




Hunter Joint Organisation Six-monthly Performance Statement July - December 2024



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

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.

If you have any feedback or questions please contact us at admin@hunterjo.nsw.gov.au or at www.hunterjo.nsw.gov.au

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Section One

About the Hunter JO

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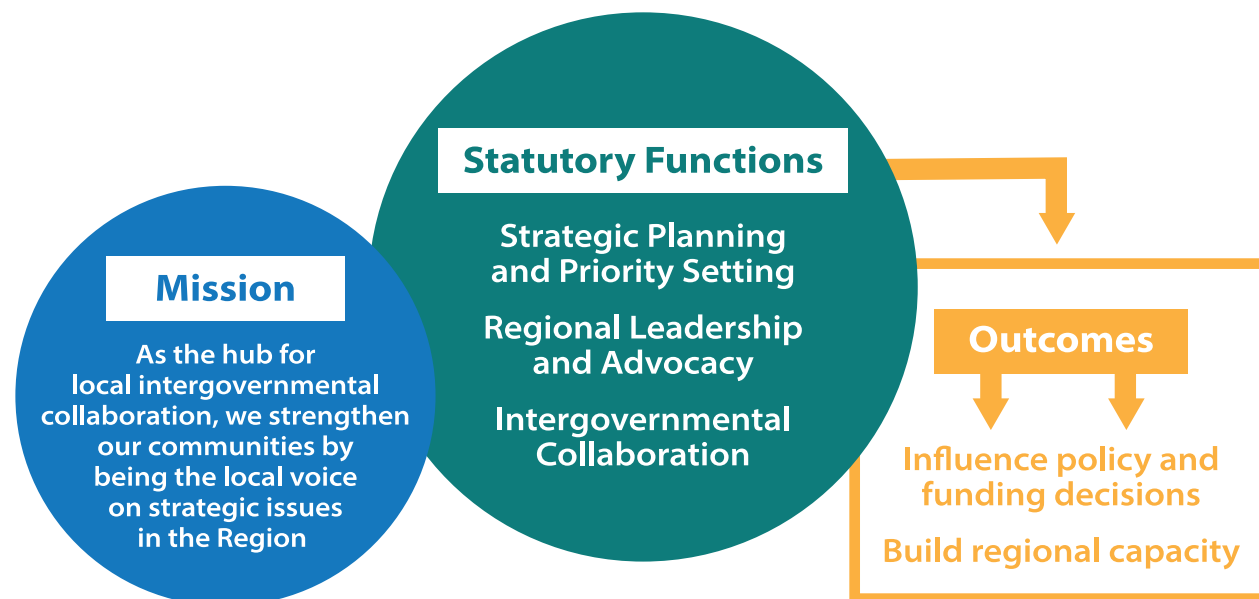
Who are we

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.

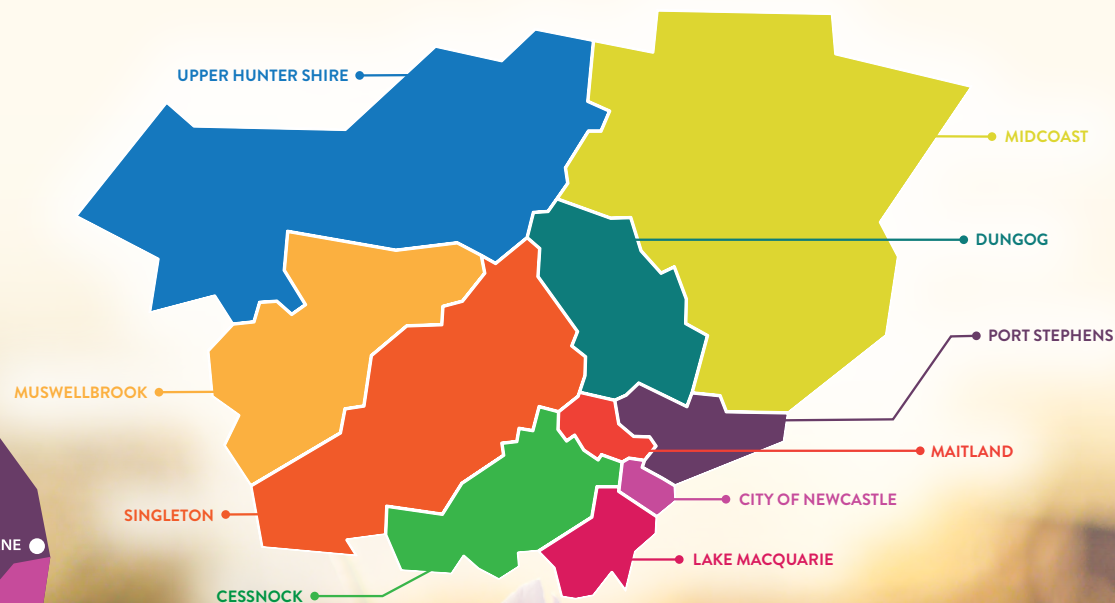
The Hunter JO Board determines the strategy and oversees the programs and advocacy priorities of the Hunter JO. The Board consists of the Mayor of each Member Council as Voting Representatives, with Non-Voting Representatives including GM's/CEO's of each Member Council and an employee of the NSW public service.

Collaboration across the Hunter region is the cornerstone of the Hunter JO. The connection and coordination between our Member Councils has grown and developed since the 1950s, when local government combined their efforts in the best interests of their communities to respond to floods across the region. Since this time our collaboration has developed and matured, delivering value for councils, our region, and the local government sector as a whole.





