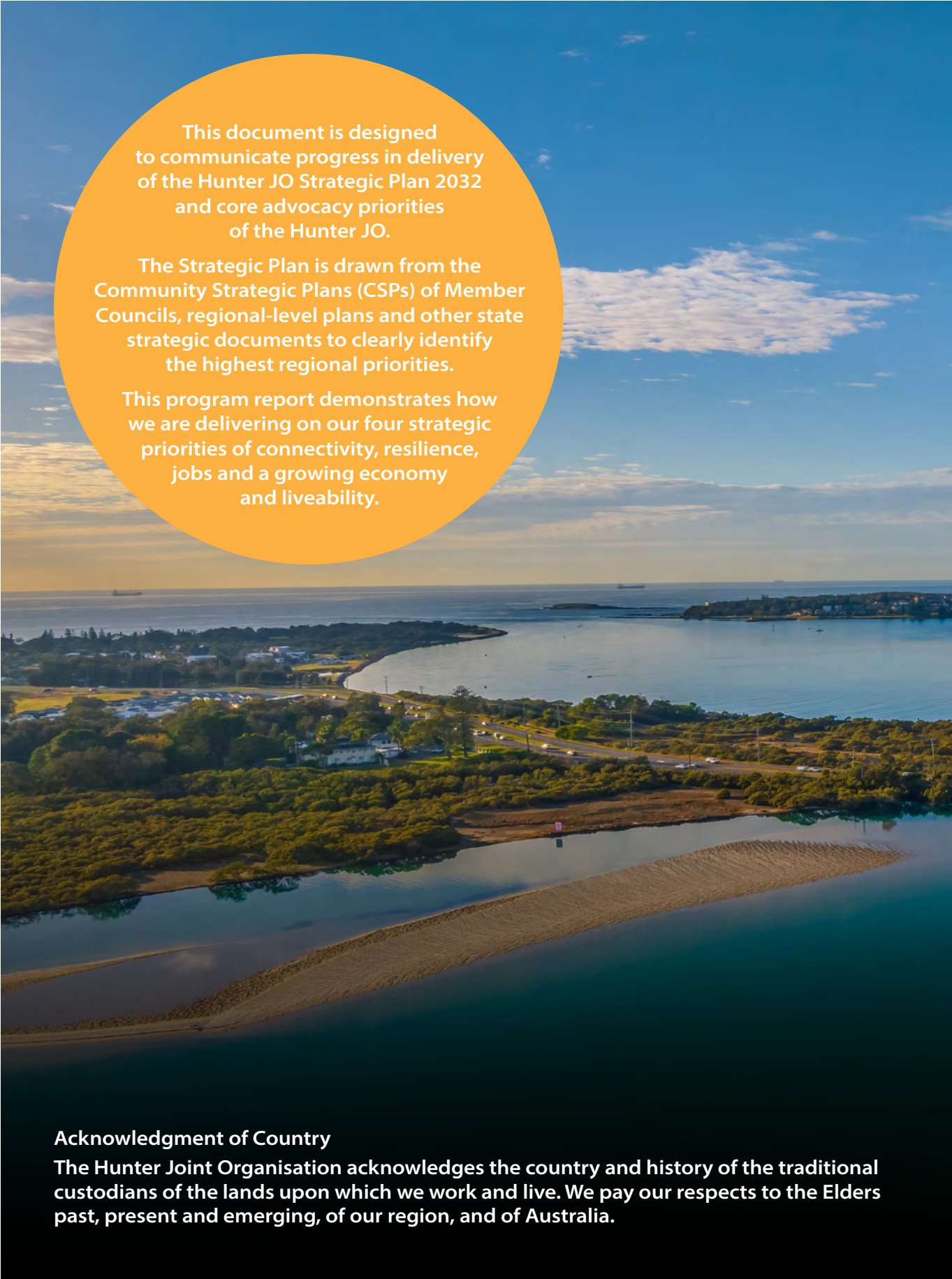




## Six-monthly Performance Statement January - July 2024



An aerial photograph of a coastal region, likely in New South Wales, Australia. The image shows a large body of water (the ocean) in the background, with a smaller inlet or bay in the foreground. A sandy beach and a line of trees separate the land from the water. In the distance, a small town or village is visible on a peninsula. The sky is blue with some clouds. A large orange circle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing text.

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

The Strategic 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.

### 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 [admin@hunterjo.com.au](mailto:admin@hunterjo.com.au).  
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# Hunter JO Program Report

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## 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.

