



Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2032

Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities (SSRP)



Acknowledgement of Country

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

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About the Hunter JO



Message from the Chair

Cr Sue Moore

The Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2032 brings together and aligns the priorities of our ten Member Councils and their respective communities from across the region. It defines our vision and our roadmap for the future of the Hunter region, determining the strategic priorities that will underpin all of our work at the Hunter JO.

Building on the individual Community Strategic Plans of our Member Councils, the Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2032 aims to address regionally significant challenges and opportunities to ensure the region continues to grow as a vibrant and unique place to live.

The Hunter is on the precipice of immense economic change, while growing in population faster than it ever has before. As we see global energy demands shift away from coal, the Hunter is facing a unique opportunity to shape the future of the region to achieve the best outcomes for its communities.

Collaboration is the cornerstone of all that we do at the Hunter JO and by working together on the complex issues and opportunities that the region is currently facing, we are able to achieve the outcomes presented in this strategy; a feat difficult to achieve on a council-by-council basis.



Continuing our rich history of collaborating across local government boundaries will be key to ensuring that the place-based and unique voice of our communities are heard, at all levels of government. This will be integral in ensuring that decisions are made that benefit the region as-a-whole.

The strategy will be led by the ten Councils through the Hunter JO but will also seek opportunities for regionally significant partnerships with other levels of government, industry, community, and other organisations. This is a crucial aspect in achieving outcomes for the region.

This strategy has been developed with considerable input from our ten Member Councils and has drawn from in-depth alignment and analysis of all of the Councils' Community Strategic Plans (CSPs), ensuring that the Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2032 represents the priorities of the region and its residents. This process has helped us to identify a range of common issues across our Member Councils.

I encourage everyone to read this document to better understand the Hunter JO's Strategic Regional priorities for the future, and how we will continue to work towards the goals and priorities in this document to maintain and enhance the region's resilience, liveability, and economic prosperity.

**Cr Sue Moore,
Mayor of Singleton
Chair of the Hunter JO**

"Collaborating across local government boundaries will be key to ensuring that the place-based and unique voice of our communities are heard."



Message from the CEO

Joe James

The Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2032 is our guide in relation to the initiatives and priorities where the ten Member Councils collaborate day-to-day. It is a document that belongs to councils and their communities through intensive engagement and ongoing consultation, that allows the Hunter JO to amplify what local government is doing at a regional scale. This will be a governing document that will guide how collaboration between councils is operationalised and facilitated by the team at the Hunter JO.

The strength of the Hunter JO stems from the authority of the collective voice of our Member Councils and Board made up of community elected representatives. The strategic investment of our Board into the Hunter JO allows us to be proactive and enhance collaborative opportunities with other levels of government.

Collaboration is hard to do, but our Member Councils have consistently demonstrated the significance of their collective impact in ensuring our communities are enabled to determine their own future. It is through the Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2032 that we will endeavour to maintain and build on this capacity and capability through our four strategic themes: Connectivity, Resilience, Liveability, and Jobs and a Growing Economy.



These four themes were developed through the strategic alignment of our councils' priorities and analysis of their community strategic plans (CSPs).

By leveraging the strategic alignment of this document with the Councils' own CSPs, we enhance and strengthen our value chain at the Hunter JO in order to deliver outcomes that will benefit the entire region. In all that the Hunter JO does, we aim to deliver two main outcomes of influencing policy and funding decisions, and building regional capacity and capability, which is achieved through our value chain and enhanced network capability.

The growth in engagement since the Hunter JO's inception in 2018, has seen the formation of a network of collaboration on behalf of the region, and the continued capacity to engage with councils and key regional stakeholders. Through the Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2032, we welcome the opportunity to continue to work with all of these stakeholders to proactively pursue more opportunities and build on the Hunter's regional influence.

Our work, and this strategic plan, is reflective of local government collectively working through the Hunter JO to provide collaborative place-based leadership and achieve beneficial outcomes for the entire region. I look forward to continuing to leverage these relationships and work with our Member Councils through the Hunter JO as a key advocate and united voice for the Hunter region.

**Joe James,
CEO Hunter Joint Organisation**

"Our work, and this strategic plan, is reflective of local government collectively working through the Hunter JO to provide collaborative place-based leadership and achieve beneficial outcomes for the entire region."

What is the Hunter JO?

As the hub for local intergovernmental collaboration, our statutory mandate includes identifying key regional strategic priorities, advocating for these priorities and building collaboration around these priorities with other levels of government, industry and community.

The Hunter JO Board determines the strategy and oversees the programs and advocacy priorities of the Hunter JO. The Board consists of the Mayor of each Member Council as Voting Representatives, with Non-Voting Representatives including GM's/CEO's of each Member Council and an employee of the public service nominated by the Secretary Department of Regional NSW.

The Hunter JO has a number of Sub-Committees, that focus on specific priorities in the region. These consist of:

- Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan Sub-Committee
- Circular Economy Sub-Committee
- Regional Economic Transition Sub-Committee

Collaboration across the Hunter region is the cornerstone of the Hunter Joint Organisation. The connection and coordination between our Member Councils has grown and developed since the 1950's. Since this time our collaboration has developed and matured, delivering value for councils, our region and the local government sector as a whole.

The Hunter Joint Organisation (JO) is a collaborative body that brings together the ten Councils in the region to provide a united and local voice for our communities.

The Local Government Act sets out three principal functions for Joint organisations:

Strategic Planning and Priority Setting

To establish strategic regional priorities for the joint organisation area and to establish strategies and plans for delivering those strategic regional priorities.

Regional Leadership and Advocacy

To provide regional leadership for the joint organisation area and to be an advocate for strategic regional priorities.

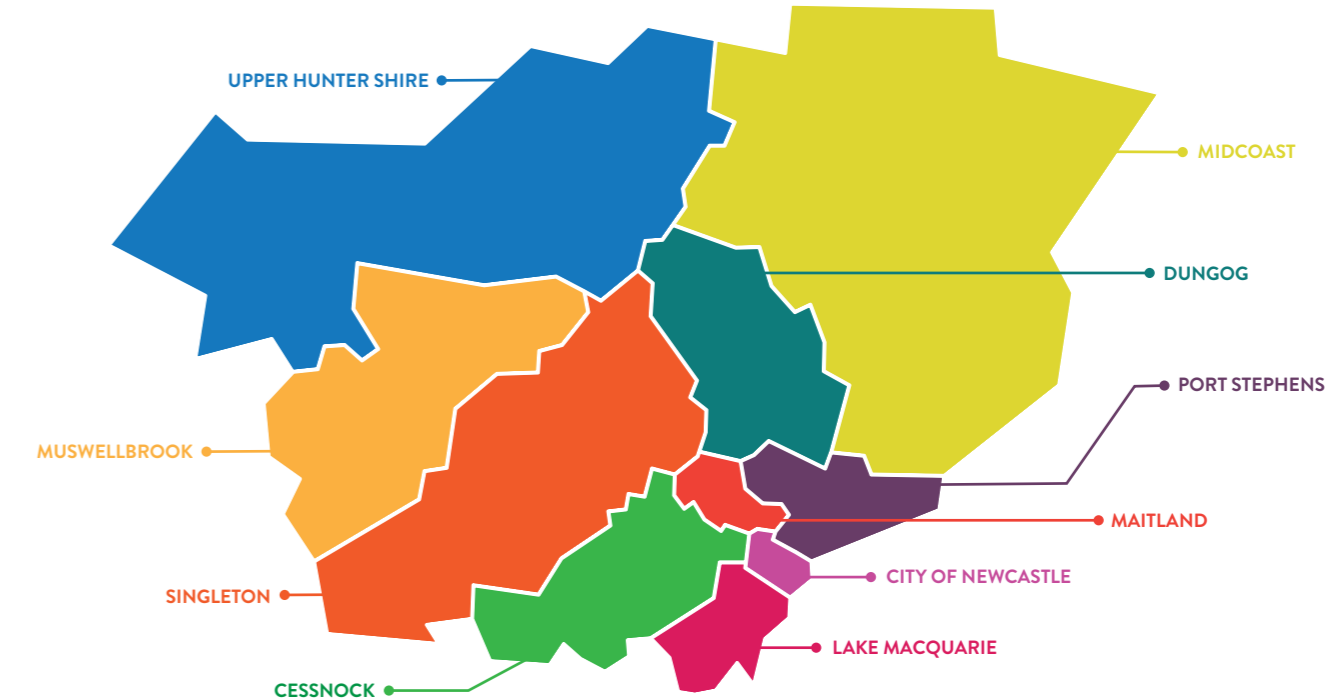
Intergovernmental Collaboration

To identify and take up opportunities for intergovernmental co-operation on matters relating to the joint organisation area.

Legislative changes in 2021 to strengthen Integrated Planning and Reporting established a streamlined planning and reporting framework for Joint Organisations under the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021.

Our Mission

As the hub for local intergovernmental collaboration, we strengthen our communities by being the local voice on strategic issues in the Hunter Region.





Vision for the Region

We are a Region that:

- Is globally connected and whose residents enjoy transport and digital infrastructure and systems that enhance their economic and lifestyle opportunities;
- Is prepared for change and ready to withstand, adapt and recover from natural and human induced risks;
- Has an economy that continues to grow and evolve as a powerhouse of the state and national economies, providing more and higher quality jobs; and
- Will protect, preserve and improve the high standard of liveability and pristine environments.

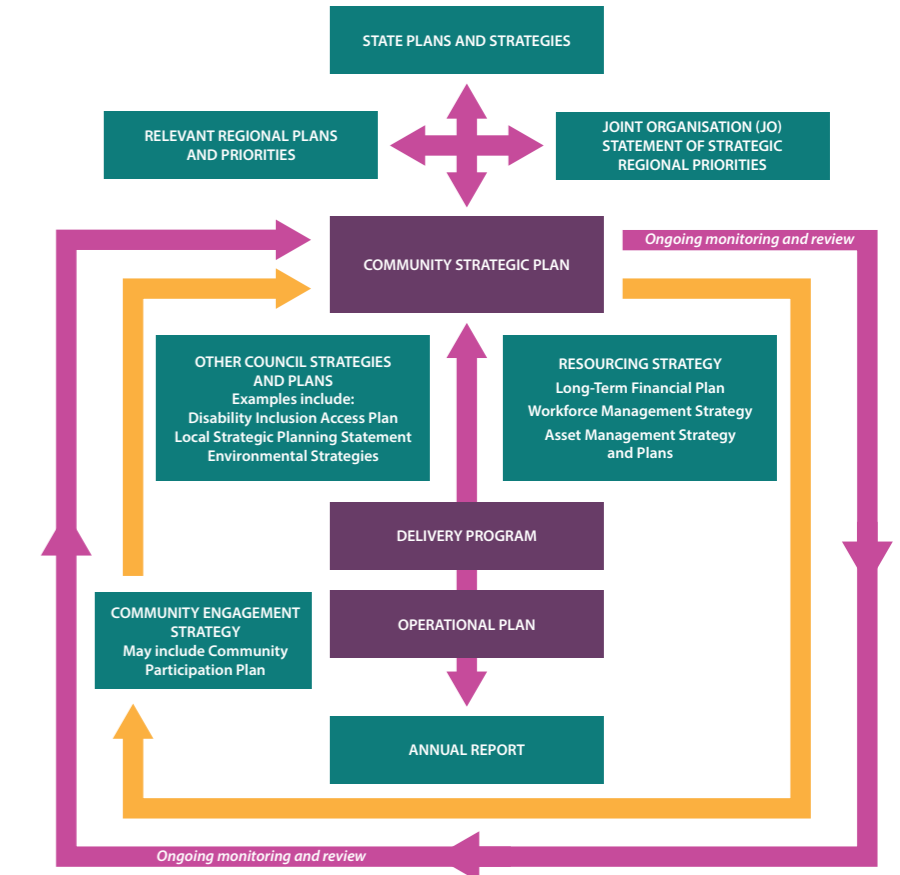


Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

The Local Government Act 1993 requires Councils to be consistent with the Local Government Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework, which aims to ensure a more sustainable Local Government sector. This requires Councils to take a long-term view and consider social, economic and environmental aspects and the needs of the current and future generations when making decisions.

Joint Organisations (JOs) now have a streamlined planning and reporting framework under the 'Local Government (General) Regulation 2021' and 'Integrated Planning and Reporting Guidelines for local councils in NSW'. This includes compliance with the relevant section of the IP&R Guidelines.

JOs are required to develop a Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities (SSRP) and this key plan is now included on the IP&R Framework. This will strengthen the linkages between the Hunter JO, it's Member Councils, state agencies and key partners and provide better support to our Councils.





What is the Hunter JO Strategic Plan?

