



Hunter JO Program Report April 2023



This document is designed to communicate progress in delivery of the Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2032.

This plan is drawn from the Community Strategic Plans (CSPs) of Member Councils, regional-level plans and other state strategic documents to clearly identify the highest regional priorities.

This program report demonstrates how we are delivering on our four strategic priorities of connectivity, resilience, jobs and a growing economy and liveability.

Hunter JO Program Report Contents

Part 1: About the Hunter JO	4
Who We Are	4
Our Vision	5
Our Board	6
Our Team	7
Our Priorities	9
Part 2: Our Delivery	10
Intergovernmental Collaboration	11
Regional Programs and Capacity Building	16
Connectivity	18
Resilience	20
Jobs and a Growing Economy	22
Liveability	26
Regional Funding Proposals	29
Part 3: Appendix	30
Strategic Directions and Objectives	30

Acknowledgment of Country

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

For all enquiries please contact Hunter Joint Organisation on 02 4978 4020 or email rppd@hunterjo.com.au.
©Hunter Joint Organisation



Who we are

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.

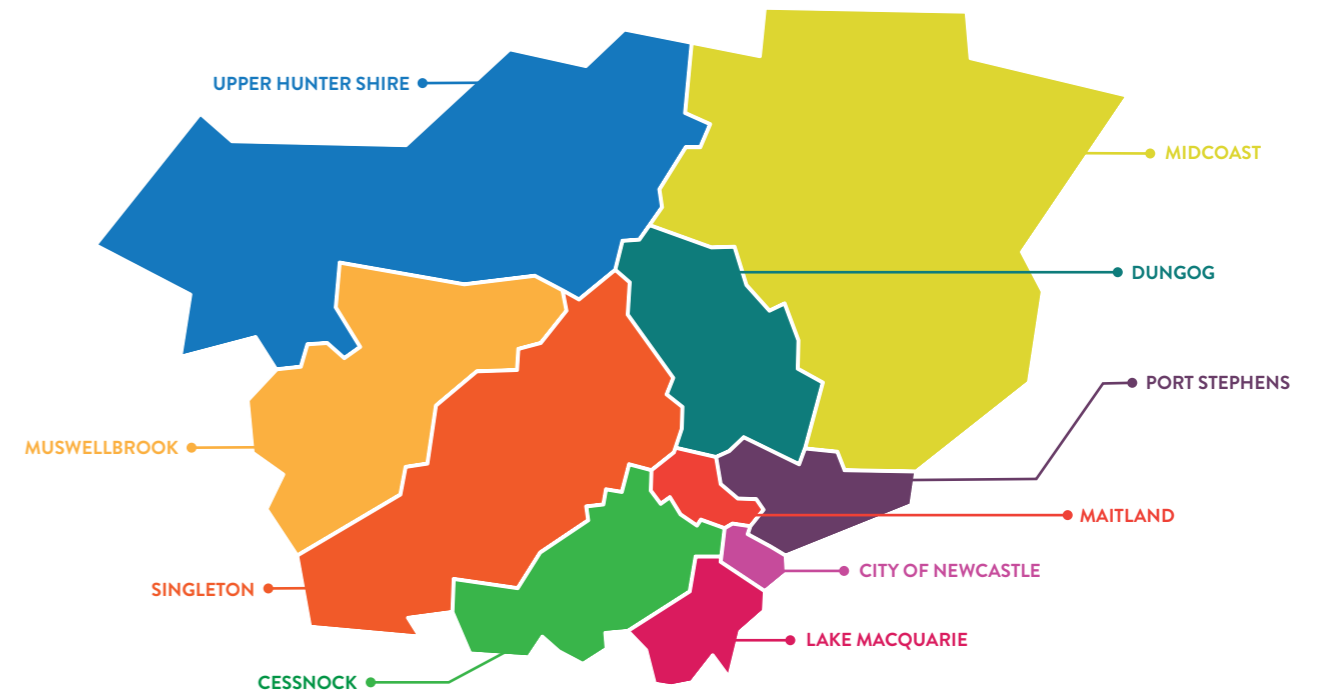
Our statutory functions defined by the NSW Local Government Amendment (Regional Joint Organisations) Act 2017 comprise:

Strategic Planning and Priority Setting
To establish strategic regional priorities for the Joint Organisation area and to establish strategies and plans for delivering those strategic regional priorities.

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

Intergovernmental Collaboration
To identify and take up opportunities for intergovernmental co-operation on matters relating to the Joint Organisation area.

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



Our Vision

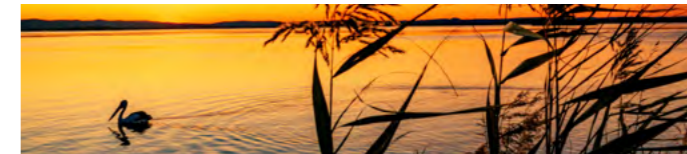
We are a Region that:

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



Our Mission

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



Our Board

The Hunter JO 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.



