



## **MEDIA RELEASE – SIGNING OF MOU BETWEEN HUNTER JO AND COMMITTEE FOR THE HUNTER**

### **Building a unified voice for the Hunter**

The Hunter Joint Organisation and the Committee for the Hunter today signed a Memorandum of Understanding outlining their shared commitment to providing a unified voice and platform for collaborative action on issues of strategic importance for the Hunter region.

The Memorandum was signed by Cr Bob Pynsent, Chair of the Hunter JO and Mayor of Cessnock, and Richard Anicich AM, the Chair of the Committee for the Hunter, with CEOs Joe James and Alice Thompson also present. The signing was held at Maitland's Coquun restaurant on the banks of the Hunter River, a natural symbol of the common destiny and connection that exists across our region.

Cr Bob Pynsent said that the MoU signifies a shared desire to deliver outcomes for the region. "We owe it to our communities to speak to State and Federal decision-makers with a unified regional voice wherever and whenever possible. As a collaboration of councils in the Hunter region we understand both the challenge of genuine collaboration and its power. This Memorandum of Understanding underpins our intent to work with Committee for the Hunter, with the region's best interests at heart. The MoU will connect our local government leadership with other thought leaders across the region, to deliver joint advocacy and action on shared priorities for our communities."

"The Committee for the Hunter was established in response to a belief that the Hunter needed a unified voice that enabled regional leaders to identify long-term goals for the region and improve collaboration between community, industry and governments to achieve these. The MoU is a significant step in bringing those key stakeholders together to present that unified voice, which can only lift our influence in Macquarie Street and in Canberra", said Richard Anicich.

The MoU speaks to the common strategic objectives of influencing policy in the interest of the Hunter region, attracting and enabling investment, and building capacity within the region.

The Hunter JO and the Committee for the Hunter recently collaborated on the 'Ready to Rebuild' campaign aimed at attracting stimulus funding in the 2020-21 Federal Budget for local government infrastructure in the Hunter. This campaign has already seen results, with the Federal Budget announcing an additional \$1 billion to local government led projects. The Hunter was also



identified in the Federal Budget as a priority under the Regional Recovery Partnerships program, providing \$100 million nation-wide to support recovery and growth in regions.

“The Committee partnered with the Hunter JO to provide a united front on the region’s priorities to decision-makers. Working together, we are considered credible and capable delivery partners and we will build from this advocacy to see more investment that reflects the Hunter’s size, economic contribution and capacity,” Alice Thompson said.

“The Committee aligns with the Hunter JO on a number of strategic priorities, and although our stakeholders bases are quite unique from one another, this MoU allows us to bring our organisations together to collaborate on key issues for the good of the region,” Joe James said.

#### **Contact details**

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Images are available for immediate use, please email request to Louisa Bulley