COUNCIL'S ROLE	TIMEFRAME
4.1	Assist small and medium sized enterprises build capacity and resilience through the promotion of training opportunities	Deliver, Facilitate Collaborate	Ongoing
4.2	Advocate for the relocation of NSW Government jobs to Penrith	Advocate Facilitate Promote	Short
4.3	Promote vocational training to ensure the supply of a trained, adaptable workforce	Collaborate Facilitate Promote	Ongoing
4.4	In partnership with industry, develop talent attraction and retention campaigns that align the six industry clusters identified in the EDS 2031	Advocate Deliver Collaborate	Short
4.5	Assess economic data and analysis to identify trends in the Penrith Economy and adjust programs to reflect risks and opportunities identified	Facilitate Collaborate	Ongoing
4.6	Collaborate with industry partners to promote programs that increase the participation of women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) jobs in Penrith	Advocate Deliver Collaborate	Ongoing
4.7	Promote research and development undertaken by local industry and institutional partners	Facilitate Promote Collaborate	Medium
4.8	Work with existing and potential night-time economy businesses to facilitate growth and diversification in the Penrith CBD and St Marys Town Centre	Collaborate Facilitate	Ongoing
4.9	Partner with industry and government to promote employee job opportunities in the six priority industry clusters	Collaborate Facilitate	Ongoing
4.10	To strengthen business resilience and employee attraction and retention, share government and industry training opportunities with local businesses	Collaborate Facilitate	Medium
4.11	Actively target knowledge focused businesses for relocation to the Quarter Penrith *Identify funding source	Advocate Facilitate Promote	Unfunded
4.12	Develop a business case to investigate the development of a Creative Industry hub *Identify funding source	Facilitate Promote Collaborate	Unfunded



**Strategic Priority 5**

# INSPIRING INNOVATION

## Objectives

- Cultivate an environment that supports innovation and entrepreneurship.
- Leverage and grow the critical mass of knowledge and technical jobs in the Quarter Health and Education Precinct.
- Enhance and strengthen Penrith’s economic triangle.

NO.	ACTIONS	COUNCIL’S ROLE	TIMEFRAME
5.1	Promote government and business led programs that drive the digital transformation of the Penrith economy	Deliver Facilitate Collaborate	Ongoing
5.2	In collaboration with key stakeholders, implement new governance and funding model for the Quarter Penrith Health and Education Precinct	Facilitate Collaborate	Short
5.3	In partnership with strategic partners in the Quarter Penrith, develop a campaign to attract new businesses to the precinct	Collaborate Promote	Ongoing
5.4	Support collaboration between industry, government, education, and business to promote innovation and unlock growth in the Circular Economy	Deliver Facilitate Collaborate	Ongoing
5.5	Promote the competitive advantages of Penrith’s economic triangle to attract investment	Deliver Facilitate Collaborate	Ongoing
5.6	Through partnership programs and City Marketing activities, support innovation, technology, and entrepreneurship in the Penrith economy	Deliver Facilitate Collaborate	Ongoing
5.7	In response to opportunities identified in Council’s Rural Lands Strategy (2022), develop a business case to assess the feasibility of attracting agribusiness investment to create a food innovation cluster, leveraging proximity to Western Sydney Airport *Identify funding source	Advocate Facilitate Collaborate	Unfunded

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DON'T WORK UNDER THE SLING!



## 10

## Measuring Success

Success of the EDS 2023–31 will be measured through economic data, jobs growth and reporting of the implementation of actions outlined in this plan.

INDICATOR	2016 (ACTUAL)	2022 (ACTUAL)	2031 (TARGET)
<b>Population</b>	201,897	219,149	260,461
<b>Gross Regional Product (GRP)</b>	\$10.21 billion	\$12.19 billion	\$16 billion
<b>Unemployment rate</b>	5.7%	3.6%	3.5%
<b>Local Jobs</b>	79,443	84,000	105,000
<b>Employment Capacity (Local Jobs)</b>	0.76	0.80	0.86
<b>Skilled Labour Pool</b>	53.2%	62.8%	71.0%
<b>Visitation</b>	1.29 million visitors per year	1.64 million visitors per year	Grow visitation by >10%
<b>Building Approvals (Residential)</b>	2,622	1,255	Increase the number of Building Approvals
<b>Number of Businesses</b>	12,314	16,388	20,000 total number of businesses by 2031



## Conclusion

The Penrith Economic Development Strategy 2023–2031 sets out a plan to build strength and resilience in our local economy. Consultation with key stakeholders and analysis of economic data revealed both challenges and opportunities for Penrith in a post-COVID world. Major infrastructure projects including the Western Sydney International (Nancy–Bird Walton) Airport and the Metro will transform our region, and with a healthy supply of employment land, and two well serviced town centres, Penrith is well positioned to capitalise on these opportunities. Council has set a target of 23,000 new jobs by 2031. This is an additional 5,000 jobs above the forecast baseline and will be achieved through the actions of Council and its partners, as outlined in this strategy.



There's never been a more exciting time to be in Penrith.  
Talk to us about building the Penrith economy together.

## PENRITH CITY COUNCIL

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