Cr Sue Moore
Mayor Singleton Council



Cr Jay Suvaal
Mayor Cessnock City Council



Cr John Connors
Mayor Dungog Shire Council



Cr Kay Fraser
Mayor Lake Macquarie City Council



Cr Philip Penfold
Mayor Maitland City Council



Cr Claire Pontin
Mayor MidCoast Council



Cr Steven Reynolds
Mayor Muswellbrook Shire Council



Cr Nuatali Nelmes
Lord Mayor City of Newcastle



Cr Ryan Palmer
Mayor Port Stephens Council



Cr Maurice Collison
Mayor Upper Hunter Shire Council

Our Team

Joe James	CEO, Hunter Joint Organisation	0405 217 249 ceo@hunterjo.com.au
Louisa Bulley	Executive Officer	0413 891 320 louisab@hunterjo.com.au
Steve Wilson	Director Hunter Joint Organisation	0448 401 436 steve@hunterjo.com.au
Tim Askew	Director of Programs	0436 420 623 tima@hunterjo.com.au
Eloise Lobsey	Policy and Programs Coordinator Waste, Resource Recovery and 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	0460 038 199 annaf@hunterjo.com.au
Chris Dart	Regional Project Officer (Simtables)	0460 038 197 chrisd@hunterjo.com.au
Susan Conway MacDonald	Policy and Programs Officer (Environmental Education)	(02) 4978 4028 susanm@hunterjo.com.au
Barbora Michalidesova	Coordinator - Executive Support and Projects	0400 087 133 barboram@hunterjo.com.au
Kali Somerville	Media and Communications Officer	0429 564 111 kalis@hunterjo.com.au
Carissa Norton	Graphic Designer	0457 049 878 carissan@hunterjo.com.au
Bonnie Gradwell	Business Administration Trainee Policy and Programs	0400 063 502 bonnieg@hunterjo.com.au



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



Our Priorities

Our Strategic Themes



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



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



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



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

*Refer to [Appendix](#) for our full list of Strategic Directions and Objectives.

Our Advocacy Priorities



Our unique lifestyle and attractive environment is protected and enhanced.



A resilient region prepared for change.



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



A globally focused Hunter connected to international markets.



Infrastructure and transport systems that connect the region.



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



Our Delivery

Intergovernmental Collaboration

Hunter JO Workshops, Forums and Events

Contaminated Land Regional Forum - Triggering a Preliminary Site Investigation (PSI) and the NSW Auditor system

Representatives from all Member Councils participated to hear from guest speakers including NSW EPA, NSW DPE, legal, auditor and Council representatives on when to trigger a contaminated land investigation through the planning process and the NSW Auditor system.

February 2023

Accelerating Event Economies branding workshops

Representatives from Member Councils, Destination Sydney Surrounds North and Committee for the Hunter attended two workshops (Jan and Feb) to discuss and agree on brand position for events in the region. This brand approach is now being developed into the website and marketing collateral.

18 January and 15 February

Hunter Regional Sports and Recreation Taskforce

Kim Carland (Regional Projects Officer - Tourism and Events) delivered a presentation on the outcomes of the Accelerating Event Economies project and Shiraz to Shore project to the Taskforce to identify and discuss areas of alignment.

1 March 2023

Systems Thinking for a Circular Economy Workshop

Hunter JO and NSW Sustainability Advantage program hosted a capacity building event with Dr Leyla Acarglu. Twenty attendees made up of members of the Circular Economy Sub Committee, plus CE practitioners and key actors in the region, were invited together to learn the value of tools like systems mapping to circular problem solving and collaboration efforts.

23 January 2023

Pitch session for Councils - Circular Economy Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) Waste to Wealth proposal

Hunter JO hosted an online pitch session for the Waste to Wealth CRC to seek support and participation from Councils in the region for a federal government funding application.

14 February 2023

Existing Standing Engagements - Convened by Hunter JO and Local Government	
Sustainable Education Group	<p>The first face-to-face meeting of this group was held on Monday 13th March. Whilst cross-promotion and resource sharing is a key theme for this group, moving forward it will be looking at working collaboratively on regional campaigns that could be either co-funded or funding sought to deliver.</p> <p>Convened by: Hunter JO</p>
NSW Joint Organisation Chairs Forum	<p>The JO Chairs Network met on 16th March. Key Agenda items included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional, rural and remote roads effect of severe weather conditions • NSW Treasury Common Planning Assumptions • Net Zero Acceleration update • Disaster Risk Reduction Fund Governance update. <p>Convened by: Hunter JO Network</p>
NSW Joint Organisation Executive Officers Network	<p>This network continues to meet on a fortnightly basis. Current focus areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying opportunities for cross regional information sharing and collaboration in delivery of the Disaster Resilience and Net Zero grant programs, under which a number of JOs received funding • Identifying opportunities for more direct collaboration and engagement with state agencies for the delivery of place based programs. <p>Convened by: Hunter JO Network</p>
IP&R Network	<p>Meeting held 7 February. Councils provided updates on their current work and discussed timelines for their draft Operational Plans.</p> <p>Convened by: Hunter JO and Lake Macquarie</p>
A2E Stakeholder Group	<p>Monthly meetings to steer outcomes of the remaining website and brand prospectus projects are continuing. Stakeholders are also being asked to consider different options for continuing a coordinated approach to event attraction beyond the 30 June 2023 completion date of the current grant funded project.</p> <p>Convened by: Hunter JO</p>

