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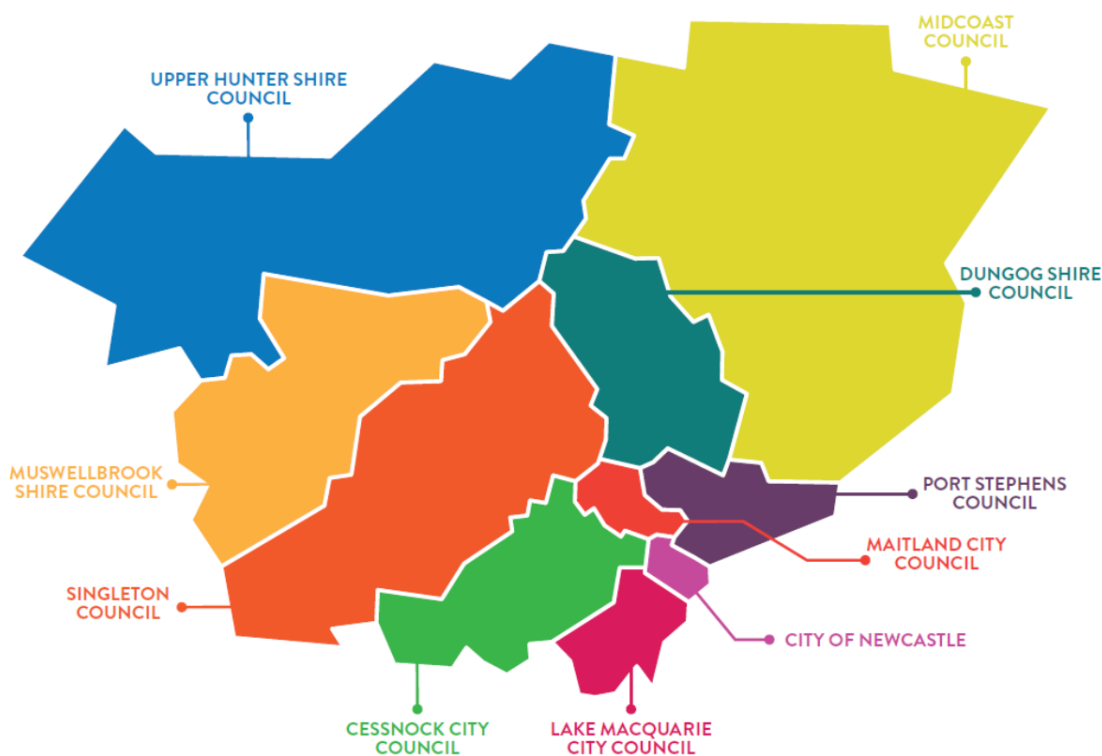
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FOLLOW OUR PROGRESS



Hunter Joint Organisation Board Meeting Papers

10:30am, Thursday 14 April 2022



[Videoconference Details](#)

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1. Welcome and Apologies

1.1 Acknowledgement of Country

The Hunter Joint Organisation acknowledges the country and history of the traditional custodians of the lands upon which we meet today. We pay our respects to the Elders past, present and emerging, of our region, and of Australia.

1.2 Conflicts of Interest

The Chair asks for any potential Conflicts of Interest to be declared from members of the Board.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

2.1 Minutes of Meeting 10 February 2022

Hunter Joint Organisation Board Meeting Minutes

11:30 – 1:00pm, Thursday 10 February 2022

Hunter JO Boardroom, 4 Sandringham Ave Thornton NSW

Voting Directors Present

Cr Jay Suvaal,	Cessnock City Council
Cr John Connors,	Dungog Shire Council
Cr Kay Fraser,	Lake Macquarie City Council
Cr Phillip Penfold,	Maitland City Council
Cr Sue Moore,	Singleton Shire Council
Cr Ryan Palmer,	Port Stephens Council
Cr Maurice Collison,	Upper Hunter Shire Council
Cr Steve Reynolds,	Muswellbrook Shire Council
Cr Claire Pontin,	MidCoast Council

Non-Voting Members Present

Lotta Jackson	General Manager, Cessnock City Council
Gareth Curtis,	General Manager, Dungog Shire Council
Adrian Panuccio,	General Manager, MidCoast Council
Wayne Wallis,	General Manager, Port Stephens Council
Greg McDonald,	General Manager, Upper Hunter Shire Council
Morven Cameron,	CEO, Lake Macquarie City Council
David Evans,	General Manager, Maitland City Council
Jason Linnane,	General Manager, Singleton Council
Fiona Plesman,	General Manager, Muswellbrook Shire Council
Jeremy Bath,	CEO, Newcastle City Council

Apologies

Cr Nuatali Nelmes, Newcastle City Council

Staff in attendance

Joe James, CEO,	Hunter Joint Organisation
Boyd Blackwell,	Policy and Program Manager, Hunter JO
Louisa Bulley,	Executive Officer, Hunter JO (Secretariat)
Tim Askew,	Policy and Program Manager, Hunter JO
Kali Somerville,	Media and Communications Officer, Hunter JO
Steve Wilson,	Director Regional Policy and Programs, Hunter JO
Zoey Eggins,	Marketing and Communications Officer, Arrow

Others

Alison McGaffin	Director, Hunter & Central Coast, Regional NSW
Virginia Errington	Office of Local Government

The meeting opened at 11:32am.

Prior to the start of the formal meeting, the CEO noted the Chairperson vacancy, and the need to elect a Chairperson to run the meeting. The CEO put forward the recommendation for the Chairperson vacancy to be filled.

Resolved:

- ***That the Hunter JO elect a Chairperson to run the Board Meeting***

Moved: John Connors

Seconded: Sue Moore

Carried.

The CEO acted as Returning Officer, as per the Hunter JO Code of Meeting Practice, and invited nominations from Voting Representatives for the position of Chairperson to formally Chair the meeting.

A nomination was received from Cr John Connors to elect Cr Ryan Palmer as Chairperson for the meeting. Cr Sue Moore seconded the recommendation.

The CEO called for nominations a second and third time, but no further nominations were received.

As only one voting representative was nominated for the position of Chairperson for the meeting, the Returning Officer declared Cr Ryan Palmer as Chair, and handed over to the Chairperson to open the formal meeting.

Item 1 Welcomes and Apologies

1.1 Acknowledgment of Country

The Chair opened the meeting, noting the apologies, and welcoming the four new Mayors to the Board. .

Resolved:

- ***That the apologies be noted.***

Moved: Jay Suvaal

Seconded: Sue Moore

Carried.

1.2 Conflicts of Interest

The Chair called for any conflicts of interest to be registered by members of the Board.

2. Hunter JO Chairperson Election

The Chairperson asked for the Board to endorse the recommendation to elect a Chairperson of the Hunter JO.

Resolved:

- ***That nominations for the position of Chairperson be accepted.***
- ***That in the event of there being more than one nominee, the Hunter JO Board determine by resolution, the method by which the election be conducted being: being preferred ballot, ordinary ballot or open voting.***
- ***That the Returning Officer conduct the election for the position of Chairperson.***
- ***That the Chairperson hold office for a two-year period through to February 2024.***

Moved: Jay Suvaal

Seconded: Maurice Collison

Carried.

The Chair handed the proceedings over to the CEO to act as Returning Officer to facilitate the election. The CEO invited nominations for the position of Chairperson for the period of two years under legislation. It was recognised that one nomination was received prior to the meeting via email on the 3rd of February 2022 for Cr Sue Moore. Cr Sue Moore was nominated by Cr Nuatali Nemes, Cr Steve Reynolds and Cr Ryan Palmer.

The CEO called for any other nominations. The CEO made a second call for any further nominations. The CEO made a third and final call for any further nominations.

As only one voting representative was nominated for the position of Chairperson of the Hunter Joint Organisation, the Returning Officer declared Cr Sue Moore as Chairperson.

The CEO congratulated Cr Sue Moore on her election as Chair, and then handed over to the new Chairperson to facilitate the remainder of the meeting.

3. Hunter JO CEO Role Description Review

The CEO spoke briefly to the report, noting as part of the CEO Performance Review for 2020-21 it was recommended that the Position Description be reviewed to better reflect the dual role, in order to better represent the expectations for both Arrow and the Hunter JO.

Resolved:

- ***That the Hunter JO Board provides any appropriate feedback on the CEO Role Description.***
- ***That the Hunter JO Board endorse the CEO Role Description to be used in the CEO Performance Review for 2021-22.***

Moved: Ryan Palmer

Seconded: Jay Suvaal

Carried.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

4.1 Minutes of Meeting 9 December 2021

The minutes were taken as read.

Resolved:

- ***That the minutes of previous meeting of 9 December 2021 be adopted.***

Moved: John Connors

Seconded: Ryan Palmer

Carried.

5. Confirmation of Minutes & Business Arising from Minutes

5.1 Business Arising: Hunter JO Action Register

The register was taken as read.

Resolved: That the register be noted.

Moved: John Connors

Seconded: Ryan Palmer

Carried.

5.2 Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan Steering Committee Action Register

The register was taken as read.

Resolved:

- **That the register be noted.**

Moved: John Connors

Seconded: Ryan Palmer

Carried.

6. Presentations

Nil

7. Correspondence

The report was taken as read.

Resolved:

- **That the update be received and noted**

Moved: Phillip Penfold

Seconded: Jay Suvaal

Carried.

8. items for the Hunter JO Board - For Decision

Nil items for decision

9. Items for the Hunter JO Board – For Noting

9.1 CEO report -Collaboration & Advocacy

The CEO spoke to the report, providing an update on Hunter Global, and asked the Mayors to provide any feedback.

Resolved:

- **That the Board receive and note the reports.**
- **That the Board endorse the Hunter JO reviewing the status of each member Council EV fleet and charging plans, to inform potential regional initiatives on EV charging and fleet transitions.**
- **That the Board endorse the proposed framing and draft text of the Hunter Global Opinion Piece.**

Moved: Philip Penfold

Seconded: John Connors

Carried.

9.2 Hunter JO December 2021 EOFY Profit & Loss Statement

The report was taken as read.

Resolved:

- *That the Profit & Loss Statement for period ending December 2021 be received and noted.*
- *That the Hunter JO proposed Member Subscription fees for the 2022-23 financial year be circulated to the Board out of session for consideration in member council's annual budget process.*
- *Sent final member contribution numbers to board out-of-session.*

Moved: Philip Penfold

Seconded: Kay Fraser

Carried.

9.3 Hunter JO Sub-Committees Standing Update

Steve Wilson spoke to the report, noting the scheduled workshop for the 10th of March 2022, with invitations already having been circulated.

Resolved:

- *That the Board note the updates on the Hunter JO Sub-Committees*

Moved: John Connors

Seconded: Kay Fraser

Carried.

9.4 Hunter JO Program Delivery Highlights

Steve Wilson spoke to the report briefly, outing for the new Mayors that this report is for all programs and projects being delivered within the region.

Resolved:

- *That the report be received and noted.*

Moved: Ryan Palmer

Seconded: Kay Fraser

Carried.

9.5 Regional NSW Standing Update

Alison McGaffin spoke to the report, introducing herself to the new Mayors and to the Board for regionals NSW. Regional Leadership Executive was noted, as the key framework for state government agencies at the regional level. It was also noted that the Regional Job Creation Fund is looking for opportunities to secure funding for the Hunter and Central Coast.

Resolved:

- *That the Board note the February 2022 update from the Department of Regional NSW.*

Moved: Ryan Palmer

Seconded: Kay Fraser

Carried.

10. Matters Raised by Members

Nil matters raised by Members.

11. General Business

11.1 Compliance & Governance Calendars

The calendars were noted.

[Meeting closed 12.10pm]

3. Confirmation of Minutes & Business Arising from Minutes

Recommendation:

- That the minutes of the previous meetings of 10 February 2022 be adopted

3.1 Business Arising: Hunter JO Action Register

I.D	Action	Mtg Date	Status	Due	Notes
HJO-19-13	That a discussion of Audit, Risk and Improvement Committees be added to the agenda for the HJO for discussion at a later date	29 Aug 2019	On hold	Revised Due date: March 2021 Revised Status: On Hold (no update since March21)	Mar2021: GMAC have discussed and indicated to put on hold until the framework is finalised and provided from OLG GMAC 25 March 2021 meeting resolution is as follows: That no further investigation of shared resourcing of ARICs be completed until the OLG Framework has been finalised, and at that point only if member councils express interest in sharing resources (if this option is allowed within the Framework). A proposal regarding a consultancy on ARICs has been included within the Arrow Business Papers
HJO-20-55	<u>Hunter JO Waste Strategy Review and Development</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• That the Hunter JO Board endorse development of a new Resource Recovery Strategy 2021-2027 that creates an ambitious yet achievable plan to transition our resource recovery sector to a circular economy model.• That the Hunter JO Board support future engagement of, and reporting to the GMAC and Hunter JO Board to facilitate input to the Strategy objectives and actions.	Feb 21	Underway	April 2022	April 2022: Refer report included in Agenda Item 6.2 - Regional Circular Materials and Waste Strategy Jan2022: The EPA released their finalised NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy (WaSM) Delivery Plan as well as their Draft Regional Response to WaSM Guidelines in December 2021. There are some specific changes to guidelines that the Hunter and Central Coast strategy will need to address and align with. This will mean a rearrangement of tasks and timelines within the project, however the work undertaken to date is broadly in alignment with the intent

I.D	Action	Mtg Date	Status	Due	Notes
					and detail of these strategic documents and the project remains on track to be completed by June 2022. It is anticipated that further engagement will be undertaken with the Board at the meeting in April 2022.
HJO-20-60	<u>Regional Freight and Logistics - Initiatives and Opportunities</u> That a Summary Brief on this be brought back to the Board for endorsement.	Apr-21	Underway	Oct-21 June 2022	April2022 – as per previous update (Jan 2022) Jan2022: As reported to the Board in December 2021, this action will now be addressed directly within the draft Hunter JO Strategic Plan currently under development.
HJO-20-63	<u>Cities Power Partnership Options</u> That the Board endorse the Hunter JO exploring a Regional Partner arrangement with CCP (the first region in Australia to do so) in line with Option 3: Collaboration Pledges Partnership.	Apr-21	Underway	December 2021 May 2022	April 2022: The focus moving forward will be to complete formalising the partnership agreement. During the regional mapping of the CSP's as part of the Hunter JO Strategy project, we will also review the CPP Program links and objectives identified in the region. Discussion will continue with the Climate Council to formalise the draft regional priorities, engage with Council staff, bring them back to the Board and incorporate them into the Hunter JO Strategy and Partnership Agreement. Jan2022: The collaboration with CPP, has included the incorporation and embedding of the CPP information and pledges into the Climate Change IP&R Package as a preparation step. The focus moving forward will be to complete formalising the partnership agreement.
HJO-20-65	<u>World Masters Games</u> Establish a Regional Events Strategy Working Group. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review opportunities and costs associated with hosting the World Masters Games. • Scope out the development of a bid for the 2029 World Masters Games on behalf of the Hunter Region. 	Apr-21	Underway	Feb 2022 June 2022	April 2022: Refer report included in Agenda Item 7.9 - Accelerating Event Economies (A2E) Nov2021: Hunter JO Board resolved August 2021 to integrate consideration of 2029 World Masters Games bid opportunities and challenges

I.D	Action	Mtg Date	Status	Due	Notes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review existing strategies and develop a roadmap for the implementation of key actions to attract major events to the region. 				<p>within the scope of the Accelerating Event Economies (A2E) project.</p> <p>Jan2022: Project Officer has been recruited to deliver Accelerating Event Economies (A2E) project, commencing 17 Jan 2022. Stakeholder engagement and development of consultant briefs also commencing regarding undertaking a regional event and asset audit, which will underpin this action.</p>
HJO-20-71	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> THAT the Hunter JO draft correspondence to the NSW Government regarding funding and action required on the Hunter Sports Precinct in Broadmeadow That the drafted correspondence be reviewed out of session by the Board prior to sending. 	10 Jun 21	Underway		<p>Nov2021: Propose to revisit this matter in 2022 once the GNMPSC has reformed post-local government elections</p> <p>Sep2021: A draft has been completed by the CEO, and has been included in Correspondence. The original intent of the correspondence has been overtaken by a government announcement on Hunter Park</p> <p>Mar2022: The CEO has now met with the Venues NSW Project lead, Phil Paris, on two occasions to discuss his process for building a business case for Hunter Park and exploring how the Hunter JO can support the business case and stakeholder engagement.</p>
HJO-20-78	<p>That subject to adequate resourcing being provided by the NSW EPA to undertake, a due diligence assessment be initiated by the Hunter JO.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review existing state-wide approaches to the management of RID Squads Determine the feasibility of the Hunter JO potentially hosting the RID Squad 	30 Sep 21	Underway	Mar-22	<p>April 2022: EPA confirmed late February 2022 that that Hunter JO will now need to identify, engage and manage consultant to deliver the due diligence review.</p> <p>We have since received a quotation to complete the due diligence work, and a request for \$46,775 has been submitted to and approved by the EPA to undertake this work.</p> <p>Jan2022: The EPA have commenced a review of RID squad models across the state as part of their</p>

