



## Hunter JO Board Meeting (Public)

11.10am, Thursday 14 August 2025

Lake Macquarie City Council

Hunter Sports Centre - 43 Stockland Dr, Glendale NSW  
2285

To join online:

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

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## 1. Acknowledgement of Country

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*We acknowledge the country and history of the traditional custodians of the lands upon which we meet today. We pay our respects to the Elders past, present and emerging, of our region, and of Australia.*

## 2. Welcome and Apologies

### 2.1 Apologies

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Apologies for the meeting to be received.

### 2.2 Conflicts of Interest

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<b>Report Author:</b>	Bonnie Gradwell, Administration and Events Officer - Hunter JO
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#### **Recommendations:**

- **That any Conflicts of Interest be declared and noted**

#### **Executive Summary:**

This report calls for any conflicts of interest to be declared and noted by the Hunter JO Board.

#### **Background**

The following process was endorsed by the Hunter JO Board at its December 2023 meeting, for declarations of any conflicts:

- At the start of each meeting, the Chair will call for any conflicts from Board Members
- If any conflicts are declared within the meeting:
  - The Board Member making the declaration will complete the [Hunter JO Conflict of Interest Form](#) within 10 business days of the meeting, for record-keeping (on submission, a copy of the completed form is provided to the Secretariat and the Chair)
  - The declaration will be added to the register, included at Appendix 2.2-A to be kept as a record for the course of the financial year within which the declaration was made.
- The Conflict of Interest Register will be noted at each meeting of the Hunter JO Board.

#### **Discussion:**

If discussion is required for any conflicts of interest declared, the Chair will lead this discussion.

**Financial / Resourcing Implications:** Nil

**Next steps:** Nil

#### **Appendices\* / Attachments\*\*:**

- Appendix 2.2-A: Hunter JO Conflict of Interest Register

\*Appendices are included directly following the report and inform the validity of the report

\*\*Attachments are included at the end of the Board Pack to provide supplementary information and context.

## Appendix 2.2-A: Hunter JO Conflict of Interest Register

Any potential conflicts of interest declared are to be included in the below Register and the Board Member in question is to also complete the [Hunter JO Disclosure of Interest Form](#).

Name of Board Member	Description of interest	Has the Board been notified?	Date of disclosure	Steps taken by Board for dealing with the conflict	Board Member actions to address the conflict



### 3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

#### 3.1 Minutes of Meeting 12 June 2025

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##### **Recommendation:**

- **That the minutes of the Hunter JO Board Meeting held on 12 June 2025 be received and noted.**

##### **Hunter Joint Organisation Board Meeting Minutes**

**9.46am, Thursday 12 June 2025**

**Hosted by Muswellbrook Shire Council (Donald Horne Building STEM Innovation Lab – 140 Bridge St, Muswellbrook)**

##### **Voting Members Present**

Cr Daniel Watton	Cessnock City Council
Cr Philip Penfold	Maitland City Council
Cr Jeffrey Drayton	Muswellbrook Shire Council
Cr Ross Kerridge	City of Newcastle
Cr Leah Anderson	Port Stephens Council (Deputy Chair)
Cr Sue Moore	Singleton Council (Chair)
Cr Maurice Collison	Upper Hunter Shire Council

##### **Non-Voting Members Present**

Morven Cameron	CEO, Lake Macquarie City Council
Jeff Smith	General Manager, Maitland City Council
Derek Finnigan	General Manager, Muswellbrook Shire Council
Jeremy Bath	CEO, City of Newcastle
Justin Fitzpatrick-Barr	General Manager, Singleton Council
Greg McDonald	General Manager, Upper Hunter Shire Council (Online)
Cameron Templeton	Council Engagement Manager, Office of Local Government
Shaun O’Sullivan	Director North - Regional Coordination, Delivery & Engagement Group – Premier’s Department NSW

##### **Apologies**

Cr Claire Pontin	MidCoast Council
Cr Digby Rayward	Dungog Shire Council
Cr Adam Shultz	Lake Macquarie City Council
Ken Liddell	General Manager, Cessnock City Council
Gareth Curtis	General Manager, Dungog Shire Council
Adrian Panuccio	General Manager, MidCoast Council
Tim Crosdale	General Manager, Port Stephens Council
Virginia Errington	Council Engagement Manager, Office of Local Government

##### **Staff in Attendance**

Steve Wilson	Director, Hunter JO (Executive Officer)
Tim Askew	Director of Programs, Hunter JO
Kim Carland	Advocacy & Government Relations Lead, Hunter JO
Anna Flack	Senior Project Coordinator, Hunter JO

Mitchell Heise  
Anja Carlen-Jorgensen

Sustainability Project Officer, Hunter JO  
Advocacy and Communications Officer, Hunter JO

**Other attendees**

Cr Jack Antcliff Deputy Mayor, Lake Macquarie City Council (Observer)

*The formal meeting opened at 9.46am.*

**Item 1 Acknowledgement of Country**

*The chair opened the meeting and welcomed the Board with an Acknowledgement of Country.*

**Item 2 Welcome & Apologies**

**2.1 Apologies**

*Apologies for the meeting were received.*

**2.2 Conflicts of Interest**

***Resolved: That any Conflicts of Interest be declared and noted.***

***Moved: Cr Leah Anderson, Seconded: Cr Daniel Watton, Carried.***

**Item 3 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

**3.1 Minutes of Meeting 10 April 2025**

***Resolved: That the minutes of the Hunter JO Board Meeting held on 10 April 2025 be received and noted.***

***Moved: Cr Philip Penfold, Seconded: Cr Leah Anderson, Carried.***

**Item 4 Actions Arising from Minutes**

**4.1 Hunter JO Board Action Register**

***Resolved:***

- ***That the status of actions included in the Register be noted.***
- ***That Action HJO-24-001 be removed from the Register.***

***Moved: Cr Daniel Watton, Seconded: Cr Leah Anderson, Carried.***

**Item 5 Presentations**

*Nil.*

**Item 6 Correspondence**

***Resolved: That the correspondence be received and noted.***

***Moved: Cr Philip Penfold, Seconded: Cr Leah Anderson, Carried.***

**Item 7 Items for the Hunter JO Board: For Decision**

**7.1 Draft Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2035 for Stakeholder Consultation**

***Resolved: That the Board endorse the draft Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2035 and draft Hunter JO Delivery Program 2025-2029 as the basis for targeted stakeholder consultation.***

***Moved: Cr Leah Anderson, Seconded: Cr Daniel Watton, Carried.***

**7.2 Budget for FY 2025/26**

***Resolved: That the Board approve the 2025-26 year budget for the Hunter JO.***

***Moved: Cr Maurice Collison, Seconded: Cr Leah Anderson, Carried.***

**7.3 Review of Organisational Structure**

***Resolved: That the Board re-determines the current operating organisational structure.***

*Moved: Cr Leah Anderson, Seconded: Cr Philip Penfold, Carried.*

#### **7.4 Delegations Register**

*Resolved: That the Board endorse the delegations register.*

*Moved: Cr Daniel Watton, Seconded: Cr Leah Anderson*

*Carried.*

#### **7.5 Shared ARIC Model**

*Resolved: That the Board endorse the development of a shared ARIC for the Hunter JO.*

*Moved: Cr Leah Anderson, Seconded: Cr Jeffrey Drayton, Carried.*

#### **7.6 Continuing regional collaboration via the joint organisation model**

*Resolved: That the Board endorse continuing to operate as a Joint Organisation as defined under the NSW Local Government Act 1993.*

*Moved: Cr Philip Penfold, Seconded: Cr Daniel Watton, Carried.*

#### **7.7 Mayoral spokesperson**

*Resolved: That the Board endorse Mayoral spokespersons for engagement with politicians, communications and media opportunities.*

*Moved: Cr Leah Anderson, Seconded: Cr Daniel Watton, Carried.*

#### **7.8 National General Assembly 2025**

*Resolved:*

*That the Board:*

- *Nominate representatives to move and second each of the Hunter JO regional motions at the National General Assembly.*
- *Formally write to ALGA expressing disappointment that two of the proposed Hunter JO regional motions were not accepted for the National General Assembly 2025.*
- *Provide a submission to the NSW Grants Commission regarding the allocation of general purpose grants to local governing bodies in New South Wales*

*Moved: Cr Daniel Watton, Seconded: Cr Leah Anderson, Carried.*

#### **7.9 Hunter JO Board Meeting Schedule 2026/27**

*Resolved: That the Board endorse the proposed meeting schedule.*

*Moved: Cr Leah Anderson, Seconded: Cr Daniel Watton*

*Carried.*

#### **7.10 Public Interest Disclosure Policy**

*Resolved: That the Board endorse the Public Interest Disclosure Policy and its publication on the Hunter JO website.*

*Moved: Cr Philip Penfold, Seconded: Cr Daniel Watton, Carried.*

### **Item 8 Items for the Hunter JO Board: For Noting**

#### **8.1 Hunter JO Financial Report**

*Resolved:*

- *That the Income Statement for period ending April 2025 be received and noted.*
- *That the summary of Credit Card expenditure for Hunter JO for YTD April 2025 be received and noted.*

*Moved: Cr Philip Penfold, Seconded: Cr Leah Anderson, Carried.*

#### **8.2 NSW JO Chairs Forum Update**

***Resolved: That the Board note the information provided.***

***Moved: Cr Philip Penfold, Seconded: Cr Leah Anderson, Carried.***

### **8.3 Hunter JO Funding & Grant Opportunities**

***Resolved: That the Board note the update on funding and grant opportunities.***

***Moved: Cr Philip Penfold, Seconded: Cr Leah Anderson, Carried.***

### **8.4 Hunter JO Program Status Report**

***Resolved: That the report be received and noted.***

***Moved: Cr Philip Penfold, Seconded: Cr Leah Anderson, Carried.***

### **8.5 Annual Audit Engagement Plan**

***Resolved: That the Board note the information provided.***

***Moved: Cr Philip Penfold, Seconded: Cr Leah Anderson, Carried.***

### **8.6 Hunter JO Risk Register**

***Resolved:***

- ***That the Hunter JO Board note the Hunter JO Risk Register.***
- ***That the Hunter JO Board identify any new risks for inclusion on the Risk Register.***

***Moved: Cr Philip Penfold, Seconded: Cr Leah Anderson, Carried.***

### **8.7 Annual Hunter JO Compliance Calendar Checklist**

***Resolved: That the Hunter JO Board note the status of the Compliance Calendar Checklist.***

***Moved: Cr Philip Penfold, Seconded: Cr Leah Anderson, Carried.***

### **8.8 Premier's Department Update**

***Resolved: That the Board note the Premier's Department update.***

***Moved: Cr Philip Penfold, Seconded: Cr Leah Anderson, Carried.***

### **8.9 Office of Local Government (OLG) Update**

***Resolved: That the Board note the OLG update.***

***Moved: Cr Philip Penfold, Seconded: Cr Leah Anderson, Carried.***

## **Item 9 Confidential Session**

### **9.1 Closure of the Meeting**

***In accordance with section 11.1 of the Hunter JO Code of Meeting Practice and section 10A(2) of the NSW Local Government Act 1993, the meeting was closed to the public for discussion of Agenda Item 9.2. This item incorporates discussion of personnel matters (other than voting representatives).***

### **9.2 Director Hunter JO (Executive Officer) Performance Review**

***The Board:***

- ***Confirmed the review panel membership for the Executive Officer's annual performance review. This will comprise Cr Sue Moore (Chair), Cr Leah Anderson (Deputy Chair) and Cr Jeff Drayton.***
- ***Confirmed the performance criteria and indicators included in Appendix 9.2-A as the basis of the performance review.***

***Moved: Cr Jeffrey Drayton, Seconded: Cr Philip Penfold, Carried.***

### **9.3 Reopening the Meeting to the Public**

***Resolved:***

- *That the meeting be reopened to the public.*
- *That the open meeting be advised of any decisions occurring during the closed meeting session.*

*Moved: Cr Philip Penfold, Seconded: Cr Leah Anderson, Carried.*

**Item 10 Matters Raised by Members**

*Nil.*

**Item 11 General Business**

*Nil.*

*Meeting closed at 10.40am*

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## 4. Actions Arising from Minutes

### 4.1 Hunter JO Board Action Register

#### Recommendation:

- That the status of actions included in the Register be noted.

I.D	Action	Mtg Date		Due	Notes
HJO-24-020	That the Board endorse collaborating with other Joint Organisations to develop a shared ARIC model for implementation	24 Oct 24	In progress	Feb 2026	<p><b>August 2025:</b> The Boards of Central NSW JO, Illawarra Shoalhaven JO and Mid North Coast JO have confirmed their interest and intent to participate in a shared ARIC. Meeting held 6<sup>th</sup> August to progress planning and development.</p> <p><b>June 2025:</b> Other JO's have been asked to confirm their intent to join a shared ARIC with the Hunter JO by 30 May 2025. Refer Agenda Item 7.10 "Shared ARIC" for more information.</p> <p><b>April 2025:</b> Report on proposed shared ARIC model will be presented to NSW JO Chairs Forum meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2025 for consideration.</p> <p><b>February 2025.</b> Hunter JO is leading collaboration with broader joint organisation network.</p>
HJO-25-001	Write to ALGA expressing disappointment that two of the proposed Hunter JO regional motions were not accepted for the National General Assembly 2025.	12 June 25	Completed	August 2025	<b>August 2025:</b> Action completed, refer Correspondence. Reply pending
HJO-25-002	Provide a submission to the NSW Grants Commission regarding the allocation of general-purpose grants.	12 June 25	Completed	August 2025	<b>August 2025:</b> Action completed, refer Correspondence Attachment 6-11.

Key: Complete In progress Incomplete

## 5. Presentations

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Nil

## 6. Correspondence

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<b>Report Author:</b>	Bonnie Gradwell, Administration and Events Officer - Hunter JO
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### Recommendation:

- That the correspondence be received and noted.

### Executive Summary:

This report provides an update on correspondence sent and received in relation to the Hunter Joint Organisation Board.

**Background:** Nil

**Discussion:** Nil

**Financial / Resourcing Implications:** Nil

**Next steps:** Nil

### Appendices\* / Attachments\*\*:

#### Correspondence Sent:

- Attachment 6-1: Correspondence to Tony Chappel CEO, NSW Environment Protection Authority re: Letter of Support – EPA/LGNSW Councils Managing Contaminated Land Together, 28 March 2025
- Attachment 6-2: Correspondence to Central Coast Council re: Letter of Support – Central Coast Council Resilient Communities Phase 2, 11 April 2025
- Attachment 6-3: Correspondence to Australian Local Government Association re: Exclusion of Motion from 2025 NGA Business Papers, 16 June 2025
- Attachment 6-4: Correspondence to Mr Dave Layzell, Member for Upper Hunter re: Accelerating the reactivation of current and former mining lands to create jobs in the Hunter Region, 20 June 2025
- Attachment 6-5: Correspondence to Mr Andrew Warrender, Newcastle Airport Pty Limited, re: Letter of Support – Newcastle Aerospace East Precinct Planning Project, 27 June 2025
- Attachment 6-6: Correspondence template to NSW Parliament Ministers re: Hunter JO Board Meeting NSW Parliament House, 15 July 2025

#### Recipients

- |                               |                             |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • The Hon Emily Suvaal        | • The Hon Chris Minns MP    |
| • The Hon Jenny Aitchison MP  | • The Hon Janelle Saffin MP |
| • The Hon Yasmin Catley MP    | • The Hon Paul Scully MP    |
| • The Hon Ron Hoenig MP       | • The Hon Penny Sharpe MP   |
| • The Hon Courtney Houssos MP | • The Hon Daniel Mookhey MP |
| • The Hon Rose Jackson        | • The Hon Mark Speakman MP  |
| • The Hon Steve Kamper MP     | • Mrs Wendy Tuckerman MP    |
| • The Hon Jihad Dib MP        |                             |

- Attachment 6-7: Correspondence to The Business Centre re: Letter of Support Net Zero Small Business Support Program, 23 July 2025
- Attachment 6-8: Correspondence to The Hon Ron Hoenig MP re: Cost shifting onto the ten councils of the Hunter Region, 29 July 2025
- Attachment 6-9: Correspondence to The Hon Daniel Mookhey MLC re: Cost shifting onto the ten councils of the Hunter Region, 29 July 2025
- Attachment 6-10: Correspondence to The Hon Chris Minns MP re: Cost shifting onto the ten councils of the Hunter Region, 29 July 2025

Correspondence Received:

- Attachment 6-11: Correspondence from The Hon Barnaby Joyce MP re: Hunter JO Advocacy Priorities, 4 June 2025
- Attachment 6-12: Correspondence from NSW Audit Officer re: Interim Management Letter 2025 (CONFIDENTIAL)
- Attachment 6-13: Correspondence from Dr Ross Kerridge Lord Mayor City of Newcastle re: Requestion advocacy for increase to pension rebate, 29 July 2025

Regional Submissions:

- Attachment 6-14: Draft Waste Infrastructure Plan, June 2025
- Attachment 6-15: NSW Grants Commission FAGs, June 2025
- Attachment 6-16: Net Zero Commission, July 2025
- Attachment 6-17: Net Zero Economy Authority – Eraring Power Station, July 2025

\*Appendices are included directly following the report and inform the validity of the report

\*\*Attachments are included at the end of the Board Pack to provide supplementary information and context.



## 7. Items for the Hunter JO Board: For Decision

### 7.1 Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2035 and Delivery Program 2025-2029

<b>Report Author:</b>	Anna Flack, Senior Project Coordinator – Hunter JO
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#### **Recommendation:**

- **That the Board endorse adoption of the Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2035 and Delivery Program 2025-2029**

#### **Executive Summary:**

The Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2035 and Hunter JO Delivery Program 2025-2029 have been developed in close consultation with the Board, council stakeholders and agency representatives. This report is seeking endorsement to formally adopt the Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2035 and Delivery Program 2025-2029.

#### **Background:**

As required under the Local Government (General) Amendment (Regional Joint Organisations) Regulation 2018 and aligned with the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) cycle, Joint Organisations must prepare a Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities (SSRP) which sets out a vision for the region and provides an overview of the strategic actions required to deliver on that vision, to be completed within 12 months after each subsequent ordinary election of councillors. The Hunter JO SSRP is referred to as the Hunter JO Strategic Plan.

While Councils must endorse their Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program and Operational Plan by 30 June, Joint Organisations have until 14 September to prepare their SSRP. This provides Hunter JO the opportunity (as has occurred) to review the priorities included in each Member Councils' Community Strategic Plan and ensure these have been reflected in the Strategic Plan.

#### **Discussion:**

Hunter JO has engaged extensively with the Board since October 2024 to develop the Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2035 and Hunter JO Delivery Program 2025-2029. A stakeholder consultation period was undertaken from 20 June to 17 July 2025, involving LinkedIn communications, newsletter and Mayors Digest articles, two drop-in sessions and targeted emails and presentations.

Feedback was received from the following organisations:

1. Lake Macquarie City Council
  - Social Planning team
  - Arts, Culture and Tourism team
2. Maitland City Council
  - City and Visitor Economy team
3. MidCoast Council
  - Liveable Communities team
4. City of Newcastle
  - Corporate Planning and Reporting team
  - Climate Change and Sustainability team
  - Transport team
5. Port Stephens Council
  - Community Futures team
6. Singleton Council

- IP&R team
- 7. NSW Department of Primary Industries & Regional Development
- 8. NSW Department of Planning Housing and Infrastructure
- 9. Transport for NSW
- 10. High Speed Rail Authority
- 11. Richmond Vale Rail Trail Supporters' Group

A high-level summary of the feedback that was received and how this has been considered in finalising the Strategic Plan and Delivery Program is provided in Appendix 7.1-A.

#### **Next steps:**

Once endorsed;

- Submit Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2035 to NSW Office of Local Government
- Publish the Strategic Plan 2025 on the Hunter JO website
- Distribute and communicate Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2035 and Hunter JO Delivery Program 2025-2029 to key stakeholders
- The Hunter JO Delivery Program 2025-2029 will be updated annually

#### **Appendices\* / Attachments\*\*:**

- Appendix 7.1-A: Summary of Feedback and Response
- Attachment 7.1-1: Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2035
- Attachment 7.1-2: Hunter JO Delivery Program 2025-2029

\*Appendices are included directly following the report and inform the validity of the report

\*\*Attachments are included at the end of the Board Pack to provide supplementary information and context.

## Appendix 7.1-A. Summary of Feedback and Response

Summary of Feedback	Response / Amendment to Strategic Plan
Add additional aligned NSW Government plans and stakeholders	Added the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NSW Industry Policy</li> <li>• NSW Innovation Blueprint</li> <li>• Industrial Lands Action Plan</li> <li>• Other community groups / agencies (as appropriate)</li> </ul>
Community Strategic Plan (CSP mapping updates)	Minor updates based on councils' final endorsed CSPs
Housing and Population Growth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homelessness should be acknowledged</li> <li>• Increasing threat to housing from natural hazards should be acknowledged</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homelessness addressed in Hunter Regional Context</li> <li>• Natural hazard risk addressed in Hunter Regional Context and updated Objective 1.4</li> </ul>
Economic Transformation and Jobs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add reference to investment attraction and innovation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Already included but minor updates included to increase emphasis</li> </ul>
Infrastructure and Connectivity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase reference to integrated active transport and public transport</li> <li>• Strengthen low emission transport solutions and electrification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ordering of objectives changed</li> <li>• Updated wording in Objective 3.3 to reflect feedback</li> </ul>
Environmental Sustainability and Resilience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should commit to regenerating natural systems and incorporating nature-based solutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wording for Objective 4.4 updated to incorporate nature-based solutions</li> </ul>
Financial Sustainability and Funding Reform <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add an objective to address funding for climate adaptation and disaster resilience rather than response and recovery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noted, however this is incorporated across Objectives 5.1 and 5.3 and corresponding advocacy priorities</li> </ul>
Community Liveability and Wellbeing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should include broader forms of social infrastructure such as education, arts and cultural facilities, community service providers, etc</li> <li>• Arts and culture has not been considered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated Objective 6.1 to broaden focus based on feedback</li> <li>• Updated Objective 6.3 to reflect support for the arts</li> </ul>
Targets, Measures and Indicators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For best practice, the Plan should include regional indicators and measures to determine effectiveness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreed, this would be best practice and is well above and beyond what is required of a JO SSRP. We have not included as we report regularly to the Board and on a project-by-project basis. This may be something we consider in future</li> </ul>

Summary of Feedback	Response / Amendment to Strategic Plan
<p>Collaborative Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does the Hunter JO work with Central Coast Council and Aboriginal stakeholders?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case study on Central Coast Council collaboration via the Environment Program now included</li> <li>Statement on our commitment to building partnerships with Aboriginal stakeholders now included</li> </ul>
<p>Delivery Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Various submissions questioned why not every Objective has been addressed in the Delivery Program</li> <li>Various submissions asked for more specific detail on individual projects, including detailed actions, community engagement strategies and solutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capacity Building Projects – updates made based on new / updated grants</li> <li>Advocacy – further detail added based on advocacy work with councils</li> <li>Detail added to ‘About Our Plan’, ‘How We Deliver and Report on our Plan’ and Delivery Program to clarify that priorities and projects for delivery will be decided annually based on available funding and resources.</li> <li>The Strategic Plan and Delivery Program are not designed to provide a high level of detail on project and priority specifics – this is delivered and provided on a project-by-project basis and/or codesigned with councils through the advocacy process</li> </ul>

<b>Report Author:</b>	Steve Wilson, Director Hunter JO (Executive Officer)
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**Recommendation:**

- **That the Pecuniary Interest and Other Matters Disclosures provided by the Hunter JO Board Voting Members and Executive Officer for the 2024-25 financial year be tabled and noted.**

**Executive Summary:**

Pecuniary Interest and Other Matter Disclosures for all Hunter JO Board voting members and the Executive Officer for the 2024-25 financial year will be provided to the Chair within the meeting for tabling.

**Background:**

In accordance with the Hunter JO Code of Conduct (clause 4.2.1), *“a voting representative or designated person must make and lodge with the executive officer a return in the form set out in schedule 2 to the code, disclosing the voting representative’s or designated person’s interests as specified in schedule 1 to the code within 3 months after:*

- a) becoming a voting representative or designated person, and*
- b) 30 June of each year, and*
- c) the voting representative or designated person becoming aware of an interest they are required to disclose under schedule 1 that has not been previously disclosed in a return lodged under paragraphs (a) or (b)”.*

Clause 4.25 requires that the returns *“lodged with the executive officer under clause 4.21(a) and (b) must be tabled at the first meeting of the Joint Organisation after the last day the return is required to be lodged”*.

Clause 4.27 requires that *“information contained in returns made and lodged under clause 4.21 is to be made publicly available in accordance with the requirements of the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009, the Government Information (Public Access) Regulation 2009 and any guidelines issued by the Information Commissioner”*. Should this be required any personal details will be redacted.

**Discussion:**

Pecuniary Interest disclosures for the 2024/25 financial year have been received from all Hunter JO Board Voting Members and the Director Hunter JO (Executive Officer) for the following periods:

- **14 September 2024 – 30 June 2025** for new Mayors joining the Board following the local government elections (i.e. Crs Anderson, Drayton, Kerridge, Rayward, Shultz & Watton)
- **1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025** for Mayors who have been Board Members for the full year (i.e. Crs Collison, Moore, Penfold and Pontin)
- **1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025** for the Executive Officer.

**Financial / Resourcing Implications:** Nil

**Next steps:** Nil

**Appendices\* / Attachments\*\*:** Nil

\*Appendices are included directly following the report and inform the validity of the report

\*\*Attachments are included at the end of the Board Pack to provide supplementary information and context.

<b>Report Author:</b>	Steve Wilson, Director Hunter JO (Executive Officer)
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**Recommendation:**

- That the Board endorse the draft 2025 Hunter JO Code of Conduct and Procedures

**Executive Summary:**

This report is seeking endorsement of the updated 2025 Code of Conduct and Procedures for the Hunter JO.

**Background:**

Under the *NSW Local Government Act*, joint organisations must review their adopted Code of Conduct within 12 months of the NSW local government elections and make such adjustments as they consider appropriate.

The Model Code of Conduct sets the minimum standards of conduct for Joint Organisation officials including Board Members and staff. It is prescribed by the *Local Government Regulation 2005* to assist local government officials to:

- understand and comply with the standards of conduct that are expected of them
- enable them to fulfil their statutory duty to act honestly and exercise a reasonable degree of care and diligence
- act in a way that enhances public confidence in local government.

Joint organisations must also appoint a panel of conduct reviewers. The role of conduct reviewers is to undertake preliminary assessments and investigations of code of conduct complaints about board members of joint organisations (including the chairperson) and the executive officer, where the complaint has not been declined or resolved at the outset. Establishment of a regional code of conduct panel was coordinated in 2024 by the Hunter JO that is also shared by the ten member councils.

**Discussion:**

The updated draft Code of Conduct and Procedures for the Hunter JO are included in Attachments 7.3-1 and 7.3-2. As required by the *Local Government Regulation* these documents are consistent (i.e. they incorporate the provisions of) the following documents:

- Model Code of Conduct for Local Councils in NSW
- Procedures for the Administration of the Model Code of Conduct for Local Councils in NSW

**Financial / Resourcing Implications: Nil****Next steps:**

- When endorsed, the updated Code of Conduct and Procedures will be published on the Hunter JO website.

**Appendices\* / Attachments\*\*:**

- Attachment 7.3-1: Draft Hunter JO Code of Conduct 2025
- Attachment 7.3-2: Draft Procedures for the Administration of the Code of Conduct 2025

\*Appendices are included directly following the report and inform the validity of the report

\*\*Attachments are included at the end of the Board Pack to provide supplementary information and context.

<b>Report Author:</b>	Steve Wilson, Director Hunter JO (Executive Officer)
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**Recommendation:**

- **That the Board endorse the updated Hunter JO Code of Meeting Practice 2025**

**Executive Summary:**

This report is seeking endorsement of an updated Hunter JO Code of Meeting Practice

**Background:**

Under the *NSW Local Government Act*, joint organisations must review their adopted Code of Meeting Practice within 12 months of the NSW local government elections and make such adjustments as they consider appropriate. Joint organisations must adopt a Code of Meeting Practice that incorporates the provisions of the Model Code of Meeting Practice for Local Councils in NSW, 2021, as prescribed under section 360 of the *Local Government Act 1993* (the Act) and the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021* (the Regulation).

**Discussion:**

The updated draft Code of Meeting Practice for the Hunter JO is included in Attachment 7.4-1, with proposed amendments marked as **red text**. A consolidated table of proposed amendments (relative to the current 2019 Hunter JO Code) is also provided in Appendix 7.4-A. As can be seen from this information, the proposed amendments predominantly relate to:

- Inclusion of mandatory clauses from the Model Code of Meeting Practice not included in the current 2019 Hunter JO Code
- Removal of clauses related to planning decisions as not applicable to joint organisations.
- Inclusion of a range of non-mandatory clauses from the Model Code of Meeting Practice that reflect current meeting practice but weren't included in the 2019 Code. For example, processes around:
  - Holding meetings by audio-visual link
  - Meeting quorums
  - Requirements for Chairperson's Minutes and Board Motions requiring the expenditure of funds
  - Dealing with items by exception

**Financial / Resourcing Implications:** Nil.

**Next steps:**

- When endorsed, the Updated Code will be published on the Hunter JO website.
- Board meetings will be conducted in accordance with the updated Code.

**Appendices\* / Attachments\*\*:**

- Appendix 7.4-A: Consolidated amendments to Code of Meeting Practice
- Attachment 7.4-1: Draft Hunter JO Code of Meeting Practice 2025

\*Appendices are included directly following the report and inform the validity of the report

\*\*Attachments are included at the end of the Board Pack to provide supplementary information and context.

#### Appendix 7.4-A. Consolidated amendments to Code of Meeting Practice

Section	Changes from previous (2019) Hunter JO Code
<b>Giving notice of business to be considered at board meetings</b>	Updating clause 3.10 to require a notice of motion to be submitted ten (10) business days before a Board meeting is to be held. This provides the opportunity to incorporate within the Business Papers. The previous code required 5 days.
<b>Statement of ethical obligations</b>	Inclusion of this mandatory section and clause 3.23 as required by Model Code.  <i>3.23 Business Papers for all ordinary and extraordinary committees of the joint organisation and Committees must contain a statement reminding voting representatives of their oath or affirmation of office made under section 233A of the Act and their obligations under the joint organisation's code of conduct to disclose and appropriately manage conflicts of interest.</i>
<b>Pre-meeting briefing sessions</b>	Inclusion of non-mandatory clauses 3.33 – 3.38 not represented in previous code. These relate to the process of holding pre-meeting briefings and the declaration of interests.
<b>The Quorum for a meeting</b>	Inclusion of following non-mandatory additional clauses (5.14 & 5.15).  <i>5.14. Where, prior to the commencement of a meeting, it becomes apparent that a quorum may not be present at the meeting, or that the health, safety or welfare of voting members, joint organisation staff and members of the public may be put at risk by attending the meeting because of a natural disaster or a public health emergency, the Chairperson may, in consultation with the Executive Officer and, as far as is practicable, with each voting member, cancel the meeting. Where a meeting is cancelled, notice of the cancellation must be published on the Joint Organisation's website and in such other manner that the Joint Organisation is satisfied is likely to bring notice of the cancellation to the attention of as many people as possible.</i>  <i>5.15 Where a meeting is cancelled under clause 5.14, the business to be considered at the meeting may instead be considered, where practicable, at the next ordinary meeting of the council or at an extraordinary meeting called under clause 3.3.</i>
<b>Meetings held by audio-visual link &amp; Attendance by voting-members at meetings by audio-visual link</b>	Inclusion of non-mandatory section (clauses 5.16 – 5.30) governing meetings held by audio-visual link. No provision for meeting by audio-visual link was included in previous code.
<b>Attendance by voting-members at meetings by audio-visual link</b>	Inclusion of non-mandatory section (clauses 5.19 – 5.30) governing meetings held by audio-visual link. No provision for meeting by audio-visual link was included in previous code.
<b>Attendance of the executive officer</b>	Inclusion of mandatory clause 5.44.  <i>5.44 The Executive Officer and other Joint Organisation staff may attend</i>



Section	Changes from previous (2019) Hunter JO Code
<b>and other staff at meetings</b>	<i>meetings of the Joint Organisation and committees of the Joint Organisation by audio-visual link. Attendance by Joint Organisation staff at meetings by audio-visual link (other than as members of the public) shall be with the approval of the Executive Officer.</i>
<b>Chairperson's minutes</b>	Inclusion of non-mandatory clause 9.10.  <i>9.10 Where a Chairperson's minute makes a recommendation which, if adopted, would require the expenditure of funds on works and/or services other than those already provided for in the Joint Organisations Delivery Program and budget, it must identify the source of funding for the expenditure that is the subject of the recommendation. If the Chairperson's minute does not identify a funding source, the Board must defer consideration of the matter, pending a report from the Executive Officer on the availability of funds for implementing the recommendation if adopted.</i>
<b>Motions requiring the expenditure of funds</b>	Inclusion of non-mandatory clause 10.9.  <i>10.9 A motion or amendment to a motion which if passed would require the expenditure of funds on works and/or services other than those already provided for in the Joint Organisations Delivery Program and budget, must identify the source of funding for the expenditure that is the subject of the motion. If the motion does not identify a funding source, the Board must defer consideration of the matter, pending a report from the Executive Officer on the availability of funds for implementing the motion if adopted.</i>
<b>Voting on planning decisions</b>	Removal of clauses 11.12 – 11.15 related to planning decisions as not applicable to joint organisations.
<b>Dealing with Items by exception</b>	Inclusion of non-mandatory clauses 13.1 – 13.6  <i>13.1 The Joint Organisation or a committee of the Joint Organisation may, at any time, resolve to adopt multiple items of business on the agenda together by way of a single resolution.</i>  <i>13.2 Before the Joint Organisation resolves to adopt multiple items of business on the agenda together under clause 13.1, the Chairperson must list the items of business to be adopted and ask voting representatives to identify any individual items of business listed by the Chairperson that they intend to vote against the recommendation made in the business paper or that they wish to speak on.</i>  <i>13.3 The Joint Organisation or a committee of the Joint Organisation must not resolve to adopt any item of business under clause 13.1 that a voting member has identified as being one they intend to vote against the recommendation made in the business paper or to speak on.</i>  <i>13.4 Where the consideration of multiple items of business together under clause 13.1 involves a variation to the order of business for the meeting, the Joint Organisation or committee of the Joint Organisation must resolve to alter the order of business in accordance with clause 8.3.</i>  <i>13.5 A motion to adopt multiple items of business together under clause 13.1 must identify each of the items of business to be adopted and state that they are to be adopted as recommended in the business paper.</i>

Section	Changes from previous (2019) Hunter JO Code
	<p><i>13.6 Items of business adopted under clause 13.1 are to be taken to have been adopted unanimously.</i></p> <p><i>13.7 Voting members must ensure that they declare and manage any conflicts of interest they may have in relation to items of business considered together under clause 13.1 in accordance with the requirements of the Joint Organisations code of conduct.</i></p>
<b>Obligations of board members attending by audio-visual link</b>	<p>Inclusion of non-mandatory clause 14.20.</p> <p><i>14.20 Hunter Joint Organisation Board Members attending a meeting by audio-visual link must ensure that no other person is within sight or hearing of the meeting at any time that the meeting is closed to the public under section 10A of the Act.</i></p>
<b>Points of Order</b>	<p>Inclusion of mandatory clauses 15.1 – 15.3.</p> <p><i>15.1 A voting representative may draw the attention of the Chairperson to an alleged breach of this code by raising a point of order. A point of order does not require a seconder.</i></p> <p><i>15.2 A point of order cannot be made with respect to adherence to the principles contained in clause 2.1.</i></p> <p><i>15.3 A point of order must be taken immediately it is raised. The Chairperson must suspend the business before the meeting and permit the voting representative raising the point of order to state the provision of this code they believe has been breached. The Chairperson must then rule on the point of order – either by upholding it or by overruling it.</i></p>
<b>Expulsion from meetings</b>	<p>Inclusion of non-mandatory clauses 15.14 – 15.16.</p> <p><i>15.14 All Chairpersons of meetings of the Joint Organisation and committees of the Joint Organisation are authorised under this code to expel any person, including any voting representative, from a Joint Organisation Board or committee meeting, for the purposes of section 10(2)(b) of the Act.</i></p> <p><i>15.15 Omitted – covered by Clause 15.14</i></p> <p><i>15.14 does not limit the ability of the Joint Organisation and committees of the Joint Organisation to resolve to expel a person, including a voting representative, from a Joint Organisation or committee meeting, under section 10(2)(a) of the Act.</i></p>
<b>How disorder by Board members attending meetings by audio-visual link may be dealt with</b>	<p>Inclusion of non-mandatory clauses 15.21 – 15.22.</p> <p><i>15.21 Where a Joint Organisation Board member is attending a meeting by audio-visual link, the Chairperson or a person authorised by the chairperson may mute the Board members audio link to the meeting for the purposes of enforcing compliance with this code.</i></p> <p><i>15.22 If a Joint Organisation Board member attending a meeting by by audio-visual link is expelled from a meeting for an act of disorder, the Chairperson of the meeting or a person authorised by the Chairperson, may terminate the Board members audio-visual link to the meeting.</i></p>

Section	Changes from previous (2019) Hunter JO Code
<b>Conflicts of Interest</b>	<p>Inclusion of non-mandatory clause 16.2.</p> <p><i>16.2 Voting representatives attending a meeting by audio-visual link must declare and manage any conflicts of interest they may have in matters being considered at the meeting in accordance with the Joint Organisation's code of conduct. Where a voting representative has declared a pecuniary or significant non-pecuniary conflict of interest in a matter being discussed at the meeting, the voting members audio-visual link to the meeting must be suspended or terminated and the voting representative must not be in sight or hearing of the meeting at any time during which the matter is being considered or discussed by the Joint Organisation Board or committee, or at any time during which the Joint Organisation Board or committee is voting on the matter.</i></p>
<b>Rescinding or altering Board decisions</b>	<p>Inclusion of non-mandatory clauses 17.12 – 17.14.</p> <p><i>17.12 Subject to clause 17.7, in cases of urgency a motion to alter or rescind a resolution of the Joint organisation may be moved at the same meeting at which the resolution was adopted, where:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>a) a notice of motion signed by three voting representatives is submitted to the Chairperson, and</i></li> <li><i>b) a motion to have the motion considered at the meeting is passed, and</i></li> <li><i>c) the Chairperson rules the business that is the subject of the motion is of great urgency on the grounds that it requires a decision by the Joint Organisation before the next scheduled ordinary meeting of the Joint Organisation.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>17.13 A motion moved under clause 17.12(b) can be moved without notice. Despite clauses 10.20–10.30, only the mover of a motion referred to in clause 17.12(b) can speak to the motion before it is put.</i></p> <p><i>17.14 A motion of dissent cannot be moved against a ruling by the Chairperson under clause 17.12(c).</i></p>
<b>Recommitting resolutions to correct an error</b>	<p>Inclusion of non-mandatory clauses (17.15 – 17.20)</p> <p><i>17.15 Despite the provisions of this Part, voting representatives may, with the leave of the Chairperson, move to recommit a resolution adopted at the same meeting:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>a) to correct any error, ambiguity or imprecision in the Joint Organisation's resolution, or</i></li> <li><i>b) to confirm the voting on the resolution.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>17.16 In seeking the leave of the Chairperson to move to recommit a resolution for the purposes of clause 17.15(a), the voting representative is to propose alternative wording for the resolution.</i></p> <p><i>17.17 The Chairperson must not grant leave to recommit a resolution for the purposes of clause 17.15(a), unless they are satisfied that the proposed alternative wording of the resolution would not alter the substance of the resolution previously adopted at the meeting.</i></p> <p><i>17.18 A motion moved under clause 17.15 can be moved without notice. Despite clauses 10.20–10.30, only the mover of a motion referred to in</i></p>

Section	Changes from previous (2019) Hunter JO Code
	<p><i>clause 17.15 can speak to the motion before it is put.</i></p> <p><i>17.19 A motion of dissent cannot be moved against a ruling by the Chairperson under clause 17.15.</i></p> <p><i>17.20 A motion moved under clause 17.15 with the leave of the Chairperson cannot be voted on unless or until it has been seconded.</i></p>
<b>Minutes of meetings</b>	<p>Inclusion of the following non-mandatory sub clause (a) to clause 19.1:</p> <p><i>19.1 At a minimum, the Executive Officer must ensure that the following matters are recorded in the Joint Organisation minutes:</i></p> <p><i>a) The names of Board members attending a Joint Organisation meeting and whether they attended the meeting in person or by audio-visual link</i></p>
<b>Minutes of Joint Organisation committee meetings</b>	<p>Addition of non-mandatory subclause (a) to clause 20.23.</p> <p><i>20.23 Each committee of the board is to keep full and accurate minutes of the proceedings of its meetings. At a minimum, a committee must ensure that the following matters are recorded in the committee's minutes:</i></p> <p><i>a) the names of voting members attending a meeting and whether they attended the meeting in person or by audio-visual link</i></p> <p>Inclusion of non-mandatory clause 20.24.</p> <p><i>20.24 All voting at meetings of committees of the Joint Organisation (including meetings that are closed to the public), must be recorded in the minutes of meetings with the names of voting representatives who voted for and against each motion or amendment, (including the use of the casting vote), being recorded.</i></p>

## 8. Items for the Hunter JO Board: For Noting

### 8.1 Hunter JO Financial Report

<b>Report Author:</b>	Tim Askew, Director of Programs – Hunter JO
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#### Recommendations:

- That the Income Statement for financial year ending June 2025 be received and noted.
- That the summary of Credit Card expenditure for Hunter JO for YTD June 2025 be received and noted.

#### Executive Summary:

This report provides, for noting, the end of year financial statements for the Hunter Joint Organisation.

**Background:** Nil

#### Discussion:

#### Income Statement Summary

SUMMARY	ACTUAL	ACTUAL	BUDGET	YTD	YTD	ANNUAL	FORECAST
INCOME STATEMENT HIGHLIGHTS	Current Month	YTD	YTD	VARIANCE	PRIOR YEAR	BUDGET	BUDGET
<b>HJO GROUP</b>							
HUNTER COUNCILS INCORPORATED	(6,000)	(144,622)	(138,631)	4%	(3,094)	(3,626)	(138,631)
HUNTER JOINT ORGANISATION	(72,595)	50,613	53,528	6%	18,303	53,528	63,388
<b>TOTAL NET PROFIT / (LOSS) - OPERATIONS</b>	<b>(78,595)</b>	<b>(94,009)</b>	<b>(85,103)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15,208</b>	<b>49,902</b>	<b>(75,243)</b>
HJO Subsidy	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Extraordinary Expenses	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL GROUP NET PROFIT / (LOSS)</b>	<b>(78,595)</b>	<b>(94,009)</b>	<b>(85,103)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15,208</b>	<b>49,902</b>	<b>(75,243)</b>

For the end of financial year, Hunter JO reports a net profit of \$50,613 which is 6% below the budget projections. This variance is primarily attributable to timing differences in grant progress increasing costs offset by reductions in training costs, audit costs and motor vehicle savings through switching to electric vehicles.

The YTD net results for Hunter Councils Inc align with the reforecast budget completed at the end of Q2. New tenants are now in place as of the 21 March 2025, so the business can return to breakeven in 2025/26.

For a more detailed breakdown of the Income Statement, Balance Sheet, and Cash Flow by company, please refer to attachment 8.1-1 & 8.1-2.

A copy of Credit Card Expenditure for the Hunter JO since 1 July 2024 has been included at Attachment 8.1-1 for noting.

