



STRATEGIC PROJECTS

ADVOCACY PLAN 2026-2028





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A person wearing a red swimsuit stands in shallow water. Their legs are covered in white body paint or clay. The background shows a rocky shoreline and water. The image is framed by a blue and white polka-dot border at the top and bottom.

Acknowledgement of

Country

Shellharbour City Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Dharawal Country and recognises their continued connection to the land. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging and the contribution they make to the life of this City.

MAYOR'S MESSAGE



Shellharbour is one of the fastest-growing communities in the Illawarra, and with that growth comes both opportunity and responsibility. Effective advocacy is critical to ensuring our city is supported by the right infrastructure, services and investment to deliver sustainable, long-term outcomes for our community and the broader region.

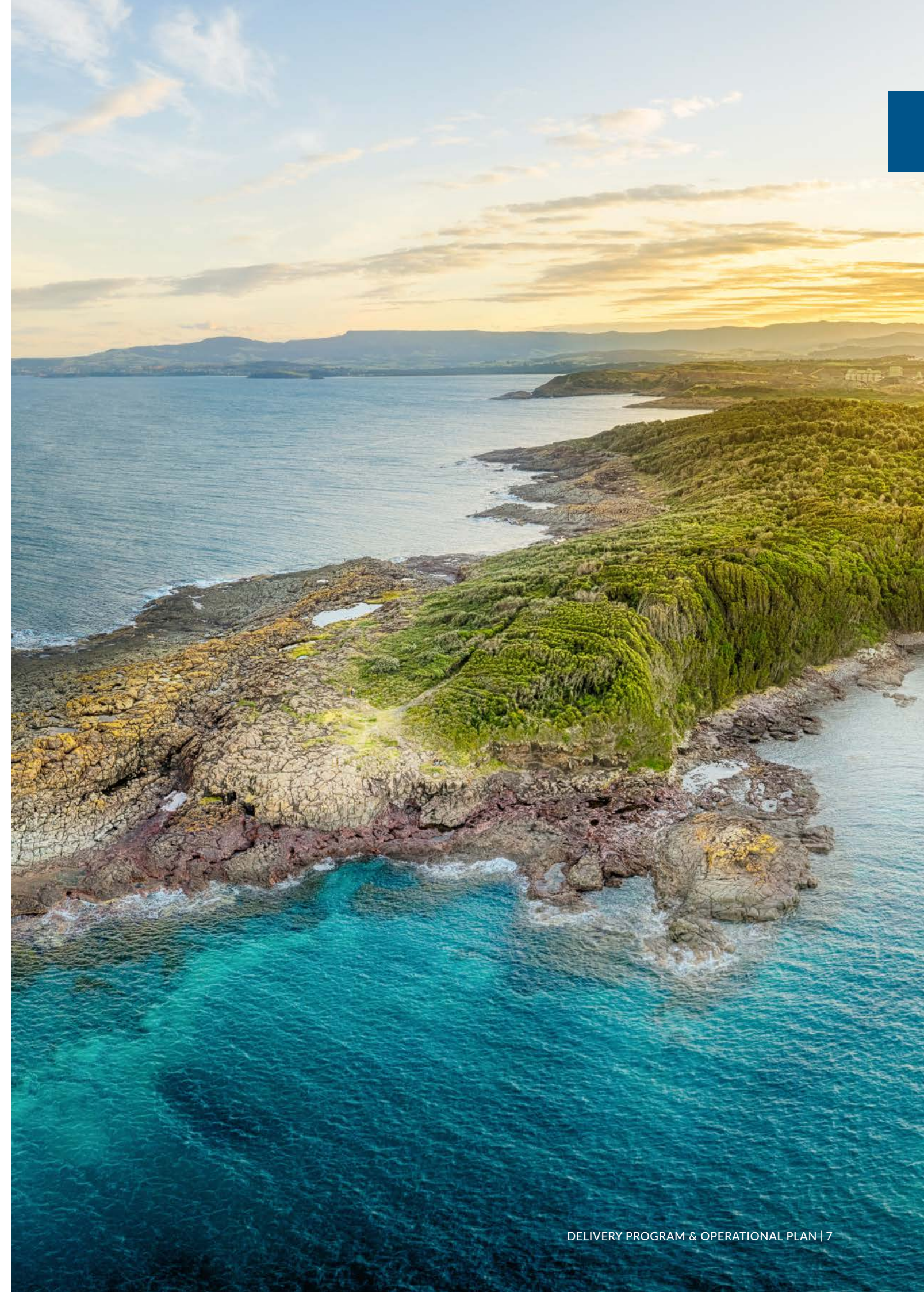
This Strategic Projects Advocacy Plan sets out Council's priorities for collaboration with the New South Wales Government and key partners to enable the delivery of essential infrastructure. These priorities are grounded in evidence-based planning and reflect Council's commitment to responsible growth, sound financial management and the protection of the environmental and cultural values that define Shellharbour.