I.D	Action	Mtg Date	Status	Due	Notes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying the most appropriate financial and operational model for the RID Squad were it to be hosted by the Hunter JO. 				<p>RID Program evaluation and planning work for the next 5 years of funding (from July 2022 under the NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy). This work will inform the Hunter RID squad model and strategic objectives going forward, and the process will include consultation with stakeholders (including the HJO).</p> <p>HJO officers are meeting with EPA representatives 17 January to progress the due diligence assessment work, focusing on the logistical and resourcing implications for HJO hosting the Hunter RID squad.</p>
HJO-20-81	That a meeting of the Regional Economic Transition Sub-Committee be called prior to the Local Government elections in December 2021, to discuss the Hunter Expert Panel.	14 Oct 21	Underway	Feb 2022	<p>April 2022 – refer Agenda Item 7.3 – Hunter JO Sub-Committees Standing Update</p> <p>Jan 2022: With the outcomes of the Local Government elections now finalised, a meeting of the Subcommittee will be scheduled for mid to late February to confirm the ongoing focus and Terms of reference for the Subcommittee. This will include a focus on the NSW Government's Hunter Expert Panel and Royalties for Rejuvenation program.</p>
	That the Board endorse the Hunter JO reviewing the status of each member Council EV fleet and charging plans, to inform potential regional initiatives on EV charging and Fleet transitions.	27 Jan 22	Not yet commenced		April 2022 - Pending allocation of internal resources
	That Board endorse the proposed framing and draft text of the Hunter Global Opinion Piece.	27 Jan 22	Complete	Feb 2022	

3.2 Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan Steering Committee Action Register

I.D	Action	Mtg Date	Responsibility	Notes
GNMP-21-10	That an update on the progress and achievements to date of the growth Catalyst Areas be included as an Agenda item for the next Committee meeting	07/10/21	HJO	<p>April 2022: In progress. Outcomes from 10th March Committee workshop identified interest in potentially two briefings per annum provided by State Agencies to the Committee, including updates on Catalyst Areas.</p> <p>Feb 2022: In progress – to be included on Agenda for next Committee meeting to be scheduled subsequent to the 10th March 2022 workshop (see below). Workshop confirmed need for updates from agencies in this regard.</p>
GNMP-21-10	That Committee representatives commit to participating in a dedicated workshop session in which to collaboratively align the expectations and directions of Committee members to redefine the focus, role, Terms of Reference and resourcing for the Steering Committee moving forward.	07/10/21	All (Hunter JO to organise workshop)	Completed. Workshop delivered 10 th March 2022.
GNMP-21-10	Any feedback from Committee members to assist with finalising the Options paper to be provided to the Hunter JO (directly to Steve Wilson) by Friday 18th February 2022	07/10/21	All	Completed. Options Paper finalised and distributed to GNMP Committee in preparation for 10 th March workshop.
GNMP-21-10	That the Committee resolve to work collaboratively on developing a shared objective / consensus on the governance outcome that needs to be achieved (a “light on the hill”), and in identifying the next steps on which to focus to progress toward that objective.	07/10/21	All (Hunter JO to organise workshop)	<p>Completed. Workshop delivered 10th March 2022.</p> <p>Refer Agenda Item 7.3 – Hunter JO Sub-Committees Standing Update for workshop outcomes.</p>
GNMP-21-10	Write to the Hon. Rob Stokes, Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, and Minister for Transport and Roads Rob Stokes, seeking a commitment from the NSW Government to participate in a collaborative process to develop a shared objective / consensus on the governance outcome that needs to be achieved for the GNMP, where ideally the outcomes is a governance model that will be the focus of a joint	07/10/21	Hunter JO	Completed.

I.D	Action	Mtg Date	Responsibility	Notes
	recommendation from the Committee to NSW Government Ministers.			
GNMP-21-10	<p>Seek confirmation from the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the timeframe for review of the GNMP confirmation that the GNMP Steering Committee will play a core role in the review process the recommended process through which the Committee will be engaged in the review process 	07/10/21	Hunter JO	In progress
GNMP-21-10	Hunter JO CEO to enquire with HCCDC and Regional NSW about whether a decision has been made on whether further identity and positioning work would be undertaken in relation to Greater Newcastle (rather than the whole of Hunter), consistent with the action in the GNMP. If a decision has not been made, then clarity on the trigger and expected timing of decision should be sought	07/10/21	Hunter JO	<p>March 2022: Meetings continue to be convened fortnightly by Regional NSW, to develop the next phase of work: to develop a plan to re-engage stakeholders on the draft brand and strategy</p> <p>Jan 22 – CEO has sought comment from Department of Regional NSW and HCCDC and is awaiting a response.</p> <p>Through its involvement in the Hunter Identity and Positioning project team, HJO management understands that Greg Clark from Business of Cities has completed their work to develop a 'story' for our 'city-region' to help inform the branding work. The resulting recommendation is to realign the branding more strongly on the 'Invest' theme to provide a focussed story for the brand and better align to the action in the GNMP to better promote the advantages of Greater Newcastle to external markets. The branding agency is working on the realigned brand strategy during January 2022.</p> <p>Note also the announcement of the focus on Newcastle as part of the expanded mandate of the Greater Sydney Commission (to become the Greater Cities Commission), which might influence next steps in the development and utilisation of any brand.</p>

I.D	Action	Mtg Date	Responsibility	Notes
GNMP-21-10	Schedule next meeting which will be a workshop, ideally in the first half of November	07/10/21	Hunter JO	Completed. Workshop delivered 10th March 2022. Refer Agenda Item 7.3 – Hunter JO Sub-Committees Standing Update for outcomes
GNMP-21-01	A timeline be developed by HCCDC & JO from engagements with Action Item 187.Stakeholders and LGA's on the progress and implementation of an Identity and Positioning Strategy specially relating to the Greater Newcastle Metro Plan. Action Item 17.1 - Provide GNMPSC a timeline when the Identify and Positioning Strategy specific to the Newcastle Metro Plan will commence.	A 17.1 - 04/04/2021 & A 16.1 – 09/12/2020	HCCDC & HJO	April 2022 – Recommend action be deleted - superseded by new Action from 7 th October 2022 meeting August 2021 update Stakeholder and LGA engagement is ongoing. The Project team has established a Council Reference Group to ensure all Councils can participate in the creation of the Identity and Positioning Project. <i>Please note: Responsibility for this project now sits with DRNSW - transferred from HCCDC in August 2021)</i>
GNMP-21-02	That an Options Paper be developed by the Hunter JO, in collaboration with GNMP Councils that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviews any existing analysis of the governance model for the GNMP as well as existing regional governance models and legislative mechanisms established to drive collaborative delivery of regional plans Identifies potential alternative governance models and legislative mechanisms that could also be appropriate for delivering on the principles established within the MoU for GNMP delivery Provides recommendations on a preferred model and a process for progressing its establishment in collaboration with the NSW Government. 	A 16.3 – 09/12/2020	HJO	April 2022. Completed. Options Paper finalised and distributed to GNMP Committee in preparation for 10th March workshop. February 2022. Draft Options Paper completed. Feedback on draft invited from Committee members by Friday 18th February 2022 to assist with finalising the Options paper. October 2021: Draft Options paper presented to Steering Committee 7th October 2021. August 2021: Draft Options paper to be considered by Steering Committee at 7/10/2021 meeting Meeting 09/12/2020 - Update provided – item ongoing
GNMP-21-03	DPIE to work with the five Councils on any future Department Acceleration Program applications and in addition, assist with a Local Acceleration Program Proposal for the Greater Newcastle Area.	A 15.2 – 05/08/2020	DPIE	April 2022 – recommend removing action – timeline for applications passed Meeting 09/12/2020 – no update provided.

I.D	Action	Mtg Date	Responsibility	Notes
				August 2021: Update requested by Hunter JO and response pending
GNMP-21-06	Dept of Regional NSW & HCCDC – once Fast Rail Strategy is released a presentation is sought for this Committee	A.13.5 – 06/02/2020	Dept of Regional NSW & HCCDC	<p>April 2022: No change to previous update, action pending release of Strategy</p> <p>Update August 2021: Fast Rail Network Strategy is yet to be released. TfNSW will be invited to present to the SC if/when the Strategy is released</p>
A 7.6	Freight Rail Bypass	A 7.6	TfNSW/RMS	<p>April 2022: 10th March Committee workshop identified interest in potentially two briefings per annum provided by State Agencies to the Committee. This would include updates on the Freight Rail Bypass.</p> <p>October 2021: Pending outcome of collaborative workshop, this action item to be reviewed.</p> <p>August 2021 - Lower Hunter Freight Corridor is out for consultation until 13 September 2021. The feedback will be important in helping TfNSW to refine, where possible the corridor before it is officially reserved. As well as working with land owners to minimise impacts where possible on them, TfNSW are also looking at how to minimise ecological impacts that will also deliver a viable freight corridor that will ease congestion on the current passenger line. Information available at transport.nsw.gov.au/LHFC</p>

4. Presentations

4.1 Hunter JO Strategic Plan: Status & Next Steps

Presentation to Hunter JO Board Closed Briefing

Presenter: Melinda Curtis, Regional Policy & Program Manager – Hunter JO

This presentation will provide an overview of the status of delivery of the Hunter JO Strategic Plan, including the implications on process and timeframe arising from changes to the IP&R Handbook and IP&R Guidelines released by the Office of Local Government in September/October 2021. This presentation accompanies Agenda Item 7.7 in the Hunter JO Board Papers.

4.2 Review of Joint Organisations – Findings, Recommendations and Next Steps

Presentation to Hunter JO Public Meeting

Presenter: Ally Dench, Executive Director Local Government – NSW Office of Local Government

Ally is participating in JO Board meetings across the JO Network to discuss the findings and recommendations arising from the Review of Joint Organisations, and to explore the process for moving forward to implement the recommendations. This presentation accompanies Agenda Item 7.8.

4.3 Formulating a regional submission to proposed IPART changes to the Domestic Waste Management Charge

Presentation to Hunter JO Board Closed Briefing

Presenter: Eloise Lobsey, Regional Policy and Program Coordinator (WARR & Circular Economy) – Hunter JO

This presentation will outline the emerging focus of a regional submission being developed in collaboration with Member Councils in response to proposed IPART changes to the Domestic Waste Management Charge. This presentation accompanies Agenda Item 6.3 in the Hunter JO Board Papers.

4.4 Accelerating Event Economies: Key Delivery Areas

Presentation to Hunter JO Board Closed Briefing

Presenter: Kim Carland, Regional Projects Coordinator (A2E)

This presentation will provide an update on the Accelerating Event Economies (A2E) project and planned deliverables. This presentation accompanies Agenda Item 7.9 in the Hunter JO Board Papers.

4.5 Simtable Demonstrations

Demonstration to Hunter JO Board meeting – to be delivered during lunch session

Presenter – Chris Dart, Regional Project Officer - Simtables

This demonstration will provide an overview of the functions and applications of the Simtables that have been purchased for the collective use of Member Councils to engage communities in place-based emergency information sessions and planning.

5. Correspondence

Report Author: Louisa Bulley, Executive Officer

Responsible Officer: Joe James, CEO

Executive Summary:

This report provides an update on correspondence sent and received in relation to the Hunter JO.

Correspondence Sent:

- Attachment 1: Correspondence to Jenny Aitchison MP re Community Recognition Notice, 2 March 2022
- Attachment 2: Correspondence to NSW DPIR re regional submission on draft Hunter Regional Plan 2041, 16 March 2022
- Attachment 3: Email Correspondence sent to all local State & Federal MPs re: Hunter Global: Our Journey to Global Connectivity (Teaser Video), 22 March 2022
- Attachment 4: Correspondence to the NSW Minister for Environment & Heritage James Griffin seeking confirmation that funding for the Regional Contaminated Land Program will be extended

Correspondence Received:

Nil for noting.

RECOMMENDATION:

- **That the update report be received and noted.**

6. Items for the Hunter JO Board - For Decision

6.1 Mayors Gala: Building Regional Collaboration and Celebrating Regional Success

Report Author: Kim Carland, Regional Projects Coordinator (A2E) & Boyd Blackwell, Regional Policy & Program Manager

Responsible Officer: Steve Wilson, Director Regional Policy & Programs

Purpose:

To seek a determination from the Board on whether to proceed with further design, development and piloting of the “*Mayor’s Gala – Building Regional Collaboration and Celebrating Regional Success*” concept.

Link to Hunter Joint Organisation Strategic Plan 2018-21 (Aspire.Act.Achieve).

Action Area	Action Area 1. Our communities stay inclusive, proud and save, and celebrate diversity. Action Area 3. Our economy is multifaceted, resilient and is Australia's leading smart regional economy
Action	2.1. Collaborate to ensure Newcastle and the Hunter to realise our potential as a smart region and innovation ecosystem, driving jobs and investment while ensuring technology improves liveability and sustainability in our region.

Background

The Hunter JO team, in collaboration with Gabe Robinson, a leading event designer and manager in the Hunter region, has investigated the concept of designing and delivering a financially self-sustaining annual gala event. The event is intended to focus on celebrating and showcasing the region’s excellence across the Hunter JO’s strategic priority areas of:

- Connectivity
- Resilience
- Jobs & Growing Economy
- Liveability

An initial presentation and report on the concept was provided to the February 2022 meeting of the Hunter JO Board.

Report

The purpose of designing and delivering an event of this nature in the region would be to:

1. Deliver a unique signature event for the region that promotes, symbolises and celebrates genuine local and regional collaboration, leadership and advocacy, and which creates the necessary connective tissue to support delivery of the collective goals identified for the region by Member Councils. This would be achieved through a program that publicly recognises and encourages collaboration, leadership and advocacy, in areas of excellence, effort and success that align with the strategic ambitions that Member Councils have collectively established for the Region through the Hunter JO Strategic Plan.
2. Provide a truly unique opportunity (with a strong point of difference to existing regional events) through which individuals, businesses and the community can engage collectively with Mayors from across the region. This opportunity is not currently provided in any other regional forum. In

addition to symbolising the collaborative value of Mayors working together for the good of the region, the opportunity to communicate with and hear from Mayors both individually and collectively would be facilitated through activities such as:

- A Mayors' Mingle (1hr pre-event casual drinks on arrival); and
- A Mayors' Moment (a 30min hosted Q&A for audience to ask Mayors questions and discuss important regional issues).

Responding to Board Queries

A number of queries were raised both during and after the February 2022 Board meeting in relation to the proposed event, which this report aims to address. In doing so the report also outlines the feedback collected from further targeted qualitative stakeholder engagement undertaken since that time by Gabe Robinson, to better understand the appetite for the concept. Responses to high level queries raised by the Board are provided below, while Attachment 4 provides more detailed feedback to specific queries communicated to the Hunter JO following the February Board meeting:

1. Stakeholder engagement / relationship to other stakeholder events

Since the February Board meeting, targeted consultation has been undertaken by Gabe Robinson to qualitatively explore and validate the event concept, including with Business Hunter, Newcastle Business Club, Hunter Young Professionals, the corporate events industry and community representatives. The outcomes of this engagement were that:

- All of those engaged believed there is an appetite for an event like the Gala within the Hunter region
- Around half of those engaged expected to pay \$200 per ticket and around a third would expect to pay \$250 per ticket for an event of this calibre
- The majority of those spoken to believe the first year of this event should be held within the Lower Hunter (NB we are conscious, through the feedback from the Board, of the need to ensure the event, once gaining initial success, is shared across the region on an annual basis)
- The majority of those spoken to were interested in attending the Mayor's Gala event concept
- A significant proportion of those spoken to prefer the event to be named 'Mayor's Gala' as opposed to some other name (NB we appreciate some concerns by Board members with the name, but when considered in the context of the uniqueness of this event, and the activities by participants in engaging with the Mayors and the broader audience, incorporating this in some manner within the title is recommended).

In addition to the above engagement, the concept has also received letters of support from Newcastle Business Club, Newcastle Airport and a majority of HJO member councils when preparing a prospective funding application in January 2022.

Should the Board resolve to accept the Report's recommendation to proceed with piloting further design and delivery of the event, further engagement with the Board and regional stakeholders will continue to further shape and refine the concept.

2. Self-Sustaining Financial Delivery Model

This event aims to be self-sustaining, funded through ticket sales and award category sponsorship (a concept that has been tested through the targeted stakeholder engagement process). Grant funds were also applied for in January 2022 through the Destination NSW Regional Business Event Development Fund, which if successful will provide additional seed funds to support piloting of the inaugural gala event.

3. Event Logistics

It is proposed that the event will be delivered as a project through the Hunter JO, in collaboration with event and business consultant Gabe Robinson of “Create, Innovate, Collaborate”.

Ideally, the event would be rotated across Member Council areas if it continued to be delivered annually, which would require a facility that can seat and cater for 400-500 patrons, with adequate audio-visual capabilities and supporting accommodation and transport infrastructure.

4. Level of involvement required of Mayors and General Managers

Mayors, Deputy Mayors, Council CEOs / General Managers would primarily be invited to participate in activities associated with delivery of the event itself on the day of delivery. For example, this could include attending a red-carpet arrival, pre-event networking, presenting an award (or other form of recognition), and participating in a short, mediated Q&A with the audience.

There would be no requirement for Mayors or Councils to participate in activities to determine who should receive potential awards or other forms of recognition. This would be undertaken through a mix of independent committees, public vote and acquired data, coordinated by Hunter JO staff in collaboration with Gabe Robinson.

Attachments

- Attachment 5: Responses to questions raised following the February 2022 Board meeting in relation to the Gala concept
- Attachment 6: Mayor’s Gala Concept Summary Report, prepared by Gabe Robinson
- Attachment 7: Slide pack scoping aspects of gala event, prepared by Gabe Robinson.

