



4 Sandringham Avenue, PO Box 3137,  
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[www.hunterjo.nsw.gov.au](http://www.hunterjo.nsw.gov.au)

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Hunter Mayors call for urgent action on mining land redevelopment**

Date: 26 March 2025

Mayors are doubling down on an urgent call for action regarding the impending loss of over 10,000 jobs in the Hunter region by 2030. The Chair and Deputy Chair of the Hunter Joint Organisation, supported by all 10 Mayors of the Hunter region, reiterates the need for immediate and concrete financial commitments from both major parties as we approach the Federal election, and a commitment from the NSW Government to directly reinvest coal royalties back into the Hunter to accelerate our economic transformation.

With an expected global decline in coal demand with the uptake of renewable energy across the world, the Hunter region is set to experience coal mine closures, impacting around 50,000 direct and indirect supply chain jobs between now and 2050. It's not just miners that will be impacted, businesses who are supplying the mines will be reduced, along with the demand on the supporting jobs that keep a community functioning such as restaurants, taxi drivers, supermarkets, chemists, accommodation, laundromats etc.

"The mining lands are currently employing thousands of people. The Mayors of the Hunter region have a plan to look at how the lands can continue to provide employment to their local communities," Chair of the Hunter Joint Organisation and Mayor of Singleton Council, Cr Sue Moore said.

"We're here today at Bloomfield mine in Maitland as an example site that has existing infrastructure such as train lines, connections to high voltage electricity, water, good transport connections to the highway, all of which could be re-used for other businesses instead of the current plans to remove them. We need to prioritise the development of these mining and buffer lands to reutilise these important assets where feasible, with the added benefit of reducing the need to clear undisturbed bushland to create much needed new employment lands" Cr Moore said.

The region's Mayors are calling on the NSW and Federal Governments to accelerate action to address these challenges, and investing in the four pilot projects across the Hunter is an important and significant first step in doing so.

The four proposed pilot projects valued at \$20.7m will map all coal mine sites across the Hunter region and analyse their economic development opportunities, in addition to developing a Mine Closure Action Plan for Singleton. Two sites in Lake Macquarie and Muswellbrook are prioritised to develop detailed Master Plans for their next best use.

"If only 1% of mining royalties collected by the NSW Government were directed to support mining impacted communities transform their economies, there would be an anticipated revenue of \$133 million over the next four years based on the 23/24 NSW Government budget." Cr Moore said. "In that context our funding ask of \$20.7m to accelerate this work across the whole region is very reasonable to get things moving" Cr Moore said.



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Deputy Chair of the Hunter Joint Organisation and Mayor of Port Stephens understands this is a regional issue “With thousands of people travelling outside of our local government area each day for work, what happens with these mining lands, and their future impacts, goes beyond council boundaries,” Cr Anderson said.

“We’re highlighting our concerns as a united front, because we need NSW and Federal Government’s help, and we need it now. Our joint proposal valued at \$20.7m, represent four pilot projects across the Hunter region, will identify the best possible use of priority mining and industrial land whilst navigating the complex planning system” Cr Anderson said.

The outcomes of these important pilot projects will streamline the process for other mining areas and communities within NSW and Australia and will support Australia’s journey towards net zero emissions.

Lord Mayor of Newcastle, Cr Ross Kerridge, expresses his support “This is important to the whole Hunter, including Newcastle. With less than five years to plan for the re-use of the mining and buffer lands set to close in 2030, we need commitment from both State and Federal governments to invest in local government led actions to strategically plan, activate and attract new business and industry to reuse these lands to create new jobs across the Hunter region. There are hundreds of supporting businesses and thousands of employees across Newcastle that will be impacted otherwise” Cr Kerridge said.

At the epicentre of the issue, “Muswellbrook is at a fork in the road and so is the Hunter. We’ve known about the closures of Mt Arthur and Mangoola for long enough to know we’re set to lose 3,000 jobs in Muswellbrook and up to 12,000 in the Hunter, from pit to port,” Muswellbrook Mayor Jeff Drayton said.

“It’s not a distant concern, it’s a crisis here and now. The next Parliament will oversee this upheaval in Muswellbrook and the Hunter. What our MPs, candidates and leaders do now will decide how that lands in our communities.

“We need industries, investment and jobs for our workers. The future of Muswellbrook, the Hunter and Australia’s energy depends on real, binding action by our next Australian government, today.” Cr Drayton said.

Mayor of Maitland, Cr Philip Penfold joins in raising his concerns “while Governments are investing into workforce re-skilling and local manufacturing initiatives, unless we have land available for new businesses to establish, we may miss out on these opportunities in the Hunter. We need to repurpose the current mining lands to allow businesses to establish and create local jobs in the region.” Cr Penfold said.

Mayor of Dungog, Cr Digby Rayward can see the bigger picture “We need to ensure that current residents of the Dungog Shire can find alternative employment if they lose their current jobs in the mining industry as it contracts.”



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“That is why it is important to allow alternative businesses the opportunity to start up quickly on old mining land - not wait 10 years or more for rezoning” Cr Rayward said.

The Hunter region is perfectly positioned to take advantage of industry and economic evolution as our economy transforms to net zero. It hosts large scale land including mining and buffer lands suitable for industrial usage, a population of close to one million people including a diverse and skilled workforce and direct connectivity to the world via Newcastle Port and Airport.

### **Mayors represented by the Hunter Joint Organisation**

- Cr Sue Moore, Mayor of Singleton Council and Chair of the Hunter Joint Organisation
- Cr Leah Anderson, Mayor of Port Stephens Council and Deputy Chair of the Hunter Joint Organisation
- Cr Dan Watton, Mayor of Cessnock City Council
- Cr Digby Rayward, Mayor Dungog Shire Council
- Cr Philip Penfold, Mayor of Maitland City Council
- Cr Jeffrey Drayton, Mayor of Muswellbrook Shire Council
- Cr Adam Shultz, Mayor of Lake Macquarie City Council
- Dr Ross Kerridge, Lord Mayor of City of Newcastle
- Cr Maurice Collison, Mayor of Upper Hunter Shire Council
- Cr Claire Pontin, Mayor of MidCoast Council

The Mayors provide a united and local voice for our communities, working across council boundaries to ensure that the diverse needs and aspirations of the Hunter region are effectively represented and addressed. The councils of the Hunter have been working closely together for nearly 70 years.

The Hunter JO includes the following councils: Cessnock, Dungog, Lake Macquarie, MidCoast, Maitland, Muswellbrook, Newcastle, Port Stephens, Singleton, and Upper Hunter.

### **Contact details:**

Please direct media or project inquiries to [comms@hunterjo.nsw.gov.au](mailto:comms@hunterjo.nsw.gov.au) or contact Kim Carland on 0460 034 614.

### **About the Hunter JO:**

The Hunter Joint Organisation is a collaborative body that brings together the ten councils in the region to provide a united and local voice for our communities. As the hub for local intergovernmental collaboration, our statutory mandate includes identifying key regional strategic priorities, advocating for these priorities, and building collaborations around these priorities with other levels of government, industry and community. Find out more at [www.hunterjo.com.au](http://www.hunterjo.com.au)