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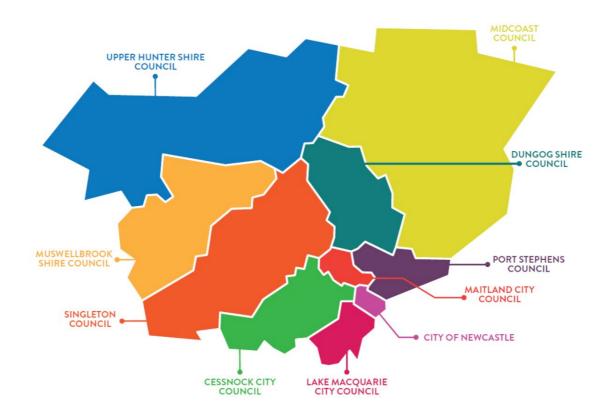
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Hunter Joint Organisation Board Meeting Papers

11:00am, Thursday 8 December 2022



Videoconference Details:

Click here to join the meeting

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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 13 October 2022

Hunter Joint Organisation Board Meeting Minutes

11:30 - 1:00pm, Thursday 13 October 2022

Hunter JO Boardroom, 4 Sandringham Avenue, Thornton

Voting Directors Present

Cr Jay Suvaal, Cessnock City Council
Cr John Connors, Dungog Shire Council

Cr Kay Fraser, Lake Macquarie City Council
Cr Maurice Collison, Upper Hunter Shire Council
Cr Nuatali Nelmes, Newcastle City Council

Cr Sue Moore, Singleton Shire Council
Cr Ryan Palmer, Port Stephens Council
Cr Claire Pontin, MidCoast Council
Cr Phillip Penfold, Maitland City Council

Non-Voting Members Present

Robert Maginnity Acting General Manager, Cessnock City Council

Gareth Curtis, General Manager, Dungog Shire Council
Adrian Panuccio, General Manager, MidCoast Council

Greg McDonald, General Manager, Upper Hunter Shire Council

Morven Cameron, CEO, Lake Macquarie City Council

Fiona Plesman, General Manager, Muswellbrook Shire Council

Jeremy Bath, CEO, Newcastle City Council

Wayne Wallis, General Manager, Port Stephens Council

Jason Linnane, General Manager, Singleton Council

Alison McGaffin Director, Hunter & Central Coast, Regional NSW

Apologies

Cr Steve Reynolds, Muswellbrook Shire Council

David Evans, General Manager, Maitland City Council

Derek Finnegan, Acting General Manager, Muswellbrook Shire Council

Staff in attendance

Joe James, CEO, Hunter Joint Organisation

Steve Wilson, Director Regional Policy and Programs, Hunter JO

Louisa Bulley, Executive Officer, Hunter JO (Secretariat)
Tim Askew, Policy and Program Manager, Hunter JO
Melinda Curtis, Policy and Program Manager, Hunter JO
Boyd Blackwell, Policy and Program Manager, Hunter JO

Kali Somerville, Media and Communications Officer, Hunter JO

Lisa Lord, Manager of Finance and Administration, Arrow & Hunter JO

Candace Woodyatt, Business Administration Trainee, Arrow

Others

Matt Endacott Representative from the Greater Cities Commission

The meeting opened at 11.00am.

Item 1 Welcomes and Apologies

1.1 Acknowledgment of Country

The Chair opened the meeting, noting the apologies.

Resolved:

• That the apologies be noted.

Moved: Jay Suvaal

Seconded: Maurice Collison

Carried.

1.2 Conflicts of Interest

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

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

2.1 Minutes of Meeting 11 August 2022

The minutes were taken as read.

Resolved:

• That the minutes of previous meeting of 11 August 2022 be adopted.

Moved: Jay Suvaal

Seconded: Ryan Palmer

Carried.

3. Confirmation of Minutes & Business Arising from Minutes

3.1 Business Arising: Hunter JO Action Register

The register was taken as read.

Resolved: That the register be noted.

Moved: Jay Suvaal

Seconded: Ryan Palmer

Carried.

3.2 Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan Steering Committee Action Register

The register was taken as read.

Resolved:

• That the register be noted.

Moved: Jay Suvaal Seconded: Ryan Palmer

Carried.

3.3 Subcommittee for Economic Evolution

The register was taken as read.

Resolved:

• The update report be received and noted.

Moved: Jay Suvaal

Seconded: Ryan Palmer

Carried.

4. Presentations

Nil Presentations

5. Correspondence

The Correspondence was noted.

Resolved:

• That the update be received and noted

Moved: Jay Suvaal

Seconded: Ryan Palmer

Carried.

6. Items for the Hunter JO Board - For Decision

6.1 Regional Approach to Establishing Council Revolving Energy Funds

Steve Wilson spoke briefly to the report.

Resolved:

- That the Hunter JO endorse exploring the opportunity for pooling the current 4 hours of REF assistance available to individual Councils, to explore potential regional opportunities.
- Add to criteria 'to check with councils if a red flag is raised by the CEO'.

Moved: Jay Suvaal

Seconded: Ryan Palmer

Carried.

6.2 Letters of Support to External Organisations for Funding Applications

Steve Wilson spoke briefly to the report.

Resolved:

 That the Board endorse the draft eligibility criteria and proposed process for approving and reporting to the Board those letters of support that have been provided.

Moved: Jay Suvaal

Seconded: Maurice Collison

Carried.

7. Items for the Hunter JO Board - For Noting

7.1 CEO Report: Collaboration & Advocacy

The CEO spoke to the report.

Resolved:

• That the Board receive and note the reports.

Moved: Ryan Palmer

Seconded: Philip Penfold

Carried.

7.2 Hunter JO Financial Reports - August 2022 YTD

The report was taken as read.

Resolved:

• That the Financial Reports for year-to-date August 2022 be received and noted.

Moved: Philip Penfold

Seconded: Jay Suvaal

Carried.

7.3 Hunter JO Sub-Committees Standing Update

The report was taken as read.

Resolved:

- That the Board note the updates on the Hunter JO Sub-Committees
- Remove Claire from the previous minutes 11 of August as she did not attend the previous meeting.

Moved: Claire Pontin

Seconded: Jay Suvaal

Carried.

7.4 Hunter JO Strategy

The report was taken as read.

Resolved:

• That the Board note the report.

Moved: Jay Suvaal Seconded: Claire Pontin

Moved.

7.5 Transforming Resilience through the IP&R Framework

Steve Wilson spoke to the report and gave an update on the IP&R framework project.

Resolved:

 That the Hunter JO Board note the information, particularly the upcoming short workshop session invitations.

Moved: Philip Penfold

Seconded: Maurice Collison

Carried.

7.6 Hunter JO Program Delivery Highlights

Steve Wilson spoke to the report and noted the high interest in the Simtables program.

Resolved:

• That the report be received and noted.

Moved: Philip Penfold Seconded: Jay Suvaal

Carried.

7.7 Standing Update from the Department of Regional NSW

Alison McGaffin spoke to the report and gave a verbal update, recognising the work of the teams from council and the Hunter JO in submitting applications for various funds. She noted that there is now a period of assessment and acknowledged that this time of year will be a busy period for councils, but will also look at ways the process can be more streamlined.

Resolved:

• That the Board note the update on key activities of the Department of Regional NSW relating to funding programs, the Regional Leadership Executive and the 2022 REDS Updates.

Moved: Jay Suvaal

Seconded: Claire Pontin

Carried.

8. Matters Raised by Members

Nil matters raised by Members.

9. General Business

Nil items for general business

9.1 Compliance & Governance Calendars

The calendars were noted.

[The Board moved into a closed briefing from 11:44am to 1:00pm]

Meeting closed 1.09pm.

3. Confirmation of Minutes & Business Arising from Minutes

Recommendation:

• That the minutes of the previous meeting of Thursday 13 October 2022 be adopted

3.1 Action Register

I.D	Action	Mtg Date	Status	Due	Notes
HJO-20-55	 Hunter JO Waste Strategy Review and 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 August 2022 October 2022 December 2022	December 2022: the Draft Regional Circular Materials Strategy is tabled for endorsement at the Board's December 2022 meeting. September 2022: The EPA have now released funding for the engagement of consultants to develop and review the draft Regional Circular Materials and Waste Strategy to ensure alignment with WaSM. All regional strategies are to be completed by December 2022. August 2022: The problems identified and endorsed at the April 2022 Board meeting are continuing. The NSW EPA have still not supplied the funding guidelines for developing the strategy. The NSW EPA have offered additional support that will assist us in these delays. The revised completion date is now October 2022. April 2022: Refer report included in Agenda Item 8.2 - 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

I.D	Action	Mtg Date	Status	Due	Notes
					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 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	Regional Freight and Logistics - Initiatives and Opportunities That a Summary Brief on this be brought back to the Board for endorsement.	Apr-21	Underway	Oct-21 June 2022 December 2022 June 2023	December 2022: No update from previous report. Advice remains pending as to the outcome of funding application. September 2022 – The Hunter JO continues to participate in the Committee for the Hunter Freight & Supply Chain taskforce, which will be releasing a report by the end of 2022 which will assist us shape the focus of the Hunter JO in this area of interest. A funding application has recently been submitted to the Regional NSW Business Case and Strategy Development Fund to prepare a Regional Airports Strategy that if successful will develop: • A strategy & business case for airfreight infrastructure investment and connectivity infrastructure for passenger and airfreight logistics (LIP) for the region. • An integrated airports strategy for the region (IRAS) including assessments of passenger, airfreight and transport (PAT) links to each airport across the region. August 2022 – as per previous update

I.D	Action	Mtg Date	Status	Due	Notes
					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	Cities Power Partnership Options 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 December 2022	December 2022: No change from previous update September 2022 - Following the 11 Councils in the Hunter joining the Cities Power Partnership Program, the Hunter Joint Organisation (Hunter JO) in March 2021 accepted an invitation from the Cities Power Partnership (CPP) to become its first 'Regional Partner'. We are the first region nationally to achieve this and were acknowledged in the NSW Parliament. The CPP pledges established have been linked and incorporated into the Climate Change IP&R Package. Hunter JO staff are currently collaborating with CPP to prepare a draft MOU. The intention of this partnership is to formalise collaboration between the organisations in order to support informed and coordinated local government climate initiatives in the Hunter region. The aim would be to ensure we enter into a partnership with mutual commitments and benefits that will support each party to achieve its aims. June 2022 - No change from previous update 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

I.D	Action	Mtg Date	Status	Due	Notes
					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	World Masters Games Establish a Regional Events Strategy Working Group.	Apr-21	Underway	Feb 2022 June 2022	December 2022 – In progress, as per previous updates
	Review opportunities and costs associated with			June 2023	September 2022 – As per previous update
	hosting the World Masters Games. • Scope out the development of a bid for the 2029			746 2020	August 2022 – As per previous update
	World Masters Games on behalf of the Hunter Region. • Review existing strategies and develop a roadmap for the implementation of key actions to attract major events to the region.				July 2022: As reported to the April 2022 Board meeting, the Major Event Feasibility component of the Accelerating Event Economies project will be assessing the feasibility, technical requirements and gaps in our region for running major sporting event e.g. Commonwealth Games, World Masters etc.
					April 2022: Refer report included in Agenda Item 7.8 - Accelerating Event Economies (A2E)
					Nov2021: Hunter JO Board resolved August 2021 to integrate consideration of 2029 World Masters Games bid opportunities and challenges within the scope of the Accelerating Event Economies (A2E) project.
					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

I.D	Action	Mtg Date	Status	Due	Notes
					regional event and asset audit, which will underpin this action.
HJO-20-71	THAT the Hunter JO draft correspondence to the NSW Government regarding funding and action required on the Hunter Sports Precinct in	10 Jun 21	Underway	Sep-22	December 2022: CEO to provide draft correspondence to GMs/CEOs in advance of Nov GMAC Meeting for feedback
	Broadmeadow That the drafted correspondence be reviewed out of session by the Board prior to sending.				September 2022: Still awaiting advice from the Hunter JO Board on if this matter should still be pursued.
					Nov2021: Propose to revisit this matter in 2022 once the GNMPSC has reformed post-local government elections
					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
					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.
HJO-20-78	That subject to adequate resourcing being provided by the NSW EPA to undertake, a due diligence assessment be initiated by the Hunter JO. Review existing state-wide approaches to the	30 Sep 21	Complete	Mar-22	December 2022 – Based on the findings and recommendations of the due diligence report, the final stages of consultation with Member Councils and negotiation with the NSW EPA are
	management of RID Squads				underway with a view to establishing a Regional Illegal Dumping Program Model.
	 Determine the feasibility of the Hunter JO potentially hosting the RID Squad 				August 2022 – Due diligence report completed and provided to NSW EPA for consideration.
	 Identifying the most appropriate financial and operational model for the RID Squad were it to be hosted by the Hunter JO. 				Currently awaiting response from EPA.

I.D	Action	Mtg Date	Status	Due	Notes
					June 2022 – Refer presentation and report included in GMAC Agenda regarding outcomes and recommendations arising from the review
					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.
					We have since received a quotation to complete the due diligence work, and a request for \$46,775 has been submitted to the EPA to undertake this work. Advice is pending on the outcome of this request.
					Jan2022: The EPA have commenced a review of RID squad models across the state as part of their 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).
					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.
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	Complete	Feb 2022	August 2022 – Subcommittee met 16 th June and will continue to meet on a monthly basis. Refer Standing Committee updates for more information.
					May 2022 – Nominations from Mayors and General Managers to participate on the Subcommittee have been extended to all

I.D	Action	Mtg Date	Status	Due	Notes
					Member Councils. Refer "Hunter JO Subcommittees Standing Update"
					April 2022 – refer Agenda Item 7.3 – Hunter JO Sub-Committees Standing Update
					Jan2022: 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.
HJO-20-84	 Further developing the concept of delivering a regional event which would require the active commitment and participation of all Mayors, Deputy Mayors & 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. 	Apr 22	Underway	August 2022	December 2022 – no change from previous update September 2022 – no change from previous update August 2022 – no change from previous update June 22 - Hunter JO team has commenced initial internal exploration of further concepts in line with the Board's resolution. Further development of concepts is required prior to engaging with the Board and other key stakeholders.

3.2 Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan Action Register

Date: 10 November 2022

Delivery Status Complete In progress Stalled / Off track

Meeting Date	Responsibility	Action	Status
17 August 2022	Hunter JO	That the Subcommittee write to the Hon Rob Stokes, Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport outlining that:	Complete
		 the Subcommittee provides a formal governance mechanism that will support the Commissioner in their role 	
		 it is the expectation of the GNMP Mayors that the Commissioner participate in the Subcommittee once they are appointed. 	
17 August 2022	Hunter JO	A workshop of the Subcommittee to be scheduled for 15 th September 2022 (10.00am) to determine agreed advocacy agenda and priorities prior to meeting with the new Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle City Cities Commissioner.	Complete
17 August 2022	Hunter JO	An invitation be extended to GCC Chief Commissioner Geoff Roberts, for the new Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle City Cities Commissioner, to participate in a meeting of the Subcommittee at 8.30am on Thursday 13 th October (prior to the Hunter JO Board meeting), subject to confirmation of their appointment by that time.	Complete
		NB should the Commissioner not yet be appointed a normal meeting of the Subcommittee will still occur from 9am prior to the full Board meeting.	
17 August 2022	Hunter JO	Meetings of the Subcommittee to be scheduled for the second Thursday of each month as follows:	Complete
		At 9.00am prior to the full Hunter JO Board meeting	
		At 10.00am (online) in the alternate month when there is no Board meeting	
17 August 2022	Hunter JO	A forward schedule of state agency briefings be drafted, and invitations extended to agencies to participate periodically in future meetings in accordance with the schedule. Priority agencies identified include:	In progress

Meeting	Responsibility	Action	Status
Date			
		Department of Planning & Environment (DPE) - Planning	
		NSW Treasury - Energy	
		Transport for NSW (TfNSW)	
		Hunter Central Coast Development Corporation (HCCDC)	
		Department of Regional NSW	
		Greater Cities Commission (GCC)	
		Newcastle Airport	
		NSW Health	
		Venues NSW	
		Hunter Water Corporation	
		NB Key agencies (e.g. TfNSW, HCCDC & DPE to potentially be invited two times per annum.	

3.3 Subcommittee for Economic Evolution Action Register

Date: 10 November 2022

Delivery Status Complete In progress Stalled / Off track

Meeting	Responsibility	Action	Delivery Status
Date			
13 October 2022	•	Boyd Blackwell to provide an overview / presentation on examples of government led domestic and international venture funds to a future meeting of the Subcommittee.	In progress
13 October 2022		Reporting of the Subcommittee's activities and progress to the full Hunter JO Board to include the Subcommittee Action Register being included in the Board Papers, along with a synopsis of progress in the Hunter JO Subcommittees Standing Update.	Complete

Meeting Date	Responsibility	Action	Delivery Status
13 October 2022	Hunter JO	In consultation with the Chair, where it is considered that a monthly meeting of the Subcommittee may not be required, that a written update on the status of actions be distributed in place of a meeting.	In progress
8 th September 2022	Hunter JO	 Prior to providing the Hunter Venture Fund report to the full Hunter JO Board: Continue to engage more broadly to both further test the concept, and to attempt to leverage commitments from other levels of government and stakeholders to support establishment of the Entity and Fund to ideally minimise/avoid the need for local government financial contributions Document brief examples of where this concept has worked- domestically and internationally Establish a clearer narrative as to the "why and what" of the entity and fund and the benefits to Member Councils and their communities 	In progress
11 August 2022	Shaelee Welchman / Hunter JO	Shaelee Welchman, will provide for distribution to Committee members the body of work completed by NSW Government, along with consultant brief and Project ToR (NB these materials have been distributed with the minutes)	Complete. Information distributed with minutes of 11 August meeting.
11 August 2022	Hunter JO	That the Hunter JO seek to have a representative nominated to participate on the Expert Panel, and that this representative be Joe James, CEO.	Complete. Nomination submitted 5 September 2022.
11 August 2022	Hunter JO	Update NSW election advocacy asks to reflect a "policy commitment" to a regional transition authority	Complete. "Policy commitment" integrated into draft Hunter Advocacy Framework and Priorities documentation currently under development
11 August 2022	Hunter JO	Establish a subgroup of the Subcommittee to assist with development of State and Federal Government advocacy strategies	Complete Subgroup met 14th September 2022
11 August 2022	Hunter JO	Develop and internal strategy for advocacy, including direct engagement with NSW parliamentarians by the Hunter JO Chair and Deputy Chair (i.e. walking the halls of Parliament, ideally by end of September), to canvass the ideas and approach of the	Complete

Meeting Date	Responsibility	Action	Delivery Status
		Subcommittee, and to invite the input of MP's to these (i.e. framed along the lines of "we need your assistance and we think this is the right thing for the region - what do you think?").	Advocacy strategy currently being implemented.
11 August 2022	Hunter JO	Include Hunter Venture Fund on the Agenda for the next meeting of the Subcommittee to further explore the appetite for the Venture Fund and to frame the next steps needed to progress its development.	Complete. Included and discussed during 8 th September meeting.

4. Presentations

4.1 Hunter JO Recap & Delivery Highlights from 2022

Presenter(s): Joe James, CEO & Steve Wilson, Director Policy & Programs

This presentation will provide a recap on the achievements and delivery outcomes for the Hunter JO over the last 12 months.

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 Ally Dench, Executive Director, Local Government NSW re Extension request - Submission of 2021/2022 Financial Statements, 14 October 2022
- Attachment 2: Correspondence to Office of Local Government re: late submission of Annual Performance Statement, 29 November 2022
- Attachment 3: Correspondence to Ally Dench, Executive Director, Local Government NSW re Additional Extension request, 30 November 2022
- <u>Not attached</u>: *Letters of Support Register* The following letters of support have been provided by the Hunter JO to funding applications being submitted by Member Councils and other regional stakeholders.

DATE	ORGANISATION REQUESTING	FUNDING PROGRAM	PROJECT TITLE
20 September 2022	Singleton Council	Resources for Regions Round 9 program (Department of Regional NSW)	Singleton Innovation and Investment Activation Program
20 September 2022	Singleton Council	Resources for Regions Round 9 program (Department of Regional NSW)	Singleton Skills and Employment Exchange
20 September 2022	The Melt	NSW Accelerating Regional Innovation Fund (Dept of Regional NSW)	Hardware innovation pre- accelerator and accelerator in the Hunter, MidCoast and New England regions.
20 September 2022	The Melt	Clean technology ecosystems grant (NSW Department of Planning & Environment)	Cleantech hardware pre- accelerator and accelerator at Muswellbrook

DATE	ORGANISATION REQUESTING	FUNDING PROGRAM	PROJECT TITLE
23 Sep 2022	The Business Centre Newcastle	NSW Accelerating Regional Innovation Fund (Dept of Regional NSW)	The Business Centre's Start House Regional Distributed Accelerator
29/9/22	University of Newcastle	NSW Accelerating Regional Innovation Fund (Dept of Regional NSW)	Hunter Cleantech Accelerator

Correspondence Received:

- Attachment 4: Correspondence received from The Hon. James Griffin MP, Minister for Environment & Heritage re Regional Contaminated Land Program, 18 October 2022
- Attachment 5: Correspondence from NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA)
 confirming 6-month funding extension to Regional Contaminated Land program
- Attachment 6: Correspondence from Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts re: Hunter JO Strategic Priorities, 1 November 2022
- Attachment 7: Correspondence received from the Office of Local Government re Request for extension for submission of Financial Statements, 1 November 2022
- Attachment 8: Submission from Committee for the Hunter re Hunter JO Strategy Feedback,
 23 November 2022
- Attachment 9: Submission from Lake Macquarie City Council Hunter re Hunter JO Strategy Feedback, 2 December 2022

Recommendation: That the update report be received and noted.



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14 October 2022

Ally Dench Executive Director, Local Government NSW Office of Local Government Locked Bag 3015 NOWRA NSW 2541

Dear Ms Dench

Extension request - submission of 2021/2022 Financial Statements

In accordance with Section 416(2) of the *Local Government Act 1993* (the Act), the Hunter Joint Organisation is seeking an application for an extension of time for the submission of its 2021/22 financial statements.

In the Hunter region, the funding of inter-council collaboration, on policy and advocacy matters, has historically been supported by profits generated through small business operations. These small businesses were established by collaborating member councils in the Hunter to provide services to the local government sector (and others).

For at least 20 years prior to the advent of joint organisations, both the collaboration of councils on policy and advocacy matters, as well as the small business operations, were conducted through independent legal entities incorporated under either the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 (NSW) or the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth).

Reason for extension request

The functions related to council collaboration on policy and advocacy matters are now conducted through the statutory vehicle of the Hunter Joint Organisation (**Hunter JO**), proclaimed under the Local Government Act. However, these activities are still funded, in part, through the business operations housed within Arrow Collaborative Services Ltd (**Arrow**), a company limited by guarantee under the *Corporations Act*, which was created pursuant to a consent given in 2003 by the then Minister for Local Government under section 358 (1)(a) of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

The Hunter JO and Arrow are related entities. They have 10 common member councils; Arrow's constitution specifically notes that its objectives include supporting the Hunter JO and the parties have a Service Level Agreement between them. However, the annual funding by Arrow to the Hunter JO is not subject to any express, legally binding arrangement between the entities.

In this context the Auditor General has identified a concern as to whether it can rely on the funding from Arrow in its assessment of the Hunter JO as a going concern. Since the creation of the Hunter JO, its board has relied on and disclosed the funding from Arrow in its assessment of the Hunter JO as a going concern and its statutory reporting under the *Local Government Act*.

The Hunter JO and Arrow are proposing to develop a legally binding funding deed that sets out Arrow's commitment to continued financial support of the Hunter JO. The proposed funding deed



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would be provided to the Auditor General for consultation and feedback, prior to being approved by both Arrow and Hunter JO boards.

It is anticipated that the process of developing the funding deed, seeking feedback from the Auditor General and seeking the approval of the respective boards will be completed by the week ending 9 December. This would allow finalisation and sign-off of the audited financials by the week ending 16 December and we would seek and extension until that time.

Hunter Joint Organisation's sub-contracted auditor, Mr Cameron Hume of RSM, and Mr Furgan Yousuf, Director of Financial Audit Services of the Audit Office of New South Wales both support Joint Organisation's application.

Accordingly, Joint Organisation requests an extension up to 16 December 2022 for the submission of its 2021/22 financial statements.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact myself on 0405 217 249

Yours sincerely,

Joe James

Chief Executive Officer



29 November 2022

Dear Ally,

Thank you for your letter approving our extension for the lodgement of the Hunter Joint Organisation's 2021-22 Financial Statements.

I am writing to you to flag that we will be submitting the Hunter Joint Organisation's Annual Performance Statement following endorsement of our Board at our December Board meeting on the 8th of December 2022.

I acknowledge that this is past the statutory deadline under the Local Government Act 1993; however, we are unable to submit it without the full approval of our Board of Member Councils.

Please contact me should there be any concerns with our timeline.

Yours sincerely,

Joe James

CEO





59 Bonville Avenue | PO Box 3137 | Thornton NSW 2322 P(02)49784040 | F(02)49660588

FOLLOW OUR PROGRESS (f)





30 November 2022

Ally Dench Executive Director, Local Government **NSW Office of Local Government** Locked Bag 3015 NOWRA NSW 2541

Dear Ms Dench

Extension request - submission of 2021/2022 Financial Statements

In accordance with Section 416(2) of the Local Government Act 1993 (the Act), the Hunter Joint Organisation is seeking an application for a further extension of time for the submission of its 2021/22 financial statements.

As per our correspondence of 14 October 2022, the Hunter Joint Organisation (Hunter JO) is currently working to develop a legally binding funding agreement with its related entity Arrow Collaborative Service Ltd (Arrow). This is in response to the going concern raised by the Auditor General, which we are seeking to resolve prior to the Financial Statements being submitted.

The proposed funding deed would be provided to the Auditor General for consultation and feedback, prior to being approved by both Arrow and Hunter JO boards.

The process of developing this funding deed, and seeking approval from both of our Boards has been pushed back, with a range of other commitments within the Hunter JO exhausting our capacity, including;

- Our Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities, which is due to the Office of Local Government by Sunday 4 December 2022; and
- Our Annual Performance Statement, due to the Office of Local Government by Wednesday 30 November 2022.

Both of these documents, and the consultation and collaboration required of our staff and our Board in their development, have been a significant undertaking, and have limited our ability to progress to approval of the funding deed between our two entities. We are now also up against the Christmas period, with closure of the offices of our Member Councils, and limited availability of our Mayors and General Managers during this time.

We are therefore requesting a further extension through to 28 February 2023, in order to provide a Funding Deed to the Auditor General for consultation and feedback that has been endorsed by both of our Boards. By providing a further extension we believe that we will reach a resolution that addresses the auditor's concern sufficiently, and will allow this issue to be resolved for future audits of the Hunter Joint Organisation.

Hunter Joint Organisation's sub-contracted auditor, Mr Cameron Hume of RSM, and Mr Furqan Yousuf, Director of Financial Audit Services of the Audit Office of New South Wales both support Joint Organisation's application.



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FOLLOW OUR PROGRESS (f) (in)





Accordingly, Joint Organisation requests an extension up to 28 February 2023 for the submission of its 2021/22 financial statements.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact myself on 0405 217 249

Yours sincerely,

Joe James

Chief Executive Officer

MD22/4463

Cr Sue Moore Chair Hunter Joint Organisation PO Box 3137 THORNTON NSW 2322

By email: admin@hunterjo.com.au

Dear Councillor Moore ()

Thank you for your letter on behalf of the Hunter Joint Organisation regarding the Contaminated Land Council Regional Capacity Building (CRCB) program. I appreciate you bringing your member councils' concerns to my attention.

I would like to acknowledge the positive feedback you have provided about this partnership, particularly noting the importance of collaboration between State and local government on managing contamination. I have also received feedback from the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA), about the success of this partnership arrangement to date.

As Minister for Environment and Heritage, I recognise that contaminated land is a serious concern to the public and environment, threatening the health of communities and ecosystems across all of NSW, and needs to be managed effectively.

The NSW Government remains committed to working closely with stakeholders to support regional councils in meeting their legislated responsibilities in managing contaminated land. While the current NSW Government funding is scheduled to end on 31 January 2023, I understand that the EPA is exploring a pathway to continue this program for local government.

If you have any further questions about this issue, please contact Ms Felicity Calvert, Unit Head Partnerships, EPA, on 9995 6624 or at felicity.calvert@epa.nsw.gov.au.

Thank you for taking the time to bring this matter to the Government's attention.

Yours sincerely

James Griffin MP

Minister for Environment and Heritage

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DOC22/898620-1

Mr Steve Wilson 59 Bonville Avenue (PO Box 3137) THORNTON NSW 2322 Email: stevew@hunterjo.com.au

Attention: MR STEVE WILSON

Dear Mr Wilson

Through the delivery of the Council Regional Capacity Building (CRCB) Program the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) has worked collaboratively with the Hunter Joint Organisation over the last three years to improve the management of contaminated land by councils within your region.

I am pleased to advise that an extension of six-months in funding is available to support the extension of the current agreement into 2023. To allow the Hunter Joint Organisation to fully administer funds provided under the agreement to the community, we propose to allow more time, until 30 June 2023, to complete the project.

This extension will be executed as a variation to the current agreement. You must submit a Variation Agreement, including an updated project plan and expenditure forecast, to the EPA by the 28th of October for approval.

In the interim, the EPA is available, upon request, to work with you, the grantee, to develop an updated project plan and accompanying expenditure forecast.

The EPA looks forward to continuing to partner with you on the Council Regional Capacity Building Program.

If you have any question about the proposed funding extension, please contact the Partnerships team at partnerships@epa.nsw.gov.au, at your convenience.

Yours sincerely

Lou-Anne Lind

Director, Education and Programs



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

Ref: MC22-008503

Mr Joe James Chief Executive Officer Hunter Joint Org PO Box 3137 THORNTON NSW 2322

via: ceo@hunterjo.com.au

Dear Mr James

Thank you for your letter of 16 September 2022 to the Hon Catherine King MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, offering your Congratulations on her appointment and regarding funding opportunities for the Hunter Joint Organisation's initiatives. The Minister has asked me to reply on her behalf. I apologise for the delay in responding.

The Australian Government values the contribution that local organisations make to the Australian community and I commend you for championing your local community.

After careful consideration, The Hon Catherine King MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government The Hon Catherine King MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, announced on 24 October 2022 new regional development grant programs. These new programs will fairly and transparently allocate funding to regions across Australia. The Department's funding opportunities will be published online at www.infrastructure.gov.au which I encourage you to look at.

In addition to this, you may also wish to monitor the GrantConnect website at www.grants.gov.au which provides details of all Australian Government Grant opportunities.

Thank you for taking the time to write.

Yours sincerely

Meghan Hibbert Assistant Secretary

Regional Programs Branch

01 November 2022



5 O'Keefe Avenue NOWRA NSW 2541 Locked Bag 3015 NOWRA NSW 2541 Our Reference: Your Reference: Contact: Phone: A839490

Performance Team 02 4428 4100

Mr Joe James Chief Executive Officer Hunter Joint Organisation PO Box 3137 Thornton NSW 2322

Email: <u>lisal@arrowco.com.au</u>

31 October 2022

Dear Mr James

Thank you for your letter of 14 October 2022 seeking an extension of time for the lodgement of the Hunter Joint Organisation's 2021-22 Financial Statements to 16 December 2022.

I appreciate the reasons for your extension request and acknowledge it is to allow time to satisfy an issue raised by the NSW Audit Office in respect of Hunter Joint Organisation's ability to continue as a going concern.

Having considered the information provided to me, I am approving an extension to 16 December 2022 for Hunter Joint Organisation to complete its 2021-22 Financial Statements.

However, the *Local Government Act, 1993* (the Act) does not authorise a similar extension in relation to an organisation's annual performance statement, of which the audited financial reports form a part. Section 428(1) of the Act currently provides that an organisation must prepare an annual report within five months after the end of the financial year. Section 428(5) of the Act requires organisations to place a copy of the annual performance statement on their website and provide a copy to the Minister for Local Government.

Hunter Joint Organisation will need to consider how it intends to address this issue, as the Office of Local Government cannot provide legal advice in this situation. The Organisation will also need to consider the implication of non-compliance with the Act, in the event that the annual performance statement is not submitted in time.

Should you need to discuss this further, please contact the Office of Local Government's Performance Team on 4428 4100.

Yours sincerely

Karin Bishop

Director, Sector Performance and Intervention

Enen Biolof



Committee for the Hunter

www.hunter.org.au ceo@hunter.org.au



Melinda Curtis **Hunter Joint Organisation** Thornton

23 November 2022

Dear Melinda,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our feedback following review of the Draft Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2032.

The Hunter region must collaborate to compete. This relies on strategic leadership and partnerships across the ten council areas of the Greater Hunter in addition to coordination on shared services and enterprises.

The Committee for the Hunter acknowledges the positive gains made across our region due to the works undertaken by the Hunter Joint Organisation. The Committee is proud to have an MoU with the Hunter Joint Organisation and work together on advocacy, strategic planning and projects to progress our shared vision for the Hunter region. Examples include:

- Hunter Global
- o A2E
- Regional advocacy and submissions (unified voice)
- Grant funding applications

The draft strategic plan is an excellent and highly informative document, summarising individual councils' priorities and where there is alignment to identify regionally-significant priorities. Recognising the comprehensive engagement that has underpinned the plan, this document is very helpful in informing the Committee's work and priorities.

The four themes and regional priorities align with Committee focus and priorities, and State planning frameworks including the (draft) Hunter regional and transport plans. Our comments below are confined to items of significance:

- Connectivity: Consider programs and services that enhance connectivity to global and domestic markets in addition to infrastructure. For example trad and investment, investment concierge linking our businesses with international opportunities and global business into the Hunter, intergovernmental coordination etc.
- Resilience: The significant role of councils in planning and approvals, including in areas at risk of fires and floods, has been omitted. Similarly the role of some councils in managing water services and infrastructure therefore water security. These are critical areas that require leadership at the regional level and coordinated, proactive planning. It would be suitable to see objectives and strategies related to these in a long-term strategic plan.





- Jobs and a growing economy:
 - Pp64 add: additional products AND SERVICES into global AND **DOMESTIC** markets
 - Opportunity and challenge: first point, include commercial uses as
 - The promotion of the region's opportunity (branding) and world-class investment concierge remain key regional priorities for which there is considerable alignment across stakeholders and role for councils.
- Liveability: Please see comment on planning approvals in 'Resilience'.



Once again, thank you for the opportunity for us to provide our feedback regarding the draft strategic plan. We value the work we do in collaborating with the Hunter Joint Organisation and look forward to continuing to strengthen our relationship into the future.

Should you wish to discuss any feedback raised above please don't hesitate to contact me directly on 0490 688 125 or via email at ceo@hunter.org.au.

Yours sincerely,

Alice Thompson Chief Executive Officer Committee for the Hunter



2 December 2022

Hunter Joint Organisation 4 Sandringham Ave **THORNTON NSW 2322**

By email: admin@hunterjo.com.au

Dear Sir / Madam,

Subject: **Submission – Hunter Joint Organisation Strategic Plan 2032**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Hunter Joint Organisation Strategic Plan 2032 (Strategic Plan). Lake Macquarie City Council (Council) staff have reviewed the Strategic Plan and offer the following comments.

Hunter JO board engagement (p26-27)

Council requests the following amendments to the Lake Macquarie priorities box:

- 'State road network lack of state investment'. Edit to include reference to pace of delivery:
 - 'State road network lack of state investment and pace of delivery'
- 'Tourism'. Edit this point to read: 'Unique tourism experiences'
- Add 'Energy transition and economic diversification' as an additional priority.

Areas of collaboration (p30-33)

- Economic diversification and energy transition are not listed as areas of collaboration, despite Jobs and a Growing Economy being one of the four themes of the Strategic Plan. Council considers economic diversification and energy transition to be collectively the region's most pressing economic priority. Collaboration will be essential to developing a regional 'city deal' style approach to government.
- The 'Roads Connectivity' box should include a dot point referencing the need to improve the pace of delivery of infrastructure:

- 'Pace of delivery the lag time between funding announcements and project construction.'
- The 'Tourism' box should include a reference to creating unique experiences to tap into new or under-developed markets:
 - 'Creating unique experiences to increase domestic overnight and international visitation.'
- The 'Environment' box should include a reference to estuaries as a natural asset:
- 'Natural assets are a particular strength of the region agricultural, open spaces, vineyards, hinterland, rivers, lakes, **estuaries** and coastline.'

Strategic line of sight (p44-45)

Council suggests the following documents be referenced:

- Draft Hunter Regional Transport Plan 2041
- Hunter Central Coast Circular Economy Roadmap

Connectivity (p56-57)

1.3: This section should include reference to the need for improved digital
connectivity on commuter routes between Sydney and Newcastle, specifically
addressing black spots on the Main Northern Rail Line between the Central Coast
and Newcastle and along the M1 Motorway. Digital connectivity on key commuter
routes is essential to supporting an increasingly mobile workforce.

Jobs and a Growing Economy (p64-65)

- The tourism opportunity listed on page 65 should reference the creation of unique experiences and the opportunity to grow new markets. Beyond the region's established tourist areas, such as Port Stephens and the Hunter Valley, there is a strong reliance on low-yielding day trip and 'Visiting Friends and Relatives' markets. The Strategic Plan should acknowledge the opportunity to strengthen regional markets for domestic (overnight, longer stay and interstate visitors) and international visitation, particularly with the imminent opening of an international runaway at Newcastle Airport.
- Council suggests the following addition to objective 3.4:
 "3.4.2 Support implementation of the Hunter Central Coast Circular Economy Roadmap

Liveability (p68-71)

Objective 4.3 references the protection and enhancement of natural environments but this is not articulated in the list of opportunities and challenges on the previous page.

Council suggests the addition of the following in opportunities and challenges:

- Significant biodiversity and natural assets add to the region's unique character and liveability
- Ongoing decline in regional biodiversity and waterway health in many rivers, creeks and estuaries due to pressures from urbanisation, mining, agriculture and other infrastructure
- Current NSW biodiversity policy settings is resulting in unnecessary barriers to development whilst failing to deliver biodiversity outcomes in the region

Objective 4.3 should be expanded to encompass biodiversity and conservation planning initiatives, as well as waterway health initiatives. Suggested edit for objective 4.3 (with additions in bold) is as follows:

 4.3 Our natural environments including our bushland, estuaries, waterways and beaches are protected and enhanced

Council also suggests the following additions to the strategies table for Objective 4.3:

- 4.3.4 Provide support for regional conservation planning to protect regional biodiversity and address barriers to development caused by current NSW policy and its implementation
- 4.3.5 Provide support and identify opportunities to enhance the health of the region's estuaries and other waterways

Council suggests the following edit to Strategy 4.5.4

4.5.4 Support enhanced cultural opportunities collaboration and protected heritage

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Hunter Joint Organisation Strategic Plan 2032. Should you wish to follow up on this submission, please reach out to either me or Karen Partington, using the contact information below.

Amy De Lore

Government Relations and Policy Lead P 0407 085 500

E: adelore@lakemac.nsw.gov.au

Karen Partington

Manager Environmental Systems

P: 02 4921 0203

E: kpartington@lakemac.nsw.gov.au

Yours sincerely

amy De Lore

Amy De Lore

Government Relations and Policy Lead

Report Author: Melinda Curtis, Regional Policy and Program Manager - Environment

Responsible Officer: Joe James, CEO

Purpose:

To present the consultation feedback and recommended amendments to the Draft Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2032.

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

This briefing does not relate to an individual priority action area but the Hunter Joint Organisation Strategic Plan 2018-2021 as a whole. This is part of the preparation for the next Strategic Plan cycle and the development of the Hunter Joint Organisation Strategic Plan 2032.

Background

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.

The SSRP is a 4-year document that aligns with the IP&R reporting cycle and must be prepared within 12 months of an ordinary election of councillors for all member councils. As the 2021 election was delayed due to covid, the statutory due date for completion of the Strategic Plan is the 4 December 2022.

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.

Report

At its October 2022 meeting the Board identified the following process and timeframe for reviewing and endorsing the draft Plan (refer Attachment 10):

- Draft Plan to be circulated to the Board for review, with comments to be provided in time to be collated and reviewed by GMAC at its meeting on 24th November 2022
- GMAC to consider collated feedback and proposed amendments, to recommend either:
 - Approving recommended changes to the plan, followed by distribution to the Board for approval via email, so that it can be provided to OLG by the 4 December statutory date (NB formal ratification would then occur at the Board meeting on 8th December); or
 - Holding an extraordinary online meeting of the Board (likely to be the 1 December) to consider the recommended changes to the plan in light of feedback received.

Consultation process

A three-week consultation process was undertaken in relation to the draft Hunter JO Strategic Plan which included:

• 102 direct emails sent to the 10 member Councils, key stakeholders and state agencies;

- Online overview sessions;
- Inclusion in the Hunter JO Newsletter; and
- Social media links to the Draft Strategic Plan consultation Hunter JO Website page.

The Briefing Sessions were delivered to provide an opportunity for Member Council IP&R staff, Council Planning and Economic Development Directors, and key regional stakeholders and agencies to receive an overview of the draft plan. The 4 online overview sessions held were as follows:

- Friday 4 November Regional Planning and Economic Development Directors and Managers
- Friday 4 November Key regional stakeholders, Council Staff and requests received through Hunter JO website
- Friday 4 November State Agencies
- Wednesday 9 November 2022 Council IP&R Regional Network

The following organisations participated:

- Cessnock City Council
- City of Newcastle
- Dungog Shire Council
- Lake Macquarie City Council
- Maitland City Council
- MidCoast Council
- Muswellbrook Shire Council
- Port Stephens Council
- Singleton Council
- Upper Hunter Shire Council
- Central Coast Council
- Business Hunter
- Committee for the Hunter
- Hunter Jobs Alliance

- Newcastle Airport
- Property Council
- Resilient Sydney
- UDIA
- Uni of Newcastle
- DPE
- DSSN
- Greater Cities Commission
- NSW Treasury
- Regional NSW
- Resilience NSW
- Transport for NSW

Outcomes of Consultation Process

The 3-week consultation process closed on the 11 November 2022. Please see in Correspondence the 2 formal submissions received from Lake Macquarie Council and Committee for the Hunter. We received emailed submissions from Cessnock Council, Department of Regional NSW and Newcastle Airport Pty Limited. In addition, are some corrections and feedback incorporated from Hunter JO staff and GMAC.

A summary of the submissions and the proposed amendments to the plan are provided in the following table:

Date	Overview of Submission	Recommended Change
10 Nov 2022	We have reviewed the Draft Hunter JO Strategic Plan with the below minor feedback: •Overall the draft Plan is in alignment with all Hunter Community Plans. • P18: \$64b should be \$65b to match the graph. • P52: 3.1.2 action be reworded to; 3.1.2 Advocate for resources from the Commonwealth and NSW Government necessary to provide the institutional capacity, expertise and local empowerment to support the evolution of the Hunter Economy.	Accept and make changes as follows: 1. Page 18 is corrected with updated figures. 2. The change requested to 3.1.2 is inconsistent with the Board's identified position of the establishment of an entity, so the recommendation is that 3.1.2 on page 66 stays as it currently is: 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.
11 Nov 2022	 P23: Typo i.e. Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036 P34: Jobs and a Growing Economy consideration for regional job growth opportunities from a domestic visitation perspective, as evidenced during/post covid with a renewed appreciation for exploring local/regional NSW ('staying close to home') and the associated demand for hospitality, tourism workers consideration given to Aboriginal partnerships and increasing Aboriginal and youth employment regionally Also, as I mentioned in the meeting last week, regular feedback/updates on reporting across the themes and regional priorities is of value to agencies. This will assist in our understanding of where there may be potential gaps/work to do, and areas that are progressing well in the current economic environment. 	1. Correct Typo on p.44, replace with Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036 2. Looking at the request in terms of jobs the following additional objective and strategies are recommended on Page 66: 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. 3. Under Objective 3.1, add in 3.1.6: Support the place-based delivery of Aboriginal partnerships and employment programs in the Hunter.

