



Draft Economic Development and Investment Attraction Strategy

2026 - 2029



Wodonga Council acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the First Peoples of the Country. We also acknowledge them as Traditional Owners and Custodians across various lands. We pay our respect to their Ancestors, Elders, children and young people. We acknowledge the strength and resilience of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and recognise their continuous connections to lands, waters and communities across the country.

Vision and objectives

Vision

To position Wodonga as Australia's leading regional growth city, attracting investment, talent and opportunity at a scale that transforms the economy and allows for all Wodonga residents to share in the economic growth.

Objectives



Strategic objective 1: Win investment

Position Wodonga as Australia's leading regional growth city through a deliberate, intelligence-led approach to investment attraction. Wodonga Council will target industries and businesses capable of delivering high-value employment, economic diversification, innovation and sustained economic impact.



Strategic objective 2: Build the economy we need next

Maintain Wodonga's investment readiness by identifying emerging industry trends, workforce needs, technological change and infrastructure requirements before they become barriers to growth. Strong networks across industry, government, investors and education providers will generate the intelligence needed to guide planning, advocacy and future investment decisions.



Strategic objective 3: Grow from within

Focus council-support on established, growth-ready businesses seeking to expand, invest, adopt technology or enter new markets. Strong business relationships and local intelligence will help the council to identify investment intentions, remove barriers and retain business growth and employment within Wodonga.

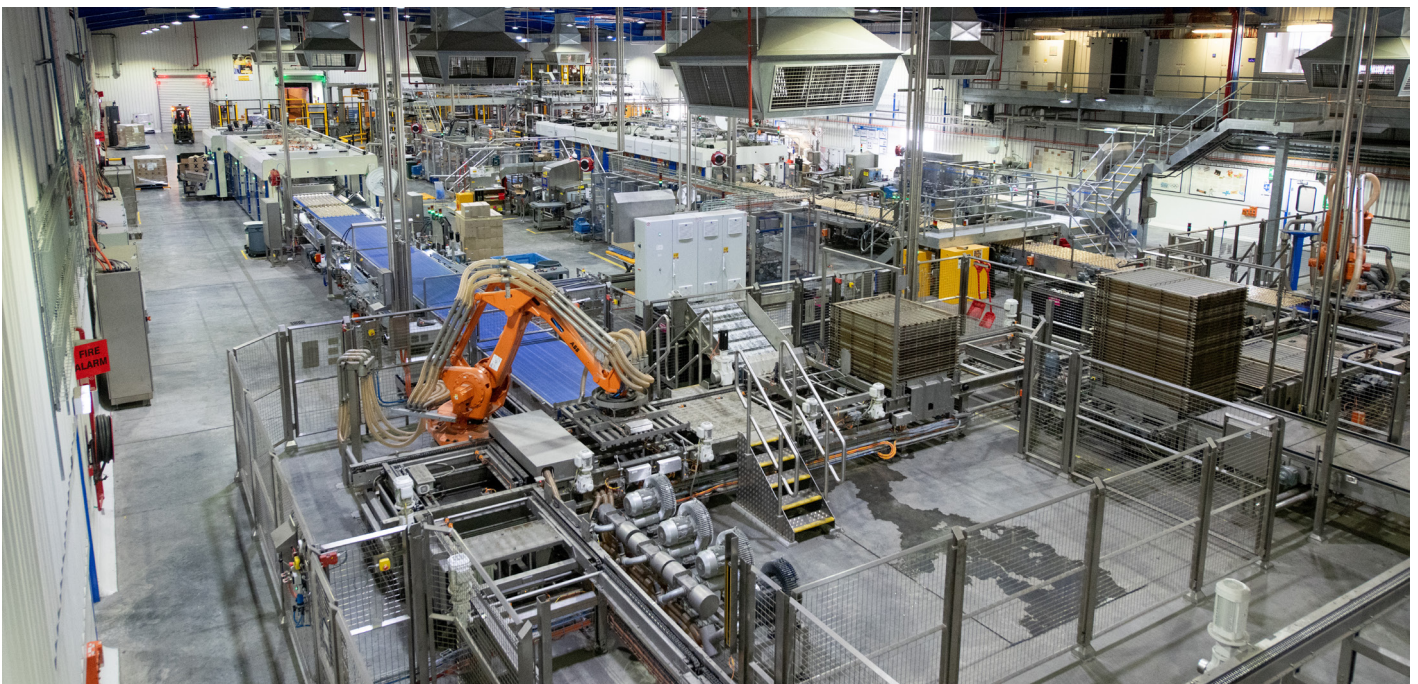
Our approach

Wodonga is experiencing a period of sustained growth and opportunity, underpinned by strong foundations in both economic performance and community wellbeing. This *Economic Development and Investment Attraction Strategy 2026 - 2029* (the Strategy) sets a clear and deliberate direction to build on that momentum - supporting balanced economic, social and cultural growth that enhances liveability, strengthens the local economy and improves the standard of living for the community.