The projects identified in this Plan have been shaped by extensive community engagement and align with established regional and state planning directions. They respond to shared challenges such as population growth, climate resilience, housing supply and transport demand, and the need for inclusive, connected communities. Together, they position Shellharbour to make a positive contribution to regional productivity, liveability and resilience.

Council is committed to working in partnership with neighbouring councils across the Illawarra and with all levels of government to deliver outcomes that are coordinated, efficient and scalable. Through collaboration, targeted investment and shared leadership, we can support growth in ways that strengthen our town centres, enhance health, wellbeing and cultural opportunities, and improve access to essential services.

Shellharbour's continued success depends on strong partnerships and a shared commitment to our region's future. This Advocacy Plan demonstrates Council's readiness to work constructively with key partners to progress projects of regional significance and deliver lasting benefits for our community and the Illawarra.

Chris Homer
Mayor, Shellharbour



COMMITMENT TO ADVOCACY

Shellharbour City Council is committed to advocating for key projects that are important to our community. Through strong leadership and collaboration, we work to drive positive change at local, regional, and national levels.

This document outlines key advocacy priorities Shellharbour City Council is committed to focusing on, and seeking partnerships in relation to, in the future. It has been prepared in line with the Local Government Act 1993 and is led by the several guiding principles within it, including strong democratic representation, integrated strategic planning, and the efficient and sustainable use of public resources.

The projects identified in this document align with the themes and objectives of the Draft Delivery Program 2025 - 2029 and Operational Plan 2026 - 2027 (DPOP) and the Community Strategic Plan 2025 - 2035.

OUR ADVOCACY OBJECTIVES

Council undertakes advocacy to support the effective delivery of outcomes aligned with state and federal government priorities, informed by community engagement, evidence-based planning, and transparent decision-making. We work to ensure our city's needs are met efficiently and sustainably, both now and in the future.

The 2026 - 2028 Strategic Advocacy Projects seeks to:

- Set Shellharbour City Council's advocacy agenda and priorities.
- Influence public policy and secure funding for key projects.
- Ensure Shellharbour receives the resources to support a thriving community.
- Partner with state and federal governments to address local issues.
- Improve infrastructure, services, and opportunities for residents.

HOW WE ADVOCATE?

Council advocates by engaging with the community, collaborating with other councils, organisations, and government agencies, and ensuring transparency in all our efforts.

Our advocacy initiatives seek to ensure Shellharbour's current and future needs are addressed in a manner that is strategically aligned, financially responsible, and consistent with long-term regional and state objectives.

By demonstrating leadership and advocating directly to the Australian and New South Wales Governments, Council contributes constructively to policy development and investment decisions that impact the Shellharbour Local Government Area.

Ongoing collaboration with local Members of Parliament supports coordinated advocacy and effective engagement on matters of shared priority.

Council employs a range of structured advocacy approaches to achieve effective outcomes, including:

- Formal submissions to state and federal agencies
- Direct engagement and lobbying with relevant Ministers, agencies and senior officials
- Participation in and leadership of advocacy delegations
- Hosting site visits and briefings for key decision-makers
- Strategic use of media, targeted communications and community-based campaigns to support shared advocacy objectives

ABOUT SHELLHARBOUR

Shellharbour City is a rapidly expanding urban local government area in the Illawarra region, just one and a half hours' drive south of Sydney.