## Balance Sheet Summary

YTD SUMMARY	HUNTER COUNCILS INC	HUNTER JOINT ORGANISATION	HJO GROUP TOTAL
<b>BALANCE SHEET HIGHLIGHTS</b>			
<b>ASSETS</b>			
Cash	68	936,945	937,013
Trade Debtors	7,897	211,543	219,440
Property, Plant & Equipment	1,518,738	48,565	1,567,303
Intercompany Loans	(645,412)	56,401	(589,011)
Other	(17,666)	2,001	(15,665)
	<b>863,625</b>	<b>1,255,455</b>	<b>2,119,080</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
Trade Creditors	16,555	49,701	66,256
Employee Leave Entitlements	-	221,532	221,532
Unspent Grant Funding	-	998,702	998,702
Intercompany Loans	226,000	-	226,000
Other	7,054	98,545	105,599
	<b>249,609</b>	<b>1,368,480</b>	<b>1,618,089</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>614,015</b>	<b>(113,025)</b>	<b>500,991</b>
	-	-	
<b>BALANCE SHEET METRICS</b>			
Working Capital	(9,701)	1,150,489	1,140,788
Current Ratio [Target >1.5]	-0.4:1	0.8:1	0.8:1
Liabilities to Assets %	29%	109%	76%
Cash Ratio [Target >1]	0:1	0.7:1	0.7:1

## Cashflow Summary

YTD SUMMARY	HUNTER COUNCILS INC	HUNTER JOINT ORGANISATION	GROUP TOTAL
<b>CASHFLOW HIGHLIGHTS</b>			
<b>OPENING BALANCE - CASH ON HAND</b>	<b>23,859</b>	<b>27,953</b>	<b>51,812</b>
Net Cash - Operating	(41,791)	902,531	860,740
Net Cash - Investing	-	(18,537)	(18,537)
Net Cash - Financing	18,000	25,000	43,000
Cash - Net Increase / (Decrease)	(23,791)	908,994	885,203
<b>CLOSING BALANCE - CASH ON HAND</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>936,947</b>	<b>937,015</b>
Plus Trade Debtors / Creditors	(8,658)	161,842	153,184
<b>AVAILABLE WORKING CAPITAL (CASH)</b>	<b>(8,590)</b>	<b>1,098,789</b>	<b>1,090,199</b>
<b>LESS RESTRICTED FUNDS</b>			
Employee Leave Entitlements	-	221,532	221,532
Unspent Grant Funds	-	998,702	998,702
<b>UNRESTRICTED FUNDS</b>	<b>(8,590)</b>	<b>(121,445)</b>	<b>(130,035)</b>

## Appendices\* / Attachments\*\*:

- Attachment 8.1-1: Hunter JO Credit Card Expenditure: YTD June 2025 (CONFIDENTIAL)
- Attachment 8.1-2: Hunter JO End of Financial Year Report: June 2025

\*Appendices are included directly following the report and inform the validity of the report

\*\*Attachments are included at the end of the Board Pack to provide supplementary information and context.

<b>Report Author:</b>	Tim Askew, Director of Programs - Hunter JO
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### Recommendation:

- That the Board note the update on funding and grant opportunities

### Executive Summary:

This paper provides an update on the status of funding applications submitted by the Hunter JO.

### Background:

Grant funding is a key source of revenue for the Hunter JO, underpinning delivery of a range of advocacy initiatives and capacity building activities and projects that contribute directly to implementation of the Hunter JO Strategic Plan.

### Discussion

#### Status of Grant Applications

Status	Grant	Amount
Successful	<b>Joint Organisation Net Zero Acceleration (JONZA) Program</b> <i>Project: Hunter Net Zero Acceleration Program</i> A further 18 months funding has been awarded to this program to continue supporting member councils deliver their local net zero targets. The funding is provided directly to JOs across NSW to support a dedicated internal staff member drive net zero initiatives, including building internal capacity across member councils.	\$253,200
Advice pending	<b>Funding Program: Regional Economic Development &amp; Community Investment Program</b> <i>Project: Regional Post Mining Land Use in the Hunter</i> This project would deliver the preliminary components of the regional post mining land use proposal. Activities would focus on assessing region-wide mining lands and assets and developing a regional action plan for the repurposing of sites.	\$998,843 (over 2 years)
Advice pending (NB If successful DSSN would be the grant recipient)	<b>Funding Program: Regional Economic Development &amp; Community Investment Program</b> <i>Project: Hunter Global Tourism Project.</i> Hunter JO has partnered with Destination Sydney Surrounds North (the proponent) and Newcastle Airport in this application, which would fund the delivery of two critical action plan items from the Hunter Global Tourism Marketing Strategy: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Trade Representation &amp; International Market Readiness</li> <li>2. Content Strategy &amp; Digital Infrastructure.</li> </ol> As required by the funding guidelines DSSN and Newcastle Airport are providing a 20% direct financial contribution to the project.	\$250,000

Status	Grant	Amount
Advice Pending	<p><b>Funding Source: NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water</b></p> <p><i>Project: Embedding Climate Risk in Council Enterprise Risk Management</i></p> <p>Hunter JO has submitted a proposal to assist councils update and develop climate change risk assessments using the latest NARClIM climate projections and embed them within councils' broader enterprise risk framework.</p> <p>The project will also include development of an instructional toolkit to assist councils across the state use best practice methodology to improve their climate risk management.</p>	\$100,000

**Key:**      Successful      Advice Pending      Unsuccessful

**Financial / Resourcing Implications:** Nil

**Next steps:** Nil

**Appendices\* / Attachments\*\*:** Nil

\*Appendices are included directly following the report and inform the validity of the report

\*\*Attachments are included at the end of the Board Pack to provide supplementary information and context.



<b>Report Author:</b>	Tim Askew, Director of Programs - Hunter JO
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**Recommendation:**

- That the report be received and noted.

**Executive Summary:**

The Program Status Report provides the Board with an “at-a-glance” overview of the range of operational capacity building projects currently being delivered by the Hunter JO.

**Background:**

Key information provided by the report includes:

1. Project name.
2. Alignment of project to the strategic themes included in the Hunter JO Strategic Plan.
3. Source of project funding.
4. Status of project delivery in relation to project schedule, resourcing and scope.
5. Scheduled delivery date.
6. A brief update where any impacts on project schedule, resourcing and scope are being experienced.

**Discussion:** Nil

**Financial / Resourcing Implications:** Nil

**Next steps:** Nil

**Appendices\* / Attachments\*\*:**

- Appendix 8.3-A: Program Status Update Report

\*Appendices are included directly following the report and inform the validity of the report

\*\*Attachments are included at the end of the Board Pack to provide supplementary information and context.

## Appendix 8.3-A: Program Status Update Report

Strategic Themes				Project	Funding	Schedule	Resourcing	Scope	Delivery Date	Updates by Exception
CONNECTIVITY										
RESILIENCE										
				Disaster Ready Project	Grant	On Track	On Track	On Track	29 February 2028	
JOBS AND A GROWING ECONOMY										
				Circular Economy Ecosystem	Grant	On Track	On Track	On Track	30 June 2027	
				Hospitality Circularity Project	Grant	On Track	On Track	On Track	31 March 2026	
				Circular Precincts and Futures Hub	Hunter JO	On Track	Moderate Impact	On Track	30 June 2026	The project continues to seek a new grant to continue the work towards development of the Circular Precincts and Futures Hub.
				Hunter Circular Knowledge Hub	Grant	Completed	Completed	Completed	30 April 2025	Project completed. Project launched internally with Council staff 15 May 2025.
				Hunter Circular Value Chains	Grant	On Track	On Track	On Track	30 June 2026	Project commenced - project plan meeting with NSW EPA team
				Circular Economy Procurement Project	Grant	On Track	On Track	On Track	30 April 2026	
				Priority Infrastructure List (Stage 2)	Hunter JO	Moderate Impact	Moderate Impact	Moderate Impact	30 June 2026	Project is on hold as there is currently no resources available in the short term. Likely to recommence in January 2026.
LIVEABILITY										
				Illegal Dumping Program	Grant	On Track	On Track	On Track	31 March 2027	
				Landfill Emissions Data Project	Grant	Completed	Completed	Completed	31 March 2025	Project completed and handed over to NSW EPA for assessing and developing next steps.
				Community Recycling Centres	Grant	Moderate Impact	On Track	On Track	30 June 2025	Main focus on hold awaiting funding deed for the next 12 months. Battery disposal awareness campaign funding has been received in the interim.
				Net Zero Acceleration	Grant	On Track	On Track	On Track	31 December 2026	

<b>Report Author:</b>	Bonnie Gradwell, Administration and Events Officer – Hunter JO
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**Recommendations:**

- That the Hunter JO Board note the Hunter JO Risk Register
- That the Hunter JO Board identify any new risks for inclusion on the Risk Register

**Executive Summary:**

This report provides, for noting, a copy of the Hunter JO Risk Register, and asks that the Board raise any additional risks for noting within the meeting, to be added to the register.

**Background:**

Provision of the Risk Register for the Board's consideration at each meeting is in accordance with the findings and recommendations of the annual Hunter JO audit.

**Discussion:**

Review and updating of the Risk Register is undertaken bi-monthly by the Director Hunter JO (Executive Officer) and Administration & Events Officer to identify any new risks and evaluate those already on the register. Identification of corporate and operational risks is also included as an agenda item in weekly Hunter JO team meetings.

**Financial / Resourcing Implications:**

The Governance & Risk Framework is managed by the Director Hunter JO (Executive Officer) in collaboration with the Administration & Events Officer.

**Next steps:**

The Register will continue to be reviewed and reported bi-monthly to Hunter JO Board.

**Appendices\* / Attachments\*\*:**

- Attachment 8.4-1: Hunter JO Risk Register (CONFIDENTIAL)

\*Appendices are included directly following the report and inform the validity of the report

\*\*Attachments are included at the end of the Board Pack to provide supplementary information and context.

<b>Report Author:</b>	Bonnie Gradwell, Administration and Events Officer - Hunter JO
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**Recommendation:**

- **That the Hunter JO Board note the status of the Compliance Calendar Checklist.**

**Executive Summary:**

This report provides for noting, the status of the annual Hunter JO Compliance Calendar Checklist.

**Background:**

Similar to its member councils, the Hunter JO has a number of statutory compliance and reporting obligations that it must fulfil on an annual basis. To assist the Board with its oversight of these compliance obligations, the Compliance Calendar checklist identifies these obligations and their delivery status throughout the year. The checklist is reviewed and reported to the Board on a bi-monthly basis.

**Discussion:** Nil

**Financial / Resourcing Implications:**

The compliance calendar checklist is reviewed by the Director Hunter JO (Executive Officer) and Administration and Events Officer on a bi-monthly basis.

**Next steps:**

The Checklist will continue to be reviewed and reported bi-monthly to meetings of the Hunter JO Board.

**Appendices\* / Attachments\*\*:**

- Appendix 8.5-A: Hunter JO Compliance Checklist 2024-25FY

\*Appendices are included directly following the report and inform the validity of the report

\*\*Attachments are included at the end of the Board Pack to provide supplementary information and context.

**Appendix 8.5-A: Compliance Checklist: 2024-25FY**

Item	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
<b>Legislative Compliance</b>												
Hunter Joint Organisation Audit (Auditor-General)	☑	☑										
Hunter JO Meeting includes presentation of audited accounts				☑								
Lodgement of Audited Financial Statements to OLG				☑								
Submission of Hunter JO Annual Performance Statement to OLG					☑							
Submission of financial data return (FDR) to OLG				☑								
Hunter JO Pecuniary Interest Declaration Form to be sent to Mayors for completion (as well as Executive Officer)					☑							☑
Tabling of Hunter JO Pecuniary Declarations at Hunter JO Board Meeting		☑				☑						
Publishing of Audited Annual Financial Statements on Hunter JO website				☑								
PID self assessment audit											☑	
Submission of Public Interest Disclosure Annual Return	☑											
Publishing of Hunter JO Board Meeting Agendas on Hunter JO website		☑		☑				☑		☑		☑
Publishing of Hunter JO Board Meeting Minutes on Hunter JO website		☑		☑				☑		☑		
Annual Report of obligations under GIPA due to the Minister and the Information Commissioner				☑								
Model Code of Conduct Complaints Statistics to be reported to Board. Collection form due to OLG						☑						
<b>Post LG Election</b>												
Election of Hunter JO Chair				☑								
Election of Hunter JO Deputy Chair				☑								
Review of Hunter JO Strategic Plan, and adoption of Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities (within 12 months of election)												due by Sept 2025
Review & adoption of Code of Meeting Practice & Expenses and Facilities Policy (within 12 months of election)												due by Sept 2025
Review of organisational structure (within 12 months of election)												due by Sept 2025
Review of Code of Conduct (within 12 months of election)												due by Sept 2025
<b>Finance &amp; Budget</b>												
Commence consultation with Board on Statement of Revenue Policy								☑				
Presentation of forecast budget (Hunter JO)												☑
GST Certificate to be submitted	☑											
Adopt Statement of Revenue Policy and Budget [LG Reg cl 397I]												☑
Publish Statement of Revenue Policy and Budget on website [LG Reg cl 397I]												☑
<b>Human Resources</b>												
Commence Director Hunter JO Performance Review												☑
Presentation of Director Hunter JO Performance Review to Hunter JO Board												due by Oct 2025

**Key:**


Green – Completed



Orange – Due date/to be completed by



Red – Not completed on schedule

<b>Report Author:</b>	Shaun O’Sullivan, Director North - Regional Coordination, Delivery & Engagement Group – Premier’s Department NSW
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**Recommendation:**

- That the Hunter JO Board note the update from the Premier’s Department

**Executive Summary:**

The April 2025 NSW Parliamentary Report - Beneficial and Productive Post-Mining Land Use highlights the scale of the challenge and outlines a coordinated, whole-of-government approach to land use planning, workforce transition, and investment attraction. With the majority of the state’s coal mines due to close by 2040, the Hunter is both significantly impacted and uniquely positioned to lead on post-mining innovation.

**Background:**

In May 2024, the Hon Courtney Houssos MLC referred an inquiry into post-mining land use to the NSW Legislative Council’s Standing Committee on State Development. The committee examined how former mine sites can be repurposed for economic, environmental, and community benefit, particularly in regions like the Hunter.

Following public submissions, hearings (including in Muswellbrook and Lake Macquarie), and site visits, the committee released, Report No. 53 Beneficial and Productive Post-Mining Land Use, in April 2025. The report responds to the declining role of coal in NSW’s economy and recommends regulatory reform, investment in workforce transition, and coordinated regional planning to support productive reuse of mining land.

**Report 53: Beneficial and Productive Post-Mining Land Use:**

The report outlines opportunities for adaptive land use including clean energy projects, advanced manufacturing, agriculture, tourism and recreation. Key recommendations include streamlining planning processes, improving rehabilitation incentives, and establishing place-based governance models to ensure that land transition benefits local communities.

To address these challenges, the NSW Legislative Council’s Standing Committee on State Development recommended a comprehensive overhaul of the regulatory and policy frameworks under the Mining Act 1992, EP&A Act 1979, and Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997. Key proposals include streamlining approvals, enabling multiple successive land uses, clarifying residual liability allocation, and implementing place-based governance mechanisms such as regional “Place Delivery Groups”.

The NSW Government formally accepted and supported all 13 recommendations in July 2025, committing to key actions including a full legislative review by June 2026 and empowering the newly created Future Jobs and Investment Authority to steer region-specific site audits, investment attraction, workforce reskilling, and collaborative planning through Local Divisions.

<b>Report Author:</b>	Cameron Templeton, Council Engagement Manager, Office of the Deputy Secretary, Office of Local Government
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**Recommendation:**

- **That the Board note the OLG update.**

**Executive Summary:**

To provide an update on upcoming policy changes, funding opportunities, consultations and events for councils and joint organisations.

**Background:**Interim OLG Engagement Manager Changes

Virginia Errington is stepping into another role within OLG until late August. Cameron Templeton will cover Virginia during this time. Feel free to reach out should you require any OLG assistance.

[Cameron.Templeton@olg.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Cameron.Templeton@olg.nsw.gov.au) PH: 0488 499 743.

Nominations Now Open 2025 Ministers Award for Woman in Local Govt.

The awards recognise women's outstanding achievements in Local Government and successful council programs aimed at supporting female participation.

The 18th annual awards will be presented on Thursday, 23 October during a ceremony at NSW Parliament House.

There are a range of categories, and the awards cover both metropolitan and rural/regional areas. Nominations close on Tuesday, 19 August.

Local Government Filming Protocol

The recently released revised [NSW Local Government Filming Protocol](#) replaces the 2009 Protocol and sets out requirements for both councils and filmmakers relating to filming activities and approvals and includes changes to maximum fees that a council may levy

Attestation Statement Reminder

Councils are reminded that commencing with the 2024-2025 annual report, general managers will be required under the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 to publish an attestation statement each year in the council's annual report.

Referral of Public Interest Disclosures

Councils are reminded of their obligations under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 2022, especially when referring matters to OLG for assessment.

The OLG requires councils providing a referral to outline whether the complaint was assessed under the PID Act, and the outcome of the assessment.

It is important councils ensure they conduct their assessments and risk assessments in line with the requirements of the PID Act, to ensure those making complaints are afforded the appropriate protections by council when making the reports.

## 9. Matters Raised by Members

### 9.1 LGNSW 2025 Annual Conference

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*Raised by: Port Stephens Council*

Opportunities for regional collaboration (e.g. development of shared regional motions) for the annual LGNSW Conference, 23-25 November 2025.

### 9.2 9.2 Events and anti-terrorism measures

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*Raised by: Lake Macquarie City Council*

Council staff received a directive via local police representatives advising the immediate cancellation of events at locations deemed unsuitable for gatherings exceeding 200 people. This directive has significantly disrupted Council and community events, with several previously approved and frequently used sites now considered unsuitable.

The directive was based on the 2017 “Hostile Vehicle Mitigation Guidelines for Crowded Places” issued by the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet, and an interpretation of the NSW Event Starter Guide. Given the substantial impact on Council event licensing processes and the broader implications for event delivery across the Hunter region, further feedback is currently being sought from NSW Police regarding.

- a) Why a phased implementation approach was not considered, given the guidelines date back to 2017. Immediate enforcement appears disproportionate
- b) Whether any funding has been allocated to support necessary infrastructure upgrades in parks, should this be a statewide directive
- c) Whether adjoining roads and pedestrian/vehicle movement responsibilities fall under Transport NSW, and if they have been considered in this directive
- d) Why venues with integrated vehicle access have not been included in the risk assessment
- e) Whether ANZAC Day marches have been assessed under this directive, given their scale and significance

Without clear and consistent guidance, Council’s reputation as a responsible event partner is at risk. This uncertainty affects both public and private events and poses a significant economic impact across the Hunter region.



### 9.3 Rate Rebate Concession

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*Raised by: City of Newcastle (refer correspondence)*

At its meeting of 17 June 2025, the elected Council of the City of Newcastle carried the following resolution.

*That Council:*

- 1. Notes the Rate Rebate concession jointly funded by the NSW State Government and local Councils.*
- 2. Notes the rate rebate of \$250 per annum was set in 1989, now 36 years ago, and in that time there has been a continued significant increase in the cost of living.*
- 3. Notes that 10 years ago in June 2015, Council resolved to write to the NSW Government requesting an increase in the Rate Rebate concession for pensioners, commensurate to CPI.*
- 4. Reaffirms its position that the State Government should index their contribution to the remission on rates, so that rate relief increasing with CPI can be passed on to pensioners.*
- 5. Resolves to again write to the NSW Government requesting an increase the Rate Rebate concession for pensioners, commensurate to CPI.*
- 6. Resolves to write to Local Government NSW and the Hunter Joint Organisation requesting their support for this advocacy.***

### 10. General Business

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*Nil.*



# Hunter JO Board Meeting (Public) Attachments

Thursday 14 August 2025

Lake Macquarie City Council

Hunter Sports Centre - 43 Stockland Dr, Glendale NSW  
2285

## Contents:

- Attachment 6-1: Correspondence to Tony Chappel CEO, NSW Environment Protection Authority re: Letter of Support – EPA/LGNSW Councils Managing Contaminated Land Together, 28 March 2025
- Attachment 6-2: Correspondence to Central Coast Council re: Letter of Support – Central Coast Council Resilient Communities Phase 2, 11 April 2025
- Attachment 6-3: Correspondence to Australian Local Government Association re: Exclusion of Motion from 2025 NGA Business Papers, 16 June 2025
- Attachment 6-4: Correspondence to Mr Dave Layzell, Member for Upper Hunter re: Accelerating the reactivation of current and former mining lands to create jobs in the Hunter Region, 20 June 2025
- Attachment 6-5: Correspondence to Mr Andrew Warrender, Newcastle Airport Pty Limited, re: Letter of Support – Newcastle Aerospace East Precinct Planning Project, 27 June 2025
- Attachment 6-6: Correspondence template to NSW Parliament Ministers re: Hunter JO Board Meeting NSW Parliament House, 15 July 2025
- Attachment 6-7: Correspondence to The Business Centre re: Letter of Support Net Zero Small Business Support Program, 23 July 2025
- Attachment 6-8: Correspondence to The Hon Ron Hoenig MP re: Cost shifting onto the ten councils of the Hunter Region, 29 July 2025
- Attachment 6-9: Correspondence to The Hon Daniel Mookhey MLC re: Cost shifting onto the ten councils of the Hunter Region, 29 July 2025
- Attachment 6-10: Correspondence to The Hon Chris Minns MP re: Cost shifting onto the ten councils of the Hunter Region, 29 July 2025
- Attachment 6-11: Correspondence from The Hon Barnaby Joyce MP re: Hunter JO Advocacy Priorities, 4 June 2025
- Attachment 6-13: Correspondence from Dr Ross Kerridge Lord Mayor City of Newcastle re: Requestion advocacy for increase to pension rebate, 29 July 2025
- Attachment 6-14: Draft Waste Infrastructure Plan, June 2025
- Attachment 6-15: NSW Grants Commission FAGs, June 2025
- Attachment 6-16: Net Zero Commission, July 2025
- Attachment 6-17: Net Zero Economy Authority – Eraring Power Station, July 2025
- Attachment 7.1-1 Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2035
- Attachment 7.1-2 Hunter JO Delivery Program 2025-2029
- Attachment 7.3-1: Draft Hunter JO Code of Conduct 2025
- Attachment 7.3-2: Draft Procedures for the Administration of the Code of Conduct 2025
- Attachment 8.1-2: Hunter JO End of Financial Year Report: June 2025



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Thornton, NSW 2322 - 02 4978 4040  
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Tony Chappel  
CEO  
NSW Environment Protection Authority  
6 Parramatta Square, 10 Darcy Street  
Parramatta NSW 2150

28 March 2025

**Re: Letter of Support – EPA / LGNSW Councils Managing Contaminated Land Together**

I write to confirm support for the ongoing continuation of the ‘Councils Managing Contaminated Land Together’ program by the NSW EPA and Local Government NSW.

The Hunter Joint Organisation (JO) is a collaborative body that brings together ten regional councils to provide a united and local voice for communities. Our statutory role includes identifying key regional strategic priorities and supporting collaborations to deliver these priorities with key partners, including other levels of government, industry and community.

Over the past 12 months, the ‘Councils Managing Contaminated Land Together’ pilot project has effectively built upon the success of the Contaminated Land Councils Regional Capacity Building (CRCB) program, ensuring that critical expertise, resources, and collaboration in contaminated land management continue to be accessible to councils.

Hunter JO and its member councils have actively participated in this program, benefiting from its structured approach to knowledge-sharing, technical support and collaboration. The program has played a crucial role in addressing a major challenge faced by councils—contaminated land management is a highly complex and technical field, and most councils lack the dedicated resources to manage it effectively on their own. The ‘Councils Managing Contaminated Land Together’ initiative provides an invaluable support system that ensures councils have the guidance, tools, and expertise needed to navigate regulatory and environmental challenges.

This program has also created an essential platform for collaboration, allowing councils to share best practices, access valuable templates and tools developed through the CRCB program, and participate in training opportunities hosted by Hunter JO and other stakeholders. This has led to greater efficiency and consistency in managing contaminated land across NSW.

For this initiative to remain effective, we encourage the continuation and expansion of key program elements that were highly valued under the CRCB model, including:

- A **service desk function** offering technical support from specialists on contaminated land projects.
- **Frequent basic training** for new staff to address high turnover rates in councils.

- A **resourcing model for UPSS compliance**, as many councils lack the capacity to conduct inspections of operational sites.

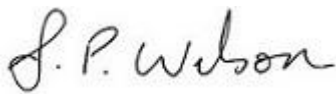
The ‘Councils Managing Contaminated Land Together’ program directly aligns with the following objectives and strategic directions from the [Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2032](#):

Strategic Theme	Strategy
Liveability	<p>4.3.1 Our Councils are well supported in protecting and enhancing the environment through regional programs, data collection, support resources and capacity building</p> <p>4.3.3 We drive council capacity building opportunities to protect the environment and human health from pollution.</p>

Maintaining the ‘Councils Managing Contaminated Land Together’ program is crucial to ensuring councils across NSW continue to receive the support they need. We strongly advocate for its ongoing funding and development to support local government capacity-building in contaminated land management. Hunter JO is committed to supporting the NSW EPA and LGNSW deliver this important initiative for the region and NSW.

Should you have any further queries or require any further information please do not hesitate to contact Anna Flack, Senior Project Coordinator, at [annaf@hunterjo.nsw.gov.au](mailto:annaf@hunterjo.nsw.gov.au) or 0460038199.

Yours Sincerely



Steve Wilson  
Director Hunter JO (Executive Officer)



4 Sandringham Avenue, PO Box 3137,  
Thornton, NSW 2322 - 02 4978 4040  
[www.hunterjo.nsw.gov.au](http://www.hunterjo.nsw.gov.au)

Central Coast Council  
91-99 Mann Street  
Gosford NSW 2250, Australia

11 April 2025

**Re: Letter of Support – Central Coast Council Resilient Communities Phase 2**

To whom it may concern

I write to confirm support for the above funding application being submitted through the Disaster Ready Fund Round 3.

The Hunter Joint Organisation (JO) is a collaborative body that brings together ten regional councils to provide a united and local voice for communities. Our statutory role includes identifying key regional strategic priorities and supporting collaborations to deliver these priorities with key partners, including other levels of government, industry and community.

This project focuses on enabling resilient communities in the Central Coast local government area, including;

- Social cohesion events for two communities
- Connected Communities: Resilience Action Plans for two communities
- Connected Communities Network
- Convening and administration of the Central Coast Disaster Recovery and Resilience Network
- Convening the Central Coast Disaster Resilience Working Group
- Localisation and promotion of the NSW Get Ready campaign
- Review of the Pre-Event Recovery Plan
- Streamline recovery processes at Central Coast Council, develop a toolkit and hold staff training sessions for recovery centre management

The proposed project directly aligns with the following objectives and strategic directions from the [Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2032](#):

Strategic Theme	Strategy
Resilience	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.



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We are committed to working with Central Coast Council to deliver this important initiative for the region.

Should you have any further queries or require any further information please do not hesitate to contact Anna Flack at [annaf@hunterjo.nsw.gov.au](mailto:annaf@hunterjo.nsw.gov.au).

Yours Sincerely

Steve Wilson  
Director Hunter JO (Executive Officer)



4 Sandringham Avenue, PO Box 3137,  
Thornton, NSW 2322 - 02 4978 4040  
[www.hunterjo.nsw.gov.au](http://www.hunterjo.nsw.gov.au)

Amy Crawford  
Chief Executive Officer  
Australian Local Government Association  
8 Geils Court  
DEAKIN ACT 2600

Via email [alga@alga.asn.au](mailto:alga@alga.asn.au)

16 June 2025

Dear NGA Motions Sub-Committee Members,

**Re: Exclusion of Motion from 2025 NGA Business Papers**

We are writing in relation to the recent advice that submitted motions by our member councils (overleaf), does not meet the published criteria for inclusion in the 2025 National General Assembly (NGA) Business Papers. These motions were supported by the ten member councils of the Hunter Joint Organisation.

We respectfully suggest that the intent and broader relevance of the motion may have been overlooked in the assessment process. The motion was developed to raise awareness of long-standing concerns regarding the distribution of Financial Assistance Grants — a system that, in its current form, entrenches inequities that disproportionately disadvantage smaller, rural, and regional councils.

Our aim was to initiate a national conversation about realigning grant allocations more closely with the objectives of the *Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995* and its guiding principles of equity. This issue directly affects the capacity of local governments across the country to deliver services and infrastructure equitably.

Excluding this motion from consideration unfortunately removes an important opportunity for open and constructive debate among member councils — a core purpose of the National General Assembly.

In the spirit of fostering fair and inclusive dialogue on issues of national significance to local government, we respectfully request that the sub-committee reconsider its decision, or identify alternative opportunities to facilitate this conversation.





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Thornton, NSW 2322 - 02 4978 4040  
[www.hunterjo.nsw.gov.au](http://www.hunterjo.nsw.gov.au)

Yours sincerely,

Cr Sue Moore  
Chair of the Hunter Joint Organisation  
Mayor of Singleton Council

**Declined motions:**

**Financial sustainability**

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to lead systems reform across all three levels of government to:

- Build consistency in the governance frameworks, systems and documentation required across various funding programs and governing agencies to reduce the administrative burden on local government.
- Improve the delivery of grant funding to councils across Australia to ensure equity, certainty and sustainability for effective strategic planning.

Ensure equitable delivery of grant funding for rural and regional councils by upholding the principles of the Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995, ensuring horizontal fiscal equalisation of funding.

**Roads and infrastructure**

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to lead systems reform across all levels of government to improve the planning, administration and delivery of road funding, to ensure equity in Financial Assistance Grant distribution to rural and regional councils by ensuring nationwide adherence to the principle of Horizontal Fiscal Equalisation established under the Federal Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995.

**Criteria for ALGA NGA motions**

To be eligible for inclusion in the NGA Business Papers, and subsequent debate on the floor of the NGA, motions must:

1. Be relevant to the work of local government nationally.
2. Not be focused on a specific jurisdiction, location, or region – unless the project or issue has national implications.
3. Be consistent with the themes of the NGA.
4. Complement or build on the policy objectives of ALGA and your state or territory local government association.

5. Be submitted by a council that is a financial member of their state or territory local government association.
6. Propose a clear action and outcome (i.e., call on the Australian Government to act on something).
7. Not be advanced on behalf of external third parties seeking to use the NGA to apply pressure to Board members or to gain national political exposure for positions not directly relevant to, or in the national interest of, local government.
8. Address issues that will directly improve the capacity of local government to deliver services and infrastructure for the benefit of all Australian communities.
9. Not seek to advance an outcome that would result in a benefit to one group of councils to the detriment of another.
10. Be supported by sufficient evidence to justify the proposed outcome and demonstrate the relevance and significance of the matter to local government nationally.



4 Sandringham Avenue, PO Box 3137,  
Thornton NSW 2323. 02 4978 4040  
[www.hunterjo.com.au](http://www.hunterjo.com.au)

Mr David Layzell  
Member for Upper Hunter  
94 John Street  
SINGLETON NSW 2330

[upperhunter@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:upperhunter@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

20 June 2025

Dear Mr Layzell

**Re: Accelerating the reactivation of current and former mining lands to create jobs in the Hunter Region**

I write on behalf of the ten Hunter Joint Organisation (JO) Mayors to request a meeting with you to discuss the focus and urgency of actions needed to accelerate the reactivation and repurposing of current and former mining lands and their infrastructure, to create urgently needed new employment lands and jobs across the Hunter region.

Within the next five years the Hunter is conservatively facing the imminent and substantial loss of up to 12,000 mining-related jobs from scheduled mine closures, with significantly more to follow. Given the scale and timeframe of this industrial closure, urgent action and transformational investment is needed to replace these significant losses and accompanying region-wide economic impacts.

It is for this reason that the Councils of the Hunter are seeking urgent investment from the NSW and Federal Governments of \$20.7M to lead a region-wide program that:

- Pilots the reactivation and repurposing of current and former mining lands and infrastructure, across a range of scenarios, to create urgently needed new employment lands
- Directly de-risks industry investment and strategically informs and accelerates the industry attraction, skills development and job creation that is urgently needed as the Hunter's economy rapidly transforms away from coal.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss and explore this opportunity, and more broadly to discuss the shared focus and priorities established by the new Hunter JO Board of Mayors following the September 2024 Local Government elections.

It would be greatly appreciated if you could please confirm the opportunity to meet with us by contacting Kim Carland, Advocacy and Government Relations Lead on 0460 034 614 or [kimc@hunterjo.com.au](mailto:kimc@hunterjo.com.au).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "SR Moore", is positioned above the printed name of the signatory.

Cr Sue Moore  
Mayor, Singleton Council  
Chair, Hunter Joint Organisation

# Mining Land Redevelopment

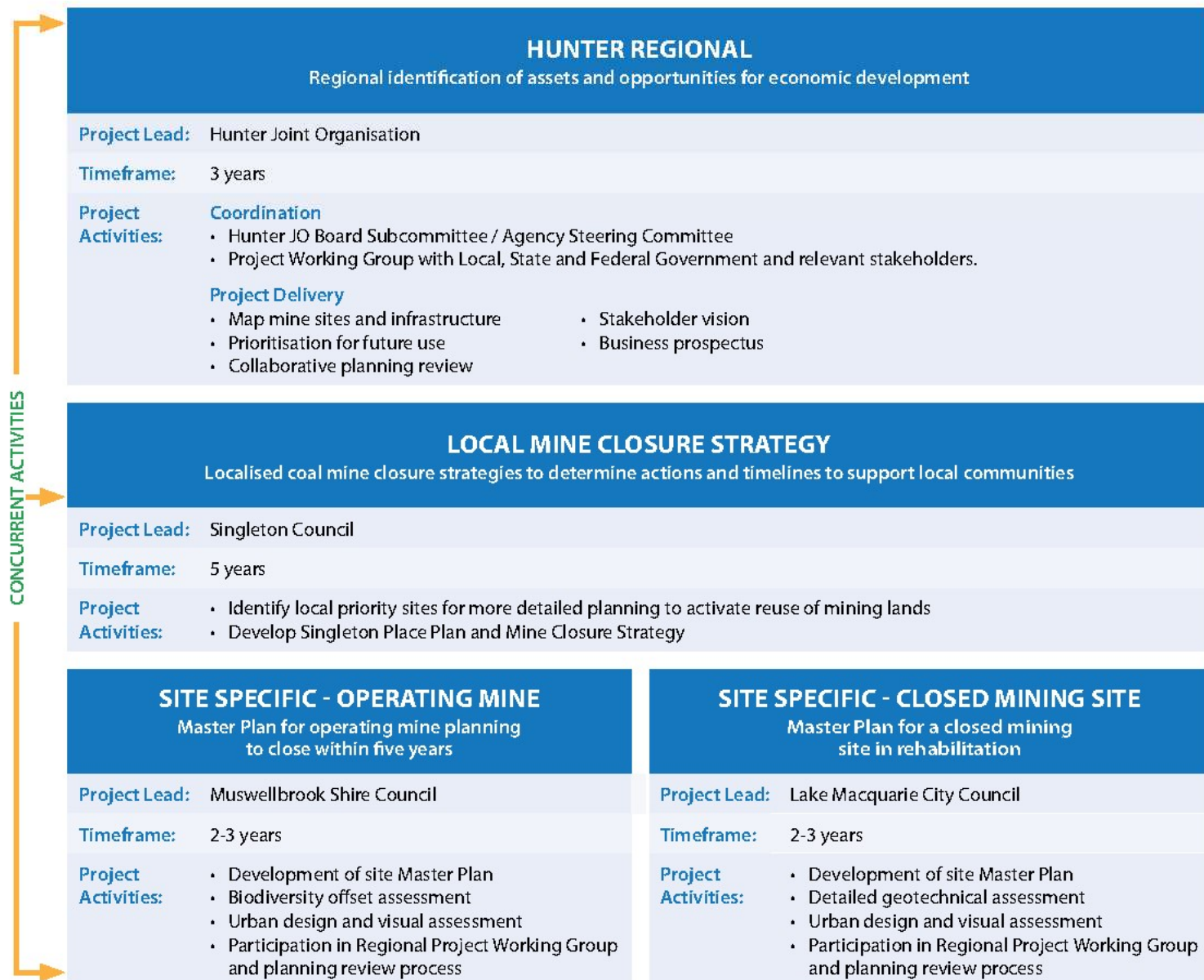
**\$20m**

## There needs to be greater urgency to plan for the impacts as we move away from coal.

- The Hunter Region will experience coal mine closures over the next couple of decades, impacting nearly 50,000 jobs.
- By 2030 alone, over 10,000 jobs will be gone unless we take action now.
- In 2023/24 budget, NSW mining royalties delivered \$3 billion to consolidated budget. There was no funding made available to mining impacted communities.

## We don't have time to waste - we need support to take action now.

We are proposing to undertake a regional audit of all mining lands and infrastructure across the Hunter, while simultaneously developing a pilot Place Based Mine Closure Strategy for Singleton and Master Plans for two identified priority mine sites in Muswellbrook and Lake Macquarie.



Outcomes from this approach can be used as a framework to accelerate planning for other mining regions and communities across NSW and Australia

We'd love to continue the conversation. Please contact Kim Carland on 0460 034 614 or [kimc@hunterjo.nsw.gov.au](mailto:kimc@hunterjo.nsw.gov.au)





4 Sandringham Avenue, PO Box 3137,  
Thornton, NSW 2322 - 02 4978 4040  
[www.hunterjo.nsw.gov.au](http://www.hunterjo.nsw.gov.au)

27 June 2025

Mr Andrew Warrender  
Newcastle Airport Pty Limited  
Williamstown NSW 2318

**Re: Letter of Support –Newcastle Aerospace East Precinct Planning Project**

To whom it may concern,

The Hunter Joint Organisation (Hunter JO) strongly supports the Newcastle Aerospace East Precinct Planning Project and commends Port Stephens Council and Newcastle Airport for their leadership in progressing this regionally significant initiative. The planning work proposed under this project will provide the approvals, design work, and technical studies required to progress the precinct to a shovel-ready state.

The Hunter Joint Organisation (JO) is a collaborative body that brings together ten regional councils to provide a united and local voice for communities. Our statutory role includes identifying key regional strategic priorities and supporting collaborations to deliver these priorities with key partners, including other levels of government, industry and community.

Hunter JO has led coordinated regional planning efforts focused on freight and airport infrastructure across the Hunter. Our 2023 Hunter Airports Strategy, developed in consultation with councils, industry, and state agencies, clearly identifies Newcastle Airport as the region's principal aviation asset and a strategic priority for investment. This Strategy—endorsed by our member councils—makes a strong case for targeted planning and activation of the airport precinct, particularly for international air cargo, and emphasises the need for collaborative, place-based approaches to infrastructure development.

Further to this, the Newcastle Airport Air Cargo Terminal Business Case (2023), developed by the Hunter JO in partnership with lead consultancies, sets out the compelling rationale and economic case for a dedicated air cargo terminal at Newcastle Airport. The business case confirms that the current lack of international air freight capacity is a major constraint on regional competitiveness. By addressing this constraint, the Aerospace East Precinct Planning Project will unlock access to export markets for key Hunter industries—including advanced manufacturing, defence, agribusiness, and technology—while also improving freight redundancy for NSW's overall logistics network.

The proposed project directly aligns with the following objectives and strategic directions from the [Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2032](#):



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Strategic Theme	Strategy
Connectivity	1.2.1 Partnering with airport and port to identify and pursue priority actions to enable access to international markets for the benefit of the region.
Jobs and a Growing Economy	3.3.1 Support efforts that position the Hunter globally in its areas of competitive and comparative strength.

The Hunter JO views this initiative as a critical next step in positioning the Hunter as a national leader in integrated freight, logistics, and aerospace capability. We strongly support Port Stephens Council's application and look forward to continuing to collaborate on delivery of this shared regional priority.

Should you have any further queries or require any further information please do not hesitate to contact Tim Askew at [tima@hunterjo.nsw.gov.au](mailto:tima@hunterjo.nsw.gov.au).

Yours Sincerely

Steve Wilson  
Director Hunter JO (Executive Officer)



4 Sandringham Avenue, PO Box 3137,  
Thornton, NSW 2322 - 02 4978 4040  
[www.hunterjo.nsw.gov.au](http://www.hunterjo.nsw.gov.au)

The Hon XX  
NSW Minister for XX  
Address  
Email

15 July 2025

Dear Minister XX,

**Re. Invitation to attend Hunter Joint Organisation Parliament House Board Meeting - 16<sup>th</sup> October 2025**

The Hunter Joint Organisation Board, comprising the ten Mayors of the Hunter Region will be holding its annual meeting in NSW Parliament House Board on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2025, in the McKell Room.

As the democratically elected local voice of the Hunter Region, our Board of Mayors are strongly aligned to the NSW Government's priorities including housing supply, job creation and transformation of the NSW economy toward net zero. These priorities are particularly important to the Hunter region, where our population is increasing toward 1 million people by 2040, and where we urgently need to transform and diversify our region's economy (the largest in regional Australia) away from its current dependence on coal.

The purpose of our meeting in NSW Parliament House is to provide the opportunity for our Mayors to collectively meet and engage with with key Ministers and decision makers in the Government, to discuss our shared priorities and opportunities for working more closely to progress outcomes in the Hunter. The full suite of our Mayor's shared priorities are provided in Attachment 1.

It is for this reason that we would be delighted if the Minister were available to attend part of our meeting to discuss our shared priorities for the Hunter region, focusing on:

- Priority 1
- Priority 2

To confirm your ability and timing to participate in the Board meeting, please contact Bonnie Gradwell, Administration and Events Officer on [bonnieg@hunterjo.nsw.gov.au](mailto:bonnieg@hunterjo.nsw.gov.au) or 0400 063 502.

Yours sincerely,



Cr Sue Moore  
Mayor, Singleton Council  
Chair, Hunter Joint Organisation



Cr Leah Anderson  
Mayor, Port Stephens Council  
Deputy Chair, Hunter Joint Organisation

*The Hunter Joint Organisation's statutory mandate includes identifying the key regional strategic priorities, advocating for these priorities and building collaboration with other levels of government, industry and community. More information on our shared priorities are outlined in our [Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2032](#) and [Advocacy Priorities](#).*

(Only include relevant topics to relevant Minister)

#### **Mining land reuse / redevelopment**

- Discuss the outcomes to the NSW Government Response to the Inquiry into the Beneficial and Productive Post Mining Land Use.

#### **Housing**

- Discuss the opportunities to support NSW Government in meeting the NSW housing targets such as enabling infrastructure investment, State Government integrated planning, balancing biodiversity and increasing density in TODs and Low-rise Mid-rise areas.

#### **Financial sustainability of local government**

Explore the financial and the opportunities to strengthen our long-term sustainability including:

- Financial Assistance Grants (FA Grants) equity
- IPART constraints
- Inadequate road funding
- Disaster recovery and resilience funding challenges
- Escalating audit and compliance costs
- Waste pressures
  - Waste Levy
  - FOGO implementation



### **Transport planning**

- Discuss the Hunter Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan and actions to improve EV charging infrastructure, public transport connections and active transport options to reduce the reliance on vehicles.

### **Water infrastructure**

- Work together to address funding needs and invest in infrastructure that ensures a resilient and secure water supply for the Hunter region.

### **Disaster resilience**

- Discuss the opportunities for sustainable and strategic place-based planning and resourcing of local and regional disaster resilience and recovery activities.

### **Airfreight precinct**

- Discuss the opportunities to deliver a cargo precinct at Newcastle Airport to unlock air freight capability to help attract international carriers and stimulate business growth.

### **Energy transition/REZ**

- Discuss the opportunities to deliver a whole of government strategic plan and vision for the future industries of the Hunter, tackling skilled worker housing, REZ challenges and opportunities, and energy supply for future industries.

### Attachment 1. Shared Priorities of the Hunter JO Board of Mayors

Rank	Advocacy Priority	Objective
1	Mining land reuse / redevelopment	Investment to pilot the reactivation and repurposing of current and former mining lands and infrastructure, and to de-risk industry investment and strategically inform and accelerate industry attraction, skills development and job creation.
2	Housing	Enabling infrastructure investment, State Government integrated planning, balancing biodiversity, increasing diversity of housing stock and increasing density in TODs and Low-rise Mid-rise areas.
3	Financial sustainability of local government	Long-term financial sustainability of local government (incorporating grant funding reform, return of waste levy, road funding reform, SRVs)
4	Transport planning	Transparent infrastructure plan with timelines, improved public transport connections, park and ride, and active transport option to reduce the reliance on vehicles, along with improved coordination of electric vehicle infrastructure.
5	Airfreight precinct	Delivery of a cargo precinct at Newcastle Airport to unlock air freight capability to help attract international carriers and stimulate business growth.
6	Disaster resilience	Sustainable and strategic place-based planning and resourcing of local and regional disaster resilience and recovery activities.
7	Water infrastructure	Investment in infrastructure to ensure a reliable, safe and secure water supply for the Hunter region.
8	Port of Newcastle	Improve road and rail infrastructure to activate diversification, i.e. container terminal, clean energy precinct, and support establishment of the REZs.



4 Sandringham Avenue, PO Box 3137,  
Thornton NSW 2323. 02 4978 4040  
[www.hunterjo.com.au](http://www.hunterjo.com.au)

To Whom It May Concern

23 July 2025

**Re: Letter of Support – Net Zero Small Business Support Program.**

I write to confirm support for The Business Centre's application to the Local Buying Foundation to deliver the Net Zero Small Business Support Program in the Upper Hunter region.