Hunter Region
32,870 km²

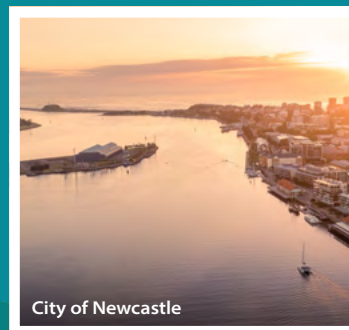


Our Vision

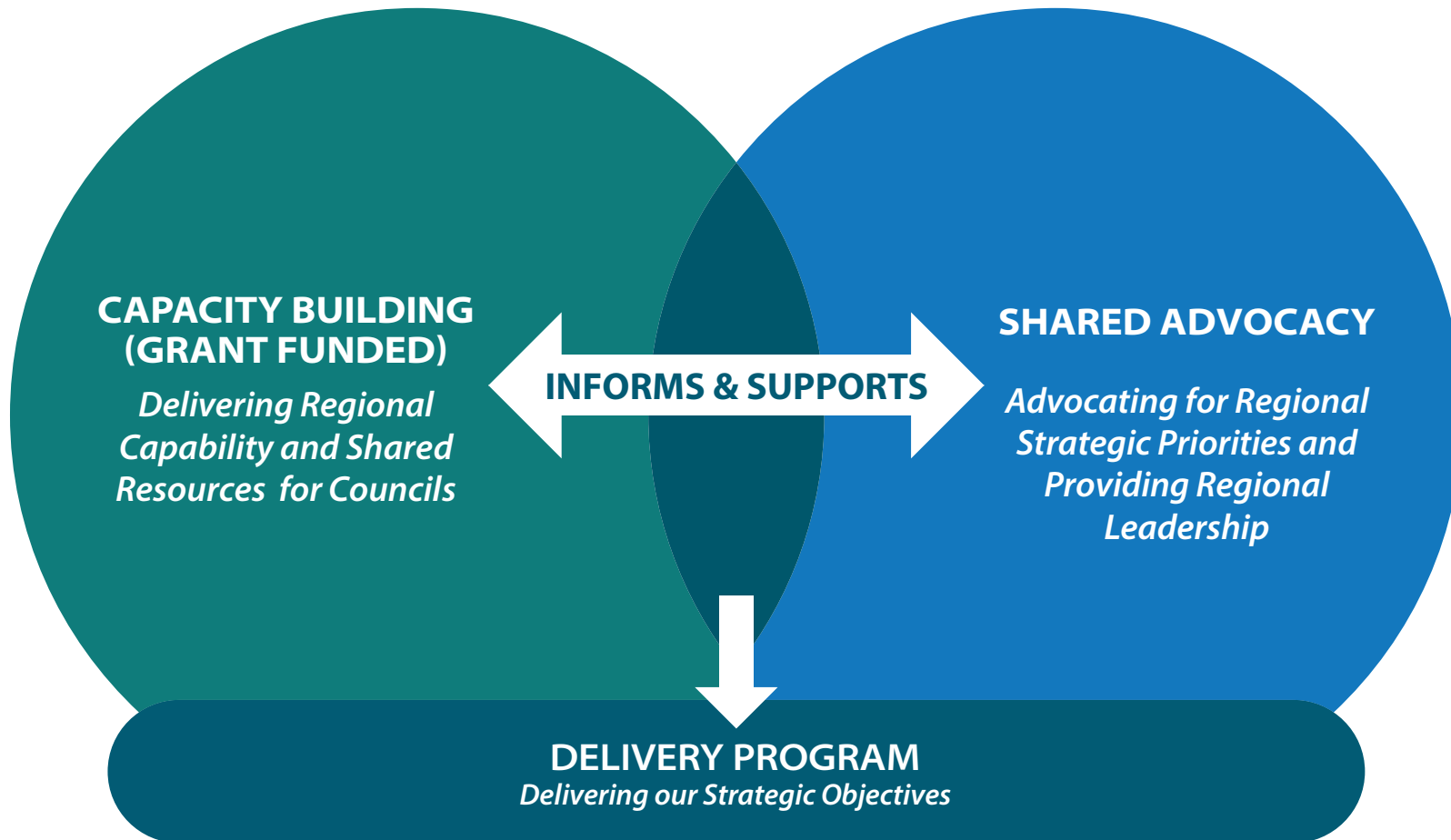
We are a region that:

- 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 Region



How we deliver



Hunter JO Board of Mayors

(Voting Members)



Mayor Daniel Watton
Cessnock City Council



Mayor Digby Rayward
Dungog Shire Council



Mayor Adam Shultz
Lake Macquarie City Council



Mayor Philip Penfold
Maitland City Council



Mayor Claire Pontin
MidCoast Council



Mayor Jeffrey Drayton
Muswellbrook Shire Council



Lord Mayor Ross Kerridge
City of Newcastle



Mayor Leah Anderson
Port Stephens Council
(Deputy Chair)



Mayor Sue Moore
Singleton Council
(Chair)



Mayor Maurice Collison
Upper Hunter Shire Council



Ken Liddell
GM Cessnock City Council



Gareth Curtis
GM Dungog Shire Council



Morven Cameron
CEO Lake Macquarie City Council
(GMAC Chair)