The gateway to the NSW South Coast, Shellharbour spans across 147 square kilometres and features picturesque beaches, rivers and significant nature reserves including the largest natural bushland reserve in the Illawarra, a National Surfing Reserve and State Aquatic Reserve.

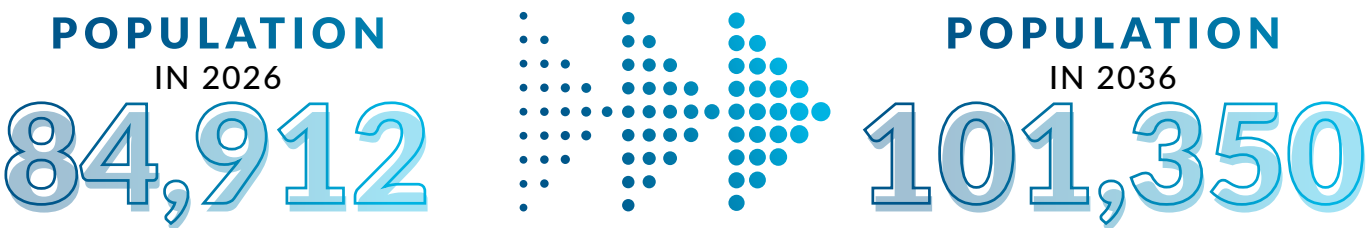
Home to over 86,000 people, Shellharbour's population is expected to increase 32% by 2041, which makes Shellharbour the 6th fastest growing Local Government Area (LGA) in NSW. Calderwood, located in the city's west, will see the highest population growth with an increase of almost 400%.



WHO ARE WE SHELLHARBOUR



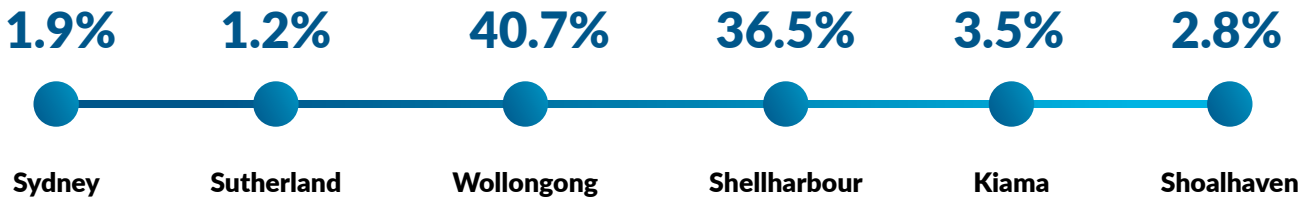
POPULATION GROWTH



LARGEST GROWING AREA

In terms of population growth in the future, the largest increase will be in **Calderwood, Tullimbar and Blackbutt-Shellharbour City Centre** in the next 10 years.

WHERE OUR RESIDENTS WORK BY LGA



WHERE WE LIVE



FORECASTED GROWTH

AREA	2021	2041	GROWTH
Shellharbour LGA	76,559	99,335	29.7% ▲
Albion Park	13,985	18,192	30.1% ▲
Albion Park Rail	6,928	7,319	5.6% ▲
Barrack Heights	5,464	5,663	3.6% ▲
Blackbutt - Shellharbour City Centre	4,268	5,590	31.0% ▲
Calderwood	3,021	11,016	264.6% ▲
Flinders	6,862	7,133	3.9% ▲
Lake Illawarra	3,389	3,665	8.1% ▲
Mount Warrigal	4,809	4,725	-1.7% ▼
Oak Flats	6,825	7,689	12.7% ▲
Rural District	1,017	2,354	131.5% ▲
Shell Cove	7,414	10,365	39.8% ▲
Shellharbour-Barrack Point	4,419	4,880	10.4% ▲
Tullimbar	1,852	4,268	130.5% ▲
Warilla	6,305	6,476	2.7% ▲



91.3%

of residents are Australian citizens (NSW 82.7%)



5%

of residents are Indigenous Australians (NSW 3.4%)

METHOD OF TRAVEL TO WORK



Car as driver
57.5%



Car as passenger
3.2%



Train
0.5%



Worked at home
18.5%



Walked
0.9%



Bus
0.6%

Population Growth derived from 2024 NSW Common Planning Assumption Projections. Where Our Residents Work and Method of Travel to Work derived from the 2021 Census.