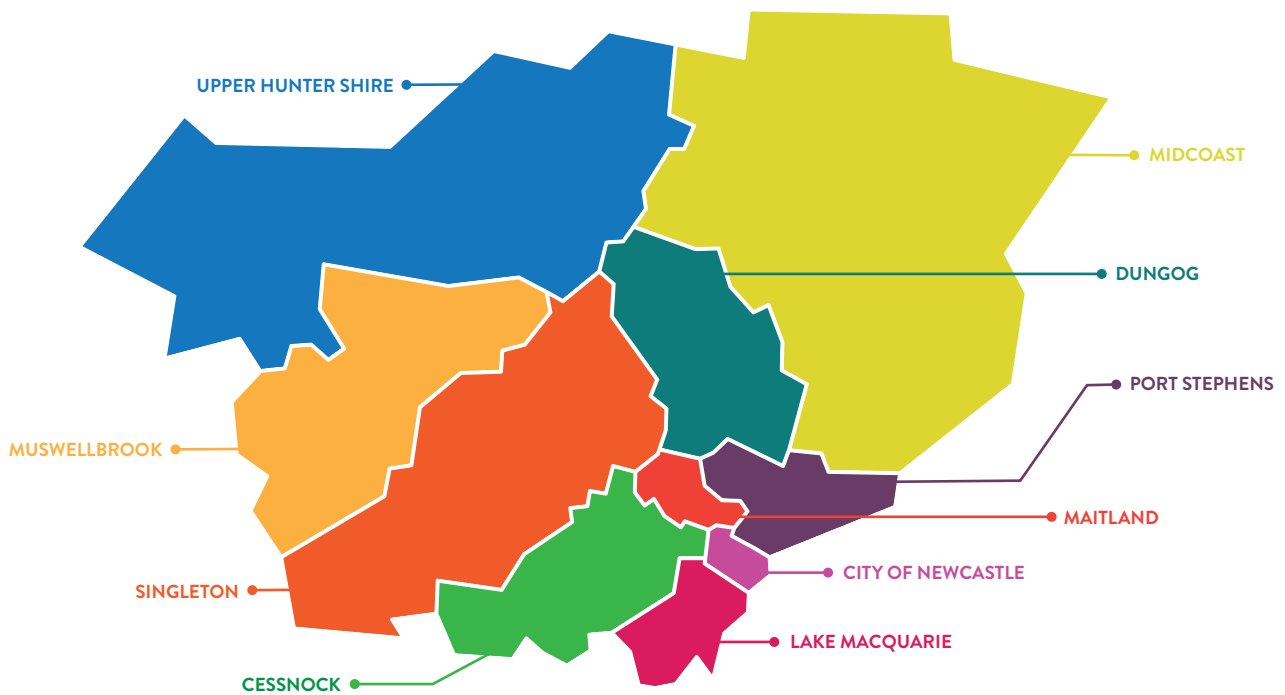


## Our Mission

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



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 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  
Chair Hunter JO



**Cr Jay Suvaal**  
Mayor Cessnock City Council  
Deputy Chair Hunter JO



**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

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







## Our 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.

# Our Delivery





# Regional Advocacy

## Political Engagements

Activity	Focus
<b>Hon Catherine King MP</b> Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government <i>5th July 2024</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hunter Cycle Tourism Plan (Shiraz to Shore)</li> <li>• Hunter Air Freight Terminal</li> <li>• Enabling Infrastructure to activate housing supply</li> </ul>
<b>Hon Barnaby Joyce MP</b> Member for New England <i>4th July 2024</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Economic Evolution</li> <li>• Reuse of Mining Land</li> </ul>
<b>Senator the Hon Jenny McAllister</b> Assistant Minister for Climate Change and Energy <i>4th July 2024</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Economic Evolution</li> <li>• Reuse of Mining Land</li> </ul>
<b>Hon Sussan Ley MP</b> Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Shadow Minister for Small and Family Business, Shadow Minister for Women & Shadow Minister for Industry, Skills and Training <i>4th July 2024</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Economic Evolution</li> <li>• Circular Economy</li> </ul>
<b>Hon Michael Sukkar MP</b> Shadow Minister for Social Services, Shadow Minister for the NDIS, Shadow Minister for Housing & Shadow Minister for Homelessness <i>4th July 2024</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enabling Infrastructure to activate housing supply</li> </ul>
<b>Hon Darren Chester MP</b> Shadow Minister for Regional Development, Shadow Minister for Local Government & Territories & Shadow Minister for Regional Education <i>4th July 2024</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Economic Evolution</li> <li>• Grant Funding Reform</li> </ul>
<b>Hon Pat Conroy MP</b> , Minister for Defence Industry & Minister for International Development and the Pacific <b>Mr Dan Repacholi MP</b> <b>Ms Meryl Swanson MP</b> <b>Ms Sharon Claydon MP</b> <i>4th July 2024</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hunter Global Freight and Tourism</li> <li>• Hunter Cycle Tourism Plan (Shiraz to Shore)</li> </ul>
<b>Senator Susan McDonald</b> Shadow Minister for Resources and Shadow Minister for Northern Australia <i>4th July 2024</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reuse of Mining Land</li> </ul>