Jeff Smith
GM Maitland City Council



Adrian Panuccio
GM MidCoast Council



Derek Finnigan
GM Muswellbrook Shire Council



Jeremy Bath
CEO City of Newcastle



Tim Crosdale
GM Port Stephens Council



Justin Fitzpatrick-Barr
GM Singleton Council



Greg McDonald
GM Upper Hunter Shire Council



Shaun O'Sullivan
Director North
Regional Coordination
Premiers Department NSW

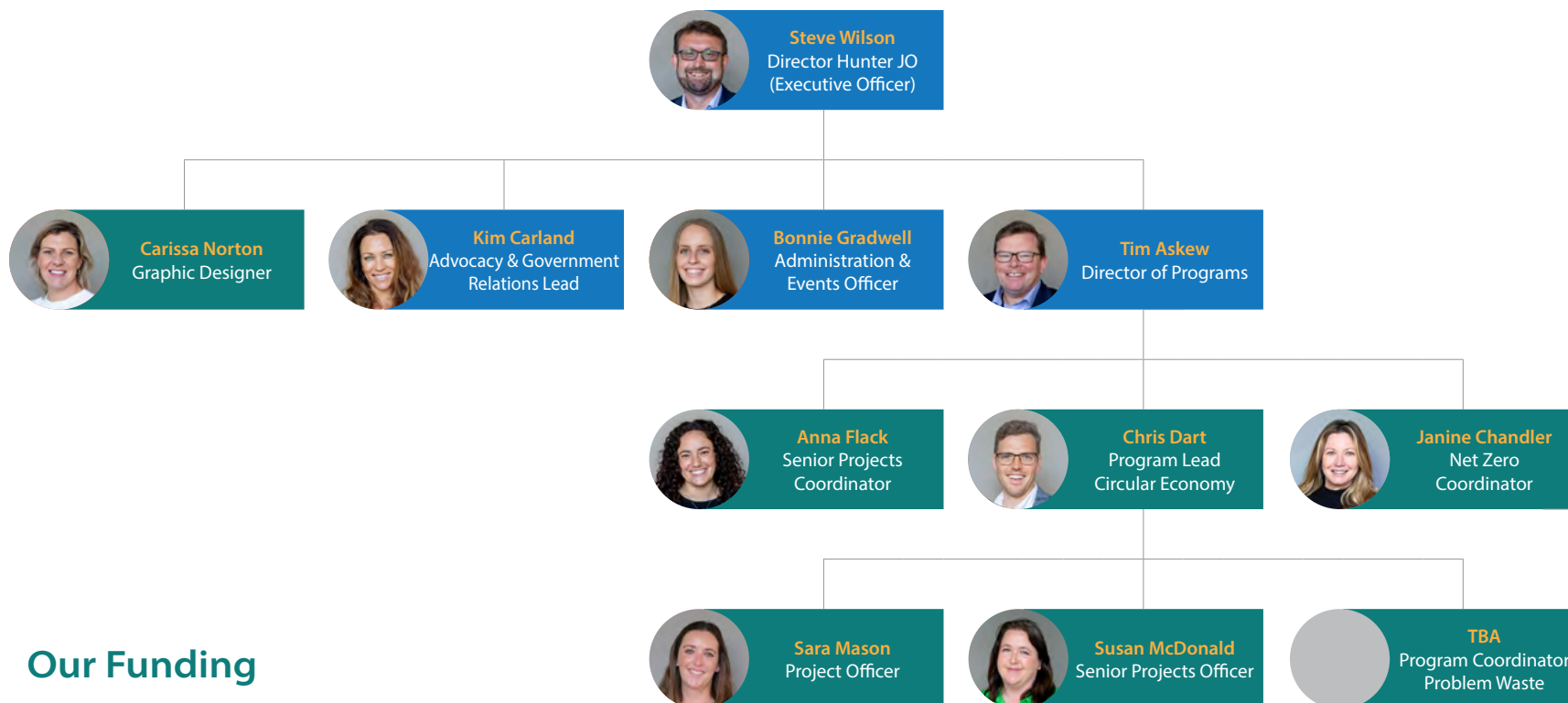


Virginia Errington
Council Engagement Manager
NSW Office of Local
Government

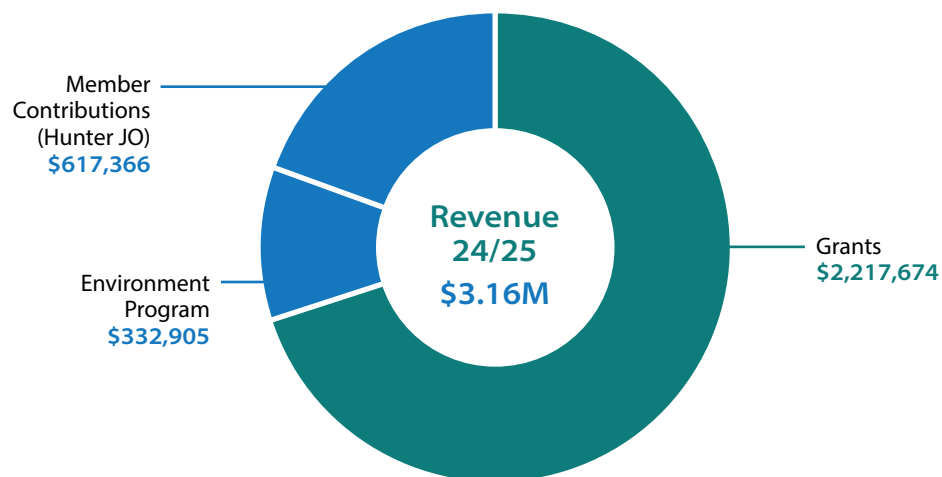
Hunter JO Board (Non-voting Members) and General Managers Advisory Committee (GMAC)



Hunter JO Team



Our Funding



Core funded role Grant funded role

Staffing

Core funding provided from Member Contributions and Environment Program currently funds four positions:

- Director Hunter Joint Organisation (Executive Officer)
- Director of Programs
- Advocacy and Government Relations Lead
- Administration and Events Officer

Additional staff are funded directly via grants to deliver a suite of policy, programs, collaboration and capacity building activities that deliver directly on the strategic objectives and directions of the Hunter JO Strategic Plan.



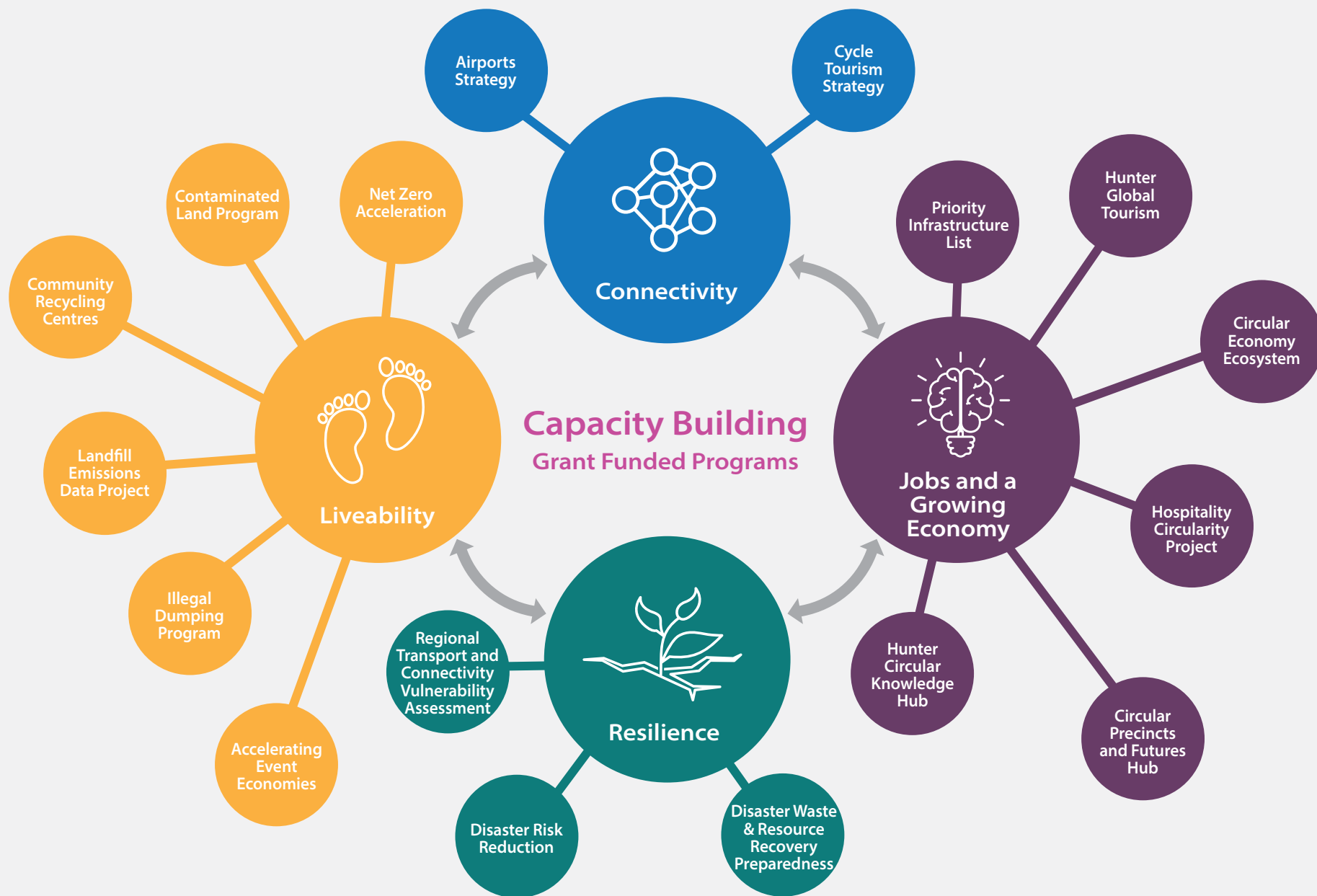
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Our Delivery

Our Delivery

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Valued at \$2.2M in 2024 - 2025



Connectivity

Strategic Objectives

- 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.

