

**BUSINESS
NSW**

Regional Housing & Infrastructure Advocacy Paper

Priorities for the Mid North Coast



MORE HOMES

**STRONGER
COMMUNITIES**



**BETTER
INFRASTRUCTURE**

FASTER DELIVERY



STRONG REGIONS

BRIGHTER FUTURE



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Executive Summary

The Mid North Coast is facing a housing and infrastructure crisis that is now a direct economic constraint on business growth, workforce availability, and regional productivity.

The Business NSW Mid North Coast Housing & Infrastructure Summit on 1 May 2026, brought together all six local councils; from the Mid Coast through to Coffs Coast LGAs, industry leaders, utilities, and community housing providers, demonstrating unprecedented alignment on both the problem and the pathway forward.

This advocacy statement outlines the key priorities and actions Business NSW Mid North Coast is calling for in the lead-up to the 2027 NSW State Election. It focuses on unlocking housing supply through enabling infrastructure, fit-for-purpose planning reform, housing diversity, and a construction skills pipeline that ensures approved homes can actually be built.



A coordinated regional call

Housing and infrastructure is a direct economic constraint.

1

PRIORITY ONE

Enabling Infrastructure: The Critical Constraint on Housing Delivery

Across every Mid North Coast LGA, enabling infrastructure was identified as the single biggest blocker to converting zoned land and approved developments into homes on the ground.

Planning reform alone will not deliver housing without state and federal investment in water, sewer, transport, electricity and telecommunications infrastructure.

Priority Advocacy Actions

- Establish a dedicated Regional Housing Enabling Infrastructure Fund for NSW.
- Provide upfront infrastructure funding, not loans, to councils to unlock growth precincts. Infrastructure charges paid by developers when delivering new housing would then be used to reimburse the funding body for its initial capital outlay.
- Align state housing targets with guaranteed infrastructure sequencing.



Infrastructure first

Fund the systems that turn plans into homes.

LGA-Specific Infrastructure Priorities

Bellingen Shire

- Water and sewer capacity upgrades in Urunga and Bellingen townships

Coffs Harbour

- Park Beach infill water and sewer upgrades
- Jetty Foreshores enabling infrastructure

