

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA SOUTHERN NSW & ACT

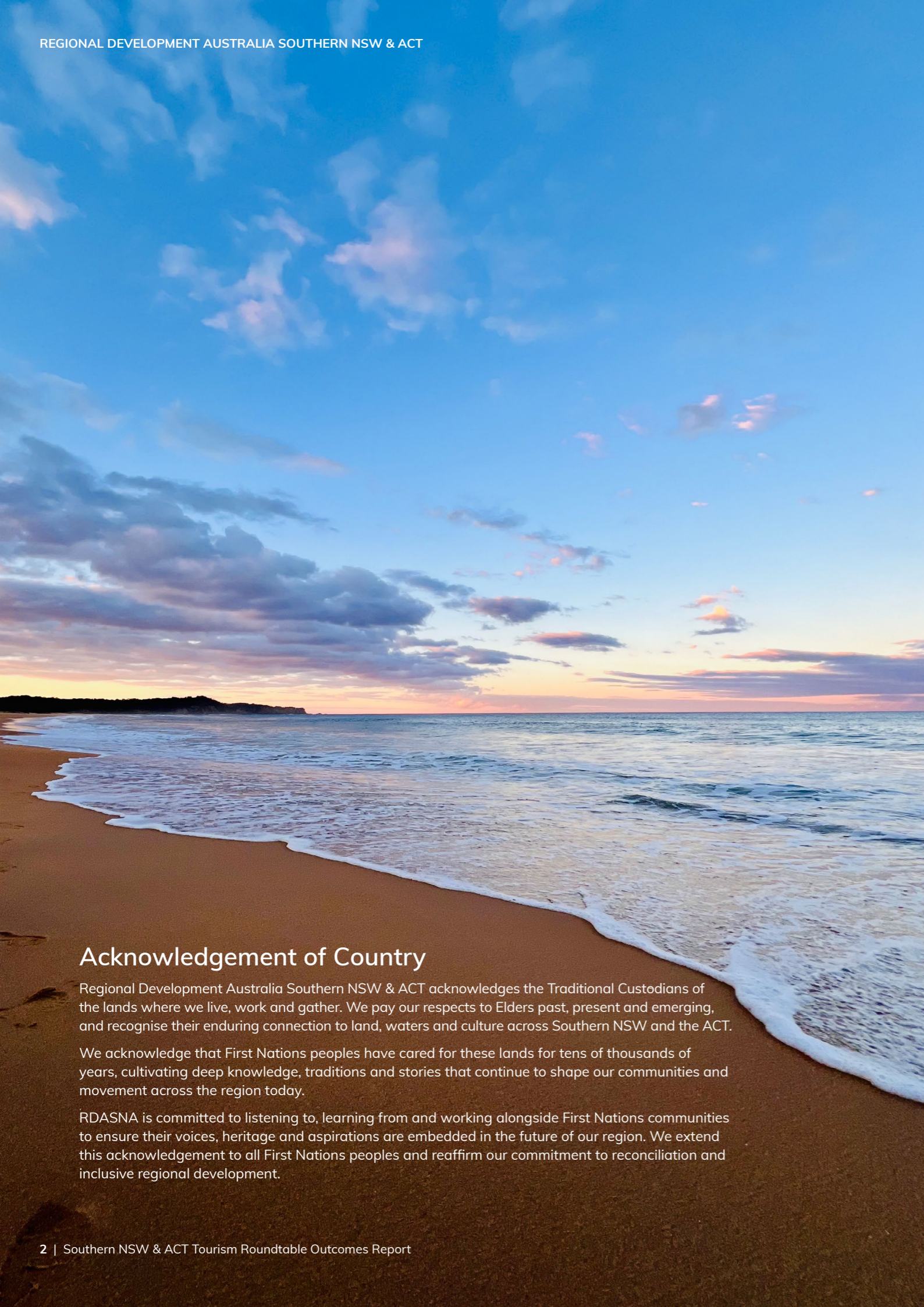
Southern NSW & ACT Tourism Roundtable Outcomes Report



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Acknowledgement of Country

Regional Development Australia Southern NSW & ACT acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we live, work and gather. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging, and recognise their enduring connection to land, waters and culture across Southern NSW and the ACT.

We acknowledge that First Nations peoples have cared for these lands for tens of thousands of years, cultivating deep knowledge, traditions and stories that continue to shape our communities and movement across the region today.

RDASNA is committed to listening to, learning from and working alongside First Nations communities to ensure their voices, heritage and aspirations are embedded in the future of our region. We extend this acknowledgement to all First Nations peoples and reaffirm our commitment to reconciliation and inclusive regional development.

Regional Development Australia Southern NSW & ACT

Regional Development Australia Southern NSW & ACT (RDASNA) is a federally funded initiative that works with industry, communities and all levels of government to support sustainable economic and social growth across the region. As part of the national Regional Development Australia network, RDASNA advocates for place-based decision-making and locally informed approaches to regional development.