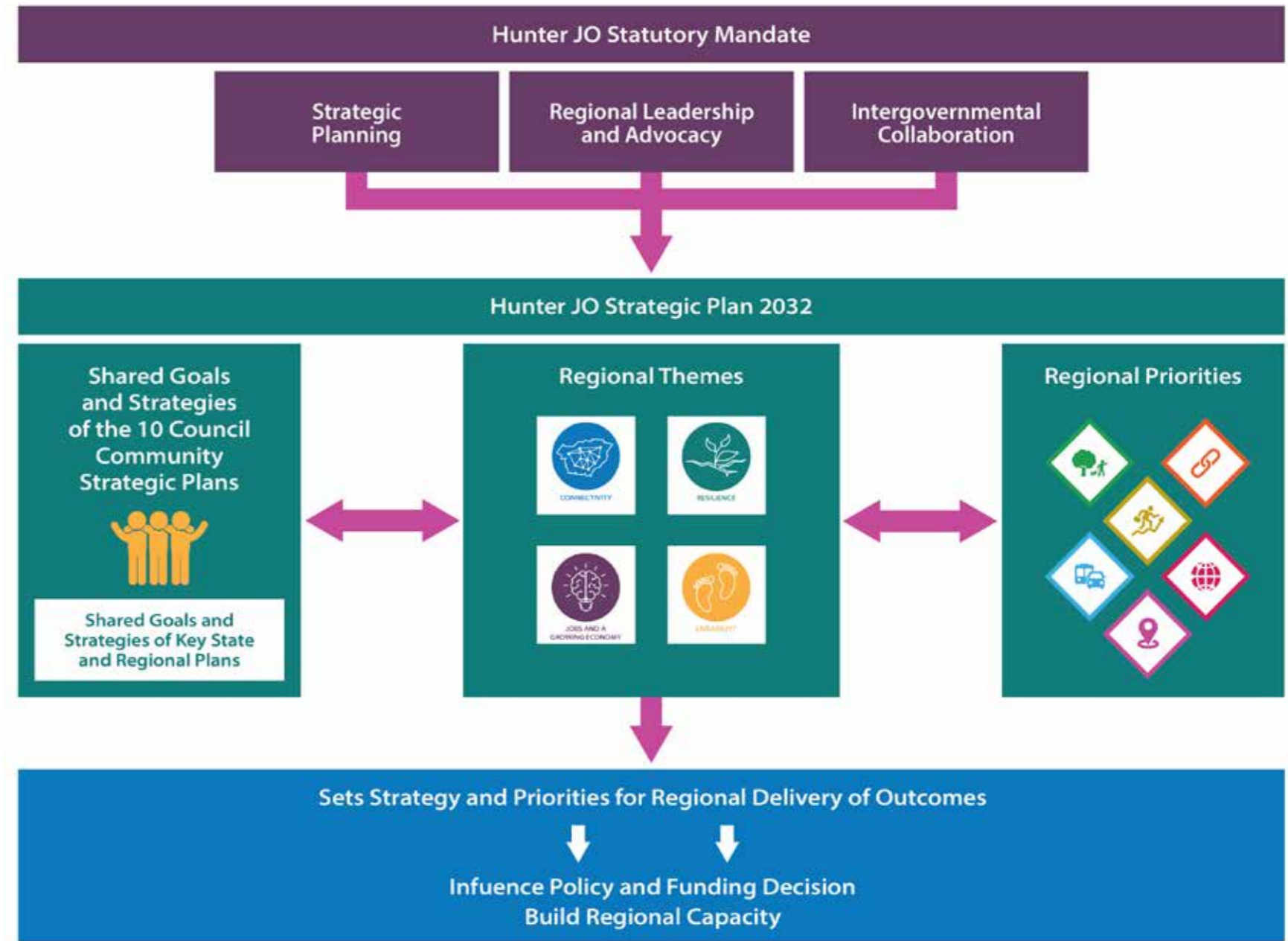
The Hunter JO's Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities (SSRP) is called the Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2032. JOs are required to develop a Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities (SSRP) which sets out a vision for the region and provides an overview of the strategic actions required to deliver the vision. The SSRP draws from the Community Strategic Plans (CSPs) of Member Councils, regional-level plans and other state strategic documents to clearly identify the highest regional priorities. Hunter JO's plan is also a aspirational 10-year plan that will be reviewed on the 4 year election cycle timeframe consistent with the IP&R Framework and must be prepared within 12 months of ordinary election of councillors for all Member Councils.

The SSRP is a 4-year document that aligns with the IP&R reporting cycle and must be prepared within 12 months of ordinary election of councillors for all Member Councils.

The JO engages directly with the Member Councils and the Regional Priorities in our Strategic Plan are a synthesised, collective view of local communities' voices drawn directly from many 1000's of our constituents, through extensive community engagement undertaken by Councils, in preparing statutory 10-year Community Strategic Plans. This includes extensive and measurable quantitative and qualitative data from:

- In-person and online community workshops
- Pop-up kiosks
- Online surveys

The Hunter JO and Member Councils take a leading role in the implementation of this plan, however collaborating and advocating with other levels of government, industry and key stakeholders is crucial to achieving our long term goals.



What is the Hunter JO Advocacy Framework and Priorities

The Hunter JO Advocacy Framework and Priorities document links directly to the Hunter JO Strategic Plan and will establish clear alignment on the Board's policy positions, priorities and advocacy "asks".

The structure of the framework and the advocacy priorities and 'asks' has been informed substantially by an analysis and synthesis of:

- Advocacy completed by the Hunter JO in the lead up to the 2022 Commonwealth election
- Information obtained from meetings with Commonwealth and State Members of Parliament and policy advisors in relation to the Hunter Global initiative
- Discussions and resolutions of the Hunter JO Board
- Outcomes and resolutions arising from each of the Hunter JO Standing Committees

- Findings and outcomes arising from delivery of the Hunter JO Policy and Programs work program
- Ministerial briefings and engagement
- Outcomes from the Hunter JO Strategic Plan engagement undertaken with the Hunter JO Board in May 2021 and July 2022

The Advocacy Framework and Priorities document is structured around 6 regional priority statements and these are linked and further deliver on the Strategic Plan themes. These plans combined set the strategy and priorities for the regional delivery of outcomes and reflect the Boards direction that collective regional advocacy is a critical function of the Hunter JO.

Leadership



Cr Sue Moore
Mayor Singleton Council



Cr Jay Suvaal
Mayor Cessnock City Council



Cr John Connors
Mayor Dungog Shire Council



Cr Kay Fraser
Mayor Lake Macquarie City Council



Cr Philip Penfold
Mayor Maitland City Council



Cr Claire Pontin
Mayor MidCoast Council



Cr Steven Reynolds
Mayor Muswellbrook Shire Council



Cr Nuatali Nelmes
Lord Mayor City of Newcastle



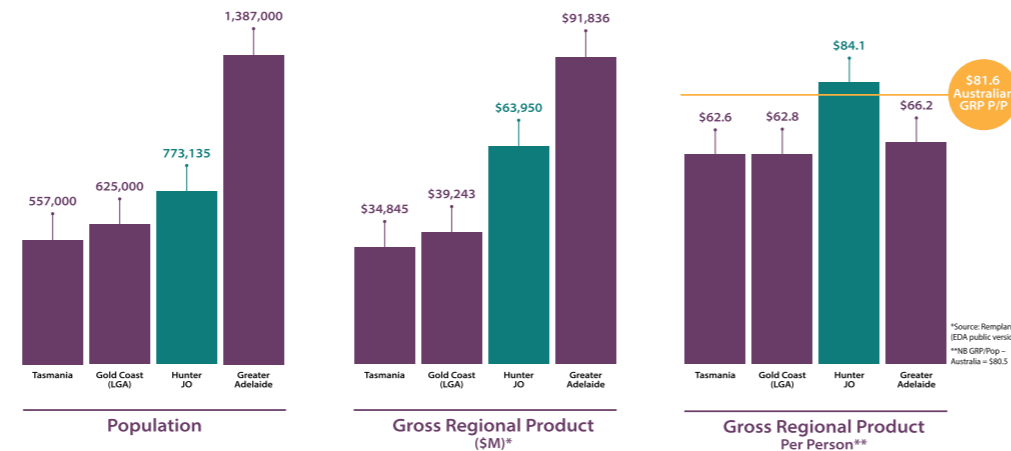
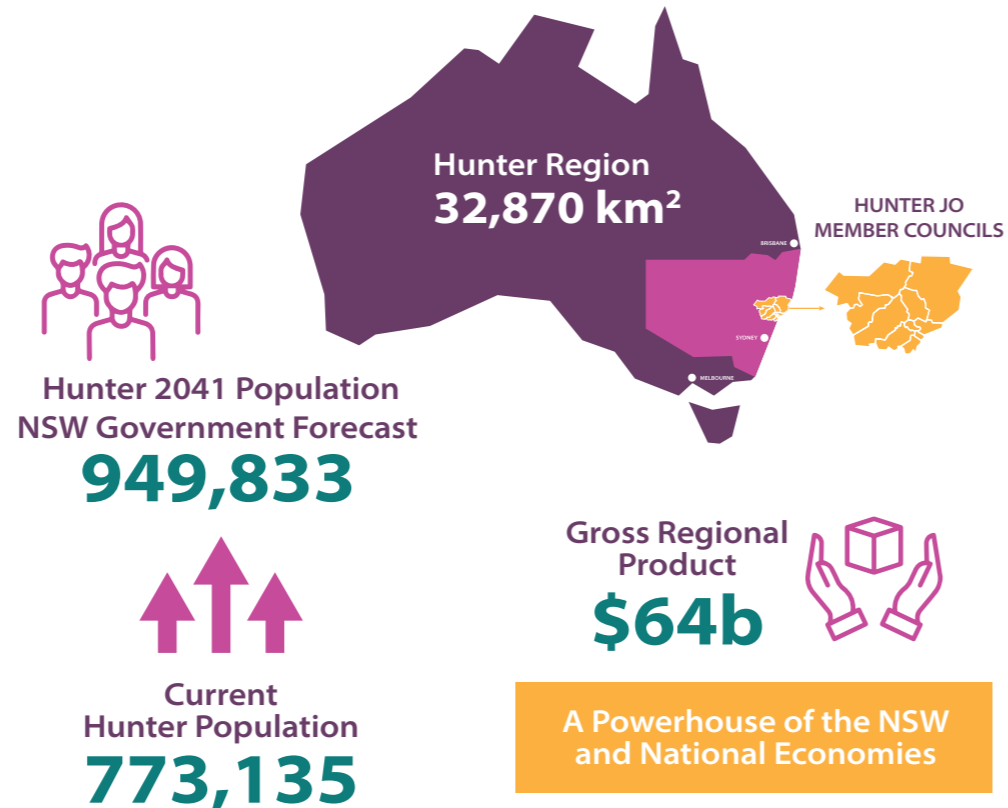
Cr Ryan Palmer
Mayor Port Stephens Council



Cr Maurice Collison
Mayor Upper Hunter Shire Council

The Hunter Region

The Hunter is currently experiencing a significant rise in population while also facing the decline of its traditional coal and energy-based industries. The Hunter's economy needs to evolve substantially and rapidly to maintain its considerable contribution to the State and Commonwealth economies, particularly as we approach a population of one million people by 2040. This is required to maintain the region's resilience, liveability, and economic prosperity. It is a core priority and function of the Hunter JO to support, advocate and collaborate with stakeholders across all levels of government to ensure the quality of life and opportunities available to our local communities are not eroded as the economic drivers of our region evolve and change. Direct competitive access to international markets will underpin and drive this transition to safeguard the future of the Hunter.



41.5yrs
Median Age

\$1,563
Median weekly household income

1,362
Bridges

The Hunter River flows **460km** and is **one of the largest river valleys** on the NSW coast with a **catchment of 2.2m ha.**

2.5
Average people per household

475
Playgrounds

334
Sportsgrounds

632
Parks

Inhabited by the Awabakal, Worimi, Wonnarua, Geawegal, Biripi, Guringai & Darkinjung Aboriginal peoples

293kms
Coastline

12,440.5km
Roads

Our Collective Voice

10 Local Councils

Cessnock, Dungog, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, MidCoast, Muswellbrook, Newcastle, Port Stephens, Singleton, Upper Hunter.

11 State Electorates

Maitland, Cessnock, Myall Lakes, Swansea, Newcastle, Charlestown, Wallsend, Lake Macquarie, Port Stephens, Upper Hunter, Port Macquarie.

6 Federal Electorates

Newcastle, Lyne, Hunter, New England, Shortland, Paterson.