Where We Live derived from Shellharbour Forecast.id, 2026. Percentage of Australian Residents and Indigenous Australians derived from Remplan, 2026.



STRATEGIC PROJECTS

PROJECT STATUS

The projects identified in this Advocacy Plan are at varying stages of development, with commencement timeframes dependent on project readiness, funding availability, approvals, and other external factors.

	SHELLHARBOUR HOSPITAL DUNMORE ROAD INTERSECTION UPGRADES <i>Concept Design Prepared</i>
	M1 PRINCES MOTORWAY <i>Future Concept</i>
	LAKE ILLAWARRA EAST CORRIDOR <i>Pending Design</i>
	IMPROVED CONNECTION TO KILLALEA STATE PARK <i>In Progress</i>
 	SHELLHARBOUR AIRPORT PRECINCT <i>Pending Design</i>

COUNCIL STRATEGIC PROJECTS & NSW GOVERNMENT

Shellharbour City Council is responsible for the delivery of these projects, in partnership with funding bodies such as the NSW Government.

- **SHELLHARBOUR AIRPORT PRECINCT**

NSW GOVERNMENT STATE ADVOCACY

The delivery of these project rests with the NSW Government, and Shellharbour City Council will continue to advocate for the funding and completion of these projects.

- **SHELLHARBOUR HOSPITAL DUNMORE ROAD INTERSECTION UPGRADES**
- **M1 PRINCES MOTORWAY**
- **LAKE ILLAWARRA EAST CORRIDOR**
- **IMPROVED CONNECTION TO KILLALEA REGIONAL PARK**



SHELLHARBOUR HOSPITAL DUNMORE ROAD UPGRADE

Supporting critical health access and regional connectivity.



**ADVOCACY
GROUP**

State
Government



**FUNDING
SOUGHT**

Allocated by
State Government



**ESTIMATED
PROJECT COST**

\$20m



**PROJECT
STATUS**

Concept Design
Prepared

SHELLHARBOUR HOSPITAL DUNMORE ROAD UPGRADE

The new Shellharbour Hospital is a critical piece of infrastructure that will significantly improve health services to Shellharbour and the southern Illawarra region.

Dunmore Road is the primary access corridor to the new Shellharbour Hospital and a key east-west connection from Shellharbour Road (State Road) to the new Hospital precinct, the new Links Hotel, schools (preschool, primary and high schools), the Dunmore Rural Fire Brigade, Shellharbour Junction train station and its commuter car park, and the Shellharbour Waste and Recycling Centre.

While the existing road network currently operates at an acceptable level of service, the introduction of significant additional traffic generated by the hospital will place unsustainable pressure on the corridor.

Without intervention, increased traffic volumes are expected to result in congestion, reduced travel reliability, and delays for emergency and essential service vehicles. This presents a direct risk to community safety and the effective operation of critical health infrastructure.

To support the long-term function of the corridor, Council is advocating for targeted upgrades along the Dunmore Road alignment, including intersection improvements, lane widening, additional turning capacity, and new roundabouts at key locations to improve traffic flow, safety, and network efficiency.

Council supports the delivery of the hospital and recognises its importance as a regional health facility. However, given the strategic importance of the hospital as a state asset, Council strongly advocates for the NSW Government to lead, fund, and deliver the required upgrades to key intersections and segments of Dunmore Road to support the long-term needs of the community.



M1 PRINCES MOTORWAY

The Tripoli Way Extension will deliver critical transport infrastructure to support urban growth and development.

			
ADVOCACY GROUP	FUNDING SOUGHT	ESTIMATED PROJECT COST	PROJECT STATUS
State Government	Allocated by State Government	\$25m	Future Concept

M1 PRINCES MOTORWAY

As one of the fastest-growing local government areas in NSW, Shellharbour requires critical infrastructure to maintain liveability and support growth. The Tripoli Way Extension to the M1 Princes Motorway has been identified as essential to achieving this.

