



HUNTER JO PROGRAM REPORT

April 2022

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ENQUIRIES

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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

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REGIONAL LEADERSHIP & ADVOCACY MEDIA

FOCUS	DATE
<p>PREPARING THE HUNTER FOR TAKEOFF <i>Newcastle Herald</i></p> <p>Representatives from government, industry and the community will come together to identify priorities and pathways to ensure the Hunter will be ready to capitalise on enhanced access to global markets resulting from the Newcastle Airport runway upgrade. The region’s councils, led by the Hunter Joint Organisation will host the Hunter Global summit.</p> <p>https://www.newcastleherald.com.au/story/7614170/preparing-the-hunter-for-takeoff/</p>	11 February 2022
<p>HUNTER’S ONCE IN A GENERATION OPPORTUNITY <i>Newcastle Herald Opinion Piece</i></p> <p>In just two years, the Hunter will host an international airport. This is a game changer for industry, business and communities, and the 10 councils of the Hunter are collaborating on readying the region to capitalise on unprecedented access to the global economy. The Mayors of the Hunter are 100% committed to supporting the region to capitalise on this unique opportunity.</p> <p>https://www.hunterjo.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Joint-Hunter-Mayors-Op-Ed_Hunter-JO.pdf</p>	12 February 2022
<p>HUNTER GLOBAL – A LOOK AT WHATS POSSIBLE <i>Newcastle Live Radio</i></p> <p>In just two years, the Hunter will host an international airport offering a once-in-a-generation opportunity for the region’s growth and diversification.</p> <p>Hunter Global: Our international future is a region-wide initiative led by the Hunter Joint Organisation (HJO), to boost collaboration, planning, and advocacy to capitalise on the Newcastle Airport runway upgrade.</p> <p>https://soundcloud.com/newcastlelive/hunter-global-summit</p>	15 February 2022
<p>SINGAPORE AND FREIGHT OPPORTUNITIES FOR AIRPORT EXPANSION <i>Newcastle Herald</i></p> <p>Focusing on freight, diversifying from Sydney and commercial flights to Singapore on a low cost airline are opportunities for Newcastle Airport to capitalise on its international expansion, a summit heard on Thursday. The Hunter Global: Our International Future summit was hosted by the Hunter Joint Organisation, made up of the region’s 10 council, at Newcastle City Hall to ready for the international runway completion next year.</p> <p>https://www.newcastleherald.com.au/story/7625068/singapore-and-freight-opportunities-for-airport-expansion/</p>	17 February 2022
<p>HUNTER GLOBAL SUMMIT <i>NBN Television</i></p> <p>Coverage of Day 2 of the Hunter Global Summit included in NBN Evening News.</p>	18 February 2022

REGIONAL SUBMISSIONS

FOCUS

DRAFT HUNTER REGIONAL PLAN 2041

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

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

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

A copy of the submission is available on the Hunter JO [website](#).

IPART CHANGES TO THE DOMESTIC WASTE MANAGEMENT CHARGE

Collaboration is underway with Member Council Waste Managers, Metropolitan Regional Waste Coordinators Group, SSROC and LGNSW to identify alignment to support the development of a regional submission on the proposed IPART changes to the Domestic Waste Management charge.

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 Global: Our International Future Summit	Hunter JO
Regional Contaminated Land Working Group	Hunter JO
Hunter Regional Waste Strategy Group	Hunter JO
Hunter JO Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan Steering Committee	Hunter JO
Hunter JO Circular Economy Sub-Committee	Hunter JO
Hunter Circular Facilitators Group	Hunter JO/DPIE
TfNSW & Joint Organisations Workshop	NSW JO Network
NSW JO Chairs Forum	NSW JO Network
JO Network EOs Meetings	NSW JO Network
Climate Action Professional Officers Group NSW	LG NSW
Regional Leadership Forum	Regional Development Australia
Regional Leadership Executive	Regional NSW
Business Attraction Committee	Regional NSW
RLE Human Services Sub-Committee	Regional NSW
RLE Economic Development Sub-Committee	Regional NSW
Project Control Group Hunter Identity and Positioning	Regional NSW
Hunter Identity and Positioning Local Government Reference Group	Regional NSW
Upper Hunter Education & Training Working Group (convened by Regional NSW)	Regional NSW
RLE Recovery & Resilience Sub-Committee	Regional NSW & Resilience NSW
EPA Local Government Advisory Group	NSW EPA
Metropolitan Regional Waste Coordinators Group	NSW EPA
Hunter Regional Illegal Dumping Squad Committee	NSW EPA
Hunter Central Coastal Management Program Practitioners Roundtable (convened by DPIE)	DPIE
Local Government Climate Change Planning Toolkit Working Group	DPIE
Partnering for Growth Coalition	Shared by partner organisations