The Hunter Joint Organisation (JO) is a collaborative body that brings together ten regional councils to provide a united and local voice for communities. Our statutory role includes identifying key regional strategic priorities and supporting collaborations to deliver these priorities with key partners, including other levels of government, industry and community.

This initiative will play a vital role in building the skills, confidence, and capacity of small businesses and entrepreneurs in our Upper Hunter community. We believe the program's combination of accredited training, mentoring, and practical business support will make a significant contribution to economic resilience and employment in the region, especially relevant during this time of transition for our economy. We are particularly supportive of its regional delivery model, and its emphasis on community engagement, local collaboration, and long-term and net zero impact.

The program directly aligns with the following objectives and strategic directions from the [Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2032](#):

- 3.1.3 Support regional institutional capacity to assist businesses and workers impacted by changes in the economy.
- 3.2.1 Support and mature the innovation ecosystem in order to drive commercialisation of ventures and start-ups in the region which will provide growth in future jobs.
- 3.3.1 Support efforts that position the Hunter globally in its areas of competitive and comparative strength.

We look forward to the opportunity to engage with the program and its participants and commend The Business Centre for their leadership in supporting regional business development and transition to a Net Zero future.

Should you have any further queries or require any further information please do not hesitate to contact Tim Askew, Director of Programs, [tima@hunterjo.nsw.gov.au](mailto:tima@hunterjo.nsw.gov.au).

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "S. P. Wilson".

Steve Wilson  
Director Hunter JO (Executive Officer)



4 Sandringham Avenue, PO Box 3137,  
Thornton, NSW 2322 - 02 4978 4040  
[www.hunterjo.nsw.gov.au](http://www.hunterjo.nsw.gov.au)

The Hon. Ron Hoenig, MP  
Minister for Local Government  
GPO Box 5341  
Sydney NSW 2001

[office@hoenig.minister.nsw.gov.au](mailto:office@hoenig.minister.nsw.gov.au)

29 July 2025

Dear Minister Hoenig,

**Re. Cost shifting onto the ten councils of the Hunter region**

I write to you on behalf of the ten councils of the Hunter region to seek your commitment to work in partnership with the local government sector to address the issue of cost shifting. Cost shifting arises where the NSW Government forces councils to assume responsibility for infrastructure, services and regulatory functions without commensurate funding or funding mechanisms.

The unrelenting growth of cost shifting to councils, coupled with rate pegging, is increasingly eroding any possibility of financially sustainable local government and risking the capacity of councils to deliver the essential infrastructure and services required by their communities.

The latest research commissioned by Local Government NSW (LGNSW)<sup>1</sup> shows that the increase in cost shifting has continued unabated by various NSW Government policies.

The cost shifting report, produced by independent consultants Morrison Low for the 2023/2024 financial year, reveals that \$1.5 billion of expense has been imposed onto councils. This is an increase of approximately \$140 million (10 per cent) since the last report for the 2021/22 financial year, when the total cost shift was estimated at \$1.36 billion.

This also now represents an inflated cost of \$497.40 for each ratepayer, an increase of \$36.72 from 2021/22.

For our member councils, this cost impost means that we are not able to deliver essential services to their communities.

---

<sup>1</sup> Cost shifting report available online at [www.lgnsw.org.au/costshifting](http://www.lgnsw.org.au/costshifting)



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[www.hunterjo.nsw.gov.au](http://www.hunterjo.nsw.gov.au)

This decades-long practice of cost shifting is continuing to undermine the financial sustainability of the local government sector.

The November 2024 report of the parliamentary inquiry into the ability of councils to fund infrastructure and services recognised the impact of cost shifting and called for the NSW Government to identify opportunities to reduce cost shifting to local government. This call must be heard and acted upon.

I therefore urge you to take immediate action to address this through a combination of regulatory reform and appropriate funding.

Addressing this longstanding matter would demonstrate a commitment from your government to work in partnership with councils for the benefit of the communities we all serve.

To further discuss or to arrange a meeting, please contact Kim Carland, Advocacy and Government Relations Lead on [kimc@hunterjo.nsw.gov.au](mailto:kimc@hunterjo.nsw.gov.au) or 0460 034 614.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "SR Moore".

Cr Sue Moore  
Mayor, Singleton Council  
Chair, Hunter Joint Organisation

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Leah Anderson".

Cr Leah Anderson  
Mayor, Port Stephens Council  
Deputy Chair, Hunter Joint Organisation

*The Hunter Joint Organisation's statutory mandate includes identifying the key regional strategic priorities, advocating for these priorities and building collaboration with other levels of government, industry and community. More information on our shared priorities are outlined in our [Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2032](#) and [Advocacy Priorities](#).*



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[www.hunterjo.nsw.gov.au](http://www.hunterjo.nsw.gov.au)

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey, MLC  
Treasurer  
52 Martin Place  
Sydney NSW 2000

[office@treasurer.nsw.gov.au](mailto:office@treasurer.nsw.gov.au)

29 July 2025

Dear Treasurer Mookhey,

**Re. Cost shifting onto the ten councils of the Hunter region**

I write to you on behalf of the ten councils of the Hunter region to seek your commitment to work in partnership with the local government sector to address the issue of cost shifting. Cost shifting arises where the NSW Government forces councils to assume responsibility for infrastructure, services and regulatory functions without commensurate funding or funding mechanisms.

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Mayor, Singleton Council  
Chair, Hunter Joint Organisation

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Deputy Chair, Hunter Joint Organisation

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[www.hunterjo.nsw.gov.au](http://www.hunterjo.nsw.gov.au)

The Hon. Chris Minns, MP  
Premier  
GPO Box 5341  
Sydney NSW 2001

[kogarah@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:kogarah@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

29 July 2025

Dear Premier Minns,

**Re. Cost shifting onto the ten councils of the Hunter region**

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Yours sincerely,

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Mayor, Singleton Council  
Chair, Hunter Joint Organisation

Cr Leah Anderson  
Mayor, Port Stephens Council  
Deputy Chair, Hunter Joint Organisation

*The Hunter Joint Organisation's statutory mandate includes identifying the key regional strategic priorities, advocating for these priorities and building collaboration with other levels of government, industry and community. More information on our shared priorities are outlined in our [Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2032](#) and [Advocacy Priorities](#).*



**The Hon Barnaby Joyce MP**

**Federal Member for New England**

Our ref: NE91341

4 June 2025

Cr Sue Moore  
Mayor, Singleton Council  
Chair, Hunter Joint Organisation  
PO Box 3137  
THORNTON NSW 2322

Via e-mail: [BonnieG@hunterjo.nsw.gov.au](mailto:BonnieG@hunterjo.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Cr Moore

Thank you for your letter of 17 April 2025 regarding the shared advocacy priorities of the Hunter Joint Organisation of Councils for the 2025 Federal Election.

Please accept my apologies for the delay in replying to you as unfortunately your letter and the covering e-mail were received amongst several thousand incoming e-mails on the same date and unfortunately your correspondence has only recently been located.

I have noted the contents of your letter and appreciate your advice regarding the Hunter Joint Organisation's priorities.

Further to our previous discussions and correspondence, I would like to reaffirm my full support for the priorities outlined in your letter and will be pleased to assist the Hunter Joint Organisation wherever possible to progress these important and much needed regional projects and initiatives.

I commend the Hunter Joint Organisation for the important work it undertakes and look forward to further discussing and assisting with these and other initiatives in the future.

Thank you once again for writing and if I can be of assistance at any time, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

The Hon Barnaby Joyce MP  
Federal Member for New England

CC Ms Kim Carland  
Advocacy and Government Relations Lead  
Hunter Joint Organisation  
Via e-mail: [kimc@hunterjo.nsw.gov.au](mailto:kimc@hunterjo.nsw.gov.au)

bj.lt.tam

Corporate Services.DC  
Phone: 02 4974 2000



29 July 2025

Ms K Carland  
Advocacy & Government Relations Lead  
Hunter Joint Org.  
PO Box 3137  
**THORNTON NSW 2322**

**BY EMAIL:** [admin@hunterjo.nsw.gov.au](mailto:admin@hunterjo.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Ms Carland

At the meeting of 17 June 2025, the elected Council of the City of Newcastle carried the following resolution.

*That Council:*

*F.*

- 1. Notes the Rate Rebate concession jointly funded by the NSW State Government and local Councils.*
- 2. Notes the rate rebate of \$250 per annum was set in 1989, now 36 years ago, and in that time there has been a continued significant increase in the cost of living.*
- 3. Notes that 10 years ago in June 2015, Council resolved to write to the NSW Government requesting an increase in the Rate Rebate concession for pensioners, commensurate to CPI.*
- 4. Reaffirms its position that the State Government should index their contribution to the remission on rates, so that rate relief increasing with CPI can be passed on to pensioners.*
- 5. Resolves to again write to the NSW Government requesting an increase the Rate Rebate concession for pensioners, commensurate to CPI.*
- 6. Resolves to write to Local Government NSW and the Hunter Joint Organisation requesting their support for this advocacy.*

I trust that you will consider advocacy of this matter. Please find letter to the Premier **attached**.

Should you require any further information on this matter please contact the Lord Mayor's office via [lordmayor@ncc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:lordmayor@ncc.nsw.gov.au).

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dr Ross Kerridge', written over a horizontal line.

**Dr Ross Kerridge**  
**LORD MAYOR CITY OF NEWCASTLE**

29 July 2025

The Hon. Chris Minns MP  
Premier  
GPO Box 5341  
**SYDNEY NSW 2001**

**BY EMAIL:** [premier@dpc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:premier@dpc.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Mr Minns

At the meeting of 17 June 2025, the elected Council of the City of Newcastle carried the following resolution.

*That Council:*

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- 1. Notes the Rate Rebate concession jointly funded by the NSW State Government and local Councils.*
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- 5. Resolves to again write to the NSW Government requesting an increase the Rate Rebate concession for pensioners, commensurate to CPI.*
- 6. Resolves to write to Local Government NSW and the Hunter Joint Organisation requesting their support for this advocacy.*

I trust that you will consider this matter and provide a response at your earliest convenience.

Should you require any further information on this matter please contact the Lord Mayor's office via [lordmayor@ncc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:lordmayor@ncc.nsw.gov.au).

Yours faithfully



**Jeremy Bath**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**



## NSW EPA Draft Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan

*Hunter Joint Organisation submission – June 2025*

### Introduction

The Hunter Joint Organisation (Hunter JO) is the statutory local government entity established by the NSW Government, under the *NSW Local Government Act 1993*, to support the ten member Councils of the Hunter Region to work together for better rural and regional outcomes, and to enhance the way local and state governments work together to plan and deliver important regional infrastructure and investment.

Member Councils of the Hunter JO are:

- Cessnock City Council
- Dungog Shire Council
- Lake Macquarie City Council
- Maitland City Council
- MidCoast Council
- Muswellbrook Shire Council
- City of Newcastle
- Port Stephens Council
- Singleton Council
- Upper Hunter Shire Council

The Hunter JO also serves as the voluntary regional waste group under the NSW EPA's [Regional Networks for Effective Waste Management \(RENEW\) program](#), which is comprised of the ten Member Councils, as well as Central Coast Council.

The Hunter JO welcomes the opportunity provided by the NSW EPA to provide feedback on Chapter 1 of the Draft Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan (the Draft Plan). The submission has been developed in consultation with the waste managers of the Hunter JO's member councils, although does not necessarily encompass the complete view of each council. The individual councils may also make independent submissions.

We are pleased to see the release of the Draft Plan and are supportive of the EPA taking a leading and active role in the delivery of critical waste and resource recovery infrastructure. As mentioned in the Draft Plan, this work is particularly important to address the looming "landfill crisis" in Greater Sydney and the approaching Food Organics Garden Organics (FOGO) diversion mandate. Similarly, planning and investment in strategic infrastructure is essential to achieve the NSW Government's target of an 80% resource recovery rate by 2030 (Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy, 2021) across all waste streams, and transition to a circular and low carbon economy.

We understand that while this initial chapter of the Draft Plan is largely concerned with landfill and FOGO infrastructure servicing Greater Sydney, subsequent chapters will be released later in 2025 with a focus on regional NSW and reuse and recycling infrastructure. We look forward to the opportunity to review those chapters when they are released.



### **Streamlining planning process to fast-track expansion of existing landfills**

Overall, the Hunter JO supports the proposed actions to improve and streamline the development assessment process for applications to expand existing landfills. However, more detail will need to be provided about what qualifies as a “priority landfill” for the purposes of a streamlined assessment. Furthermore, we suggest that the actions to expediate the assessment of landfill expansion applications should apply beyond the landfills that service Greater Sydney. Waste infrastructure is critical to regional and rural areas of NSW as well, and planning complexity puts pressure on the limited resources of local government who often own and operate this infrastructure.

There are existing landfill sites across regional NSW, including the Hunter and Central Coast, that may have current or future capacity to process residual waste from Greater Sydney. These do not appear to have been considered in the capacity assessment presented in the Draft Plan. While it makes sense not to simply assume that alternate sites are willing and able to accept additional waste, **the Hunter JO encourages the EPA to engage with owners and operators of significant regional landfills** to understand the potential role these facilities could perform in addressing the expected shortages. Examples of significant sites within the Hunter and Central Coast region include the Buttonderry Waste Management Facility (Central Coast Council), and the Summerhill Waste Management Centre (City of Newcastle).

### **Building resilience by enabling planning for energy-from-waste**

As outlined in our [recent submission on the NSW Energy from Waste Options Paper](#), the Hunter JO supports the NSW Government’s policy to enable the development of Energy from Waste (EfW) projects in regional NSW, particularly the Tomago Precinct within the Hunter region. Our view is that EfW can deliver better resource recovery and environmental outcomes than landfill for certain residual waste streams, and we consider it to be an important part of the future waste infrastructure mix.

However, the putrescible waste infrastructure capacity projections shown in Figure 4 of the Draft Plan relies heavily on the development of EfW projects that have not yet secured development consent. While the declaration of EfW permissible precincts will give confidence to project developers, there remains significant uncertainty about the length and cost of the development assessment process for proponents, a barrier identified for all waste infrastructure in the Draft Plan. Additionally, securing social license for EfW projects is a concern, as there is a perception amongst the community that these facilities present significant risks to environmental and human health.

The Hunter JO therefore encourages the EPA to support the development EfW projects to increase the likelihood that they will be successfully delivered to provide the processing capacity need identified in the Draft Plan. The establishment of an EfW precinct at Tomago must be supported by a robust environmental assessment and planning process that ensures appropriate and effective controls are put in place to manage impacts of this site on the surrounding environment and community. While we believe that locating the precinct within an existing industrial area is appropriate for this type of development, it will be critical to the success of the project to ensure that any impacts are mitigated, especially given the expected community

sensitivity to EfW and the proximity of the site to sensitive environmental areas including the Ramsar Convention listed Hunter Wetlands National Park. While we recognise the importance of robust development and environmental assessment processes to mitigate any impacts of EfW projects, the **NSW Government should also explore providing EfW proposals (in appropriate locations where social licence exists) with more streamlined planning pathway and/ or support services** similar to those that are earmarked in the Draft Plan for proposals to expand existing landfills. A focussed, streamlined, yet comprehensive planning pathway needs to commence soon in order to be ready for commencement in alignment with need. Secondly, **the NSW Government should lead community engagement and education activities, and fund local government engagement activity, to build the community's understanding of the role of EfW** in modern waste management, its benefits (especially compared to landfill), and how impacts can be controlled.

Finally, EfW projects should be complemented with **investment and support for the development of resource recovery infrastructure**. This will ensure valuable materials are not simply used as feedstocks for EfW but are diverted to a higher and best use, supporting the development of NSW's circular economy. We understand resource recovery and circular economy infrastructure will be addressed in subsequent chapters of the Draft Plan.

### **Strategic planning to meet the waste management needs of growing populations**

The Hunter JO supports the NSW Government's actions to strategically plan for new waste infrastructure and protect existing waste infrastructure from the encroachment of incompatible land uses and developments.

Pressures on waste sites from urban and residential expansion are experienced, albeit to a lesser extent, in the Hunter region too. A good example is the Summerhill Waste Management Centre, a regionally significant landfill and resource recovery site that is owned and operated by the City of Newcastle. This site is being encroached upon by a planned and approved residential subdivision on the surrounding land<sup>1</sup>, despite opposition from City of Newcastle on the grounds of inconsistency with modern planning policies<sup>2</sup>. This development is likely to be sensitive to the impacts of the site's existing activities, such as odour and vehicle movements, and complicate the planned future expansion of the landfill and development of essential associated infrastructure, including improved road access. While it may be too late to prevent or alter this development, it exemplifies **the need to proactively protect significant waste infrastructure from incompatible land uses**. We would like to see the considered and addressed by the subsequent chapters of the Draft Plan that examine the needs of regional NSW.

We agree with the Draft Plan's identification of the need for strategic and whole-of-government planning and investment in new waste infrastructure, and we are pleased to see the NSW EPA and Property Development NSW (PDNSW) nominated as lead agencies responsible for coordinating this work. Modern, adaptive and suitably located infrastructure is needed to meet the community's waste management needs, and to increase recovery rates and circularity. However, a number of

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<sup>1</sup> <https://newcastleweekly.com.au/summerhill-a-logical-sustainable-and-affordable-solution-nelmes/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://newcastle.nsw.gov.au/getattachment/77d306c8-2671-45a0-8d67-88eca7e834df/Item-7-2-Lord-Mayoral-Minute-HCCRPP-Winten-DA-Minmi.pdf>

challenges or barriers exist that are stopping or slowing the delivery of this infrastructure by councils and the private sector. For example, within the Hunter region, there is a dearth of available FOGO processing capacity and transfer infrastructure, with Remondis in Lake Macquarie being oversubscribed and Loop Organics in Singleton being too far from the metropolitan areas of the Lower Hunter, meaning no commercial organics collection is available. While several projects are planned, none are confirmed nor are they likely to be operational prior to the commencement of the business FOGO mandate in 2026. MidCoast Council are in the process of developing a significant 95,000mt FOGO processing facility at Tuncurry, but this will not be ready until 2027. Another example is that in the Upper Hunter, resource recovery services are often not available or not financially viable for councils. Aggregation and transfer infrastructure could help overcome these barriers. The NSW Government could facilitate the development of this infrastructure through the identification and/ or supply of land, financial support, and coordination of stakeholders including councils, services providers, and infrastructure developers.

We encourage the NSW Government to **consider the waste infrastructure needs of regional NSW in the subsequent chapters of the Draft Plan and provide similar support to the regions as is being suggested for Greater Sydney.** This could include:

- Analysing the current and planned infrastructure capacity and any gaps.
- Identifying and supplying land for significant infrastructure, with a focus on the adaptive reuse of mine sites as operations wind down.
- Continuing to invest in regional coordination through programs like the Regional Capacity Support Program (RCSP)<sup>3</sup>, to provide a mechanism for council waste teams to work collaboratively.
- Reinvesting an equitable portion of the waste levy into infrastructure development and procurement support in regional NSW.

Overall, the Hunter JO is supportive of the NSW EPA's efforts to improve the strategic delivery of waste infrastructure across NSW. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this initial chapter of the Draft Plan and look forward to the release of the subsequent chapters, including a focus on regional NSW. We encourage the NSW EPA and their NSW Government colleagues to engage regional councils as a part of this process.

Should you have any further queries please don't hesitate to contact Chris Dart, Circular Economy Program Lead, Hunter JO at [chrisd@hunterjo.nsw.gov.au](mailto:chrisd@hunterjo.nsw.gov.au) or on 0460 038 197.

Yours Sincerely



Cr Sue Moore  
Mayor, Singleton Council  
Chair Hunter Joint Organisation

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/Your-environment/Waste/local-council-operations>





4 Sandringham Avenue, PO Box 3137,  
Thornton, NSW 2322 - 02 4978 4040  
[www.hunterjo.nsw.gov.au](http://www.hunterjo.nsw.gov.au)

Linda Scott,  
Chair, Office of Local Government Grants Commission  
Locked bag 3015,  
Nowra, NSW 2541 Australia

[grantscommission@olg.nsw.gov.au](mailto:grantscommission@olg.nsw.gov.au)

30 June 2025

Dear Mrs Scott

**Re: Recommendations to inform the allocation of general purpose grants to local governing bodies in New South Wales under the provisions of the [Commonwealth Local Government \(Financial Assistance\) Act 1995](#).**

The ten Member Councils of the Hunter Joint Organisation (JO) welcome the opportunity provided by the NSW Grants Commission to provide feedback on the NSW methodology to distribute the Federal Government's Financial Assistance Grants.

The Hunter Joint Organisation is the statutory local government entity established by the NSW Government, through the *NSW Local Government Act 1993*, to support the ten member Councils of the Hunter Region to work together for better rural and regional outcomes, and to enhance the way local and state governments work together to plan and deliver important regional infrastructure and investment.

Member Councils of the Hunter JO include:

- |                               |                              |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| • Cessnock City Council       | • Muswellbrook Shire Council |
| • Dungog Shire Council        | • City of Newcastle          |
| • Lake Macquarie City Council | • Port Stephens Council      |
| • Maitland City Council       | • Singleton Council          |
| • MidCoast Council            | • Upper Hunter Shire Council |

The core statutory functions established by the NSW Government for the Hunter JO include:

- Strategic planning and priority setting
- Intergovernmental collaboration
- Shared leadership and advocacy

The ten Mayors of the Region, through the Hunter Joint Organisation, are strongly aligned in recognising the on-going concern of financial sustainability of local government. We appreciate the efforts of the NSW Grants Commission to increase the non-metro allocation compared to the state average in the 24/25 financial years.

However, we are calling on the NSW Government to lead systems reform across all levels of government to improve the planning, administration and delivery of funding, to ensure equity in Financial Assistance Grant distribution to rural and regional councils by ensuring nationwide adherence to the principle of Horizontal Fiscal Equalisation established under the Federal Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995.

**Our recommendations include:**

1. Commit to addressing the inequities of the current distribution of Financial Assistance Grants (FA Grants).
2. Undertake a 12-month review of the NSW general-purpose grant distribution methodology, with recommendations submitted to the Minister in advance of the 2026–27 allocation, including consideration of:
  - a. the difference between a council's potential to raise revenue and its actual capacity to raise revenue given the limitations imposed by legislation, or the economic conditions within their jurisdiction.
  - b. allowing for the difference in costs in providing services in rural and regional areas instead of state averages on a per capita basis.
  - c. cost factors that better reflect an individual council's operating environment in relation to climate change impacts, natural disasters, management of public infrastructure and provision of water/sewerage.
  - d. a significant increase in the proportion of annual CPI adjustments quarantined for councils facing the greatest relative disadvantage.
  - e. any increases in the total FA Grants allocation are quarantined for councils facing the greatest relative disadvantage.
3. Undertake extensive consultation with metropolitan councils on the challenges faced by regional councils under the current methodology, to build a broader understanding and grow support for a more equitable redistribution of FA Grants in favour of councils with a greater need.
4. Provide greater certainty in the timing of FA Grants payment to allow councils to strategically plan for current and future years.
5. Develop improved communications materials that provide greater transparency in the calculation methodology for distribution, including information on the:
  - a. Annual percentage variances in distribution and how these can be anticipated and incorporated into planning.
  - b. Criteria within the cost adjustment factors (20 expenditure functions and 47 disadvantages factors)
  - c. Changes that have been made annually to address the inequities of distribution, and examples of the challenges faced by rural and regional councils.

I encourage you to consider our recommendations to inform the focus and scope of the Financial Assistance Grants general-purpose distribution methodology and would welcome the opportunity to further discuss our ideas with State Government, given the enormous opportunities and impacts facing the Hunter region and NSW more broadly.

As an organisation representing 10 diverse councils, we are well placed to serve as a test bed for reviewing different methodologies and would welcome the opportunity to collaborate with you throughout the review process.

Should you have any further queries please don't hesitate to contact Kim Carland, Advocacy and Government Relations Lead, Hunter JO at [kimc@hunterjo.com.au](mailto:kimc@hunterjo.com.au) or on 0460 034 614.

Yours Sincerely



Cr Sue Moore  
Mayor Singleton Council  
Chair Hunter Joint Organisation

## **The challenge**

- The value of Financial Assistance Grants provided to local government has declined over the past three decades from around 1 percent of Commonwealth taxation revenue to around 0.55 percent.
- Rural and regionals councils continue to rely heavily on financial support from other levels of government to meet their expenditure needs and a growing asset backlog. As an example, more than 60% of Dungog Shire Council's revenue is from external sources provided through grants, and the volatility of operations.
- Service delivery costs are higher in rural and regional areas; however, the current NSW methodology does not account for this. Instead, it calculates the state average per capita cost for each function by aggregating all council expenses reported in Financial Data Returns and dividing this total by the overall NSW population.
- Financial Assistance Grants (FA Grants) must be allocated on the basis of the National Principles under the Federal legislation - the Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995, whereby a fixed 30% of the General-Purpose Component (GPC) must be allocated based on population increases/decreases. Any change to Federal Principles would require agreement from all State and Territory Ministers, ALGA and both Houses of Parliament.

## **The opportunity**

- The Hunter Joint Organisation, representing ten diverse local governments, stands united in advocating to address the current inequities in the distribution of Financial Assistance Grants.
- Many councils, especially those in capital cities and urban centres, are able to generate enough revenue from their communities to fund their operations without needing government grants.
- The differences in revenue-raising capacity across council types highlight the need to reconsider how general-purpose grants are allocated to local governments.

## **Our request**

We encourage the NSW Grants Commission to identify additional levers within their constraints to address the structural inequities that currently exist. As an example, we understand reviews have been undertaken in both Victoria and Queensland to address these inequities and request the NSW Grants Commission to consider these options over the next 12 months review.

## **Victoria**

Through recent consultation with the Commission, we understand the Office of Local Government Victoria (OLGV) Grants Commission is committed to addressing the inequities of the current distribution of funds.

Within the current constraints, each year Victoria makes changes to provide a greater distribution to councils with a greater need. They do this by:

- Annual comprehensive consultation undertaken with all councils, marked by open, transparent communication and a strong focus on highlighting the unique challenges faced by regional councils. As a result, there is now a broader understanding and growing support—particularly among metropolitan councils—for a more equitable redistribution of Financial Assistance Grants (FA Grants) in favour of regional councils with greater need.

- The methodology for distributing the remaining 70% of the general-purpose component of FA Grants was reviewed, with adjustments made using levers within state control to enable a gradual, ongoing reallocation of funds from metropolitan to regional areas in Victoria each year.
- All future increases to the overall FA Grants general-purpose allocation from the Federal Government will be prioritised for regional councils with greater need. This approach ensures that councils currently receiving the minimum grant are not adversely affected.
- A detailed review of the Federal Principles was completed, including modelling to assess the impact of lowering or removing the minimum population threshold for general-purpose grants. Based on this analysis, a recommendation to reduce the minimum to 10% was recommended to the Victorian Minister for Local Government in November 2024.

## **Queensland**

The Queensland Local Government Grants Commission engaged Queensland Treasury Corporation to undertake a comprehensive review of the Financial Assistance Grant allocation methodology in 2021.

A more equitable funding distribution was achieved with more funding being distributed under the new model to councils with a greater need, predominantly small and indigenous councils.

Key features of the new model include:

- focusing on the difference between a council's potential to raise revenue and its actual capacity to raise revenue in acknowledgement of the revenue raising challenge faced by many councils
- allowing for the difference in costs in providing services (on a per capita basis)
- including cost factors that better reflect an individual council's operating environment (remoteness, dispersion and socio-economic conditions)
- reducing the sensitivity of the model to road network input data, which means road length and related information is not as influential in determining grant allocations.
- establishing four more councils as minimum grant councils given their higher revenue raising capacity when compared to other Queensland councils.
- 57 councils (74%) out of 77 councils in Queensland will receive a greater funding allocation under the new FA Grant methodology in 2022-23.
- 26% of councils will receive a reduced allocation in 2022-23. For these councils the average reduction is approximately 0.3% of operating revenue.

## **Previous reviews**

The case for this review is reinforced by findings from several other reviews and reports, including:

- 2008 Productivity Commission - Assessing Local Government Revenue Raising Capacity, Productivity Commission Research Report.
- 2010 Australian Treasury - Australia's Future Taxation System Report.
- 2013 NSW Local Government Grants Commission submission to the Commonwealth Grants Commission Review
- 2014 NSW Government's Response to the Local Government Review Panel
- 2017 Productivity Commission - Shifting the Dial: 5 year Review.

- 2024 Federal Inquiry - House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport adopted Inquiry into local government sustainability
- 2025 Federal Inquiry - Interim report into local government sustainability
- Nov 2024 - NSW Government Standing Committee on State Development – Inquiry into ‘Ability of local governments to fund infrastructure and services.
- May 2025 - NSW Government Response to the Inquiry into ‘Ability of local governments to fund infrastructure and services.

**As outlined in the 2025 NSW Government Response to the Inquiry into ‘Ability of local governments to fund infrastructure and services:**

*In recognition of the financial challenges faced by smaller rural and remote councils, a continual review of the Federal Assistance Grants distribution model will also be part of the ongoing process of the NSW Local Government Grants Commission in its allocation of grants to NSW councils.*

**Grants as a method to provide funding**

Local government is fundamentally under-resourced to deliver on the services they’re expected to provide. Current staffing levels at councils are already stretched, and ongoing challenges in recruiting and retaining skilled staff, particularly in regional areas, further constrain delivery.

Uncertainty in timing, or short-term, competitive grant funding is not an adequate or sustainable solution. This model creates uncertainty, limits strategic planning, and ultimately embeds vulnerability rather than building long-term resilience.

Councils are forced to chase fragmented funding opportunities, which leads to:

- Loss of local skills and capability, as short-term funding undermines job security and continuity. Councils often lose talent to the private sector or rely on metropolitan consultants, limiting regional employment and local knowledge retention.
- Boom-bust delivery cycles, where sudden influxes of grant funding inflate supplier costs and reduce value for money, with little ability to coordinate investment over time.

To improve efficiency, certainty and impact for both funding agencies and recipients we recommend:

- Longer-term block funding aligned to councils’ four-year Delivery Programs, enabling proactive planning, integration with core council business, and delivery of sustained climate adaptation and mitigation outcomes.
- Multi-year funding for positions (minimum 4–5 years), which is essential to attract and retain qualified staff, particularly in regional areas. Longer-term roles help build institutional knowledge, strengthen delivery capability, and embed adaptation across council functions.
- Build consistency in the governance frameworks, systems and documentation required across various funding programs and governing agencies to reduce the administrative burden on local government.
- Identify potential efficiencies across NSW Government to reduce the bureaucratic requirements placed on councils to pay taxes/charges to state government only to be processed by NSW government staff to be repaid back from other budget areas to local government eg waste levy, emergency services levy.

Investing in stable, long-term funding mechanisms is a critical step toward realising the NSW Government’s commitment to ensure NSW councils are efficient and financially sustainable.



4 Sandringham Avenue, PO Box 3137,  
Thornton, NSW 2322 - 02 4978 4040  
[www.hunterjo.nsw.gov.au](http://www.hunterjo.nsw.gov.au)

Ms Meg McDonald  
Chair of the Net Zero Commission  
Uploaded via website

11 July 2025

Dear Ms McDonald

**Re: Recommendations to inform the 'The NSW Net Zero Commission advice to NSW Government on climate change and adaption.**

The ten Member Councils of the Hunter Joint Organisation (JO) welcome the opportunity provided by the NSW Net Zero Commission to provide feedback to inform the climate change and adaptation advice you provide to the NSW Government.

The Hunter Joint Organisation is the statutory local government entity established by the NSW Government, through the *NSW Local Government Act 1993*, to support the ten member Councils of the Hunter Region to work together for better rural and regional outcomes, and to enhance the way local and state governments work together to plan and deliver important regional infrastructure and investment.

Member Councils of the Hunter JO include:

- |                               |                              |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| • Cessnock City Council       | • Muswellbrook Shire Council |
| • Dungog Shire Council        | • City of Newcastle          |
| • Lake Macquarie City Council | • Port Stephens Council      |
| • Maitland City Council       | • Singleton Council          |
| • MidCoast Council            | • Upper Hunter Shire Council |

The core statutory functions established by the NSW Government for the Hunter JO and joint organisations more broadly across NSW include:

1. Strategic planning and priority setting
2. Intergovernmental collaboration
3. Shared leadership and advocacy

The Hunter Region is the largest regional economy in Australia, driving around 28% of regional NSW's total economic output, of which coal exports contribute around a third (\$24 billion) and approaching a population of one million people by 2040. The ten Mayors of the Region, through the Hunter Joint Organisation, are strongly aligned in recognising the economic challenges facing the region, and on the priorities and actions needed to evolve the Hunter's economy toward net zero.

In line with our shared commitment to meet net zero, the Hunter JO welcomes the opportunity to provide the recommendations included in the following submission, summarised below.

# Summary of recommendations

## 1. Support Local Government Leadership

- Councils play a vital role in emissions reduction and climate adaptation.
- We recommend more recognition and funding to help councils deliver local and community-wide net zero actions.

## 2. Work Regionally with Joint Organisations

- JOs are set up to coordinate regional efforts.
- We propose partnering with JOs to:
  - Develop regional net zero plans.
  - Co-design funding programs.
  - Align investment with four-year regional priorities.
  - Build capacity through dedicated roles.

## 3. Improve Communication and Engagement

- Communities need clearer and more consistent information about net zero.
- We recommend a whole-of-government approach to regional engagement and tracking community understanding over time.

## 4. Invest in Council-led Emissions Projects

- Set up a fund for shovel-ready, council-led projects that reduce emissions.
- Support bulk solar buys, EV infrastructure, and regional energy savings through joint procurement.

## 5. Repurpose Mining Lands

- Use former mining sites for renewable energy and new industries.
- This can create jobs and avoid the need to develop undisturbed land.

## 6. Strengthen Community Benefits in REZs

- REZ developments must deliver tangible benefits to the communities directly affected by them, in a consistent and fair manner.
- Integrate NSW housing targets into delivering permanent worker housing creating a lasting legacy for communities.

## 7. Back the Circular Economy

- Fund landfill gas capture and organic waste processing.
- Reinforce circular economy hubs like those developed by Hunter JO.
- Reinvest the regional waste levy into local infrastructure and job creation.

## 8. Fund Climate Adaptation

- Most councils lack funding for adaptation or to meet net zero targets.
- We propose sustained funding, betterment grants, and targeted support to help councils plan and prepare for extreme weather and reducing emissions.

## 9. Decarbonise Transport

- Trial zero-emissions freight and aviation projects in the Hunter.
- Invest in regional EV charging, public transport, and active travel.
- Expand park-and-ride and better integrate transport networks.

I encourage you to consider our recommendations to inform the focus and scope of the Net Zero Commission and would welcome the opportunity to further discuss our ideas with NSW Government, given the enormous opportunities and impacts facing the Hunter region and NSW economies more broadly.

Should you have any further queries please don't hesitate to contact Kim Carland, Advocacy and Government Relations Lead, Hunter JO at [kimc@hunterjo.nsw.gov.au](mailto:kimc@hunterjo.nsw.gov.au) or on 0460 034 614.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'SR Moore'.

Cr Sue Moore  
Chair Hunter Joint Organisation



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# Submission to the NSW\_Net Zero Commission

## Consultation Paper 2025

**Organisation:** Hunter Joint Organisation

**Date:** 11 July 2025

### Introduction

Across NSW, local governments are ideally placed to support the State's transition to net zero, both in directly reducing organisational and community emissions and in supporting communities plan and adapt to the changing climate. This arises from:

- The direct and trusted relationship that councils have with their local communities, providing the opportunity to successfully and meaningfully engage with diverse communities, business and other stakeholder groups to support and collaborate on practical actions that both reflect local needs and deliver statewide net zero objectives.
- The policy and planning (land use, infrastructure and community) responsibilities of councils, which provide the opportunity to integrate net zero objectives and practical action into the strategic and operational plans, policies and regulations of local and regional communities, which will be key to enacting sustained community behaviour change
- The vast range and extent of land and infrastructure collectively managed by councils across the state. Key examples include waste management and landfill facilities, water and sewer infrastructure, community centres, libraries, aquatic and sporting centres, extensive community lands (parks, natural spaces and waterways) and road networks.
- Local governments play a unique and systemic role in addressing climate-related risks and achieving climate adaptation objectives. The adaptation required in local communities to address climate risk cannot be delivered by any other level of government due to a lack of local presence and knowledge, as well as the absence of necessary skills, systems and experience delivering place-based projects ([Australian Local Government Association, 2025. Adapting Together: Local Government Leadership in a Changing Climate](#))
- The central role that councils play at both local and regional levels in economic development and business attraction. Enhancing this local government function has the potential to substantially enhance the capability and speed at which regional communities are able to transition regional economies across NSW toward net zero.
- Local councils can be a catalyst for broader community-wide emissions reductions by demonstrating leadership and supporting local initiatives.

However, despite the importance of local government in enabling the transition to net zero, the role of local government is currently insufficiently recognised in the [NSW Government's Net Zero Plan Stage 1:2020-2030](#). Moving forward however, effective and sustained support from the NSW Government to local government led efforts has the enormous potential to effectively and sustainably deliver on the NSW Governments net zero targets, including in the following areas:

1. **Emissions reduction** - Directly supporting councils to reduce emissions from both current infrastructure and facilities and when designing and constructing new infrastructure

2. **Circular Economy** - Local councils are crucial to driving the transition to decarbonisation via the circular economy, including implementing strategies that minimise waste, promote resource efficiency, and support sustainable practices within their communities. They also play a key role in educating residents, businesses, and other stakeholders about circular economy principles and initiatives.
3. **Leading place-based disaster planning and climate adaptation** at both local and regional scales.
4. **Integrating net zero and climate adaptation into the core strategic planning (corporate, land use, infrastructure & community) and operations** of local councils and their communities via the NSW Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework. This state-wide framework comprising Community Strategic Plans (10+ year strategy), Delivery Programs (4 year program) and Operational Plans (1 year plan) provides a consistent and effective way to strategically embed net zero objectives and actions within local communities across NSW. (More information: [Climate Change Integrated Planning and Reporting Package, 2022](#))
5. **Leading efforts to diversify existing and attract new low carbon businesses and industries** to regional NSW to transition local and regional economies to net zero.
6. **Communicating and engaging local communities** to facilitate support and local action that contributes to net zero outcomes
7. **Delivering on ground actions across Council managed lands** that both reduce emissions and improve the adaptive capacity of local communities (eg greening programs to reduce urban heat effect and coastal management programs).

## Joint Organisations - the value of a regional, place-based approach to leading net zero efforts

Climate impacts do not respect LGA boundaries. For example, in the Hunter Region Councils have been collaborating on shared challenges and opportunities for over 70 years, with this initiated in response to the devastating 1955 Maitland floods and the need for a more coordinated response to regional disaster planning and recovery.

To facilitate broader collaboration of this kind across regional NSW, the NSW Government formally established Joint Organisations (JO's) in 2018, which are statutory local government authorities under the *NSW Local Government Act 1993*. JO's seek to support member councils work together for better rural and regional outcomes, and to enhance the way local and state governments work together to plan and deliver shared priorities across regional NSW. The core statutory functions established by the NSW Government for the JO's include:

1. Strategic planning and priority setting
2. Intergovernmental collaboration
3. Shared leadership and advocacy

Joint organisations are also empowered to undertake a range of other functions including capacity building for councils and may undertake regulatory functions of a council if delegated to do so, pending funding provided by their member councils.

These functions make Joint Organisations ideally placed to lead and coordinate regional, place-based programs across their member councils, significantly enhancing the efficiency by which NSW Government agencies can deliver net zero focused programs into regional communities across the state. From a state government perspective, the structure and focus of JO's provides an opportunity for the NSW Government to work with recognised and regulated entities to more efficiently and effectively deliver state programs and funding via

strategic and collaborative frameworks at the regional level. Subject to appropriate resourcing, key areas in which JO's can potentially support the NSW Government deliver its net zero objectives include:

- Providing advice on regional priorities
- Coordinating / facilitating the input of Councils and local communities to State agency planning and consultation processes
- Providing a regular forum through which to reach and engage with regional leaders (Mayors and General Managers) or other Council personnel
- Providing advice and support to navigate local communities (e.g. stakeholder engagement and support)
- Providing a mechanism to deliver better value from State programs through aggregation / centralised delivery of programs (see examples below)
- Offering consistent points of reference and repositories for maintaining local and regional knowledge and information as State agencies go through regular machinery of government changes.

As well as performing the above functions within their own regions, JO's are actively collaborating across regional NSW to exchange information on best practice in the delivery of strategic regional priorities, joint advocacy and collaboration activities, and to align delivery efforts to provide a more effective and cohesive approach to regional program delivery. It is for this reason that an increasing number of state government agencies are increasingly engaging with the JO network to support delivery of state government programs.

Some examples of regional scale program initiatives already being delivered in partnership with the NSW Government by the Hunter JO (and in some cases more broadly by JO's across the state), which align with the NSW Government's Net Zero targets (including climate adaptation) are provided in the table below.

With appropriate and sustainable resource support from the NSW Government, the potential exists to significantly expand this focus and effort to accelerate the delivery of the State Government's net zero objectives.

Table: Examples of JO led regional initiatives

Program	Focus
NSW Joint Organisation Acceleration (JONZA) Program (State-wide JO program)	Operating since July 2023, the JONZA program is a grant funded program that helps JO's accelerate net zero emissions reduction efforts. It provides funding to support a dedicated internal staff member within JO's to drive net zero initiatives, including building internal capacity across member councils to develop and implement net zero projects.  More Information: <a href="#">"Net Zero Managers helping to reduce emissions across regional NSW"</a> .
Disaster Readiness / Planning (State-wide JO program)	State-wide and regionally specific grant funded programs designed to improve the disaster readiness of councils and their communities. Over the next three years JO's will play a key role in supporting the NSW Reconstruction Authority consult and prepare Regional Disaster Adaptation Plans in accordance with the NSW Disaster Adaptation Planning Guidelines.

Program	Focus
	More Information: <a href="#">Hunter JO Disaster Resilience Programs</a>
Hunter Circular Economy Hub (Hunter JO)	<p>A grant funded program that has developed a digital platform to enable cross sector collaboration and build awareness of circular economy initiatives occurring across the Hunter region. The Hub supports knowledge sharing, ecosystem connectivity and collaboration as the go-to resource for circular economy in the Hunter and Central Coast.</p> <p>More Information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Hunter Circular Hub</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Circular Economy Program</a></li> </ul>
Climate Change Integrated Planning and Reporting Package (Hunter JO)	<p>The grant funded Climate Change Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&amp;R) Package provides support and guidance to Councils during the development of their Community Strategic Plan (CSP), Delivery Program and Operational Plan. This guide supports Councils' and their communities' climate change journey by providing user friendly, practical tools and templates to embed climate change throughout the IP&amp;R process.</p> <p>This resource is now being utilised by councils across NSW.</p> <p>More Information: <a href="#">Climate Change IP&amp;R Package</a></p>
Coastal & Estuary Communications Support Package (Hunter JO)	<p>This grant funded package provides a resource for local Councils to support more consistent community education and engagement efforts to raise community awareness of coastal hazards and impacts.</p> <p>More Information: <a href="#">Coastal &amp; Estuary Communications Support Package</a></p>
Reuse of Mining Lands (Hunter JO)	<p>Consistent with the recommendations of the NSW Government's <a href="#">Inquiry into the Beneficial and productive post-mining land use</a>, the Hunter JO is leading region wide advocacy efforts to obtain support and resourcing from the NSW and Federal Governments to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot the reactivation and repurposing of current and former mining lands and infrastructure, across a range of scenarios, to create urgently needed new employment lands across the region</li> <li>• Directly de-risk industry investment and strategically inform and accelerate industry attraction, skills development and job creation urgently needed as the Hunter's economy rapidly transforms away from coal.</li> </ul> <p>More Information: <a href="#">Post Mining Land Use in the Hunter</a></p>
Regional Climate Change Risk	Grant funded risk assessment and adaptation planning work completed in 2010 highlight the value of regional scale

Program	Focus
Assessment and Adaptation Planning (Hunter JO)	collaboration in identifying and planning for shared climate risks across Council boundaries  More Information: <a href="#">Regional Climate Change Adaptation</a>

# Response to the Consultation Paper

The Hunter JO provides the following responses and recommendations to the 2025 Net Zero Commission Consultation Paper.