Recommendations:

- **That the Board endorse:**
 - **Further developing the concept with a view to piloting delivery of the Regional Gala event, which would require the active commitment and participation of all Mayors, Deputy Mayors and General Managers in its delivery.**
 - **Continuing to engage with key regional stakeholders, including with the Board, to further guide design and development of the concept to ensure delivery of a unique signature event for the region that promotes, symbolises and celebrates genuine examples of local and regional collaboration and leadership.**

Attachment 5:

Responses to Questions raised following the February 2022 Board meeting in relation to the Gala concept

1. *What does the Mayor's Gala bring to benefit the community that isn't already covered by other awards?*

A whole range of awards will be provided that go beyond the current business awards offered through other award nights. The idea of the evening is that for the first time, local government collaborative leadership, through the Mayors, will be hosting conversations and presenting awards that cover the extended Hunter region. This event aims to bring all the sectors of the region together, platforming the Hunter region, and enticing and projecting region-wide collaboration.

The event will go beyond the business sector and indeed individual councils and reflect leadership, collaboration and advocacy for our shared interests in the wellbeing and assets of the region. This is at the heart of objectives of what the Hunter JO delivers to the shared interest of the region.

2. *How will engagement with Mayors work in practice and thereby attract people to participate in the event?*

Specifically relating to Mayors engagement, the 2 allocated opportunities for the extended region to engage with all 10 Mayors is:

- **Mayors Mingle** (1hr pre- event casual drinks on arrival) and
- **Mayors Moment** (a 30min hosted Q&A for audience to ask Mayors questions).

The nature of these events, both in terms of who is nominated for awards and who pays to attend, tends to self-select people who are actively trying to make a difference and/or create great products and services across the region. The opportunity to have their projects considered and recognised in a room full of other highly motivated and successful people, including elected leaders in the form of the Mayors, is a significant drawcard.

3. *How event will finance itself & also account for costs that will be incurred by each Council?*

Council input is for social media and digital support only. Like all Hunter JO projects (for example the recent Hunter Global Summit) there is always an element of financial risk if we cannot execute to deliver the forecast outcomes.

Because this is an event of significant relevance for all who live within the Hunter region (i.e. across all our 10-member LGAs), we see that the minimal requested council resources (e.g. Comms department in kind support) far outweigh the community service benefits to share and encourage engagement in the event.

No individual Council event team support is required. This event also has a business model that is self-sustaining with no direct funding required from Councils – see next item.

4. *Funding sources - how confident are we that we will receive sponsorship or grants?*

Based on recent corporate event comparisons, industry feedback and existing appetite within the region, it is considered that this concept (even in its infant stage) has great potential.

5. *What tangible benefits will the residents of individual Council areas receive from an event like this?*

If the Hunter JO is doing its job well, over time, we should be improving the Jobs and Growing Economy opportunities and Liveability for people of the region, including those in each LGA.

We do this by doing things together, when they are less effective done alone, to influence state and federal government decisions in a beneficial way.

The gala provides an opportunity for a unifying celebration of, and bringing together of, both motivated leaders and outcomes of excellence in our region. It would be an important symbol to:

- (1) **community** that local elected leaders collectively support people making a difference in our place, and
- (2) **those we seek to influence** where they see a united collaborative leadership of a large populace.

Practical examples of tangible benefits for constituents include:

Example 1:

A local resident owns a food and beverage shop and does quite well servicing their local LGA, however they are looking to expand their business into new markets and new areas, so they invest in a food truck.

They now need to do business development to help spread the word about their new business, as well as learn more about events and activations happening in other areas of the Hunter.

This business owner attends the Mayors Gala to mix with other businesses, councils, gov agencies etc.

During the Mayors Mingle this business owner has a great conversation with another business owner who provides social/digital media services - he ends up using these services to grow his business digitally. Furthermore, he sees that XXX has won 'event of the year', and as a result has decided to attend this event next year with his food truck.

Outcome: Economic and business development and networking connection benefits for the local resident / business owner. This may also result in other benefits for improved social, cultural and environmental benefits because of the new connection and collaboration.

Example 2:

A family from Sydney is looking to relocate north to the Hunter Region and are deciding where to settle.

They are wanting a 'country escape' but have a young family so are in need of services like parks among other things.

They begin looking into areas and see that a new kids' playground has just won Placing Making award of the year at the HJO Mayors Gala. After researching the park further, they find that the Park has First Nation activations, cooking facilities, paragon, basketball courts and scooter tracks. They try the facilities first hand, love them along with the general feel and amenities of the town and decide to move to that LGA.

Outcome: The LGA grows 4+ people larger, spending money in their town and contributing to their new community. - everyone benefits. This multiplies as the word gets out from the original family's connections and other families move to the region.

6. *Will the event be seen as a truly region wide event, and has consideration been given to the extra costs, travel time, and accommodation that would be incurred in travelling to other parts of the region when determining indicative ticket pricing?*

This is at the heart of the JO approach and philosophy - we are only as strong as when we work together and showcase what the entire region has to offer.

Given this philosophy, the plan for the gala is for it to be an annual event and held across rotating LGAs each year.

The only requirements are that the LGA hosting the event has facilities that can host an event of this size (ability to host 500 guests, staging, projectors, audio etc) and we believe that all our councils can deliver this, even with temporary accommodations where necessary.

Based on our research of many other large scale corporate events, we are confident our ticket price is fair, and our attendance will be at capacity.

Importantly, having a political collection of leaders from the region at the event will, as noted above, attract a range of attendees where the combined local political representation for the region is in the room.

7. *What other options have the JO considered to achieve the goals of engaging member Councils to build collaboration between events and communications teams?*

Collaboration and advocacy forms a major part of the business of the Hunter JO, its member councils, and the JO's teams. There are other high priority projects focussed on attracting a major sporting event to the region – preparations for scoping out what is required in preparing a major sporting event bid are underway.

Similarly, the Hunter Global summit was designed as a collaborative effort between our member councils and the ports to gain international visitors (and further product) to and from the region – boosting income and jobs.

The Accelerating Event Economies (A2E) project which, through collaboration across our councils has secured a \$862K grant to prepare our region for events that work across council boundaries, is designed to create efficiencies for event managers and planners and to boost event growth in the region. This will build resilience and diversified business opportunities across our region as part of the recovery from Bushfires but requires very strong collaboration and effort across all our member councils - especially given we plan to have an integrated event approval system for event planners and managers.

8. *Would another option be to consider hosting a series of community and business roadshows or round tables across various areas in the region to better allow people to come and engage with the Mayors?*

A series of round tables may be better suited to the committees allocated to creating categories and judging finalists. Importantly for the financial viability and the self-sustaining model of the gala itself however, the viability of the event is in the numbers of the evening. We have to be careful not to dilute the numbers into a series of smaller round table roadshows - it would not be financially viable to deliver and would require more council resources to deliver.

Report Author: Eloise Lobsey, Regional Policy and Program Coordinator (WARR & Circular Economy)

Responsible Officer: Tim Askew, Regional Policy and Program Manager

Purpose: To seek the Board's endorsement of priorities and directions to be addressed by the Regional Circular Materials and Waste Strategy, and the recommended timeframe for its completion.

Link to Hunter Joint Organisation Strategic Plan 2018-21 (Aspire.Act.Achieve).

Action Area	2. Our enviable environment is protected for future generations and our resources are used efficiently
Action	2.3 Work together to find an effective recycling solution for the region

Background

In February 2021 the Hunter Board endorsed the development of a new Hunter and Central Coast Resource Recovery Strategy 2021-2027 that *"creates an ambitious yet achievable plan to transition our resource recovery sector to a circular economy model"* and *"that the Hunter JO Board support future engagement of, and reporting to the GMAC and Hunter JO Board to facilitate input to the Strategy objectives and actions"*.

Regional strategies of this nature have previously been produced every 4 years in alignment with funding cycles from the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA). In regard to the development of the next regional strategy:

- EPA have completed a new 20-year NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy (WaSM), signalling new policy priorities, targets (e.g. 80% diversion from landfill by 2030), mandates (e.g. FOGO services) as well as new funding models which we are required to respond to.
- New Response to WaSM guidelines have recently been released by the EPA (released February 2022) to guide how regions organise and collaborate to deliver on WaSM targets and ambitions, and have set the planning horizon at 20 years, and the strategy life for 5 years. It also broadens the lens of the strategy from waste and resource recovery to enabling a circular economy (CE).
- The new regional strategy will guide us for next 5 years, with an annually reviewed action plan that is designed to be adaptive and responsive to changing market conditions, plus regional opportunities and challenges that arise.
- With the shift to a (largely) contestable funding model under WaSM, the strategy and action plan will play a critical role in articulating the region's priority programs and actions in order to successfully compete for funding from the EPA.

Report

Following review and assessment of the existing Regional Waste Strategy and multi-staged consultation with Council Waste Managers, the consultants who have been engaged to assist with strategy development, have produced a Strategic Directions and Options Paper. This paper provides recommendations on the key directions and priorities to be addressed within the Draft Strategy and Action Plan.

Key recommendations from the Paper include:

- The 20-year Strategy period be divided initially into two sections; the first 5 years and the second 15 years;
- Compared to the previous strategy, the new Strategy should shift its lens by applying circular economy principles to resource recovery, combining elements of the CE program related to material circularity (i.e. keeping materials in circulation for maximum benefit)
- Action delivery within the first 5-year period would concentrate on:
 - the WaSM Priority Areas, maximising opportunity for access to funding packages;
 - continuing to build strategic collaboration across the region;
 - reducing carbon emissions from resource recovery and waste management operations and improving resource recovery rates in the region;
 - further investigation into strategic infrastructure needs in the region including waste to energy facilities;
 - analysis of potential for stronger alignment of regional kerbside collection, processing and disposal contracts;
 - enabling CE outcomes through regional data management and knowledge sharing;
 - stimulating local end-markets for recovered materials through government procurement, and CE precincts;
 - enabling community to participate in the transition to a circular economy.
- Action delivery within the second 15-year period will concentrate on more-fully circularising diversion from landfill efforts;
- Hunter JO reviewing the progress of the strategy's delivery at least every 12 months, and updating or changing action programs to retain a flexible and adaptive approach.

Consultation with Hunter Central Coast Regional Waste Strategy Group

The Strategic Directions and Options Paper was used to inform a strategy direction workshop with the Hunter Central Coast Regional Waste Strategy Group on 14 March 2022. The feedback from the group is summarised as:

- The vision (20 years) should reflect the aspiration of eliminating waste in our region;
- The Strategy should be focused, by adopting a 'doing less and doing it well' prioritisation approach to action planning;
- There is strong interest in aligning kerbside waste services across the region;
- There is strong support for delivering regional behaviour change programs designed to deliver consistent messaging that support Council implementation of WaSM priorities such as FOGO services roll out and plastics education;
- The Strategy should continue to drive the transition to a circular economy in our region.

Next steps and timeline to completion

The Hunter JO team have recently determined to no longer continue with using an external consultant to deliver the next stages of the project (i.e. the development of the actual WaSM Strategy). This work will now be done using primarily internal staff resources. Whilst the technical analysis completed by an external consultant to date establishes a strong foundation for the strategy development work, we are not confident that a consultant is best placed to manage the diversity, complexity and challenges involved in aligning interests across the region in preparing the new

strategy, or to effectively integrate the region's ambitions to transition to a Circular Economy. Hunter JO staff are well placed to synthesise the work undertaken to date and translate this into an ambitious and focused regional strategy and action plan.

The Hunter JO team are also waiting on the EPA to provide more detail on the requirements for strategy development including the requirements for developing action plans and the future funding program details. These requirements will be critical to ensuring we align with EPA guidance and have access to State Government funding sources. The EPA have commented that we are months ahead of other regional waste strategy groups and joint organisations at this point.

Given the above information, the following timeline is now proposed for completing the strategy:

March - May 2022	Completion of Draft Strategy and Action Plan
June - July 2022	Consultation on Draft Strategy and Action Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regional Waste Strategy Group• EPA• GMAC/ HJO Board
August 2022	Report to Hunter JO Board recommending endorsement of the Strategy and draft Action Plan

It should be noted that the Action plan will likely need to stay in draft form until funding detail from the EPA is released, which is anticipated to be early in the 2022/23 financial year.

Recommendation

- **That the Board endorse the draft recommendations identified in relation to development of the strategy and the proposed time frame for completion.**

Report Author: Eloise Lobsey, Regional Policy and Program Coordinator (WARR & Circular Economy)

Responsible Officer: Tim Askew, Regional Policy and Program Manager

Background

In 2010, the Minister for Local Government delegated to IPART the function of approving special rate variations and minimum rates, and the function of varying annual council charges for domestic waste management (DWM) services.

In May 2020, IPART initiated a review of the local government DWM charge after being informed that OLG had ceased auditing the reasonable cost basis of these charges in 2016-17. After surveying councils on DWM expenses and services for the 2017-18 and 2018-19 financial years as part of the 2019-20 Local Government Cost Index (LGCI), IPART found that DWM charges had risen significantly in recent years and that they vary significantly across councils and between similar councils. IPART was then tasked with devising an approach to reduce variation in DWM charges and ensure value for money across councils based on transparent, reasonable and efficient costs.

The Rebalancing Approach

In August 2020, IPART released a DWM charge review [Discussion Paper](#), which proposed:

- Benchmarking waste-related costs across councils;
- OLG to publish pricing principles in their *Council Rating and Revenue Raising Manual* on how to set DWM charges to ensure they reflect the costs of providing the service and best value for ratepayers;
- Councils to rebalance DWM income and expenses with general rates in line with the pricing principles with the aim of shifting overheads not consistent with the pricing principles to general rates; and
- Councils annually report via a simple and streamlined spreadsheet.

In response to the Discussion Paper, the Hunter JO prepared a regional submission in collaboration with member councils, that in principle supported transparency in the setting of DWM charges, however, raised concerns that IPART had not properly accounted for the complexities and contextual factors that account for the wide variation in DWM charges, nor the external financial pressures these DWM services have been under in recent years.

DWM Charge Peg

On 13 December 2021, IPART released its Local Government DWM Charge review draft report, with the following recommendations:

- Publish annually a benchmark DWM charge peg (1.1% for 2022-23) that gives guidance on how much the reasonable costs of providing DWM services have changed over the previous year. Councils can increase DWM charges beyond this but must provide justification.
- Publish an annual report on councils that have increased their DWM charges beyond the annual peg, and those councils' justifications for doing so.

- Recommend that NSW OLG publishes pricing principles in their *Council Rating and Revenue Raising Manual*, on how to set DWM charges to ensure they reflect the costs of providing the service and best value for ratepayers.
- Calculate a Waste Cost Index (WCI) based on a basket of 26 items taken from DWM expenditures in 2017-18 and 2018-19, similar to IPART's Local Government Cost Index (LGCI), and use ABS price indexes to measure changes in these costs.

Consultation on the draft report is open for submissions until 29 April 2022, with the following questions posed for feedback:

1. Do you think our proposed annual 'benchmark' waste peg will assist councils in setting their DWM charges?
2. Do you think the pricing principles will assist councils to set DWM charges to achieve best value for ratepayers?
3. Would it be helpful to councils if further detailed examples were developed to include in the Office of Local Government's *Council Rating and Revenue Raising Manual* to assist in implementing the pricing principles?

Report

Sector wide concerns

Discussions across council waste managers as well as between regional waste groups are progressing to identify common issues and to work towards aligning submission feedback across the state to present a unified voice. The concerns discussed to date range from high-level down to detailed mechanics of the system proposed by IPART, all of which it would seem could have considerable implications for councils if adopted in their current form.

At the time of writing this report, a series of discussions have occurred (and are still to come) amongst Metro and Regional Waste Coordinators and LGNSW. In addition, a webinar was hosted by SSROC and LG NSW on 22 March 2022 (with councils in attendance as well as industry) to discuss the implications and potential sector response to the current consultation.

Whilst evolving, the current conversations occurring amongst the sector can be summarised as follows:

1. Clarification on IPARTs legal delegations

It is understood that LGNSW have sought legal clarification on the remit of IPART based on the legislation and delegation instrument, in particular, as to whether IPARTs delegation extends beyond the ability to apply a peg. At the time of writing this report, it remains unclear how this advice might colour the framing of LGNSW's submission, and it is likely that the Hunter JO's submission will need to take account of this advice once available.

2. Impact of fluctuating costs of DWM services

Unlike other service areas of councils, waste services are particularly susceptible to external cost drivers, often which are unpredictable and difficult to plan for. In current circumstances these unpredictable costs commonly include (and are not limited to):

- Covid pandemic impacts on staffing, DWM volume increases and associated costs;
- Rising fuel costs;
- Day labour cost increases (new Local Government Award);

- Disaster recovery costs.

For these reasons, the rigid and unresponsive system for calculating incidental costs that IPART is proposing is not considered fit for purpose and would result in a high proportion of councils exceeding the 1.1% peg across the state. It is unclear what would occur if a high proportion of councils across the state consistently exceeded the 1.1% peg. Concerns have been expressed by some councils that under this scenario, IPART may be placed under pressure to impose a hard DWM rate peg in subsequent years.