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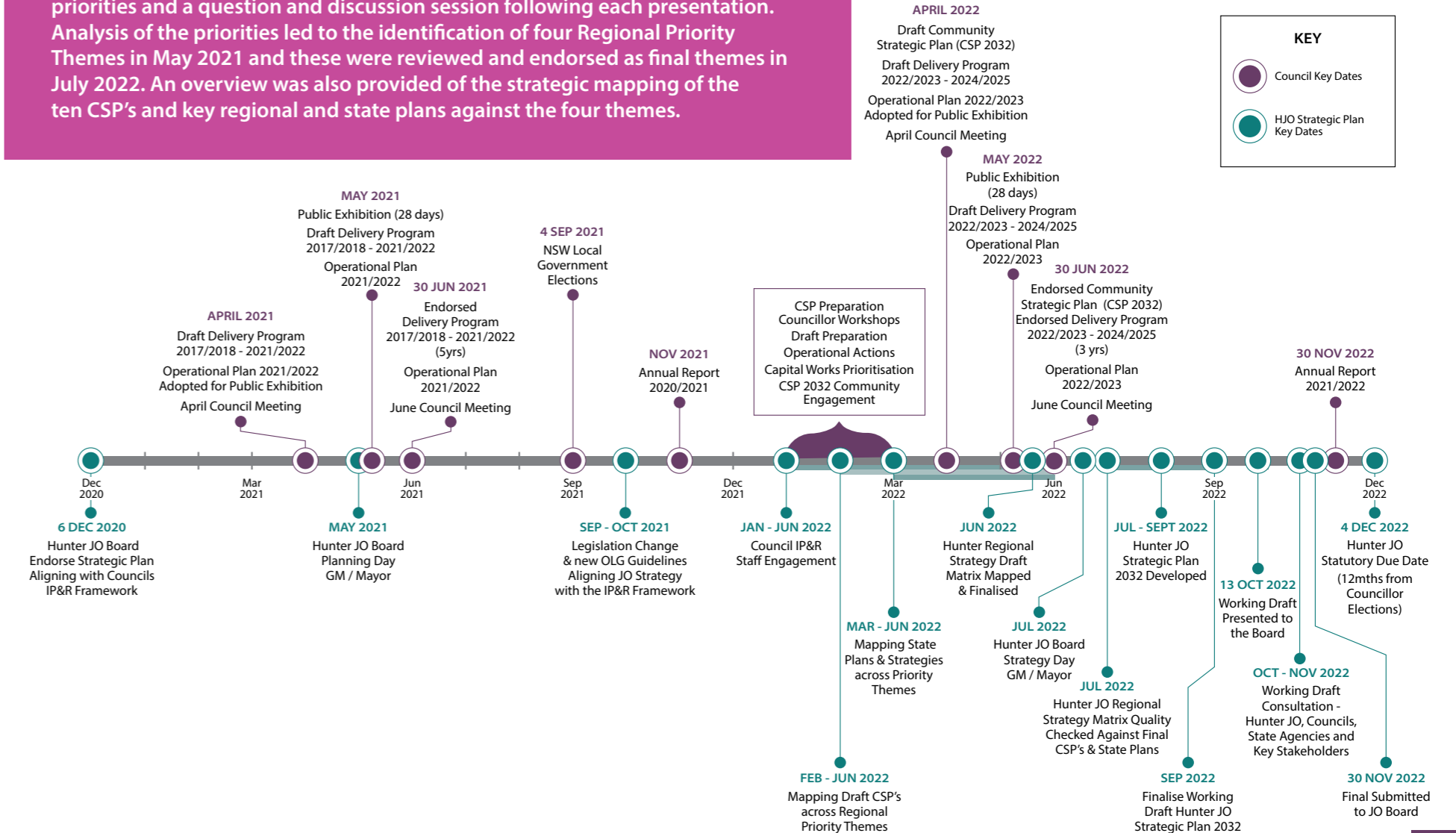
Developing our Plan

- The Strategic Plan has been developed through:
- Extensive engagement with the Hunter JO Board;
 - Review and mapping of draft themes against the 10 Community Strategic Plan's (CSP) of the region,
 - Review of the key state and regional plans; and
 - Incorporation of key priorities and challenges and opportunities identified through consultation during program and advocacy work.

As the overarching strategy, it will provide a proactive pathway to leverage alignment of priorities and provide clear guidance on the regional priorities and the strategic actions required to achieve them. The strategy needs to be reactive and flexible to allow the JO to be responsive when an issue or need arises and conduct advocacy on behalf of the region. At the same time, it needs to be a robust document that sets the future Strategic Regional Priorities.

The Hunter JO Board endorsed the Hunter JO Strategic Plan aligning with Councils IP&R Framework on 10 December 2020 prior to the Legislation change and amended IP&R Framework and Guidelines coming into effect in September/October 2021. This approach was taken to strengthen the linkages between the Hunter JO and its Member Councils and provide better support to our councils.

Hunter JO Board Strategy days were held in May 2021 and July 2022. There was also pre-workshop preparation carried out with each Councils General Manager and Mayor to Identify the Councils list of regional priorities for the future. Both Strategy days included each General Manager and Mayor presenting their list of priorities and a question and discussion session following each presentation. Analysis of the priorities led to the identification of four Regional Priority Themes in May 2021 and these were reviewed and endorsed as final themes in July 2022. An overview was also provided of the strategic mapping of the ten CSP's and key regional and state plans against the four themes.





Process to develop and promote the Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities (SSRP)*:

- Review of CSPs of Member Councils and key regional plans and strategies.
- Consultation with Member Councils e.g. Mayors, General Managers and senior staff.
- Preparation of a draft statement for review and adoption by the JO Board.
- Publishing of SSRP on JO website.

As a minimum, each SSRP* should include:

- Vision for the region
- Regional priority areas (around 5)
- Strategies and/or actions required to deliver the regional priorities
- Overview of the stakeholders, agencies and organisations required to help deliver activities and achieve regional priorities.

*OLG Integrated Planning and Reporting Handbook September 2021



Hunter JO Board Engagement

A robust consultation process with the 10 Mayors and General Managers of our Member Councils identified the aligned regional priority areas and the shared areas of collaboration.

The Strategic Plan has been designed around creating a strategic framework to address these priorities, which will result in the regional delivery of the outcomes.

The Hunter JO is committed to advocating on behalf of the region and facilitating change in these regional priority areas.

The July 2022 overview of the Hunter JO Board Strategy days provides a high level summary of the priorities and potential areas for collaboration identified.

Cessnock

- Local road network
- Connectivity – transport/digital
- Cycling networks - liveability
- Job growth and security
- Regional program resources
- Tourism - increase diversity
- Education – place-based skills and training
- State Government processes eg. Transport NSW, Blackhill dev.
- South Maitland railway – cycling, walking, running, liveability
- Job creation and open up employment lands
- Job location – jobs closer to where people are living
- Cessnock airport – Airport and aviation industry

Port Stephens

- Local road network and condition
- Climate change action
- Newcastle airport and Williamtown SAP
- Regional jobs
- Transport infrastructure connectivity
- Tourism
- Community infrastructure and facilities
- Diverse economy
- Disaster response and resilience
- Foreshore management
- Council financial sustainability
- Waste / recycling solution
- Housing supply and necessary infrastructure

Lake Macquarie

- Setting the region up as the “next big city outside of Sydney”
- Housing growth, affordability and job creation
- Transport / Faster rail
- Connectivity – digital and transport
- State road network – lack of state investment and pace of delivery
- Unique tourism experiences’
- Climate change / coastal, estuary erosion
- Community resilience / disaster resilience
- Health facilities – region wide
- Regional program resources

Upper Hunter

- Financial sustainability
- Regional Connectivity
- Local road network
- Economic development
- Tourism
- Education
- Environmental resilience disaster recovery
- Regional resource capacity programs
- Community facilities
- Water security, sewer and waste
- Road reclassification

Maitland

- Airport
- Connectivity – Transport / Digital
- Tourism - regional experience / visitor economy
- Events
- Regional road network
- Employment –future of jobs
- Circular economy and regional waste strategy

MidCoast

- Local road network - funding
- Economic development
- Improving accountability / consultation / engagement
- Finance
- Climate change / sustainability
- Water security
- Connectivity
- Health – upgrade hospital and emergency services, advocacy
- Digital connectivity
- Performance of audit office – service standards to local government / RSM
- Planning issues –between regional and city
- Housing – affordability
- Existing programs

Singleton

- Statutory body to drive a whole of region approach to economic evolution
- Housing supply and affordability
- Public transport
- Telecommunications
- Financial Sustainability – Local Gov
- Waste management and circular economy

Dungog

- Statutory corporations / government
- Economic development – employment
- Connectivity – airport
- Employment - farming
- Tourism
- Education
- Disaster response and resilience
- Regional resource capacity programs
- Community facilities
- Water security, sewer and waste
- Road reclassification

Developing our Plan

Muswellbrook

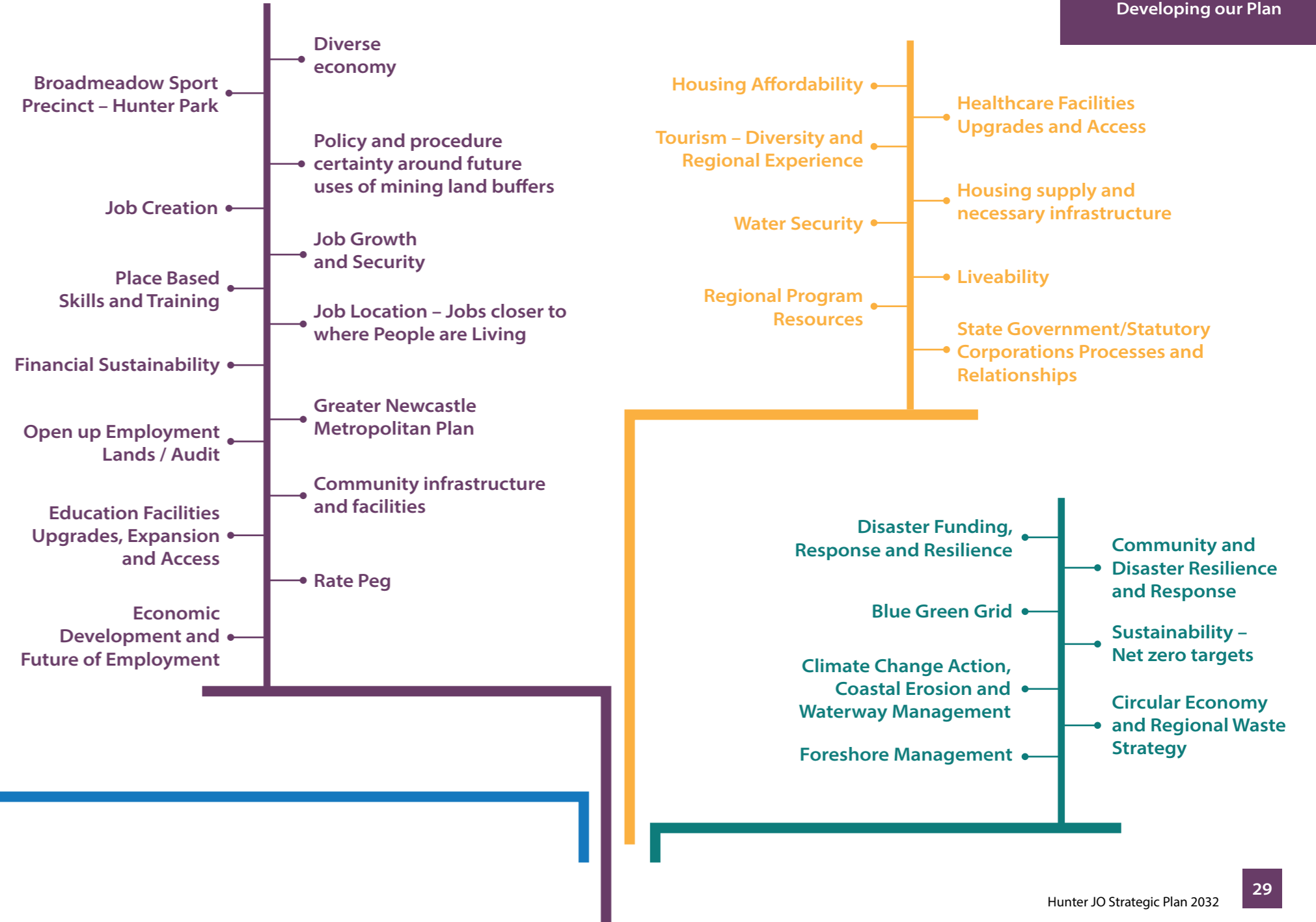
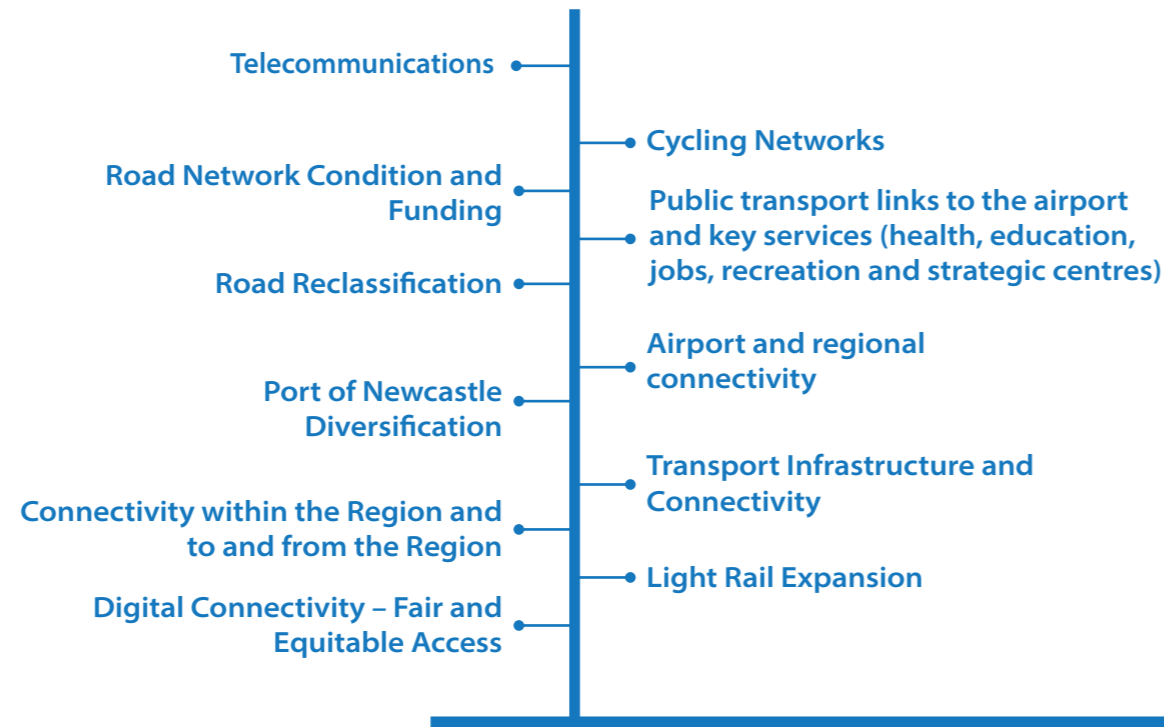
- Economy and future of employment
- Connectivity – port / airport
- Advanced manufacturing hub
- Employment lands audit
- Industrial (AGL) and mining
- Policy and procedure certainty around future uses of mining land buffers
- Post mining LAaND
- Liveability – Activating town centre
- Tourism and Events
- Health - upgrade to hospital
- Housing – lack of availability / affordability
- Rates – PEG
- Local road network