Existing Standing Engagements - Convened by Others	
Hunter Central Coastal Management Program Practitioners Roundtable	<p>Meeting held 16 February 2023. A range of interesting presentations focused on coastal management were provided, including an update on the Marine Estate Management Strategy (MEMS) initiatives. A number of new staff from across Councils and DPE joined the Roundtable for the first time.</p> <p>Convened by: DPE</p>
State and Regional Waste Managers Network	<p>Metro Regional Coordinators met on the 16 February, with a number of presentations from various EPA sections. Discussions focussed around the issues presented to councils from storage and handling of lithium ion batteries (at CRCs and other waste management facilities). EPA are working towards providing some support to councils on this issue.</p> <p>Convened by: EPA</p>
Hunter Cruise Committee	<p>Port Authority of NSW have advised they have developed an MOU with Port of Newcastle and will be responsible for the coordination of cruise in the Hunter region. They will be developing a stakeholder group with representatives from Destination Sydney Surrounds North, Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, Cessnock and Port Stephens. Hunter JO have advised that since there are multiple council representatives involved, the Hunter JO will not participate in the stakeholder group.</p> <p>Convened by: Regional NSW / Destination Sydney & Surrounds North</p>

Additional Strategic Engagements - Convened by Hunter JO and Local Government

<p>Consultation - Hunter Venture Fund and Innovation Entity</p>	<p>Meeting held with Claire Swan (Director, Lower Hunter - Greater Newcastle City Plan) and Courtney Molloy (Director Innovation District Ecosystem, Central Coast) - Greater Cities Commission, and with Corrie Germin (Director, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Programs) - Investment NSW regarding the outcomes and recommendations of the Hunter Venture Fund report, and alignment with GCC and Investment NSW policy directions and programs.</p> <p>Convened by: Hunter JO 9 March 2023</p>
	<p>Meeting held with Alex Zelinski (Vice Chancellor), Warwick Dawson (Pro Vice Chancellor - Industry & Engagement) and Siobhan Curran (Assistant Director, I2N Operations and Innovation) - University of Newcastle, regarding the outcomes and recommendations of the Hunter Venture Fund report.</p> <p>Convened by: Hunter JO 15 March 2023</p>

Additional Strategic Engagements - Convened by Others

<p>Community of Practice workshop - Hunter Regional Plan</p>	<p>Attended by Council and agency staff from across the region, this workshop focused on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The new policy setting in the Hunter Regional Plan 2041 and a re-cap on key concepts 2. The feedback received on the Western Sydney Precinct Tour and further detail on Place-Delivery Groups 3. Work underway and planned for the new Urban Development Program <p>Convened by: Department of Planning & Environment (DPE) 17 February 2023</p>
<p>Hunter SDG Indicators Project - Sustainability Advantage and UON</p>	<p>University of Newcastle presented an overview and update of the SDG indicators project. This included an update on the dashboard which will host the data generated by the project, which should provide a valuable tool for the region when completed later in 2023.</p> <p>Convened by: Sustainability Advantage 31 January 2023</p>
<p>Empowering Women and Girls in the Circular Economy event</p>	<p>Eloise Lobsey participated in a panel discussion alongside Nicole Garafao from the PlanetArk's AceHub which was aimed at inspiring and empowering women to take up roles in the circular economy transition. Proceeds raises went to a Hunter charity - Got Your Back Sista</p> <p>Convened by: GoCircular 7 March 2023</p>

Additional Strategic Engagements - Convened by Others (cont)

<p>Consultation on proposed offshore wind zone off the Hunter Coast</p>	<p>The Commonwealth provided an overview of the key elements of the proposal and the stages of the consultation and development process that will be undertaken, including the current consultation.</p> <p>Convened by: Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment & Water 9 March 2023</p>
<p>Regional Investment Attraction Workshop</p>	<p>This Workshop was delivered as part of the NSW Regional Investment Activation Program (RIAP), which was initiated by the NSW Government to activate the economic potential of priority precincts and key industries in regions. The workshop was delivered by Andreas Dressler from FDI Center, who has more than 20 years' experience as a specialist consultant in location analysis, site selection, investment incentives, location benchmarking, and investment attraction and promotion. The workshop was attended by Hunter JO, agency and council staff from across the region, focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of Investment Attraction • The Role of Local Government and working with the NSW Government • Defining Target Groups for Investment Attraction • Developing Value Propositions for Key Target Groups • Developing Promotional Materials • Compiling Data and Information for Response to Investor Requests • Organising Site Visits for Potential Investors • Tracking and Maintaining Relationships with Existing Investors (Reinvestment). <p>Convened by: Investment NSW 14 March 2023</p>