3. DWM service innovation mandated by WaSM and net zero targets.

Notwithstanding the concerns outlined with the proposed peg in a BAU setting, the timing of IPART changes and their impacts on councils is particularly ill-timed. Given the state government has mandated significant change to DWM services across the state (such as the implementation of FOGO services, and an 80% diversion of landfill target by 2030), as well as ambitious net zero targets, now is not the time to be setting rigid and unresponsive pricing systems that limit council's ability to innovate and respond to these policy settings.

To understand the potential impacts of a 1.1% peg on implementing FOGO service roll out for councils in their group, SSROC have undertaken feasibility analysis to determine predicted real costs to be incurred by Councils (refer Attachment 8). Key findings of their work include:

- Funding gap: FOGO implementation costs on average \$15.5million/council in year 1, whereas the EPAs Organics Collection Grant program offers at most \$0.76million/council (TBC) if proportionally distributed to councils yet to adopt FOGO.
- Predicted year 1 cost of FOGO is 8% more than BAU for SSROC Councils (averaged as a region).
- This will represent 3.7% of total DWC expenditures for their largest Council, which doesn't factor in the new LG award increases, CPI and other processing/contractor cost increases.
- FOGO model includes \$1-3 million of unaccounted for costs per council (ineligible for grants) such as audits, human resourcing, smart tech, bin reconciliation, tendering, and advertising.

The SSROC FOGO analysis report is included in Attachment 8.

4. Pricing Principles 1 and 4 are problematic

Four pricing principles are proposed under the IPART report, these are outlined below with commentary on the potential implications as they are understood at the time of writing this report:

1. DWM revenue should equal the efficient incremental cost of providing the DWM service

Incremental cost approach is not appropriate given the problematic and outdated definition of 'waste' and 'domestic waste management services' under the Local Government Act. The current definition is predicated on services to the kerb as opposed to services to the benefit of a property, which in turn excludes domestic waste services such as:

- Community Recycling Centres
- Public place litter bins
- Illegal dumping clean up (domestic waste)
- Self haul
- Education not related to source separation (i.e excludes avoidance/litter)

Note, it is likely that the definition of waste will be changed as part of the EPAs current review of the Resource Recovery Framework. It is critical for councils that IPART use a definition consistent with the Resource Recovery Framework, which would involve advocacy to the OLG to update the definition in the Local Government Act to align with the new framework (when available).

2. *Councils should publish details of all the DWM services they provide, the size of the bin, the frequency of the collection and the individual charges for each service.*

No in-principle concerns to greater transparency this enables.

3. *Within a council area, customers that are:*

- *Imposing similar costs for a particular service should pay the same DWM charge*
- *Paying the same DWM charge for a particular service should reflect the same level of service.*

Concerns with this principle are namely around the difficulty in finding genuinely comparable organisations and services given the contextual complexity of delivering DWM services.

4. *Any capital costs of providing DWM services should be recovered over the life of the asset to minimise price volatility*

The 'user pays' approach this principle establishes is problematic. Capital costs should continue to be recovered based on forward planning as opposed to relying on borrowings to fund expenditure and recover costs post service implementation. For example, the interest on financing waste facilities and land acquisition imposes a significant extra financial burden on ratepayers and does not represent the most efficient cost of service delivery.

Situation in our region

Below is a table showing the draft (at the time of writing this report) DWM charge rate increases for councils in the Hunter and Central Coast Regional Waste Group shown as % increase between 2021/22 and 2022/23 financial years:

Table 1: Draft percentage increase on previous year for 2022/23 DWM charge by Council

Proposed % increase in DWM charge	Central Coast	Cessnock	DSC	LMCC	MCC	MSC	NCC	PSC	SC	UPSC
	4.92%	3%	tbc	4.92%	1%	tbc	tbc	3%	8%	1.1%

Over the previous 5 financial years, councils have on average (across the region) increased DWM charge by 3.5% each year, as detailed in the table below.

Table 2: Percentage increase in previous years DWM charge by Council

FY	Central Coast	Cessnock	DSC	LMCC	MCC	MSC	NCC	PSC	SC	UPSC
2016-17	4%	6.3%	11.8%	5%	10.6%	2.8%	0%	-5.9%	18.9%	23.4%
2017-18	7.2%	0%	4.0%	4.8%	4.4%	8%	0%	3.5%	-8.7%	5.9%
2018-19	2.3%	2.8%	9.8%	0.2%	2.6%	0%	2.3%	0.7%	4.8%	23.8%
2019-20	2.4%	5.9%	0%	0.0%	2.5%	2.6%	0%	2.2%	0%	16.1%
2020-21	2.0%	1.9%	2.9%	2.5%	3.6%	5.5%	7.6%	5.6%	2.5%	1.5%

5 yr average	3.6%	3.4%	5.7%	2.5%	4.7%	3.8%	2%	1.2%	3.5%	14.1%
Regional 5 yr average	3.5% increase									

A discussion was facilitated with the Hunter Central Coast Regional Waste Strategy Group on 3 March 2022. Key feedback from Waste Managers is summarised as:

- Consensus that preferred option be the rebalancing method other the 1.1% rate peg.
- Concerns around the proposed 1.1% rate peg are that:
 - 1.1% is too low given majority of Councils consistently exceed this each year, coupled with the future cost of implementing WaSM policy and regulation changes.
 - Unrealistic rate peg will mean significant number of Councils fall within the 15% buffer (our understanding is that IPART will not regulate if DWC increases fall within 15% of the peg). If this became an established pattern, the fear is that IPART may be under pressure to implement a hard peg.
- Significant concerns around the implications of Pricing Principle 4 'user pays' model given reasons outlined above.

When asked if Councils were concerned on implications of the proposed peg on the planning and implementation of FOGO services in their LGA, no significant concerns were raised. It should be noted that this feedback was predicated on FOGO financial modelling undertaken by councils featuring a shift to fortnightly red bin (garbage) collection.

Sector consistency and high-level position emerging

Feedback by Metro Regional Waste Group members who are on the IPART reference group, have advised that IPART have indicated that the draft report is not a fait accompli and if enough councils propose the previously identified rebalancing approach over the DWM charge peg in their submissions (not just oppose the peg but actively advocate for rebalancing), there is a high likelihood that it will be adopted over the peg. Even if councils propose a third alternative, IPART would have to conduct another public consultation, which it is very unlikely to do.

LGNSW are due to circulate their position statement imminently, which based on recent discussion with LGNSW staff is expected to highlight the limitations of IPARTs remit and by extension their ability to fix the underlying structural issues that persist in the setting of DWM charges (as discussed above). The structural issues primarily relate to the need to update the definitions and associated guidelines to reflect modern waste and recycling practices, but would require broader legislative and regulatory changes beyond the scope of this IPART report to align and harmonise the necessary instruments. Whilst the imposition of a peg or a rebalance exercise would be acting on the symptomatic issues, it is expected that LGNSW submission will favour the rebalancing option over the peg.

When asked (via poll) at the SSROC/LGNSW webinar hosted late March, 98% councils attending were favouring the rebalancing method over the peg (when faced with a choice between the two).

It is understood that the EPA are planning to make a submission to this consultation to highlight the conflict and potential risks to state policy implementation, and oppose the introduction of a DWM peg.

On the basis of the feedback and discussions outlined above, and in order to align with local government voices across the state, the emerging position for the Hunter JO submission at the time of writing this report is summarised as:

- The introduction of the proposed DWM rate peg is not supported;

- Councils call for a review of the definitions of ‘waste’ and ‘domestic waste management services’ in the LG Act and OLG Rating and Revenue Raising Manual, in tandem with the EPA’s review of the resource recovery framework, to cover all services/functions that relate to the minimisation, management, and highest order recovery of waste that is generated by rateable plots of land;
- As the least worst option, councils favour benchmarking, clear and consistent pricing principles, and rebalancing DWMC with general rates, over a minimum 2-year transition period, based on expanded definitions of ‘waste’ and ‘domestic waste management services’.

It is anticipated that the Hunter JO response to the consultation will be aligned with the LGNSW position statement (once available) and fellow Regional Waste Groups as described above, unless additional information or advice is forthcoming as a result of this report and other planned discussions in the coming weeks.

Consideration by GMAC

At its 31st March meeting, GMAC considered and supported the Hunter JO regional submission taking an approach that aligns with the emerging position of local government voices across the state. In providing this advice GMAC also strongly recommended that the regional submission:

- Clearly identify that the premise underpinning the IPART review is not accepted by Hunter JO Member Councils. At this point in time no problem has been adequately defined that justifiably needs solving via the recommendations arising from the IPART review;
- Support for rebalancing DWMC with general rates is predicated on it being the least worst of the only two options presented. In its current form, it is also considered that both a DWM peg or rebalancing exercise could direct Councils to act contrary to existing legislation which prohibits Councils from subsidising the costs of delivering waste services from general rate revenue.

Recommendation

- **That the Hunter JO Board endorse the following key principles and directions around which to formulate a regional submission to IPART’s current consultation on the Review of Domestic Waste Management Charges Draft Report:**
 - **Oppose the introduction of a DWM rate peg;**
 - **Clearly identify that the premise underpinning the IPART review is not accepted by Hunter JO Member Councils;**
 - **Raise concerns that both a DWM peg or rebalancing exercise could direct Councils to act contrary to existing legislation, and therefore call for a review of the definitions of ‘waste’ and ‘domestic waste management services’ in the LG Act and OLG Rating and Revenue Raising Manual, in tandem with the EPA’s review of the resource recovery framework, to cover all services/functions that relate to the minimisation, management, and highest order recovery of waste that is generated by rateable plots of land;**
 - **As the least worst option, councils favour benchmarking, clear and consistent pricing principles, and rebalancing DWMC with general rates, over a minimum 2-year transition period, based on expanded definitions of ‘waste’ and ‘domestic waste management services’.**

Report Author: Boyd Blackwell, Regional Policy & Program Manager

Responsible Officer: Steve Wilson, Director Regional Policy & Programs

Purpose:

To seek the Board's endorsement of the draft Regional Infrastructure Prioritisation Methodology / Assessment Framework developed during Phase 1 of the Regional "Priority Infrastructure List" project as the basis upon which to proceed to the next phase of project delivery.

Link to Hunter Joint Organisation Strategic Plan 2018-21 (Aspire.Act.Achieve).

Action Area	4. Our people and products move across the region easily on integrated and accessible transport networks
Action	4.5 Use the in-depth evidence base to prepare Hunter JO agreed priority list of infrastructure, system and service improvements which will make the greatest difference to communities and businesses across the region. This will include expansion and connectivity between cycleways.

Background

The Priority Infrastructure List (PIL) project was identified as a priority by the Hunter JO Board in 2020. At an overall level the project objectives are to:

1. Build and advocate a stronger case across the region for investment in infrastructure priorities
2. Identify the potential for shared interests and collaboration between Councils and other stakeholders in delivering local and regional scale infrastructure initiatives, and
3. Identify a longer-term infrastructure investment pipeline, to provide transparency and confidence for potential investors, professional services and contractors to build their presence in the Hunter.

Delivery of the project includes two phases:

Phase 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review methodologies and available tools for prioritising infrastructure at regional and/or sub regional scales• Identify / develop a valid, reliable and defensible evidence base/method for prioritisation• Provide guidance on further tools to be developed to support implementation of the prioritisation methodology
Phase 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development of a tool to capture and facilitate the prioritisation of infrastructure utilising the methodology developed during Phase 1.

A presentation on the objectives and applications of the PIL project, including the outcomes of Phase 1 was provided to the Hunter JO Board at its February 2022 briefing session (Refer Attachment 9).

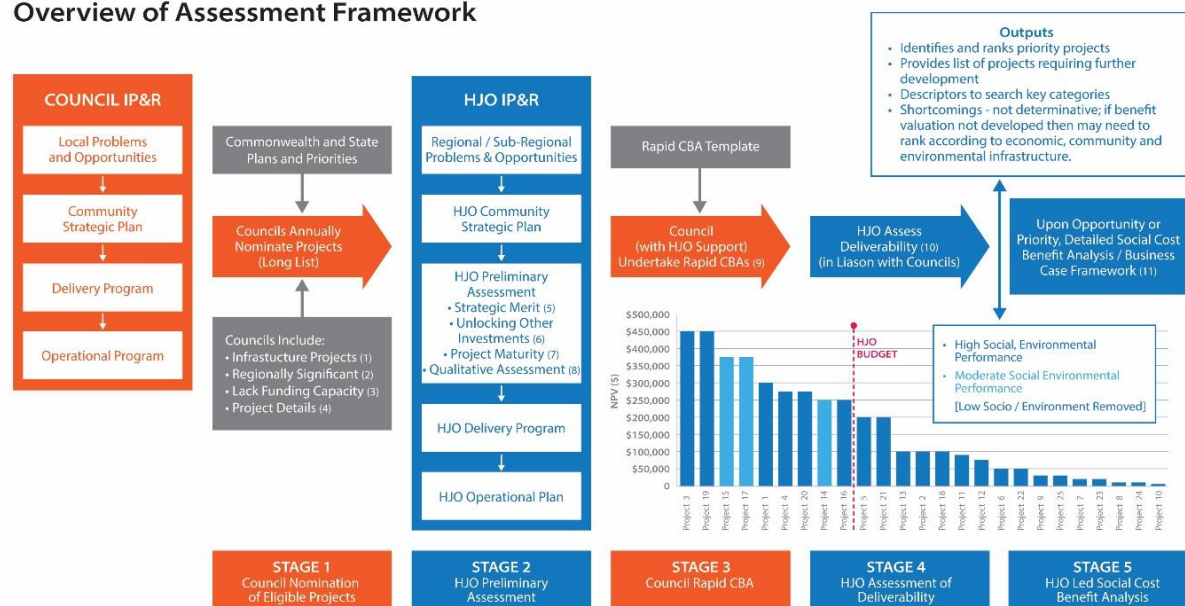
Report

Phase 1 Outcomes - Prioritisation Methodology / Assessment Framework

The primary outcome of the Phase 1 work is development of a prioritisation methodology / Assessment Framework, which was developed by the consultants engaged on the project (Marsden Jacob Associates), in close collaboration with Hunter JO staff, representatives from Member Councils, state agencies and other stakeholder organisations. This collaboration included contributing to the design and development of the Assessment Framework via participation in project workshops, testing the assessment framework against real life infrastructure projects and scenarios, and reviewing interim and final versions of the Assessment Framework

The following figure provides a schematic overview of the Assessment Framework developed during Phase 1 (NB a larger version is also available in the attached PowerPoint presentation).

Overview of Assessment Framework



The above framework incorporates 5 stages for developing a list of priority infrastructure:

Stage	Description
Stage 1: Council IP&R	Nomination of eligible projects – councils annually nominate projects along with supporting information and data to the Hunter JO to form an initial long list of projects.
Stage 2: HJO IP&R	Hunter JO undertakes a preliminary assessment of projects submitted using criteria including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Merit • Unlocking other investments • Project maturity • Qualitative Assessment
Stage 3: Council Rapid CBA	Councils with Hunter JO support undertake rapid Cost Benefit Assessment of projects identified from preliminary assessment (NB a Rapid CBA tool has been developed as an output of Phase 1)
Stage 4:	The Hunter JO working with councils, assesses the deliverability of short-listed projects. At this point in the process a series of outputs are produced that include:

Stage	Description
Hunter JO assessment of Deliverability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies and ranks priority projects Provides a list of projects requiring further development Descriptors to search key categories Shortcomings – where quantitative benefit measures are not readily available a project may need to be ranked based other criteria – process is not determinative.
Stage 5: Hunter JO led Social Cost-Benefit Analysis	In this final stage a business case using social-cost benefit analysis will be undertaken for projects that demonstrate opportunity and priority

It is envisaged that the collection and analysis of data from Member Councils and other organisations using the Assessment Framework would be undertaken on a yearly basis at a time that is aligned with Member Council strategic planning processes.

Next steps (Phase 2)

The next step of the PIL project is to reengage Marsden Jacob Associates to proceed with the development of a tool that will automate the capture and categorisation of infrastructure data provided by Councils, and to facilitate the analysis of this data within the Assessment Framework that has been developed during Phase 1. Arising from their involvement in the project to date and recognition of the value of the project to the region, Hunter Central Coast Development Corporation (HCCDC) are also contributing \$20,000 in project funding to this next phase of the project.

Recommendation:

- **That the Board endorse the Assessment Framework that has been developed during Phase 1 of the project as the basis upon which to proceed to Phase 2 delivery.**

7. Items for the Hunter JO Board – For Noting

7.1 CEO Report – Collaboration & Advocacy

Report Author: Joe James, CEO

Responsible Officer: Joe James, CEO

Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of key collaboration and advocacy engagement since the last meeting of the Hunter JO. This includes key networks, meetings, workshops and forums in which the CEO and staff have recently participated in to facilitate and support intergovernmental collaboration.

The report provides an update for the last period on:

1. Advocacy (other than is reported in a project update or through a standing engagement)
2. Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement
 - a. Political Engagements;
 - b. Existing Standing Engagements (convened by local government)
 - c. Existing Standing Engagements (convened by others)
 - d. Proposed New Standing Engagements
 - e. Additional Strategic Engagements (if any)
3. Submissions (in development or lodged)
4. Regional Funding Applications (status)

Advocacy

Hunter Global

The Hunter JO is leading regional collaboration and advocacy efforts to collectively identify and actively pursue key international opportunities for expanding the Airport's economic contribution to the Region, following the upgrade of the Airport's runway to Code E status. Key partners in the initiative include Newcastle Airport, Committee for the Hunter, Business Hunter and the University of Newcastle.