## Overall Recommendations

The Commission should consider the benefits of strengthening regional, place-based delivery mechanisms for implementation of net zero initiatives across NSW, including:

- Regional net zero plans collaboratively developed by JO's, councils and government agencies that:
  - Confirm and identify shared net zero priorities at the regional scale.
  - Identify resourcing, delivery mechanisms, responsibilities and timeframes for implementation.
  - Align and drive the practical and efficient delivery of shared regional net zero objectives across multiple councils and agencies.
  - Reduce the current short-term focus, misalignment and duplication frequently occurring across multiple state agencies attempting to deliver programs and strategies across regional NSW to progress the Government's net zero targets.
- Formalising place-based adaptation partnerships between NSW Government agencies, JOs and councils to coordinate planning and investment at regional scales.
- Co-designing regional funding programs with JOs, which are statutory entities established by the NSW Government. Engaging JOs early will ensure that programs reflect local place-based priorities, risk profiles and delivery realities.
- Linking multi-year funding to JOs' Strategic Regional Priorities, which are developed on a four-year cycle and aligned with the NSW Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework. This would enable more strategic and consistent investment in regional net zero and climate adaptation initiatives.
- Building regional capacity through targeted roles, which have proven highly efficient and effective in:
  - Supporting councils to align with relevant State and Commonwealth legislation and policy.
  - Facilitating knowledge sharing, peer learning, and consistent implementation of net zero and adaptation actions.
  - Bridging communication between state and local government on net zero and climate adaptation needs and opportunities.

# Consultation Questions

## Climate Change is happening now & Informing and empowering change

Question 1. What can you tell us about your experience of the impacts of climate change and how can the commission seek to reflect and respond to this in its work?

Question 2. What actions can the commission take to engage across the community to help drive the shifts needed for the net zero transition and for effective climate change mitigation and adaptation?

## Vision for the future through coordinated Government communications

Achieving a net zero future requires strong community support and a sense of shared ownership in the outcomes. Currently, there is confusion about what actions are being taken, what is planned, who is responsible, and how the community will benefit. This arises because this information is across multiple departments with varying levels of communications support.

This lack of integration and oversight across agencies is also impacting NSW Government staff within various agencies, who are not consistently aware of other agency priorities or activities, or of their obligations to incorporate net zero policies into their work, undermining the state's overall ability to deliver its net zero targets.

### *Recommendations*

It is recommended that:

- The NSW Government bring together and simplify information on all relevant State and Federal Government net zero plans and initiatives occurring across multiple agencies to provide clear and consistent messaging that improves community awareness, understanding and participation in the net zero journey.
- Given the variation that exists across NSW regarding the impacts and opportunities arising for communities from the transition to net zero, it is further recommended that a regional scale, place-based and whole of government approach to community engagement and communication be delivered, prioritising those regions most affected.
- The Net Zero Commission establish a framework and process for consistently measuring community understanding and acceptance of the State's net zero goals and initiatives, to provide a consistent benchmark over time of community awareness, attitudes and acceptance of the net zero transition. This would provide valuable shared intelligence to inform both NSW and local government net zero programs, initiatives.



## Electricity and energy

Question 5. What additional information and evidence should the commission consider when assessing progress towards NSW's targets for reducing net greenhouse gas emissions?

Question 6. The speed of deployment of electricity generation and infrastructure is a key risk to emissions reduction targets. What more could be done to fast-track deployment?

### Joint Organisation Net Zero Acceleration (JONZA) Program

Regional councils and Joint Organisations play a vital role in achieving net zero outcomes through their strategic planning, infrastructure investments, and trusted relationships with communities. Current assessment frameworks often under-represent the contributions, challenges, and investment readiness of regional councils. A more comprehensive approach is required to fully reflect their role in NSW's transition.

#### *Recommendations*

When assessing progress towards NSW's targets for achieving net zero targets the commission should:

- Assess alignment between council strategic planning and net zero targets and support capacity-building in emissions accounting and forecasting. Provision and funding for appropriate tools is required to provide consistent reporting across regions to make evidence-based decisions, be better positioned to access funding programs, empower community engagement and encourage regional net zero planning through Joint Organisations and/or other regional organisations
- Establish an investment fund offering interest-free loans or matched co-investment options to deliver shovel-ready council-led projects with measurable emissions outcomes. This will address funding gaps and disparity for delivering priority projects that contribute to emissions reduction, as the current reliance on time-limited or competitive grants is a barrier to long-term planning and delivery.
- Support the establishment of Regional Revolving Energy Funds, potentially aligned with Joint Organisations. A regionally managed fund model can recycle energy savings from council and community projects into future emissions-reduction initiatives in particular those councils with minimal or no funding allocation for net zero initiatives.
- Introduce state-supported group procurement arrangements and provide technical assistance to smaller councils potentially through Joint Organisations and the JONZA network. Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) have proven effective in reducing emissions, yet many regional councils lack the scale or procurement capacity to participate.
- Inclusion of council-enabled community actions and provision of dedicated funding for program coordination roles for local delivery of community-based energy projects such as rooftop solar bulk buys, community batteries, EV charging infrastructure and household electrification.
- Improve coordination and governance by identifying and mapping existing net zero organisations and programs such as Cooperative Research Centres, Social or Commercial Enterprises. Identify duplication, and support trusted regional coordination platforms. Councils with the support of Joint Organisations can help pilot and scale up research and innovation developed through partnerships with such organisations.

To meet NSW's net zero emissions targets, the capacity and contributions of councils across regional NSW must be better recognised, resourced, and coordinated. The Net Zero Commission

can play a key role in ensuring progress assessments reflect the full scope of local government action and capacity.

**More Information:** [Hunter Net Zero Acceleration Program](#)

## Post mining land use

The reuse and redevelopment of former mining and energy sites provides an important opportunity to contribute to NSW and Federal net zero targets. These sites, particularly in mining and energy intensive regions like the Hunter, provide the opportunity to:

- Reuse existing infrastructure such as high voltage energy connections, transport networks and rail connections to accelerate the development of renewable energy and other job creating industries on these former sites. Repurposing their existing infrastructure also has the significant benefit of reducing waste from the site decommissioning process and reducing the financial and carbon costs of building new infrastructure to establish new activities and industries.
- Reduce the need to clear undisturbed land to provide for renewable energy solutions to meet net zero targets. The current rehabilitation requirements for many mining sites (which in many cases were established decades ago) require them to be rehabilitated to their former natural condition. However, given their proximity to skilled workforces and the high-quality assets and infrastructure they contain, there is the opportunity to repurpose a proportion of these lands to new renewable or other industries to directly support and accelerate the transition to net zero.
- Provide industrial land that will entice new, clean, high-value industries based on net zero and circular economy principles, such as renewable energy, smart manufacturing, resource recovery, and high-value agriculture. This provides the additional benefit of creating new jobs in a region experiencing job losses due to mine closures.

## Recommendations

To facilitate this transition, urgent action is required from the NSW Government to pilot the reactivation and repurposing of current and former mining lands and infrastructure, prioritising those region's facing the imminent closure of coal mines and its related energy infrastructure. This is needed to:

- Create urgently needed new employment lands and opportunities for workers impacted by the transition away from coal to meet net zero targets.
- Reduce the significant commercial risk currently deterring new and expanded investment in the reuse of mining and industrial lands.
- De-risk industry investment and strategically inform and accelerate industry attraction, skills development and job creation as regional economies rapidly transform away from coal.

It is also recommended that the Net Zero Commission measure the pace of regulatory change and investment attraction required by State Government to reuse mining lands to achieve a productive and equitable economic evolution away from coal.

**More Information:** NSW Government [Inquiry into the Beneficial and productive post-mining land use](#)

- [Post Mining Land Use in the Hunter](#)

Question 7. Are the measures now in place sufficient to ensure community engagement and benefit sharing from the build out of infrastructure for the energy transition?

## Ensuring Community Benefit

While it is recognised that Renewable Energy Zones (REZs) will be a significant part of NSW's emissions and energy security solution into the future, there is growing concern across regional communities both within and outside REZ boundaries, of the current impacts arising from REZ's and those ongoing impacts likely to continue for decades. It is increasingly considered that Government legislation enabling the transition to a renewable energy future has been rushed, will continue to be rushed and that its socialisation with regional communities has been ineffective.

In many cases the impacts of the REZ's on local communities and councils are only just starting to be considered, despite the advanced stage of their roll out. These challenges are now being realised and are further exacerbated by local councils not being effectively engaged due to insufficient resources, and inaccurate assumptions as to the capacity and role of councils and their communities to accommodate the project impacts. Key issues and concerns being experienced across regional communities include:

- Councils and community members feeling that their feedback provided during community consultation processes is not being genuinely considered or incorporated into meaningful action.
- Planned temporary worker housing not being integrated within local communities and economies and not considering the potential to enhance longer term housing supply in regional communities to meet the NSW Government housing targets.
- Traffic disruptions and damage to local road networks with no compensation to fund their repair, further stretching already stressed council road networks and resources.
- Capacity of water utilities and waste management services being insufficient to meet increased demands.
- A lack of local investment or community legacy projects being generated from the construction of renewable energy and/or transmission projects
- Lack of transparency over benefit funds where they exist, and the short-term focus of such funds that do not consider the longer term cumulative social and environmental impacts on local communities.

Consequently, there is a growing frustration in regional communities that community engagement efforts have been performative rather than transformative, leaving communities to bear the brunt of transition pressures without a fair return in community benefits. Frustration of this nature has the significant potential to inhibit or delay the effective roll out of the REZ's due to a lack of social licence.

To reduce such resistance and minimise delays in delivering renewable energy infrastructure, a more proactive and coordinated approach is needed. Clear, fair, and transparent frameworks, particularly around community benefits and local planning impacts can build trust and social license. Empowering communities and councils with adequate resources and involvement will also assist implementation and foster collaboration rather than conflict.

Integrating broader planning reforms within the development of the REZ's can help ensure that renewable energy zones contribute to lasting positive legacies, including new and affordable housing that aligns with state and federal targets. Integrating energy development with housing

policy in this way can help avoid displacement, support workforce accommodation, and foster liveable, thriving communities.

Community benefit schemes are programs designed to ensure that development projects, particularly those involving infrastructure or resource extraction, provide tangible benefits to the communities directly or indirectly affected by them. These schemes aim to distribute the economic, social, and environmental advantages of such projects more equitably among stakeholders. They can involve monetary contributions, physical works, or a combination of both.

Community Benefit Schemes have the potential to be transformational enablers. By providing funding to local councils, these schemes can directly support place-based planning, infrastructure readiness, business attraction, and skills development. Councils are well placed to align these initiatives with local needs, enabling communities to maximise the socio-economic opportunities created by the renewables rollout.

### *Recommendations*

- Design and roll out fair and fit for purpose Community Benefit Schemes to address the impacts and concerns being experienced in regional communities.
- Integrate broader planning and housing policy within the project planning and development processes for the REZ's, to provide lasting project legacies such as new and affordable housing in regional NSW.

#### **More Information:**

- <https://engie.com.au/renewablesrebate> Engie (project developer) - <https://engie.com.au/renewablesrebate>
- Hay Shire Council - <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-09-22/renewables-nsw-town-embraces-wind-solar-to-boost-economy-farms/104355706>
- Planning Framework - <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/policy-and-legislation/renewable-energy/renewable-energy-planning-framework>

## **Integrated Approach to energy development projects**

Currently, renewable energy development across New South Wales is approached on a project-by-project basis, resulting in inconsistency, inefficiencies, and unclear expectations. A unified framework that sets consistent guidelines, planning requirements, and expectations for community engagement and benefit delivery would streamline processes, reduce confusion, and ensure fairness across all regions impacted by the energy transition.

## **Align with Net Zero and Broader State Policy Objectives**

Strategically embedding renewable energy planning within the wider goals of the NSW Government, including net zero targets, regional economic development, and energy security will reinforce coherence across departments and agencies. A consistent and integrated approach ensures that energy reform isn't just about emissions, but about shaping resilient, inclusive, and future-focused regional communities.

## Industry and waste

Question 13. What policies or programs at a sectoral level could complement the Safeguard Mechanism to support the accelerated decarbonisation of heavy industry in NSW?

Question 14. What measures could accelerate industrial heat electrification in NSW, where technology is viable?

Question 15. What short to medium term measures could be prioritised to address the systemic challenges regarding waste generation and resource recovery?

## Waste and Landfill Management

Presently, there are no council owned facilities in the Hunter region that produce enough emissions to be captured by the Safeguard Mechanism, nor are local governments required to report under the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting (NGER) Scheme. As such, the financial and regulatory decarbonisation incentives that these schemes create are not particularly relevant to councils within the Hunter region.

With that said, the largest of the council owned landfill facilities in the Hunter and Central Coast produce annual emissions close to the Safeguard threshold of 100,00 t-CO<sub>2</sub>-e per annum and are therefore some of the highest emitting councils owned facilities in NSW. The scale of these facilities and their emissions profiles means that a range of emissions reduction strategies are financially viable, such as landfill gas capture for energy production. In addition, the expected introduction of FOGO collection and diversion in line with the NSW mandate by 2030 will further reduce emission from landfills across the region.

Despite this, landfills will continue to be significant greenhouse gas emissions sources for the foreseeable future, and generally the largest source of emissions for any individual council who operates such a facility. For example, even with a current landfill gas capture system in place and the expected introduction of a FOGO service in the next 2 years, our modelling shows that the landfill at City of Newcastle's Summerhill Waste Management Centre will continue to emit more than 80,000 t-CO<sub>2</sub>-e per annum without further interventions. Further action is required to reduce and mitigate these emissions.

While landfill gas capture systems are feasible on larger facilities, the capture efficiency of these systems can vary widely (between 30-85%) depending on the characteristics of the landfill and so some emissions continue to occur.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, smaller landfills often do not produce the volume of gas required to justify a landfill capture system for energy generation, and therefore are not financially feasible. While the Australian carbon Credit Unit Scheme enables a revenue source for certain emissions reduction methodologies, the recent [expiry of the landfill gas method](#) has removed a critical support for these projects. Because legacy waste in landfills will continue to decompose and produce greenhouse gas emissions for decades after it has been deposited, support for gas mitigation strategies will be important to help NSW meet its emissions targets, including to achieve net zero emissions from organics waste by 2030.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hunter JO Factsheet, "Efficiency of Landfill Gas (LFG) collection systems in Australia"  
<https://hunterjo.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Hunter-JO-06-Landfill-Gas.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> NSW EPA Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041,  
<https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/nsw-waste-and-sustainable-materials-strategy-2041.pdf>, pg. 6

## Decarbonising the waste sector

To effectively decarbonize the waste sector, it is essential for the NSW Government to develop effective legislation, policies, programs, and invest in infrastructure to achieve reduced waste generation rates, increased diversion from landfill, and higher order recovery and circularity of materials and commodities. The Hunter region, like many parts of NSW, lacks key infrastructure along the value or supply chain to enable various waste and materials streams to be captured and recirculated. An example is that there is currently no available organic waste processing capacity in the region, despite the looming commencement of the business FOGO mandate in July 2026. Investment in a range of assets is required, including for collection, sorting, aggregation, processing and recycling or recovery. The development of this infrastructure must be supported by strategic planning, investment, and regulatory changes by relevant NSW Government departments. More information is available in a [recent submission on the NSW EPA's Draft Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan](#).

The recent declaration of an Energy from Waste Precinct in the Hunter is an example of strategic policy that will support the development of modern infrastructure that will achieve improved environmental outcomes compared to landfill. As stated in our [submission to the NSW EPA on Energy from Waste Framework review](#), this must be complemented by investment in the circular economy. We recommend that an equitable portion of the waste levy collected from the waste facilities within our region is reinvested into circular economy programs and infrastructure.

One initiative that the Hunter JO has developed is the Circular Economy Precincts and Futures Hub concept. An NSW Government funded business case by the Hunter JO investigated the potential for the development of an industrial scale circular economy industry by establishing a network of interconnected precincts, businesses, and stakeholders that is supported by a regional body, labelled the Futures Hub. The business case found that this model could provide the following benefits:

- An additional 1,020 jobs created by diverting 80% of the Hunter and Central Coast Region's waste from landfill.
- Economic value in the order of \$1.1 billion.
- Economic diversity, decarbonisation and environmental benefits, and support for State and National government goals.

Another example is Hunter JO's desire to develop a Regional Zero Waste Strategy, that would provide a roadmap for the delivery of key infrastructure needed to meet the region's waste management needs while also achieving state and federal waste and circular economy targets. Both are examples of initiatives led by place-based organisations that can aid in the decarbonization of the waste sector but require the support of the NSW Government through funding and collaboration.

### *Recommendations:*

#### **1. Provide support to councils for landfill emissions mitigation**

While large landfill gas capture systems are viable for major sites, smaller facilities lack financial feasibility under current market conditions. The NSW Governments should develop new funding or incentive mechanisms specifically for small to mid-sized landfills to support methane capture or flaring technologies.

## **2. Accelerate and support organics diversion infrastructure**

As landfills remain the largest emission source for councils, particularly due to organic waste, the NSW Government should identify strategic sites and fast-track the development assessment of FOGO collection and processing infrastructure in alignment with the 2030 NSW mandate.

## **3. Reinvest Waste Levy Revenue in Regional Circular Economy Initiatives**

The NSW Government should allocate a fair share of the waste levy collected in the Hunter region back into local circular economy projects, including investments in infrastructure for collection, sorting, processing, and material recovery, as well as skills development and job creation.

## **4. Support Development of Circular Economy Precincts and the Futures Hub**

The Circular Economy Precincts and Futures Hub model presents clear economic, social, and environmental benefits. The NSW Government should endorse and fund the next phase of this model's development.

## **5. Enable Strategic Planning and Regulatory Reform for Waste Infrastructure**

To address infrastructure gaps across the supply chain, the NSW Government should collaborate with regional bodies like Hunter JO to co-design a Regional Zero Waste Strategy, ensuring alignment with State and National targets, and implement planning reforms and approvals pathways that expedite delivery of essential waste infrastructure.

### **More Information:**

- [Hunter Circular Hub](#)
- [Hunter Circular Economy Program](#)
- [Circular Economy Futures Hub video](#)



## Adapting to a Changing Climate

Question 23. The adaptation objective is for NSW to be more resilient to a changing climate. The Act allows for regulations to further define the adaptation objective. What does a more resilient NSW look like to you?

Question 24. What additional information and evidence should the commission consider when assessing progress towards the adaptation objective?

Question 25. How can adaptation planning better use the NSW Government's climate change projections (NARClIM)?

Question 26. What other information or tools are needed to support decision-makers in NSW?

Question 27. What initiatives should the commission consider in assessing NSW's preparation and responses to extreme heat and humidity events in NSW?

## The role of Local Government

Local governments are irreplaceable delivery partners in climate adaptation, playing a unique and systemic role in addressing climate-related risks and achieving national climate adaptation objectives. As outlined in the ALGA 2025 [Adapting Together – Local Government Leadership in a Changing Climate](#) report, the adaptation required in local communities could not be delivered by any other level of government due to a lack of local presence and knowledge, as well as the absence of necessary skills, systems and experience delivering place-based projects.

A more climate-resilient NSW requires councils and communities to be resourced, empowered, and supported to lead adaptation in ways that are locally relevant, regionally coordinated, and institutionally embedded. In the Hunter region, this vision is already being progressed through strong collaboration between member councils and the Hunter JO. However, without sustained resourcing, councils cannot fully deliver on their role in helping NSW adapt to a changing climate.

## Resourcing is the critical barrier to achieving the adaptation objective

The [2023 Local Government Climate Change Action Survey](#) (NSW Energy, Climate Change and Sustainability and Local Government NSW) revealed that only 18 councils in NSW have a dedicated budget for climate adaptation. Metropolitan councils were four times more likely than regional councils to have this funding in place. The most common barrier to adaptation action was lack of funding; the top enablers were allocated budgets and access to external funding. To meaningfully assess progress toward the adaptation objective, the Commission should consider:

- Whether councils have secure, ongoing funding to plan and deliver adaptation.
- Whether funding mechanisms support long-term, integrated, place-based approaches.
- The presence of dedicated staff or capacity within councils and Joint Organisations to drive adaptation planning and implementation.

## Recommendations

To enable councils and regional bodies (such as JOs) to deliver against the adaptation objective, we recommend:

- Streamlined, recurrent funding aligned with councils' four-year Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) cycles. This would allow proactive planning and delivery of strategic, long-term adaptation priorities, rather than reactive, piecemeal grant applications.



- Betterment funding for public infrastructure, enabling councils to 'build back better' using current NARcliM climate projections.
- Targeted investment in high-risk communities, especially where legacy planning has increased exposure to climate-related hazards, supported by the latest climate risk data.
- Reform of road repair and betterment grant processes to give councils more flexibility to prioritise and allocate funds in line with locally defined adaptation priorities.
- Increased investment in regional delivery capacity, including dedicated roles to coordinate adaptation across councils, provide technical support, and align efforts with state and national policy frameworks.

## The value of a regional, place-based approach

Climate impacts do not respect LGA boundaries. In the Hunter region, decades of collaboration dating back to the 1955 Maitland floods have demonstrated the efficiency and effectiveness of regionally coordinated adaptation and disaster preparedness.

### *Recommendation*

The Commission should consider the benefits of strengthening regional delivery mechanisms, including:

- Formalising place-based adaptation partnerships between NSW Government agencies, JOs and councils to coordinate planning and investment at scale.
- Co-designing regional funding programs with JOs, which are statutory entities established by the NSW Government to identify and act on regional priorities. Engaging JOs early ensures that programs reflect local risk profiles and delivery realities.
- Linking multi-year funding to JOs' Strategic Regional Priorities, which are developed on a four-year cycle and already aligned with the IP&R Framework. This would enable more strategic and consistent investment in regional climate adaptation.
- Building regional capacity through targeted roles, which have proven highly cost-effective in:
  - Supporting councils to align with relevant state and Commonwealth legislation and policy.
  - Facilitating knowledge sharing, peer learning, and consistent implementation of adaptation actions.
  - Bridging communication between state and local government on adaptation needs and opportunities.

## Transport

Question 9. What are likely to prove the most effective approaches to accelerate rapid decarbonisation across freight and passenger transport?

### Decarbonising freight transport

- The Hunter region has always been an area utilised for trials for new innovations or products. With the region hosting several heavy industrial zones, including the Port, Tomago, Cardiff, Williamtown, Taree, Kurri Kurri and the numerous power stations sites around the region, the region could be set up to trial **heavy vehicle EV charging sites**. This could be demonstrated in the region and then rolled out across NSW.
- Similarly, with the local CSIRO facility focused on decarbonisation and energy, local airport now international flight capable and hosting a large Airforce base, **Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) and Biofuels** could similarly be trialed for development and storage in the region. The region has already received funding promises from the federal government for the development of the **Hunter Hydrogen Hub at the Port of Newcastle** and similarly SAF and Biofuels could also be developed on the Clean Energy Precinct site. The Port of Newcastle tenants have already received support for decarbonisation of nitric acid and ammonia production and has invested in developing containerised green freight handling.
- The **Hunter Rail Network** has high quality and extensive existing infrastructure for high-volume freight, currently taken up to a large extent by coal. With future coal volumes declining, capacity could be redirected to support NSW's freight requirements (especially alleviating Sydney congestion) as well as moving bulk green commodities (e.g., hydrogen, critical minerals). Reference: ARTC, Hunter Valley Network Strategy (2023). Furthermore, electrification of freight rail could be trialed in the Hunter to further decarbonise freight transport.

### Decarbonising passenger transport

- We need to develop a **Hunter EV charging strategic implementation plan** (regional level) for charging infrastructure. With the Hunter Renewal Energy Zone providing critical supply and link for green electricity, the region will have the right infrastructure for demonstrating how strategically placed EV infrastructure will encourage EV uptake and attract tourism. Alongside the National EV Backbone Project (run by NRMA) we could create a strategic implementation plan that meets local and tourist needs as well as reduce range anxiety. The strategy will ensure that a logical distribution of chargers is made throughout the region and that investment is located in areas that promote local economic activity.
- **Fleet conversion leadership:** Local governments areas like Newcastle and Lake Macquarie are already showing leadership through commitments to fleet electrification. Providing the necessary funding to accelerate this transition across all areas of the Hunter JO member council-owned fleets ranging from passenger vehicles to light commercial trucks not only directly reduces transport emissions but also establishes a powerful demonstration effect for private sector uptake. This could be coordinated through our JONZA partnership with the State Government. Leveraging public

procurement policies to prioritise EVs, while integrating renewable energy for fleet charging, further amplifies the decarbonisation impact. Councils can also act as early adopters helping drive down costs, building confidence in the community and provide the necessary second-hand market for electric vehicles.

- **Active transport – cycle, walk and last km transit:** Active transport infrastructure plays a vital role in reducing car dependency and associated emissions. Prioritising safe, connected walking and cycling routes, alongside investments in end-of-trip facilities and integrated "last kilometre" mobility solutions, encourages a modal shift for short-distance trips. By providing an increase in funding for active transport across NSW, with emission reduction measurement built into the grant funding process, will deliver healthier, low carbon communities and increase social cohesion. Projects like our [Shiraz to Shore cycleway](#) could be funded to significantly change the way the region uses cycling as a form of transport and encourage healthy, low carbon tourism in the region.
- **Public transport upgrades:** Upgrading public transport is central to reducing emissions and congestion, especially in a growing region like the Hunter, which will be home to nearly one million people in a short period of time. A key priority is improving both intra-regional connectivity, linking towns, suburbs, and employment hubs across the Hunter and inter-regional connectivity with Greater Sydney, the Central Coast, and Mid-North Coast. Currently, only 2.7% of trips in the Hunter are made via public transport, a figure that reflects both infrastructure and service gaps. Investing in zero-emission buses and trains, improving service frequency, and aligning timetables with real-world commuting patterns can dramatically boost uptake.

Strategic integration of rail and bus networks, smart ticketing, and unified transport planning across councils will help create a seamless, reliable, and appealing alternative to car travel. We would encourage the NSW government to commit significant resources to the implementation of the [Hunter's SRIT Plan](#) (currently in draft) When properly resourced and aligned with land use planning, public transport upgrades can deliver transformative decarbonisation and enhance equity across the region.

- **Park and Ride Infrastructure:** Park and ride facilities are an essential component in encouraging mode shift from private vehicles to public transport for the Hunter region. The increasing use of roadside parking along our major freeways and at junctions signals clear commuter demand but presents growing safety and traffic hazards. Similarly, many existing commuter carparks at train stations are inadequate, poorly designed, and misaligned with population growth and usage patterns. For example, Chisholm is home to approximately 4,500 residents, nearly three-quarters of whom live within 2 kilometres of Metford Station. Yet, due to a lack of direct access from Chisholm's side of the rail line, a potential 3-minute drive or 15-minute walk to the station becomes a 15–20-minute drive during peak times. These kinds of strategically located and well-designed facilities, when paired with better-aligned train timetables, are a crucial enabler of regional mode shift. This has been identified in the draft Hunter Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan but accelerated action on park and ride will deliver emissions reductions faster.

## *Recommendations*

The Commission should consider encouraging more government investment and fast tracking of the Hunter Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan when it is formalised as much of the required transport decarbonisation is included in that document. Strong inter-governmental

collaboration and communication should be strongly encouraged to ensure the Plan is implemented appropriately and with support. The following should also be considered:

- **Scale Fleet Conversion using the JONZA program:** Support the Hunter JO JONZA program with funding to leverage the existing programs of fleet conversion at Newcastle and Lake Macquarie to accelerate the region's transition to electric fleets.
- **Boost Active and Last-Km Transport:** Increase funding in safe cycling, walking and micro-mobility infrastructure to shift short trips away from private cars, especially in growth and town centre areas. Fund large cycling infrastructure projects like [Shiraz to Shore](#).
- **Upgrade Public and Regional Transport Services:** Enhance intra- and inter-regional transport by modernising infrastructure, improving timetables and coverage, and better integrating services across the Hunter.
- **Expand Park and Ride Facilities:** Deliver new and upgraded commuter car parks at key locations, integrated with public transport and aligned to local growth.
- **Trial EV Freight Charging Hubs:** Establish heavy vehicle EV charging trials in Hunter industrial zones (e.g. Port of Newcastle, Tomago, Cardiff), creating a model for broader NSW rollout. A strategy could be developed through the Hunter JO JONZA program.
- **Develop Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) Initiatives:** Leverage existing CSIRO, airport, and RAAF capabilities to trial SAF and biofuel development, storage, and use, aligned with the Hunter Hydrogen Hub and Clean Energy Precinct.
- **Repurpose and decarbonise the Hunter Rail Freight Network:** Trial freight rail electrification in the region to lead emissions reduction across the network.



4 Sandringham Avenue, PO Box 3137,  
Thornton, NSW 2322 - 02 4978 4040  
[www.hunterjo.nsw.gov.au](http://www.hunterjo.nsw.gov.au)

EIJP Operations and Engagement team  
Net Zero Economy Authority  
[EIJP@pmc.gov.au](mailto:EIJP@pmc.gov.au)  
Uploaded via website

17 July 2025

To whom it may concern

**Re: Recommendations to inform the 'The Net Zero Economy Authority on the Energy Industry Jobs Plan – Eraring Power Station.'**

The ten Member Councils of the Hunter Joint Organisation (JO) welcome the opportunity provided by the NS Net Zero Economy Authority on the Energy Industry Jobs Plan – Eraring Power Station.

The Hunter Joint Organisation is the statutory local government entity established by the NSW Government, through the *NSW Local Government Act 1993*, to support the ten member Councils of the Hunter Region to work together for better rural and regional outcomes, and to enhance the way local and state governments work together to plan and deliver important regional infrastructure and investment.

Member Councils of the Hunter JO include:

- |                               |                              |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| • Cessnock City Council       | • Muswellbrook Shire Council |
| • Dungog Shire Council        | • City of Newcastle          |
| • Lake Macquarie City Council | • Port Stephens Council      |
| • Maitland City Council       | • Singleton Council          |
| • MidCoast Council            | • Upper Hunter Shire Council |

The core statutory functions established by the NSW Government for the Hunter JO and joint organisations more broadly across NSW include:

1. Strategic planning and priority setting
2. Intergovernmental collaboration
3. Shared leadership and advocacy

The Hunter Region is the largest regional economy in Australia, driving around 28% of regional NSW's total economic output, of which coal exports contribute around a third (\$24 billion) and approaching a population of one million people by 2040. The ten Mayors of the Region, through the Hunter Joint Organisation, are strongly aligned in recognising the economic challenges facing the region, and on the priorities and actions needed to evolve the Hunter's economy toward net zero.

In line with our shared commitment to meet net zero, the Hunter JO welcomes the opportunity to provide the recommendations included in the following submission, summarised below.

## Summary of recommendations


The closure of Eraring marks a pivotal moment in the broader Hunter region's economic transition journey. For this reason it must be used as a catalyst to deliver a whole-of-region economic transformation that is inclusive, just and sustainable. Our recommendations are summarised as follows:

1. Support for and expanded EIJP scope to cover all coal-dependent communities and supply chain workers across the Hunter,
2. Investment in skill mapping, retraining, and redeployment support across the region,
3. Utilising Net Zero Economy Authority's leadership role to encourage urgent action from the NSW Government to undertake planning reform of land release processes, unlocking post-mining and former coal-fired power station sites for future employment-generating uses,
4. Early social investment in community services, housing, education and mental health, and
5. Strong place-focused (regional) intergovernmental coordination aligned with existing national, state and regional strategies.

I encourage you to consider our recommendations to inform the focus and scope of the Energy Industry Jobs Plan for Eraring Power Station and would welcome the opportunity to further discuss our ideas with Net Zero Economy Authority, given the enormous opportunities and impacts facing the Hunter region and Australian economies more broadly.

Should you have any further queries please don't hesitate to contact Kim Carland, Advocacy and Government Relations Lead, Hunter JO at [kimc@hunterjo.nsw.gov.au](mailto:kimc@hunterjo.nsw.gov.au) or on 0460 034 614.

Yours Sincerely



Cr Sue Moore  
Chair Hunter Joint Organisation

# Submission to the Net Zero Economy Authority

## RE: Energy Industry Jobs Plan (EIJP) – Closure of Eraring Power Station

The Hunter Joint Organisation, representing the ten councils of the Hunter region, welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the consultation on the application of the Energy Industry Jobs Plan (EIJP) in response to the planned closure of Eraring Power Station in August 2027. As a region with a legacy of coal mining and energy generation, this transition marks a critical turning point in our economic evolution.

We support Lake Macquarie City Council's submission, and submit this Hunter regional-wide perspective to reinforce and broaden the call for urgent and targeted support through the EIJP.

The region's communities and economy are deeply interlinked through shared labour markets, supply chains, and infrastructure. An integrated whole-of-region approach is essential to ensure that no worker, community, or local economy is left behind.

### 1. Hunter Region Context and Importance of Eraring

The Hunter region is one of the most significant contributors to the NSW and national economy driving around 28% of regional NSW's total economic output, with energy production and mining long standing as economic pillars. Eraring Power Station represents about \$4.5 billion in economic activity and 1,800 direct and indirect jobs.

While the closure of Eraring is one of the most immediate and visible milestones in the net zero transition, it is not an isolated event. Multiple mine closures across the Hunter are expected or underway. Each closure will cumulatively exacerbate the economic and social disruption facing the region unless supported by well-resourced, strategic, coordinated, and adaptive transition planning.

### 2. Call for a Region-Wide EIJP Framework

The Hunter region is characterised by deep economic, social, and workforce interdependencies that transcend individual industrial sites. The closure of one major facility inevitably reverberates across the broader regional economy, affecting shared labour markets, supply chains, transport corridors, housing availability, and community services. It is therefore critical that these transitions are not addressed in isolation.

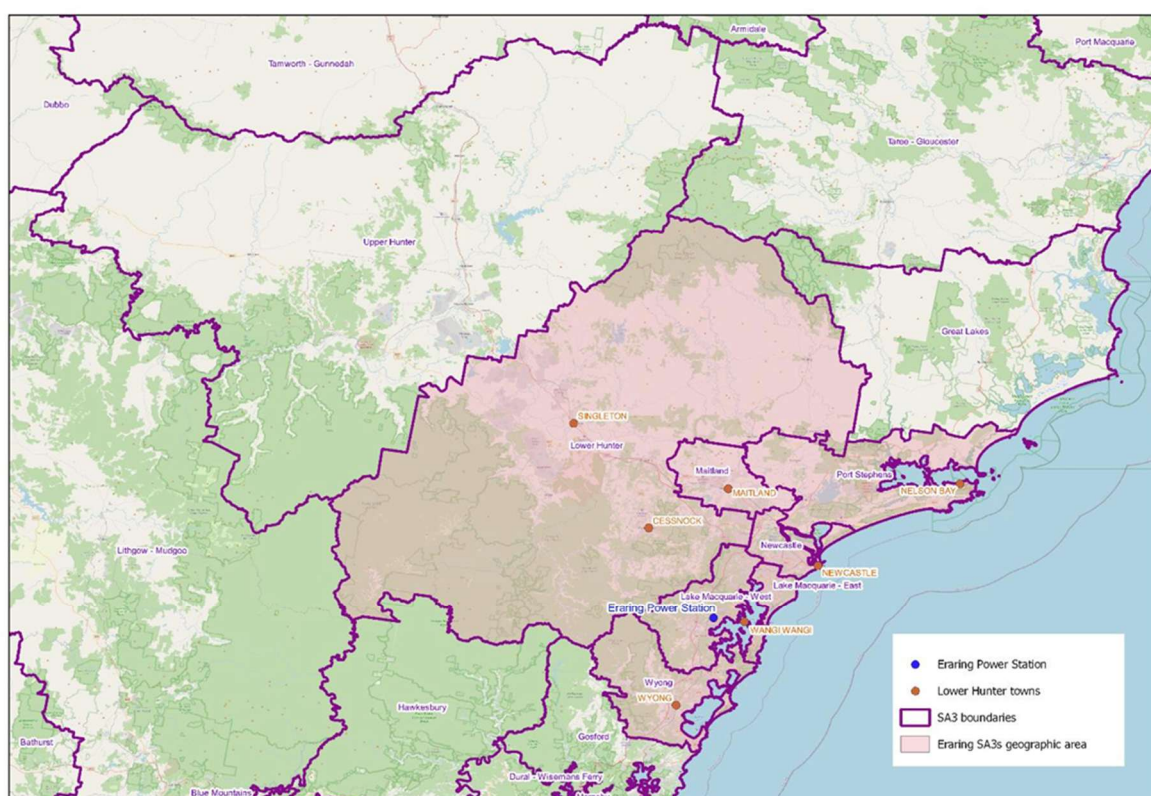
A strategic, region-wide approach, one that is responsive to the cumulative impact of multiple energy and mining transitions and coordinated across all levels of government, is essential to ensure long-term economic resilience, social stability, and just outcomes for all Hunter communities.



While the closure of other coal-fired power stations across the Hunter region may technically fall outside the immediate scope of this submission, they are nonetheless highly relevant to the context in which the Eraring transition is occurring.

We urge NZEA to expand its EIJP implementation to cover a greater area than what has been proposed to encompass more of the Hunter.

**Figure 2:** Areas for inclusion in the geographic area for Eraring Power Station



We urge the NZEA to expand its EIJP implementation to start mapping all Hunter coal-dependent communities, not just Lake Macquarie and Eraring focussed. including;

- Workers across the full energy supply chain, including contractors, suppliers, and logistics operators.
- Interlinked economic sectors, such as manufacturing and construction, that may be affected by the loss of energy-sector demand.
- Industrial land available now and that could become available in post mining and coal fired power stations.

Key elements of this approach should include:

- A place-focused (region-wide) integrated whole of government approach to the region's transition planning and action that integrates and embeds broader federal and state government planning and policy into a clear strategy for the Hunter region



- Skill mapping and transition planning across the region to anticipate workforce needs and opportunities in clean energy, advanced manufacturing, circular economy, and public infrastructure.
- Hunter region wide focussed personnel offering direct engagement, placement support, and early matching of available skills to future jobs.
- Retraining incentives and reskilling funds, particularly targeted to emerging sectors aligned with the Hunter's renewable energy zone (REZ), green hydrogen opportunities, and defence industries.
- Support for self-employment and local enterprise creation, including accelerator programs for displaced workers to transition into entrepreneurship.
- Business incentives, such as wage subsidies or onboarding payments, for firms that take on transitioning workers or create vacancies via early retirement.

### 3. Post Mining and Coal Fired Power Station Land Use

The Hunter region faces constraints in providing appropriately zoned employment lands to deliver new job opportunities due to ongoing mining tenure.

All ten Mayors of the Hunter region support a reform of mining license relinquishment processes to make suitable land available more rapidly for industrial reuse, job creation, and clean energy infrastructure.

Limitations in industrial land may inhibit NZEA from meeting the objectives of the EIJP for Eraring Power Station and broader sites across the Hunter that will soon require their own EIJPs.

We urge Net the Zero Economy Authority to use its leadership role to encourage urgent action from the NSW Government to undertake planning reform of land release processes, unlocking post-mining and former coal-fired power station sites for future employment-generating uses.

### 4. Social Support, Community Resilience and Coordination

Beyond workforce measures, the human and community impacts of these closures demand early investment in:

- Mental health and social services in affected communities;
- Education and family transition planning;
- Transport, housing and digital connectivity, to enable access to new jobs and training across the region.

Strong cross-government and industry coordination will be essential. We urge the NZEA to:

- Maintain regular engagement with local councils, including the Joint Organisation of Councils in the Hunter;
- Integrate transition efforts with existing national, state and regional policies and strategies to deliver a place based planning approach to the Hunter incorporating the

housing targets, Renewable Energy Zones, NSW Hunter Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan and the National Circular Economy Framework to name a few.

## 5. Final Remarks

The closure of Eraring marks a pivotal moment in the Hunter region's transition journey away from coal. It must be used as a catalyst to deliver a whole-of-region economic transformation that is inclusive, just and sustainable.

We thank the Net Zero Economy Authority for its leadership in this critical process and stand ready to partner in the planning and delivery of a successful transition.





Hunter Joint Organisation  
**Strategic Plan 2035**





Port Stephens

The Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2035 is our Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities (SSRP), an aspirational 10-year plan reflecting the shared vision of our ten Councils for the Hunter Region.

**Acknowledgment of Country**

Lands of the Awabakal, Worimi, Wonnarua, Geawegal, Biripi, Guringai and Darkinjung Aboriginal peoples.

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.

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## a message from **the chair** Cr Sue Moore

**The Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2035 is a renewed and future-focused vision for our region, developed in close collaboration with our ten Member Councils and their communities.**

This Strategic Plan reflects a collective commitment by the region's Mayors to work together to shape a stronger, more resilient Hunter - one that is ready to meet the challenges of today and embrace the opportunities of tomorrow. It builds on Member Councils' Community Strategic Plans, aligning local aspirations with a shared regional purpose.

The Hunter is navigating a period of profound transformation. With population growth accelerating and global shifts in energy and industry impacting our region more than most, this Plan recognises the need for coordinated leadership, strategic advocacy, and meaningful partnerships. Together, we are laying the groundwork to ensure that our communities remain vibrant, liveable and economically secure into the future.

This strategy marks an important evolution for the Hunter JO itself. Alongside our core work in regional collaboration and project delivery, we are enhancing our capacity to lead on regional advocacy - ensuring that the Hunter's voice is heard clearly at the state and national level.

Importantly, this Plan is not just a roadmap for the Hunter JO - it is a shared regional agenda. It reflects the unity, ambition, and strategic foresight of our Member Councils, and positions us to drive real outcomes for our communities.

On behalf of the Board of Mayors, I thank everyone who contributed to the development of this strategy. We look forward to working with our partners to bring its vision to life.



## a message from **the director** (executive officer) Steve Wilson

**Our Plan outlines a clear, regionally aligned direction for addressing the most pressing issues facing our region.**

Through strengthened collaboration across our ten Member Councils, this Plan reflects our shared commitment to achieving sustainable outcomes for the Hunter.

This Plan is guided by six strategic themes:

- Housing and Population Growth
- Economic Transformation and Jobs
- Infrastructure and Connectivity
- Environmental Sustainability and Resilience
- Financial Sustainability and Funding Reform
- Community Liveability and Wellbeing

Each theme represents a core priority for the region, and through collaborative action, we aim to deliver lasting change. Throughout the Plan, you'll find case studies showcasing how the Hunter JO drives regional programs and advocacy, highlighting the significant benefits of working together as a region.

The Hunter JO is committed to facilitating connections, advocating for the region, and building capacity to ensure the Hunter thrives. I look forward to continuing this important work with our Board of Mayors, councils, and partners to deliver impactful, community-driven outcomes.



# hunter jo strategic plan 2035

## statement of strategic regional priorities

Cessnock City Council • Dungog Shire Council  
Lake Macquarie City Council • Maitland City Council  
MidCoast Council • Muswellbrook Shire Council  
City of Newcastle • Port Stephens Council  
Singleton Council • Upper Hunter Shire Council

## our vision for the region

We harness our unique strengths to drive economic transformation, build resilience, and enhance community wellbeing for the Hunter Region.