Program

Purpose and Outcome

Airports Strategy (Freight and Logistics)

To develop strategy and business case for airfreight and passenger infrastructure and connectivity logistics for the region to leverage the new international terminal investment into Newcastle Airport.

This project funded by the Regional NSW Business Case and Strategy Development Fund project has been completed. Since then, we have been working in partnership with Newcastle Airport in using the evidence and results from the Business Case to advocate for catalytic investment into constructing an airfreight precinct to stimulate business growth across the region and assist in attracting international routes.

Cycle Tourism Strategy (Shiraz to Shore)

To prepare a cycle tourism masterplan / Destination Management Plan for the region.

This project funded by the Regional NSW Business Case and Strategy Development Fund project has been completed. Since then, we have been advocating for funding to deliver the 100km connected cycleway from the Hunter Valley to the shores of Newcastle and Lake Macquarie.



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

Political Engagements

- **Hon Yasmin Catley, MP, Minister for the Hunter, and the NSW Hunter Labor Caucus**
21 November 2024
Focus: Progressing shared priorities around Hunter Global Tourism and Freight.
- **Hon Jenny Aitchison MP, Minister for Regional Transport and Roads and Member for Maitland.**
13 November 2024
Focus: Hunter Global Freight Business Case outcomes.
- **Hon Anoulack Chanthivong, Minister Industry and Trade**
30 October 2024
Focus: Hunter Global Freight Business Case outcomes.
- **Ms Sharon Claydon, MP for Newcastle**
4 September 2024
Focus: Hunter Global Freight and Hunter Cycle Tourism Plan (Shiraz to Shore) Business Case outcomes.
- **Hon Pat Conroy, MP Shortland, Minister for Defence Industry, Minister for International Development and the Pacific**
16 August 2024
Focus: Hunter Global Freight and Hunter Cycle Tourism Plan (Shiraz to Shore) Business Case outcomes.



- **Hon Catherine King, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government**
5 July 2024
Focus: Business Case outcomes for Hunter Global Freight and Hunter Cycle Tourism Plan (Shiraz to Shore).
- **Hon Don Farrell, Minister for Tourism and Trade**
3 July 2024
Focus: Business Case outcomes for Hunter Global Freight and Hunter Cycle Tourism Plan (Shiraz to Shore).
- **Hon Carol Brown, Assistant Minister for Infrastructure and Transport**
2 July 2024
Focus: Shiraz to Shore Business Case outcomes.



Connectivity

Media

- **Newcastle Airport terminal expansion Hunter JO tour - "Construction Milestone for Newcastle Airport International Terminal"**
8 August 2024
Focus: Hunter JO Board meeting tour of the Airport upgrade
Coverage: NBN, Newcastle Herald and ABC Radio.
- **Hunter Cycle Tourism Plan - "Shiraz to Shore: \$89m plan for 100km cycle trail linking wineries to beach"**
2 August 2024
Focus: Outcomes and recommendations from Hunter Cycle Tourism (Shiraz to Shore) Business Case
Coverage: NBN, Newcastle Herald and ABC Radio.



Strategic Engagements

- **Transport for NSW**

11 December 2024

Focus: Presentation to Mayors and GMs on the Hunter Strategic Transport Integrated Regional Plan prior to public exhibition on Monday 16th December.

- **Tourism Australia and Destination NSW**

26 November 2024

Focus: Alongside our project partners Destination Sydney and Surrounds North and Newcastle Airport, we met with senior representatives from Tourism Australia and Destination NSW to:

- Communicate the outcomes and recommendations of the Hunter Global Tourism Business Case
- Explore avenues and opportunities for further developing and integrating shared Hunter region marketing collateral (trade focused) into the marketing systems and processes of these national and state tourism bodies.

- **Hunter Central Coast Regional Development Team, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development**

12 November 2024

Focus: Communicating Business Case outcomes for Hunter Global Tourism, Freight and Shiraz to Shore.

- **High Speed Rail Authority**

16 August 2024 and 11 September 2024

Focus: Attended events where feedback and insights were provided into potential alignment, economic and land use opportunities arising from high speed rail development.

- **Hunter Valley Wine Tourism Association**

14 August 2024

Focus: Communicating Business Case outcomes for Hunter Global Tourism and Shiraz to Shore outcomes and an advocacy update.



Submissions

- **NSW Transport Freight Policy Reform Program**

23 October 2024

Focus: Second and final recommendations for building the international freight capacity and capability of the Hunter Region's primary international gateways, the Port of Newcastle and Newcastle Airport.



Resilience

Strategic Objectives

- 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.