26 Oct 2022	Internal corrections based on further analysis of economic data and state government updates (population). Corrections on demographic economic numbers.	Corrections on demographic economic numbers, as follows: • P18: In graph change population to 773,135, Gross Regional Product to 63,950 and Gross Regional Product by person to \$81.60.
17 Nov 2022	I note there is only one passing reference to Williamtown SAP (Page 26 in Port Stephens box), and no reference to Astra despite the aim to be a key economic and employment driver for the region – I would have thought an opportunity that could lead to 5,000+ new jobs would have had more of a mention in the Draft Strategic Plan.	As this is a high level strategy, The Williamtown SAP and Astra are directly linked to the themes of Connectivity, Jobs and a Growing Economy and Liveability. No changes are recommended but this advise will be provided back to Newcastle Airport.
23 Nov 2022	The draft strategic plan is an excellent and highly informative document, summarising individual councils' priorities and where there is alignment to identify regionally-significant priorities. Recognising the comprehensive engagement that has underpinned the plan, this document is very helpful in informing the Committee's work and priorities. The four themes and regional priorities align with Committee focus and priorities, and State planning frameworks including the (draft) Hunter regional and transport plans. Our comments below are confined to items of significance: • Connectivity: Consider programs and services that enhance connectivity to global and domestic markets in addition to infrastructure. For example trade and investment, investment concierge linking our businesses with international opportunities and global business into the Hunter, intergovernmental coordination etc. • Resilience: The significant role of councils in planning and approvals, including in areas at risk of fires and floods, has been omitted. Similarly the role of some councils in managing water services and infrastructure therefore water security. These are critical areas that require leadership at the regional level and coordinated, proactive planning. It would be suitable to see objectives and strategies related to these in a long-term strategic plan. • Jobs and a growing economy: P64: Add additional products AND SERVICES into global AND DOMESTIC markets Opportunity and challenge: first point, include commercial uses as well.	The comments show we are certainly aligned in strategic focus and intent A number of the suggestions are at a planning level that sits below the strategy (eg they would be appropriate within a delivery or operational plan or other strategy (eg Hunter Global Flightpath report)). As such, there are no changes recommended to Connectivity or Resilience. Change: UPp64 add: additional products AND SERVICES into global AND DOMESTIC markets in point 2. p.65 Opportunity and challenge: first point, include commercial uses as well. Add on p.65 Promotion of the region's opportunity (branding) and world-class investment concierge.

	 The promotion of the region's opportunity (branding) and world-class investment concierge remain key regional priorities for which there is considerable alignment across stakeholders and role for councils. Liveability: Please see comment on planning approvals in 'Resilience'. 	
24 Nov 2022	Hunter JO Board Engagement (p26-27) Council requests the following amendments to the Lake Macquarie priorities box: 'State road network – lack of state investment'. Edit to include reference to pace of delivery: 'State road network – lack of state investment and pace of delivery' 'Tourism'. Edit this point to read: 'Unique tourism experiences' Add 'Energy transition and economic diversification' as an additional priority. Areas of collaboration (p30-33) Economic diversification and energy transition are not listed as areas of collaboration, despite Jobs and a Growing Economy being one of the four themes of the Strategic Plan. Council considers economic diversification and energy transition to be collectively the region's most pressing economic priority. Collaboration will be essential to developing a regional 'city deal' style approach to government. The 'Roads – Connectivity' box should include a dot point referencing the need to improve the pace of delivery of infrastructure: 'Pace of delivery – the lag time between funding announcements and project construction.' The 'Tourism' box should include a reference to creating unique experiences to tap into new or under-developed markets: 'Creating unique experiences to increase domestic overnight and international visitation.' The 'Environment' box should include a reference to estuaries as a natural asset: 'Natural assets are a particular strength of the region – agricultural, open spaces, vineyards, hinterland, rivers, lakes, estuaries and coastline.' Strategic line of sight (p44-45)	Consistent with the submission, make all changes on, p.26-27. Make all changes on p.30-33, with point 1 add Economic Diversification and energy transition in a box on p.30. Make all changes on p.44-45. On p.59 amend digital connectivity on commuter routes across the region and between Sydney and Newcastle in 1.3 and 1.3.1. Make changes on p.65-66, including the additional objective 3.4.2. Make all changes as requested in p.68-71, however amend 4.3.4 Provide support for regional conservation planning to protect regional biodiversity. Do not change 4.5.4 as whole plan is based on collaboration.

Council suggests the following documents be referenced:

- Draft Hunter Regional Transport Plan 2041
- Hunter Central Coast Circular Economy Roadmap Connectivity (p56-57)
- 1.3: This section should include reference to the need for improved digital connectivity on commuter routes between Sydney and Newcastle, specifically addressing black spots on the Main Northern Rail Line between the Central Coast and Newcastle and along the M1 Motorway. Digital connectivity on key commuter routes.

Jobs and a Growing Economy (p64-65)

- The tourism opportunity listed on page 65 should reference the creation of unique experiences and the opportunity to grow new markets. Beyond the region's established tourist areas, such as Port Stephens and the Hunter Valley, there is a strong reliance on low-yielding day trip and 'Visiting Friends and Relatives' markets. The Strategic Plan should acknowledge the opportunity to strengthen regional markets for domestic (overnight, longer stay and interstate visitors) and international visitation, particularly with the imminent opening of an international runaway at Newcastle Airport.
- Council suggests the following addition to objective 3.4:
- 3.4.2 Support implementation of the Hunter Central Coast Circular Economy Roadmap

Liveability (p68-71)

Objective 4.3 references the protection and enhancement of natural environments but this is not articulated in the list of opportunities and challenges on the previous page.

Council suggests the addition of the following in opportunities and challenges:

- Significant biodiversity and natural assets add to the region's unique character and liveability
- Ongoing decline in regional biodiversity and waterway health in many rivers, creeks and estuaries due to pressures from urbanisation, mining, agriculture and other infrastructure
- Current NSW biodiversity policy settings is resulting in unnecessary barriers to development whilst failing to deliver biodiversity outcomes in the region

Recommendation:

That the Board ratify the the Strategic Plan, amended in response to the submissions received through the consultation process, which was published on the Hunter JO website and provided to the Office of Local Government by the statutory due date of the 4 December 2022







The Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2032 is our Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities (SSRP) and an aspirational 10-year plan that will be reviewed on the election cycle timeframe consistent with the IP&R Framework.

Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2032 Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities (SSRP)

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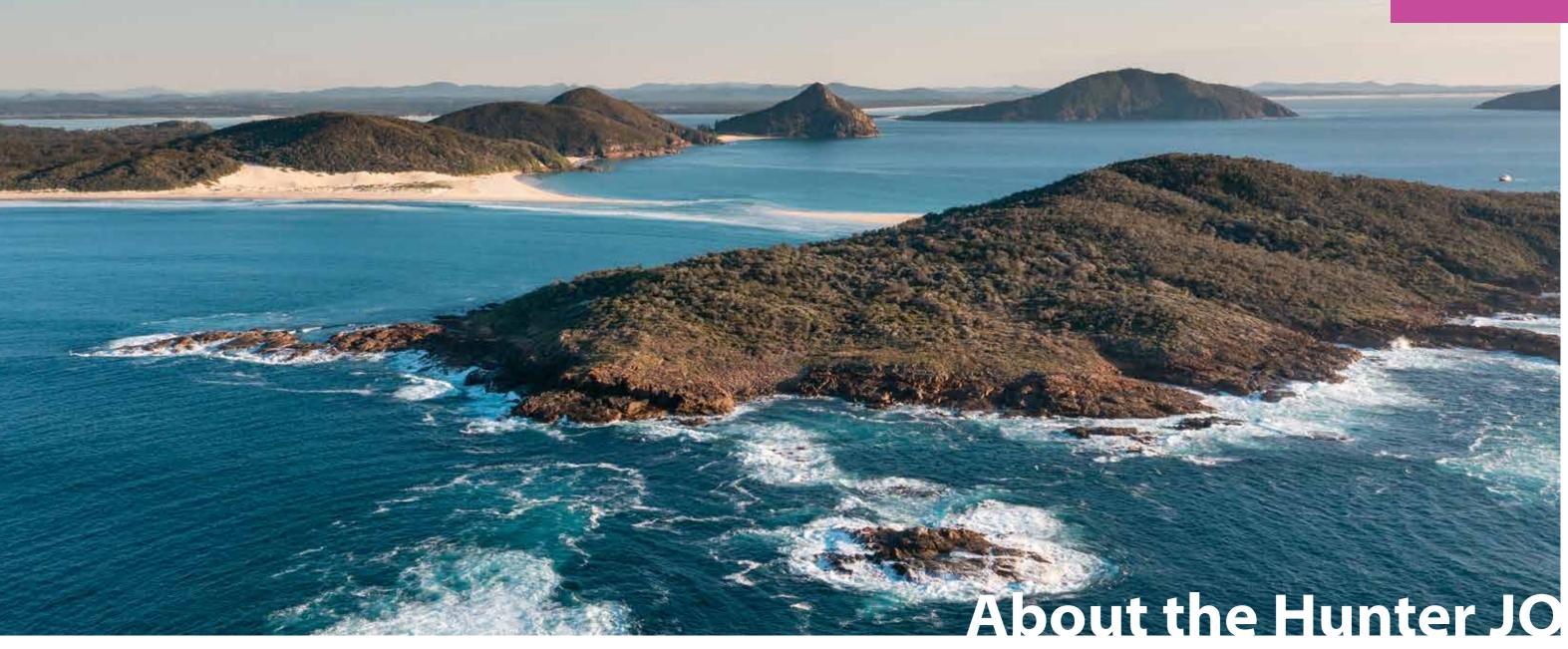
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About the Hunter JO

Part One

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Message from the Chair

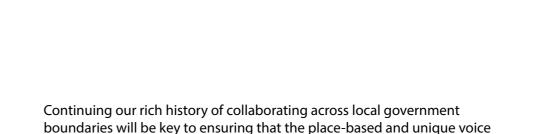
Cr Sue Moore

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.



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

of our communities are heard, at all levels of government. This will be

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."

6 Huntor IO Strato







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

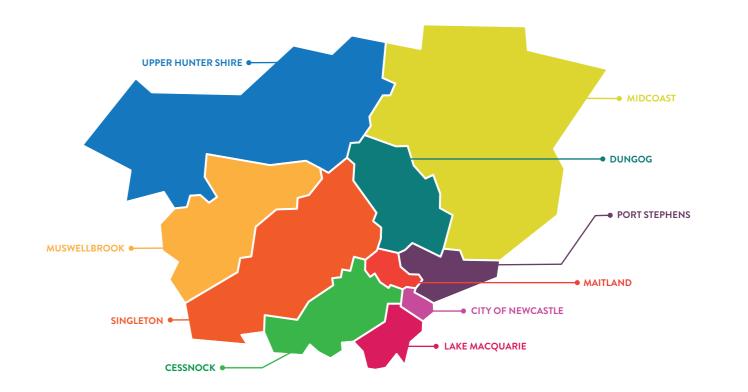
To identify and take up opportunities for intergovernmental co-operation on matters relating to the joint organisation area.

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.

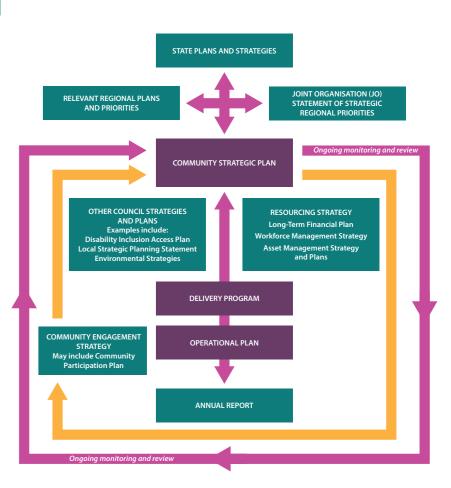


Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

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.

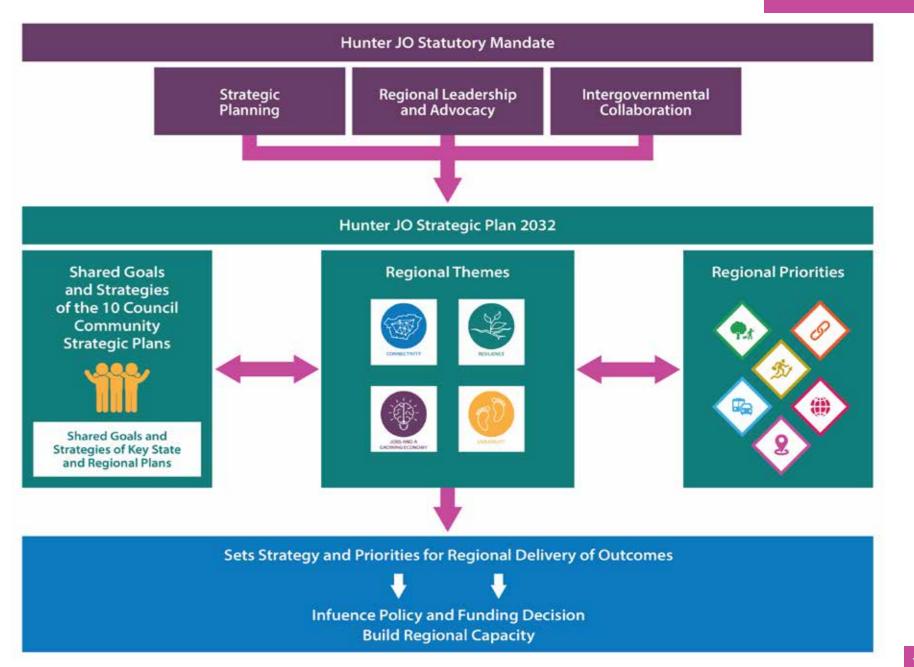
JOs are required to develop a Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities (SSRP) which sets out a vision for the region and provides an overview of the strategic actions required to deliver the vision. The SSRP draws from the Community Strategic Plans (CSPs) of Member Councils, regional-level plans and 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















Mayor Muswellbrook Shire Counci



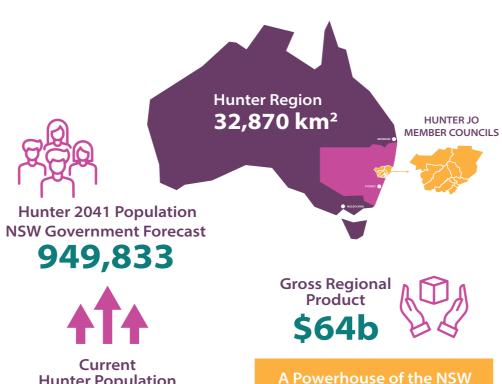




The Hunter Region

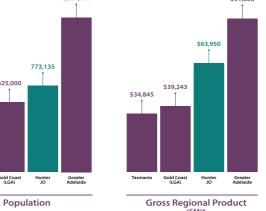
The Hunter is currently experiencing a significant rise in population while also facing the decline of its traditional coal and energy-based industries. The Hunter's economy needs to evolve substantially and rapidly to maintain its considerable contribution to the State and Commonwealth economies, particularly 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.





Hunter Population 773,135

and National Economies





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.

Average people per household

Playgrounds

Sportsgrounds

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



12,440.5km

Our Collective Voice



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



Electorates

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



Electorates

Federal

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

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KEY



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.

4 SEP 2021

NSW Local

Government

Elections

NOV 2021

Annual Report

2020/2021

across Regional

Priority Themes

SEP - OCT 2021

Legislation Change

& new OLG Guidelines

Aligning JO Strategy

with the IP&R Framework

Public Exhibition (28 days)

Draft Delivery Program

2017/2018 - 2021/2022

2021/2022 30 JUN 2021

Delivery Program

2017/2018 - 2021/2022

Operational Plan

2021/2022

June Council Meeting

Operational Plan

MAY 2021

Hunter JO Board

Planning Day

GM / Mayor

Draft Delivery Program

2017/2018 - 2021/2022

Operational Plan 2021/2022

Adopted for Public Exhibition

April Council Meeting

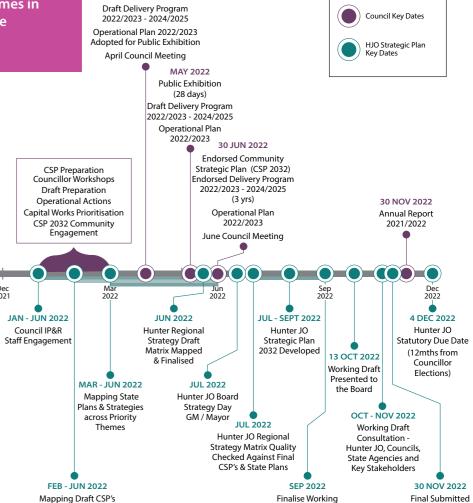
6 DEC 2020

Hunter JO Board

Endorse Strategic Plan

Aligning with Councils

IP&R Framework



APRIL 2022

Draft Community

Strategic Plan (CSP 2032)

to JO Board

Draft Hunter JO

Strategic Plan 2032





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

- Airpo
- Connectivity Transport / Digit
- Tourism regional experience / visitor econom
- Events
- Regional road netwo
- Employment –future of ic
- 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 Sustainibility 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

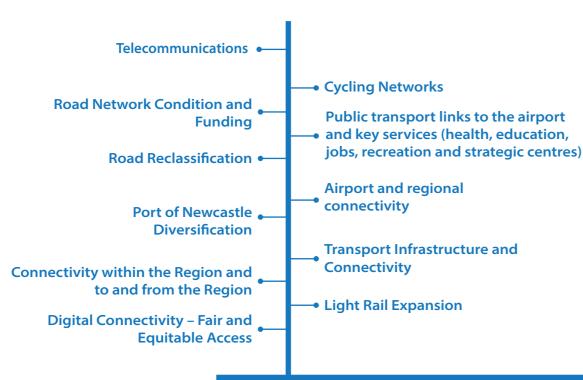
Muswellbrook

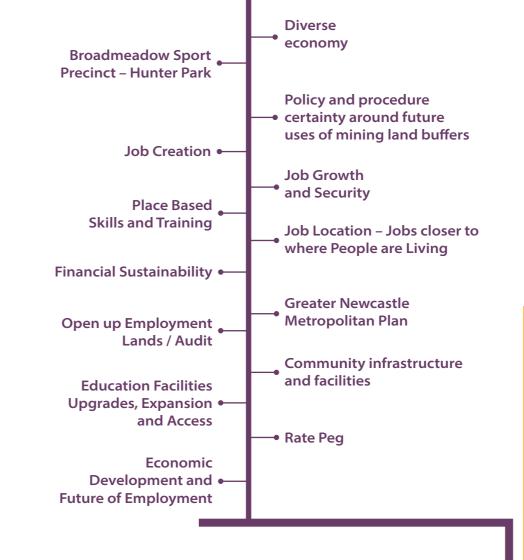
- Economy and future of employment
- Connectivity port / airport
- Advanced manufacturing hub
- Employment lands audit
- Industrial (AGL) and mining
- Policy and procedure certainty around future uses of mining land buffers
- Post mining LAaND
- Liveability Activating town centre
- Tourism and Events
- 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







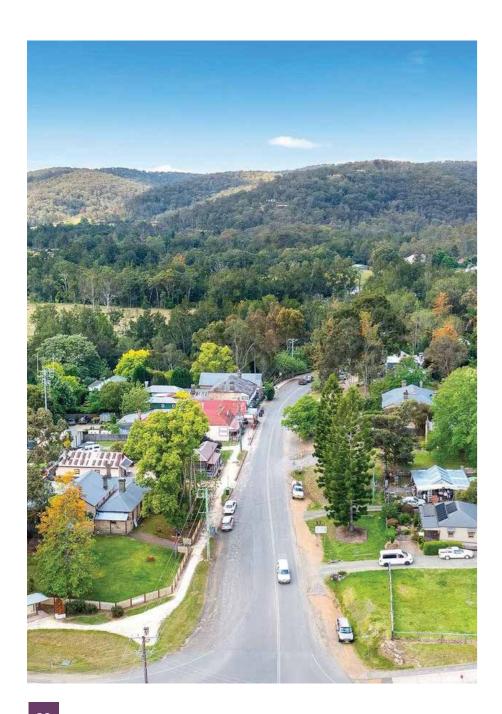


Marketing Roads the Region Connectivity EV Environment Charging Regional Tourism **Areas of** Innovation and Visitor Collaboration **Economy** Strategy Climate Change and Airport(s) Coastal Erosion Staff Services Resourcing Connectivity and Capacity Circular Natural Disaster Resilience

Areas of Collaboration

Connectivity	 Multi-modal connectivity 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 Fair and equitable access across region
Health Services	 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	 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	 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	 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.



Climate Change	 Coastal erosion is a whole of coastline issue Erosion solutions tend not to be sustainable or
and Coastal Erosion	 effective in the experience of Councils Shared coastal erosion advocacy or policy approach
Roads - Connectivity	 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 a a group Clarification of the process and timeline for reclassification Pace of delivery – the lag time between funding announcements and project construction.
Natural Disaster Resilience	 Up front Disaster Resilience work is important Clarification of role of local government in resilience 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

Circular Economy and Waste	 Engaging a broad range of stakeholders, including Federal, State, Local Government and Businesses and Organisations in the Circular Economy Developing Circular Materials Strategy
Staff Resourcing and Capacity	 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
Airport(s)	 Region airport strategy, including specialising at the various airports across the region
Marketing the Region	 Circular food systems Trying to get menu items in the lower hunter restaurants that use and market Hunter produce
EV Charging	 Regional approach to EV infrastructure Regional coordination to placement of charging stations and links to tourism Enabling infrastructure

nergy ransition and conomic iversification	 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
egional nnovation trategy	 Supporting education and economic transition Understanding skills base, technology, assets an infrastructure, and future needs. Innovation and incubator hubs Regional branding and marketing of region to attract investors and businesses.

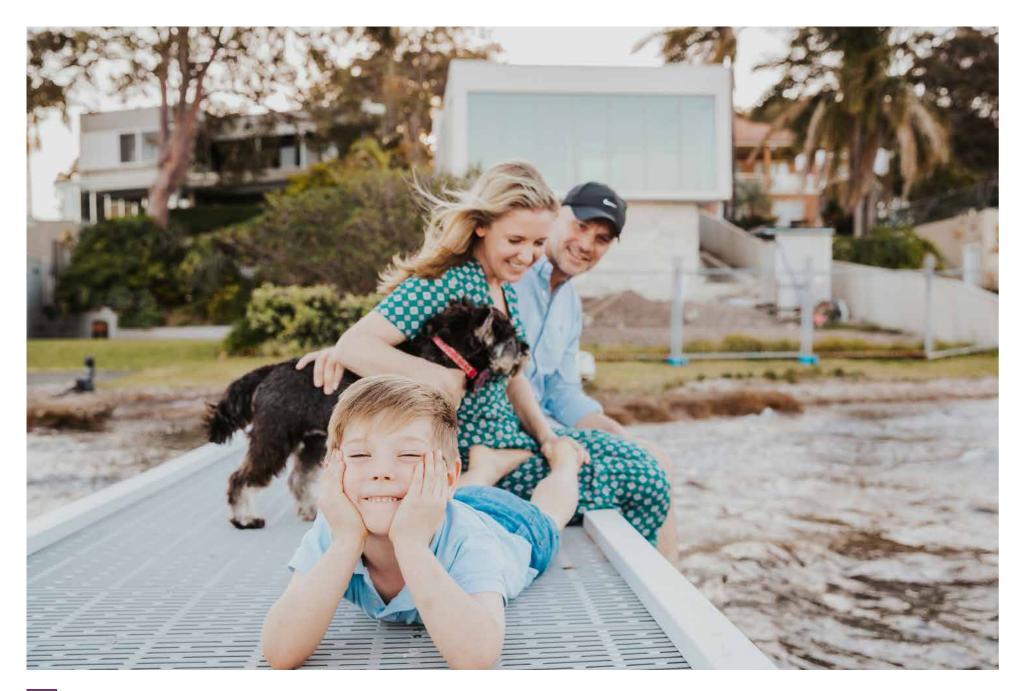


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Theme	Priorities	CONNECTIVITY	JOBS AND A GROWING ECONOMY	LIVEABILITY	RESILIENCE
Cessnock City Council					
A connected, safe and creative community	1.1 Promoting social connections and wellbeing.	✓		✓	
community	1.2 Strengthening community culture.				
	1.3 Promoting safe communities.	✓			
	1.4 Fostering an articulate and creative community.		✓	✓	
A sustainable and prosperous	2.1 Diversifying and growing our economy.		✓		
economy	2.2 Achieving more sustainable employment opportunities.		✓		
	2.3 Increasing tourism opportunities and visitation in the area.		✓		
A sustainable and healthy	3.1 Protecting and enhancing the natural environment and the rural character of the area.			✓	✓
environment	3.2 Better utilisation of existing open space.		✓		✓
	3.3 Better resource recovery and waste management.		✓		
Accessible infrastructure,	4.1 Better transport links.	✓			
services, and facilities	4.2 Improving the road network.	✓			
	4.3 Approved access to health services locally.			✓	
Civic leadership and effective	5.1 Fostering and supporting community leadership.		✓		
governance	5.2 Encouraging more community participation in decision making.				
	5.3 Ensuring Council is accountable and responsive to the community.				✓

Dungog Snire 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.				

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Theme	Priorities	CONNECTIVITY	JOBS AND A GROWING ECONOMY	LIVEASILITY	RESIJENCE
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.		✓		
Lake Macquarie City Council Unique landscape 1.1 Natural environ 1.2 New developme 1.3 Stormwater thr 1.4 We mitigate the 2.1 Our community 2.2 Our open and s 2.3 Our vibrant city 2.4 We have buildin Mobility and accessibility 3.1 It is easier to ge	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.		✓	\checkmark	✓
	2.3 Our vibrant city has events and festivals that enhance our lifestyle.		✓		
	2.4 We have buildings and facilities for a range of activies and recreation.		✓	\checkmark	
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.		✓		
Diverse economy Connected communities	4.4 We have vibrant economic and neighbourhood centres.	✓	✓	\checkmark	
Connected communities	5.1 Public spaces help connect us with each other.	✓		✓	
	5.2 We are a supportive and inclusive community.			\checkmark	✓
	5.3 We are proud of our city's heritage and cultures.			\checkmark	
	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	7.1 Our community influences decisions that shape our city.				
decision-making	7.2 We know how and why decisions are made.				
	7.3 Partnerships between community, government and business benefit our city.	✓ _	✓	✓	✓

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Theme	Priorities	CONNECTIVITY	JOBS AND A GROWING ECONOMY	LIVEABILITY	RESILIENCE
Maitland City Council					
Let's connect with each	To stay friendly, happy and proud as our city grows.		✓	✓	
other	To easily get to where we want to go.	✓			
	To acknowledge First Nations peoples.			✓	
1	To be heathy and active with access to local services and facilities.	✓	✓	✓	
	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 create opportunities Let's live sustainably	To show off our city.		✓	✓	
Let's live sustainably	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.				✓
	To reduce our waste.		✓		
Let's lead together	To have elected leaders that look out for us.				
	To have an efficient and effective Council.				
	To work together to be the best our community can be.	✓	✓	✓	✓



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Theme	Priorities	CONNECTIVITY	JOBS AND A GROWING ECONOMY	LIVEABILITY	RESILIENCE
MidCoast Council					
A resilient and socially	1.1 We celebrate our history, culture, creativity and diversity.			✓	
connected community	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	2.1 We protect, manage and restore our natural environment and our biodiversity.			✓	
approach to managing our natural and built environments	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	4.1 The community has confidence in Council decisions and planning for the future.				
governance	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.	V	V		
Social Equity	2. An inclusive and interconnected community, where everyone enjoys full participation.	V	V	V	
Environmental Sustainability	3. An environmentally sensitive and sustainable community.		→	V	V
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.	─ ✓	√		─ ✓

6. Collaborative and responsive leadership that meets the expectations and anticipates the needs of the community.

Community Leadership

		(TOTAL)	(- (<u>1</u>))	(70)	
Theme	Priorities	CONNECTIVITY	JOBS AND A GROWING ECONOMY	LWEASILITY	RESILIENCE
City of Newcastle					
Liveable	1.1 Enriched neighbourhoods and places.			✓	
	1.2 Connected and fair communities.			\checkmark	
	1.3 Safe, active and linked movement across the city.	\checkmark			
	1.4 Innovative and connected city.	\checkmark			
Sustainable	2.1 Action on climate change.		✓		✓
	2.2 Nature-based solutions.			\checkmark	✓
	2.3 Circular economy.		✓		
Creative	3.1 Vibrant and creative city.	\checkmark	✓		
	3.2 Opportunities in jobs, learning and innovation.	\checkmark	✓		
	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.				

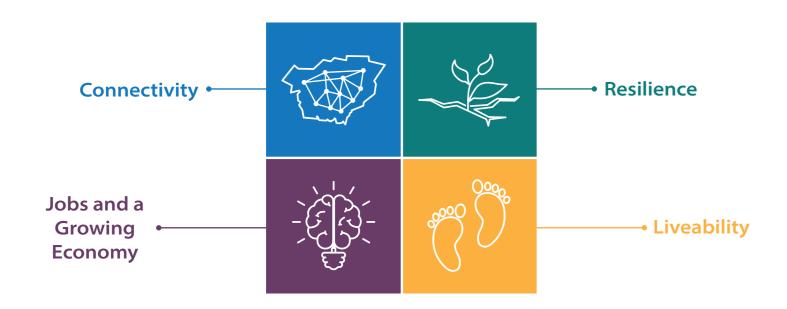
Port Stephens Council					
Community	C1 Community wellbeing.	✓	✓	✓	
	C2 Recognised traditions and lifestyles.		✓	✓	
Environment	E1 Ecosystem function.				✓
Livioninent	E2 Environmental sustainability.		✓	✓	✓
	E3 Environmental resilience.				✓
Place	P1 Strong economy, vibrant local businesses, active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

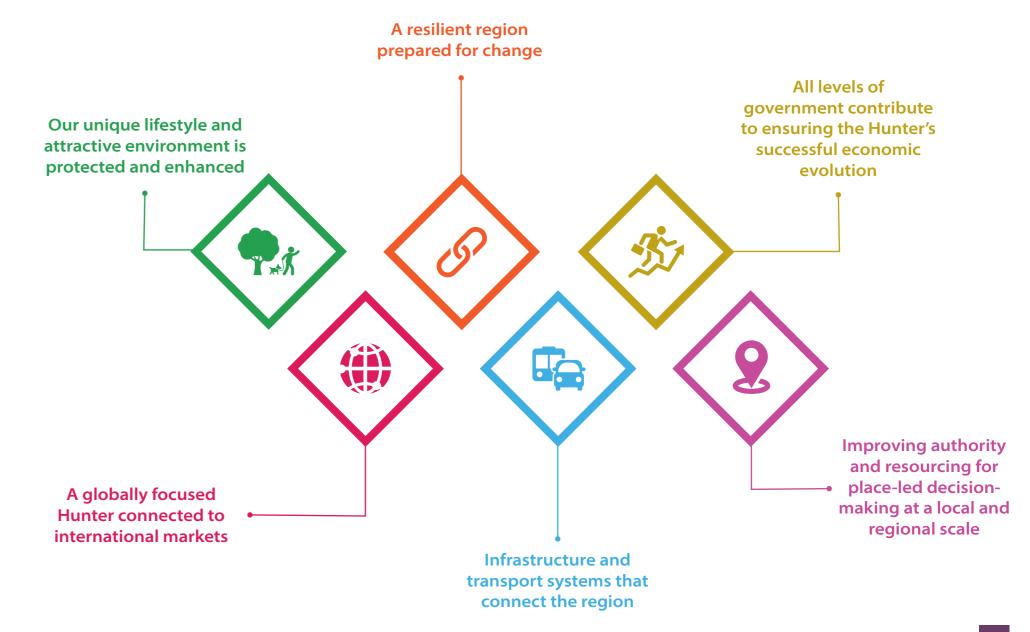
			-33-	70	E .
Theme	Priorities	CONNECTIVITY	JOBS AND A GROWING ECONOMY	LIVEABILITY	RESILIENCE
Singleton Council					
Our People	Our community is creative, vibrant, inclusive, safe, healthly and sustainable. Our community is resilient, educated, inclusive, connected and engaged.	✓	✓	✓	
Our Places	Our places 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, responsbile 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	Stregthening 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
- Midcoast Regional Economic Development
- 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**















Part Three

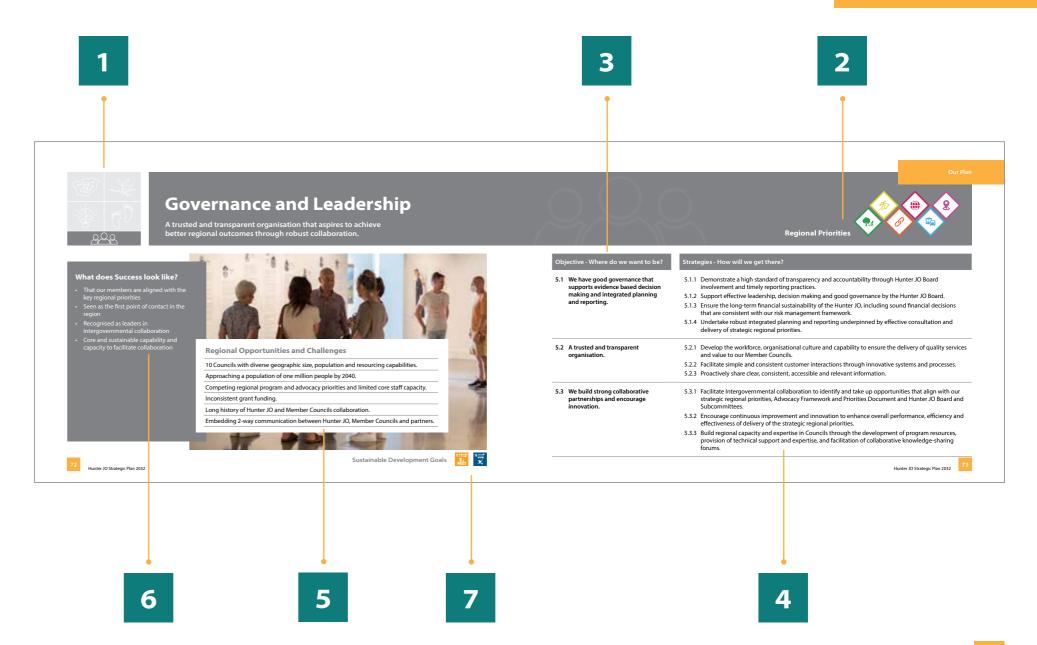
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How to Read this Part of the Plan

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	
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		
	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.	



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.

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.	3.2.1 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.
3.3.1 Support efforts that position the Hunter globally in its areas of competitive and comparative strength.	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.	3.5.1 Support a coordinated approach and collaborate around regional tourism promotion to grow jobs in the region.
3.5.2			

Liveability

4.6.2

Support an increase in the

closer to people.

availability of jobs and services

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

4.6.3

facilities.

Support equitable access to

education and health services and

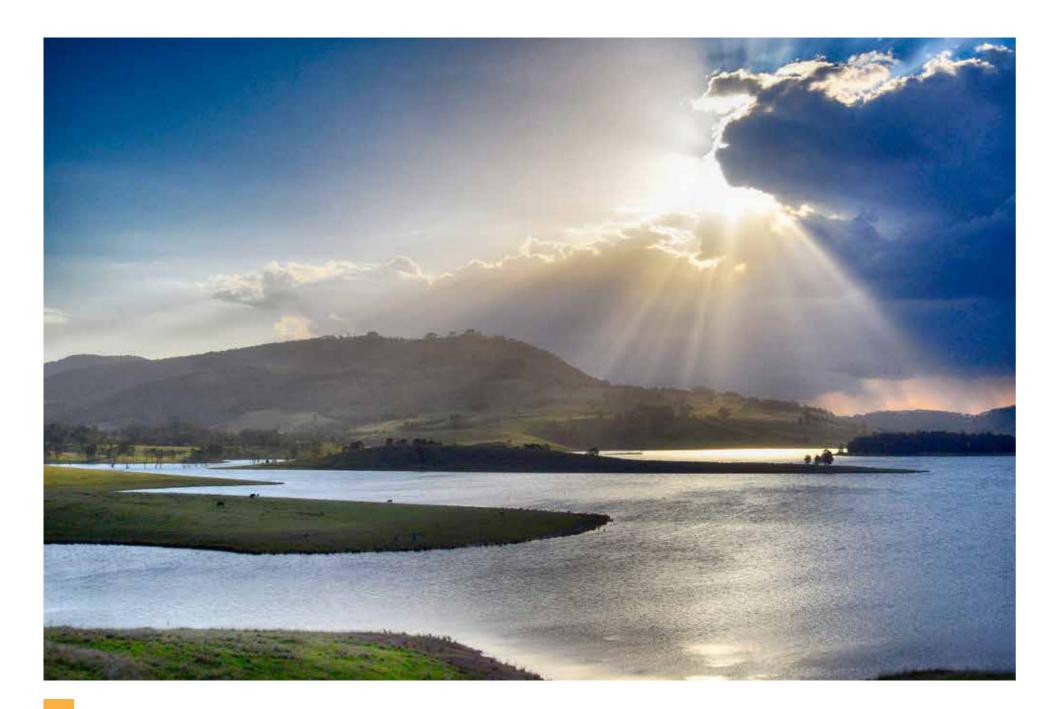
4.1.1 Support a coordinated approach and collaborate around events and tourism.	4.1.2 Identify opportunities for growth and diversification of the regional events and tourism economy.	4.2.1 Support meeting our future regional infrastructure and operations for circular outcomes.	4.2.2 Reduce carbon emissions 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.	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.

Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2032

Identify opportunities for growth

and diversification of employment

based in the tourism economy.



Governance and Leadership

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

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.

Hunton IO Stratogic Plan



Connectivity

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

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.



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.

Regional Priorities

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.

Strategies - How will we get there? Objective - Where do we want to be?

infrastructure and systems.

- 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.

- 1.1.1 Support local government having a collective voice in the planning and delivery of major transport
- 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.

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.

Regional Priorities

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

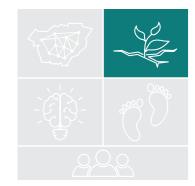
Close collaborative relationship across the region to work together to improve resilience.

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.





2.1 We are recognised as innovative leaders in Council capacity building	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.
and policy support for climate change action, resilience and	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** We take leadership and drive regional best practice in climate strategy on climate change.
 - 2.2.2 Engage and provide thought leadership in local, national and global climate change and resilience networks.
- 2.3 Our region is resilient to
 2.3.1 Apply and obtain financial grants for regional programs that support a resilient region.
 environment risks, natural hazards

Strategies - How will we get there?

Objective - Where do we want to be?

disaster preparedness.

and climate change.

action.

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.

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.









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.

Regional Priorities

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.

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
- 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 marketdriven investment in innovation that capitalises on the region's existing natural strengths and attributes which create jobs in
- 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.

future industries



Liveability

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

What does Success look like?

- Improve the quality of our rivers, coasts and lakes
- services closer to people
- Improve and protect the Blue Green Grid



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 calend ar of events for the region.

Regional Priorities

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.



Ob	jective - Where do we want to be?	Strategies - How will we get there?
4.1	We are recognised as a destination for hosting world class events that align with our unique offering.	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	Making use of our opportunity to drive circular evolution of our region's 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	Our natural environments including our bushland, estuaries, waterways and beaches are protected and enhanced.	 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	Supporting our region to be on the path to net zero emissions and paving the way with smart innovative solutions that increase liveability.	 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 neighourhoods 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.



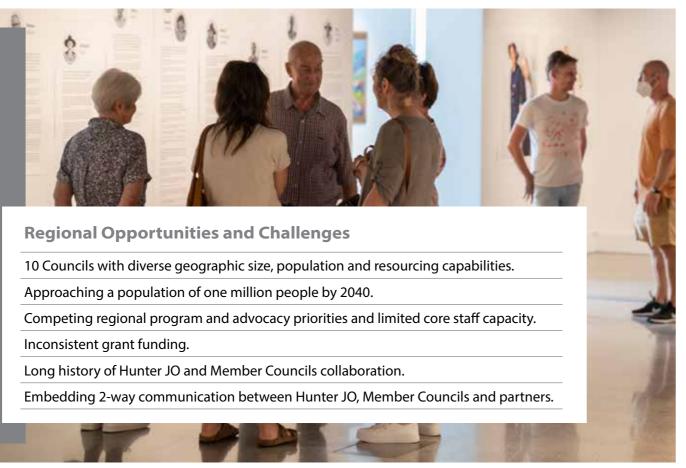
Governance and Leadership

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

Regional Priorities Q

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



Objective - Where do we want to be?

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

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 A trusted and transparent organisation.

- 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 We build strong collaborative partnerships and encourage innovation.
- 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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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

Upper

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 Regional NSW

Destination North Coast NSW

Greater Cities Commission

Hunter Jobs Alliance

Destination Sydney Surrounds North

Department of Planning and Environment (DPE)

Hunter Central Coast Development Corporation

Hunter Local Land Services NSW Treasury Hunter Water Corporation Office of Local Government **Local Land Services** Other JOs / JO Chairs Forum Port of Newcastle Newcastle Airport **NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer RDA Hunter NSW Department of Primary Industries** Resilience NSW **NSW Environment Protection Authority** Sustainability Advantage **NSW Health** The Business Centre Newcastle NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service Transport NSW **NSW Office of Sport** University of Newcastle NSW Rural and Fire Service Venues NSW

NSW State Emergency Service





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.



Report Author: Steve Wilson, Director Policy & Programs

Responsible Officer: Joe James, CEO

Under the NSW Local Government Act, Joint Organisations must prepare an annual performance statement within five months after the end of the financial year. For JOs the report should identify their progress in implementing strategies and plans for delivering strategic regional priorities.

Attachment 11 includes the draft Hunter JO Performance statement for the 2021/22 period.

As noted in the Correspondence, the Hunter JO has requested, and been granted, an extension of submission of the Audited Financials. It is anticipated that, due to this extension, the Annual Performance Statement will be submitted to the Office of Local Government without the financials, to be provided once these have been endorsed by the Hunter JO Board.

Recommendation:

That the Board endorse the Hunter JO Performance statement for the 2021/22 period, and its submission to the Office of Local Government, excluding the financial statements until these have been separately endorsed by the Board

That the Board endorse publication of the Hunter JO Performance Statement for the 2021/22 period on the Hunter JO website, excluding the financial statements until these have been endorsed



HUNTER JOINT ORGANISATION

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE STATEMENT 2021 - 2022



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.

Contact details for Hunter Joint Organisation

If you have any feedback or questions on our Annual Performance Statement please contact us with any enquiries.

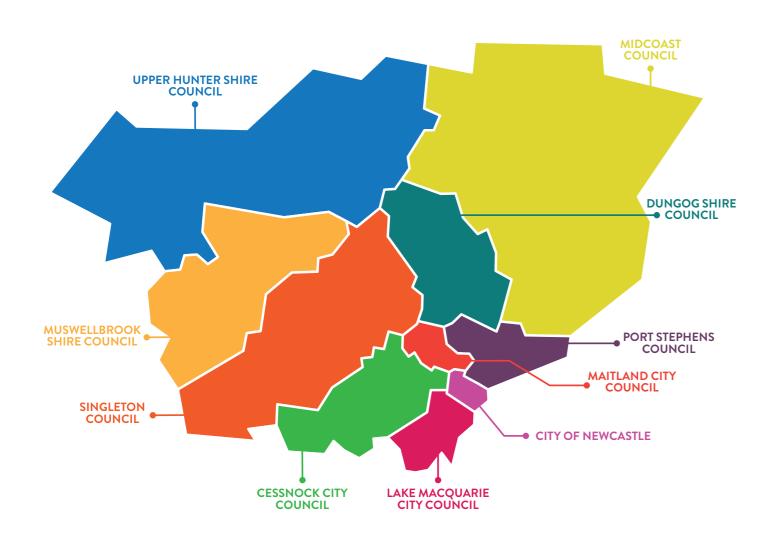
Email your feedback or questions to: admin@hunterjo.com.au

Write to us at: Hunter JO PO Box 3137, Thornton NSW 2322

Speak to our Administration Officer on: **4978 4040**

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PART 1 Hunter JO Summary

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Who we are and what we do

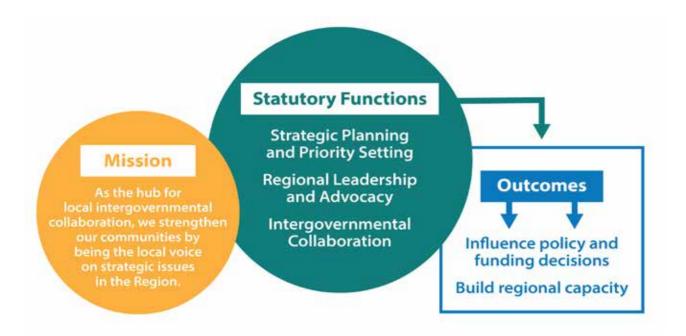
The Hunter Joint Organisation is a collaborative body that brings together the ten councils in the region to provide a united and local voice for our communities. As the hub for local intergovernmental collaboration, our statutory mandate includes identifying key regional strategic priorities, advocating for these priorities, and building collaborations 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 also has a number of sub-committees, that focus on specific priorities for the region. These consist of:

- Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan Sub-Committee
- Circular Economy Sub-Committee
- Sub-Committee for Economic Evolution

Collaboration across the Hunter region is the cornerstone of the Hunter JO. The connection and coordination between our Member Councils has grown and developed since the 1950s, when local government combined their efforts in the best interests of their communities to respond to floods across the region. Since this time our collaboration has developed and matured, delivering value for councils, our region, and the local government sector as a whole.