## regional priorities and objectives



### Housing & Population Growth

- 1.1 Housing affordability, density, diversity and availability
- 1.2 Integrated planning and enabling infrastructure to support housing development in priority growth areas
- 1.3 Supporting population growth and demographic shifts
- 1.4 Development planning to minimise environmental impacts and natural hazard risks



### Economic Transformation & Jobs

- 2.1 Activate the reuse of mining related lands
- 2.2 Leveraging regional and global industries
- 2.3 Evolution towards renewable energy, circular economy and future industries
- 2.4 Business attraction, job creation and future skills development



### Infrastructure & Connectivity

- 3.1 Integrated cross-agency infrastructure planning
- 3.2 Safe and efficient road networks
- 3.3 Multimodal, low-emission transport connectivity
- 3.4 Digital connectivity improvements



### Environmental Sustainability & Resilience

- 4.1 Climate change mitigation, adaptation and disaster resilience
- 4.2 Circular materials and waste management
- 4.3 Water security and waterway health
- 4.4 Protection of natural environments



### Financial Sustainability & Funding Reform

- 5.1 Ensuring the long-term financial sustainability of Local Government
- 5.2 Securing reliable funding for place-based regional collaboration and knowledge sharing
- 5.3 Reforming grant funding processes to secure sustainable funding models



### Community Liveability & Wellbeing

- 6.1 Enhancing access to education, health and community services
- 6.2 Improving open space, greening, and public amenity access
- 6.3 Promoting community identity, arts, culture and opportunities

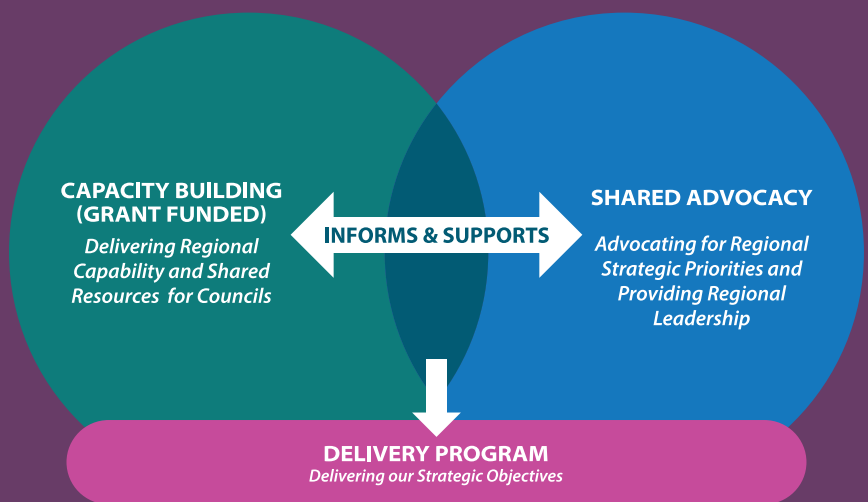


## our principal functions

Strategic Planning and Priority Setting

Regional Leadership and Advocacy

Intergovernmental Collaboration



## how we deliver our strategic objectives



## our key partners and stakeholders



### hunter region

- Regional advocacy groups (eg. Committee for Hunter, Business Hunter, HunterNet)
- University of Newcastle
- Regional Development Australia (RDA) Hunter
- Hunter Water
- Destination Sydney Surrounds North
- Newcastle Airport
- Port of Newcastle
- Central Coast Council
- Other community groups / agencies (as appropriate)



### state

- NSW Premiers Department
- NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
- NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
- NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
- NSW Reconstruction Authority
- NSW Environment Protection Authority
- NSW Health
- Transport for NSW
- Office of Local Government
- Future Jobs and Investment Authority
- Local Land Services
- Other relevant State Government dept's
- Joint Organisation Chairs Forum & Network
- Local Government NSW



### national

- Net Zero Economy Authority
- National Emergency Management Agency
- High Speed Rail Authority
- Australian Local Government Association
- Department of Employment and Workplace Relations



# the hunter region

gross regional  
product  
**\$91b**  
REMPAN 2025

The Hunter Region is a diverse and economically significant area known for its agriculture, manufacturing, defence, tourism, mining and energy industries. We enjoy diversity in housing and lifestyle choice, from major city centres and their suburbs, through to peri urban lots, rural towns and villages and more isolated farming and bushland environments.

The Hunter Region boasts diverse natural landscapes and environments that underpin the liveability of our local communities and attract significant numbers of visitors to our region. With a Gross Regional Product of \$91b, the Hunter plays a vital role in New South Wales' economic, social and environmental landscape.

Collectively, our ten local government areas are entering a new and exciting phase with a growing metropolitan area, greater economic

diversification and global gateways that will increasingly link the Hunter to the rest of the world.

Our region hosts a newly opened international airport, deep sea port and industrial hub with a growing focus on clean energy and technology.

The Hunter's economy has traditionally relied on coal exports, but there is increasing investment in renewable energy, manufacturing, and agribusiness.

With its rapidly growing population, the Hunter Region is facing increasing demand for infrastructure, housing, and services. Collaboration with State and Federal Governments is essential for sustainable development, ensuring investment in transport, healthcare, and economic diversification.

## opportunities and challenges



Housing affordability, availability and diversity



Population growth



Economic diversification



Climate Change



State and federal investment in economic transformation



Repurposing of industrial and mining lands and infrastructure



Training and skills development for future economy



Shared vision for our region



Leveraging international opportunities through Newcastle Airport and Port





Maitland

Inhabited by the  
Awabakal, Worimi,  
Wonnarua, Geawegal,  
Biripi, Guringai and  
Darkinjung Aboriginal  
peoples

## our collective voice



### 10 local councils

- Cessnock
- Dungog
- Lake Macquarie
- Maitland
- MidCoast
- Muswellbrook
- Newcastle
- Port Stephens
- Singleton
- Upper Hunter



### 11 state electorates

- Cessnock
- Charlestown
- Lake Macquarie
- Maitland
- Myall Lakes
- Newcastle
- Port Macquarie
- Port Stephens
- Swansea
- Upper Hunter
- Wallsend



### 6 federal electorates

- Hunter
- Lyne
- Newcastle
- New England
- Paterson
- Shortland

**810,491**  
2025  
Population



**959,562**  
2041  
Population Projection  
NSW Government 2024



**32,748km<sup>2</sup>**  
Hunter Region



**41yrs**  
Median age



**69%**  
Population  
who own their  
home or have a  
mortgage



**26%**  
Population  
who rent



**2.5**  
Average people  
per household



**\$1.95b**  
Value of tourism  
industry



**12,993k**  
Annual tourist  
visitors



**283.5km**  
Coastline



**162,233ha**  
Rainforest



**12,664km**  
Roads



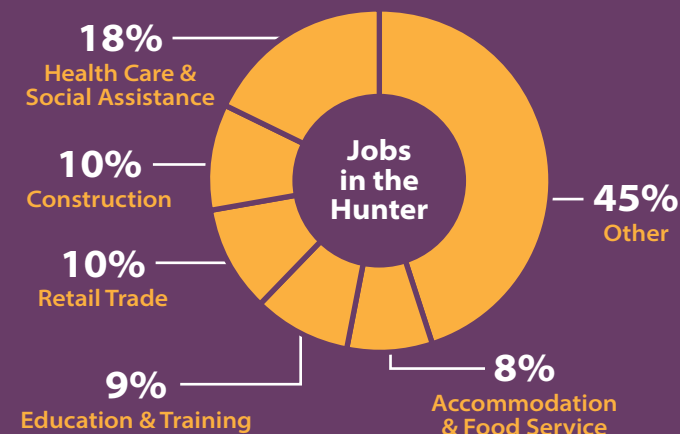
**37,938ha**  
Wetlands



**3,581**  
Native plant  
species



**803**  
Native mammal,  
bird, reptile &  
amphibian  
species







### More accurately predicting our population

In 2021, Hunter JO Member Councils identified the need to challenge the NSW State Government's outdated 2041 population projections. Official estimates were significantly lower than local calculations, impacting funding for infrastructure, schools, hospitals, and emergency services.

Through collaboration, the councils' advocacy successfully contributed to a 10% increase in the population projection. Further efforts in 2024 led to additional adjustments, particularly for Upper Hunter councils, ensuring better alignment with local realities.

This success highlights the power of regional collaboration and advocacy in securing accurate forecasts, attracting investment, and influencing long-term state planning to support the Hunter's growing communities.

Maitland

# PART 1

## the hunter jo

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Why Work Together	19
Vision for the Region	19



# what is the hunter jo

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.

As the hub for local intergovernmental collaboration, our statutory mandate includes identifying key regional strategic priorities, advocating for these priorities and building collaboration 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 General Managers (GM) and/or Chief Executive Officers (CEO) of each

Member Council, an employee of the public service nominated by the Secretary Department of Regional NSW, and a representative from the Office of Local Government.

Collaboration across the Hunter Region is the cornerstone of the Hunter JO. Since our beginning in 1955, the connection and coordination between our Member Councils has grown, developed and matured, delivering value for councils, our region and the Local Government sector as a whole.

The Local Government Act 1993 (NSW) sets out three principal functions for Joint Organisations:

### 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 councils

- Cessnock City Council
- Dungog Shire Council
- Lake Macquarie City Council
- Maitland City Council
- MidCoast Council
- Muswellbrook Shire Council
- City of Newcastle
- Port Stephens Council
- Singleton Council
- Upper Hunter Shire Council





# leadership

MidCoast

## our board of mayors



**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



**Peter Chrystal**  
Interim 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

## our general managers advisory committee





The Hunter is a connected region  
**40% of hunter residents**  
 travel out of their local government area to work

Dungog

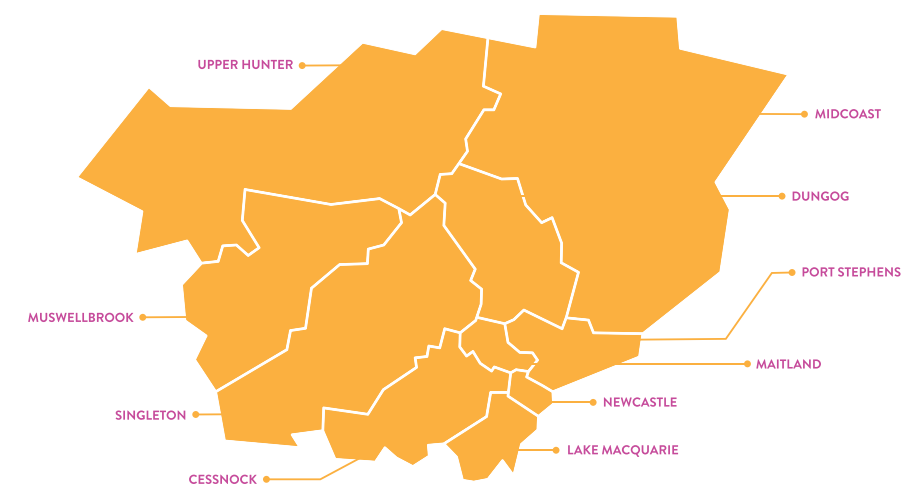
## vision for the region

We harness our unique strengths to drive economic transformation, build resilience, and enhance community wellbeing for the Hunter Region.

## why work together

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

Our region is significant, diverse and evolving. Collectively, our ten local government areas are entering a new and exciting phase with a growing metropolitan area, greater economic diversification and global gateways that will increasingly link the Hunter to the rest of the world.



### The Hunter JO offers:

- The only place where the ten Hunter Mayors and General Managers regularly come together.
- The only democratically elected voice for the whole of the Hunter, expressing the needs and priorities of our local communities.
- The power of a united and aligned voice for the region, focusing on issues and opportunities we all share.
- A forum through which to engage, influence and collaborate with other levels of government to solve our shared challenges together.





**Advocating for mining land reuse**

As coal demand declines, the Hunter Region faces mine closures that could affect up to 50,000 direct and indirect jobs by 2050.

Urgent action is needed to overcome the barriers to reusing former mining and buffer lands. Repurposing mine sites and infrastructure represents a cost-effective way to support new industries and jobs as the region transitions.

Recognising this, the Hunter JO Board has made post-mining land use one of its top advocacy priorities, initially focusing on delivery of four pilot projects to map former mine sites, developing action plans, and creating master plans for redevelopment.

With ten democratically elected Mayors representing the Hunter Region, our collective voice is stronger and more influential.



Muswellbrook

**PART 2**  
**about our plan**

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# what is the hunter jo strategic plan?

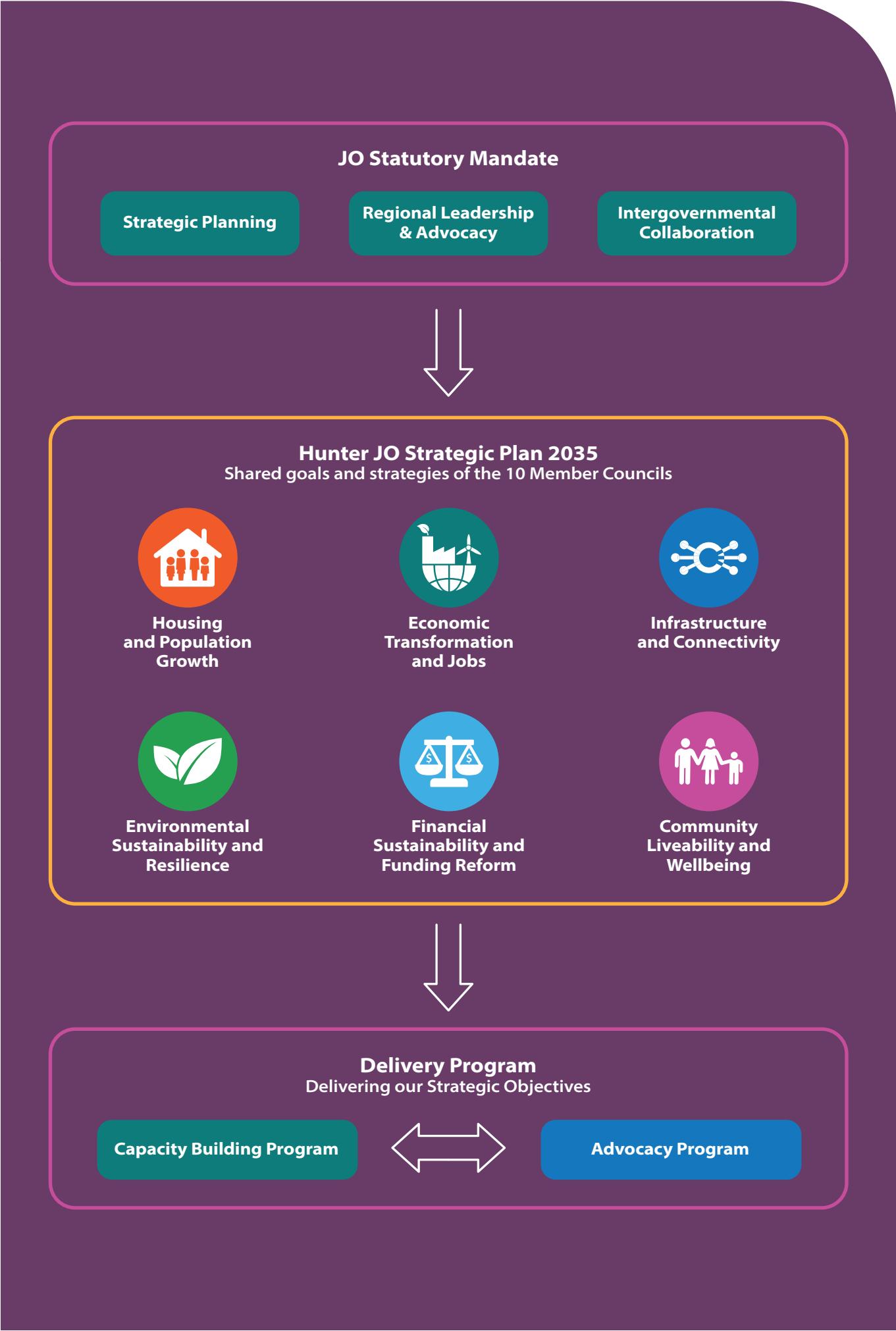
The Hunter JO’s Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities (SSRP) is called the Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2035.

JOs are required to develop a Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities (SSRP) which sets out a vision and aspirations for the region and provides an overview of the strategic actions required to deliver the vision. The SSRP draws from the Community Strategic Plans (CSPs) of Member Councils, regional-level plans and other state strategic documents to clearly identify the highest regional priorities. It is a four year document that aligns with the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) cycle and must be prepared within 12 months of ordinary election of councillors for all Member Councils.

Hunter JO engages directly with Member Councils to ensure our Strategic Plan is a synthesised, representative view of local communities’ voices from across the region.

Hunter JO and Member Councils take a leading role in the implementation of the Strategic Plan, however collaboration with, advocacy to, and funding from other levels of government, industry and key stakeholders will be crucial to achieving our long-term goals.

Our Strategic Plan is supported by the Hunter JO Delivery Program 2025-2029, which identifies the projects and advocacy priorities Hunter JO will deliver to achieve the objectives of the Strategic Plan. The Delivery Program will be reviewed and adopted by the Hunter JO Board annually. Depending on available funding and resources, this annual process will determine the priorities and projects for delivery each year.







**Building resilient communities: Integrating climate action into council strategies**

Hunter JO is a leader in developing guidance documents that align with the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework. The [Climate Change IP&R Package](#) and [Resilience IP&R Support Package](#) are the first of their kind, providing councils with practical tools and templates to embed climate resilience into everyday operations.

Recognising the region's diversity, spanning large regional centres to smaller rural councils, Hunter JO's IP&R Support Packages offer flexible templates tailored to different commitment levels: **Committed**, **Motivated**, and **Leading**. This approach allows councils to choose templates that best suit their resources, priorities, and community needs.

The adaptability of these Packages has also enabled their uptake by councils right across NSW, further strengthening climate resilience and long-term planning by Local Government.

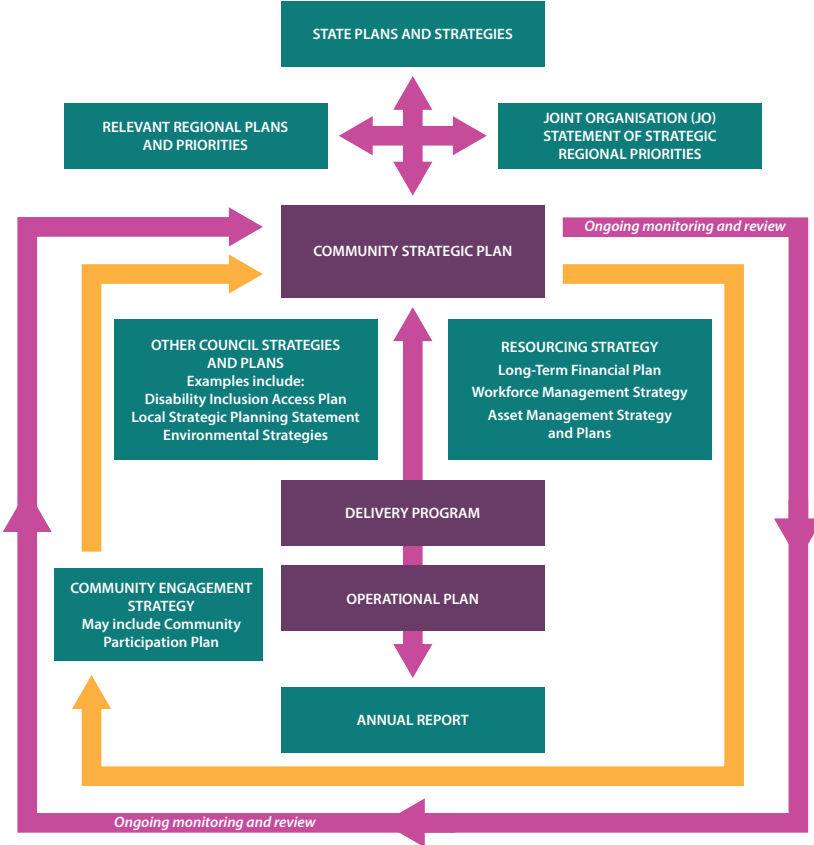
**integrated planning and reporting framework**

The Local Government Act 1993 (NSW) requires Councils to be consistent with the Local Government Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework, which aims to ensure a more sustainable Local Government sector. This requires Councils to take a long-term view and consider social, economic and environmental aspects and the needs of the current and future generations when making decisions.

Joint Organisations (JO) also have streamlined planning and reporting requirements under the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 and Integrated Planning and Reporting Guidelines for Local Government in NSW. This includes compliance with the relevant section of the IP&R Guidelines.

The JO Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities (SSRP) strengthens the linkages between the JO, its Member Councils, state agencies and key partners, providing better support to Councils.

Joint Organisations (JO) also have streamlined planning and reporting requirements under the Local Government





# developing our plan

## The Strategic Plan aligns local priorities and provides clear guidance on shared regional objectives.

The Plan should be broad and comprehensive enough to allow Hunter JO to be adaptable when regional priorities change or opportunities arise, while at the same time being specific and targeted to set our strategic direction for the region.

The Delivery Program outlines the specific projects and advocacy priorities Hunter JO will deliver over a four-year period and will be reviewed and updated annually.

### The Strategic Plan has been developed through:



Extensive engagement with the Hunter JO Board



Review and mapping strategic themes against the ten Community Strategic Plans (CSP) of the region



Review of key state and regional plans



Incorporation of key priorities, challenges and opportunities identified through program and advocacy work



# strategic line of sight

## aligns at the local level

- Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework
- Member Councils Community Strategic Plans
  - Cessnock Community Strategic Plan 2040
  - Dungog Shire Community Strategic Plan 2025-2035
  - Lake Macquarie City Community Strategic Plan 2025-2035
  - Maitland's Future - Community Strategic Plan 2025-2034
  - MidCoast 2035 Community Strategic Plan
  - Muswellbrook Shire Community Strategic Plan 2025-2035
  - Newcastle 2040 It's Our Future
  - Port Stephens Community Strategic Plan 2025 - 2035
  - Create Singleton 2035
  - Upper Hunter 2035

## aligns at the regional level

- Hunter Regional Plan 2041
- Hunter Central Coast Regional Leadership Executive (RLE) Priorities
- Regional Disaster Adaptation Plans (under development)
- Regional Economic Development Strategies for Central Coast and Lake Macquarie, Hunter and MidCoast
- Draft Hunter Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan
- Hunter Central Coast Circular Economy Roadmap
- Hunter Local Jobs Plan
- Regional Development Australia (RDA) Hunter charter

## aligns at the state level

- NSW Premier's Priorities
- NSW Performance and Wellbeing Framework
- NSW Net Zero Plan
- State Infrastructure Strategy
- NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy
- NSW Circular Economy Policy Statement
- NSW Future Transport Strategy
- NSW State Disaster Mitigation Plan
- NSW State Health Plan
- Future Jobs and Investment Authorities Issues Paper 2024
- NSW Industry Policy
- NSW Innovation Blueprint
- Industrial Lands Action Plan
- NSW Housing Targets
- Local Government NSW Advocacy Priorities

## aligns at the national level

- Powering Australia Plan
- Net Zero Plan (under development)
- Annual Climate Change Statement
- Net Zero Economy Authority focus areas
- Future Made in Australia
- Australia's Strategy for Nature 2024-2030
- National Housing Accord
- Australian Local Government Association Advocacy Priorities







## aligns at the global level

### United Nations Sustainable Development Goals









# community strategic plan mapping

The ten Community Strategic Plans adopted in June 2025 have been mapped against the six themes of the Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2035, to identify aligned priority areas and collaboration focus areas.

Community Strategic Plan (CSP) Priority						
Cessnock City Council						
Live	●		●	●		●
Thrive		●	●			●
Protect	●	●	●	●		●
Move	●	●	●			●
Lead		●	●		●	●
Dungog Shire Council						
Our Community			●	●	●	●
Our Environment and Planning	●	●		●		
Our Economy		●	●			●
Our Infrastructure			●	●		●
Our Leadership					●	●
Lake Macquarie City Council						
Economic	●	●	●		●	●
Environmental		●	●	●		●
Social	●		●			●
Governance			●		●	●
Maitland City Council						
Liveable Maitland	●		●	●		●
Sustainable Maitland		●		●		●
Vibrant Maitland	●	●	●		●	●
Achieving Together	●	●	●			●
MidCoast Council						
Our Wellbeing				●		●
Our Natural Environment		●	●	●		
Our Places & Infrastructure	●		●	●	●	●
Our Economic Prosperity		●				●
Our Leadership			●		●	●



Community Strategic Plan (CSP) Priority						
Muswellbrook Shire Council						
We are a strong community						●
We are a regional centre		●	●			●
We are a thriving economy		●				●
We are a great place to live	●	●	●	●		●
We are working together		●			●	●
City of Newcastle						
Liveable	●		●			●
Sustainable		●		●		
Creative		●			●	●
Achieving Together		●			●	●
Port Stephens Council						
Our Community						●
Our Place	●	●	●	●		●
Our Environment		●	●	●		●
Our Council		●	●		●	
Singleton Council						
Our Community	●	●	●	●	●	●
Our Places	●	●	●	●		●
Our Environment		●	●	●		
Our Economy		●				●
Our Leadership					●	●
Upper Hunter Shire Council						
A Connected Community			●	●		●
Protected Environment	●	●		●		●
Thriving Economy	●	●			●	●
Quality Infrastructure	●	●	●	●	●	●
Responsible Governance		●	●	●	●	●





### Advocacy for regional integrated transport planning

Hunter JO brought together agency representatives, Mayors and local councils to shape the draft *Hunter Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan*, ensuring the priorities of councils were clearly communicated.

Our collaborative approach helped secure key recommendations in the Plan, including a coordinated, accessible transport system, improved public transport, the Lower Hunter Freight Corridor, and enhanced rail services to drive economic growth.

The Hunter JO submission supports the plan but calls for clearer project prioritisation, better walking and cycling infrastructure, stronger climate resilience, improved mobile connectivity, and recognition of regional airports like Cessnock.

By working together, Hunter JO strengthens its influence on state transport planning to ensure local needs are met.

Newcastle

# PART 3

## our plan

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**Boosting our global reach – Hunter Global**

The Newcastle Airport precinct is undergoing a once-in-a-generation redevelopment and expansion to enable international connectivity. Leveraging the benefits of the investment and upgrades, Hunter JO and key partners facilitated a 2022 Hunter Global summit to boost collaboration, planning and advocacy to capitalise on the runway and terminal upgrade.

Acting on the summit recommendations, Hunter JO led two grant-funded projects to develop [Business Cases](#) exploring economic opportunities in air freight and international tourism.

With input from regional stakeholders, the Business Cases identified key priorities - establishing an air freight cargo terminal at Newcastle Airport to boost freight capacity and developing a unified 'Hunter Region' brand to attract international tourists.

This research has strengthened our advocacy efforts by demonstrating the potential benefits and returns on investment for the broader Hunter Region.



# our plan



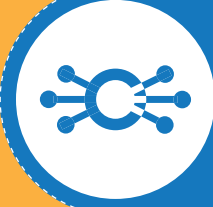
**Housing & Population Growth**

Inclusive, affordable, and sustainable housing that supports population growth through integrated development, efficient land use, protection of natural environments and reduced exposure to natural hazard risk.



**Economic Transformation & Jobs**

The evolution of our region toward renewable and future focused industries, maximising our mining related and industrial lands and leveraging our regional strengths to drive innovation and economic growth, create jobs and protect our natural assets and environment.



**Infrastructure & Connectivity**

Seamless, multimodal, low-emission connectivity powered by modern transport networks, enhanced digital infrastructure, and integrated planning to support sustainable mobility and regional growth.



**Environmental Sustainability & Resilience**

A future focused on long-term resilience, where disaster preparedness, climate mitigation and adaptation, sustainable water management, and circular economy practices work together to protect ecosystems and build holistic resilience for future generations.



**Financial Sustainability & Funding Reform**

Financial sustainability achieved through reformed funding processes and secure financial models that ensure the long-term viability and success of Local Government to deliver services to communities.



**Community Liveability & Wellbeing**

A community where enhanced access to services, improved public spaces, and a strong sense of identity and opportunity promote wellbeing and a high quality of life for all.





# how to read this plan

1

### housing & population growth

Inclusive, affordable and sustainable housing that supports population growth through integrated development, efficient land use, protection of natural environments and reduced exposure to natural hazard risk.

2

Objectives (Where do we want to be?)	Directions (How do we get there?)
1.1 Housing affordability, density, diversity and availability.	Establish the Hunter region as a model for affordable, diverse, resilient and sustainable housing where a range of housing options are available.
1.2 Integrated planning and enabling infrastructure to support housing development in priority growth areas.	Collaborate with all levels of government and key stakeholders to secure funding and ensure the timely and integrated delivery of enabling infrastructure that supports housing development in priority growth areas.
1.3 Supporting population growth and demographic shifts.	Develop inclusive policies and ensure the availability of facilities and services to proactively support population growth, adapt to demographic shifts and foster vibrant communities.
1.4 Development planning to minimise environmental impacts and natural hazard risks.	Prioritise infill development and densification in areas with suitable land use capacity, ensuring sustainable growth, protection of the region's natural assets, and reduced housing exposure to natural hazards such as bushfires and floods.

3

### hunter regional context

The Hunter region is experiencing considerable population growth, with projections indicating an increase from 860,000 to nearly 959,000 residents by 2041 and requiring an additional 101,800 dwellings (Hunter Regional Plan 2041).

The NSW Government has established regionally significant growth areas, Transport Oriented Development (TOD) provisions and a Low and Mid-Rise Housing policy which aim to encourage development of more homes close to transport jobs and services to meet housing targets in the Hunter and beyond.

The Hunter Region's appeal has been amplified by lifestyle changes, especially post-pandemic, as more individuals and families relocate from metropolitan areas seeking affordable housing and a higher quality of life.

However, with rapid growth comes challenges, including:

- Ensuring housing supply meets diverse community needs

4

Transport Oriented Development (TOD) Areas

Local Government can play an important role in the housing system, including supporting people experiencing homelessness and advocating for greater investment in crisis, social and affordable housing as part of broader efforts to improve housing security across the region. Opportunities arise in the form of revitalising existing communities, promoting diverse housing options, and leveraging the region's economic strengths to support sustainable development.

5

### Unlocking housing on development-ready land

Significant areas of development-ready land exist in the Hunter, but construction is stalled due to delays in essential infrastructure like transport and utilities.

To assess the extent of the problem, Hunter JO and Member Councils gathered data on:

- The top three cases where infrastructure gaps were blocking housing development
- Estimated investment needed to address these gaps
- The number of housing lots that could be unlocked

This data has been crucial in advocating to State and Federal Ministers, helping them grasp the scale of the issue and the opportunity for the Hunter region to support the delivery of national housing targets.

6

- 1

### Regional Strategic Themes

Six themes that the Strategic Plan is developed around. An overarching Objective is identified for each theme.
- 2

### Objectives

Where do we want to be? The region's long-term priorities and aspirations
- 3

### Directions

How will we get there? Details what needs to be done to achieve our objectives.
- 4

### Regional Context

Provides regional context for each theme, giving insight into the challenges and opportunities faced by the Hunter.
- 5

### Case Studies

Recent examples of how Hunter JO delivers regional programs and advocacy, highlighting the benefits of regional collaboration.
- 6

### Sustainable Development Goals

The UN adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 to address poverty, protect the planet, and promote prosperity. While the goals are global, each can be localised to local needs and contexts. This plan aligns regional priorities with the SDGs, reflecting the Hunter JO's vision and indicating where we believe the Hunter JO can best contribute at a regional scale.



# housing & population growth



**Inclusive, affordable and sustainable housing that supports population growth through integrated development, efficient land use, protection of natural environments and reduced exposure to natural hazard risk.**



## hunter regional context

The Hunter Region is experiencing considerable population growth, with projections indicating an increase from 860,000 to nearly 959,000 residents by 2041 and requiring an additional 101,800 dwellings (Hunter Regional Plan 2041).

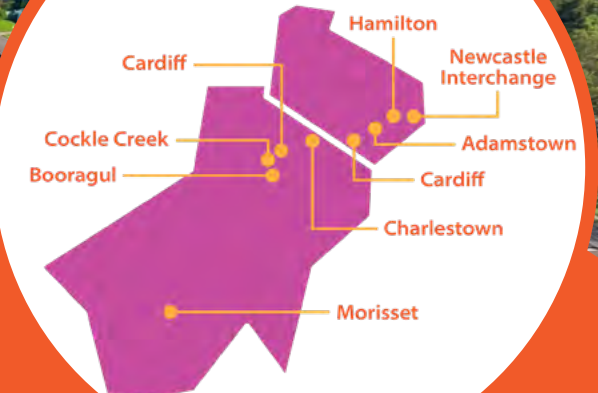
The NSW Government has established regionally significant growth areas, Transport Oriented Development (TOD) provisions and a Low and Mid-Rise Housing policy which aim to encourage development of more homes close to transport, jobs and services to meet housing targets in the Hunter and beyond.

The Hunter Region's appeal has been amplified by lifestyle changes, especially post-pandemic, as more individuals and families relocate from metropolitan areas seeking affordable housing and a higher quality of life.

However, with rapid growth comes challenges, including:

- Ensuring housing supply meets diverse community needs

### Transport Oriented Development (TOD) Areas



- The need for an integrated approach to planning, ensuring infrastructure, roads, public transport, utilities, community services and facilities are provided to support housing
- Preservation of the region's valued natural environments
- Increasing threats from bushfires, flooding, coastal erosion and other natural hazards.

Local Government can play an important role in the housing system, including supporting people experiencing homelessness and advocating for greater investment in crisis, social and affordable housing as part of broader efforts to improve housing security across the region. Opportunities arise in the form of revitalising existing communities, promoting diverse housing options, and leveraging the region's economic strengths to support sustainable development.



#### Objectives (Where do we want to be?)

#### Directions (How do we get there?)

**1.1 Housing affordability, density, diversity and availability.**

Establish the Hunter Region as a model for affordable, diverse, resilient and sustainable housing where a range of housing options are available.

**1.2 Integrated planning and enabling infrastructure to support housing development in priority growth areas.**

Collaborate with all levels of government and key stakeholders to secure funding and ensure the timely and integrated delivery of enabling infrastructure that supports housing development in priority growth areas.

**1.3 Supporting population growth and demographic shifts.**

Develop inclusive policies and ensure the availability of facilities and services to proactively support population growth, adapt to demographic shifts and foster vibrant communities.

**1.4 Development planning to minimise environmental impacts and natural hazard risks.**

Prioritise infill development and densification in areas with suitable land use capacity, ensuring sustainable growth, protection of the region's natural assets, and reduced housing exposure to natural hazards such as bushfires and floods.

### Unlocking housing on development-ready land

Significant areas of development-ready land exist in the Hunter, but construction is stalled due to delays in essential infrastructure like transport and utilities.

To assess the extent of the problem, Hunter JO and Member Councils gathered data on:

- The top three cases where infrastructure gaps were blocking housing development
- Estimated investment needed to address these gaps
- The number of housing lots that could be unlocked

This data has been crucial in advocating to State and Federal Ministers, helping them grasp the scale of the issue and the opportunity for the Hunter Region to support the delivery of national housing targets.



**case  
study**



# economic transformation & jobs



The evolution of our region toward renewable and future focused industries, maximising our mining related and industrial lands and leveraging our regional strengths to drive innovation and economic growth, create jobs and protect our natural assets and environment.



## hunter regional context

The Hunter Region is undergoing enormous economic transformation, shifting from traditional coal, energy and manufacturing toward renewable energy, health, and advanced manufacturing. With over 343,000 jobs and \$173.9 billion in current annual output (REMPAN), the region faces both significant opportunities and challenges.

22 coal mines in the Hunter are forecast to close in the next few decades, impacting nearly 50,000 jobs (Future Jobs and Investment Authorities), including around 12,000 jobs by 2030 alone (Muswellbrook Shire Council). Urgent action is needed to ensure alternative jobs can be provided.

The reuse of former mining land and infrastructure presents a major opportunity,

with sites potentially being repurposed for renewable energy projects, circular economy precincts, industrial hubs, smart manufacturing, tourism, freight and logistics, and conservation. Renewable Energy Zones (REZs) and initiatives like the proposed TAFE Energy Centre of Excellence aim to address retraining challenges, skill shortages and infrastructure demands, and over 70% of residents have expressed they are open to retraining (University of Newcastle Institute of Regional Futures).

Strategic regional planning is essential to balance industry transition while ensuring economic stability. With proactive workforce development and investment, the Hunter Region is well-positioned to drive sustainable job growth in a rapidly evolving economy.

### Objectives (Where do we want to be?)

### Directions (How do we get there?)

2.1 Activate the reuse of mining related lands.	Transform former mining-related lands into vibrant, economically productive areas that deliver new and sustainable jobs, maximise land use potential, drive long-term economic growth and minimise environmental impacts.
2.2 Leveraging regional and global industries.	Leverage the region's key economic assets including port, airports, tourism, agriculture, freight networks and manufacturing skills base to drive industry diversification and strengthen the Hunter Region's position as a leading globally connected economic hub of state and national significance.
2.3 Evolution towards renewable energy, circular economy and future industries.	Transform the Hunter Region towards net zero to become a hub for renewable energy, circular economy and future industries, driving innovation, creating sustainable jobs, fostering economic diversification, attracting investment and maximising community benefits.
2.4 Business attraction, job creation and future skills development.	Position the Hunter Region to attract businesses and new industries and strengthen our role as a leader in innovation, skills and workforce development through strong partnerships with TAFE, universities and other educational institutions.

## Advancing a Circular Economy in the Hunter Region

Hunter JO's [Circular Economy Precincts Project](#) supports the region's economic evolution through new efficient, resilient, net zero approaches to economic development. Funded by the NSW Government, the project delivered concept plans for four Circular Economy Precincts and an operational framework for a coordinating body - the Futures Hub.

The precincts were designed using extensive research and stakeholder input, focusing on integrating circular principles locally by leveraging waste streams, adopting new technologies, and coordinating logistics and energy systems. The Futures Hub is designed to be a trusted entity to guide precinct development, assist circular system development, foster innovation, and attract investment.

The project developed a hybrid model concept to develop the local circular economy, through combining place-based precincts with a broader network of circular businesses. It has identified key sites, validated business models, and outlined governance structures, positioning the Hunter as a potential national leader in circular economy innovation, with the capacity to unlock up to \$2 billion in economic value and significantly reduce emissions.







## infrastructure & connectivity

Seamless, multimodal, low-emission connectivity powered by modern transport networks, enhanced digital infrastructure, and integrated planning to support sustainable mobility and regional growth.

## hunter regional context

The Hunter Region's infrastructure, transport networks, and digital connectivity are central to its ongoing development and future growth. Key road projects, such as the \$700 million Singleton bypass and the \$2.1 billion M1 Pacific Motorway extension to Raymond Terrace are improving safety, reducing congestion, and enhancing the region's connection to Greater Sydney and key industrial hubs including the Renewable Energy Zones. Public transport and active transport solutions are also evolving, with ongoing initiatives to improve accessibility and connectivity within the region.

However, challenges remain, including the need for more efficient and safer road links, better public transport options, and reliable digital infrastructure. The region faces increasing demand for high-speed internet and mobile coverage, especially in rural and remote areas. Opportunities exist in coordinating infrastructure planning, supporting the growth of innovation hubs, expanding digital infrastructure, and leveraging new transport technologies including high speed rail to further connect communities and improve economic resilience. Effective planning and investment in these areas will be essential for the Hunter's future.



### Objectives (Where do we want to be?)

### Directions (How do we get there?)

#### 3.1 Integrated cross-agency infrastructure planning.

Foster integrated infrastructure planning that coordinates efforts across all levels of government and sectors to create a seamless, efficient, and future-ready region.

#### 3.2 Safe and efficient road networks.

Support a safe and efficient road network across the Hunter Region by advocating for equitable and sustainable road funding.

#### 3.3 Multimodal, low-emission transport connectivity.

Enhance the sustainable movement of people and goods by supporting diverse, multimodal, low- and zero-emission transport solutions, with a focus on regionally connected and continuous active transport networks, improved public transport service integration and investment, and infrastructure for rail, air, and active transport.

#### 3.4 Digital connectivity improvements.

Drive digital connectivity improvements across the Hunter Region to support economic development, education, and community engagement.

### Supporting electric vehicle readiness in the Hunter

Hunter JO is working with the NSW Government to build capacity and confidence among councils to lead the transition to [net zero transport solutions](#).

With funding support from the NSW Government, Hunter JO organised electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure feasibility assessments for across the region. These assessments have supported councils in applying for grants to expand the local charging network, advancing the region's shift to low-emission transport.

We also hosted the 2023 *Plugging into the Future: Electrifying Council Fleets* event, which provided practical guidance on EV fleet transition for councils - covering topics such as total cost of ownership, charging infrastructure, and transition planning.

These collaborative efforts are helping to lay the groundwork for a cleaner, more sustainable transport future across the Hunter Region.





# environmental sustainability & resilience



A future focused on long-term resilience, where disaster preparedness, climate mitigation and adaptation, sustainable water management, and circular economy practices work together to protect ecosystems and build holistic resilience for future generations.



## hunter regional context

The Hunter is predicted to experience increased extreme weather and natural hazards, with the effects of this already impacting the region. Many of the region’s communities are struggling to recover from the continual and combined impacts of more frequent and severe natural hazards. The NSW Reconstruction Authority’s [State Disaster Mitigation Plan 2024](#) has identified the Lake Macquarie, Newcastle and MidCoast LGAs among the most at-risk from natural hazards now and into the future, and Port Stephens was identified in the top three LGAs for coastal erosion and inundation risk. These challenges mean climate change adaptation measures such as enhancing flood resilience and protecting vulnerable infrastructure are becoming essential, but Local Government, especially regional and rural councils, are often under-resourced in this area.

The Hunter is also at the forefront of circular economy initiatives, with councils, businesses, and communities working to create economic value, while reducing waste and maximise resource recovery. Programs focused on repurposing industrial by-products, expanding recycling infrastructure, and supporting sustainable manufacturing are positioning the region as a leader in innovative and sustainable economic development and waste solutions.

Hunter communities value and enjoy the lifestyle provided by our diverse ecosystems, rich biodiversity, clean air, water, and natural resources. As the region grows, balancing development with the protection of these critical ecosystems remains a key challenge.



Objectives (Where do we want to be?)	Directions (How do we get there?)
4.1 Climate change mitigation, adaptation and disaster resilience.	Develop and implement comprehensive strategies and programs for climate change mitigation, adaptation and disaster resilience, strengthening the long-term resilience and wellbeing of the region.
4.2 Circular materials and waste management.	Promote a circular economy and enhance waste management practices, focusing on regional waste opportunities, maximising resource value, reducing landfill reliance, and fostering circular waste solutions that support decarbonisation, environmental and economic sustainability in the Hunter Region.
4.3 Water security and waterway health.	Ensure a reliable, safe and secure water supply for the Hunter Region through coordinated and sustainable water management practices, infrastructure investment, and proactive measures that safeguard waterways and water resources for current and future generations.
4.4 Protection of natural environments.	Protect, enhance and restore our natural environments and open space including bushland, estuaries, waterways, beaches and biodiversity and incorporate nature-based solutions into urban planning.

### Planning for the future: Increasing disaster resilience in the Hunter

The NSW Reconstruction Authority has developed the *Disaster Adaptation Planning (DAP)* process to help NSW communities better manage natural hazard risks and reduce the impact and cost of disasters. Stakeholder engagement has strongly supported a regional approach to implementing DAPs across the state.

Hunter JO and its Member Councils have a long history of [disaster resilience collaboration](#), dating back to the 1955 Maitland floods. This long-standing collaboration has been recognised with *Disaster Ready Fund* support, enabling Hunter JO to coordinate disaster adaptation planning with councils in the region.

In the coming years, delivering DAPs will be a key priority, strengthening the Hunter’s long-term resilience.

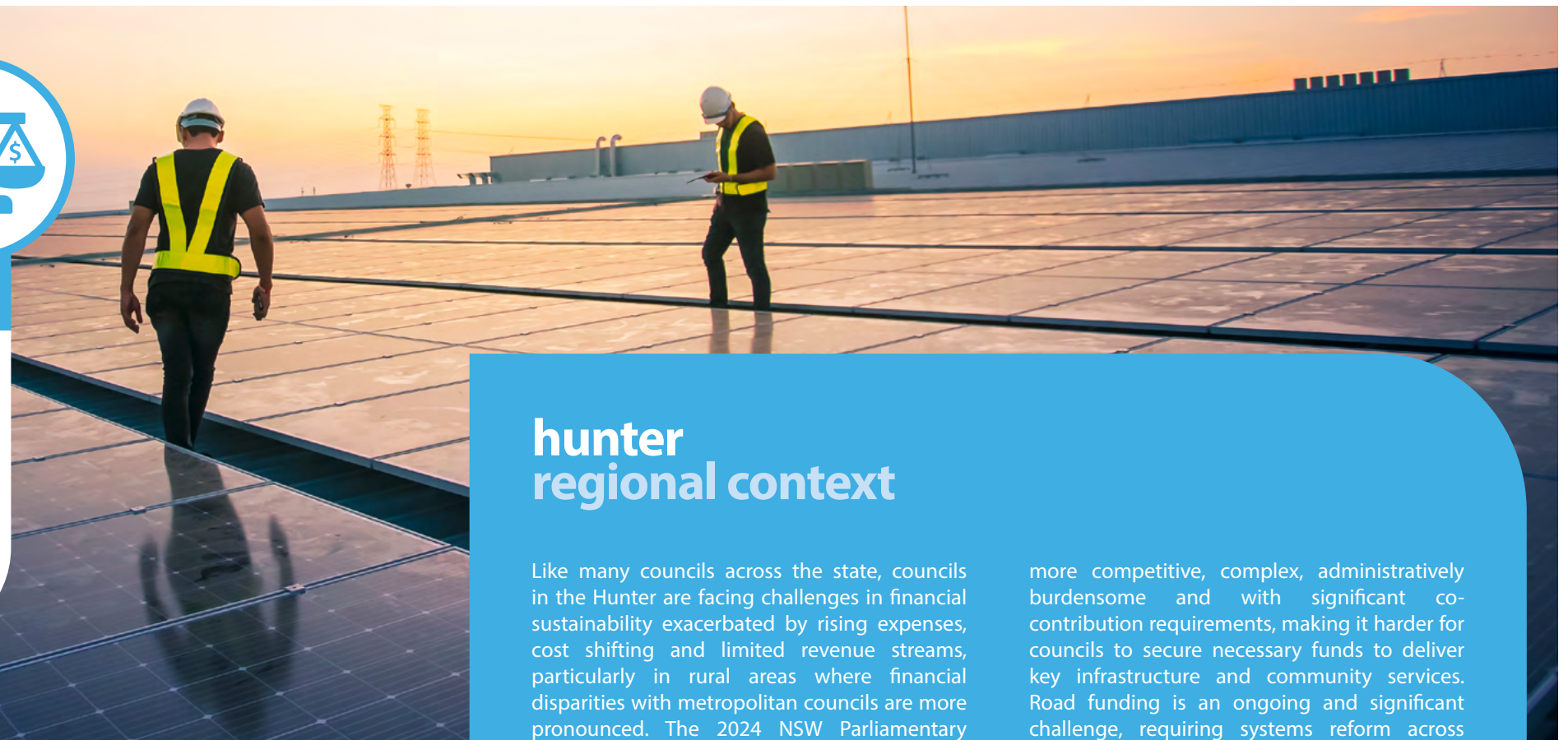




# financial sustainability & funding reform



Financial sustainability achieved through reformed funding processes and secure financial models that ensure the long-term viability and success of Local Government to deliver services to communities.



