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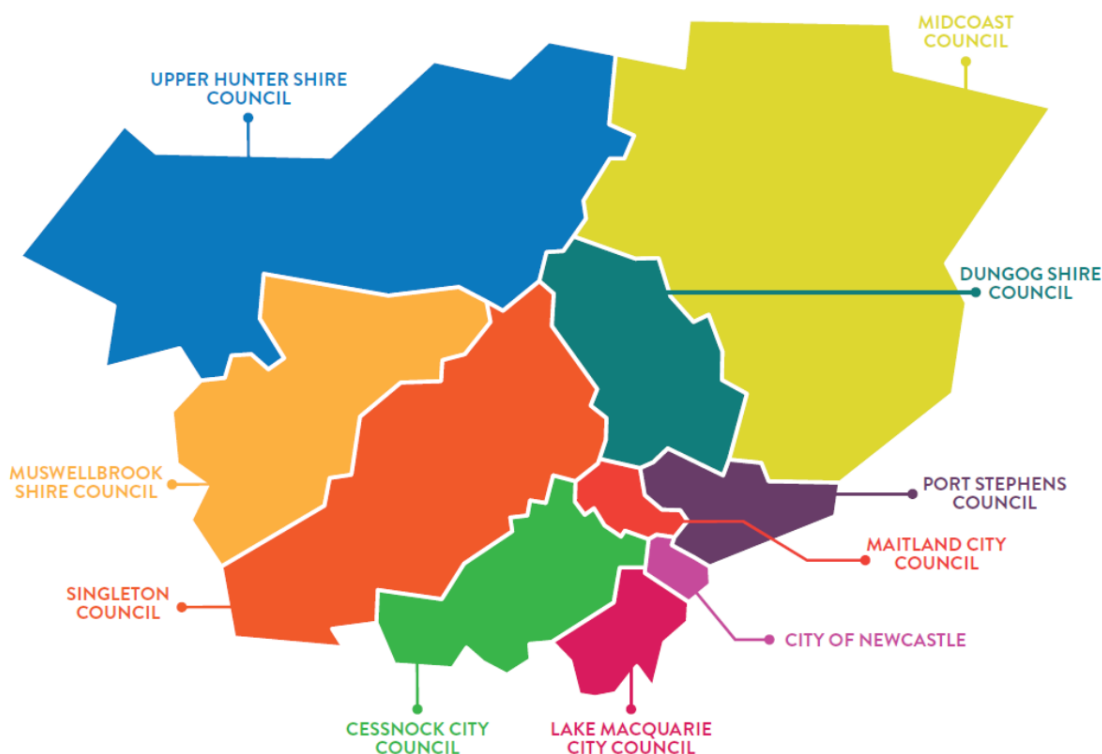
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## Hunter Joint Organisation Board Meeting Papers

10:00am, Thursday 9 June 2022



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## 1. Welcome and Apologies

### 1.1 Acknowledgement of Country

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*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

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*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 14 April 2022

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#### **Hunter Joint Organisation Board Meeting Minutes**

**10:30 – 1:00pm, Thursday 14 April 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 Phillip Penfold,	Maitland City Council
Cr Nuatali Nelmes,	Newcastle City Council
Cr Sue Moore,	Singleton Shire Council
Cr Ryan Palmer,	Port Stephens Council
Cr Claire Pontin,	MidCoast 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
David Evans,	General Manager, Maitland City Council
Fiona Plesman,	General Manager, Muswellbrook Shire Council
Jeremy Bath,	CEO, Newcastle City Council
Justin Fitzpatrick Barr	Acting General Manager, Singleton Council

#### **Apologies**

Cr Maurice Collison,	Upper Hunter Shire Council
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Cr Steve Reynolds,	Muswellbrook Shire Council
Wayne Wallis,	General Manager, Port Stephens Council
Jason Linnane,	General Manager, Singleton 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
Kali Somerville,	Media and Communications Officer, Hunter JO

#### **Others**

Ally Dench	Executive Director Local Government, Office of Local Government
Alison McGaffin	Director, Hunter & Central Coast, Regional NSW
Virginia Errington	Council Engagement Manager, Office of Local Government

*The meeting opened at 10:45am.*

### **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: Ryan Palmer***

***Seconded: John Connors***

***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 10 February 2022**

*The minutes were taken as read.*

#### ***Resolved:***

- ***That the minutes of previous meeting of 10 February 2022 be adopted.***

***Moved: John Connors***

***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: John Connors**

**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: John Connors**

**Seconded: Ryan Palmer**

**Carried.**

## **4. Presentations**

### **Review of Joint Organisations – Findings, Recommendations & Next Steps**

*Ally Dench, Executive Director Local Government – NSW Office of Local Government gave a presentation on the review of Joint Organisations that had been conducted, and process for implementation of recommendations*

## **5. Correspondence**

*The report was taken as read.*

**Resolved:**

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

**Moved: Phillip Penfold**

**Seconded: John Connors**

**Carried.**

## **6. Items for the Hunter JO Board - For Decision**

### **6.1 Mayors Gala: Building Regional Collaboration & Celebrating Regional Success**

*The Board discussed the report and recommendations provided within the papers. Cr Suvall noted that he is not in support of the recommendations as written. Cr Fraser also raised some concerns with the recommendations and the awards concept within the Gala Proposal.*

*The Board discussed the pros and cons of the Mayors Gala event, and the purpose of such an event for the Hunter JO.*

*Cr Suvall proposed a motion that the Hunter JO not proceed with the concept of the Mayors Gala, and that the Hunter JO investigate alternate opportunities to build capacity and collaboration between Councils in bidding for and hosting major events. Cr Fraser seconded this motion.*

*Cr Palmer provided a response to the motion, and indicated that there may be a way to address Crs Suvaal and Fraser's concerns while still exploring the concept further.*

*The Chair put the motion forward to a vote. The motion was lost.*

*Cr Palmer proposed to move the recommendation provided within the report. Cr Penfold seconded this motion.*

*The Chair put the motion forward to a vote. The motion was lost.*

*Cr Nelmes proposed that an alternate motion could potentially provide a middle group, as an event such as this would require the support of all Mayors, and with additional clarification an event in this style could still be explored.*

*Cr Nelmes proposed that this item be deferred procedurally to later in the meeting, to provide time to develop an alternate motion to resolve the matter. Cr Suvaal seconded this motion.*

*There was no opposition to deferring the item procedurally.*

## **6.2 Regional Circular Materials and Waste Strategy**

*The item was taken as read.*

### **Resolved**

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

***Moved: Nuatali Nelmes***

***Seconded: John Connors***

***Carried.***

## **6.3 IPART proposed changes to Domestic Waste Management Charge: Formulating a Regional Submission**

*The Board discussed the report provided.*

*Cr Nelmes proposed to move the recommendation as provided, but suggested that additional wording could be added to take a stronger stance. Cr Palmer seconded this motion.*

*Cr Suvaal voiced his support for the report and noted that, in addition to the motion, the proposal of benchmarking would need to specify that Councils be compared like-for-like, both in terms of population and in the waste services that they provide, as Councils can differ significantly in what waste services that are able to provide.*

*Cr Nelmes seconded Cr Suvaal's comments, and noted that benchmarking should also take private industry into account, as Councils are often having to compete with private waste providers now.*

*Cr Nelmes proposed the following amended motion, which was seconded by Cr Palmer;*

### **Resolved:**

***That the Hunter JO Board endorse the following key principles and directions around which to formulate a regional submission to IPART's current consultation on the Review of Domestic Waste Management Charges Draft Report:***

***o Oppose the introduction of a DWM rate peg;***

***o Clearly identify that the premise underpinning the IPART review is not accepted by Hunter JO Member Councils;***

***o Raise concerns that both a DWM peg or rebalancing exercise could direct Councils to act contrary to existing legislation, and therefore call for a review of the definitions of 'waste' and 'domestic waste management services' in the LG Act and OLG Rating and Revenue Raising Manual, in tandem with the EPA's review of the resource recovery framework, to cover all services/functions that relate to the minimisation, management, and highest order recovery of waste that is generated by rateable plots of land; and that all waste services offered and delivered within the LGA be considered in the definition of waste services.***

***o As the least worst option, councils favour benchmarking, clear and consistent pricing principles, and rebalancing DWMC with general rates, over a minimum 2-year transition period, based on expanded definitions of 'waste' and 'domestic waste management services.***

***o That if benchmarking is to be used that councils are compared like for like, making sure there is a true comparison, and that benchmarking includes private industry***

***o Consider whether IPART's behaviour is anti-competitive, and query the role of IPART in this process, and the resulting inability for local government to effectively capture future investment in waste within their rate revenue.***

***Moved: Nuatali Nelmes***

***Seconded: Ryan Palmer***

***Carried.***

## 6.4 Priority Infrastructure List

*The report was taken as read.*

**Resolved:**

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

***Moved: Nuatali Nelmes***

***Seconded: Ryan Palmer***

***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: Philip Penfold***

***Seconded: John Connors***

***Carried.***

### 7.2 Hunter JO Financial Report – April 2022

*The Board discussed the proposed member contributions within the report for the 2022-23 financial year budget.*

*Cr Fraser noted that Member Councils may be limited in their own ability to increase according to CPI at 3.5%, as suggested in the report, as they will have their own rate peg imposed by IPART for the new financial year.*

*Cr Suvaal seconded these comments, and that the Board consider the rate peg as a model moving forward, rather than standard CPI.*

*The Chair asked if an alternate motion was being put forward.*

*Cr Penfold proposed to put forward the recommendation as written in the report. Cr Palmer seconded this motion.*

*Cr Penfold spoke to the motion, noting that the difference between and increased based on CPI or based on IPART rate pegs would have a substantial financial impact for the Hunter JO's budget. Cr Penfold also noted that the difference in these amounts may have a broader operational impact for the Hunter JO, rather than the difference this would make for each Member Council in relation to their contribution.*

*Cr Palmer seconded these comments, noting that each Council is having to adjust to their IPART rate peg and the restrictions this may present for their Councils budgets, but that this issue shouldn't then also limit the Hunter JO budget in the same way.*

*The Chair asked if there was any opposition to the motion.*

*Cr Fraser moved an alternate motion, that the minimum rate peg of 0.7% be used to model the increases for member contributions for the 2022-23 financial year. Cr Nelmes seconded this motion.*

*Cr Palmer proposed an amended motion as below, which was seconded by Cr Connors;*

**Resolved:**

***That each Council's contribution for the 2022-23 financial year budget be modelled on that from the 21/22 financial year, with an increase based either on;***

- ***the Council's rate peg for the 22/23 financial year (at a minimum of 0.7%); or***
- ***the rate of CPI***

*With each Council making their own determination as to the mechanism for variation, based on their circumstances.*

*Moved: Ryan Palmer*

*Seconded: John Connors*

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

*Moved: Ryan Palmer*

*Seconded: Nuatali Nelmes*

***Carried.***

#### **7.4 Hunter JO Program Delivery Highlights**

*The report was taken as read, and noted by the Board.*

#### **7.5 Regional NSW Standing Update**

*Alison McGaffin spoke to the report, which was noted by the Board.*

#### **7.6 Regional Contaminated Land Program – Status & Next Steps**

*The report was taken as read, and noted by the Board.*

#### **7.7 Hunter JO Strategic Plan Status & Next Steps**

*The report was taken as read, and noted by the Board.*

#### **7.8 OLG Review of the Joint Organisation Network**

*The report was taken as read, and noted by the Board.*

#### **7.9 Accelerating Event Economies in the Hunter: Key Delivery Areas**

*The report was taken as read, and noted by the Board*

#### **7.10 Hunter Global Summit Outcomes & Directions**

*The report was taken as read, and noted by the Board*

### **8. Matters Raised by Members**

*Nil matters raised by Members.*

### **9. General Business**

#### **9.1 Compliance & Governance Calendars**

*The calendars were noted.*

*The Chair reconvened the discussion on Item 6.1.*

#### **6.1 Mayors Gala: Building Regional Collaboration & Celebrating Regional Success**

*Cr Suvaal presented an amended motion from the original recommendations, seconded by Cr Palmer;*

***That the Hunter JO Board endorse:***

- ***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.***

***Moved: Jay Suvaal***

***Seconded: Ryan Palmer***

***Carried.***

Meeting closed 12.45pm

### 3. Confirmation of Minutes & Business Arising from Minutes

#### Recommendation:

- That the minutes of the previous meetings of 14 April 2022 be adopted

#### 3.1 Business Arising: Hunter JO Action Register

I.D	Action	Mtg Date	Status	Due	Notes
HJO-19-13	That a discussion of Audit, Risk and Improvement Committees be added to the agenda for the HJO for discussion at a later date	29 Aug 2019	On hold	Revised Due date: March 2021  Revised Status: On Hold (no update since March 21)	Mar2021: GMAC have discussed and indicated to put on hold until the framework is finalised and provided from OLG  GMAC 25 March 2021 meeting resolution is as follows: That no further investigation of shared resourcing of ARICs be completed until the OLG Framework has been finalised, and at that point only if member councils express interest in sharing resources (if this option is allowed within the Framework).  June 2022: OLG has advised that further minor changes to the ARIC Guidelines will be made, however the expectation for Councils to have an ARIC in place by June 2022 will stand.
HJO-20-55	<b><u>Hunter JO Waste Strategy Review and Development</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the Hunter JO Board endorse development of a new Resource Recovery Strategy 2021-2027 that creates an ambitious yet achievable plan to transition our resource recovery sector to a circular economy model.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	Feb 21	Underway	April 2022  August 2022	<p>June 2022: Progress on track in accordance with revised completion date (August 2022) endorsed at April 2022 Board meeting.</p> <p>April 2022: Refer report included in Agenda Item 8.2 - Regional Circular Materials and Waste Strategy</p> <p>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</p>

I.D	Action	Mtg Date	Status	Due	Notes
					to guidelines that the Hunter and Central Coast strategy will need to address and align with. This will mean a rearrangement of tasks and timelines within the project, however the work undertaken to date is broadly in alignment with the intent 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	<b><u>Regional Freight and Logistics - Initiatives and Opportunities</u></b>  That a Summary Brief on this be brought back to the Board for endorsement.	Apr-21	Underway	<del>Oct-21</del> June 2022	June 2022 – as per previous update (April 2022)  April 2022 – as per previous update (Jan 2022)  Jan2022: As reported to the Board in December 2021, this action will now be addressed directly within the draft Hunter JO Strategic Plan currently under development.
HJO-20-63	<b><u>Cities Power Partnership Options</u></b>  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	<del>December 2021</del> May 2022	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 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

I.D	Action	Mtg Date	Status	Due	Notes
					focus moving forward will be to complete formalising the partnership agreement.
HJO-20-65	<b><u>World Masters Games</u></b>  Establish a Regional Events Strategy Working Group. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review opportunities and costs associated with hosting the World Masters Games.</li> <li>• Scope out the development of a bid for the 2029 World Masters Games on behalf of the Hunter Region.</li> <li>• Review existing strategies and develop a roadmap for the implementation of key actions to attract major events to the region.</li> </ul>	Apr-21	Underway	<del>Feb 2022</del> June 2022	<p>June 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.</p> <p>April 2022: Refer report included in Agenda Item 7.8 - Accelerating Event Economies (A2E)</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Jan2022: Project Officer has been recruited to deliver Accelerating Event Economies (A2E) project, commencing 17 Jan 2022. Stakeholder engagement and development of consultant briefs also commencing regarding undertaking a regional event and asset audit, which will underpin this action.</p>
HJO-20-71	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• THAT the Hunter JO draft correspondence to the NSW Government regarding funding and action required on the Hunter Sports Precinct in Broadmeadow</li> <li>• That the drafted correspondence be reviewed out of session by the Board prior to sending.</li> </ul>	10 Jun 21	Underway		<p>Nov2021: Propose to revisit this matter in 2022 once the GNMPSC has reformed post-local government elections</p> <p>Sep2021: A draft has been completed by the CEO and has been included in Correspondence. The original intent of the correspondence has been overtaken by a government announcement on Hunter Park</p>



I.D	Action	Mtg Date	Status	Due	Notes
					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	<p>That subject to adequate resourcing being provided by the NSW EPA to undertake, a due diligence assessment be initiated by the Hunter JO.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review existing state-wide approaches to the management of RID Squads</li> <li>Determine the feasibility of the Hunter JO potentially hosting the RID Squad</li> <li>Identifying the most appropriate financial and operational model for the RID Squad were it to be hosted by the Hunter JO.</li> </ul>	30 Sep 21	Underway	Mar-22	<p>June 2022 – Due diligence review completed and outcomes reported to 26 May 2022 GMAC meeting. GMAC endorsed the Hunter JO Team proceeding with negotiations with the NSW EPA, Hunter JO Member Councils and with Central Coast Council, with the objective of establishing a Regional Illegal Dumping Program to be hosted by the Hunter JO. Proceeding will be contingent on a level of funding being provided by the NSW EPA that ensures delivery of the RID Program does not detract from the core capability of the Hunter JO team to deliver on the agreed strategic and program priorities endorsed by the Hunter JO Board.</p> <p>April 2022: EPA confirmed late February 2022 that that Hunter JO will now need to identify, engage and manage consultant to deliver the due diligence review.</p> <p>We have since received a quotation to complete the due diligence work, and a request for \$46,775 has been submitted to the EPA to undertake this work. Advice is pending on the outcome of this request.</p> <p>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</p>

I.D	Action	Mtg Date	Status	Due	Notes
					<p>squad model and strategic objectives going forward, and the process will include consultation with stakeholders (including the HJO).</p> <p>HJO officers are meeting with EPA representatives 17 January to progress the due diligence assessment work, focusing on the logistical and resourcing implications for HJO hosting the Hunter RID squad.</p>
HJO-20-81	That a meeting of the Regional Economic Transition Sub-Committee be called prior to the Local Government elections in December 2021, to discuss the Hunter Expert Panel.	14 Oct 21	Underway	Feb 2022	<p>June 2022 – Nominations from Mayors and General Managers to participate on the Subcommittee have been extended to all Member Councils. Refer “Hunter JO Subcommittees Standing Update”</p> <p>April 2022 – refer Agenda Item 7.3 – Hunter JO Sub-Committees Standing Update</p> <p>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.</p>
HJO-20-84	<p>That the Hunter JO Board endorse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further developing the concept of delivering a regional event which would require the active commitment and participation of all Mayors, Deputy Mayors &amp; General Managers in its delivery</li> <li>Continuing to engage with key regional stakeholders, including with the Board, to further guide design and development of the</li> </ul>	Apr 22	Underway	August 2022	<p>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.</p>

I.D	Action	Mtg Date	Status	Due	Notes
	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.				
HJO-20-85	That the Board endorse the draft recommendations identified in relation to development of the Hunter JO strategy and the proposed time frame for completion.	Apr 22	Complete		June 2022 - The Hunter JO Board Strategy Workshop has been scheduled for the 14-15 July 2022.
HJO-20-86	<p>That the Hunter JO Board endorse the following key principles and directions around which to formulate a regional submission to IPART's current consultation on the Review of Domestic Waste Management Charges Draft Report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Oppose the introduction of a DWM rate peg;</li> <li>o Clearly identify that the premise underpinning the IPART review is not accepted by Hunter JO Member Councils;</li> <li>o Raise concerns that both a DWM peg or rebalancing exercise could direct Councils to act contrary to existing legislation, and therefore call for a review of the definitions of 'waste' and 'domestic waste management services' in the LG Act and OLG Rating and Revenue Raising Manual, in tandem with the EPA's review of the resource recovery framework, to cover all services/functions that relate to the minimisation, management, and highest order recovery of waste that is generated by rateable plots of land; and that all waste services offered and delivered within the LGA be considered in the definition of waste services.</li> <li>o As the least worst option, councils favour benchmarking, clear and consistent pricing</li> </ul>	Apr 22	Complete		Submission completed – refer "Correspondence" for a copy of the full submission.

I.D	Action	Mtg Date	Status	Due	Notes
	<p>principles, and rebalancing DWMC with general rates, over a minimum 2-year transition period, based on expanded definitions of 'waste' and 'domestic waste management services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o That if benchmarking is to be used that councils are compared like for like, making sure there is a true comparison, and that benchmarking includes private industry</li> <li>o Consider whether IPART's behaviour is anti-competitive, and query the role of IPART in this process, and the resulting inability for local government to effectively capture future investment in waste within their rate revenue.</li> </ul>				
HJO-20-87	<p>Priority Infrastructure List: That the Board endorse the Assessment Framework that has been developed during Phase 1 of the project as the basis upon which to proceed to Phase 2 delivery.</p>	Apr 22	Complete		June 2022 - Following the Board's endorsement of Phase 1, delivery of Phase 2 is now underway.
HJO-20-88	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the Board note the updates on the Hunter JO Sub-Committees</li> <li>• That the Board endorse the recommendations arising from the GNMP Steering Committee workshop including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The Hunter JO advocate to the Minister that: <p>A formal governance arrangement be enshrined between the Greater Newcastle Cities Commissioner (to be appointed), and the five Mayors of the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Area (City of Newcastle, Lake Macquarie City Council, Cessnock City Council, Maitland City Council and Port Stephens Council)</p> <p>The governance process established, enshrines a process for regular and</p> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Apr 22	Underway		June 2022 - Refer Agenda Item 6.5 - Hunter JO Sub-Committees Standing Update.

I.D	Action	Mtg Date	Status	Due	Notes
	<p>meaningful communication and collaboration between the Greater Newcastle Cities Commissioner and the five Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Area Mayors</p> <p>ii. That the primary role of the GNMP Steering Committee moving forward, will be to:</p> <p>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</p> <p>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.</p> <p>• That the Board endorse the recommendations relating to the Regional Economic Transition Subcommittee, including:</p> <p>i. That the primary role of the Subcommittee moving forward, will be to develop and provide a strong and united advocacy voice on agreed core priorities for the place based economic evolution of the Hunter region, within the context of the broader Hunter JO narrative. This would particularly focus on seeking and influencing State Government leadership, strategic direction, resources and action to ensure collective local government priorities enable the region's economic evolution through the Royalties for Rejuvenation program and the Hunter Expert Panel.</p> <p>ii. That membership of the Committee be drawn exclusively from the Hunter JO Board, to ensure representatives have the appropriate authority to make decisions and deliver the advocacy functions of the Subcommittee and its members.</p>				

I.D	Action	Mtg Date	Status	Due	Notes
	iii. That the name of the Standing Committee be amended to the "Subcommittee for Economic Evolution" to align with the broader narrative of the Hunter JO around the region's economic transformation. • That representatives from the Hunter JO Board with an interest in being a representative on the Regional Economic Transition Subcommittee confirm their involvement at the April 2022 Board meeting.				
HJO-20-89	That the Hunter JO Member Council Contributions for the 22/23FY budget be modelled on that from the 21/22 financial year, with an increase based either on: • the relevant Council's rate peg for the 22/23 financial year; or • the Consumer Price Index (CPI), With each Council to make their own determination as to the amount they would pay, based on their circumstances.	Apr 22	Complete	Jun 22	Correspondence has been sent out of session to all Mayors and GMs requesting feedback on their contribution for the 22/23 financial year. These figures have been used in the Hunter JO Budget, which will be brought for endorsement to the June meeting of the Hunter JO Board.

### 3.2 Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan Steering Committee Action Register

I.D	Action	Mtg Date	Responsibility	Notes
GNMP-21-10	That an update on the progress and achievements to date of the growth Catalyst Areas be included as an Agenda item for the next Committee meeting	07/10/21	HJO	<p>June 2022 &amp; April 2022: In progress. Outcomes from 10<sup>th</sup> March Committee workshop identified interest in potentially two briefings per annum provided by State Agencies to the Committee, including updates on Catalyst Areas.</p> <p>Feb 2022: In progress – to be included on Agenda for next Committee meeting to be scheduled subsequent to the 10<sup>th</sup> March 2022 workshop (see below). Workshop confirmed need for updates from agencies in this regard.</p>

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

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



## 4. Presentations

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### 4.1 Hunter Estuary Program – Maitland City Council

Representatives from Maitland City Council will provide an overview of progress and directions on the Hunter River Estuary Coastal Management Program. Maitland City Council is leading this work on behalf of the 5 Councils involved in the program. The presentation will include the proposed governance model that has been identified for driving implementation of the Program and explore the potential relationship with, and reporting updates to the Hunter JO Board moving forward.

### 4.2 Office of Regional Youth

*Presenter(s): Dan Brown (Regional Youth Community Coordinator, Office of Regional Youth)*

Regional Youth Community Coordinators are now based in the Hunter with the Office of Regional Youth. This presentation will provide a general overview of the work of the Office of Regional Youth and a specific briefing on the Children and Young People Wellbeing Recovery initiative.

## 5. Correspondence

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**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 Minister Griffin re Contaminated Land Funding Extension, 7 April 2022
- Attachment 2: Correspondence to IPART re Hunter JO Submission on DWM Charge Review, 6 May 2022
- Attachment 3: Correspondence to Candidates for Federal Electorates, including electorate-specific priority lists.

Correspondence was sent to all of the following;

David Gillespie	Member for the Federal Seat of Lyne
Karl Attenborough	Candidate for the Federal Seat of Lyne
Joel Putland	Candidate for the Federal Seat of Lyne
Daniel Repacholi	Candidate for the Federal Seat of Hunter
James Thomson	Candidate for the Federal Seat of Hunter
Janet Murray	Candidate for the Federal Seat of Hunter
Dale McNamara	Candidate for the Federal Seat of Hunter
Stuart Bonds	Candidate for the Federal Seat of Hunter
Geoff Passfield	Candidate for the Federal Seat of Hunter
Meryl Swanson	Member for the Federal Seat of Paterson
Brooke Vitnell	Candidate for the Federal Seat of Paterson
Louise Ihlein	Candidate for the Federal Seat of Paterson
Neil Turner	Candidate for the Federal Seat of Paterson
Jason Olbourne	Candidate for the Federal Seat of Paterson
Laura Hughes	Candidate for the Federal Seat of New England
Barnaby Joyce	Member for the Federal Seat of New England
Carol Sparks	Candidate for the Federal Seat of New England
Cindy Duncan	Candidate for the Federal Seat of New England
Pat Conroy	Member for the Federal Seat of Shortland
Nell McGill	Candidate for the Federal Seat of Shortland
Kim Grierson	Candidate for the Federal Seat of Shortland
Kenneth Maxwell	Candidate for the Federal Seat of Shortland
Sharon Claydon	Member for the Federal Seat of Newcastle
Katrina Wark	Candidate for the Federal Seat of Newcastle

Charlotte McCabe	Candidate for the Federal Seat of Newcastle
Mark Watson	Candidate for the Federal Seat of Newcastle
Amanda Cook	Candidate for the Federal Seat of Newcastle

It was also provided to the following Federal Ministers & MPs;

Hon Scott Morrison, MP	Prime Minister
Hon Anthony Albanese, MP	Leader of the Opposition
Hon Paul Fletcher, MP	Minister for Communications, Urban Infrastructure, Cities and the Arts
Hon Michelle Rowland, MP	Shadow Minister for Communications
Hon Dan Tehan, MP	Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment
Hon Richard Marles, MP	Shadow Minister for National Reconstruction, Employment, Skills and Small Business
Hon Angus Taylor, MP	Minister for Industry, Energy and Emissions Reduction
Hon Tony Burke, MP	Shadow Minister for the Arts
Hon Alan Tudge, MP	Minister for Education and Youth
Senator the Hon Don Farrell, MP	Shadow Minister for Sport and Tourism
Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie, MP	Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education
Hon Catherine King, MP	Shadow Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development
Hon Chris Bowen, MP	Shadow Minister for Climate Change and Energy
Hon Ed Husic, MP	Shadow Minister for Industry and Innovation
Senator the Hon Hollie Hughes, MP	Senator for New South Wales

Correspondence Received:

- Attachment 4: Correspondence from Minister Griffin re Contaminated Land Funding Extension, 12 May 2022
- Attachment 5: Correspondence from NSW EPA – re extension of six-months in funding to support the extension of the Regional Contaminated Land Program

**RECOMMENDATION: That the update report be received and noted.**



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The Hon. James Griffin, MP  
Minister for Environment and Heritage  
52 Martin Place  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

7<sup>th</sup> April 2022

Dear Minister Griffin,

**Subject: Formal Request for confirmation of funding extension to the *Regional Contaminated Land Capacity Building Program***

On behalf of its Member Councils, the Hunter Joint Organisation is formally requesting confirmation that a 12-month extension in funding for the Regional Contaminated Land Capacity Building Program is to be provided. The current program which commenced in January 2020 is due for completion in August 2022. The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) has informally advised that they are looking at extending the Program with an additional 12 months funding until August 2023, however, formal confirmation of this extension is yet to be provided.

This request is supported by Central Coast Council and all Member Councils of the Hunter Joint Organisation, including:

- Cessnock City Council
- Dungog Shire Council
- Lake Macquarie City Council
- Maitland City Council
- MidCoast Council
- Muswellbrook Shire Council
- City of Newcastle
- Port Stephens Council
- Singleton Council
- Upper Hunter Shire Council



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The Regional Contaminated Land Capacity Building Program is a critical regional program that is heavily used by all participating Councils. The Program is essential in supporting Councils to effectively identify, assess and manage contaminated sites on private and Council managed land, and to support Councils' transition to their role as regulators of the Underground Petroleum Storage System (UPSS) Regulation.

The program is highly used by operational staff across all member Councils, including high attendance at working groups and training sessions and technical advice requests through the Service Desk. Formal confirmation of the Program's extension is required as soon as possible to ensure minimal disruption to Program support services.

I ask that you consider the above request and look forward to your reply.

Should you have any further queries, please contact Melinda Curtis, Regional Policy and Program Manager - Environment on 0428 981 012 or at [melindac@hunterjo.com.au](mailto:melindac@hunterjo.com.au)

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "SR Moore", written in a cursive style.

**Cr Sue Moore**  
Chair, Hunter Joint Organisation  
Mayor, Singleton Council



Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal  
PO Box K35  
Haymarket Post Shop, Sydney NSW 1240

6 May 2022

To Whom it May Concern,

**Subject: Submission: Draft Report - Review of domestic waste management charges- 13 December 2021**

The Hunter Joint Organisation (JO) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission in response to IPART's Draft Report – Review of Domestic Waste Management Charges (13 December 2021). The Hunter JO has worked in collaboration with its ten Member Councils, Central Coast Council, and with a wide range of other government and non-government bodies for more than a decade in relation to local government focused waste and resource recovery matters. We look forward to continuing to build capacity and drive innovation in partnership with the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA), Councils of the Hunter Central Coast Waste Region and with other national, state, regional and local stakeholders as this space continues to innovate and evolve in the face of dynamic and rapidly changing policy, commercial and environmental settings.

#### **The Hunter Joint Organisation**

The Hunter Joint Organisation is a statutory local government entity established by the NSW Government, through the *NSW Local Government Act 1993*, to support councils work together for better rural and regional outcomes, and to enhance the way local and state governments work together to plan and deliver important regional infrastructure and investment.

Member Councils of the Hunter JO include:

- Cessnock City Council
- Muswellbrook Shire Council
- Dungog Shire Council
- City of Newcastle
- Lake Macquarie City Council
- Port Stephens Council
- Maitland City Council
- Singleton Council
- MidCoast Council
- Upper Hunter Shire Council

Additionally, the Hunter JO also works collaboratively with Central Coast Council to deliver the Hunter and Central Coast Regional Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy.

The core statutory functions established for the Hunter JO are:

1. **Strategic planning and priority setting** – to establish strategic regional priorities for the Joint Organisation area and to establish strategies and plans for delivering those priorities
2. **Intergovernmental collaboration** - to identify and take up opportunities for inter-governmental cooperation on matters relating to the Joint Organisation area.

3. **Shared leadership and advocacy** - to provide regional leadership for the Joint Organisation area and to be an advocate for strategic regional priorities.

In the context of this submission, the Hunter JO plays several roles in leading and coordinating delivery of the place-based regional waste programs identified within the Hunter - Central Coast Regional Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy, including:

- Leading change, through evidence-based research, information, programs and advocacy,
- Facilitating collaborative and cost-effective research, planning and management initiatives to enhance the local and regional environment
- Building the capacity of Councils to continue to design, deliver and embed innovation and sustainability into their business operations and strategic plans.

Our submission summarises quantitative and qualitative feedback from our Member Councils consolidated through comprehensive consultations. Consequently, this submission should be weighted by IPART as consensus feedback from 11 councils – not just one organisation. Together, the Hunter - Central Coast voluntary waste group covers a population of over 1.1 million people, and manages approximately 15% of all NSW household waste, highlighting the central role that these councils play in waste management and resource recovery in NSW.