The core operations of the Hunter JO are funded by our ten member councils and by the affiliated commercial business units which offer shared services to Local Government. The projects of the organisation are also made possible by state and commonwealth grant funding.

Our Values





Through true collaboration we are able to achieve great outcomes for the Hunter region. As a relationship-focussed organisation we come from a place of listening and inclusion to create win-win opportunities and further develop strong foundations for our regional community.

Connection



We believe in creating deep connections with our Hunter Region, Member Councils and broader community. When we all feel a sense of deep connection to one another's success we can offer and deliver our best support and service.

- Trus



We know trust to be the currency of interactions, and through communication and clear understanding we in turn build deeper levels of trust. Our consistent delivery of results to our Member Councils and region ensures our community can continue to place faith, hope and trust in the Hunter Joint Organisation.

Leadership



The Hunter JO is responsible for providing leadership and advocacy on strategic regional priorities. We inspire, connect, collaborate and lead via the development of trusting relationships.

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SUMMARY

Our 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.

Hunter 2041 Population NSW Government Forecast 949,833



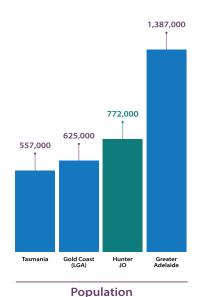
Hunter Population 773,135

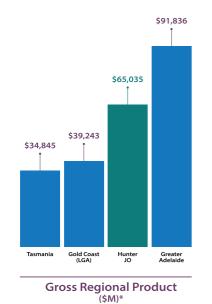
Hunter Region HUNTER JO MEMBER COUNCILS 32,870 km²

A Powerhouse of the NSW and National Economies

Gross Regional Product









Gross Regional Product Per Person*



















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



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







Local Councils

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



State **Electorates**

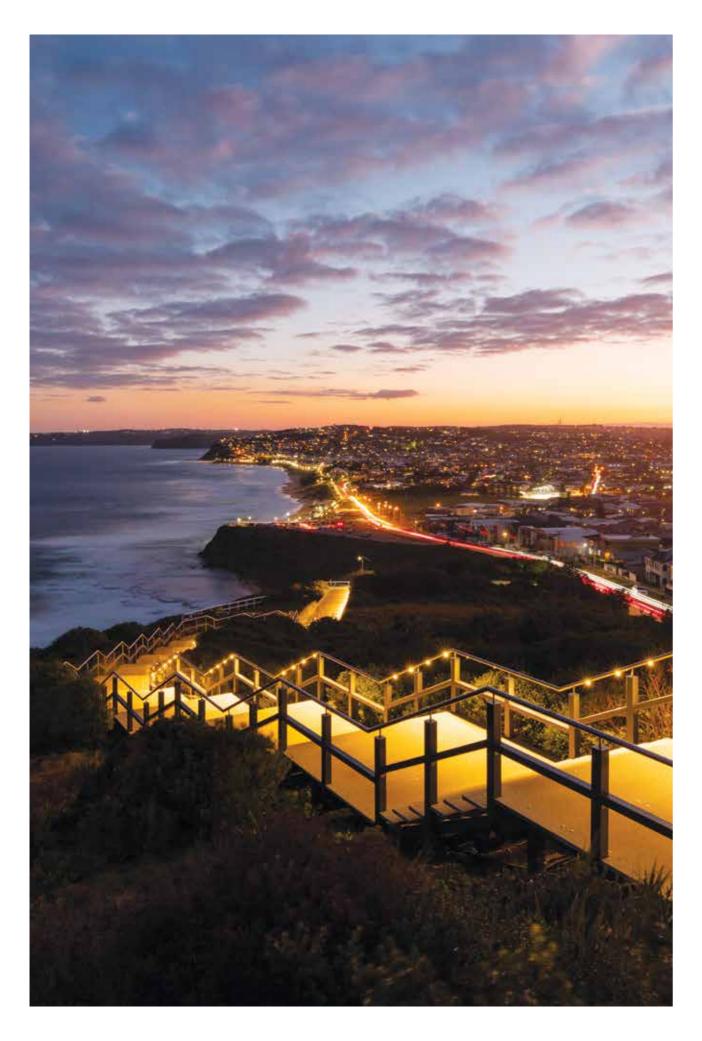
Maitland, Cessnock, Myall Lakes, Swansea, Newcastle, Charlestown, Wallsend, Lake Macquarie, Port Stephens, Upper Hunter, Port Macquarie.



Federal Electorates

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

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Our Six Key Areas

At its first formal meeting on Thursday 28 June 2018, The Hunter JO adopted its Strategic Plan for the region. This document has helped to guide the operations of the Hunter JO by identifying strategic priorities for the region, structured around six key areas;



Our **communities** stay inclusive, proud and safe and celebrate diversity



Our enviable **environment** is protected for future generations and our resources are used efficiently



Our **economy** is multifaceted, resilient and is Australia's leading regional economy



Our **people and products** move across the region easily on integrated and accessible transport networks



Our **educational facilities** support and encourage our young people and foster lifelong learning and encourage our young people



Our people have access to the full range of **health care** fostering active and healthy communities



Cr Sue Moore Mayor of Singleton Chair of the Hunter JO

"I look forward to the finalisation and implementation of the new Hunter JO Strategic Plan. As a product of our collaborative leadership, it provides clarity on the region's shared interests to decision makers and empowers our communities and other regional influencers."

A word from the Chair

This Annual Performance Statement outlines the Hunter JO's organisational performance in the 2021/2022 Financial Year. It is my great pleasure to be presenting this report as a reflection of the leadership of our region and a demonstration of the collective strength that stems from true collaboration.

The Board saw a big shift this financial year with several key changes following the local government elections. In addition to being reelected in my mayoral capacity, I am honoured to have been elected by my fellow Board members as Chair of the Hunter JO. I look forward to continuing my term as Chair of the Hunter JO as we work together to achieve the interests of the whole Hunter region.

We also had four new mayors join the Hunter JO Board: Cr Steve Reynolds, Mayor of Muswellbrook, Cr Philip Penfold, Mayor of Maitland, Cr Claire Pontin, Mayor of MidCoast and Cr Jay Suvaal, Mayor of Cessnock. Cr Suvaal was also elected as the Hunter JO's first Deputy Chair. It has been a pleasure working with all new and old mayors as the Hunter JO has continued to grow and evolve in its capacity.

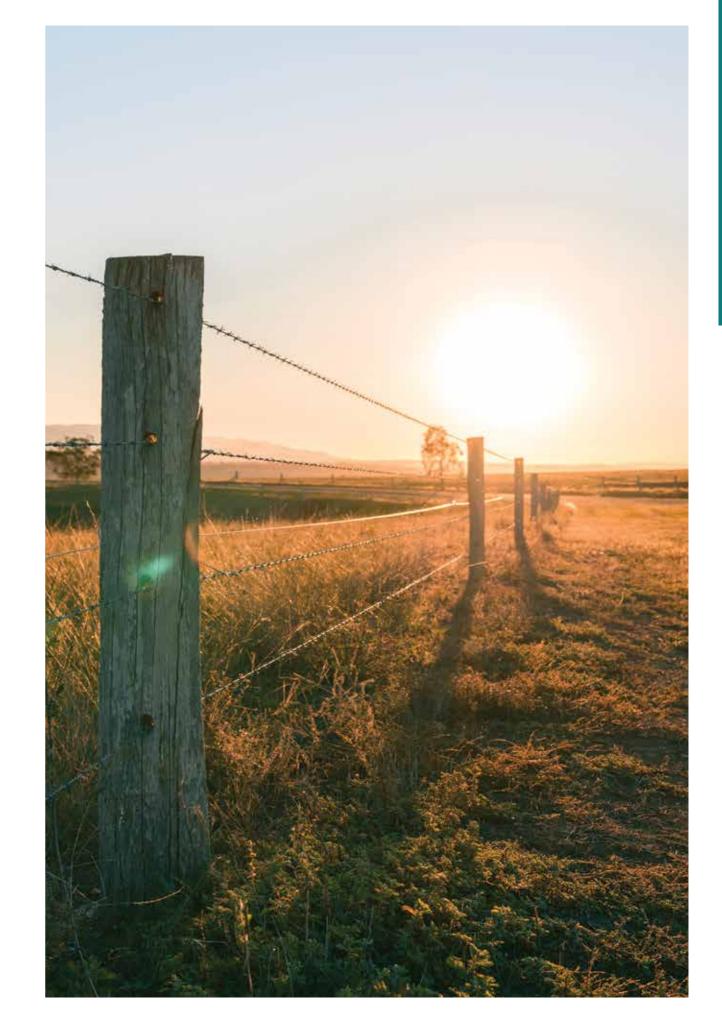
A large focus of this financial year has been the development of the Hunter JO Strategic Plan. Following the local government elections and Board changes, the JO held another strategy planning workshop to continue collaborating and aligning on this important and significant document for the region. The strength of the alignment on the core issues that we need to work together on for both our local communities and the entire region, ensures place-based outcomes for the Hunter.

This workshop was a great opportunity to be able to hear from our fellow Mayors and their council's key opportunities and challenges, to be able to co-design the priorities for the whole of the region. I look forward to the finalisation and implementation of the new Hunter JO Strategic Plan. As a product of our collaborative leadership, it provides clarity on the region's shared interests to decision makers and empowers our communities and other regional influencers.

We have continued to advocate for our region, recognising the value and capacity that intergovernmental collaboration enables. We began the development of the Hunter JO Advocacy Framework, to guide and synthesise our advocacy outcomes. The input of Mayors through our three subcommittees has been central to identifying these advocacy priorities.

We have also continued to support local government leadership at a regional level by delivering in a collaborative way across many program areas. This includes Contaminated Land Management, Circular Economy, Economic Evolution, Events Acceleration, Disaster Preparedness and Environmental Resilience.

I thank my fellow Mayors for all of their commitment and dedication to achieving the best outcomes possible for the region. We have seen many achievements over the last 12 months through key advocacy and programs delivered by the Hunter JO on behalf of the Board. I am excited for the incoming year and the opportunities that continue to evolve and grow.



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Joe James Chief Executive Officer

"Enhancing both council capacity and the region's capacity is a core focus of all activity undertaken at the Hunter JO and has been a consistent theme throughout the development of the next Hunter JO Strategic Plan."

A word from the CEO

Throughout the 2021/2022 Financial Year, the Hunter JO has had significant focus on amplifying what local government is doing at a regional scale and working with them as we move into a new integrated planning and reporting (IP&R) cycle.

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 has allowed us to be proactive and enhance collaborative opportunities with other levels of government.

Collaboration is hard to do, but our Member Councils, through the Mayors, have consistently demonstrated a desire to ensure our communities are empowered to determine their own future.

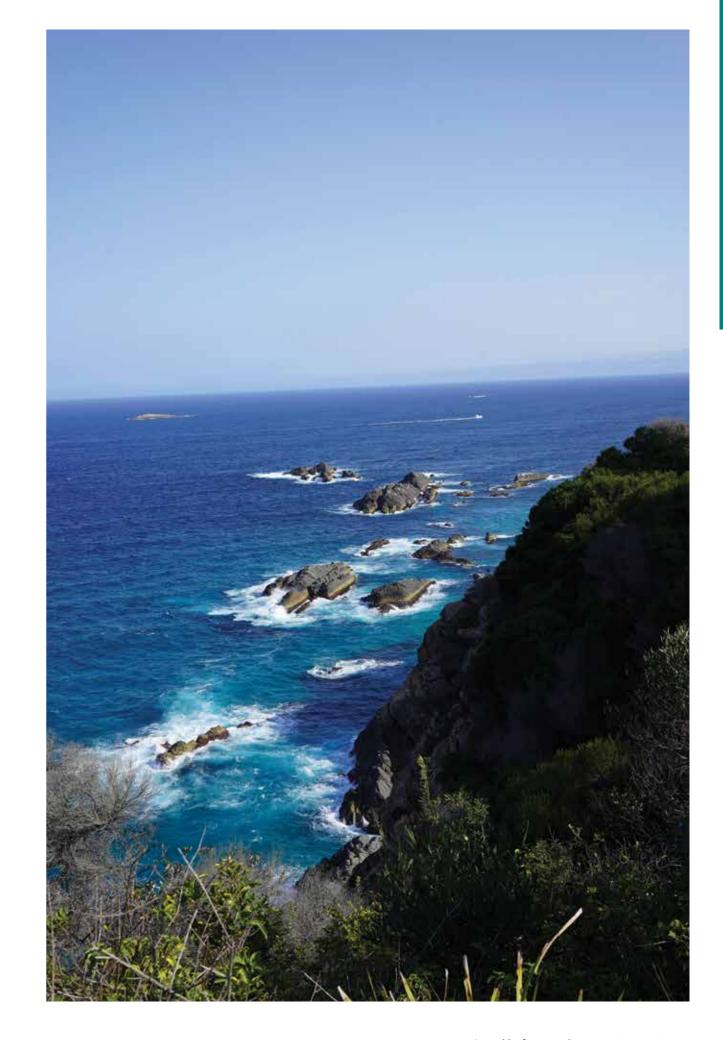
Enhancing both council capacity and the region's capacity is a core focus of all activity undertaken at the Hunter JO and has been a consistent theme throughout the development of the next Hunter JO Strategic Plan. Over the last 12 months, we continued to codevelop the strategy and will be completed by December 2022. I look forward to working with the Hunter JO staff and our Member Councils in implementing and delivering this plan.

We have continued to work across a broad range of areas with key achievements including:

- Strengthening the focus on disaster resilience in the Hunter region
- Continued collaborative advocacy around economic diversification and evolution
- Maintaining our recognition as a leader in circular economy
- Delivery of nearly 30 regionally significant events

Also of note, our Member Councils through the Hunter JO, for the first time collaborated on regional advocacy in the lead up to the recent Federal election. This is in addition to continuing our genuine and sustained collaboration with all levels of government and a range of key regional stakeholders. We have honed and refined the way in which we approach our advocacy activity, with the development of an advocacy framework that we are utilising in the lead up to the NSW State Government election.

I am proud of what we continue to be able to achieve at the Hunter JO over the 2021/2022 financial year. Our staff and our Member Councils consistently demonstrate their commitment and dedication to enabling place-based outcomes for the region.



Delivery Highlights 2021 - 2022



Initiation of the Accelerating Events Economies Project





Community Recycling Centres
captured 90% of all materials
collected in CRCs in 2022

The Hunter's CRC brand recognition had a 20% increase from the previous year







Regional Contaminated Land Program

Supporting and building Council capacity

Review and Refocus of Hunter JO Subcommittees

Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan Circular Economy Subcommittee Subcommittee for Economic Evolution



Circular Economy Leader on a Regional Scale

Launch of the region's first Circular Economy Roadmap







Strengthened Focus on Disaster Resilience in the Hunter Region

IP&R Climate Change Package Complete

helping councils to embed climate change into their IP&R network

Simtables for Community Empowerment

Working with councils and emergency services to help communities better understand, plan, and prepare for natural disasters

Disaster Response Joint Statement calling for more regional support

Highly Commended in the National Climate Awards



Hunter JO Strategic Plan

Consultation and Development



Small Acts Big Change

The digital strategy reached over

3 million people and had over 7 million views

Strategic Planning and Integrated Planning & Reporting

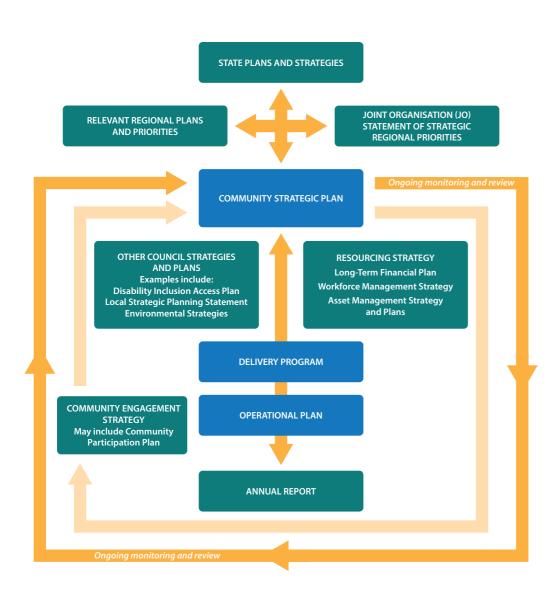
Framework and our relationship to our Member Councils

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.

This is the final Annual Performance Statement for the current Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2018 - 2021 reporting cycle. The next Annual Performance Statement will be a new format and reporting on our new Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2032.



Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2032

The Hunter JO's next Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities (SSRP) is called the Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2032.

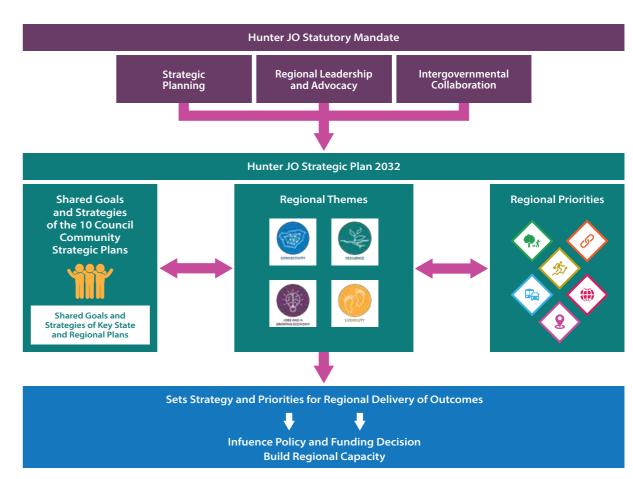
JOs are required to develop a Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities (SSRP) which sets out a vision for the region and provides an overview of the strategic actions required to deliver the vision. The SSRP draws from the Community Strategic Plans (CSPs) of Member Councils, regional-level plans and other state strategic documents to clearly identify the highest regional priorities.

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.

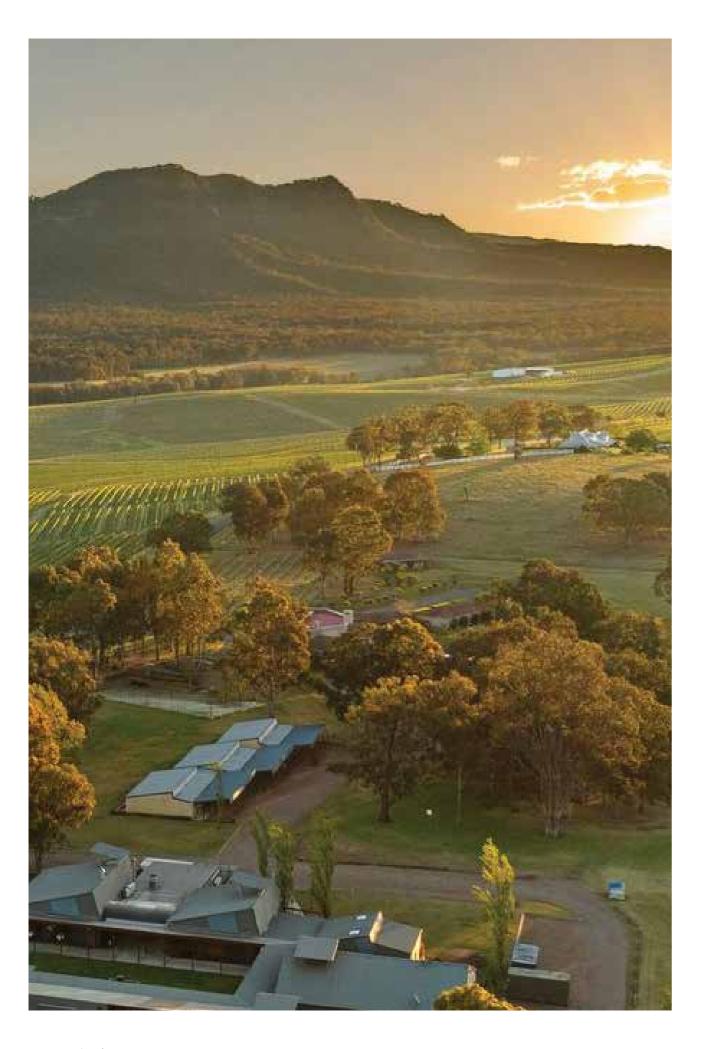
The JO engages directly with the Member Councils and the Regional Priorities in our Strategic Plan are a synthesised, collective view of local communities' voices drawn directly from many 1000's of our constituents, through extensive community engagement undertaken by Councils, in preparing statutory 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.



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PART 2 Hunter JO Program Report 2021 - 2022

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ction Area 4 - Our people and products move across the region easily nintegrated and accessible transport networks	39

Collaboration, Engagement and Advocacy Overview

Intergovernmental Collaboration - Committees and Networks

COMMITTEE / NETWORK NAME	CONVENED BY
AGL Transition Working Group	AGL
Hunter Future Workforces Committee	Business Hunter
City of Newcastle Strategy and Innovation Advisory Committee	City of Newcastle
City of Newcastle SDG Collaborative meeting	City of Newcastle
Hunter Freight and Logistics Taskforce	Committee for the Hunter
Hunter Regional Plan Review Steering Committee	NSW Department of Planning & Environment
Hunter Central Coastal Management Program Practitioners Roundtable	NSW Department of Planning & Environment
Local Government Climate Change Planning Toolkit Working Group (convened by DPIE)	NSW Department of Planning & Environment
RLE Planning & Environment Subcommittee	NSW Department of Planning & Environment
Urban Development Program Committee	NSW Department of Planning & Environment
Upper Hunter Education and Training Working Group	Education NSW
State and Regional Waste Managers Network	NSW Environment Protection Authority
EPA Local Government Advisory Group	NSW Environment Protection Authority
Regional Contaminated Land Working Group	Hunter JO
Hunter JO Regional Planning & Economic Development Forum	Hunter JO
Regional Waste Managers Network (Hunter Regional Waste Strategy Group)	Hunter JO
Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan Subcommittee	Hunter JO
Subcommittee for Economic Evolution	Hunter JO
UP Website collaboration working group	Hunter JO
Hunter JO Circular Economy Subcommittee	Hunter JO
Sustainable Education Group	Hunter JO

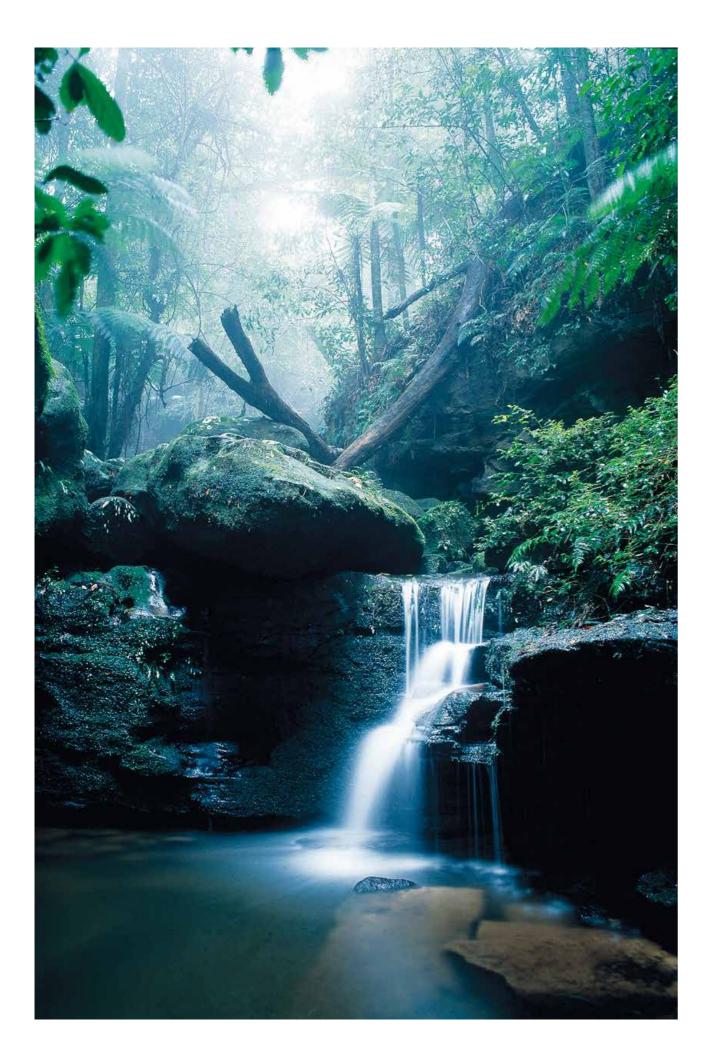
COMMITTEE / NETWORK NAME	CONVENED BY
Hunter Circular Facilitators Group	Hunter JO / DPIE
Simtables Project Collaboration Group	Hunter JO
NSW Joint Organisation JO Chairs Forum	JO Network
A2E Regional Events Stakeholder Group	Hunter JO
Hunter Global Project Partner Working Group	Hunter JO
JO Executive Officers Network	JO Network
IP&R Network	Lake Macquarie Council / Hunter JO
Climate Action Professional Officers Group	LGNSW
Hunter Regional Leadership Executive	Regional NSW
Upper Hunter Stakeholder Engagement Working Group	Regional NSW
RLE Economic Development Subcommittee	Regional NSW
RLE Human Services Sub Committee	Regional NSW
Upper Hunter Economic Diversification Working Group	Regional NSW
Hunter Industry Roundtable	Regional NSW
Royalties for Rejuvenation - Interim Expert Panel	Regional NSW
Regional Business Attraction Committee	Regional NSW
RLE Recovery & Resilience Sub-Committee	Regional NSW & Resilience NSW
Hunter Cruise Committee	Regional NSW / Destination Sydney & Surrounds North
Hunter Identity and Positioning Strategy - Project Control Group and Local Government Reference Group	Regional NSW / HCCDC
Hunter Planning Alliance	Shared

Political Engagements

A diverse range of Political Engagements took place over the year and an overview is provided below:

ENGAGEMENT FOCUS	DATE	NATIVE / FOCUS OF ENGAGEMENT
Hunter-based State Goverment MPs & targeted NSW Government Ministers	October 2021	 Correspondence to State MPs and Ministers re Transport Advocacy from Hunter JO & Hunter Planning Alliance Correspondence re NSW Infrastructure Contributions Bill.
The Hon. Dominic Perrottet, MP, Premier of NSW	October 2021	Correspondence to the NSW Premier re Infrastructure Contributions Bill.
	November 2021	Invitation extended to the Premier to speak at the Hunter Global Summit.
The Hon Matt Kean, NSW Treasurer, and Minister for Energy and Environment	November 2021	Invitation extended to the Treasurer to speak at the Hunter Global Summit.
Lifergy and Lifviloninent	December 2021	Meeting to discuss the Hunter Partnering for Growth advocacy initiative.
The Hon Shelley Hancock, NSW Minister for Local Government	October 2021	Correspondence to the Minister seeking an extension to the NSW Coastal Management Act Transitional Arrangements. A two-year extension was provided to Councils.
	December 2021	The Hunter JO Chair and CEO participated in a workshop with the Minister re the outcomes of the review of Joint Organisations completed by NSW Office of Local Government.
Senator Hollie Hughes, Liberal Senator for New South Wales and Patron Senator for the Hunter Region	November 2021 & February 2022	Senator Hughes participated in the Hunter Global Roundtable (December 2021) and Hunter Global Summit (February 2022).
Hunter-based Commonwealth and State Government MPs & targeted Commonwealth & NSW Government Ministers	November 2021	Invitations extended to participate in the Hunter Global Summit delivered February 2022.

ENGAGEMENT FOCUS	DATE	NATIVE / FOCUS OF ENGAGEMENT
The Hon. Taylor Martin, MLC, Parliamentary Secretary for the Hunter	February 2022	Presentation delivered by Taylor to the Hunter Global Summit on behalf of the NSW Premier
Yasmin Catley MP, Shadow Minister for Customer Service, Shadow Minister for Digital, Shadow Minister for the Hunter and Member for Swansea	February 2022	A meeting was held with the Member for Swansea on 3 February 2022, along with coalition partners, to discuss the Hunter Partnering for Growth advocacy initiative.
Hunter-based Commonwealth and State Government MPs, targeted Commonwealth & NSW Government Ministers and Candidates for Hunter based Commonwealth seats	April 2022	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.
Sharon Claydon MP, Member for Newcastle	April 2022	Meetings to discuss: Role and strategic priorities of the Hunter JO
Tim Crakanthorp MP, Member for Newcastle, Shadow Minister for Skills and TAFE, Shadow Minister for Tertiary Education	April 2022	 Hunter Global summit outcomes and emerging priorities The Hunter JOs goals, role and activity in regard to the Region's economic evolution, including the Hunter Venture Fund project Transport connectivity
Jenny Atchison MP, Member for Maitland, Shadow Minister for Regional Transport and Roads	April 2022	Shiraz to Shore initiative
Commonwealth Ministers and Shadow Ministers, Sitting Members and Candidates for Commonwealth election seats in the Hunter	April 2022	Correspondence sent providing an overview of the Hunter JOs regional priorities prior to the Federal Election



ENGAGEMENT FOCUS	DATE	NATIVE / FOCUS OF ENGAGEMENT
Daniel Mookhey MLC, NSW Shadow Treasurer	June 2022	Hunter JO participation in the NSW Budget Roundtable Forum hosted by Yasmin Catley (Shadow Minister for the Hunter & Member for Swansea) and City of Newcastle. The forum provided the opportunity to engage with the Shadow Treasurer on a range of economic development, waste management and climate and energy opportunities that could be unlocked in the region through NSW Government policy.
The Hon Kristy McBain MP, Commonwealth Minister for Regional Development, Local Government & Territories	June 2022	A delegation of Hunter JO Mayors and General Managers met with the Minister to communicate the shared priorities of Member Councils on core regional issues and priorities relevant to the new Minister's portfolio, including: • Economic evolution to drive jobs and a growing economy in the region • A globally focused Hunter connected to international markets

Advocacy

Hunter Global: Our International Future

Hunter Global is a region-wide initiative led by Member Councils through the Hunter JO, to boost collaboration, planning and advocacy across the region to capitalise on the Newcastle Airport runway upgrade to Code E status. This upgrade will provide direct international access for the region when completed in 2023, and by doing so provide a primary enabler for significant economic activity throughout the entire region. 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.

Connectivity - Advocacy on integrated transport planning, delivery and funding

The Hunter JO has continued to collaborate with UDIA, Property Council, Dantia, Business Hunter and the Committee for the Hunter on the need to:

- Address the funding backlog for under funding of transport infrastructure in the Hunter.
- Improve the integration of landuse and transport infrastructure planning, prioritisation and delivery.

End to Transitional Arrangements under the NSW Coastal Management Act (2016)

Based on the advice of council staff and confirmation from General Managers, a letter was forwarded to the Minister for Local Government, Shelley Hancock making a formal request for a 3-year extension to the transitional arrangements under the NSW Coastal Management Act, or that CZMP's still have effect until replaced by CMP's. The Coastal Management Amendment Bill 2021 that was passed provided a 2 year extension to Councils.

Federal Election Advocacy

A synthesis of all materials provided by Member Councils on their local advocacy priorities for the Commonwealth election, combined with feedback provided by the Board was completed and provided to:

- Commonwealth Government Ministers and Shadow Ministers
- Existing Commonwealth Members of Parliament representing the Hunter Region
- Candidates for Commonwealth seats across the Hunter

In addition to overall regional priorities derived from this synthesis, information was also provided on more specific priorities related to their individual electorates, based on the information that had been provided by each Member Council.

Joint Statement - Hunter Region Mayors call for more disaster support

Following the devastation of recent floods across the Hunter, the region's ten Mayors signed a joint statement calling for more disaster support from the State and Federal Government. The statement acknowledged the improved and more timely response for disaster funding in comparison to previous disasters but argued that the impact of the flood in the face of multiple natural disasters did not extend far enough.

The Mayors called for increased financial support to be able to address urgent infrastructure repairs and to help their communities recover, prepare, and adapt. There is also a need to build back better to be more resilience to future disasters.

Annual National General Assembly of Local Government

Representatives from Hunter JO Member Councils and the Hunter JO attended the annual National General Assembly of Local Government in Canberra convened by the Australia Local Government Association (ALGA). A delegation from the region met with the Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories, the Hon. Kristy McBain MP. This meeting provided a united voice from the Hunter region on the importance of leadership and support, especially by the Commonwealth, to give confidence to communities during times of economic transformation.

Hunter JO Advocacy Framework and Priorities

For the first time, the Hunter JO Board has endorsed an Advocacy Framework and accompanying series of draft policy statements and "advocacy asks", which demonstrate the aligned interests, priorities and directions of the Hunter region's 10 democratically elected Mayors. This document is initially being used to underpin advocacy efforts by the Hunter JO in the lead up to the 2023 NSW State Government election.

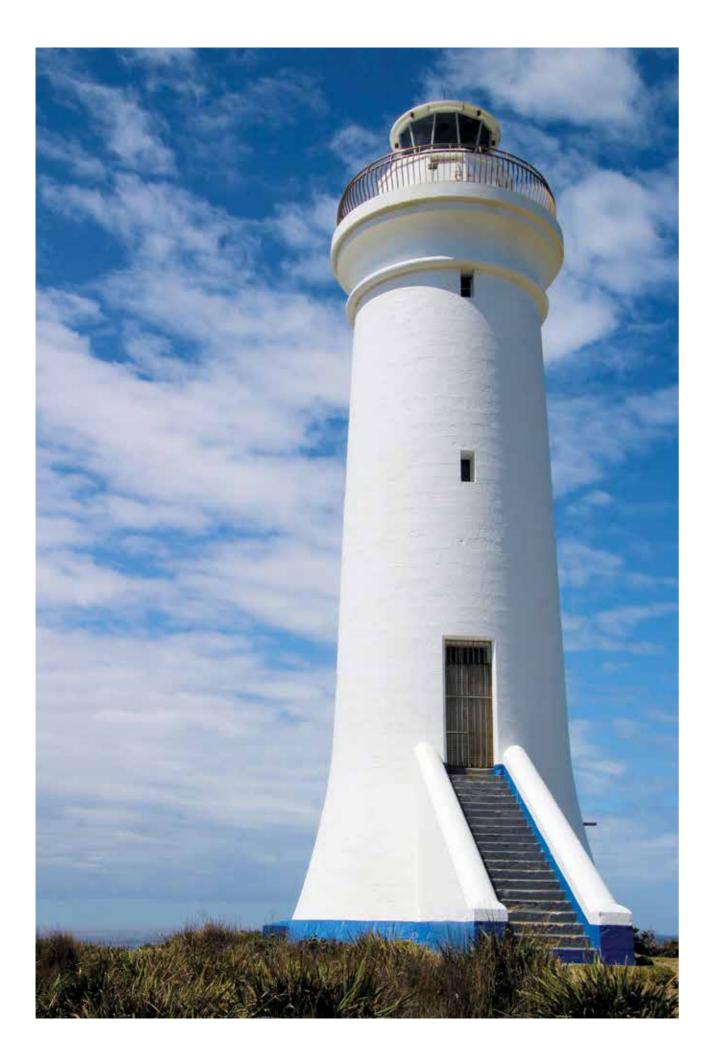
NSW Infrastructure Reforms

During the year the Hunter JO supported the LGNSW advocacy around local government concerns with infrastructure contributions reforms.

Regional Submissions

A diverse range of formal regional submissions were also prepared over the year and are listed below:

- End to Transitional Arrangements under the NSW Coastal Management Act (2016)
- NSW Regional Housing Taskforce Submission and Taskforce Report Key Findings
- NSW Infrastructure Contributions Bill
- IPART review of domestic waste management service charges.
- Draft Hunter Regional Plan 2041
- NSW Environmental Planning & Assessment Regulation



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

1.1 Develop an engaging online presence which tells the stories of the diverse places and people which make up the Hunter Region

HUNTER JOINT ORGANISATION WEBSITE

PURPOSE: The Hunter Joint Organisation website (https://www.hunterjo.com.au) aims to actively, regularly and effectively engage member Councils, partner organisations and the broader community on the activities and progress of the Hunter JO.

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

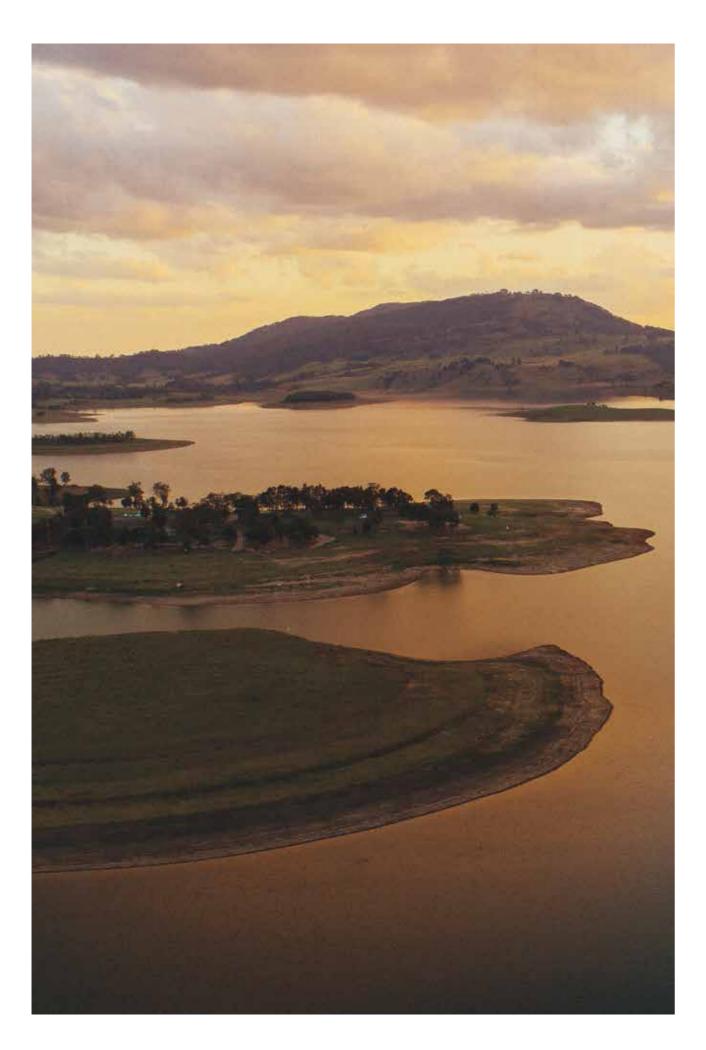
PURPOSE: To provide an innovative approach to support bush fire affected member Councils embed resilience principles and projects into their IP&R, which in turn will provide Councils the ability to allocate recurrent funds and commit to long term resourcing (financial and staff) for resilience projects. The key deliverables of the project include:

- Resilience IP&R Support Package (based on Climate Change IP&R Package)
- Resilience health-check and gap assessment of Councils
- Resilience Health and Improvement Games

SIMTABLES FOR COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

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.

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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

CITIES POWER PARTNERSHIP

PURPOSE: To support regional collaborative efforts by Councils, the Hunter JO and Cities Power Partnership (CPP) in delivery of shared pledges on climate action made by Councils.

REGIONAL CONTAMINATED LAND PROGRAM

PURPOSE: To build capacity and capability of Councils to manage contaminated sites on private and Council managed land, and to support councils transition to their new role as regulator of the Underground Petroleum Storage System (UPSS) Regulation.

BUSINESS CASE REVIEW - POTENTIAL FOR HUNTER JO TO HOST REGIONAL ILLEGAL DUMPING SQUAD

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.

2.2 Establish a Coastal Resilience Sub Committee, made up of representatives from relevant Hunter JO councils, to increase collaboration in planning for climate change

ACT NOW ON COASTAL ADAPTATION

PURPOSE: The objectives of this project are to:

- 1. Develop an Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Package which embeds resilience to Climate Change into Councils operations through incorporation into the overarching IP&R documents.
- Provide a coastal adaptation communication framework, media templates and suite of practical resources to directly build the capacity of the coastal councils of the Hunter and Central Coast Councils.
- 3. Build capacity within Councils to reduce risks, increase resilience and reduce climate vulnerability by collaboratively building community understanding and literacy around coastal management and adaptation issues and bridging the gap between the IP&R framework and prioritisation of Climate Change resilience.

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

HUNTER & CENTRAL COAST REGIONAL CIRCULAR MATERIALS AND WASTE STRATEGY

PURPOSE: To develop a new Hunter Central Coast Resource Recovery Strategy for the period 2022-2027. The new Strategy will align with the recently released NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2021-2041 and associated funding streams and provide improved alignment with the Regional Circular Economy program.

SMALL ACTS BIG CHANGE REGIONAL COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN

PURPOSE: To deliver a regional communication campaign to improve community waste avoidance behaviours at the top end of the waste management hierarchy, along with reuse and recycling habits.

COMMUNITY RECYCLING CENTRES AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

PURPOSE: To deliver a regionally coordinated approach to promoting community awareness of Community Recycling Centres (CRC's).

HUNTER & CENTRAL COAST CIRCULAR ECONOMY HUB

PURPOSE: To drive and facilitate development of the Circular Economy (CE) across the Hunter and Central Coast by Councils, government agencies, business and industry groups and the community. The CE Hub would focus on:

- Providing leadership and planning to establish a common vision and plan for the region's move to a CF
- Facilitate the acquisition and sharing of research and information among stakeholders in the CE, including the provision of a "problem concierge"
- Continuing to curate and grow the CE ecosystem
- Facilitating and delivering joint projects and initiatives across organisations
- Coordinating and advocating an agreed regional voice on CE for the region to State and Federal Governments
- · Consistent and coordinated promotion of the region to researchers, innovators and investors
- Building knowledge in the region to capture and translate innovation and best practice into day to day operations, and to enact sustained change in organisational culture and systems required to progress the Circular Economy.

CIRCULAR ECONOMY ROADMAP

PURPOSE:

- 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

CIRCULAR ECONOMY ECO-SYSTEM STAGE 2

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

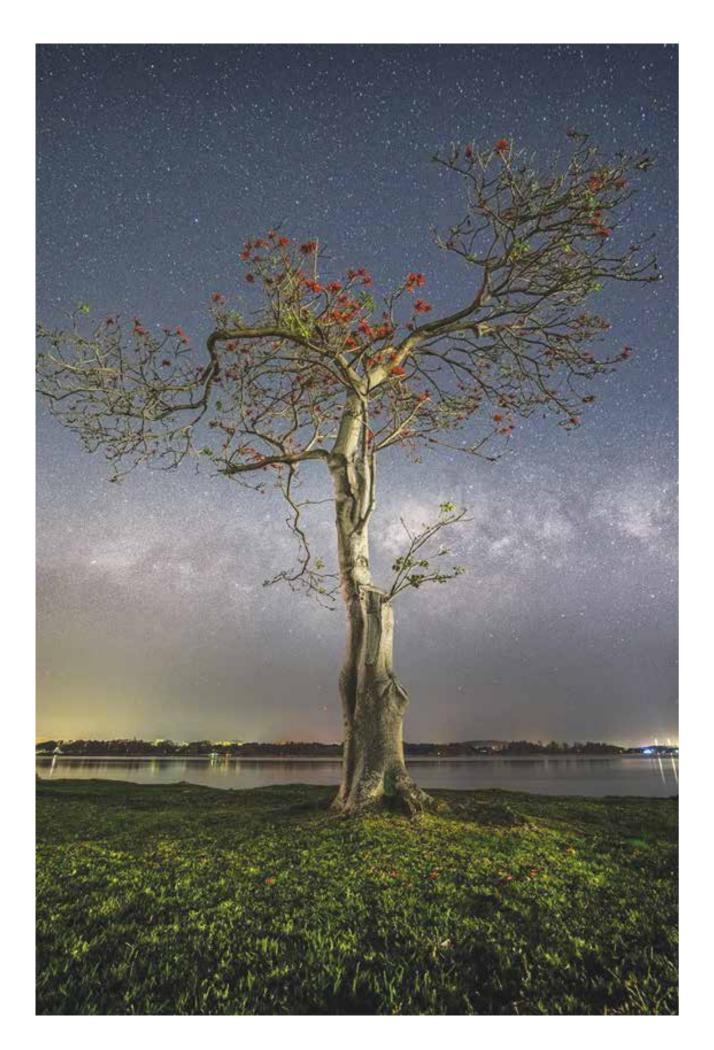
CIRCULAR ECONOMY PROCUREMENT

PURPOSE: To support Councils to prioritise recycled materials and circular economy services in their procurement systems and processes, and to collaborate with the Hunter JO and other participating councils to develop a common framework for a joint regional procurement of recycled materials.