## hunter regional context

Like many councils across the state, councils in the Hunter are facing challenges in financial sustainability exacerbated by rising expenses, cost shifting and limited revenue streams, particularly in rural areas where financial disparities with metropolitan councils are more pronounced. The 2024 NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into the Ability of Councils to Fund Infrastructure and Services and the 2024 Federal Inquiry into Local Government Sustainability have recognised the need for reform to improve council financial sustainability, providing numerous recommendations.

One of the main issues Hunter councils face is the reliance on grant funding which has become

more competitive, complex, administratively burdensome and with significant co-contribution requirements, making it harder for councils to secure necessary funds to deliver key infrastructure and community services. Road funding is an ongoing and significant challenge, requiring systems reform across all three levels of government and a renewed focus on ensuring greater equity, certainty and sustainability in funding across regional and metropolitan communities.

There are significant opportunities for more equitable, efficient, and sustainable funding models, flexible rate-setting mechanisms, and exploring alternative revenue sources.



Objectives (Where do we want to be?)	Directions (How do we get there?)
5.1 Ensuring the long-term financial sustainability of Local Government.	Advocate for more equitable and efficient funding models that enhance the long-term financial capacity of Local Government to deliver essential services to Hunter communities.
5.2 Securing reliable funding for place-based regional collaboration and knowledge sharing.	Advocate for consistent, long-term and non-competitive funding to deliver effective place-based regional collaboration under the Joint Organisation / Regional Organisation of Councils model.
5.3 Reforming grant funding processes to secure sustainable funding models.	Advocate for reforms to grant funding models, systems and processes aligned to the IP&R Framework to support improved efficiency and impact of council-led programs.

## Helping councils save on energy costs and transition to renewables

In 2024, Hunter JO helped 13 councils across regional NSW secure a renewable electricity supply agreement through a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA), extending to 2030. The group includes four Hunter JO Member Councils - Maitland, MidCoast, Muswellbrook, and Upper Hunter.

The agreement delivers over 390 gigawatt hours of electricity to 163 council sites and streetlighting, with 83% sourced from NSW renewable projects. Maitland, MidCoast, and Muswellbrook have committed to 100% renewable energy.

Key benefits include:

- **Emissions Reduction:** Avoiding 185,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>, supporting net zero targets.
- **Cost Savings and Stability:** Councils will save an estimated \$5.3M and gain protection from energy price volatility.
- **Regional Economic Support:** The deal supports NSW wind and solar projects, creating jobs and boosting local economies.

Through [JO-led collaboration](#), councils leveraged collective buying power to secure a competitive price and reduce procurement costs.



case study





## community liveability & wellbeing



A community where enhanced access to services, improved public spaces, and a strong sense of identity and opportunity promote wellbeing and a high quality of life for all.

## hunter regional context

The Hunter Region's liveability and community wellbeing are shaped by access to essential services, public spaces, and strong local identity. While the region benefits from expanding health infrastructure, including the new Maitland Hospital and upgrades to John Hunter Hospital, challenges remain in meeting growing demand, particularly in aged care, mental health, and specialist services in rural areas.

Access to quality open spaces and public amenities varies and communities face gaps in green space and social infrastructure, especially in the face of increasing development. There may be opportunities to take a regional-scale

approach to improve community access to facilities and services as the Hunter grows.

The lands of the Hunter Region cross 15 Local Aboriginal Land Councils. Our region's cultural identity is a key strength, with vibrant arts, heritage, and First Nations initiatives fostering community pride and social cohesion.

Opportunities exist to further invest in accessible healthcare, expand public amenities, and support local cultural initiatives to strengthen community resilience and wellbeing as the region continues to grow.



Objectives (Where do we want to be?)	Directions (How do we get there?)
6.1 Enhancing access to education, health and community services.	Advocate for equitable access to education, health and community services.
6.2 Improving open space, greening, and public amenity access.	Improve access to open spaces, green areas, and public amenities, fostering vibrant, healthy communities and enhancing the quality of life for the community through sustainable and inclusive urban design.
6.3 Promoting community identity, arts, culture and opportunities.	Promote and celebrate the region's unique community identity and culture, fostering opportunities for cultural expression, supporting the arts, community engagement, and social inclusion for the community.

### Tackling illegal dumping across the Hunter

Hunter JO's [Regional Illegal Dumping \(RID\) Program](#), funded by the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) over five years, helps Member Councils address and reduce illegal dumping in their communities. The program provides coordinated regional support through initiatives such as a social media education campaign, a legal support desk for councils, staff training, and provision of equipment like road signs, personal protective equipment, surveillance cameras, and educational materials.

This regional approach is delivering strong value for money and operational efficiencies for both participating councils and the NSW EPA. It also fosters collaboration among council officers across the Hunter, resulting in more effective and consistent outcomes for local communities.







## PART 4

### collaborating, delivering and reporting on our plan

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# collaborative partnerships

Hunter JO and Member Councils take a leading role in the implementation of the Strategic Plan, however collaboration with other levels of government, industry and key stakeholders is crucial to achieving our long-term goals.

As the Hunter JO continues to build our focus and capacity to lead on regional advocacy, collaborative partnerships with other advocacy organisations will

be key to reinforcing and further amplifying our shared priorities at the state and national level.

We recognise the importance of deepening our engagement with Aboriginal stakeholders, and are committed to building genuine, respectful and ongoing partnerships with Local Aboriginal Land Councils and other Aboriginal communities across our region.



UPPER HUNTER

MIDCOAST

DUNGOG

PORT STEPHENS

MAITLAND

NEWCASTLE

LAKE MACQUARIE

CENTRAL COAST

CESSNOCK

SINGLETON

MUSWELLBROOK

**Hunter JO's collaboration with the Central Coast**

While not a statutory member of the Hunter JO, Central Coast Council is one of our closest geographic and strategic partners.

For over two decades the councils of the Hunter have been collaborating with Central Coast Council to deliver improved environmental outcomes for our region through the Hunter and Central Coast Environment Program.

The Hunter and Central Coast Environment Program's current focus areas include disaster resilience and adaption planning, net zero acceleration, circular economy, regional waste management, regional illegal dumping and biodiversity, directly supporting the delivery of the Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2035.

case study

Cessnock

# key existing and emerging collaboration partners

## 10 member councils



hunter region

- Regional advocacy groups (eg. Committee for Hunter, Business Hunter, HunterNet)
- University of Newcastle
- Regional Development Australia (RDA) Hunter
- Hunter Water
- Destination Sydney Surrounds North
- Newcastle Airport
- Port of Newcastle
- Central Coast Council
- Other community groups / agencies (as appropriate)



state

- NSW Premiers Department
- NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
- NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
- NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
- NSW Reconstruction Authority
- NSW Environment Protection Authority
- NSW Health
- Transport for NSW
- Office of Local Government
- Future Jobs and Investment Authority
- Local Land Services
- Other relevant State Government departments
- Joint Organisation Chairs Forum and Network
- Local Government NSW



national

- Net Zero Economy Authority
- National Emergency Management Agency
- High Speed Rail Authority
- Australian Local Government Association
- Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

# how we deliver and report on our plan

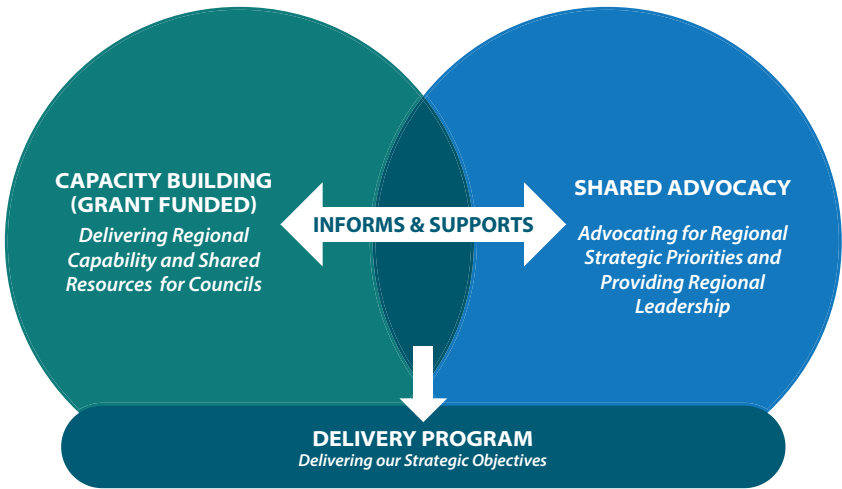
## capacity building and advocacy

### Capacity Building

Hunter JO's Capacity Building program (including the Environment Program) delivers policy and program development, collaboration and capacity building activities for Member Councils to directly achieve the objectives of the Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2035. Hunter JO seeks out State and Federal Government grants to fund our Capacity Building program.

### Advocacy

Hunter JO's Advocacy program is predominately funded through Member Council contributions and is supported by the Capacity Building program. Each year, the Hunter JO Board prioritises the advocacy focus areas within the resources that are available.



The Advocacy and Capacity Building programs support and inform each other. Council insights, findings and recommendations from grant-funded project work directly inform the Advocacy program, while advocacy efforts also attract grant funding for capacity building initiatives.

## hunter jo delivery program 2025-29

Hunter JO's Delivery Program 2025-29 is our plan for achieving the objectives outlined in the Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2035. It identifies the projects and advocacy priorities that the Hunter JO will deliver between 2025 and 2029 based on available resources. The Delivery Program will be reviewed and adopted by the Hunter JO Board annually. Depending on available funding and resources, this annual process will determine the priorities and projects for delivery each year.

## reporting our progress

Our progress on delivering the Hunter JO Strategic Plan and Delivery Program will be reported through:

- Annual audited financial reports
- Annual Performance Statement
- Six-monthly Performance Statement

## reviewing the plan

A review will be undertaken annually and a complete update of the Strategic Plan will be carried out within 12 months of each ordinary election of councillors for all Member Councils (normally every 4 years).







**Keeping communities cool: Regional collaboration on heatwave communication**

Hunter JO's [Beat the Heat Communications Support Package](#) was developed in collaboration with councils and NSW Health to engage communities about the impacts of heatwaves. Based on NSW Health's Beat the Heat resources, it adapts key messages into various formats to address at-risk communities and highlight important issues.

The package includes customisable content such as key messages, email alerts, newsletters, SMS/text alerts, social media posts, and website materials to support councils in creating their communications.

These resources ensure consistent messaging across platforms, helping avoid miscommunication and duplication of effort. This means that residents across the region receive the same important information, no matter where they are.

By working together, councils can develop shared, regionally consistent resources, making it easier to communicate with the communities across the Hunter Region.

# communication and engagement strategy

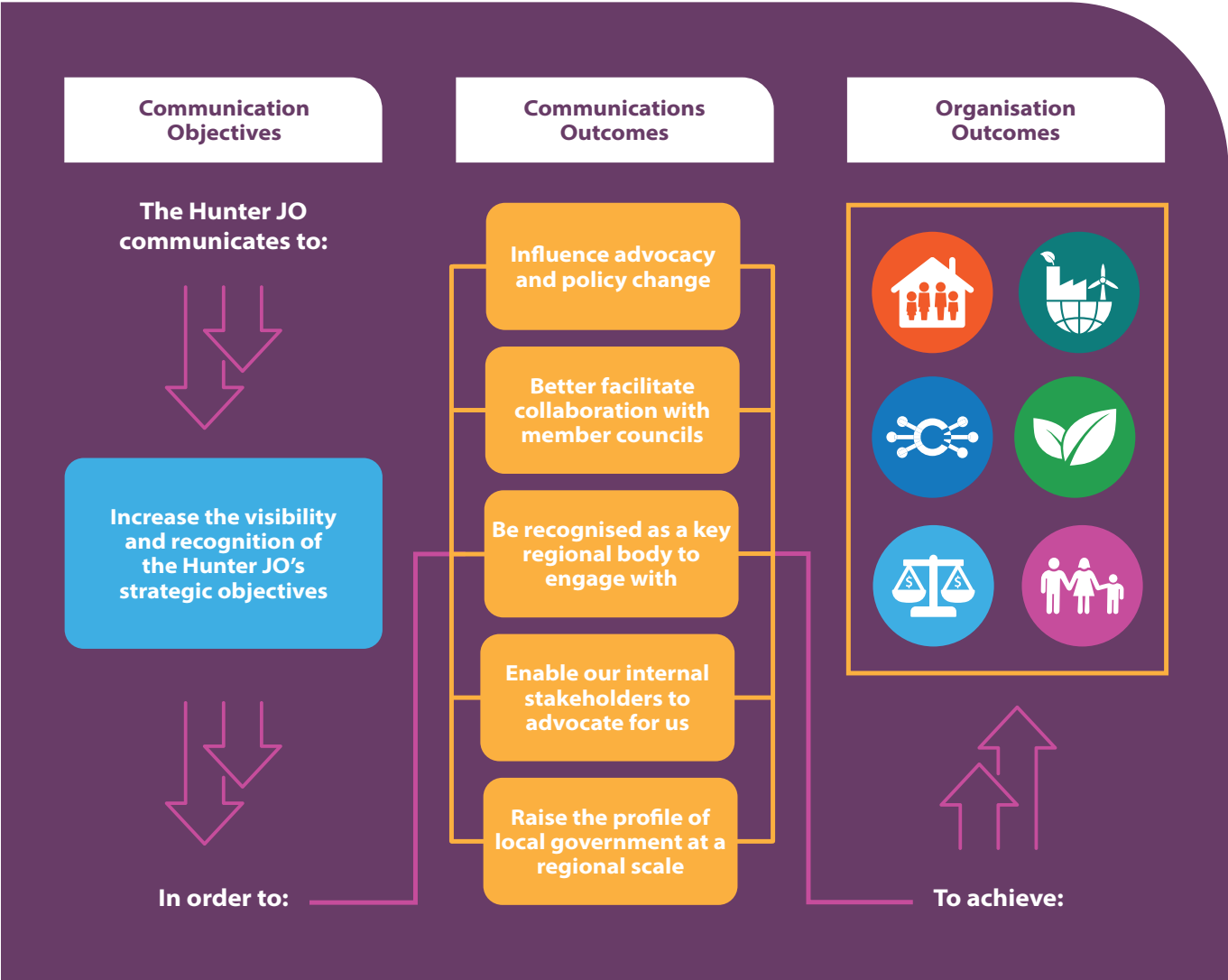
The Communication and Engagement Strategy enables clear communication about the delivery of the Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2035 and provides consistent messaging aligned to our strategic priorities, statutory functions and communications objectives.

In a collaborative organisation like the Hunter JO, implementing effective communications campaigns using a variety of methods is essential in achieving our desired outcomes of:

- Advocating to influence policy and funding decisions for the benefit of the region.
- Building capacity within the region (particularly within Local Government and the community) through the delivery of grant-funded projects and programs.

Maintaining a positive reputation and strong brand recognition by increasing our visibility and demonstrating our value will contribute to the successful delivery of the Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2035. A strong communications strategy can assist in encouraging partnerships with, and support from, key industry bodies and other levels of government, supporting our advocacy function.

Upper Hunter





# methods for communicating

Our Communication and Engagement Strategy will drive communications activities on the progress of our strategic priorities, including the achievement of key milestones and successes. This includes:



## Websites

Providing updates on our website including project updates and latest news.



## Newsletters

Publishing a bi-monthly corporate newsletter to share updates on our key projects and advocacy priorities.



## Mayors Digest

A monthly newsletter sent to Mayors and General Managers outlining political engagements, media, strategic engagements, events and key project and program updates.



## Social Media

Posting social media updates that link to our projects and advocacy activities.



## Traditional Media

Coordinating radio, newspaper and TV media opportunities to promote key project milestones, strategic objectives and advocacy priorities.



## Meetings and Events

Hosting or attending meetings and events that are relevant to our strategic priorities, including with Ministers and MPs.



## Presentations and Publications

Providing reports and updates in the form of presentations and publications on the progress of our strategic priorities.



## Direct Email Distributions

Sending emails to stakeholders on the progress of our strategic priorities.



## monitoring and review process

We continually monitor and review our communication channels and methods to ensure we're meeting current trends in information consumption. Our program activities are reported on and communicated through the delivery of our Annual

Performance Statement and six-monthly Performance Statement that is available on our website and communicated via our newsletters and social media.

Lake Macquarie







# Hunter JO Delivery Program 2025-2029

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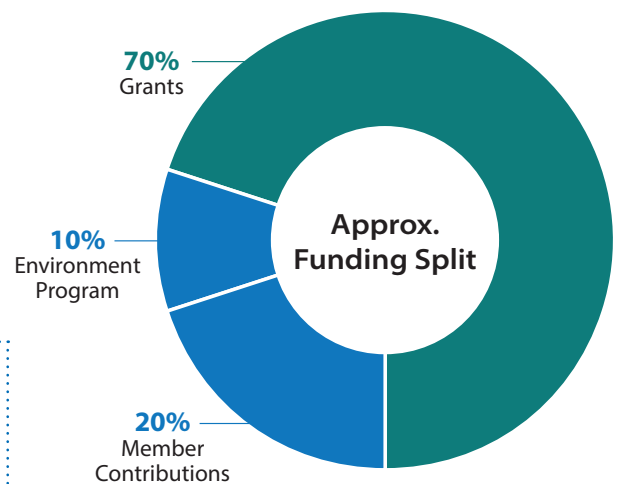
## How we deliver

### Capacity Building

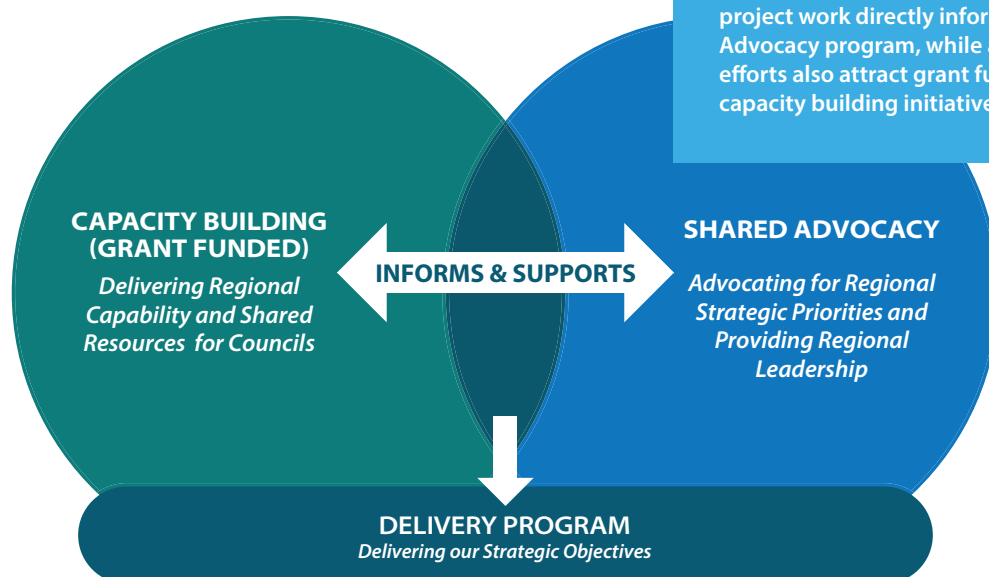
Hunter JO's Capacity Building program (including the Environment Program) delivers policy and program development, collaboration and capacity building activities for Member Councils to directly achieve the objectives of the Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2035. Hunter JO seeks out State and Federal Government grants to fund our Capacity Building program.

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Hunter JO's Advocacy program is predominately funded through Member Council contributions and is supported by the Capacity Building program. Each year, the Hunter JO Board prioritises the advocacy focus areas within the resources that are available.



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## Reporting our progress

Our progress on delivering the Hunter JO Strategic Plan and Delivery Program will be reported through:

- Annual audited financial reports • Annual Performance Statement
- Six-monthly Performance Statement

Strategic Objective (How will we get there?)	Project	Funding Source	Housing & Population Growth	Economic Transformation & Jobs	Infrastructure & Connectivity	Environmental Sustainability & Resilience	Financial Sustainability & Funding Reform	Community Liveability & Wellbeing	Project Objective (What will we do to get there?)	Funding Status			
										2025 / 2026	2026 / 2027	2027 / 2028	2028 / 2029
HOUSING & POPULATION GROWTH													
ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION & JOBS													
2.1	Activate the reuse of mining related lands	Regional Post Mining Land Use in the Hunter	Regional Development Trust						Deliver the preliminary components of the regional post mining land use proposal. Activities would focus on assessing region-wide mining lands and assets and developing a regional action plan for the repurposing of sites.				
2.3	Evolution towards renewable energy, circular economy and future industries	Circular Economy Procurement Project	NSW EPA						To support Member Councils to prioritise recycled materials and circular economy services in their procurement systems and processes.				
		Regional Economic Evolution Project	Hunter JO						To create a clear place-based, whole of government approach to create a clear vision and plan for the region's economic evolution.				
INFRASTRUCTURE & CONNECTIVITY													
3.1	Integrated cross-agency infrastructure planning	Regional Priority Infrastructure List	Hunter JO						To progress implementation of a methodology and process for determining regional infrastructure priorities to build a stronger advocacy case for investment in our region.				
		Regional transition funding	Hunter JO						To gain alignment and commitment across all levels of government on an infrastructure plan for the region to unlock economic evolution.				
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY & RESILIENCE													
4.1	Climate change mitigation, adaptation and disaster resilience	Disaster Risk Reduction	NEMA						Develop regional Disaster Adaptation Plans in collaboration with all councils and NSW Reconstruction Authority				
		Net Zero Acceleration	NSW DCCEEW						To support Member Councils reduce their carbon emissions to achieve their part in the State's Net Zero target of 50% reduction by 2030 and Net Zero by 2050.				
		Embedding Climate Risk in Council Enterprise Risk Management	NSW DCCEEW						Assist councils update and develop climate change risk assessments, embed within councils' broader enterprise risk framework and develop instructional best-practice methodology and toolkit.				
4.2	Circular materials and waste management	Regional Waste Coordination	NSW EPA						To build circular economy knowledge through education, data sharing and capacity building opportunities for Hunter JO Member Councils and Central Coast Council.				
		Community Recycling Centres	NSW EPA						To deliver a regionally coordinated approach to promoting community awareness of Community Recycling Centres (CRC).				
		Regional Illegal Dumping Program	NSW EPA						To support Member Councils manage and reduce the impacts of illegal dumping on local communities and the environment.				
		Hospitality Circularity Network	NSW EPA						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.				
		Hunter Circular Value Chains	NSW EPA						To tackle waste management issues by building on previous circular economy projects through a coordination of efforts, including value chain analysis and updating the Circular Economy Ecosystem.				
FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY & FUNDING REFORM													
COMMUNITY LIVEABILITY & WELLBEING													

Strategic Objective (How will we get there?)		Advocacy Priority	Housing & Population Growth	Economic Transformation & Jobs	Infrastructure & Connectivity	Environmental Sustainability & Resilience	Financial Sustainability & Funding Reform	Community Liveability & Wellbeing	Advocacy Objective	State or Federal	Resourcing 2025 / 2026			
											Opportunistic	Tier 3	Tier 2	Tier 1
HOUSING & POPULATION GROWTH														
1.1	Housing affordability, density, diversity and availability	Housing	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>				Integrated planning to increase viability of housing in Transport Oriented Development (TOD) and Low and Mid-Rise areas, and opportunities to reduce construction cost by increasing feasibility and quality of modular homes.	State	<div></div>			
1.2	Integrated planning and enabling infrastructure to support housing development in priority growth areas		<div></div>		<div></div>				Funding for enabling infrastructure, State Government integrated planning, and improved biodiversity mapping.	State	<div></div>			
1.3	Supporting population growth and demographic shifts	Regional population projections	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>				An agreed population vision as a foundation to support advocacy for State and Federal Government service planning.	State	<div></div>			
ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION & JOBS														
2.1	Activate the reuse of mining related lands	Mining land reuse / redevelopment		<div></div>					Investment to pilot the reactivation and repurposing of current and former mining lands and infrastructure, and to de-risk industry investment and strategically inform and accelerate industry attraction, skills development and job creation.	State & Federal	<div></div>			
2.2	Leveraging regional and global industries	Airfreight precinct		<div></div>				<div></div>	Delivery of air cargo precinct at Newcastle Airport to unlock air freight value chain.	State & Federal	<div></div>			
		Hunter Global Tourism Marketing Strategy		<div></div>				<div></div>	Leverage the investment in the Newcastle Airport to increase international tourism through business training and mentoring, implementing a Hunter regional identity, and international trade representation.	State & Federal	<div></div>			
		Port of Newcastle		<div></div>	<div></div>				Improve road and rail infrastructure to activate diversification, i.e. container terminal, clean energy precinct, and support establishment of the Renewable Energy Zones (REZ).	State & Federal	<div></div>			
2.3	Evolution towards renewable energy, circular economy and future industries	Circular Economy Futures Hub		<div></div>		<div></div>			Alignment and commitment across all levels of government on a Circular Economy Futures Hub to accelerate the region towards a circular economy.	State & Federal	<div></div>			
		Energy transition	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>			Whole of government strategic plan and vision for the future industries of the Hunter, skilled worker housing, Renewable Energy Zone challenges and opportunities, and energy supply for future industries.	State & Federal	<div></div>			
INFRASTRUCTURE & CONNECTIVITY														
3.1	Integrated cross-agency infrastructure planning	Transport planning			<div></div>				A strong focus on implementing a public transport system based on projected use instead of actual numbers, investment in the Strategic Cycleway Corridors Plan for the Hunter, equity in road funding, prioritising investment into freight corridor to allow for additional passenger trains, and transparent planning and reporting.	State	<div></div>			
		Water infrastructure	<div></div>		<div></div>	<div></div>		<div></div>	Investment into infrastructure to ensure a reliable, safe and secure water supply for the Hunter and MidCoast Region.	State	<div></div>			
3.2	Safe and efficient road networks	Road funding reform			<div></div>		<div></div>		Commitment from the Federal and State Governments to collaboratively develop and apply a more equitable model for allocating roads funding across metropolitan and regional local government areas.	State & Federal	<div></div>			
3.3	Multimodal, low-emission transport connectivity	Transport improvement			<div></div>	<div></div>		<div></div>	Improved low-emissions transport solutions for the region, including electric vehicle infrastructure, park and ride, and investment to implement the NSW Strategic Cycleway Corridors Plan.	State	<div></div>			
		Shiraz to Shore		<div></div>	<div></div>			<div></div>	Delivery of the Shiraz to Shore cycle trail from the Hunter Valley to Newcastle and Lake Macquarie.	State & Federal	<div></div>			
3.4	Digital connectivity improvements	Digital connectivity			<div></div>			<div></div>	Investment in infrastructure to improve digital connectivity.	State & Federal	<div></div>			
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY & RESILIENCE														
4.1	Climate change mitigation, adaptation and disaster resilience	Disaster resilience				<div></div>	<div></div>		Sustainable and strategic place-based planning and resourcing of local and regional disaster resilience and recovery activities.	State & Federal	<div></div>			
4.2	Circular materials and waste management	Waste levy		<div></div>		<div></div>	<div></div>		Return of waste levy funds to implement local and regional circular economy and waste management initiatives.	State	<div></div>			
4.3	Water security and waterway health	Regional waterway management				<div></div>			Establish a regional waterway management authority with responsibility for waterway and catchment health.	State	<div></div>			
FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY & FUNDING REFORM														
5.1	Ensuring the long-term financial sustainability of Local Government	Financial sustainability of Local Government					<div></div>		Ensuring the long-term financial sustainability of local government, including addressing challenges such as inadequate Financial Assistance Grants, rate capping by IPART, cost shifting, rising audit fees, increased service delivery and waste management costs, and the growing financial burden of recurring natural disasters.	State & Federal	<div></div>			
5.3	Reforming grant funding processes to secure sustainable funding models	Grant funding reform					<div></div>		Strategic block funding of grants aligned to IP&R Framework provided to Local Government from both State and Federal Governments to allow effective planning and delivery of community interests.	State & Federal	<div></div>			
COMMUNITY LIVEABILITY & WELLBEING														





# Code of Conduct

14 August 2025

## Controlled Document Information

### Authorisation Details

Policy Name	Code of Conduct
Responsible Officer	Steve Wilson (Executive Officer)
Review timeframe	Within 12 months of Local Government Elections
Next Scheduled Review	August 2030
Authorisation	Hunter JO Board
Authorisation Date	14 August 2025

### Related Document Information

Relation Legislation	<i>Local Government Act 1993</i> Local Government (General) Regulation 2005.
Related Policies / Procedures	Procedures for the Administration of the Code of Conduct

### Definitions

Term / Abbreviation	Definition

### Consultation

Consulted with:	General Managers Advisory Committee (31 July 2025)
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### Version History

Version No.	Date Changed	Modified by	Details and Comments
1	9 <sup>th</sup> May 2019	Joe James	N/A
2	14 <sup>th</sup> August 2025	Steve Wilson	N/A

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This *Code of Conduct* is made under section 440 of the *Local Government Act 1993* (“LGA”) and the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005* (“the Regulation”).

The Code of Conduct sets the minimum standards of conduct for joint organisation officials. It is prescribed by regulation to assist joint organisation officials to:

- understand and comply with the standards of conduct that are expected of them
- enable them to fulfil their statutory duty to act honestly and exercise a reasonable degree of care and diligence (section 439)
- act in a way that enhances public confidence in local government.

Section 440 of the LGA requires joint organisations to adopt a code of conduct that incorporates the provisions of the NSW Model Code of Conduct. A joint organisation’s adopted code of conduct may also include provisions that supplement the Model Code of Conduct and that extend its application to persons that are not “joint organisation officials” for the purposes of the Code of Conduct (eg volunteers, contractors and members of wholly advisory committees).

A joint organisation’s adopted code of conduct has no effect to the extent that it is inconsistent with the Model Code of Conduct. However, a joint organisation’s adopted code of conduct may prescribe requirements that are more onerous than those prescribed in the Model Code of Conduct.

Voting representatives, administrators, members of staff of joint organisations, delegates of joint organisation (including members of committees that are delegates of a joint organisation) and any other person a joint organisation’s adopted code of conduct applies to, must comply with the applicable provisions of their joint organisation’s code of conduct. It is the personal responsibility of joint organisation officials to comply with the standards in the code and to regularly review their personal circumstances and conduct with this in mind.

Failure by a voting representative to comply with the standards of conduct prescribed under this code constitutes misconduct for the purposes of the LGA. The LGA provides for a range of penalties that may be imposed on voting representative for misconduct, including suspension or disqualification from civic office. A voting representative who has been suspended on three or more occasions for misconduct is automatically disqualified from holding civic office for five years.

Failure by a member of staff to comply with a joint organisations code of conduct may give rise to disciplinary action.



## 2. DEFINITIONS

In this code the following terms have the following meanings:

LGA	the Local Government Act 1993
administrator	an administrator of a joint organisation appointed under the LGA other than an administrator appointed under section 66
committee	see the definition of “joint organisation committee”
complaint	a code of conduct complaint made for the purposes of clauses 4.1 and 4.2 of the Procedures.
conduct	includes acts and omissions
joint organisation committee	a committee established by a joint organisation comprising of voting representatives, staff or other persons that the joint organisation has delegated functions to and the joint organisation audit, risk and improvement committee
joint organisation committee member	a person other than a voting representative or member of staff of a joint organisation who is a member of a joint organisation committee other than a wholly advisory committee, and a person other than a voting representative who is a member of the joint organisation’s audit, risk and improvement committee
joint organisation official	includes voting representatives, members of staff of a joint organisation, administrators, joint organisation committee members, delegates of the joint organisation and, for the purposes of clause 4.16, joint organisation advisers
Voting representative	any person elected or appointed to civic office, including the voting representatives of the boards of joint organisations and chairpersons of joint organisations
delegate of joint organisation	a person (other than a voting representative or member of staff of a joint organisation) or body, and the individual members of that body, to whom a function of the joint organisation is delegated
designated person	a person referred to in clause 4.8
election campaign	includes joint organisation, state and federal election campaigns
environmental planning instrument	has the same meaning as it has in the <i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979</i>
executive officer	includes the executive officer of a joint organisation
joint organisation	a joint organisation established under section 4000 of the LGA
LGA	<i>Local Government Act 1993</i>

local planning panel	a local planning panel constituted under the <i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979</i>
chairperson	includes the chairperson of a joint organisation
members of staff of a joint organisation	includes members of staff of joint organisations
the Office	Office of Local Government
personal information	information or an opinion (including information or an opinion forming part of a database and whether or not recorded in a material form) about an individual whose identity is apparent or can reasonably be ascertained from the information or opinion
the Procedures	the <i>Procedures for the Administration of the Model Code of Conduct for Local Joint organisations in NSW</i> prescribed under the Regulation
the Regulation	the <i>Local Government (General) Regulation 2005</i>
voting representative	a voting representative of the board of a joint organisation
wholly advisory committee	a joint organisation committee that the joint organisation has not delegated any functions to

### **3. GENERAL CONDUCT OBLIGATIONS**

#### **General conduct**

- 3.1 You must not conduct yourself in a manner that:
- a) is likely to bring the joint organisation or other joint organisation officials into disrepute
  - b) is contrary to statutory requirements or the joint organisation's administrative requirements or policies
  - c) is improper or unethical
  - d) is an abuse of power
  - e) causes, comprises or involves intimidation or verbal abuse
  - f) involves the misuse of your position to obtain a private benefit
  - g) constitutes harassment or bullying behaviour under this code, or is unlawfully discriminatory.
- 3.2 You must act lawfully and honestly, and exercise a reasonable degree of care and diligence in carrying out your functions under the LGA or any other Act. (section 439).

#### **Fairness and equity**

- 3.3 You must consider issues consistently, promptly and fairly. You must deal with matters in accordance with established procedures, in a non-discriminatory manner.
- 3.4 You must take all relevant facts known to you, or that you should be reasonably aware of, into consideration and have regard to the particular merits of each case. You must not take irrelevant matters or circumstances into consideration when making decisions.
- 3.5 An act or omission in good faith, whether or not it involves error, will not constitute a breach of clauses 3.3 or 3.4.

#### **Harassment and discrimination**

- 3.6 You must not harass or unlawfully discriminate against others, or support others who harass or unlawfully discriminate against others, on the grounds of age, disability, race (including colour, national or ethnic origin or immigrant status), sex, pregnancy, marital or relationship status, family responsibilities or breastfeeding, sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status or political, religious or other affiliation.
- 3.7 For the purposes of this code, "harassment" is any form of behaviour towards a person that:
- a) is not wanted by the person
  - b) offends, humiliates or intimidates the person, and
  - c) creates a hostile environment.

#### **Bullying**

- 3.8 You must not engage in bullying behaviour towards others.
- 3.9 For the purposes of this code, "bullying behaviour" is any behaviour in which:
- a) a person or a group of people repeatedly behaves unreasonably towards another person or a group of persons, and
  - b) the behaviour creates a risk to health and safety.

- 3.10 Bullying behaviour may involve, but is not limited to, any of the following types of behaviour:
- a) aggressive, threatening or intimidating conduct
  - b) belittling or humiliating comments
  - c) spreading malicious rumours
  - d) teasing, practical jokes or 'initiation ceremonies'
  - e) exclusion from work-related events
  - f) unreasonable work expectations, including too much or too little work, or work below or beyond a worker's skill level
  - g) displaying offensive material
  - h) pressure to behave in an inappropriate manner.
- 3.11 Reasonable management action carried out in a reasonable manner does not constitute bullying behaviour for the purposes of this code. Examples of reasonable management action may include, but are not limited to:
- a) performance management processes
  - b) disciplinary action for misconduct
  - c) informing a worker about unsatisfactory work performance or inappropriate work behaviour
  - d) directing a worker to perform duties in keeping with their job
  - e) maintaining reasonable workplace goals and standards
  - f) legitimately exercising a regulatory function
  - g) legitimately implementing a joint organisation policy or administrative processes.

### **Work health and safety**

- 3.12 All joint organisation officials, including voting representatives, owe statutory duties under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (WHS Act). You must comply with your duties under the WHS Act and your responsibilities under any policies or procedures adopted by the joint organisation to ensure workplace health and safety. Specifically, you must:
- a) take reasonable care for your own health and safety
  - b) take reasonable care that your acts or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons
  - c) comply, so far as you are reasonably able, with any reasonable instruction that is given to ensure compliance with the WHS Act and any policies or procedures adopted by the joint organisation to ensure workplace health and safety
  - d) cooperate with any reasonable policy or procedure of the joint organisation relating to workplace health or safety that has been notified to joint organisation staff
  - e) report accidents, incidents, near misses, to the executive officer or such other staff member nominated by the executive officer, and take part in any incident investigations
  - f) so far as is reasonably practicable, consult, co-operate and coordinate with all others who have a duty under the WHS Act in relation to the same matter.

### **Land use planning, development assessment and other regulatory functions**

- 3.13 You must ensure that land use planning, development assessment and other regulatory decisions are properly made, and that all parties are dealt with fairly. You must avoid any occasion for suspicion of improper conduct in the exercise of land use planning, development assessment and other regulatory functions.



- 3.14 In exercising land use planning, development assessment and other regulatory functions, you must ensure that no action, statement or communication between yourself and others conveys any suggestion of willingness to improperly provide concessions or preferential or unduly unfavourable treatment.

### **Binding caucus votes**

- 3.15 You must not participate in binding caucus votes in relation to matters to be considered at a joint organisation or committee meeting.
- 3.16 For the purposes of clause 3.15, a binding caucus vote is a process whereby a group of joint organisation voting representatives are compelled by a threat of disciplinary or other adverse action to comply with a predetermined position on a matter before the joint organisation or committee, irrespective of the personal views of individual members of the group on the merits of the matter before the joint organisation or committee.
- 3.17 Clause 3.15 does not prohibit joint organisation voting representatives from discussing a matter before the joint organisation or committee prior to considering the matter in question at a joint organisation or committee meeting, or from voluntarily holding a shared view with other joint organisation voting representatives on the merits of a matter.
- 3.18 Clause 3.15 does not apply to a decision to elect the chairperson or deputy chairperson, or to nominate a person to be a member of a joint organisation committee or a representative of the joint organisation on an external body.

### **Obligations in relation to meetings**

- 3.19 You must comply with rulings by the chair at joint organisation and committee meetings or other proceedings of the joint organisation unless a motion dissenting from the ruling is passed.
- 3.20 You must not engage in bullying behaviour (as defined under this Part) towards the chair, other joint organisation officials or any members of the public present during joint organisation or committee meetings or other proceedings of the joint organisation (such as, but not limited to, workshops and briefing sessions).
- 3.21 You must not engage in conduct that disrupts joint organisation or committee meetings or other proceedings of the joint organisation (such as, but not limited to, workshops and briefing sessions), or that would otherwise be inconsistent with the orderly conduct of meetings.
- 3.22 If you are a joint organisation voting representative, you must not engage in any acts of disorder or other conduct that is intended to prevent the proper or effective functioning of the joint organisation, or of a committee of the joint organisation. Without limiting this clause, you must not:
- a) leave a meeting of the joint organisation or a committee for the purposes of depriving the meeting of a quorum, or
  - b) submit a rescission motion with respect to a decision for the purposes of voting against it to prevent another joint organisation voting representative from submitting a rescission motion with respect to the same decision, or
  - c) deliberately seek to impede the consideration of business at a meeting.

## 4. PECUNIARY INTERESTS

### What is a pecuniary interest?

- 4.1 A pecuniary interest is an interest that you have in a matter because of a reasonable likelihood or expectation of appreciable financial gain or loss to you or a person referred to in clause 4.3.
- 4.2 You will not have a pecuniary interest in a matter if the interest is so remote or insignificant that it could not reasonably be regarded as likely to influence any decision you might make in relation to the matter, or if the interest is of a kind specified in clause 4.6.
- 4.3 For the purposes of this Part, you will have a pecuniary interest in a matter if the pecuniary interest is:
- (a) your interest, or
  - (b) the interest of your spouse or de facto partner, your relative, or your partner or employer, or
  - (c) a company or other body of which you, or your nominee, partner or employer, is a shareholder or member.
- 4.4 For the purposes of clause 4.3:
- (a) Your “relative” is any of the following:
    - i) your parent, grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, lineal descendant or adopted child
    - ii) your spouse’s or de facto partner’s parent, grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, lineal descendant or adopted child
    - iii) the spouse or de facto partner of a person referred to in paragraphs (i) and (ii).
  - (b) “de facto partner” has the same meaning as defined in section 21C of the *Interpretation Act 1987*.
- 4.5 You will not have a pecuniary interest in relation to a person referred to in subclauses 4.3(b) or (c):
- (a) if you are unaware of the relevant pecuniary interest of your spouse, de facto partner, relative, partner, employer or company or other body, or
  - (b) just because the person is a member of, or is employed by, a joint organisation or a statutory body, or is employed by the Crown, or
  - (c) just because the person is a member of, or a delegate of a joint organisation to, a company or other body that has a pecuniary interest in the matter, so long as the person has no beneficial interest in any shares of the company or body.

### What interests do not have to be disclosed?

- 4.6 You do not have to disclose the following interests for the purposes of this Part:
- (a) your interest as an elector
  - (b) your interest as a ratepayer or person liable to pay a charge
  - (c) an interest you have in any matter relating to the terms on which the provision of a service or the supply of goods or commodities is offered to the public generally, or to a section of the public that includes persons who are not subject to this code
  - (d) an interest you have in any matter relating to the terms on which the provision of a service or the supply of goods or commodities is offered to your relative by the

joint organisation in the same manner and subject to the same conditions as apply to persons who are not subject to this code

- (e) an interest you have as a member of a club or other organisation or association, unless the interest is as the holder of an office in the club or organisation (whether remunerated or not)
- (f) if you are a joint organisation committee member, an interest you have as a person chosen to represent the community, or as a member of a non-profit organisation or other community or special interest group, if you have been appointed to represent the organisation or group on the joint organisation committee
- (g) an interest you have relating to a contract, proposed contract or other matter, if the interest arises only because of a beneficial interest in shares in a company that does not exceed 10 per cent of the voting rights in the company
- (h) an interest you have arising from the proposed making by the joint organisation of an agreement between the joint organisation and a corporation, association or partnership, being a corporation, association or partnership that has more than 25 members, if the interest arises because your relative is a shareholder (but not a director) of the corporation, or is a member (but not a member of the committee) of the association, or is a partner of the partnership
- (i) an interest you have arising from the making by the joint organisation of a contract or agreement with your relative for, or in relation to, any of the following, but only if the proposed contract or agreement is similar in terms and conditions to such contracts and agreements as have been made, or as are proposed to be made, by the joint organisation in respect of similar matters with other residents of the area:
  - i) the performance by the joint organisation at the expense of your relative of any work or service in connection with roads or sanitation
  - ii) security for damage to footpaths or roads
  - iii) any other service to be rendered, or act to be done, by the joint organisation by or under any Act conferring functions on the joint organisation, or by or under any contract
- (j) an interest relating to the payment of fees to joint organisation voting representatives (including the chairperson and deputy chairperson)
- (k) an interest relating to the payment of expenses and the provision of facilities to joint organisation voting representatives (including the chairperson and deputy chairperson) in accordance with a policy under section 252 of the LGA,
- (l) an interest relating to an election to the office of chairperson arising from the fact that a fee for the following 12 months has been determined for the office of chairperson
- (m) an interest of a person arising from the passing for payment of a regular account for the wages or salary of an employee who is a relative of the person
- (n) an interest arising from being covered by, or a proposal to be covered by, indemnity insurance as a joint organisation voting representatives or a joint organisation committee member
- (o) an interest arising from the appointment of a joint organisation voting representatives to a body as a representative or delegate of the joint organisation, whether or not a fee or other recompense is payable to the representative or delegate.