At an overall level the consensus positions and key recommendations identified by Member Councils include:

1. Councils do not accept the underlying premise upon which implementation of the IPART review has been initiated;
2. Councils hold serious concerns that both the voluntary rate peg or a rebalancing exercise could direct Councils to act contrary to existing legislation, and therefore call for a review of the definitions of 'waste' and 'domestic waste management services' in the Local Government Act 1993, alongside updates to the Office of Local Government's Rating and Revenue Raising Manual, to cover all services and functions necessary for minimising landfill and maximising resource recovery from domestic waste;
3. The cost of Domestic Waste Management (DWM) service provision varies greatly across geographical and historical contexts, population densities, transport infrastructure and other circumstantial differences. Given the highly contextual nature of these costs, and their interdependencies, Councils are best placed to determine value for money for ratepayers. As such, the setting of DWM charges should be determined by councils in consultation with their communities to reflect their place-based characteristics;
4. That the proposed voluntary DWM rate peg be abandoned in favour of improved pricing guidelines, reporting tools, and auditing processes (where warranted) that support councils to set DWM charges in line with their community needs and expectations.
5. That Councils be guided in the setting of DWM charges through the alignment across instruments and frameworks, clear guidelines, as well as a capacity building and education programs that support Councils to educate consumers on how DWM charges are set, and explain local differentiation, in order to promote accountability to, and communication with their communities;



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6. That as the least worst option presented to date, Councils favour benchmarking, clear and consistent pricing principles, an opportunity to rebalance DWM charges with general rates, over a minimum 2-year transition period, based on updated and expanded definitions of 'waste' and 'domestic waste management services' that include all activities involved in the minimisation of, source separation, collection, recovery, processing and disposal of all forms of domestically generated waste.

Further context to these positions and recommendations is included in the following detailed submission.

To discuss this submission further, please do not hesitate to contact Eloise Lobsey, Regional Policy and Programs Coordinator on 0448 160 800 or [eloisel@hunterjo.com.au](mailto:eloisel@hunterjo.com.au).

Regards,

Joe James

CEO, Hunter Joint Organisation





## **Submission by the Hunter Joint Organisation in response to the Draft Report - Review of Domestic Waste Management Charges (13 December 2021)**

### **Overall Responses to Draft Report**

In responding to IPART's Draft Report – Review of Domestic Waste Management Charges – 13 December 2021 (Draft Report), the Hunter JO notes the intent of IPART to assess consistency and value for money for ratepayers in relation to the domestic waste management (DWM) charges.

It is the position of the Hunter JO Member Councils that much of the holistic approach needed to adequately assess the contextual factors influencing the setting of DWMC in NSW sits outside of IPART's delegation, such as the definitions contained within the *Local Government Act 1993 (LG Act)* and in the associated Council Rating and Revenue Manual, as well as other frameworks and instruments. This highlights a fundamental flaw with the recommendations contained in the draft report, as they cannot adequately take account of the nuance and complexities Councils face in the setting of their DWMC, and therefore are destined to create unintended consequences that if implemented as proposed will undermine IPART's original objective.

The HJO and the council's it represents welcome and are comfortable with greater transparency and consistency in the allocation of costs for DWM charges, however, object in principle to the premise of the Draft Report on the basis that, at this point in time, no problem has been adequately defined that justifies the recommendations arising from the IPART review. The transparency and value for money objectives of IPART should instead be realised by supporting councils to address the fundamental source of IPART's concerns, rather than introducing further regulatory measures such as a benchmark or peg.

Within this context, in addition to responding to the specific consultation questions posed by the Draft Report, the Hunter JO Member Councils have identified the following in-principle concerns regarding the underlying premise for initiating the review:

#### **1. Local Government's role in transitioning to circular economy outcomes**

Local government's role in the collection and aggregation of recyclables, as well as its central role in residual waste collection and disposal means it has a crucial role to play now, and into the future, in enabling and preparing their local communities for the transition to a more circular and resilient waste paradigm. The importance of local government leadership in this transition is acknowledged and mandated through the *NSW Waste and Sustainable Material Strategy 2041*, alongside other State and National policies and strategies.

In addition to the essential waste and resource recovery services they provide, Councils work consistently and diligently to reduce the amount of waste ending up in landfill by educating residents, businesses and schools about waste avoidance and recycling. Councils continue to face significant challenges from ever changing consumer behaviours, changes to legislative and policy settings, increasing waste generation rates, contract monopolies and lack of markets for Australian recycled content, which mean constant evolving and adapting their services to maintain safe and effective services.

All levels of government, as well as business and the community need to work collectively as we move to a more circular economy where materials and products remain within the economy for longer and waste is reduced. Local government will need the support of all its partners, critically the State Government, in order to plan and deliver the services innovation required (and mandated through State Government policy) to be fit-for-future. This will require nimble planning and innovation at a local level, to identify and work with local industry to support the establishment of new localised markets for the materials collated and processed by councils. Critical to this will be the updating of the regulatory environment for resource recovery (such as the Resource Recovery Framework currently under review), as well as the legal definitions of 'waste management services' (in the LG Act), alongside broader economic settings that push and pull the sector into circularity.

Given the rapid sector evolution underway, and the significant change yet to come, it is considered that the State Government should investigate ways to enable local government in this very challenging yet exciting time, rather than introduce blunt and unrealistic regulatory instruments that unduly impact and restrict Council's abilities to effectively adapt and innovate in response to ongoing change impacting delivery of their statutory functions.

## 2. Reduction in Local Government's autonomy and disempowerment of their communities

The Hunter JO is concerned that the recommendations contained within the Draft Report, combined with other financial interventions such as general rates capping, significantly erodes the autonomy of Council's to design services in line with their community expectations.

Extensive transparency with, and accountability to, ratepayers already exist within Council processes. Council's undertake extensive and robust planning and consultation processes with their communities when developing their Community Strategic Plans and subsidiary strategies and plans, as required of them by the NSW Government via the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework. Through these processes a community is consulted about the level of domestic waste management service they wish to receive and are willing to pay for and can comment on the service prices annually. Furthermore, the community's satisfaction with the service is measured regularly (annual or biannual).

The centralisation of decision making via pegs and other regulatory interventions effectively centralise decision making, and stifles Council's autonomy and ability to undertake effective long term strategic planning. Community resilience depends on the ability to self-determine and adapt to the contemporary and sometimes highly localised challenges facing communities, for example disaster planning and recovery.

The cost of DWM service provision differs greatly across geographical and historical contexts, population densities, transport infrastructure and other circumstantial differences (such as operational facilities, fleet, day labour etc). Given the highly contextual nature of these costs, and their interdependencies, it is considered that Councils, through the extensive consultation they already undertake with their local communities, are best placed to determine value for money for ratepayers.

### 3. IPARTs proposals appear anti-competitive

Councils operate within what could be described as a semi-commercial setting operating waste and resource recovery facilities and services, however, they retain the statutory function to deliver DWM services to their communities. The introduction of a voluntary DWM peg would in effect limit the capacity of Councils to compete within an increasingly competitive commercial environment, given that the rate peg applies only to local government. As a result Councils will be increasingly vulnerable to commercial fluctuations and privatisation pressures, which given the serious concerns with the proposed peg calculation methodology (described in response to the consultation questions below), will substantially restrict the ability for long-term recovery of costs arising from the planning and delivery of DWM services.

It is therefore the position of Member Councils that the proposed voluntary DWM peg be abandoned in favour of improved pricing guidelines, reporting tools, and auditing processes (where warranted) that support councils to set DWM charges in line with their community needs and expectations.

## Consensus Positions and Recommendations of Hunter JO Member Councils in Response to the Draft Report

The key positions and recommendations of the Hunter JO and its member Councils in response to the draft paper are that Member Councils:

1. Formally endorse Local Government NSW's Position Statement in response to the draft Report
2. Oppose the introduction of a voluntary DWM rate peg;
3. Do not accept the premise underpinning the IPART review;
4. Maintain that the setting of DWM charges should be set by councils in consultation with their communities to reflect their historical and place-based characteristics;
5. Recommend Councils be guided in the setting of DWM charges through the alignment across instruments and frameworks, clear guidelines, as well as a capacity building and education programs that support Councils to educate consumers on how DWM charges are set, and explain local differentiation, in order to promote accountability to, and communication with their communities;
6. Have serious concerns that both the voluntary peg rate peg or a rebalancing exercise could direct Councils to act contrary to existing legislation, and therefore call for a review of the definitions of 'waste' and 'domestic waste management services' in the Local Government Act 1993, alongside updates to the Office of Local Government's Rating and Revenue Raising Manual, to cover all services and functions necessary for minimising landfill and maximising resource recovery from domestic waste;
7. As the least worst option presented to date, favour benchmarking, clear and consistent pricing principles, an opportunity to rebalance DWM charges with general rates, over a minimum 2-year transition period, based on updated and expanded definitions of 'waste' and 'domestic waste management services' that include all activities involved in the minimisation of, source separation, collection, recovery, processing and disposal of all forms of domestically generated waste.

## Response to Specific Consultation Questions included in Draft IPART Report

### **1. Do you think our proposed annual 'benchmark' waste peg will assist councils in setting their DWM charges?**

No. The proposed voluntary DWM peg will hinder Council's efforts in the task of setting effective and best value for ratepayers DWM charges as they will interfere with their ability to recover the actual costs of service delivery, and when combined with the proposed pricing principles will prevent council's ability to forward plan financially. Consequently, councils will no longer be able to respond to policy mandates effectively and design services to meet community expectations because they are unduly financially constrained.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned concerns and objections to the introduction of a voluntary DWM peg in principle, the Hunter JO has serious concerns with the mechanics of the voluntary DWM peg calculation put forward in the Draft Report. These concerns are summarised as:

- **DWM are set based on actual and expected costs, not general indices**

Hunter JO councils largely set their DWMC based on the actual and expected incremental costs of providing waste management services, based on community expectations, to parcels of rateable land, including the costs of contracts, infrastructure, community education, operational requirements, and related overheads etcetera. In contrast, it is considered that the proposed rate peg method is based on dated data and a basket of lagging, tangentially-related indicators with limited relevance to councils' specific needs and service levels.

The most significant source of confusion and inconsistency is not what these costs are but which services and functions can be included in the DWMC and how these are provided for in the definitions of 'domestic waste' and 'domestic waste management services' in the Local Government Act and OLG Manual.

- **A voluntary DWM peg will stifle councils ability to participate and enable the industry transformation required for a circular economy**

For the reasons articulated in our letter above, the Hunter JO Member Councils are seriously concerned about the immediate and long-term implications of a voluntary DWM peg on council's ability to take up their critical role in the enablement of circular economy outcomes. The rapid transformation required by the sector (and by State and Federal government targets and mandates) will mean that councils will need flexible revenue-raising mechanisms to meet increasing costs, service transformation to meet NSW Government mandates, and the participation in a growing and rapidly changing marketplace.

Some of the critical role's councils will play in this transition could and should include (but are not limited to):

- Driving circular markets for materials through government procurement/purchasing power;
- Enabling source separation, collection, aggregation and processing of materials for highest and best use (e.g. reuse, recycling, or energy extraction of materials through the DWM services and operation of resource recovery and waste facilities);

- Show leadership through piloting, evaluating and adopting circular economy solutions through council operations;
- Enable community to shift consumption behaviours and to participate in the circular economy through both knowledge and opportunity (e.g. education programs, drop off points);

Local government's leadership role in the circular economy transition should be enabled by the harmonisation of all relevant State Government relevant policy and regulatory settings, in order to be properly realised. The proposed rate peg is not consistent with achieving that objective.

- **The Waste Cost Index (WCI) calculation methodology is flawed and sets councils up to fail**  
In setting an expectation of 1.1% (for 2022/23) for the DWM peg, IPART has failed to consider the contemporary real world financial environment that will be faced by councils in that year, and by doing so will be setting up councils to fail not only in that initial year but on a year-on-year basis. Some immediate and considerable flaws with this approach are as follows:

1. *The data is old and unrepresentative of council's operating environment*

Calculating the peg based on 2017-18 and 2018-19 data for the setting of a 2022/23 peg has both immediate and obvious flaws, which notably includes the anomaly between projected and actual inflation rates. The proposed 1.1% peg considerably differs from the current 5.1% CPI rate (March 2022).

2. *Lag factor*

As a backwards looking instrument, the WCI does not take into account current and forecasted CPI and fails to reflect rapidly changing market conditions with significantly fluctuating inflation, fuel prices, and global supply chain disruptions.

DWM costs fluctuate considerably due to external cost drivers, consumption trends and environmental factors – such as drought, high-yield years, and increasingly frequent and intense (and in many cases unprecedented) natural disaster events. Since the data analysis period, council's DWM services have been subjected to (but not limited to):

- Major global and local market adjustments for recyclables;
- Market contraction and contract monopolies;
- Bushfire disasters;
- COVID-19 pandemic changes to consumption behaviours – increased volumes in the domestic stream and stream composition changes;
- COVID-19 pandemic impacts on staffing and associated operational costs;
- Rising fuel costs;
- Flooding disasters;
- Day labour cost increases.

In their February 2022 report, the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) reported a 3.5% seasonally adjusted annualised rise in CPI, which as identified above, has now risen further to 5.1% for the March quarter.

Furthermore, in the Hunter JO voluntary waste group, councils DWM charge increased by an average of 4.4%, as shown in the table below:



**Table 1: Percentage increase in previous years DWM charge by Council**

FY	Central Coast	Cessnock	Dungog	Lake Macquarie	Maitland	Muswellbrook	Newcastle	Port Stephens	Singleton	Upper Hunter
2016-17	N/A	6.3%	11.8%	5%	10.6%	2.8%	0%	-5.9%	18.9%	23.4%
2017-18	-7%	0%	4.0%	4.8%	4.4%	8%	0%	3.5%	-8.7%	5.9%
2018-19	2.3%	2.8%	9.8%	0.2%	2.6%	0%	2.3%	0.7%	4.8%	23.8%
2019-20	2.4%	5.9%	0%	1.1%	2.5%	2.6%	0%	2.2%	0%	16.1%
2020-21	2.0%	1.9%	2.9%	2.5%	3.6%	5.5%	7.6%	5.6%	2.5%	1.5%
5 yr average	1.6%	3.4%	5.7%	2.72%	4.7%	3.8%	2%	1.2%	3.5%	14.1%
Regional 5 yr average	4.4% increase									

It should be noted that in the Hunter and Central Coast region, only one council has implemented the state-mandated kerbside FOGO service, and therefore the other 9 councils are well into the planning of significant DWM services changes to be implemented in the coming years.

Councils must consider a combination of financial factors to forecast changes in the DWMC in budget planning, so the fact that the indicative 1.1% peg has deviated so significantly from what has actually been experienced highlights how inappropriate it is to guide DWMC settings and that now is not the optimal time to make major changes to council revenue-raising mechanisms given the rapidly changing market dynamics, as well as the risks it would pose in future should it continue to underestimate the scale of council waste service costs.

## ***2. Do you think the pricing principles will assist councils to set DWM charges to achieve best value for ratepayers?***

The Hunter JO and its Member Councils do not accept the premise of this question as it assumes that councils are not already seeking to achieve best value for ratepayers – an assertion that is yet to be founded by this review, and one which we assert is incorrect.

Councils are constantly seeking out the best way to deliver the community's expected services in the most efficient way, to maximise the return to ratepayers. If there are some anomalies or outliers (i.e. some Councils are failing to deliver best value), those councils should be the focus of IPART's efforts rather than the introduction of blunt and restrictive instruments that will interfere with the proper planning of the majority of councils that are successfully delivering quality services in line with their community's expectations. Where IPART finds sufficient evidence that value for money is not being delivered, they should work with those councils to bring them into alignment with best practice.

The Hunter JO generally supports the concept and intent of pricing principles and would in due course welcome updated, realistic and considered guidance on how they should be applied to aid transparency and consistency across councils. It is critical that these pricing principles be developed in consultation with councils, and updated regularly, to ensure their intent is realised without detrimental unintended outcomes (as exists with their current drafting).

- **Principle 1: DWM revenue should equal the efficient incremental cost of providing the DWM service**

The intent of this principle is accepted, however, it relies on a definition that is no longer fit-for-purpose, as it does not reflect modern waste and resource recovery practices.

The definition as it stands does not reflect the Government's current policy direction of converting from a linear waste model to a circular economy, and therefore creates a fundamental inconsistency in the regulatory environment that councils operate their DWM services within. Given the pace of change in this area it is recommended that once updated, the definitions and guidance on the DWM charge be reviewed every 5 years to maintain currency and reflect real-world conditions.

Updating the definitions and guidance will provide a more definitive list of what costs should be attributed to the DWM charge versus general rates charge. It is critical that local government drives formulation of the list as they are most familiar with the day-to-day activities in this area.

IPART's Draft Report includes examples of what activities should be included in the DWM charge. In addition to those activities, the Hunter JO recommends the following activities should also be included:

- Illegal dumping clean-up costs, particularly where the material predominantly arises from residential sources. For example, councils report that 100% of illegal dumping in some eastern Sydney councils is household waste.
- Broader waste avoidance education, not just focussing on disposal and recycling education, but rather projects that align with the priorities of the waste hierarchy (i.e. avoiding the generation of waste in the first instance), such as reusable coffee cup programs.
- Events such as Clean Up Australia Day, Tidy Towns and other littering/waste community programs.
- Operational and ongoing costs of a Community Recycling Centre, being a service provided to residents and valued by the community.
- Drop off events for hazardous waste, chemicals, e-waste and other future product stewardship scheme items (e.g. other electronic waste)
- Collection and recycling of materials from residents, including soft plastics, textiles, mattresses, tyres and solar PV panels.

The above list provides broader activities that should be included, however there are several other costs that should be included in the DWM charge. If we look specifically at an example where a council will commence an organics collection, the following additional costs are also relevant for the period of service roll out/early implementation:

- Contract development and variations
- Trials and pilots
- Additional staff to support a new service
- Replacement bins and caddies (extra to initial infrastructure provided)
- Multi-unit dwelling (MUD) upgrades and fit outs to allow for food collection
- Audits and evaluation
- Advertising and media
- Consultant costs in designing, consulting community and implementation

- Contamination fees and decontamination costs
- Implementation of smart technology such as RFID which is proven to reduce contamination issues

These lists are not exhaustive, but rather demonstrate the value of retaining flexibility for Councils to set DWM charges based on contextual and circumstantial factors.

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

This principle is accepted in principle, however councils already publish information regarding the waste services they provide via multiple channels and mechanisms including:

- *Councils Fees and Charges:*  
Published by councils via their Operational Plan and on council websites. This information is usually itemised to outline bin size, frequency of collection, plus charges for additional service components (additional bins, wheel in/out services etc).
- *NSW EPA's WARR survey reporting:*  
Councils in NSW already report with extensive granularity on the waste services provided to their communities through the annual WARR return. This includes the annual DWMC, numbers and types of properties receiving services, and all additional resource recovery services.
- *Your Council website:*  
Provides a figure for each council's per capita environmental expenditure (including waste), with a comparison figure for other councils in the same 'group'. While this comparison is broader than just 'waste' it does provide a point of reference to assist with benchmarking.

Rather than duplicating existing processes and burdening councils, this information could be readily extracted by IPART to populate the centralised database without requiring any additional reporting input from Councils. If any gaps exists, IPART could work with those existing processes to enable data capture and consistency.

- **Principle 3: Within a council area, customers that are:**
  - imposing similar costs for a particular service should pay the same DWM charge
  - paying the same DWM charge for a particular service should receive the same level of service.

The general intent of this principle is understood, however, the concerns with this principle lie in the high variability in contextual factors that influence DWM costs, and therefore the difficulty in finding genuinely comparable organisations and services given this complexity.

For example, in regional and rural areas, councils will have the capacity to vary the cost-of-service delivery where the same service is delivered in different communities. These costs will often reflect variations in infrastructure and transportation costs as well as the time taken to service remote communities.

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

This principle is problematic, and if implemented would have unintended consequences that conflict with IPART's objectives to deliver 'best value for ratepayers'.





The Hunter JO strongly advocates for councils to retain their ability to utilise the waste reserve to provision for reasonable future obligations, including climate events and other emergencies, rapid market-based cost increases, capital expenditures for planned services such as FOGO or planned waste-related infrastructure such as CRCs, and other reasonable market risks.

IPART has advised that capital costs for providing DWM services should only be recovered once those services have commenced or facilities have been built; and that, should a council build a waste-related facility or roll out a DWM service that the council must rely on external borrowing, whether from the main council reserve or from an outside financial institution. While this may be one financial avenue at council's disposal, it may not represent best value for ratepayers. Councils are best placed to choose the most appropriate financial measures based on their context and financial situation.

The Hunter JO advocates for councils to be able to recover reasonable capital costs for future services or facilities included in their long-term financial plan. This not only serves to stabilise variations in the DWMC by ensuring councils have a flexible and transparent capital cost raising mechanism, but it also decreases the net total of DWMC charged to residents over time by avoiding passing on loan interest to ratepayers.

***3. Would it be helpful to councils if further detailed examples were developed to include in the Office of Local Government's Council Rating and Revenue Raising Manual to assist in implementing the pricing principles?***

Once the pricing principles and the underlying definitions have been modernised and clarified to align with the objectives of the WaSM and WARR Act, detailed working examples would be useful to illustrate how each cost, including associated overheads, should be allocated and reported.

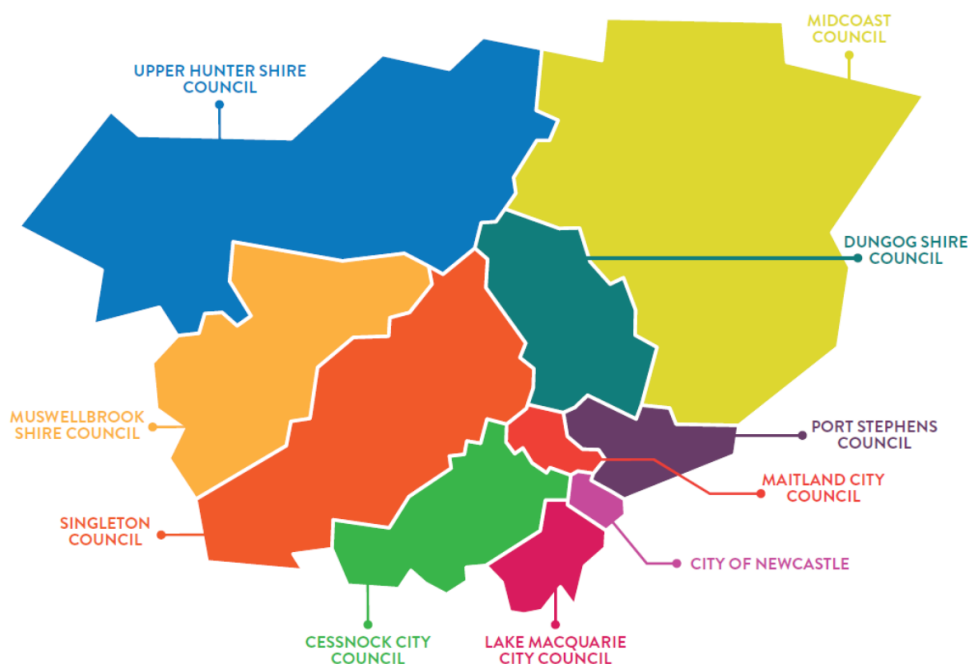
Should IPART ultimately decide on implementing a voluntary peg, it is essential that IPART consults councils on the most appropriate indices, basket of items, and weightings to determine the Local Government Cost Index and Waste Cost Index, and includes a detailed explanation of how the indicative peg is calculated.



## 2022 Commonwealth Election Priorities for Local Communities in the Hunter Region

### Background

The [Hunter Joint Organisation](https://hunterjoint.org) is a collaborative body that brings together the ten councils in the Hunter Region to provide a united and local voice for our communities.



Collectively these Councils represent a population of 760,000 people, across 6 Commonwealth electorates:

- Hunter
- Paterson
- Shortland
- Newcastle
- Lyne
- New England

The priorities outlined in this paper represent a synthesised, collective view of local communities, which have been gathered and distilled by councils, directly from their constituents, from thousands of digital, telephone and face-to-face surveys and engagements. This extensive consultation is undertaken by Councils when preparing their statutory 10-year Community Strategic Plans and a vast set of supporting strategies, which are frequently recognised by both Federal and State Governments in their own planning.



## **Policy Statements - What Our Local Communities Need to Create Jobs, Grow a Strong and Resilient Economy and Make the Hunter the Most Liveable Region in Australia.**

1. As we transition to a clean energy future, we need to evolve the Hunter's economy to replace the dominance of coal with other products and services, at a level that will replace and ideally provide more jobs than those currently provided by the coal industry.
2. Successfully navigating the economic evolution that is needed in the Hunter will require significant government intervention and investment. The most efficient type of investment is that which accelerates and amplifies market driven investment in innovation that capitalises on the region's existing natural strengths and attributes.
3. A globally focused Hunter connected to international markets will underpin the Hunter's successful economic evolution. Efficient and effective access to global markets to attract investment and talent to evolve our economy, and to sell our products and services on the world stage, will be key to this success.
4. Addressing the existing transport infrastructure deficit and improving intra-regional 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.
5. Ensuring the region is 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).



**The commitments we seek for our local communities across each of these core policy areas include:**

***Policy Statement 1. As we transition to a clean energy future, we need to evolve the Hunter's economy to replace the dominance of coal with other products and services, at a level that will replace and ideally provide more jobs than those currently provided by the coal industry; and***

***Policy Statement 2. Successfully navigating the economic evolution that is needed in the Hunter will require significant government intervention and investment. The most efficient type of investment is that which accelerates and amplifies market driven investment in innovation that capitalises on the region's existing natural strengths and attributes.***

**1. A clear, integrated whole of government policy and planning approach to drive the Region's economic evolution, incorporating:**

- A platform for better information, collaboration and agreement on the economic evolution strategy for the Hunter, building on the partnerships and collaboration that are growing in the region.
- 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 for businesses and workers impacted by changes in the economy. This includes dedicated innovation and transition support services, built on successful models deployed in other regions of Australia, to ensure that supply chains and workers can begin to plan their future as key customers, or employers, close facilities.

**2. \$25M contribution to the \$50M Hunter Venture Fund, to be co-funded by Hunter JO, Commonwealth and State government, research and industry partners. Irrespective of the need for a whole of government policy and planning approach (see above), we need to accelerate the flow of capital into the region to support the innovation ecosystem, in a way that amplifies market driven investment in innovation that capitalises on the region's existing natural strengths and attributes. The Hunter Venture Fund will directly:**

- Support ventures which may leverage opportunities in energy transition or diversify Hunter economic activity away from energy
- Address local concerns around access to a depth of readily available capital for early-stage ventures in the Hunter

**3. \$750K co-contribution per annum secured for 5 years to establish a "Hunter Innovation Agency", whose purpose is to:**

- Support the commercialisation of research and other innovation in the Hunter region
- Support ventures which may leverage opportunities in energy transition or diversify Hunter economic activity away from energy

- Provide investors in (and managers of) any local fund with confidence that there is a pipeline of viable Hunter investment opportunities

**4. \$2.65M in funding over 3 years to position the Hunter as the nation's leading Circular Economy region:**

- **Circular Economy Precincts (\$0.9M)** – delivery of concept plans for 4 multi-element circular economy precincts across the region with organic waste processing as a central element. Each precinct would represent a key part of the Hunter and outline the potential for circular processing, green energy and value-added businesses delivering diversified employment opportunities and new industries to the Hunter.
- **Circular Economy Innovation Hub (\$1.75M)** – to drive and facilitate development of the Circular Economy across the Hunter and Central Coast by Councils, government agencies, business and industry groups and the community including:
  - Providing leadership and planning to deliver on the common vision and plan for the region's move to a Circular Economy
  - Facilitate the acquisition and sharing of research and information among stakeholders, including the provision of a "problem concierge" (i.e. a regional broker to link stakeholders with issues to those who can provide solutions)
  - Continuing to curate and grow the CE ecosystem (website, industry networking, collaboration and development)
  - 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.

***Policy Statement 3. A globally focused Hunter connected to international markets will underpin the Hunter's successful economic evolution. Efficient and effective access to global markets to attract investment and talent to evolve our economy, and to sell our products and services on the world stage, will be key to this success.***

**~~5. \$27.5M co-contribution to Newcastle Airport to enable the upgrade of the terminal to facilitate international travel and freight.~~** Newcastle Airport Terminal upgrade is currently identified on the Infrastructure Australia Priority List and Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan. **SUCCESSFUL COMMITMENT!** The federal bipartisan commitment for \$55M funding for the terminal upgrade is an essential enabler for jobs growth and liveability in the region, enhancing our competitive access to global markets.

**6. A commitment to establish a permanent Australian Border Force presence at Newcastle Airport** following commissioning of the airport runway upgrade to Code E



status (Commonwealth funded). This will facilitate direct operational access to international markets through Newcastle Airport that are needed to facilitate the region's economic evolution.

7. **Commitment to co-fund 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. This involves critical integration of Federal
8. **Commonwealth Government support to remove restrictions in the Port of Newcastle Port Commitment Deed** impeding the development of the Newcastle Container Terminal.
9. **\$1M over three years for "Hunter Global – Regional Tourism Marketing, Concierge & Product Packaging"**
  - This region wide initiative will capitalise on the direct entry point to the region for international visitors arising from the Newcastle Airport upgrade. It will coordinate and provide regional leadership on branding and development of a combined offering of packages for international visitors. The project will develop an integrated Hunter wide, regional tourism product showcasing the diversity of experiences of the region that can be packaged together to entice visitors to stay and spend longer in the region. Key elements include:
    - Development of an overall international marketing plan for the region that brings together existing Council and State Government plans and destination management plans in order to showcase and connect the varied international visitor experiences available across the region's 10 Local Government Areas
    - Establish 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 booking.

***Policy Statement 4. Addressing the existing transport infrastructure deficit and improving intra-regional 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.***

10. **\$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.

More Information: [Partnering for Growth](#)



**11. Contribute funding to accelerate planning and development of key regional Catalyst Growth Areas.** The attached region-wide project list includes these projects (and their project values). These are critical to our aspirations to be a globally-connected city region that is offering employment and service opportunities that will retain and attract talent in our current and future areas of competitive strength.

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

- The value of Financial Assistance Grants provided to local government has declined over the past three decades from around 1 percent of Commonwealth taxation revenue to around 0.55 percent. Local governments only collect around 3.5 percent of taxation nationally and need support from other spheres of government to provide and maintain the infrastructure their communities need such as swimming pools, playgrounds, sports facilities, regional airports, and roads.
- ALGA's 2021 National State of the Assets report indicates that around 10 percent of the infrastructure owned and managed by Australian councils is in poor condition and requires intervention.
- Financial Assistance Grants are particularly valuable for local government, as the funding is untied, meaning it can be spent where it is most needed. This can include building new infrastructure, delivering new programs that meet community needs, as well as maintaining local pools, libraries, sporting grounds and roads.
- Untied funding provided to councils also enables them to invest in their workforces, through bringing on new staff or upskilling or retraining existing employees, helping address Australia's workforce capacity challenges.

**13. Investment in a Region-Wide 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:

Key Themes for 'Liveability' Infrastructure
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

**14. \$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 on into one comprehensive location
- Marketing Plan
- Product development.

**15. Contribution to the \$71M build program for the [Shiraz to Shore](#) initiative**, 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 - l \$39.6m

**16. \$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).

***Policy Statement 5. Ensuring the region is 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).***

**17. \$10M per annum for 5 years in direct funding for councils to work together through the Hunter JO** to systemically build organisational, business and community resilience to increasingly frequent and intense natural disasters. This will be done through the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework of Councils, focusing on the resource and funding gaps that need to be addressed to build resilience.