Program

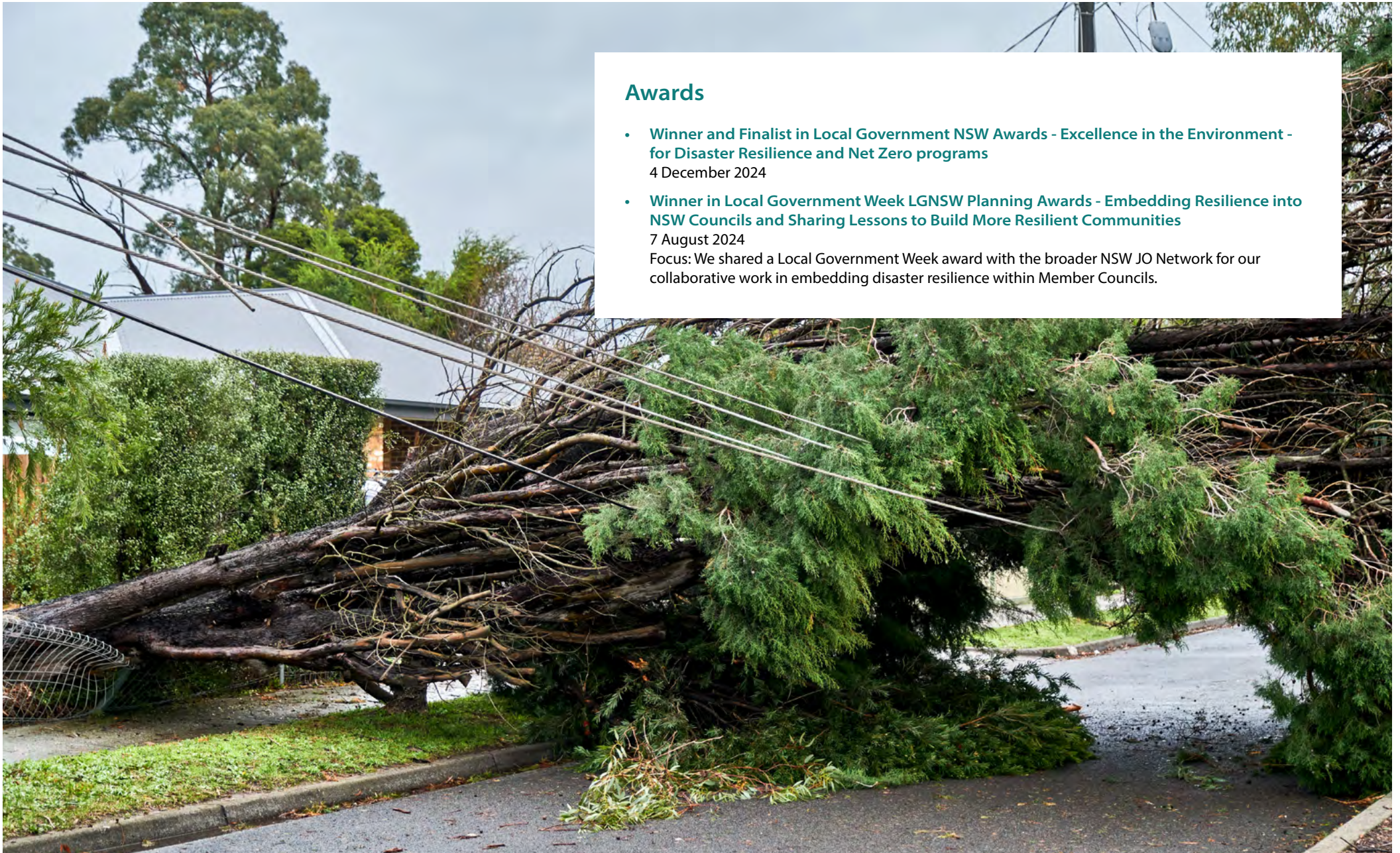
Purpose and Outcome

Getting Local Government Disaster Ready

We were successful with our \$851,000 funding application to the Australian Government's National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) for this new 3 year project which will build disaster resilience capacity and capability within 11 Hunter and Central Coast councils and their communities. This will be achieved by supporting development and implementation of local and regional Disaster Adaptation Plans, embedding resilience into councils' IP&R framework, facilitating a regional resilience network, and supporting community engagement efforts.



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



Awards

- **Winner and Finalist in Local Government NSW Awards - Excellence in the Environment - for Disaster Resilience and Net Zero programs**
4 December 2024
- **Winner in Local Government Week LGNSW Planning Awards - Embedding Resilience into NSW Councils and Sharing Lessons to Build More Resilient Communities**
7 August 2024
Focus: We shared a Local Government Week award with the broader NSW JO Network for our collaborative work in embedding disaster resilience within Member Councils.



Resilience

Strategic Engagements

- **Adapt NSW Forum**
29 and 30 October 2024
Focus: Hunter JO Resilience team and council representatives attended the NSW Government's AdaptNSW Forum, exploring themes of adaptation and building resilience to climate change impacts.
- **NSW Reconstruction Authority**
8 July 2024
Focus: Hunter JO, member councils and key stakeholders joined the NSW Reconstruction Authority for a workshop to better understand the purpose of Disaster Adaptation Plans (DAPs) Guidelines, our role in and the indicative process for developing a DAP. It was also an opportunity to provide local insights and feedback to influence the final DAP Guidelines.



Political Engagements

- **Senator Perin Davey, Shadow Minister for Emergency Management**
2 July 2024
Focus: A more sustainable and strategic approach to local and regional recovery and resilience planning and funding aligned with councils' four-year statutory planning time frames.



Submissions

- **Independent Review of Commonwealth Disaster Funding**

The Final report of the Commonwealth Government's Independent "Colvin Review" into Disaster Funding was released on 25th October.

Key recommendations (including a direct extract) are consistent with those included in Hunter JO's 2023 regional submission, including;

- ensuring adequate investment, support and funding for local government to respond to natural disaster events (R5)
- prioritisation of data coordination across all levels of government (R9)
- an evidence-informed, risk-based approach to disaster funding (R24)
- streamlining of administrative arrangements (R33)
- increased funding allocated to disaster risk reduction and resilience (R42).

- **Draft Disaster Adaptation Guidelines**

22 August 2024

Focus: Hunter JO's submission expressed support for a regional approach to developing Disaster Adaptation Plans, but also communicated concerns on resource implications of the process for Councils and JO's.



Jobs and a Growing Economy

Strategic Objectives

- 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.

Program	Purpose and Outcome
Economic Evolution - Mining Land Reuse / Redevelopment	<p>To seek support and investment from State and Federal Government to look at reusing the existing infrastructure on mining lands for economic development opportunities and streamlining the process for rezoning the land to incentivise new businesses.</p> <p>Our advocacy efforts have involved meeting with several State and Federal Ministers and Members of Parliament to raise awareness of the need for policy change to activate mining land redevelopment in the Hunter region.</p>
Hunter Global Tourism	<p>To identify the international tourism opportunities of the Hunter region in preparation of the Newcastle Airport international upgrade.</p> <p>This project funded by the Regional NSW Business Case and Strategy Development Fund project has been completed. Since then, we have been using the evidence and results from the Business Case to advocate for catalytic investment into delivering the marketing and business training activities to increase international tourism across the Hunter region.</p>
Airports Strategy (Freight and Logistics)	<p>To develop strategy and business case for airfreight and passenger infrastructure and connectivity logistics for the region to leverage the new international terminal investment into Newcastle Airport.</p> <p>This project funded by the Regional NSW Business Case and Strategy Development Fund project has been completed. Since then, we have been working in partnership with Newcastle Airport in using the evidence and results from the Business Case to advocate for catalytic investment into constructing an airfreight precinct to stimulate business growth across the region and assist in attracting international routes.</p>

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

Program	Purpose and Outcome
Circular Economy Ecosystem	<p>To build circular economy knowledge through education, data sharing and capacity building opportunities for Hunter JO member councils and Central Coast Council.</p> <p>This program continued to support a number of circular economy ecosystems initiatives including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating fortnightly Circular Economy Facilitators Group meetings • Delivering quarterly Hunter JO Regional Waste Managers Network meetings • Participating in quarterly metro and regional waste group meetings • Facilitating bi-monthly meetings of the Sustainability Educators Group • Contributing to the Hunter IF Action Group, who collaboratively work to develop the Hunter region's circular economy • Maintaining the Hunter Circular website, including compiling and updating new case studies for the site.
Hospitality Circularity Project	<p>To engage hospitality SMEs across the region, to build their capacity to evaluate and adopt circular solutions for their business operations and supply chains, focusing on organics and single use items.</p> <p>Go Circular, the consultant delivering this project, has completed two rounds of Bin Trim assessments with 157 hospitality business across Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, Singleton, Port Stephens, and Cessnock. These business have each been provided with action plans to help them reduce the amount of waste they are generated and disposing of to landfill. Go Circular has also delivered two co-design workshops with participating business to identify waste reduction solutions. To date, this has resulted in an estimated 382 tonnes per year reduction in landfilled waste from the participating businesses. Go Circular will now complete a third round of assessments for 13 highly engaged business, and provide support to implement waste reduction strategies.</p>
Circular Economy Precincts and Futures Hub	<p>To advocate for the funding of the Circular Economy Futures Hub to help facilitate the development of a circular economy in the Hunter Region.</p> <p>This project, funded by the Regional NSW Business Case and Strategy Development Fund project, has been completed. For the last six months we have been engaging stakeholders and familiarising all levels of government with the results of the business case and requesting core funding to realise the business case benefits.</p>