REGIONAL WASTE MANAGEMENT TRAINING (CERT III IN WASTE MANAGEMENT)

PURPOSE: Councils identified a training need for waste management staff. A capacity building program was established to deliver Cert III in Waste Management to train council waste management staff from across the region utilising funds from the NSW Government's Better Waste Recycling program.

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

3.1 Establish an Economic Sustainability Sub Committee, made up of representatives from member councils, to coordinate the economic development activity of the JO and report to the Board.

SUBCOMMITTEE FOR ECONOMIC EVOLUTION

PURPOSE: 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 includes a 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

3.2 Work with the Hunter Research Foundation, University of Newcastle and other research partners to gather and analyse economic data and develop a regional attraction plan based on regional strengths in research, education, transport and logistics, aerospace, agribusiness and tourism.

HUNTER ECONOMIC MODEL

PURPOSE: To develop/obtain an easily updateable, forward and backward-looking economic model for the region that can be used to quantify the economic impacts of any given policy, program or project, and that provides detailed analysis of the relative structure, size and impact of the region's evolving economy. This will support most of the HJO's Regional Policy and Program work: both backward looking reviews and evaluations and forward-looking policy, strategies and plans.

3.3 Deepen relationships with the Department of Planning and Environment and the Hunter Development Corporation and gain a commitment to a formal JO role in the implementation, monitoring and review of the Hunter Regional Plan 2036 and Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036. Be an effective and outcome-oriented committee member.

GREATER NEWCASTLE METROPOLITAN PLAN SUBCOMMITTEE

PURPOSE:

- 1. 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
- 2. To 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.

REGIONAL POPULATION SCENARIO PLANNING

PURPOSE: To prepare population scenarios as a platform for informing an agreed long-term vision for regional population growth, and to influence strategic regional planning processes, delivery programs and regional migration strategies by all levels of government for the Hunter Region.

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

HUNTER VENTURE FUND

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.

UPPER HUNTER REGION WEBSITE

PURPOSE: The delivery of this website was a key action in the Upper Hunter Economic Diversification Action Plan. It was developed in partnership between Regional NSW and the Hunter JO, to provide a central location for resources for investors, local business and community for the Upper Hunter.

3.5 Collaborate to ensure Newcastle and the Hunter realise our potential as a smart region and innovation ecosystem, driving jobs and investment whilst ensuring technology improves livability and sustainability for our region

SMART REGION PROJECT

PURPOSE: The Smart Region Project will be an overarching collation of smart region activities and projects across the region placed within an annual review document produced to market the progress of our region. Initially the project will review the existing state of smart city thinking and activity across the region to get a baseline of progress. This program will then outline the priorities of the region in the smart region context and develop a suite of priority actions and templates for regional use.

3.6 Develop a sustainable model to coordinate council-run events across the region and showcase the Hunter and attract local, national and international visitors.

ACCELERATING EVENT ECONOMIES

PURPOSE: To strengthen the region's collective voice and the capacity of Councils to collaboratively pitch for major events for the region. It includes undertaking an events and opportunity audit, and identifying, preparing and implementing shared destination and even management resources including an event managers toolkit, prospectus, website and integrated council shared services, approvals and event data.

3.7 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.

HUNTER GLOBAL: OUR INTERNATIONAL FUTURE INITIATIVE

PURPOSE: The Hunter JO is leading a collaborative partnership between the Hunter JO, Newcastle Airport, Committee for the Hunter, Business Hunter and the University of Newcastle to:

- Build collaborative processes and systems within the region to collectively identify and actively pursue key international opportunities for expanding the Airport's economic contribution to the Region
- Directly support the expansion of international Airport related business and industry as a primary contributor to the Hunter Region's economic growth and diversification.
- 3.9 Explore and act on smart ways to transform local and global disruptions, such as the disruption of recycling services, into economic opportunities for the Hunter. ination. Develop a regional destination management plan.

HUNTER BIOCIRCULAR

PURPOSE: To embrace world-leading innovations to develop a flagship community resources recovery model. By demonstrating a Circular Economy approach, Hunter BioCircular seeks to move the region toward zero waste to landfill, and in doing so provide long term economic, social and environmental benefits from processing waste locally, which will help transition the regional economy, deliver new local jobs and reduce carbon emissions.

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Action Area 4 - Our people and products move across the region easily on integrated and accessible transport networks

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.

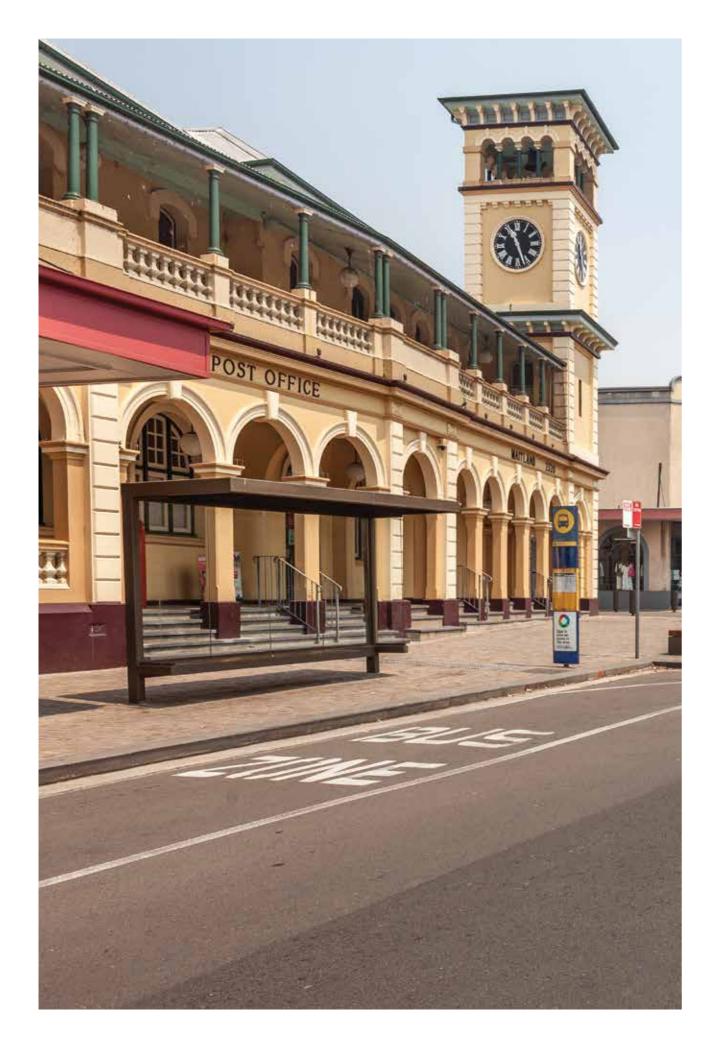
REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITY LIST

PURPOSE: To prepare an agreed list of regional and subregional infrastructure priorities to:

- Build and advocate a stronger case for investment in infrastructure priorities across the region
- Identify the potential for shared interests and collaboration between Councils and other stakeholders in delivering local and regional scale infrastructure initiatives.
- 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

REGIONAL CYCLE TOURISM MASTER PLAN (SHIRAZ TO SHORE)

PURPOSE: Significant opportunity exists to link existing and planned cycleway infrastructure across Hunter JO member Councils; to create an integrated region wide network. This would provide both a valuable region wide recreational resource for residents, and the foundation upon which to generate economic and business development by holistically promoting the region as a key cycling destination. The purpose of this project is to prepare and implement a cycle tourism masterplan / Destination Management Plan for the region.



PART 3 Financials and **Statutory Statements**

The Hunter JO's Audited Financials and Statutory Statements can be accessed on our website: www.hunterjo.com.au



Statutory Statements

Overseas Travel

No representatives from the Hunter JO made any overseas trips during the 2020/2021 financial year.

Expenses & Provision of Facilities to Board Members

Nil

Details of each Contract Awarded

The Hunter JO engaged the policy and program management delivery services of Arrow Collaborative Services (a related entity of the Hunter JO) via a service level agreement to the amount of \$630,600.

Summary of amounts incurred in relation to legal proceedings

Nil

Financial Assistance of Others

Nil

Statement of all external bodies exercising function of JO

The Hunter JO has not delegated any of its functions. Arrow Collaborative service provides policy and advocacy services, and grant and program management services to the Hunter JO.

Statement of bodies in which JO held a controlling interest

Nil

Statement of bodies in which JO participated

Nil

Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan

Our EEO Policy has undertaken broad consultation and is currently pending approval with the CEO. Staff and Manager training will be conducted once approved.

Associated policies and processes have been updated including Code of Conduct, Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment, Performance Management process, Grievance and Complaint procedures and the Recruitment process.

Additional measures to capture or prevent any EEO contraventions include:

- Systematic review of employment practices to ensure flexibility in accommodating the changing needs of employees
- Annual review schedule of Human Resource policies and procedures to ensure they are nondiscriminatory and supportive to all employment groups equally
- Employee Assistance Program provider reports de-identified information on any contraventions
- Confidential reporting for staff and managers
- Exit Interviews
- Staff Survey and a 360-feedback survey scheduled for 2023
- Planned for 2023 is a salary review to ensure fair and equitably pay across the business

Our HR Officer has professional membership with the Australian Human Resources Institute – CPHR (Certified Practitioner), The Australian Sociological Association and the Australasian Legal Practice Management Association and keeps abreast of workplace legislation changes and case law outcomes with consideration to currency and best practice of our workplace practices and procedures.

Remuneration Executive Officer

The total remuneration package of the Executive Officer for the 2021/2022 financial year was \$335,560.45 inclusive of salary, vehicle allowance, superannuation and fringe benefits tax payable (for the period).

Remuneration of Senior Staff Members

NIL

Statement of total numbers of persons completing paid work on 25 May 2022

The total number of persons who performed paid work on Wednesday 25 May 2022 was fourteen persons, including:

- Two persons employed by the JO on a permanent full-time, permanent part-time or casual basis or under a fixed-term contract, one of which is a senior staff member
- Twelve persons engaged by the JO, under a contract or other arrangement with the person's employer, wholly or principally for the labour of the person one of which is a trainee

Capital works projects

Nil

Government Information Public Access (GIPA)

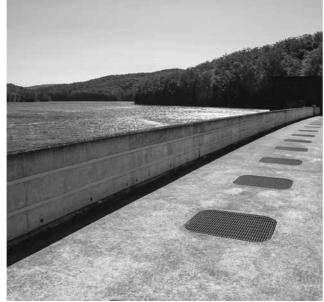
Hunter JO received zero formal access and zero informal applications for the reporting year under Government Information (Public Access) Act, 2009 (GIPA).

Public Interest Disclosure Activity

Hunter JO received zero public interest disclosures for the reporting year under Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994.























Report Author: Louisa Bulley, Executive Officer & Joe James, CEO

Responsible Officer: Joe James, CEO

Executive Summary

The CEO is developing a funding deed between Arrow and the Hunter JO:

- In response to the Hunter JO audit, where the Auditor General's office has indicated that they
 will not consider the funding contribution of Arrow in its consideration of the Hunter JO as a
 going concern,
- In part to address one of the CEO priorities for the 2022-23 financial year, set by the Board, relating to the structure of the relationship between Arrow and the Hunter JO.
- To provide a clear process, setting annual expectations between both Arrow and the Hunter JO, that will provide a future mechanism to document changes in annual funding

Background

The relationship between Arrow and the Hunter JO has continued to be formalised following establishment of the Hunter JO under the Local Government Act in May 2018. Since this time, the services and funding between the two entities has continued to develop and be refined under both the Arrow Master Business Plan and the Hunter JO Strategy.

The auditing of both entities has raised considerations regarding the relationship in the past three financial years, with establishment of key documents as a result, i.e.;

- Service Level Agreement between Arrow, the Hunter JO, Hunter Councils Legal Services, and Hunter Councils Incorporated (September 2021)
- Hunter JO Related Parties Disclosure Policy (September 2021)

However, the formality of the relationship, and particularly the funding relationship between the entities, has again been raised in the audit of the Hunter JO Financials 2021-22. The Auditor General's office has indicated that they will not consider the funding contribution of Arrow in its consideration of the Hunter JO as a going concern. This issue has also been raised in discussion at the Hunter JO board in relation to the level of reliance that the voting members of the Hunter JO Board must make in relation to Arrows funding 'promise'.

Equally the board of Arrow needs to be able to make its own determination of what it can reasonably provide as funding to the Hunter JO in its own determination as to Arrow as a going concern.

In consultation with the auditors, the Hunter JO has sought and received an extension on submission of the Hunter JO Financials 2021-22 to the Office of Local Government.

Draft Hunter JO Funding Agreement

In exploring potential solutions to the issues raised within the audit, we have proposed creation of a legally binding commitment, in the form of a funding agreement or guarantee.

The drafting of a Funding Agreement between Arrow and the Hunter JO has been contracted to Local Government Legal, and is currently under review by the CEO.

The below provides a summary of what the Funding Agreement will cover;

- 1. The Deed should be an in principal indication of intent with mechanism to provide specific commitments (\$\$ funding and/or letter of comfort) that are legally enforceable.
- 2. Document needs to meet our processes around what the HJO requires and what the JO wants to achieve, but also what Arrow can afford to provide to support the HJO

- 3. The document should indicate to the HJO what Arrow can contribute and what they commit to for a 12-month period (or the period that the auditors are referring to generally about 14-15 months from the commencement of the financial year)
- 4. The commitment should be binding and by the HJO and Arrow signing said document acknowledges that this is the binding scope of funding provided and the HJO is work within that scope.
- 5. Additionally, to this an update to the SLA to allow HJO, on notice, to limit services required for project management from Arrow
- 6. It is the HJO's responsibility to satisfy the going concern determination by setting a budget that sits within the funding scopes provided by both councils and Arrow
- 7. Purpose of document is to satisfy Audit Office concerns and accept funding provided by Arrow as legitimate, even though it does not sit within the LG legislation
- 8. Arrow is not to be noted as the financial backer for HJO, rather a supporter with a predetermined financial contribution. This allows the JO to future plan, <u>but does not expose</u> <u>Arrow to an open-ended agreement</u>

Recommendation:

- That the Board endorses, in principle, the intent that the funding arrangement between Arrow and the Hunter JO if formalised, consistent with the manner and intent outlined within the report
- That the final draft of the Funding Agreement be provided to the Board out of session for final approval and endorsement as a circular resolution

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

Responsible Officer: Tim Askew, Regional Policy and Program Manager

Purpose: To seek the Board's endorsement of the draft Regional Circular Materials Strategy 2022-2027.

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

- Regional waste strategies have historically been completed every 4 years in alignment with funding cycles from the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA).
- In 2021, the NSW Government published its new 20-year NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041 (WaSM), setting out the actions that will be taken over the next 6 years to move toward a circular economy. Subsequently, new EPA Regional Response to WaSM Guidelines have been published which guide how regions organise and collaborate to deliver on WaSM targets and ambitions and set minimum expectations for the development of regional strategies.
- The Hunter region's strategy will guide us for next 5 years (with a 20-year planning horizon), including an annually reviewed action plan that is designed to be adaptive and responsive to changing market conditions, funding availability, regional opportunities and challenges.
- 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 Executive Summary

The development of the Draft Regional Circular Materials Strategy ('the strategy') has undergone various phases during its preparation, including:

- Review and assessment of the existing Regional Waste Strategy
- Technical and strategic analysis to identify key strategic challenges and opportunities for the region
- Aligning approach to new EPA strategy guidelines
- Peer review of technical and strategic analysis
- Multi-staged consultation with the Regional Waste Group and other relevant stakeholders
- Onboarding MidCoast Council into the strategy development process after they joined the waste region, including direct consultation with council staff
- Drafting the strategy and 5 year program.

Draft Strategy Directions

The vision, key regional planning themes and strategic directions included in the draft strategy include:

Vision: To transform the Hunter Central Coast into Australia's leading circular materials region.

Key planning themes:

- **1. Collaboration:** continual collaboration at regional, state and national levels to solve problems and knowledge share;
- **2. Circularity**: unlocking regional circularity solutions to transform upstream and downstream material flows to become more circular;
- **3. Resource Recovery:** enhancing regional resilience through improved core resource recovery and waste infrastructure, operations, and services; and
- **4. Protect the Environment**: ensure we always protect the environment and take a proactive, regenerative approach.

REGIONAL THEMES	STRATEGIC DIRECTION - How will we get there - we will
	Foster regional knowledge sharing and turn collaboration into action
	Support and deliver education and behaviour change programs that increase community knowledge and awareness of services
COLLABORATION	Facilitate regional procurement of products and services
	Advocacy for regionally relevant issues and solutions
	Manage regional data and insights to understand regional material flows
00	Support the adoption of upstream Circular Economy solutions to reduce consumer waste generation - incl better design, reuse \& repair and sharing
	Support the improvement of downstream markets and industry to increase uptake of recycled materials
CIRCULARITY	Investigate and support implementation of Circular Economy business models, technologies and precincts
	Improve Circular Economy knowledge and embed principles into practice
.00	Investigate and implement solutions to increase resource recovery by improving infrastructure, operations and material quality
	Collaborate, conduct research and support programs to divert organic waste from landfill
RESOURCE RECOVERY	$Under take \ research\ and\ pilots\ of\ solutions\ that\ will\ reduce\ carbon\ emissions\ from\ current\ was te\ and\ resource\ recovery\ operations$
*	Identify and implement opportunities to improve problem and hazardous waste recovery
	Collaborate and support programs to reduce illegal dumping and litter
PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT	Coordinate regional service continuity planning to improve emergency and disaster resilience

Consultation with Hunter Central Coast Regional Waste Strategy Group

The draft strategy has been developed in collaboration with Member Councils and Central Coast Council through the Hunter Central Coast Regional Waste Strategy Group. Through this process Council's identified the following top 5 challenges on which they require regional support from the Hunter JO (in order of priority):

- 1. Lack of political support for planning and investment of infrastructure local/state/federal
- 2. Meeting State & Federal Target of 80% resource recovery by 2030
- 3. Taxation policy s88 waste levy hypothecated back into waste and resource recovery infrastructure and services
- 4. Security of end-markets caused by market shocks (e.g. China Sword)
- 5. Understanding long-term landfill requirements and role for alternatives such as Energy from Waste

Next steps and timeline to completion

The draft Strategy, including a 5-year program overview and timeline (refer Attachment 12) is being provided to the Board to consider for endorsement. Subject to this occurring, an Annual Action Plan will be prepared by Hunter JO staff and consultants, in consultation with the Regional Waste Strategy Group. The annual action plan will set out how the known resources (such as the EPA's Regional Coordination Grant Funding) will be utilised over the year to deliver on the strategies priorities and themes, as well as any additional projects arising through successful grants and other funding sources. The Annual Action Plan will be completed by March 2023 for year two to line up with grant cycles. Year one (2022/23 financial year) will serve as a transitional year.

Recommendation:

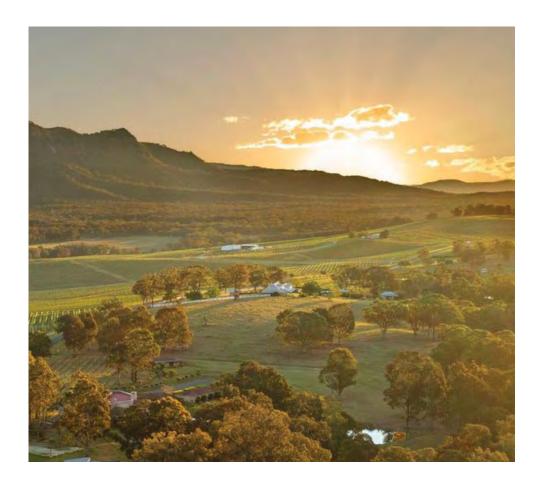
1. That the Board endorse the draft Regional Circular Materials Strategy.



Regional Circular Materials Strategy Hunter and Central Coast 2022 - 2027



Regional Response to NSW Government Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041



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Hunter Joint Organisation



Authors

Patrick Arnold - Principal Consultant Louise Cannon - Principal Consultant



This program is funded and supported by the NSW EPA through the Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041.



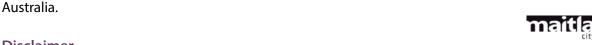
Project Partners











Disclaimer

Acknowledgement of Country

While the Hunter Joint Organisation takes reasonable steps to ensure that the information included in this resource is correct, it provides no warranty or guarantee that information is accurate, complete, or up to date. The Hunter Joint Organisation does not accept any responsibility or liability for any actions taken as a result of, or in reliance on, information included in this publication.

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











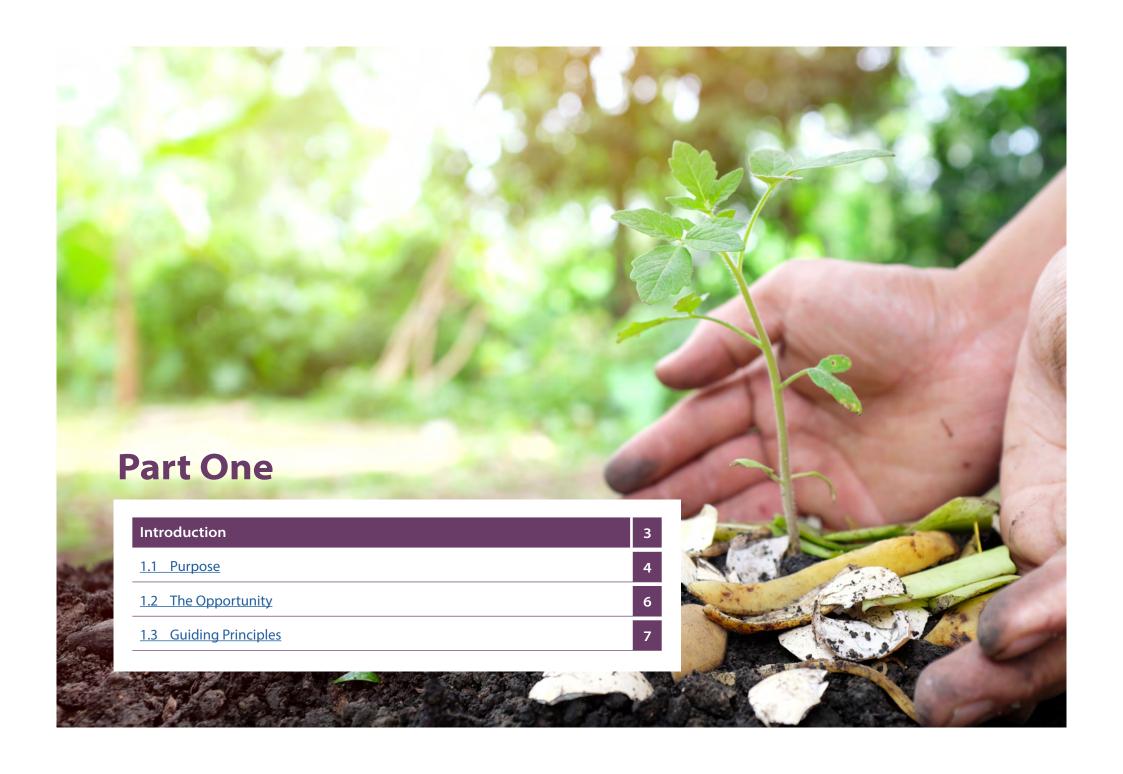




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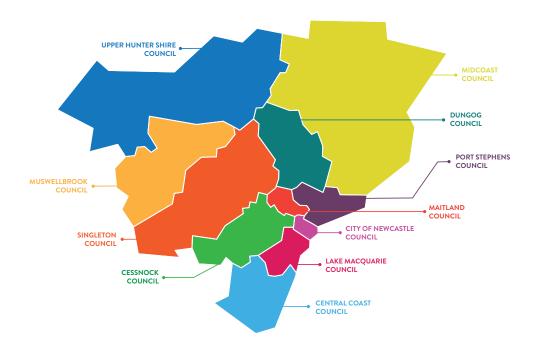
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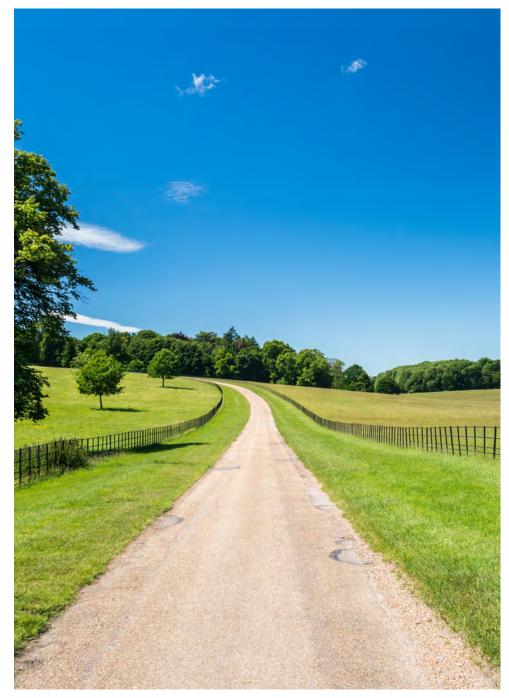
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Introduction

The 10 member councils of the Hunter Joint Organisation (Hunter JO) has partnered with Central Coast Council to develop this new Circular Materials Strategy for the region. The Hunter JO is responsible for the coordination of the Hunter and Central Coast (HCC) Regional Waste Group, and as such, will be referred to as the organisation responsible for delivering this strategy.





1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline the Hunter Joint Organisation's (Hunter JO's) strategic direction as a regional response to the NSW EPA Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2021-41 (WaSM). The Hunter and Central Coast Regional Circular Materials Strategy (Regional CMS or the Strategy) (formerly known as the Regional Waste Strategy), embraces a 20-year vision while focusing on the initiatives required in the 5-year period from 2022-2027 and how progress will be monitored. There is considerable value to be realised by the region working collaboratively to identify regional priorities and deliver strategic projects and programs.

This Strategy interprets national and state policies for our regional context and looks to local plans to develop regional strategic priorities and to identify common issues to be solved at a regional level.

Falling out of the Strategy is an Annual Action Plan, as well as the Hunter and Central Coast Circular Economy Roadmap (CE Roadmap). The CE Roadmap is identified by the Regional CMS as an important collaboration activity for the Hunter JO to lead on behalf of the region. It spans beyond government effort by adopting a whole-of-region approach to coordinating and elevating the circular evolution occurring in our region.

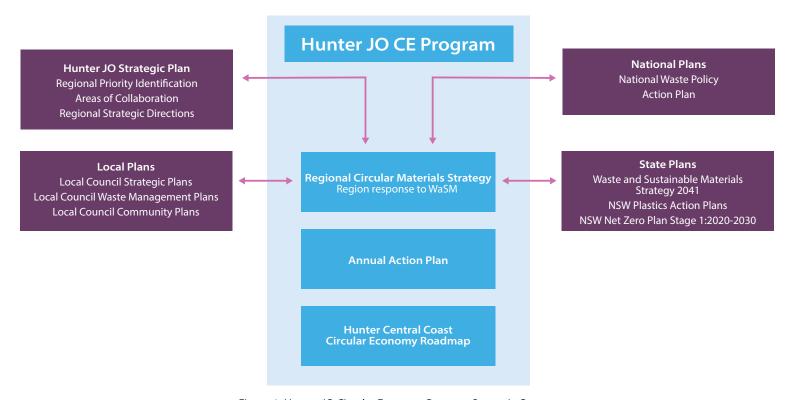


Figure 1: Hunter JO Circular Economy Program Strategic Context

The Hunter JO relies on external funding to deliver all of its functions in relation to the Regional CMS. The Hunter JO receives funding under the NSW Regional Support and Coordination Funding under the NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2021-41 (WaSM), which is in place until June 2027. As, part of its commitment under this funding arrangement, the Hunter JO will:

- Prepare and oversee the delivery of this Regional CMS; and
- Coordinate the Hunter Central Coast Regional Waste Group

Under the previous Regional Waste Strategy, Hunter JO received additional non-contestable funding from the Better Waste and Recycling Fund for the delivery of projects under its action plan. Funding for regional projects has altered under WaSM to a contestable model, with a smaller pool of funding ring-fenced for local and regional government initiatives. The figure below summarises the likely grant funding streams from the NSW EPA. As a result, this Strategy must adopt a focused and flexible approach to its delivery, to allow for funding uncertainty in terms of project implementation.

Table 1 - NSW WaSM Funding Program

NEW IN	ITIATIVES	BUILDING ON OUR SUCCESS			
Carbon recycling and abatement fund \$37m	Facilitating joint council procurement of waste services \$16m	Preventing illegal dumping \$16m	Litter prevention \$38m		
Landfill gas capture infrastructure \$7.5m	Local government waste and resource recovery \$25.6m Funding for local government (\$10m) Continuation of Regional Coordination and Strategy Program (\$15.6m)	Household problem wastes \$66m	Aboriginal communities waste management \$5m		
Diverting organics from landfill \$69m	Avoiding plastic waste \$13m Circular materials fund (\$10m)	Landfill consolidation and environmental improvements program \$6m	NSW Asbestos Coordination Committee \$5m		
Circular innovation fund to support research into new technologies and uses for recycled content and opportunities to pilot them in government projects \$13m	Plastic Research Partnership (\$2m) Education program for single-use plastic phase outs (\$1m) Support for improved plastic nurdle	Business r \$15	, -		
Strategic infrastructure investment fund \$24m	management at manufacturing facilities				

1.2 The Opportunity

Our current linear economy, a take-make-waste model, is having detrimental effects on the economy, the environment, and communities. Australia generates over 74 million tonnes of waste each year. Approximately 1 million tonnes of waste is landfilled each year from the Hunter and Central Coast. The system is failing and leading to systemic and complex social and environmental challenges. Circular economy is an economic model designed around closed-loop systems that maximises the value gained from materials already in the economy. Circular economy presents a huge environmental and economic opportunity. Estimates range from \$1,860 billion direct economic benefit for Australia over the next 20 years, and \$210 billion increase in Australia's gross domestic product and an additional 17,000 jobs by 2047- 48 from circular interventions in the food, transport and built environment sectors.

Circular economy will be a key factor in tackling climate change by reducing emissions generated for example through agriculture and manufacture of key materials like cement, plastics, steel and aluminium. It's estimated that circular economy will save Australia 165 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent each year by 2040, which will be key in meeting all Australian state government targets of net zero by 2050.

The Hunter and Central Coast (HCC) recognise the benefits of circular economy for their local region and its merits for delivering on their strategic objectives for a sustainable, vibrant, and resilient region. With decreasing global demand for coal, local and state governments are supporting moves to diversify the economy and intensify investment in renewable energies in the region to build long-term economic resilience and support future-focused local jobs. The HCC's diversity in skills and industries, leading research institutions, and connectivity to domestic and overseas markets gives the region huge potential to become a regional leader in circular economy in Australia.

This circular model presents sizable economic, environmental and social benefits for Australia including... \$1,860 billion direct benefit over the next 20 years meaning \$billions of economic opportunity in the Hunter.

Local Government representatives, are uniquely placed to provide strategic direction, connect stakeholders across the local ecosystem to collaborate and share knowledge, and remove some of the barriers to support circular economy progress at scale. The Hunter Joint Organisation (Hunter JO) as Local Government representatives will support these initiatives as project partners or through enabling initiatives with the collaboration and funding from the NSW State Government.

The Hunter JO's strategy 2022-2026 highlights the region's need to grow and evolve as a powerhouse of the state and national economies, with "Jobs and a Growing Economy" a key theme in the strategy. The theme sees an opportunity to drive the circular evolution of our region's economy, built around circular economy principles as a driver of future jobs.



Figure 2 - Circular economy is at the heart of several national and state-level strategies.

1.3 Guiding Principles

In approaching the development of the Regional CMS, some key guiding principles have been used to develop the scope and lens in which the Strategy looks at material use within the region, and how we can, overtime, assist the region to transition to a circular economy (CE).

1

THINK CIRCULAR NOT LINEAR

The Circular Economy provides a whole-of-system lens which broadens out our thinking around consumption and resource recovery, in order to find upstream solutions to current and future resource shortages and waste legacies, as well as a means to address critical climate change issues. This Strategy will integrate the Ellen Macarthur principles¹ of:







2

AIM FOR SYSTEM-WIDE CHANGE

The transition to a Circular Economy system requires system-wide transformation in order to reach optimisation of material and resource usage. This means working at all levels and scales to push and pull economic and other levers that will help bend the linear economy. Without this, our best intended efforts will remain peripheral and will not achieve the scale and buy-in in required to design out waste and pollution from our economies. The Regional CMS will look to ways in which it can contribute to systems-level change.

3

START LOCAL AND BUILD MOMENTUM

The Regional CMS will focus on ways to support the local transition by:

- Strengthened Hunter and Central Coast waste and resource recovery infrastructure network to ensure continuity and localisation of core services with maximised resource recovery,
- Collaborative regional procurement models that provide better cost and environmental outcomes for the region, and
- Adoption of CE principles, business models and technologies in transforming upstream and downstream material flows to become more circular.

The early Strategy program will remain flexible to respond to uncertainty and will build maturity over time.

4

ALIGN OUR EFFORTS WITH THE NSW GOVERNMENT

Direction and funding for this Strategy is set by NSW government and will influence where we can best place our efforts, in order to achieve maximum collective impact. We will use the well-established waste hierarchy to prioritise our efforts to maximise the impact of our work in achieving sustainable material resource usage outcomes.



Where are we today?

2.1

Previous Achievements & Learnings

Reflecting on the 2017-2021 HCC Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy there is still a long way to go towards meeting the State's ambitious resource recovery target.

Greater focus on service changes or enhancement and infrastructure improvements is needed to drive noticeable improvement in resource recovery for the region.

Improved data capture and reporting in all areas, including behaviour change, litter and illegal dumping, is necessary to understand initiative efficacy.



Development of an infrastructure report for the Hunter Region

as part of the NSW infrastructure analysis project for improved planning.



Catalysing the Circular Economy through

4 Circular Economy events
Circular Economy Eco-system report
HCC material flow analysis
Circular Economy Procurement Project



Supporting the HCC Regional Illegal Dumping Squad

in their Communication and Action Plan to ramp up online and offline communications about illegal dumping.



Advocating for the provision of

Community Recycling Centre's in the region

for the collection of problem wastes.

There are currently 10 active centres.



Implementing behaviour change projects such as

The Small Acts Big Change Program
Green Caffeen

See Appendix 2 for more details

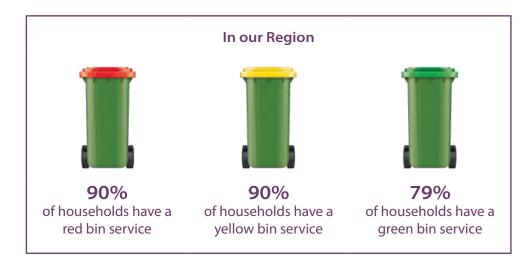
2.2

Service & Infrastructure Overview

There are currently 3 streams of council operated kerbside collection services available in the region (available in all LGAs with the exception of Port Stephens and Dungog Councils who don't currently offer a green bin service):

- Residual waste (Red Bin)
- · Mixed recycling (Yellow Bin)
- Garden Organics (Green Bin)

Lake Macquarie City Council and Upper Hunter Shire Council's have also converted their Green Bin to a Food Organics & Garden Organics (FOGO) system and accept food scraps.



Food Organics services are currently available in 2 of the 11 HCC councils. There will be a need for significant infrastructure growth in HCC to meet 2030 commitments of municipal FOGO.

There are limited options for kerbside recycling in the lower Hunter Central Coast and solutions are actively being explored.

There is significant private sector investment and advancement occurring in the HCC.

Councils also provide various services including:

- Bulky/hard waste (drop-off and self-haul),
- Community recycling centres (CRC),
- Commercial waste collection,
- Public space waste management (such parks, gardens and sporting venues)
- Public event waste management, and
- Campaign recovery programs such as the annual Household Chemical Clean-Up and drumMUSTER programs.

Core HCC councils waste management and recovery services and infrastructure is summarised below in <u>Table 2</u> and <u>Figure 3</u>. Planned municipal and private sector infrastructure and service enhancements are summarised in <u>Appendix 3</u>.

Table 2 - Summary of Municipal Kerbside Services and Infrastructure

	CENTRAL COAST	CESSNOCK	DUNGOG	LAKE MACQUARIE	MAITLAND	MIDCOAST	MUSWELLBROOK	NEWCASTLE	PORT STEPHENS	SINGLETON	UPPER HUNTER
Kerbside Services	•										
Landfill (Red) & Recycling (Yellow)		Ø	Ø	Ø	Ø		Ø	Ø	Ø	Ø	Ø
Garden Organics	Ø	Ø		Ø	Ø	Ø	Ø	Ø			Ø
Food Organics	TBA by 2030	2024	2024	Ø	2024	2026	TBA by 2030	2024	TBA by 2030	2022/23	
Infrastructure											
Landfill (Years of space remaining + gas capture?)	(multiple 20-50 + gas cap)	(<3)	(10-15)	(<3)	(<3)	(15-20)	(10-15)	(>50 + gas cap)		(>50)	Ø
Transfer Stations	Ø				Ø	(multiple)	Ø		Ø		(multiple)
Community Recycling Centre	Ø	Ø		Ø	Ø		Ø	Ø	Ø	S	Ø
Materials Recovery Facility						Ø		(by 2024)			
Garden Organics	Ø			⊘				Ø	(by 2023)		
Food Organics	(TBA)			Ø		(by 2026)		(by 2024)			



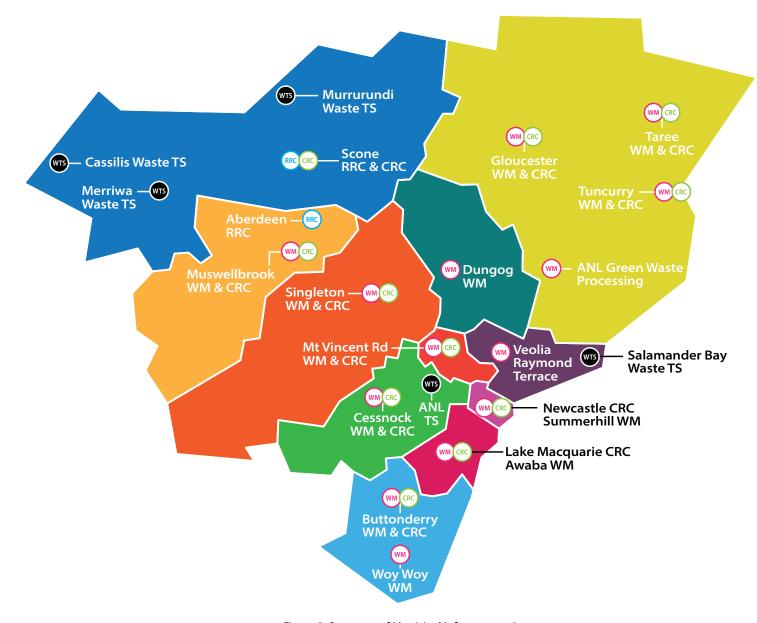


Figure 3: Summary of Municipal Infrastructure*

^{*}Some of these facilities are not owned or operated by councils

2.3 Regional Challenges

In NSW, over the last 4 years, there has been no significant overall improvement in the state's resource recovery rate. The Hunter and Central Coast regions have experienced similar static recovery rates with the latest data showing our regional average resource recovery rate at 42% in 2020 compared to 46% for the state.

<u>Appendix 1 – Regional Forecast & Performance (Section 5.1)</u> outlines the regional challenges faced shown through the most recently available data. These challenges include:

- The Hunter Central Coast's total municipal waste generation will increase by 22.1%, by 2041, due to the equivalent population growth the region will experience over the same period.
- Recycling rates have been relatively static for the last few years with the
 notable exceptions of Port Stephens Council (affected by the MWOO ban)
 and Lake Macquarie Council introducing food organics collection in their
 green bin. Our Regional Waste Group member councils will see improved
 levels of resource recovery (between 50-60%) once food organic collections
 commence in all other council areas over the next few years.
- Councils can directly influence about 25% of the total waste generated in the region through our municipal waste systems. The remaining waste is managed by the commercial and construction sectors.

The Hunter JO used this data and a PESTLE analysis study to review the key regional waste and resource management challenges impacting Hunter & Central Coast Councils.

The Hunter JO will make the greatest regional impact for their members by focusing on two key challenges;

- advocating for political support on planning and investment in infrastructure, and
- supporting projects to meet State/Federal targets of 80% resource recovery by 2030.

When interviewed, the specific challenges raised by Regional Waste Group member councils are echoed within the two key regional challenges.

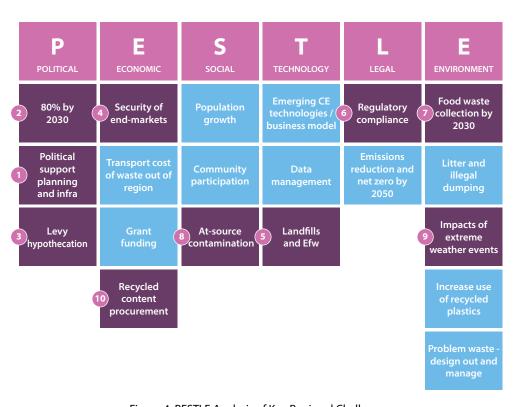


Figure 4: PESTLE Analysis of Key Regional Challenges

The PESTLE analysis provides a macroscopical view of challenges faced in the region with the majority of the challenges interdependent with each other.

A prioritisation exercise was conducted by Regional Waste Group members to understand the greatest challenges for each Council that would be best solved at a regional level over the next 5 years. The top 10 key challenges are highlighted, in order of priority in Figure 4.

The highest consensus where the Hunter JO could influence the greatest regional impact was around:

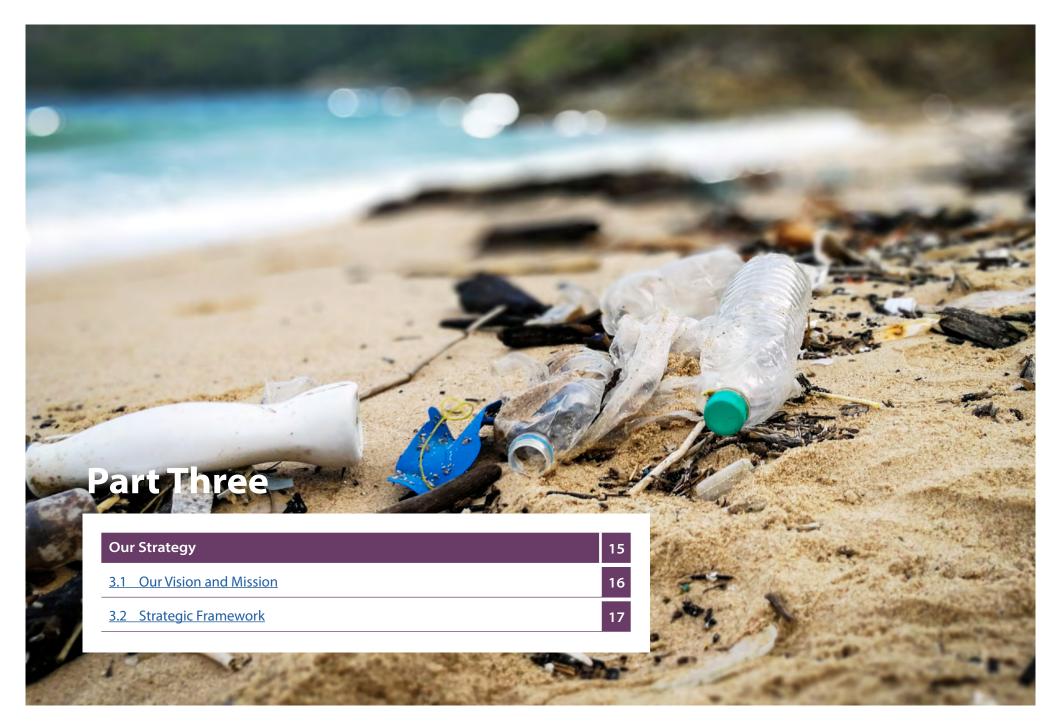
- · Political support for planning and investment in infrastructure, and
- Achieving the State/National Targets of 80% resource recovery by 2030.

Specific challenges raised by Regional waste group members have previously included:

- A very distinctive division in size and waste generated by member Councils;
- Dwindling human resources and experience/skills within Local Government;
- Ever-increasing requirements for regulatory compliance raises the expense to Councils of compliant service delivery;
- Individual Councils do not generally have an appetite to deliver their own **new regional infrastructure**, preferring to lead and facilitate private

- investment;
- WaSM Strategy targets are greater than can likely be met by Councils individually, particularly the state's 80% recovery rate across all waste streams by 2030;
- Limited opportunity for significant gains in resource recovery; 80% waste being managed by private contractors;
- A stalling in improvement of the MSW resource recovery rate by LG for at least the last five years;
- Member councils have previously indicated that joint operational contracting and procurement is not a high priority through Hunter JO;
- Recent changes to the NSW EPA's EfW policy, limiting thermal processes to specific geographical regions of the state; and
- Changes to funding arrangements for voluntary waste groups such as the Hunter Central Coast region, favouring greater project and diminishing program funding.