The strategy is built around three interconnected pathways that recognise that sustainable economic growth cannot be achieved through investment attraction alone. To create a stronger and more resilient economy, Wodonga will pursue a balanced approach that attracts new investment and jobs, prepares for emerging industries and future economic opportunities and supports local businesses to innovate, expand and succeed. Together, these pathways ensure the city can grow its economy while building the workforce, infrastructure and business capability needed for long-term prosperity.

The three pathways:

1. **Attract** - focuses on securing new investment, industry and employment opportunities that strengthen Wodonga's economic base.
2. **Prepare** - ensures the city is ready for future industries by anticipating workforce, infrastructure and land requirements before constraints emerge.
3. **Grow** - centred on helping existing businesses invest, innovate and remain in Wodonga, recognising that local businesses are critical drivers of jobs, productivity and economic resilience.



To deliver this strategy, Wodonga Council will focus on three practical actions. We will:

1. **Build and leverage networks** to create access to investment and opportunity.
2. **Reposition Wodonga** to strengthen awareness of the city's advantages and future potential.
3. **Engage Wodonga internally** through structured partnerships with employers, industry leaders and strategic businesses.

Together, these activities turn strategy into action by creating connections, attracting attention and generating growth outcomes for Wodonga.

Wodonga Council will contribute to each action in one of three ways:

1. Deliver - lead and be accountable for the action.
2. Partner - share responsibility with other organisations for the action.
3. Facilitate - enable, connect, advocate or help others progress the action.