City of Newcastle

- Airport – regional connectivity
- Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan
- Waste
- Liveability
- Housing – increase supply, affordable, social
- Coastal erosion
- Sustainability – net zero targets
- Port of Newcastle diversification
- Expansion of John Hunter Hospital and innovation precinct
- Light rail expansion
- Broadmeadow sport precinct – Hunter Park
- Richmond Vale rail trail / cycleways
- Gateway city reclassification – regional funding pool
- Blue green grid



Key Regional Priorities Identified

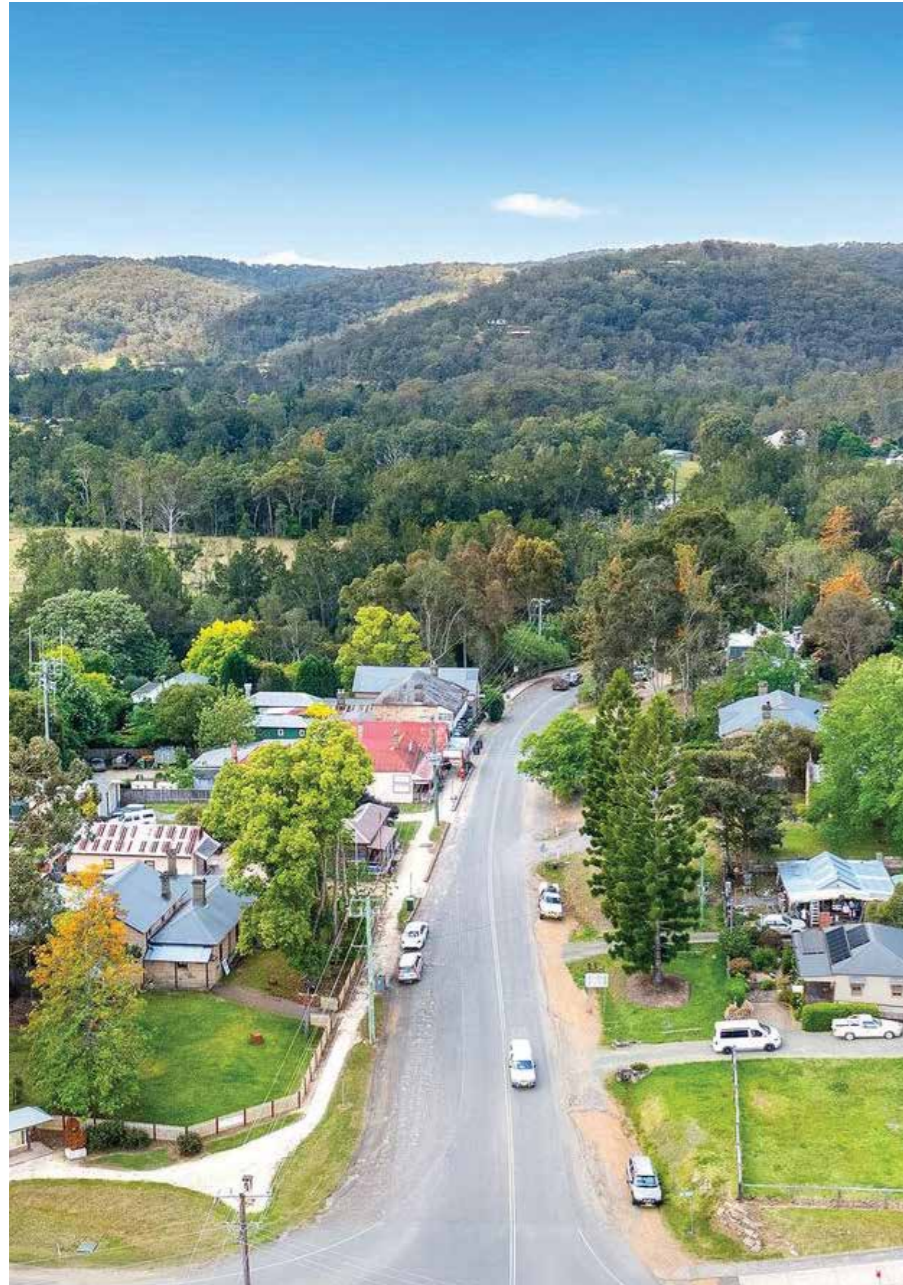




Areas of Collaboration

Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-modal connectivity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infrastructure and physical assets Policy changes Getting to and from key assets – University, Airport, Hospitals, Port, Strategic Centres Advocacy and submission on Hunter Regional Transport Plan Digital connectivity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fair and equitable access across region
Health Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key Liveability issue, also impacts Jobs and Growing Economy as it attracts and supports a workforce Includes Connectivity aspects – getting to and from health services Collaboration with the state, group advocacy and action (program and policy component) Housing required to support the health workforce – connected issue

Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental issues are a regional issue and are rarely limited by LGA boundaries. Advocating for clear responsibility for environmental issues at the state level. Natural assets are a particular strength of the region – agricultural, open spaces, vineyards, hinterland, rivers, lakes and coastline Assisting our local governments to advocate successfully – regional collaboration adds strength to seek a collaborative relationship rather than a transactional one Natural assets are a particular strength of the region – agricultural, open spaces, vineyards, hinterland, rivers, lakes, estuaries and coastline.
Open Space and Recreational Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liveability These facilities are regional assets, not confined to LGAs JO to have strategic approach to managing and developing these Clarifying the asks of state and federal government
Tourism and Visitor Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Options for a collaborative approach to package up whole of region Consolidating marketing and a region wide website Creating unique experiences to increase domestic overnight and international visitation.



<p>Climate Change and Coastal Erosion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coastal erosion is a whole of coastline issue • Erosion solutions tend not to be sustainable or effective in the experience of Councils • Shared coastal erosion advocacy or policy approach
<p>Roads - Connectivity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding inconsistency and uncertainty – this has capacity and resourcing implications as it makes it difficult to maintain an adequate workforce with the ‘lumpiness’ of funding • Increasing financial burden of road maintenance • Pre-emptive investment in road upgrades would save significant recovery cost • Road reclassification – compilation of a list of roads to be reclassified so the JO can advocate as a group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarification of the process and timeline for reclassification • Pace of delivery – the lag time between funding announcements and project construction.
<p>Natural Disaster Resilience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up front Disaster Resilience work is important • Clarification of role of local government in resilience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If resilience work is going to be delegated to Councils, then funding needs to be provided long term. - At the moment, roles are grant funded meaning that it is difficult to retain resilience staff. - Councils would like clarification of role, and more sustainable funding to support these functions

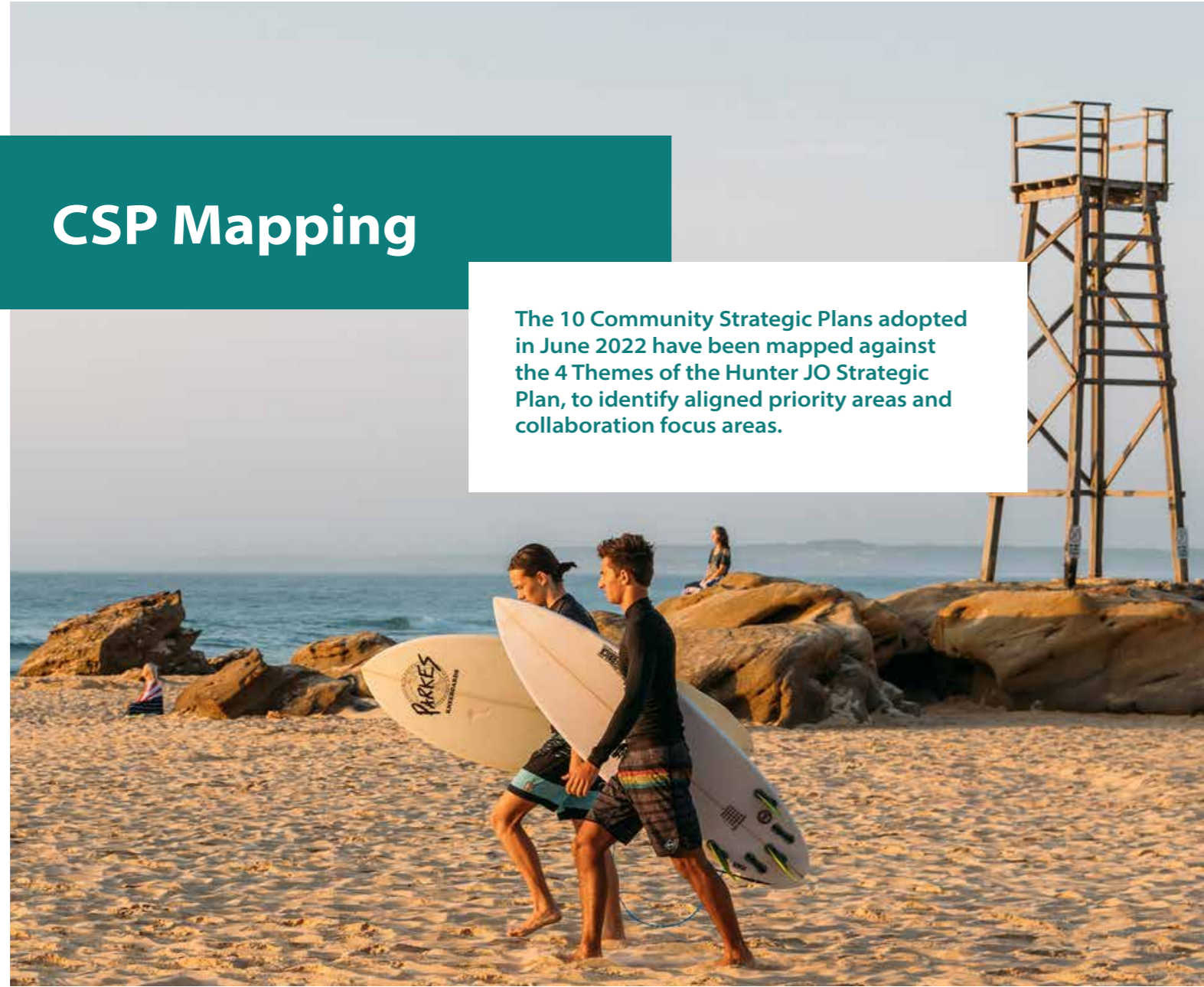
<p>Circular Economy and Waste</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging a broad range of stakeholders, including Federal, State, Local Government and Businesses and Organisations in the Circular Economy • Developing Circular Materials Strategy
<p>Staff Resourcing and Capacity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address skills shortages and create pool of staff • State government could provide resourcing support (not just funding) – Hunter JO to advocate for or even host key resources for the region • Pathway process with university for planners and engineers
<p>Airport(s)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Region airport strategy, including specialising at the various airports across the region
<p>Marketing the Region</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circular food systems • Trying to get menu items in the lower hunter restaurants that use and market Hunter produce
<p>EV Charging</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional approach to EV infrastructure • Regional coordination to placement of charging stations and links to tourism • Enabling infrastructure

<p>Energy transition and economic diversification</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic diversification and energy transition is a pressing economic priority for the region. Collaboration will be essential to developing a regional ‘city deal’ style approach to government.
<p>Regional Innovation Strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting education and economic transition • Understanding skills base, technology, assets and infrastructure, and future needs. • Innovation and incubator hubs • Regional branding and marketing of region to attract investors and businesses.