- 4.7 For the purposes of clause 4.6, “relative” has the same meaning as in clause 4.4, but includes your spouse or de facto partner.

#### **What disclosures must be made by a designated person?**

- 4.8 Designated persons include:
- (a) the executive officer
  - (b) other senior staff of the joint organisation for the purposes of section 332 of the LGA
  - (c) a person (other than a member of the senior staff of the joint organisation) who is a member of staff of the joint organisation or a delegate of the joint organisation and who holds a position identified by the joint organisation as the position of a designated person because it involves the exercise of functions (such as regulatory functions or contractual functions) that, in their exercise, could give rise to a conflict between the person’s duty as a member of staff or delegate and the person’s private interest
  - (d) a person (other than a member of the senior staff of the joint organisation) who is a member of a committee of the joint organisation identified by the joint organisation as a committee whose members are designated persons because the functions of the committee involve the exercise of the joint organisation’s functions (such as regulatory functions or contractual functions) that, in their exercise, could give rise to a conflict between the member’s duty as a member of the committee and the member’s private interest.
- 4.9 A designated person:
- (a) must prepare and submit written returns of interests in accordance with clauses 4.21, and
  - (b) must disclose pecuniary interests in accordance with clause 4.10.
- 4.10 A designated person must disclose in writing to the executive officer (or if the person is the executive officer, to the joint organisation) the nature of any pecuniary interest the person has in any joint organisation matter with which the person is dealing as soon as practicable after becoming aware of the interest.
- 4.11 Clause 4.10 does not require a designated person who is a member of staff of the joint organisation to disclose a pecuniary interest if the interest relates only to the person’s salary as a member of staff, or to their other conditions of employment.
- 4.12 The executive officer must, on receiving a disclosure from a designated person, deal with the matter to which the disclosure relates or refer it to another person to deal with.
- 4.13 A disclosure by the executive officer must, as soon as practicable after the disclosure is made, be laid on the table at a meeting of the joint organisation and the joint organisation must deal with the matter to which the disclosure relates or refer it to another person to deal with.

#### **What disclosures must be made by joint organisation staff other than designated persons?**

- 4.14 A member of staff of joint organisation, other than a designated person, must disclose in writing to their manager or the executive officer the nature of any pecuniary interest they have in a matter they are dealing with as soon as practicable after becoming aware of the interest.



- 4.15 The staff member's manager or the executive officer must, on receiving a disclosure under clause 4.14, deal with the matter to which the disclosure relates or refer it to another person to deal with.

#### **What disclosures must be made by joint organisation advisers?**

- 4.16 A person who, at the request or with the consent of the joint organisation or a joint organisation committee, gives advice on any matter at any meeting of the joint organisation or committee, must disclose the nature of any pecuniary interest the person has in the matter to the meeting at the time the advice is given. The person is not required to disclose the person's interest as an adviser.
- 4.17 A person does not breach clause 4.16 if the person did not know, and could not reasonably be expected to have known, that the matter under consideration at the meeting was a matter in which they had a pecuniary interest.

#### **What disclosures must be made by a joint organisation committee member?**

- 4.18 A joint organisation committee member must disclose pecuniary interests in accordance with clause 4.28 and comply with clause 4.29.
- 4.19 For the purposes of clause 4.18, a "joint organisation committee member" includes a member of staff of joint organisation who is a member of the committee.

#### **What disclosures must be made by a joint organisation voting representatives?**

- 4.20 A joint organisation voting representatives:
- (a) must prepare and submit written returns of interests in accordance with clause 4.21, and
  - (b) must disclose pecuniary interests in accordance with clause 4.28 and comply with clause 4.29 where it is applicable.

#### **Disclosure of interests in written returns**

- 4.21 A joint organisation voting representatives or designated person must make and lodge with the executive officer a return in the form set out in schedule 2 to this code, disclosing the joint organisation voting representatives or designated person's interests as specified in schedule 1 to this code within 3 months after:
- (a) becoming a joint organisation voting representatives or designated person, and
  - (b) 30 June of each year, and
  - (c) the joint organisation voting representatives or designated person becoming aware of an interest they are required to disclose under schedule 1 that has not been previously disclosed in a return lodged under paragraphs (a) or (b).
- 4.22 A person need not make and lodge a return under clause 4.21, paragraphs (a) and (b) if:
- (a) they made and lodged a return under that clause in the preceding 3 months, or
  - (b) they have ceased to be a joint organisation voting representatives or designated person in the preceding 3 months.
- 4.23 A person must not make and lodge a return that the person knows or ought reasonably to know is false or misleading in a material particular.

- 4.24 The executive officer must keep a register of returns required to be made and lodged with the executive officer.
- 4.25 4.25 Returns required to be lodged with the executive officer under clause 4.21(a) and (b) must be tabled at the first meeting of the joint organisation after the last day the return is required to be lodged.
- 4.26 4.26 Returns required to be lodged with the executive officer under clause 4.21(c) must be tabled at the next joint organisation meeting after the return is lodged.
- 4.27 4.27 Information contained in returns made and lodged under clause 4.21 is to be made publicly available in accordance with the requirements of the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009, the Government Information (Public Access) Regulation 2009 and any guidelines issued by the Information Commissioner.

### **Disclosure of pecuniary interests at meetings**

- 4.28 A joint organisation voting representatives or a joint organisation committee member who has a pecuniary interest in any matter with which the joint organisation is concerned, and who is present at a meeting of the joint organisation or committee at which the matter is being considered, must disclose the nature of the interest to the meeting as soon as practicable.
- 4.29 The joint organisation voting representatives or joint organisation committee member must not be present at, or in sight of, the meeting of the joint organisation or committee:
- (a) at any time during which the matter is being considered or discussed by the joint organisation or committee, or
  - (b) at any time during which the joint organisation or committee is voting on any question in relation to the matter.
- 4.30 In the case of a meeting of a board of a joint organisation, a voting representative is taken to be present at the meeting for the purposes of clauses 4.28 and 4.29 where they participate in the meeting by telephone or other electronic means.
- 4.31 A disclosure made at a meeting of a joint organisation or joint organisation committee must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
- 4.32 A general notice may be given to the executive officer in writing by a joint organisation voting representative or a joint organisation committee member to the effect that the joint organisation voting representative or joint organisation committee member, or the joint organisation voting representatives' or joint organisation committee member's spouse, de facto partner or relative, is:
- (a) a member of, or in the employment of, a specified company or other body, or
  - (b) a partner of, or in the employment of, a specified person.

Such a notice is, unless and until the notice is withdrawn or until the end of the term of the joint organisation in which it is given (whichever is the sooner), sufficient disclosure of the joint organisation voting representatives' or joint organisation committee member's interest in a matter relating to the specified company, body or person that may be the subject of consideration by the joint organisation or joint organisation committee after the date of the notice.

- 4.33 A joint organisation voting representative or a joint organisation committee member is not prevented from being present at and taking part in a meeting at which a matter is being considered, or from voting on the matter, merely because the joint organisation voting representatives or joint organisation committee member has an interest in the matter of a kind referred to in clause 4.6.
- 4.34 A person does not breach clauses 4.28 or 4.29 if the person did not know, and could not reasonably be expected to have known, that the matter under consideration at the meeting was a matter in which they had a pecuniary interest.
- 4.35 Despite clause 4.29, a joint organisation voting representative who has a pecuniary interest in a matter may participate in a decision to delegate consideration of the matter in question to another body or person.
- 4.36 Clause 4.29 does not apply to a joint organisation voting representative who has a pecuniary interest in a matter that is being considered at a meeting if:
- (a) the matter is a proposal relating to:
    - (i) the making of a principal environmental planning instrument applying to the whole or a significant portion of the joint organisation's area, or
    - (ii) the amendment, alteration or repeal of an environmental planning instrument where the amendment, alteration or repeal applies to the whole or a significant portion of the joint organisation's area, and
  - (b) the pecuniary interest arises only because of an interest of the joint organisation voting representatives in the joint organisation voting representatives' principal place of residence or an interest of another person (whose interests are relevant under clause 4.3) in that person's principal place of residence, and
  - (c) the joint organisation voting representatives made a special disclosure under clause 4.37 in relation to the interest before the commencement of the meeting.
- 4.37 A special disclosure of a pecuniary interest made for the purposes of clause 4.36(c) must:
- (a) be in the form set out in schedule 3 of this code and contain the information required by that form, and
  - (b) be laid on the table at a meeting of the joint organisation as soon as practicable after the disclosure is made, and the information contained in the special disclosure is to be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
- 4.38 The Minister for Local Government may, conditionally or unconditionally, allow a joint organisation voting representatives or a joint organisation committee member who has a pecuniary interest in a matter with which the joint organisation is concerned to be present at a meeting of the joint organisation or committee, to take part in the consideration or discussion of the matter and to vote on the matter if the Minister is of the opinion:
- (a) that the number of joint organisation voting representatives prevented from voting would be so great a proportion of the whole as to impede the transaction of business, or
  - (b) that it is in the interests of the electors for the area to do so.
- 4.39 A joint organisation voting representatives or a joint organisation committee member with a pecuniary interest in a matter who is permitted to be present at a meeting of the joint organisation or committee, to take part in the consideration or discussion of the matter and

to vote on the matter under clause 4.38, must still disclose the interest they have in the matter in accordance with clause 4.28.



## 5. NON-PECUNIARY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

### What is a non-pecuniary conflict of interest?

- 5.1 Non-pecuniary interests are private or personal interests a joint organisation official has that do not amount to a pecuniary interest as defined in clause 4.1 of this code. These commonly arise out of family or personal relationships, or out of involvement in sporting, social, religious or other cultural groups and associations, and may include an interest of a financial nature.
- 5.2 A non-pecuniary conflict of interest exists where a reasonable and informed person would perceive that you could be influenced by a private interest when carrying out your official functions in relation to a matter.
- 5.3 The personal or political views of a joint organisation official do not constitute a private interest for the purposes of clause 5.2.
- 5.4 Non-pecuniary conflicts of interest must be identified and appropriately managed to uphold community confidence in the probity of joint organisation decision-making. The onus is on you to identify any non-pecuniary conflict of interest you may have in matters that you deal with, to disclose the interest fully and in writing, and to take appropriate action to manage the conflict in accordance with this code.
- 5.5 When considering whether or not you have a non-pecuniary conflict of interest in a matter you are dealing with, it is always important to think about how others would view your situation.

### Managing non-pecuniary conflicts of interest

- 5.6 Where you have a non-pecuniary conflict of interest in a matter for the purposes of clause 5.2, you must disclose the relevant private interest you have in relation to the matter fully and in writing as soon as practicable after becoming aware of the non-pecuniary conflict of interest and on each occasion on which the non-pecuniary conflict of interest arises in relation to the matter. In the case of members of joint organisation staff other than the executive officer, such a disclosure is to be made to the staff member's manager. In the case of the executive officer, such a disclosure is to be made to the chairperson.
- 5.7 If a disclosure is made at a joint organisation or committee meeting, both the disclosure and the nature of the interest must be recorded in the minutes on each occasion on which the non-pecuniary conflict of interest arises. This disclosure constitutes disclosure in writing for the purposes of clause 5.6.
- 5.8 How you manage a non-pecuniary conflict of interest will depend on whether or not it is significant.
- 5.9 As a general rule, a non-pecuniary conflict of interest will be significant where it does not involve a pecuniary interest for the purposes of clause 4.1, but it involves:
  - a) a relationship between a joint organisation official and another person who is affected by a decision or a matter under consideration that is particularly close, such as a current or former spouse or de facto partner, a relative for the purposes of clause 4.4 or another person from the joint organisation official's extended family that the joint

organisation official has a close personal relationship with, or another person living in the same household

- b) other relationships with persons who are affected by a decision or a matter under consideration that are particularly close, such as friendships and business relationships. Closeness is defined by the nature of the friendship or business relationship, the frequency of contact and the duration of the friendship or relationship.
- c) an affiliation between the joint organisation official and an organisation (such as a sporting body, club, religious, cultural or charitable organisation, corporation or association) that is affected by a decision or a matter under consideration that is particularly strong. The strength of a joint organisation official's affiliation with an organisation is to be determined by the extent to which they actively participate in the management, administration or other activities of the organisation.
- d) membership, as the joint organisation's representative, of the board or management committee of an organisation that is affected by a decision or a matter under consideration, in circumstances where the interests of the joint organisation and the organisation are potentially in conflict in relation to the particular matter
- e) a financial interest (other than an interest of a type referred to in clause 4.6) that is not a pecuniary interest for the purposes of clause 4.1
- f) the conferral or loss of a personal benefit other than one conferred or lost as a member of the community or a broader class of people affected by a decision.

5.10 Significant non-pecuniary conflicts of interest must be managed in one of two ways:

- a) by not participating in consideration of, or decision making in relation to, the matter in which you have the significant non-pecuniary conflict of interest and the matter being allocated to another person for consideration or determination, or
- b) if the significant non-pecuniary conflict of interest arises in relation to a matter under consideration at a joint organisation or committee meeting, by managing the conflict of interest as if you had a pecuniary interest in the matter by complying with clauses 4.28 and 4.29.

5.11 If you determine that you have a non-pecuniary conflict of interest in a matter that is not significant and does not require further action, when disclosing the interest you must also explain in writing why you consider that the non-pecuniary conflict of interest is not significant and does not require further action in the circumstances.

5.12 If you are a member of staff of joint organisation other than the executive officer, the decision on which option should be taken to manage a non-pecuniary conflict of interest must be made in consultation with and at the direction of your manager. In the case of the executive officer, the decision on which option should be taken to manage a non-pecuniary conflict of interest must be made in consultation with and at the direction of the chairperson.

5.13 Despite clause 5.10(b), a joint organisation voting representatives who has a significant non-pecuniary conflict of interest in a matter, may participate in a decision to delegate consideration of the matter in question to another body or person.

5.14 Joint organisation committee members are not required to declare and manage a non-pecuniary conflict of interest in accordance with the requirements of this Part where it arises from an interest they have as a person chosen to represent the community, or as a member

of a non-profit organisation or other community or special interest group, if they have been appointed to represent the organisation or group on the joint organisation committee.

### Political donations

- 5.15 Joint organisation voting representatives should be aware that matters before joint organisation or committee meetings involving their political donors may also give rise to a non-pecuniary conflict of interest.
- 5.16 Where you are a joint organisation voting representatives and have received or knowingly benefitted from a reportable political donation:
- a) made by a major political donor in the previous four years, and
  - b) the major political donor has a matter before joint organisation,
- you must declare a non-pecuniary conflict of interest in the matter, disclose the nature of the interest, and manage the conflict of interest as if you had a pecuniary interest in the matter by complying with clauses 4.28 and 4.29. A disclosure made under this clause must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
- 5.17 For the purposes of this Part:
- a) a “reportable political donation” has the same meaning as it has in section 6 of the *Electoral Funding Act 2018*
  - b) “major political donor” has the same meaning as it has in the *Electoral Funding Act 2018*.
- 5.18 Joint organisation voting representatives should note that political donations that are not a “reportable political donation”, or political donations to a registered political party or group by which a joint organisation voting representative is endorsed, may still give rise to a non-pecuniary conflict of interest. Joint organisation voting representatives should determine whether or not such conflicts are significant for the purposes of clause 5.9 and take the appropriate action to manage them.
- 5.19 Despite clause 5.16, a joint organisation voting representative who has received or knowingly benefitted from a reportable political donation of the kind referred to in that clause, may participate in a decision to delegate consideration of the matter in question to another body or person.

### Loss of quorum as a result of compliance with this Part

- 5.20 A joint organisation voting representative who would otherwise be precluded from participating in the consideration of a matter under this Part because they have a non-pecuniary conflict of interest in the matter is permitted to participate in consideration of the matter if:
- a) the matter is a proposal relating to:
    - i) the making of a principal environmental planning instrument applying to the whole or a significant portion of the joint organisation’s area, or
    - ii) the amendment, alteration or repeal of an environmental planning instrument where the amendment, alteration or repeal applies to the whole or a significant portion of the joint organisation’s area, and
  - b) the non-pecuniary conflict of interest arises only because of an interest that a person has in that person’s principal place of residence, and

- c) the joint organisation voting representatives discloses the interest they have in the matter that would otherwise have precluded their participation in consideration of the matter under this Part in accordance with clause 5.6.
- 5.21 The Minister for Local Government may, conditionally or unconditionally, allow a joint organisation voting representative or a joint organisation committee member who is precluded under this Part from participating in the consideration of a matter to be present at a meeting of the joint organisation or committee, to take part in the consideration or discussion of the matter and to vote on the matter if the Minister is of the opinion:
  - a) that the number of joint organisation voting representatives prevented from voting would be so great a proportion of the whole as to impede the transaction of business, or
  - b) that it is in the interests of the electors for the area to do so.
- 5.22 Where the Minister exempts a joint organisation voting representatives or committee member from complying with a requirement under this Part under clause 5.21, the joint organisation voting representative or committee member must still disclose any interests they have in the matter the exemption applies to, in accordance with clause 5.6.

### **Other business or employment**

- 5.23 The executive officer must not engage, for remuneration, in private employment, contract work or other business outside the service of the joint organisation without the approval of the joint organisation.
- 5.24 A member of staff must not engage, for remuneration, in private employment, contract work or other business outside the service of the joint organisation that relates to the business of the joint organisation or that might conflict with the staff member's joint organisation duties unless they have notified the executive officer in writing of the employment, work or business and the executive officer has given their written approval for the staff member to engage in the employment, work or business.
- 5.25 The executive officer may at any time prohibit a member of staff from engaging, for remuneration, in private employment, contract work or other business outside the service of the joint organisation that relates to the business of the joint organisation, or that might conflict with the staff member's joint organisation duties.
- 5.26 A member of staff must not engage, for remuneration, in private employment, contract work or other business outside the service of the joint organisation if prohibited from doing so.
- 5.27 Members of staff must ensure that any outside employment, work or business they engage in will not:
  - a) conflict with their official duties
  - b) involve using confidential information or joint organisation resources obtained through their work with the joint organisation including where private use is permitted
  - c) require them to work while on joint organisation duty
  - d) discredit or disadvantage the joint organisation
  - e) pose, due to fatigue, a risk to their health or safety, or to the health and safety of their co-workers.



### **Personal dealings with joint organisation**

- 5.28 You may have reason to deal with your joint organisation in your personal capacity (for example, as a ratepayer, recipient of a joint organisation service or applicant for a development consent granted by joint organisation). You must not expect or request preferential treatment in relation to any matter in which you have a private interest because of your position. You must avoid any action that could lead members of the public to believe that you are seeking preferential treatment.
- 5.29 You must undertake any personal dealings you have with the joint organisation in a manner that is consistent with the way other members of the community deal with the joint organisation. You must also ensure that you disclose and appropriately manage any conflict of interest you may have in any matter in accordance with the requirements of this code.

## 6. PERSONAL BENEFIT

- 6.1 For the purposes of this Part, a gift or a benefit is something offered to or received by a joint organisation official or someone personally associated with them for their personal use and enjoyment.
- 6.2 A reference to a gift or benefit in this Part does not include:
- a) items with a value of \$10 or less
  - b) a political donation for the purposes of the *Electoral Funding Act 2018*
  - c) a gift provided to the joint organisation as part of a cultural exchange or sister-city relationship that is not converted for the personal use or enjoyment of any individual joint organisation official or someone personally associated with them
  - d) a benefit or facility provided by the joint organisation to an employee or joint organisation voting representatives
  - e) attendance by a joint organisation official at a work-related event or function for the purposes of performing their official duties, or
  - f) free or subsidised meals, beverages or refreshments provided to joint organisation officials in conjunction with the performance of their official duties such as, but not limited to:
    - i) the discussion of official business
    - ii) work-related events such as joint organisation-sponsored or community events, training, education sessions or workshops
    - iii) conferences
    - iv) joint organisation functions or events
    - v) social functions organised by groups, such as joint organisation committees and community organisations.

### Gifts and benefits

- 6.3 You must avoid situations that would give rise to the appearance that a person or body is attempting to secure favourable treatment from you or from the joint organisation, through the provision of gifts, benefits or hospitality of any kind to you or someone personally associated with you.
- 6.4 A gift or benefit is deemed to have been accepted by you for the purposes of this Part, where it is received by you or someone personally associated with you.

### How are offers of gifts and benefits to be dealt with?

- 6.5 You must not:
- a) seek or accept a bribe or other improper inducement
  - b) seek gifts or benefits of any kind
  - c) accept any gift or benefit that may create a sense of obligation on your part, or may be perceived to be intended or likely to influence you in carrying out your public duty
  - d) subject to clause 6.7, accept any gift or benefit of more than token value as defined by clause 6.9

- e) accept an offer of cash or a cash-like gift as defined by clause 6.13, regardless of the amount
- f) participate in competitions for prizes where eligibility is based on the joint organisation being in or entering into a customer–supplier relationship with the competition organiser
- g) personally benefit from reward points programs when purchasing on behalf of the joint organisation.

6.6 Where you receive a gift or benefit of any value other than one referred to in clause 6.2, you must disclose this promptly to your manager or the executive officer in writing. The recipient, manager, or executive officer must ensure that, at a minimum, the following details are recorded in the joint organisation’s gift register:

- a) the nature of the gift or benefit
- b) the estimated monetary value of the gift or benefit
- c) the name of the person who provided the gift or benefit, and
- d) the date on which the gift or benefit was received.

6.7 Where you receive a gift or benefit of more than token value that cannot reasonably be refused or returned, the gift or benefit must be surrendered to the joint organisation, unless the nature of the gift or benefit makes this impractical.

#### **Gifts and benefits of token value**

6.8 You may accept gifts and benefits of token value. Gifts and benefits of token value are one or more gifts or benefits received from a person or organisation over a 12-month period that, when aggregated, do not exceed a value of \$100. They include, but are not limited to:

- a) invitations to and attendance at local social, cultural or sporting events with a ticket value that does not exceed \$100
- b) gifts of alcohol that do not exceed a value of \$100
- c) ties, scarves, coasters, tie pins, diaries, chocolates or flowers or the like
- d) prizes or awards that do not exceed \$100 in value.

#### **Gifts and benefits of more than token value**

6.9 Gifts or benefits that exceed \$100 in value are gifts or benefits of more than token value for the purposes of clause 6.5(d) and, subject to clause 6.7, must not be accepted.

6.10 Gifts and benefits of more than token value include, but are not limited to, tickets to major sporting events (such as international matches or matches in national sporting codes) with a ticket value that exceeds \$100, corporate hospitality at a corporate facility at major sporting events, free or discounted products or services for personal use provided on terms that are not available to the general public or a broad class of persons, the use of holiday homes, artworks, free or discounted travel.

6.11 Where you have accepted a gift or benefit of token value from a person or organisation, you must not accept a further gift or benefit from the same person or organisation or another person associated with that person or organisation within a single 12-month period where the value of the gift, added to the value of earlier gifts received from the same person or organisation, or a person associated with that person or organisation, during the same 12-month period would exceed \$100 in value.

- 6.12 For the purposes of this Part, the value of a gift or benefit is the monetary value of the gift or benefit inclusive of GST.

### **“Cash-like gifts”**

- 6.13 For the purposes of clause 6.5(e), “cash-like gifts” include, but are not limited to, gift vouchers, credit cards, debit cards with credit on them, prepayments such as phone or internet credit, lottery tickets, memberships or entitlements to discounts that are not available to the general public or a broad class of persons.

### **Improper and undue influence**

- 6.14 You must not use your position to influence other joint organisation officials in the performance of their official functions to obtain a private benefit for yourself or for somebody else. A joint organisation voting representatives will not be in breach of this clause where they seek to influence other joint organisation officials through the proper exercise of their role as prescribed under the LGA.
- 6.15 You must not take advantage (or seek to take advantage) of your status or position with joint organisation, or of functions you perform for joint organisation, in order to obtain a private benefit for yourself or for any other person or body.



## **7. RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN JOINT ORGANISATION OFFICIALS**

### **Obligations of joint organisation voting representatives and administrators**

- 7.1 Each joint organisation is a body politic. The joint organisation voting representatives or administrator/s are the governing body of the joint organisation. Under section 223 of the LGA, the role of the governing body of the joint organisation includes the development and endorsement of the strategic plans, programs, strategies and policies of the joint organisation, including those relating to workforce policy, and to keep the performance of the joint organisation under review.
- 7.2 Joint organisation voting representatives or administrators must not:
- a) direct joint organisation staff other than by giving appropriate direction to the executive officer by way of joint organisation or committee resolution, or by the chairperson or administrator exercising their functions under section 226 of the LGA
  - b) in any public or private forum, direct or influence, or attempt to direct or influence, any other member of the staff of the joint organisation or a delegate of the joint organisation in the exercise of the functions of the staff member or delegate
  - c) contact a member of the staff of the joint organisation on joint organisation-related business unless in accordance with the policy and procedures governing the interaction of joint organisation voting representatives and joint organisation staff that have been authorised by the joint organisation and the executive officer
  - d) contact or issue instructions to any of the joint organisation's contractors, including the joint organisation's legal advisers, unless by the chairperson or administrator exercising their functions under section 226 of the LGA.
- 7.3 Despite clause 7.2, joint organisation voting representatives may contact the joint organisation's external auditor or the chair of the joint organisation's audit risk and improvement committee to provide information reasonably necessary for the external auditor or the audit, risk and improvement committee to effectively perform their functions.

### **Obligations of staff**

- 7.4 Under section 335 of the LGA, the role of the executive officer includes conducting the day-to-day management of the joint organisation in accordance with the strategic plans, programs, strategies and policies of the joint organisation, implementing without undue delay, lawful decisions of the joint organisation and ensuring that the chairperson and other joint organisation voting representatives are given timely information and advice and the administrative and professional support necessary to effectively discharge their official functions.
- 7.5 Members of staff of joint organisation must:
- a) give their attention to the business of the joint organisation while on duty
  - b) ensure that their work is carried out ethically, efficiently, economically and effectively
  - c) carry out reasonable and lawful directions given by any person having authority to give such directions
  - d) give effect to the lawful decisions, policies and procedures of the joint organisation, whether or not the staff member agrees with or approves of them
  - e) ensure that any participation in political activities outside the service of the joint organisation does not interfere with the performance of their official duties.

## Inappropriate interactions

7.6 You must not engage in any of the following inappropriate interactions:

- a) joint organisation voting representatives and administrators approaching staff and staff organisations to discuss individual or operational staff matters (other than matters relating to broader workforce policy), grievances, workplace investigations and disciplinary matters
- b) joint organisation staff approaching joint organisation voting representatives and administrators to discuss individual or operational staff matters (other than matters relating to broader workforce policy), grievances, workplace investigations and disciplinary matters
- c) subject to clause 8.6, joint organisation staff refusing to give information that is available to other joint organisation voting representatives to a particular joint organisation voting representatives
- d) joint organisation voting representatives and administrators who have lodged an application with the joint organisation, discussing the matter with joint organisation staff in staff-only areas of the joint organisation
- e) joint organisation voting representatives and administrators approaching members of local planning panels or discussing any application that is either before the panel or that will come before the panel at some future time, except during a panel meeting where the application forms part of the agenda and the joint organisation voting representatives or administrator has a right to be heard by the panel at the meeting
- f) joint organisation voting representatives and administrators being overbearing or threatening to joint organisation staff
- g) joint organisation staff being overbearing or threatening to joint organisation voting representatives or administrators
- h) joint organisation voting representatives and administrators making personal attacks on joint organisation staff or engaging in conduct towards staff that would be contrary to the general conduct provisions in Part 3 of this code in public forums including social media
- i) joint organisation voting representatives and administrators directing or pressuring joint organisation staff in the performance of their work, or recommendations they should make
- j) joint organisation staff providing ad hoc advice to joint organisation voting representatives and administrators without recording or documenting the interaction as they would if the advice was provided to a member of the community
- k) joint organisation staff meeting with applicants or objectors alone AND outside office hours to discuss planning applications or proposals
- l) joint organisation voting representatives attending on-site inspection meetings with lawyers and/or consultants engaged by the joint organisation associated with current or proposed legal proceedings unless permitted to do so by the joint organisation's executive officer or, in the case of the chairperson or administrator, unless they are exercising their functions under section 226 of the LGA.

## **8. ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND JOINT ORGANISATION RESOURCES**

### **Joint organisation voting representatives and administrator access to information**

- 8.1 The executive officer is responsible for ensuring that joint organisation voting representatives and administrators can access information necessary for the performance of their official functions. The executive officer and public officer are also responsible for ensuring that members of the public can access publicly available joint organisation information under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (the GIPA Act).
- 8.2 The executive officer must provide joint organisation voting representatives and administrators with the information necessary to effectively discharge their official functions.
- 8.3 Members of staff of joint organisation must provide full and timely information to joint organisation voting representatives and administrators sufficient to enable them to exercise their official functions and in accordance with joint organisation procedures.
- 8.4 Members of staff of the joint organisation who provide any information to a particular joint organisation voting representatives in the performance of their official functions must also make it available to any other joint organisation voting representatives who requests it and in accordance with joint organisation procedures.
- 8.5 Joint organisation voting representatives and administrators who have a private interest only in joint organisation information have the same rights of access as any member of the public.
- 8.6 Despite clause 8.4, joint organisation voting representatives and administrators who are precluded from participating in the consideration of a matter under this code because they have a conflict of interest in the matter, are not entitled to request access to joint organisation information in relation to the matter unless the information is otherwise available to members of the public, or the joint organisation has determined to make the information available under the GIPA Act.

### **Joint organisation voting representatives and administrators to properly examine and consider information**

- 8.7 Joint organisation voting representatives and administrators must ensure that they comply with their duty under section 439 of the LGA to act honestly and exercise a reasonable degree of care and diligence by properly examining and considering all the information provided to them relating to matters that they are required to make a decision on.

### **Refusal of access to information**

- 8.8 Where the executive officer or public officer determine to refuse access to information requested by a joint organisation voting representatives or administrator, they must act reasonably. In reaching this decision they must take into account whether or not the information requested is necessary for the joint organisation voting representatives or administrator to perform their official functions (see clause 8.2) and whether they have disclosed a conflict of interest in the matter the information relates to that would preclude their participation in consideration of the matter (see clause 8.6). The executive officer or public officer must state the reasons for the decision if access is refused.

## Use of certain joint organisation information

- 8.9 In regard to information obtained in your capacity as a joint organisation official, you must:
- a) subject to clause 8.14, only access joint organisation information needed for joint organisation business
  - b) not use that joint organisation information for private purposes
  - c) not seek or obtain, either directly or indirectly, any financial benefit or other improper advantage for yourself, or any other person or body, from any information to which you have access by virtue of your office or position with joint organisation
  - d) only release joint organisation information in accordance with established joint organisation policies and procedures and in compliance with relevant legislation.

## Use and security of confidential information

- 8.10 You must maintain the integrity and security of confidential information in your possession, or for which you are responsible.
- 8.11 In addition to your general obligations relating to the use of joint organisation information, you must:
- a) only access confidential information that you have been authorised to access and only do so for the purposes of exercising your official functions
  - b) protect confidential information
  - c) only release confidential information if you have authority to do so
  - d) only use confidential information for the purpose for which it is intended to be used
  - e) not use confidential information gained through your official position for the purpose of securing a private benefit for yourself or for any other person
  - f) not use confidential information with the intention to cause harm or detriment to the joint organisation or any other person or body
  - g) not disclose any confidential information discussed during a confidential session of a joint organisation or committee meeting or any other confidential forum (such as, but not limited to, workshops or briefing sessions).

## Personal information

- 8.12 When dealing with personal information you must comply with:
- a) the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*
  - b) the *Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002*
  - c) the Information Protection Principles and Health Privacy Principles
  - d) the joint organisation's privacy management plan
  - e) the Privacy Code of Practice for Local Government

## Use of joint organisation resources

- 8.13 You must use joint organisation resources ethically, effectively, efficiently and carefully in exercising your official functions, and must not use them for private purposes, except when supplied as part of a contract of employment (but not for private business purposes), unless this use is lawfully authorised and proper payment is made where appropriate.
- 8.14 Union delegates and consultative committee members may have reasonable access to joint organisation resources and information for the purposes of carrying out their industrial responsibilities, including but not limited to:
- a) the representation of members with respect to disciplinary matters



- b) the representation of employees with respect to grievances and disputes
  - c) functions associated with the role of the local consultative committee.
- 8.15 You must be scrupulous in your use of joint organisation property, including intellectual property, official services, facilities, technology and electronic devices and must not permit their misuse by any other person or body.
- 8.16 You must avoid any action or situation that could create the appearance that joint organisation property, official services or public facilities are being improperly used for your benefit or the benefit of any other person or body.
- 8.17 You must not use joint organisation resources (including joint organisation staff), property or facilities for the purpose of assisting your election campaign or the election campaigns of others unless the resources, property or facilities are otherwise available for use or hire by the public and any publicly advertised fee is paid for use of the resources, property or facility.
- 8.18 You must not use the joint organisation letterhead, joint organisation crests, joint organisation email or social media or other information that could give the appearance it is official joint organisation material:
  - a) for the purpose of assisting your election campaign or the election campaign of others, or
  - b) for other non-official purposes.
- 8.19 You must not convert any property of the joint organisation to your own use unless properly authorised.

### **Internet access**

- 8.20 You must not use joint organisation's computer resources or mobile or other devices to search for, access, download or communicate any material of an offensive, obscene, pornographic, threatening, abusive or defamatory nature, or that could otherwise lead to criminal penalty or civil liability and/or damage the joint organisation's reputation.

### **Joint organisation record keeping**

- 8.21 You must comply with the requirements of the State Records Act 1998 and the joint organisation's records management policy.
- 8.22 All information created, sent and received in your official capacity is a joint organisation record and must be managed in accordance with the requirements of the State Records Act 1998 and the joint organisation's approved records management policies and practices.
- 8.23 All information stored in either soft or hard copy on joint organisation supplied resources (including technology devices and email accounts) is deemed to be related to the business of the joint organisation and will be treated as joint organisation records, regardless of whether the original intention was to create the information for personal purposes.
- 8.24 You must not destroy, alter, or dispose of joint organisation information or records, unless authorised to do so. If you need to alter or dispose of joint organisation information or records, you must do so in consultation with the joint organisation's records manager and comply with the requirements of the *State Records Act 1998*.

### **Joint organisation voting representatives access to joint organisation buildings**

- 8.25 Joint organisation voting representatives and administrators are entitled to have access to the joint organisation chamber, committee room, chairperson's office (subject to availability), joint organisation voting representatives' rooms, and public areas of joint organisation's buildings during normal business hours and for meetings. Joint organisation voting representatives and administrators needing access to these facilities at other times must obtain authority from the executive officer.
- 8.26 Joint organisation voting representatives and administrators must not enter staff-only areas of joint organisation buildings without the approval of the executive officer (or their delegate) or as provided for in the procedures governing the interaction of joint organisation voting representatives and joint organisation staff.
- 8.27 Joint organisation voting representatives and administrators must ensure that when they are within a staff only area they refrain from conduct that could be perceived to improperly influence joint organisation staff decisions.

## **9. MAINTAINING THE INTEGRITY OF THIS CODE**

### **Complaints made for an improper purpose**

- 9.1 You must not make or threaten to make a complaint or cause a complaint to be made alleging a breach of this code for an improper purpose.
- 9.2 For the purposes of clause 9.1, a complaint is made for an improper purpose where it is trivial, frivolous, vexatious or not made in good faith, or where it otherwise lacks merit and has been made substantially for one or more of the following purposes:
- a) to bully, intimidate or harass another joint organisation official
  - b) to damage another joint organisation official's reputation
  - c) to obtain a political advantage
  - d) to influence a joint organisation official in the exercise of their official functions or to prevent or disrupt the exercise of those functions
  - e) to influence the joint organisation in the exercise of its functions or to prevent or disrupt the exercise of those functions
  - f) to avoid disciplinary action under the Procedures
  - g) to take reprisal action against a person for making a complaint alleging a breach of this code
  - h) to take reprisal action against a person for exercising a function prescribed under the Procedures
  - i) to prevent or disrupt the effective administration of this code under the Procedures.

### **Detrimental action**

- 9.3 You must not take detrimental action or cause detrimental action to be taken against a person substantially in reprisal for a complaint they have made alleging a breach of this code.
- 9.4 You must not take detrimental action or cause detrimental action to be taken against a person substantially in reprisal for any function they have exercised under the Procedures.
- 9.5 For the purposes of clauses 9.3 and 9.4, a detrimental action is an action causing, comprising or involving any of the following:
- a) injury, damage or loss
  - b) intimidation or harassment
  - c) discrimination, disadvantage or adverse treatment in relation to employment
  - d) dismissal from, or prejudice in, employment
  - e) disciplinary proceedings.

### **Compliance with requirements under the Procedures**

- 9.6 You must not engage in conduct that is calculated to impede or disrupt the consideration of a matter under the Procedures.
- 9.7 You must comply with a reasonable and lawful request made by a person exercising a function under the Procedures. A failure to make a written or oral submission invited under the Procedures will not constitute a breach of this clause.
- 9.8 You must comply with a practice ruling made by the Office under the Procedures.

### **Disclosure of information about the consideration of a matter under the Procedures**

- 9.9 All allegations of breaches of this code must be dealt with under and in accordance with the Procedures.
- 9.10 You must not allege breaches of this code other than by way of a complaint made or initiated under the Procedures.
- 9.11 You must not make allegations about, or disclose information about, suspected breaches of this code at joint organisation, committee or other meetings, whether open to the public or not, or in any other forum, whether public or not.
- 9.12 You must not disclose information about a complaint you have made alleging a breach of this code or any other matter being considered under the Procedures except for the purposes of seeking legal advice, unless the disclosure is otherwise permitted under the Procedures.
- 9.13 Nothing under this Part prevents a person from making a public interest disclosure to an appropriate public authority or investigative authority under the Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994.

### **Complaints alleging a breach of this Part**

- 9.14 Complaints alleging a breach of this Part by a joint organisation voting representatives, the executive officer or an administrator are to be managed by the Office. This clause does not prevent the Office from referring an alleged breach of this Part back to the joint organisation for consideration in accordance with the Procedures.
- 9.15 Complaints alleging a breach of this Part by other joint organisation officials are to be managed by the executive officer in accordance with the Procedures.



## SCHEDULE 1: DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS AND OTHER MATTERS IN WRITTEN RETURNS SUBMITTED UNDER CLAUSE 4.21

### Part 1: Preliminary

#### Definitions

1. For the purposes of the schedules to this code, the following definitions apply:

*address* means:

- a) in relation to a person other than a corporation, the last residential or business address of the person known to the joint organisation voting representatives or designated person disclosing the address, or
- b) in relation to a corporation, the address of the registered office of the corporation in New South Wales or, if there is no such office, the address of the principal office of the corporation in the place where it is registered, or
- c) in relation to any real property, the street address of the property.

*de facto partner* has the same meaning as defined in section 21C of the *Interpretation Act 1987*.

*disposition of property* means a conveyance, transfer, assignment, settlement, delivery, payment or other alienation of property, including the following:

- a) the allotment of shares in a company
- b) the creation of a trust in respect of property
- c) the grant or creation of a lease, mortgage, charge, easement, licence, power, partnership or interest in respect of property
- d) the release, discharge, surrender, forfeiture or abandonment, at law or in equity, of a debt, contract or chose in action, or of an interest in respect of property
- e) the exercise by a person of a general power of appointment over property in favour of another person
- f) a transaction entered into by a person who intends by the transaction to diminish, directly or indirectly, the value of the person's own property and to increase the value of the property of another person.

*gift* means a disposition of property made otherwise than by will (whether or not by instrument in writing) without consideration, or with inadequate consideration, in money or money's worth passing from the person to whom the disposition was made to the person who made the disposition, but does not include a financial or other contribution to travel.

*interest* means:

- a) in relation to property, an estate, interest, right or power, at law or in equity, in or over the property, or
- b) in relation to a corporation, a relevant interest (within the meaning of section 9 of the *Corporations Act 2001* of the Commonwealth) in securities issued or made available by the corporation.

*listed company* means a company that is listed within the meaning of section 9 of the *Corporations Act 2001* of the Commonwealth.

*occupation* includes trade, profession and vocation.

*professional or business association* means an incorporated or unincorporated body or organisation having as one of its objects or activities the promotion of the economic interests of its members in any occupation.

*property* includes money.

*return date* means:

- a) in the case of a return made under clause 4.21(a), the date on which a person became a joint organisation voting representatives or designated person
- b) in the case of a return made under clause 4.21(b), 30 June of the year in which the return is made
- c) in the case of a return made under clause 4.21(c), the date on which the joint organisation voting representatives or designated person became aware of the interest to be disclosed.

*relative* includes any of the following:

- a) a person's spouse or de facto partner
- b) a person's parent, grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, lineal descendant or adopted child
- c) a person's spouse's or de facto partner's parent, grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, lineal descendant or adopted child
- d) the spouse or de facto partner of a person referred to in paragraphs (b) and (c).

*travel* includes accommodation incidental to a journey.

### **Matters relating to the interests that must be included in returns**

- 2. *Interests etc. outside New South Wales:* A reference in this schedule or in schedule 2 to a disclosure concerning a corporation or other thing includes any reference to a disclosure concerning a corporation registered, or other thing arising or received, outside New South Wales.
- 3. *References to interests in real property:* A reference in this schedule or in schedule 2 to real property in which a joint organisation voting representatives or designated person has an interest includes a reference to any real property situated in Australia in which the joint organisation voting representatives or designated person has an interest.
- 4. *Gifts, loans etc. from related corporations:* For the purposes of this schedule and schedule 2, gifts or contributions to travel given, loans made, or goods or services supplied, to a joint organisation voting representatives or designated person by two or more corporations that are related to each other for the purposes of section 50 of the *Corporations Act 2001* of the Commonwealth are all given, made or supplied by a single corporation.

## Part 2: Pecuniary interests to be disclosed in returns

### Real property

5. A person making a return under clause 4.21 of this code must disclose:
  - a) the street address of each parcel of real property in which they had an interest on the return date, and
  - b) the street address of each parcel of real property in which they had an interest in the period since 30 June of the previous financial year, and
  - c) the nature of the interest.
6. An interest in a parcel of real property need not be disclosed in a return if the person making the return had the interest only:
  - a) as executor of the will, or administrator of the estate, of a deceased person and not as a beneficiary under the will or intestacy, or
  - b) as a trustee, if the interest was acquired in the ordinary course of an occupation not related to their duties as the holder of a position required to make a return.
7. An interest in a parcel of real property need not be disclosed in a return if the person ceased to hold the interest prior to becoming a joint organisation voting representatives or designated person.
8. For the purposes of clause 5 of this schedule, “interest” includes an option to purchase.

### Gifts

9. A person making a return under clause 4.21 of this code must disclose:
  - a) a description of each gift received in the period since 30 June of the previous financial year, and
  - b) the name and address of the donor of each of the gifts.
10. A gift need not be included in a return if:
  - a) it did not exceed \$500, unless it was among gifts totalling more than \$500 made by the same person during a period of 12 months or less, or
  - b) it was a political donation disclosed, or required to be disclosed, under Part 3 of the *Electoral Funding Act 2018*, or
  - c) the donor was a relative of the donee, or
  - d) subject to paragraph (a), it was received prior to the person becoming a joint organisation voting representatives or designated person.
11. For the purposes of clause 10 of this schedule, the amount of a gift other than money is an amount equal to the value of the property given.

### Contributions to travel

12. A person making a return under clause 4.21 of this code must disclose:
  - a) the name and address of each person who made any financial or other contribution to the expenses of any travel undertaken by the person in the period since 30 June of the previous financial year, and
  - b) the dates on which the travel was undertaken, and
  - c) the names of the states and territories, and of the overseas countries, in which the travel was undertaken.