One of the primary deliverables of the initiative the 2-day Hunter Global Regional Summit was delivered on 17th & 18th February 2022 at Newcastle Town Hall (refer report included in Agenda Item 7.10 for full details).

Following on from the summit, the first piece of advocacy collateral arising from the event has been produced, in the form of a "teaser" video, which highlights the importance of international connectivity for the Hunter; unlocking growth markets, creating new jobs across the region, and maintaining and diversifying the fantastic lifestyle that our region offers. The video can be seen https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= 0vpCbx_H8s. Distribution of the teaser video along with encouragement to share broadly has included:

- Hunter JO Board
- Communications staff in Member Councils
- Senior Economic Development and Planning staff in member Councils
- Project Partners
- Those who registered for the February summit

As can be seen from the "Collaboration & Stakeholder Engagement" table below, the teaser video has also been distributed broadly to Commonwealth and State political representatives to raise awareness of the Hunter Global initiative and to encourage their interest, involvement and support.

The next outputs from the project that will further underpin regional advocacy include:

1. An extended advocacy video that will further underpin regional advocacy efforts to state and federal governments, as well as to attract potential investors to the region. The focus of this video will be “When we get to the world stage”, showcasing 2-4 storylines from local people and businesses from around the region as to what direct international access through the airport will allow them to do.
2. A report analysing the opportunities identified at the summit, and identifying the key “next steps” needed to effectively progress their delivery. This report will provide a platform to support ongoing advocacy and program development work undertaken by the JO, project partners and other regional stakeholders to continue to promote and develop the economic development opportunities for the region arising from the airport runway upgrade.

“Shiraz to Shore” Cycle Trail

With the Commonwealth Government election pending, the opportunity to advocate to Hunter candidates seeking commitments to resource initial stages of the regional “Shiraz to Shore” Cycle Trail initiative has been previously discussed by the General Managers Advisory Committee. To facilitate efforts of this nature, an advocacy document has since been developed providing an overview of the “Shiraz to Shore” concept, including costings for each of the project design, marketing and initial construction elements.

A copy of the draft document is included in Attachment 10.

Pending feedback from the Hunter JO Board, this document can be circulated to Councils to assist with promoting the project locally alongside efforts from the Hunter JO. Along with promoting through general communications channels, Hunter JO activities will include direct communication with the following audiences to encourage them to promote and support the initiative:

- Hunter candidates for the 2022 Commonwealth Government election
- Commonwealth Government Ministers with relevant portfolios
- NSW Government Ministers with relevant portfolios
- Hunter based NSW Members of Parliament.

Federal election advocacy

We have now received information from all Member Councils identifying their local and regional advocacy priorities in respect to the upcoming Commonwealth election process. The CEO, EO and Director RPPD are currently reviewing and synthesising this information with a view to identifying clear areas of regional or sub regional alignment and region-wide benefit around which the formulate an advocacy plan. Emerging themes include:

- Funding for renewal of local road networks and bridge upgrades
- Leadership and support to drive the region’s economic evolution
- Newcastle Airport Terminal upgrade
- Funding for sporting, recreational and Community facility upgrades
- Funding for cycleway and pedestrian infrastructure
- Improved health facilities, services and research
- Funding for Catalyst Areas – Hunter Park and Williamstown SAP
- Town Centre upgrades and beautification
- Upgrades to water and sewer infrastructure

Regional Submissions

1. Draft Hunter Regional Plan 2041

In collaboration with Member Councils, a regional submission was lodged on the draft Hunter Regional Plan 2041. This submission was based on an analysis and synthesis of individual council feedback and submissions.

Overall, the submission supported the objectives in the draft Plan which demonstrated high alignment with the Hunter JOs own strategic priorities. However, the submission identified that the Plan's main gaps lie in either silence or ambiguity on three key areas which, if not addressed, undermine the Plan's potential to achieve its own Vision and Objectives:

- Competitive access to global markets and the importance of global connectivity for the Hunter region
- Intra-region connectivity, specifically public transport
- Clarity around governance of the document and its delivery

2. IPART changes to the Domestic Waste Management Charge

Collaboration is underway with Member Council Waste Managers, Metropolitan Regional Waste Coordinators Group, SSROC and LGNSW to identify alignment to support the development of a regional submission on the proposed IPART changes to the Domestic Waste Management charge. Refer accompanying report (Agenda Item 6.3) for further information.

Media Coverage

A selection of the below media coverage has been included at the end of the Board Pack for information.

FOCUS	DATE
PREPARING THE HUNTER FOR TAKEOFF <i>Newcastle Herald</i> Representatives from government, industry and the community will come together to identify priorities and pathways to ensure the Hunter will be ready to capitalise on enhanced access to global markets resulting from the Newcastle Airport runway upgrade. The region's councils, led by the Hunter Joint Organisation will host the Hunter Global summit. https://www.newcastleherald.com.au/story/7614170/preparing-the-hunter-for-takeoff/	11 February 2022
HUNTER'S ONCE IN A GENERATION OPPORTUNITY <i>Newcastle Herald Opinion Piece</i> In just two years, the Hunter will host an international airport. This is a game changer for industry, business and communities, and the 10 councils of the Hunter are collaborating on readying the region to capitalise on unprecedented access to the global economy. The Mayors of the Hunter are 100% committed to supporting the region to capitalise on this unique opportunity. https://www.hunterjo.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Joint-Hunter-Mayors-Op-Ed_Hunter-JO.pdf	12 February 2022

FOCUS	DATE
HUNTER GLOBAL – A LOOK AT WHATS POSSIBLE <i>Newcastle Live Radio</i> <p>In just two years, the Hunter will host an international airport offering a once-in-a-generation opportunity for the region's growth and diversification. Hunter Global: Our international future is a region-wide initiative led by the Hunter Joint Organisation (HJO), to boost collaboration, planning, and advocacy to capitalise on the Newcastle Airport runway upgrade.</p> https://soundcloud.com/newcastlelive/hunter-global-summit	15 February 2022
SINGAPORE AND FREIGHT OPPORTUNITIES FOR AIRPORT EXPANSION <i>Newcastle Herald</i> <p>Focusing on freight, diversifying from Sydney and commercial flights to Singapore on a low cost airline are opportunities for Newcastle Airport to capitalise on its international expansion, a summit heard on Thursday. The Hunter Global: Our International Future summit was hosted by the Hunter Joint Organisation, made up of the region's 10 council, at Newcastle City Hall to ready for the international runway completion next year.</p> https://www.newcastleherald.com.au/story/7625068/singapore-and-freight-opportunities-for-airport-expansion/	17 February 2022
HUNTER GLOBAL SUMMIT <i>NBN Television</i> <p>Coverage of Day 2 of the Hunter Global Summit included in NBN Evening News.</p>	18 February 2022

Collaboration & Stakeholder Engagement

Key Stakeholder Engagement	Outcomes (where relevant)
Political Engagements (upcoming)	
Tim Crakanthorp MP – Member for Newcastle (26th April 2022) Jenny Atchison MP – Member for Maitland (28th April 2022)	<p>Meetings scheduled to discuss current Hunter JO priorities, focus areas and opportunities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hunter Global Initiative • Hunter Venture Fund • Shiraz to Shore
Political Engagements (completed)	
Sharon Claydon - Member for Newcastle (5th April 2022)	<p>Meeting held to discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process for identifying local government priorities for the Commonwealth Election Campaign • Hunter Global Initiative • Hunter Venture Fund • Shiraz to Shore

Key Stakeholder Engagement	Outcomes (where relevant)
The Hon. Taylor Martin, MLC	Presented on behalf of the NSW Premier at the Hunter Global Summit – Friday 18 th February 2022
Senator Hollie Hughes, Senator for NSW	Attended morning session of the Hunter Global summit – Friday 18 th February 2022
Yasmin Catley - Member for Swansea	A meeting was held with the Member for Swansea on 3 February 2022, along with coalition partners, to discuss the <i>Hunter Partnering for Growth</i> advocacy initiative.
<u>NSW Government Ministers</u> The Hon Dominic Perrottet , NSW Premier The Hon Matt Kean , NSW Treasurer, and Minister for Energy The Hon Paul Toole , Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Police The Hon Stuart Ayres , Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, Minister for Tourism and Sport, and Minister for Western Sydney The Hon Rob Stokes , Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport The Hon. Dugald William Saunders , Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales The Hon Wendy Tuckerman , Minister for Local Government	Correspondence sent providing a copy of the Hunter Global “teaser” video to raise awareness of the Hunter Global initiative and to encourage interest, involvement and support.
<u>Commonwealth Government Ministers</u> Barnaby Joyce , Deputy Prime Minister of Australia Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development David Littleproud , Minister for Agriculture and Northern Australia Paul Fletcher , Minister for Communications, urban Infrastructure, Cities and the Arts Dan Tehan , Minister for Trade, Tourism & Investment Senator Bridget McKenzie , Minister for Regionalisation, Regional	Correspondence sent providing a copy of the Hunter Global “teaser” video to raise awareness of the Hunter Global initiative and to encourage interest, involvement and support.

Key Stakeholder Engagement	Outcomes (where relevant)
Communication and Regional Education	
<u>NSW Members of Parliament representing the Hunter Region</u> Jenny Aitchison - Member for Maitland Clayton Barr - Member for Cessnock Stephen Bromhead - Member for Myall Lakes Tim Crakanthorp - Member for Newcastle Jodie Harrison - Member for Charlestown Sonia Hornery - Member for Wallsend Greg Piper - Member for Lake Macquarie Kate Washington - Member for Port Stephens David Layzell - Member for Upper Hunter	Correspondence sent providing a copy of the Hunter Global “teaser” video to raise awareness of the Hunter Global initiative and to encourage interest, involvement and support.
<u>Commonwealth Members of Parliament representing the Hunter Region</u> Sharon Claydon - Member for Newcastle David Gillespie - Member for Lyne Joel Fitzgibbon - Member for Hunter Barnaby Joyce - Member for New England, Pat Conroy - Member for Shortland Andrew Gee - Member for Calare Emma McBride - Member for Dobell Meryl Swanson - Member for Paterson	Correspondence sent providing a copy of the Hunter Global “teaser” video to raise awareness of the Hunter Global initiative and to encourage interest, involvement and support.
Candidates for Hunter electorates in the 2022 Commonwealth election	Correspondence sent providing a copy of the Hunter Global “teaser” video to raise awareness of the Hunter Global initiative and to encourage interest, involvement and support.
Existing Standing Engagement (convened by Local Government)	

Key Stakeholder Engagement	Outcomes (where relevant)
Hunter JO Circular Economy Subcommittee	A meeting of the Subcommittee occurred on 1 February 2022. Refer Agenda Item 7.3 – Hunter JO Subcommittees Standing Update for further details
Hunter JO Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan Steering Committee	<p>A Committee workshop was held on 10th March 2022 to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> align the expectations and directions of Committee members to redefine the focus, role, Terms of Reference and resourcing for the Steering Committee moving forward. Work collaboratively on developing a shared objective / consensus on the governance outcome that needs to be achieved (a “light on the hill”) for the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan, and to identify the next steps on which to focus to progress toward that objective. <p>Refer Agenda Item 7.3 – Hunter JO Subcommittees Standing Update for workshop outcomes.</p>
Regional Contaminated Land Working Group (convened by Hunter JO)	<p>The bi-monthly Regional Contaminated Land Working Group was held on Wednesday 30 March. Focus areas included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update on the priorities and activities of the Regional Program Update on the Contaminated Land Helpdesk Identifying priorities, ideas and case studies for upcoming asbestos and PFAS regional forum Council updates and general discussion on contaminated land issues and initiatives
Metropolitan Regional Waste Coordinators Group (convened by network members)	<p>The focus of the network during February – March has included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifying shared alignment and direction in responding to the proposed IPART changes to the Domestic Waste Management Charge EPA updates and directions on the NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy (WaSM) and its implications locally and regionally for Councils
Hunter Regional Waste Strategy Group	Workshop sessions of the Regional Waste Managers / Strategy Group have recently been delivered, which focused on development of the next Regional Circular Materials and Waste Strategy
‘Partnering for Growth’ Coalition	<p>Following distribution of the ‘Partnering for Growth’ advocacy package, the coalition have now held meetings with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSW Treasurer on (1 December 2021)

Key Stakeholder Engagement	Outcomes (where relevant)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anthony Hayes - Executive Director Community and Place, Transport for NSW (30 November 2021); • Nomiky Panayiotakis, Senior Policy Adviser to the Deputy Premier (Minister Toole) (12 December 2021) • Kiersten Fishburn – Secretary DPIE (10 December 2021).
<p>Additional networks and regional forums during the period included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hunter Regional Illegal Dumping Squad Committee • Joint Organisation Executive Officers Network 	<p>Participation in this regional forum continues to facilitate information sharing and collaboration across a range of shared interest focus areas between member councils, government agencies and other stakeholder organisations.</p>
Existing standing engagements (convened by others)	
<p>Regional Leadership Executive (2 March 2022)</p>	<p>Agenda included a number of significant program updates on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regional NSW Regional Liveability Strategy – high level feedback has been sought from the GMAC Chair and the HJO CEO 2. The Hunter Central Coast REZ 3. NSW Hydrogen Strategy 4. The HCC Enabling Regional Adaptation Strategy (significant input from local government to shape)
<p>EPA Local Government Advisory Group (convened by NSW EPA)</p>	<p>NSW EPA representatives provides updates on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress against Waste Delivery Plan • NSW Plastics Plan • Current & potential grant opportunities • EPA Roadshows (planned for Newcastle 24 May) • POEO Act Amendment (Thermal Energy from Waste) • Resource Recovery Framework • Resource Recovery Orders - Update on recovered fines legislation. • IPART: review of domestic waste management service charges

Key Stakeholder Engagement	Outcomes (where relevant)
Regional Leadership Executive – Human Services Subcommittee (convened by Regional NSW)	<p>While direct Hunter JO participation in meeting not possible due meeting scheduled at same time as Hunter JO Board meeting, key agenda items included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merging of the Hunter and Central Coast Subcommittees and creation of a Terms of Reference • Maitland Placed Based Initiative, including proposed Youth Engagement project, Office of Regional Youth initiative & Integrated transport plan for East Maitland Transport NSW • Strategies for reducing smoking rates in the Hunter • Social Housing COVID response team and activities
RLE Resilience & Recovery Subcommittee (jointly convened by Resilience NSW & Regional NSW)	<p>The Hunter JO has continued to participate in the RLE Recovery and Resilience Committee, attending a meeting on the 1 February 2022. A further update on the Hunter Central Coast Adaptation strategy was provided at the meeting. A request has been made to give an overview of the Simtables for Community Empowerment Project being delivered by the Hunter JO at the next meeting of the Subcommittee.</p>
RLE Economic Development Subcommittee (convened by Regional NSW)	<p>Meeting held 1 February 2022. Updates included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Strategy Development Plan for the Hunter Park Broadmeadow Precinct is underway • The Upper Hunter Economic Diversification Action Plan is in development • Williamstown SAP draft plan should be out for consultation in March 2022 • Regional Job Creation Fund recipients announced creating 700 FTE jobs in the Hunter
Business Attraction Committee (convened by Regional NSW)	<p>Significant updates provided by sub-committee working groups.</p> <p>Energy (UoN Alan Broadfoot):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlined significant government policy and funding that will shape the renewable energy generation sector and hydrogen production sector. Training and skills shortages are a strategic risk. • Hunter based hydrogen bids (AGL, Energy estates, Hunter Energy, the Port bid) <p>Health - Chris Levi</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlined a series of projects in health innovation. • Highlighted NSW Health Precinct Steering Committee - parallel provider for commercial investment in space and land has been approved

Key Stakeholder Engagement	Outcomes (where relevant)
	<p>(i.e. streamlined approval process). Fighting to get John Hunter the necessary profile in the Health Precinct Groups</p> <p>Defence - Tim Owen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlighted various announcements by fence / aerospace primes and other significant projects Discussed recent trip to Singapore and potential for regional delegation
Upper Hunter Economic Diversification Working Group (convened by Regional NSW)	<p>Updates provided at the most recent meeting were in relation to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Working Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training and Education Working Group update UP website Working Group AGL Transition Working Group update Governance paper (in development) Work Plan update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation Priorities Monitoring economic indicators Hunter Identity and Positioning Strategy GM Facilitated Session – progressing a business case Preparing for business cases and funding opportunities Workforce demand modelling Update on Royalties for Rejuvenation Fund
Upper Hunter Education & Training Working Group (convened by Regional NSW)	<p>This new working group of the Upper Hunter Economic Diversification Working Group met 15 February. Outcomes included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hunter JO made a commitment to assist committee with education and training requirements for the Upper Hunter via providing a voice from Councils and also support from Arrow through LGTI Hunter JO & Uni of Newcastle (through an MoU) will endeavour to provide support through projects that provide necessary evidence bases through education and training at University level.
Local Government Climate Change Planning Toolkit Working Group (convened by DPE)	<p>The Hunter JO has continued to participate in working group meetings to collaborate with DPIE during the development of the Climate Change IP&R Package and the DPE Local Government Climate Change Toolkit.</p> <p>The Hunter HO (Mel Curtis) presented to the State-wide IP&R Network, on the Hunter JOs Climate Change IP&R Package at the request of the City of Sydney Council.</p>