Activity	Focus
<b>Hon Chris Bowen MP</b> Minister for Climate Change and Energy 3rd July 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Economic Evolution</li> <li>• Reuse of Mining Land</li> </ul>
<b>Senator the Hon Jonathon Duniam</b> Shadow Minister for Environment, Fisheries and Forestry 3rd July 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circular Economy</li> <li>• Regional Economic Evolution</li> <li>• Reuse of Mining Land</li> </ul>
<b>Hon Kristy McBain MP</b> Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories 3rd July 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Economic Evolution</li> <li>• Grant funding reform</li> </ul>
<b>Senator the Hon Don Farrell</b> Minister for Trade and Tourism, Special Minister of State 3rd July 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hunter Global Freight and Tourism</li> <li>• Hunter Cycle Tourism Plan (Shiraz to Shore)</li> </ul>
<b>Hon Madeleine King MP</b> Minister for Resources and Minister for Northern Australia 3rd July 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mining Land Reuse</li> </ul>
<b>Senator the Hon Carol Brown</b> Assistant Minister for Infrastructure and Transport 2nd July 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hunter Cycle Tourism Plan (Shiraz to Shore)</li> </ul>
<b>Senator Perin Davey</b> Shadow Minister for Water, Shadow Minister for Emergency Management 2nd July 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disaster Resilience</li> </ul>
<b>Hon Peter Dutton MP</b> , Leader of the Opposition <b>Ted O'Brien MP</b> , Shadow Minister for Climate Change and Energy <b>Hon Barnaby Joyce MP</b> , Member for New England <b>Senator Ross Cadell</b> , Senator for NSW 2nd July 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Economic Evolution</li> </ul>
<b>Senator the Hon Tim Ayres</b> Assistant Minister for Trade, Assistant Minister for Manufacturing 2nd July 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hunter Global Air Freight opportunities</li> <li>• Circular Economy</li> </ul>
<b>Hon David Gillespie MP</b> Federal Member for Lyne 25th June & 22nd May 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Economic Evolution</li> <li>• Hunter Global Freight and Tourism</li> <li>• Hunter Cycle Tourism Plan (Shiraz to Shore)</li> </ul>
<b>Mr Dan Repacholi MP</b> Federal Member for Hunter 17th June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hunter Global Freight and Tourism</li> <li>• Hunter Cycle Tourism Plan (Shiraz to Shore)</li> </ul>

Activity	Focus
<b>NSW Hunter Labor Caucus</b> <i>9th May 2024</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hunter Global Freight and Tourism</li> <li>• Hunter Cycle Tourism Plan (Shiraz to Shore)</li> </ul>
<b>Hon Courtney Houssos MLC</b> NSW Minister for Finance, Minister for Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement, and Minister for Natural Resources <i>8th May 2024</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Economic Evolution</li> <li>• Re-use of Mining Lands</li> </ul>
<b>Ms Meryl Swanson MP, Federal Member for Paterson</b> <i>24th April 2024</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hunter Global Freight and Tourism and Hunter Cycle Tourism Plan (Shiraz to Shore)</li> </ul>

Regional Submissions	
Activity	Focus
<b>Future Jobs and Investment Authorities Issues Paper</b> <i>12th July 2024</i>	Priorities and opportunities through which to activate the strategic planning and implementation of actions needed to drive the broad scale evolution and diversification of the Hunter's economy by the Future Jobs and Investment Authorities.
<b>Inquiry into beneficial and productive post-mining land use</b> <i>25th June 2024</i>	Priorities and opportunities through which to activate the strategic, beneficial and productive reuse of mining lands as a primary contributor to the region's economic evolution.
<b>NSW Transport Freight Policy Reform Program</b> <i>31st May 2024</i>	Recommendations for building the international freight capacity and capability of the Hunter Region's primary international gateways, the Port of Newcastle and Newcastle Airport

Media	
Activity	Focus
<b>Media coverage of Hunter JO submission to the Future Jobs and Investment Hunter Issues Paper</b> <i>16th July 2024</i>	Priority recommendations for the Future Jobs and Investment Authority to activate the Hunter's economic evolution. Coverage: <a href="#">Newcastle Herald</a> – "Hunter councils say 0.5% of coal royalties not enough for transition plan"
<b>Media Launch for Hunter Global Tourism</b> <i>12th June 2024</i>	Outcomes and Recommendations arising from Hunter Global Tourism Business Case <a href="#">Media release</a> Coverage: <a href="#">NBN News</a> <a href="#">Newcastle Herald</a> ABC Radio
<b>Media Launch for Hunter Airport Strategy and Air-freight cargo terminal</b> <i>8th March 2024</i>	Outcomes and Recommendations arising from Hunter Global Tourism Business Case <a href="#">Media release</a> Coverage: NBN News <a href="#">Newcastle Herald</a>