RDASNA's role is to identify regional strengths, challenges and opportunities and to facilitate collaboration that enables investment, workforce development and long-term economic resilience. We work across sectors to support strategic planning, inform policy and connect stakeholders to deliver outcomes that strengthen regional communities.

The RDASNA region encompasses the Australian Capital Territory and nine New South Wales Local Government Areas: Bega Valley, Eurobodalla, Goulburn Mulwaree, Hilltops, Queanbeyan–Palerang, Snowy Monaro, Upper Lachlan, Wingecarribee and Yass Valley. The region spans more than 56,000 square kilometres and is home to over 773,000 people, incorporating a diverse mix of urban centres, regional cities, coastal destinations and rural communities.

In this context, RDASNA convenes strategic forums, such as the Tourism Roundtable, to bring stakeholders together to explore system-level challenges and support coordinated regional responses.

Key Infrastructure

- Passenger Airport
- Port
- Rail
- Base Hospital
- Tertiary Education
- Metropolitan City
- Strategic Centre
- Centre

Industries

- Agriculture
- Dairy Industry
- Aquaculture
- Defence & Space
- Mining
- Manufacturing
- Mountain Biking
- Renewable Energy
- Wine Industry
- Ski Resorts

Projects

- Snowy Hydro
- Southern Highlands Innovation Park
- One Raceway
- National Circularity Centre
- Australian Agriculture Centre
- Woodlawn Eco Precinct
- South Jerrabomberra Regional Job Precinct
- Snowy Mountains Special Activation Precinct

