



MEDIA RELEASE – RMS MINISTERIAL MEETING

Reform the key to unlocking the Hunter Region

On Thursday 21st May 2020 the Hunter Joint Organisation had a ground-breaking meeting with Minister for Regional Roads and Transport, the Hon. Paul Toole MP, where we discussed the future prosperity of the Hunter region. The meeting was the outcome of a collaboration between the Hunter Joint Organisation, the Urban Development Institute of Australia, the Property Council of Australia, and Member for Lake Macquarie, Greg Piper MP. This coalition has come together to present themselves as a partner to government – a partnership of local government and industry stakeholders willing to work with the government to find solutions.

The meeting with Minister Toole marks the first step towards improving transport and planning outcomes for the Hunter. Red tape reduction, systems improvement and improved resourcing will see the delays associated with the former Roads and Maritime Service (now a part of Transport for NSW) become a thing of the past for the region.

A key outcome from the meeting was the establishment of a reference group between TfNSW, industry partners, and local government, with the oversight of Minister Toole, to maintain connectivity and accountability beyond the meeting with the Minister.

“Meeting with the Minister is a great start to the Hunter region being able to attract the support of the State Government to get on with delivering growth, jobs and economic prosperity for the region” Bob Pynsent, Chair of the Hunter Joint Organisation and Mayor of Cessnock said. “The Hunter is one region, one voice – we know that by having a united voice for the Hunter we can achieve together. It is great to see the State Government join our united voice.”

The Hunter region has grown significantly over the past decade and will continue to grow in the future. The Roads and Maritime Service must evolve and improve its practices to meet this growing demand by delivering significant reforms. Historically, the Roads and Maritime Service has had a strong commitment to Sydney through clear mandates in State Government planning documents. By reviewing their processes in the Hunter, this mandate can be extended across the State, delivering an equally outcomes-focused approach in the Hunter region.

The Hunter Joint Organisation, along with its member councils, and through its Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan Steering Committee, is committed to investing time and resources to



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collaborate on the changes that are required to deliver economic growth and new investment in the Hunter region.

The Hunter Joint Organisation also hopes to see greater alignment achieved through collaboration with State government on Cabinet-endorsed strategic plans, such as the *Hunter Regional Plan* and the *Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan*. Nuatali Nelmes, Chair of the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan Steering Committee and Lord Mayor of City of Newcastle noted, “The economic impacts of COVID-19 across our region highlight the importance of unlocking economic stimulus from the private sector, and the reforms that we have proposed to the Minister are a way to deliver economic impacts in a time when the Hunter needs them most.”

Unlocking development in the Hunter will help deliver more affordable housing, provide local jobs, support a regional workforce, provide investment opportunities, support businesses of all sizes, and support the government’s bottom line.

The Hunter Joint Organisation looks forward to collaborating further with the State Government in delivering these outcomes for the region.

Contact details

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