Key Stakeholder Engagement	Outcomes (where relevant)
Climate Action Professionals Network (convened by LGNSW)	Hunter JO staff continue to participate in the Climate Action Professional Officers Group, the last meeting of which was 17 th March. Dissemination and discussion of the Hunter JOs draft Climate Change IP&R Package has occurred through the Group's Portal.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Control Group Hunter Identity and Positioning Hunter Identity and Positioning Local Government Reference Group (convened by Regional NSW) 	Meetings continue fortnightly to develop the next phase of work: to develop a plan to re-engage stakeholders on the draft brand and strategy
Additional networks and forums: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hunter Central Coastal Management Program Practitioners Roundtable (convened by DPE) 	Participation in this regional forum continues to facilitate information sharing and collaboration across a range of shared interest focus areas between member councils, government agencies and other stakeholder organisations.
Proposed New Standing Engagements	
Invite for HJO CEO to sit on Business Attraction Health sub-committee (chaired by Chris Levi – meeting for a couple of hours every 2-3 months)	Currently being considered by CEO, EO and Director RPPD to assess Hunter JO capacity and strategic fit.
Proposed New Standing Engagements	
Invite for HJO CEO to be festival chair for Hunter Innovation Festival (1 day a week capacity until festival, approx. Sept / Oct, and then two weeks of the festival)	This would be a form of sponsorship in-kind. Currently being considered by CEO, EO and Director RPPD to assess Hunter JO capacity and strategic fit.
Additional Strategic Engagements	
Greater Sydney Commission Research Workshop (5 th April 2022)	<p>The Hunter JO CEO and Director Regional Policy & Programs participated in this workshop convened by the GSC and University of Newcastle, designed to inform development of a new Research Strategy to support delivery of the existing Greater Sydney Regional Plans and upcoming 6 cities plans. A range of regional stakeholder organisations participated in the workshop including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Newcastle Dantia University of Newcastle Wollotuka Institute Hunter Jobs Alliance Business Hunter Hunter Water Port of Newcastle UDIA

Key Stakeholder Engagement	Outcomes (where relevant)
Hunter Global Summit (convened by Hunter JO)	The 2-day Hunter Global Regional Summit was delivered on 17 th & 18 th February 2022 at Newcastle Town Hall. Refer report included in Agenda Item 7.10 for further details).
Accelerating Event Economies Networking Breakfast & Project Working Group (convened by Hunter JO)	<p>A networking breakfast with Regional Stakeholders was held 2 March 2022 with approximately 55 representatives attending (35 in person and 20 online).</p> <p>The dedicated project working group meeting was also held following the breakfast, which identified some areas of uncertainty or concerns, but at an overall level indicated enthusiasm for the opportunity to collaborate on initiatives within the events space.</p>
Regional Leadership Forum (convened by Regional Development Australia)	<p>The initial meeting of this group on 28 January 2022 introduced actions and initiatives (underway and planned) that need support to address challenges and take advantage of regional opportunities and prospects. Key directions identified for ongoing dialogue and collaboration by the Group include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued information sharing about projects and activities and coordination of collaborative effort to deliver shared outcomes • Growing areas of competitive advantage and building local capacity, capabilities and competencies: taking advantage of the region's comparative advantages • Building evidence-based action plans and advice to decision-makers based on region-specific data, experience and know-how • Presenting evidence, including local statistics, in ways understood by decision-makers – governments, investors and families
JO Chairs Forum (convened by JO Executive Officers Network)	<p>The JO Chairs network, comprising newly elected Chairs met for the first time on 28 March 2022, at Parliament House in Sydney. The focus of the meeting included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal opening and address by the Minister for Local Government, The Hon. Wendy Tuckerman, MP • Election of a new Chair for the Forum • JO updates • Review of the terms of Reference for the Chairs Forum • A Facilitated workshop session with OLG to identify priorities for delivery by the interagency committee established to respond to the recommendations identified in the 2021 review of Joint Organisations report.

Key Stakeholder Engagement	Outcomes (where relevant)
Destination Management Plan Development Session (convened by Destination Sydney Surrounds North)	<p>Along with other regional stakeholders, the Hunter JO recently participated in this engagement session on the development of a new Destination Management Plan by DSSN. The following insights and trends were presented to the workshop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travellers are looking for higher end products and services, and an increase in sustainability focus. • International markets won't be coming back for 2-3 years so a focus on domestic visitors should continue during that time • The Hunter should focus on its unique offering • The region should collaborate more to position and market our region, and "hunt in packs" for funding. • The region needs to service trends in Electric Vehicles and hybrid working weeks. <p>These insights are valuable across a number of Hunter JO projects and strategic planning priorities.</p>
TfNSW & Joint Organisations Workshop (convened by JO Executive Officers Network)	A workshop was delivered on 25 January between the State-wide JO Executive Officers Network and senior staff from Transport for NSW.

Status of Regional Funding Applications

Grant applications

Funding Program	Grant Title	Amount Requested	Status
NSW Regional Business Event Development Fund	<p>Mayors Gala - Building Regional Collaboration & Celebrating Regional Success</p> <p><i>Submitted 31 January 2022</i></p> <p>To support piloting of the proposed Mayors Gala regional event should proceeding with this concept be approved by the Board.</p>	\$30,000	Pending

Extension of Existing Funding

- The NSW EPA have confirmed a 12-month funding extension (i.e. for 2022/23 financial year) for coordination of the Hunter and Central Coast Regional Waste Program.
- Verbal indications have been received from the NSW EPA that additional funding will be allocated to extend the Regional Contaminated Land Program by a further 12 months, although formal confirmation is still pending (Refer Agenda Item 7.6 "Regional Contaminated Land Program – Status and Next Steps")

Recommendation:

- **That the report be received and noted.**

Report Author: Lisa Lord, Head of Finance

Responsible Officer: Joe James, CEO

The Hunter JO financial reports for February 2022 have been included at Attachment 11.

Balance Sheets and Cashflow Reports have also been included in the Financials for this report.

The Hunter JO Member Subscription fees have been calculated and are included below. In keeping with the determination from the Hunter JO Board in February 2020, Member Contributions have been calculated comprised of;

- A fixed contribution per member council, and;
- A variable fee contribution using a hybrid model of 50% determined by population and 50% determined by rate base;

The population numbers are revised annually, and have been based on the NSW Planning Projection numbers for 2021. The rate base numbers have been taken from each Member Council's Annual Financial Statements of 'Total ordinary rates'. CPI has also been included this year, at the rate of 3.5%.

In line with the Arrow Master Business Plan and growth projections, the contribution of \$600,000 from Arrow is funded out of both Arrow's operational surplus and capital reserves. The target split for FY22-23 is \$400,000 from operational surplus and \$200,000 from capital reserves.

Recommendation:

- **That the Financial Reports for year-to-date February 2022 be received and noted.**
- **That the proposed Hunter JO Member Subscription fees be endorsed for delivery to the Hunter JO Board**

Report Author: Steve Wilson

Responsible Officer: Joe James, CEO

7.3.1 [Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan Steering Committee \(update on GCC\)](#)

In line with the resolutions of the 7th October 2021 meeting of the Committee, a workshop was held on 10th March 2022 to:

1. Collaboratively align the expectations and directions of Committee members to redefine the focus, role, Terms of Reference and resourcing for the Steering Committee moving forward.
2. Work collaboratively on developing a shared objective / consensus on the governance outcome that needs to be achieved (a “light on the hill”) for the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan, and to identify the next steps on which to focus to progress toward that objective.

There were two priority recommendations arising from the workshop:

1. The Hunter JO advocate to the Minister, that within amendments to the *Greater Sydney Commission Regulation* 2016 required to enable establishment of the expanded “Greater Cities Commission”, that:
 - a. A formal governance arrangement be enshrined between the Greater Newcastle Cities Commissioner (to be appointed), and the five Mayors of the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Area (City of Newcastle, Lake Macquarie City Council, Cessnock City Council, Maitland City Council and Port Stephens Council)
 - b. The governance process established, enshrines a process for regular and meaningful communication and collaboration between the Greater Newcastle Cities Commissioner and the five Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Area Mayors
2. That the primary role of the GNMP Steering Committee moving forward, will be to:
 - a. Provide a strong and united advocacy voice on agreed core priorities for the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Area, within the context of a broader shared regional narrative
 - b. Inform the broader advocacy platform of the Hunter JO Board in regard to the agreed priorities and advocacy narrative for the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan area.

7.3.2 [Circular Economy Sub Committee](#)

A meeting of the Subcommittee was held 1 February 2022. In addition to receiving updates on the status of delivery of the various Circular Economy initiatives being collaboratively implemented by the Hunter JO, Member Councils and partner organisations, the decision was made to divert from running a singular circular economy event, to developing a roadmap for 3 years of events, with Circular Economy tradeshow and celebration of the region’s achievements being earmarked for Year 1.

7.3.3 [Regional Economic Transition Sub Committee](#)

As reported to the recent meetings of the Board, an initial review of the Sub-committee’s focus and operations was undertaken in conjunction with Sue Moore (Chair) and Jason Linnane (General Manager, Singleton Council) in late 2021. With the outcomes of the Local Government elections finalised, a meeting of the existing Subcommittee was earmarked for late February / early March 2022 to confirm the Subcommittee’s ongoing focus and Terms of Reference, including an increased focus on the NSW Government’s Hunter Expert Panel and Royalties for Rejuvenation program.

In planning the next meeting of the SubCommittee it has been identified that:

- There has been substantive change and movement in the representatives who were historically involved in the Steering Committee, which comprised a broad mix of elected officials, Council staff (e.g. Economic Development officers) and Agency representatives
- A range of new Committees / Working Groups are now operating in the region that have a strong planning and operational focus on economic transition, and which now overlap with the previously established role and functions of the Subcommittee (Refer Attachments 12 & 13). There is also an overlap in membership at an operational staff level. Examples include:
 - RLE Economic Development Subcommittee
 - Upper Hunter Economic Development Committee (and Working Groups)
 - Hunter Identity and Positioning Strategy
 - Hunter Business Attraction Committee
 - Hunter JO Regional Economic Development Forum (comprising Member Council Senior Economic Development staff)
 - Hunter Royalties for Rejuvenation Interim Expert Panel

Given the above, it is recommended that the role of the Committee be more clearly defined as one that primarily formulates and drives the advocacy work of the Hunter JO around place based economic evolution for the region. Specific recommendations to achieve this include:

- That the primary role of the Subcommittee moving forward, will be to develop and provide a strong and united advocacy voice on agreed core priorities for the place based economic evolution of the Hunter region, within the context of the broader Hunter JO narrative. This would particularly focus on seeking and influencing State Government leadership, strategic direction, resources and action to ensure collective local government priorities enable the region's economic evolution through the Royalties for Rejuvenation program and the Hunter Expert Panel.
- That membership of the Committee be drawn exclusively from the Hunter JO Board, to ensure representatives have the appropriate authority to make decisions and deliver the advocacy functions of the Subcommittee and its members.
- That representatives from the Hunter JO Board with an interest being a representative on the Committee confirm their involvement at the April 2022 Board meeting.
- That the name of the Standing Committee be amended to the "Subcommittee for Economic Evolution" to align with the broader narrative of the Hunter JO around the region's economic transformation.

A revision of the Terms of Reference for the Standing Committee will be undertaken to reflect the outcomes of the Board's resolution, and presented to the next meeting of the Standing Committee for consideration.

Attachments

- Attachment 12: DRAFT Place based Regional Economic Development Framework
- Attachment 13: DRAFT Standing Committee Governance & Advocacy Relationships

Recommendation:

- **That the Board note the updates on the Hunter JO Sub-Committees**
- **That the Board endorse the recommendations arising from the GNMP Steering Committee workshop including:**
 - i. **The Hunter JO advocate to the Minister that:**

- A formal governance arrangement be enshrined between the Greater Newcastle Cities Commissioner (to be appointed), and the five Mayors of the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Area (City of Newcastle, Lake Macquarie City Council, Cessnock City Council, Maitland City Council and Port Stephens Council)
 - The governance process established, enshrines a process for regular and meaningful communication and collaboration between the Greater Newcastle Cities Commissioner and the five Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Area Mayors
- ii. That the primary role of the GNMP Steering Committee moving forward, will be to:
 - Provide a strong and united advocacy voice on agreed core priorities for the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Area, within the context of a broader shared regional narrative
 - Inform the broader advocacy platform of the Hunter JO Board in regard to the agreed priorities and advocacy narrative for the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan area.
- That the Board endorse the recommendations relating to the Regional Economic Transition Subcommittee, including:
 - i. That the primary role of the Subcommittee moving forward, will be to develop and provide a strong and united advocacy voice on agreed core priorities for the place based economic evolution of the Hunter region, within the context of the broader Hunter JO narrative. This would particularly focus on seeking and influencing State Government leadership, strategic direction, resources and action to ensure collective local government priorities enable the region's economic evolution through the Royalties for Rejuvenation program and the Hunter Expert Panel.
 - ii. That membership of the Committee be drawn exclusively from the Hunter JO Board, to ensure representatives have the appropriate authority to make decisions and deliver the advocacy functions of the Subcommittee and its members.
 - iii. That the name of the Standing Committee be amended to the "Subcommittee for Economic Evolution" to align with the broader narrative of the Hunter JO around the region's economic transformation.
- That representatives from the Hunter JO Board with an interest in being a representative on the Regional Economic Transition Subcommittee confirm their involvement at the April 2022 Board meeting.

Report Author: Steve Wilson, Director – Policy and Programs Division

Responsible Officer: Joe James, CEO

PROGRAM DELIVERY HIGHLIGHTS

Action Area 1. Our communities stay inclusive, proud and safe and celebrate diversity

1.4 Continue to work together to deliver the programs to increase community resilience and preparedness for natural disasters through the Hunter and Central Coast Regional Environmental Management Strategy

Transforming Resilience with the IP&R Framework	
Program / Project Lead	Anna Flack
Purpose: To provide an innovative approach to support bush fire affected member Councils embed resilience principles and projects into their IP&R, which in turn will provide Councils the ability to allocate recurrent funds and commit to long term resourcing (financial and staff) for resilience projects.	
Status update: The Project Officer has now been employed and commenced work on the project. Project planning and stakeholder identification has been undertaken and will be continually updated as the initial literature review progresses. A consultant has been engaged to complete a literature review on existing regional, state and national resilience policies and strategies, as well as developing a framework for what makes a 'high', 'medium' and 'low' resilience Council and community. Following on from the success of the Climate Change IP&R package, the consultant will also commence preparation of a Resilience IP&R document. A review of Council's draft CSPs is being undertaken to identify current approaches towards improving resilience. Discussions have commenced with Resilience NSW and Resilient Sydney to exchange advice and experiences of embedding resilience into Council IP&R frameworks. The Hunter IP&R Network meets every two months to share progress on their IP&R activities. This working group will be used to update participating Councils on the Resilience IP&R program. Next steps involve developing a Resilience Health Check Tool to help complete a gap analysis and assess participating Councils to determine their current level of resilience, so that we can better inform future actions and support required.	

Simtables for Community Empowerment	
Program / Project Lead	Chris Dart
Purpose: Simtables provide a "State of the Art" tool that can be used to engage communities in localised place-based emergency information sessions. This project has purchased two Simtables for the collective use of member Councils and to provide direct support to Councils in undertaking the extensive community engagement associated with their use.	
Status update: The Simtables for Community Empowerment project is progressing well. The two Simtable unit have now been procured, set-up and tested with the New Mexico based Simtable team. The JO is in the	

process of procuring the walnut shell sand – the media that fills the table – from a Victorian supplier. When received the Simtables will be fully functional and engagement with the project stakeholders can begin. Council staff will have the opportunity to participate in two levels of training: general user training and “super” user training. The Simtables Project Officer will be in touch with relevant staff from each Council with details of the project and how to register for the training sessions.

Action Area 2. Our enviable environment is protected for future generations and our resources are used efficiently

2.1 Continue to work together to deliver the Hunter and Central Coast Regional Environmental Management Strategy

Business case review - potential for HJO to host Regional Illegal Dumping Squad	
Program / Project Lead	Eloise Lobsey
Purpose: To determine the feasibility of the Hunter JO potentially hosting the Hunter RID Squad, and the most appropriate financial and operational model for the RID Squad were this to occur.	
Status update: Following GMAC’s resolution in September 2021 to proceed with a due diligence process to explore the potential for the Hunter JO to host the Hunter & Central Coast RID Squad (subject to adequate resourcing being provided by the NSW EPA), the following has occurred: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It had been our understanding that EPA were integrating the due diligence work within a broader state-wide review of RID Squads they had commissioned, to which end a brief outlining our requirements was provided in October 2021 • EPA confirmed late February 2022 that that Hunter JO will now need to identify, engage and manage consultant to deliver the due diligence review. • We have since received a quotation to complete the due diligence work, and a request for \$46,775 to deliver has been approved by the EPA. This amount includes the consultancy (\$40,675) and Hunter JO project management costs (\$6,100). 	

2.3 Work together to find an effective recycling solution for the region

Circular Economy Roadmap	
Program / Project Lead	Tim Askew
Purpose: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop a common understanding and definition for the circular economy of the region relevant to all stakeholders – government, business and academia. • Gain broad regional support and engagement for the development of a circular economy in the Hunter and Central Coast region. • Develop a strategic roadmap for the region • To create an identity for the region as a leader in the transition to a circular economy and as a place to do Circular Economy activities, providing business attraction and local support for the circular economy 	

- To provide leverage and connect with other key circular economy frameworks and strategies at all levels of government

Status update:

The CE roadmap is now finalised and is ready to go live on the website. Options from a soft to a more formal launch are being considered. A quarterly review process is being established to keep the document up to date and relevant for our regions circular economy.