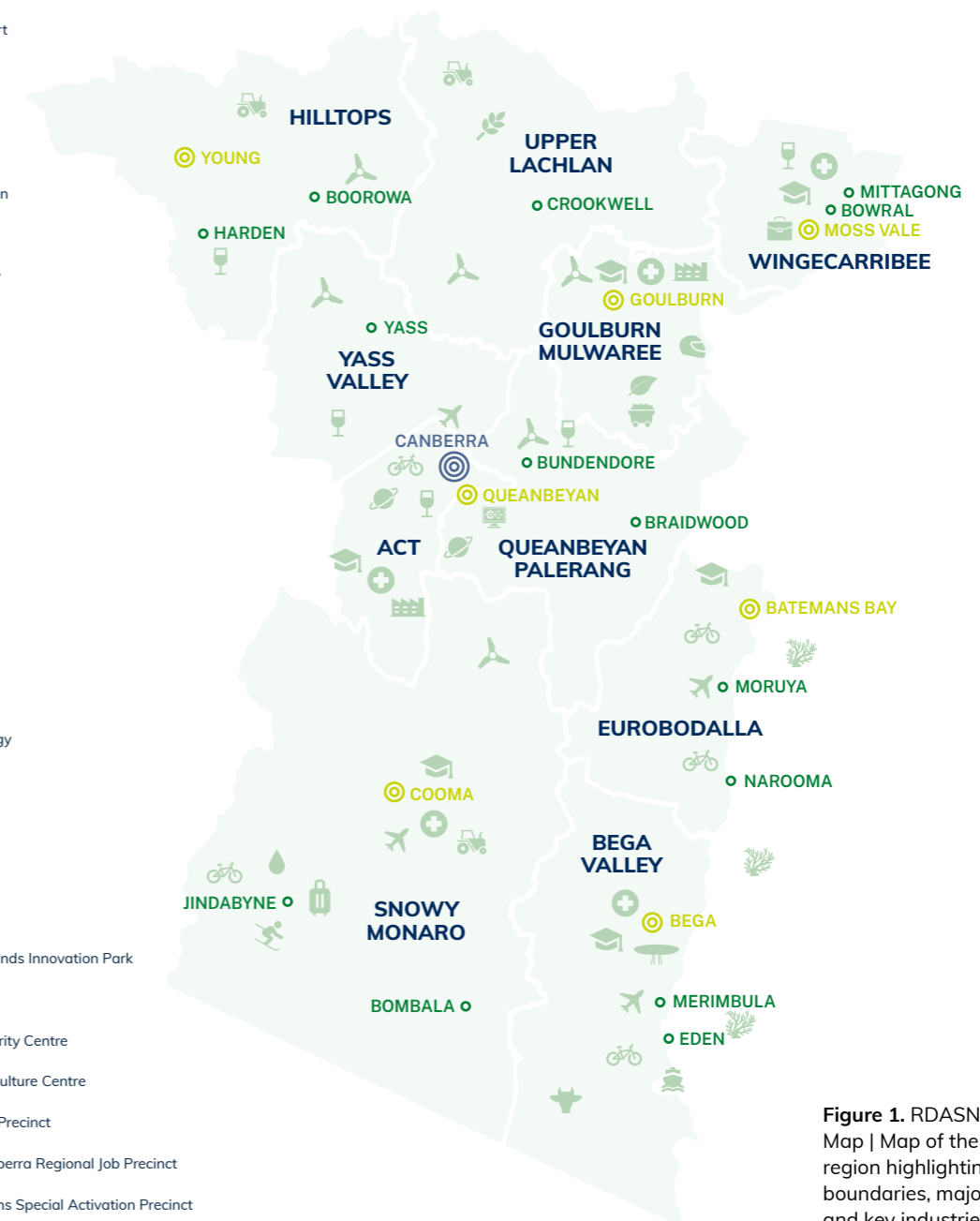


Figure 1. RDASNA Regional Map | Map of the RDASNA region highlighting LGA boundaries, major towns and key industries.

Executive Summary

Tourism is a significant contributor to the economy of Southern NSW and the ACT, supporting jobs, local businesses and community vitality across a diverse and geographically complex region. However, the Southern NSW & ACT Tourism Roundtable highlighted that the long-term performance of the visitor economy is increasingly shaped by broader regional systems and development pressures. These issues extend beyond tourism alone and require coordinated, cross-sector responses.

Participants consistently described a visitor economy with strong underlying assets but constrained by fragmentation. While the region offers strong natural, cultural and event-based attractions, challenges relating to connectivity, collaboration and consistency were seen to limit dispersal, length of stay and business confidence. Many of the issues raised were not operational in nature, but systemic, reflecting the way decisions, funding and responsibilities are distributed across governments, organisations and jurisdictions.

A key theme emerging from the Roundtable was the need to shift from place-based and siloed approaches toward more integrated, journey-based and system-led planning. Participants emphasised the importance of aligning transport, workforce, branding, investment and regulatory settings to better reflect how visitors move through the region and how businesses operate across seasons and borders. Collaboration, coordination and shared accountability were repeatedly identified as critical enablers of sustainable growth.

This Outcomes Report synthesises the key insights from the Roundtable and highlights how system-wide challenges and opportunities were experienced across different topic areas. It is intended to provide a shared evidence base to support advocacy, inform decision-making and guide coordinated action by industry, governments and regional organisations, alongside the more detailed analysis contained in the Southern NSW & ACT Tourism Roundtable Qualitative Insights Report.



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Purpose of the Tourism Roundtable

Tourism plays a vital role in the economy of Southern NSW and the ACT, supporting local employment, attracting investment and contributing to the vitality of towns and communities across the region. However, the visitor economy does not operate in isolation. Its performance is closely linked to broader regional systems, including housing, workforce availability, transport connectivity, infrastructure and the impacts of climate change.

Regional Development Australia Southern NSW & ACT convened the Southern NSW & ACT Tourism Roundtable as a strategic forum to connect national, regional and local tourism stakeholders and enable deeper discussion on the structural and system-wide challenges shaping the visitor economy. The Roundtable was designed to complement and build on existing tourism strategies and industry initiatives, providing a platform for shared learning, cross-sector conversations and real-time prioritisation.

Participants explored common challenges, tested assumptions and identified opportunities to strengthen coordination and long-term outcomes across the region. Supported by Destination Southern NSW, Destination Sydney Surrounds South, VisitCanberra and the Canberra Region Tourism Leaders Forum, the event encouraged collaboration across jurisdictions and sectors, expanding on existing regional and destination-level work.

As Olivia West, Chief Executive Officer of Regional Development Australia Southern NSW & ACT, noted:

“Tourism is deeply interconnected with broader regional systems and development pressures. The Roundtable aimed to understand these challenges, uncover opportunities and identify actionable solutions that can deliver both immediate and long-term benefits to the visitor economy.”



A key point of difference for the Roundtable was the inclusion of a structured, facilitated session based on key topics shaped by participant input. For each topic, participants actively identified priority challenges, tested ideas and developed potential solutions through a guided process. This method ensured that the outcomes reflected lived experiences across the region while focusing on actions capable of driving systemic change.

The insights captured through the Roundtable, alongside existing industry data and strategic analysis, underpin this Outcomes Report. The findings provide a shared evidence base that industry can leverage to advocate for change, operators can use to inform decision-making and governments can reference to support coordinated action across the visitor economy. Together, they inform ongoing efforts to strengthen the resilience, sustainability and long-term performance of the visitor economy across Southern NSW and the ACT.

What We Heard

The Roundtable brought together tourism operators, regional organisations, industry groups, and representatives from all levels of government. Participants were asked to reflect on the challenges shaping the visitor economy and to identify opportunities and actions that could support stronger, more sustainable outcomes.

Across discussions, participants consistently described an asset and experience-dense visitor economy constrained by structural issues that limit its ability to operate as a cohesive, year-round system. While challenges were often experienced at an operational level, the themes that emerged point clearly to system-wide drivers and the need for coordinated, enabling responses.