Regional Programs and Capacity Building

Program Status Report				
Strategic Themes	Project		Funding	Delivery Date
CONNECTIVITY				
● ● ●	Cycle Tourism Strategy (Shiraz to Shore)		Grant	30-09-2023
● ● ●	Airports Strategy (Freight and Logistics)		Grant	30-09-2023
RESILIENCE				
● ● ●	Transforming Resilience with the IP&R Framework		Grant	30-06-2023
● ● ●	Act Now on Coastal Adaptation		Grant	30-06-2023
● ● ●	Reducing Regional Disaster Risk through Early Action		Grant	30-06-2024
● ● ●	Simtables for Community Empowerment		Grant	30-06-2023
JOBS AND A GROWING ECONOMY				
● ● ●	Circular Economy Eco-System		Grant	30-06-2023
● ● ●	Circular Economy Procurement		Grant	30-06-2023
● ● ●	Circular Economy Precincts and Futures Hub		Grant	30-09-2023
● ● ●	Hunter Global Tourism		Grant	30-09-2023
● ● ●	Hunter Venture Fund		Grant & HJO	30-06-2023
● ● ●	Priority Infrastructure List		Grant & HJO	30-06-2023
● ● ●	Population Scenario Planning		Grant & HJO	30-12-2022
LIVEABILITY				
● ● ●	Accelerating Event Economies		Grant	30-06-2023
● ● ●	Regional Illegal Dumping (RID) Program		Grant	31-03-2027
● ● ●	Small Acts Big Change		Grant	30-06-2023
● ● ●	Community Recycling Centres		Grant	30-06-2023
● ● ●	Net Zero Acceleration		Grant	30-06-2024
● ● ●	Contaminated Land Program		Grant	30-06-2023



Connectivity

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

Objectives - Where do we want to be?

- 1.1** Within the region there is a robust integrated transport solution that underpins the experience/liveability and productivity of its residents and visitors comparable to its global peers.
- 1.2** Through its port and airport the Hunter is a globally connected and economically prosperous city-region, recognised as a key international gateway, providing its communities with a vibrant and unique lifestyle and growth in products and services to replace the economic output of thermal coal.
- 1.3** Digital connectivity that ensures community access to core services on commuter routes across the region and between Sydney and Newcastle and to enable business development, growth and innovation.
- 1.4** A region that is built around sustainable transport outcomes.

Cycle Tourism Strategy (Shiraz to Shore)

Purpose	Status Update
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.	<p>\$368,750 has been successfully secured from the the Regional NSW Business Case and Strategy Development Fund to deliver a project plan, concept designs and indicative costs for the Shiraz to Shore cycle route. This project will also include development of a Hunter Cycle Tourism Strategy. Recruitment is currently underway for a project officer to support delivery of this project.</p> <p>Advice remains pending on another funding application submitted in January 2023 to the NSW Get Active Grants program. If successful, this additional funding will be used to complete a Strategic Assessment of a section of Shiraz to Shore through Hunter Wine Country, working with Cessnock City Council as a key partner.</p>
Strategic Directions	1.1.2, 1.1.5, 1.4.1, 4.1.2

Airports Strategy (Freight and Logistics)

Purpose	Status Update
To develop: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strategy and business case for airfreight and passenger infrastructure and connectivity logistics for the region. • An integrated airports strategy for the region including assessments of passenger, airfreight and transport links across the region. 	<p>\$500,000 has been successfully secured from the Regional NSW Business Case and Strategy Development Fund to deliver this project. Recruitment is currently underway for a project officer to support delivery.</p>
Strategic Directions	1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3





Resilience

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

Objectives - Where do we want to be?

- 2.1** We are recognised as innovative leaders in Council capacity building and policy support for climate change action, resilience and disaster preparedness.
- 2.2** We take leadership and drive regional best practice in climate action.
- 2.3** Our region is resilient to environment risks, natural hazards and climate change.

Transforming Resilience with the IP&R Framework

Purpose	Status Update
To support Member Councils embed resilience principles and projects into their Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework (IP&R), in order to support their ability to allocate recurrent funds and commit to long term resourcing (financial and staff) for resilience projects.	Consultation sessions have been completed with staff representatives from all bush fire-declared Member Councils to complete a "Resilience Health Check". The focus of these sessions included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the biggest resilience challenges being faced by Council? • Whats does Council see as its role in resilience? • What makes a resilient Council? And community? The outcomes of the Health check have been collated and are now informing the design of the final elements of the project, which include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hunter Resilience Health and Improvement Games • Completion of the Resilience IP&R Package A six-month extension to the completion date for this project (ie from 30 June to 15 December 2023) is being requested from the grant authority to facilitate more effective design and delivery of these final outputs, and to accommodate the current onboarding by staff of new grant funded disaster projects received by the Hunter JO through the Disaster Risk Reduction Fund.
Strategic Directions	2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.3.1, 2.3.2

Act Now on Coastal Adaptation

Purpose	Status Update
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. 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. 	A consultant has recently been engaged to deliver the final component of this project, which will be to undertake an independent improvement review of the Coastal and Estuary Support Package developed earlier in the project.
Strategic Directions	2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.2.1, 4.3.1



Reducing regional disaster risk through early action

Purpose	Status Update
To facilitate place-based regional collaboration across four sub projects to empower Councils and communities in the region to reduce disaster risk through early action. The focus of the sub-projects includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Support and Capacity Building - embedding disaster resilience into Council operations and building capacity to communicate disaster resilience to local communities. • Disaster waste management and resource recovery preparedness - assisting Councils to plan place-based solutions for effective disaster waste management and resource recovery systems • Delivering a regional transport vulnerability and connectivity assessment and mitigation plan • Continued refinement and expansion of the use of Simtables regionally for multi-hazard disaster engagement 	\$1,493,856 has been successfully secured from the NSW Disaster Risk Reduction Program to deliver this project. Key activities undertaken to date include acceptance and signing of the funding agreement, allocating existing staff resources to the coordination and delivery of the sub projects, and commencing recruitment of a project officer to further support project delivery. A Project Implementation Plan and Risk Register has been submitted to the NSW Reconstruction Authority, the Administration Authority for the grant. The Hunter JO will be collaborating with seven other Joint Organisations around NSW who are also recipients of funding through the Disaster Risk Reduction Program. This collaboration will occur through an integrated governance structure and Program Management Framework to promote and embed synergies and efficiencies in approaches and implementation across the JOs. Meetings of the Steering Committee overseeing this process have commenced.
Strategic Directions	2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 2.2.2, 2.3.1, 2.3.2