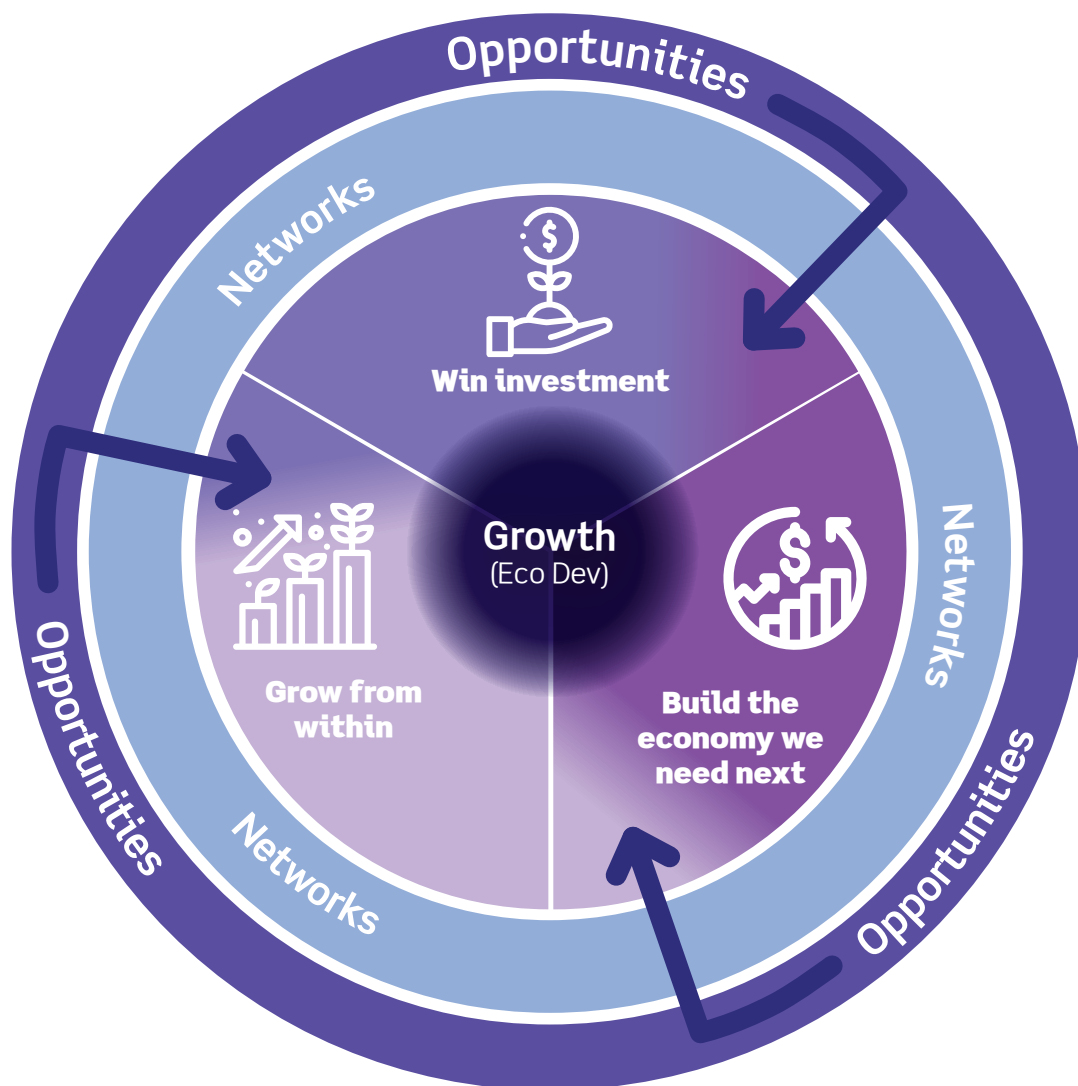


Image: Wodonga Council Economic Development and Investment Attraction Framework

Wodonga's growth will be driven by increased business investment. Wodonga Council's approach to economic development and investment attraction is deliberately structured to cultivate favourable investment conditions. It recognises that opportunities will be identified by establishing extensive networks, strategic partnerships and through ongoing engagement with investors and industry.

This approach reflects a contemporary view of economic development; one that extends beyond traditional investment attraction to encompass workforce capability, infrastructure planning, housing outcomes and community wellbeing. It also reinforces the council's role as an enabler, facilitator and advocate, working in partnership across all levels of government and the private sector to deliver outcomes that would not be achieved in isolation.

A key feature of the Strategy is its focus on integration and alignment. Economic development is positioned as a whole-of-organisation responsibility, requiring coordinated action across planning, infrastructure, community services and advocacy. This ensures that growth is anticipated, planned for and supported in a way that minimises risk and maximises benefit to the community.

This strategy recognises that economic prosperity, driven by jobs, affordable housing and liveability factors such as community and social infrastructure, underpins Wodonga's growth.

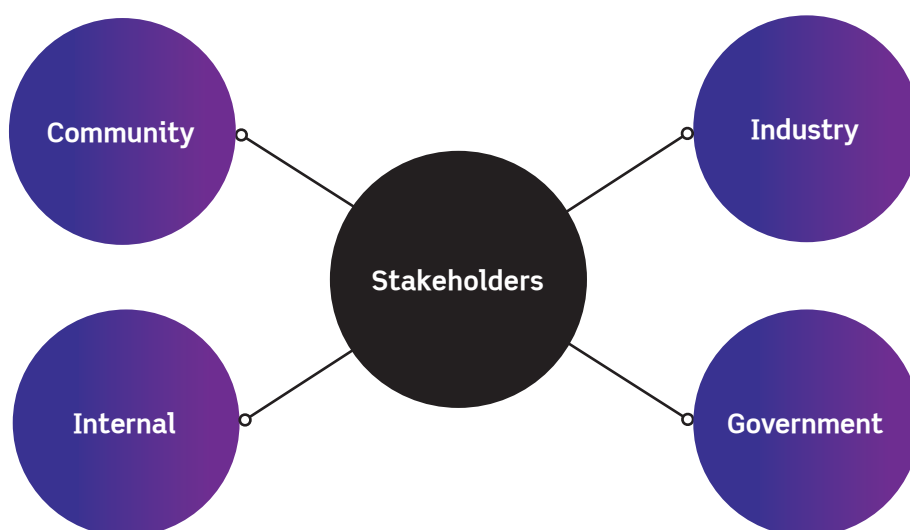
Wodonga Council will unlock land for development and advocate for enabling infrastructure, recognising these are critical to sustaining population growth and maintaining the city's competitive position as a regional destination of choice for investment and workforce attraction.

Ultimately, this Strategy provides a framework for the council to deliver, partner and facilitate growth in a way that balances economic opportunity with community expectations.