The prioritised PESTLE analysis and understanding Hunter JO member council challenges has formed a critical component in developing this Strategy and further strategic decision-making.



Where are we going?

3.1

Our Vision and Mission

Our Vision

To transform the Hunter Central Coast into Australia's Leading Circular Materials Region

Our Mission

We will achieve our vision through:

- Continual collaboration at regional, state and national levels to solve problems and knowledge share for greatest positive impact;
- Unlocking regional circularity solutions to transform upstream and downstream material flows to become more circular;
- Enhancing regional resilience through improved core resource recovery and waste infrastructure, operations, and services; and
- Ensure we always **protect the environment** and take a proactive, regenerative approach.

3.2 Our Strategic Framework

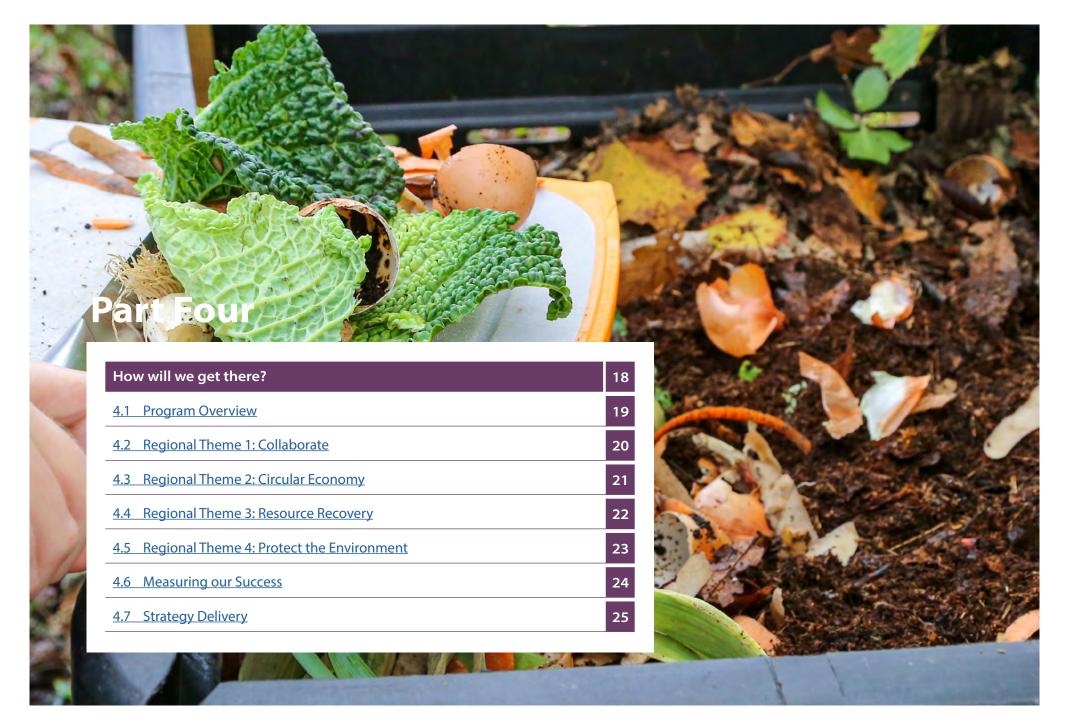
The strategic framework uses the mission statements to form four key Regional Themes, **Collaboration**, **Circularity**, **Resource Recovery and Protect the Environment**. This is further aligned with the NSW EPA Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2021-41 (WaSM) themes and key priorities.



Figure 5: Strategic Framework

Each Regional Theme is affiliated with:

- Outcomes What would success look like if the Regional Theme was achieved?
- Success Measures How would we track success to know we're on the right path?
- Strategic Directions How will we get to our goal of achieving the Regional Theme outcomes?
- Key Regional Challenges How are Strategic Directions linked to the key regional challenges?



Hunter Central Coast Circular Materials Strategy
To transform the Hunter Central Coast into Australia's Leading Circular Materials Region

	10 transform the franter ee	intrair Coast into Australia's	Leading Circular Materials Region
REGIONAL THEMES	OUTCOMES What will success look like?	SUCCESS MEASURES How will it be measured?	STRATEGIC DIRECTION How will we get there?
COLLABORATION Collaborating to solve regional problems for greatest positive impact Strategic Collaboration • 1 2 3	 Regional knowledge sharing and collaboration Increased community knowledge Leveraged regional buying power Strong regional advocacy 	 Community Surveys # Hunter JO meetings with external stakeholders 	 Foster regional knowledge sharing and turn collaboration into action Support and deliver education and behaviour change programs that increase community knowledge and awareness of services Facilitate regional procurement of products and services Advocacy for regionally relevant issues and solutions
CIRCULARITY Enabling and influencing the circular economy Avoid or Reduce • 1 3	 Understanding of regional material flows Reduced waste per capita Increased recycled materials uptake Increased CE knowledge and adoption 	 Waste tonnage/capita CE Knowledge and skills survey # organisations reporting CE progress Increased CE initiatives and reporting 	 Manage regional data and insights to understand regional material flows Support the adoption of upstream Circular Economy solutions to reduce consumer waste generation - incl better design, reuse & repair and sharing Support the improvement of downstream markets and industry to increase uptake of recycled materials Investigate and support implementation of Circular Economy business models, technologies and precincts Improve Circular Economy knowledge and embed principles into practice
RESOURCE RECOVERY Improved infrastructure and operations for circular outcomes Recover Resources • 1 2	 Increased resource recovery incl organics Optimised waste and resource recovery services Reduced carbon emissions Localised material flows 	 Overall Recovery Rate (%) CO₂e tonnes 	 Investigate and implement solutions to increase resource recovery by improving infrastructure, operations and material quality Collaborate, conduct research and support programs to divert organic waste from landfill Undertake research and pilots of solutions that will reduce carbon emissions from current waste and resource recovery operations
PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT Improved problem waste management and disaster resilience Protect the Environment • 1 3	 Improved recovery of problem waste streams Reduced illegal dumping and litter Regional service continuity 	 CRC tonnes and recovery rates Illegal Dumping Incidents 	 Identify and implement opportunities to improve problem and hazardous waste recovery Collaborate and support programs to reduce illegal dumping and litter Coordinate regional service continuity planning to improve emergency and disaster resilience

Figure 6: Strategy on a page



Collaborate

Identifying and delivering on opportunities for strategic collaboration to solve regional problems for greatest positive impact. Through regional knowledge sharing, communication and engagement, advocacy, education and behaviour change, and procurement.

OUTCOMES - What will success look like?

"Collaborating to solve regional problems for greatest positive impact"

- 1. Regional knowledge sharing and collaboration with Hunter JO members
- 2. Highly connected and collaborative circular economy ecosystem function in the region.
- 3. Regional buying power leveraged with better cost and environmental outcomes
- 4. Strong regional advocacy to solve key regional challenges

SUCCESS MEASURES - How will it be measured?				
An informed community	Community Surveys - number of participants, improved knowledge metric			
Strong advocacy	Number of Hunter JO meetings/ workshops with industry, government, councillors, other regional groups			

STRATEGIC DIRECTION - How will we achieve success?	
a. Foster regional knowledge sharing and turn collaboration into action (Outcome 1)	Strong
b. Support and deliver education and behaviour change programs that increase community knowledge and awareness of services (Outcome 1,2)	
c. Facilitate regional procurement of products and services (Outcome 3)	Lower
d. Advocacy for regionally relevant issues and solutions (Outcome 1,2,4)	Strong

Link to Regional Key Challenges Strong: addresses 7-10 challenges Moderate: addresses 4-6 challenges Weak: address 3 or less challenges

- Regional Coordination and Strategy Program \$15.6M
- Joint council procurement of waste services \$16M
- Education program for plastic phase outs \$1M



Circularity

Enabling and influencing the circular economy by understanding the full material supply chain creating cradle-to-cradle solutions. Focused on transforming upstream and downstream material flows to become more circular.

OUTCOMES - What will success look like?

"Enabling and influencing the circular economy"

- 1. Understanding of regional material flows
- 2. Reduced total waste generated per capita
- 3. Increased uptake of recycled materials
- 4. Increased Circular Economy knowledge and practice adoption

SUCCESS MEASURES - How will it be measured?					
Reduced total waste generated per capita	Waste tonnage/capita - LGA WARR Report				
Level of CE knowledge and skills within councils and organisations	CE knowledge and skills survey – Hunter JO Survey				
Increased CE initiatives and reporting	Number of organisations reporting on CE progress – Hunter JO Survey				

STRATEGIC DIRECTION - How will we achieve success?	
a. Manage regional data and insights to understand regional material flows (Outcome 1,4)	Moderate
b. Support the adoption of upstream Circular Economy solutions to reduce consumer waste generation - incl better design, reuse and repair and sharing (Outcome 2,3,4)	Lower
c. Support the improvement of downstream markets and industry to increase uptake of recycled materials (Outcome 1,3,4)	Moderate
d. Investigate and support implementation of Circular Economy business models and technologies (Outcome 1,4)	Moderate
e. Improve Circular Economy knowledge and embed principles into practice (Outcome 4)	Moderate

Link to Regional Key Challenges Strong: addresses 7-10 challenges Moderate: addresses 4-6 challenges Weak: address 3 or less challenges

- Circular innovation fund \$13M
- Strategic infrastructure investment fund \$24M
- Avoiding plastic waste \$13M
- Circular materials fund \$10M
- Plastic research partnership \$2M



Resource Recovery

Maintaining regional continuity and enhancement of core waste and resource recovery infrastructure, operations, and services.

OUTCOMES - What will success look like?

"Improved infrastructure and operations for circular outcomes"

- 1. Increased resource recovery particularly organic waste
- 2. Optimised waste and resource recovery services
- 3. Reduced carbon emissions from current operations
- 4. Localised material flows

SUCCESS MEASURES - How will it be measured?					
Municipal Resource Recovery Rate	Overall Recovery Rate (%) - LGA WARR Report				
Reduced carbon emissions	Carbon dioxide equivalent (CO2e) tonnes - baseline yet to be determined				

STRATEGIC DIRECTION - How will we achieve success?

- a. Investigate and implement solutions to increase resource recovery by improving infrastructure, operations and material quality (Outcome 1,2,4)
- b. Collaborate, conduct research and support programs to divert organic waste from landfill (Outcome 1,3)
- c. Undertake research and pilots of solutions that will reduce carbon emissions from current waste and resource recovery operations (Outcome 3)

Lower

Link to Regional Key Challenges

Strong

Strong: addresses 7-10 challenges

Moderate

Moderate: addresses 4-6 challenges

Lower

Weak: address 3 or less challenges

- Diverting organics from landfill \$69M
- Local government waste and resource recovery \$25.6M
- Carbon recycling and abatement fund \$37M
- Landfill gas capture infrastructure \$7.5M
- Landfill consolidation and environmental improvements \$6M



Protect the Environment

Creating a regionally coordinated approach to protect our environment and human health through problem waste management. As well as improving regional disaster resilience and environmental regeneration.

OUTCOMES - What will success look like?

"Improved problem waste management & disaster resilience"

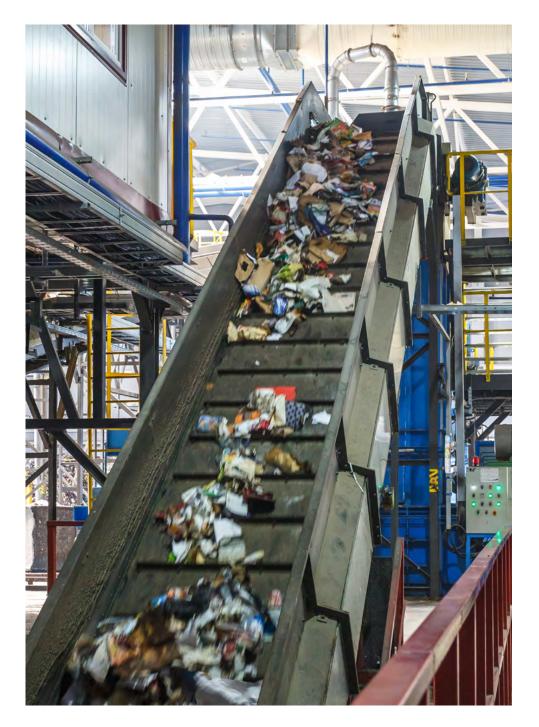
- 1. Improved recovery of problem and hazardous waste streams
- 2. Reduced illegal dumping and litter
- 3. Regional service continuity

SUCCESS MEASU	JRES - How will it be measured?
Improved recovery of problem waste streams	CRC tonnes and recovery rates
Reduced illegal dumping and litter	Illegal Dumping Incidents

STRATEGIC DIRECTION - How will we achieve success?				
a. Identify and implement opportunities to improve problem and hazardous waste recovery (Outcome 1)				
b. Collaborate and support programs to reduce illegal dumping and litter (Outcome 2)				
c. Coordinate regional service continuity planning to improve emergency and disaster resilience (Outcome 3)	Lower			

Link to Regional Key Challenges Strong: addresses 7-10 challenges Moderate: addresses 4-6 challenges Weak: address 3 or less challenges

- Household problem waste \$66M
- Prevent illegal dumping \$16M
- Litter prevention \$38M
- NSW Asbestos Coordination Committee \$5M



Measuring Success

Each regional theme has key success measures that correlate to achieving the theme outcomes and overall Strategy vision. It is recognised that significant change takes time, and these measures are long term indicators of the Hunter JO's regional impact rather than the Hunter JO's performance delivering initiatives.

REGIONAL THEMES	SUCCESS MEASURES	DATA SOURCE/ DEPENDENCIES		
COLLABORATION	Community Surveys - number of participants, improved knowledge metric	Councils		
	Number of Hunter JO meetings/ workshops with industry, government, councillors, other regional groups	Hunter JO		
CIRCULARITY	Waste tonnage/capita	LGA WARR Report		
	Level of CE knowledge and skills within councils and organisations	Hunter JO Survey via CE Roadmap Program		
	Increased CE initiatives and reporting	Hunter JO Survey via CE Roadmap Program		
RESOURCE RECOVERY	Overall Recovery Rate (%)	LGA WARR Report		
	Carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂) tonnes	Methodology and baseline yet to be determined ¹		
PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT	CRC tonnes and recovery rates	Councils		
	Illegal Dumping Incidents	RID Squad/Councils		

Figure 7: Success Measures

While no standard methodology exists to measure carbon impact of waste and resource recovery across each council yet. It was determined that this will be an important measure long term and efforts to report this measure should commence. The measure sits in the Strategy as a key indicator to ensure accountability to Hunter JO and members to commit to a methodology, begin baselining and reporting.

4.8 Strategy Delivery

This Strategy will be delivered through:

• The Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan provides an indicative overview of Hunter JO's delivery of the Strategic Direction objectives of the Strategy over the next 5 years.

An Annual Action Plan

The initiatives in the Annual Action Plan will:

- Link to a Regional Theme and Strategic Direction
- Outline the expected actions including estimated delivery timeframe
- Establish Hunter JOs role in the initiative
- Highlight initiative partners

The Annual Action Plan will be the active program for Hunter JO and be updated as per the initiative decision tree in <u>Appendix 5</u>. A formal review of the program will be conducted annually to allow for adjustment to initiatives or timelines for delivery.

· Actively pursuing funding

The Hunter JO will stay abreast of WaSM Program Delivery grant programs.

The Hunter JO will pursue funding for initiatives that sit under a Strategic Direction that have moderate to strong links addressing regional challenges. Funding will not be "actively" sought for initiatives that have weaker links to addressing regional challenges. However, should non-competitive funding become available the Hunter JO would still fulfill a lower priority initiative.



Figure 8: Prioritisation Key

Where grant funding only applies to individual councils (i.e. regional groups cannot apply), Hunter JO is to communicate these opportunities to member councils. Contribution of this grant funding to Hunter JO for implementation and delivery of regional initiatives is up to the discretion of the member councils.

Continual communication and collaboration

Hunter JO will engage member councils periodically to:

- · Review and consider new initiatives or grant applications
- Provide updates on the Annual Action Plan to share wins or key learnings
- Report on regional impact through the Strategy key success measures.

5 Year Implementation Plan										
REGIONAL THEMES	STRATEGIC DIRECTION - How will we get there - we will	1	2	3	4	5	REGIONAL CHALLENGES LINK			
COLLABORATION	Foster regional knowledge sharing and turn collaboration into action						Strong			
	Support and deliver education and behaviour change programs that increase community knowledge and awareness of services						Lower			
	Facilitate regional procurement of products and services						Lower			
	Advocacy for regionally relevant issues and solutions						Strong			
CIRCULARITY	Manage regional data and insights to understand regional material flows						Moderate			
	Support the adoption of upstream Circular Economy solutions to reduce consumer waste generation - incl better design, reuse & repair and sharing						Lower			
	Support the improvement of downstream markets and industry to increase uptake of recycled materials						Moderate			
	Investigate and support implementation of Circular Economy business models, technologies and precincts						Moderate			
	Improve Circular Economy knowledge and embed principles into practice						Moderate			
RESOURCE RECOVERY	Investigate and implement solutions to increase resource recovery by improving infrastructure, operations and material quality						Moderate			
	Collaborate, conduct research and support programs to divert organic waste from landfill						Moderate			
	Undertake research and pilots of solutions that will reduce carbon emissions from current waste and resource recovery operations						Lower			
	Identify and implement opportunities to improve problem and hazardous waste recovery						Moderate			
	Collaborate and support programs to reduce illegal dumping and litter						Lower			
PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT	Coordinate regional service continuity planning to improve emergency and disaster resilience						Lower			



Appendices

5.1

Appendix 1 - Regional Forecast & Performance

Over the next 20 years (2021-2041), Figure 9, the Hunter Central Coast Region population will grow by 21.9% leading to a 22.1% increase in waste generation. The five lower Hunter Councils (Cessnock, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, Newcastle and Port Stephens) and the Central Coast are predominantly driving this growth and have the greatest influence on the population and economic growth across the region.

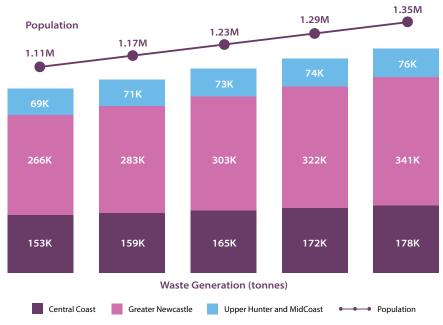


Figure 9: Waste Generation and Population Forecast

The HCC councils have achieved recycling rates, Figure 10, ranging between 21% and 54% in 2020. Port Stephens decrease between 2017 and 2018 was attributed to the ban of the application of mixed waste organic outputs (MWOO) to land.



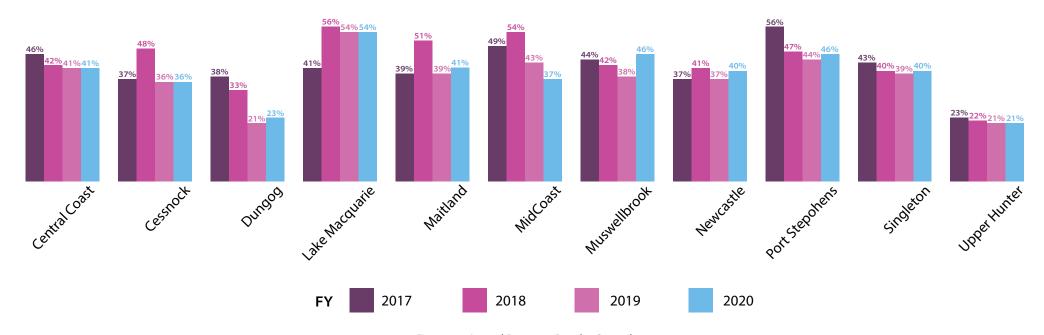


Figure 10: Annual Recovery Rate by Council

This data has been sourced from the EPA WARRP reports and variation in annual data may occur due to data availability and interpretation of the survey questions.

The HCC Councils have performed slightly below average, Figure 11, when compared to performance in other NSW geographic areas and the overall NSW average. However, overall, the state municipal recovery rate has not significantly improved over the last 4 years.

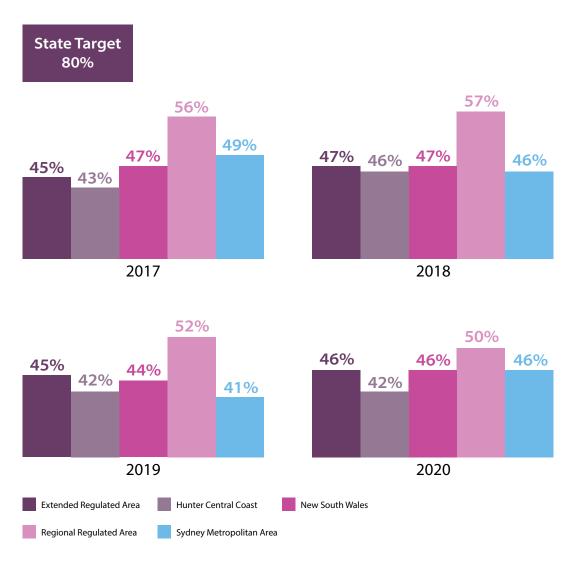


Figure 11: Annual Resource Recovery Rate by Regional Area

The Hunter JO, in 2019, commissioned a Material Flow Analysis (MFA) study of the HCC region (excluding Mid-Coast) across all key waste sectors; Municipal Solid Waste (MSW), Commercial & Industrial (C&I), and Construction & Demolition (C&D).

Key results from the MFA, as per Figure 12, indicates that while the C&D sector generates the most waste, greater than the other sectors combined, it was also the sector that achieved the greatest resource recovery. The MSW and C&I sector require the greatest work to move towards the 80% resource recovery policy targets. However, the Hunter JO influence is greatest in the MSW sector, through the directly managed contracts and infrastructure by member councils, whereas the C&I sector is mostly privately run.

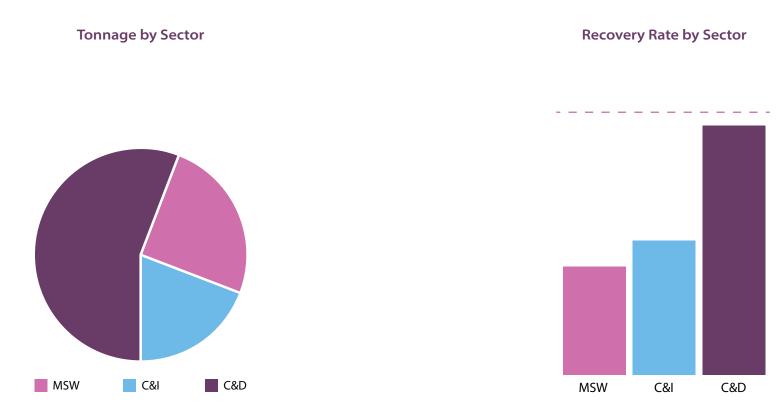


Figure 12: Generation and Recovery Rate by Sector

5.2

Appendix 2 - Previous Achievements & Learnings

The Hunter JO has reflected on the performance and achievements of initiatives conducted through the 2017-2021 Regional Waste Strategy, and a summary is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Achievement and Learnings

TOPIC	2017 - 2021 PERFORMANCE & ACHIEVEMENTS	KEY LEARNINGS
Resource Recovery	Hunter JO: No significant change, 1% decrease from 43% (2017/18) to 42% (2020/21) NSW: No significant change, 1% decrease from 47% (2017/18) to 46% (2020/21) Previous Target: 70%. New State Target: 80% Behaviour change projects such as: • the Small Acts Big Change program • Green Caffeen Circular Economy Projects (as per topic below)	The regions performance is comparable to the rest of the State. The target set by State Government was an ambitious target that required significant service, technology and behaviour change to achieve. The previous Strategy had a strong focus on actions centred around behaviour change, including the Small Acts Big Change program, and whilst they play an important role on improving recovery and waste reduction it is challenging to measure and limiting in its ability to produce measurable results. Greater focus on service changes or enhancement and infrastructure improvements is needed to drive noticeable improvement in resource recovery. Pricing mechanisms and incentives should also be explored (e.g. smaller red-lidded bins, at a reduced costs, for those households that generate less waste).
Waste Reduction and Avoidance	Hunter JO: Increased by 3%, from baseline of 547.25kg/capital/year (2011/12) to 565.13 kg/capita/yr (2020/21) 2020/21 KPI Comparison NSW: 478.6 kg/capital/year SMA: 394.7 kg/capita/year ERA: 558.9 kg/capita/year RRA: 594.7kg/capita/year Previous Target: 4% reduction by 2021/22 from the 2011/12 baseline New State Target: 10% reduction by 2030	Attendance at avoidance, reuse and repair workshops or waste avoidance behaviour is often by those members of the community that are already engaged. The region may consider utilising the results of the Taverner Research to develop targeted messaging to capture those members of the community that may not be engaged in the topics of avoidance, reuse and repair, similar to how the results were used to inform the Small Acts Big Change education program. In parallel with tracking tonnage data, routine assessment of community behaviours through research, like that undertaken by Taverner, is key to ensure messaging is relevant to current behaviours.

TOPIC	2017 - 2021 PERFORMANCE & ACHIEVEMENTS	KEY LEARNINGS
Community Recycling Centres	10 community recycling centres (CRCs) active in region with Central Coast CRC opened in 2021.	Hunter JO will continue to actively advocate for the provision of facilities for the collection of problem wastes across the region
Illegal dumping	HCC Regional Illegal Dumping (RID) Squad and Hunter JO collaborated on a Communications and Education Plan to ramp up online and offline communications about the RID Squad and priority illegal dumping issues.	Improved data sharing between RID Squad and Hunter JO to assess effectiveness of programs.
Litter	A Regional Litter Plan and Implementation Plan was developed. 4 litter projects were implemented.	Improved capture of litter data to baseline and assess future performance. Research for new innovative solutions was deemed too expensive and requires additional State support.
Infrastructure & Planning	Infrastructure report for Hunter Region completed and participated in NSW infrastructure analysis project in 2020/21. Multiple training sessions offered in previous years. Certificate III & IV training for waste staff. Aggregated landfill gas collection project under the national Energy Reduction Fund (ERF) underway as part of CE Precincts project.	The alignment of planning policies and guidelines between jurisdictions is challenging, but beneficial and will continue to be a focus of the Hunter JO moving forward.
Circular Economy	 Completed significant regional engagement work including: Quarterly meetings of Circular Economy Sub-Committee of (Hunter JO Board) Setup and co-chair of HCC Circular Economy Facilitators Group with quarterly meetings Developed and implemented 4 Circular Economy events in the region Completed several projects, including:	Strong sentiment across the Hunter JO members to continue and expand on the works already undertaken. Supportive executive is critical to success Ability to test and trial circular economy projects/ allowing innovation is important to success Finding, developing and engaging circular economy champions across multiple sectors is important to foster collaboration and innovation Understanding the role of local government in circular economy and focussing in on what your can deliver and what you can advocate for.

5.3

Appendix 3 - Service & Infrastructure Overview

The table below summarises the regional infrastructure needs, which were mostly identified in the NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy - A guide to infrastructure needs document and industry insights.

Table 4: Hunter Infrastructure Needs

MATERIAL STREAM	HUNTER REGION INFRASTRUCTURE NEED	REASON
Mixed Recycling	Local capacity to process 70,000 tpa to 100,000tpa of kerbside recyclables	China National Sword Policy and COAG Export Ban. Closure of Gateshead MRF. Currently, there are no MRFs in the lower Hunter region. All lower Hunter councils transport their materials to the Central Coast or to Sydney.
Organics	 1 x small In Vessel Composter (IVC) (20,000 tpa) or 1 x medium outdoor aerated compost (FOGO, minor FO) (10,000 tpa to 50,000 tpa) 2 x medium IVC (20,000 tpa to 70,000 tpa per site) or 2 x large outdoor aerated compost (FOGO, minor FO) (>50,000 tpa per site) 2 x medium AD (FO) (30,000 tpa per site) 	National and State governments target of 80% resource recovery and 50% food waste diverted from landfill. The NSW EPA, in October 2018, revoked the exemption for mixed waste organic outputs (MWOO) application for land. An estimated additional 176,000 tpa of processing capacity for organic material will need to be reconfigured from Alternative Waste Technology to FOGO facilities. Councils are to provide kerbside FOGO services to all households by 2030 Selected commercial food businesses are to implement food organics recovery by 2025 The NSW Government estimates that 1.1 million tpa in FOGO/FO processing capacity will be required (capacity deficit) to service metropolitan areas including Greater Newcastle.
Landfill	Additional landfill capacity to accept >300ktpa or a medium-scale energy recovery facility by 2040.	Regional population and economic growth.

Planned municipal infrastructure and service enhancements are highlighted in Table 5.

Table 5: Municipal Infrastructure and Service Enhancement Pipeline

COUNCIL	MUNICIPAL - PLANNED INFRASTRUCTURE/SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS
Central Coast	EfW residual waste investigation, improve waste data capture, soft plastics collection, new FOGO facility
Cessnock	New Transfer Station 2024, re-instating a Buy-Back Shop
Dungog	Strategy development, soft plastics collection, assessment of introducing GO/FOGO service
Lake Macquarie	CE programs and leadership, Hydrogen Hub, business waste focus
Maitland	Major upgrades to Resource Recovery Centre including construction of Circular Economy/Reuse Centres
Mid-Coast	FOGO 'in-tunnel' composting at council facility – Tuncurry site
Muswellbrook	New Transfer Station, reviewing C&I and C&D processing
Newcastle	50-80,000 tpa MRF; 50,000 tpa FOGO processing facility, new Southern Access Rd from M1
Port Stephens	Reviewing refining former Bedminster tunnels for FOGO
Singleton	Soft plastics, Site Master Plan, reviewing C&D recycling, double-Pass bulky waste collection
Upper Hunter	Closing 4 landfills within 2 years

SOURCE: Interviews with member Council waste managers 2021.

There are a number of very substantial existing, planned and conceptual independent commercial waste management and resource recovery initiatives, detailed in Table 6, providing significant opportunity for improved resource recovery rates over the next five years.

Table 6: Private Sector Infrastructure Pipeline

AREA	PRIVATE ENTITY/CONTRACTOR - PLANNED INFRASTRUCTURE/SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS
Hunter Central Coast	 A long-term expression of interest (EOI) was issued, in 2022, for "Hunter Regional Recycling Solutions" to provide kerbside co-mingled recycling collection and processing services for the Hunter Central Coast. The project is being managed by Hunter Resource Recovery (HRR) an incorporated, not-for-profit joint venture company limited by guarantee between Cessnock City, Maitland City, Lake Macquarie City and Singleton Councils. A residual waste (timber) collection business, using collected materials within manufacture of particle board and energy recovery.
Port Stephens	 Energy from Waste (EfW) facility at Tomago providing energy into industrial processes. Resource recovery facility at Tomago for receipt and processing of up to 98,201 tpa of solid and liquid waste through a variety of recycling services, including: A cardboard baling facility for source separated cardboard collected from businesses (up to 30,000 tpa); A drill mud recycling from civil, construction and mining industries (up to 5,000 tpa); A packaged food recycling plant (up to 2,000 tpa); A garden organics primary processing plant for decontamination and shredding (up to 5,000 tpa); A hazardous waste recycling facility for sorting and aggregating a range of spent solid materials and liquids containing oils and chemicals (up to 20,201 tpa);
Singleton	 Resource recovery and recycling facility processing up to 95,000 tpa of dry municipal, commercial and construction waste, including: A Community Recycling Centre for household problem wastes A tipping, sorting and processing areas for a range of household, business and building waste; A product manufacturing area for landscaping and civil supplies.
Central Coast	 iQ Renew is active in a number of areas including: Virtual Quarry, the largest of its kind in Australia, when fully commissioned will be crushing 110,000 tonnes of recovered glass per annum, making it capable of processing 50% of the recovered glass in NSW SPEC facility is dedicated to creating streams of locally sourced, quality feedstock available for use in Australian based technologies such as mechanical and emerging advanced recycling to make new products. Cat-HTRTMtechnology uses chemical recycling to convert non-recyclable or End-of-Life Plastics (otherwise sent to landfill) into chemicals to make new plastics and more sustainable fuels.

Political

REGIONAL CHALLENGE	DESCRIPTION AND REFERENCE
Meeting State & National Target of 80% resource recovery by 2030	The Australian Government, through National Waste Policy and Action Plan, and the State Government, through the NSW WaSM Strategy, has set an ambitious target of 80% average resource recovery rate from all waste streams (MSW, C&I, C&D) by 2030. Since the current (2020/21) average regional MSW recovery rate is 42%, and C&I is in a similar position, there is a significant gap for the state, regional and local councils to resolve within only 8 years.
Lack of political support for planning and investment of infrastructure - local/state/national	 The NSW WaSM Strategy – Guide to Future Infrastructure Needs highlights an additional infrastructure need in the Hunter for: Organics: Three small to medium-sized (10,000 to 70,000 tpa) in-vessel or outdoor-aerated composters to cater for food organics and garden organics by 2030. Two medium-sized (30,000 tpa) anaerobic digesters to cater for food organics) by 2030. Residual Waste: Additional landfill capacity to accept >300,000 tpa or a medium-scale waste to energy facility by 2040.
	The lower Hunter region faced the closure of its only Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) in Gateshead in 2020, which was processing yellow bin recyclable materials. Material is now sent to the Central Coast or to Sydney.
	Greater political support at the local, state and national level is required for waste and recycling infrastructure by providing funding for the significant capital investment of new infrastructure, improved planning to fast-track critical infrastructure, protect existing infrastructure from urban encroachment, and modernise existing infrastructure to enhance capabilities.
Taxation policy – section 88 waste levy hypothecated back into waste and resource recovery	The NSW Waste Levy is NSW's major economic instrument to encourage resource recovery and reduce waste to landfill. The funds generated from the levy are currently used for both general purpose programs as well as a range of waste and environmental programs. Greater direct hypothecation of the Waste Levy would allow government and industry to achieve the state and national targets.
infrastructure and services	For example, City of Newcastle (CN), since 2015, has invested \$54 million into developing and expanding its waste and recycling facilities. CN has also paid \$270 million in section 88 waste levies to the NSW Government, while receiving only 2% (\$6.5 million) back in grants to help fund that infrastructure and deliver waste education programs to encourage behaviour change.

E Economic

REGIONAL CHALLENGE	DESCRIPTION AND REFERENCE
Security of end-markets caused by market shocks (e.g. China Sword)	Recyclable and waste materials are part of a global and local commodity market. Any disruption in these markets impact how these services are delivered. There is limited end-markets for any low-quality recyclables in the Hunter region and nationally. Greater work is required to create and align recycled materials as feedstock to local manufacturers to create more stable and circular supply chains.
	In 2018, the China National Sword policy came into effect and had global market repercussions for recyclable material, as China stopped accepting low quality materials from overseas. Australia since enacted a National Waste Export Ban restricting the export of waste glass, plastic, tyres and paper to support Australia to take responsibility for localised reprocessing and remanufacture.
Cost to transport waste out of region due to lack of local infrastructure	A significant part of the cost of providing waste services is in transport and not just the processing/disposal of the material. Additional cost is incurred should access to waste and resource recovery services be further afield. Should the transport costs become prohibitive, access to services will be restricted.
	Transportation challenges can include poor road networks, congestion, time restrictions, long travel times and lack of convenient aggregation points.
	Eliminating the need for long-haul transport of waste and recyclables will not only reduce transportation costs but also related greenhouse gas emissions.
Securing grant funding for infrastructure and services (incl education and CE projects)	 State and National policies have developed several funding streams to execute their strategies. The most relevant include: Waste Less, Recycle More: The WaSM Strategy will also focus on new initiatives including carbon recycling and abatement, joint council procurement of waste services, diverting organics from landfill, strategic infrastructure investment and avoiding plastic waste. Remanufacture NSW: Jointly funded by the Australian Government's Recycling Modernisation Fund and NSW Waste Less, Recycle More initiative. A funding pool of \$35 million to support co-investment of infrastructure projects that will address export ban materials & provide opportunities for new innovative technologies using circular economy principles
Significantly increasing recycled content procurement	The National Waste Policy and Action Plan, National Plastic Plan, NSW WaSM Strategy and NSW Circular Economy Policy commit to significantly increasing the use of recycled content by industry and government to stimulate local demand for recycled materials.
	 This can be enacted by local councils through: Adoption of policy to improve recycled content procurement, Development of procurement targets for recycled content, including how they will be calculated, achieved, and audited, Reporting on progress in achieving procurement targets with recycled content, particularly those which have significantly increased use of recycled materials within infrastructure projects, and Facilitate joint council procurement of waste services.

S Social

REGIONAL CHALLENGE	DESCRIPTION AND REFERENCE
Population growth impacting waste generation and meeting waste reduction targets of 10% by 2030	The Hunter Central Coast Regions, in 2021-2041, population will grow by 21.9% leading to a 22.1% increase in waste generation. The per capita waste generation has increased by 3%, since 2011/12, despite improvements in the HCC Council's overall resource recovery rate. Further efforts focused on avoidance and not just recovery is required to shift waste avoidance and reduction behaviours. The National Waste Policy and Action Plan commits to reduce total waste generated in Australia by 10% per person. Household attitudes and behaviours were examined through an Australian Food Waste National Benchmarking Study. The study highlights that food waste is the largest opportunity area for waste avoidance and reduction and education should be a key focus area. Without managing our resources more efficiently, recycling infrastructure will struggle with increased waste and the negative impacts on the
Improving community participation - awareness raising and improving access to services	environment will continue to grow. In the Hunter Central Coast region, 90% of households have a red and yellow bin kerbside service, and 79% of households have a green bin kerbside service. There is a range of additional services offered by councils, including: bulky/hard waste (drop-off and self-haul), community recycling centres and stations to dispose of household problem wastes campaign recovery programs such as the annual Household Chemical Clean-Up and drumMUSTER programs. There has been a rise of private recycling and reuse service offerings, including TerraCycle & Green Caffeen, that complement council resource recovery efforts.
	Improving awareness and access to these services is an important step in community participation for resource recovery.
Managing and reducing at-source contamination - including residents, businesses, MUDS and culturally diverse users	The state-wide averages for contamination in 2020/21 in the kerbside recycling, GO and FOGO bins, are 11.5%, 0.7% and 1.9% respectively. High contamination also has a direct impact to facility gate rates as additional processing and disposal needs to be factored into the processing of the material. BehaviourWorks Australia conducted one of the largest trials to reduce contamination of household kerbside recycling. Key findings include: There are many barriers to good recycling, including physical barriers (i.e. complex packaging proliferation), social barriers (i.e. inaccurate advice given from trusted messengers, or judgement from others) and individual barriers (i.e. skepticism, lack of consequences, competing priorities). Targeting contamination (rubbish in the recycling bin) and leakage (recycling in the rubbish bin) at the same time creates confusion. Focusing on what should not be in the recycling bin is more effective at getting it out, reducing contamination. Traditional education approaches (e.g. signage and flyers) are not sufficient on their own to change behaviour. Adding behaviourally informed messaging to information can help a little but it can also backfire, so should be tested first. Personalised feedback on recycling behaviour is effective in reducing contamination.

T Technology

REGIONAL CHALLENGE	DESCRIPTION AND REFERENCE
Understanding emerging technology/business models to improve Circular Economy outcomes i.e. marketplace, reverse logistics, boutique technologies	KPMG estimates that a circular economy could give Australia a \$23 billion GDP boost. Accenture's Circular Advantage report, highlights several business models that would contribute towards a circular economy shift. Circular Supplies: Provide renewable energy or fully recyclable input material to replace single-lifecycle inputs Resource Recovery: Recover useful resources/energy out of disposed products or by-products Product Life Extension: Extend lifecycle of products and components by repairing, upgrading and reselling Sharing Platforms: Enable increased utilization rate of products by making possible shared use/access/ownership Product as a Service: Offer product access and retain ownership to internalise benefits of circular resource productivity Hunter JO will require to keep abreast of CE innovation to reap the benefits and apply it most effectively to the region.
Improving data management and access for better consumer, investment and policy decisions (National Waste Policy)	The National Waste Policy and Action Plan states a commitment to make comprehensive, economy-wide and timely data publicly available to support better consumer, investment and policy decisions. The Australian Government has invested \$20.6 million to create a public-facing data repository - National Waste and Resource Recovery Data Hub. This will allow improved understanding of waste and recycle volumes, value and movement through the economy which will support effective decision making. At a localised level, the Hunter JO conducted a Material Flow Analysis, in 2019, to understand material flows of the HCC.
Understanding long-term landfill requirements and role for alternatives such as Energy from Waste	According to the NSW WaSM Strategy – Infrastructure Needs Guide, Greater Sydney's inert landfill capacity will be exceeded in 2028 and putrescible by 2036. The Hunter will need to plan for additional landfill capacity to accept >300,000 tpa of residual waste by 2040. Landfills are a depleting and essential infrastructure for the foreseeable future. The development of new landfills is challenging due to: High cost of land, especially in metropolitan areas; Difficulty in securing suitable properties close to transport infrastructure; Reluctance of some councils or communities to have waste related infrastructure located in their vicinity; Lack of timely data on waste flows and holistic information on the location and volume of waste generated; Improved diversion rates will help extend the life of existing infrastructure, however, understanding the regions long-term landfill requirements and the role of alternatives, such as Energy from Waste, is critical for planning and needs to be understood early.

L Legal

REGIONAL CHALLENGE	DESCRIPTION AND REFERENCE
Meeting ever-increasing requirements or impacts of regulatory compliance. i.e. COAG ban of waste exports, MWOO, EFW in nominated precincts, Product Stewardship Act	There is a range of ever-increasing requirements that have direct impacts to the Hunter JO waste and resource recovery services, operations, and infrastructure. It is important that the Hunter JO keeps abreast of regulator compliance and the potential impact it has on the region. This has included: Waste Export Ban - In March 2020, the Australian, state and territory governments, and the Australian Local Government Association, as members of the former Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed that the export of waste glass, plastic (including processed engineered fuel), tyres and paper be regulated by the Australian government. Product Stewardship - The makers and importers of items on the product stewardship priority list must take responsibility for the impacts of their products on the environment across their entire life cycle. It goes above and beyond recycling and considers how the development, design, manufacture, import, sale, use and recovery of materials and products can be adjusted to improve environmental outcomes. The Minister may consider regulatory measures if industry does not act. MWOO - In October 2018, revoked the exemption for mixed waste organic outputs (MWOO) application for land. An estimated additional 176,000
	tpa of processing capacity for organic material will need to be reconfigured from Alternative Waste Technology to FOGO facilities. Energy from Waste – The POEO Regulation 2022 Amendment (thermal energy from waste) prohibits the thermal treatment of waste for energy recovery unless it is undertaken in a nominated precinct. As of November 2022, only two precincts are available; Parkes Activation Precinct and Southern Goulburn-Mulwaree Precinct.
Meeting emissions reduction by 43% and net zero by 2050 (Climate Change Bill)	Climate Change Bill 2022 - Australia's greenhouse gas emissions reduction target commitments of a 43% reduction from 2005 levels by 2030 and net zero by 2050 is now legislated. Greater understanding is required on how this commitment will be met by the region or how it even be measured.