A fragmented and highly seasonal visitor economy

The most consistent theme raised through the Roundtable was the impact of fragmentation and seasonality across the visitor economy. Participants described a system made up of strong individual destinations, experiences and operators, but one that lacks sufficient coordination across planning, promotion, transport, workforce and investment.

Seasonal patterns of demand were seen to exacerbate this fragmentation, concentrating visitation in peak periods and locations while limiting the viability of year-round operations elsewhere. This volatility was identified as a key constraint on business confidence, long-term investment and the ability to sustain high-quality visitor experiences across the region.

Connectivity and experience integration as critical constraints

Poor connectivity, both physical and experiential, was consistently identified as a barrier to dispersal, longer stays and smoother visitor journeys. Participants highlighted gaps in transport options, limited integration between destinations and inconsistent wayfinding and visitor information.

Despite the strength of individual attractions, the lack of integrated experience planning was seen to reduce the overall value of the visitor offering. Participants emphasised that better connection of existing assets, rather than creating new ones, represents a significant opportunity to address seasonality and improve the performance of the visitor economy as a whole.

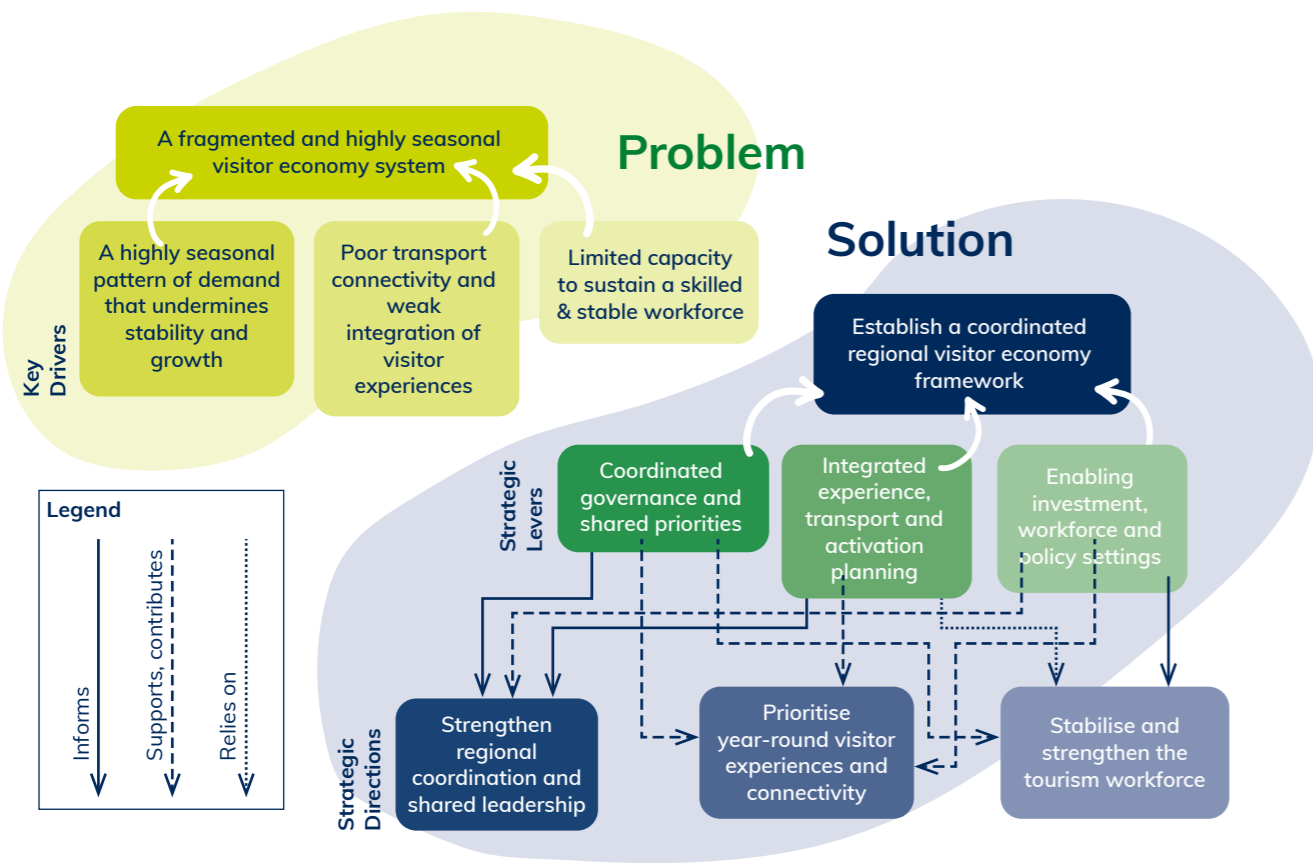


Figure 2 Summary of the engagement findings, illustrating the relationship between the central problem, key drivers, emerging solution, strategic levers and strategic directions.