Circular Economy Eco-system

Program / Project Lead	Tim Askew
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Purpose:

- Provide and improve circular economy communication for all circular economy eco-system participants in the Hunter and Central Coast
- Build circular economy knowledge through education and capacity building opportunities for Hunter JO member councils and Central Coast Council
- Develop and improve circular economy data and analytics systems for use by all circular economy eco-system participants in the Hunter and Central Coast

Status update:

A communications plan has been developed and is now being implemented. This includes:

- Development of a Circular Economy newsletter, soon to be launched in tandem with the release of the CE Roadmap
- Launching of a LinkedIn Circular Economy network group, which has grown to 62 members and receives weekly postings
- A review and update of the www.huntercircular.com.au website which has now gone live

A CE event working group has also been established to scope a roadmap of CE events for the region over a 3-year time period, delivery of which will be dependent on accessing funding.

Action Area 3. Our economy is multifaceted, resilient and is Australia's leading regional economy

3.4 Work with the Upper Hunter Regional Leadership Executive to deliver the Upper Hunter Economic Diversification Project Action Plan, monitor its success and review as needed

Hunter Venture Fund

Program / Project Lead	Boyd Blackwell
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Purpose:

The purpose of establishing a Hunter venture Fund is to fill funding, investment and capability shortfalls to 2050, that are required to help the Hunter Region plan for change that is accelerated by advancing energy technologies that will reduce the world's reliance on coal over time.

Status update:

Following targeted consultation with industry stakeholders, the consultant Henshall Capital PL (engaged to work on the project) has finalised development of:

- A draft Pitch Deck to enable the Hunter JO to approach government and the funds management industry about investing in the Hunter Venture Fund (HVF)

- A draft Structuring Report that provides recommendations on the structure, function and design of the HVF; and any further investigations that might be required to support the evidence base for the need for the fund.

The outputs are currently under review.

Full Hunter JO Program Delivery Report

Refer Attachment 14 “Hunter JO Program Report” for information on the full range of programs being delivered.

Recommendation:

- **That the report be received and noted.**

Report Author: Alison McGaffin, Director, Hunter and Central Coast

Responsible Officer: Alison McGaffin, Director, Hunter and Central Coast

Purpose:

To provide an update on key activities of the Department of Regional NSW, specifically focussing on the outcomes of the Hunter Central Coast Regional Leadership Executive (RLE) meeting held on 22 February 2022.

Report:

The Hunter Central Coast RLE met most recently on Tuesday 22 February 2022 (2 weeks after the last Hunter JO Board meeting). A key purpose of the meeting was to start to scope some of the strategic challenges and opportunities for intergovernmental collaboration for the next Statement of Intent 2022-24. The outcomes of greatest relevance to the Hunter Joint Organisation (HJO) Board relate to the following items:

Briefing on the Regional Liveability Program

Department of Regional NSW is leading the development of a new Regional Liveability program that will include the following key elements:

- Liveability Vision – a long-term strategy to make regional NSW an even better place to live. The Vision is expected to be released mid-year.
- Liveability Business Case – DRNSW-led initiatives for 2022/23, to be considered via state budget process.

A key objective of the program is to strengthen regional leadership and place-based decision-making to meet communities' needs in their local circumstances.

Hunter Central Coast Adaptation Strategy

As noted in the December 2021 report to the Board, a Draft Regional Adaptation Strategy had been developed to guide more efficient and effective implementation of regional climate change adaptation responses.

A Working Group has been established to coordinate alignment of objectives and assist project leads to leverage existing programs to increase project effectiveness and efficiency, and alignment to a whole-of-government approach. The Working Group will report annually to the HCC Regional Recovery and Resilience (RRR) and RLE.

The resolution of the February 2022 Hunter Central Coast RLE meeting endorsed the Hunter Central Coast (HCC) Adaptation Strategy.

Department of Planning and Environment have agreed to meet with the HJO to clarify the HJO partner roles in the Adaptation Strategy.

Hunter-Central Coast Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) and outcome of the Registration of Interest

Presentation on the Hunter-Central Coast Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) and outcome of the Registration of Interest. A number of entities have been set-up specifically to provide recommendations to government around job creation and logistic supply chains. The Renewable Energy Sector Board is preparing a detailed report that includes region specific modelling around supply chains, job numbers, unemployment issues and skills training.

NSW Hydrogen Strategy and potential opportunities for the Hunter

Presentation on the NSW Hydrogen Strategy and potential opportunities for the Hunter.

Link to the strategy - <https://www.energy.nsw.gov.au/renewables/renewable-generation/hydrogen>

A digital platform has been launched to drive collaboration on hydrogen in NSW and facilitate connections between hydrogen projects and consumers. Stakeholders may contact the department at hydrogen@planning.nsw.gov.au if they would like to access this portal.

Draft Hunter Central Coast Regional Transport Plan

Transport for NSW provided a high level snapshot of the Draft Hunter and Central Coast Regional Transport Plans (RTP) expected to go on public exhibition in the coming months. Key challenges identified for the Hunter RTP include:

- Connectivity within and between regionally significant areas
- Supporting rapid pace of development with infrastructure and services
- Protecting freight movements and reinforcing key links to the Newcastle Port and Airport and the Global Gateway of Sydney.

Update from the Office of Regional Youth

- Minister for Regional Youth announced the \$10.3 million Children and Young People Wellbeing Recovery Initiative on 9 February that will help regional youth recover from the impacts of natural disasters and COVID-19. Councils, schools, not-for-profit organisations and Local Aboriginal Land Councils are encouraged to apply for grants to deliver projects that support recovery, boost resilience and support mental health and wellbeing for regional young people.
- The Holiday Break program providing funding for councils and free and subsidised activities for regional young people. The Autumn Holiday Break program will be opened on 7 March 2022. The Autumn Break will run from 2-25 April to include Youth Week.
- Recruitment of the 2022 Regional Youth Taskforce has been finalised, with the 2021 Taskforce holding their final meeting in November 2021, and
- Regional Youth Pilots including The Youth Radio program and Regional School Alumni Events Program.

Next RLE Meeting

The next meeting of the RLE is scheduled for 31 May. One of the key actions for the RLE over the next month is to draft a revised set of Priorities (Statement of Intent) including projects and key initiatives for 2022-2024.

I am currently seeking input from RLE members (including the Hunter JO) to identify any whole of Government Projects and/or key initiatives that members would like to see included in the Hunter Central Coast Statement of Intent for 2022-2024. The criteria for any projects proposed for consideration are:

- Projects will require collaboration across government
- Have measurable outcomes

- Be informed by compelling evidence.

There is now an opportunity for the Hunter JO to input to this process through the Executive Officer and the Chair of GMAC.

Recommendation:

- **That the Board note the outcomes of the meeting of the Hunter Central Coast Regional Leadership Executive (RLE) on 22 February 2022.**

Report Author: Melinda Curtis

Responsible Officer: Steve Wilson

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the status and achievements of the Regional Contaminated Land Program, including potential to extend implementation for a further 12 months. This is provided as context to recent correspondence forwarded to the Minister for Environment and Heritage, the Hon. James Griffin MP on this matter.

Link to Hunter Joint Organisation Strategic Plan 2018-21 (Aspire.Act.Achieve).

Action Area	Action Area 2. Our enviable environment is protected for future generations and our resources are used efficiently
Action	2.1. Continue to work together to deliver the Hunter and Central Coast Regional Environmental Management Strategy

Background

The Regional Contaminated Land Program is a NSW EPA Grant funded initiative delivered by the Hunter JO. Grant funding for the current 3-year program is scheduled to finish in August 2022. The program forms part of the NSW Government's overarching Council Regional Capacity Building (CRCB) Program for Contaminated Land, which involves delivery of similar regional programs at various locations around NSW.

In addition to the NSW EPA funding provided to the program, Hunter JO Member Councils and Central Coast Council have also contributed 3 years of collective funding directly to the program as shown in the following table.

Direct Program Funds	Total Funding (3 years)
NSW EPA	\$420,000
Councils	\$118,000
TOTAL	\$538,000

Report

The objectives of the Regional Contaminated Land Program are to build the capacity of participating Councils by assisting them develop local contaminated land policies, procedures and land-use information systems, as well as providing training and technical support on contaminated land management matters.

The Program is a core regional initiative that is heavily used by all Hunter JO Member Councils and Central Coast Council. The program provides significant support to Councils to effectively identify, assess and manage contaminated land sites on private and Council managed land, and to support Councils' transition as regulators of the *Underground Petroleum Storage System (UPSS) Regulation*.

Throughout December 2021 and January 2022, individual meetings were held with each Council to introduce new Hunter JO staff employed to deliver the program, to check in on Council progress and needs, and discuss the next steps for the program. Below is a high-level summary of the outcomes from these discussions:

- All Councils see value in the regional program, specifically acknowledging the Service (Help) Desk function, collaboration through working group meetings, and links to the EPA that are provided.
- All Councils would continue to benefit from future training sessions organised through the program, including training for planners and broader Council staff
- Some Councils are under resource constraints and will require more ongoing support in developing and embedding procedures, contaminated land registers and training
- 8 out of 11 Councils have a Contaminated Land Policy in place, including 7 who have or intend to adopt the Hunter JO Model Policy
- 4 Councils have a contaminated land register in place, while 6 are working towards updating or improving their contaminated land register
- 10 out of 11 Councils have allocated responsibility for UPSS management, however 5 require support embedding UPSS procedures

The current iteration of the Regional Contaminated Land Program has run since January 2020 and is currently due to be completed in August 2022. Based on verbal advice from EPA staff we are anticipating a further 12-month funding extension, however no formal confirmation of this has been received.

To encourage confirmation of the funding extension, correspondence has recently been forwarded to the Minister for Environment and Heritage, the Hon. James Griffin MP, seeking confirmation of continued funding (refer Correspondence).

Recommendation:

- **That the report be received and noted.**

Report Author: Melinda Curtis

Responsible Officer: Steve Wilson

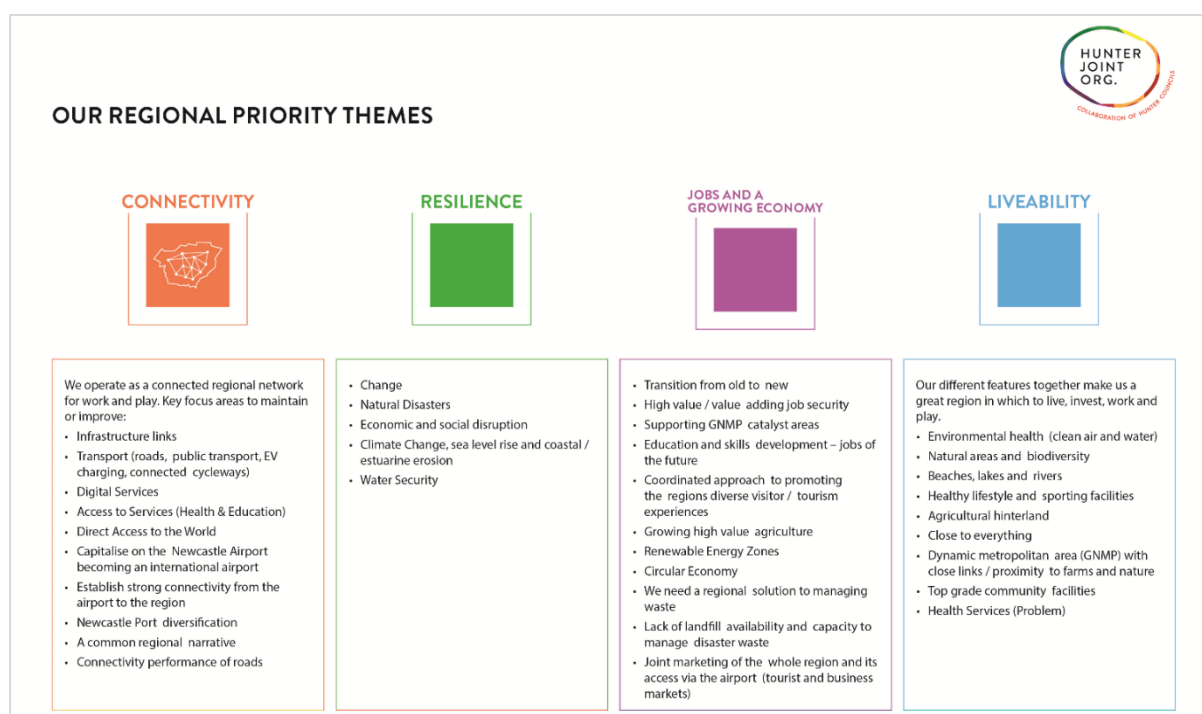
Purpose:

To provide the Board with an update on the development of the Hunter JO Strategic Plan and planned next steps.

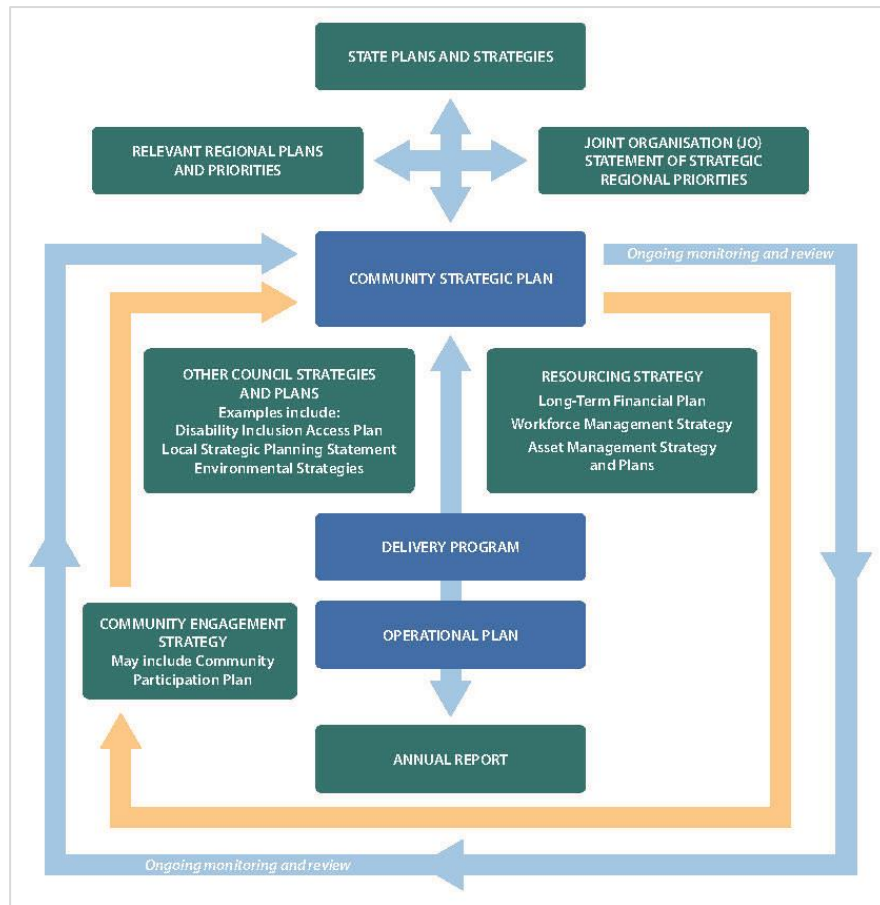
Background

This is a continuation of previous briefings related to the development of the new Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2022-2026.

At the Hunter JO Strategic Planning Workshop held on the 21st May 2021, the presentations and discussions led to the identification of the following 4 key Regional Priority themes, listed below:



Since that time the Office of Local Government (OLG) released a new IP&R Handbook and IP&R Guidelines in September/October 2021, which included the amended IP&R Framework below:



Report

Consistent with the changes to the *Local Government (General) Regulation (cl 397H)*, a Joint Organisation must now prepare its Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities by no later than 12 months after each ordinary election of councillors for all member councils. In accordance with this amendment, the Hunter JO Strategic Plan will need to be completed by December 2022. The proposed steps and draft timeline for meeting this timeline are provided in Attachment 15.

Recommendation:

- That the report be received and noted.

Report Author: Steve Wilson, Director Regional Policy and Programs

Responsible Officer: Joe James, CEO

Purpose:

To inform the Board of the outcomes from a review of the NSW Joint Organisation framework, and of the next steps in responding to the recommendations arising from the review.

Background

During 2021 The Office of Local Government (OLG), initiated a review of the NSW Joint Organisation framework. The objectives of the review were to:

1. Assess the effectiveness of the JO operational model in facilitating the delivery of core functions and statutory obligations and increasing collaboration with external partners, and;
2. Assess the outcomes of the JOs in delivering their core functions —advocacy and leadership, strategic planning and priority setting, and intergovernmental collaboration.

The Terms of Reference established for the review included:

- Analysis of what has worked in the establishment of the JOs, and what barriers exist to good governance.
- How effective the JO model has been in supporting JOs to deliver against the core objectives of advocacy, strategic leadership, and better outcomes for regional communities.
- How the delivery of core objectives can be measured.
- How other NSW and Commonwealth agencies work with the JO network and value the contribution of the JO network.
- Overview of JO achievements and opportunities to share learnings from those achievements.
- How the \$150,000 capacity building funding has been used and the value of that funding program to the ongoing sustainability of JOs.
- Identification of barriers to success of the JO model.
- What a successful JO network looks like and how it can be realised.