E Environment

REGIONAL CHALLENGE	DESCRIPTION AND REFERENCE
Implementing council food waste collection service by 2030	 The National Food Waste Strategy and the NSW WaSM Strategy set out targets of halving food waste to landfill and achieving net zero emissions from organics in landfill by 2030. The NSW WaSM also commits to: food and garden organics from all NSW households by 2030 food waste from targeted businesses and other entities that generate the highest volumes of food waste, including large supermarkets and hospitality businesses, by 2025. Councils and businesses will need to ensure they have access to infrastructure to process food waste, implement a collection service and support the new recovery stream with appropriate education
Reducing litter & illegal dumping (WaSM reduce litter by 60% by 2030 and plastics litter by 30% by 2025)	Poor litter management costs the NSW economy more than \$162 million per year. The Australian Government's National Plastic Plan focuses on plastics in our oceans and waterways, including; marine plastic pollution and litter entering via stormwater with specific focuses on microplastics, cigarette butts & shipping waste. The NSW WaSM Strategy sets litter targets of overall litter reduction of 60% by 2030 and a plastic litter reduction target of 30% by 2025. The WaSM commits an additional \$16 million in funding to combat illegal dumping including maintaining programs such as the RID squads and the RIDonline reporting system.
Managing increasing incidence of extreme weather events that impact service continuity	The State of the Climate 2020 indicates Australia is projected to experience; longer fire seasons and more dangerous fire weather, heavy rainfall events to become more intense, and fewer tropical cyclones but at higher-intensity. Hunter JO member Councils identified the need for regional business continuity to drive a regional, strategic approach to providing waste services in the face of disruptions, stresses and catastrophic impacts of climate change (and extreme weather events), global pandemics and the varying fortunes of global markets for waste derived materials. In particular, member Councils identified the need for a combined regional approach for short-term sites to receive waste from natural disasters such as fires and floods, and longer-term regional landfilling options for these wastes and others derived from the impact of materials such as increased medical waste and unsorted, mixed waste.
Significantly increasing the use of recycled plastics (National/State Target)	The Australian Government, through National Waste Policy and Action Plan and the National Plastic Plan, commits to significantly increasing the use of recycled plastics by industry and government. This is further supported via the export ban of waste plastic and phasing out of problematic and unnecessary plastics by 2025. The NSW WaSM Strategy sets a goal, in line with the NSW Plastics Action Plan, triple the plastics recycling rate by 2030. Finding ways to use recycled plastics productively will increase market demand and ensure it does not end up in landfill.
Designing out and managing problem waste materials. Eg. Hazardous, e-waste, textiles, hard-to-recover materials	The NSW WaSM Strategy has made a commitment to invest \$127 million in household problem waste programs. This includes the establishment of Community Recycling Centres that capture commonly used but difficult/costly to recover/treat items such as batteries, paints, gas-bottles, etc. Poor management of problem waste material has adverse impacts to the environment and human health. However, poor disposal also contaminates kerbside recycling or can cause operational issues such as fires at processing facilities. This can be resolved by eliminating and/or improving management of problem waste materials.

Appendix 5 - Initiative Decision Tree & Prioritisation Tool

Initiative Decision Tree

Provides a framework to understand whether an initiative would be considered part of the:

- Annual Action Plan (Active Program)
- The Bench (Initiative Backlog)

Or needs to be considered under the Initiative Prioritisation Tool.

Initiative Prioritisation Tool

The tool allows a formal process to prioritise initiatives to match them to available resourcing. The tool takes into consideration:

Effort

- Is there a resource that can deliver the initiative
- · Is there funding to deliver the initiative?

Impact

- Considers how strongly linked the initiative is at addressing regional challenges
- · Considers the number of councils impacted

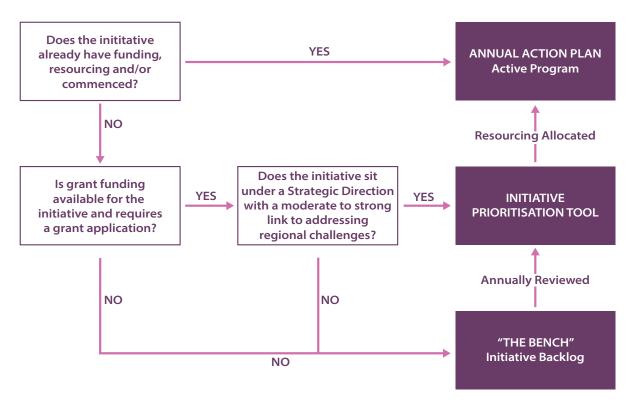


Figure 13: Initiative Design Tree



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Report Author: Kim Carland, Project Coordinator – A2E

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

Purpose:

To provide an update on the outcomes generated to date from the Accelerating Event Economies (A2E) project, and to seek the Board's endorsement for the Hunter JO and Member Councils to continue to collaborate to review and progress implementation of the recommendations generated from the regional review of Council event licencing processes.

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

Action Area	Our economy is multifaceted, resilient and is Australia's leading smart regional economy.
Action	Action 6: Develop a sustainable model to coordinate council-run events across the region and showcase the Hunter and attract local, national and international visitors
	Action 7: 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 Hunter JO was successful in securing over \$860k through the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund (BLERF) to undertake the Accelerating Event Economies (A2E) project. This project, which will run until June 2023, is implementing a range of actions that aim to improve the foundation for events attraction to the region.

The objectives of A2E are to:

- 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, building economic recovery, resilience and diversification in response to the bushfires and other rising uncertainty.
- Encourage investment through identified 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

Project outcomes achieved to date

A number of outcomes have been delivered under the project to date, which have been guided by a dedicated regional stakeholder group that has been meeting monthly. This group includes representatives from each member Council, State Government agencies and industry. Key project outcomes include:

1. **Regional Event Economic Impact Report**. KPMG have produced a report that has analysed the Hunter regional event economy, including return on investment and business case data. Using these findings, the report provides recommendations designed to help accelerate events attraction in the Hunter. In addition to the report itself, KPMG have also produced the following tools:

- a. An Event Economic Modelling Tool and
- b. An Event Assessment and Prioritisation Framework.

A workshop will be held on 5 December 2022 with the stakeholder group to review the outcomes and discuss next steps, with a view to providing the Board with a further update in February 2023.

- Hunter Event Facilities Audit. This audit has identified event facilities (indoor and outdoor) and accommodation that will assist event managers and owners in identifying and selecting the Hunter Region to host their event.
- 3. **Event Licencing**. Canvas Events were engaged to review the Event Application Process of the 10 Hunter JO Member Councils, to identify opportunities and provide recommendations to streamline the process for both **internal** Local Government event-assessment officers, and external event owners and managers. The recommendations generated by this work aim to generate savings in both time and money on approvals (for councils) and enhance our region's attractiveness as a place to host events for both event managers and owners, and event participants.

The review also looked at potential options to develop a collaborative arrangement where a central entity supports event licences that cross several local government areas in the Hunter region. The research indicated that local knowledge was an important aspect of the event assessment process, and that Councils need to maintain control of what events they assess and approve to maintain quality and ensure the safety of the event attendees. This important finding has led to the recommendation that a centralised application system is not the recommended way forward, however more centralised communication channels and a resource library would assist Councils and Event Owners.

A workshop was held with stakeholders on 2 November 2022 to discuss the recommendations of the report, with feedback indicating general support for all recommendations. However it was identified by Council staff representatives that they would require the support of Mayors and General Managers in order to continue working collaboratively on the recommendations that have been identified (see following).

Recommendations for improving Event Licencing

Key recommendations arising from the review of event application processes completed by Canvas Events include:

Licencing procedures and practices

- 1. The implementation of consistent use of language through an agreed set of common key terms, to be provided through delivery of the A2E project.
- Major event pre lodgement communication whereby an all-agency meeting is coordinated by Council, where Event Owners have the opportunity to speak to the event service industry (Council regulators, police, ambulance, transport etc) and gather any relevant feedback from key agencies to assist with preparing their Event Management Plan.
- 3. A user generated digital application form that ensures only relevant information is requested based on responses from the Event Owner.
- 4. Multi-year licences that allow a space to be booked and requires minimal updates to a repetitive Event Management Plan, providing certainty for Event Owners.
- 5. One point of contact for Event Owners to deal with in Council.

- 6. A draft Event Licence be provided when the majority of information is supplied to give the Event Owner certainty to market the event. This would not change the requirement to provide all details in order to receive the full Event Licence prior to the event proceeding.
- 7. Incentivise sustainable events, and accessible events, to provide a financial gain for Event Owners implementing ethical and moral practices.
- 8. Charity rates to encourage small community events.
- Event Licence should be invoiced post event to allow the flexibility of cancellation due to weather or other means out of the control of the Event Owner, along with assisting with cashflow.
- 10. A post event evaluation survey should be developed for all Event Owners, to provide feedback on both the process and facilities, and on event attendees to gather social and economic data to determine the success of the event.

Opportunities for enhanced regional collaboration

- 11. Development of a regional best practices procedure to ensure consistent and sustainable event planning and management.
- 12. Regional calendar of events to avoid duplication and dilution of audiences.
- 13. Annual forum for Event Assessment teams to facilitate collaboration.
- 14. Centralised coordination to enable collaborative marketing.

A2E projects continuing to be implemented

Key remaining projects that are continuing to be delivered under the A2E project include:

- Hunter Tourism Prospectus. A workshop was held with stakeholders on 2 November 2022 to gather feedback to inform the outcomes of this subproject, which will identify and collate tourism information to assist event managers in identifying and selecting the Hunter Region to host their event, and to help market their events. This will include developing itineraries for the Hunter region to complement marketing of events and encourage visitors to stay in the region for longer.
- 2. **Website**. Development of a regional website to provide event managers with information that makes it easy and attractive to run their events in the Hunter, and which promotes all events in the Hunter and provides surrounding key tourism information.

Recommendation:

That the Board:

- 1. Note the key outcomes achieved to date in delivering the A2E project
- Endorse the Hunter JO and Member Councils' staff continuing to collaborate to review and progress implementation of the recommendations generated from the review of event licencing processes.

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:

- Advocacy (other than is reported in a project update or through a standing engagement)
- Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement
- Political Engagements
- Hunter JO convened workshops, forums and events
- Existing Standing Engagements (convened by local government)
- Existing Standing Engagements (convened by others)
- Proposed New Standing Engagements
- Additional Strategic Engagements (if any)
- Submissions (in development or lodged)
- Regional Funding Applications (status) and Opportunities

Advocacy

NSW Parliamentary Engagement

The Chair (Cr Sue Moore), Deputy Chair (Cr Jay Suvaal), CEO (Joe James) and Director Policy and Programs (Steve Wilson) have participated in a series of meetings with NSW Government Ministers, Shadow Ministers and Hunter based MPs to communicate the shared interests, priorities and directions of the Hunter region's 10 democratically elected Mayors in the lead up to the 2023 NSW Government election. The sessions have:

- Presented for the first time, an agreed policy and advocacy agenda across the 10 Hunter JO
 Member Councils via the Regional Advocacy Framework and Priorities document developed and endorsed by the Hunter JO Board (refer Attachment 13)
- All explored the idea of a regional entity based in the Hunter, with the authority and resources
 necessary to drive, coordinate and deliver the substantive and rapid economic evolution needed
 to maintain the Hunter's resilience, liveability, and economic prosperity in the face of a rapidly
 growing population and decline of our traditional coal and energy-based industries.
- Articulated those advocacy priorities for the region of particular relevance to the portfolios of Ministers and Shadow Ministers with whom meetings have been held.

The value to Ministers and Shadow Ministers of the Regional Advocacy Framework and Priorities document that has been developed has been noted on a number of occasions, given that it provides a resource that demonstrates alignment across a large number of Councils, and is evidence upon which

they are able to draw when formulating or attempting to influence policy directions and outcomes within their party and within the Parliament.

Those meetings that have been completed or are pending are identified in the Stakeholder Collaboration and Engagement table below.

Outcomes form IPART Domestic Waste Management Charge Review

The Board will recall that the earlier in the year a regional submission was made to the review by IPART of Domestic Waste Management charges. IPART have since published their final report from the review, which importantly, recommends that a voluntary DWMC peg not proceed, a key point of the Hunter JO regional submission. Key recommendations from the report include:

- 1. OLG update their Rating and Revenue Raising Manual to provide further guidance to Councils on the setting of their DWMC.
- 2. Work with NSW Audit Office to initiate performance audits on a case-by-case basis of any council that may be imposing unjustifiably high DWMC on their communities.

These are considered a favourable outcome for councils across the state. In light of the outcomes of the review, the Office of Local Government:

- 1. Are intending to run a proactive consultation as part of their review of the Rating and Revenue Raising Manual, however, no timeframes have been indicated at this stage.
- 2. Have indicated via a stakeholder briefing, that review and update of the Local Government Act definitions of waste are not within the scope of their planned work (despite acknowledging that they are outdated and in need of revision).

Hunter Global

The Hunter Global project partner group met on 3rd November to collectively review and refine the final draft of the "Hunter Global: The Flightpath to our Future" report. Editing to include this feedback along with graphic design of the document is now in its final stages. When completed, the report will provide another key piece of evidence-based collateral that can be utilised by the Hunter JO and Member Councils to underpin collaboration and advocacy efforts to unlock the economic and social opportunities for the region triggered by more competitive access to global markets that will be provided via the Airport.

Regional Submissions

A regional submission is currently being prepared on the draft Hunter Regional Transport Plan. This will draw on the individual submissions of Member Councils, the draft Hunter JO Strategic Plan and Regional Advocacy Framework and Priorities.

Media Coverage

Outlet	Focus		
Newcastle Herald Thursday 1 December 2022	HUNTER EXPERT PANEL ANNOUNCEMENT The Hunter Regional Expert Panel members have been appointed, with Joe James appointed as a panellist. A copy of the media release provided from the Deputy		
December 2022	Premier's Office has been included at Attachment 14.		
Noosa Today	SIMTABLES FOR COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT		
Wednesday 19 th October 2022	Chris Dart, Regional Project Officer (Simtables) attended Noosa Shire Council to assist in facilitating training of their staff after the acquirement of a Simtable.		

Outlet	Focus
	Link https://noosatoday.com.au/news/19-10-2022/new-technology-to-boost-disaster-resilience/

Collaboration & Stakeholder Engagement

Key Stakeholder Engagement	Purpose / Outcomes (where relevant)			
Political Engagements (confirmed upcoming)				
Hunter based Labor MPs Date tbc	Collective meeting of Hunter Based Labor MPs convened by Yasmin Catley, Member for Swansea and Shadow Minister for the Hunter, in response to our invitation for a meeting to communicate the shared interests, priorities and directions of the Hunter region's 10 democratically elected Mayors in the lead up to the 2023 NSW Government election			
Political Engagements (complete	ed)			
The Hon Wendy Tuckerman MP, Minister for Local Government	To communicate the shared interests, priorities and directions of the Hunter region's 10 democratically elected Mayors in the lead up to the 2023 NSW Government election			
9 November 2022	To seek the Ministers perspective on the service relationship between the Hunter JO and the Member Council's wholly owned service provider (Arrow Collaborative Services) – communicated to the Minister by Cr Sue Moore and Cr John Connors			
 David Harris MP, Shadow Minister for Jobs, Investment and Tourism (6 December 2022) Paul Scully MP, Shadow Minister for Planning and Public Spaces (29 November 2022) 	The purpose of these meetings has been to communicate the shared interests, priorities and directions of the Hunter region's 10 democratically elected Mayors in the lead up to the 2023 NSW Government election, including a focus on exploring the idea of a regional entity based in the Hunter, with the authority and resources necessary to drive, coordinate and deliver the substantive and rapid economic evolution needed to maintain the Hunter's resilience, liveability, and economic prosperity in the face of a rapidly growing population and decline of our traditional coal and energy-based industries.			
• The Hon. Rob Stokes MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities & Minister for Active Transport (17 November 2022)	Agenda items covered (with the level of focus amended to address the recipients portfolio or electorate based interests) have included: Governance and Funding 1. Testing position and view on the concept of a regional coordination authority / entity			
 Greg Warren MP, Shadow Minister for Local Government, Shadow Minister for Veterans, and Shadow Minister for Western Sydney (23 October 2022) Jihad Dib MP, Shadow Minister for Energy & Climate Change & Shadow Minister for Emergency Services (26 October 2022) 	 2. Funding reform Alignment of grants with Council IP&R cycles Disaster resilience funding Road funding reform 3. Collaboration with Greater Cities Commission Transport and connectivity Intra-regional transport connectivity (planning and funding) 5. Global connectivity 6. Digital Connectivity Economic Development 			

Key Stakeholder Engagement	Purpose / Outcomes (where relevant)		
Tim Crakanthorp MP, Member for Newcastle & Shadow Minister for Skills and TAFE, Shadow Minister for Tertiary Education (23 October 2022)	 7. Hunter Global Tourism (collaborative destination marketing & Cycling Tourism (Shiraz to Shore) 8. Investment in Catalyst Growth Areas, Innovation & Circular Economy 		
David Layzell MP, Member for Upper Hunter & Lachlan Barnsley, Strategy Advisor (representing The Hon Sam Farraway MP, Minister for Regional Transport and Roads (Thursday 10th November)			
• Clayton Barr MP, Member for Cessnock (21 October 2022)			
The Hon. James Griffin MP, Minister for Environment and Heritage	Correspondence received from the Minister in response to the Hunter JOs request for a continuation of the Contaminated Land Council Regional Capacity Building (CRCB) Program (refer Correspondence)		
Meeting with Invest NSW and Greater Cities Commission re Hunter Venture Fund proposal 25 October 2022	In response to an invitation extended to the Hon Alister Henkins MP, Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, Minister for Skills and Training & Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology, a meeting was held with representatives from Invest NSW and Greater Cities Commission to discuss the opportunity, need and recommendations for establishing a Hunter focused Innovation Entity and Venture Fund.		
	Interest in the concept of a place-based fund was communicated by agency representatives, within the context of broader policy initiatives in this space being explored by the NSW Government. A commitment was made to meet again following further review of the information provided by the Hunter JO.		
Hunter JO convened workshops	, forums and events		
A2E Workshop - Regional Tourism / Event Approvals Review 2 November 2022	This full day workshop comprised representatives from Member Councils, Destination Sydney Surrounds North, Newcastle Airport, Committee for the Hunter, Hunter Valley Wine Tourism Association and Destination Port Stephens. The workshop focused on the following project areas of the A2E project:		
	Refining the focus and scope of the Tourism Prospectus to be developed		
	Reviewing the outcomes and recommendations of the Event Approvals Review completed by Canvas Events.		
Regional Infrastructure Priority Lists (PIL) Information Session for Council Data Collection 3 November 2022	This information session was designed to take council and agency staff officers through the googleform developed, and data requirements established, for collecting information on priority regional infrastructure projects from their organisations as part of the PIL project. A due date of 30 Nov 2022 was confirmed by participants for providing the first round of information on priority infrastructure projects.		

Key Stakeholder Engagement	Purpose / Outcomes (where relevant)			
Hunter JO Regional Planning	Key focus areas for the December event include:			
& Economic Development Forum	Hunter JO Strategic Plan			
Scheduled for 1 December 2022	 Implications of the NSW Flood Inquiry for Local Government (Department of Planning & Environment) 			
	 Disaster resilience opportunities and initiatives (Hunter Local Land Services) 			
	 Lake Macquarie economic development overview and initiatives (Dantia) 			
	Hunter JO program updates			
Contaminated Land Regional Forum - Acid Sulfate Soils and Preliminary Site Investigations	This forum will provide an opportunity for Council staff to get together to learn about specific contaminated land topics, including a focus on acid sulfate soils, and when to trigger a preliminary site investigation.			
Scheduled for 12 December 2022				
Existing Standing Engagement (convened by Hunter JO and Local Government)			
IP&R Network (convened by Lake Macquarie City Council & Hunter JO)	The focus of this meeting included the Hunter JO providing an overview of the draft Hunter JO Strategic Plan to network members			
9 th November 2022				
Regional Contaminated Land Working Group (convened by Hunter JO) 28 September 2022	This latest meeting had a high level of engagement from Member Council staff. The focus included getting thoughts and feedback on the update of the 'Developing a Contaminated Land Information Register' and 'Register of Contaminated Land Consent Conditions' documents. The next meeting is scheduled for 30th November 2022.			
Existing standing engagements	convened by others)			
Hunter Central Coastal Management Program Practitioners Roundtable (convened by Department of Planning & Environment)	Meetings of this network have resumed following staffing changes in the DPE Coast and Estuaries team. The most recent meeting attended by the Hunter JO in September included a focus on the Coastal Management Program (CMP) process and the advantages and disadvantages of using consultants versus inhouse resources to develop CMPs.			
21 September 2022				
Upper Hunter Economic	Key updates from the meeting included:			
Diversification Committee (convened by Regional NSW)	A regional water strategy is being prepared			
11 November 2022	 Department of Regional NSW have developed a geographical (land based) mapping and data tool to assist with attracting commercial businesses. This drills down to a local level and could be of use to local councils, however it is currently subject to commercial in confidence constraints. 			
	A Renewables Roundtable is scheduled for 1 Dec 2022			
	Regional housing plan - temporary Functional Economic Region status has been assigned to the region which will increase opportunities to attract funding			

Key Stakeholder Engagement	Purpose / Outcomes (where relevant)	
Regional Leadership Executive	Outcomes from the meeting included:	
(convened by Regional NSW)	1. Status of RLE Review	
27 th September 2022	 Existing subcommittee structure is being reviewed to become more project focused. Existing subcommittees will discontinue after each identifies priority initiatives / projects. The RLE will determine which of these will be a focus that may receive seed funding to progress. 	
	The exception to the above is the Upper Hunter Economic Development subcommittee which will continue	
	 Local Government representation will remain as is currently for the RLE, however opportunities will be explored to facilitate increased involvement of General Managers 	
	2. Presentations were provided to the RLE focusing on:	
	Regional Liveability Plan	
	Six Cities Vision and Discussion paper	
New Standing Engagements		
Energy Diversification Working Group (convened by Department of Regional NSW) Scheduled for 30 November 2022		
Additional Strategic Engagemen	nts	
Adapt NSW 2022 Forum - The Adaptation Challenge for Local Government	Melinda Curtis delivered a presentation to the forum on the Climate Change IP&R Package developed by the Hunter JO in collaboration with Member Councils, LGNSW and the NSW Government.	

2 November 2022

Melinda also participated in a panel session focusing on the adaptation challenge for local government, along with other representatives including:

- Tiffany Correggia, Senior Project Officer, OECC, NSW Treasury
- Scott Baker, Community Liaison Specialist, Blueprint for a Resilient Southeast NSW, Canberra Region Joint Organisation

Key Stakeholder Engagement	Purpose / Outcomes (where relevant)
International Conference on Assessing Waste and Recycle. 14 & 15 November 2022	Tim Askew, Regional Policy & Program Manager attended and presented to this 2-day international conference in Melbourne. The focus of Tim's presentation was "Circular Economy in Local Government"
2022 Circularity Conference – Driving Circular Innovation 24-25 November 2022	Eloise Lobsey, Regional Policy & Program Manager is presenting to this 2-day event in Sydney that is designed to share knowledge, collaborate and drive actionable change towards a more circular future. The focus of Eloise's involvement in the conference is "Developing local circular solutions – how do we catalyse and scale localised circular economies"
2022 New South Wales Smart Sensing Network (NSSN) Conference on Circular Economy	Tim Askew, Regional Policy & Program Manager attended and presented this 2-day conference in Newcastle. The focus of Tim's presentation was "The importance of data in the Circular Economy"
27-28 October 2022	
Hunter Innovation Festival 12 October 2022	This one-day event attended by Hunter JO representatives focused on connecting industry, innovators and start-ups to grow the Hunter economy. A primary outcome for the Hunter JO has been identifying the potential opportunity for the HiF to collaborate more closely with Member Councils. This will initially be explored through a presentation by Alex Brennan and Will Rifkin from the HiF Board to the next meeting of the Hunter JO Subcommittee for Economic Evolution.
Newcastle Futuremap workshop (convened by University of Technology Sydney 13 October 2022	The Hunter JO assisted in designing and promoting this workshop that was delivered to approximately 20 SMEs in advanced manufacturing from across the region. The workshop aimed to assist these organisations prepare their strategic planning, to provide them with a clearer idea of where to focus over the next 2 years, and where to access the knowledge, capital and human resources needed to get them there.
	Partners supporting delivery of the workshop included University of Newcastle, TAFE NSW, HunterNet, Regional Development Australia Hunter, AusIndustry, Hunter Joint Organisation, and the Innovative Manufacturing CRC (IMCRC).
Draft Regional Economic Development Strategies presentations from three Functional Economic Regions of Hunter JO council areas: MidCoast, Hunter, Lake Macquarie	Hunter JO staff participated in 3 online sessions delivered by Department of Regional NSW staff that provided updates on the review of the draft Regional Economical Development Strategies for the Mid Coast, Hunter and Lake Macquarie-Central Coast functional economic regions. Technical feedback to the draft reports has also been provided.

Key Stakeholder Engagement	Purpose / Outcomes (where relevant)
Commonwealth Government Net Zero Economy Taskforce 24 October 2022	The Commonwealth Government has established a Taskforce in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to advise the Government on how to support regional communities as Australia transforms to a net zero economy. The Taskforce will bring together perspectives from regional communities, state and territory governments, industry and unions. It will advise the Government on how it can best support regional communities and industries to secure growth and employment opportunities as part of the economic transformation to net zero emissions. This includes how all levels of government can work together to develop a joined-up and well-managed approach to regional transformation in the context of Australia's net zero commitments.
	The Hunter JO CEO met with the Taskforce when they visited the Hunter, as part of a broader program of visiting impacted regions to speak with stakeholders, including local government, industry, unions and community groups. These visits aim to gather insights and reflections on the considerable work already underway in regions, so as to build understanding and inform consideration of how the Commonwealth can be most effective in supporting the economic transformation of regions.
Western Sydney Place Making tour 24 and 25 October 2022	The CEO and Director Policy & Programs both participated (one day each) in a two day "Western Sydney Precincts Tour" organised by the Department of Planning and Environment. The tour was attended by Council and agency representatives from across the Hunter and Central Coast. The purpose of the tour was to:
	 hear the lessons-learnt, opportunities, and challenges of recent Masterplans in Western Sydney.
	 hear from Departmental and Council colleagues on their journey, and how we can collectively translate the draft Hunter Regional Plans Place- Planning vision into reality.
NSW Joint Organisation Chairs	The focus of the next meeting of the Chairs Forum includes:
Forum 17 November 2022	1. Briefing from the Minister for Local Government
17 November 2022	2. Briefing from the Shadow Minister for Local Government
	3. Report from Office of Local Government
	4. Regional Investment Activation Program
	5. JO Executive Officers update on:
	JO Sustainability
	Progressing a systems approach between JOs and State agencies
	Progress on implementation of OLG JO Review
JO Review Implementation Plan Working Groups (Various dates)	The CEO and Director Policy & Programs are participating in 3 working groups comprising JO and NSW Government agency staff from across NSW to progress the implementation of recommendations identified from the review of Joint Organisations completed in 2021 by the Office of Local Government. The focus of working groups in which we are involved include:
	Governance, Promotion and Communication
	Accountability & Performance
	Financial sustainability and boundaries

Status of Regional Funding Applications

Funding Program	Project Summary	Amount Requested	Status
NSW Government's Joint Organisations Net Zero Acceleration (JONZA) grant program Submitted 30 November 2022	The JONZA grant program supports JOs and non-metropolitan Regional Organisations of Councils (ROCs) by providing up to \$155,000 for an internal staff member dedicated to progressing net zero greenhouse gas emission outcomes for member councils. This program aims to support JOs and ROCs in delivering net zero outcomes while building net zero capability within organisations.	\$155,000pa	In development. Applications close 30th November 2022
Disaster Risk Reduction Fund - Local & Regional Risk Reduction stream - Pathway 2 Submitted 12- Jul-22	Reducing regional disaster risk through early action: Place-based collaboration in the Hunter and the Central Coast Facilitation of place-based regional collaboration across four sub projects to empower Councils and communities in the region to reduce disaster risk through early action. Sub projects include: Regional Support and Capacity Building Disaster waste management and resource recovery preparedness Regional transport vulnerabilityand connectivity assessment Simtables for multi-hazard disaster engagement	\$1,499,839	Successful A funding offer of \$1,493,856 has been received from Resilience NSW. We have until 8 th December to return the deed with feedback.
NSW Environment Protection Authority	Regional Contaminated Land Program	\$85,288	Successful Funding has been received to facilitate a further 6 month extension to the Regional Contaminated Land Program.
NSW EPA Regional Illegal Dumping Program	Establishment of Regional Illegal Dumping Program.	Approximately \$580,000 p/a for 5 years (NB final funding amount subject to outcomes of negotiation presently underway)	The Hunter JO Team is in the final stages of: • consultation with Member Councils (and Central Coast Council) staff re the design of the RID Program Model and development of an MOU between the Hunter JO and

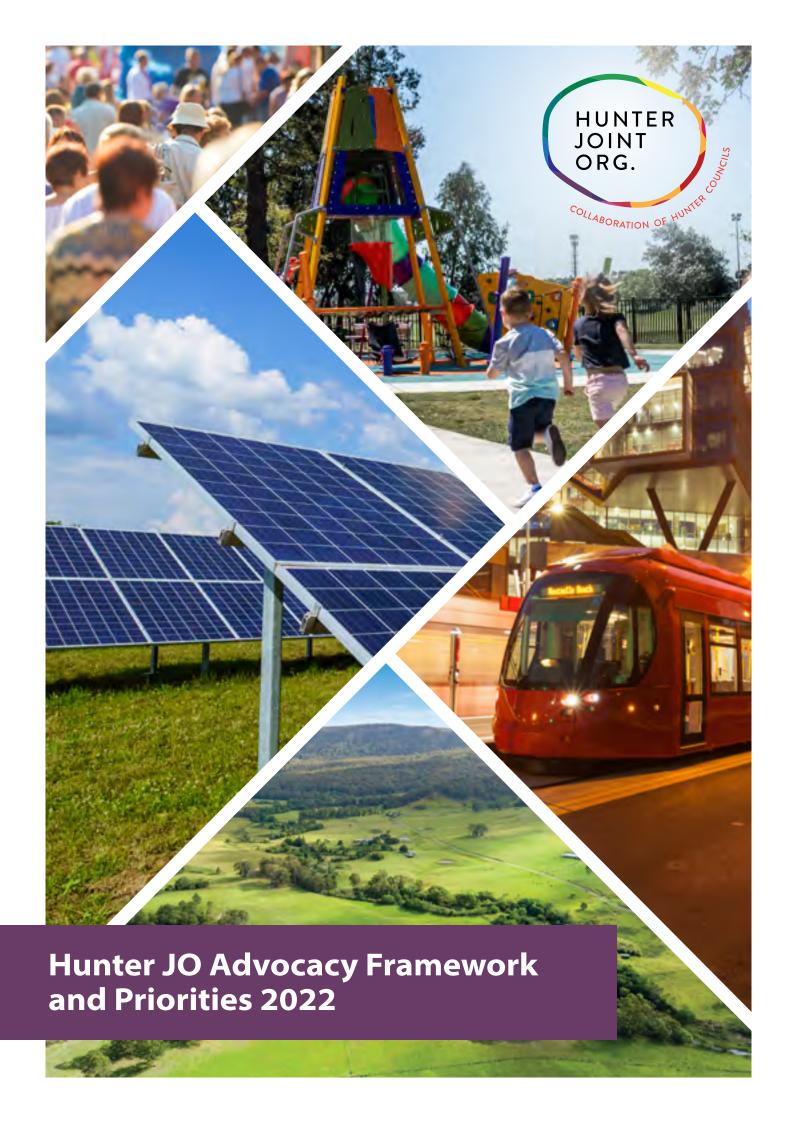
Funding Program	Project Summary	Amount Requested	Status
			Councils to govern roles and responsibilities • negotiating the final details of the funding agreement that will be entered into between the NSW EPA and Hunter JO directly.
Regional NSW Business Case and Strategy Development Fund Submitted 24- Aug-22	 Regional Airports Strategy A strategy & business case for airfreight infrastructure investment and connectivity infrastructure for passenger and airfreight logistics (LIP) for the region. An integrated airports strategy for the region (IRAS) including assessments of passenger, airfreight and transport (PAT) links to each airport across the region. 	\$500,000	Pending
Regional NSW Business Case and Strategy Development Fund Submitted 24- Aug-22	Regional Transition MasterPlan • Providing Place-Based Authoritative Leadership and Policy Certainty through an assessment of transition mechanisms that accelerate Investment, Business Diversification, Job Substitution, and Innovation for the region.	\$368,750	Pending
Regional NSW Business Case and Strategy Development Fund Submitted 24- Aug-22	 Stakeholder engagement to bring all tourism, marketing and economic development organisations across the region to identify how we want to position, brand and market our region as one to potential visitors. Undertaking a review of our region to identify one piece of priority tourism infrastructure needed by our region to attract international visitors. 	\$500,000	Pending
Regional NSW Business Case and Strategy Development Fund	Shiraz to Shore A Shiraz to Shore concept plan with communication and engagement plan	\$387,500	Pending

Funding Program	Project Summary	Amount Requested	Status
Submitted 24- Aug-22	A Hunter cycle tourism destination management plan.		
Regional NSW Business Case and Strategy Development Fund Submitted 24- Aug-22	Regional Electric Vehicle Strategy This project will develop a Regional Electric Vehicle Strategic Plan to provide and promote intra-regional (within the Hunter and Central Coast) and inter-regional (with other NSW regions) EV connectivity.	\$205,438	Pending
Regional NSW Business Case and Strategy Development Fund Submitted 24- Aug-22	 Circular Economy Innovation Hubs A concept plan and strategy for Circular Economy Precincts A concept plan and strategy for CE Futures Hub. 	\$878,600	Pending

The focus of additional funding opportunities also being actively explored / progressed at present include:

Funding Opportunity	Summary	Indicative Value	Status
Get NSW Active Program	The Get NSW Active program provides funding for projects that create safe, easy and enjoyable walking and cycling trips. The opportunity is being explored to seek funding for the Shiraz to Shore Initiative.	tbd	Reviewing grant funding guidelines to determine feasibility and opportunity Applications close 6th January 2023.
NSW Environment Protection Authority	NSW Waste & Sustainable Materials Strategy	Not yet available	While some additional information on the focus of the new contestable funding program is emerging, at this point in time advice remains pending from the NSW EPA as to the focus, design and application process for the revised program.

Recommendation: That the report be received and noted.







The Hunter Region is a Powerhouse of the NSW and National Economies.

It has the largest regional economy in Australia, driving around 28% of regional NSW's total economic output, \$23 billion of which can be attributed to coal exports.

We need to work together to build the region's resilience to changing global energy demands and maintain it's significant contribution to Australia's economies.

Gross Regional Product per person



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What we want for our local communities

We believe it is our responsibility to support and advocate for the people of the Hunter.

Change is upon us now.

We will not allow the quality of life or the opportunities available to our community to be eroded while the economic drivers of our community evolve.

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Our priorities represent the aligned regional interests of the region's ten councils and the directions of the region's ten democratically elected Mayors.

Our Leaders



Cr Sue MooreMayor Singleton Council



Cr Jay Suvaal Mayor Cessnock City Council



Cr John Connors Mayor Dungog Shire Council



Cr Kay FraserMayor Lake Macquarie City Council



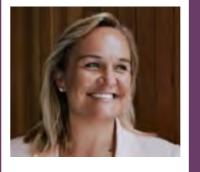
Cr Philip Penfold Mayor Maitland City Council



Cr Claire PontinMayor MidCoast Council



Cr Steven ReynoldsMayor Muswellbrook Shire Council



Cr Nuatali Nelmes Lord Mayor City of Newcastle



Cr Ryan Palmer Mayor Port Stephens Council



Cr Maurice CollisonMayor Upper Hunter Shire Council

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Engagement Driving Priorities

As a region currently facing the downturn of its traditional industries and a fast-growing population, the Hunter's economy needs to evolve to maintain its substantial economic contribution to the State and Federal economies. As we approach one million people by 2040, radical intervention is required to maintain the liveability and economic prosperity of the Hunter to build a region resilient to changing global energy demands.

Individual economic opportunity and value needs to be maintained and improved as the region diversifies away from coal. This will require support and investment from all levels of government.

Our Priorities

Represent the synthesised, collective view of local communities.

Are drawn directly from many 1000's of our constituents, through extensive community engagement undertaken by Councils, in preparing statutory 10 year Community Strategic Plans.

Are based on extensive and measurable quantitative and qualitative data from in-person and online community workshops, pop-up kiosks and online surveys.





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Our unique lifestyle and attractive environment is protected and enhanced.



Unique, diverse and accessible environmental features (waterways, beaches, mountains, bushland and agricultural hinterland).

Advocacy Asks

Housing Availability and Affordability

- 1. Support affordability and increased access to housing.
- 2. Unlock the transport deficit to support increases in supply of higher density housing.

Liveability Infrastructure

Investment in a Liveability program of local government led infrastructure projects.

The local amenity provided by these projects enhance liveability, which is key to global talent attraction. These projects also create local jobs, provide confidence in local business communities of a sustained pipeline of work, and can be rolled out quickly to provide dispersed benefits. The key themes across the whole region include:

- Fixing and upgrading local roads and bridges
- Sporting, recreational and community facilities
- Cycleway and pedestrian infrastructure
- · Improved health facilities, services and research
- Town Centre upgrades and beautification
- Upgrades to water and sewer infrastructure.



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A resilient region prepared for change.



Policy Statements

- 1. The region needs to be prepared for change, and able to withstand and recover from natural and human induced risks (i.e. natural disasters, climate change, economic and social disruption and change).
- **2.** The current system of reactive, post disaster competitive grant processes to facilitate local and regional recovery and resilience planning does not provide the best value for money. Such an approach:
 - Directly fosters competition between regional stakeholders rather than building the alignment and a collaborative approach that is needed to successfully support communities recover from and plan resilience to natural disasters of increasing frequency and intensity
- The current system places a significant administrative impost on Councils in the post disaster period, at the very time that maximum resources (human and financial) need to be focused on disaster recovery and resilience efforts.
- The current grant-based system places a disproportionate negative impact on the capacity of smaller and less resourced Councils and Joint Organisations to access adequate and sustainable recovery and resilience funding.
- 3. The cost of implementing Coastal Management Programs being developed by Councils in collaboration with the NSW Government is prohibitive for Councils, meaning that the objectives and intent of the NSW Government's Coastal Management Act will not be achieved under the current system.



Advocacy Asks

Sustainable Place-based Resilience **Planning and** Resourcing

Commit to more sustainable and strategic place-based planning and resourcing of local and regional recovery and resilience planning, delivered via the collaborative efforts of Local Councils and Joint Organisations. At a minimum such funding should be provided on a four-year, recurrent funding cycle that aligns to the Integrated Planning and Reporting cycles of Councils and Joint Organisations.

Coastal Management Establish a truly collaborative funding model involving significant state resources to effectively meet the objectives and intent of the NSW Government's Coastal Management Act. Innovative funding models are required to enable the State Government and Councils to generate revenue for Coastal Management Programs.

Assets

Rural Fire Service That the NSW Government's determination, applied by the Auditor General, that Rural Fire Service assets (Red Fleet) are the property of councils for accounting purposes be reversed.



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Policy Statements

- As we transition to a clean energy future, we need to evolve the Hunter's economy to ensure a steady increase in the region's economic outputs, so that the dominance of coal is replaced with other products and services, at a level that will:
 - Replace and provide more jobs than those currently provided by traditional heavy industries
 - Maintain and improve the lifestyle and opportunities available for our local communities.
- 2. The economic evolution needed in the Hunter requires intervention and investment across all sectors and levels of government. Investment that accelerates and amplifies market driven investment in innovation and capitalises on the region's existing natural strengths and attributes is the priority.
- 3. The region needs a clear, place-based, integrated whole of government policy and planning approach to drive the Region's economic evolution, including:
 - Create a structure for better information, collaboration and agreement on the economic evolution strategy for the Hunter.
 - Establish an entity that has the authority and resources from the Commonwealth and NSW Governments necessary to drive and deliver the Region's economic evolution. The entity would provide institutional capacity with a focus on expert and empowered place-based planning and decision-making capability.

- Establish a specialised local investment and redevelopment entity, with place-based leadership collaborating with government, to drive the industrial changes needed to transition the Hunter's economy.
- Support businesses and workers impacted by changes in the economy with dedicated innovation and transition support services.
- 4. Design of the Royalties for Rejuvenation program strategically and systematically fund the transition required to support coal mining communities to attract and develop new industries in the long-term
- 5. The \$25M per annum currently allocated across NSW coal mining regions from the Royalties for Rejuvenation program, is insufficient to support the investment needed to proactively catalyse the region's economic evolution.
- 6. Accelerating planning and investment in key regional catalyst areas is critical to driving the economic evolution of the region and to making the Hunter a globally connected region.



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All levels of government contribute to ensuring the Hunter's successful economic evolution.



Coordinated **Planning and Investment**

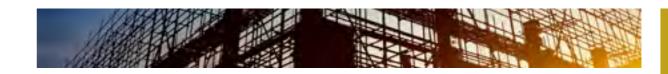
- A commitment to establish a regional entity based in the Hunter, with the authority and resources from the Commonwealth and NSW Governments, necessary to drive and deliver the Region's economic evolution.
- Establish a "place-based deal" for the Hunter, entered by all levels of Government, that provides clear priorities for public and private investment and planning in the Hunter for the next 30 years.
- **Develop an Integrated Transport Plan** for the Hunter Region that identifies and delivers:
 - · Increased accessibility to diverse transport options that provide genuine options for our
 - Clear priorities and funding for transport infrastructure and services to support a population of 1 million people by 2041
 - Frequency and accessibility to a diversity of transport services and systems that provide a truly sustainable '15-minute region' via genuine multi-modal, fast and efficient non-car based intra-regional connections, particularly between key facilities including Newcastle Airport, tertiary educational facilities (University & TAFE), health and medical services and regional transport nodes.
- Make both legislation and policy changes to provide clarity, certainty and a clear pathway to enable access to and adaptation of former mining and mining buffer lands.

Royalties for Rejuvenation

- Increase the level of funding allocated overall to the Royalties for Rejuvenation program.
- Allocate funds from the program to a "place-based deal" or entity to drive and deliver the coordinated and integrated approach needed to ensure the region's economic evolution

NOTE: Establishing a competitive grant process in the Hunter to determine the allocation of funds from the Royalties for Rejuvenation Program will not deliver the best value for money or the necessary outcome from these funds. It will instead:

- Significantly undermine the credibility of the program and its potential role in strategically shaping the economic evolution of the region beyond coal.
- Directly foster competition between regional stakeholders rather than building the alignment and collaborative approach that is needed to successfully plan and deliver the Hunter's economic evolution.



Investment in Innovation

Invest \$1.5M per annum for 10 years to create and operate a "Hunter Innovation **Entity"** which will:

- Support the commercialisation of research and other innovation in the Hunter region
- Support ventures which leverage opportunities in energy transition or diversify Hunter economic activity
- Incubate, accelerate and activate the innovation ecosystem that will attract investors and provide confidence that there is a pipeline of viable Hunter investment opportunities

Establish a \$50M Hunter Venture Fund, to be co-funded by all levels of Government, research and industry partners which will:

- Accelerate the flow of capital into the region to support the innovation ecosystem and drive investment.
- Activate a pipeline of projects that attracts ongoing private sector investment.
- Address concerns around access to a depth of readily available capital for early-stage ventures in the Hunter

Building the Nation's **Leading Circular Economy** Region

Invest \$2.65M over 3 years to position the Hunter as Australia's leading Circular Economy region:

- Circular Economy Precincts (\$0.9M) delivery of concept plans for 4 multi-element circular economy precincts across the region. Each precinct will represent a key strength or resource available, and establish circular processing, green energy and value-added businesses that deliver new industries and jobs to the Hunter.
- Circular Economy Futures Hub (\$1.75M) to drive the growth of the Circular Economy across the Hunter and Central Coast by Councils, government agencies, education, business and industry groups and the community including:
- Delivering the region's Circular Economy Roadmap
- Acquire and share research and information, and provide a "problem concierge" (i.e. a regional broker to link stakeholders with issues to those who can provide solutions)
- Curate and grow the Circular Economy ecosystem
- Facilitate and deliver projects and initiatives across organisations
- Consistent and coordinated promotion of the region to researchers, innovators and investors.

Catalysing Investment

Government planning documents recognise and prioritise investment to accelerate planning and development of key regional catalyst areas, including:

- Williamtown Special Activation Precinct
- John Hunter Hospital Health and Innovation Precinct East Maitland Catalyst Precinct
- Lake Macquarie Northwest Catalyst Area
- Callaghan
- Beresfield Black Hill

- Broadmeadow (Hunter Park)
- Newcastle Port
- Tomago
- Kotara





Advocacy Asks

Global Gateways •

- All levels of government confirm their support for the Commonwealth Government's commitment of \$66 million to upgrade the Newcastle Airport runway to Code E status
- All levels of government confirm their support for the Newcastle Airport terminal upgrade
- Establish a permanent Australian Border Force presence at Newcastle Airport following commissioning of the airport runway upgrade to Code E status.
- **Invest in development of a Transport Master Plan** that prioritises and improves accessibility for people and freight from across the region to key international transport and export hubs including Newcastle Airport and the Port of Newcastle.
- Remove restrictions in the Port of Newcastle Port Commitment Deed impeding the development of the Newcastle Container Terminal.