# Intergovernmental Collaboration

## Highlights - Hunter JO Workshops, Forums and Events

<b>Hunter Resilience Forum</b> <i>9 May 2024</i>	<p>This forum provided councils the opportunity to connect and collaborate with their peers from across the region. The Forum included;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NSW Reconstruction Authority (RA) update on the State Recovery Plan</li> <li>- City of Newcastle Emergency Management Mapping case study</li> <li>- NSW RA presentation on the State Disaster Mitigation Plan and Disaster Adaptation Plans (DAP)</li> <li>- NSW RA workshop on draft DAP process and governance</li> <li>- University of Canberra presentation on Indicators of Resilience</li> <li>- Workshop on IP&amp;R and defining and measuring community resilience, setting targets and indicators</li> </ul> <p>Workshop findings have been incorporated into the NSW RA DAP framework and the Hunter JO Resilience IP&amp;R Support Package.</p>
<b>Circular Economy Co-Design Workshop</b> <i>7 May 2024</i>	<p>Council and industry representatives presented key insights on current practices, level of circularity and gaps to address across our top 10 waste streams in the region.</p>
<b>Regional Economic Development and Planning Forum</b> <i>17 May 2024</i>	<p>This forum showcased the preliminary findings (and their relationship to the Hunter's economic evolution) of Dr Simon Wright's recent Churchill Fellowship visit to Europe and Canada investigating the transition of coal based economies. Updates were also provided by Federal and NSW Government agency representatives on the progress of the Net Zero Economy Agency and Future Jobs and Investment Authorities.</p>
<b>Hunter Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan Technical Workshop with Transport for NSW and Council staff</b> <i>27 June 2024</i>	<p>This workshop facilitated Council staff input to the Hunter Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan.</p>
<b>Newcastle Tourism Industry Group's Hunter Regional Tourism Summit - Presentation on Hunter Global</b> <i>19 June 2024</i>	<p>The outcomes and recommendations from the Hunter Global Tourism Business Case were presented to this forum.</p>
<b>Statewide Regional Waste Coordinators Meeting</b> <i>13 - 14 June 2024</i>	<p>Hunter JO hosted the Statewide Waste Coordinators meeting where regional coordinators from the 14 regions around the state come together with the State Government to collaborate and exchange information. The meeting was hosted at the City of Newcastle, and was followed by a site tour of industrial showcasing council circular economy related sites in the region.</p>

### Standing Engagement - Convened by Hunter JO & Local Government

Hunter JO Circular Economy SubCommittee	Quarterly
Regional Waste Managers Network	Quarterly
Sustainability Educators Group	Bi-monthly
Regional Illegal Dumping Committee	Quarterly
Hunter Net Zero Network	Bi-monthly
Revolving Energy Fund Action Group	Monthly
Hunter Resilience Network	Bi-monthly

### Standing Engagement - Convened by Others

Hunter Central Coast Coastal Management Practicioners Roundtable (DCCEEW)	Bi-monthly
Hunter IP&R Network	Quarterly
Hunter Councils Risk Management Team	Quarterly
Hunter Inwards Grants Network	Quarterly
NSW JO Chairs Forum	Quarterly
NSW JO Executive Officers Network	Monthly
Joint Organisation Net Zero Acceleration Network (DCCEEW)	Weekly
Hunter Regional Leadership Executive (NSW Premiers)	Quarterly
Regional Business Attraction Committee (Regional NSW)	Quarterly
Resources NSW Steering Committee (NIER)	Quarterly
Unified Voice - Hunter Advocacy Coordination and Collaboration (Committee for the Hunter)	Six-Weekly

# Regional Programs and Capacity Building

## Program Status Report

Strategic Themes	Project	Funding	Delivery Date
CONNECTIVITY			
● ● ●	Cycle Tourism Strategy (Shiraz to Shore)	Grant	31-03-2024
● ● ●	Airports Strategy (Freight and Logistics)	Grant	31-03-2024
RESILIENCE			
● ● ●	Disaster Risk Reduction	Grant	30-06-2024
● ● ●	Disaster Waste & Resource Recovery Preparedness	Grant	30-06-2024
● ● ●	Regional Transport and Connectivity Vulnerability Assessment	Grant	30-06-2024
JOBS AND A GROWING ECONOMY			
● ● ●	Circular Economy Ecosystem	Grant	30-06-2027
● ● ●	Circular Precincts and Futures Hub	Grant	31-03-2024
● ● ●	Hunter Circular Knowledge Hub	Grant	31-12-2024
● ● ●	Hospitality Circularity Project	Grant	31-03-2026
● ● ●	Hunter Global Tourism	Grant	31-03-2024
● ● ● ●	Priority Infrastructure List	Hunter JO	30-06-2024
LIVEABILITY			
● ● ●	Accelerating Event Economies	Grant	31-12-2023
● ● ●	Community Recycling Centres	Grant	30-06-2024
● ● ●	Illegal Dumping Program	Grant	31-03-2027
● ● ●	Landfill Emissions Data Project	Grant	30-06-2024
● ● ●	Contaminated Land Program	Grant	15-12-2023
● ● ● ●	Net Zero Acceleration	Grant	30-06-2024