Kempsey Shire

- Stewart's Point power and waste infrastructure

Mid Coast

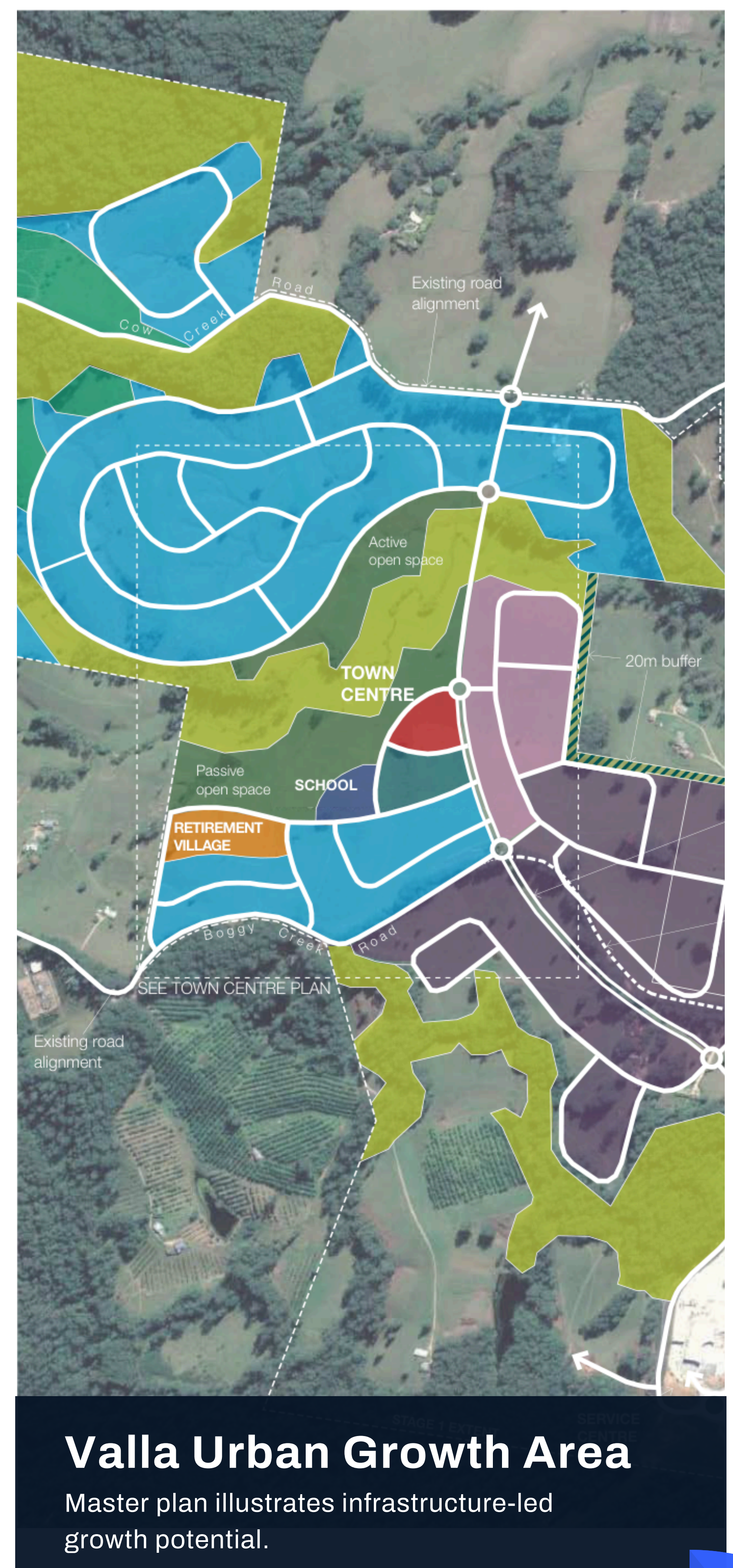
- Tea Gardens: Sewer infrastructure to support 1500 lots
- Kolodong: Roundabout infrastructure to support 478 lots
- Brimbin: Bridge and road infrastructure up to 8,000 lots

Nambucca Valley

- Valla Urban Growth Area: Stage Two Residential & Employment Land – enabling lead-in infrastructure
- Scotts Head Sewage Treatment Plant capacity upgrades
- Nambucca Water Supply Scheme Augmentation capacity upgrades

Port Macquarie-Hastings

- Thrumster Sewage Treatment Plant
- Cowarra Water Supply and Treatment upgrades
- Oxley Highway to Lake Road Upgrade



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PRIORITY TWO

Planning Reform Must Reflect Regional Reality



Regional delivery needs regional settings

The Summit recognised recent NSW planning reforms as directionally positive, but metro-centric in design and insufficient for regional delivery models.

Industry speakers highlighted that post-approval delays, certification bottlenecks and regulatory cost burdens continue to stall housing delivery even after approvals are granted.

Priority Advocacy Actions

- Reform the Housing Delivery Authority thresholds to better suit regional projects.
- Amend the National Construction Code to recognise “Class 1.5 / missing middle” category for low-rise, medium-density housing.
- Streamline post-consent processes and empower subdivision certifiers.