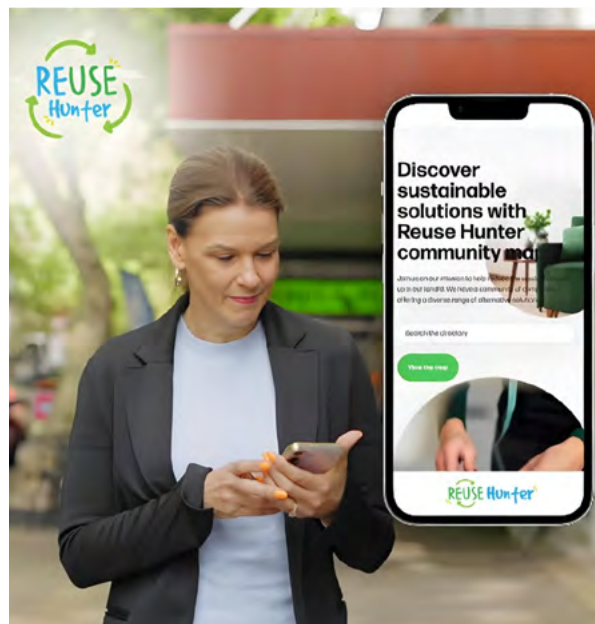
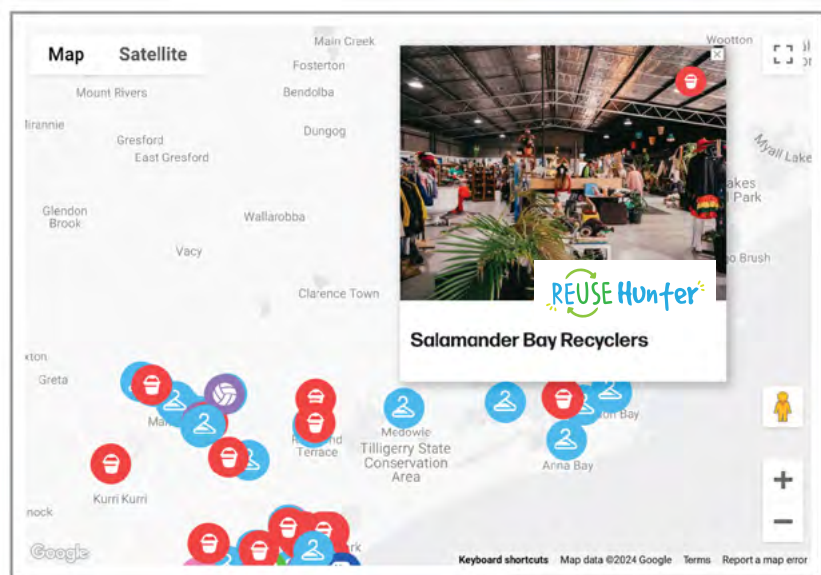


Jobs and a Growing Economy

Program	Purpose and Outcome
Circular Economy Procurement	<p>To support Councils to prioritise recycled materials and circular economy services in their procurement systems and processes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Initial meetings held with Hunter councils to introduce the project and begin mapping council specification processes• Working Group/champions re-established with representatives from Councils, University of Newcastle, MECLA and Circular Economy Living Lab (CELL)• Collaborated with NSW DCCEEW Low Emissions Specification program working with three Hunter Councils (MidCoast, Lake Mac, and Newcastle) and NSW DCCEEW Supplier Directory• Scanned best practice circular procurement tools/practice in Australia• Test product 1 selected - low carbon concrete (LCC). LCC specification developed leveraging NSW DCCEEW low carbon program resources promoted by MECLA.
Hunter Circular Knowledge Hub	<p>To create a digital circular knowledge hub for council staff and community to address the information accessibility and knowledge barriers that prevail and frustrate uptake of circular services and recovery pathways in the region.</p> <p>The project is divided into two streams with their own unique objectives: Stream A – Council Hub and Stream B - Community Hub.</p> <p>Stream A - Council Hub is further broken down into two distinct sub-projects;</p> <p>1. Research - on key material streams, combined with co-design processes with industry, enabling councils to collaboratively evaluate new recovery pathways and off-takers. From this research, an immediate opportunity to increase circular outcomes of plastic waste was identified with a Circular Plastics Pilot Initiated with Upper Hunter, Singleton, Cessnock, Maitland and Newcastle Councils and Resourceful Living, a recycled plastic manufacturer located In Kurri. While initially considering a range of plastics, the pilot commenced In September with councils collecting HDPE Type 2 plastics and transferring them to Resourceful Living to be recycled and made into new items. The end date for this was extended into 2025 due to a fire at the factory. The full Circular Plastics Pilot Action Plan can be read here 2024-Circular Plastic Pilot - Action Plan-final</p> <p>2. Council Portal - a prototype for a new council-only access digital portal has been developed and will be hosted on the Hunter Circular website to enable circularity best practice for council-managed waste streams. Data from the research above has been used to inform the portal. Next steps for the portal will be a peer review to refine the information and facilitate use as well as a webinar to launch the portal to council stakeholders.</p> <p>Stream B - Community Hub 'ReUse Hunter'</p> <p>The development of a digital map tool designed to encourage the uptake of sharing, hiring, reuse and repair behaviours by connecting community members with circular solutions provided by businesses (B2C) and councils (C2C). The outcome of this project, ReUse Hunter, is hosted on the Hunter Circular website.</p> <p>Since launching ReUse Hunter in September, the Hunter Circular website has seen a dramatic increase in traffic, with views Increasing from 3,104 to 12,962 compared to the four month period prior to launch. Watch the ReUse Hunter community video here.</p>

Strategic Engagements

- Launch of Federal Government's Circular Economy Precincts Report (convened by Minister Plibersek)**
 9 September 2024
 Focus: Attended launch of the Ministerial Advisory Group's Circular Economy Precincts Report, involving Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, Minister for Environment and Water; and Hon Kristy McBain MP, Minister for Regional Development and Local Government.
- Future Made in Australia Industry Workshop (convened by Minister Ayres)**
 6 September 2024
 Focus: Attended Future Made in Australia Industry Workshop, involving Hon Tim Ayres MP, Assistant Minister for Trade; Hon Pat Conroy MP, Minister for Defence Industry and Capability; and Sharon Claydon, Member for Newcastle.
- Circular Precincts Workshop (convened by Circular Australia Taskforce)**
 16th August 2024
 Focus: Circular Australia is the leading national body on the circular economy with strong links to Federal Government through the Circular Economy Ministerial Advisory Group. Circular Australia convened a specific workshop with national experts from across Australia to help review and develop our CE Precincts and Futures Hub project.
- Australian Bio-Economy Conference (presenting)**
 11 September 2024
 Focus: Presented the Hunter JO Circular Economy Precincts and Futures Hub business case recommendations and next steps.
- Australian Circular Economy Forum 2024**
 10 October 2024
 Focus: Attended forum to learn more about the challenges and opportunities of embedding a circular economy, with Chair of Circular Economy Ministerial Advisory Group and former Victorian Deputy Premier, John Thwaites.