ARTD Consulting were commissioned to undertake the review, which included reviewing findings from an examination of existing background documents, a survey of all General Managers of participating Councils across the JO Network, and interviews with a total of 72 stakeholders from across all 13 JOs in NSW.

Report

The outcomes from the review are documented in two reports that are both provided:

- Attachment 16: Joint Organisations Review - Volume 1: Overview Report
- Attachment 17: Joint Organisations Review - Joint Organisations Profiles – Volume 2

These reports were released along with a briefing to the JO Chairs and Executive Officers by the then Minister for Local Government Shelly Hancock on 1 December 2021. This timing three days prior to the NSW Local Government elections prevented the JO Chairs Network from being able to collaboratively review and respond to the findings and recommendations identified by the review process.

Review Findings

At an overall level the review found that The JO framework is sufficiently robust to be a credible, legitimate and transparent model of regional governance, and that there is evidence that most JOs are beginning to deliver outcomes in line with the model's three core functions. Stakeholders agree that the potential of JOs to coordinate and simplify state–local government collaboration represents value. However, the performance of JOs in this and other core functions is inconsistent across NSW. To ensure JOs reach their potential and are sustainable, some aspects of the model need refinement.

Outcomes in relation to more specific focus areas are included in the table below, and in the Executive Summary of the Volume 1: Overview Report.

Focus Area	Findings
Appropriateness	<p>The legislative, regulatory, and strategic collaboration frameworks of the JO model are an appropriately robust foundation for JOs to deliver effective regional governance. Most stakeholders agree that these legislative and regulatory frameworks reinforce the credibility, legitimacy, and transparency of this model of regional governance over other models, including Regional Organisations of Councils (ROCs).</p> <p>Building on this strong foundation, there are opportunities to refine aspects of the model to ensure individual JOs remain viable, and that the model overall is sustainable.</p>
Compliance Requirements	<p>While holding JOs to the same governance requirements as member councils is an important and necessary accountability, it creates an administrative load for some JOs. The costs associated with annual external audits are reportedly burdensome, particularly for some smaller, less well-resourced JOs.</p>
Composition of JOs	<p>JO boundaries align with NSW regional planning boundaries. Councils in regional NSW were invited to form JOs of any configuration, provided they replicated or nested within the NSW regional planning boundaries. Most eligible councils (87) voluntarily joined a JO. However, in four JOs, some potential member councils declined to join a JO which has impacted the ability of these JOs to fulfil their core functions and threatens their ongoing viability.</p>
Ongoing Investment to ensure financial viability	<p>JOs were established with seed funding from the NSW Government. It was intended that JOs would become financially sustainable without ongoing state investment, deriving income in three main ways: member contributions, project delivery and delivery of shared services across member councils. The extent to which JOs have been able to unlock alternate revenue streams varies considerably across the state. Currently, one-third (38%) of JOs have inadequate or marginally adequate resources to sustain their ongoing operation.</p> <p>In all but one JO, member contributions are the sole source of ongoing funding to support baseline operational costs. Reflecting the variable capacity of member councils, the quantum of member contributions available to each JO also varies considerably. Raising member contributions could threaten the willingness of member councils to remain involved if the JO cannot demonstrate value for money to participating councils.</p>

Focus Area	Findings
	<p>It was intended that JOs would be permitted to retain a portion of NSW Government grant funding for administering projects and initiatives identified by both JOs and the NSW Government as regional priorities, and that this would generate an income source. However, this has only been realised in a small number of cases. Some NSW Government agencies are reluctant to invest in major regional projects via the JO.</p> <p>Limited financial resources have in some instances hampered the ability of JOs to attract and retain appropriately skilled staff; focus on long term, strategic planning and develop alternative revenue streams, such as shared service delivery.</p> <p>There was widespread agreement amongst stakeholders, particularly local government stakeholders, that without further investment from the NSW Government, the JO model will fail. However, a small number of stakeholders do not believe it is appropriate for the State Government to be funding the operational costs of JOs. Most stakeholders observed that any additional funding from the NSW Government should be time-limited and linked to performance against agreed indicators that reflect the core functions of JOs</p>
Effectiveness	<p>There is evidence that almost two-thirds (62%) of JOs are delivering their core functions effectively, or highly effectively, including successfully delivering against their strategic plans, and securing funding to deliver regional projects. In most cases, a JO's effectiveness is closely correlated to its financial viability.</p>
Strategic Planning & Priority Setting	<p>All JOs have developed a formal strategic planning document, in line with legislative and regulatory requirements. These documents vary in terms of how clearly the priorities are specified and linked with actions and associated responsibilities and timeframes for delivery. Stakeholders noted that the extent to which the identified regional priorities reflect all member councils' priorities, or particular state agencies' priorities for the region, is variable.</p> <p>JOs are delivering a range of major projects that directly address some of their identified strategic priorities, with varying degrees of success.</p> <p>Many stakeholders observed that JOs are at times required to compete with their member councils for grant funding, which limits their opportunity to grow their financial capacity. Some JOs have been precluded by their member councils from applying for NSW Government grant programs, even if they are eligible to apply.</p>
Regional Leadership & Advocacy	<p>Stakeholders agreed that JOs <i>should</i> be a critical entity for regional leadership. The JO's capacity to lead is determined by its maturity, which is determined by working relationships between member councils and the calibre and capacity of its staff, particularly the EO. Less financially viable JOs have been unable to recruit and retain suitably skilled full time EOs, and this is an obvious limit to the ability of those JOs to lead and advocate regionally.</p> <p>Well resourced, mature JOs have struck a balance between regional and local issues and are actively and successfully pursuing leadership opportunities. This includes participating in the Regional NSW-convened</p>

Focus Area	Findings
	Regional Leadership Executives (RLEs), although stakeholders observed these forums are not always operating to their fullest potential. Where the RLE is not fully functioning as a strategic and collaborative forum, JO stakeholders perceive there is little to be gained from participating.
Intergovernmental Collaboration	<p>Member councils are experiencing some economies of scope and scale that flow from collaboration with other councils. All JOs agreed that the collective voice of councils is a key strength of the model, which unlocks regional leadership and advocacy.</p> <p>JO stakeholders indicated a willingness to partner with state agencies to deliver regional projects that align with their priorities. Some state agencies noted that where JOs lack capacity (financial or human resources) they are not viable delivery partners. Other state agencies have not fully explored the possibility of partnering with JOs. There are opportunities to strengthen the profile of JOs with state agencies. Where regional–state collaboration is effective, the NSW Government experiences important efficiencies, such as streamlined consultation and negotiation with councils, and effective, locally managed project delivery. Councils gain from having their voices heard by key NSW Government decision makers.</p> <p>Some JOs are effectively collaborating with other state or territory governments, or with the Australian Government. These collaborative relationships are heavily dependent on geography. Cross-jurisdictional collaboration is most evident in JOs that are close to state or territory boundaries.</p>

In addition to the above findings, the review has identified a number of critical success factors for JOs:

1. **A commitment to regional vision and clearly defined regional priorities.** Effective JOs have a culture of collaboration that leverages positive historical working relationships and have clear articulation of their shared and individual priorities. Member councils understand they are not in competition with JOs for funding opportunities which relate specifically to their local government interests.
2. **A highly capable and experienced EO in a full-time role.** The role is suited to individuals with highly developed relational skills, who can facilitate regional collaboration by focussing on stakeholders' shared issues and priorities. This is important to ensure the JO can negotiate any conflicting or competing interests among member councils. In order for JOs to reach their potential, this role requires a full-time appointment with strategic capability.
3. **A larger council that supports the JO's operation** by 'hosting' the EO and project staff, and providing administrative, human resources and information technology support.
4. **A functional Regional Leadership Executive** that understands the potential of the JO as an effective model of regional governance, and a strategic partner for achieving key regional priorities.
5. **A strong and participatory General Managers Advisory Committee (or equivalent).** The General Managers Advisory Committees (GMACs) and working groups provide advice to JO board members that help them to develop actionable strategic priorities and projects. Much of the work involved in implementing and operationalising joint organisation priorities occurs in

these advisory committee meetings. Interviewees identified that these networking opportunities support strategic capacity development.

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been generated from the review:

Recommendation	Responsibility
Develop a performance framework for JOs which sets clear, measurable performance targets for each core function. These should be tailored and reflect the maturity of individual JOs. Performance should be regularly reviewed against these targets and should be used to identify priorities for capacity building and opportunities for additional support and resourcing, where agreed with the JO	OLG
Develop a tailored approach to capacity building and ongoing investment, that recognises the different membership structures and socioeconomic contexts in which JOs operate. This may include subsidising the costs of audits conducted by the NSW Audit Office	OLG
Use audit and compliance information to identify joint organisations whose governance processes require strengthening.	OLG in consultation with other NSW Government Agencies
Create a Partnerships Officer role to support NSW Government agencies to showcase JOs as a strong and respected partner for the NSW Government.	OLG to lead discussions with other NSW Government agencies
Encourage NSW Government agencies to prioritise investing in the JO network for major regional projects and initiatives, recognising that JOs are entities with robust legislative and regulatory frameworks.	OLG in consultation with other NSW Government agencies
Develop guidelines that set out the circumstances in which the Minister may consider a realignment of JO boundaries for a region to ensure JOs are enabled to reach their full potential.	OLG in consultation with other NSW Government agencies
Prioritise OLG resources to support JOs to work more effectively within the framework of the Local Government Act and regulations and to encourage JOs to reach their full potential.	OLG
Continue to support regular meetings of the forum of JO Chairs as a means of securing strategic collaboration between Chairs, Members of Parliament and NSW Government agency executives on key issues impacting on regional NSW.	OLG
Use the existing governance structures and strategic collaboration frameworks, particularly the JO Chairs Forum and General Managers Advisory Committees to profile successful projects and initiatives and showcase best practices. This will assist all JOs on their development to maturity.	OLG & JOs
Encourage JOs to work with member councils to ensure a better understanding within councils of their role in supporting regional collaboration and progressing regional priorities.	JOs
Consider ways of encouraging all eligible councils to belong to a joint organisation.	OLG

Next Steps

The following activities are being implemented in response to the outcomes and recommendations arising from the review process:

1. Ally Dench, Executive Director Local Government – NSW Office of Local Government is participating in JO Board meetings across the JO Network to discuss the findings and recommendations from the review, and to explore the process for moving forward in regard to implementing the recommendations. Ally will be providing a presentation to the Hunter JO Board at its 14th April 2022 meeting.
2. The Office of Local Government is establishing an interagency working group to progress delivery of the recommendations arising from the review
3. A facilitated workshop session with the JO Chairs Network was held on 28th March 2022 (the first meeting of the new Chairs). The workshop focused on the outcomes of the review, particularly opportunities for improving collaboration between JOs and State Government Agencies in the delivery of regional programs.

Recommendation:

- **That the report be received and noted.**

Report Author: Kim Carland, Project Coordinator – A2E

Responsible Officer: Boyd Blackwell, Regional Policy and Program Manager.

Purpose:

To provide an update on the Accelerating Event Economies (A2E) project and planned deliverables.

Link to Hunter Joint Organisation Strategic Plan 2018-21 (Aspire.Act.Achieve).

Action Area	AAA: Our economy is multifaceted, resilient and is Australia's leading smart regional economy.
Action	<i>Action 6:</i> Develop a sustainable model to coordinate council-run events across the region and showcase the Hunter and attract local, national and international visitors. <i>Action 7:</i> Work with Destination NSW, Newcastle Airport and other partners to more strongly promote the Hunter as a multifaceted visitor destination. Develop a regional destination management plan.

Background

The Accelerating Event Economies (A2E) program was successful in securing over \$860k through the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund (BLERF).

The project will implement actions that provide a foundation for events attraction to the region between now and June 2023.

The objectives of A2E are to:

- Strengthen the region's collective voice & the capacity to collaboratively pitch for and manage major events for the region.
- Streamline event management and planning in the region across council boundaries to create efficiencies for event managers and planners and attract them to our region
- As a result of streamlining event management and planning, attract additional events (large and small) to the region building economic recovery, resilience and diversification in response to the bushfires and other rising uncertainty.
- Encourage investment by identifying gaps and opportunities for event assets across the region
- Build on the collective tourism objectives for the region to be recognised as a destination of choice

Update on Project

A dedicated A2E Project Coordinator, Kim Carland, has been recruited, who started mid-January 2022 to support the delivery of the project by the Hunter JO in collaboration with member councils.

Stakeholder groups have been established with representatives from each member Council along with State and Federal Government agencies, and industry representatives.

Next Steps

Between now and June 2023, the A2E project will deliver on five key actions (refer Figure 1, 'A to E', A2E Timeline in Attachment 18):

- A. **Hunter Event Facilities Audit.** Identify event facilities (indoor and outdoor) and supporting services (e.g. accommodation, transport) that will assist event managers in identifying and selecting the Hunter Region to host their event.
- B. **Major Event Feasibility – Regional Event Economic Impact.** Analyse the Hunter regional event economy, provide Return on Investment and business case data, and using these analyses make recommendations to help the acceleration of events attraction in the Hunter. Determine benchmark indicators of success for a dedicated events attraction program (number of events, jobs etc). Provide data to encourage infrastructure or social investment to further attract events to the region (local and national case studies).
- C. **Hunter Tourism Prospectus.** Identify and collate tourism information that will assist event managers in identifying and selecting the Hunter Region to host their event, and to help market their events. Develop itineraries for the Hunter region to complement marketing of events and encourage visitors to stay in the region for longer.
- D. **Collaborative Event Licencing.** Collaboratively explore the potential for and development of a simplified event licence process, whereby a centralised entity can facilitate and licence events that cross LGA boundaries, making it easier and more attractive for event owners to run or expand events in the Hunter region.
- E. **Website/Application Build.** Develop a user-friendly digital interface that allows event managers to have access to information that makes it easy and attractive to run their events in the Hunter. Also, develop a user-friendly digital interface that promotes all events in the Hunter and surrounding key tourism information.

RFQs have been drafted for each of these actions, to which input has been invited from councils and other stakeholders. These will go out to market to be consistent with the general timelines indicated in Figure 1 in Attachment 18.

The Project Management Group will be meeting regularly and the Regional Stakeholder engagement activities are planned twice a year until the project funding ends in June 2023.

Recommendation:

- **That the report be received and noted.**

Report Author: Steve Wilson, Director Regional Policy & Programs**Responsible Officer: Joe James, CEO**

One of the primary deliverables of the “Hunter Global – Our International Future” project, the Hunter Global Regional Summit was delivered on 17th & 18th February 2022 at Newcastle Town Hall. The summit attracted attendees from all sectors across the region, who came together to co-design the way forward as the Hunter enters the global stage.

The summit included a number of high profile and quality speakers and facilitators who provided clear and practical insights to the opportunities (and challenges) for the region in order to capitalise on the international opportunities that will arise from the Newcastle Airport runway upgrade.

They included:

- Taylor Martin MLC - representing the NSW Premier
- Dr Peter Cock, CEO Newcastle Airport
- Oliver Lamb, MD, Ailevon Pacific
- Geoff Roberts, Chief Commissioner, Greater Cities Commission
- Stephen Mahoney, Destination NSW, General Manager, Product, Policy & Engagement
- Elizabeth Mildwater, CEO Greater Sydney Commission
- Andrew Smith, CEO Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council
- Amy Brown, CEO, Secretary NSW Department of Enterprise, Investment & Trade and CEO Investment NSW
- Sara Hales, MD, Managing Director, Avistra Aviation Consulting
- Professor Mark Hoffman – University of Newcastle Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Vice President
- Samantha Martin-Williams, Non-Executive Director, Supply Chain & Logistics Association of Australia and Newcastle Airport Pty Ltd
- Rosemarie Milsom, Founding Director, Newcastle Writers Festival

Following on from the summit, the first piece of advocacy collateral arising from the event has been produced, in the form of a “teaser” video, which highlights the importance of international connectivity for the Hunter; unlocking growth markets, creating new jobs across the region, and maintaining and diversifying the fantastic lifestyle that our region offers. The video can be seen https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= 0vpCbx_H8s.

Presentations from the summit are also available on the Hunter JO website at <https://www.hunterjo.com.au/event/hunterglobalsummit/>

The next outputs from the project which are currently in development include:

1. An extended advocacy video that will underpin regional advocacy efforts to state and federal governments, as well as to attract potential investors to the region. The focus of this video will be “When we get to the world stage”, showcasing 2-4 storylines from local people and businesses from around the region as to what direct international access through the airport will allow them to do.
2. A report analysing the opportunities identified at the summit, and identifying the key “next steps” needed to effectively progress their delivery. This report will provide a platform to support ongoing

advocacy and program development work undertaken by the JO, project partners and other regional stakeholders to continue to promote and develop the economic development opportunities for the region arising from the airport runway upgrade.

Recommendation:

- **That the report be received and noted.**

8. Matters Raised by Members

Nil.

9. General Business

9.1 Compliance & Governance Calendars

- Attachment 19 - HJO Board Forward Planner and Governance Calendar
- Attachment 20 - JO-Calendar-of-Compliance-and-Reporting-Requirements-2021-2022