## Hunter JO Advocacy Priorities – Federal Seat of Hunter

LGA	Federal Electorate	Category	Priority	Funding Required	Notes
Singleton	Hunter	Funding for cycleway and pedestrian infrastructure	Build a cycle/pedestrian bridge over the Hunter River	\$4M	A pedestrian and cycleway link across the Hunter River will provide the rapidly expanding residential areas of Singleton Heights and Hunterview with a safe and convenient dedicated cycle and pedestrian link to the Singleton CBD without the use of the New England Highway.
Upper Hunter Shire	Hunter, New England, Lyne	Funding for cycleway and pedestrian infrastructure	Footpath & Cycleways		
Newcastle	Hunter, Paterson, Newcastle	Funding for cycleway and pedestrian infrastructure	Richmond Vale Rail Trail	\$9M	The Federal Government to fund \$9 million of the Richmond Vale Rail Trail development within the Newcastle LGA. Further investments will be required in neighbouring councils. The Richmond Vale Rail Trail is a regional walking and cycling trail running through Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, and Cessnock LGA's (32km). It will provide valuable recreational and tourism opportunities for the city and the region and is identified in the Grater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan.
Cessnock	Hunter, Paterson, Newcastle	Funding for cycleway and pedestrian infrastructure	Richmond Vale Rail Trail Construction	\$25M	The Richmond Vale Rail Trail project is a 32-kilometre cycling and walking track along the former Richmond Vale rail line between Kurri Kurri and Hexham. The trail is located along the former Chichester to Newcastle water pipeline between Shortland and Tarro, and through the Hunter Wetlands National Park. The trail is estimated to cost \$25 million and is expected to have significant economic benefits for the region. It's anticipated the trail will attract 367,000 overnight stays from cycling tourists who will spend \$69 million in the Hunter each year. Support us to generate more employment, health, and social benefits.
Singleton	Hunter, Whole of Region	Funding for cycleway and pedestrian infrastructure	Creation of a cycling network linking Singleton with existing and planned networks in the Lower Hunter Region: initial link from Hermitage Road to Branxton	\$3-\$4M	The Hermitage Road to Branxton Cycleway project aims to provide a cycle link between the northern end of Hermitage Road and Branxton, a distance of approximately 8km. The project includes the construction of a new 600m section of cycleway from Hermitage Road to the Old New England Highway, continuing for approximately 3km (noting some relatively minor upgrade works are required on sections of the road to allow for cycle use). Finally, a new 1.5km section of cycleway would be constructed from the end of the Old New England Highway, under the Hunter Expressway bridge that passes over Black Creek and connecting to the New England Highway and leading to Branxton. The project would complement a 10km cycleway that was completed in a joint project

					between Singleton Council and Cessnock City Council in 2017. This vine-fringed shared pathway passes more than a dozen cellar doors, an art gallery, antique shops, and a tourist information bay from the New England Highway to Broke Road. In addition, there are several bicycle hire companies in the area.
Cessnock	Hunter	Funding for renewal of local road networks and bridge upgrades	Renewal of local road network	\$27M for condition 5 roads, \$97M for condition 4 roads	We want a road network that meets the needs of the growing Cessnock community. As we experience growth in development, population and an increase in travel demand our current network is no longer viable. All levels of government need to invest in upgrading our local roads. Council requires: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$27 million to repair condition 5 roads and</li> <li>• \$97 million to repair condition 4 roads to an acceptable standard.</li> </ul>
Cessnock	Hunter	Funding for renewal of local road networks and bridge upgrades	Planning the Cessnock CBD Bypass	\$1M	\$1 million is required to develop concept plans for the Cessnock CBD Bypass that will ensure traffic moves efficiently throughout the city. Planning for a northern and southern CBD bypass will be critical to addressing increasing vehicles in our CBD. This is an exciting opportunity to plan ahead and future proof our city.
Cessnock	Hunter	Funding for renewal of local road networks and bridge upgrades	Upgrading Wollombi Road between Bellbird and Cessnock	\$45M	We've identified a significant opportunity to deliver a \$45 million to upgrade Wollombi Road between Bellbird and Cessnock. This would transform the road to a four lane, two-way corridor with signalisation at selected intersections. A large investment in anticipation for the increased traffic volumes this road is expected to experience in the future
Cessnock	Hunter	Funding for renewal of local road networks and bridge upgrades	Upgrading Maitland Road between Cessnock and East Cessnock Public School	\$17M	A \$17 million upgrade of Maitland Road between Cessnock and East Cessnock Public School will ensure this busy road can support the growing traffic volumes. The upgrade would see the construction of a four lane, two-way corridor.
Muswellbrook	Hunter	Funding for renewal of local road networks and bridge upgrades	Muswellbrook Bypass		Seek commitment for delivery of the Muswellbrook Bypass by 2026
Muswellbrook	Hunter	Funding for renewal of local road networks and bridge upgrades	Gateway Project		South Muswellbrook: To complement the proposed Muswellbrook Bypass
Singleton	Hunter	Funding for renewal of local road networks and bridge upgrades	Brunners Bridge replacement	\$5.5M	Brunners Bridge is a three-span concrete double lane bridge constructed in the 1940's that has passed its useful life. There are significant cracks in the main girders. In 2017, Council undertook a comprehensive structural assessment (L4) including 3D modelling and load rating to determine the feasibility of posttension strengthening of the girders. Due to the current state and age of the bridge, the structural report confirmed that strengthening the bridge is not an option. Council is working toward attracting externally funded grants to be able to replace the bridge.

Lake Macquarie	Hunter	Funding for renewal of local road networks and bridge upgrades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrade to Mandalong Road, Morisset (Hunter)</li> </ul>	\$67M	We have been recently working with the state and federal government, via Transport for NSW, on a design and cost verification for this project and after some adjustments to the scope, the total funding request has been updated to \$67 million (the attached documents have been amended to reflect this). We have proposed an 80/20 federal/state funding split and have been advocating to have the project included in this year's federal and state budgets. Labor has made a funding commitment of \$30 million to this project at federal level.
Lake Macquarie	Hunter	Funding for renewal of local road networks and bridge upgrades	GLENDALE: Pennant Street Bridge	\$26M	The Pennant Street Bridge is key supporting infrastructure for Lake Macquarie's North West Catalyst Area, recognised in the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan as one of the Hunter region's major precincts for economic growth Construction of a bridge over the rail line at Glendale to link the expansive Cardiff industrial and commercial employment zone with the Glendale retail, sports and commercial precinct.
Upper Hunter Shire	Hunter, New England	Funding for renewal of local road networks and bridge upgrades	Urban Streets	\$3.2M	Roads in Scone, Murrurundi, Merriwa, Aberdeen
Upper Hunter Shire	Hunter, New England, Lyne	Funding for renewal of local road networks and bridge upgrades	Rural Unsealed Roads	\$3M	The rural unsealed road network, some 1,000km, is generally in an average to poor condition due to the lack of quality material for gravel re-sheeting and patching, access to water (particularly during the drought period) and pavement defects such as potholes, heavy patches, corrugations, scours and ravelling.
Upper Hunter Shire	Hunter, New England, Lyne	Funding for renewal of local road networks and bridge upgrades	Rural Sealed Roads	\$8.7M	The sealed road network is generally in an average to poor condition with defects such as potholes, heavy patches that require major rehabilitation.
Upper Hunter Shire	Hunter, New England, Lyne	Funding for renewal of local road networks and bridge upgrades	Road Reclassification		<p>In February 2019, the NSW Government announced that a Road Classification Review would be initiated to ensure that the current classification framework was still fit for purpose, and that roads across NSW were appropriately classified. The last review was undertaken between 2003 and 2009, with implementation finalised in 2012. Future Transport 2056 identifies the Road Classification Review as a key initiative to make adjustments to the classification policy framework and update the road network to align with the 'Hub and Spoke' Transport Network Model and the 'Movement and Place' Framework.</p> <p>Council staff have reviewed both the regional and local road networks and have identified a number of roads that meet the general criteria for reclassification to state or regional status.</p>

Muswellbrook	Hunter, Whole of Region	Funding for renewal of local road networks and bridge upgrades	Improved Public Transport		Seek commitment to permanently fund an increased level of service
Cessnock	Hunter	Funding for renewal of local road networks and bridge upgrades	Widening Main Road between Cliftleigh and Kurri Kurri CBD	\$20M	A \$20 million investment in creating an expedient connection between Maitland and Kurri Kurri. This can be achieved by widening Main Road to four lanes between Cliftleigh and Kurri Kurri, as identified in the Cessnock LGA Traffic and Transport Strategy. This upgrade will improve the connection to the Hunter Expressway, reduce commute times and improve safety.
Cessnock	Hunter	Funding for renewal of local road networks and bridge upgrades	Hart Road Interchange Northern Ramps Construction	\$20M	\$20 million is required to construct northern ramps at the Hunter Expressway Hart Road Interchange. This economic enabling infrastructure will allow the commercial and residential development planned at the Former Kurri Kurri Hydro Aluminium Smelter to service the Upper and Lower Hunter, accelerating the creation of 6,900 full time permanent jobs.
Cessnock	Hunter	Funding for renewal of local road networks and bridge upgrades	Upgrade Old Maitland Road at Sawyers Gully	\$10M	This \$10 million infrastructure project will improve road safety and reduce commute times by straightening 21 bends and sealing the road surface. The upgrade of Old Maitland Road is vital to achieving the communities preferred 2041 road network by providing a faster road link to Rutherford and the Hunter Expressway.
Muswellbrook	Hunter	Funding for sporting, recreational and Community facility upgrades	Olympic Park Precinct		Complete Stage Two of the Olympic Park Masterplan
Muswellbrook	Hunter	Funding for sporting, recreational and Community facility upgrades	Wollombi & Hunter Parks		The objectives of these parks are to promote and enhance community identity and sense of belonging, provide active and passive recreation opportunities with safety and amenity for all users.
Muswellbrook	Hunter	Funding for sporting, recreational and Community facility upgrades	Denman Tourist Park & Hot Pools		Proposed as a key infrastructure project within the Shire
Singleton	Hunter	Funding for sporting, recreational and Community facility upgrades	Upgrade infrastructure at Lake St Clair Park to maximise tourism potential	\$1.6M	The Lake St Clair Plan of Management (2018) and Business Plan (2021) have identified a range of infrastructure improvements to improve the amenity for visitors to Lake St Clair Park and increase visitation numbers. These improvements include the provision of a playground, sewerage dump point, upgraded and additional amenities and additional powered sites.

Singleton	Hunter	Funding for sporting, recreational and Community facility upgrades	Replace and upgrade the all-weather enclosure at Singleton Gym + Swim	\$3.5M	The existing roof structure over the indoor 25m pool at the Singleton Gym & Swim has deteriorated due to the harshness of the pool environment and is at the end of its design life. Structural repair works undertaken in 2020 were intended to provide short-term longevity of the existing structure for the next five years, until a permanent structure could be funded and constructed.
Singleton	Hunter	Funding for sporting, recreational and Community facility upgrades	Creation of Alroy Oval Sports Precinct	\$3M	The Alroy Oval Draft Masterplan has been developed and, with Council approval, will be placed on public exhibition. The master plan proposes upgrades to enable Alroy Oval to become the home of football in the Singleton LGA.
Singleton	Hunter	Funding for sporting, recreational and Community facility upgrades	Hunter Regional Livestock Exchange	\$3.1M	Agriculture has always played a very important role in the Singleton community. The Hunter Regional Livestock Exchange (HRLX) project has been identified to deliver a modern regional facility for Singleton and the Hunter Region, generating in excess of \$40million in stock sales annually. Construction of a new kiosk building incorporating a commercial kitchen, public seating area and modern office spaces for RLX staff and sales agents. It is envisaged that the Hunter Regional Livestock Exchange (HRLX) project will be a partnership between Council, stakeholders and government. The estimated total cost of the project is \$3.1million and \$2.77million has been identified to be funded by grant sources.
Lake Macquarie	Hunter	Funding for sporting, recreational and Community facility upgrades	TORONTO: Toronto Baths	\$2M	An upgrade of Toronto Baths will complement the \$9 million Toronto Foreshore Masterplan Project Council is undertaking to transform the waterfront into a vibrant lakeside precinct. The upgrade will be modelled on the successful Belmont Baths revitalisation to improve accessibility, amenities, and safety.
Lake Macquarie	Hunter	Funding for sporting, recreational and Community facility upgrades	GLENDALE: Trampoline Centre of Excellence	\$11.4M	Council is proposing a world-class and Australian-first high performance sports centre, providing a national hub for elite training and competition, as well as community programs. The project involves construction of a 2000sqm arena with seating for 450 people and will complement the Hunter Sports Centre expansion, which received \$10 million in the last Building Better Regions round five funding cycle. The project is backed by Gymnastics Australia, the sport's governing body, and supported by a feasibility study that confirmed profitability and market opportunities.
Lake Macquarie	Hunter	Funding for sporting, recreational and Community facility upgrades	RATHMINES: Aviation-themed playground Outdoor gym equipment for Rathmines Park	\$670,000 aviation-themed playground \$150,000 outdoor exercise equipment	Council is proposing an aeroplane-themed playground for Rathmines Park, acknowledging the history of the area as a WWII air base, and the provision of outdoor exercise equipment. These works will complement other projects being undertaken to upgrade the park as part of the Rathmines Park Masterplan, including the provision of a new skate park and youth hub.

Upper Hunter Shire	Hunter, New England, Lyne	Funding for sporting, recreational and Community facility upgrades	Sporting Grounds & Venues		
Upper Hunter Shire	Hunter, New England, Lyne	Funding for sporting, recreational and Community facility upgrades	Parks & Gardens		
Upper Hunter Shire	Hunter, New England, Lyne	Funding for sporting, recreational and Community facility upgrades	Swimming Pools Upgrade		
Upper Hunter Shire	Hunter, New England, Lyne	Funding for sporting, recreational and Community facility upgrades	Scone Library Development	\$1.5-\$2M	The project involves the construction and fit out of a new modern library and Visitor Information Centre on the ground floor of the Campbell's Corner building at 167 Kelly Street, Scone. The project will contribute to the revitalisation of the Scone CBD and will provide an essential public facility that is a focal point for all members of the community within Scone and the broader Upper Hunter Shire.
Cessnock	Hunter, Paterson	Funding for sporting, recreational and Community facility upgrades	Richmond Main legacy mining site remediation	\$8M	We're proud of our mining history but must address legacy mining issues. Support our recovery with an \$8 million investment in the Richmond Main site to restore heritage buildings. The site, owned by Council, operated as a colliery between 1888 and 1967 and is now a heritage mining tourist attraction thanks to Richmond Main Preservation Society. Unfortunately, the site is heavily constrained due to contamination and safety issues. Investing in this site would unlock a unique visitor experience.
Cessnock	Hunter	Funding for sporting, recreational and Community facility upgrades	Netball precinct at Booth Park, Kurri Kurri	\$7.5M	We have a unique opportunity to transform netball in the Cessnock Local Government Area with the creation of a \$7.5 million purpose-built netball precinct at Booth Park, Kurri Kurri. The facility would feature eight floodlit netball courts, car parking, change rooms, canteen, storage rooms and accessible toilets. Let's increase female participation in sport!
Muswellbrook	Hunter	Improved health facilities, services and research	Improved Health Services for Muswellbrook		Seek commitment to maintaining and expanding health services in Muswellbrook Shire. Seek commitment to provide maternity services including obstetric and paediatric specialists at Muswellbrook Hospital. Seek commitment for an increase in mental health services.
Upper Hunter Shire	Hunter, New England, Lyne	Improved health facilities, services and research	State Emergency Levy - Cost Shifting		Council has always acknowledged this contribution as a worthy cost to the community as the services provide assurances and comfort, that when required, these services will be available to meet emergency crisis points. However, in the past two years Council has noted significant increases in the levy which it regards as totally untenable for a small rural council.

Lake Macquarie	Hunter	Leadership and support to drive the region's economic evolution	WYEE: Wyee Paper Subdivision	\$30M	Wyee Paper Subdivision is one of the largest permanently occupied 'paper' subdivisions in NSW, with many of residents from a disadvantaged socio-economic background. Council is seeking government funding to assist with the considerable cost of providing the essential infrastructure (water, sewer, roads, services) that will allow the formalisation of the subdivision and provide certainty to residents. Council has a funding submission before the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation (NHFIC) for this project.
Lake Macquarie	Hunter	Leadership and support to drive the region's economic evolution	Hydrogen demonstration project	\$5-\$7M	Council is proposing a demonstration project involving the integration of hydrogen-powered trucks into its waste fleet. The project presents a great opportunity to demonstrate 'real world' application of hydrogen technology in an everyday context and aligns with government strategies and aspirations for hydrogen industry development. It will highlight the potential for mainstream hydrogen technology adoption across private sector and government organisations, progress domestic capabilities in hydrogen technology and promote competitive domestic hydrogen markets. Council has submitted a funding application to the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) for this project.
Lake Macquarie	Hunter	Leadership and support to drive the region's economic evolution	Fibre City – High-speed internet	\$5M	The Fibre City project involves the rollout of a fibre-to-the premise (FTTP) network connecting key residential and commercial centres in the city's north and northwest via a 30km loop. Provide super-fast internet services to attract strategic investment to Lake Macquarie, improve performance for existing users and council service providers and enhance the city's reputation as a leader in digital innovation. Provide a complementary network capable of supporting IoT and Smart City services to public spaces.
Upper Hunter Shire	Hunter, New England, Lyne	Leadership and support to drive the region's economic evolution	Emergency Housing	\$100,000	Public housing is a State responsibility. Council owns a property that could however be made available for the provision of emergency accommodation for vulnerable people including victims of domestic violence. Funds are needed to renovate the property to make it habitable and secure before being leased to a local community service provider to manage.
Upper Hunter Shire	Hunter, New England, Lyne	Leadership and support to drive the region's economic evolution	Landfill Closures & remediation	\$3,300,000	Council's landfills at Merriwa and Murrurundi are nearing end of life and will need to be closed and capped in the near future. Funds collected by the NSW Government through the waste levy should be made available to Council to enable the required landfill capping and closure works at these sites to be completed. In general, Council would like to see a larger proportion of the funds collected through the waste levy returned to local Councils to provide adequate funding for landfill consolidation and closure, environmental improvements of landfills and waste infrastructure across the state. Since 2011, Upper Hunter Shire Council has paid a total of \$7,636,970 in waste levies to the NSW Government and received only \$1,612,022 in grant funding for waste infrastructure and other waste related projects. Based on our figures year to date, it is anticipated that Council's total waste levy contributions to the NSW government this financial year will be approximately \$1,168,000.



Muswellbrook	Hunter, Whole of Region	Leadership and support to drive the region's economic evolution	Planning for Post Mining Land Use		Undertake master planning with a focus on facilitating post-mining land uses for a range of large-scale agribusiness, energy generation, food processing, manufacturing, tourism, and recreation with consideration for leveraging existing infrastructure – roads, rails, and power grid to support job creation.
Muswellbrook	Hunter, Whole of Region	Leadership and support to drive the region's economic evolution	Leadership to drive Economic Diversification		Actively address changes within the thermal coal mining industry to foster new industries and businesses for coal mining communities now. Leadership is required for a holistic approach to planning and resourcing for region-wide benefits. Apply Royalties for Rejuvenation to focus on coal mining communities and provide concrete opportunities for transfer of employment to like industry.
Muswellbrook	Hunter, Whole of Region	Leadership and support to drive the region's economic evolution	TAFE & Education		Encourage further collaboration and strong engagement between the Tertiary Education Centre (TEC) University of Newcastle and TAFE campuses to provide training and research to support local economic activity.
Muswellbrook	Hunter, Whole of Region	Leadership and support to drive the region's economic evolution	Leadership on Waste & Recycling Issues		Seek commitment to actively work with industry to develop viable waste and recycling processes such as FOGO. Seek funding commitment to ensure recycling infrastructure is delivered. Seek commitment for 100% of the waste levy to be returned to local governments for community waste minimisation and recycling programs.
Muswellbrook	Hunter, Whole of Region	Leadership and support to drive the region's economic evolution	Resources for Regions		Seek long term commitment to the Resources for Regions funding program to continue to recognise and provide certainty for mining communities
Lake Macquarie	Hunter, Whole of Region	Leadership and support to drive the region's economic evolution	• Hydrogen Demonstration Project (Citywide)		This project aligns with broader efforts across the region to position the Hunter as a leader in the new energy economy.
Newcastle	Whole Region	Leadership and support to drive the region's economic evolution			The Federal Government increase investment in affordable housing, including measures to prevent housing stress and vulnerability for very low-income earners.
Muswellbrook	Hunter	Town Centre upgrades and beautification	Town Square		Cornerstone of a purpose-built civic precinct the town square has been identified as a catalyst site in the Muswellbrook Town Centre Strategy and a priority in the Hunter Regional Plan.
Singleton	Hunter	Upgrades to water and sewer infrastructure	Deliver Bulga-Milbrodale water security	\$12M	The Bulga-Milbrodale Water Supply Project will provide safe and reliable water connection to 180 properties across the communities of Bulga and Milbrodale, including Milbrodale Public School. This project will also support the local economy, particularly the regionally significant vineyards and wine tourism businesses in the Broke - Fordwich Wine Region, which have a combined estimated output of \$14 million per year. The project scope includes provision of reticulated water mains in Bulga served by a transfer water main connecting to the existing water supply network at Broke. The



					transfer water mains are to be located along Milbrodale Road, then onto Putty Road to Broke. The proposed transfer main has the potential to serve a number of commercial properties within Milbrodale which is a significant tourism hub for Singleton. The project also includes a water carter filling station that may be accessed by commercial operators to provide water to properties outside the water supply area.
Singleton	Hunter	Upgrades to water and sewer infrastructure	Design and construction of Wattle Ponds Reservoir	\$5M	<p>The design and construction of a new 5 megalitre treated water reservoir at Wattle Ponds in Singleton will service the growing residential area of Hunterview, as well as increase capacity to conduct maintenance in other areas of the Singleton water network.</p> <p>The reservoir would provide greater water security for Singleton by increasing the storage capacity of the Singleton Water Network.</p> <p>Currently, all reservoirs that service Singleton are located west of the rail corridor, while the water treatment plant is located east of the rail corridor. One rail crossing currently transports the water from the treatment plant to the reservoirs. This poses a water security risk if there is an issue with the transfer main under the rail corridor.</p>
Lake Macquarie	Hunter	Upgrades to water and sewer infrastructure	FASSIFERN: LT Creek remediation and dredging	\$1.63M	The aquatic health of LT Creek is significantly affected by sediments that have collected from historic mining activity. Undertaking the dredging works will rectify the adverse impacts on the waterway, improving the recreational amenity and providing significant benefits.
Upper Hunter Shire	Hunter, New England, Lyne	Upgrades to water and sewer infrastructure	Water, Sewer & Waste		Upper Hunter Shire Council has a very small rate base that needs to support multiple water supply, sewerage and waste management facilities. Continued major capital investment is required to bring our facilities up to best practice – Council has previously had issues with water quality and security and meeting all environmental requirements for treated effluent and waste.

## Hunter JO Advocacy Priorities – Federal Seat of Lyne

LGA	Federal Electorate	Advocacy Category	Priority	Funding Required	Notes
MidCoast	Lyne	Funding for cycleway and pedestrian infrastructure	Pedestrian Footpath Upgrade on The Singing Bridge, Hawkes Nest	\$4,500,000	High priority identified by the community. Outlined in Council's Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan (PAMP). Concept plans developed; detail design required.
MidCoast	Lyne	Funding for cycleway and pedestrian infrastructure	Implementation of priority Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan (PAMP) Projects	\$4,200,000	Extensive community consultation. Adopted Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan (PAMP) strategy. Concepts complete, detailed design required.
Dungog	Lyne	Funding for cycleway and pedestrian infrastructure	Camping to Dungog Common connection	\$264,432.00	
Dungog	Lyne	Funding for cycleway and pedestrian infrastructure	Pool to School - Clarence Town walking and cycling path	\$200,000.00	
Dungog	Lyne	Funding for cycleway and pedestrian infrastructure	Gresford to East Gresford primary school cycleway	\$550,000.00	
Dungog	Lyne	Funding for cycleway and pedestrian infrastructure	Footpath and cycleway Limeburners Creek to Clarence Town	\$1,000,000	
MidCoast	Lyne	Funding for renewal of local road networks and bridge upgrades	Upgrade and bitumen seal Bulga Road from Bobin to Elands	\$15,600,000	Requires survey & detailed design.
MidCoast	Lyne	Funding for renewal of local road networks and bridge upgrades	Rural Collector Roads – Community Resilience, emergency and safety upgrades	\$15,000,000	General road widening, alignment improvements, pavement strengthening, resealing & line marking. Shovel ready.
MidCoast	Lyne	Funding for renewal of local road networks and bridge upgrades	Macquarie Street upgrade adjacent to the Coopernook Public School	\$1,400,000	Road strengthening and resurfacing, pathway for school children and drainage improvements.
MidCoast	Lyne	Funding for renewal of local road networks and bridge upgrades	Forest Lane Extension, Old Bar	\$1,200,000	Construction of Forest Lane from Bluehaven Estate to Saltwater Road, including upgraded intersection works. High priority during community conversations.

Dungog	Lyne	Funding for renewal of local road networks and bridge upgrades	Fixing Local Roads program	\$6,000,000	Dungog has put in funding & grant applications that if successful, this would have seen a total of \$9M spent on eight local roads within the Shire, with \$2.2M contributed by Council. Dungog has only been successful on one out of eight roads. This represents only 13% of what was applied for and presents a grant funding deficit of almost \$6M for our critical road funding priorities.
Dungog	Lyne	Funding for renewal of local road networks and bridge upgrades	Fixing Country Bridges Program	\$2,272,400	Gresford Suspension Bridge Unsuccessful for \$2,272,400 funding under Round 1 of the NSW Government's Fixing Country Bridges program. Council will be applying for funding under Round 2 and is seeking candidate support to achieve this aim.
Dungog	Lyne	Funding for renewal of local road networks and bridge upgrades			A number of Dungog Shire roads have been submitted to the NSW Government's road classification review to be reclassified to Regional or State roads. Currently, Dungog Shire is the only Local Government Area in New South Wales not to have a State road.
MidCoast	Lyne	Funding for sporting, recreational and Community facility upgrades	Pelican Boardwalk Extension to Little Street, Forster	\$6,000,000	Engagement complete. Shovel ready.
MidCoast	Lyne	Funding for sporting, recreational and Community facility upgrades	Gloucester Caravan Park Upgrade	\$4,000,000	A recent dilapidation report identified significant condition and compliance issues. High priority community asset that provided outreaching tourism and ED benefits to the Barrington Coast.
MidCoast	Lyne	Funding for sporting, recreational and Community facility upgrades	Little Street Baths	\$1,000,000	Engaged with users. High use community infrastructure that provides a safe enclosed swimming environment and a place for people who live on the other side of the lake or on the islands to tie up their private boats for a short term while in Forster
MidCoast	Lyne	Funding for sporting, recreational and Community facility upgrades	Pacific Palms Community Hall Upgrades	\$500,000	High use facility. New roof and guttering required. Bathroom upgrades. Carpark upgrade.
MidCoast	Lyne	Funding for sporting, recreational and Community facility upgrades	Pacific Palms Pontoon Upgrade	\$450,000	Engaged with the community. High use facility. Infrastructure near end of useful life. Propose to install a fixed jetty with floating pontoons to facilitate usage at all tides.
MidCoast	Lyne	Funding for sporting, recreational and Community facility upgrades	Bulahdelah Showground Electrical Upgrade	\$400,000	Engaged with users. No longer meeting community requirements. Project scoped.
Newcastle	Whole Region	Leadership and support to drive the region's economic evolution			The Federal Government increase investment in affordable housing, including measures to prevent housing stress and vulnerability for very low-income earners.
MidCoast	Lyne	Town Centre upgrades and beautification	CBD Beautification of highway service town to improve attractiveness for travellers to stop	\$2,000,000	High priority in community conversations. Requires detailed plans.
MidCoast	Lyne	Town Centre upgrades and beautification	CBD Beautification of highway service town to improve attractiveness for travellers to stop	\$2,000,000	High priority raised with discussion with community. Requires detailed plans.
MidCoast	Lyne	Upgrades to water and sewer infrastructure	Hawks Nest Sewer Treatment Plant Upgrade	\$30,000,000	Detailed design in progress. Approaching shovel ready.

MidCoast	Lyne	Upgrades to water and sewer infrastructure	Gloucester Sewer Treatment Plant Renewal	\$30,000,000	Detailed design in progress. Approaching shovel ready.
MidCoast	Lyne	Upgrades to water and sewer infrastructure	Tea Gardens Sewer Rising Main Augmentation	\$11,500,000	Environmental Impact Assessment in progress, ahead of the detailed design being completed.
MidCoast	Lyne	Upgrades to water and sewer infrastructure	Trunk Drainage Remediation – restoration of existing trunk drainage capacity and expansion of drainage network to provide basic service levels	\$4,800,000	High community priority due to level of damage caused to public and private infrastructure.

## Hunter JO Advocacy Priorities – Federal Seat of New England

LGA	Federal Electorate	Advocacy Category	Priority	Funding Required	Notes
Newcastle	Whole Region	Leadership and support to drive the region's economic evolution			The Federal Government increase investment in affordable housing, including measures to prevent housing stress and vulnerability for very low-income earners.
Upper Hunter Shire	New England	Funding for renewal of local road networks and bridge upgrades	Regional Sealed Roads	\$9.9M	Scone to Merriwa Road (RR62) provides access for heavy vehicles between the Golden and New England Highways. This is a crucial route for industry within the area and the wider region. The pavement has numerous defects such as cracking, heavy patches, shoving, potholes and narrowing.
Upper Hunter Shire	New England	Funding for renewal of local road networks and bridge upgrades	Bridges	\$5.1M	Ti-Tree Creek Bridge and Allen Bridge are the two major vehicles bridges that are not primarily constructed on concrete that remain in the Upper Hunter Shire Council LGA.
Upper Hunter Shire	New England, Whole of Region	Funding for renewal of local road networks and bridge upgrades	Northern Overpass	\$20-\$30M	The completion of the Scone Bypass Project has seen a reduction in volumes of heavy vehicles passing through the Scone CBD. However, given that the only access to the Scone industrial area is via Kelly Street and Muffett Street, many heavy vehicles still have to use this route and travel directly through the CBD. The establishment of an overpass onto Muffett Street from Kelly Street will essentially eliminate the need of heavy vehicles, who are accessing the industrial areas, to travel through the CBD area of Scone. This has numerous added benefits including; lessening pavement deterioration, improving both traffic and pedestrian safety and amenity within the CBD.

## Hunter JO Advocacy Priorities – Federal Seat of Newcastle

LGA	Federal Electorate	Advocacy Category	Priority	Funding Required	Notes
Newcastle	Whole Region	Leadership and support to drive the region's economic evolution			The Federal Government increase investment in affordable housing, including measures to prevent housing stress and vulnerability for very low-income earners.
Newcastle	Newcastle	Funding for Catalyst Areas – Hunter Park and Williamtown SAP	Hunter Park / Broadmeadow	\$500,000,000	The Federal Government support the redevelopment of Hunter Park. Specific asks to be identified through forthcoming Business Case. Funding of approximately \$500 million will be required to facilitate the redevelopment. Hunter Park is currently identified on the Infrastructure Australia Priority List and Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan.
Newcastle	Newcastle, Shortland	Improved health facilities, services and research	John Hunter Health & Innovation Precinct	\$800,000,000	The Federal / NSW Government commit to funding Stage 2 of the John Hunter Health and Innovation Precinct worth approximately \$800 million. The John Hunter Health and Innovation Precinct is currently identified on the Infrastructure Australia Priority List and Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan.
Newcastle	Newcastle, Shortland, Paterson	Leadership and support to drive the region's economic evolution			Develop a National Urban Policy Framework that recognises the strategic role Second Cities / Gateway Cities / Next Metros play in driving economic opportunities across Australia. We are seeking a consistent three-part dichotomy of Metropolitan / Gateway / Regional for all areas of urban policy and funding.

## Hunter JO Advocacy Priorities – Federal Seat of Paterson

LGA	Federal Electorate	Advocacy Category	Priority	Funding Required	Notes
Newcastle	Whole Region	Leadership and support to drive the region's economic evolution			The Federal Government increase investment in affordable housing, including measures to prevent housing stress and vulnerability for very low-income earners.
Newcastle	Newcastle, Shortland, Paterson	Leadership and support to drive the region's economic evolution			Develop a National Urban Policy Framework that recognises the strategic role Second Cities / Gateway Cities / Next Metros play in driving economic opportunities across Australia. We are seeking a consistent three-part dichotomy of Metropolitan / Gateway / Regional for all areas of urban policy and funding.
Cessnock	Paterson	Funding for sporting, recreational and Community facility upgrades	Netball precinct at Booth Park, Kurri Kurri	\$7.5M	We have a unique opportunity to transform netball in the Cessnock Local Government Area with the creation of a \$7.5 million purpose built netball precinct at Booth Park, Kurri Kurri. The facility would feature eight floodlit netball courts, car parking, change rooms, canteen, storage rooms and accessible toilets. Let's increase female participation in sport!
Cessnock	Paterson	Funding for renewal of local road networks and bridge upgrades	Widening Main Road between Cliftleigh and Kurri Kurri CBD	\$20M	A \$20 million investment in creating an expedient connection between Maitland and Kurri Kurri. This can be achieved by widening Main Road to four lanes between Cliftleigh and Kurri Kurri, as identified in the Cessnock LGA Traffic and Transport Strategy. This upgrade will improve the connection to the Hunter Expressway, reduce commute times and improve safety.