The NSW Government has already invested in Stages 1 and 2 of the Tripoli Way Extension, which are progressing. These initial stages will establish vital new road links that begin to unlock growth areas, improve local connectivity and relieve congestion on surrounding road networks.

The connection of Tripoli Way to the M1 Princes Motorway would be the third stage of this project and will be critical to support the projected population growth of the region, with more than 8000 residential and commercial land lots approved, improve reliability and accessibility for residents and businesses as well increase the economic viability of Albion Park and the wider region.

The Tripoli Way Extension to the M1 Princes Motorway is a regionally significant advocacy priority, aligned with the Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan’s focus on infrastructure delivery to support housing and jobs growth.

Council continues to work closely with the NSW Government to secure funding and delivery of this critical project, recognising its essential role in enabling sustainable growth, improving connectivity and supporting the long term prosperity of the region.



EAST LAKE ILLAWARRA CORRIDOR

A strategic regional growth corridor supporting housing, jobs, transport infrastructure and services to create connected, liveable communities.

			
ADVOCACY GROUP	FUNDING SOUGHT	ESTIMATED PROJECT COST	PROJECT STATUS
State Government	Allocated by State Government	Allocated by State Government	Pending Design

EAST LAKE ILLAWARRA CORRIDOR

The East Lake Illawarra Corridor is a strategically significant 15-kilometre stretch running along the eastern side of Lake Illawarra, bookended by the Oak Flats and Port Kembla train stations, and linking major employment and residential growth precincts.

As well as providing a critical public transport connection along the eastern edge of Lake Illawarra, the corridor links the Shellharbour City Centre with the recently identified mid-rise centres of Warilla and Warrawong, as well as the State significant employment precincts within the Wollongong CBD and the Blue Scope Lands transformation project, positioning the area as a major focus for future growth and infrastructure investment.

State-led rezoning in the Shellharbour City Centre and Blue Scope Lands will provide sufficient zoned land to accommodate some 20,000 new dwellings and over 23,000 jobs in the corridor. The Shellharbour City Centre will play an increasingly critical role, with capacity for over 10,000 new dwellings, thousands of new jobs, and the potential to create a vibrant, active city centre that will become the economic, cultural and social heart of Shellharbour City.

With land being rezoned for residential development, and significant growth anticipated in the corridor, the emphasis now shifts toward smart, sustainable planning. This includes delivering diverse and affordable housing, enhancing transport connectivity through a proposed East Lake transport hub, and ensuring essential services such as schools, health, and aged care facilities evolve in step with population and employment growth.

IMPROVED TRANSPORT CONNECTIVITY

The successful delivery of the East Lake Illawarra Corridor is critically dependent on improved transport connectivity, particularly public transport, to support growth and reduce reliance on private vehicles.

The defining geography of Lake Illawarra means transport networks are wrapped around its western or eastern shores. While the western side benefits from rail and motorway access, the eastern corridor, where much of the future growth is planned, is currently serviced by infrequent buses along the eastern shore towards Warrawong, Port Kembla and to Wollongong.

A rapid, high-frequency bus service along Lake Entrance Road and Shellharbour/Windang Road is a key advocacy priority and a critical enabler of the corridor's success. This service would provide a direct and reliable public transport link between Oak Flats and Port Kembla rail stations, while connecting major centres including Shellharbour City Centre, Warrawong, Port Kembla and facilitating access to the Wollongong CBD.

Council will continue to work in partnership with the NSW Government to prioritise the delivery of this high-frequency public transport corridor, recognising its essential role in enabling housing supply, supporting economic growth, and delivering on regional planning objectives.



IMPROVED CONNECTION TO KILLALEA STATE PARK

Improving transport connectivity.

