

Position Description

Government Relations - Advocacy Lead

Location	NSW Hunter Region (Thornton)
Date position description approved	21 May 2024

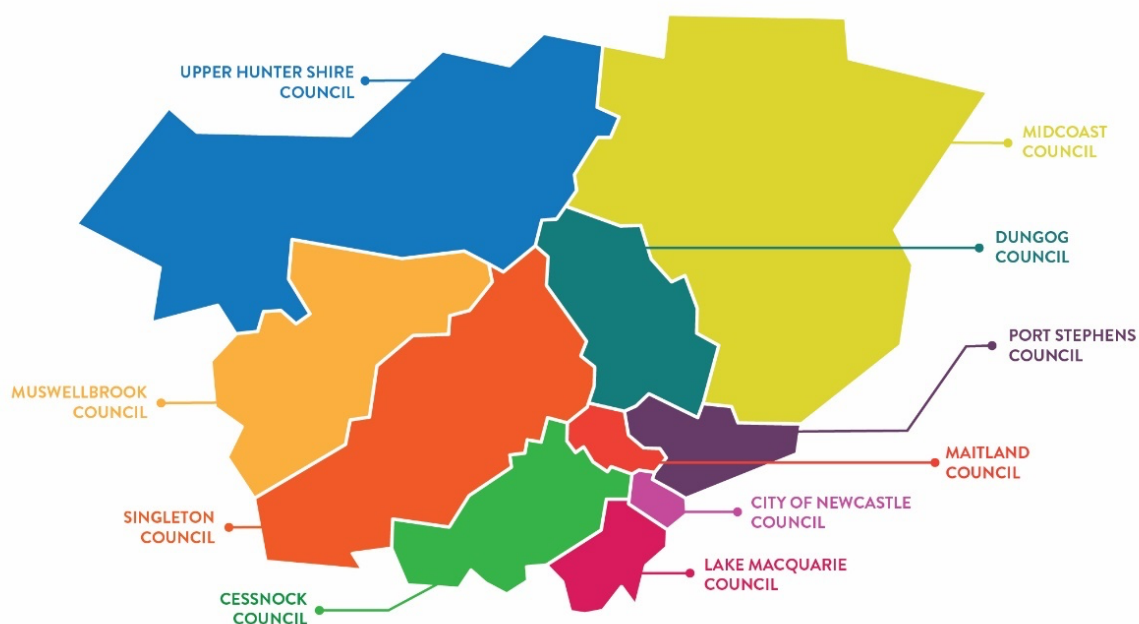
The Organisation

The Hunter Joint Organisation (Hunter JO) is a collaborative organisation of the ten Councils of the Hunter region of New South Wales that facilitates the delivery of strategic advocacy and program outcomes for the entire region. Our principal statutory functions include:

- Regional strategic planning and priority setting
- Intergovernmental collaboration
- Shared regional leadership and advocacy.

Being a hub for local government collaboration, the Hunter JO provides a united and local voice for communities throughout the Hunter region. The Hunter JO is a growing organisation, with an exciting and diverse range of advocacy initiatives and programs that are delivering real outcomes for our region.

The Board of the Hunter JO comprises the Mayors of the ten Councils of the Hunter Region.





Our values

Collaboration is key to our success. It allows us to create innovative solutions, efficient processes, improved culture, and is a defining strength for our organisation. Our focus on place-based leadership and collaborating with Councils, government, industry and community partners on the region's key issues and priorities makes the Hunter JO a dynamic, innovative and exciting organisation in which to work.

Purpose of the Role

The Government Relations - Advocacy Lead is a new role in the Hunter JO responsible for supporting the Hunter JO Board of Mayors shape and advance their shared advocacy priorities for the region.

The role will lead coordination of the Hunter JO's government relations, advocacy and associated strategic communication capabilities. It will build strong relationships across and within the Hunter JO Member Councils, and with State and Federal Governments, peak advocacy organisations, regional advocacy groups and other joint organisations and Regional groups of Councils, to progress shared advocacy priorities to influence favourable outcomes for the Hunter JO Member Councils and their communities.

The role includes a strong focus on increasing direct communication and engagement between the Hunter JO Board of Mayors and political representatives (Government Ministers, Shadow Ministers, Members of Parliament, and parliamentary advisors) to communicate the Hunter JO's priorities, and to increase opportunities for collaboration with other levels of government to progress action on these.

Key Responsibilities of the Role

Government Relations

- Provide a key point of contact for the Hunter JO with members of the State and Federal Ministerial Staff, and Members of Parliament.
- Provide support to enable Members of the Hunter JO Board to effectively engage with all levels of government, including preparing meeting briefs, advice and relevant background material ahead of engagement with relevant Ministers, members of parliament, and key Government Departments.
- Facilitate direct engagement by the Hunter JO Board of Mayors with Ministers and senior public servants (State and Federal) to enable strategy, policy and project advocacy and negotiation by the Hunter JO and its member Councils.