Port Stephens	Paterson	Leadership and support to drive the region's economic evolution	Creating a sustainable future: funding for programs to reduce emissions, mitigate environmental impacts & grow circular economy outcomes	\$20M	Investment in new technology to support the adaptation of fleet services, construction materials and renewable energies to achieve a carbon neutral council by 2025. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate the suitability of a Green Energy Corridor for Tomago and Williamstown.</li> <li>• Deliver the Port Stephens Coastal Management Plan.</li> <li>• Renew the Port Stephens Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management (CkPOM).</li> </ul>
Port Stephens	Paterson	Funding for sporting, recreational and Community facility upgrades	Sport and recreation infrastructure		Seek funding support for high quality, multifunctional sports complexes at Medowie, Raymond Terrace and Nelson Bay. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$11 million – Stage 1 King Park Masterplan.</li> <li>• \$50,000 – Feasibility and business case for the Raymond Terrace Indoor Sports and Multipurpose Centre.</li> <li>• \$2.1 million – Stage 2 Tomaree Sports Complex expansion.</li> </ul>
Port Stephens	Paterson	Funding for sporting, recreational and Community facility upgrades	Foreshores & Waterways		Funding to implement foreshore revitalisation works that seek to sustainably manage and support recreational, commercial and economic outcomes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$250,000 – Business case and concept design for the Nelson Bay commercial tour operator wharf, visitors centre and foreshore upgrade.</li> <li>• \$150,000 – Development of a Port Stephens Waterways Strategy to deliver economic, tourism and environmental outcomes.</li> <li>• \$600,000 – Minor stabilisation works at Shoal Bay and Corlette to reduce coastal erosion.</li> <li>• \$1.6 million – Co-funding to support construction of a new Marine Rescue Facility at Lemon Tree Passage.</li> </ul>
Port Stephens	Paterson	Town Centre upgrades and beautification	Town centre revitalisation		Seek funding opportunities to compliment Councils financial commitment to invest in increasing the vibrancy of our town centres through a place based approach to infrastructure and development. <p>Creating vibrant and liveable spaces is a key driver of economic growth. Investment in tourism infrastructure, wayfinding signage and public domain enhancements that will help boost the NSW economy through new private investment, infrastructure enhancements and a thriving visitor economy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$2.3 million – Planning and concept design for Medowie Town Centre and District Playground.</li> <li>• \$15+ million – Deliver package of works for the Raymond Terrace Public Domain Plan.</li> <li>• \$5 million – Deliver package of works for the Nelson Bay Public Domain Plan.</li> </ul>



Port Stephens	Paterson	Funding for renewal of local road networks and bridge upgrades			<p>Seek a firm commitment for funding and the delivery of major infrastructure items to reduce travel times, improve liveability and expand active transport options.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress – the long awaited M1 extension to address sustained traffic growth on one of our nation's most important motorways, the duplication of Nelson Bay Road from Williamtown to Bobs Farm and the Fingal Bay Link Road to cater to forecast population growths and reduce congestion.</li> <li>• \$100 million – Upgrade to Cabbage Tree Road to accommodate traffic growth from expanded Newcastle Airport and Williamtown/Tomago industrial areas.</li> <li>• \$17 million – A rolling program of road reseal will address significant risks to road safety for residents and visitors.</li> <li>• \$2.5 million – Connecting pathways between Shoal Bay and Nelson Bay to improve health, wellbeing and mobility between aged care facilities and the town centre.</li> <li>• \$2 million – Improving cyclist and pedestrian connectivity between Medowie and Raymond Terrace CBD.</li> <li>• \$3 million – Shared path between Williamtown RAAF to Medowie connecting pedestrian staff between the base and the community.</li> <li>• \$9 million – High priority pathways as part of the Tomaree Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan ensuring safety and accessibility for pedestrians.</li> <li>• Commitment to upgrade the Medowie Road and M1 intersection and Bucketts Way and M1 intersection.</li> </ul>
Maitland	Paterson	Funding for renewal of local road networks and bridge upgrades	Thornton / Chisholm Traffic Congestion	\$50M	<p>Thornton / Chisholm traffic congestion (and needed upgrade works - \$50m) exacerbated by the use of the road corridor through Thornton by traffic moving between the M1 and Pacific Highway at Raymond Terrace. This congestion will in part be relieved by the M1 to Heatherbrae link which is reliant on Federal Funding</p>
Port Stephens	Paterson, Whole of Region	Leadership and support to drive the region's economic evolution	Housing Supply	\$80M	<p>Ensure a pipeline of new housing to attract residents, support housing affordability and attract a workforce for the future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commit funding to the highway interchange and drainage channel at Kings Hill to catalyse housing development.</li> <li>• Support increased building heights and density in strategic centres.</li> <li>• Commit funding to public transport connections between Port Stephens, Maitland and Newcastle to support the needs of students and workers.</li> <li>• Commit to ensuring adequate education and health facilities to support population growth.</li> </ul> <p>Creating liveable cities requires quality infrastructure, increased density and investment in public transport to provide suitable housing and connectivity. Supporting Council to bring forward a supply of development ready land in and around the strategic centres of Nelson Bay and Raymond Terrace will support population targets and economic growth.</p>

Port Stephens	Paterson, Whole of Region	Funding for Catalyst Areas – Hunter Park and Williamtown SAP	Williamtown Special Activation Precinct	\$150M	<p>Drive investment in defence, aviation and aerospace through the delivery of government led investment in infrastructure and development at the Williamtown Special Activation Precinct (SAP).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resolve long term drainage issues to alleviate land use constraints to unlock development.</li> <li>• Align all levels of government to facilitate future development through streamlined planning and investment attraction.</li> <li>• Plan for and deliver sustainable design elements and public domain treatments to identify Williamtown as a global gateway to</li> </ul>
Port Stephens	Paterson, Whole of Region	Newcastle Airport Terminal upgrade	Upgrades to Newcastle Airport Terminal	\$55M	<p>Seek funding to assist Council, as co-owner of Newcastle Airport, to upgrade the terminal to service new international flights, increasing domestic flights, freight and logistics. \$55 million – A Code E runway at Williamtown is a game changer for NSW, generating 4,410 full time jobs and driving \$12.7 billion in regional economic benefit through increased freight and stimulation of the visitor economy.</p>
Maitland	Paterson, Whole of Region	Funding for sporting, recreational and Community facility upgrades	Morpeth to Walka Water Works Shared Pathway	\$20M	<p>Under the banner of ‘Shiraz to Shore’, the Morpeth to Walka Water Works shared pathway (via Central Maitland) as an element of the regional cycling experience, and also telling the history of Morpeth as the head of navigation on the Hunter River, the port from which materials and supplies were off-loaded for transport by bullock to the New England region via what is today High Street Maitland, and the industrial history of the WWW pumping system and it’s supply of reticulated water and later, electricity, to Maitland. (\$20m)</p>
Maitland	Paterson, Whole of Region	Funding for sporting, recreational and Community facility upgrades			<p>Growing our visitor economy through the ongoing implementation of the Maitland Destination Management Plan and the Maitland Gaol development plan. This would extend to the broader issue of connectivity within and to the region, and things like the required upgrades to the Newcastle Airport terminal to accommodate international visitors.</p>
Newcastle	Paterson, Whole Region	Newcastle Airport Terminal upgrade	Newcastle Airport Terminal Upgrade	\$27,500,000	<p>The Federal / State Government provide \$27.5 million funding to Newcastle Airport to enable the upgrade of the terminal to facilitate international travel and freight. Newcastle Airport Terminal upgrade is currently identified on the Infrastructure Australia Priority List and Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan.</p>

## Hunter JO Advocacy Priorities – Federal Seat of Shortland

LGA	Federal Electorate	Advocacy Category	Priority	Funding Required	Notes
Newcastle	Whole Region	Leadership and support to drive the region's economic evolution			The Federal Government increase investment in affordable housing, including measures to prevent housing stress and vulnerability for very low-income earners.
Newcastle	Newcastle, Shortland	Improved health facilities, services and research	John Hunter Health & Innovation Precinct	\$800M	The Federal / NSW Government commit to funding Stage 2 of the John Hunter Health and Innovation Precinct worth approximately \$800 million. The John Hunter Health and Innovation Precinct is currently identified on the Infrastructure Australia Priority List and Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan.
Newcastle	Newcastle, Shortland, Paterson	Leadership and support to drive the region's economic evolution			Develop a National Urban Policy Framework that recognises the strategic role Second Cities / Gateway Cities / Next Metros play in driving economic opportunities across Australia. We are seeking a consistent three-part dichotomy of Metropolitan / Gateway / Regional for all areas of urban policy and funding.
Lake Macquarie	Shortland	Upgrades to water and sewer infrastructure	SWANSEA: Swansea Channel dredging solution	\$10M	Council is seeking funding support for a continuous dredging program for Swansea Channel to provide long-term, cost-effective intervention against constant shoaling. Lake Macquarie has one of the highest boating participation rates in NSW and is one of the best yachting waterways in Australia for small- to medium-sized vessels, however the lack of a consistent long-term approach to a recurrent dredging program means the channel is often choked by sand. A permanent dredge, sited in Lake Macquarie, and potentially shared by other waterways, could facilitate an annual dredging program.
Lake Macquarie	Shortland	Funding for sporting, recreational and Community facility upgrades	PELICAN: Foreshore stabilisation	\$3M	Council has developed a four-stage plan for foreshore stabilisation works from Naru Point to Pelican Point to address severe erosion caused by strong tidal currents. These forces led to the collapse of the Pelican Marina in 2016. Stage one of this program of works involves construction of a rock-bag embankment in an area at the end of the Lake Macquarie Airport, which will secure this important part of the foreshore for tourism and recreational activity.

Lake Macquarie	Shortland	Funding for cycleway and pedestrian infrastructure	BELMONT: Fernleigh Awabakal Shared Track upgrade	\$1.6M	This project will complement the currently under construction extension of the Fernleigh Awabakal Shared Track from Belmont to Blacksmiths Beach. It will add an elevated viewing platform, fire-resistant materials for protection of the boardwalks and a teardrop-shaped bridge to span the 25-metre channel connecting Lake Macquarie with Belmont Lagoon. Council has submitted a funding application to the Black Summer Bushfire Recovery (BSBR) grants program (NSW State Government) for this project.
Lake Macquarie	Shortland	Funding for sporting, recreational and Community facility upgrades	CATHERINE HILL BAY: Catherine Hill Bay jetty stabilisation	\$5M	The iconic Catherine Hill Bay jetty is the centrepiece of a proposed international tourism project offering five-star accommodation and dining. The jetty is part of the city's mining history and offers a unique platform to build a destination style resort based on diving and aquatic experiences. Funding is sought for structural repair and maintenance of the ageing jetty as part of the first phase of the tourism development masterplan. Council has submitted a funding application to the Regional Tourism Activation Fund (NSW State Government) for this project.
Lake Macquarie	Shortland	Funding for sporting, recreational and Community facility upgrades	CHARLESTOWN: Lions Park upgrade	\$2M	Council is seeking funding to upgrade Lions Park at Charlestown, a well-used community facility in proximity to existing retail and recreational assets. The upgrade will add additional space to the park and provide new multi-court, play and recreational spaces.
Lake Macquarie	Shortland	Funding for cycleway and pedestrian infrastructure	BELMONT NORTH: Fernleigh Awabakal Shared Track branch line	\$500,000	This project will provide a branch line extension off the Fernleigh Awabakal Shared Track at Belmont North to allow better connectivity and safe access to the track from Lenaghan Park.
Lake Macquarie	Shortland	Funding for sporting, recreational and Community facility upgrades	BLACKSMITHS: Yirritabah Aboriginal Cultural Centre	\$4.9M	cultural centre at Blacksmiths in Lake Macquarie. The facility will provide a much needed keeping place for Aboriginal cultural heritage objects. The project will deliver cultural heritage, employment, and economic outcomes. It will promote awareness of Aboriginal culture in the community and provide tourism infrastructure and opportunities that will benefit the local economy. The cultural centre will protect, showcase, and celebrate cultural history in a way that strengthens the local Aboriginal community and sets a path of pride into the future. Council supports this project, which has been developed by the Bahtabah Local Aboriginal Land Council.
Lake Macquarie	Shortland	Funding for renewal of local road networks and bridge upgrades	GLENDALE-CARDIFF: Pennant Street Bridge	\$32M	The Pennant Street Bridge is key supporting infrastructure for Lake Macquarie's North West Catalyst Area, recognised in the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan as one of the Hunter region's major precincts for economic growth. The project involves construction of a bridge over the rail line to link the Cardiff industrial and commercial employment zone with the Glendale retail, sports, and commercial precinct.

Lake Macquarie	Shortland	Leadership and support to drive the region's economic evolution	Hydrogen-powered waste trucks	\$5-7M	Council is proposing a demonstration project involving the integration of hydrogen-powered trucks into its waste fleet. The project presents a great opportunity to demonstrate 'real world' application of hydrogen technology in an everyday context and aligns with government strategies and aspirations for hydrogen industry development. It will highlight the potential for mainstream hydrogen technology adoption across private sector and government organisations, progress domestic capabilities in hydrogen technology and promote competitive domestic hydrogen markets. Council is submitting a funding application to the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) for this project.
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**The Hon. James Griffin MP**  
Minister for Environment and Heritage

MD22/1470

Cr Sue Moore  
Chair, Hunter Joint Organisation  
Mayor, Singleton Council  
59 Bonville Avenue  
THORNTON NSW 2322

By email: [ceo@hunterjo.com.au](mailto:ceo@hunterjo.com.au)

Dear Councillor Moore

Thank you for your letter on behalf of the Hunter Joint Organisation requesting confirmation of a funding extension for the Council Regional Capacity Building (CRCB) Program for contaminated land management delivered by the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA).

I acknowledge that the Regional Contaminated Land Capacity Building Program has been highly utilised and valued by regional councils and that funding is currently scheduled to end on 30 June 2022.

I understand the EPA remains committed to working closely with stakeholders to continue to support regional councils in meeting their legislated responsibilities in managing contaminated land. Options to extend the program beyond July 2022 are being explored with CRCB officers, including the Hunter Joint Organisation.

If you have any further questions about this issue, please contact Ms Felicity Calvert, Unit Head, Partnerships, EPA, on 02 9995 6624 or at [Felicity.Calvert@epa.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Felicity.Calvert@epa.nsw.gov.au).

Thank you for taking the time to bring this matter to my attention.

Yours sincerely

**James Griffin MP**  
Minister for Environment and Heritage

*u/s/r*



DOC22/422105

Mr Steve Wilson  
59 Bonville Avenue (PO Box 3137)  
THORNTON NSW 2322  
Email: [stevew@hunterjo.com.au](mailto: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 2022. To allow the Hunter Joint Organisation to fully administer funds provided under the agreement to the community, we propose to allow more time, until 31 January 2023, to return unspent funds.

This extension will be executed as a variation to the current agreement. The terms of the offer will be provided in early July, in the form of a Variation Agreement for your consideration.

In the interim, the NSW EPA will 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 Peter Brennan on 02 9585 6113 or [peter.a.brennan@epa.nsw.gov.au](mailto:peter.a.brennan@epa.nsw.gov.au), at your convenience.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lou-Anne Lind'.

**Lou-Anne Lind**  
**Director, Education and Programs**



## 6. Items for the Hunter JO Board - For Decision

### 6.1 Hunter JO 2021-22 Audit Response – Procurement Issue

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**Report Author: Louisa Bulley, Executive Officer**

**Responsible Officer: Joe James, CEO**

#### **Executive Summary**

The Hunter JO Audited Financials and accompanying reports for the 2021-22 financial year were delivered to the Board at its Annual General Meeting on 1 December 2021.

Within the Auditors Closing Report and the Report on the Conduct of the Audit, the Auditor General's Office raised a 'significant audit observation' regarding the Hunter JO directly engaging Arrow Collaborative Services (**Arrow**), an entity owned by the same member councils, to support delivery of both its statutory functions and grant funded projects.

The Management response to the Auditor General, contained with the Closing Report, recommended a solution to the audit observation in the form of a resolution by the Hunter JO Board, under section 55(3)(i) of the Local Government Act, that a satisfactory result to support delivery of both its statutory functions and grant funded projects will not be achieved by inviting tenders in which Arrow competes with third parties.

This report sets out the basis of the recommendation to address the issues raised by the audit observation.

#### **Background**

From the beginning of formal local government collaborative, the Hunter region has led the way in developing innovative models to build institutional capacity and operationalise council collaboration.

The architecture of the current relationship between Hunter JO, Arrow Collaborative Services, and other related entities within the structure, has developed organically throughout the significant history of the organisation.

A brief summary of the history of the organisation and its entities is provided below, which the purpose of providing is showing the extensive period of which the current structure has developed and the intimate involvement of the NSW Government throughout that period.

1955	Informal collaboration between councils in the Hunter Region to respond to floods	
1956	Formally constituted as Hunter Valley Local Government Association	
1973	Hunter Region Association of Councils formed	
1990	Hunter Regional Organisation of Councils (HROC) established under 'Integrated Local Area Council' philosophy	
1992	Business Manager employed under HROC	
1996	Lower Hunter Central Coast Regional Environmental Management Strategy (LHCCREMS) program established by HROC	
1997	Additional business services offered through HROC (training, purchasing, etc.)	
2002	HROC establishes Hunter Councils Incorporated (incorporated association)	Constitution under the Associations Incorporation Act 2009



2003	HROC established Hunter Councils Limited (trading company) to house Hunter Records Storage business.  Approval given by Harry Woods, Minister for Local Government to enable HROC to operate Records Business under Hunter Council Limited (Attachment 6)	Constitution under Corporations Act 2001, Company Limited by Guarantee and not having a Share Capital
2012	Hunter Councils Limited established Hunter Councils Legal Services entity	Constitution under Corporations Act 2001, Public Company Limited by Guarantee
2014	Hunter Councils Limited changes name to Strategic Services Australia	As per Hunter Councils Ltd
2015	<b>Boards of Hunter Councils Incorporated and Strategic Services Australia recommend to Paul Toole, Minister for Local Government that all commercial operations and business activities be shifted from Hunter Councils Incorporated to Strategic Services Australia (Attachment 7). This recommendation was supported at the time by both Department of Fair Trading and the Office of Local Government, as per attached report (Attachment 8).</b>  <b>Minister's advice provided that approval is not required (Attachment 9)</b>  <b>Advice sought from DFK Crosbie to support restructure.</b>  <b>Commercial activities shifted out of Hunter Council Incorporated to Strategic Services Australia.</b>	
2016	Hunter Councils Incorporated members undertake trial as a pilot Joint Organisation under 'Fit for the Future'	
2018	Hunter Joint Organisation formally established under Local Government Act	Under Local Government Act
2020	Service Level Agreement developed between Hunter JO, Strategic Services Australia, and related entities	
2021	Strategic Services Australia re-brands as Arrow Collaborative Services	As per Hunter Councils Ltd

## Audit Report FY21/22

The following summary was provided within the Auditor's Report;

### ***Non-compliance with the procurement regulations under the Local Government Act 1993***

*Since its establishment the Hunter Joint Organisation (HJO) has been engaging Arrow Collaborative Services Limited (Arrow), to deliver entirely all of the HJO's grant programs funded by State and Local Governments.*

*In doing so, HJO has not complied with the requirements of Circular 09-39 Tendering Guidelines for NSW Local Government (Procurement Regulations) issued by the Office of Local Government within the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment under section 23A of the Local Government Act 1993. Procurement activities in Local Government are governed by strict considerations of probity, transparency and accountability, as they involve expenditure of public funds for public purposes.*

Management's view is that:

1. the compliance issue raised by the Auditor is fully rectified should the Board pass the recommended resolution by the Hunter JO Board, under section 55(3)(i) of the Local Government Act; and
2. in considering probity, transparency and accountability in Hunter JO's expenditure of public funds for public purposes, both the Hunter JO Board and the Auditor General should have regard to the following:
  - a. All businesses within Arrow Collaborative Services comply with the Hunter JO's Procurement Policy, as endorsed by both the Hunter JO and Arrow Boards;
  - b. The blended rate for Regional Policy and Program team (including all on-costs) is approximately \$130/hour. This is not a rate that the private sector can compete with.
  - c. The Regional Policy & Programs team, was borne out of the Lower Hunter Central Coast Regional Environmental Management Strategy (LHCCREMS) program established by HROC in 1996. The specific organisational competency and capability that the team provides has been refined over a 26 year period.
  - d. Since the piloting of joint organisations, and in a deliberate strategy since February 2020, the Hunter JO has invested in the team expanding its portfolios / policy areas and systemising its operation to be a bespoke and sophisticated service provider, with a unique combination of organisational competency and capability to support the value chain required to deliver Hunter JO's statutory functions and grant funded projects;
  - e. That Management recommends that the service level agreement with Arrow be amended to explicitly include that:
    - i. Arrow must follow the tendering/procurement policies of HJO; and
    - ii. Arrow report to HJO on Arrow's compliance with the tendering/procurement policies;

to enable Hunter JO to demonstrate transparency and accountability in the expenditure of public funds (note that this information is already available to member councils in full and that this is simply a formalisation of current operational arrangements).

**Recommendation:**

- **Pursuant to section 55(3)(i) of the Local Government Act, that a satisfactory result will not be achieved by inviting tenders where a tender would neither represent value for money for the HJO, nor a fair process for invited tenderers given:**
  - (a) such a tenderer would be competing against Arrow, as a related entity of the HJO, that has built specific organisational competency and capability over many years, and**
  - (b) comparison of market rates and Arrow cost base for providing these services.**
- **That the service level agreement with Arrow be amended to explicitly include that:**
  - (a) Arrow must follow the tendering/procurement policies of HJO; and**
  - (b) Arrow report to HJO on Arrow's compliance with the tendering/procurement policies.**

# Department of Local Government

Our Reference: DTS74519

Your Reference: JKA

Contact: Scott Wallace  
(02) 9793 0603

Mr John Austine  
Director  
PricewaterhouseCoopers  
PO Box 798  
NEWCASTLE NSW 2300

10 JAN 2003

Dear Mr Austine

I refer to your letter of 19 September 2002 concerning the application for Ministerial consent to establish a company limited by guarantee to enable the applicant Member Councils of Hunter Region Organisation of Councils Incorporated (HROC) to operate a regional records repository.

The Minister has consented, pursuant to section 358(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 1993, to the incorporation of "Hunter Councils Limited", as submitted, subject to the attached conditions.

Please note that the Minister's consent should not be interpreted as an indication of State Government approval of, or support for, the Company itself. Further, the Member Councils are entirely responsible for obtaining their own legal and commercial advice relating to the establishment and operation of the company.

It is noted that the proposed company constitution seeks to indemnify company officers from liability. It is strongly recommended that appropriate insurance be taken out to cover the company's exposure.

Yours sincerely



Garry Payne  
Director General

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1993

### Consent pursuant to Section 358 (1)(a) to form a corporation

I, HARRY FRANCIS WOODS MP, Minister for Local Government, hereby give my consent pursuant to Section 358 (1)(a) of the Local Government Act 1993 for the following list of Councils to form the corporation "Hunter Councils Limited":

- Cessnock City Council
- Dungog Shire Council
- Gloucester Shire Council
- Great Lakes Council
- Lake Macquarie City Council
- Maitland City Council
- Merriwa Shire Council
- Murrurundi Shire Council
- Muswellbrook Shire Council
- Newcastle City Council
- Port Stephens Council
- Scone Shire Council
- Singleton Council

Consent is granted subject to the following conditions, which apply for the duration of the life of the company:

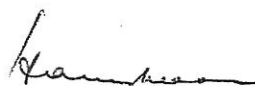
1. the principles of competitive neutrality are applied to the Company and the accounts of the Company are separately reported in the Member Council's Financial Statements as a business activity in the special purpose financial reports;
2. the Member Councils do not circumvent their limitations, through the Company, in respect of terms of tendering, borrowings or investments;
3. it is understood that, in terms of section 731 of the Local Government Act 1993 officers of the company are not acting under the direction of the Minister or Director-General;
4. that no remuneration or other benefit in money's worth shall be given by the Company to any member of its Board of Directors, who also holds a position of Councillor or Council employee, in their capacity as a Board member except out-of-pocket expenses reasonably and properly spent for purposes of the Company.

Dated this

*Tenth*

day of *JANUARY*

200 *3*



Harry Woods,  
Minister for Local Government



1 August 2015

59 Bonville Avenue

PO Box 3137

Thornton NSW 2322

Telephone: (02) 4978 4040 Facsimile (02) 4966 0588

Email: [admin@huntercouncils.com.au](mailto:admin@huntercouncils.com.au)

The Hon. Paul Toole, MP  
Minister for Local Government  
GPO Box 5341  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

## **PROPOSED TRANSFER OF BUSINESSES FROM HUNTER COUNCILS INCORPORATED TO STRATEGIC SERVICES AUSTRALIA LTD**

Dear Minister

As you are aware, the Councils of the Hunter Region are currently piloting the operation of a Joint Organisation as part of the Fit for the Future process. This pilot Joint Organisation is utilising a corporate entity collectively owned by the Hunter's councils – Hunter Councils Incorporated – the Board of which comprises the Mayor's of the eleven member councils of the region.

Hunter Councils Incorporated was formed many years ago and houses the bulk of our business activities. Both in terms of income generation and asset ownership it is a substantial and highly successful operation.

By its very nature, however, Hunter Councils Incorporated is also an increasingly inappropriate structure within which to house large scale commercial operations and the Department of Fair Trading – which administers the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 – is of the view that this situation should not continue and that the association should divest itself of its assets and income streams or else convert with the Department's assistance to a different corporate form such as a cooperative or a company limited by guarantee.

A deadline of 30 June 2016 has been set for completion of this process.

The Councils of the Hunter already own a company limited by guarantee in the form of Strategic Services Australia Ltd (formerly known as Hunter Councils Ltd).

In developing its response to the Department of Fair Trading and the Fit for the Future package the Board of Hunter Councils Incorporated has determined – and the Board of Strategic Services Australia Ltd (the Council General Managers) has agreed – that it would be appropriate to house all of the business activities of the Hunter Councils group within the existing company. The "rump" of Hunter Councils Incorporated would then be freed to focus on regional strategy and intergovernmental relationships. – an appropriate role, we feel, for the Council of Mayors. This transition has been foreshadowed in our application for selection of Hunter Councils Incorporated as a trial joint organisation and it would facilitate our early adoption of a joint organisation entity within a revised Local Government Act should the Government ultimately determine to proceed on such a course.

The Ministerial approval granted in 2003 (correspondence attached) for the creation of a company limited by guarantee referenced, in its covering letter, the operation of a regional records repository.

Such a purpose remains the sole focus of the company.

The actual consent under Section 358(1) to form a corporation does not include that restriction and simply includes a small number of easily met conditions.

The purpose of my letter today is to seek your formal concurrence to the focus of Strategic Services Australia Ltd expanding to include general business provision consistent with the following extract from its constitution:

*The objectives of the Company are to:*

- *Improve the quality and efficiency of local government service*
- *Enhance the social, economic, cultural and environmental interests of communities*
- *Encourage and nurture suitable business investment throughout regions*
- *Ensure the Company develops as a highly credible and cost effective organisation*
- *Investigate business opportunities and enter into commercial ventures on behalf of its members and to acquire any assets, land and buildings where necessary in furtherance of such ventures*

In seeking your concurrence to the expansion of focus it should be noted:

1. Another company is not being created
2. The activities are consistent with the charter of the company
3. Any risk to the member councils is actually reduced to a peppercorn amount both through the company limited by guarantee structure and the very substantial equity in property and assets held by the company
4. No borrowings will be required by the member councils. In fact at no stage in their development have the corporate entities of Hunter Councils sought or required borrowings from the members
5. Appropriate external advice has been sourced in regard to legal, human resource, statutory and audit consequences of the transition of the businesses between the Hunter Councils entities
6. The transition is fully self funded, and
7. While not dependent on or a consequence of implementation of a Joint Organisation structure, the fining down of Hunter Councils Incorporated to a Council of Mayors / Joint Organisation model is strategically sensible, removes the Mayors from day to day business decision making and better positions local government in the Hunter to effectively contribute to the State Government's ambitions for strategic cooperation, shared accountability and local government participation in the achievement of State priorities.

As noted previously, a copy of the 2004 approval correspondence is attached as is a diagram demonstrating how the business migration will take effect.

The constitutions of Hunter Councils Incorporated and Strategic Services Australia Ltd are also provided.

The expansion of approval requested above is an important matter for the ongoing development of regional local government capacity in the Hunter.

Please let me know if any further information would assist in your consideration of this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Stephan', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

**Roger Stephan**

**CEO Hunter Councils Inc  
CEO Strategic Services Australia Ltd**

## Current and proposed location of businesses within Hunter Councils Group

### Current Structure:

#### Hunter Councils Incorporated

- Regional Procurement
- Local Government Training Institute
- Leadership and Development Australia
- Environmental Services
- Screen Hunter
- Consultancy Services
- Administration, Finance and Technology

Local Government Legal

#### Strategic Services Australia Limited

- Hunter Records Storage

Other shared services: Weeds, Hunter Resource Recovery, etc., not housed within the above corporate structure

### Proposed Structure:

#### Hunter Councils Incorporated

- Regional Advocacy / Government Partnerships

#### Strategic Services Australia Limited

- Hunter Records Storage
- Regional Procurement
- Local Government Training Institute
- Leadership and Development Australia
- Environmental Services
- Screen Hunter
- Consultancy Services
- Administration, Finance and Technology

Local Government Legal

Other shared services: Weeds, Hunter Resource Recovery, etc., not housed within the above corporate structure



## 5. Commercial in Confidence Reports

### 5.1 Organisational Restructuring

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**Report Author:** Roger Stephan, CEO

**Responsible Officer:** Roger Stephan, CEO

#### ***EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:***

The purpose of this report is to provide background information to allow further consideration of the report on corporate restructuring deferred from the 2 July 2015 Meeting.

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#### ***RECOMMENDATION:***

##### **THAT:**

1. **Actions to date in regard to transitioning of businesses within the Hunter Councils group of corporate entities be noted**
  2. **The processes and outcomes dealt with in the presentation from DFK Crosbie Pty Ltd be noted and endorsed**
  3. **A report be provided to the next meeting of the Board in regard to matters of strategic accountability and business positioning outlined in the report.**
- 

#### ***REPORT:***

During the 2 July 2015 of the Hunter Councils Inc Board / Trial Joint Organisation a report was considered in regard to motivating factors, timeframes and required steps associated with the pending movement of business units within the wider Hunter Councils group.

The Board ultimately resolved to defer consideration of the matter until its next meeting and the receipt of further information. This decision came after passage of a detailed resolution on aspects of concern:

1. **The update report be received and noted;**
2. **The constitution of the new entity, Strategic Services Ltd, be reviewed;**
3. **The Minister's approval to the formation of Hunter Councils Ltd be also reviewed to ensure the transfer of businesses falls within the scope of that approval;**
4. **The articles of association of Hunter Councils Incorporated be reviewed to ensure that the anticipated arrangements fall within the power of these articles; and**
5. **These things occur prior to any further step in the process and are reported back to the Board.**

**Moved: Cr Martin Rush**  
**Seconded: Cr Bruce MacKenzie**

The purpose of this report is to respond to the Board resolution and to provide additional information to support consideration of the matters in hand.

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### **A brief history of Hunter Councils business unit development**

Hunter Councils through its three corporate entities has grown to be a supplier of a diverse range of services to local government, government generally and the wider public sector.

The majority of Hunter Councils business activities started in the late 1990s / early 2000s from a very small base of one or two employees and it was appropriate, at the time, to house those staff and their activities in the incorporated association – Hunter Councils Inc – given the small scale of operations and the fact that the association was the sole entity available.

In 2004 it was determined that a company limited by guarantee would be formed to begin the process of true commercial business activity. Hunter Councils Ltd (as it was then known) was duly created and Hunter Records Storage commenced as a start up activity.

Because of uncertainty as to the ultimate success of the company the remaining business activities of Hunter Councils stayed within the incorporated association. These activities grew in size and diversity becoming, in time, collectively multi-million dollar operations with substantial assets including the LGTI building and land and a substantial vehicle fleet.

### **The Department of Fair Trading and the Associations Incorporation Act**

The Associations Incorporation Act within which Hunter Councils Inc operates is administered by the NSW Department of Fair Trading.

The Department has determined that the purpose of the Associations Incorporation Act is to provide a legal structure for previously unincorporated groups of individuals to undertake activities which are “small-scale, non profit and non-commercial”. Examples of activities deemed by the Department to be appropriate to an incorporated association include “sporting clubs, arts and crafts groups, ethnic and cultural groups, musical societies, childcare services and environmental groups”.

A limit of \$2 million collectively of income, expenditure and assets has been applied beyond which, in the Department’s view, an entity should cease to be an incorporated association and move to a more appropriate structure.

Hunter Councils Inc is a substantial asset owner. It conducts overtly commercial activities in competition with the private sector and it has levels of income and expenditure significantly higher than allowed by the Department.

The Department of Fair Trading has therefore had the view for a number of years that Hunter Councils is inappropriately using an incorporated association structure to house the majority of its activities and it has set now set a non-negotiable deadline of 30 June 2016 for the situation to be addressed.

If Hunter Councils Inc is not compliant at that date the Department will move to have it deregistered.

## **The affect of deregistration**

The act of deregistration activates a winding up process.

The winding up process requires, amongst other actions, the satisfaction of debts and liabilities, meeting of the costs associated with the winding up process and the distribution of any property / assets held. Any property supplied by a government department or authority including unexpended grants must be returned to the department or authority.

Unfortunately, distribution of property / assets to members of the association is prohibited unless those members are themselves associations (incorporated or unincorporated) whose constitution prohibits the distribution of property to its members.

Note that a council is not regarded as an association for the purposes of asset distribution.

## **Options identified by the Department of Fair Trading**

The Department of Fair Trading – through the legislation it administers – has identified three options to address the situation in which Hunter Councils Inc finds itself.

These options are:

1. Cease undertaking the non-compliant activities, divest assets and thereby reduce the size and nature of the association's scope to an appropriate level
2. Convert the association to a cooperative
3. Convert the association to a company limited by guarantee.

In considering these options to date, Hunter Councils has been mindful of the following:

1. The bulk of the business activities of Hunter Councils Inc are commercial in nature (most overtly the LGTI and Regional Procurement because they act in direct competition with commercial providers)
2. The bulk of the business activities of Hunter Councils Inc are indeed of a size and scope that is inappropriate to operation within an incorporated association (LGTI, Regional Procurement and increasingly the Environment Division with its movement to commercial fee for service arrangements and the scale of its grant income / expenditure)
3. The only business activity of Hunter Councils Inc that would comfortably stay within the structure of an incorporated association is Screen Hunter
4. Screen Hunter operates at a deficit (projected to be \$100,000 in 2015/2016) and its future is in doubt
5. An unfunded association housing a loss making activity is not a viable proposition.