			
ADVOCACY GROUP	FUNDING SOUGHT	ESTIMATED PROJECT COST	PROJECT STATUS
State Government	Allocated by State Government	\$10m	Future Concept

KILLALEA STATE PARK

Located on Dharawal Country, Killalea Regional Park is a significant natural and cultural asset for Shellharbour. The proposed project will deliver a secondary transport link to the park, improving connectivity and providing an essential alternative for emergency access.

Currently, access to the park is reliant on a single vehicle route via Killalea Drive and Southern Cross Boulevard, which limits network resilience and presents challenges for safety, access and visitor movement.

Establishing a new connection between Dunmore Road and Killalea will enhance emergency access, strengthen transport connectivity, and improve visitor accessibility, supporting local tourism and the park’s ongoing role as a key recreational, cultural and environmental destination.



SHELLHARBOUR AIRPORT PRECINCT

*Improve the accessibility and connectivity of Shellharbour Airport
by building better links for residents, visitors and business.*

			
ADVOCACY GROUP	FUNDING SOUGHT	ESTIMATED PROJECT COST	PROJECT STATUS
Council & State Government	\$16m	\$16m	Pending

Shellharbour Airport plays a vital role as the strategic and tourism gateway to the Illawarra, South Coast and Southern Highlands, and the NSW Government has already identified the airport as having high economic and tourism potential. Continued investment in airport infrastructure will unlock significant opportunities for the region, creating local jobs, attracting new industries and investment, and strengthening connections between the Illawarra and destinations across Australia.

The Airport currently faces challenges associated with ageing infrastructure and limited opportunities to generate sustainable revenue. Strategic investment in infrastructure is essential to meet the current and future needs of the facility, support growing aviation activity and improve the Airport’s long-term financial sustainability.

AVIATION BUSINESS PARK

Once complete, the Aviation Business Park will:

- Enable direct airside access, with frontage to taxiways and two sealed runways.
- Provide heavy vehicle road access via a dedicated secure entrance.
- Support aviation-related industries including aircraft maintenance, pilot training, charter services, emergency services, and other commercial operations.
- Deliver infrastructure and utility upgrades, including road extensions and new taxiways, ready for immediate tenant occupation.

Despite its important regional role, Shellharbour Airport is currently classified within a “Major City of Australia” boundary for the purposes of many grant programs, placing it in direct competition with Sydney’s major airports. This classification does not reflect the Airport’s function, scale or market.

Shellharbour Airport operates as a regional facility, servicing regional destinations and supporting communities across the Illawarra and Southern NSW, yet it is often excluded from funding opportunities specifically designed for regional airports.

GRANT BOUNDARY CLASSIFICATION – SHELLHARBOUR AIRPORT

Shellharbour Airport is a key regional asset that delivers economic, employment and connectivity benefits well beyond the Shellharbour local government area, servicing communities across the Illawarra and Southern NSW. Despite this regional role, the Airport’s operating and renewal costs are largely borne by Shellharbour ratepayers, with significant infrastructure renewal requirements that Council cannot sustainably fund alone.

The Airport’s current classification as part of a “Major City of Australia” excludes it from many airport-related grant programs and places it in the same category as Sydney’s major airports. This classification does not reflect the Airport’s function, scale or market. Shellharbour Airport operates as a regional facility, servicing regional destinations and demand, and does not have the capacity to generate the level of own-source revenue available to major metropolitan airports.

Council seeks advocacy support to reconsider the current grant boundary and classification arrangements to better reflect the Airport’s regional role. A revised classification would improve access to funding for essential infrastructure renewal, support aviation safety and enable Shellharbour Airport to continue operating as a regional gateway to Southern NSW, delivering broader economic and visitor benefits without placing an ongoing and disproportionate burden on local ratepayers.

RUNWAY/TAXIWAY/APRON UPGRADES

With the anticipated increased usage and expanded operations, upgrades to the existing taxiways and apron areas are expected. As larger aircraft and more destinations utilise the airport, the strength of the parking aprons may need to be increased.





Shellharbour City Council
Dharawal Country

76 Cygnet Avenue, Shellharbour City Centre NSW 2529

Telephone: (02) 4221 6111

Email: council@shellharbour.nsw.gov.au

shellharbour.nsw.gov.au

Shellharbour City Council Admin Building