## 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?

<b>1.1</b> 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.	<b>1.2</b> 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.	<b>1.3</b> 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.	<b>1.4</b> A region that is built around sustainable transport outcomes.
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### 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.	The Business Case and Concept Plan is now complete, with a media launch scheduled for Friday 2 August 2024. Briefings on the project's findings and recommendations have been provided to The Hon Don Farrell, Federal Minister for Tourism and Trade Hon Catherine King MP, Federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, NSW Hunter Labor Caucus, Federal Hunter Labor Caucus and Hunter JO Board.
<b>Strategic Directions</b>	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"> <li>A strategy and business case for airfreight and passenger infrastructure and connectivity logistics for the region.</li> <li>An integrated airports strategy for the region including assessments of passenger, airfreight and transport links across the region.</li> </ul>	<p>The Business Case and Concept Plan is now complete. A Media Launch took place on Wednesday 12 June involving Mayors John Connors and Ryan Palmer, along with Newcastle Airport CEO Peter Cock, at Newcastle Airport.</p> <p>Briefings on the project's findings and recommendations have been provided to The Hon Don Farrell, Federal Minister for Tourism and Trade and Hon Catherine King MP, Federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, NSW Hunter Labor Caucus and the Federal Hunter Labor Caucus.</p>
<b>Strategic Directions</b>	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.

## Disaster Risk Reduction Sub-Project 1 - Regional Support & Capacity Building

### Purpose

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:

- 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

### Status Update

The Disaster Risk Reduction Program is now complete. Hunter Resilience Network meetings continue to be held every two months featuring council case studies, guest presentations and discussion. An in-person forum was held in May and included NSW Reconstruction Authority delivering a workshop on Disaster Adaptation Plans, a workshop on measuring resilience, and a case study from City of Newcastle. The Resilience IP&R Support Package has been updated to reflect workshop outputs and the new State Disaster Mitigation Plan and is publicly available at <https://www.hunterjo.com.au/projects/disaster-resilience/>. Six council representatives attended Australian Institute of Disaster Resilience online masterclasses to build capability. Resilience Needs and Opportunities Analyses for individual LGAs and the Hunter region are now available and has been summarised in a report outlining linkages with the IP&R framework.

### Strategic Directions

2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 2.2.2, 2.3.1, 2.3.2

## Disaster Risk Reduction Sub-Project 2 - Disaster Waste & Resource Recovery Preparedness

### Purpose

To understand disaster waste needs and risks in the Hunter and Central Coast, and prepare a regional support package to assist councils to plan for effective disaster waste management.

### Status Update

The Disaster Waste and Resource Recovery Preparedness Project has helped the region to better understand and prepare for waste generated by disasters and enable greater diversion and recovery of materials, protecting the region's landfill. The project created several outputs that will assist the regions councils in increasing their disaster preparedness, these include; Regional and LGA Disaster Waste and Resource Recovery Management Plans Draft Memorandum of understanding, Disaster Waste Planning Flowchart, Material Flow Analysis, Regional Risk Register, Disaster Waste Composition Matrix, and a Multi Criteria Analysis Tool. More information can be found in the Project Summary and Project Report. See [link](#) for these project resources and project outputs.

### Strategic Directions

2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 2.2.2, 2.3.1, 2.3.2



## Resilience

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

### Disaster Risk Reduction Sub-Project 3 - Transport Vulnerability & Connectivity

#### Purpose

To provide an assessment of the risks posed to Hunter and Central Coast region's transport networks by natural disasters, and the actions and partnerships required to mitigate these risks

#### Status Update

In collaboration with TfNSW and the NSW JO Network, we've arranged for a 12-month subscription for councils to use the Planwisely platform. Planwisely is used extensively by TfNSW and contains a wide array of TfNSW data along with foundational, demographic and movement data and satellite imagery, allowing councils to access and use data in real world planning, preparation, response and recovery, 'test' the usefulness and serviceability of the data and identify what else would better support them to deliver disaster resilience of their networks. Each council has been issued with 1-3 licences to trial and use over the next 12 months, with training and licencing to commence late July.

#### Strategic Directions

2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 2.2.2, 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?

**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.

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

**3.3** A globally focused region that drives talent attraction and retention.

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

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

### Circular Economy Ecosystem

#### Purpose

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

#### Status Update

This program has had reduced resourcing since March 2024, however has continued to support a number of circular economy ecosystems initiatives including; facilitating the Circular Economy; Facilitators Group meetings and quarterly workshops; Hunter Innovation Festival; Boomerang Labs Circular Economy Accelerator and the Hunter Circular website.