It is on the basis of the above that the strategy of moving business operations from Hunter Councils Inc to Strategic Services Australia Ltd has been developed.

## **Prescribed status under the Local Government Act**

It has long been the ambition of Hunter Councils and its member councils to have prescribed status under s.55 of the Local Government Act awarded to the Regional Procurement Division.

Prescribed status would put Regional Procurement on an even playing field with the other commercial providers in the sector – Local Government Procurement and Procurement Australia – and would be a significant asset to councils particularly given the profit sharing arrangement now in place between Regional Procurement and councils utilising its services.

Feedback from the Office of Local Government indicated a number of concerns in regard to the positioning of Regional Procurement within an incorporated association bearing the name “Hunter Councils”.

A series of steps to address this situation was identified and reported – initially to the General Managers Advisory Committee and then to the Board of Hunter Councils Inc on 27 November 2014.

The report to the Inc Board was received and noted.

Relevant extracts from the report follow:

*As a result of recent discussions with the OLG a number of steps have been undertaken to facilitate – within the current environment of local government reform – the gaining of the desired status.*

*These steps include:*

- 1. Confirmation that it is Hunter Councils Ltd rather than Hunter Councils Incorporated that is the applicant entity*
- 2. Removal of any direct or implied reference to Hunter Councils Incorporated in our prescribed status application*
- 3. Transfer of ownership of the Regional Procurement business name(s) from Hunter Councils Incorporated to Hunter Councils Ltd*
- 4. Registering of a new business name – Strategic Services Australia – for Hunter Councils Ltd to reflect its focus as a service provider and to distance the company from Hunter Councils Incorporated (which, as General Managers are aware, is intended to house the Hunter Joint Organisation). An application for an additional business name – Local Government Strategic Services Australia – has also been lodged. At a future date the Board of Hunter Councils Ltd will be asked to choose which of these business names will be used to brand the overall trading entity*
- 5. Finalisation of a new business logo. This logo incorporates the words “Hunter Councils Ltd”. In the future this reference may be amended to reflect the strategic business name of the wider entity*
- 6. Confirmation to the OLG that the staffing of the Regional Procurement Division has been transferred to Hunter Councils Ltd.*

#### **Additional required actions**

*As a result of the above an additional series of actions now need to be undertaken. These include but are not limited to finalisation of the transfer of Regional Procurement to Hunter Councils Ltd (for example, leave entitlements) and the phasing out of Hunter Councils Incorporated based contracts with goods and services suppliers.*

Delegations of authority are currently being developed which will enable Regional Procurement to call tenders on behalf of the company. Minor changes to the draft Deed of Agreement with the

Office of Local Government are also being undertaken. Once completed our application for prescribed status will be placed before the Minister for endorsement.

### **Agreed way forward in regard to corporate restructuring**

A number of briefings / discussions have taken place with the Board of Hunter Councils Inc in regard to the issues of structure and appropriateness. These briefings / discussions have been coincident with but not driven by the Independent Review of Local Government Panel process, the Acts Taskforce process and the Fit for the Future initiative.

The driving force has been the need to address the inappropriate housing of commercial activities.

At the same time, the ambitions of the Board in regard to regional voice and a “mandated seat at the table” of state decision making were actually facilitated by changes to structure which enabled a clear strategic role for the association.

In the end this led the Board of Hunter Councils Inc to lodge an expression of interest for nomination as a trial joint organisation that addressed both the concerns of the Department of Fair Trading and the opportunities potentially inherent in the joint organisation function.

The success of our expression of interest was communicated to the Department of Fair Trading and an extension of time to 30 June 2015 granted to allow required changes to take place to Hunter Councils Inc.

### **What happens if the joint organisations do not proceed?**

It should be noted in regard to the above that the effective operation of the new corporate structure is not dependent on joint organisations being imbedded in the Local Government Act. If joint organisations do not proceed the incorporated association will continue to operate as the voice of the region and the overall determiner of agreed whole of region strategy.

### **Is Strategic Services Australia Ltd an appropriate vehicle to house the business activities?**

Strategic Services Australia Ltd is a company limited by guarantee and without a share holding. Its ownership is exactly the same as Hunter Councils Inc.: the eleven local government areas of the historical Hunter Region.

The objects of Strategic Services Australia Ltd are as follows (clause 2.1 of its constitution):

*The objectives of the Company are to:*

- *Improve the quality and efficiency of local government service*
- *Enhance the social, economic, cultural and environmental interests of communities*
- *Encourage and nurture suitable business investment throughout regions*
- *Ensure the Company develops as a highly credible and cost effective organisation*
- *Investigate business opportunities and enter into commercial ventures on behalf of its members and to acquire any assets, land and buildings where necessary in furtherance of such ventures*
- *Encourage local government bodies to operate separate businesses so as to improve commercial efficiency and service delivery.*

These objects are – in business terms – complementary to the mission and objectives of Hunter Councils Inc. which do not focus on business activity but rather on regional advocacy and voice:

## **2. Mission**

- (1) *To be recognised as the 'Voice of the Hunter'.*
- (2) *To be recognised locally and nationally as the peak Hunter body that:*
  - *focuses and fosters cooperation, information and resource sharing,*
  - *improves the image of the Hunter Region and Local Government, and*
  - *effectively advocates on agreed regional positions and priorities.*

## **3. Objectives**

- (1) *Cooperation, Information and Resource Sharing*

*To improve the quality and efficiency of Local Government service delivery throughout the Hunter Region and to maximize value to our respective communities.*

- (2) *Advocacy*

*To effectively represent the social, economic, cultural and environmental interests of Hunter Region communities.*

- (3) *Business Investment*

*To encourage and where possible, facilitate suitable business investment throughout the region.*

- (4) *Organisational Development*

*To ensure the Association develops as a highly credible and cost-effective organisation.*

There is nothing in the constitutions of either entity which precludes the proposed transfer of assets.

### **Ministerial approval**

An application has been lodged with the Minister for Local Government to formally facilitate the proposed restructuring by agreeing to an expanded scope for Strategic Services Australia Ltd.

Approval of this application is expected.

If for some reason Ministerial support was not forthcoming, Hunter Councils Inc would then be required to address the inappropriateness of its corporate size and scope either through the closing down of businesses or transfer to a cooperative or a company limited by guarantee structure.

### **Issues of strategic accountability**

Past discussions with the Board in relation to the interface between the trial Joint Organisation / the Board of Hunter Councils Inc / the Council of Mayors and the strategic direction of the businesses to be housed in Strategic Services Australia Ltd have focused on the development and endorsement of an annual "business plan".

The motivations for such a plan / accountability mechanism are many and include recognition of the need to position the Council of Mayors / Board / Joint Organisation as the critical driver of regional strategy and profile.

A range of options is currently being investigated in regard to the form the accountability / reporting mechanism might take and whether the constitution of Strategic Services Australia Ltd should be reviewed / amended to imbed a role for the Mayors in the company's general meeting / strategic process.

Progress in regard to these investigations including draft proposals will be reported to the Board at its next meeting.

**Presentation by DFK Crosbie in regard to steps, consequences and funding in transitioning of businesses between the corporate entities**

Hunter Councils' auditors will provide an overview of the steps likely to be involved in the transitioning of businesses between Hunter Councils Inc and Strategic Services Australia Ltd. This overview will deal with a range of matters including funding, timing, recognition of value, etc.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. **Relevant sections of the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 and Department of Fair Trading commentary**
2. **Hunter Councils Inc Constitution**
3. **Strategic Services Australia Ltd Constitution**

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**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Financial aspects of the transitioning of ownership of business units will be included in the report from Hunter Councils' auditors.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS:**

As noted in the report.

**STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS:**

As noted in the report.

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## ATTACHMENT ONE:

### ASSOCIATIONS INCORPORATION ACT 2009 - SECT 3

#### Objects of Act

#### 3 Objects of Act

The objects of this Act are:

*(a) to establish a scheme for the registration of associations that are constituted for the purpose of engaging in small-scale, non-profit and non-commercial activities, including:*

*(i) associations that are currently unincorporated (which become bodies corporate when they are registered), and*

*(ii) associations that are currently incorporated under other legislation (which retain their corporate status following registration), and*

*(b) to make provision with respect to the corporate governance and financial accountability of associations registered under that scheme.*

#### Commentary from Department of Fair Trading One

[http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/ftw/Cooperatives\\_and\\_associations/Incorporating\\_an\\_association/Commercial\\_activities\\_and\\_monetary\\_gain.page](http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/ftw/Cooperatives_and_associations/Incorporating_an_association/Commercial_activities_and_monetary_gain.page)

#### Incorporated associations

The *Associations Incorporation Act 2009* (the Act) facilitates the incorporation of associations engaging in small-scale, non-profit and non-commercial activities.

Organisations operating as commercial enterprises are not eligible for incorporation under the Act.

NSW Fair Trading takes into account a number of key factors when considering if an association is or is likely to be engaged in commercial activities, including:

the proposed objects of the association

the nature and extent of the proposed activities, including dealings with the public

**if the commercial money-making activities will be a major part of its operations**

if the proposed activities will be undertaken in a normal commercial manner

if goods or services are restricted to members or available to the general public

if it is operating on a profit basis rather than a cost-recovery basis

**if it is operating in competition with businesses undertaking the same commercial activities.**

#### Can an association be refused incorporation?

[http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/ftw/Cooperatives\\_and\\_associations/About\\_associations.page](http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/ftw/Cooperatives_and_associations/About_associations.page)

The Director-General may refuse an application to register an association and may direct an association to apply for cancellation. The Director-General will consider, taking into account the objects of the Act, whether an association should not be registered:

because some provision of the association's constitution is contrary to law, or



where the nature or extent of the association's activities exceeds Fair Trading's policy of \$2 million or more in income, assets or expenditure, or because of the nature or extent of the association's dealings with the public, or for any other reason that appears sufficient to the Director-General.

### **Improving governance in incorporated associations**

[http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/sites/ftw/About\\_us/Have\\_your\\_say/Improving\\_governance\\_in\\_incorporated\\_associations.page](http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/sites/ftw/About_us/Have_your_say/Improving_governance_in_incorporated_associations.page)

Incorporated associations are generally community-based entities run by volunteers.

Examples of incorporated associations include sporting clubs, arts and crafts groups, ethnic and cultural groups, musical societies, childcare services and environmental groups. There are some 36,900 incorporated associations registered in NSW.

The *Associations Incorporation Act 2009* provides small, non-profit and non-commercial organisations with a simple and low-cost means of becoming a legal entity, and also establishes a registration scheme for these organisations.

## **ASSOCIATIONS INCORPORATION ACT 2009 - SECT 25**

### ***Provisions of model constitution to apply if appropriate provision not otherwise made***

25 Provisions of [model constitution](#) to apply if appropriate provision not otherwise made

(1) If an [association's constitution](#) fails to address a matter referred to in Schedule 1, the provisions of the [model constitution](#) with respect to the matter are taken to form part of the [association's constitution](#).

(2) For avoidance of doubt, an [association's constitution](#) may address a matter referred to in Schedule 1:

(a) by adopting the provisions of the [model constitution](#) with respect to the matter, or

(b) by adopting a modified version of the provisions of the [model constitution](#) with respect to the matter.

(3) Subsection (2) does not limit the way in which an [association's constitution](#) may otherwise address a matter referred to in Schedule 1.

(4) A provision of an [association's constitution](#) is of no effect to the extent to which it is contrary to this or any other Act or law.

## **ASSOCIATIONS INCORPORATION ACT 2009 - SECT 73**

### ***Director-General may direct association to apply for cancellation***

73 Director-General may direct association to apply for cancellation

(1) The Director-General may, by order in writing served on an association, direct the association to apply for cancellation of its registration within such time (being not less than 3 months) as is fixed by the direction.

(2) The Director-General may not give such a direction unless he or she is satisfied that, having regard to the objects of this Act, the association should no longer be registered:

(a) because some provision of the association's constitution is contrary to law, or

(b) because of the Director-General's assessment of the nature or extent of the association's activities, or

(c) because of the Director-General's assessment of the nature or extent of the association's dealings with the public, or

(d) for any other reason that appears sufficient to the Director-General.

## **ASSOCIATIONS INCORPORATION ACT 2009 - SECT 65**

### ***Distribution of surplus property***

#### **65 Distribution of surplus property**

(1) In this section, a reference to the surplus property of an [association](#) is a reference to that property of the [association](#) remaining after satisfaction of the debts and [liabilities](#) of the [association](#) and the costs, charges and expenses of the winding up of the [association](#).

(2) In a winding up of an [association](#), the surplus property of the [association](#) is to be distributed in accordance with a [special resolution](#) of the [association](#).

(3) Any such distribution of surplus property:

(a) must be [approved](#) by the [Director-General](#), and

(b) is not to be made to or for the benefit of:

(i) any member or former member of the [association](#), or

(ii) any person to be held on trust for any member or former member of the [association](#), unless the member or former member is an [association](#) (whether incorporated or unincorporated) whose [constitution](#), at the time of the distribution, prohibits the distribution of property to its members, and

(c) is subject to any trust affecting that property or any part of it.

(4) Surplus property or any part of it that consists of property supplied by a government [department](#) or public authority, including any unexpended portion of a grant, must be returned to the [department](#) or authority that supplied it or to a body nominated by the [department](#) or authority.

(5) A person aggrieved by the operation of this section in relation to an [association](#)'s surplus property may apply to the Supreme [Court](#) for an order as to its disposal.

(6) The Supreme [Court](#) may deal with such an application by making such orders as it thinks fit with respect to the disposal of the [association](#)'s surplus property.



**The Hon Paul Toole MP**  
Minister for Local Government

Ref:  
MIN: 2015-7461  
Doc ID: A433097



Mr Roger Stephan  
Chief Executive Officer  
Hunter Councils Inc  
PO Box 3137  
THORNTON NSW 2322

**12 NOV 2015**

Dear Mr Stephan

Thank you for your letter of 1 August 2015 about the proposed transfer of businesses from Hunter Councils Incorporated (the Association) to Strategic Services Australia Limited (the Company). I apologise for the delay in responding.

You have asked for my concurrence to the Company expanding its focus from the operation of a regional records repository to general business provision to enable it to subsume the business activities that are presently undertaken by the Association. I understand that the divestment of commercial activities by the Association is necessary to avoid its registration under the *Associations Incorporation Act 2009* being cancelled.

I note that Company was formed on 20 January 2003 following the granting of consent by the then Minister for Local Government under section 358 of the *Local Government Act 1993*. I am advised that the Association was formed in 2003 when section 358 did not require the Minister's consent to the formation of incorporated associations.

Neither section 358 nor any other provision of the Local Government Act requires my concurrence to the company extending its business activities.

As you have noted, the Association is currently administering the Hunter Pilot Joint Organisation.

In August of this year the Government released, for public consultation, the Joint Organisations Emerging Directions Paper. This paper examined the progress of the pilot Joint Organisation project and explored a number of matters to inform the development of a final model for Joint Organisations. Those matters included the type of entity most appropriate for Joint Organisations.

The Government is presently considering the submissions it received during the consultation period. This will lead to the refinement of the key areas of the Joint Organisation model and will, in turn, inform a Joint Organisation Framework Paper.

This paper will be released later this year. Ultimately, this process will inform how the Joint Organisation model will be legislated.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul Toole". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Paul Toole MP  
**Minister**


**Report Author: Lisa Lord, Head of Finance**

**Responsible Officer: Joe James, CEO**

A Full copy of the Hunter JO Budget for the 2022-23 financial year has been provided at Attachment 10.

### BUDGET SUMMARY

Budget preparation for the Financial Year ended 30/6/23, sees a new format and process introduced. The process this year has allowed for not only a 12 month budget, but also a full 12 month cash forecast.

<b>HUNTER JOINT ORGANISATION</b>	
<b>Income Statement Report</b>	
	
<b>REVENUE</b>	
Membership Subscriptions	557,787
Project Funding	-
Arrow Funding	630,600
Grant Funding	1,190,674
Miscellaneous	256,191
<b>Revenue - Total</b>	<b>2,635,252</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	
General & Administration	197,532
Occupancy Costs	30,744
Depreciation	23,652
Information Technology	8,876
Overhead Labour	502,237
Employee Costs	4,600
Travel & Accommodation	7,860
Motor Vehicle	17,711
Project Expenses	1,190,674
<b>Overhead Expenses - Total</b>	<b>1,983,886</b>
<i>% of Revenue</i>	<i>75%</i>
<b>NET PROFIT - OPERATIONS</b>	<b>651,366</b>
<i>Net Profit Margin</i>	<i>25%</i>
<b>OTHER INCOME / (EXPENSES)</b>	
<b>OTHER INCOME</b>	
Profit / Loss on sale of asset	-
Interest	-
<b>OTHER EXPENSES</b>	
RPPD Funding	(651,366)
<b>Other Income / (Expenses) - Total</b>	<b>(651,366)</b>
<b>NET PROFIT BEFORE TAX</b>	<b>(0)</b>

## Key Assumptions:

### Revenue:

- Member Councils Fees have been increased by the individual councils applicable rate peg. This increases the fees from the previous year by 1%
- Funding received by the Arrow group has increased from the previous year by a CPI of 5.1%
- Shown as additional income is the charge to Arrow for 50% of costs associated with CEO and EO roles. This has previously been shown as a deduction to wages and salaries under expense.

### Expenses:

- Funding to the RPPD program \$651,366 – inclusive of charges for the regular use of staff employed by Arrow.
- Staff numbers: 2
- No allowance has been made for the Cruise Co-ordinator or additional staff

### Capital Expenditure:

- |                             |         |  |
|-----------------------------|---------|--|
| • Video Conferencing System | \$1,800 | Expected purchase date: September 2022 |
| • Laptop                    | \$2,500 | Replacement                            |

### Other Items to note:

- Budget records the expected grant funds received and disbursement of funds to Arrow Regional Policy and Project team for management of grants projects

## Commentary on the Regional Policy & Programs budget is included below.

Underpinning assumptions relating to the level of funding allocated to Arrow to resource the core activities of the Regional Policy and Programs Team are provided below. These core activities include:

- Strategic planning (including the production of the Strategic Plan as required by IPNR / statutory requirements)
- Planning and delivery of Hunter JO Board Subcommittees (Circular Economy, Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan and Economic Evolution)
- Researching, collating, synthesising and formulating information and materials to inform the development and delivery of the policy and advocacy positions and activities of the Board (eg election advocacy, regional submissions, media and communication, regional events and forums)
- Building network capability between Member Councils, agencies and industry stakeholders, via convening or participating in approximately 40 separate regional committees and networks, and representing the region and the work of Member Councils through the Hunter JO in a range of forums and events as they regularly occur throughout the year
- Directly managing the delivery of priority projects identified by the Board (e.g. Hunter Venture Fund, Priority Infrastructure List, Hunter Global, Population Scenario Planning, Circular Economy), as well as overseeing management by project staff of a wide range of grant funded initiatives (e.g. Disaster Resilience, Accelerating Event Economies, Contaminated Land, Regional Waste Program etc)



- Preparing funding applications across a range of grant programs, or preparing more direct funding proposals or submissions to enable the delivery of programs that align with the strategic priorities of the Board.

**Assumptions:**

- In addition to the annual transfer amount from the Hunter JO to Arrow, the Policy and Programs team will need to, in order to deliver a balanced budget, generate administration fees in the order of \$120,000. Administration fees of this amount assumes we are taking a minimum 10% on approximately \$1.2M of additional grant / investment funded activity. It should be noted that:
  - The target of a further \$1.2M of grant funded activity compares to the need to attract \$400,000 in additional grant funding for the 2021/22 financial year.
  - Based on the work of the Policy and Programs team during 21/22, there are a number of significant funding opportunities currently being pursued that have the potential to contribute to this funding objective (refer “Status of Regional Funding Applications” in CEO Report)
  - Monitoring of progress toward this goal will be provided to each Board meeting (2 monthly), and should the objective be at risk, actions to address / recommendations for further reducing core operating expenditure or for increasing revenue will be provided.
  - Increasing reliance on external grants to balance increases in core operating expenses, will limit the capacity and adaptability of the Policy and Programs team to respond to the evolving needs and potentially changing priorities of the Hunter JO Board during the year. This would result from the increased management oversight required of the team to manage an increase in grant funded projects.

**Recommendation:**

**That**

- (1) Subject to the Arrow board confirming a contribution of \$630,000 to the Hunter JO, the proposed budget be accepted and approved.**
- (2) If the Arrow Board does not, approve the contribution of \$630,000 to the Hunter JO, that the proposed budget be returned to the Hunter provided to GMAC on its completion on 30 May 2022, for feedback and comments prior to the Hunter JO Board Papers being circulated**

HUNTER JOINT ORGANISATION

BUSINESS UNIT: -

Income Statement Report

	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	TOTAL
REVENUE													
MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS													
Member Councils	46,482	46,482	46,482	46,482	46,482	46,482	46,482	46,482	46,482	46,482	46,482	46,482	557,787
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PROJECT FUNDING													
Commonwealth Grants	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
State Grants	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,190,674	1,190,674
Member Councils Project Funding	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Project Funding	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Internal Project Funding _Arrow	39,413	39,413	39,413	39,413	39,413	39,413	39,413	39,413	39,413	39,413	39,413	39,413	472,950
Internal Project Funding - LGL	8,758	8,758	8,758	8,758	8,758	8,758	8,758	8,758	8,758	8,758	8,758	8,758	105,100
Internal Project Funding - Goodchat	4,379	4,379	4,379	4,379	4,379	4,379	4,379	4,379	4,379	4,379	4,379	4,379	52,550
MISCELLANEOUS													
Trainee Incentives	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Miscellaneous Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	20,127	28,628	19,627	19,627	19,627	19,627	29,512	19,883	19,883	19,883	19,883	19,883	256,191
Revenue - Total	119,159	127,661	118,659	118,659	118,659	118,659	128,544	118,915	118,915	118,915	118,915	1,309,589	2,635,252
GROSS MARGIN	119,159	127,661	118,659	118,659	118,659	118,659	128,544	118,915	118,915	118,915	118,915	1,309,589	2,635,252
Gross Margin %	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
GENERAL & ADMINISTRATION													
Accounting Fees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Advertising & Promotions	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	3,600
Audit & Assurance	1,290	1,290	1,290	1,290	1,290	1,290	1,290	1,290	1,290	1,290	1,290	1,290	15,480
Bad Debts	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bank Charges	21	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	406
Catering & Functions	-	600	-	600	-	5,000	-	600	-	600	-	5,000	12,400
Corporate Overheads	10,570	10,570	10,570	10,570	10,570	10,570	10,570	10,570	10,570	10,570	10,570	10,570	126,840
Filing Fees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Insurance - PI & PL	750	750	750	750	750	750	750	750	750	750	750	750	9,000
Insurance - Volunteers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Legal Fees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Photocopier charges	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	1,440
Postage	-	-	-	-	-	60	-	-	-	-	-	-	60
Printing & Stationery	20	20	20	20	20	1,500	20	20	20	20	20	1,500	3,200
Professional Fees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Quality Assurance & Audit	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	1,800
Records Storage / destruction	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Scanner - Lease payments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Subscriptions and Licences	1,630	1,630	1,630	1,630	1,630	1,630	1,630	1,630	1,630	1,630	1,630	1,630	19,556
Telephone - Landline	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	300
Telephone - Mobile	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	1,200

Hunter Joint Organisation													
Business Unit: -													
Income Statement Report													
	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	TOTAL
Board Functions	-	750	-	-	-	-	-	750	-	-	-	750	2,250
OCCUPANCY COSTS													
Rent & Outgoings	6,783	6,783	6,783	1,155	1,155	1,155	1,155	1,155	1,155	1,155	1,155	1,155	30,744
DEPRECIATION													
Depreciation - Building	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Depreciation - Computer	125	125	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	175	2,002
Depreciation - Furniture & Fittings	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Depreciation - Motor Vehicles	1,804	1,804	1,804	1,804	1,804	1,804	1,804	1,804	1,804	1,804	1,804	1,804	21,650
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY													
IT Management	450	450	450	450	450	450	450	450	450	450	450	450	5,400
Repairs & Maintenance - IT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
IT Software Maintenance / Support	222	222	222	222	222	222	222	222	222	222	222	222	2,664
Website Maintenance / Support	68	68	68	68	68	68	68	68	68	68	68	68	813
OVERHEAD LABOUR													
Wages & Salaries	30,900	46,350	30,900	30,900	30,900	30,900	47,009	31,339	31,339	31,339	31,339	31,339	404,555
Superannuation	3,245	4,867	3,245	3,245	3,245	3,245	4,936	3,291	3,291	3,291	3,291	3,291	42,478
Payroll Tax	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Workers Compensation	732	1,099	732	732	732	732	1,114	743	743	743	743	743	9,588
FBT	1,940	1,940	1,940	1,940	1,940	1,940	1,940	1,940	1,940	1,940	1,940	1,940	23,284
Leave Provisions	1,706	2,559	1,706	1,706	1,706	1,706	2,595	1,730	1,730	1,730	1,730	1,730	22,331
EMPLOYEE COSTS													
Recruitment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Training & Development	-	-	2,300	-	-	-	2,300	-	-	-	-	-	4,600
Uniforms	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Staff Amentities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TRAVEL & ACCOMODATION													
Meals & Accomodation	580	80	80	80	80	80	280	80	80	80	80	280	1,860
Fares & Parking	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	6,000
Milleage Allowance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
MOTOR VEHICLE													
Fuels & oils	900	900	900	900	900	900	900	900	900	900	900	900	10,800
Insurance - Motor Vehicle	223	223	223	223	223	223	223	223	223	223	223	223	2,678
Registration and CTP Insurance	186	186	186	186	186	186	186	186	186	186	186	186	2,233
Repairs & Maintenance - Motor Vehicle	1,000	-	-	-	-	-	1,000	-	-	-	-	-	2,000
Vehicle Hire	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PROJECT EXPENSES													
Project Funding Disbursement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,190,674	1,190,674
Grant Disbursement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Consultants	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Overhead Expenses - Total	66,340	84,495	67,204	59,876	59,276	65,816	81,847	61,146	59,796	60,396	59,796	1,257,900	1,983,886

HUNTER JOINT ORGANISATION														
BUSINESS UNIT: -														
Income Statement Report														
	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	TOTAL	
% of Revenue	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
NET PROFIT - OPERATIONS	52,819	43,165	51,455	58,783	59,383	52,843	46,698	57,770	59,120	58,520	59,120	51,690	651,366	
Net Profit Margin	44%	34%	43%	50%	50%	45%	36%	49%	50%	49%	50%	4%	25%	
OTHER INCOME / (EXPENSES)														
OTHER INCOME														
Profit / Loss on sale of asset	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Interest	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
OTHER EXPENSES														
Interest	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
RPPD Funding	- 54,281	- 54,281	- 54,281	- 54,281	- 54,281	- 54,281	- 54,281	- 54,281	- 54,281	- 54,281	- 54,281	- 54,281	- 651,366	-
Other Income / (Expenses) - Total	- 54,281	- 54,281	- 54,281	- 54,281	- 54,281	- 54,281	- 54,281	- 54,281	- 54,281	- 54,281	- 54,281	- 54,281	- 651,366	
NET PROFIT BEFORE TAX	- 1,461	- 11,115	2,825	4,503	5,103	1,437	7,583	3,489	4,839	4,239	4,839	2,591	0	
EBITDA - NET PROFIT OPERATIONS	54,749	45,095	53,435	60,763	61,363	54,823	48,677	59,749	61,099	60,499	61,099	53,669	675,018	
	46%	35%	45%	51%	52%	46%	38%	50%	51%	51%	51%	4%	26%	

HUNTER JOINT ORGANISATION												
BUSINESS UNIT: -												
Balance Sheet												
Version: FINAL												
Date: 1/06/2022												
	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>												
Bank	58,478	405,244	478,145	387,216	374,385	364,907	304,545	288,485	277,484	217,524	204,654	185,266
Trade Debtors	490,852	122,713	30,678	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)
Prepayments	10,041	8,942	8,210	7,477	6,745	6,013	4,899	4,156	3,413	2,671	1,928	1,185
Other Debtors	511,304	464,822	418,340	371,858	325,376	278,893	232,411	185,929	139,447	92,964	46,482	(0)
	1,070,676	1,001,721	935,373	766,551	706,506	649,813	541,855	478,570	420,344	313,159	253,064	186,451
<b>NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>												
Buildings												
Land												
Computers	3,043	2,918	4,543	4,368	4,193	4,018	3,842	3,667	3,492	3,317	3,142	2,967
Fixtures and Fittings												
Motor Vehicles	115,121	113,317	111,512	109,708	107,904	106,100	104,296	102,491	100,687	98,883	97,079	95,275
Office Equipment												
ROU												
Arrow - Loan	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
HJO - Loan												
HCI - Loan												
	143,164	141,235	141,055	139,076	137,097	135,117	133,138	131,159	129,179	127,200	125,221	123,241
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>1,213,840</b>	<b>1,142,956</b>	<b>1,076,429</b>	<b>905,627</b>	<b>843,602</b>	<b>784,931</b>	<b>674,993</b>	<b>609,729</b>	<b>549,523</b>	<b>440,359</b>	<b>378,285</b>	<b>309,692</b>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>												
Trade Creditors	14,605	14,456	15,501	7,440	6,780	13,974	10,630	8,265	6,780	7,440	6,780	14,953
Accruals	1,157,379	1,074,981	995,277	910,856	828,459	748,755	672,889	590,492	510,788	426,367	343,970	264,265
Loan - Arrow	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Loan - HJO												
Loan - HCI												
Employee Payables	11,588	28,969	40,556	11,588	23,175	34,763	17,628	29,380	41,132	11,752	23,504	25,385
Other Payables	(14,190)	(12,900)	(11,610)	(10,320)	(9,030)	(7,740)	(6,450)	(5,160)	(3,870)	(2,580)	(1,290)	-
GST	56,214	57,762	58,136	1,286	2,633	3,325	1,985	3,222	4,594	1,312	2,684	3,313
Employee Entitlements	61,706	64,264	65,970	67,676	69,381	71,087	65,127	66,857	68,587	70,317	72,047	73,776
Premium Funding												
Unearned Income												
	1,287,301	1,227,533	1,163,830	988,526	921,398	864,164	761,809	693,056	628,010	514,607	447,694	381,692
<b>NON CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>												
Term Debt												
Employee Entitlements - non current	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000
Lease Liability												
	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>1,305,301</b>	<b>1,245,533</b>	<b>1,181,830</b>	<b>1,006,526</b>	<b>939,398</b>	<b>882,164</b>	<b>779,809</b>	<b>711,056</b>	<b>646,010</b>	<b>532,607</b>	<b>465,694</b>	<b>399,692</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>(91,461)</b>	<b>(102,576)</b>	<b>(105,402)</b>	<b>(100,899)</b>	<b>(95,796)</b>	<b>(97,233)</b>	<b>(104,816)</b>	<b>(101,327)</b>	<b>(96,488)</b>	<b>(92,248)</b>	<b>(87,409)</b>	<b>(90,000)</b>

HUNTER JOINT ORGANISATION													
BUSINESS UNIT: -													
Cashflow													
Version: FINAL													
Date: 1/06/2022													
	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	TOTAL
<b>CASH FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>													
Cash inflows from													
Trade debtors	197,403	452,180	166,175	104,818	74,140	74,140	85,013	74,421	74,421	74,421	74,421	74,421	1,525,976
Other receivables													-
Other Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cash outflows to													
Creditor Expenses	26,755	14,605	14,456	15,501	7,440	6,780	13,974	10,630	8,265	6,780	7,440	6,780	139,406
Employee Expenses													
Wages & Salaries	22,557	33,836	22,557	22,557	22,557	22,557	34,316	22,877	22,877	22,877	22,877	22,877	295,325
Superannuation	-	-	-	11,356	-	-	9,734	-	-	11,517	-	9,872	42,478
Workers Compensation	-	2,693	-	-	2,693	-	-	2,693	-	-	2,693	-	10,772
Payroll Tax	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PAYG	37,000	-	-	29,201	-	-	25,029	-	-	29,615	-	-	120,845
HJO contribution	54,281	54,281	54,281	54,281	54,281	54,281	54,281	54,281	54,281	54,281	54,281	54,281	651,366
Taxes	20,582	-	-	62,853	-	-	8,042	-	-	9,311	-	-	100,788
<b>Net cash from/(used)</b>	<b>36,228</b>	<b>346,766</b>	<b>74,881</b>	<b>(90,930)</b>	<b>(12,831)</b>	<b>(9,478)</b>	<b>(60,362)</b>	<b>(16,060)</b>	<b>(11,002)</b>	<b>(59,960)</b>	<b>(12,870)</b>	<b>(19,389)</b>	<b>164,996</b>
<b>CASH FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>													
Cash Inflows from													
Proceeds from sale of P&E	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cash outflows to													
Purchase of CAPEX	2,750	-	1,980	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,730
<b>Net cash from/(used)</b>	<b>(2,750)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(1,980)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(4,730)</b>
<b>CASH FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES</b>													
Cash inflows from													
Term debt - drawdown													
Cash outflows to													
Current borrowing - premium funding													
Dividend paid													
<b>Net cash from/(used)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Movement in cash</b>													
Cash at the beginning of the period	25,000	58,478	405,244	478,145	387,216	374,385	364,907	304,545	288,485	277,484	217,524	204,654	25,000
Net increase/(decrease) in cash	33,478	346,766	72,901	(90,930)	(12,831)	(9,478)	(60,362)	(16,060)	(11,002)	(59,960)	(12,870)	(19,389)	160,266
<b>CASH AT THE END OF THE PERIOD</b>	<b>58,478</b>	<b>405,244</b>	<b>478,145</b>	<b>387,216</b>	<b>374,385</b>	<b>364,907</b>	<b>304,545</b>	<b>288,485</b>	<b>277,484</b>	<b>217,524</b>	<b>204,654</b>	<b>185,266</b>	<b>185,266</b>

**Report Author: Louisa Bulley, Executive Officer**

**Responsible Officer: Joe James, CEO**

At the request of the new Hunter JO Chair Cr Sue Moore, the CEO and Executive Officer have been exploring options for the election and appointment of a Deputy Chairperson for the Hunter Joint Organisation.