By building on existing momentum and maintaining a focus on integrated, evidence-based decision-making, Wodonga is well positioned to strengthen its role as a vibrant, connected and prosperous regional city.



Partnerships for growth



These are the defining attributes that will shape Wodonga Council's reputation among key stakeholders in investment attraction and economic development.

Community	Industry	Government	Internal
Growth that improves everyday quality of life Local jobs, better services, stronger local economy. Balanced and responsible development Managed in a way that protects liveability, amenity and long-term community wellbeing. Transparent about growth impacts Transparent about why growth is needed, what it delivers and how impacts are planned for and managed.	A council that is pro-investment and commercially literate Understands commercial realities, investment timeframes and risk, and engages in a pragmatic, solutions-focused way. Certainty, speed and clarity Clear processes, upfront guidance, timely decision making and minimal surprises. A genuine partner in long term growth Supports workforce attraction, infrastructure planning, advocacy and expansion over time.	A credible delivery partner Demonstrates the capacity to plan, co-fund, deliver and manage complex infrastructure and economic initiatives. Evidence-led and outcomes focused Investment and advocacy positions are grounded in data, regional logic and clearly articulated economic and social outcomes. Regionally collaborative, not parochial Aligns with regional strategies and advocates for solutions that benefit the wider system.	Economic development is a whole of organisation responsibility Coordinated action across planning, infrastructure, finance, community services and advocacy. Shared priorities and early alignment Major growth initiatives are understood early, with departments clear on roles, impacts, dependencies and timing. A culture of enablement, not avoidance Solves problems, managing risk proportionately and supporting good projects to succeed.



Strategic objective 1: Win investment

Compete nationally and internationally for investment, industries and businesses that strengthen Wodonga's economy and create the jobs of the future.

Wodonga will actively compete for investment and industry opportunities that accelerate economic growth, diversify the local economy and create high-value jobs for future generations. Recognising that investment is increasingly mobile and highly competitive, the council will position Wodonga as Australia's leading regional growth city by promoting its strategic location, industrial land supply, transport connectivity, skilled workforce potential and liveability.

This objective moves beyond passive investment attraction and adopts a deliberate, intelligence-led approach to identifying, targeting and securing opportunities that align with Wodonga's long-term economic ambitions. The council will work collaboratively with industry, investors and governments to attract businesses capable of generating significant economic value, innovation and employment outcomes. Particular focus will be placed on industries that strengthen economic resilience and align with emerging opportunities, including advanced manufacturing, logistics, healthcare, clean energy, circular economy industries, technology-enabled services and other future growth sectors.

Success will be measured not only by the volume of investment secured, but by the quality of investment attracted, including job creation, industry diversification, capital expenditure and long-term economic impact. Through a strong investment proposition, proactive engagement and sustained advocacy, Wodonga will establish itself as the destination of choice for businesses seeking to invest, expand and grow. This aligns with the Strategy's ambition to position Wodonga as a leading regional growth city attracting investment, talent and opportunity at a scale that transforms the economy.

Key action		Indicator of success	Council role
1.1	Develop and execute a targeted investment attraction program by identifying and engaging investors, site selectors and businesses in priority sectors.	A credible flow of priority sector investment opportunities progresses from initial engagement to active consideration, site assessment and investment decision, with proposals demonstrating alignment to Wodonga's economic ambitions.	Deliver
1.2	Build and maintain a live investment pipeline, supported by a "One Front Door" investment facilitation service.	The council has a current, decision-ready view of investment opportunities, their stage, barriers and next steps, and investors experience a coordinated and responsive pathway through the council.	Deliver
1.3	Promote Wodonga's competitive investment proposition nationally and internationally through campaigns, prospectuses and targeted industry engagement.	Wodonga is recognised by target industries, investors and intermediaries as a credible regional investment location, generating well-aligned enquiries and deeper engagement with prospective investors.	Deliver



Strategic objective 2: Build the economy we need next

Anticipate the industries, infrastructure, workforce and development conditions Wodonga will need to compete over the next decade.

Economic success over the next decade will depend not only on the businesses Wodonga attracts today, but on how effectively the city prepares for the opportunities of tomorrow. This objective focuses on ensuring Wodonga remains investment-ready by proactively planning for the industries, workforce capabilities, infrastructure and development conditions that will underpin future economic growth.