Advocacy

- Assess the political and policy landscape, as well as potential future political developments, to devise strategic positioning and planning for the Hunter JO Board's advocacy priorities.



- Regularly engage with Hunter JO Board Members to facilitate their involvement in advocacy planning and implementation.
- Lead planning and implementation of strategies that deliver on the Hunter JO's strategic advocacy priorities.
- Regularly review the focus and effectiveness of the organisation's objectives and approach to advocacy to facilitate continual improvement.
- Coordinate implementation of the day-to-day advocacy activities required to support and enable the Hunter JO Board to effectively engage with all levels of government to achieve the organisations advocacy priorities and strategic objectives.
- Proactively lead engagement with media networks, member councils, peak advocacy bodies, regional advocacy groups and other regional groups of councils to build relationships and opportunities to promote the Hunter JO's advocacy and strategic priorities.

Communications

- Identify the need for and manage development of issue briefs, research, infographics and talking points to support advocacy efforts.
- Develop and implement communications campaigns to promote the Hunter JO agenda.
- Identify opportunities for media, prepare media releases in consultation with the Chair & Board spokespersons, issue releases to media contacts and networks, and manage media responses and opportunities.
- Lead management of the Hunter JO's core communication digital and social media platforms
- Monitor media coverage that aligns with the Hunter JO's advocacy and strategic planning priorities.
- Proactively build and maintain collaborative working relationships with Member Council communications staff to align the focus and delivery of aligned regional advocacy and communication priorities.

Key challenges

- Understanding and navigating complex and regularly changing political environments at all levels of government.
- Engaging with multiple and wide-ranging stakeholders with often conflicting and overlapping priorities to identify agreed positions and priorities.
- Synthesising and translating complex material and issues into clear and succinct communication messages and formats to support advocacy efforts targeting a range of audiences.
- Managing expectations and priorities in an environment of changing and competing priorities and limited resources.



Key relationships

Who	Why
Internal	
Hunter JO Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate and support identification of aligned Board advocacy positions. Provide advice and reports on the progress and effectiveness of advocacy programs and activities. Coordinate Board participation in day-to-day advocacy and communication activities and opportunities.
Hunter General Managers Advisory Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek advice on advocacy focus, priorities and approach as they relate to Member Councils and the Board. Provide reports on the progress and effectiveness of advocacy programs and activities.
Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaise regularly on the focus, planning and delivery of day-to-day advocacy initiatives. Collaborate on the development of strategic advocacy plans and work programs. Provide advice and reports on the progress and effectiveness of advocacy programs and activities. Identify emerging issues/risks and their implications and propose solutions
Hunter JO Policy and Programs Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate regularly on the focus, planning and delivery of day-to-day advocacy initiatives. Collaborate on the development of strategic advocacy plans and work programs. Collaborate to identify advocacy opportunities generated through the team's regional policy and program work. Collaborate to formulate regional advocacy positions that harness the knowledge and evidence base held within the team.
External	
Ministers and senior public servants (State and Federal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a key point of contact for the Hunter JO Facilitate engagement and communication with the Hunter JO Board of Mayors
Media networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish networks to communicate information and opportunities regarding the Hunter JO's advocacy and strategic priorities. Develop and disseminate / publish media briefings and OpEds



Who	Why
Council staff (Hunter JO Member Councils)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead and facilitate engagement to build relationships and opportunities to promote the Hunter JO’s advocacy and strategic priorities.
Other Joint Organisations, peak advocacy bodies, and regional advocacy groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead and facilitate engagement to build relationships and opportunities to promote the Hunter JO’s advocacy and strategic priorities.

Reporting

Reports to	Director Hunter JO
Direct Reports	Nil
Indirect reports	Two

Essential Requirements

1. Degree qualification and relevant experience in a relevant discipline such as communications, public policy or government relations.
2. Ability to work collaboratively, with experience in building consensus on complex issues
3. Demonstrated advocacy and communications experience, including skills in developing and executing persuasive strategies for change, stakeholder engagement and influencing decision-makers.
4. Excellent communication and presentation skills with an ability to synthesise and translate complex material and issues, and tailor communication to different audiences.
5. Strong analytical skills, political judgement and strategic thinking.
6. Sound project coordination skills and ability to meet multiple competing timelines, delivering an array of projects and tasks simultaneously.
7. Experience in building and maintaining relationships with government entities.

Desirable Requirements

1. An understanding of government operations and parliamentary processes at the State and Federal level.
2. Experience working on complex, politically sensitive projects, programs or policies.