Jobs and a Growing Economy

Political Engagements

- **Senior Advisor to the Hon John Graham, Minister for Jobs and Tourism, Angud Chawla**
10 December 2024
Focus: Hunter Global Tourism Business Case outcomes.
- **Hon Yasmin Catley, Minister for the Hunter, along with the Hunter NSW Labor Caucus, and Angud Chawla - Policy Advisor to Hon John Graham, Minister for Jobs and Tourism**
21 November 2024
Focus: Confirming support from NSW Hunter Labor MPs for the Hunter Global Freight and Tourism Business Cases, and opportunities for progressing their implementation in collaboration with both State and Federal Governments.
- **Ms Emily Suvaal MLC & Lizzie Butterworth, Policy Advisor to the NSW Minister for Jobs and Tourism, Hon John Graham**
13 November 2024
Focus: Hunter Global Freight and Tourism Business Case Outcomes.
- **Ms Sharon Claydon, MP for Newcastle**
4 September 2024
Focus: Hunter Global Tourism Business Case outcomes.
- **Hon Pat Conroy, MP Shortland, Minister for Defence Industry, Minister for International Development and the Pacific**
16 August 2024
Focus: Hunter Global Tourism Business Case outcomes.
- **Prime Minister's Office (Senior Advisors)**
17 July 2024
Focus: Economic evolution and the need to diversify our economy through various industries and the need to activate mining and industrial lands for economic opportunities.
- **Hon Sussan Ley, Deputy Leader of the Opposition**
4 July 2024
Focus: Economic evolution and the need to diversify our economy through various industries and the need to activate mining and industrial lands for economic opportunities.
- **Hon Barnaby Joyce, Member for New England**
4 July 2024
Focus: Economic evolution and the need to diversify our economy through various industries and the need to activate mining and industrial lands for economic opportunities.
- **Hon Don Farrell, Minister for Tourism and Trade**
3 July 2024
Focus: Business Case outcomes for Hunter Global Freight and Tourism and Hunter Cycle Tourism Plan (Shiraz to Shore).
- **Hon Madelaine King, Minister for Resources**
3 July 2024
Focus: The activation of mining and industrial lands for economic opportunities.
- **Hon Kristy McBain, Minister for Regional Development and Local Government**
3 July 2024
Focus: Economic evolution and the need to diversify our economy through various industries, and the need for more equitable grant funding allocation for roads.
- **Hon Jonathon Duniam, Shadow Minister Environment, Fisheries and Forestry**
3 July 2024
Focus: Economic evolution and the need to diversify our economy through various industries and the need to activate mining and industrial lands for economic opportunities.
- **Hon Chris Bowen, Minister for Climate Change and Energy**
3 July 2024
Focus: Economic evolution and the need to diversify our economy through various industries and the need to activate mining and industrial lands for economic opportunities.
- **Senator Susan McDonald, Shadow Minister for Resources**
3 July 2024
Focus: The activation of mining and industrial lands for economic opportunities.





- **Hon Darren Chester, Shadow Minister for Regional Development and Local Government**
3 July 2024
Focus: Economic evolution and the need to diversify our economy through various industries and the need to activate mining and industrial lands for economic opportunities.
- **Federal Hunter Labor Caucus, Mr Dan Repacholi MP, Ms Meryl Swanson MP, Ms Sharon Claydon MP, Hon Pat Conroy MP**
3 July 2024
Focus: Business Case outcomes in freight and tourism to leverage the Newcastle Airport upgrade.
- **Hon Peter Dutton, Leader of the Opposition**
2 July 2024
Focus: Economic evolution and the need to diversify our economy through various industries and the need to activate mining and industrial lands for economic opportunities.

- **Mr Ted O'Brien, Shadow Minister for Climate Change and Energy**
2 July 2024
Focus: Economic evolution and the need to diversify our economy through various industries and the need to activate mining and industrial lands for economic opportunities.
- **Hon David Littleproud, Shadow Minister Agriculture and Leader of the Nationals**
2 July 2024
Focus: Economic evolution and the need to diversify our economy through various industries and the need to activate mining and industrial lands for economic opportunities.

Submissions

- **Committee Hearing: Beneficial and productive post mining land use**
21 August 2024
Focus: Providing further evidence to the Inquiry into post-mining land on the Hunter JO submission.
- **NSW Plastics: The Way Forward (Draft Discussion Paper for Consultation)**
4 November 2024
Focus: The submission provided general support for the proposed measures identified in the EPA discussion paper, but further recommended:
 - A more holistic circular economy approach for removing problematic plastic items from the marketplace to reduce items being littered or deposited as waste in landfill facilities.
 - The return of funds collected through the NSW Waste Levy to support local and regional local government waste management and circular economy initiatives that would contribute to reducing plastic pollution.
- **Australian Government Productivity Commission: Inquiry into Australia's Opportunities in the Circular Economy**
Focus: Comprehensive technical input was provided in response to the questions posed by the Inquiry, drawing on the Circular Economy project work of the Hunter JO and its partners. The submission communicated the nature and recommendations arising from the considerable work undertaken by the Hunter JO and its partners in the Circular Economy space over recent years, with a view to encouraging the Productivity Commission to engage more directly with the Hunter JO during the next more detailed stages of the Inquiry.



Jobs and a Growing Economy

Hunter JO Events

- **Regional Council Economic Development Forum**
26th July 2024
Focus: Outcomes and Recommendations from Hunter Global
Tourism Business Case and Events10 resources available.





Media

- Circular Economy procurement grant - "Council scores Circular Economy funding"**
 22 August 2024
 Focus: Announcement of EPA funding for Circular Economy Procurement Project. Launch included a site visit to mattress recycling facility at Redhead, attended by Minister for the Hunter and Mayor Fraser.
 Coverage: Newcastle Herald
- Hunter Circular - ReUse Hunter Community Map**
 Coverage: Social media launch the ReUse Hunter web page - connecting the community to circular businesses who provide a service to repair, hire, donate, refurbish and buy second hand; within their own LGA and across the broader Hunter region.





Strategic Objectives

- 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.