Since the inception of the Hunter Joint Organisation the Deputy Chairperson position has not been utilised consistently.

The Deputy Chairperson is referenced in Section 10 of the *Charter of the Hunter Joint Organisation*, alongside the role of Chairperson as follows;

3. *The Board may elect a Deputy Chairperson from amongst the Voting Representatives who are Mayors following the election of the Chairperson, to hold office for the term of the Chairperson.*
4. *In the absence of the Chairperson, the voting representatives at the meeting of the Board are to determine which of their number is to preside at the meeting. The representative thus elected does not have a casting vote.*

Beyond this, there is no definition of the Deputy Chairperson role within the Charter, however, further definition of this role is provided within Section 5 of the *Final Code of Meeting Practice Hunter JO*;

- 5.1 *The chairperson, or at the request of or in the absence of the chairperson, the deputy chairperson (if any) presides at meetings of the board.*
- 5.2 *If the chairperson and the deputy chairperson (if any) are absent, a voting representative elected to chair the meeting by the voting representatives present presides at a meeting of the board*

It has been proposed by the Chair of the Hunter JO that the Board consider election of a Deputy Chairperson to act in the role when she may be absent, including presiding over meetings and acting as a Spokesperson for the Organisation, and to potentially act as the second elected Mayor on the CEO's Performance Review Panel (as referenced in Item 5.3). If this proposal is accepted by the Board, it is proposed that an election take place using the same process as the Hunter JO Chairperson election.

A nomination form modelled on that for the election for the Hunter JO Chair has been provided at Attachment 11.

**Recommendation:**

- **That the Hunter JO Board decide if it wants to elect a Deputy Chairperson for the Hunter Joint Organisation.**
- **That, if the Board decides to elect a Deputy Chairperson, the Hunter JO Board decide when such election should occur.**



## Hunter Joint Organisation:

### Nomination for the position of Deputy Chairperson

This nomination is to be delivered or sent to the Returning Officer (Joe James, CEO), this can be done via email to [ceo@hunterjo.com.au](mailto:ceo@hunterjo.com.au) prior to the meeting at which the election shall take place.

We, as voting representatives of the Hunter Joint Organisation,  
nominate:

Cr \_\_\_\_\_ (name of nominee)  
as a candidate for the Office of Deputy Chairperson of the Hunter  
Joint Organisation.

Cr \_\_\_\_\_ Mayor of \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Cr \_\_\_\_\_ Mayor of \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Cr \_\_\_\_\_ Mayor of \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

I, Cr \_\_\_\_\_ (name of nominee)  
accept nomination as a candidate for the Office of Deputy  
Chairperson of the Hunter Joint Organisation.

Signature of nominee

Date

Note: This nomination is to be made by two or more Mayors of Member Councils of the Hunter Joint Organisation (one of whom may be the nominee) and is not valid unless the nominee has indicated consent, in writing, to be nominated.



**Report Author: Louisa Bulley, Executive Officer**

**Responsible Officer: Joe James, CEO**

The CEO Annual Performance Review is currently being scheduled to take place in July/August 2022, in line with the resolution from the last review that the process take place at the conclusion of the financial year.

With the change of Chair of the Hunter JO, the panel will consist of the below members;

- Chair of Hunter JO Board - Cr Sue Moore
- Additional Mayor (to be nominated by the Hunter JO Board, or potentially Deputy Chairperson)
- Chair of Arrow Board - Wayne Wallis
- Chair of General Managers Advisory Committee - David Evans

The review will be based upon the CEO's Performance, measured against the CEO Personal Performance Agreement, and the KPIs agreed by the panel in 2021, and provided to the Hunter JO and Arrow Boards for endorsement.

The process for the review will be;

1. CEO Personal Performance Agreement and KPIs circulated to Panel
2. Feedback gathered from each Board, as per recommendation below, for incorporation into panel discussion
3. Panel to meet to discuss documents prior to meeting with CEO
4. CEO Performance Review to take place in July with full panel
5. Performance Agreement and Revised KPIs to be brought to the Hunter JO Board in August 2022, and to the Arrow Board in September 2022, for endorsement by each Board respectively.

For any General Managers or Board Members wanting to provide their own specific feedback on the CEO's Performance within either entity, this should be sent directly to their respective Chairs, to be incorporated into the performance review.

**Recommendation:**

- **That the Hunter JO Board endorse the process for the CEO Performance Review**
- **That at the conclusion of the 21/22 financial year, the Hunter JO Board Members provide feedback on the CEO's performance to the Hunter JO Chair for inclusion in the CEO's Performance Review**

## 7. Items for the Hunter JO Board – For Noting

### 7.1 CEO Report – Collaboration & Advocacy

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**Report Author: Joe James, CEO**

**Responsible Officer: Joe James, CEO**

Executive Summary:

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

The report provides an update for the last period on:

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

**Advocacy**

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 during and subsequent to its April 2202 meeting, was completed and provided to:

- Commonwealth Government Ministers & 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.

Refer Correspondence and “Collaboration & Stakeholder Engagement” section of the CEO report below for further detail.

ALGA Conference

Building on the Federal Election advocacy, an– opportunity exists to engage with Commonwealth Members of Parliament while member council representatives are attending ALGA.

A briefing session will be held after this board meeting. Potential key focus areas include:

1. In the context of public discussion about pressure on federal budget infrastructure spending, and subject to consultation with the Airport, ensuring Airport runway and terminal commitments are prioritised;
2. Other items from Commonwealth advocacy document

#### State Government Election Advocacy

Utilising the information and learnings gained from the recent Commonwealth Advocacy work completed by the Hunter JO, and information gleaned from recent meetings with Commonwealth and State Members of Parliament, the following process is proposed for developing and implementing a regional advocacy campaign in the lead up to the NSW Government election in March 2023.

The process that is proposed aims to achieve clear alignment on the Board's policy positions, priorities and advocacy "asks" so that they can be collated, collateral developed around them, and disseminated in a timeframe that ensures the potential for them to influence policy and funding commitments in time for internal government budget processes and prior to the election. As with the Commonwealth election advocacy materials, target audiences will include sitting Members of Parliament in seats across the region and candidates for their seats, relevant Ministers and Shadow Ministers, and other key decision makers (e.g. policy advisors).

The proposed process and timeframe includes:

Activity	Completion date
Member Councils invited to update / refine the information already provided to the JO to support the Commonwealth election advocacy work, to reflect the NSW Government election focus.	30 June 2022
Hunter JO team to review and collate updated information to formulate draft regional advocacy position paper	20 July 2022
Draft regional advocacy position paper presented to GMAC for consideration	28 July 2022
Draft regional advocacy position paper presented to Hunter JO Board for consideration and endorsement	11 August 2022
Development of advocacy collateral for confirmed advocacy priorities.	26 August 2022
Dissemination of advocacy collateral to target audiences	2 <sup>nd</sup> September 2022
Face to face meetings with MPs Ministers and policy advisors	1 September – 30 November 2022

#### Hunter Global

Key advocacy activities currently underway in relation to the Hunter Global initiative include:

1. Seeking and undertaking meetings with local Commonwealth and State Members of Parliament, and with Ministers of relevant portfolios, to brief them on the Hunter Global initiative. This includes providing an overview of the Hunter Global initiative, the rationale for its delivery and for the Hunter JO taking a lead role, and the priorities and opportunities that are emerging from the summit and report currently being finalised. Refer to the following "Collaboration & Stakeholder Engagement" section of the CEO report for details on the status of completed and pending meetings.

2. Production of an extended advocacy video is continuing, however has been affected by some delays in the availability of local talent arising from COVID impacts. When completed this resource will further underpin regional advocacy efforts to state and federal governments, as well as to attract potential investors to the region. The focus of this video will be “When we get to the world stage”, showcasing 2-4 storylines from local people and businesses from around the region as to what direct international access through the airport will allow them to do.
3. The report documenting the opportunities and key priorities for the region as a whole to capitalise on the runway upgrade (and recently announced passenger terminal upgrade) is nearing completion. This report will provide a platform to support ongoing advocacy and program development work undertaken by the JO, project partners and other regional stakeholders to continue to promote and develop the economic development opportunities for the region arising from the airport runway upgrade.

## **Regional Submissions**

### **1. IPART changes to the Domestic Waste Management Charge**

In line with the advice and recommendations of the Hunter JO Board meeting at its April 2022 meeting, and in collaboration with Member Councils, Central Coast Council and a wide range of stakeholder organisations, the Hunter JO team provided a submission in response to IPART’s Draft Report – Review of Domestic Waste Management Charges (13 December 2021). At an overall level the consensus positions and key recommendations identified in the submission included:

1. Councils do not accept the underlying premise upon which implementation of the IPART review has been initiated
2. Councils hold serious concerns that both the voluntary rate peg or a rebalancing exercise could direct Councils to act contrary to existing legislation, and therefore call for a review of the definitions of ‘waste’ and ‘domestic waste management services’ in the Local Government Act 1993, alongside updates to the Office of Local Government’s Rating and Revenue Raising Manual, to cover all services and functions necessary for minimising landfill and maximising resource recovery from domestic waste
3. The cost of Domestic Waste Management (DWM) service provision varies greatly across geographical and historical contexts, population densities, transport infrastructure and other circumstantial differences. Given the highly contextual nature of these costs, and their interdependencies, Councils are best placed to determine value for money for ratepayers. As such, the setting of DWM charges should be determined by councils in consultation with their communities to reflect their place-based characteristics
4. That the proposed voluntary DWM rate peg be abandoned in favour of improved pricing guidelines, reporting tools, and auditing processes (where warranted) that support councils to set DWM charges in line with their community needs and expectations.
5. That Councils be guided in the setting of DWM charges through the alignment across instruments and frameworks, clear guidelines, as well as a capacity building and education programs that support Councils to educate consumers on how DWM charges are set, and explain local differentiation, in order to promote accountability to, and communication with their communities
6. That as the least worst option presented to date, Councils favour benchmarking, clear and consistent pricing principles, an opportunity to rebalance DWM charges with general rates, over a minimum 2-year transition period, based on updated and expanded definitions of ‘waste’ and ‘domestic waste management services’ that include all

activities involved in the minimisation of, source separation, collection, recovery, processing and disposal of all forms of domestically generated waste.

A copy of the submission is included in Correspondence.

### **Media Coverage**

A copy of the below media coverage has been included at the end of the Board Pack for information (Attachment 16).

### **GET UP HERE. "ITS NOT OUR JOB": UPPER HUNTER COUNCILS FORCED INTO THE VOID**

*Newcastle Herald, Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2022*

"Singleton and Muswellbrook mayors have fired a broadside at the state and federal governments for not doing enough to help the Upper Hunter shift away from the region's over reliance on coal"....

"Muswellbrook Mayor and former coal miner Steve Reynolds said the NSW Government needs "to do a lot more" and he described the "complete lack" of engagement by Scott Morrison's Coalition Government and Anthony Albanese's Labor Opposition in the lead up to this months federal election as "ridiculous" and "appalling"....

"Singleton Mayor and Chair of the Hunter Joint Organisation Sue Moore (Ind) said the state and federal governments had the funds and ability to secure the region's future, but were dragging the chain".

### **Hunter JO Board Strategic Planning Workshop with Mayors & GMs**

Now scheduled for 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> July (encompassing overnight stay and dinner), this workshop will focus on further development of the Hunter JO's Strategic Plan 2022-26, consistent with the timeline presented at the April 2022 Board Meeting.

The focus of the three workshop elements to be delivered over the two days includes:

#### **1. Collaboration and Council Priorities Workshop**

The focus of this session will be a presentation from each Council General Manager and Mayor, which outlines their priorities for their LGA and any challenges that impact their ability to achieve them. The aim is to discuss the shared priorities, areas for collaboration and shared challenges that would benefit from a regional approach.

#### **2. Hunter JO Workshop – Session 1**

A presentation of the 10 Council Community Strategic Plans mapped against the current 4 themes identified at the May 2021 Strategy Day. Looking at the shared strategic priorities and any potential collaboration focus areas that sit outside the 4 themes.

A presentation of the State Plans and Strategies mapped against the current 4 themes and the links to the CSP matrix.

Discussion around advocacy and program priorities for the future.

#### **3. Hunter JO Workshop – Session 2**

Analysis of the data from the previous 2 workshops, which will lead to discussion and a "review" of the 4 themes. A decision on the final theme areas that will form the framework of the Hunter JO Strategy.

### **Collaboration & Stakeholder Engagement**

Key Stakeholder Engagement	Outcomes (where relevant)
<b>Political Engagements (upcoming)</b>	
<b>David Layzell - NSW Member for Upper Hunter</b>	<p>Similar to recent meetings held between the CEO and Director Regional Policy &amp; Programs with local Commonwealth and NSW Members of Parliament, this meeting with Member for Upper Hunter will focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role and strategic priorities of the Hunter JO</li> <li>• Hunter Global summit outcomes and emerging priorities</li> <li>• The Hunter JOs goals, role and activity in regard to the Region's economic evolution, including the Hunter Venture Fund project</li> <li>• Transport connectivity</li> <li>• Shiraz to Shore initiative</li> </ul>
<b>Political Engagements (completed)</b>	
<b>Rob Stokes – NSW Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport</b>	<p>In conjunction with other members of the Hunter Planning Alliance, the purpose of this meeting was to brief the Minister on the priorities outlined in the Partnering for Growth advocacy initiative, including the establishment of a \$500M 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.</p> <p>Additional items of note that we discussed included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The next steps on the Regional Transport Plan (high level policy direction to bind and align government direction)</li> <li>- The next steps on the GCC and its planned 'directions paper' (again, high level policy direction to bind and align government direction)</li> <li>- The rapidly changing population and demographic trends impacting Greater Newcastle, the Hunter and regional NSW generally;</li> <li>- Fast rail/ faster rail general considerations next steps; and</li> <li>- The strategic significance of the container terminal to future industry within the Hunter.</li> </ul>
<b>Ministerial Liaison Advisor to Rob Stokes, NSW Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Cities, and Minister for Active Transport</b>	<p>This meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> May provided an overview of the Hunter Global Initiative, and of the priority opportunities and directions emerging from the February summit and ongoing work since that time. The opportunity was also taken to flag other matters of priority to the Board within the remit of the Minister, including the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• future governance and communication relationship between the Hunter JO Board / GNMP Steering Committee and the Greater Cities Commission,</li> <li>• importance of a developing an Integrated Regional Transport Plan for the region, and</li> <li>• importance of further expanding direct international access to global markets through Newcastle Airport and the Port of Newcastle.</li> </ul>

Key Stakeholder Engagement	Outcomes (where relevant)
	<p>The Minister's representatives also raised and requested further information on the <a href="#">Shiraz to Shore Cycle Trail</a>, noting the significant economic and community benefits that smaller scale infrastructure projects of this nature have been proven to provide.</p>
<p>The Hon. James Griffin, MP NSW Minister for Environment and Heritage</p>	<p>In response to correspondence sent to the Minister, formally requesting confirmation of a 12-month extension in funding for the Regional Contaminated Land Capacity Building Program, the Minister's reply (refer Correspondence):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledges that the Regional Contaminated Land Capacity Building (CRCB) Program has been highly utilised and valued by regional councils and that funding is currently scheduled to end</li> <li>• Identifies that the EPA remains committed to working closely with stakeholders to continue to support regional councils in meeting their legislated responsibilities in managing contaminated land</li> <li>• Confirms that options to extend the program are being explored with CRCB officers, including the Hunter JO</li> </ul> <p>Subsequent to the Minister's reply, NSW EPA representatives have also confirmed a further six-months in funding to support the extension of the Regional Contaminated Land Program (refer correspondence)</p>
<p><b>Sharon Claydon</b> – Federal Member for Newcastle <b>Jenny Aitchison</b> – NSW Member for Maitland <b>Tim Crakanthorp</b> – NSW Member for Newcastle</p>	<p>These meetings have occurred following the dissemination of information on the Hunter Global Initiative to all local Commonwealth and State MPs, which was accompanied by an invitation to meet and provide more information. Undertaking the meetings has also provided the opportunity to provide information on the broader priorities and programs of the Hunter JO including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role and strategic priorities of the Hunter JO</li> <li>• The relationship of the Hunter JO to other regional advocacy groups and organisations</li> <li>• Hunter Global summit outcomes and emerging priorities</li> <li>• Regional transport connectivity</li> <li>• The Hunter JOs goals, role and activity in regard to the Region's economic evolution, including the Hunter Venture Fund project</li> <li>• Shiraz to Shore initiative</li> </ul> <p>Interest and support was indicated by those MP's with whom meetings were held, in working more closely with the Hunter JO to advocate for the priorities being identified and programs being delivered by the Hunter JO. This interest was in recognition of the democratic, community derived foundation from which these regional priorities are drawn.</p>
<p><b>Commonwealth Government Ministers &amp; Shadow Ministers</b></p>	<p>Correspondence was forwarded to all Commonwealth Ministers and Shadow Ministers providing an overview of the Hunter JOs regional priorities prior to the recent Federal Election (refer Correspondence). Those targeted included:</p>

Key Stakeholder Engagement	Outcomes (where relevant)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Scott Morrison</b>, Prime Minister</li> <li>• <b>Anthony Albanese</b>, Leader of the Opposition</li> <li>• <b>Paul Fletcher</b>, Minister for Communications, Urban Infrastructure, Cities and the Arts</li> <li>• <b>Michelle Rowland</b>, Shadow Minister for Communications</li> <li>• <b>Dan Tehan</b>, Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment</li> <li>• <b>Richard Marles</b>, Shadow Minister for National Reconstruction, Employment, Skills and Small Business</li> <li>• <b>Angus Taylor</b>, Minister for Industry, Energy and Emissions Reduction</li> <li>• <b>Tony Burke</b>, Shadow Minister for the Arts</li> <li>• <b>Alan Tudge</b>, Minister for Education and Youth</li> <li>• <b>Don Farrell</b>, Shadow Minister for Sport and Tourism</li> <li>• <b>Bridget McKenzie</b>, Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education</li> <li>• <b>Catherine King</b>, Shadow Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development</li> <li>• <b>Chris Bowen</b>, Shadow Minister for Climate Change and Energy</li> <li>• <b>Ed Husic</b>, Shadow Minister for Industry and Innovation</li> <li>• <b>Hollie Hughes</b>, Senator for New South Wales</li> </ul>
<b>Existing Commonwealth Members of Parliament representing the Hunter Region and Candidates for Commonwealth seats across the Hunter</b>	<p>Correspondence was forwarded to all sitting members and candidates providing an overview of the Hunter JOs regional priorities prior to the recent Federal Election (refer Correspondence). In addition to overall regional priorities 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.</p> <p>A full of list of Candidates &amp; MPs contacted has been included within the Correspondence.</p>
<b>Hunter JO convened workshops, forums and events</b>	
<b>Hunter JO Regional Planning &amp; Economic Development Forum (18 May 2022)</b>	<p>A meeting of the forum was convened by the Hunter JO on 18<sup>th</sup> May, where updates were provided to Council representatives on a range of initiatives being delivered by the Hunter JO including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hunter JO Strategic Plan</li> <li>• Climate Change IP&amp;R Package</li> <li>• Coastal Communications Package</li> <li>• IP&amp;R Resilience Project</li> <li>• Simtable Project update</li> </ul>



Key Stakeholder Engagement	Outcomes (where relevant)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Contaminated Land Program</li> <li>• Regional Economic Strategy Review</li> <li>• Regional Infrastructure Priority List</li> <li>• Accelerating Event Economies project</li> <li>• Population Scenario Modelling</li> <li>• Cycle Based Tourism &amp; Regional Marketing Opportunities</li> <li>• Circular Economy Program</li> </ul> <p>Updates were also provided by State Government Agencies on the following planning, policy and legislative changes occurring in the region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hunter Regional Plan</li> <li>• Greater Cities Commission</li> <li>• Hunter Regional Transport Plan</li> </ul>
Regional Contaminated land Forum (12 May 2022)	This forum focused on problem contaminants (Asbestos and PFAS) to support Council staff involved in contaminated land management. The forum featured regulatory and technical experts on asbestos and PFAS. Two interactive panel sessions enabled Council staff to ask questions of the speakers, who came from organisations including Local Government NSW, NSW EPA, and Sydney Airport.
Simtable User Training (27 <sup>th</sup> April & 4 <sup>th</sup> May 2022)	"General" and "Super" user Simtable training sessions were delivered by the Hunter JO team on 27 <sup>th</sup> April and 4 <sup>th</sup> May 2022. These sessions were facilitated by the U.S.A. based Simtable team. Staff from Hunter JO member Councils, along with Resilience NSW, the RFS and SES participated.
<b>Existing Standing Engagement (convened by Hunter JO and Local Government)</b>	
Hunter Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework Network (convened by Lake Macquarie City Council)	Mel Curtis, Regional Policy & Program Manager with the Hunter JO continues to engage with the Regional IP&R Network convened by Member Councils, as a key mechanism for informing development of the Hunter JO Strategic Plan. A key outcome of this has been the provision of draft Council Community Strategic Plans. The local objectives and strategies from these are being mapped against the four strategic priorities for the Hunter JO Strategic Plan that have been identified by the Board.
Hunter JO Circular Economy Subcommittee (convened by Hunter JO)	<p>The Subcommittee last met on 10 May 2022. The focus of the meeting included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Updates on Hunter JO led initiatives including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CE Materials Map and EOI demonstration project</li> <li>• CE Procurement Project</li> <li>• CE Roadmap, Media and Quarterly Updates</li> <li>• CE Event Strategy</li> <li>• Presentation delivered to the recent NSW Waste Conference</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

Key Stakeholder Engagement	Outcomes (where relevant)
	<p>2. Updates on the CE initiatives being delivered by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lake Macquarie City Council</li> <li>• City of Newcastle</li> <li>• Maitland Council</li> </ul>
Hunter Regional Waste Strategy Group (convened by Hunter JO)	Regular sessions of the Regional Waste Managers / Strategy Group continue, which have recently focused on development of the next Regional Circular Materials and Waste Strategy and preparation of the recent submission on proposed IPART changes to the Domestic Waste Management Charge
Hunter Circular Economy Facilitators Group (co-convened by Hunter JO & Department of Planning & Environment)	The Facilitators group held its quarterly meeting in April 2022. The group resolved to develop working groups for prioritising projects and measuring progress. The group also resolved to now meet fortnightly to progress projects.
Smart Region Forum (convened by Hunter JO)	The recent focus of this initiative has been continuing to hold meetings with the NSW Smart City team to discuss collaboration and funding opportunities.
<b>Existing standing engagements (convened by others)</b>	
Regional Leadership Executive (convened by Regional NSW)	<p>The Regional Leadership Executive met on 31 May 2022. Outcomes from the meeting are summarised in item 7.7 (the Regional NSW Standing Update).</p> <p>Of particular note from the CEO's perspective is for the Hunter JO, through its GNMP Standing Committee to decide how it structures its engagement with both the new Commissioner and the Commission itself. Note that the GCC is hiring staff to support the role the Commissioner for Greater Newcastle and the Lower Hunter.</p>
RLE Human Services Subcommittee (convened by Regional NSW)	<p>Updates were provided on the following initiatives being delivered in the region</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Central Coast Domestic Violence Committee Plan</li> <li>2. Central Coast Healthy Eating program</li> <li>3. Maitland place-based initiative incorporating: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aboriginal youth engagement project</li> <li>• Education at High School</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Social Housing Initiative</li> <li>5. Monitoring of number of sleeping rough</li> <li>6. Reducing smoking</li> <li>7. Strengthening Local Government involvement through refresh of Community Strategic Plans</li> </ol>

Key Stakeholder Engagement	Outcomes (where relevant)
RLE Economic Development Subcommittee (convened by Regional NSW)	Hunter JO staff continue to participate in the Subcommittee, which last met on 17 May. The Hunter JO has been requested to provide a presentation on the Priority Infrastructure List project at the next meeting of the Subcommittee.
Upper Hunter Education & Training Working Group (convened by Regional NSW)	The next meeting of this Committee is scheduled for 7 June. The meeting will focus on providing updates from around the region on education and training.
Business Attraction Committee (convened by Regional NSW)	A briefing was provided 13 May to the Business Attraction Committee on the status of the Hunter Identity and Branding project. Feedback has been provided by the Hunter JO on the need to engage with Mayors and General Managers as soon as possible, in line with the expectation that was previously set when briefing the General Managers Advisory Committee in 2021.
RLE Recovery & Resilience Sub-Committee (co-convened by Regional NSW & resilience NSW)	The Subcommittee last met on 23 May, at which Hunter JO representatives provided an overview of the SIM tables project, with Resilience NSW confirming they will work closely with us on the delivery of workshops and the program more broadly.
Interim Hunter Expert Panel (convened by Regional NSW)	<p>The Interim Expert Panel met on 12 May. Key discussion and outcomes included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legislation has been subject of ongoing debate in parliament.</li> <li>• Generally speaking objectives of RfR supported but concerns around transparency and accountability main issues</li> <li>• Timeline delayed (given legislation delayed)</li> <li>• LGA eligibility criteria being developed</li> <li>• Some useful work on value chain mapping for emerging industries being undertaken by Invest Regional NSW</li> </ul> <p>Questions / observations by CEO to Regional NSW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fund is for all coal mining regions. Can regions can be given some funding certainty (ie guaranteed minimum allocation)</li> <li>• In terms of community input, critical to consider local government CSP's and the community engagement that underpins them</li> <li>• Can scenario analysis of future of coal fired power stations globally by shared</li> <li>• Are the organisations of Panel members precluded from applying for funding?</li> </ul>

Key Stakeholder Engagement	Outcomes (where relevant)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are member based organisations (HJO, HunterNet, HJA) conflicted where members apply?</li> <li>• What is accountability of the panel beyond a grant assessment process? And the corollary... what is the panel's authority?</li> </ul>
Upper Hunter Education & Training Working Group (convened by Regional NSW)	The next meeting is scheduled for 7 June, at which updates from around the region on education and training will be provided.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Control Group Hunter Identity and Positioning</li> <li>• Hunter Identity and Positioning Local Government Reference Group</li> </ul> (convened by Regional NSW)	Meeting continue fortnightly to develop the next phase of work: to develop a plan to re-engage stakeholders on the draft brand and strategy. A draft engagement plan is under development currently.
EPA Local Government Advisory Group (convened by NSW EPA)	The Local Government Advisory Group met on the 12 May 2022, at which the following updates were provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic modelling for future disaster waste (new project)</li> <li>• Nationally consistent Hazardous waste tracking systems</li> <li>• Carbon Abatement Cost Curve Study</li> <li>• Waste classification and accreditation</li> <li>• Landfill gas capture fund design</li> <li>• Resource recovery review – consultation now closed. Review should be finalised by end of July 2022.</li> <li>• Energy from waste regulation - 400 plus submissions received</li> <li>• Grants update (upcoming, under assessment, announced)</li> <li>• FOGO</li> </ul>
<b>New Standing Engagements</b>	
Hunter Future Workforces Committee  (Convened by Business Hunter)	The CEO and Director Regional Policy and Programs are participating in the Business Hunter Future Workforces Committee, which aims to create a platform for dialogue and recommendations in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing the region with a collaborative policy development agency (the Committee) that can consider and formulate approaches to governments, public sector agents and private enterprises with cohesive advice on the Hunter region's readiness to respond and deliver on industrial growth</li> </ul>

Key Stakeholder Engagement	Outcomes (where relevant)
	<p>and state the case for investment in workforce attraction, development and growth projects to support us.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying, analysing, facilitating and promoting strategies and projects that can address industry readiness, workforce attraction, skills development and education pathways for key markets in the Hunter business landscape.</li> <li>Qualifying the scope and scale of new jobs potential in key business markets, drawing on Committee membership data and insights to inform policy and advocacy objectives.</li> <li>Focusing our region on the current workforce growth and business development gaps particularly in new business economies, new energy to diversify our economic offering, the growth and skills attraction in innovation-centric sectors that align with job and business growth from 2025 to 2050.</li> <li>Formulating and delivering key investment and skilled migration recommendations to state and federal governments for targeted, regionally relevant workforce attraction and readiness programs as well as social and built infrastructure that will equalise offerings available in other metropolitan growth areas that currently enjoy higher levers of regional serviceability within Australia.</li> <li>Sharing information with other skills and workforce agencies who advocate for sectors outside of this committee's scope.</li> </ul>
<b>Proposed New Standing Engagements</b>	
N/A	No new standing updates are proposed
<b>Additional Strategic Engagements</b>	
Powering Business 2050 Summit Reference Group (convened by Business Hunter)	<p>Business Hunter have established a reference group (based on the approach taken by the Hunter JO for the Hunter Global Summit) to assist it in planning a 2-day "Powering Business 2050" regional summit on the 22-23 June 2022. As with Hunter Global, the role of the reference group is to share ideas, collaboratively build content, establish partnerships, and provide logistics support for the Summit. The CEO and Director Policy and Programs are participating in the reference group.</p> <p>Through our efforts in supporting the event the Hunter JO will be recognised as a Silver Sponsor, along with other organisations including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department of Regional NSW</li> <li>The Business Centre</li> <li>The Marketing GP</li> <li>Business NSW</li> <li>Oasis Media</li> </ul>
Meeting with Mark Apthorpe – NSW	The CEO and Director Regional Policy and Programs met Mark Apthorpe on 11th May. Mark has been appointed by the NSW Energy Minister to work

Key Stakeholder Engagement	Outcomes (where relevant)
Electricity Infrastructure Jobs Advocate	<p>closely with regional communities to advise on strategies to encourage workforce development, education and training in regional NSW, including the Hunter and Central Coast.</p> <p>Dr Apthorpe will also advise the Minister on the development of road, rail and port infrastructure required in the regions to promote export opportunities for electricity generation, storage and network technology.</p> <p>The meeting was requested by Dr Apthorpe to gain an understanding of the JOs role and the programs we are working on, given their strong alignment with the remit he has been given by the Minister.</p>
Meeting with Kate Wilson, Executive Director, Climate Change & Sustainability – NSW Department of Planning and Environment	<p>Along with other key stakeholder organisations in the Circular Economy space, Joe James, Steve Wilson and Tim Askew participated in this meeting to discuss the Circular Economy work being undertaken in the region by the Hunter JO and partner organisations.</p>
Coffs Harbour Waste Conference	<p>The Coffs Harbour Waste Conference is the leading conference for the waste management industry in Australia which is targeted at anyone who works in, or has an interest in waste management issues, particularly local government. Tim Askew and Eloise Lobsey attended the conference for the Hunter JO, with a presentation delivered by Eloise on “How to implement circular procurement in local government”, based on the CE Procurement project currently underway. The conference also provided a wealth of contacts across different levels of government and industry that will support the ongoing delivery and growth of the regional CE program.</p>
Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS) Review Workshops (convened by Regional NSW)	<p>The CEO and staff from the Policy and Programs team participated in three workshops convened by Regional NSW to initiate a review of the Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS) within our region. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central Coast and Lake Macquarie (31<sup>st</sup> May)</li> <li>• MidCoast (1<sup>st</sup> June)</li> <li>• Hunter (2<sup>nd</sup> June)</li> </ul> <p>Participation by the team facilitated the input of information and objectives identified by the Hunter JO Board for the region as a whole, into each of the more targeted sub regional workshops, and to gather local information from Councils and other key stakeholders to inform regional policy and program development.</p> <p>The CEO actively pursued and supported the inclusion of the City of Newcastle in the Hunter workshop process.</p>
JO Chairs Forum (convened by JO Executive Officers Network)	<p>A meeting of the JO Chairs network was held in Sydney on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> May, which was attended by the Chair Cr Sue Moore, and Director Policy and Programs. While circumstances prevented a quorum being reached, key focus areas of discussion included:</p>

Key Stakeholder Engagement	Outcomes (where relevant)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outcomes from the Chair's facilitated workshop held in March, which explored opportunities for progressing the actions and recommendations identified by the 2021 review of Joint Organisations</li> <li>Report from the Office of Local Government on progressing the recommendations of the review, including the establishment of an interagency committee to facilitate their implementation, and exploring opportunities for agencies to better (and more systematically) engage with JOs to improve place-based policy and planning outcomes, and to support the financial sustainability of JOs across the State. Reports from ALGA and LGNSW on their current advocacy programs and on the outcomes / commitments achieved for local government during the recent federal election campaign</li> </ul> <p>The next JO Chairs meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> August will be convened by the Hunter JO and will include a focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing a cross JO register of advocacy positions</li> <li>Progressing development of a cross JO communications strategy</li> </ul>

### **Status of Regional Funding Applications**

#### *Grant applications*

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

#### *Status of funding extensions and new funding opportunities*

1. Disaster Resilience – The team is currently exploring opportunities under the Local & Regional stream of the Disaster Risk Reduction Fund that is open for applications until 1 July. The program supports place-based initiatives that help communities prevent and mitigate natural disaster risks. Joint Organisations are eligible to apply for up to \$1.5 million.
2. Contaminated land –the NSW EPA have recently confirmed a 6 month extension in funding (refer correspondence)
3. Regional Waste Implementation – Advice remains pending from the NSW EPA as to the focus, design and application process for what will be a revised (and now contestable) funding program.
4. Regional Illegal Dumping (RID) Program –the Hunter JO Team are proceeding with negotiations with the NSW EPA, Hunter JO Member Councils and with Central Coast Council, with the objective of establishing a Regional Illegal Dumping Program to be hosted by the

Hunter JO. Proceeding will be contingent on a level of funding being provided by the NSW EPA that ensures delivery of the RID Program does not detract from the core capability of the Hunter JO team to deliver on the agreed strategic and program priorities endorsed by the Hunter JO Board.