Workforce instability as both a cause and consequence

Workforce challenges were raised across all discussions and were closely linked to both seasonality and fragmentation. Participants described difficulties attracting and retaining skilled workers in an environment characterised by short seasons, limited housing options and constrained mobility between locations and roles.

Importantly, workforce issues were not viewed as a standalone problem. Instead, participants consistently framed workforce instability as both a cause and a consequence of broader system performance. Without more consistent demand and coordinated planning, the visitor economy struggles to offer secure employment, clear career pathways and the conditions needed to support a stable workforce.

A clear shift toward system-level solutions

While participants articulated challenges grounded in day-to-day experience, there was a clear shift in focus when discussing solutions. Rather than prioritising individual projects or isolated initiatives, participants consistently emphasised the need for improved coordination, shared priorities and enabling frameworks that support collaboration.

Governance, policy alignment, investment settings and regional coordination were repeatedly identified as critical levers for change. This reflects a shared understanding that meaningful improvement in the visitor economy will depend on how well the system functions as a whole, rather than on the performance of any single component.

This section provides a high-level synthesis of the key themes emerging from the Tourism Roundtable. More detailed qualitative analysis, including topic-level insights, thematic coding and supporting data, is provided in the Southern NSW & ACT Tourism Roundtable: Qualitative Insights Report.



Topic Overview

The following section provides an overview of the topics discussed during the Roundtable. Across the facilitated discussions, each of the twelve tables covered one of nine topic areas. Due to popularity, several topics were explored across more than one table. Where this occurred, each table has been presented as a separate overview, reflecting that distinct challenges, opportunities and perspectives were raised in each table discussion. For clarity and consistency, the top three challenges identified at each table have been drawn directly from participant voting, with minor edits to grammar, spelling and sentence structure.

These topic overviews illustrate how the system-wide issues identified in What We Heard played out across different lenses, places and stakeholder groups. They are intended to capture the breadth of discussion and participant voice rather than provide exhaustive analysis or prioritisation.

The topic overviews provide a practical evidence base that informs the strategic directions that follow, while remaining closely grounded in the lived experience and insights shared during the Roundtable.



Transport and Visitor Linkages

Participants consistently highlighted transport as a foundational issue shaping both visitor experience and regional liveability. Discussion focused on the lack of end-to-end transport options connecting airports, transport hubs, towns and attractions, and the way fragmented transport systems limit visitor dispersal, workforce participation and business growth. Participants noted that destinations beyond major centres are often difficult to access without a private vehicle, which can deter visitation and constrain regional opportunities.

Key challenges

- A lack of transport connectivity poses a barrier to both visitors and communities, affecting their ability to live, experience and thrive in the destination.
- Developing a strong end-to-end transport experience for all visitors.
- Improving connectivity between Canberra and the surrounding region to better leverage tourism and business opportunities.

Discussions highlighted opportunities to enhance transport outcomes through improved coordination, point-to-point services, and seasonal shuttles. Also, a stronger collaboration between government and industry to trial solutions that meet local demand, rather than applying a one-size-fits-all approach, was discussed.

Participants emphasised

Improving transport connectivity is not just a visitor issue, but a system-wide enabler that affects workforce access, experience clustering, dispersal and the long-term viability of the visitor economy.

Communication & Connectivity

Participants identified communication and connectivity as vital enablers for both visitor experience and business operations across the region. Discussion highlighted inconsistent signage and wayfinding, along with gaps in digital connectivity and mobile coverage. Limited coordination regarding how information is shared with visitors, especially during road works, events and disruptions, was also raised. These issues were seen to affect visitor confidence, length of stay and the ability of regional communities to promote experiences beyond their immediate area.

Key challenges

- Inconsistent signage and wayfinding across the region.
- Gaps in digital connectivity, including mobile and internet coverage.
- Fragmented communication and information-sharing, including limited real-time updates about road works, events and local activity.

Discussions pointed to opportunities to improve communication outcomes through more consistent regional approaches to signage and wayfinding and better use of digital tools such as QR codes and online maps. Stronger coordination between councils, destination organisations and industry to share timely, relevant information was also proposed.

Participants emphasised

Clear, consistent communication and reliable connectivity underpin visitor confidence, support dispersal and enable regional businesses and communities to better connect with markets and each other.

Investment & Partnerships

Participants highlighted investment and partnerships as critical enablers of a strong and sustainable visitor economy. Discussion focused on the complexity of funding and partnership arrangements. Participants noted that while opportunities exist, navigating investment pathways can be challenging, particularly for smaller operators and regional organisations. Uneven access to marketing investment, support and knowledge was seen to limit collaboration, confidence and the ability to scale tourism initiatives across the region.

Key challenges

- Lack of marketing investment and the complexity and inequity of partnerships.
- Complexity of partnership options, including a lack of access to the right support, creates barriers.
- Lack of industry knowledge across investment and outcome potentials.