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
<p>Purpose: To develop a new Hunter JO Strategic Plan for the period 2022-2026. The new strategy will align with the Local Government IP&R Framework, which will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve alignment between the Hunter JO Strategy and strategic planning documents of member Councils • Provide increased support to member Councils to assist with integrating shared regional priorities and actions within their local planning processes. 	
<p>Status update: Development of the Hunter JO Strategy (JO Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities) has progressed. A review of the new requirements and OLG Guidelines 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 is to be completed by December 2023. Engagement with the IP&R staff of Council is ongoing and has continued at both an individual basis with staff from each Council and collectively through the Hunter IP&R Network. 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 identified at the Hunter JO Board Strategy Day in May 2021.</p>	

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
<p>Purpose: The Hunter Joint Organisation website (https://www.hunterjo.com.au/) aims to actively, regularly and effectively engage member Councils, partner organisations and the broader community on the activities and progress of the Hunter JO.</p>	
<p>Status update: Ongoing review and updating of website news and content. Changes have been made to the navigation menu of the website to make it more user friendly. This includes calling out the 'Our Projects' page and updating the text under Local Government Services to clearly direct people to Arrow. Currently working through a process of further updating project information on the site.</p>	

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>Purpose:</p> <p>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.</p>	
<p>Status update:</p> <p>The Project Officer has now been employed and commenced work on the project. Project planning and stakeholder identification has been undertaken and will be continually updated as the initial literature review progresses. A consultant has been engaged to complete a literature review on existing regional, state and national resilience policies and strategies, as well as developing a framework for what makes a 'high', 'medium' and 'low' resilience Council and community. Following on from the success of the Climate Change IP&R package, the consultant will also commence preparation of a Resilience IP&R document. A review of Council's draft CSPs is being undertaken to identify current approaches towards improving resilience.</p> <p>Discussions have commenced with Resilience NSW and Resilient Sydney to exchange advice and experiences of embedding resilience into Council IP&R frameworks. The Hunter IP&R Network meets every two months to share progress on their IP&R activities. This working group will be used to update participating Councils on the Resilience IP&R program.</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 support required.</p>	

Simtables for Community Empowerment	
Program / Project Lead	Chris Dart
Delivery Status	On track
Purpose:	
<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>	
Status update:	
<p>The Simtables for Community Empowerment project is progressing well. The two Simtable unit have now been procured, set-up and tested with the New Mexico based Simtable team. The JO is in the process of procuring the walnut shell sand – the media that fills the table – from a Victorian supplier. When received the Simtables will be fully functional and engagement with the project stakeholders can begin. Council staff will have the opportunity to participate in two levels of training: general user training and “super” user training. The Simtables Project Officer will be in touch with relevant staff from each Council with details of the project and how to register for the training sessions.</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
Purpose: To support regional collaborative efforts by Councils, the Hunter JO and Cities Power Partnership (CPP) in delivery of shared pledges on climate action made by Councils.	
Status update: During the regional mapping of Council CSP's undertaken as part of the Hunter JO Strategy project, we are also reviewing the CPP Program links and objectives identified by Councils across the region. Discussion will continue with the Climate Council to formalise the draft regional priorities on which we will engage with Council staff, before bringing them back to the Hunter JO Board with a view to 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
Purpose: To determine the feasibility of the Hunter JO potentially hosting the Hunter RID Squad, and the most appropriate financial and operational model for the RID Squad were this to occur.	
Status update: Following GMAC's resolution in September 2021 to proceed with a due diligence process to explore the potential for the Hunter JO to host the Hunter & Central Coast RID Squad (subject to adequate resourcing being provided by the NSW EPA), the following has occurred: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It had been our understanding that EPA were integrating the due diligence work within a broader state-wide review of RID Squads they had commissioned, to which end a brief outlining our requirements was provided in October 2021 • EPA confirmed late February 2022 that that Hunter JO will now need to identify, engage and manage consultant to deliver the due diligence review. • We have since received a quotation to complete the due diligence work, and a request for \$46,775 has been submitted to the EPA to undertake this work. This amount includes the consultancy (\$40,675) and Hunter JO project management costs (\$6,100). Advice is pending on the outcome of this request. 	