Simtables for Community Empowerment

Purpose	Status Update
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 is providing direct support to Councils in undertaking the extensive community engagement associated with their use.	During the first quarter of 2023, thirteen community workshops/events have been delivered along with two demonstration/ training sessions across a number of Council areas. All up under the project to date, 35 workshops, 23 demonstrations, and 3 Simtable loans have been delivered. Engagement of a consultant to prepare a suite of community engagement resources to support use of the Simtables has also recently occurred, and a videographer engaged to produce a community case study video, on which production has commenced.
Strategic Directions	2.1.2, 2.3.1, 2.3.2



Jobs and a Growing Economy

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



Objectives - Where do we want to be?

<p>3.1 Coordinated planning and investment by all levels of government that empowers the region and its residents to maintain and grow jobs, economic opportunities and quality of life.</p>	<p>3.2 Accelerated and amplified market-driven investment in innovation that capitalises on the region's existing natural strengths and attributes which create jobs in future industries.</p>	<p>3.3 A globally focused region that drives talent attraction and retention.</p>
<p>3.4 A region that is built around Circular Economy principles as a driver of future jobs.</p>	<p>3.5 We are recognised as a destination of choice for international and domestic visitors.</p>	



Circular Economy Ecosystem

Purpose	Status Update
<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>A redesign of the Hunter Circular website is currently well underway, with the web designers building out the new site during March. It is anticipated the new website will be live in April.</p>
Strategic Directions	3.4.1, 4.2.2, 4.4.2

Circular Economy Procurement

Purpose	Status Update
<p>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.</p>	<p>Phase 1 of this project has been completed. Recruitment of a Circular Economy Project Officer is currently underway. When appointed this role will work on finalising outputs from Phase 1 to support their public release, and also provide the resourcing needed to commence Phase 2 of the project.</p>
Strategic Directions	3.4.1, 4.2.2, 4.4.2

Circular Economy Precincts and Futures Hub

Purpose	Status Update
<p>To deliver concept plans and business cases for four multi-element circular economy precincts, that would each represent a key part of the Hunter. Project outputs will outline the potential for circular processing, renewable energy production and value-added businesses, delivering diversified employment opportunities and new industries to the region. Key project deliverables will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A concept plan and strategy for Circular Economy Precincts, including an Anaerobic Digestion component for the circular processing of organics and biogas or energy production for the precinct. A concept plan and strategy for establishing a Circular Economy Futures Hub. 	<p>\$878,600 has been successfully secured from the Regional NSW Business Case and Strategy Development Fund to deliver this project. Recruitment is underway for a project officer to support delivery of this project, while planning has also commenced on a tender process to select and engage a lead consultant to manage the various delivery components of this project.</p>
Strategic Directions	3.4.1, 4.2.2, 4.4.2

Hunter Global Tourism

Purpose	Status Update
<p>To identify the international tourism opportunities of the Hunter region in preparation of the Newcastle Airport international upgrade. Key elements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder engagement to bring all tourism, marketing and economic development organisations across the region together to identify how we want to position, brand and market the region as one to potential visitors. Undertaking a review of the region to identify priority tourism infrastructure needed to attract international visitors. 	<p>\$500,00 has been successfully secured from the Regional NSW Business Case and Strategy Development Fund to deliver this project. Stakeholder engagement has commenced and recruitment is currently underway for a project officer to support delivery.</p>
Strategic Directions	1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 3.5.1, 3.5.2, 4.1.1

Hunter Venture Fund & Innovation Entity

Purpose	Status Update
<p>To explore the design, feasibility and demand for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A Hunter focused Innovation Entity, to support the commercialisation of research and other innovation in the Hunter region, through incubating, accelerating and activating the innovation ecosystem to attract investors and provide confidence that there is a pipeline of viable Hunter investment opportunities A Hunter Venture Fund, a place-focused venture fund with potential to be co-funded by all levels of Government, research and industry partners to accelerate the flow of capital into the Hunter region to support the innovation ecosystem and drive investment; to activate a pipeline of projects that attracts ongoing private sector investment; and to address industry concerns around access to a depth of readily available capital for early-stage ventures in the Hunter. 	<p>Consultation completed with key regional stakeholders around the report prepared for the Hunter JO by Henshall Capital in 2022, has confirmed the significant value that a venture fund and innovation entity would contribute to accelerating the innovation ecosystem and driving new investment in the region, particularly by addressing the existing lack of readily available capital for early-stage ventures in the Hunter. With this work now completed, efforts by the JO team will now focus on advocating to State and Federal Governments, the value of establishing a place-focused fund and innovation entity in the Hunter, as a policy priority for actively enabling the region's economic evolution.</p>
Strategic Directions	3.2.1, 3.2.2