CSP Mapping

The 10 Community Strategic Plans adopted in June 2022 have been mapped against the 4 Themes of the Hunter JO Strategic Plan, to identify aligned priority areas and collaboration focus areas.



Theme	Priorities	CONNECTIVITY	JOBS AND A GROWING ECONOMY	LIVABILITY	RESILIENCE
Cessnock City Council					
A connected, safe and creative community	1.1 Promoting social connections and wellbeing.	✓		✓	
	1.2 Strengthening community culture.			✓	
	1.3 Promoting safe communities.	✓		✓	
	1.4 Fostering an articulate and creative community.		✓	✓	
A sustainable and prosperous economy	2.1 Diversifying and growing our economy.		✓		
	2.2 Achieving more sustainable employment opportunities.		✓		
	2.3 Increasing tourism opportunities and visitation in the area.		✓		
A sustainable and healthy environment	3.1 Protecting and enhancing the natural environment and the rural character of the area.			✓	✓
	3.2 Better utilisation of existing open space.		✓	✓	✓
	3.3 Better resource recovery and waste management.		✓		
Accessible infrastructure, services, and facilities	4.1 Better transport links.	✓			
	4.2 Improving the road network.	✓			
	4.3 Approved access to health services locally.			✓	
Civic leadership and effective governance	5.1 Fostering and supporting community leadership.		✓		
	5.2 Encouraging more community participation in decision making.				
	5.3 Ensuring Council is accountable and responsive to the community.				✓
Dungog Shire Council					
Our Community	1.1 That we all enjoy a safe, supportive community, characterised by vibrant cultural life and a strong sense of local heritage.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Our Environment and Planning	2.1 The health of our natural environment and biodiversity is preserved and enhanced.		✓	✓	✓
	2.2 Growth is achieved through a balanced mix of development which acknowledges our unique scenic qualities, rural amenity and country lifestyle.		✓	✓	
	2.3 We are committed to climate action.				✓
Our Economy	3.1 That we ensure our economy is strong, innovative and sustainable, and that it provides us with jobs, business opportunities and easy access to goods and services.	✓	✓	✓	
Our Infrastructure	4.1 That our Community is supported by safe, functional, accessible and maintained infrastructure and effective local and regional transport networks.	✓	✓	✓	
	4.2 That the Community has access to a range of places, activities and facilities which cater for diverse sporting and recreational interests.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Our Leadership	5.1 That we aim for strong community leadership, financial sustainability and ethical, accountable and responsive governance.				



Theme	Priorities	CONNECTIVITY	JOBS AND A GROWING ECONOMY	LIVABILITY	RESILIENCE
Lake Macquarie City Council					
Unique landscape	1.1 Natural environments are protected and enhanced.		✓	✓	✓
	1.2 New development and growth complement our unique character and sense of place, now and into the future.		✓	✓	
	1.3 Stormwater throughout our city is well-managed and maintained.			✓	✓
	1.4 We mitigate the impacts of adverse environmental conditions.				✓
Lifestyle and wellbeing	2.1 Our community has access to adaptable and inclusive community, health and wellbeing services.				✓
	2.2 Our open and shared spaces are inclusive and help us to live a healthy and safer social lifestyle.		✓	✓	✓
	2.3 Our vibrant city has events and festivals that enhance our lifestyle.		✓		
	2.4 We have buildings and facilities for a range of activities and recreation.		✓	✓	
Mobility and accessibility	3.1 It is easier to get around our city to connect with others.	✓			
	3.2 New technology supports sustainable transport choices.	✓			
Diverse economy	4.1 Our city is a vibrant destination that reflects the lifestyle, culture and natural environment that make it special.		✓	✓	
	4.2 We have an adaptable, diverse, prosperous and circular economy.		✓		
	4.3 Our growing population supports a thriving local economy.		✓		
	4.4 We have vibrant economic and neighbourhood centres.	✓	✓	✓	
Connected communities	5.1 Public spaces help connect us with each other.	✓		✓	
	5.2 We are a supportive and inclusive community.			✓	✓
	5.3 We are proud of our city's heritage and cultures.			✓	
	5.4 Our community responds and adapts to change.		✓		✓
Creativity	6.1 Creative thinking drives our city.		✓		
	6.2 Our city has a strong creative industry.			✓	
	6.3 Cultural experiences and public art connect us with the past, present and future.			✓	
Shared decision-making	7.1 Our community influences decisions that shape our city.				
	7.2 We know how and why decisions are made.				
	7.3 Partnerships between community, government and business benefit our city.	✓	✓	✓	✓



Theme	Priorities	CONNECTIVITY	JOBS AND A GROWING ECONOMY	LIVABILITY	RESILIENCE
Maitland City Council					
Let's connect with each other	To stay friendly, happy and proud as our city grows.		✓	✓	
	To easily get to where we want to go.	✓			
	To acknowledge First Nations peoples.			✓	
	To be healthy and active with access to local services and facilities.	✓	✓	✓	
Let's create opportunities	To celebrate what makes our city unique – our history, our people and our river.			✓	
	To shop and work locally.	✓	✓	✓	
	To afford the house we want in the neighbourhood we like.		✓	✓	
	To have Central Maitland as the vibrant heart of our city.		✓	✓	
Let's live sustainably	To show off our city.		✓	✓	
	To love and look after our great outdoors.			✓	✓
	To reduce our reliance on nonrenewable natural resources.			✓	✓
	To be ready in case of more hot days, storms and floods.				✓
Let's lead together	To reduce our waste.		✓		
	To have elected leaders that look out for us.				
	To have an efficient and effective Council.				
Let's lead together	To work together to be the best our community can be.	✓	✓	✓	✓



Theme	Priorities	Connectivity	Jobs and a Growing Economy	Liveability	Resilience
MidCoast Council					
A resilient and socially connected community	1.1 We celebrate our history, culture, creativity and diversity.			✓	
	1.2 We have access to a wide range of services and activities that contribute to the wellbeing of all members of our community.	✓	✓	✓	
	1.3 We work towards being a sustainable, resilient and socially connected community.	✓		✓	✓
	1.4 We protect the health and safety of our communities.			✓	✓
An integrated and considered approach to managing our natural and built environments	2.1 We protect, manage and restore our natural environment and our biodiversity.			✓	
	2.2 We understand and manage environment and climate change risks and impacts.		✓		✓
	2.3 Council works towards net zero emissions.		✓		✓
	2.4 We have an adequate and reliable water supply.				✓
	2.5 We balance the needs of our natural and built environment.		✓		✓
	2.6 We have a diverse range of housing options.			✓	
A thriving and strong economy	3.1 MidCoast is a great place to visit, work and invest.	✓	✓		
	3.2 Our villages and business precincts are vibrant commercial spaces.		✓	✓	
	3.3 Our integrated transport networks meet the needs of our businesses and the community.	✓			
Strong leadership and good governance	4.1 The community has confidence in Council decisions and planning for the future.				
	4.2 Council demonstrates good governance to ensure decisions and transactions are ethical, efficient, safe and fair.				
	4.3 Council builds a healthy and community-focused culture that contributes to our success.				
	4.4 We develop and encourage community and civic leadership.				✓
Muswellbrook Council					
Economic Prosperity	1. A dynamic local economy with full employment for current and future residents in a diverse range of high value industries.	✓	✓		
Social Equity	2. An inclusive and interconnected community, where everyone enjoys full participation.	✓	✓	✓	
Environmental Sustainability	3. An environmentally sensitive and sustainable community.		✓	✓	✓
Cultural Vitality	4. A culturally rich and diverse Community with strong identities, history and sense of belonging.			✓	
Community Infrastructure	5. Effective and efficient infrastructure that is appropriate to the needs of our community.	✓	✓		✓
Community Leadership	6. Collaborative and responsive leadership that meets the expectations and anticipates the needs of the community.				



Theme	Priorities	CONNECTIVITY	JOBS AND A GROWING ECONOMY	LIVABILITY	RESILIENCE
City of Newcastle					
Liveable	1.1 Enriched neighbourhoods and places.			✓	
	1.2 Connected and fair communities.			✓	
	1.3 Safe, active and linked movement across the city.	✓			
	1.4 Innovative and connected city.	✓			
Sustainable	2.1 Action on climate change.		✓	✓	✓
	2.2 Nature-based solutions.			✓	✓
	2.3 Circular economy.		✓		
Creative	3.1 Vibrant and creative city.	✓	✓		
	3.2 Opportunities in jobs, learning and innovation.	✓	✓		
	3.3 Celebrating culture.		✓	✓	
	3.4 City-shaping partnerships.	✓	✓		
Achieving together	4.1 Inclusive and integrated planning.	✓	✓	✓	✓
	4.2 Trust and transparency.				
	4.3 Collaborative and innovative approach.				