Regional Contaminated Land Program	
Program / Project Lead	Mel Curtis & Anna Flack
Delivery Status	On track
Purpose:	
To build capacity and capability of Councils to manage contaminated sites on private and Council managed land, and to support councils transition to their new role as regulator of the Underground Petroleum Storage System (UPSS) Regulation.	
Status update:	
Throughout December 2021 and January 2022, individual meetings were held with each Council to introduce new staff, discuss and check in on progress, and discuss Council needs under the program. The Council Contaminated helpdesk has continued to be highly used and there is now a centralised contaminated land inbox, which allows us to track requests and provide updates to Councils when requested. The next meeting of the Contaminated Land Working Group is scheduled for 30 March 2022, and planning for a Contaminated Land Regional Forum targeting problem contaminants is being planned for 12 May 2022.	

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
Purpose:	
The objectives of this project are to:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop an Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Package which embeds resilience to Climate Change into Councils operations through incorporation into the overarching IP&R documents. 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. 3. Build capacity within Councils to reduce risks, increase resilience and reduce climate vulnerability by collaboratively building community understanding and literacy around coastal management and adaptation issues and bridging the gap between the IP&R framework and prioritisation of Climate Change resilience. 	
Status update:	
The review period for the Working Draft of the Climate Change IP&R Package has now closed. The feedback and recent updates to State and National Climate Change Policy is currently being incorporated and then the final package will be released. The Coastal Communications Package is now progressing and the RFQ for development of the package released. The Hunter Central Coast Act on Adaptation Coastal Wise Communities Survey Final Report provide by DPE is now complete and available as a reference guide for our Councils. This will contribute to the evidence base for the development of the Communications package.	

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

Hunter & Central Coast Resource Recovery Strategy	
Program / Project Lead	Eloise Lobsey
Delivery Status	On track
Purpose: To develop a new Hunter Central Coast Resource Recovery Strategy for the period 2022-2027. The new Strategy will align with the recently released NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2021-2041 and associated funding streams, and provide improved alignment with the Regional Circular Economy program.	
Status update: The EPA released their final Regional Response to WaSM (Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy) Guidelines in February 2022. This has resulted in some rescoping of analysis work to be undertaken by our consultant, to meet the requirements of this new framework and its strategic intent. A Strategic Direction and Options Paper has been produced as a basis for consultation and collaboration with Council Waste Managers in developing the strategy, on which an overview is provided in the April Hunter JO Board Report. The timeline for development and endorsement of the strategy is targeting June 2022 for completion, however this remains reliant on relevant detail being provided by the NSW EPA regarding funding arrangements moving forward.	

Small Acts Big Change Regional Communication Campaign	
Program / Project Lead	Eloise Lobsey
Delivery Status	On track
Purpose: To deliver a regional communication campaign to improve community waste avoidance behaviours at the top end of the waste management hierarchy, along with reuse and recycling habits.	
Status update: The waste avoidance campaign has continued to grow its reach and engagement within the region. A recent boosted post (ad spend) on How to Source Locally Grown Food had 15,600 impressions and reached 8,751 people.	