Building International **Profile and Visitation**

Invest \$4M over three years for "Hunter Global - Regional Tourism Marketing, Concierge & Product Packaging." To capitalise on direct international access created by the Newcastle Airport runway and passenger terminal upgrades, this initiative is necessary to provide coordination and promotion to grow the number of international visitors directly entering the region and entice them to stay and spend longer. Key elements include:

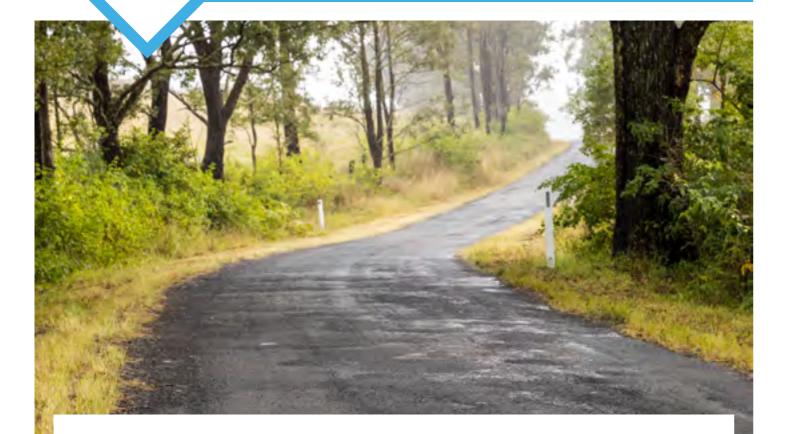
- A unified and collaborative approach across the Hunter Region to connect experiences and create compelling itineraries (e.g. food and wine trails, coastal experiences, coast to mountains, rural hinterland, ecotourism trail, adventure experiences etc)
- Scoping the opportunities, focus and delivery mechanisms for existing booking systems to provide a whole of region approach to international travel packaging and
- Identifying key barriers and opportunities for attracting international visitors directly to the region via Newcastle Airport
- Market research to identify core international markets aligned to the region's key tourism assets and experiences
- Development and delivery of a targeted international marketing campaign.



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Infrastructure and transport systems that connect the region.



Policy Statements

- Addressing the existing infrastructure deficit and improving intra-regional transport connectivity is key to realising the broader aspiration and strategic goals for the region, which are focused around: Jobs & A Growing Economy; Connectivity; Liveability; and Resilience.
- Investment in digital connectivity and the elimination of mobile black spots across the region are fundamental to ensure community access to core health and education opportunities, and to enable business development, growth and innovation.
- 3. Uptake of electric cars, bicycles and other vehicles is increasing rapidly and will continue to accelerate over the coming years. Providing a pathway and level of confidence for private

- and commercial users is needed to support the transition to Electric Vehicles, and in doing so, improve intra and inter regional connectivity and accessibility for EVs in a way that supports regional liveability, local place making, economic activity and the visitor economy.
- 4. Improving connectivity of the region's cycling experiences and networks and increasing cycle tourism provides clear benefits to local communities and economies, including new jobs within the visitor economy, preventive health outcomes, enhanced recreational opportunities and social connectivity, and environmental benefits such as reducing car use and contributing towards net zero emissions targets.



Advocacy Asks

Digital Connectivity

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 core health and education opportunities, and to enable business development, growth and innovation.

Integrated Transport Planning

Develop an Integrated Transport Plan for the Hunter Region that identifies and delivers:

- Clear priorities and funding for transport infrastructure and services to support a population of 1 million people by 2041
- Frequency and accessibility to a diversity of transport services and systems that
 provide a truly sustainable "15-minute region" via genuine multi-modal, fast and
 efficient non-car based intra-regional connections, particularly between key facilities
 including Newcastle Airport, tertiary educational facilities (University & TAFE), health
 and medical services and regional transport nodes.
- \$500M to establish an Enabling Infrastructure Fund to invest in urban infrastructure that will free up land capable of supporting the construction of over 25,000 homes and generate an annual economic output of \$12.9 billion including the creation of 15,700 jobs.

For more information - Partnering for Growth

Local and Regional Road Network

- Confirm the process and timeframe for completing a review of the road classification system across all of NSW.
- Streamline the process for Councils to apply for the reclassification of roads from regional to state status and local to regional status



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Infrastructure and transport systems that connect the region.





Cycle Based Tourism

\$1M investment in Stage 1 of "Shiraz to Shore", a region-wide recreational and tourism initiative that connects and amplifies a collection of already outstanding cycle experiences that span mountain, road and leisure riding across the Hunter. Stage 1 will develop the Shiraz to Shore concept as a nationally and internationally recognised destination for recreational and high value cycling tourists, including development of:

- Destination Masterplan
- Website to collate all existing cycling experiences in the Hunter into one comprehensive location
- · Marketing Plan
- Product development.

Contribution to the \$71M build program for Shiraz to Shore, to link existing and planned cycleway infrastructure, local businesses and points of interest across all council areas to create an integrated region wide network. Connecting the picturesque Hunter wine country to the spectacular coastal beaches and lakes through this initiative, will activate cycle tourism as a significant contributor to our local and regional economies, and to the Hunter's broader economic evolution. The breakdown of the project sections are (from the vineyards towards the coast) are:

- Shiraz Section (Pokolbin to Cessnock) \$17.5m
- Cessnock to Kurri Section \$14m
- Richmond Vale Rail Trail \$39.6m
- Broke to Hermitage Road
- Hermitage Road to Pokolbin and
- Branxton to Hermitage Road

Transition to Electric Vehicles

\$300K to develop a Regional Strategic Plan for Electric Vehicle (EV) infrastructure to support a region-wide transition to EV's.

The plan will identify:

- Priority locations and types of recharging stations to provide a strategic and
 consolidated network across the region that is integrated with community, business
 and tourism facilities. This will provide confidence to local communities of access to
 recharging facilities and underpin increased visitation to the region based on the
 Hunter being "EV friendly".
- Priority actions (and collaborative opportunities) for Councils to transition their own corporate fleets to EV, and to identify the mechanisms through which this could be delivered in a collaborative manner (e.g. policy alignment, regional monitoring, regional procurement).

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2

Improving authority and resourcing for place-led decision-making at a local and regional scale.



Policy Statements

- Wherever possible and appropriate, delegation of decision-making authority to place-led mechanisms strengthens social fabric and empowers communities.
- Increasing the authority of local decisionmaking can, and will, come with increased accountability of decision makers to communities. This can occur through statutory and funding requirements but principally is manifested through the proximity of local elected representatives to community and the democratic process.
- 3. Having genuine local decision-making authority, encourages members of a local community to have an active voice in matters that affect their lives and encourages them to advocate for the voice of others with whom they are connected within their communities.

- It provides communities with a sense of control of their individual and collective futures and drives improved and more meaningful place-led dialogue.
- 4. Increasing the authority of local-decision making is only meaningful if supported with appropriate resourcing. This requires both structural change in the resourcing of local government and also more structured and genuine collaboration between all three levels of government to efficiently use scarce resources.
- 5. The financial sustainability of a stable source of "royalty" revenue is needed to fund local infrastructure in local communities that bear the impacts, or otherwise have restrictions arising from the contribution of that place to broader regional or state benefits.



Advocacy Asks

Authority with Resourcing

Restore Financial Assistance Grants to at least 1 percent of Commonwealth taxation revenue via a phased approach.

A fair share of Commonwealth tax revenue is essential to the continued livability of our communities. Financial Assistance Grants, as a source of operating revenue provided to local government, has declined in a highly material, in some instances almost existential, manner over the past 20 years. Funding should be restored in a planned and phased approach to 1% to minimise budgetary shock. Funding should remain untied, meaning it can be spent where it is most needed.

Greater Cities Commission

A formal governance arrangement be enshrined between the Greater Newcastle Cities Commissioner 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), that enshrines a process for regular and meaningful communication and collaboration between the Greater Newcastle Cities Commissioner and the five Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Area Mayors.

Road-funding Reform

Commence and lead collaborative reform between all three levels of government in how roads are planned, managed and funded.

Local roads underpin the economy on which local jobs and community amenity depend as well as the productivity of the national tax base. Structural change should not leave some communities worse off but should repair the structural inequity of the current system where regional communities bear an undue road-funding burden compared with capital city counterparts.



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Improving authority and resourcing for place-led decision-making at a local and regional scale.





Returning a share of the NSW Government's water dividend to support the communities of the Dungog Shire

A share of the dividend paid to the NSW Government by Hunter Water be provided to Dungog Shire Council

With 80% of the greater Newcastle and Lower Hunter's water supply coming from within the Dungog local government area, the Councils of the Hunter JO seek a share of the dividend paid to the NSW Government by Hunter Water to be provided to Dungog Shire Council to support the future of its communities.

Alignment of NSW grant programs with the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

A simplification and alignment of government grant programs to Council Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

Simplification of state government grants and a 4-year commitment (to align to IPR cycle) to each LGA. This would save everyone so much time and allow far better local and regional outcomes.

At a minimum such funding should be provided on a four-year, recurrent funding cycle that aligns to the Integrated Planning and Reporting cycles of Councils and Joint Organisations.

- More standardised approaches to the timing and process of funding applications to align with IP&R processes of Councils
- Government grant programs recognise and fund the priorities identified in Council IP&R Frameworks (ie the core business)

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MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 1 December 2022

LOCAL EXPERTISE SHAPES FUTURE OF HUNTER

Community leaders and local representatives have been appointed as members on the Hunter Regional Expert Panel, one of four panels established to provide input into the NSW Government's Royalties for Rejuvenation Fund.

Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional NSW Paul Toole said the panel members were appointed after a competitive, merit-based recruitment process.

"The panel, comprising of members with a diverse range of skills, expertise, backgrounds and experiences, will provide me with advice and recommendations on applications received through the Royalties for Rejuvenation Fund to ensure that decision-making is aligned with the needs of the local area," Mr Toole said.

"These panel members, who will serve over a three-year term, will have a say in how the Fund is invested towards projects and initiatives like strategic planning and workforce development programs, the development of enabling infrastructure and the establishment of new industries and job opportunities.

"Importantly, we have established the Fund and appointed the Expert Panel members at a time when export thermal coal prices are at record highs, with several mining companies planning to expand and extend the life of their mining operations across the Hunter."

Member for Upper Hunter Dave Layzell said 28 positions have been appointed across the four prescribed coal mining regions of the Hunter, Illawarra, North West and Central West.

"The expert panel blends a mix of local understanding and expert industry knowledge which will be critical to developing the future direction of industry in the Hunter region," Mr Layzell said.

"The panel has a very important task ahead, so I look forward to working with them closely."

Hunter Regional Expert Panel chair Bob Hawes thanked the Minister for his confidence, saying the panel can hit the ground running as a consequence of the work done through the interim panel since early 2022.

"We have continuity as a consequence of a number of the members from the interim

panel being re-appointed. The composition of the panel means significant locally based intelligence and input will inform the recommendations that will be considered by government," Mr Hawes said.

"I'm excited at the prospect of working with a diverse group in the interests of the future of the region and building it's resilience."

The NSW Government has committed at least \$25 million each year from mining royalties to support coal mining communities in NSW through the Royalties for Rejuvenation Fund.

For more information about the Royalties for Rejuvenation Fund, visit nsw.gov.au/RoyaltiesRejuvenation.

MEDIA: Ella Smith | 0428 745 348

The Hunter Regional Expert Panel members are:

- Mr Bob Hawes, Chairperson
- Professor Roberta Ryan, panel member
- Mr Joe James, panel member
- Ms Elizabeth Watts, panel member
- Mr James Barben, panel member
- Mr Warrick Jordan, panel member
- Mr John Turner, panel member
- Mr Brendan Moyle, panel member
- Ms Fiona Plesman, panel member
- Mr Robin Williams, panel member

Report Author: Lisa Lord, Head of Finance

Responsible Officer: Joe James, CEO

A copy of the Hunter JO Financial Reports for October has been provided at Attachment 15.

Recommendation: That the Financial Reports for year-to-date October 2022 be received and noted.

HUNTER JOINT ORGANISATION



HUNTER JOINT ORGANISAT	ION									ORG.
INCOME STATEMENT - SUMMARY	cu	JRRENT MONTH Budget	% Variance		YEAR TO DATE Budget	% Variance	Approved Annual	Forecast Annual	% Variance	Forecast - Budget Variance Commentary
OCTOBER 22	Actual Current	Current	Current	Actual Current	Current	Current	Budget	Budget	Forecast	on variances of 10% or more of a line item or 2.5% of revenue or expenditure total
REVENUE MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS										
Member Councils Other	47,058	46,482	1%	188,232	185,929 -	1%	557,787 -	564,696 -	1%	Increase to reflect ASV
PROJECT FUNDING										
Commonwealth Grants State Grants	-	-		- 244,822	-		- 1,190,674	- 1,190,674	0%	
Member Councils Project Funding		-		298,870	-		-	-	070	
Other Project Funding Internal Project Funding _Arrow	39,413	39,413	0%	- 157,650	- 157,650	0%	- 472,950	- 472,950	0%	
Internal Project Funding - LGL	8,758	8,758	0%	35,033	35,033	0%	105,100	105,100	0%	
Internal Project Funding - Goodchat	4,379	4,379	0%	17,517	17,517	0%	52,550	52,550	0%	
MISCELLANEOUS Trainee Incentives					_					
	(4.000)			2.250						Reverse accomodation costs associated with Strategy workshop previously brought in @ 30.6.2022 & then invoiced to councils on the 11.7.2022
Miscellaneous Income Other	(1,909) 20,469	19,627	4%	2,250 93,339	88,010	6%	256,191	256,191	0%	Key staff costs billed to Arrow
Revenue - Total	118,168	118,659	0%	1,037,713	484,139	114%	2,635,252	2,642,161	0	
GROSS MARGIN	118,168	118,659	0%	1,037,713	484,139	114%	2,635,252	2,642,161	0%	
Gross Margin %	100%	100%		100%	100%	2470	100%	100%	21%	
GENERAL & ADMINISTRATION										
Accounting Fees Advertising & Promotions	_	300	-100%	236	1,200	-80%	3,600	3,600	0%	
Audit & Assurance	1,290	1,290	0%	5,160	5,160	0%	15,480	15,480	0%	
Bad Debts Bank Charges	26	35	-26%	105	126	-17%	406	406	0%	
Catering & Functions	1,177	600	96%	1,971	1,200	64%	12,400	12,400	0%	
Corporate Overheads Filing Fees	10,570	10,570	0%	42,280	42,280	0%	126,840	126,840	0%	
Insurance - PI & PL Insurance - Volunteers	755	750	1%	3,020	3,000	1%	9,000	9,000	0%	
Legal Fees	-	-		5,181	-		-	-		
Miscellaneous Photocopier charges	-	120	-100%	1,372	480	-100%	1,440	- 1,440	0%	
Postage	-	-		13	-		60	60	0%	
Printing & Stationery Professional Fees	20	20	0%	47	80	-41%	3,200	3,200	0%	
Quality Assurance & Audit Records Storage / destruction	-	150	-100%	-	600	-100%	1,800	1,800	0%	
Scanner - Lease payments										
Subscriptions and Licences Telephone - Landline	1,010 30	1,630 25	-38% 20%	3,390 121	6,519 100	-48% 21%	19,556 300	19,556 300	0% 0%	
Telephone - Mobile	55	100	-45%	473	400	18%	1,200	1,200	0%	
Board Functions - Venue Hire	127	-		1,581	750	111%	2,250	2,250	0%	Meeting room for CEO Preformance review
OCCUPANCY COSTS Rent & Outgoings	6,783	1,155	487%	27,133	21,504	26%	30,744	30,744	0%	
	3,145	-,		,	,					
DEPRECIATION Depreciation - Building										
Depreciation - Computer Depreciation - Furniture & Fittings	62	175	-65%	117	601	-80%	2,002	2,002	0%	
Depreciation - Furniture & Fittings Depreciation - Motor Vehicles	1,804	1,804	0%	7,217	7,217	0%	21,650	21,650	0%	
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY										
IT Management	336	450	-25%	1,597	1,800	-11%	5,400	5,400	0%	
Repairs & Maintenance - IT IT Software Maintenance / Support		222	-100%		888	-100%	- 2,664	2,664	0%	
Website Maintenance / Support	13	68	-81%	13	271	-95%	813	813	0%	
OVERHEAD LABOUR										
Wages & Salaries Superannuation	32,067 3,361	30,900 3,245	4% 4%	148,582 15,595	139,051 14,600	7% 7%	404,555 42,478	404,555 42,478	0% 0%	
Payroll Tax	-	-		-	-		-	-		
Workers Compensation FBT	750 1,940	732 1,940	2% 0%	5,138 7,760	3,296 7,761	56% 0%	9,588 23,284	9,588 23,284	0% 0%	
Leave Provisions	2,519	1,706	48%	9,983	7,676	30%	22,331	22,331	0%	
EMPLOYEE COSTS										
Recuitment Training & Development		-		- 3,388	2,300	47%	- 4,600	4,600	0%	
Uniforms Staff Amentities	-	-		-	-		-	-		
		-			-			-		
TRAVEL & ACCOMODATION										
Meals & Accomodation	419	80	424%	938	820	14%	1,860	1,860	0%	Costs associated with training in Canberra
Fares & Parking Milleage Allowance	1,572	500	214%	3,311	2,000	66%	6,000	6,000	0%	
MOTOR VEHICLE										
Fuels & oils	789	900	-12%	3,756	3,600	4%	10,800	10,800	0%	
Insurance - Motor Vehicle Registration and CTP Insurance	1,845	223 186	727% -100%	2,879 1,825	893 744	223% 145%	2,678 2,233	2,678 2,233	0% 0%	\$1500 excess was paid for accident
Repairs & Maintenance - Motor Vehicle	-	-		1,017	1,000	2%	2,000	2,000	0%	
Vehicle Hire										
PROJECT EXPENSES Project Funding Disbursement				543,692			1,190,674	1,190,674	0%	
Grant Disbursement	-	-		-	-		-	-	U%	
Consultants	-	-		-	-		-	-		
Overhead Expenses - Total	69,320	59,876	16%	848,891	277,916	205%	1,983,886	1,983,886	-	
% of Revenue	59%	50%	-3809%	82%	57%	180%	75%	75%	0%	

NET PROFIT - OPERATIONS	48,848	58,783	-17%	188,822	206,223	-8%	651,366	658,275	1%	
Net Profit Margin	41%	50%		18%	43%		25%		86%	
OTHER INCOME / (EXPENSES) OTHER INCOME Profit / Loss on sale of asset Interest	-	÷		:	Ī		:	Ī		
OTHER EXPENSES Interest RPPD Funding	- (54,281)	- (54,281)	0%	- (217,122)	- (217,122)	0%	- (651,366)	- (651,366)	0%	
Other Income / (Expenses) - Total	(54,281)	(54,281)	0%	(217,122)	(217,122)	0%	(651,366)	(651,366)	-	
NET PROFIT BEFORE TAX	(5,432)	4,503		(28,300)	(10,899)	160%	(0)	6,909		

Report Author: Steve Wilson, Director Regional Policy & Programs

Responsible Officer: Joe James, CEO

7.3.1 Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan Steering Committee

A workshop was held with the Subcommittee on 13th October to identify priority opportunities for collaboration with the recently appointed Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle City Cities Commissioner, Matt Endacott. The priorities identified include:

1. Partnership and collaboration

- Building a strong and effective collaborative relationship between the GNMP Mayors and the Commissioner, characterised by strong 2-way communication
- Supporting the Commissioner's success will support the region's success
- Providing strong and collective thought leadership for the region.

2. Building on strong foundations

- Building the narrative to showcase the region's strengths, successes and key opportunities
- Showcasing the region and its opportunities to the GCC. Invite GCC representatives to the region to see and understand its strengths, opportunities and priorities
- Review and build on the good planning work already completed in the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan and other local and regional strategies, rather than starting completely anew. The existing GNMP should be seen as a starting point for the preparation of the City Plan.
- Accelerating delivery of priority catalyst growth areas, such as Williamtown SAP, Health innovation precinct, Newcastle Airport and Hunter Park

The new Commissioner Matt Endacott attended the subsequent meeting of the Subcommittee held on 10 November 2022, at which these and other priorities for collaboration were discussed. Matt also provided an overview of the role and functions of the Commissioner and how the role can be leveraged to progress the region's shared objectives.

No reply has yet been received to the correspondence (dated 8th September 2022) to the Hon Rob Stokes, Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport, which invited the involvement of the City Commissioner in the monthly meetings of the Subcommittee, to provide the key governance and communication link needed between the GCC and ourselves to ensure successful alignment and collaboration moving forward.

7.3.2 Circular Economy Sub Committee

There has been no meeting of the Subcommittee during the reporting period. The next meeting is scheduled for 6 December 2022.

7.3.3 Subcommittee for Economic Evolution

The most recent meeting of the Subcommittee was held on 13th October 2022. The key focus of the Subcommittee remains advocacy to the NSW and Commonwealth Governments around:

• The need for a regional entity based in the Hunter, with the authority and resources necessary to drive, coordinate and deliver the substantive and rapid economic evolution needed to maintain the Hunter's resilience, liveability, and economic prosperity in the face of a rapidly growing population and decline of our traditional coal and energy-based industries.

• Concerns surrounding the design, focus and level of funding allocated to the Royalties for Rejuvenation program

These concerns, within the context of the broader regional economic evolution challenges facing the region, are being communicated to NSW Ministers, Shadow Ministers and Hunter based Members of Parliament as part of the NSW Parliamentary engagement currently underway (refer CEO Report). Members of the Subcommittee including Cr Sue Moore, Cr Jay Suvaal, Cr Steven Reynolds and Cr John Connors have all been involved in recent advocacy activities targeting NSW Parliamentary representatives that are communicating these priorities.

Recommendation: That the Board note the updates on the Hunter JO Sub-Committees

Report Author: Anna Flack, Regional Environmental Projects Coordinator

Responsible Officer: Melinda Curtis, Regional Policy and Program Manager - Environment

Purpose:

To provide an overview of the achievements of the Contaminated Land Council Regional Capacity Building (CRCB) Program delivered to date and an update on the next steps including expected funding extension from the EPA beyond 2022.

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 Contaminated Land Regional Capacity Building (CRCB) Program is a NSW EPA Grant funded initiative delivered by the Hunter JO since 2014. Grant funding for the current 3-year program was scheduled to finish in August 2022 but has now been extended until June 2023 following requests from the Hunter JO and other NSW JOs. 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 + 12-month extension)
NSW EPA	\$420,000 + \$175,663
Councils	\$118,000
TOTAL	\$713,663

Report

The objectives of the Contaminated Land CRCB 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. It provides significant support to Councils to effectively identify, assess and manage contaminated sites on private and Council managed land, and to support Councils' transition as regulators of the Underground Petroleum Storage System (UPSS) Regulation.

Key achievements of the program to include:

- Significant uptake in use of the Contaminated Land Service Desk between October 2021 and October 2022, 31 requests totalling over 165 hours have been resolved through the contaminated.land@hunterjo.com.au inbox. 3 Councils are high users of this service.
- Development of 11 support resources, including the Hunter JO Model Contaminated Land Policy. These resources and policy are not only being used in the Hunter region, but also by other Councils across Sydney and NSW. NSW EPA is currently developing a state-wide model contaminated land policy, largely based on the Hunter JO Policy.
- Extensive resource library available through the Hunter JO Contaminated Land website https://www.hunterjo.com.au/projects/regional-contaminated-land-program/
- Increasing attendance at forums and training sessions:

Date	Event	No. participants	No. Councils
June 2022	Contaminated Land for Planners training	120 (across 3 sessions)	10
May 2022	Regional Forum on Problem Contaminants (asbestos and PFAS)	25	8
August 2021	Asbestos in soil workshop	18	11
May 2021	Decoding Contaminated Land Reports; Session 1 - PSI and SAQP's	49	11
June 2021	Decoding Contaminated Land Reports; Session 2 - Quality Assurance / Quality Controls + Air Quality Assessments	34	11
February 2021	PFAS Risks session	13	11
November 2020	Undertaking an Initial Review and Initiating the Investigation, Remediation & Site Audit Process workshops x 4	46 (across 4 sessions)	11
November 2020	SPEL stormwater workshop	34	11
August 2020	Role of laboratories in contaminated land management	22	11
May 2020	Maintenance and monitoring requirements of UPSS infrastructure	21	11
March 2020	On site UPSS training sessions x 4	15	8

- Bi-monthly working group meetings to share experiences and learnings, with good engagement and well attended by most Councils
- 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 Information System (register) in place, while 6 are working towards updating or improving their Contaminated Land Information System
- 10 out of 11 Councils have allocated responsibility for UPSS management, however 5 require support embedding UPSS procedures

Specific feedback provided by Council staff from across the region in regard to the program generally and specifically in regard to workshops delivered includes:

- "Well planned, great speakers and informative subjects" (Regional Forum on Problem Contaminants)
- "I enjoyed the mix of industry experts and local gov practical examples" (Regional Forum on Problem Contaminants)
- "I loved that there were regular breaks so we could discuss/network, and that there were not only information-based presentations but case studies as well. I really enjoyed the whole day" (Regional Forum on Problem Contaminants)
- "I wasn't aware of the range of great resources now on the HJO site! Thanks for preparing these, they will be very useful" (Contaminated Land for Planners training)
- "As a junior, I found this really informative. The links to all the resources are incredibly helpful moving forward. Thank you for these training sessions" (Contaminated Land for Planners training)
- "Thank you Time well spent" (Working Group meeting)

An overview of program achievements is also provided in Attachment 16.

Future funding

The current iteration of the Contaminated Land CRCB Program has run since July 2019 and has recently been extended for an additional 6 months, in addition to the first 6-month extension initially provided. This will now take the program through to a completion date of June 2023. However, beyond that date there will still exist a high demand for the program among Member Council staff, and an ongoing need to support Councils with technical matters, build capacity and provide a trusted link between Councils and the EPA. The EPA and NSW JOs are also discussing the potential for developing a state-wide EPA-endorsed contaminated land toolkit, drawing on all the valuable experiences and learnings from the current Contaminated Land CRCB Program.

The Hunter JO and other NSW JOs have also petitioned to the Minister for Environment and Heritage, the Hon. James Griffin MP, seeking certainty around long-term funding for this program. Whilst there has not been any formal confirmation at the time of writing, we are hopeful of a positive outcome for the future of the Contaminated Land CRCB Program.

Recommendation:

That the report be received and noted.

Key Achievements of the Contaminated Land CRCB Program 2020 - 2022



4 out of 11 Councils with a Contaminated **Land Information System**

7 working towards updating or improving their system



31 Service Desk **Requests Totalling** over 165 hours in the past year



8 out of 11 Councils with a **Contaminated Land Policy**

including 7 who have or intend to adopt the Hunter JO **Model Policy**



Hunter JO Contaminated Land Website

hunterjo.com.au/projects/ regional-contaminated-land-program



11 Support Resources including the Hunter JO Model **Contaminated Land Policy**



Bi-monthly Working Group Meetings

11 Training Sessions, Workshops and Forums totalling 400 Participants including:

Contaminated Land for Planners

3 sessions - June 2022



Decoding Contaminated Land Reports

2 sessions - May 2021



Undertaking an Initial Review and Initiating the Investigation, Remediation and Site Audit Process

workshops - November 2020



Recent Feedback from Councils

"I enjoyed the mix of industry experts and local government practical examples"

"As a junior, I found this really informative. The links to all the resources are incredibly helpful moving forward. Thank you for these training sessions"

"Thank you - Time well spent"

"I wasn't aware of the range of great resources now on the HJO site! Thanks for preparing these, they will be very useful"

"Well planned, great speakers and informative subjects"

"I loved that there were regular breaks so we could discuss/network, and that there were not only information-based presentations but case studies as well. I really enjoyed the whole day"

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

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 program continues to progress well, with program highlights in this reporting period including:

- 3 demonstrations or "train the trainer" sessions
- 2 community workshops
- 1 x RFS loan (Berkely Vale RFS)
- Assisted with facilitation of Simtable training with Noosa Council and QFES staff.

The focus of the upcoming reporting period will be to deliver Simtable workshops in those LGAs that have not yet received any.

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

Cities Power Partnership Program	
Program / Project Lead	Mel Curtis
Durnosa:	

Purpose:

To support regional collaborative efforts by Councils, the Hunter JO and Cities Power Partnership (CPP) in delivery of shared pledges on climate action made by Councils.

Status update:

In line with the agreed regional priorities and pledges identified by Councils through the CPP Program:

- A funding proposal has been submitted to the Regional NSW Business Case and Strategy
 Development Program, for the development of a Regional Electric Vehicle Strategic Plan to
 provide and promote intra-regional (within the Hunter and Central Coast) and inter-regional
 (with other NSW regions) EV connectivity. Advice on the outcome of the funding application
 remains pending.
- A funding application is also currently being prepared under the JONZA grant program, a new State Government program to support JOs and non-metropolitan Regional Organisations of Councils to progress net zero greenhouse gas emission outcomes for member councils. This program aims to support JOs and ROCs in delivering net zero outcomes while building net zero capability within organisations. Applications close 30th December 2022.

Hunter Central Coast Regional Illegal Dumping Program

Program / Project Lead Tim Askew and 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:

The Hunter JO Team is in the final stages of:

- Consultation with Member Councils (and Central Coast Council) staff re the design of a RID Program Model and development of an MOU between the Hunter JO and Councils to govern roles and responsibilities
- Negotiating the final details of the funding agreement that will be entered into between the NSW EPA and Hunter JO directly.

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

Community Recycling Centres Awareness Campaign			
Program / Project Lead	Susan McDonald		

Purpose:

To deliver a regionally coordinated approach to promoting community awareness of Community Recycling Centres (CRC's).

Status update:

MidCoast and Central Coast Councils have recently joined the CRC education program. We are currently working with these Councils to integrate them within the broader program

Circular Economy Procurement Program / Project Lead Tim Askew

Purpose:

To support Councils to prioritise recycled materials and circular economy services in their procurement systems and processes, and to collaborate with the Hunter JO and other participating councils to develop a common framework for a joint regional procurement of recycled materials.

Status update:

The Circular Economy procurement methods and tools are currently being tested and readied for deployment. The main task will be to position the work for limited implementation into Councils and to seek funding for broader implementation over the next few years.

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

3.4 Work with the 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

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:

As previously reported, the company Henshall Capital P/L were engaged by the Hunter JO to test the viability of an innovation fund for the region. This work included extensive consultation with investment industry and innovation ecosystem representatives, and the preparation of two key outputs:

- 1. The Hunter Venture Fund Report (draft)
- 2. A pitch deck to support advocacy efforts by the Hunter JO to leverage support from government and industry for the fund.

An engagement process with staff across Member Councils to discuss the findings and recommendations of the draft report is now complete. This has identified general support for the concept of the place-based fund, which would complement any existing funds and innovation support provided to ventures in the region.

Widening of the consultation process has now also occurred to further explore the report's findings and recommendations with the following audiences:

- 1. The Region's Investment & Innovation Ecosystem
- 2. Senior Government Agency representatives and policy advisors
- 3. NSW Government Ministers

In response to an invitation extended to the Hon Alister Henkins MP, Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, Minister for Skills and Training & Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology, a meeting was held with representatives from Invest NSW and Greater Cities

Commission to discuss the opportunity, need and recommendations for establishing A Hunter focused Innovation Entity and Venture Fund.

Interest in the concept of a place-based fund was communicated by agency representatives, within the context of broader policy initiatives in this space being explored by the NSW Government. A commitment was made to meet again following further review of the information provided by the Hunter JO.

a. 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.

Hunter Global: Our Interna	ational Future Initiative
Program / Project Lead	Steve Wilson & Kali Somerville

Purpose:

The Hunter JO is leading a collaborative partnership between the Hunter JO, Newcastle Airport, Committee for the Hunter, Business Hunter and the University of Newcastle to:

- Build collaborative processes and systems within the region to collectively identify and actively
 pursue key international opportunities for expanding the Airport's economic contribution to the
 Region
- Directly support the expansion of international Airport related business and industry as a primary contributor to the Hunter Region's economic growth and diversification.

Status update:

The Hunter Global project partner group met on 3rd November to collectively review and refine the final draft of the "Hunter Global: The Flightpath to our Future" report. Editing to include this feedback along with graphic design of the document is now in its final stages. When completed, the report will provide another key piece of evidence-based collateral that can be utilised by the Hunter JO and Member Councils to underpin collaboration and advocacy efforts to unlock the economic and social opportunities for the region triggered by more competitive access to global markets that will be provided via the Airport.

Action Area 4. Our people and products move across the region easily on integrated and accessible transport networks

1.5 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.

Regional Infrastructure Priority List	
Program / Project Lead	Boyd Blackwell
Duciest Dumeses	

Project Purpose:

To prepare an agreed list of regional and sub regional infrastructure priorities to:

- Build and advocate a stronger case for investment in infrastructure priorities across the region
- Identify the potential for shared interests and collaboration between Councils and other stakeholders in delivering local and regional scale infrastructure initiatives.

• 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

Status update:

An information session was held on 3rd November to take council and agency staff officers through the google form developed and data requirements established for collecting information on priority regional infrastructure projects from their organisations as part of the PIL project. A due date of 30 Nov 2022 was confirmed by participants for providing the first round of information on priority infrastructure projects.

Refer Attachment 17 "Hunter JO Program Report" for information on the full range of programs being delivered.

Recommendation: That the report be received and noted.





HUNTER JO PROGRAM REPORT

December 2022

This publication was produced by the Hunter Joint Organisation.



ENQUIRIES

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Our educational facilities support and encourage our young people and foster lifelong learning and encourage our young people
Action Area 6
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THE HUNTER JO

WHO ARE WE?

The Hunter Joint Organisation (Hunter JO) is a collaborative body that brings together the ten councils in the region to provide a united and local voice for our communities. As the hub for local intergovernmental collaboration, our statutory mandate includes identifying key regional strategic priorities, advocating for these priorities, and building collaborations around these prioritieswith other levels of government, industry and community.

OUR STATUTORY FUNCTIONS

Our statutory functions defined by the NSW Local Government Amendment (Regional Joint Organisations) Act 2017 comprise:

- Regional Strategic planning and priority setting
- Regional leadership and advocacy
- Intergovernmental collaboration

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

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

HUNTER JO BOARD

Our Board is made up of members from each of our member councils, with each Mayor as a voting representative, and the General Managers of each of the councils in a non-voting capacity. OurBoard also includes a representative from NSW Government.



OUR TEAM

NAME	ROLE	CONTACT
Joe James	CEO, Hunter Joint Organisation	0405 217 249 ceo@hunterjo.com.au
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Boyd Blackwell	Regional Policy and Program Manager	0448 490 656 boydb@hunterjo.com.au
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REGIONAL LEADERSHIP & ADVOCACY

POLITICAL ENGAGEMENTS

POLITICAL ENGAGEMENTS (UPCOMING)

Hunter based Labor MPs

Date the

Collective meeting of Hunter Based Labor MPs convened by Yasmin Catley, Member for Swansea and Shadow Minister for the Hunter, in response to our invitation for a meeting to communicate the shared interests, priorities and directions of the Hunter region's 10 democratically elected Mayors in the lead up to the 2023 NSW Government election

POLITICAL ENGAGEMENTS (COMPLETED)

The Hon Wendy Tuckerman MP, Minister for Local Government 9 November 2022

- To communicate the shared interests, priorities and directions of the Hunter region's 10 democratically elected Mayors in the lead up to the 2023 NSW Government election
- To seek the Ministers perspective on the service relationship between the Hunter JO and the Member Council's wholly owned service provider (Arrow Collaborative Services) – communicated to the Minister by Cr Sue Moore and Cr John Connors
- David Harris MP, Shadow Minister for Jobs, Investment and Tourism (6 December 2022)
- Paul Scully MP, Shadow Minister for Planning and Public Spaces (29 November 2022)
- The Hon. Rob Stokes MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities & Minister for Active Transport (17 November 2022)
- Greg Warren MP, Shadow Minister for Local Government, Shadow Minister for Veterans. and Shadow Minister for Western Sydney (23 October 2022)
- Jihad Dib MP, Shadow Minister for Energy & Climate Change & Shadow Minister for Emergency Services (26 October 2022)
- Tim Crakanthorp MP, Member for Newcastle & Shadow Minister for Skills and TAFE, Shadow Minister for Tertiary Education (23 October 2022)
- David Layzell MP, Member for **Upper Hunter & Lachlan Barnsley, Strategy Advisor** (representing the The Hon Sam Farraway MP, Minister for

The purpose of these meetings has been to communicate the shared interests, priorities and directions of the Hunter region's 10 democratically elected Mayors in the lead up to the 2023 NSW Government election, including a focus on exploring the idea of a regional entity based in the Hunter, with the authority and resources necessary to drive, coordinate and deliver the substantive and rapid economic evolution needed to maintain the Hunter's resilience, liveability, and economic prosperity in the face of a rapidly growing population and decline of our traditional coal and energy-based industries.

Agenda items covered (with the level of focus amended to address the recipients portfolio or electorate based interests) have included:

Governance and Funding

- 1. Testing position and view on the concept of a regional coordination authority / entity
- 2. Funding reform
 - Alignment of grants with Council IP&R cycles
 - Disaster resilience funding
 - Road funding reform
- 3. Collaboration with Greater Cities Commission

Transport and connectivity

- 4. Intra-regional transport connectivity (planning and funding)
- 5. Global connectivity
- 6. Digital Connectivity

Economic Development

- 7. Hunter Global Tourism (collaborative destination marketing & Cycling Tourism (Shiraz to Shore)
- 8. Investment in Catalyst Growth Areas, Innovation & Circular **Economy**

Regional Transport and Roads (Thursday 10th November) • Clayton Barr MP, Member for Cessnock (21 October 2022)	
The Hon. James Griffin MP, Minister for Environment and Heritage	Correspondence received from the Minister in response to the Hunter JOs request for a continuation of the Contaminated Land Council Regional Capacity Building (CRCB) Program (refer Correspondence)
Meeting with Invest NSW and Greater Cities Commission re Hunter Venture Fund proposal 25 October 2022	In response to an invitation extended to the Hon Alister Henkins MP, Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, Minister for Skills and Training & Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology, a meeting was held with representatives from Invest NSW and Greater Cities Commission to discuss the opportunity, need and recommendations for establishing a Hunter focused Innovation Entity and Venture Fund. Interest in the concept of a place-based fund was communicated by agency representatives, within the context of broader policy initiatives in this space being explored by the NSW Government. A commitment was made to meet again following further review of the information provided by the Hunter JO.

MEDIA

OUTLET	FOCUS
Noosa Today Wednesday 19th October 2022	SIMTABLES FOR COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT Chris Dart attended Noosa Shire Council to assist in facilitating training their staff after the acquirement of their simtable.
	LINK TO THE ARTICLE https://noosatoday.com.au/news/19-10-2022/new-technology-to-boost-disaster-resilience/

REGIONAL SUBMISSIONS

Draft Hunter Regional Transport Plan

The Hunter JO team are currently preparing a regional submission on the draft Hunter Regional Transport Plan. This will draw on the individual submissions of Member Councils, the draft Hunter JO Strategic Plan and Regional Advocacy Framework and Priorities.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COLLABORATION

HUNTER JO CONVENED WORKSHOPS, FORUMS AND EVENTS

EVENT	PURPOSE / OUTCOMES
A2E Workshop - Regional Tourism / Event Approvals Review 2 November 2022	This full day workshop comprised representatives from Member Councils, Destination Sydney Surrounds North, Newcastle Airport, Committee for the Hunter, Hunter Valley Wine Tourism Association and Destination Port Stephens. The workshop focused on the following project areas of the A2E project: 1. Refining the focus and scope of the Tourism Prospectus to be developed 2. Reviewing the outcomes and recommendations of the Event Approvals Review completed by Canvas Events.
Regional Infrastructure Priority Lists (PIL) Information Session for Council Data Collection 3 November 2022	This information session was designed to take council and agency staff officers through the googleform developed, and data requirements established, for collecting information on priority regional infrastructure projects from their organisations as part of the PIL project. A due date of 30 Nov 2022 was confirmed by participants for providing the first round of information on priority infrastructure projects.
Hunter JO Regional Planning & Economic Development Forum Scheduled for 1 December 2022	 Key focus areas for the December event include: Hunter JO Strategic Plan Implications of the NSW Flood Inquiry for Local Government (Department of Planning & Environment) Disaster resilience opportunities and initiatives (Hunter Local Land Services) Lake Macquarie economic development overview and initiatives (Dantia) Hunter JO program updates
Contaminated Land Regional Forum - Acid Sulfate Soils and Preliminary Site Investigations Scheduled for 12 December 2022	This forum will provide an opportunity for Council staff to get together to learn about specific contaminated land topics, including a focus on acid sulfate soils, and when to trigger a preliminary site investigation.

COMMITTEES AND NETWORKS

EXISTING STANDING ENGAGEMENT (CONVENED BY HUNTER JO AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT)		
IP&R Network (convened by Lake Macquarie City Council & Hunter JO) 9th November 2022	The focus of this meeting included the Hunter JO providing an overview of the draft Hunter JO Strategic Plan to network members	
Regional Contaminated Land Working Group (convened by Hunter JO) 28 September 2022	This latest meeting had a high level of engagement from Member Council staff. The focus included getting thoughts and feedback on the update of the 'Developing a Contaminated Land Information Register' and 'Register of Contaminated Land Consent Conditions' documents. The next meeting is scheduled for 30th November 2022.	
EXISTING STANDING ENGAGEME	NTS (CONVENED BY OTHERS)	
Hunter Central Coastal Management Program Practitioners Roundtable (convened by Department of Planning & Environment) 21 September 2022	Meetings of this network have resumed following staffing changes in the DPE Coast and Estuaries team. The most recent meeting attended by the Hunter JO in September included a focus on the Coastal Management Program (CMP) process and the advantages and disadvantages of using consultants versus in-house resources to develop CMPs.	
Upper Hunter Economic Diversification Committee (convened by Regional NSW) 11 November 2022	 Key updates from the meeting included: A regional water strategy is being prepared Department of Regional NSW have developed a geographical (land based) mapping and data tool to assist with attracting commercial businesses. This drills down to a local level and could be of use to local councils, however it is currently subject to commercial in confidence constraints. A Renewables Roundtable is scheduled for 1 Dec 2022 Regional housing plan - temporary Functional Economic Region status has been assigned to the region which will increase opportunities to attract funding 	

Regional Leadership Executive (convened by Regional NSW) 27th September 2022

Outcomes from the meeting included:

- 1. Status of RLE Review
 - Existing subcommittee structure is being reviewed to become more project focused. Existing subcommittees will discontinue after each identifies priority initiatives / projects. The RLE will determine which of these will be a focus that may receive seed funding to progress.
 - The exception to the above is the Upper Hunter Economic Development subcommittee which will continue
 - Local Government representation will remain as is currently for the RLE, however opportunities will be explored to facilitate increased involvement of General Managers
- 2. Presentations were provided to the RLE focusing on:
 - Regional Liveability Plan
 - Six Cities Vision and Discussion paper

NEW STANDING ENGAGEMENTS

Energy Diversification Working Group (convened by Department of Regional NSW) Scheduled for 30 November 2022 The Upper Hunter Economic Diversification Action Plan prioritises Government partnership to support new investment, employment and skills development as part of the energy industry transition in the Hunter region. In 2022, the AGL Working Group has been meeting regularly to coordinate government response and support for the closure of the Liddell Power Station in 2023 and planning for the closure of Bayswater in 2030-3033.

DRNSW are now expanding this working group to become an Energy Diversification Working Group to include those regionally significant sites that are expecting operational change in the next 10-15 years including AGL (Liddell and Bayswater Power station), Idemitsu (Muswellbrook Coal), BHP (Mt Arthur) and Origin Energy (Eraring Power station). The working group will facilitate regular contact with key government agencies such as DPE Water, EPA, Treasury, DPE Planning and NSW Energy Corp. The purpose of meetings will be to:

- Foster collaboration and facilitate decision-making across key government stakeholders
- Share learnings
- Ensure that state and local government and community stakeholders are kept informed of, and can contribute to, regional energy evolution.

The inaugural meeting of the group is scheduled for Wednesday, 30 November 2022, with the intention that they be held every quarter or more regularly if required.