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PRIORITY THREE

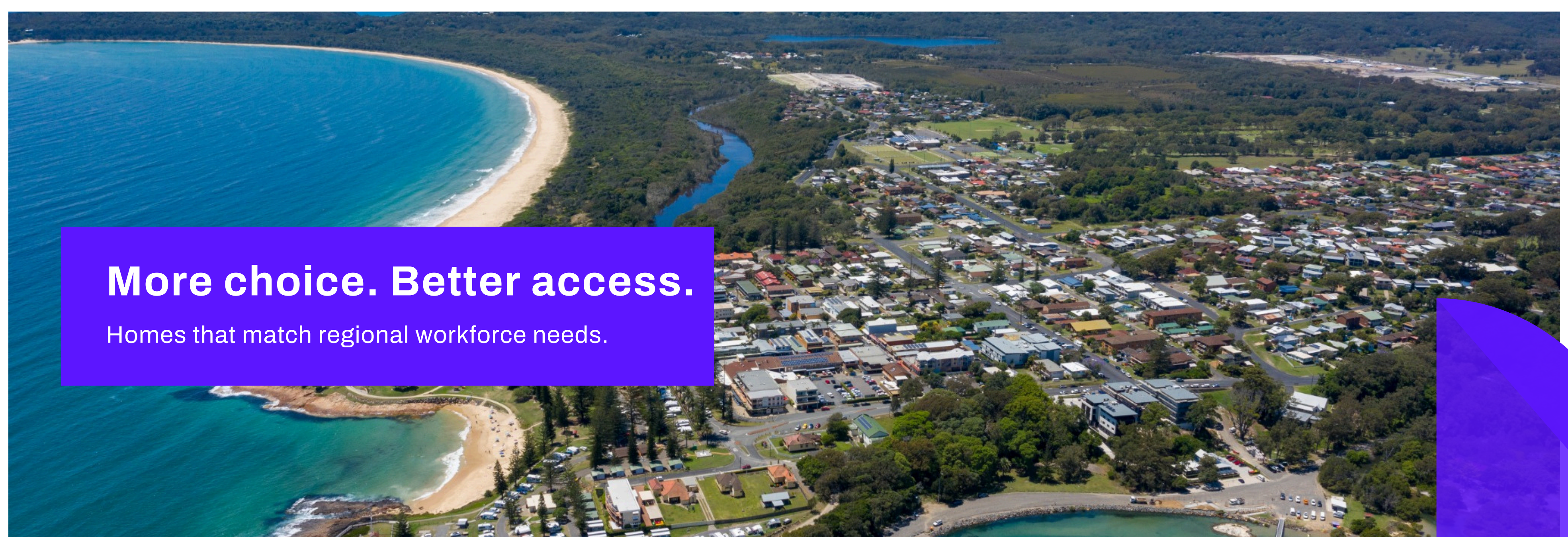
Housing Diversity: Unlocking the “Missing Middle”

The Mid North Coast cannot meet housing demand through detached dwellings alone. There is strong consensus that medium-density housing, including townhouses, manor houses, secondary dwellings and small walk-ups is essential to affordability and workforce housing.

Current regulatory settings often make these typologies financially unviable in regional markets.