Community Recycling Centres Awareness Campaign	
Program / Project Lead	Susan McDonald
Delivery Status	On track
Purpose: To deliver a regionally coordinated approach to promoting community awareness of Community Recycling Centres (CRC's).	
Status update: Delivery of CRC advertising across the region has continued in conjunction with the Small Acts Big Change campaign. Promotional flyers have recently been developed and circulated to Councils for circulating at local events.	

Green Caffein Swap and Go Coffee Cup Scheme	
Program / Project Lead	Susan McDonald
Delivery Status	On track
Purpose:	
<p>The Hunter JO, seven-member councils and Central Coast Council are partnering with Green Caffein 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.</p>	
Status update:	
<p>Green Caffein has recently been relaunched in both the Central Coast and Hunter, featuring re-engagement with cafes and renewed social media campaigns by Green Caffein, Small Acts Big Change and Councils. Further growth of the program will benefit from continued Council engagement with local businesses and community.</p>	

Hunter & Central Coast Circular Economy Hub	
Program / Project Lead	Tim Askew
Delivery Status	Not yet started (subject to resourcing)
Purpose:	
<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing leadership and planning to establish a common vision and plan for the region’s move to a CE • facilitate the acquisition and sharing of research and information among stakeholders in the CE, including the provision of a “problem concierge” • Continuing to curate and grow the CE ecosystem • Facilitating and delivering joint projects and initiatives across organisations • Coordinating and advocating an agreed regional voice on CE for the region to State and Federal Governments • Consistent and coordinated promotion of the region to researchers, innovators and investors • Building knowledge in the region to capture and translate innovation and best practice into day to day operations, and to enact sustained change in organisational culture and systems required to progress the Circular Economy. 	
Status update:	
<p>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 we can leverage this work to progress the design and establishment of a Circular Economy Hub for the region.</p>	

Circular Economy Roadmap	
Program / Project Lead	Tim Askew
Delivery Status	On track
<p>Purpose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop a common understanding and definition for the circular economy of the region relevant to all stakeholders – government, business and academia. • Gain broad regional support and engagement for the development of a circular economy in the Hunter and Central Coast region. • Develop a strategic roadmap for the region • To create an identity for the region as a leader in the transition to a circular economy and as a place to do Circular Economy activities, providing business attraction and local support for the circular economy • To provide leverage and connect with other key circular economy frameworks and strategies at all levels of government 	
<p>Status update:</p> <p>The CE roadmap is now finalised and is ready to go live on the website. Options from a soft to a more formal launch are being considered. A quarterly review process is being established to keep the document up to date and relevant for our regions circular economy.</p>	

Circular Economy Eco-system	
Program / Project Lead	Tim Askew
Delivery Status	On track
<p>Purpose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	
<p>Status update:</p> <p>A communications plan has been developed and is now being implemented. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a Circular Economy newsletter, soon to be launched in tandem with the release of the CE Roadmap • Launching of a LinkedIn Circular Economy network group, which has grown to 62 members and receives weekly postings • A review and update of the www.huntercircular.com.au website which has now gone live <p>A CE event working group has also been established to scope a roadmap of CE events for the region over a 3 year time period, delivery of which will be dependent on accessing funding.</p>	

Circular Economy Procurement	
Program / Project Lead	Tim Askew
Delivery Status	On track
Purpose: To support Councils to prioritise recycled materials and circular economy services in their procurement systems and processes, and to collaborate with the Hunter JO and other participating councils to develop a common framework for a joint regional procurement of recycled materials.	
Status update: Consultants have completed the case study report which was presented to the Circular Economy Sub-Committee in February 2022. The priority materials workshop was also completed in February, with 7 councils and 20 persons attending the online session. Next step is to develop the methods and tools for circular procurement at Councils.	