#### Strategic Directions

3.4.1, 4.2.2, 4.4.2

### Circular Precincts and Futures Hub

#### Purpose

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:

- 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.

#### Status Update

This project is complete, and delivered a business case for the development of industrial circular economy precincts in the Hunter and Central Coast region, along with a Futures Hub to act as a transition broker to establish and support this industry. The business case was developed by GHD, and found that the industrial circular economy could provide \$1.1 billion of GRP and 1,080 jobs to the regional economy, support other emerging industries (e.g. locally recycling and supplying materials to renewable energy), and regenerating the local environment. Over the next 6-12 months, the Hunter JO team will aim to implement the project by engaging stakeholders, obtaining funding, and establishing the Futures Hub.

#### Strategic Directions

3.4.1, 4.2.2, 4.4.2





## 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.

### Hunter Circular Knowledge Hub

#### Purpose

To create and pilot a digital circular knowledge hub for two distinct user groups – for council staff, and for the community at large. The aim is to address the information accessibility and knowledge barriers that prevail and frustrate uptake of circular services and recovery pathways in the region. By creating tools to broaden participation, these solutions will be supported to scale and increase their impact. The project will gather information on services and solutions available in the region, then deploy tools that will present that information in a user-friendly format designed specifically for that group's needs.

#### Status Update

**Stream A** - Council Portal. Contract awarded and Working Group established to better understand the needs of council staff in the development of the Knowledge Hub Council Portal.

**Stream A** – Research. Final Report and Circularity Assessment completed. Circular Plastics Pilot commenced with Upper Hunter, Singleton, Cessnock, Maitland, Newcastle and Port Stephens with Resourceful Living as the industry body. Site visits scheduled for Thursday 8 August 2024, waste facilities to be confirmed.

**Stream B** – Community Map. The mapping tool has been developed and user testing is currently taking place. Name for the tool is currently being workshopped. Working Group to provide feedback on prototype once user testing has been completed and relevant changes made. Dates for festival attendance (Living Smart and Bushlands) as well as roll out of promotions currently being developed.

#### Strategic Directions

3.4.1, 3.4.2, 4.2.2, 4.4.2

### Hospitality Circularity Project

#### Purpose

This project will create the 'Hunter Hospitality Circularity Network' and engage hospitality SME's across the Hunter region, to build their capacity to evaluate and adopt circular solutions for their business operations and supply chains, with a focus on organics and single-use items. The project will work with existing business networks in precincts across six Local Government areas to take a place-based approach to strengthening and building hospitality SME networks. Through co-design processes and Bin Trim assessment phases, the project will build the capacity of these networks to work collectively to identify and implement circular solutions that benefit from network efficiency and scale.

#### Status Update

Phase 1 and 2 of the program has been successfully completed, with waste audits and action plans created for 161 hospitality businesses around the region. Milestone 2 reporting targets were met and exceeded. Next steps for the program are to run 2 codesign events with local businesses to refine Phase 3 program activities, before undertaking second round of detailed business engagement.

#### Strategic Directions

3.4.2, 4.2.2

### Hunter Global Tourism

#### Purpose

To identify the international tourism opportunities of the Hunter region in preparation of the Newcastle Airport international upgrade. Key elements include:

- 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.

#### Status Update

The Business Case and Strategy is now complete, with a media launch occurring on 12 June 2024. Briefings on the project outcomes have been provided to the Hon Don Farrell, Federal Minister for Tourism and Trade, Federal Hunter Labor Caucus and NSW Hunter Labor Caucus.

#### Strategic Directions

1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 3.5.1, 3.5.2, 4.1.1



## 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.

### Priority Infrastructure List (Stage 2)

Purpose	Status Update
<p>To develop a methodology and process for determining regional infrastructure priorities to support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Building and advocating a stronger case for investment in infrastructure priorities across the region</li><li>• Identifying the potential for shared interests and collaboration between Councils and other stakeholders in delivering local and regional scale infrastructure initiatives.</li></ul>	<p><b>Transport</b> - Member Councils were invited to participate in a technical workshop with TfNSW, providing an opportunity to contribute to the TfNSW Hunter Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan (SRITP). Prior to the workshop, council staff were asked to list their Council's top 5 regional transport priorities and shared these along with their reasoning and benefits of the projects identified, enabling TfNSW to recognise and understand the unique local needs of the Hunter. Draft SRITP due to be released late October.</p>
Strategic Directions	3.1.1, 3.1.5, 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?

4.1

We are recognised as a destination for hosting world class events that align with our unique offering.

4.2

Making use of our opportunity to drive circular evolution of our region's economy.

4.3

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

4.4

Supporting our region to be on the path to net zero emissions and paving the way with smart innovative solutions that increase liveability.