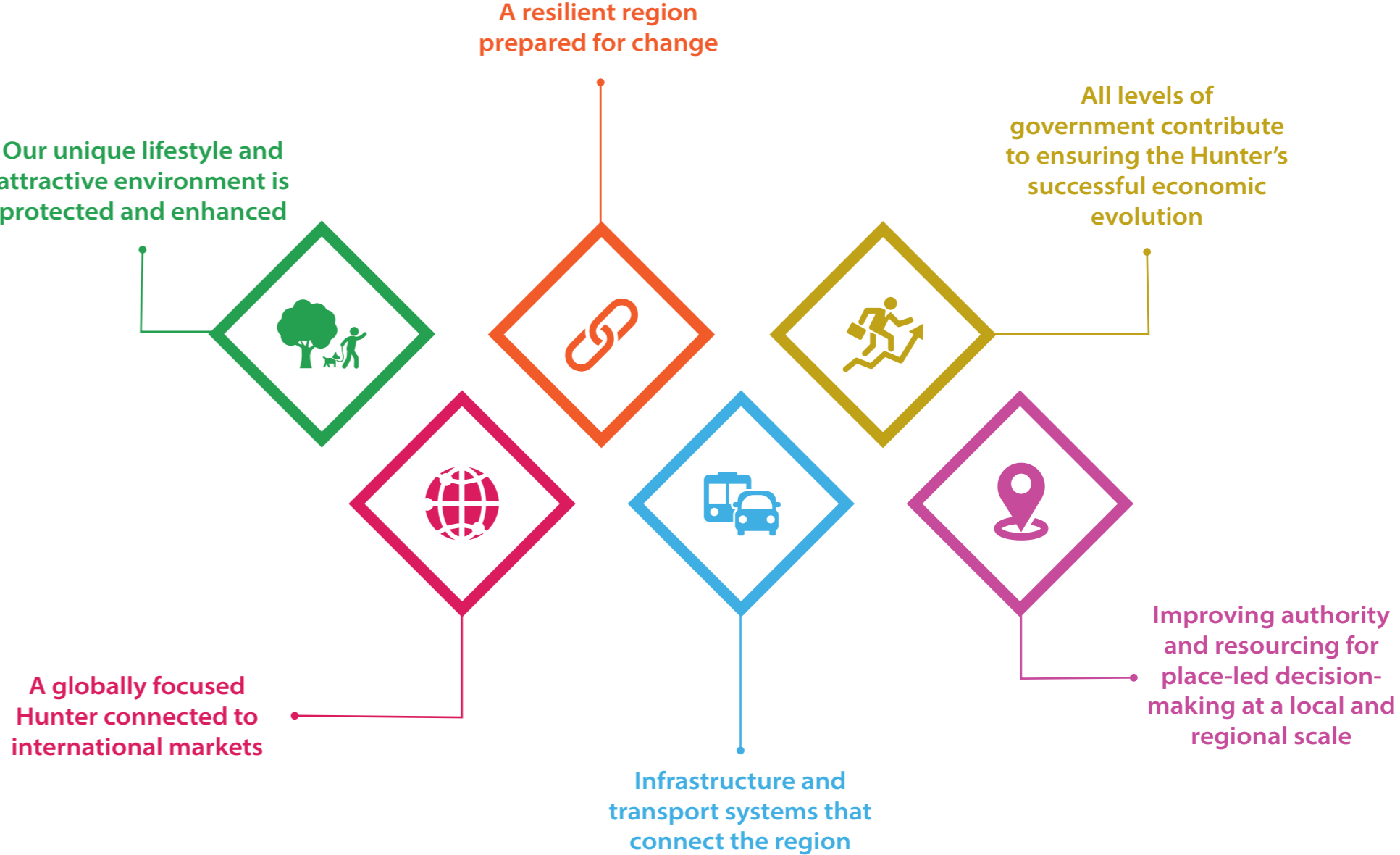
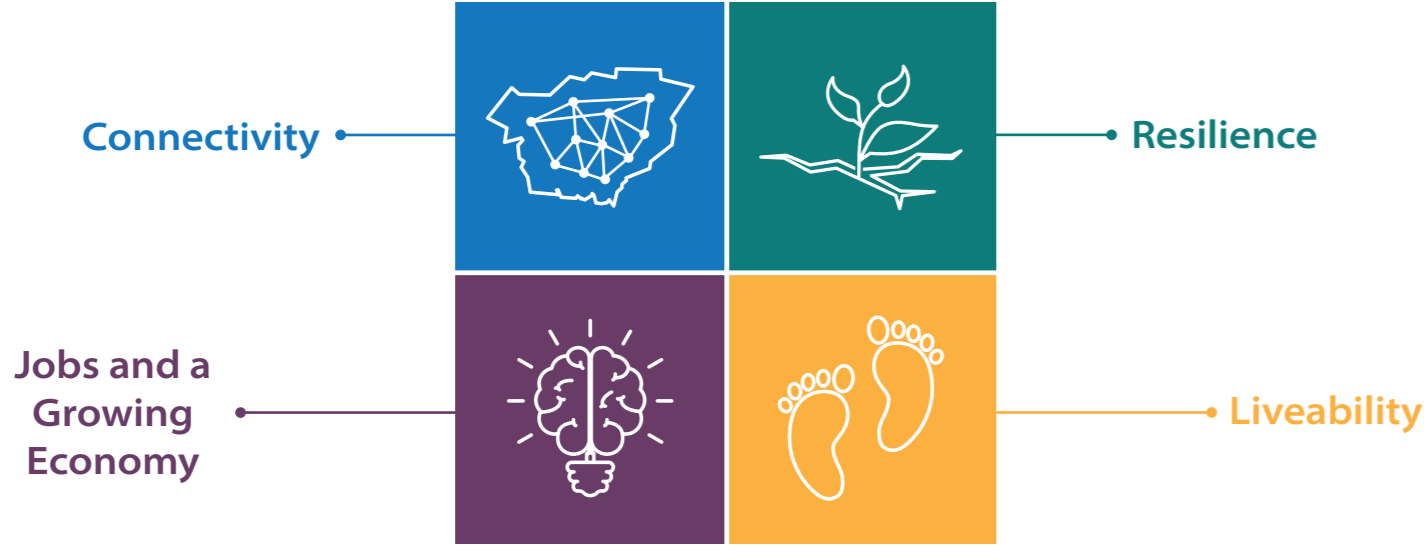
Port Stephens Council					
Community	C1 Community wellbeing.	✓	✓	✓	
	C2 Recognised traditions and lifestyles.		✓	✓	
Environment	E1 Ecosystem function.			✓	✓
	E2 Environmental sustainability.		✓	✓	✓
	E3 Environmental resilience.				✓
Place	P1 Strong economy, vibrant local businesses, active investment.		✓		
	P2 Infrastructure and facilities.	✓	✓		
	P3 Thriving and safe place to live.			✓	✓
Council	L1 Governance.				
	L2 Financial management.				
	L3 Communication and engagement.				



Theme	Priorities	CONNECTIVITY	JOBS AND A GROWING ECONOMY	LIVABILITY	RESILIENCE
Singleton Council					
Our People	Our community is creative, vibrant, inclusive, safe, healthy and sustainable. Our community is resilient, educated, inclusive, connected and engaged.	✓	✓	✓	
Our Places	Our places are sustainable, adaptable and inclusive. Our places are vibrant, connected, innovative and safe.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Our Environment	Our environments are valued, preserved, respected and enhanced in a sustainable way.		✓	✓	✓
Our Economy	Our economy will demonstrate diversity, resilience and innovation. Our economy will be smart, embrace growth and provide security for the future.		✓		✓
Our Leadership	Our Council is trusted, accountable, responsible and community focused.				
Upper Hunter Shire Council					
A connected community	Developing and deepening connections of people to each other and their community.	✓	✓	✓	
Protected Environment	Ensuring the ongoing protection of our environment and natural resources.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Thriving Economy	Strengthening our vibrant industries and economy while seizing emerging opportunities.		✓	✓	
Quality Infrastructure	Maintaining and developing our infrastructure network to meet the ongoing needs of our population.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Responsible Governance	Providing efficient and responsible governance in order to effectively serve the community.				

Themes and Regional Priorities

Our Strategic Plan is developed around 4 themes and 6 Regional Priority Statements that set the framework for the Hunter JO Statement of Strategic Priorities. They guide our resourcing, capacity and delivery of advocacy and program actions moving forward.





Strategic Line of Sight

Aligns at the Local Level

- Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework
- Member Councils Community Strategic Plans
- Cessnock Community Strategic Plan 2036
- Our Dungog Shire 2032
- Lake Mac 2032 Community Strategic Plan
- Maitland +10 Together, We Make Maitland
- Midcoast 2032: Shared Vision, Shared Responsibility
- Muswellbrook Shire 2022-2032 Community Strategic Plan
- Newcastle 2040 It's Our Future
- Port Stephens Community Strategic Plan 2022 - 2032
- Create Singleton 2032
- Upper Hunter 2032

Aligns at the Regional Level

- Hunter Regional Plan 2041
- Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036
- RLE Statement
- Greater Cities Commission Plans
- Hunter Central Coast Adaptation Strategy
- Central Coast and Lake Macquarie Regional Economic Development Strategy
- Hunter Regional Economic Development Strategy
- Midcoast Regional Economic Development Strategy
- Upper Hunter Economic Diversification Action Plan
- Draft Hunter Regional Transport Plan 2041
- Hunter Central Coast Circular Economy Roadmap

Aligns at the State Level

- NSW State Plan • NSW Energy Plan • NSW Net Zero Plan
- Premier's Priorities • NSW Waste and Sustainability Strategy
- NSW Circular Economy Policy Statement
- NSW Biodiversity Strategy 2050 • NSW Future Transport Strategy

Aligns at the National Level

- Smart Cities Plan • Australia's Climate Change Commitments
- National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy 2021-2025
- Australia's Long-term Emissions Reduction Plan - A whole-of economy plan to achieve net zero emissions by 2050

Aligns at the Global Level

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals



Part Three

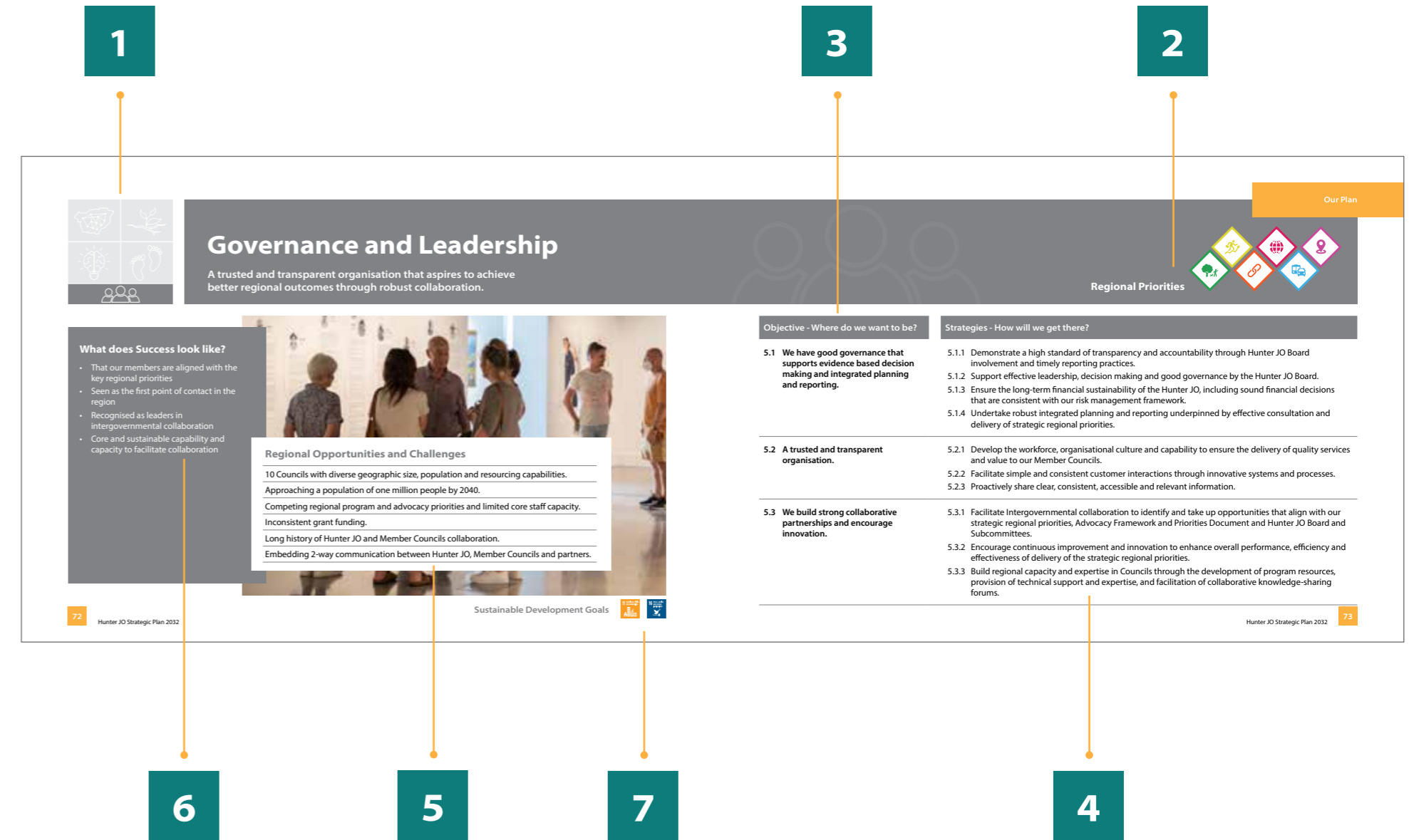
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How to Read this Part of the Plan

Regional Themes	4 themes that the strategic plan is developed around, for which an overarching Future Goal statement is identified for each.	1
Regional Priority Statements	6 Regional Priority statements that link to the Hunter JO Advocacy Framework and Priorities Document	2
Objectives	Where do we want to be? - Region's long-term priorities and aspirations	3
Strategic Directions	What will we do to get there? - They are the strategies that detail how we will get there	4
Regional Challenges and Opportunities	Challenges and opportunities that may impact the delivery of this Future Goal.	5
What does success look like?	What a successful outcome looks like for each theme.	6
Sustainable Development Goals	The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) are a set of global principles to guide action. Seventeen goals sit atop 169 global targets and an emerging set of indicators. These goals can be localised to address specific issues that are relevant in a local context and in our plan it will be a regional context to contribute to the global effort. We have looked at how our themes align to the 17 SDG's consistent with the Hunter Jo's vision and regional priorities, indicating where we believe the Hunter JO is best placed to contribute to achieving these global goals.	7



Strategic Direction Summary

Connectivity A globally connected region whose residents enjoy transport and digital infrastructure and systems that enhance their economic and lifestyle opportunities.		
1.1.1 Support local government having a collective voice in the planning and delivery of major transport infrastructure and systems.	1.1.2 Proactively facilitate collaboration with key state agencies to support delivery of connectivity solutions that suit the regions current and future needs.	1.1.3 Support Member Councils to influence other levels of government on a sustainable model for delivery and maintenance of road infrastructure.
1.1.4 Support a Regional Integrated Transport Plan linking key services and centres.	1.1.5 Identify and facilitate regional approaches for active transport outcomes that deliver connectivity, health, liveability and economic benefits.	1.1.6 Private and public transport solutions operate on a net zero basis.
1.2.1 Partnering with airport and port to identify and pursue priority actions to enable access to international markets for the benefit of the region.	1.2.2 Influence government policy to prioritise the importance of access to international markets for the benefit of the region.	1.2.3 Leading collaboration in the region between government, industry and community to ensure the benefits of international markets are region wide.
1.2.4 Support a transport access strategy for regional connectivity to and from the airport.	1.3.1 Support and encourage investment in equitable and competitive digital connectivity and the elimination of mobile black spots across the region to ensure community access to commuter routes, core health and education opportunities, and to enable business development, growth and innovation.	1.4.1 Embed the direction of net-zero in all our connectivity strategies to provide a pathway and level of confidence to investors and community to support the transition to more sustainable transport outcomes.