Hunter ReCircular (Regional Recycling Solution - yellow bins)	
Program / Project Lead	Tim Askew
Delivery Status	On track
Purpose: To investigate preferred options for development of a new regional materials recovery facility	
Status update: EOI process being managed through Lake Macquarie City Council remains underway	

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 Standing Committee	
Program / Project Lead	Boyd Blackwell
Delivery Status	On track
Purpose: The purpose of the Committee (from existing Terms of Reference) is to continue to prioritise a resilient and diversified economy, and to assist in managing economic transition in the region in partnership with identified and other Regional stakeholders.	
Status update: An initial review of the Sub-committee's focus and operations was undertaken in conjunction with Sue Moore (Chair) and Jason Linnane (General Manager, Singleton Council) in late 2021. A report has prepared for the Hunter JO Board to consider at its April 2022 meeting regarding the future focus and membership of the Standing Committee.	

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: High level review and synthesis of State and Local Government Economic Development Strategies has been completed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify core economic planning themes and the alignment of these across Councils • Map existing regional programs and initiatives being delivered • Identify gaps and opportunities that have the potential to be addressed at a regional scale through the Hunter JO <p>The outcomes of this work are now informing the drafting of the new Hunter JO Strategic Plan, in those areas of the plan relating to regional economic development, which are considered appropriate to be led by local government through the Hunter JO. The knowledge generated to date is also informing a broader range activity being delivered by the Hunter JO including:</p>	

- Review of the Hunter JO Standing Committee for Economic Transition
- Input to the Interim Hunter Royalties for Region Expert Panel Expert Panel
- Hunter 2050
- Hunter Venture Fund
- Accelerating Event Economies

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
Purpose:	
<p>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.</p>	
Status update:	
<p>In line with the resolutions of the 7th October 2021 meeting of the Committee, a workshop was held on 10th March 2022 to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collaboratively align the expectations and directions of Committee members to redefine the focus, role, Terms of Reference and resourcing for the Steering Committee moving forward. 2. Work collaboratively on developing a shared objective / consensus on the governance outcome that needs to be achieved (a “light on the hill”) for the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan, and to identify the next steps on which to focus to progress toward that objective. <p>There were two priority recommendations arising from the workshop:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Hunter JO advocate to the Minister, that within amendments to the <i>Greater Sydney Commission Regulation</i> 2016 required to enable establishment of the expanded “Greater Cities Commission”, that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. A formal governance arrangement be enshrined between the Greater Newcastle Cities Commissioner (to be appointed), and the five Mayors of the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Area (City of Newcastle, Lake Macquarie City Council, Cessnock City Council, Maitland City Council and Port Stephens Council) b. The governance process established, enshrines a process for regular and meaningful communication and collaboration between the Greater Newcastle Cities Commissioner and the five Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Area Mayors 2. That the primary role of the GNMP Steering Committee moving forward, will be to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide a strong and united advocacy voice on agreed core priorities for the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Area, within the context of a broader shared regional narrative b. Inform the broader advocacy platform of the Hunter JO Board in regard to the agreed priorities and advocacy narrative for the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan area. 	

Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan - Review of Regional Governance Options	
Program / Project Lead	Steve Wilson
Delivery Status	Completed
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	
Program / Project Lead	Tim Askew
Delivery Status	On track
Purpose: To prepare population scenarios as a platform for informing an agreed long-term vision for regional population growth, and to influence strategic regional planning processes, delivery programs and regional migration strategies by all levels of government for the Hunter Region.	
Status update: A draft advocacy document is now complete and ready for consultation with council and expert panel stakeholders. The next stage will be to familiarise the Hunter JO Board and member Council executives with the draft advocacy document.	

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

Hunter Venture Fund	
Program / Project Lead	Boyd Blackwell
Delivery Status	On track
Purpose: The purpose of establishing a Hunter venture Fund is to fill funding, investment and capability shortfalls to 2050, that are required to help the Hunter Region plan for change that is accelerated by advancing energy technologies that will reduce the world's reliance on coal over time.	
Status update: Following targeted consultation with industry stakeholders, the consultant Henshall Capital PL (engaged to work on the project) has finalised development of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A draft Pitch Deck to enable the Hunter JO to approach government and the funds management industry about investing in the Hunter Venture Fund (HVF) 	

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

The outputs are currently under review.