Discussions pointed to opportunities to improve investment outcomes through clearer partnership models and stronger collaboration between councils, destination organisations and industry. Mechanisms to pool or distribute funding more equitably to support destination marketing and product development were important to participants.

Participants emphasised

Improving access to investment and simplifying partnership pathways would support collaboration, unlock regional potential and enable more coordinated, long-term growth of the visitor economy.

Cultural Tourism

Participants discussed cultural tourism as an under-recognised but high-value contributor to the visitor economy, closely linked to community identity, heritage and creative industries. Discussion focused on the need for stronger connections between the arts, culture and tourism sectors. A greater recognition of cultural assets beyond built heritage, including living traditions, creative practice and local stories, was also discussed. Participants noted that cultural tourism is often constrained by fragmented funding, limited coordination and a lack of shared understanding across sectors.

Key challenges

- Building better connections between the arts, culture and tourism sectors.
- Supporting stakeholders to work together, share resources and build community-led cultural tourism experiences.
- Implementation challenges and costs associated with cultural tourism.

Discussions highlighted opportunities to strengthen cultural tourism through deeper engagement with creative communities, improved collaboration between councils, destination organisations and cultural practitioners. Approaches that value cultural assets as both economic and community drivers were prioritised.

Participants emphasised

Cultural tourism plays a critical role in place identity and year-round visitation, and requires coordinated, cross-sector approaches to unlock its full potential.

24-Hour Economy

Participants discussed the 24-hour economy as an opportunity to enhance town vibrancy, extend visitor spend and support local businesses, particularly outside peak daytime hours. Discussion focused on the regulatory and practical barriers that can limit businesses' ability to operate later or more flexibly, including approval processes, compliance requirements and community safety considerations. Participants noted that these challenges vary by place but can constrain experimentation and collaboration at a local level.

Key challenges

- Working with government, council and regulators to help remove barriers for business.
- Red tape and regulations that can inhibit operators, such as noise, alcohol, lighting and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) requirements.
- Encouraging small businesses to open more often, including additional or longer days.

Discussions pointed to opportunities to support a stronger 24-hour economy through clearer guidance and communication from councils, more flexible and coordinated approval processes, and targeted funding or grants. A collaborative approach, such as shared trading hours, rolling events and place-based initiatives, was suggested.

Participants emphasised

Enabling a 24-hour economy requires place-based solutions, collaboration with regulators and a balance between economic activity, community amenity and safety.

Events & Experience Sustainability

Participants discussed events and experiences as vital contributors to visitation, community identity and regional economies, while noting ongoing challenges in making them financially and operationally sustainable. Discussion focused on the need for stronger collaboration between councils, event organisers and local businesses. The impact of regulatory burden, infrastructure constraints and volunteer capacity on event viability was also examined. Participants noted that while events deliver significant local benefits, the systems supporting them are often fragmented.

Key challenges

- Collaboration between councils, event organisers and other local businesses.
- Cutting red tape and ensuring events are financially sustainable.
- Regional collaboration.

Discussions highlighted opportunities to improve event sustainability through clearer and more consistent council processes, reduced administrative burden, and improved planning and infrastructure. Mechanisms such as levies or targeted funding to reinvest in events and visitor infrastructure were proposed.

Participants emphasised

Sustainable events rely on coordinated planning, streamlined processes and shared responsibility between government, industry and communities to deliver long-term regional benefits.



Branding & Regional Identity

Participants on the first table discussed branding through the lens of scale and complexity, noting the challenge of representing a large and diverse region with multiple destination brands, geographies and visitor markets. Discussion focused on the difficulty of creating cohesion across VisitCanberra, Destination Networks and individual LGAs, while still allowing places to retain their distinct identities. Participants highlighted tensions between geographic branding and experience-led marketing and the need to better align branding with how visitors actually travel and consume experiences.

Key challenges

- The size and diversity of the region, with multiple destination brands creating complexity for visitors.
- Shifting from geography-led branding to experience-led approaches, prioritising experiences over administrative boundaries.
- Lack of shared frameworks and buy-in across stakeholders, limiting cohesion and collaboration.

Discussions pointed to opportunities to strengthen regional identity through experience-based pillars, shared narratives and collaborative approaches that allow operators and destinations to participate without losing local distinctiveness.

Participants emphasised

A clearer, experience-led regional identity could improve visitor understanding, reduce duplication and support collaboration across the visitor economy.

Participants at the second table focused on branding as a tool to support dispersal, seasonality management and cross-border collaboration. Discussion highlighted the challenge of linking diverse offerings across regions and jurisdictions into a coherent visitor journey. Participants noted that current branding approaches do not always align with consumer behaviour, making it harder to guide visitors across multiple destinations.

Key challenges

- Linking diverse offerings while managing seasonality and regional boundaries.
- Creating a single identity when the region is diverse, including city, coast and bush.
- Developing regional identity with state and national strategies, while retaining local relevance.