Resilience We are prepared for change and ready to withstand, adapt and recover from natural and human induced risks.		
2.1.1 We provide guidance and support packages to embed Climate Change action, resilience and disaster preparedness into Councils Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework.	2.1.2 We drive council capacity building opportunities supported by an evidence base to improve regional resilience and community awareness.	2.1.3 We drive opportunities to collaborate, adopt system thinking and circular economy opportunities to reduce our impact on climate change and increase resilience.
2.2.1 We lead the way in regional best practice and work with all levels of government to drive policy and strategy on climate change.	2.2.2 Engage and provide thought leadership in local, national and global climate change and resilience networks.	
2.3.1 Apply and obtain financial grants for regional programs that support a resilient region.	2.3.2 Facilitate and manage regional programs that support a resilient region.	

Jobs and a Growing Economy

The Hunter economy continues to grow and evolve as a powerhouse of the state and national economies, providing more and higher quality jobs.



<p>3.1.1 Support a clear, place-based, integrated whole-of-government policy and planning approach to drive the region's economic evolution and jobs of the future.</p>	<p>3.1.2 Support the establishment of an entity that has the authority and resources from the Commonwealth and NSW Government necessary to provide the institutional capacity and expert and empowered, place-based planning and decision-making capability.</p>	<p>3.1.3 Support regional institutional capacity to assist businesses and workers impacted by changes in the economy.</p>	<p>3.1.4 Drive collaboration to provide clarity, certainty and fairness in land-use policy and regulation as it relates to the use of former industrial and mining land and assets, or where local communities bear the impacts or have restrictions arising from the contribution of that place to broader regional or state benefits.</p>
<p>3.1.5 Support government policy and planning that prioritise the investment into key regional catalyst areas.</p>	<p>3.1.6 Support the place-based delivery of Aboriginal partnerships and employment programs in the Hunter.</p>	<p>3.2.1 Support and mature the innovation ecosystem in order to drive commercialisation of ventures and start-ups in the region which will provide growth in future jobs.</p>	<p>3.2.2 Improve and accelerate the regions access to investment and capital markets to underpin the innovation ecosystem and the redevelopment of industrial and mining assets.</p>
<p>3.3.1 Support efforts that position the Hunter globally in its areas of competitive and comparative strength.</p>	<p>3.4.1 Support knowledge sharing and embed Circular Economy principles in our strategies and plans to provide a pathway to future jobs creation in our local supply chains and services.</p>	<p>3.4.2 Support implementation of the Hunter Central Coast Circular Economy Roadmap.</p>	<p>3.5.1 Support a coordinated approach and collaborate around regional tourism promotion to grow jobs in the region.</p>
<p>3.5.2 Identify opportunities for growth and diversification of employment based in the tourism economy.</p>			

Liveability

Protect, preserve and improve the high standard of liveability and pristine environments that we enjoy in our region.



<p>4.1.1 Support a coordinated approach and collaborate around events and tourism.</p>	<p>4.1.2 Identify opportunities for growth and diversification of the regional events and tourism economy.</p>	<p>4.2.1 Support meeting our future regional infrastructure and operations for circular outcomes.</p>	<p>4.2.2 Reduce carbon emissions through better waste and materials management.</p>
<p>4.3.1 Our Councils are well supported in protecting and enhancing the environment through regional programs, data collection, support resources and capacity building.</p>	<p>4.3.2 Provide support and identify opportunities to improve and protect the regional Blue Green Grid.</p>	<p>4.3.3 We drive council capacity building opportunities to protect the environment and human health from pollution.</p>	<p>4.3.4 Provide support for regional conservation planning to protect regional biodiversity.</p>
<p>4.3.5 Provide support and identify opportunities to enhance the health of the region's estuaries and other waterways.</p>	<p>4.4.1 Provide support and identify opportunities on regional collaboration around Electric Vehicles.</p>	<p>4.4.2 Support regional collaboration around clean energy and future energy initiatives and industries.</p>	<p>4.5.1 Support Improved planning outcomes to enhance liveability and lifestyle.</p>
<p>4.5.2 Support a healthy and active community.</p>	<p>4.5.3 Support a safe and accessible society across the region.</p>	<p>4.5.4 Support enhanced cultural opportunities and protected heritage.</p>	<p>4.6.1 Support affordability and increased access to housing.</p>
<p>4.6.2 Support an increase in the availability of jobs and services closer to people.</p>	<p>4.6.3 Support equitable access to education and health services and facilities.</p>		



Governance and Leadership

A trusted and transparent organisation that aspires to achieve better regional outcomes through robust collaboration.

<p>5.1.1 Demonstrate a high standard of transparency and accountability through Hunter JO Board involvement and timely reporting practices.</p>	<p>5.1.2 Support effective leadership, decision making and good governance by the Hunter JO Board.</p>	<p>5.1.3 Ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the Hunter JO, including sound financial decisions that are consistent with our risk management framework.</p>
<p>5.1.4 Undertake robust integrated planning and reporting underpinned by effective consultation and delivery of strategic regional priorities.</p>	<p>5.2.1 Develop the workforce, organisational culture and capability to ensure the delivery of quality services and value to our Member Councils.</p>	<p>5.2.2 Facilitate simple and consistent customer interactions through innovative systems and processes.</p>
<p>5.2.3 Proactively share clear, consistent, accessible and relevant information.</p>	<p>5.3.1 Facilitate Intergovernmental collaboration to identify and take up opportunities that align with our strategic regional priorities, Advocacy Framework and Priorities Document and Hunter JO Board and Subcommittees.</p>	<p>5.3.2 Encourage continuous improvement and innovation to enhance overall performance, efficiency and effectiveness of delivery of the strategic regional priorities.</p>
<p>5.3.3 Build regional capacity and expertise in Councils through the development of program resources, provision of technical support and expertise, and facilitation of collaborative knowledge-sharing forums.</p>		



Connectivity

A globally connected region whose residents enjoy transport and digital infrastructure and systems that enhance their economic and lifestyle opportunities.

Regional Priorities



What does Success look like?

- Competitive access to and from global gateways for residents and business.
- Integrated public transport linking key services and centres.
- A sustainable model for delivery and maintenance of road infrastructure.
- Private and public transport solutions operate on a net zero basis.
- A regional network of cycleways and walkways that is accessible to all residents and visitors.
- Equitable and competitive Digital Connectivity that supports access to core services and enables industry growth and innovation.



Sustainable Development Goals



Regional Opportunities and Challenges

Large geographies and lower densities make transport investment less attractive to government.

Intraregional transport connections are not appropriate for the needs of the current or rapidly growing population of the region.

Reliance and prioritisation of cars due to historical planning and a lack of active transport infrastructure.

Freight congestion on railway lines limiting commuter offering.

Road network is not designed for the increasing population demands and the movement of goods and services.

Limited advocacy, co-ordination and planning for diversified regional transport of produce, services and people across the region including, air, water, road, and alternatives.

Government policy on container terminal restricting access to international markets.

Improved intraregional transport planning, investigating on-demand transport services, and investment in more multi-modal transport options (including public transport, road, rail and bus) to reduce commuter times.

Planning for road network improvements, EV, park and ride, heavy rail, light rail, bus, cycleways, and pedestrian as fundamental for a growing region.

Poor connections to and from our major employment, transport hubs and international gateways for both freight and people.

Unreliable network of mobile towers and NBN connections limiting efficiency of business and liveability in the region.

Invest in higher speed internet and fibre connectivity when installing infrastructure in major town centres.

Digital literacy programs improved across the region.

Better connections to key locations in the region for both people and freight.

Overhauling the existing inner-city rail network when introducing fast or faster rail, including converting parts of the network to metro standards and more regular services to all rail connected centres.

Improving digital connectivity across the region in the form of improved 5G coverage and a minimum 4G standard coverage across 100% of the region.

Investigating and protecting rail corridors and infrastructure no longer required for the coal industry for conversion to rail passenger services or cycleways.



Connectivity

A globally connected region whose residents enjoy transport and digital infrastructure and systems that enhance their economic and lifestyle opportunities.

Regional Priorities



Objective - Where do we want to be?

1.1 Within the region there is a robust integrated transport solution that underpins the experience/liveability and productivity of its residents and visitors comparable to its global peers.

1.2 Through its port and airport the Hunter is a globally connected and economically prosperous city-region, recognised as a key international gateway, providing its communities with a vibrant and unique lifestyle and growth in products and services to replace the economic output of thermal coal.

Strategies - How will we get there?

- 1.1.1 Support local government having a collective voice in the planning and delivery of major transport infrastructure and systems.
- 1.1.2 Proactively facilitate collaboration with key state agencies to support delivery of connectivity solutions that suit the regions current and future needs.
- 1.1.3 Support Member Councils to influence other levels of government on a sustainable model for delivery and maintenance of road infrastructure.
- 1.1.4 Support a Regional Integrated Transport Plan linking key services and centres.
- 1.1.5 Identify and facilitate regional approaches for active transport outcomes that deliver connectivity, health, liveability and economic benefits.
- 1.1.6 Private and public transport solutions operate on a net zero basis.

- 1.2.1 Partnering with airport and port to identify and pursue priority actions to enable access to international markets for the benefit of the region.
- 1.2.2 Influence government policy to prioritise the importance of access to international markets for the benefit of the region.
- 1.2.3 Leading collaboration in the region between government, industry and community to ensure the benefits of international markets are region wide.
- 1.2.4 Support a transport access strategy for regional connectivity to and from the airport.

Objective - Where do we want to be?

1.3 Digital connectivity that ensures community access to core services on commuter routes across the region and between Sydney and Newcastle and to enable business development, growth and innovation.

1.4 A region that is built around sustainable transport outcomes.

Strategies - How will we get there?

- 1.3.1 Support and encourage investment in equitable and competitive digital connectivity and the elimination of mobile black spots across the region to ensure community access to commuter routes, core health and education opportunities, and to enable business development, growth and innovation.
- 1.4.1 Embed the direction of net-zero in all our connectivity strategies to provide a pathway and level of confidence to investors and community to support the transition to more sustainable transport outcomes.



Resilience

We are prepared for change and ready to withstand, adapt and recover from natural and human induced risks.

Regional Priorities



What does Success look like?

- Bounce back from events
- Minimal disruption and loss
- Adaption and resilience is a design principal in all our planning and built environment.
- Integration of local, state and federal government decision making.
- Alignment and clarity around roles and responsibilities and resourcing for natural and human induced risk for planning, response, and recovery.
- Our residents are personally aware and prepared.



Regional Opportunities and Challenges

Significant impacts from fires, floods, coastal erosion and drought.

Population growth and development increasing disaster impacts (building on floodplains, close to bushland.)

Lack of resourcing in regional areas towards building resilience.

Skills shortages in key industries for resilient communities – e.g. health, engineering, planning, trades.

Large region (in terms of area) to allow for adaptation from disasters (i.e. retreat, relocation, mitigation activities.)

Transition to a cleaner greener economy towards renewables and net-zero emission industries.

Opportunity for growing areas to have resilience embedded during development stage.

Close collaborative relationship across the region to work together to improve resilience.

Community support for resilience projects is easy to obtain from our engaged communities.

Lack of resourcing and unclear responsibility expectations in regional areas towards building resilience.





Resilience

We are prepared for change and ready to withstand, adapt and recover from natural and human induced risks.

Regional Priorities



Objective - Where do we want to be?

2.1 We are recognised as innovative leaders in Council capacity building and policy support for climate change action, resilience and disaster preparedness.

2.2 We take leadership and drive regional best practice in climate action.

2.3 Our region is resilient to environment risks, natural hazards and climate change.

Strategies - How will we get there?

- 2.1.1 We provide guidance and support packages to embed Climate Change action, resilience and disaster preparedness into Councils Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework.
- 2.1.2 We drive council capacity building opportunities supported by an evidence base to improve regional resilience and community awareness.
- 2.1.3 We drive opportunities to collaborate, adopt system thinking and circular economy opportunities to reduce our impact on climate change and increase resilience.

- 2.2.1 We lead the way in regional best practice and work with all levels of government to drive policy and strategy on climate change.
- 2.2.2 Engage and provide thought leadership in local, national and global climate change and resilience networks.

- 2.3.1 Apply and obtain financial grants for regional programs that support a resilient region.
- 2.3.2 Facilitate and manage regional programs that support a resilient region.



Jobs and a Growing Economy

The Hunter economy continues to grow and evolve as a powerhouse of the state and national economies, providing more and higher quality jobs.

Regional Priorities

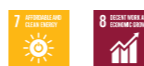


What does Success look like?