Priority Advocacy Actions

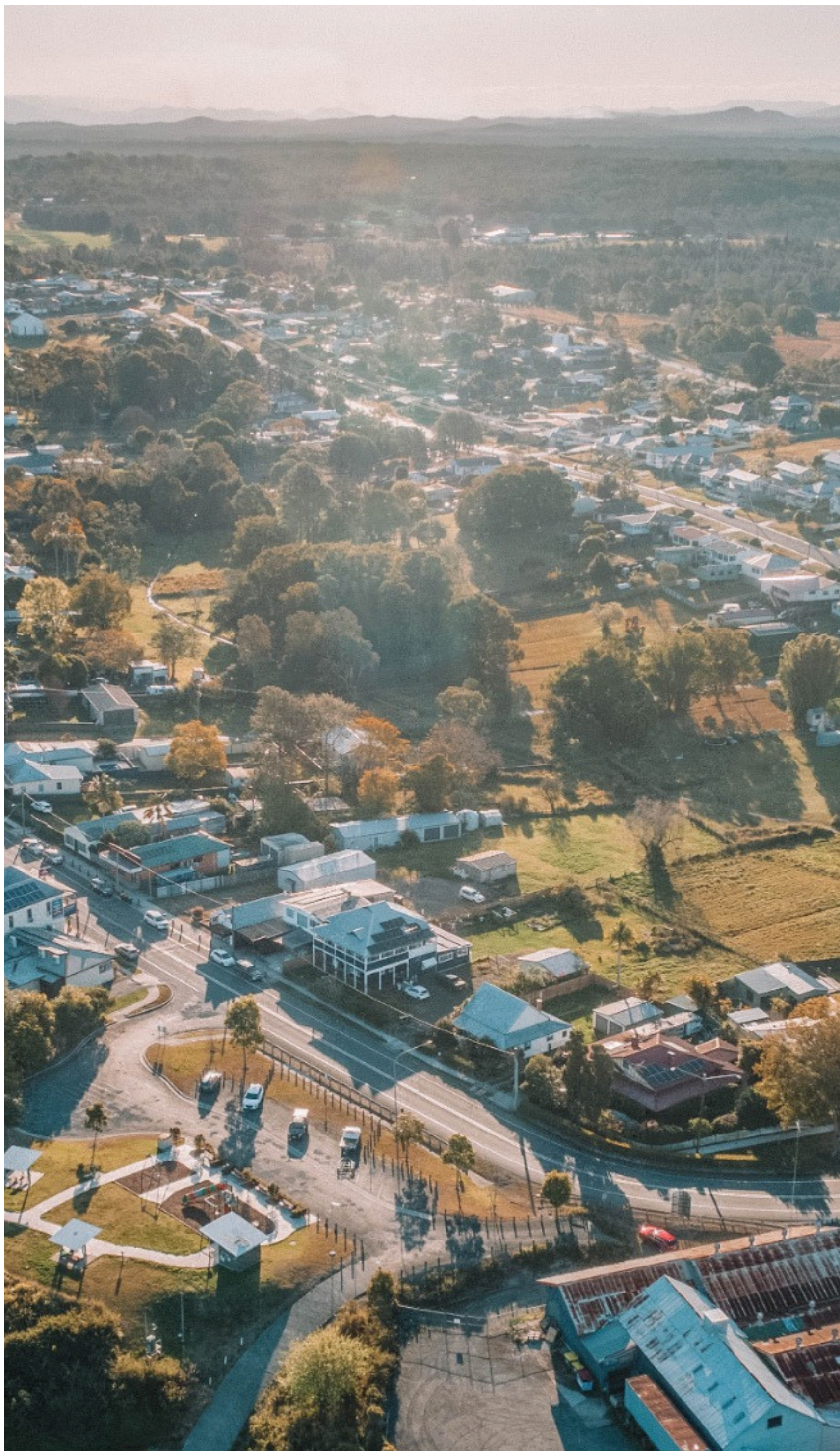
- Incentivise medium-density housing in regional centres.
- Remove regulatory barriers to secondary dwellings and dual occupancies.
- Support council-led infill strategies with infrastructure funding.



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PRIORITY FOUR

Social and Affordable Housing as Economic Infrastructure



Housing underpins services

Essential workers need affordable local housing.

Housing stress is now impacting essential workers, trades and small business employees, undermining service delivery and economic participation.

Summit discussions emphasised the need for new supply, not simply acquisition of existing homes, to avoid displacement effects.

Priority Advocacy Actions

- Increase state investment in new-build social and affordable housing.
- Support inclusionary zoning where viable, with regional flexibility.
- Enable partnerships between councils, community housing providers and industry.