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.

4.6

A region that is connected, inclusive and a fair.

### Accelerating Event Economies

#### Purpose

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

#### Status Update

This project is now complete, with the final report to be submitted by end of July 2024. Key benefits from the project include:

- Understanding the economic benefits of events in our region.
- Identifying the gaps in infrastructure to support event attraction.
- Providing data to develop business cases to encourage infrastructure investment in the region and have evidence-based conversations with stakeholders.
- Positioned our region as a destination of choice for events.
- Making it easier for event managers to find, select and host events in our region.

More information on the project's outputs can be found at <https://www.hunterjo.com.au/projects/accelerating-events-economies-in-the-hunter-a2e/>

#### Strategic Directions

1.2.1, 1.2.3, 4.1.1, 4.1.2

### Community Recycling Centres

#### Purpose

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

#### Status Update

The current focus of this project is obtaining signed deeds from all participating Councils in order to proceed with the next stage of delivery. Four remain to be finalised

#### Strategic Directions

4.2.1, 4.2.2, 4.3.1, 4.3.3



## Liveability

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

### Illegal Dumping Program

Purpose	Status Update
<p>To support Member Councils manage illegal dumping by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivering a regional approach to target illegal dumping</li> <li>• Employing skilled officers to undertake compliance action against illegal dumpers</li> <li>• Undertaking proactive measures to prevent illegal dumping</li> <li>• Targeting problematic and complex illegal dumping incidents.</li> <li>• Increasing capacity to target problematic and complex illegal dumping incidents.</li> </ul>	<p>The Hunter Central Coast RID Program continues to build momentum among the ten councils represented. A major achievement for the first full year has been development of a program logic outlining three key activity areas for attaining a region free from illegal dumping: building community awareness and knowledge about illegal dumping; building member council capacity; and building relationships and partnerships with stakeholders. The most successful activities to date have been a regional social media campaign, training workshops and purchase of new surveillance cameras.</p>
Strategic Directions	4.3.1, 4.3.2, 4.3.3

### Landfill Emissions Data Project

Purpose	Status Update
<p>To establish 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.</p>	<p><b>Stage 1</b> of this project is complete, delivering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a boundary assessment to determine what is and isn't included in landfill emissions calculations.</li> <li>- calculation of landfill emissions using the NGERs solid waste calculator for 8 of the 11 participating councils.</li> <li>- the Mastering Landfill Emissions with the NGERs Calculator capacity building package.</li> </ul> <p><b>Stage 2</b> of the project is now underway, and includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- scenario modelling showing how emissions reductions actions (FOGO implementation and landfill gas capture systems) impact projected landfill emissions.</li> <li>- technical and financial feasibility guidance for implementing landfill gas capture systems.</li> <li>- NSW case studies of landfill gas capture systems that have been implemented</li> <li>- building a online dashboard to display the landfill emissions data and scenario modelling.</li> </ul>
Strategic Directions	4.2.2, 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>	<p>This project is now complete. In the last quarter, all Hunter JO Contaminated Land resources have been updated and published at <a href="https://www.hunterjo.com.au/projects/regional-contaminated-land-program/">https://www.hunterjo.com.au/projects/regional-contaminated-land-program/</a>. Two online and one in-person information sessions were held during March and May to refresh councils' knowledge of the resources available, and one-on-one UPSS support sessions have been held with most councils. The EPA-funded LGNSW Contaminated Land webpage and network continues to be used to facilitate collaboration between councils on contaminated land issues.</p>
Strategic Directions	4.3.1, 4.3.3





## Liveability

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

### Net Zero Acceleration

Purpose	Status Update
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.	The JONZA Pilot Round (2023-24) concluded on 31 June 2024, after a successful first 12 months. The Hunter JO, along with 8 other JOs across NSW, has received a further 12 months of funding (\$161,200 ex-GST) for the 2024-25 financial year. This will allow for the continuation of Net Zero Coordinator position to assist member councils to progress towards net zero, by facilitating projects and collaboration with NSW DCCEEW. In addition, NSW DCCEEW has provided \$75,400 of project funding to progress EV uptake and charging infrastructure.
Strategic Directions	2.2.1, 2.2.2, 4.4.1, 4.4.2