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENTS

EVENT	PURPOSE / OUTCOMES
Adapt NSW 2022 Forum - The Adaptation Challenge for Local Government 2 November 2022	Melinda Curtis delivered a presentation to the forum on the Climate Change IP&R Package developed by the Hunter JO in collaboration with Member Councils, LGNSW and the NSW Government. Melinda also participated in a panel session focusing on the adaptation challenge for local government, along with other representatives including: Tiffany Correggia, Senior Project Officer, OECC, NSW Treasury Scott Baker, Community Liaison Specialist, Blueprint for a Resilient Southeast NSW, Canberra Region Joint Organisation
International Conference on Assessing Waste and Recycle. 14 & 15 November 2022	Tim Askew, Regional Policy & Program Manager attended and presented to this 2-day international conference in Melbourne. The focus of Tim's presentation was "Circular Economy in Local Government"
2022 Circularity Conference – Driving Circular Innovation 24-25 November 2022	Eloise Lobsey, Regional Policy & Program Manager is presenting to this 2-day event in Sydney that is designed to share knowledge, collaborate and drive actionable change towards a more circular future. The focus of Eloise's involvement in the conference is "Developing local circular solutions – how do we catalyse and scale localised circular economies"
2022 New South Wales Smart Sensing Network (NSSN) Conference on Circular Economy 27-28 October 2022	Tim Askew, Regional Policy & Program Manager attended and presented this 2-day conference in Newcastle. The focus of Tim's presentation was "The importance of data in the Circular Economy"
Hunter Innovation Festival 12 October 2022	This one-day event attended by Hunter JO representatives focused on connecting industry, innovators and start-ups to grow the Hunter economy. A primary outcome for the Hunter JO has been identifying the potential opportunity for the HiF to collaborate more closely with Member Councils. This will initially be explored through a presentation by Alex Brennan and Will Rifkin from the HiF Board to the next meeting of the Hunter JO Subcommittee for Economic Evolution.
Newcastle Futuremap workshop (convened by University of Technology Sydney 13 October 2022	The Hunter JO assisted in designing and promoting this workshop that was delivered to approximately 20 SMEs in advanced manufacturing from across the region. The workshop aimed to assist these organisations prepare their strategic planning, to provide them with a clearer idea of where to focus over the next 2 years, and where to access the knowledge, capital and human resources needed to get them there. Partners supporting delivery of the workshop included University of Newcastle, TAFE NSW, HunterNet, Regional Development Australia Hunter, AusIndustry, Hunter Joint Organisation, and the Innovative Manufacturing CRC (IMCRC).
Draft Regional Economic Development Strategies presentations from three Functional Economic Regions of Hunter JO council areas:	Hunter JO staff participated in 3 online sessions delivered by Department of Regional NSW staff that provided updates on the review of the draft Regional Economical Development Strategies for the Mid Coast, Hunter and Lake Macquarie-Central Coast functional economic regions. Technical feedback to the draft reports has also been provided.

EVENT	PURPOSE / OUTCOMES
MidCoast, Hunter, Lake Macquarie	
Commonwealth Government Net Zero Economy Taskforce 24 October 2022	The Commonwealth Government has established a Taskforce in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to advise the Government on how to support regional communities as Australia transforms to a net zero economy. The Taskforce will bring together perspectives from regional communities, state and territory governments, industry and unions. It will advise the Government on how it can best support regional communities and industries to secure growth and employment opportunities as part of the economic transformation to net zero emissions. This includes how all levels of government can work together to develop a joined-up and well-managed approach to regional transformation in the context of Australia's net zero commitments. The Hunter JO CEO met with the Taskforce when they visited the Hunter, as part of a broader program of visiting impacted regions to speak with stakeholders, including local government, industry, unions and community groups. These visits aim to gather insights and reflections on the considerable work already underway in regions, so as to build understanding and inform consideration of how the Commonwealth can be most effective in supporting the economic transformation of regions.
Western Sydney Place Making tour 24 and 25 October 2022	The CEO and Director Policy & Programs both participated (one day each) in a two day "Western Sydney Precincts Tour" organised by the Department of Planning and Environment. The tour was attended by Council and agency representatives from across the Hunter and Central Coast. The purpose of the tour was to: • hear the lessons-learnt, opportunities, and challenges of recent Masterplans in Western Sydney. • hear from Departmental and Council colleagues on their journey, and how we can collectively translate the draft Hunter Regional Plans Place-Planning vision into reality.
NSW Joint Organisation Chairs Forum 17 November 2022	 The focus of the next meeting of the Chairs Forum includes: Briefing from the Minister for Local Government Briefing from the Shadow Minister for Local Government Report from Office of Local Government Regional Investment Activation Program JO Executive Officers update on: JO Sustainability Progressing a systems approach between JOs and State agencies Progress on implementation of OLG JO Review

EVENT	PURPOSE / OUTCOMES
JO Review Implementation Plan Working Groups (Various dates)	The CEO and Director Policy & Programs are participating in 3 working groups comprising JO and NSW Government agency staff from across NSW to progress the implementation of recommendations identified from the review of Joint Organisations completed in 2021 by the Office of Local Government. The focus of working groups in which we are involved include: • Governance, Promotion and Communication • Accountability & Performance • Financial sustainability and boundaries

PROGRAM ACTIVITY REPORT

This Activity Report provides an update on the status and nature of current programs and activities being undertaken by the Hunter JO. Reporting is provided against each of the priority Action Areas included in the Hunter Joint Organisation's Strategic Plan 2018-21 (Aspire.Act.Achieve).



The status of delivery of projects and initiatives being delivered is denoted by the following colour coding:

	Project is On Track, or Completed
	Project is At Risk, Not Yet Started (subject to resourcing to deliver), or Delayed / Impacted
	Project is Stalled / Off Track, or No Longer Proceeding

HUNTER JO STRATEGIC PLAN (2022-2026)

Hunter JO Strategic Plan	
Program / Project Lead	Mel Curtis
Delivery Status	On track

Purpose:

To develop a new Hunter JO Strategic Plan for the period 2022-2026. The new strategy will align with the Local Government IP&R Framework, which will:

- Improve alignment between the Hunter JO Strategy and strategic planning documents of member Councils
- Provide increased support to member Councils to assist with integrating shared regional priorities and actions within their local planning processes.

Status update:

A three-week consultation process undertaken in relation to the draft Hunter JO Strategic Plan has been completed which included direct emails to key contacts, online overview sessions, inclusion in the Hunter JO Newsletter and social media links to the Draft Strategic Plan consultation Hunter JO Website page.

Briefing sessions were delivered to provide an opportunity for Member Council IP&R staff, Council Planning and Economic Development Directors, and key regional stakeholders and agencies to receive an overview of the draft plan. The 4 online overview sessions held were as follows:

- Friday 4 November Regional Planning and Economic Development Directors and Managers)
- Friday 4 November Key regional stakeholders, Council Staff and requests received through Hunter JO website
- Friday 4 November State Agencies
- Wednesday 9 November 2022 Council IP&R Regional Network

Proposed amendments arising from the consultation process will be considered by the General Managers Advisory Committee meeting at its 24th September meeting.

ACTION AREA 1. OUR COMMUNITIES

1.1 Develop an engaging online presence which tells the stories of the diverse places and people which make up the Hunter Region

Hunter JO website	
Program / Project Lead	Kali Somerville
Delivery Status	On track

Purpose:

The Hunter Joint Organisation website (https://www.hunterjo.com.au/) aims to actively, regularly and effectively engage member Councils, partner organisations and the broader community on the activities and progress of the Hunter JO.

Status update:

Undertaking exploration of user experience and navigation ahead of integrating advocacy and new strategy onto the website.

1.2 Work with the Department of Planning and Environment, Hunter Valley Research Foundation and other partners to closely monitor housing affordability in the region and identify key areas of concern

Monitor housing affordability in the region	
Delivery Status	Not yet started (subject to resourcing)

1.3 Develop and implement a targeted program to advocate for measures to improve housing affordability in the region

Targeted advocacy program to improve housing affordability	
Delivery Status	Not yet started (subject to resourcing)

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
Delivery Status	On track

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:

- Project review held with Resilience NSW to update them on progress.
- Individual Council meetings to be held throughout November/early December.
- Research on Resilience Health Check tools continues.

Simtables for Community Empowerment	
Program / Project Lead	Chris Dart
Delivery Status	On track

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 program continues to progress well, with program highlights in this reporting period including:

- 3 demonstrations or "train the trainer" sessions
- 2 community workshops
- 1 x RFS loan (Berkely Vale RFS)
- Assisted with facilitation of Simtable training with Noosa Council and QFES staff.

The focus of the upcoming reporting period will be to deliver Simtable workshops in those LGAs that have not yet received any.

ACTION AREA 2. OUR ENVIRONMENT

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

Cities Power Partnership Program	
Program / Project Lead	Mel Curtis
Delivery Status	On track

Purpose:

To support regional collaborative efforts by Councils, the Hunter JO and Cities Power Partnership (CPP) in delivery of shared pledges on climate action made by Councils.

Status update:

In line with the agreed regional priorities and pledges identified by Councils through the CPP Program:

- A funding proposal has been submitted to the Regional NSW Business Case and Strategy
 Development Program, for the development of a Regional Electric Vehicle Strategic Plan to provide
 and promote intra-regional (within the Hunter and Central Coast) and inter-regional (with other
 NSW regions) EV connectivity. Advice on the outcome of the funding application remains pending.
- A funding application is also currently being prepared under the JONZA grant program, a new State Government program to support JOs and non-metropolitan Regional Organisations of Councils to progress net zero greenhouse gas emission outcomes for member councils. This program aims to support JOs and ROCs in delivering net zero outcomes while building net zero capability within organisations. Applications close 30th December 2022.

Hunter Central Coast Regional Illegal Dumping Program	
Program / Project Lead	Tim Askew and Eloise Lobsey
Delivery Status	Complete

Purpose:

To determine the feasibility of the Hunter JO hosting a RID Program and the most appropriate financial and operational model for the RID Squad were this to occur.

Status update:

The Hunter JO Team is in the final stages of:

- Consultation with Member Councils (and Central Coast Council) staff re the design of a RID Program Model and development of an MOU between the Hunter JO and Councils to govern roles and responsibilities
- Negotiating the final details of the funding agreement that will be entered into between the NSW EPA and Hunter JO directly.

NB A RID Program model is a collaboration model where a centralised program team (coordinator and administrator) provide advice, support and programs to member council's Illegal dumping operations. All RID officers or regulatory and waste officers managing illegal dumping compliance are retained by their local council.

Regional Contaminated Land Program	
Program / Project Lead	Mel Curtis & Anna Flack
Delivery Status	On track

Purpose:

To build capacity and capability of Councils to manage contaminated sites on private and Council managed land, and to support councils transition to their new role as regulator of the Underground Petroleum Storage System (UPSS) Regulation.

Status update:

The NSW EPA have recently confirmed funding for an additional 6 month extension to the program, which will now take the program through to a completion date of June 2023. In addition to reviewing the project plan to reflect the extension, current project priorities include:

- Updating the 'Developing a Contaminated Land Information Register' and 'Register of Contaminated Land Consent Conditions' documents,
- Individual visits to Maitland, Port Stephens, Muswellbrook and Singleton
- Online UPSS refresher training (9 Nov)
- Regional Forum on Acid Sulfate Soils and Preliminary Site Investigations (12 Dec).
- Ongoing provision and utilisation of the Service Desk by Councils.

2.2 Establish a Coastal Resilience Sub Committee, made up of representatives from relevant Hunter JO councils, to increase collaboration in planning for climate change

Act Now on Coastal Adaptation	
Program / Project Lead	Mel Curtis
Delivery Status	Completed

Purpose:

The objectives of this project are to:

- 1. Develop an Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Package which embeds resilience to Climate Change into Councils operations through incorporation into the overarching IP&R documents.
- Provide a coastal adaptation communication framework, media templates and suite of practical resources to directly build the capacity of the coastal councils of the Hunter and Central Coast Councils.
- 3. Build capacity within Councils to reduce risks, increase resilience and reduce climate vulnerability by collaboratively building community understanding and literacy around coastal management and adaptation issues and bridging the gap between the IP&R framework and prioritisation of Climate Change resilience.

Status update:

- The Climate Change IP&R Package has been announced as finalist in the 2022 LGNSW Excellence in the Environment Awards, to be announced on 6 December.
- Proposals are currently being invited from consultants to review and update the Coastal and Estuary Support Package.

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

Hunter & Central Coast Resource Recovery Strategy	
Program / Project Lead	Eloise Lobsey
Delivery Status	On track

Purpose:

To develop a new Hunter Central Coast Resource Recovery Strategy for the period 2022-2027. The new Strategy will align with the recently released NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2021-2041 and associated funding streams, and provide improved alignment with the Regional Circular Economy program.

Status update:

The draft Regional Circular Materials Strategy is now in the final stages of preparation. Key stages in its development have included:

- Review and assessment of the existing Regional Waste Strategy
- Technical and strategic analysis to identify key strategic challenges and opportunities for the region
- Aligning approach to new EPA strategy guidelines
- Peer review of technical and strategic analysis
- Multi-staged consultation with the Regional Waste Group and other relevant stakeholders
- Onboarding MidCoast Council into the strategy development process after they joined the waste region, including direct consultation with council staff
- Drafting the strategy and 5-year program (currently underway).

The draft strategic framework and directions were recently presented to the Hunter Central Coast Regional Waste Strategy Group to gather feedback from Council staff and to undertake a prioritisation exercise. It is proposed that the Hunter JO Board will be presented with and asked to consider endorsing the draft strategy (including a 5-year program overview and timeline) at its December 2022 meeting. Following that an Annual Action Plan will be prepared by Hunter JO staff and consultants, in consultation with the Regional Waste Strategy Group. The annual action plan will set out how the known resources (such as the EPA's Regional Coordination Grant Funding) will be utilised over the year to deliver on the strategies priorities and themes, as well as any additional projects arising through successful grants and other funding sources.

Small Acts Big Change Regional Communication Campaign	
Program / Project Lead	Eloise Lobsey
Delivery Status	On track

Purpose:

To deliver a regional communication campaign to improve community waste avoidance behaviours at the top end of the waste management hierarchy, along with reuse and recycling habits.

Status update:

Phase 2 of the "Hero" video project has now been finalised. Nine videos have been created with multiple cut downs of each. The social media campaign utilising these videos will begin soon.

Community Recycling Centres Awareness Campaign	
Program / Project Lead	Susan McDonald
Delivery Status	On track

Purpose:

To deliver a regionally coordinated approach to promoting community awareness of Community Recycling Centres (CRC's).

Status update:

MidCoast and Central Coast Councils have recently joined the CRC education program. We are currently working with these Councils to integrate them within the broader program

Hunter & Central Coast Circular Economy Hub	
Program / Project Lead	Tim Askew
Delivery Status	On track

Purpose:

To drive and facilitate development of the Circular Economy (CE) across the Hunter and Central Coast by Councils, government agencies, business and industry groups and the community. The CE Hub would focus on:

- Providing leadership and planning to establish a common vision and plan for the region's move to a CE
- facilitate the acquisition and sharing of research and information among stakeholders in the CE, including the provision of a "problem concierge"
- Continuing to curate and grow the CE ecosystem
- Facilitating and delivering joint projects and initiatives across organisations
- Coordinating and advocating an agreed regional voice on CE for the region to State and Federal Governments
- Consistent and coordinated promotion of the region to researchers, innovators and investors
- Building knowledge in the region to capture and translate innovation and best practice into day to day operations, and to enact sustained change in organisational culture and systems required to progress the Circular Economy.

Status update:

- The Circular Economy (CE) Hub project is continuing to work with the CE Living Lab (CELL) developed by Lake Macquarie City Council to see how we can leverage CE outcomes for the region.
- Advice remains pending on the outcome of the \$878,600 funding application submitted to the Regional NSW Business Case and Strategy Development Fund on 24th August to prepare a concept plan and strategy for Circular Economy Precincts and a concept plan and strategy for a CE Futures Hub.

Circular Economy Roadmap	
Program / Project Lead	Tim Askew
Delivery Status	On track

Purpose:

- 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

Continuing to work on the quarterly review process to keep the Regional Circular Economy Roadmap up to date and relevant. Roadmap update to be posted to the website in December 2022.

Circular Economy Eco-system Stage 2	
Program / Project Lead	Tim Askew
Delivery Status	On track

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:

The project is currently under review in preparation for NSW EPA grant rounds which are now 5 months behind anticipated release. A CE newsletter will be launched following the launch of the CE Roadmap and the CE website - huntercircular.com.au will have a refresh by December 2022.

Circular Economy Procurement	
Program / Project Lead	Tim Askew
Delivery Status	On track

Purpose:

To support Councils to prioritise recycled materials and circular economy services in their procurement systems and processes, and to collaborate with the Hunter JO and other participating councils to develop a common framework for a joint regional procurement of recycled materials.

Status update:

The Circular Economy procurement methods and tools are currently being tested and readied for deployment. The main task will be to position the work for limited implementation into Councils and to seek funding for broader implementation over the next few years.

Hunter ReCircular (Regional Recycling Solution - yellow bins)	
Program / Project Lead	Tim Askew
Delivery Status	On track
Purpose:	
To investigate preferred options for development of a new regional materials recovery facility	
Status update:	
No further update. The EOI process continues to be managed through Lake Macquarie City Council	

ACTION AREA 3. OUR ECONOMY

3.1 Establish an Economic Sustainability Sub Committee, made up of representatives from member councils, to coordinate the economic development activity of the JO and report to the Board.

Subcommittee for Economic Evolution	
Program / Project Lead	Boyd Blackwell
Delivery Status	On track

Purpose:

The purpose of the Committee (from existing Terms of Reference) is to continue to prioritise a resilient and diversified economy, and to assist in managing economic transition in the region in partnership with identified and other regional stakeholders.

Status update:

The most recent meeting of the Subcommittee was held on 13th October 2022. The key focus of the Subcommittee remains advocacy to the NSW and Commonwealth Governments around:

- The need for a regional entity based in the Hunter, with the authority and resources necessary to drive, coordinate and deliver the substantive and rapid economic evolution needed to maintain the Hunter's resilience, liveability, and economic prosperity in the face of a rapidly growing population and decline of our traditional coal and energy-based industries.
- Concerns surrounding the design, focus and level of funding allocated to the Royalties for Rejuvenation program

These concerns, within the context of the broader regional economic evolution challenges facing the region, are being communicated to NSW Ministers, Shadow Ministers and Hunter based Members of Parliament as part of the NSW Parliamentary engagement currently underway (refer CEO Report). Members of the Subcommittee including Cr Sue Moore, Cr Jay Suvaal, Cr Steven Reynolds and Cr John Connors have all been involved in recent advocacy activities targeting NSW Parliamentary representatives that are communicating these priorities.

3.2 Work with the Hunter Research Foundation, University of Newcastle and other research partners to gather and analyse economic data and develop a regional attraction plan based on regional strengths in research, education, transport and logistics, aerospace, agribusiness and tourism.

Hunter Economic Model	
Program / Project Lead	Boyd Blackwell
Delivery Status	On track

Purpose:

To develop/obtain an easily updateable, forward and backward-looking economic model for the region that can be used to quantify the economic impacts of any given policy, program or project, and that provides detailed analysis of the relative structure, size and impact of the region's evolving economy. This will support most of the HJO's Regional Policy and Program work: both backward looking reviews and evaluations and forward-looking policy, strategies and plans.

Status update:

The Hunter JO has recently purchased access to REMPLAN, which is now being used to analyse the following:

- Investment gap analysis given projected loss of coal related employment relative to projected replacement by jobs in emerging industries such as Hydrogen, Health, Advanced Manufacturing, Aerospace/Defence etc.
- Gross Regional Impact (GRP) per capita impact including how much of alternative emerging industries can replace current regional dependence of coal (also including analysis of medium household incomes versus GRP/capita)
- Location Quotient and Shift Share Analyses that combines Functional Economic Regions of Regional Economic Development Strategies of state: MidCoast, Hunter, Central Coast and Lake Macquarie (excluding Central Coast), to identify engines of economic growth for the region.

3.3 Deepen relationships with the Department of Planning and Environment and the Hunter Development Corporation and gain a commitment to a formal JO role in the implementation, monitoring and review of the Hunter Regional Plan 2036 and Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036. Be an effective and outcome-oriented committee member.

Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan Subcommittee	
Program / Project Lead	Steve Wilson
Delivery Status	Complete

Purpose:

The role of the SubCommittee (current Terms of Reference) is to oversee the development and implementation of the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan with the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Department of Regional NSW, Hunter Central Coast Development Corporation & Transport for NSW.

Status update:

A workshop was held with the Subcommittee on 13th October to identify priority opportunities for collaboration with the recently appointed Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle City Cities Commissioner, Matt Endacott. These included:

- 1. Partnership and collaboration
 - Building a strong and effective collaborative relationship between the GNMP Mayors and the Commissioner, characterised by strong 2-way communication
 - Supporting the Commissioner's success will support the region's success
 - Providing strong and collective thought leadership for the region.
- 2. Building on strong foundations
 - Building the narrative to showcase the region's strengths, successes and key opportunities
 - Showcasing the region and its opportunities to the GCC. Invite GCC representatives to the region to see and understand its strengths, opportunities and priorities
 - Review and build on the good planning work already completed in the Greater Newcastle
 Metropolitan Plan and other local and regional strategies, rather than starting completely anew.
 The existing GNMP should be seen as a starting point for the preparation of the City Plan.
 - Accelerating delivery of priority catalyst growth areas, such as Williamtown SAP, Health innovation precinct, Newcastle Airport and Hunter Park

Regional Population Scenario Planning	
Program / Project Lead	Tim Askew
Delivery Status	On track

Purpose:

To prepare population scenarios as a platform for informing an agreed long-term vision for regional population growth, and to influence strategic regional planning processes, delivery programs and regional migration strategies by all levels of government for the Hunter Region.

Status update:

A draft advocacy document presented to the Hunter JO Board and planners in August is out for more consultation before finalisation by December 2022. All advocacy items will be translated and transferred to the consolidated and overarching Hunter JO advocacy document.

3.4 Work with the 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
Delivery Status	On track

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:

As previously reported, the company Henshall Capital P/L were engaged by the Hunter JO to test the viability of an innovation fund for the region. This work included extensive consultation with investment industry and innovation ecosystem representatives, and the preparation of two key outputs:

- 1. The Hunter Venture Fund Report (draft)
- 2. A pitch deck to support advocacy efforts by the Hunter JO to leverage support from government and industry for the fund.

An engagement process with staff across Member Councils to discuss the findings and recommendations of the draft report is now complete. This has identified general support for the concept of the place-based fund, which would complement any existing funds and innovation support provided to ventures in the region.

Widening of the consultation process has now also occurred to further explore the report's findings and recommendations with the following audiences:

- 1. The Region's Investment & Innovation Ecosystem
- 2. Senior Government Agency representatives and policy advisors
- 3. NSW Government Ministers

In response to an invitation extended to the Hon Alister Henkins MP, Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, Minister for Skills and Training & Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology, a meeting was held with representatives from Invest NSW and Greater Cities Commission to discuss the opportunity, need and recommendations for establishing A Hunter focused Innovation Entity and Venture Fund.

Interest in the concept of a place-based fund was communicated by agency representatives, within the context of broader policy initiatives in this space being explored by the NSW Government. A commitment was made to meet again following further review of the information provided by the Hunter JO.

Upper Hunter Region Website	
Program / Project Lead	Kali Somerville
Delivery Status	On track

Purpose:

The delivery of this website was a key action in the Upper Hunter Economic Diversification Action Plan. It was developed in partnership between Regional NSW and the Hunter JO, to provide a central location for resources for investors, local business and community for the Upper Hunter.

Status update:

Awaiting direction from Regional NSW.

3.5 Collaborate to ensure Newcastle and the Hunter realise our potential as a smart region and innovation ecosystem, driving jobs and investment whilst ensuring technology improves livability and sustainability for our region

Smart Region Project	
Program / Project Lead	Tim Askew
Delivery Status	Delayed / Impacted

Purpose:

The Smart Region Project will be an overarching collation of smart region activities and projects across the region placed within an annual review document produced to market the progress of our region. Initially the project will review the existing state of smart city thinking and activity across the region to get a baseline of progress. This program will then outline the priorities of the region in the smart region context and develop a suite of priority actions and templates for regional use.

Status update:

On hold. Waiting on NSW data action plan refresh (Strategy 2.0) and review those results to determine next steps.

3.6 Develop a sustainable model to coordinate council-run events across the region and showcase the Hunter and attract local, national and international visitors.

Accelerating Event Economies	
Program / Project Lead	Kim Carland
Delivery Status	On track
Purpose:	

To strengthen the region's collective voice and the capacity of Councils to collaboratively pitch for major events for the region. It includes undertaking an events and opportunity audit, and identifying, preparing and implementing shared destination and even management resources including an event managers toolkit, prospectus, website and integrated council shared services, approvals and event data.

Status update:

A number of outcomes have been delivered under the project to date, including:

- Regional Event Economic Impact Report. KPMG have produced a report that has analysed the
 Hunter regional event economy, including return on investment and business case data. Using
 these findings, the report provides recommendations designed to help accelerate events
 attraction in the Hunter. In addition to the report itself, KPMG have also produced the following
 tools:
 - a. An Event Economic Modelling Tool and
 - b. An Event Assessment and Prioritisation Framework.

A workshop will be held on 5 December 2022 with the stakeholder group to review the outcomes and discuss next steps.

- 2. **Hunter Event Facilities Audit**. This audit has identified event facilities (indoor and outdoor) and accommodation that will assist event managers and owners in identifying and selecting the Hunter Region to host their event.
- 3. **Event Licencing**. Canvas Events were engaged to review the Event Application Process of the 10 Hunter JO Member Councils, to identify opportunities and provide recommendations to streamline the process for both internal Local Government event-assessment officers, and external event owners and managers. The recommendations generated by this work aim to generate savings in both time and money on approvals (for councils) and enhance our region's attractiveness as a place to host events for both event managers and owners, and event participants. A workshop was held with stakeholders on 2 November 2022 to discuss the recommendations, with feedback indicating general support.

Mayors Gala - Building Regional Collaboration & Celebrating Regional Success	
Program / Project Lead	Boyd Blackwell
Delivery Status	Delayed / Impacted

Purpose:

To pilot delivery of a collaborative regional event by Councils, through the Hunter JO, that brings all Mayors together, along with the full range of stakeholders in the region, to showcase the region's successes and strengths, and to demonstrate the full range of opportunities and assets that the Hunter offers.

Status update

The Hunter JO Board considered proposals for the Mayors Gala concept at its April 2022 meeting. In light of the feedback provided a review of options needs to be undertaken (subject to resources being available) to further review and refine the concept.

3.7 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.

Hunter Global: Our International Future	
Program / Project Lead	Steve Wilson
Delivery Status	On track

Purpose:

The Hunter JO is leading a collaborative partnership between the Hunter JO, Newcastle Airport, Committee for the Hunter, Business Hunter and the University of Newcastle to:

- Build collaborative processes and systems within the region to collectively identify and actively
 pursue key international opportunities for expanding the Airport's economic contribution to the
 Region
- Directly support the expansion of international Airport related business and industry as a primary contributor to the Hunter Region's economic growth and diversification.

Status update:

The Hunter Global project partner group met on 3rd November to collectively review and refine the final draft of the "Hunter Global: The Flightpath to our Future" report. Editing to include this feedback along with graphic design of the document is now in its final stages. When completed, the report will provide another key piece of evidence-based collateral that can be utilised by the Hunter JO and Member Councils to underpin collaboration and advocacy efforts to unlock the economic and social opportunities for the region triggered by more competitive access to global markets that will be provided via the Airport.

Destination Sydney Surrounds Destination Management Plan (DMP)		
Program / Project Lead	Tim Askew	
Delivery Status	Completed	
Purpose:		
To prepare a Destination Management Plan for the DSSN area, which includes the Hunter Region.		
Status update:		
The Destination Management Plan has now been completed by DSSN		

3.8 Work with the Department of Infrastructure, Regional development & Cities to undertake more detailed exploration of the opportunities created by a City Deal, as well as the preconditions and process to develop a City Deal in the Hunter

City Deal Advocacy	
Program / Project Lead	Joe James
Delivery Status	On track
Dumpaga	

Purpose:

Undertake detailed exploration of the opportunities created by a City Deal, as well as the preconditions and process to develop a City Deal in the Hunter.

Status update:

With the election of the Anthony Albanese as Prime Minister (a historic supporter of City Deals), the Subcommittee for Economic Evolution has identified asking the Commonwealth Government to commit to a coordinating transition authority resourced via a min 20-year City Regional Deal as an advocacy priority. This is reflected directly as the Advocacy Ask within the Hunter JO Regional Advocacy Framework and Priorities to "establish a place-based deal for the Hunter, entered by all levels of Government, that provides clear priorities for public and private investment and planning in the Hunter for the next 30 years".

3.9 Explore and act on smart ways to transform local and global disruptions, such as the disruption of recycling services, into economic opportunities for the Hunter.

Hunter BioCircular	
Program / Project Lead	Tim Askew
Delivery Status	On track

Purpose:

To embrace world-leading innovations to develop a flagship community resources recovery model. By demonstrating a Circular Economy approach, Hunter BioCircular seeks to move the region toward zero waste to landfill, and in doing so provide long term economic, social and environmental benefits from processing waste locally, which will help transition the regional economy, deliver new local jobs and reduce carbon emissions.

Status update:

This project is being redesigned to focus on the development of Circular Economy (CE) Precincts to align more closely with NSW Government thinking. Hunter BioCircular is part of the \$878,600 funding application submitted to the Regional NSW Business Case and Strategy Development Fund to prepare a concept plan and strategy for Circular Economy Precincts. Advice remains pending on the outcome of this application.

ACTION AREA 4. OUR TRANSPORT

4.1 Establish a Transport Connectivity Sub Committee, made up representatives from member councils, to coordinate the transport and associated infrastructure planning activity of the JO and report to the Board.

Transport Connectivity Sub Committee	
Delivery Status	Delivery Status: Not yet started (subject to resourcing)

4.2 Coordinate and prepare submissions on regional planning initiatives such as the 2056 Freight and Ports Plan.

Submission to Draft Hunter Regional Transport Plan		
Program / Project Lead	Steve Wilson	
Delivery Status	On track	
Purpose:		
To prepare a regional submission on the Hunter Regional Transport Plan.		
Status update:		
The Hunter JO team are currently preparing a regional submission on the draft Hunter Regional Transport Plan. This will draw on the individual submissions of Member Councils, the draft Hunter JO		

4.3 Work with the Transport for NSW and other partners to access and analyse detailed transport data across the region and understand gaps in infrastructure and services.

Strategic Plan and Regional Advocacy Framework and Priorities.

Analyse detailed transport data across the region							
Delivery Status	Delivery Status: Not yet started (subject to resourcing)						

4.4 Engage at a senior level with key transport stakeholders including Transport for NSW, Roads and Maritime Authority, Newcastle Airport, Port of Newcastle and Keolis Downer to better understand their forward planning for the region.

Analyse detailed transport data across the region						
Delivery Status	Delivery Status: Not yet started (subject to resourcing)					

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.

Regional Infrastructure Priority List					
Program / Project Lead	Boyd Blackwell				
Delivery Status	On track				

Project Purpose:

To prepare an agreed list of regional and sub regional infrastructure priorities to:

- Build and advocate a stronger case for investment in infrastructure priorities across the region
- Identify the potential for shared interests and collaboration between Councils and other stakeholders in delivering local and regional scale infrastructure initiatives.
- 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

Status update:

An information session was held on 3rd November to take council and agency staff officers through the googleform developed and data requirements established for collecting information on priority regional infrastructure projects from their organisations as part of the PIL project. A due date of 30 Nov 2022 was confirmed by participants for providing the first round of information on priority infrastructure projects.

Regional Cycle Tourism Master Plan (Shiraz to Shore)					
Program / Project Lead	Tim Askew				
Delivery Status	On track				

Purpose:

Significant opportunity exists to link existing and planned cycleway infrastructure across Hunter JO member Councils; to create an integrated region wide network. This would provide both a valuable region wide recreational resource for residents, and the foundation upon which to generate economic and business development by holistically promoting the region as a key cycling destination. The purpose of this project is to prepare and implement a cycle tourism masterplan / Destination Management Plan for the region.

Status update:

A funding application totalling \$387,500 has been submitted to the Regional NSW Business Case and Strategy Development Fund to develop a concept plan, strategy and business case for the project. Advice on the outcome of the funding application remains pending.

4.6 Develop and implement a targeted advocacy program to gain commitments from infrastructure and service delivery agencies, including the Australian Government, to deliver agreed priorities.

Regional Advocacy Framework and Priorities					
Program / Project Lead	Steve Wilson				
Delivery Status	On track				

Purpose:

To communicate the shared interests, priorities and directions of the Hunter region's 10 democratically elected Mayors.

Status update:

For the first time, the Hunter JO Board has endorsed an Advocacy Framework and accompanying series of draft policy statements and "advocacy asks", which demonstrate the aligned interests, priorities and directions of the Hunter region's 10 democratically elected Mayors. This document is initially being used to underpin advocacy efforts by the Hunter JO in the lead up to the 2023 NSW State Government election.

ACTION AREA 5. OUR EDUCATION

- 5.1. Establish a Social Sustainability Sub Committee, made up representatives from member councils, to coordinate the education, health and related policy and planning activities of the JO and report to the Board.
- 5.2 Engage at a senior level with key education stakeholders including the University of Newcastle, TAFE NSW and School Infrastructure NSW to better understand their forward planning for the region.
- 5.3 Work with the NSW Department of Education to better understand and test their projections for growth in student numbers throughout the Hunter.
- 5.4 Use the in-depth evidence base to prepare a Hunter JO agreed priority list of school infrastructure improvements which will make the greatest difference to communities across the region.
- 5.5 Advocate to Schools Infrastructure NSW and the Minister for Education to gain commitments to deliver agreed schools infrastructure improvements.
- 5.6 Work with TAFE NSW to expand access to training and vocational services across the region, including through innovative models such as Connected Learning Centres, Specialist Centres and Mobile Training Units.
- 5.7 Work with the University of Newcastle and TAFE NSW to help raise awareness, aspiration and achievement of tertiary education opportunities for primary and secondary school students in the region.
- 5.8 Work with Indigenous educational and community groups to support and encourage young Indigenous people into tertiary education.
- 5.9 Work with local Libraries and education providers to develop and implement technology for life learning schemes to ensure all generations take advantage of new technology to improve quality of life.

Delivery Status	Delivery Status: Not yet started (subject to resourcing)
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ACTION AREA 6. OUR HEALTH

- 6.1 Work with the Hunter New England Local Health District and other key partners to audit health services across the region, identify accessibility gaps and prioritise actions.
- 6.2 Hold regional stakeholder workshops to gain input from community members and health professionals to better understand the priority health needs of local communities.
- 6.3 Use the in-depth evidence base to prepare a Hunter JO agreed priority list of improvements to health services and facilities which will make the greatest difference to communities across the region.
- 6.4 Explore innovative models of housing to enable older people to age in place in Hunter towns and villages.

Delivery Status	Delivery Status: Not yet started (subject to resourcing)
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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, including the recent Regional Leadership Executive Regional Development Forum on 29 November 2022, and the status of funding streams made available to support infrastructure, bushfire and flood recovery efforts, as well as those that form part of the NSW Government's Regional Growth Fund.

Report:

Regional Leadership Executive

A recommendation from the 2022 review of Regional Leadership Executives (RLEs) was to establish biannual Regional Development Forums, bringing together a wider collection of government and nongovernment stakeholders and regional leaders.

The forums will enable connection and collaboration at the regional level on the three RLE state-wide focus areas - Liveability; Aboriginal Communities; Economic Development/Diversification. They will also provide a platform to explore other priorities and opportunities specific to the region.

The Regional Development Forums will provide an avenue for the RLE to collaborate with a broader range of regional stakeholders and leaders on significant issues affecting the region, allow solutions to be workshopped and inform the RLE priorities and actions over the next 12 months.

The Hunter Central Coast Region was given the opportunity to pilot a Bi-annual Forum held on 29 November 2022, ahead of other regions in May 2023.

While it is expected that the Bi-annual Forums will ultimately include a broad cross-section of stakeholders, the initial pilot in the Hunter Central Coast included primarily representatives from the three tiers of Government and the University.

The format for the pilot included presentations to establish the State policy context on the 3 statewide Focus Areas, followed by concurrent workshop sessions, and a 'speed-networking' brokerage opportunity, where councils could link in with relevant government agencies on specific issues.

For the purpose of the 'speed-networking' session, participating Councils were invited to identify their top 3 issues/opportunities that they would like to engage with specific Agencies around and we coordinated time for a 1:1 discussion.

The Hunter Central Coast RLE will now work to develop a new Annual Priorities Plan (replacing the former Statement of Intent) focussed on initiatives to implement the three Statewide priority focus areas, at the regional level. The learnings from the Hunter Central Coast pilot forum will inform the rollout of RLE Regional Development forums around the state in 2023.

Funding Programs - update

A. Applications open

- Regional Investment Activation Fund (RIAF) provides \$110M to facilitate new private sector investment to activate the potential of priority precincts and industries.
 - Stream One: an open, competitive grants program closed for EOIs on 14 November 2022.
 - Stream Two: an open, non-competitive grants program for unique footloose projects to provide increased flexibility to secure investments that are time-sensitive and strategically

- significant for a priority industry or location. EOIs for this stream will close when the program funding has been fully allocated or 31 December 2024, whichever occurs first.
- Infrastructure Betterment Fund (IBF) provides \$200M additional recovery support for NSW Public Assets impacted by storms, floods, and bushfires (2019/20 bushfires, February/March 2021 & 2022 floods). This is a rolling application review program, with eligibility focussed on essential public assets directly damaged by bushfire or flood. Works and expenditure to be completed by 30 May 2025. Applications close on 15 December 2022.

B. Assessment phase

- Business Case Strategy Development Fund (BCSDF) \$24 million program to facilitate the
 development of business cases or strategies for projects delivering significant economic or social
 benefits to regional communities, with a focus on infrastructure. Applications closed 24 August
 2022, with notification and announcements expected to be made shortly.
- Stronger Country Communities Fund (SCCF Rd 5) \$160 million to boost the wellbeing of
 communities in regional areas by providing new or upgraded social and sporting infrastructure,
 or community programs that have strong local support. Applications closed 23 September 2022,
 with notification and announcements expected to be made shortly.
- Accelerating Regional Innovation Fund (ARIF) \$2M program to support regional entrepreneurs and start-ups in emerging sector and future industries. Applications closed 30 September 2022, with notification and announcements expected to be made shortly.

C. Announcements

- Regional Tourism Activation Fund (RTAF Rd 2) \$150 million in funding to support the
 development of high impact tourism infrastructure projects that increase visitation, expenditure
 and extend length of stay for visitors to regional NSW. Applications closed on 27 September
 2022, with the notification process underway.
- Resources for Regions (R4R Rd 9) \$140 million to NSW's highly valued mining communities for
 infrastructure and community projects that support economic and social prosperity. The eligible
 regions included Cessnock City Council, Lake Macquarie City Council, Maitland City Council,
 Muswellbrook Shire Council, Newcastle City Council, Singleton Council and Upper Hunter Shire
 Council. Applications closed on 30 September 2022, with the notification process underway.
- Regional Event Acceleration Fund (REAF Rd 2) \$20 million in funding for events hosted in regional NSW between July 2022 and June 2023, to help attract new events to the regions, make existing iconic regional NSW events even bigger and better, and improve accessibility and inclusion at major events. Applications closed 4 October 2022, with the notification process underway.

Recommendation:

That the Board note the update on key activities of the Department of Regional NSW relating to the Regional Leadership Executive Regional Development Forum and the status of various State government funding programs.

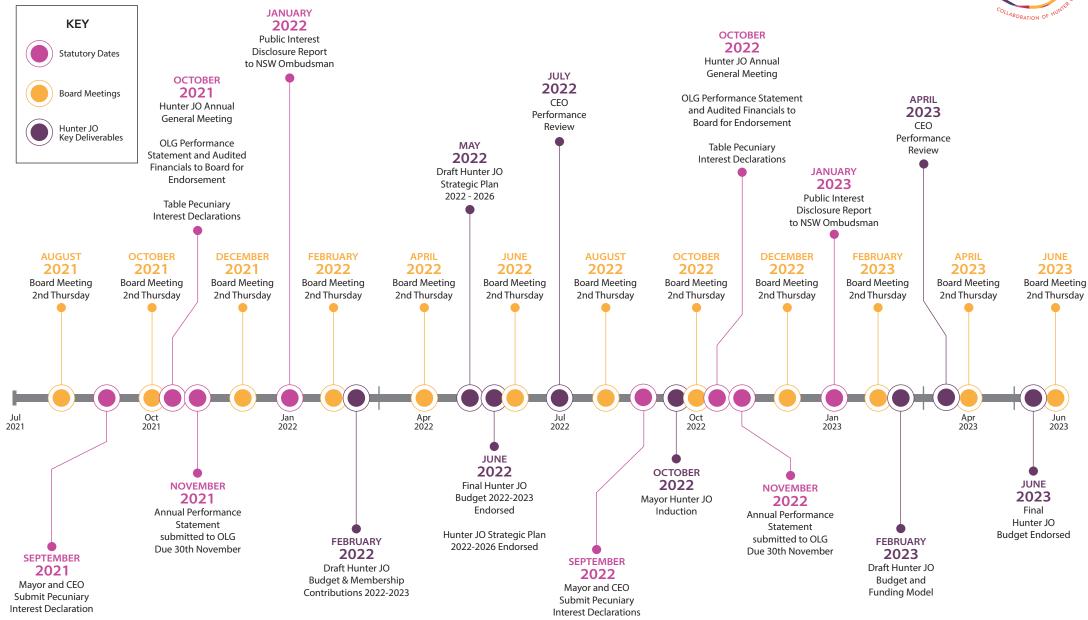
8. Matters Raised by Members

Nil items received.

- 9. General Business
- 9.1 Compliance & Governance Calendars
- Attachment 18 HJO Board Forward Planner and Governance Calendar
- Attachment 19 JO-Calendar-of-Compliance-and-Reporting-Requirements-2021-2022

HUNTER JO BOARD FORWARD PLANNER & GOVERNANCE CALENDAR





JOINT ORGANISATION CALENDAR OF COMPLIANCE AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS 2021-22

	Office of
NSW	Local Government

	JULY 2021	AUGUST 2021	SEPTEMBER 2021	OCTOBER 2021	NOVEMBER 2021	DECEMBER 2021	JANUARY 2022	FEBRUARY 2022	MARCH 2022	APRIL 2022	MAY 2022	JUNE 2022
	7 Proposed loan borrowings return to be submitted to TCorp					5 Last day for meeting to be held to present audited financial statements [LGA s418(2)]						
FINANCE	d GST Certificate to be submitted to OLG [Commonwealth Constitution s114]			17 Request for extension to lodge financial statements to be submitted in writing to OLG [LGA s416(2); Codel								
	Funding Stage 1 - Final report on the funding and delivery. Where extensions are granted- progress report is 31 July and final on project completion	30 Capacity Building Funding Stage 2 - Report to OLG with action plan, key delivery milestones and budget		31 Audited Financial Statements to be lodged with OLG [LGA s417(5); Code]		28 Last day for annual performance statement to be published [LGReg cl 397J(2)]				30 Capacity Building Funding Stage 2 - Report to OLG detailing delivery progress for expenditure of the funding, benefits, and report against budget.		
	loint Organisations to not		ar when loans are drawn down	(LGReg cl 230)								
			chairperson at the first meeting of the JO after the ordinary election of councils (give member councils time to elect mayors who make up the JO board)									
GOVERNANCE				30 Annual Report of obligations under PIDA to the Minister and the Ombudsman IPIDA s311								
	30 Public interest disclosures report due to the NSW Ombudsman [PIDA s6CA]		To Lodge completed written returns of interest for voting representatives and designated persons who held office at 30 June [MCC cl 4.21(b)]. Executive Officer to table returns at next JO Board meeting [MCC cl	30 Annual Report of obligations under GIPA to the Minister and the Information Commissioner [GIPA s125]	Statement due [LGReg cl 397J(1)]	[MCCP cl 11.2] and OLG [MCCP cl 11.2] on code of conduct complaint statistics	30 Public interest disclosures report due to the NSW Ombudsman [PIDA s6CA]					30 Last day to adopt Statement of Revenue Policy and Budget [LGReg cl 397I]
L	Local Government Directory - Joint Organisations should notify the OLG (olg@olg.nsw.gov.au) of any senior staff or address changes via email to enable updating of the directory											

Elections: Requirements within 12 months after the elections: Amend Local Policy (s.165(4)); Re-determine Organisation Structure (s.333); Review delegations (s.380); Review JO adopted Code of Conduct (s.440(7)); Adopt a code of meeting practice that incorporates the mandatory provisions of the model code and a policy concerning the payment of expenses (LGA s360 (3) and s252(1) LGReg cl 397M)

Joint Organisations must review its publication guide in relation to the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 and adopt a new publication guide at intervals of not more than 12 months; An agency may update and amend its publication guide at any time

Joint Organisation Circulars are emailed to Joint Organisations. Please advise OLG (olg@olg.nsw.gov.au) of any change of JO email address. Joint Organisation Circulars can be downloaded from OLG webpage at www.olg.nsw.gov.au

OLG = Office of Local Government. LGA = Local Government Act 1993. LGReg = Local Government (General) Regulation 2005. Code = Local Government Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting, Update No. 28, March 2020. MCC = Model Code of Conduct for Local Councils in NSW, 2018. MCCP = Procedures for the Administration of The Model Code of Conduct for Local Councils in NSW, 2018. PIDA = Public Interests Dislosures Act 1994. GIPA = Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009.