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PRIORITY FIVE

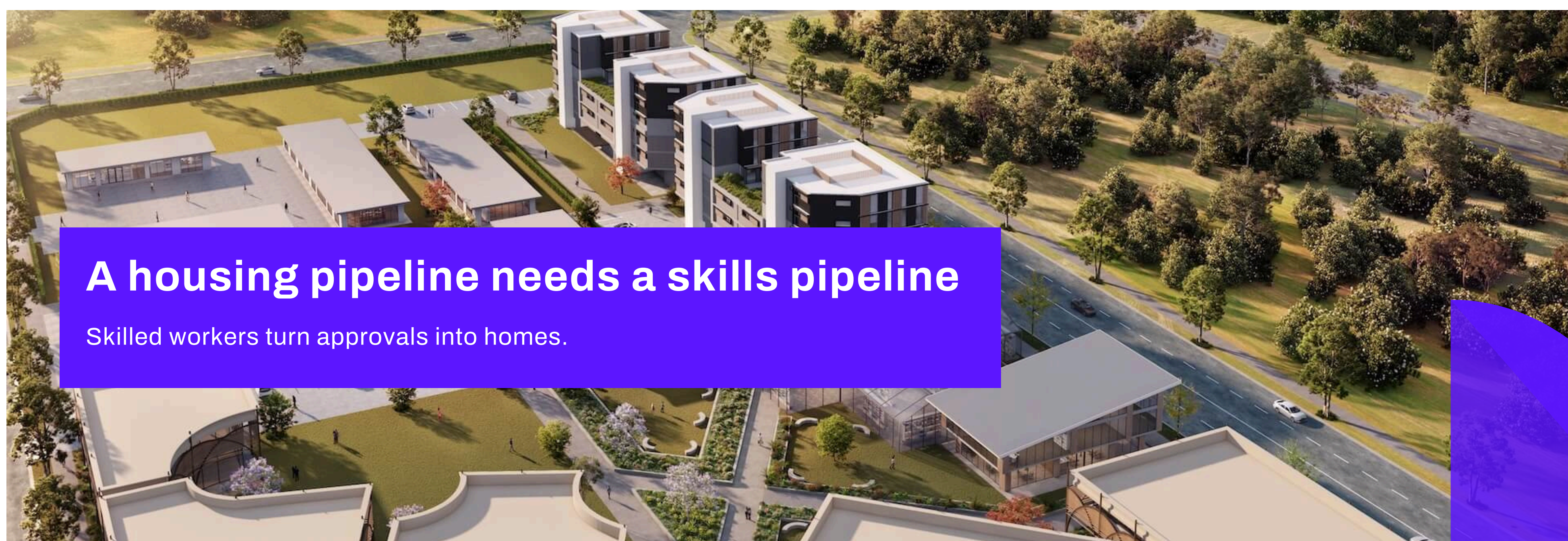
Skills Pathways: Building the Workforce to Build the Homes

A critical insight reinforced at both the Summit and by skills and training stakeholders was that housing delivery is constrained by workforce shortages, particularly in construction and certification roles.

Even with land and approvals in place, the region lacks the skilled workers required to meet demand.

Priority Advocacy Actions

- Expand regional construction apprenticeships and traineeships.
- Improve access to TAFE and non-TAFE training locally.
- Support attraction and relocation of skilled tradespeople to the Mid North Coast.
- Align housing targets with workforce planning.
- Reduce the regulatory and liability burdens on private certifiers and bring NSW into line with other states by permitting certifiers to provide compliance advice.



Conclusion: A Coordinated Regional Call to Action

The Mid North Coast is aligned, ready and willing to deliver housing but cannot do so without structural reform and investment.

Business NSW Mid North Coast calls on all political parties to commit to:

- 1

Funding enabling infrastructure
- 2

Regional-appropriate planning reform
- 3

Housing diversity and affordability
- 4

Investment in social and affordable housing
- 5

A skilled workforce pipeline

These priorities are essential not just for housing, but for the economic future of the Mid North Coast.



BUSINESS NSW

This document has been compiled by Business NSW Mid North Coast, drawing on feedback from businesses, stakeholders and government representatives across the region. It identifies the key advocacy priorities required to address housing and infrastructure challenges and support the long-term economic future of the Mid North Coast.

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