**Recommendation: That the report be received and noted.**

## 7.2 Hunter JO Financial Reports – April 2022 YTD

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**Report Author: Lisa Lord, Head of Finance**

**Responsible Officer: Joe James, CEO**

A copy of the Hunter JO Financial Reports for April has been provided at Attachment 12.

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



# HUNTER JOINT ORGANISATION



INCOME STATEMENT												
APRIL	CURRENT MONTH				YEAR TO DATE				Approved Annual Budget	Forecast Annual Budget	% Variance Forecast	Forecast Budget Variance Commentary
	Actual	Current	Budget Current	% Variance Current	Actual	Current	Budget Current	% Variance Current				on variances of 10% or more of a line item or 2.5% of revenue or expenditure total
<b>REVENUE</b>												
Contributions												
Arrow Contribution		50,000	50,000	0%		500,000	500,000	0%		600,000	600,000	0%
Member Councils Project Fundin												
Other Councils Project Funding												
Third Parties Project Funding												
Membership Subscriptions						397,579				397,579		RPPD and SH member council subscriptions forwarded to Arrow
Member Councils		45,184	43,996	3%		451,840	439,963	3%		527,956	527,956	0%
Third Parties		-				13,300						HJO Member council subscriptions
Grant Revenue												
Grant Revenue - Federal		-				-						
Grant Revenue - State		-				773,793						Grants received for the following projects
Grant Revenue - Member Council		-				-						- BLERF - Accelerating Event Economics
Miscellaneous Income		598				598						- Regional Waste projects
<b>Revenue - total</b>	<b>95,783</b>	<b>93,996</b>		<b>2%</b>	<b>2,137,111</b>	<b>939,963</b>		<b>127%</b>	<b>1,127,956</b>	<b>1,525,535</b>	<b>35%</b>	
<b>GENERAL &amp; ADMINISTRATION</b>												
Administration & Overheads (Arrow)	8,864	7,575		17%	88,637	75,751		17%	90,901	106,364	17%	Prior years total budgeted in error. Adjusted to reflect correct figure
Communications & Marketing	45	833		-95%	24,884	8,330		199%	9,996	9,996	0%	Consultants fees recorded in FY22 - S/be FY21
Audit & Assurance	1,263	1,250		1%	12,625	12,500		1%	15,000	15,000	0%	
Bank Charges	23	35		-35%	240	350		-31%	431	431	0%	
Catering	1,668	600		178%	5,042	7,400		-32%	13,000	13,000	0%	Costs spread across the year, forecasting one overnight workshop annually for Hunter JO Board (not yet held)
Consultants	-				5,510							
Insurance	720	-			7,195	9,000		-20%	9,000	9,000	0%	
Legal Fees	-				751							
Miscellaneous	-	100		-100%	42	1,000		-96%	1,200	1,200	0%	
Mobiles	91	80		14%	1,102	800		38%	960	960	0%	
Postage & Couriers	-				8							
Printing & Stationery	423	120		253%	1,694	1,200		41%	1,440	1,440	0%	Timing of printing for Annual Performance Statement, major printing for FY
Professional Development												
Professional Fees												
Records Storage												
Recruitment	-				1,200							
Rent	6,454	6,453		0%	64,540	64,528		0%	77,434	77,434	0%	
Repairs & Maintenance												
Search Fees												
Staff Amentities	97	80		21%	4,094	800		412%	960	960	0%	Staff Christmas Party expenses included here. Will need to be split between Hunter JO & Arrow
Subscriptions	132	128		3%	865	1,280		-32%	1,536	1,536	0%	Budget includes anticipated subscription cost for Salesforce once roll-out completed
Telephone	34	112		-70%	371	1,120		-67%	1,344	1,344	0%	Have reduced number of landlines required. Only EO using landline
Travel & Accomodation	-	250		-100%	555	2,500		-78%	3,000	3,000	0%	As per Catering cost, this includes assumed spend on Board workshop, incl. Accommodation for key staff
Fares Parking & Tolls	886	600		48%	5,838	6,000		-3%	7,200	7,200	0%	
Meals	161	80		101%	245	800		-69%	960	960	0%	As per Catering cost, this includes assumed spend on Board workshop, incl. Accommodation for key staff
<b>DEPRECIATION</b>												
Depreciation - Office Equipment & Furniture	44	52		-16%	439	520		-16%	624	624	0%	
Depreciation - Motor Vehicle	1,804	928		94%	17,890	9,280		93%	11,136	21,507	93%	Depreciation increased with purchase of additional vehicle
<b>INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY</b>												
Database Hosting & Upgrades												
Depreciation - IT Equipment												
Hardware Maintenance	361	698		-48%	5,751	6,980		-18%	8,376	8,376	0%	
Internet / Website Maintenance												
Software Maintenance												
<b>LABOUR</b>												
Wages & Salaries	12,452	16,740		-26%	183,335	184,138		0%	217,618	243,341	12%	Wages adjusted to reflect current employees salaries. Backpay provided for J.James not provided for in original budget
FBT	999	1,601		-38%	9,990	16,013		-38%	19,216	19,216	0%	
Leave Provisions	2,484				34,004							Net Leave provisions not provided for in budget

# HUNTER JOINT ORGANISATION



## INCOME STATEMENT

APRIL	CURRENT MONTH				YEAR TO DATE				Approved Annual Budget	Forecast Annual Budget	% Variance Forecast	Forecast Budget Variance Commentary <i>on variances of 10% or more of a line item or 2.5% of revenue or expenditure total</i>
	Actual	Current	Budget Current	% Variance Current	Actual	Current	Budget Current	% Variance Current				
Payroll Tax	-				-							
Superannuation	3,110		1,674	86%	35,959		18,414	95%	21,762	24,334	12%	
Workers Compensation	208		646	-68%	1,960		6,458	-70%	7,750	7,750	0%	
Training & Development	-		250	-100%	(92)		2,500	-104%	5,000	5,000	0%	Purchase occurred in February for Comms Officer Training, CEO training still to be scheduled
Uniforms	-		-		-		-		400	400	0%	
<b>MOTOR VEHICLE</b>												
Fuel	1,084		700	55%	7,503		7,000	7%	8,400	8,400	0%	
Registration	-		-		-		2,200	-100%	2,200	2,200	0%	
Repairs & Maintenance	-		-		997		1,000	0%	1,500	1,500	0%	
<b>PROJECT FUNDING</b>												
Project Funding Disbursement	-				397,579				397,579			RPPD and SH member council subscriptions forwarded to Arrow
Grant Funding Disbursement	-				937,093							Disbursement of Grant Funds to Arrow for project management of Grants
<b>Overheads - total</b>	<b>43,405</b>		<b>41,585</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>1,857,847</b>		<b>447,863</b>	<b>315%</b>	<b>538,344</b>	<b>990,052</b>	<b>84%</b>	
	45%		44%		87%		48%		48%	65%		
<b>NET PROFIT - OPERATIONS</b>	<b>52,378</b>		<b>52,411</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>279,264</b>		<b>492,100</b>	<b>-43%</b>	<b>589,612</b>	<b>535,483</b>	<b>-9%</b>	
	55%		56%		13%		52%		52%	35%		
<b>OTHER INCOME / (EXPENSES)</b>												
Project Funding - Arrow	(49,161)		(49,161)	0%	(491,610)		(491,608)	0%	(589,929)	(589,929)	0%	
Profit (loss) on disposal of assets	-		-		5,862		-		-	-		
Interest Expense	-		-		(17)		-		-	-		
<b>Other Income - total</b>	<b>(49,161)</b>		<b>(49,161)</b>		<b>(485,765)</b>		<b>(491,608)</b>		<b>(589,929)</b>	<b>(589,929)</b>		
<b>NET PROFIT BEFORE TAX</b>	<b>3,217</b>		<b>3,250</b>		<b>(206,502)</b>		<b>493</b>		<b>(317)</b>	<b>(54,446)</b>	<b>17065%</b>	
	3%		3%		-10%		0%		0%	-4%		
<b>EBITDA</b>	<b>5,065</b>		<b>4,230</b>		<b>(188,173)</b>		<b>10,293</b>		<b>11,443</b>	<b>(32,315)</b>		
	5%		5%		-9%		1%		1%	-2%		

**Report Author: Steve Wilson, Director Regional Policy & Programs**

**Responsible Officer: Joe James, CEO**

### Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan Steering Committee

Dates are being explored for the next meeting of the Subcommittee (at the time of writing we are targeting the 24<sup>th</sup> June), which will focus on:

1. Collectively reviewing the outcomes of individual engagement sessions held between Councils and the Greater Cities Commission during May
2. Determining an agreed approach / position around the design and structure of governance arrangements to be established between the Greater Newcastle Cities Commissioner (to be appointed), and the five Mayors, to:
  - Ensure regular and meaningful communication and collaboration between the Mayors and the Commissioner, and:
  - Establish effective reporting processes to ensure accountability within the Greater Cities Commission for delivery of key regional planning documents.
3. Progressing the outcomes of the March Committee workshop focused on developing an agreed narrative to be used by the Mayors to:
  - Provide a strong and united advocacy voice on agreed core priorities for the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Area, within the context of a broader shared regional narrative
  - Inform the broader advocacy platform of the Hunter JO Board in regard to the agreed priorities and advocacy narrative for the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan area.

### Circular Economy Sub Committee

The Subcommittee last met on 10 May 2022. The focus of the meeting included:

1. Updates on Hunter JO led initiatives including:
  - CE Materials Map and EOI demonstration project
  - CE Procurement Project
  - CE Roadmap, Media and Quarterly Updates
  - CE Event Strategy
  - Presentation delivered to the recent NSW Waste Conference
2. Updates on the CE initiatives being delivered by:
  - Lake Macquarie City Council
  - City of Newcastle
  - Maitland City Council

### Regional Economic Transition Sub Committee

In line with the resolution of the Board at its April 2022 meeting, Board Members (Mayors and General Managers) have been invited to nominate their interest in being involved as a representative on the

Subcommittee. Options are also being explored with the Chair to deliver the first meeting of the restructured and refocused Committee during June (potentially 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> or 24<sup>th</sup>).

Those Mayors and General Managers who have confirmed their involvement in the Subcommittee include:

Mayors	General Managers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cr Sue Moore (Singleton Council)</li><li>• Cr Jay Suvaal (Cessnock City Council)</li><li>• Cr John Conners (Dungog Shire Council)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Jason Linnane (Singleton Council)</li><li>• Morven Cameron (Lake Macquarie City Council)</li><li>• Fiona Plesman (Muswellbrook Shire Council)</li></ul>

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

**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**

- *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*

<b>Transforming Resilience with the IP&amp;R Framework</b>	
<b>Program / Project Lead</b>	Anna Flack
<b>Purpose:</b> 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.	
<b>Status update:</b> A consultant has commenced a literature review on existing regional, state and national resilience policies and strategies, development of a framework for what makes a 'high', 'medium' and 'low' resilience Council and community, as well as a Resilience IP&R document. A review of the draft CSPs of Councils is also being undertaken to identify current approaches towards improving resilience. Next steps involve developing a Resilience Health Check Tool to help complete a gap analysis and assess participating Councils to determine their current level of resilience, so that we can better inform future actions and identify support required.	
<b>Simtables for Community Empowerment</b>	
<b>Program / Project Lead</b>	Chris Dart
<b>Purpose:</b> 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.	
<b>Status update:</b> The Simtables for Community Empowerment program continues to progress well. The "General" and "Super" user training sessions were delivered on 27 April and 4 May 2022 respectively, facilitated by the U.S.A. based Simtable team. Staff from our member Councils, along with Resilience NSW, the RFS and SES attended the sessions either in-person or online. Data acquisition for the Simtable has commenced, and the Hunter JO has gained access to the the State Vegetation Type Map from DPIE which will provide crucial vegetation data for the region. The team has provided a demonstration of the Simtable at meetings of the GMAC and Hunter JO board, and at a Resilience NSW workshop which included Executive Director Dominic Lane. The Simtable was also used to assist delivery of an emergency management workshop in Karuah, hosted by Aboriginal Affairs NSW.	

Upcoming will be the finalisation of workshop content resources, after which delivery of place-based workshops in each of the Hunter LGAs will commence.

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

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

Circular Economy Roadmap	
<b>Program / Project Lead</b>	Tim Askew
<b>Purpose:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To develop a common understanding and definition for the circular economy of the region relevant to all stakeholders – government, business and academia.</li> <li>Gain broad regional support and engagement for the development of a circular economy in the Hunter and Central Coast region.</li> <li>Develop a strategic roadmap for the region</li> <li>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</li> <li>To provide leverage and connect with other key circular economy frameworks and strategies at all levels of government</li> </ul>	
<b>Status update:</b> <p>The Circular Economy (CE) Roadmap is finished and awaiting final approval from NSW EPA before being released. The quarterly review process to keep the Roadmap up to date and relevant is now developed. The first meeting established prioritisation and measurement working groups to facilitate changes to the Roadmap at the quarterly reviews.</p>	

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

### 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	
<b>Program / Project Lead</b>	Kim Carland
<b>Purpose:</b> <p>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 event management resources including an event managers toolkit, prospectus, website and integrated council shared services, approvals and event data.</p>	
<b>Status update:</b> <p>Significant progress has been made on establishing a foundation for event attraction, delivery and planning efficiency in the region including:</p>	

- Over 100 stakeholders in the economic development, tourism and events industry have been engaged since January 2022.
- A dedicated A2E partner task group has been established with representatives from all 10 member councils, Destination Sydney Surrounds North, Dept of Regional, Hunter Central Coast Development Corporation and Committee for the Hunter.
- A vision workshop has been held with the working group, with a shared vision being 'We're recognised as a destination for hosting world class events that align with our unique offering'.
- Weekly meetings with the partner task group have provided in depth feedback to ensure the A2E projects meet stakeholder needs.
- Vision and overall program delivery have been presented to HJO Board for feedback.
- Two consultants have been appointed to deliver the Hunter Events and Opportunities Audit.
- A Project Brief is out for tender to begin the streamlining of regional event approvals.
- A major event opportunity has been presented to GMs for endorsement.
- A workshop with each member councils is being organised to discuss the collaborative options and barriers for attracting and supporting major events to achieve our vision.

#### 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	
<b>Program / Project Lead</b>	Boyd Blackwell
<b>Project Purpose:</b> To prepare an agreed list of regional and sub regional infrastructure priorities to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build and advocate a stronger case for investment in infrastructure priorities across the region</li> <li>• Identify the potential for shared interests and collaboration between Councils and other stakeholders in delivering local and regional scale infrastructure initiatives.</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul>	
<b>Status update:</b> Phase 2 of this project has commenced in collaboration with HCCDC, and will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• preparation of a googleform for councils and other agencies to provide their infrastructure priorities annually</li> <li>• Development and testing of an excel model for capturing and analyzing data</li> <li>• Extending the model to integrate decisions relating to prioritisation, such as qualitative assessment and rapid CBA outcomes</li> <li>• Development of an operating procedure</li> </ul>	

- Incorporation of a pipeline of existing project data within the database

The consultant, Marsden Jacob Associates has been appointed to deliver this next stage of work.

#### **Full Hunter JO Program Delivery Report**

Refer Attachment 13 “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

June 2022

This publication was produced by the Hunter Joint Organisation.



#### **ENQUIRIES**

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#### **SUGGESTED BIBLIOGRAPHIC CITATION**

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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 priorities with 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. Our Board 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
Louisa Bulley	Executive Officer	0413 891 320 louisab@hunterjo.com.au
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Boyd Blackwell	Regional Policy and Program Manager	0448 490 656 boydb@hunterjo.com.au
Tim Askew	Regional Policy and Program Manager	0436 420 623 tima@hunterjo.com.au
Eloise Lobsey	Regional Policy and Program Coordinator - Waste, Resource Recovery & Circular Economy	0448 160 800 eloisel@hunterjo.com.au
Kim Carland	Regional Projects Coordinator – Accelerating Event Economies	0408 051 705 kimc@hunterjo.com.au
Anna Flack	Regional Environmental Projects Coordinator	0460038199 annaf@hunterjo.com.au
Chris Dart	Regional Project Officer (Simtables)	0460 038 197 chrisd@hunterjo.com.au
Susan Conway MacDonald	Regional Policy & Programs Officer (Environmental Education)	(02) 4978 4028 susanm@hunterjo.com.au
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## REGIONAL LEADERSHIP & ADVOCACY MEDIA

FOCUS	DATE
<p><b>GET UP HERE. "ITS NOT OUR JOB": UPPER HUNTER COUNCILS FORCED INTO THE VOID</b>  <i>Newcastle Herald</i></p> <p>"Singleton and Muswellbrook mayors have fired a broadside at the state and federal governments for not doing enough to help the Upper Hunter shift away from the region's over reliance on coal"....</p> <p>"Muswellbrook Mayor and former coal miner Steve Reynolds said the NSW Government needs "to do a lot more" and he described the "complete lack" of engagement by Scott Morrison's Coalition Government and Anthony Albanese's Labor Opposition in the lead up to this months federal election as "ridiculous" and "appalling"....</p> <p>"Singleton Mayor and Chair of the Hunter Joint Organisation Sue Moore (Ind) said the state and federal governments had the funds and ability to secure the region's future, but were dragging the chain".</p>	<p><i>Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2022</i></p>

## REGIONAL SUBMISSIONS

### FOCUS

#### IPART REVIEW OF DOMESTIC WASTE MANAGEMENT CHARGES

6<sup>th</sup> May 2022

The Hunter JO team collaborated with Member Councils, Central Coast Council and a wide range of stakeholder organisations, to provide a submission in response to IPART's Draft Report – Review of Domestic Waste Management Charges (13 December 2021). At an overall level the consensus positions and key recommendations identified in the submission included:

1. Councils do not accept the underlying premise upon which implementation of the IPART review has been initiated
2. Councils hold serious concerns that both the voluntary rate peg or a rebalancing exercise could direct Councils to act contrary to existing legislation, and therefore call for a review of the definitions of 'waste' and 'domestic waste management services' in the Local Government Act 1993, alongside updates to the Office of Local Government's Rating and Revenue Raising Manual, to cover all services and functions necessary for minimising landfill and maximising resource recovery from domestic waste
3. The cost of Domestic Waste Management (DWM) service provision varies greatly across geographical and historical contexts, population densities, transport infrastructure and other circumstantial differences. Given the highly contextual nature of these costs, and their interdependencies, Councils are best placed to determine value for money for ratepayers. As such, the setting of DWM charges should be determined by councils in consultation with their communities to reflect their place-based characteristics
4. That the proposed voluntary DWM rate peg be abandoned in favour of improved pricing guidelines, reporting tools, and auditing processes (where warranted) that support councils to set DWM charges in line with their community needs and expectations.
5. That Councils be guided in the setting of DWM charges through the alignment across instruments and frameworks, clear guidelines, as well as a capacity building and education programs that support Councils to educate consumers on how DWM charges are set, and explain local differentiation, in order to promote accountability to, and communication with their communities
6. That as the least worst option presented to date, Councils favour benchmarking, clear and consistent pricing principles, an opportunity to rebalance DWM charges with general rates, over a minimum 2-year transition period, based on updated and expanded definitions of 'waste' and 'domestic waste management services' that include all activities involved in the minimisation of, source separation, collection, recovery, processing and disposal of all forms of domestically generated waste.

# INTERGOVERNMENTAL COLLABORATION

## REGIONAL COMMITTEES AND NETWORKS

Over recent months our team have hosted or participated in the following regional networks, committees and forums.

NETWORK / COMMITTEE	CONVENER
Hunter JO Regional Planning & Economic Development Forum	Hunter JO
Regional Contaminated Land Forum (Problem Contaminants)	Hunter JO
Simtable User Training	Hunter JO
Hunter Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework Network	Lake Macquarie City Council
Circular Economy Subcommittee	Hunter JO
Hunter Regional Waste Strategy Group	by Hunter JO
Hunter Circular Economy Facilitators Group	Hunter JO & Department of Planning & Environment
Smart Region Forum	Hunter JO
Regional Leadership Executive	Regional NSW
RLE Human Services Subcommittee	Regional NSW
RLE Economic Development Subcommittee	Regional NSW
Upper Hunter Education & Training Working Group	Regional NSW
Business Attraction Committee	Regional NSW
RLE Recovery & Resilience Sub-Committee	Regional NSW & Resilience NSW
Interim Hunter Expert Panel	Regional NSW
Upper Hunter Education & Training Working Group	Regional NSW
Project Control Group Hunter Identity and Positioning	Regional NSW
Hunter Identity and Positioning Local Government Reference Group	Regional NSW
EPA Local Government Advisory Group	NSW EPA
Hunter Future Workforces Committee	Business Hunter
Powering Business 2050 Summit Reference Group	Business Hunter
JO Chairs Forum	JO Executive Officers Network



## 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, as at December 2021. Reporting is provided against each of the priority Action Areas included in the Hunter Joint Organisation's Strategic Plan 2018-21.



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

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 (Aspire.Act.Achieve) 2018-21.

## HUNTER JO STRATEGIC PLAN (2022-2026) –

Hunter JO Strategic Plan	
Program / Project Lead	Mel Curtis
Delivery Status	On track
<b>Purpose:</b> 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve alignment between the Hunter JO Strategy and strategic planning documents of member Councils</li> <li>• Provide increased support to member Councils to assist with integrating shared regional priorities and actions within their local planning processes.</li> </ul>	
<b>Status update:</b> An updated timeline was provided and endorsed by the Hunter JO Board at its April 2022 meeting, with development of the new Hunter JO Strategy (JO Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities) now progressing consistent with the revised timeline. A review of the new requirements and OLG Guidelines released in October 2021 has been completed. The guidance now stipulates that "A joint organisation must prepare its Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities by no later than 12 months after each ordinary election of councillors for all member councils". Therefore, the Strategy statutory completion date is December 2022, however as determined by the April 2022 Board resolution, this date will be brought forward to September 2022. Engagement with the IP&R staff of Council is ongoing and has continued individually and through the Hunter IP&R Network meeting. A request was made to obtain copies of all Council Draft CSP's when they are available. We are mapping the priorities of the 10 CSP's against the 4 priority themes of: Jobs and a Growing Economy; Connectivity; Resilience; and Liveability identified by the Hunter JO Board Strategy Day in May 2021.	

## 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
<b>Purpose:</b> The Hunter Joint Organisation website ( <a href="https://www.hunterjo.com.au/">https://www.hunterjo.com.au/</a> ) aims to actively, regularly and effectively engage member Councils, partner organisations and the broader community on the activities and progress of the Hunter JO.	
<b>Status update:</b> Website news and content continues to be reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis. All content from the former HCCREMS website has recently been transferred to the Hunter JO website to provide one integrated location for information on the programs and activities of the Hunter JO.	

**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
<p><b>Purpose:</b></p> <p>To provide an innovative approach to support bush fire affected member Councils embed resilience principles and projects into their IP&amp;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.</p>	
<p><b>Status update:</b></p> <p>A consultant has commenced a literature review on existing regional, state and national resilience policies and strategies, development of a framework for what makes a 'high', 'medium' and 'low' resilience Council and community, as well as a Resilience IP&amp;R document. A review of the draft CSPs of Councils is also being undertaken to identify current approaches towards improving resilience.</p> <p>Discussions with Resilience NSW and Resilient Sydney have continued and are a valuable way to exchange advice and experiences around embedding resilience into Council IP&amp;R frameworks. The Hunter IP&amp;R working group meets every two months to catch up and share progress on the IP&amp;R activities. This working group will be used to update participating Councils on the Resilience IP&amp;R program.</p> <p>Next steps involve developing a Resilience Health Check Tool to help complete a gap analysis and assess participating Councils to determine their current level of resilience, so that we can better inform future actions and identify support required.</p>	

Simtables for Community Empowerment	
Program / Project Lead	Chris Dart
Delivery Status	On track
<b>Purpose:</b> <p>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.</p>	
<b>Status update:</b> <p>The Simtables for Community Empowerment program continues to progress well.</p> <p>The "General" and "Super" user training sessions were delivered on 27 April and 4 May 2022 respectively, facilitated by the U.S.A. based Simtable team. Staff from our member Councils, along with Resilience NSW, the RFS and SES attended the sessions either in-person or online.</p> <p>Data acquisition for the Simtable has commenced, and the Hunter JO has gained access to the the State Vegetation Type Map from DPIE which will provide crucial vegetation data for the region.</p> <p>The team has provided a demonstration of the Simtable at meetings of the GMAC and Hunter JO board, and at a Resilience NSW workshop which included Executive Director Dominic Lane. The Simtable was also used to assist delivery of an emergency management workshop in Karuah, hosted by Aboriginal Affairs NSW.</p> <p>Upcoming will be the finalisation of workshop content resources, after which delivery of place-based workshops in each of the Hunter LGAs will commence.</p>	

## 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
<b>Purpose:</b> 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.	
<b>Status update:</b> During the regional mapping of the CSP's as part of the Hunter JO Strategy project, a review the CPP Program links and objectives identified in the region will also be completed. Discussion will continue with the Climate Council and Member Council staff to formalise the draft regional priorities, prior to presenting them to the Hunter JO Board for endorsement and incorporating them into the Hunter JO Strategy.	

Business case review - potential for HJO to host Regional Illegal Dumping Squad	
Program / Project Lead	Eloise Lobsey
Delivery Status	On track
<b>Purpose:</b> 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.	
<b>Status update:</b> At its September 2021 meeting, The General Managers Advisory Committee resolved to undertake a due diligence assessment to explore the potential for the Hunter JO to host a Regional Illegal Dumping (RID) squad, that would: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review existing state-wide approaches to the management of RID Squads</li> <li>• Determine the feasibility of the Hunter JO potentially hosting a RID Squad</li> <li>• Identifying the most appropriate financial and operational model for the RID Squad were it to be hosted by the Hunter JO.</li> </ul> <p>Consultation with the NSW EPA and many of our member councils as part of the due diligence process has identified strong support for a continuation of a regional collaboration approach to RID activities. Initial consultation has favoured a <b>RID Program</b> model, which 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 the member councils.</p>	

Regional Contaminated Land Program	
Program / Project Lead	Mel Curtis & Anna Flack
Delivery Status	On track
<b>Purpose:</b> 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.	
<b>Status update:</b> Engagement with the Councils has continued through the Contaminated Land Working Group and ad hoc Service Desk enquiries from member Councils. The Service Desk function continues to be well used, with multiple requests received since January 2022, delivered through the Contaminated Land Support Officer. A Regional Forum on Problem Contaminants (asbestos and PFAS) was held on 12 May and included presentations from EPA, LGNSW, Council case studies and technical experts. All relevant Council staff involved in contaminated land management were invited. Additional training on UPSS and contaminated land training for land use planners is being organised for the coming months. Advice remains pending from the NSW EPA as to whether there will be a 12 month extension in funding for the program.	

## 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	On track
<b>Purpose:</b> The objectives of this project are to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop an Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&amp;R) Package which embeds resilience to Climate Change into Councils operations through incorporation into the overarching IP&amp;R documents.</li> <li>2. 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.</li> <li>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&amp;R framework and prioritisation of Climate Change resilience.</li> </ol>	
<b>Status update:</b> Comments received from Councils and stakeholder organisations (within and beyond the region) on the Climate Change IP&R Package have now been integrated and the final document is now available. Communications consultants Articulous have been engaged and have commenced work on the coastal communications package. The first round of engagement with Councils on the draft communications	

matrix is complete with good support received from all Councils. The final communications package is due for completion in early June.

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

Hunter & Central Coast Resource Recovery Strategy	
<b>Program / Project Lead</b>	Eloise Lobsey
<b>Delivery Status</b>	On track
<b>Purpose:</b> <p>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.</p>	
<b>Status update:</b> <p>A Strategic Directions and Options Paper has been developed following review and assessment of the existing Regional Waste Strategy and multi-staged consultation with Council Waste Managers. This paper provides recommendations on the key directions and priorities to be addressed within the Draft Strategy and Action Plan. This document was used to inform a strategy direction workshop with the Hunter Central Coast Regional Waste Strategy Group on 14 March 2022, from which key outcomes included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The vision (20 years) should reflect the aspiration of eliminating waste in our region.</li> <li>• The Strategy should be focused, by adopting a 'doing less and doing it well' prioritisation approach to action planning.</li> <li>• There is strong interest in aligning kerbside waste services across the region.</li> <li>• There is strong support for delivering regional behaviour change programs designed to deliver consistent messaging that support Council implementation of WaSM priorities such as FOGO services roll out and plastics education.</li> <li>• The Strategy should continue to drive the transition to a circular economy in our region.</li> </ul> <p>The planned completion date for the Strategy (i.e. endorsement by the Hunter JO Board) is August 2022.</p>	

Small Acts Big Change Regional Communication Campaign	
<b>Program / Project Lead</b>	Eloise Lobsey
<b>Delivery Status</b>	On track
<b>Purpose:</b> <p>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.</p>	
<b>Status update:</b> <p>The waste avoidance campaign continues to grow its reach and engagement within the region.</p>	

Community Recycling Centres Awareness Campaign	
Program / Project Lead	Susan McDonald
Delivery Status	On track
<b>Purpose:</b> To deliver a regionally coordinated approach to promoting community awareness of Community Recycling Centres (CRC's).	
<b>Status update:</b> The regional delivery of CRC advertising across the region continues in conjunctions with the Small Acts Big Change campaign. Targeted advertising through our social media accounts has reach over 100,000 people. Additional promotional activities in recent months have included the direct mail out to of information flyers to 16,000 households in the Upper Hunter, with plans to reach further households in the Lower Hunter	
Green Caffeine Swap and Go Coffee Cup Scheme	
Program / Project Lead	Susan McDonald
Delivery Status	Complete
<b>Purpose:</b> The Hunter JO, seven-member councils and Central Coast Council partnered with Green Caffeine to deliver a Swap-and-Go Coffee Cup scheme. The scheme aims to eliminate distribution of disposable cups by providing participating cafes and coffee outlets with reusable cups which are available for scheme members to use when buying their coffee. Councils participating in the initiative are Maitland, Port Stephens, Lake Macquarie, Cessnock, Singleton, Muswellbrook, Upper Hunter and Central Coast Council.	
<b>Status update:</b> The contract with Green Caffeine ended in March 2022, however the program will continue to be supported by Green Caffeine, the Hunter JO and councils to support continued uptake of the scheme by customers and cafes across the region. Since the program commenced 85 cafes are active across 9 Local Government Areas saving 32,513 cups from landfill which is the equivalent of 327 bins!	

Hunter & Central Coast Circular Economy Hub	
Program / Project Lead	Tim Askew
Delivery Status	On track
<b>Purpose:</b> 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing leadership and planning to establish a common vision and plan for the region's move to a CE</li> <li>• facilitate the acquisition and sharing of research and information among stakeholders in the CE, including the provision of a "problem concierge"</li> <li>• Continuing to curate and grow the CE ecosystem</li> <li>• Facilitating and delivering joint projects and initiatives across organisations</li> </ul>	



- 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 currently awaiting the final Living Lab business case being developed by Lake Macquarie City Council to see how the CE Hub proposal can leverage upon that initiative.

### Circular Economy Roadmap

<b>Program / Project Lead</b>	Tim Askew
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<b>Delivery Status</b>	On track
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**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:**

The Circular Economy (CE) Roadmap is finished, and awaiting final approval from NSW EPA before being released.

The quarterly review process to keep the Roadmap up to date and relevant is now developed. The first meeting established prioritisation and measurement working groups to facilitate changes to the Roadmap at the quarterly reviews.