Jobs and a Growing Economy

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



Priority Infrastructure List

Purpose	Status Update
<p>To develop a methodology for determining regional infrastructure priorities to support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building and advocating a stronger case for investment in infrastructure priorities across the region • Identifying the potential for shared interests and collaboration between Councils and other stakeholders in delivering local and regional scale infrastructure initiatives. • Identifying 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. 	<p>All deliverables from this project have now been completed and provided by the consultants delivering the project, Marsden Jacob Associates. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A prioritisation methodology / framework to objectively identify the importance and ranking of regionally significant infrastructure projects • A Google based survey tool to facilitate the capture of infrastructure project data from Member Councils and Agencies • A database tool that supports the assessment and analysis of data provided by Councils and Agency partners, against the prioritisation framework <p>Hunter JO staff have recently completed training with the consultant on the application of these tools, and will now pilot the methodology and database using initial data provided by Councils, using the new Google based survey tool, in December 2022. Now these tools are completed, the process moving forward will be to identify and build capacity in the Hunter JO team to apply these tools, and to implement an annual recurring process and system to acquire and analyse data from Councils to identify regional infrastructure priorities.</p>
Strategic Directions	3.1.1, 3.1.5, 4.5.1

Population Scenario Planning

Purpose	Status Update
<p>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.</p>	<p>This project has now been completed, with key project outputs including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An analysis of NSW Government population forecasts against local and regional population trends being experienced by Member Councils and regional stakeholders and industry groups • Identification of regional priorities related to Housing, Transport and Connectivity, Jobs and Economic Evolution, and regionally significant projects. <p>The outcomes of this work have been integrated within the Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2032 endorsed by the Board in December 2022, and Advocacy Framework and Priorities endorsed by the Board in August 2022.</p>
Strategic Directions	3.1.1, 4.5.1



Liveability

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

Objectives - Where do we want to be?

<p>4.1 We are recognised as a destination for hosting world class events that align with our unique offering.</p>	<p>4.2 Making use of our opportunity to drive circular evolution of our region's economy.</p>	<p>4.3 Our natural environments including our bushland, estuaries, waterways and beaches are protected and enhanced.</p>
<p>4.4 Supporting our region to be on the path to net zero emissions and paving the way with smart innovative solutions that increase liveability.</p>	<p>4.5 A region with enriched neighborhoods and places supported by planned infrastructure that promotes community cohesion, active living and pride in culture and heritage.</p>	<p>4.6 A region that is connected, inclusive and a fair.</p>

Accelerating Event Economies

Purpose	Status Update
<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 even management resources including an event managers toolkit, prospectus, website and integrated council shared services, approvals and event data.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two workshops have recently been held with Member Councils and broader project stakeholders on the brand positioning and marketing of events in our region. Out of this process "Events10 - top 10 destinations to host your event" is being built into the website development, and in the accompanying marketing collateral. A Request for Quotation process is currently underway for a consultant to complete a major Events Feasibility study. This includes identifying the feasibility of hosting a Commonwealth Games or World Masters event, along with identifying other events the region could attract over the next five years. Conversations with project stakeholders are also currently underway to discuss options for continuing the momentum created with the Accelerating Event Economies project beyond its scheduled completion date of 30 June 2023.
Strategic Directions	1.2.1, 1.2.3, 4.1.1, 4.1.2

Regional Illegal Dumping (RID) Program

Purpose	Status Update
<p>To support Member Councils manage illegal dumping by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivering a regional approach to target illegal dumping Employing skilled officers to undertake compliance action against illegal dumpers Undertaking proactive measures to prevent illegal dumping Targeting problematic and complex illegal dumping incidents. Increasing capacity to target problematic and complex illegal dumping incidents. 	<p>A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Member Councils and the Hunter JO is currently being finalised, after which the Hunter JO will enter a Funding Deed with the NSW EPA to deliver the RID Program. Recruitment for the position of RID Coordinator to deliver the program has commenced.</p>
Strategic Directions	4.3.1, 4.3.2, 4.3.3

Small Acts Big Change

Purpose	Status Update
<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>	<p>Promotion of new local business hero videos has commenced with promotion of the first three videos reaching over 500,000 people.</p>
Strategic Directions	4.2.1, 4.3.2, 4.3.3

Community Recycling Centres

Purpose	Status Update
<p>To deliver a regionally coordinated approach to promoting community awareness of Community Recycling Centres (CRC's).</p>	<p>Filming for promotional videos that showcase Community Recycling Centres in the region, has taken place at facilities in Cessnock, Scone, and Tuncurry. These videos will be promoted on the Small Acts Big Change platforms. Advertising campaigns in January and February using existing CRC videos featuring Lake Macquarie and Singleton have been viewed by almost 400,000 people across Facebook and Instagram. Over 217,000 households in the Hunter Region received a CRC flyer promoting items that should not go in bins but be safely disposed of at Community Recycling Centres for free. This CRC flyer also includes locations and contact details for all of the Community Recycling Centres across the region, including those in the Central Coast and Midcoast.</p>
Strategic Directions	4.2.1, 4.2.2, 4.3.1, 4.3.3