# Grants and Funding Proposals

Status	Amount	Grant
Successful	\$349,413 (over 2 yrs)	<b>Funding Program:</b> Local Government Waste Solutions Fund <b>Project:</b> Circular Procurement for Local Government Phase 2 This project will continue the circular economy work on procurement systems and processes to assist our member councils procure more circular products and assist suppliers in meeting our specification requirements.
Successful	\$161,200 (1 yr)	<b>Funding Program:</b> Joint Organisations Net Zero Acceleration (JONZA) <b>Project:</b> 12-month extension of employment of Hunter Net Zero Coordinator This funding will continue employment of the Regional Net Zero Coordinator, to continue providing regional coordination of net zero projects across the Hunter Joint Organisation Member Councils.
<b>Advice Pending</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First round EOI successful</li> <li>• Full application submitted 20 March 2024</li> <li>• Project has been included in the NSW Government's submission to the Commonwealth funding body.</li> </ul>	\$851,271 (over 3 yrs)	<b>Funding Program:</b> Australian Government's Disaster Ready Fund <b>Project:</b> "Getting Local Government Disaster Ready – Disaster Resilience Capacity Building for the Hunter and Central Coast" This project will build resilience capacity and capability within 11 Hunter and Central Coast councils by supporting development of local and regional Disaster Adaptation Plans, embedding resilience into councils' IP&R framework, facilitating a regional resilience network, and supporting community engagement.

Successful

Advice Pending

Unsuccessful



# 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?
<b>1.1</b> 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.	<b>1.1.1</b> Support local government having a collective voice in the planning and delivery of major transport infrastructure and systems. <b>1.1.2</b> Proactively facilitate collaboration with key state agencies to support delivery of connectivity solutions that suit the regions current and future needs. <b>1.1.3</b> Support Member Councils to influence other levels of government on a sustainable model for delivery and maintenance of road infrastructure. <b>1.1.4</b> Support a Regional Integrated Transport Plan linking key services and centres. <b>1.1.5</b> Identify and facilitate regional approaches for active transport outcomes that deliver connectivity, health, liveability and economic benefits. <b>1.1.6</b> Private and public transport solutions operate on a net zero basis.
<b>1.2</b> 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.	<b>1.2.1</b> Partnering with airport and port to identify and pursue priority actions to enable access to international markets for the benefit of the region. <b>1.2.2</b> Influence government policy to prioritise the importance of access to international markets for the benefit of the region. <b>1.2.3</b> Leading collaboration in the region between government, industry and community to ensure the benefits of international markets are region wide. <b>1.2.4</b> Support a transport access strategy for regional connectivity to and from the airport.
<b>1.3</b> 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.	<b>1.3.1</b> 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.
<b>1.4</b> A region that is built around sustainable transport outcomes.	<b>1.4.1</b> Embed the direction of net-zero in all our connectivity strategies to provide a pathway and level of confidence to investors and community to support the transition to more sustainable transport outcomes.

## Resilience

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



Objectives - Where do we want to be?	Strategic Directions - How will we get there?
<p><b>2.1</b> We are recognised as innovative leaders in Council capacity building and policy support for climate change action, resilience and disaster preparedness.</p>	<p><b>2.1.1</b> We provide guidance and support packages to embed Climate Change action, resilience and disaster preparedness into Councils Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&amp;R) framework.</p> <p><b>2.1.2</b> We drive council capacity building opportunities supported by an evidence base to improve regional resilience and community awareness.</p> <p><b>2.1.3</b> We drive opportunities to collaborate, adopt system thinking and circular economy opportunities to reduce our impact on climate change and increase resilience.</p>
<p><b>2.2</b> We take leadership and drive regional best practice in climate action.</p>	<p><b>2.2.1</b> 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><b>2.2.2</b> Engage and provide thought leadership in local, national and global climate change and resilience networks.</p>
<p><b>2.3</b> Our region is resilient to environment risks, natural hazards and climate change.</p>	<p><b>2.3.1</b> Apply and obtain financial grants for regional programs that support a resilient region.</p> <p><b>2.3.2</b> 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?
<b>3.1</b> 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.	<b>3.1.1</b> 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. <b>3.1.2</b> 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. <b>3.1.3</b> Support regional institutional capacity to assist businesses and workers impacted by changes in the economy. <b>3.1.4</b> 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. <b>3.1.5</b> Support government policy and planning that prioritise the investment into key regional catalyst areas. <b>3.1.6</b> Support the place-based delivery of Aboriginal partnerships and employment programs in the Hunter.
<b>3.2</b> 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.	<b>3.2.1</b> 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. <b>3.2.2</b> Improve and accelerate the regions access to investment and capital markets to underpin the innovation ecosystem and the redevelopment of industrial and mining assets.
<b>3.3</b> A globally focused region that drives talent attraction and retention.	<b>3.3.1</b> Support efforts that position the Hunter globally in its areas of competitive and comparative strength.
<b>3.4</b> A region that is built around Circular Economy principles as a driver of future jobs.	<b>3.4.1</b> 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. <b>3.4.2</b> Support implementation of the Hunter Central Coast Circular Economy Roadmap.
<b>3.5</b> We are recognised as a destination of choice for international and domestic visitors.	<b>3.5.1</b> Support a coordinated approach and collaborate around regional tourism promotion to grow jobs in the region. <b>3.5.2</b> Identify opportunities for growth and diversification of employment based in the tourism economy.

## Liveability

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



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



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