Upper Hunter Region Website	
Program / Project Lead	Kali Somerville
Delivery Status	On track
Purpose:	
The delivery of this website was a key action in the Upper Hunter Economic Diversification Action Plan. It was developed in partnership between Regional NSW and the Hunter JO, to provide a central location for resources for investors, local business and community for the Upper Hunter.	
Status update:	
Work continues with videography to produce the final “hero” video for Dungog focusing on the business “Just Been Laid”. A few delays have been experienced due to unforeseen circumstances affecting the business owner. A broader review of the resources held on the website is also being undertaken 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
Purpose:	
The Smart Region Project will be an overarching collation of smart region activities and projects across the region placed within an annual review document produced to market the progress of our region. Initially the project will review the existing state of smart city thinking and activity across the region to get a baseline of progress. This program will then outline the priorities of the region in the smart region context and develop a suite of priority actions and templates for regional use.	
Status update:	
Several meetings have been held with NSW Smart City team to discuss collaboration and funding opportunities to progress Smart Region opportunities. Outcomes are informing design and development of a regional forum, likely to be delivered in May.	

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

Accelerating Event Economies	
Program / Project Lead	Kim Carland
Delivery Status	On track
Purpose:	
<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>	
Status update:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder groups have been established including representatives from each member Council along with State and Federal Government agencies, and industry. • A networking breakfast with Regional Stakeholders was held 2 March 2022 with approximately 55 representatives attending (35 in person and 20 online). • The dedicated project working group meeting was also held following the networking breakfast , which identified some areas of uncertainty or concerns, but at an overall level indicated enthusiasm for the opportunity to collaborate on initiatives within the events space. • Consultant RFQs have been drafted and continued to be refined through RPP team and engagement with stakeholders including ('A to E' = A2E): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Hunter Facilities Event Audit, b. Regional Event Economic Impact, c. Hunter Tourism Prospectus, D. Collaborative Event Approvals, d. Website or App build. • A visioning statement for Hunter Events is being drafted to guide the overall project drawing from input from member councils. 	

Mayors Gala - Building Regional Collaboration & Celebrating Regional Success	
Program / Project Lead	Boyd Blackwell
Delivery Status	On track
Purpose:	
<p>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.</p>	
Status update:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A consultant has been engaged to assist with initial concept development for consideration by the Board • A funding application was submitted 31 January to the Destination NSW Regional Business Event Development Fund to support development and delivery of the project. • A report has been prepared for the April 2022 meeting of the Hunter JO Board to determine whether to proceed further with project design and delivery. 	

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>Purpose:</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"> • Build collaborative processes and systems within the region to collectively identify and actively pursue key international opportunities for expanding the Airport’s economic contribution to the Region • Directly support the expansion of international Airport related business and industry as a primary contributor to the Hunter Region’s economic growth and diversification. 	
<p>Status update:</p> <p>One of the primary deliverables of the project, the Hunter Global Regional Summit was delivered on 17th & 18th February 2022 at Newcastle Town Hall. The summit attracted attendees from all sectors across the region, who came together to co-design the way forward as the Hunter enters the global stage. The summit attracted a number of high quality speakers and facilitators who provided clear and practical insights to the opportunities (and challenges) for the region in order to capitalise on the international opportunities that will arise from the Newcastle Airport runway upgrade. They included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taylor Martin MLC - representing the NSW Premier • Dr Peter Cock, CEO Newcastle Airport • Oliver Lamb, MD, Ailevon Pacific • Geoff Roberts, Chief Commissioner, Greater Cities Commission • Stephen Mahoney, Destination NSW, General Manager, Product, Policy & Engagement • Elizabeth Mildwater, CEO Greater Sydney Commission • Andrew Smith, CEO Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council • Amy Brown, CEO, Secretary NSW Department of Enterprise, Investment & Trade and CEO Investment NSW • Sara Hales, MD, Managing Director, Avistra Aviation Consulting • Professor Mark Hoffman – University of Newcastle Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Vice President • Samantha Martin-Williams, Non-Executive Director, Supply Chain & Logistics Association of Australia and Newcastle Airport Pty Ltd • Rosemarie Milsom, Founding Director, Newcastle Writers Festival <p>Following on from the summit, the first piece of advocacy collateral arising from the event has been produced, in the form of a “teaser” video, which highlights the importance of international connectivity for the Hunter; unlocking growth markets, creating new jobs across the region, and maintaining and diversifying the fantastic lifestyle that our region offers. The video can be seen https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= 0vpCbx_H8s.</p> <p>Presentations from the summit are also available on the Hunter JO website at https://www.hunterjo.com.au/event/hunterglobalsummit/</p> <p>The next outputs from the project which are currently in development include:</p>	