Wodonga Council will take a forward-looking approach to economic development by identifying emerging industry trends, technological change, workforce demands and infrastructure requirements before they become barriers to growth. As Australia undergoes significant economic transformation, Wodonga must be positioned to capitalise on new opportunities ahead of competing regional centres.

A central element of this objective is the deliberate development of strong networks and strategic relationships across industry, government, investors, education providers and economic development organisations. These networks provide access to intelligence, insights and emerging opportunities that are often visible long before they appear in economic data. Through trusted relationships and active engagement, the council will gather the market intelligence needed to understand where industries are headed, what infrastructure will be required, what skills will be in demand and how investment patterns are changing.

This intelligence-led approach will help the council make informed decisions, advocate for future infrastructure, support workforce readiness and create the development conditions needed for long-term prosperity. By planning for the economy Wodonga needs next, the council will create the foundations for sustained investment, higher-value employment and a resilient, future-focused economy.

Key action		Indicator of success	Council role
2.1	Establish a Future Economy Intelligence and Networks Program, connecting the council with industry, investors, government, education institutions and regional partners.	Wodonga Council's strategic and investment decisions are informed by trusted networks and timely intelligence on emerging industries, technologies, workforce needs, risks and opportunities.	Facilitate
2.2	Develop and maintain a Future Infrastructure and Development Pipeline covering infrastructure, utilities, industrial land, housing and enabling development conditions.	Priority infrastructure and development constraints are clearly identified, sequenced and supported by an agreed pathway for planning, advocacy, funding or delivery.	Deliver
2.3	Strengthen workforce and skills readiness through partnerships with education providers, industry and government.	Industry workforce needs are reflected in coordinated education, training and workforce responses, with partners working together to address priority skills gaps and improve local capability.	Partner



Strategic objective 3: Grow from within

Back ambitious Wodonga businesses to invest, expand, innovate and remain in Wodonga.

The strongest opportunities for economic growth often come from businesses that have already chosen to invest in Wodonga. Local businesses create jobs, develop local supply chains, build skills, support community organisations and contribute significantly to the city's identity and prosperity. This objective recognises that retaining and growing existing businesses is just as important as attracting new investment.

Wodonga Council will take an active role in supporting ambitious businesses that are seeking to expand operations, increase investment, adopt new technologies, enter new markets or establish the next stage of their growth journey in Wodonga. Rather than providing generic business support, the council will focus on identifying growth-ready businesses and working alongside them to remove barriers, connect them to opportunities and facilitate investment outcomes.

Central to this approach will be the development of strong relationships with Wodonga businesses and industry leaders. Through ongoing engagement and trusted networks, the council will gain valuable intelligence about business confidence, investment intentions, workforce challenges, infrastructure constraints and emerging opportunities. This intelligence will enable the council to respond proactively, shape advocacy priorities and identify opportunities for local business expansion before they are lost to competing regions.

By helping existing businesses succeed, invest and remain in Wodonga, the council will strengthen economic resilience, create sustainable employment opportunities, retain investment within the city and support the development of a more diverse and competitive local economy.

Key action		Indicator of success	Council role
3.1	Establish a Grow Wodonga Business Engagement Program to identify investment opportunities, expansion plans, barriers and emerging industry needs.	Wodonga Council maintains trusted relationships with growth-ready businesses and uses current business intelligence to identify investment intentions, emerging needs and barriers early.	Deliver
3.2	Facilitate business expansion and investment outcomes by helping businesses navigate planning, infrastructure, workforce, government and investment challenges.	Growth-ready businesses can navigate the council and external requirements more effectively, with material barriers actively coordinated toward resolution and viable projects progressing toward investment.	Facilitate
3.3	Connect businesses to innovation, capability and growth opportunities, including government programs, education providers, industry networks and funding.	Wodonga businesses are connected to relevant expertise, networks, programs and funding that strengthen capability, support innovation and enable sustainable growth.	Facilitate

Economic Development and Investment Attraction Strategy overview



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Win investment

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Key action

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1.2 Build and maintain a live investment pipeline, supported by a "One Front Door" investment facilitation service.

1.3 Promote Wodonga's competitive investment proposition nationally and internationally through campaigns, prospectuses and targeted industry engagement.



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Build the economy we need next

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2.2 Develop and maintain a Future Infrastructure and Development Pipeline covering infrastructure, utilities, industrial land, housing and enabling development conditions.

2.3 Strengthen workforce and skills readiness through partnerships with education providers, industry and government.



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