Discussions highlighted opportunities to create unified journeys, touring routes and experience-based itineraries that encourage dispersal. Participants emphasised that efforts to encourage dispersal should be supported by consistent branding and collaboration across councils, destination organisations and governments.

Participants emphasised

Effective regional branding should reflect how visitors travel, support cross-border collaboration and help connect places into coherent, compelling journeys.

Seasonality & Dispersal

Participants on the first table discussed seasonality as a structural challenge affecting business viability, workforce stability and regional confidence. The conversation focused on the concentration of visitation into short peak periods and the difficulty of sustaining operations, staffing and investment during shoulder and off-peak seasons. Participants noted that seasonality is often treated as a marketing problem, when in reality it reflects deeper product, access and experience design issues.

Key challenges

- Smoothing seasonality and better dispersing visitation to maximise growth during peak periods, while developing new off-season products.
- Growing demand to meet seasonality challenges.
- Learning how to understand and adapt to marketplace demand across the year.

Discussions highlighted opportunities to grow off-season travel through targeted product development, experience-led itineraries, pricing incentives and clearer articulation of the benefits of travelling in shoulder seasons.

Participants emphasised

Addressing seasonality requires coordinated product, experience and marketing responses, not promotion alone.

The second discussion focused on seasonality through the lens of demand creation, workforce impacts and dispersal beyond major centres. Participants highlighted the “feast and famine” nature of visitation and its effect on staffing, business confidence and service continuity. Strong emphasis was placed on demonstrating the value of off-peak travel and creating clear triggers that motivate visitation during quieter periods.

Key challenges

- Driving demand for off-peak travel, including clearly communicating the benefits of travelling at those times.
- Expectations that marketing can address seasonality without appropriate product development.
- Fluctuations in seasonal trade are impacting staffing and business viability.

Participants identified opportunities in off-season product development, visitation triggers such as events and themed experiences and better use of rail trails and slow tourism. A stronger NSW–ACT collaboration to support dispersal and winter travel was also discussed as an opportunity.

Participants emphasised

Successful dispersal and off-season growth depend on clear triggers, cross-regional collaboration and aligning products with the needs of off-peak travellers.



Workforce

Participants discussed workforce challenges through the lens of attraction, accessibility and retention, particularly for younger people and seasonal workers. The conversation focused on the perception of tourism as a temporary or low-value career, difficulties getting to work, and the lack of coordinated pathways that allow workers to move across regions or roles. Participants noted that workforce issues are closely tied to transport, training, housing and taxation settings, which together shape whether people are willing and able to participate in the tourism workforce.

Key challenges

- Changing the perception that a career in tourism is only for young people or a temporary job.
- Lack of coordination across the region to create more enticing, year-round employment opportunities for younger workers.
- How to attract and retain staff.

Discussions highlighted opportunities to improve workforce outcomes through regional collaboration, incentives for workers and employers, improved job-matching tools, and clearer pathways that enable people to move between roles and regions.

Participants emphasised

Addressing workforce challenges requires coordinated, system-wide responses rather than isolated, business-by-business solutions.

The second table's discussion centred on how evolving workforce expectations are transforming tourism and hospitality, especially regarding flexibility, lifestyle, and long-term career pathways. Participants highlighted that today's workforce values work-life balance, meaningful experiences and progression opportunities. The tourism industry must adapt to remain attractive. Strong emphasis was placed on how seasonality, visa regulations, taxation of second jobs and accommodation supply affect workforce participation.

Key challenges

- The changing expectations of what a career in tourism and hospitality looks like in today's workforce.
- Seasonality, visa costs and accommodation issues affecting workforce stability in regional Australia.
- Industry understanding and adopting methods of how the next generation is willing to work.

Participants identified opportunities to promote tourism careers more effectively, enhance training and education pathways, reduce regulatory and tax barriers, and support long-term career growth to strengthen workforce resilience.

Participants emphasised

The future tourism workforce will depend on the industry's ability to adapt to changing expectations and create viable, long-term career pathways in regional communities.

Strategic Directions

The strategic directions set out below represent a synthesis of the solution-focused insights generated through the Tourism Roundtable. They reflect where participants most consistently identified collective effort is likely to deliver meaningful improvement to the visitor economy across Southern NSW and the ACT.

Rather than prescribing specific projects or sequencing, the directions articulate priority focus areas for coordinated action. They are intended to guide future planning, investment and collaboration, informed by the evidence and perspectives captured through the Roundtable.

Strengthen regional coordination and shared leadership

Improved regional coordination emerged as the most critical enabler of system-level change. Participants consistently identified fragmented decision-making, unclear roles and misaligned priorities as barriers to progress across the visitor economy.