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

Destination Management Plan	
Program / Project Lead	Destination Sydney Surrounds North
Delivery Status	On track
Purpose:	
To prepare a Destination Management Plan for the Destination Sydney Surrounds North (DSSN) area, which includes the Hunter Region.	
<p>Along with other regional stakeholders, the Hunter JO recently participated in an engagement session on the development of a new Destination Management Plan by DSSN. The following insights and trends were presented to the workshop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travellers are looking for higher end products and services, and an increase in sustainability focus. • International markets won't be coming back for 2-3 years so a focus on domestic visitors should continue during that time • The Hunter should focus on its unique offering • The region should collaborate more to position and market our region, and “hunt in packs” for funding. • The region needs to service trends in Electric Vehicles and hybrid working weeks. <p>The Hunter JO Team will continue to participate in engagement sessions of this nature as the Destination Management Plan continues to be developed, as well as integrate the findings presented across a range of project and planning initiatives.</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
Purpose:	
Undertake detailed exploration of the opportunities created by a City Deal, as well as the preconditions and process to develop a City Deal in the Hunter.	
Status update:	

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)
Purpose:	
To embrace world-leading innovations to develop a flagship community resources recovery model. By demonstrating a Circular Economy approach, Hunter BioCircular seeks to move the region toward zero waste to landfill, and in doing so provide long term economic, social and environmental benefits from processing waste locally, which will help transition the regional economy, deliver new local jobs and reduce carbon emissions.	
Status update:	
Focus of project remains at scope redesign and seeking new funding opportunities for the concept. Hunter BioCircular has been included in recent letters of support (late 2021) provided by the Hunter JO to 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>Purpose:</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>Status update:</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"> • Competitive access to global markets and the importance of global connectivity for the Hunter region • Intra-region connectivity, specifically public transport • Clarity around governance of the document and its delivery <p>The regional submission can be viewed at https://www.hunterjo.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Hunter-JO-Submission_Draft-Hunter-Regional-Plan-FINAL.pdf</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
<p>Purpose:</p> <p>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</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable Transport for NSW to respond proactively to anticipated changes in land use, demographics and travel demand • Establish a transport vision for the region • Detail short, medium and long-term initiatives that in combination, support the transport vision 	
<p>Status update:</p> <p>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.</p>	

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
<p>Project Purpose:</p> <p>To prepare an agreed list of regional and sub regional infrastructure priorities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build and advocate a stronger case for investment in infrastructure priorities across the region • Identify the potential for shared interests and collaboration between Councils and other stakeholders in delivering local and regional scale infrastructure initiatives. • Identify a longer-term infrastructure investment pipeline, to provide transparency and confidence for potential investors, professional services and contractors to build their presence in the Hunter 	

Status update:

Phase 1 of this project has been completed, including:

- Final Stage 1 report incorporating prioritisation framework
- Rapid cost-benefit analysis (CBA) template.
- Scoping document for the preparation of a tool that automates the data collection process

The final report and rapid CBA template have been reviewed by council and agency staff involved in the project. The Hunter JO are currently exploring funding opportunities for delivering Phase 2 of the project, the preparation of a tool that automates the data collection and prioritisation process.

Regional Cycle Tourism Master Plan (Shiraz to Shore)

Program / Project Lead	Tim Askew
Delivery Status	Delivery Status: Not yet started (subject to resourcing)
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, including use as an advocacy document in the lead up to the 2022 Federal Government election.	

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

Delivery Status	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.

Delivery Status	<i>Delivery Status: Not yet started (subject to resourcing)</i>
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