Net Zero Acceleration

Purpose	Status Update
<p>To support Member Councils reduce their carbon emissions to achieve their part in the State's Net Zero target of 50 per cent reduction by 2030 and Net Zero by 2050. This includes employing a staff member dedicated to progressing the JO and its member councils toward net zero emissions, and to provide a link to other NSW government support mechanisms.</p>	<p>Recruitment is currently underway for a project officer to support delivery of this project, to be in place by May 2023. An Initial Project Plan has been submitted to the funding agency, the Office of Energy & Climate Change (OECC). Initial engagement with Council staff from across the region has been undertaken, from whom interest in the project has been strong. The relationship established through this project with OECC is already generating benefits for Member Councils, with the Agency recently committing to complete Electric Vehicle Feasibility Studies for all LGAs in the region excluding Lake Macquarie and Muswellbrook, who have recently received Destination Charging grants.</p>
Strategic Directions	2.2.1, 2.2.2, 4.4.1, 4.4.2

Contaminated Land Program

Purpose	Status Update
<p>To build capacity and capability within Member 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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Contaminated Land Regional Forum well attended by representatives from all Member Councils was held on 27 February. Key topics addressed by the forum included when to trigger the contaminated land process and understanding the Contaminated Land Auditor system. Updates to guideline resources on Contaminated Land Information Systems and Conditions of Consent have been completed and are currently undergoing graphic design prior to being released. Verbal updates received from the NSW EPA indicate that there will be no further funding from the Agency to extend the regional program beyond the currently scheduled completion date of 30 June 2023. In anticipation of this, consultation has been undertaken with Council Officers to explore the potential for extending the delivery of key, highly utilised components of the program via a collaborative funding model between Councils.
Strategic Directions	4.3.1, 4.3.3



Regional Funding Proposals

Grants and Funding Proposals

EPA Sustainability Partnerships Program 2023-24

Landfill Emissions Data Management Program (Landfill Emissions DMP)

Focus: Establishing a landfill emission data management program for councils to assist in understanding their baseline landfill emissions, and building a model data management framework and tools to support the collation and interpretation of landfill emission data.

Status update: Advice Pending

Get NSW Active Program

Shiraz to Shore Feasibility and Route Selection (Hunter Wine Country)

Focus: To undertake a strategic assessment to determine the feasibility and preferred route of the Hunter vineyards section of the widely supported Shiraz to Shore 100km cycle trail, connecting communities, tourists and local businesses. The project will:

- balance safety, amenity, feasibility and local landholder and stakeholder inputs for the route following an extensive local stakeholder engagement program.
- produce the indicative costs and key elements to enable the project to move through to the next stage.

Status update: Advice Pending

Appendix - Strategic Objectives and Directions

Connectivity

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



Objectives - Where do we want to be?	Strategic Directions - How will we get there?
<p>1.1 Within the region there is a robust integrated transport solution that underpins the experience/liveability and productivity of its residents and visitors comparable to its global peers.</p>	<p>1.1.1 Support local government having a collective voice in the planning and delivery of major transport infrastructure and systems.</p> <p>1.1.2 Proactively facilitate collaboration with key state agencies to support delivery of connectivity solutions that suit the regions current and future needs.</p> <p>1.1.3 Support Member Councils to influence other levels of government on a sustainable model for delivery and maintenance of road infrastructure.</p> <p>1.1.4 Support a Regional Integrated Transport Plan linking key services and centres.</p> <p>1.1.5 Identify and facilitate regional approaches for active transport outcomes that deliver connectivity, health, liveability and economic benefits.</p> <p>1.1.6 Private and public transport solutions operate on a net zero basis.</p>
<p>1.2 Through its port and airport the Hunter is a globally connected and economically prosperous city-region, recognised as a key international gateway, providing its communities with a vibrant and unique lifestyle and growth in products and services to replace the economic output of thermal coal.</p>	<p>1.2.1 Partnering with airport and port to identify and pursue priority actions to enable access to international markets for the benefit of the region.</p> <p>1.2.2 Influence government policy to prioritise the importance of access to international markets for the benefit of the region.</p> <p>1.2.3 Leading collaboration in the region between government, industry and community to ensure the benefits of international markets are region wide.</p> <p>1.2.4 Support a transport access strategy for regional connectivity to and from the airport.</p>
<p>1.3 Digital connectivity that ensures community access to core services on commuter routes across the region and between Sydney and Newcastle and to enable business development, growth and innovation.</p>	<p>1.3.1 Support and encourage investment in equitable and competitive digital connectivity and the elimination of mobile black spots across the region to ensure community access to commuter routes, core health and education opportunities, and to enable business development, growth and innovation.</p>
<p>1.4 A region that is built around sustainable transport outcomes.</p>	<p>1.4.1 Embed the direction of net-zero in all our connectivity strategies to provide a pathway and level of confidence to investors and community to support the transition to more sustainable transport outcomes.</p>

Resilience

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



Objectives - Where do we want to be?	Strategic Directions - How will we get there?
<p>2.1 We are recognised as innovative leaders in Council capacity building and policy support for climate change action, resilience and disaster preparedness.</p>	<p>2.1.1 We provide guidance and support packages to embed Climate Change action, resilience and disaster preparedness into Councils Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework.</p> <p>2.1.2 We drive council capacity building opportunities supported by an evidence base to improve regional resilience and community awareness.</p> <p>2.1.3 We drive opportunities to collaborate, adopt system thinking and circular economy opportunities to reduce our impact on climate change and increase resilience.</p>
<p>2.2 We take leadership and drive regional best practice in climate action.</p>	<p>2.2.1 We lead the way in regional best practice and work with all levels of government to drive policy and strategy on climate change.</p> <p>2.2.2 Engage and provide thought leadership in local, national and global climate change and resilience networks.</p>
<p>2.3 Our region is resilient to environment risks, natural hazards and climate change.</p>	<p>2.3.1 Apply and obtain financial grants for regional programs that support a resilient region.</p> <p>2.3.2 Facilitate and manage regional programs that support a resilient region.</p>