This direction reflects a shared view that more precise coordination and shared leadership are foundational to addressing challenges related to seasonality, connectivity and workforce stability. Participants emphasised the importance of agreed regional priorities, aligned planning across jurisdictions and sectors, and mechanisms that support regular collaboration and joint decision-making.

Importantly, this direction is not about creating new layers of governance. Instead, it focuses on using existing structures and organisations more effectively, supported by more explicit mandates, shared objectives and consistent ways of working.

Stabilise and strengthen the tourism workforce

Workforce stability was consistently framed as both a constraint on and an outcome of visitor economy performance. Participants highlighted that workforce challenges cannot be addressed in isolation and are closely tied to seasonality, demand patterns, housing availability and mobility.

This direction reflects a shared view that improving workforce stability requires coordinated, region-wide approaches that support more consistent demand, clearer employment pathways and greater workforce mobility across locations and seasons. Participants emphasised the importance of collaboration between industry, training providers and governments to support skills development, retention and long-term career viability within the visitor economy.

While workforce outcomes were often framed as a medium- to long-term priority, participants also identified the value of early action to improve confidence, retention and service quality as foundations for sustained growth.

Prioritise year-round visitor experiences and connectivity

Participants consistently highlighted the need to improve how visitor experiences are planned, connected and accessed across the region. This direction consolidates insights relating to experience integration, transport connectivity, wayfinding, visitor information and seasonal activation.

Improving the connectivity of the visitor journey was seen as a high-impact opportunity to address seasonality, support dispersal and extend visitor stays, without reliance on significant new assets. Participants emphasised the value of better linking existing destinations, attractions and events through coordinated itineraries, trails and transport planning.

This direction reflects a shift from place-based thinking toward journey-based planning, with a focus on creating seamless, intuitive pathways that encourage visitors to move across the region and engage beyond peak periods and hero destinations.





What Happens Next?

The Tourism Roundtable Outcomes Report provides a shared evidence base to support informed decision-making across the visitor economy in Southern NSW and the ACT. It is intended to be used by industry, governments and regional organisations to guide policy development, investment decisions and collaborative initiatives aligned with their respective roles and responsibilities.

The strategic directions outlined in this report reflect where participants identified the greatest potential for system-level improvement. They are designed to inform ongoing work across the sector rather than prescribe specific actions or projects, recognising that delivery will occur through a range of existing strategies, programs and partnerships.

Regional Development Australia Southern NSW & ACT will use the outcomes of the Roundtable to:

- share evidence-based insights with government, industry and regional stakeholders
- provide advice and recommendations that support place-based approaches to regional economic development
- contribute to collaboration and coordination by connecting stakeholders and supporting informed dialogue across jurisdictions and sectors
- integrate the findings into RDASNA's broader economic development, workforce and infrastructure work where there is clear alignment.

The outcomes of the Tourism Roundtable are already informing RDASNA's ongoing advocacy and policy input. Insights were used to support a submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Trade and Investment Growth inquiry into creating sustainable economic growth in rural and regional Australia, demonstrating the immediate relevance of the findings to national discussions on regional development.

More broadly, this report is intended to act as a reference point for future discussions and work across the visitor economy, supporting continued collaboration and evidence-led responses to shared challenges. By providing a common understanding of the issues and opportunities identified by stakeholders, the outcomes aim to strengthen alignment and support sustained, coordinated action.

Acknowledgments

Regional Development Australia Southern NSW & ACT would like to thank all participants who contributed their time, experience and insights to the Southern NSW & ACT Tourism Roundtable. The diversity of perspectives represented across operators, councils, destination organisations, industry partners and government agencies was central to the quality of discussion and the outcomes captured in this report.

We also sincerely thank the speakers and panel members who shared their expertise and perspectives throughout the day, helping to frame discussion and deepen understanding across the visitor economy. This included Martin Wisata, Managing Director of Rocky Trail Entertainment; Jonathan Kobus, Executive Branch Manager at VisitCanberra; Stephen Mahoney, General Manager, Policy, Product and Engagement at Destination NSW; and Lauren Douglass, Chief Executive Officer of Australian Regional Tourism. We also acknowledge our panel speakers, Kelly Eastwood, Founder and Chef of Eastwood's Bermagui; Michael Thomson, Head of Aviation at Canberra Airport; and Kathryn Carling, Area General Manager Canberra at Doma Hotels, for their valuable insights grounded in on-the-ground industry experience.

We are grateful for the support of our event partners and sponsors, including the ACT Government, Canberra Airport, Business NSW, NBN and Telstra, whose support made the Roundtable possible.

We also acknowledge our delivery partners Destination Southern NSW, Destination Sydney Surrounds South, VisitCanberra and the Canberra Region Tourism Leaders Forum for their collaboration and leadership across the visitor economy.

Finally, we thank Purdon for facilitating the Roundtable discussions and preparing the Qualitative Insights Report, and Camilla Duffy for the photography captured on the day, which is used throughout this report.



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