Program	Purpose and Outcome
Regional Illegal Dumping Program	<p>To support member councils manage and reduce the impacts of illegal dumping on local communities and the environment.</p> <p>During the year this program continued to build momentum among the eleven participating councils in the program. Key achievements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delivery of an illegal dumping social media campaign across the Small Acts Big Change channels.• Establishing a legal service desk to provide councils with support to enforce illegal dumping offences.• Organising for the EPA to deliver Protection of the Environment Operations Act (POEO) Act training to council staff In August 2024.• Arranging for Phil McNeice, Senior Ranger from Shoalhaven Council to provide peer-to-peer training to Singleton Council staff, and a presentation to the Report Illegal Dumping (RID) Officers Forum.• Providing equipment to councils, including road signs, PPE, promotional and educational materials, and surveillance cameras.
Landfill Emissions Data Project	<p>To establish a landfill emission data management program for councils to improve understanding of baseline emissions.</p> <p>Hunter Joint Organisation partnered with the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) through the Sustainability Partnerships program to support NSW councils with landfill emissions measurement and reporting. Deliverables include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Mastering Emissions with the National Greenhouse and Energy Report a Scheme (NGER) Solid Waste Calculator package, to help councils estimate their landfill emissions using best practice methodology.• Completing an National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Scheme (NGER) Solid Waste Calculator for ten council managed landfills.• Scenario modelling estimating the emissions reductions that could be achieved by implementing Food Organics Garden Organics (FOGO), landfill gas capture systems, and landfill closure at each of the ten landfills.• A data dashboard for councils to visualise and analyse the above data.• Six factsheets providing guidance on landfill emissions management for councils.

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

Program

Purpose and Outcome

Joint Organisation Net Zero Acceleration (JONZA) Program

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.

With funding support provided through the NSW Government's Joint Organisation Net Zero Acceleration (JONZA) program, a staff member is employed within the Hunter JO dedicated to progressing the JO and its member councils toward net zero emissions, and to provide a link to other NSW government support mechanisms. Key initiatives delivered during the year (including in collaboration with the broader JO network) included:

- Facilitating bi-monthly meetings of the Hunter Net Zero Network, a network for council staff working on emissions reduction.
- Completed the Regional Councils NSW Power Purchasing Agreement (PPA), a buyer's group of 13 councils across regional NSW (including four Hunter JO councils) to purchase renewable energy supply until 2030. The PPA will result in an estimated 185,000 tonnes of CO₂-e avoided, and combined savings of \$5.2M for the participating councils. The buyers group included Maitland, MidCoast, Muswellbrook and Upper Hunter Councils, who will collectively save over \$2M over the course of the agreement (compared to 2024 electricity costs) and be protected from future energy price fluctuations.
- Facilitated a trial of the Kinesis community emissions data platform for councils.
- Supported NSW DCCEEW with the roll out of the Carbon Compass emissions calculator, helping councils to measure their operational emissions.
- Organised the installation of a rooftop solar system and two EV chargers at the Hunter JO office.
- Provided support and advice to councils on the procurement of Small Market Electricity supply.
- Provided legal advice to councils on the leasing of council owned land and crown land for EV charging.

Community Recycling Centres (CRC) Education & Communication Plan

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

Promotions commenced in September with the key activities including:

- Direct Mail Campaign – 160,647 CRC flyers were distributed to households across the Central Coast, MidCoast, Singleton, Muswellbrook and Upper Hunter. 2000 additional flyers were distributed to waste facilities across the Hunter and Central Coast.
- Social Media Campaign – across the Small Acts Big Change platforms Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. There has been significant growth totalling a 4.6k% increase on Facebook and Instagram. Reach and engagement on both accounts has also improved with impressions increasing from 1,154 to 707,322 since November.
- CRC Survey – first time we have trialled a digital survey situated at CRC locations. Survey to run through to April 30. Survey available for non-English speaking visitors including Spanish, Mandarin, Punjabi and Arabic based on Census and REMPLAN research (from available languages).
- Radio Advertising – Upper Hunter on 2NM, three ads playing on rotation across all radio time slots (Breakfast, Morning, Afternoon, Drive BMAD) with a potential audience of 58,000 listeners. Lower Hunter on Triple M and HIT 106.9, dedicated ads to suit audience demographics also played across BMAD reaching over 293k target audience weekly.
- Cinema Advertising – three different ads running across cinemas Event Glendale, Event Kotara, HOYTS Charlestown, HOYTS Green Hills, Reading Charlestown and Reading Maitland. Advertising includes dedicated battery recycling messaging. Advertising to reach guaranteed minimum of 100k cinema attendees over duration of campaign.



Political Engagements

- **Hon Michael Sukkar, Shadow Minister Housing**
4 July 2024
Focus: Enabling infrastructure for housing.
- **Hon Sussan Ley, Deputy Leader of the Opposition**
4 July 2024
Focus: Circular economy business case outcomes.
- **Hon Jonathon Duniam, Shadow Minister Environment, Fisheries and Forestry**
3 July 2024
Focus: Circular economy business case outcomes.
- **Hon Tim Ayres, Assistant Minister for Future Made in Australia**
2 July 2024
Focus: Circular economy and airfreight business case outcomes.
- **Mr Ted O'Brien, Shadow Minister for Climate Change and Energy**
2 July 2024
Focus: Circular economy business case outcomes.



Strategic Engagements

- **Dr Iain Ross, Chair of Net Zero Economy Agency**
24 October 2024
Focus: Presentation from Net Zero Economy Agency to the Board providing information about purpose and objectives.
- **Beyond Zero Emissions - Delivering Australia's Energy Future**
19 September 2024
Focus: Attended event where Beyond Zero Emissions reported on data and discussed the challenges and opportunities of delivering renewable energy projects and a changing workforce.
- **UDIA NSW Housing Event**
12 September 2024
Focus: Attended event with UDIA and Department of Transport presenting on the challenges and opportunities of unlocking the region's major housing growth fronts.



Media

- **Power Purchasing Agreement - Hunter councils save millions**
12 November 2024
Focus: Power Purchasing Agreement (PPA) finalised securing a renewable electricity supply and financial savings for Maitland, MidCoast, Muswellbrook and Upper Hunter Councils.
Coverage: NBN, ABC Newcastle, Newcastle Herald, Muswellbrook Chronicle, Hunter Valley News, Maitland Mercury, Manning Times, Council Magazine, Inside Local Government, Renewables Now, PV Magazine Australia, PV Tech, Port Stephens Examiner, New of the Area.



Hunter JO Events

- **Net Zero Economy Agency - Communications Workshop**
15 October 2024
Focus: Hunter JO organised a workshop with NZEA and council communication managers to improve the level of information being shared with our community on our net zero future.
- **Illegal Dumping Program Events**
17 & 18 September 2024
Focus: Shoalhaven City Council shared their illegal dumping expertise and approach with Hunter councils.



Capacity Building

- **No Time to Waste Conference (presenting)**
30 and 31 October 2024
Focus: Presented outcomes on our Landfill Emissions partnership project with EPA to identify strategies to reduce emissions from council owned landfills.
- **Regional Illegal Dumping annual RIDstock 2024 Event**
29 and 30 October 2024
Focus: Attended the annual capacity-building event for illegal dumping enforcement officers in Parramatta.
- **Western Sydney Regional Councils Waste Managers**
14 August 2024
Focus: Sharing the Hunter's Regional Circular Economy Program with Western Sydney Councils.



Submissions

- **Federal Net Zero Transport and Infrastructure Roadmap**
6 August 2024
Focus: Recommendations to inform Federal Government programs implemented by the Net Zero Economy Agency.