Jobs and a Growing Economy

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



Objectives - Where do we want to be?	Strategic Directions - How will we get there?
<p>3.1 Coordinated planning and investment by all levels of government that empowers the region and its residents to maintain and grow jobs, economic opportunities and quality of life.</p>	<p>3.1.1 Support a clear, place-based, integrated whole-of-government policy and planning approach to drive the region's economic evolution and jobs of the future.</p> <p>3.1.2 Support the establishment of an entity that has the authority and resources from the Commonwealth and NSW Government necessary to provide the institutional capacity and expert and empowered, place-based planning and decision-making capability.</p> <p>3.1.3 Support regional institutional capacity to assist businesses and workers impacted by changes in the economy.</p> <p>3.1.4 Drive collaboration to provide clarity, certainty and fairness in land-use policy and regulation as it relates to the use of former industrial and mining land and assets, or where local communities bear the impacts or have restrictions arising from the contribution of that place to broader regional or state benefits.</p> <p>3.1.5 Support government policy and planning that prioritise the investment into key regional catalyst areas.</p> <p>3.1.6 Support the place-based delivery of Aboriginal partnerships and employment programs in the Hunter.</p>
<p>3.2 Accelerated and amplified market-driven investment in innovation that capitalises on the region's existing natural strengths and attributes which create jobs in future industries.</p>	<p>3.2.1 Support and mature the innovation ecosystem in order to drive commercialisation of ventures and start-ups in the region which will provide growth in future jobs.</p> <p>3.2.2 Improve and accelerate the regions access to investment and capital markets to underpin the innovation ecosystem and the redevelopment of industrial and mining assets.</p>
<p>3.3 A globally focused region that drives talent attraction and retention.</p>	<p>3.3.1 Support efforts that position the Hunter globally in its areas of competitive and comparative strength.</p>
<p>3.4 A region that is built around Circular Economy principles as a driver of future jobs.</p>	<p>3.4.1 Support knowledge sharing and embed Circular Economy principles in our strategies and plans to provide a pathway to future jobs creation in our local supply chains and services.</p> <p>3.4.2 Support implementation of the Hunter Central Coast Circular Economy Roadmap.</p>
<p>3.5 We are recognised as a destination of choice for international and domestic visitors.</p>	<p>3.5.1 Support a coordinated approach and collaborate around regional tourism promotion to grow jobs in the region.</p> <p>3.5.2 Identify opportunities for growth and diversification of employment based in the tourism economy.</p>

Liveability

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



Objectives - Where do we want to be?	Strategic Directions - How will we get there?
<p>4.1 We are recognised as a destination for hosting world class events that align with our unique offering.</p>	<p>4.1.1 Support a coordinated approach and collaborate around events and tourism.</p> <p>4.1.2 Identify opportunities for growth and diversification of the regional events and tourism economy.</p>
<p>4.2 Making use of our opportunity to drive circular evolution of our region's economy.</p>	<p>4.2.1 Support meeting our future regional infrastructure and operations for circular outcomes.</p> <p>4.2.2 Reduce carbon emissions through better waste and materials management.</p>
<p>4.3 Our natural environments including our bushland, estuaries, waterways and beaches are protected and enhanced.</p>	<p>4.3.1 Our Councils are well supported in protecting and enhancing the environment through regional programs, data collection, support resources and capacity building.</p> <p>4.3.2 Provide support and identify opportunities to improve and protect the regional Blue Green Grid.</p> <p>4.3.3 We drive council capacity building opportunities to protect the environment and human health from pollution.</p> <p>4.3.4 Provide support for regional conservation planning to protect regional biodiversity.</p> <p>4.3.5 Provide support and identify opportunities to enhance the health of the region's estuaries and other waterways.</p>
<p>4.4 Supporting our region to be on the path to net zero emissions and paving the way with smart innovative solutions that increase liveability.</p>	<p>4.4.1 Provide support and identify opportunities on regional collaboration around Electric Vehicles.</p> <p>4.4.2 Support regional collaboration around clean energy and future energy initiatives and industries.</p>
<p>4.5 A region with enriched neighborhoods and places supported by planned infrastructure that promotes community cohesion, active living and pride in culture and heritage.</p>	<p>4.5.1 Support Improved planning outcomes to enhance liveability and lifestyle.</p> <p>4.5.2 Support a healthy and active community.</p> <p>4.5.3 Support a safe and accessible society across the region.</p> <p>4.5.4 Support enhanced cultural opportunities and protected heritage.</p>
<p>4.6 A region that is connected, inclusive and a fair.</p>	<p>4.6.1 Support affordability and increased access to housing.</p> <p>4.6.2 Support an increase in the availability of jobs and services closer to people.</p> <p>4.6.3 Support equitable access to education and health services and facilities.</p>



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