### Circular Economy Eco-system

<b>Program / Project Lead</b>	Tim Askew
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<b>Delivery Status</b>	On track
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**Purpose:**

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

**Status update:**

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

- A CE newsletter - this first edition is being readied for sending to our database of subscribers
- A LinkedIn CE network group - now launched it has grown to 65 members and receives weekly postings
- Huntercircular.com.au website is now updated and live

A Circular Economy event working group has been established to scope a roadmap of CE events for the region over a 3 year time period (no funding at this stage)

**Circular Economy Procurement**

<b>Program / Project Lead</b>	Tim Askew
<b>Delivery Status</b>	On track
<b>Purpose:</b> 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.	
<b>Status update:</b> Significant progress has been made by the project on the development of the Circular Economy procurement methods and tools. Draft tools, implementation and engagement plans are now being reviewed and readied for deployment.	

**Purpose:****Status update:****Hunter ReCircular (Regional Recycling Solution - yellow bins)**

<b>Program / Project Lead</b>	Tim Askew
<b>Delivery Status</b>	On track
<b>Purpose:</b> To investigate preferred options for development of a new regional materials recovery facility	
<b>Status update:</b> EOI process being managed through Lake Macquarie City Council remains underway	

**Purpose:****Status update:**

## 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.**

Hunter JO Regional Economic Transition Subcommittee	
Program / Project Lead	Boyd Blackwell
Delivery Status	On track
<p><b>Purpose:</b></p> <p>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.</p>	
<p><b>Status update:</b></p> <p>The Hunter JO Board at its April 2022 meeting resolved that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the primary role of the Subcommittee moving forward, will be to develop and provide a strong and united advocacy voice on agreed core priorities for the place based economic evolution of the Hunter region, within the context of the broader Hunter JO narrative. This would particularly focus on seeking and influencing State Government leadership, strategic direction, resources and action to ensure collective local government priorities enable the region's economic evolution through the Royalties for Rejuvenation program and the Hunter Expert Panel.</li> <li>Membership of the Committee be drawn exclusively from the Hunter JO Board, to ensure representatives have the appropriate authority to make decisions and deliver the advocacy functions of the Subcommittee and its members.</li> <li>Representatives from the Hunter JO Board with an interest being a representative on the Committee confirm their involvement at the April 2022 Board meeting.</li> <li>The name of the Subcommittee be amended to the "Subcommittee for Economic Evolution" to align with the broader narrative of the Hunter JO around the region's economic transformation.</li> <li>A revision of the Terms of Reference for the Subcommittee will be undertaken to reflect the outcomes of the Board's resolution, and presented to the next meeting of the Subcommittee for consideration.</li> </ul> <p>In line with this resolution, Board Members (Mayors and General Managers) have been invited to nominate their interest in being involved as a representative on the Subcommittee. Options are also being explored with the Chair to deliver the first meeting of the restructured and refocused Committee during June 2022.</p>	

Regional Strategy Review - Exploring the role of local government in regional economic development strategy for the Hunter	
Program / Project Lead	Boyd Blackwell
Delivery Status	On track

**Purpose:**

There are currently a range of strategies and initiatives being prepared and/or implemented across the region at various scales (local to federal), and by various agencies that are targeting economic development and investment attraction. The purpose of this project is to identify and review the focus and activities of the many initiatives currently in play in the region, to identify those priority areas of shared interest and/or gaps that the Hunter JO needs to be actively involved in addressing. This seeks to avoid duplication with existing programs, improve alignment between them, and ensure the shared interests of Councils are being considered. The outcome of this work will be a priority list of clear actions for the Hunter JO to pursue that are consistent with its statutory functions and strategic plan.

**Status update:**

Following the work of identifying common themes across member councils for economic development, fact sheet information has been drafted that identifies the role of the Hunter JO and governance arrangements for regional economic development. This will now support the work of the Subcommittee for Economic Evolution (SEE) and other projects within the scope of regional economic development, including:

- NSW Government's Royalties for Rejuvenation Expert Panel
- NSW Government review of Regional Economic Development Strategies
- Hunter 2050 (H50)
- Hunter Venture Fund (HVF)
- Regional Infrastructure Priority lists (PIL)
- Accelerating Event Economies (A2E) and
- Hunter Economic Model (HEM).

**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 Steering Committee	
Program / Project Lead	Steve Wilson
Delivery Status	On track
<b>Purpose:</b> The role of the Steering Committee (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:**

The focus of the next meeting of the Subcommittee will include:

1. Collectively reviewing the outcomes of individual engagement sessions held between Councils and the Greater Cities Commission during May
2. Determining an agreed policy position around the design and structure of governance arrangements to be established between the Greater Newcastle Cities Commissioner (to be appointed), and the five Mayors, to:
  - Ensure regular and meaningful communication and collaboration between the Mayors and the Commissioner, and:
  - Establish effective reporting processes to ensure accountability within the Greater Cities Commission for delivery of key regional planning documents.
3. Progressing the outcomes of the March workshop of the Subcommittee focused on developing an agreed narrative to be used by the Mayors to:
  - Provide a strong and united advocacy voice on agreed core priorities for the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Area, within the context of a broader shared regional narrative
  - Inform the broader advocacy platform of the Hunter JO Board in regard to the agreed priorities and advocacy narrative for the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan area.

**Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan - Review of Regional Governance Options**

<b>Program / Project Lead</b>	Steve Wilson
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<b>Delivery Status</b>	Completed
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**Purpose:**

The purpose of this project is to identify and explore potential regional governance models and/or legislative change that would ensure integrated, collaborative and effective delivery of the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan.

**Status update:**

Following presentation of the draft Options Paper to the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan Steering Committee in October 2021, feedback has now been consolidated and the Options Paper finalised.

**Regional Population Scenario Planning**

<b>Program / Project Lead</b>	Tim Askew
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<b>Delivery Status</b>	On track
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**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 has been reviewed and is currently being reviewed to align with broader policy directions and advocacy documents developed by the Hunter JO.

The next stage of work will be to familiarise the member Council and expert panel stakeholders with the draft 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
<p><b>Purpose:</b></p> <p>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.</p>	
<p><b>Status update:</b></p> <p>In August 2021 the Hunter JO Board resolved to repivot the efforts of the Hunter JO away from advocacy specifically focused on the establishment of the 2050 Foundation entity and instead focus on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continuing advocacy and engagement on the regional transformation challenge as this remains an enduring strategic priority for the region</li> <li>2. Supporting and constructively influencing the implementation of the Expert Panel and Royalties for Rejuvenation Fund, the Renewable Energy Zone, Special Activation Precinct, Catalyst Areas in the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan and other relevant initiatives based on member assessments of key regional needs; and</li> <li>3. Retaining a primary focus on advocacy and facilitation efforts aiming to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• secure significant private sector investment, including through the Hunter Venture Fund concept, into new industries that can reduce long term risk and create new jobs; and</li> <li>• maintain local leadership of solutions for the Hunter.</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>In line with the third focus area, 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:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Hunter Venture Fund Report</li> <li>2. A pitch deck to support advocacy efforts by the Hunter JO to leverage support from government and industry for the fund.</li> </ol> <p>These outputs have now been finalised and will be considered by the Hunter JO Board at its June 2022 meeting. At an overall level the report finds:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That there have been and continue to be clear gaps in the flow of funds in the early start-up stage of new businesses (products and services).</li> <li>2. There remains a gap in the region's innovation ecosystem, especially in the incubation and acceleration of new products and services provided by these start-ups.</li> </ol> <p>The first finding demonstrates a clear role for the HVF and the second demonstrates a clear role for government in building capacity in the region's innovation ecosystem.</p>	

Upper Hunter Region Website	
Program / Project Lead	Kali Somerville
Delivery Status	On track
<b>Purpose:</b> 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.	
<b>Status update:</b> Work continues with videography to produce the final “hero” video for the Dungog Shire Council Area focusing on the “Tin Shed Brewery” business. Filming completed on Friday 6 <sup>th</sup> May and is currently in the post production stage.  A broader review of the resources held on the website is also continuing to ensure it is still relevant, and we are working with Regional NSW to revise the ongoing strategy for the website.	

### 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	On track
<b>Purpose:</b> 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.	
<b>Status update:</b> Discussions continue on the scoping for a Circular Economy Data Strategy and the broader implications for the smart region data system.	

### 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
<b>Purpose:</b> 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 event management resources including an event managers toolkit, prospectus, website and integrated council shared services, approvals and event data.

**Status update:**

Significant progress has been made on establishing a foundation for event attraction, delivery and planning efficiency in the region including:

- Over 100 stakeholders in the economic development, tourism and events industry have been engaged since January 2022.
- A dedicated A2E partner task group has been established with representatives from all 10 member councils, Destination Sydney Surrounds North, Dept of Regional, Hunter Central Coast Development Corporation and Committee for the Hunter.
- A vision workshop has been held with the working group, with a shared vision being 'We're recognised as a destination for hosting world class events that align with our unique offering'.
- Weekly meetings with the partner task group have provided in depth feedback to ensure the A2E projects meet stakeholder needs.
- Vision and overall program delivery have been presented to HJO Board for feedback.
- Two consultants have been appointed to deliver the Hunter Events and Opportunities Audit.
- A Project Brief is out for tender to begin the streamlining of regional event approvals.
- A major event opportunity has been presented to GMs for endorsement.
- A workshop with each member councils is being organised to discuss the collaborative options and barriers for attracting and supporting major events to achieve our vision.

**Mayors Gala - Building Regional Collaboration & Celebrating Regional Success**

<b>Program / Project Lead</b>	Boyd Blackwell
<b>Delivery Status</b>	Delayed / Impacted
<b>Purpose:</b> 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.	
<b>Status update</b> 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 is now being undertaken 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
<p><b>Purpose:</b></p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• Directly support the expansion of international Airport related business and industry as a primary contributor to the Hunter Region's economic growth and diversification.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Status update:</b></p> <p>Key advocacy activities underway in relation to the Hunter Global initiative include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Seeking and undertaking meetings with local Commonwealth and State Members of Parliament, and with Ministers of relevant portfolios, to brief them on the Hunter Global initiative. This includes providing an overview of the Hunter Global initiative, the rationale for its delivery and for the Hunter JO taking a lead role, and the priorities and opportunities that are emerging from the summit and report currently being finalised.</li> <li>2. Production of an extended advocacy video is continuing, however has been affected by some delays in the availability of local talent arising from COVID impacts. When completed this resource will further underpin regional advocacy efforts to state and federal governments, as well as to attract potential investors to the region. The focus of this video will be "When we get to the world stage", showcasing 2-4 storylines from local people and businesses from around the region as to what direct international access through the airport will allow them to do.</li> <li>3. The report documenting the opportunities and key priorities for the region as a whole to capitalise on the runway upgrade (and recently announced passenger terminal upgrade) is nearing completion. This report will provide a platform to support ongoing advocacy and program development work undertaken by the JO, project partners and other regional stakeholders to continue to promote and develop the economic development opportunities for the region arising from the airport runway upgrade.</li> </ol> <p>The first piece of advocacy collateral arising from the event, a "teaser" video highlighting the importance of international connectivity for the Hunter; unlocking growth markets, creating new jobs across the region, and maintaining and diversifying the fantastic lifestyle that our region offers, is available at <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= 0vpCbx_H8s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= 0vpCbx_H8s</a>.</p> <p>Presentations from the summit are also available on the Hunter JO website at <a href="https://www.hunterjo.com.au/event/hunterglobalsummit/">https://www.hunterjo.com.au/event/hunterglobalsummit/</a></p>	

### 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	Delivery Status: No longer proceeding
<b>Purpose:</b> 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.	
<b>Status update:</b> There is currently no active advocacy occurring around a City Deal, based on advice from the Commonwealth Government that there are no plans for Commonwealth Investment in City Deal initiatives at the current time. However other projects being initiated by the Hunter JO including the Population Scenario Planning and Regional Infrastructure Priority List initiatives will provide important foundations for future planning and advocacy work around a City Deal.	

### 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	Delivery Status: Not yet started (subject to resourcing)
<b>Purpose:</b> 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.	
<b>Status update:</b> Project is still in redesign of scope and seeking new funding opportunities for the concept. Currently waiting on a response to the letters of support sent to the Clean Manufacturing Precincts consortium EOIs.	

## 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.**

Regional Submission – Draft Hunter Regional Plan 2041	
Program / Project Lead	Steve Wilson
Delivery Status	Completed
<p><b>Purpose:</b></p> <p>To identify and represent the shared interests of Hunter JO Member Councils within a regional response to the draft Hunter Regional Plan 2041.</p>	
<p><b>Status update:</b></p> <p>A regional submission has been submitted, which focused on those regional scale issues, priorities and responses on which Member Councils were aligned regarding the focus and directions identified in the draft Plan, which were drawn from an analysis and synthesis of individual council feedback and submissions.</p> <p>Overall, the submission supported the objectives in the draft Plan which demonstrated high alignment with our own strategic priorities. The submission identified that the draft Plan's main gaps however, lie in either silence or ambiguity on three key areas which, if not addressed, undermine the Plan's potential to achieve its own Vision and Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competitive access to global markets and the importance of global connectivity for the Hunter region</li> <li>• Intra-region connectivity, specifically public transport</li> <li>• Clarity around governance of the document and its delivery</li> </ul> <p>The regional submission can be viewed at <a href="https://www.hunterjo.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Hunter-JO-Submission_Draft-Hunter-Regional-Plan-FINAL.pdf">https://www.hunterjo.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Hunter-JO-Submission_Draft-Hunter-Regional-Plan-FINAL.pdf</a></p>	

**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.**

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.**

Hunter Regional Transport Plan	
Program / Project Lead	Steve Wilson & Joe James
Delivery Status	On track
<b>Purpose:</b> Transport for NSW are developing a new Hunter Regional Transport Plan. Its development is occurring in collaboration with DPIE's current process to review the Hunter Regional Plan to ensure these key documents are complementary. The Regional Transport Plan will aim to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enable Transport for NSW to respond proactively to anticipated changes in land use, demographics and travel demand</li> <li>• Establish a transport vision for the region</li> <li>• Detail short, medium and long-term initiatives that in combination, support the transport vision</li> </ul>	
<b>Status update:</b> This project is being led by Transport for NSW. Hunter JO staff continue to facilitate liaison as required between the Transport for NSW planning process and member Councils staff, General Managers Advisory Committee and Hunter JO Board. We understand that a draft Plan will soon be placed on public exhibition.	

**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
<b>Project Purpose:</b> To prepare an agreed list of regional and sub regional infrastructure priorities to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build and advocate a stronger case for investment in infrastructure priorities across the region</li> <li>• Identify the potential for shared interests and collaboration between Councils and other stakeholders in delivering local and regional scale infrastructure initiatives.</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul>	

**Status update:**

Phase 2 of this project has commenced in collaboration with HCCDC, and will include:

- preparation of a googleform for councils and other agencies to provide their infrastructure priorities annually
- Development and testing of an excel model for capturing and analyzing data
- Extending the model to integrate decisions relating to prioritisation, such as qualitative assessment and rapid CBA outcomes
- Development of an operating procedure
- Incorporation of a pipeline of existing project data within the database

The consultant, Marsden Jacob Associates has been appointed to deliver this next stage of work.

**Regional Cycle Tourism Master Plan (Shiraz to Shore)**

<b>Program / Project Lead</b>	Tim Askew
<b>Delivery Status</b>	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 draft advocacy document has been developed to assist with generating support and attracting funding for this initiative, and has been used as an advocacy document in the lead up to the 2022 Federal Government election.

The next step is to reengage with key stakeholders to prepare the document for the NSW State Government elections in 2023.

**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.****Advocacy program**

<b>Delivery Status</b>	Not yet started (subject to completion of Action 4.5)
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## 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	<i>Delivery Status: Not yet started (subject to resourcing)</i>
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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.**

<b>Delivery Status</b>	<i>Delivery Status: Not yet started (subject to resourcing)</i>
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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, specifically focussing on the outcomes of the most recent Hunter Central Coast Regional Leadership Executive meeting on 31 May 2022.

**Report:**

**Hunter Central Coast Regional Leadership Executive (RLE)**

The Hunter Central Coast RLE met most recently on Tuesday 31 May 2022.

The Agenda included presentations by the Greater Cities Commission on *The Six Cities Strategy* and *Closing the Gap Reform* by Aboriginal Affairs NSW. These are recognised as key Government priorities that will require whole of government collaboration at the regional level to support delivery over the coming years.

The Agenda also included an update from the Office of Regional Youth, as follows:

- The \$10.3 million Children and Young People Wellbeing Recovery Initiative will help regional youth recover from the impacts of natural disasters and COVID-19.
- The Autumn Summer Break program was expanded to include Youth Week. The program included grants of up to \$10,000 for councils and not-for-profits to hold free and subsidised social and recreational activities for regional young people.
- The Regional Youth Taskforce held their first 2022 meeting in Dubbo on 9 and 10 April and focussed on the 'Work-Ready' pillar of the Regional Youth Framework.
- The Youth Radio program supports new projects enabling regional young people to lead and participate in youth radio and podcasting activities such as training and skills development, program or content creation, essential equipment, and minor capital works.

***Regional Leadership Executive Refresh***

The Department of Regional NSW has initiated a review/refresh of the RLE framework and structures as a sense check to ensure RLEs are still fit for purpose and operating effectively across the regions.

In April 2022 all members of RLEs across the State were invited to participate in an initial survey and the HCC RLE reviewed and discussed the initial results at the meeting on 31 May.

Key points from the 2022 RLE Survey:

- The survey attracted 42 responses.
- Feedback: RLEs are still a relevant forum for senior leaders to raise and address issues in a regional context.
- Some work to be done to build consistency, effectiveness and focus across the regions.

Options for change/further consideration:

- Statement of Intent/Outcome - Revised and simplified template and process.



- Statewide priorities - Exploring one or two statewide priority areas that every RLE will have a focus on and that all agencies will work together on. Examples might include Closing The Gap Reform Areas or improving Liveability in the regions. Place based priorities will still be a part of the RLE agenda and allow each RLE to focus on specific issues relevant to that region.
- Governance - Introducing a more streamlined governance structure including reducing the number of subcommittees and working groups.
- Funding - Avenues for funding to RLEs to allow project and pilot funding opportunities.
- Joint Organisations – Determining the best model of engagement and collaboration with Joint Organisations of Councils.

### ***New and Emerging Opportunities***

During the past 12 months, the Hunter Central Coast RLE has explored a range of new and emerging opportunities, trends and issues in the region with a view to understanding future whole of government priorities in the region. This has occurred through RLE workshops, guest speakers and presentations.

Based on the opportunities explored, the RLE is well placed to work towards identifying priorities and key initiatives for the next two years.

Work has commenced on developing a new HCC RLE Statement of Intent for the 2022-2024 period. Several current Statement of Intent key initiatives are expected to be carried forward (albeit in a varied or merged form). A number of initiatives have been completed and will not be carried forward. New whole-of-government project proposals, submitted by members in advance of the meeting, will be considered for inclusion, including the Joint Organisations project relating to prioritisation of key enabling infrastructure.

The agreed high-level themes for the HCC RLE to consider and develop as part of our strategic planning include:

- Closing the Gap
- Six Cities
- Economic Diversification
- Regional Liveability

In addition, the HCC RLE expressed a strong commitment to exploring opportunities to strengthen engagement with both the Commonwealth and individual Councils. They also reiterated their intent to establish a well-connected, collaborative and responsive RLE structure to move with urgency and agility around emerging regional challenges and opportunities.

### **Recommendation:**

**That the Board note the outcomes of the meeting of the Hunter Central Coast Regional Leadership Executive (RLE) on 31 May 2022.**

## 8. Matters Raised by Members

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*Nil.*

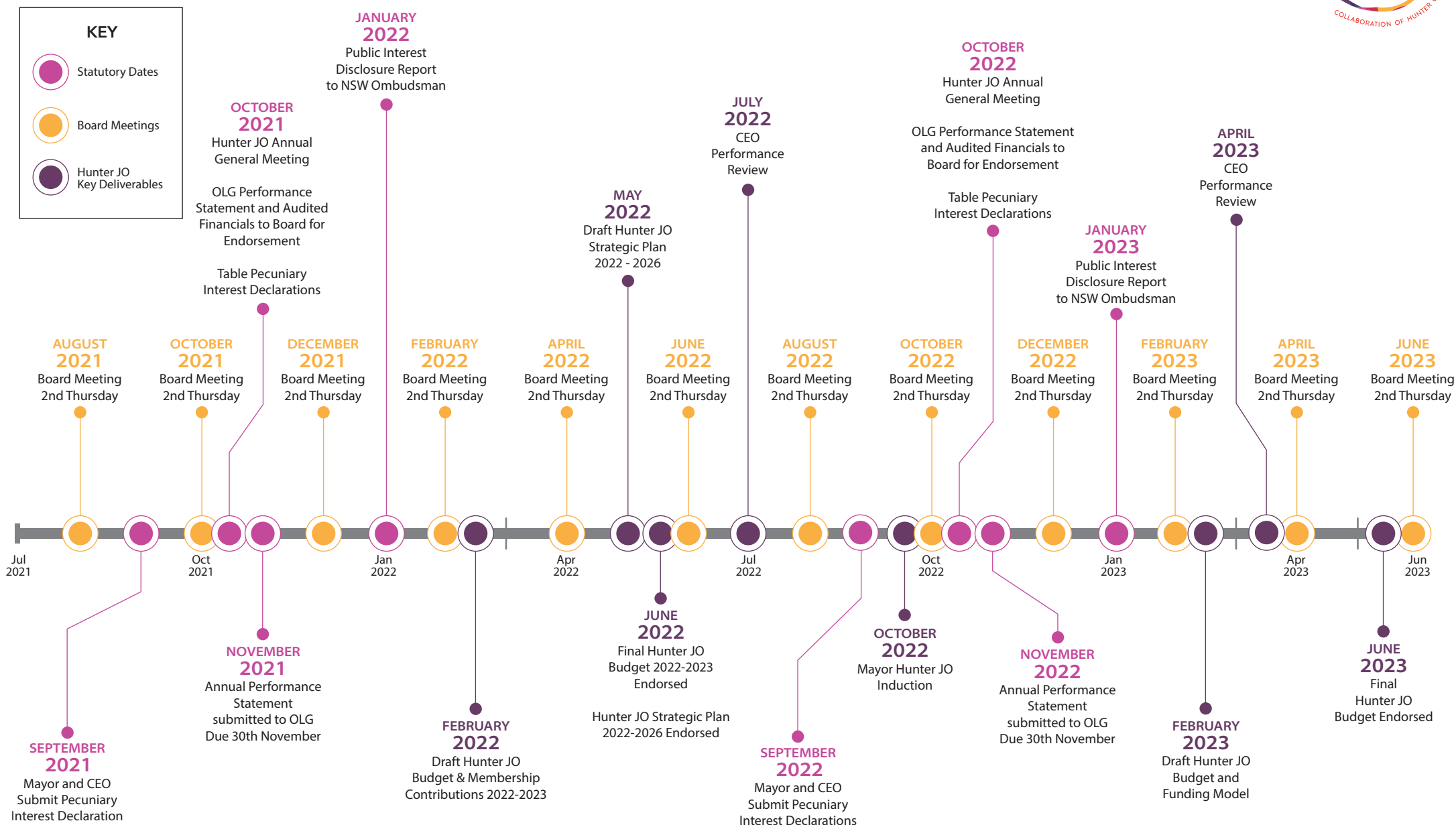
## 9. General Business

### 9.1 Compliance & Governance Calendars

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- Attachment 14 - HJO Board Forward Planner and Governance Calendar
- Attachment 15 - JO-Calendar-of-Compliance-and-Reporting-Requirements-2021-2022

# HUNTER JO BOARD FORWARD PLANNER & GOVERNANCE CALENDAR

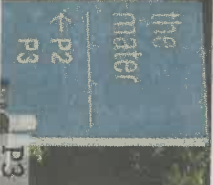


# JOINT ORGANISATION CALENDAR OF COMPLIANCE AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS 2021-22

GOVERNMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES																
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				
FINANCE	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)]									
	31	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); Code]										
	31	Capacity Building 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.				
	Joint Organisations to notify OLG throughout the year when loans are drawn down (LGReg cl 230)															
GOVERNANCE			4	REMINDER: Election of the 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)												
					30	Annual Report of obligations under PIDA to the Minister and the Ombudsman [PIDA s311]										
	30	Public interest disclosures report due to the NSW Ombudsman [PIDA s6CA]		30	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 4.25]	30	Annual Report of obligations under GIPA to the Minister and the Information Commissioner [GIPA s125]	30	Annual Performance Statement due [LGReg cl 397J(1)]	31	Report to JO Board [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
GENERAL	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 Disclosures Act 1994. GIPA = Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009.																



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**MUSWELLBROOK MAYOR'S BLUNT MESSAGE TO  
POLITICAL LEADERS: 'GET OFF YOUR ARSE' AND ...**

# GET UP HERE

'It's not our job': Upper Hunter councils forced into the void

BY DONNA PAGE

SINGLETON and Muswellbrook mayors have fired a broadside at the federal and state governments for not doing enough to help the Upper Hunter shift away from the region's over reliance on coal.

With both governments "failing to provide enough

support", the councils have stepped into the void to develop a masterplan for possible future uses for mining land and investigate new job-creating industries.

Muswellbrook mayor and former coal miner Steve Reynolds (Ind) said it was time the state and federal governments got "off their arses and got up here".

Cr Reynolds said the Upper Hunter recently turned away a major manufacturing business that would have created hundreds of jobs because there was no available land. The NSW government

needs "to do a lot more" and he described the "complete lack" of engagement by Scott Morrison's Coalition government and Anthony

Albanese's Labor opposition in the lead up to this month's federal election as "ridiculous" and "appalling".

"It comes down to this, Muswellbrook and Singleton have been feeding the economy, both state and federally for so long, and now they're talking about turning the lights off up here," he said. "It's complacency I believe.

We are the most impacted area when it comes to all these debates people are having regarding net zero and coal mining. They should be having the conversation right here at the coalface."

Singleton mayor and chair of the Hunter Joint Organisation Sue Moore (Ind) said the state and federal governments had the funds and

ability to secure the region's future, but were dragging the chain. "We've been working within council, which we shouldn't have to do as it's not our job, but we've been looking across all those mine sites from a bird's-eye view to determine what the opportunities are into the future for the land," she said.

CONTINUED P6

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## POWER AND THE PASSION

# Transition a dirty word in the valley

BY DONNA PAGE

TO MANY in the Hunter, "transition" or "just transition" is a shorthand term for you are going to lose your job.

The phrases, initially developed by the trade union movement in North America to describe interventions to secure workers rights and livelihoods when economies shift from extractive reliant to renewables, are now dirty words.

New research has found Australian politicians, exploiting coal mining communities' fears about their future, have tainted the phrases so they are "toxic".

Coal communities, like the Upper Hunter, view transition as something being imposed on them by people in cities.

Dr Gareth Edwards, Associate Professor in Geography and Development, from Britain's University of East Anglia, teamed with Dr Robert McNeil and Professor Susan Park, both from the University of Sydney, to look at a just transition away from coal in Australia.

The researchers said the most significant finding was how regional communities, including the Hunter Valley, view the terminologies.

Dr Edwards said political rhetoric had "poisoned the chalice" of talking about transition and people working or living in coal mining communities associate the terms with the idea of people from cities trying to close down the industry they rely on.

He said internationally it was "fairly well accepted" if countries are transitioning

energy systems, workers and communities reliant on coal should be looked after.

"Transition in Australia in regional communities seems to be equated with restructuring," he said. "Regional communities have had a gutful of restructuring in the past, not always about energy or coal, but in other areas. But it always goes badly for them."

Politicians wheeling out the tired old "jobs versus environment" argument were fueling the distrust.

"The number one thing we found when we started talking to people, and also from our analysis of literature and press coverage, was that transition was a problematic term," Dr Edwards said.

The situation was made worse by some Australian politicians and interest groups being stuck in a climate policy cul de sac.

Dr Edwards said when we talk about transition or just transition, communities are told loudly and repeatedly by vested interests that they can have jobs, or a healthy environment, but they can't have both.

This has created fear among coal-dependent communities and led to the phrases transition and just transition becoming "toxic".

"It's framed that they're coming for your jobs," Dr Edwards said.

"People working in this space in Australia, rather than talking about seeking a transition, they talk about economic diversification and new job opportunities, words like that don't provoke the same kind of visceral reaction from people."



**LEADERSHIP:** Singleton mayor Sue Moore said it was better to talk about economic evolution than transition in the Upper Hunter due to residents' concerns about their jobs. Picture: Simone De Peak



**RESEARCHER:** Dr Gareth Edwards, Associate Professor in Geography and Development, is a Leverhulme International Fellow and Visiting Fellow with the Sydney Environment Institute, investigating transition in Australia.

The researchers also found that there was a clear distinction between coal sectors in the Upper Hunter and how people working in the different sectors view their futures.

People working in the domestic power generation sector are well aware that coal only has a limited lifetime.

In February, Origin Energy announced it will close

Australia's largest coal-fired power station seven years early, in 2025, saying the rapidly changing energy market had hampered its viability.

The company flagged a closure date of 2032 for Eraring in May last year but said earlier this year that "growth in renewable energy challenges Eraring's viability".

Eraring provides about a fifth of NSW's electricity and employs about 230 workers and 200 contractors.

"In the Hunter, and even in Queensland, most of the power generators are not talking about continuing," Dr Edwards said.

prices, which are forecast to propel Australia's annual thermal coal exports to a record \$45 billion this financial year, almost \$20 billion more than the previous peak, has buoyed many mine workers.

The government's Resources and Energy Quarterly publication shows thermal and metallurgical coal exports will exceed \$100 billion for the first time in 2021-22 as the conflict in Ukraine, rising demand and logistical pressures drive global prices higher.

Dr Edwards said the record export coal price "shields" people working in the sector.

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# A NEWCASTLE HERALD SERIES



**ECONOMIC POWERHOUSE:** Bengalla open cut mine just outside of Muswellbrook. Picture: Johnathan Carroll

About 80 per cent of NSW coal is exported. China's share had grown to be about 20 per cent of Newcastle exports before the political stoush with Australia led to a ban importing our coal in late 2020. Other markets including India, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam and Thailand quickly filled the void, and tonnages were only 1 per cent down last year.

During the past eight years alone, more than 3.45 billion tonnes of coal has moved through the Port of Newcastle, with an export value of \$150 billion.

The International Energy

Agency predicts that, if the demand for coal being exported through the Port of Newcastle and Port Kembla remains on its current trajectory, it will remain static, or continue to grow, until at least 2040.

At the same time, our three biggest coal customers - Japan, South Korea and Taiwan - all have net-zero carbon emissions targets.

"When you have a record high coal price, the company indicates well of course the coal market is good at the moment and that is what people working in Singleton mines see," Dr Edwards said.

"So that further complicates talking about transition because when you are talking to people like that, of course, there's no reason for them to think that everything is imminently about to change."

Singleton and Muswellbrook mayors, Sure Moore and Steve Reynolds, both agree that transition and just transition are problematic terms in the Upper Hunter.

They both told the *Newcastle Herald* they never use them because residents find them upsetting and it ends the conversation too quickly. Cr Moore said Singleton uses the term "economic

evolution" and Cr Reynolds said he uses the word diversify.

"When they hear transition people hear the mines are going to close tomorrow, hang onto your chairs because your jobs gone," Cr Moore said.

"We use the word economic evolution because it indicates we're going to grow into new jobs, they're not necessarily going to be there tomorrow, but we're working towards them.

"It helps keep the conversation open and break down barriers, these are tough conversations."

Cr Moore, who has a close family member working in a mine, said talking about the future is "very sensitive".

She said too much talk and no action means people tend to pick the negative words from conversations and they don't hear the message.

"It has a flow on effect right through, all the economic areas of town, if there is talk about closing the coal mines down," she said.

"I like to start each conversation by saying the coal mines will continue as long as their approvals allow and as long as people keep buying our coal from overseas,

then you can have a conversation."

Cr Reynolds said people see the word transition as taking one job and replacing it with another, which they fear.

"We need to diversify and people can accept that, but the word transition just gets misconstrued and it's counterproductive," he said.

"Transition is used down in Sydney and Canberra, it doesn't work here.

"We need to be having this conversation in terms where people will engage. We're the coal capital of NSW, I think people agree we need to diversify and that's exactly what we are talking about here."

Dr Edwards agreed the majority of people talking about transition are not seen as invested in local communities. "They're seen as outsiders and coming in telling local communities effectively what you are doing is bad and you need to stop," he said.

"It's quite a complex situation, but that's part of the reason why talking about a transition is so difficult in Australia and the other part is the federal government is completely unwilling to talk about it."

According to the research, the alternative to a just transition, is a disorderly transition. Dr Edwards said this would leave workers and communities with not enough time to plan for their futures.

"A disorderly transition means more announcements like Origin or AGL that this power station is closing, or Glencore that this coal mine is closing down and not a lot of lead time to actually work out what workers and communities are going to do for employment and livelihoods next," he said.

"A just transition means actually saying we know that this is the direction of travel and we so we need to start thinking about what the plan is to shepherd communities through that change."



**Sharon Claydon MP**  
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR NEWCASTLE

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