- All levels of government collaboratively contribute to and drive our regions successful economic evolution to drive jobs.
- Planned and executed the creation of new and additional products and services into global and domestic markets to replace the economic contribution of thermal coal.
- New products and services leverage our areas of advantage including clean energy, advanced manufacturing and sectors of existing strength.
- Selling new and additional products into global markets.
- Investment into the region that accelerates and amplifies innovation outcomes.



Sustainable Development Goals



Regional Opportunities and Challenges

Protecting land use for industrial, agriculture and commercial uses due to competing demands.

Growth in a net-zero emissions constrained environment and obstacles to building the necessary infrastructure including land use conflicts, investments, and finance.

Lack of coordinated regional approach to the evolution of the regional economy and reliance on coal as main employer and source of income and exports.

Stranded land and water assets following coal fired power station and mine closures.

Reskilling workforce and talent attraction to the region to be fit for future work opportunities.

No consolidated regional event and visitor attraction agency to promote and advocate for the region.

Transitioning the economy to a circular economy.

No rigorous regional economic evidence base to guide explicit investment in key growth sub sectors.

Maintaining and improving our gross regional product during the decline of our traditional industries.

Whole of region land and water assets assessment to identify opportunities for viable long-term reuse.

Setting up a regional transition authority to coordinate evolution of the economy.

Insufficient capital flow to provide needed investment to support acceleration of ventures and start-ups.

Determine focus areas and foster regional specialisations like advanced manufacturing, defence industries, energy, circular economy, Medtech and Agritech.

Acceleration of event and tourism economies through greater regional collaboration and marketing efforts.

New economy supports from all levels of government.

Circular Economy eco-system and precinct development including circularisation of all parts of the supply chain.

Support infrastructure and marketing to assist international trade of our products and services.

Attract investment and talent to help evolve our economy.

Coordination of economic and other data that is regionally specific to guide evidence-based decision making.

Supporting the diversification of energy supply to renewables across the region towards net-zero emissions.

Coordinated promotion of the region and the opportunity for a world-class investment concierge.



Jobs and a Growing Economy

The Hunter economy continues to grow and evolve as a powerhouse of the state and national economies, providing more and higher quality jobs.



Regional Priorities



Objective - Where do we want to be?

3.1 Coordinated planning and investment by all levels of government that empowers the region and its residents to maintain and grow jobs, economic opportunities and quality of life.

Strategies - How will we get there?

- 3.1.1 Support a clear, place-based, integrated whole-of-government policy and planning approach to drive the region's economic evolution and jobs of the future.
- 3.1.2 Support the establishment of an entity that has the authority and resources from the Commonwealth and NSW Government necessary to provide the institutional capacity and expert and empowered, place-based planning and decision-making capability.
- 3.1.3 Support regional institutional capacity to assist businesses and workers impacted by changes in the economy.
- 3.1.4 Drive collaboration to provide clarity, certainty and fairness in land-use policy and regulation as it relates to the use of former industrial and mining land and assets, or where local communities bear the impacts or have restrictions arising from the contribution of that place to broader regional or state benefits.
- 3.1.5 Support government policy and planning that prioritise the investment into key regional catalyst areas.
- 3.1.6 Support the place-based delivery of Aboriginal partnerships and employment programs in the Hunter.

3.2 Accelerated and amplified market-driven investment in innovation that capitalises on the region's existing natural strengths and attributes which create jobs in future industries

- 3.2.1 Support and mature the innovation ecosystem in order to drive commercialisation of ventures and start-ups in the region which will provide growth in future jobs.
- 3.2.2 Improve and accelerate the regions access to investment and capital markets to underpin the innovation ecosystem and the redevelopment of industrial and mining assets.

Objective - Where do we want to be?

3.3 A globally focused region that drives talent attraction and retention

Strategies - How will we get there?

- 3.3.1 Support efforts that position the Hunter globally in its areas of competitive and comparative strength.

3.4 A region that is built around Circular Economy principles as a driver of future jobs.

- 3.4.1 Support knowledge sharing and embed Circular Economy principles in our strategies and plans to provide a pathway to future jobs creation in our local supply chains and services.
- 3.4.2 Support implementation of the Hunter Central Coast Circular Economy Roadmap.

3.5 We are recognised as a destination of choice for international and domestic visitors.

- 3.5.1 Support a coordinated approach and collaborate around regional tourism promotion to grow jobs in the region.
- 3.5.2 Identify opportunities for growth and diversification of employment based in the tourism economy.



Liveability

Protect, preserve and improve the high standard of liveability and pristine environments that we enjoy in our region.

Regional Priorities



What does Success look like?

- Our growth has not impinged on liveability and lifestyle
- Improve the quality of our rivers, coasts and lakes
- Increase the availability of jobs and services closer to people
- Improved planning outcomes to enhance liveability and lifestyle
- Improve and protect the Blue Green Grid
- A healthy and active community
- A safe and accessible society for all
- Enhanced cultural opportunities and protected heritage
- Improved affordability and increased access to housing
- Equitable access to education and health services and facilities



Sustainable Development Goals



Regional Opportunities and Challenges

Climate change impacting liveability – floods, fires, heat, loss of biodiversity.

Population pressures are going to impact demand for land and housing, increasing house prices.

Town centres need revitalisation as part of the 15 minute region concept.

Growth impacting our lifestyle and liveability due to land use constraints, pollution and climate change impacts.

Social housing not keeping pace with demand.

Recreational space conflicts in forests and national parks.

Illegal dumping and littering.

Significant biodiversity and natural assets add to the region's unique character and liveability.

Refocus land use planning to infill and transit oriented development as opposed to urban sprawl.

More social housing development imbedded in new developments and direct investment by government.

Variety of accessible green spaces including signage within 15 minutes' walk of the population.

Planning and population preparedness will help us manage climate change and natural disaster risks.

Collaborate to create a calendar of events for the region.

Better access and information on trail infrastructure and mapping (walking, cycling etc) to improve accessibility and tourism potential.

Better access to wild places across the region (much held in private ownership) to improve accessibility and tourism potential.

Ongoing decline in regional biodiversity and waterway health in many rivers, creeks and estuaries due to pressures from urbanisation, mining, agriculture and other infrastructure.



Liveability

Protect, preserve and improve the high standard of liveability and pristine environments that we enjoy in our region.

Regional Priorities



Objective - Where do we want to be?

- 4.1 **We are recognised as a destination for hosting world class events that align with our unique offering.**
- 4.2 **Making use of our opportunity to drive circular evolution of our region's economy.**
- 4.3 **Our natural environments including our bushland, estuaries, waterways and beaches are protected and enhanced.**
- 4.4 **Supporting our region to be on the path to net zero emissions and paving the way with smart innovative solutions that increase liveability.**

Strategies - How will we get there?

- 4.1.1 Support a coordinated approach and collaborate around events and tourism.
- 4.1.2 Identify opportunities for growth and diversification of the regional events and tourism economy.
- 4.2.1 Support meeting our future regional infrastructure and operations for circular outcomes.
- 4.2.2 Reduce carbon emissions through better waste and materials management.
- 4.3.1 Our Councils are well supported in protecting and enhancing the environment through regional programs, data collection, support resources and capacity building.
- 4.3.2 Provide support and identify opportunities to improve and protect the regional Blue Green Grid.
- 4.3.3 We drive council capacity building opportunities to protect the environment and human health from pollution.
- 4.3.4 Provide support for regional conservation planning to protect regional biodiversity.
- 4.3.5 Provide support and identify opportunities to enhance the health of the region's estuaries and other waterways.
- 4.4.1 Provide support and identify opportunities on regional collaboration around Electric Vehicles.
- 4.4.2 Support regional collaboration around clean energy and future energy initiatives and industries.

Objective - Where do we want to be?

- 4.5 **A region with enriched neighbourhoods and places supported by planned infrastructure that promotes community cohesion, active living and pride in culture and heritage.**
- 4.6 **A region that is connected, inclusive and a fair**

Strategies - How will we get there?

- 4.5.1 Support Improved planning outcomes to enhance liveability and lifestyle.
- 4.5.2 Support a healthy and active community.
- 4.5.3 Support a safe and accessible society across the region.
- 4.5.4 Support enhanced cultural opportunities and protected heritage.
- 4.6.1 Support affordability and increased access to housing.
- 4.6.2 Support an increase in the availability of jobs and services closer to people.
- 4.6.3 Support equitable access to education and health services and facilities.



Governance and Leadership

A trusted and transparent organisation that aspires to achieve better regional outcomes through robust collaboration.

Regional Priorities



What does Success look like?

- That our members are aligned with the key regional priorities
- Seen as the first point of contact in the region
- Recognised as leaders in intergovernmental collaboration
- Core and sustainable capability and capacity to facilitate collaboration

Regional Opportunities and Challenges

10 Councils with diverse geographic size, population and resourcing capabilities.

Approaching a population of one million people by 2040.

Competing regional program and advocacy priorities and limited core staff capacity.

Inconsistent grant funding.

Long history of Hunter JO and Member Councils collaboration.

Embedding 2-way communication between Hunter JO, Member Councils and partners.



Objective - Where do we want to be?

5.1 We have good governance that supports evidence based decision making and integrated planning and reporting.

5.2 A trusted and transparent organisation.

5.3 We build strong collaborative partnerships and encourage innovation.

Strategies - How will we get there?

- 5.1.1 Demonstrate a high standard of transparency and accountability through Hunter JO Board involvement and timely reporting practices.
- 5.1.2 Support effective leadership, decision making and good governance by the Hunter JO Board.
- 5.1.3 Ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the Hunter JO, including sound financial decisions that are consistent with our risk management framework.
- 5.1.4 Undertake robust integrated planning and reporting underpinned by effective consultation and delivery of strategic regional priorities.

- 5.2.1 Develop the workforce, organisational culture and capability to ensure the delivery of quality services and value to our Member Councils.
- 5.2.2 Facilitate simple and consistent customer interactions through innovative systems and processes.
- 5.2.3 Proactively share clear, consistent, accessible and relevant information.

- 5.3.1 Facilitate Intergovernmental collaboration to identify and take up opportunities that align with our strategic regional priorities, Advocacy Framework and Priorities Document and Hunter JO Board and Subcommittees.
- 5.3.2 Encourage continuous improvement and innovation to enhance overall performance, efficiency and effectiveness of delivery of the strategic regional priorities.
- 5.3.3 Build regional capacity and expertise in Councils through the development of program resources, provision of technical support and expertise, and facilitation of collaborative knowledge-sharing forums.



Part Four

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Partnerships, Progress Reporting & Communication



Collaborative Partnerships

Key Existing and Emerging Collaboration Partners

Hunter JOs 10 Member Councils

Cessnock City Council

City of Newcastle

Dungog Shire Council

Lake Macquarie City Council

Maitland City Council

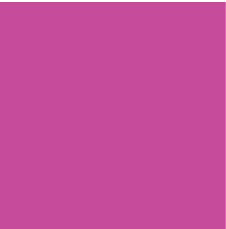
MidCoast Council

Muswellbrook Council

Port Stephens Council

Singleton Shire Council

Upper Hunter Shire Council



Australian Circular Economy Hub

Business Hunter

Central Coast Council

Cities Power Partnership

Committee for the Hunter

Department of Planning and Environment (DPE)

Department of Regional NSW

Destination North Coast NSW

Destination Sydney Surrounds North

Greater Cities Commission

Hunter Central Coast Development Corporation

Hunter Jobs Alliance

Hunter Local Land Services

Hunter Water Corporation

Local Land Services

Newcastle Airport

NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer

NSW Department of Primary Industries

NSW Environment Protection Authority

NSW Health

NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service

NSW Office of Sport

NSW Rural and Fire Service

NSW State Emergency Service

NSW Treasury

Office of Local Government

Other JOs / JO Chairs Forum

Port of Newcastle

RDA Hunter

Resilience NSW

Sustainability Advantage

The Business Centre Newcastle

Transport NSW

University of Newcastle

Venues NSW



Progress Reporting, Plan Review and Communication

Reporting our Progress

Our progress on delivering the plan will be reported as follows:

- Annual audited financial reports
- Annual performance statement
- 6 month progress report submitted to the Hunter JO Board

Reviewing the Plan

A review will be undertaken annually and a complete review of the Plan carried out within 12 months of each ordinary election of councillors for all Member Councils (normally every 4 years)

Communicating about the Plan

The Hunter JO has a Communication and Engagement Strategy, which outlines the internal and external approach to Engagement, including:

- Key messages about its role and commitment to achieving strategic priorities
- Methods for communicating effectively with Member Councils and stakeholders on progress in strategic priorities, including the achievement of key milestones and successes
- Identifies monitoring and regular review processes, to ensure the Communication and Engagement Strategy remains relevant and effective.

Progress on the implementation of the Communications and Engagement strategy will be 6 monthly.



4 Sandringham Ave, Thornton, NSW, 2322
02 4978 4020 • admin@hunterjo.com.au
www.hunterjo.com.au