13. A financial or other contribution to any travel need not be disclosed under this clause if it:
- a) was made from public funds (including a contribution arising from travel on free passes issued under an Act or from travel in government or joint organisation vehicles), or
  - b) was made by a relative of the traveller, or
  - c) was made in the ordinary course of an occupation of the traveller that is not related to their functions as the holder of a position requiring the making of a return, or
  - d) did not exceed \$250, unless it was among gifts totalling more than \$250 made by the same person during a 12-month period or less, or
  - e) was a political donation disclosed, or required to be disclosed, under Part 3 of the *Electoral Funding Act 2018*, or
  - f) was made by a political party of which the traveller was a member and the travel was undertaken for the purpose of political activity of the party in New South Wales, or to enable the traveller to represent the party within Australia, or
  - g) subject to paragraph (d) it was received prior to the person becoming a joint organisation voting representatives or designated person.
14. For the purposes of clause 13 of this schedule, the amount of a contribution (other than a financial contribution) is an amount equal to the value of the contribution.

#### **Interests and positions in corporations**

15. A person making a return under clause 4.21 of this code must disclose:
- a) the name and address of each corporation in which they had an interest or held a position (whether remunerated or not) on the return date, and
  - b) the name and address of each corporation in which they had an interest or held a position in the period since 30 June of the previous financial year, and
  - c) the nature of the interest, or the position held, in each of the corporations, and
  - d) a description of the principal objects (if any) of each of the corporations, except in the case of a listed company.
16. An interest in, or a position held in, a corporation need not be disclosed if the corporation is:
- a) formed for the purpose of providing recreation or amusement, or for promoting commerce, industry, art, science, religion or charity, or for any other community purpose, and
  - b) required to apply its profits or other income in promoting its objects, and
  - c) prohibited from paying any dividend to its members.
17. An interest in a corporation need not be disclosed if the interest is a beneficial interest in shares in a company that does not exceed 10 per cent of the voting rights in the company.
18. An interest or a position in a corporation need not be disclosed if the person ceased to hold the interest or position prior to becoming a joint organisation voting representatives or designated person.

#### **Interests as a property developer or a close associate of a property developer**

19. A person making a return under clause 4.21 of this code must disclose whether they were a property developer, or a close associate of a corporation that, or an individual who, is a property developer, on the return date.
20. For the purposes of clause 19 of this schedule:



*close associate*, in relation to a corporation or an individual, has the same meaning as it has in section 53 of the *Electoral Funding Act 2018*.

*property developer* has the same meaning as it has in Division 7 of Part 3 of the *Electoral Funding Act 2018*.

### **Positions in trade unions and professional or business associations**

21. A person making a return under clause 4.21 of the code must disclose:
  - a) the name of each trade union, and of each professional or business association, in which they held any position (whether remunerated or not) on the return date, and
  - b) the name of each trade union, and of each professional or business association, in which they have held any position (whether remunerated or not) in the period since 30 June of the previous financial year, and
  - c) a description of the position held in each of the unions and associations.
22. A position held in a trade union or a professional or business association need not be disclosed if the person ceased to hold the position prior to becoming a joint organisation voting representatives or designated person.

### **Dispositions of real property**

23. A person making a return under clause 4.21 of this code must disclose particulars of each disposition of real property by the person (including the street address of the affected property) in the period since 30 June of the previous financial year, under which they wholly or partly retained the use and benefit of the property or the right to re-acquire the property.
24. A person making a return under clause 4.21 of this code must disclose particulars of each disposition of real property to another person (including the street address of the affected property) in the period since 30 June of the previous financial year, that is made under arrangements with, but is not made by, the person making the return, being a disposition under which the person making the return obtained wholly or partly the use of the property.
25. A disposition of real property need not be disclosed if it was made prior to a person becoming a joint organisation voting representatives or designated person.

### **Sources of income**

26. A person making a return under clause 4.21 of this code must disclose:
  - a) each source of income that the person reasonably expects to receive in the period commencing on the first day after the return date and ending on the following 30 June, and
  - b) each source of income received by the person in the period since 30 June of the previous financial year.
27. A reference in clause 26 of this schedule to each source of income received, or reasonably expected to be received, by a person is a reference to:
  - a) in relation to income from an occupation of the person:
    - (i) a description of the occupation, and
    - (ii) if the person is employed or the holder of an office, the name and address of their employer, or a description of the office, and
    - (iii) if the person has entered into a partnership with other persons, the name (if any) under which the partnership is conducted, or

- b) in relation to income from a trust, the name and address of the settlor and the trustee, or
  - c) in relation to any other income, a description sufficient to identify the person from whom, or the circumstances in which, the income was, or is reasonably expected to be, received.
28. The source of any income need not be disclosed by a person in a return if the amount of the income received, or reasonably expected to be received, by the person from that source did not exceed \$500, or is not reasonably expected to exceed \$500, as the case may be.
29. The source of any income received by the person that they ceased to receive prior to becoming a joint organisation voting representatives or designated person need not be disclosed.
30. A fee paid to a joint organisation voting representatives or to the chairperson or deputy chairperson under sections 248 or 249 of the LGA need not be disclosed.

## Debts

31. A person making a return under clause 4.21 of this code must disclose the name and address of each person to whom the person was liable to pay any debt:
- a) on the return date, and
  - b) at any time in the period since 30 June of the previous financial year.
32. A liability to pay a debt must be disclosed by a person in a return made under clause 4.21 whether or not the amount, or any part of the amount, to be paid was due and payable on the return date or at any time in the period since 30 June of the previous financial year, as the case may be.
33. A liability to pay a debt need not be disclosed by a person in a return if:
- a) the amount to be paid did not exceed \$500 on the return date or in the period since 30 June of the previous financial year, as the case may be, unless:
    - (i) the debt was one of two or more debts that the person was liable to pay to one person on the return date, or at any time in the period since 30 June of the previous financial year, as the case may be, and
    - (ii) the amounts to be paid exceeded, in the aggregate, \$500, or
  - b) the person was liable to pay the debt to a relative, or
  - c) in the case of a debt arising from a loan of money the person was liable to pay the debt to an authorised deposit-taking institution or other person whose ordinary business includes the lending of money, and the loan was made in the ordinary course of business of the lender, or
  - d) in the case of a debt arising from the supply of goods or services:
    - (i) the goods or services were supplied in the period of 12 months immediately preceding the return date, or were supplied in the period since 30 June of the previous financial year, as the case may be, or
    - (ii) the goods or services were supplied in the ordinary course of any occupation of the person that is not related to their duties as the holder of a position required to make a return, or
  - e) subject to paragraph (a), the debt was discharged prior to the person becoming a joint organisation voting representatives or designated person.

## Discretionary disclosures

34. A person may voluntarily disclose in a return any interest, benefit, advantage or liability, whether pecuniary or not, that is not required to be disclosed under another provision of this Schedule.

## SCHEDULE 2: FORM OF WRITTEN RETURN OF INTERESTS SUBMITTED UNDER CLAUSE 4.21

### ‘Disclosures by joint organisation voting representatives and designated persons’ return

1. The pecuniary interests and other matters to be disclosed in this return are prescribed by Schedule 1 of the *Model Code of Conduct for Local Joint organisations in NSW* (the Model Code of Conduct).
2. If this is the first return you have been required to lodge with the executive officer after becoming a joint organisation voting representatives or designated person, do not complete Parts C, D and I of the return. All other parts of the return should be completed with appropriate information based on your circumstances at the return date, that is, the date on which you became a joint organisation voting representatives or designated person.
3. If you have previously lodged a return with the executive officer and you are completing this return for the purposes of disclosing a new interest that was not disclosed in the last return you lodged with the executive officer, you must complete all parts of the return with appropriate information for the period from 30 June of the previous financial year or the date on which you became a joint organisation voting representatives or designated person, (whichever is the later date), to the return date which is the date you became aware of the new interest to be disclosed in your updated return.
4. If you have previously lodged a return with the executive officer and are submitting a new return for the new financial year, you must complete all parts of the return with appropriate information for the 12-month period commencing on 30 June of the previous year to 30 June this year.
5. This form must be completed using block letters or typed.
6. If there is insufficient space for all the information you are required to disclose, you must attach an appendix which is to be properly identified and signed by you.
7. If there are no pecuniary interests or other matters of the kind required to be disclosed under a heading in this form, the word “NIL” is to be placed in an appropriate space under that heading.

### Important information

This information is being collected for the purpose of complying with clause 4.21 of the Model Code of Conduct.

You must not lodge a return that you know or ought reasonably to know is false or misleading in a material particular (see clause 4.23 of the Model Code of Conduct). Complaints about breaches of these requirements are to be referred to the Office of Local Government and may result in disciplinary action by the joint organisation, the Chief Executive of the Office of Local Government or the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

The information collected on this form will be kept by the executive officer in a register of returns. The executive officer is required to table all returns at a joint organisation meeting.

Information contained in returns made and lodged under clause 4.21 is to be made publicly available in accordance with the requirements of the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*, the *Government Information (Public Access) Regulation 2009* and any guidelines issued by the Information Commissioner.

You have an obligation to keep the information contained in this return up to date. If you become aware of a new interest that must be disclosed in this return, or an interest that you have previously failed to disclose, you must submit an updated return within three months of becoming aware of the previously undisclosed interest.

**Disclosure of pecuniary interests and other matters** by *[full name of joint organisation voting representatives or designated person]*

as at *[return date]*

in respect of the period from *[date]* to *[date]*

*[joint organisation voting representatives' or designated person's signature]*  
*[date]*

#### A. Real Property

Street address of each parcel of real property in which I had an interest at the return date/at any time since 30 June	Nature of interest
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#### B. Sources of income

1 Sources of income I reasonably expect to receive from an occupation in the period commencing on the first day after the return date and ending on the following 30 June  
Sources of income I received from an occupation at any time since 30 June

Description of occupation	Name and address of employer or description of office held (if applicable)	Name under which partnership conducted (if applicable)
---------------------------	--	--

2 Sources of income I reasonably expect to receive from a trust in the period commencing on the first day after the return date and ending on the following 30 June  
Sources of income I received from a trust since 30 June

Name and address of settlor	Name and address of trustee
-----------------------------	-----------------------------

3 Sources of other income I reasonably expect to receive in the period commencing on the first day after the return date and ending on the following 30 June  
Sources of other income I received at any time since 30 June  
*[Include description sufficient to identify the person from whom, or the circumstances in which, that income was received]*

#### C. Gifts

Description of each gift I received at any time since 30 June	Name and address of donor
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#### D. Contributions to travel

Name and address of each person who made any financial or other contribution to any travel	Dates on which travel was undertaken	Name of States, Territories of the Commonwealth and overseas countries
--	--------------------------------------	--



undertaken by me at any time since 30 June	in which travel was undertaken
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#### E. Interests and positions in corporations

Name and address of each corporation in which I had an interest or held a position at the return date/at any time since 30 June	Nature of interest (if any)	Description of position (if any)	Description of principal objects (if any) of corporation (except in case of listed company)
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F. Were you a property developer or a close associate of a property developer on the return date? (Y/N)

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#### G. Positions in trade unions and professional or business associations

Name of each trade union and each professional or business association in which I held any position (whether remunerated or not) at the return date/at any time since 30 June	Description of position
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#### H. Debts

Name and address of each person to whom I was liable to pay any debt at the return date/at any time since 30 June
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#### I. Dispositions of property

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1 Particulars of each disposition of real property by me (including the street address of the affected property) at any time since 30 June as a result of which I retained, either wholly or in part, the use and benefit of the property or the right to re-acquire the property at a later time

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2 Particulars of each disposition of property to a person by any other person under arrangements made by me (including the street address of the affected property), being dispositions made at any time since 30 June, as a result of which I obtained, either wholly or in part, the use and benefit of the property

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#### J. Discretionary disclosures

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### **SCHEDULE 3: FORM OF SPECIAL DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST SUBMITTED UNDER CLAUSE 4.37**

1. This form must be completed using block letters or typed.
2. If there is insufficient space for all the information you are required to disclose, you must attach an appendix which is to be properly identified and signed by you.

#### **Important information**

This information is being collected for the purpose of making a special disclosure of pecuniary interests under clause 4.36(c) of the *Model Code of Conduct for Local Joint organisations in NSW* (the Model Code of Conduct).

The special disclosure must relate only to a pecuniary interest that a joint organisation voting representatives has in the joint organisation voting representatives's principal place of residence, or an interest another person (whose interests are relevant under clause 4.3 of the Model Code of Conduct) has in that person's principal place of residence.

Clause 4.3 of the Model Code of Conduct states that you will have a pecuniary interest in a matter because of the pecuniary interest of your spouse or your de facto partner or your relative or because your business partner or employer has a pecuniary interest. You will also have a pecuniary interest in a matter because you, your nominee, your business partner or your employer is a member of a company or other body that has a pecuniary interest in the matter.

"Relative" is defined by clause 4.4 of the Model Code of Conduct as meaning your, your spouse's or your de facto partner's parent, grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, lineal descendant or adopted child and the spouse or de facto partner of any of those persons.

You must not make a special disclosure that you know or ought reasonably to know is false or misleading in a material particular. Complaints about breaches of these requirements are to be referred to the Office of Local Government and may result in disciplinary action by the Chief Executive of the Office of Local Government or the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

This form must be completed by you before the commencement of the joint organisation or joint organisation committee meeting at which the special disclosure is being made. The completed form must be tabled at the meeting. Everyone is entitled to inspect it. The special disclosure must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

Special disclosure of pecuniary interests by *[full name of joint organisation voting representatives]*

in the matter of *[insert name of environmental planning instrument]*

which is to be considered at a meeting of the *[name of joint organisation or joint organisation committee (as the case requires)]*

to be held on the      day of      20      .

Pecuniary interest	
Address of the affected principal place of residence of the joint organisation voting representatives or an associated person, company or body (the identified land)	
Relationship of identified land to the joint organisation voting representatives <i>[Tick or cross one box.]</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> The joint organisation voting representatives has an interest in the land (e.g. is the owner or has another interest arising out of a mortgage, lease, trust, option or contract, or otherwise). <input type="checkbox"/> An associated person of the joint organisation voting representatives has an interest in the land. <input type="checkbox"/> An associated company or body of the joint organisation voting representatives has an interest in the land.
Matter giving rise to pecuniary interest <sup>1</sup>	
Nature of the land that is subject to a change in zone/planning control by the proposed LEP (the subject land) <sup>2</sup> <i>[Tick or cross one box]</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> The identified land. <input type="checkbox"/> Land that adjoins or is adjacent to or is in proximity to the identified land.
Current zone/planning control <i>[Insert name of current planning instrument and identify relevant zone/planning control applying to the subject land]</i>	
Proposed change of zone/planning control <i>[Insert name of proposed LEP and identify proposed change of zone/planning control applying to the subject land]</i>	

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<sup>1</sup> Clause 4.1 of the Model Code of Conduct provides that a pecuniary interest is an interest that a person has in a matter because of a reasonable likelihood or expectation of appreciable financial gain or loss to the person. A person does not have a pecuniary interest in a matter if the interest is so remote or insignificant that it could not reasonably be regarded as likely to influence any decision the person might make in relation to the matter, or if the interest is of a kind specified in clause 4.6 of the Model Code of Conduct.

<sup>2</sup> A pecuniary interest may arise by way of a change of permissible use of land adjoining, adjacent to or in proximity to land in which a joint organisation or a person, company or body referred to in clause 4.3 of the Model Code of Conduct has a proprietary interest.

Effect of proposed change of zone/planning control on joint organisation voting representatives or associated person <i>[Insert one of the following: "Appreciable financial gain" or "Appreciable financial loss"]</i>	
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*[If more than one pecuniary interest is to be declared, reprint the above box and fill in for each additional interest.]*

Joint organisation voting representatives' signature

Date

[This form is to be retained by the joint organisation's executive officer and included in full in the minutes of the meeting]





# **Procedures for the Administration of the Code of Conduct 2025**

**14 August 2025**

## Controlled Document Information

### Authorisation Details

Policy Name	Procedures for the Administration of the Code of Conduct
Responsible Officer	Steve Wilson (Executive Officer)
Review timeframe	Within 12 months of Local Government Elections
Next Scheduled Review	August 2030
Authorisation	Hunter JO Board
Authorisation Date	14 August 2025

### Related Document Information

Relation Legislation	<i>Local Government Act 1993</i> Local Government (General) Regulation 2005.
Related Policies / Procedures	Hunter JO Code of Conduct 2025

### Definitions

Term / Abbreviation	Definition

### Consultation

Consulted with:	Executive officers Advisory Committee (31 July 2025)
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### Version History

Version No.	Date Changed	Modified by	Details and Comments
1	9 <sup>th</sup> May 2019	Joe James	N/A
2	14 <sup>th</sup> August 2025	Steve Wilson	N/A

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## **PART 1. INTRODUCTION**

These procedures are prescribed by the administration of the *Model Code of Conduct for Local Joint organisations in NSW* ("the Model Code of Conduct").

The Model Code of Conduct is made under section 440 of the *Local Government Act 1993* ("the LGA") and the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005* ("the Regulation"). Section 440 of the LGA requires every joint organisation to adopt a code of conduct that incorporates the provisions of the Model Code of Conduct.

The Model Code Procedures are made under section 440AA of the LGA and the Regulation. Section 440AA of the LGA requires every joint organisation to adopt procedures for the administration of their code of conduct that incorporate the provisions of the Model Code Procedures.

In adopting procedures for the administration of their adopted codes of conduct, joint organisations may supplement the Model Code Procedures. However, provisions that are not consistent with those prescribed under the Model Code Procedures will have no effect.

**Note:** Parts 6, 7, 8 and 11 of these procedures apply only to the management of code of conduct complaints about voting representatives (including the chairperson) or the executive officer.



## PART 2. DEFINITIONS

In these procedures the following terms have the following meanings:

administrator	an administrator of a joint organisation appointed under the LGA other than an administrator appointed under section 66
code of conduct	a code of conduct adopted under section 440 of the LGA
code of conduct complaint	a complaint that is a code of conduct complaint for the purposes of clauses 4.1 and 4.2 of these procedures
complainant	a person who makes a code of conduct complaint
complainant voting representative	a voting representative who makes a code of conduct complaint
complaints coordinator	a person appointed by the executive officer under these procedures as a complaints coordinator
conduct reviewer	a person appointed under these procedures to review allegations of breaches of the code of conduct by voting representatives or the executive officer
joint organisation	a joint organisation established under section 400O of the LGA
joint organisation committee	a committee established by a joint organisation comprising of voting representatives, staff or other persons that the joint organisation has delegated functions to and the joint organisation's audit, risk and improvement committee
joint organisation committee member	a person other than a voting representative or member of staff of a joint organisation who is a member of a joint organisation committee other than a wholly advisory committee, and a person other than a voting representative who is a member of the joint organisation's audit, risk and improvement committee
voting representative	any person elected or appointed to civic office, including voting representatives of the boards of joint organisations and chairpersons of joint organisations
joint organisation official	any voting representative, member of staff of joint organisation, administrator, joint organisation committee member, delegate of joint organisation and, for the purposes of clause 4.16 of the Model Code of Conduct, joint organisation adviser
delegate of joint organisation	a person (other than a voting representative or member of staff of a joint organisation) or body, and the individual members of that body, to whom a function of the joint organisation is delegated

external agency	a state government agency such as, but not limited to, the Office, the ICAC, the NSW Ombudsman or the police
executive officer	includes the executive officer of a joint organisation
ICAC	the Independent Commission Against Corruption
LGA	the Local Government Act 1993
chairperson	includes the chairperson of a joint organisation
members of staff of a joint organisation	includes members of staff of a joint organisation
the Office	the Office of Local Government
investigator	a conduct reviewer
the Regulation	the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005)
respondent	a person whose conduct is the subject of investigation by a conduct reviewer under these procedures
wholly advisory committee	a joint organisation committee that the joint organisation has not delegated any functions to

## PART 3. ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

### The establishment of a panel of conduct reviewers

- 3.1 The joint organisation must establish a panel of conduct reviewers
- 3.2 The joint organisation may enter into an arrangement with one or more other councils or joint organisations to share a panel of conduct reviewers including through a joint organisation or another regional body associated with the joint organisations.
- 3.3 The panel of conduct reviewers is to be established following a public expression of interest process.
- 3.4 An expression of interest for members of the joint organisation's panel of conduct reviewers must, at a minimum, be advertised locally and in the Sydney metropolitan area.
- 3.5 To be eligible to be a conduct reviewer, a person must, at a minimum, meet the following requirements:
  - a) an understanding of local government, and
  - b) knowledge of investigative processes including but not limited to procedural fairness requirements and the requirements of the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994*, and
  - c) knowledge and experience of one or more of the following:
    - i) investigations
    - ii) law
    - iii) public administration
    - iv) public sector ethics
    - v) alternative dispute resolution, and
  - d) meet the eligibility requirements for membership of a panel of conduct reviewers under clause 3.6.
- 3.6 A person is not eligible to be a conduct reviewer if they are:
  - a) a voting representative, or
  - b) a nominee for election as a voting representative, or
  - c) an administrator, or
  - d) an employee of a joint organisation, or
  - e) a member of the Commonwealth Parliament or any State Parliament or Territory Assembly, or
  - f) a nominee for election as a member of the Commonwealth Parliament or any State Parliament or Territory Assembly, or
  - g) a person who has a conviction for an indictable offence that is not an expired conviction.
- 3.7 A person is not precluded from being a member of the joint organisation's panel of conduct reviewers if they are a member of another council's or joint organisation's panel of conduct reviewers.
- 3.8 An incorporated or other entity may be appointed to a joint organisation's panel of conduct reviewers where the joint organisation is satisfied that all the persons who will be undertaking

the functions of a conduct reviewer on behalf of the entity meet the selection and eligibility criteria prescribed under this Part.

- 3.9 A panel of conduct reviewers established under this Part is to have a term of up to four years.
- 3.10 The joint organisation may terminate the panel of conduct reviewers at any time. Where a panel of conduct reviewers has been terminated, conduct reviewers who were members of the panel may continue to deal with any matter referred to them under these procedures prior to the termination of the panel until they have finalised their consideration of the matter.
- 3.11 When the term of the panel of conduct reviewers concludes or is terminated, the joint organisation must establish a new panel of conduct reviewers in accordance with the requirements of this Part.
- 3.12 A person who was a member of a previous panel of conduct reviewers established by the joint organisation may be a member of subsequent panels of conduct reviewers established by the joint organisation if they continue to meet the selection and eligibility criteria for membership of the panel.

#### **The appointment of an internal ombudsman to a panel of conduct reviewers**

- 3.13 Despite clause 3.6(d), an employee of a joint organisation who is the nominated internal ombudsman of one or more joint organisations may be appointed to a joint organisation's panel of conduct reviewers with the Office's consent.
- 3.14 To be appointed to a joint organisation's panel of conduct reviewers, an internal ombudsman must meet the qualification requirements for conduct reviewers prescribed under clause 3.5 as modified by the operation of clause 3.13.
- 3.15 An internal ombudsman appointed to a joint organisation's panel of conduct reviewers may also exercise the functions of the joint organisation's complaints coordinator. For the purposes of clause 6.1, an internal ombudsman who is a joint organisation's complaints coordinator and has been appointed to the joint organisation's panel of conduct reviewers, may either undertake a preliminary assessment and investigation of a matter referred to them under clauses 5.26 or 5.33 or refer the matter to another conduct reviewer in accordance with clause 6.2.
- 3.16 Clause 6.4(c) does not apply to an internal ombudsman appointed to a joint organisation's panel of conduct reviewers.

#### **The appointment of complaints coordinators**

- 3.17 The executive officer must appoint a member of staff of the joint organisation or another person (such as, but not limited to, a member of staff of another joint organisation or other regional body associated with the joint organisation), to act as a complaints coordinator. Where the complaints coordinator is a member of staff of the joint organisation, the complaints coordinator should be a senior and suitably qualified member of staff.
- 3.18 The executive officer may appoint other members of staff of the joint organisation or other persons (such as, but not limited to, members of staff of another joint organisation or other regional body associated with the joint organisation), to act as alternates to the complaints coordinator.



- 3.19 The executive officer must not undertake the role of complaints coordinator.
- 3.20 The person appointed as complaints coordinator or alternate complaints coordinator must also be a nominated disclosures coordinator appointed for the purpose of receiving and managing reports of wrongdoing under the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994*.
- 3.21 The role of the complaints coordinator is to:
- a) coordinate the management of complaints made under the joint organisation's code of conduct
  - b) liaise with and provide administrative support to a conduct reviewer
  - c) liaise with the Office, and
  - d) arrange the annual reporting of code of conduct complaints statistics.

## **PART 4. HOW MAY CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS BE MADE?**

### **What is a code of conduct complaint?**

- 4.1 For the purpose of these procedures, a code of conduct complaint is a complaint that shows or tends to show conduct on the part of a joint organisation official in connection with their role as a joint organisation official or the exercise of their functions as a joint organisation official that would constitute a breach of the standards of conduct prescribed under the joint organisation's code of conduct if proven.
- 4.2 The following are not "code of conduct complaints" for the purposes of these procedures:
- a) complaints about the standard or level of service provided by the joint organisation or a joint organisation official
  - b) complaints that relate solely to the merits of a decision made by the joint organisation or a joint organisation official or the exercise of a discretion by the joint organisation or a joint organisation official
  - c) complaints about the policies or procedures of the joint organisation
  - d) complaints about the conduct of a joint organisation official arising from the exercise of their functions in good faith, whether or not involving error, that would not otherwise constitute a breach of the standards of conduct prescribed under the joint organisation's code of conduct.
- 4.3 Only code of conduct complaints are to be dealt with under these procedures. Complaints that do not satisfy the definition of a code of conduct complaint are to be dealt with under the joint organisation's routine complaints management processes.

### **When must a code of conduct complaint be made?**

- 4.4 A code of conduct complaint must be made within 3 months of the alleged conduct occurring or within three months of the complainant becoming aware of the alleged conduct.
- 4.5 A complaint made after 3 months may only be accepted if the executive officer or their delegate, or, in the case of a complaint about the executive officer, the chairperson or their delegate, is satisfied that the allegations are serious and compelling grounds exist for the matter to be dealt with under the code of conduct.

### **How may a code of conduct complaint about a joint organisation official other than the executive officer be made?**

- 4.6 All code of conduct complaints other than those relating to the executive officer are to be made to the executive officer in writing. This clause does not operate to prevent a person from making a complaint to an external agency.
- 4.7 Where a code of conduct complaint about a joint organisation official other than the executive officer cannot be made in writing, the complaint must be confirmed with the complainant in writing as soon as possible after the receipt of the complaint.
- 4.8 In making a code of conduct complaint about a joint organisation official other than the executive officer, the complainant may nominate whether they want the complaint to be resolved by mediation or by other alternative means.

- 4.9 The executive officer or their delegate, or, where the complaint is referred to a conduct reviewer, the conduct reviewer, must consider the complainant's preferences in deciding how to deal with the complaint.
- 4.10 Notwithstanding clauses 4.6 and 4.7, where the executive officer becomes aware of a possible breach of the joint organisation's code of conduct, they may initiate the process for the consideration of the matter under these procedures without a written complaint.

#### **How may a code of conduct complaint about the executive officer be made?**

- 4.11 Code of conduct complaints about the executive officer are to be made to the chairperson in writing. This clause does not operate to prevent a person from making a complaint about the executive officer to an external agency.
- 4.12 Where a code of conduct complaint about the executive officer cannot be made in writing, the complaint must be confirmed with the complainant in writing as soon as possible after the receipt of the complaint.
- 4.13 In making a code of conduct complaint about the executive officer, the complainant may nominate whether they want the complaint to be resolved by mediation or by other alternative means.
- 4.14 The chairperson or their delegate, or, where the complaint is referred to a conduct reviewer, the conduct reviewer, must consider the complainant's preferences in deciding how to deal with the complaint.
- 4.15 Notwithstanding clauses 4.11 and 4.12, where the chairperson becomes aware of a possible breach of the joint organisation's code of conduct by the executive officer, they may initiate the process for the consideration of the matter under these procedures without a written complaint.

## **PART 5. HOW ARE CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS TO BE MANAGED?**

### **Delegation by executive officers and chairpersons of their functions under this Part**

- 5.1 An executive officer or chairperson may delegate their functions under this Part to a member of staff of the joint organisation or to a person or persons external to the joint organisation other than an external agency. References in this Part to the executive officer or chairperson are also to be taken to be references to their delegates.

### **Consideration of complaints by executive officers and chairpersons**

- 5.2 In exercising their functions under this Part, executive officers and chairpersons may consider the complaint assessment criteria prescribed under clause 6.31.

### **What complaints may be declined at the outset?**

- 5.3 Without limiting any other provision in these procedures, the executive officer or, in the case of a complaint about the executive officer, the chairperson, may decline to deal with a complaint under these procedures where they are satisfied that the complaint:
- a) is not a code of conduct complaint, or
  - b) subject to clause 4.5, is not made within 3 months of the alleged conduct occurring or the complainant becoming aware of the alleged conduct, or
  - c) is trivial, frivolous, vexatious or not made in good faith, or
  - d) relates to a matter the substance of which has previously been considered and addressed by the joint organisation and does not warrant further action, or
  - e) is not made in a way that would allow the alleged conduct and any alleged breaches of the joint organisation's code of conduct to be readily identified.

### **How are code of conduct complaints about staff (other than the executive officer) to be dealt with?**

- 5.4 The executive officer is responsible for the management of code of conduct complaints about members of staff of joint organisation (other than complaints alleging a breach of the pecuniary interest provisions contained in Part 4 of the code of conduct) and for determining the outcome of such complaints.
- 5.5 The executive officer must refer code of conduct complaints about members of staff of the joint organisation alleging a breach of the pecuniary interest provisions contained in Part 4 of the code of conduct to the Office.
- 5.6 The executive officer may decide to take no action in relation to a code of conduct complaint about a member of staff of joint organisation other than one requiring referral to the Office under clause 5.5 where they consider that no action is warranted in relation to the complaint.
- 5.7 Where the executive officer decides to take no action in relation to a code of conduct complaint about a member of staff of joint organisation, the executive officer must give the complainant reasons in writing for their decision and this shall finalise the consideration of the matter under these procedures.
- 5.8 Code of conduct complaints about members of staff of the joint organisation must be managed in accordance with the relevant industrial instrument or employment contract and make



provision for procedural fairness including the right of an employee to be represented by their union.

- 5.9 Sanctions for breaches of the code of conduct by staff depend on the severity, scale and importance of the breach and must be determined in accordance with any relevant industrial instruments or contracts.

#### **How are code of conduct complaints about delegates of joint organisation, joint organisation advisers and joint organisation committee members to be dealt with?**

- 5.10 The executive officer is responsible for the management of code of conduct complaints about delegates of the joint organisation and joint organisation committee members (other than complaints alleging a breach of the pecuniary interest provisions contained in Part 4 of the code of conduct) and for determining the outcome of such complaints.
- 5.11 The executive officer must refer code of conduct complaints about joint organisation advisers, delegates of joint organisation and joint organisation committee members alleging a breach of the pecuniary interest provisions contained in Part 4 of the code of conduct to the Office.
- 5.12 The executive officer may decide to take no action in relation to a code of conduct complaint about a delegate of the joint organisation or a joint organisation committee member other than one requiring referral to the Office under clause 5.11 where they consider that no action is warranted in relation to the complaint.
- 5.13 Where the executive officer decides to take no action in relation to a code of conduct complaint about a delegate of joint organisation or a joint organisation committee member, the executive officer must give the complainant reasons in writing for their decision and this shall finalise the consideration of the matter under these procedures.
- 5.14 Where the executive officer considers it to be practicable and appropriate to do so, the executive officer may seek to resolve code of conduct complaints about delegates of joint organisation or joint organisation committee members, by alternative means such as, but not limited to, explanation, counselling, training, mediation, informal discussion, negotiation, a voluntary apology or an undertaking not to repeat the offending behaviour. The resolution of a code of conduct complaint under this clause is not to be taken as a determination that there has been a breach of the joint organisation's code of conduct.
- 5.15 Where the executive officer resolves a code of conduct complaint under clause 5.14 to the executive officer's satisfaction, the executive officer must notify the complainant in writing of the steps taken to resolve the complaint and this shall finalise the consideration of the matter under these procedures.
- 5.16 Sanctions for breaches of the code of conduct by delegates of the joint organisation and/or joint organisation committee members depend on the severity, scale and importance of the breach and may include one or more of the following:
- a) censure
  - b) requiring the person to apologise to any person or organisation adversely affected by the breach in such a time and form specified by the executive officer
  - c) prosecution for any breach of the law
  - d) removing or restricting the person's delegation
  - e) removing the person from membership of the relevant joint organisation committee.

- 5.17 Prior to imposing a sanction against a delegate of joint organisation or a joint organisation committee member under clause 5.16, the executive officer or any person making enquiries on behalf of the executive officer must comply with the requirements of procedural fairness. In particular:
- a) the substance of the allegation (including the relevant provision/s of the joint organisation's code of conduct that the alleged conduct is in breach of) must be put to the person who is the subject of the allegation, and
  - b) the person must be given an opportunity to respond to the allegation, and
  - c) the executive officer must consider the person's response in deciding whether to impose a sanction under clause 5.16.

#### **How are code of conduct complaints about administrators to be dealt with?**

- 5.18 The executive officer must refer all code of conduct complaints about administrators to the Office for its consideration.
- 5.19 The executive officer must notify the complainant of the referral of their complaint in writing.

#### **How are code of conduct complaints about voting representatives to be dealt with?**

- 5.20 The executive officer must refer the following code of conduct complaints about voting representatives to the Office:
- a) complaints alleging a breach of the pecuniary interest provisions contained in Part 4 of the code of conduct
  - b) complaints alleging a failure to comply with a requirement under the code of conduct to disclose and appropriately manage conflicts of interest arising from political donations (see section 328B of the LGA)
  - c) complaints alleging a breach of the provisions relating to the maintenance of the integrity of the code of conduct contained in Part 9 of the code of conduct
  - d) complaints that are the subject of a special complaints management arrangement with the Office under clause 5.49.
- 5.21 Where the executive officer refers a complaint to the Office under clause 5.20, the executive officer must notify the complainant of the referral in writing.
- 5.22 The executive officer may decide to take no action in relation to a code of conduct complaint about a voting representative, other than one requiring referral to the Office under clause 5.20, where they consider that no action is warranted in relation to the complaint.
- 5.23 Where the executive officer decides to take no action in relation to a code of conduct complaint about a voting representative, the executive officer must give the complainant reasons in writing for their decision within 21 days of receipt of the complaint and this shall finalise the consideration of the matter under these procedures.
- 5.24 Where the executive officer considers it to be practicable and appropriate to do so, the executive officer may seek to resolve code of conduct complaints about voting representatives, other than those requiring referral to the Office under clause 5.20, by alternative means such as, but not limited to, explanation, counselling, training, mediation, informal discussion, negotiation, a voluntary apology or an undertaking not to repeat the offending behaviour. The resolution of a code of conduct complaint under this clause is not to be taken as a determination that there has been a breach of the joint organisation's code of conduct.

- 5.25 Where the executive officer resolves a code of conduct complaint under clause 5.24 to the executive officer's satisfaction, the executive officer must notify the complainant in writing of the steps taken to resolve the complaint within 21 days of receipt of the complaint and this shall finalise the consideration of the matter under these procedures.
- 5.26 The executive officer must refer all code of conduct complaints about voting representatives, other than those referred to the Office under clause 5.20 or finalised under clause 5.23 or resolved under clause 5.24, to the complaints coordinator.

#### **How are code of conduct complaints about the executive officer to be dealt with?**

- 5.27 The chairperson must refer the following code of conduct complaints about the executive officer to the Office:
- a) complaints alleging a breach of the pecuniary interest provisions contained in Part 4 of the code of conduct
  - b) complaints alleging a breach of the provisions relating to the maintenance of the integrity of the code of conduct contained in Part 9 of the code of conduct
  - c) complaints that are the subject of a special complaints management arrangement with the Office under clause 5.49.
- 5.28 Where the chairperson refers a complaint to the Office under clause 5.27, the chairperson must notify the complainant of the referral in writing.
- 5.29 The chairperson may decide to take no action in relation to a code of conduct complaint about the executive officer, other than one requiring referral to the Office under clause 5.27, where they consider that no action is warranted in relation to the complaint.
- 5.30 Where the chairperson decides to take no action in relation to a code of conduct complaint about the executive officer, the chairperson must give the complainant reasons in writing for their decision within 21 days of receipt of the complaint and this shall finalise the consideration of the matter under these procedures.
- 5.31 Where the chairperson considers it to be practicable and appropriate to do so, the chairperson may seek to resolve code of conduct complaints about the executive officer, other than those requiring referral to the Office under clause 5.27, by alternative means such as, but not limited to, explanation, counselling, training, mediation, informal discussion, negotiation, a voluntary apology or an undertaking not to repeat the offending behaviour. The resolution of a code of conduct complaint under this clause is not to be taken as a determination that there has been a breach of the joint organisation's code of conduct.
- 5.32 Where the chairperson resolves a code of conduct complaint under clause 5.31 to the chairperson's satisfaction, the chairperson must notify the complainant in writing of the steps taken to resolve the complaint within 21 days of receipt of the complaint and this shall finalise the consideration of the matter under these procedures.
- 5.33 The chairperson must refer all code of conduct complaints about the executive officer, other than those referred to the Office under clause 5.27 or finalised under clause 5.30 or resolved under clause 5.31, to the complaints coordinator.

## **How are complaints about both the executive officer and the chairperson to be dealt with?**

- 5.34 Where the executive officer or chairperson receives a code of conduct complaint that alleges a breach of the code of conduct by both the executive officer and the chairperson, the executive officer or chairperson must either:
- a) delegate their functions under this part with respect to the complaint to a member of staff of the joint organisation other than the executive officer where the allegation is not serious, or to a person external to the joint organisation, or
  - b) refer the matter to the complaints coordinator under clause 5.26 and clause 5.33.

## **Referral of code of conduct complaints to external agencies**

- 5.35 The executive officer, chairperson or a conduct reviewer may, at any time, refer a code of conduct complaint to an external agency for its consideration, where they consider such a referral is warranted.
- 5.36 The executive officer, chairperson or a conduct reviewer must report to the ICAC any matter that they suspect on reasonable grounds concerns or may concern corrupt conduct.
- 5.37 Where the executive officer, chairperson or conduct reviewer refers a complaint to an external agency under clause 5.35, they must notify the complainant of the referral in writing unless they form the view, on the advice of the relevant agency, that it would not be appropriate for them to do so.
- 5.38 Referral of a matter to an external agency shall finalise consideration of the matter under these procedures unless the joint organisation is subsequently advised otherwise by the referral agency.

## **Disclosure of the identity of complainants**

- 5.39 In dealing with matters under these procedures, information that identifies or tends to identify complainants is not to be disclosed unless:
- a) the complainant consents in writing to the disclosure, or
  - b) it is generally known that the complainant has made the complaint as a result of the complainant having voluntarily identified themselves as the person who made the complaint, or
  - c) it is essential, having regard to procedural fairness requirements, that the identifying information be disclosed, or
  - d) a conduct reviewer is of the opinion that disclosure of the information is necessary to investigate the matter effectively, or
  - e) it is otherwise in the public interest to do so.
- 5.40 Clause 5.39 does not apply to code of conduct complaints made by voting representatives about other voting representatives or the executive officer.
- 5.41 Where a voting representative makes a code of conduct complaint about another voting representative or the executive officer, and the complainant voting representative considers that compelling grounds exist that would warrant information that identifies or tends to identify



them as the complainant not to be disclosed, they may request in writing that such information not be disclosed.

- 5.42 A request made by a complainant voting representative under clause 5.41 must be made at the time they make a code of conduct complaint and must state the grounds upon which the request is made.
- 5.43 The executive officer or chairperson, and where the matter is referred to a conduct reviewer, the conduct reviewer, must consider a request made under clause 5.41 before disclosing information that identifies or tends to identify the complainant voting representative, but they are not obliged to comply with the request.
- 5.44 Where a complainant voting representative makes a request under clause 5.41, the executive officer or chairperson or, where the matter is referred to a conduct reviewer, the conduct reviewer, shall notify the voting representative in writing of their intention to disclose information that identifies or tends to identify them prior to disclosing the information.

#### **Code of conduct complaints made as public interest disclosures**

- 5.45 These procedures do not override the provisions of the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994*. Code of conduct complaints that are made as public interest disclosures under that Act are to be managed in accordance with the requirements of that Act, the joint organisation's internal reporting policy, and any guidelines issued by the NSW Ombudsman that relate to the management of public interest disclosures.
- 5.46 Where a voting representative makes a code of conduct complaint about another voting representative or the executive officer as a public interest disclosure, before the matter may be dealt with under these procedures, the complainant voting representative must consent in writing to the disclosure of their identity as the complainant.
- 5.47 Where a complainant voting representative declines to consent to the disclosure of their identity as the complainant under clause 5.46, the executive officer or the chairperson must refer the complaint to the Office for consideration. Such a referral must be made under section 26 of the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994*.

#### **Special complaints management arrangements**

- 5.48 The executive officer may request in writing that the Office enter into a special complaints management arrangement with the joint organisation in relation to code of conduct complaints made by or about a person or persons.
- 5.49 Where the Office receives a request under clause 5.48, it may agree to enter into a special complaints management arrangement if it is satisfied that the number or nature of code of conduct complaints made by or about a person or persons has:
  - a) imposed an undue and disproportionate cost burden on the joint organisation's administration of its code of conduct, or
  - b) impeded or disrupted the effective administration by the joint organisation of its code of conduct, or
  - c) impeded or disrupted the effective functioning of the joint organisation.

- 5.50 A special complaints management arrangement must be in writing and must specify the following:
- a) the code of conduct complaints the arrangement relates to, and
  - b) the period that the arrangement will be in force.
- 5.51 The Office may, by notice in writing, amend or terminate a special complaints management arrangement at any time.
- 5.52 While a special complaints management arrangement is in force, an officer of the Office (the assessing OLG officer) must undertake the preliminary assessment of the code of conduct complaints specified in the arrangement in accordance with the requirements of Part 6 of these procedures.
- 5.53 Where, following a preliminary assessment, the assessing OLG officer determines that a code of conduct complaint warrants investigation by a conduct reviewer, the assessing OLG officer shall notify the complaints coordinator in writing of their determination and the reasons for their determination. The complaints coordinator must comply with the recommendation of the assessing OLG officer.
- 5.54 Prior to the expiry of a special complaints management arrangement, the Office may, at the request of the executive officer, review the arrangement to determine whether it should be renewed or amended.
- 5.55 A special complaints management arrangement shall expire on the date specified in the arrangement unless renewed under clause 5.54.

## **PART 6. PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS ABOUT VOTING REPRESENTATIVES OR THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER BY CONDUCT REVIEWERS**

### **Referral of code of conduct complaints about voting representatives or the executive officer to conduct reviewers**

- 6.1 The complaints coordinator must refer all code of conduct complaints about voting representatives or the executive officer that have not been referred to an external agency or declined or resolved by the executive officer, chairperson or their delegate and that have been referred to them under clauses 5.26 or 5.33, to a conduct reviewer within 21 days of receipt of the complaint by the executive officer or the chairperson.
- 6.2 For the purposes of clause 6.1, the complaints coordinator will refer a complaint to a conduct reviewer selected from:
  - a) a panel of conduct reviewers established by the joint organisation, or
  - b) a panel of conduct reviewers established by an organisation approved by the Office.
- 6.3 In selecting a suitable conduct reviewer, the complaints coordinator may have regard to the qualifications and experience of members of the panel of conduct reviewers. Where the conduct reviewer is an incorporated or other entity, the complaints coordinator must also ensure that the person assigned to receive the referral on behalf of the entity meets the selection and eligibility criteria for conduct reviewers prescribed under Part 3 of these procedures.
- 6.4 A conduct reviewer must not accept the referral of a code of conduct complaint where:
  - a) they have a conflict of interest in relation to the matter referred to them, or
  - b) a reasonable apprehension of bias arises in relation to their consideration of the matter, or
  - c) they or their employer has entered into one or more contracts with the joint organisation (other than contracts relating to the exercise of their functions as a conduct reviewer) in the 2 years preceding the referral, and they or their employer have received or expect to receive payments under the contract or contracts of a value that, when aggregated, exceeds \$100,000, or
  - d) at the time of the referral, they or their employer are the joint organisation's legal service provider or are a member of a panel of legal service providers appointed by the joint organisation.
- 6.5 For the purposes of clause 6.4(a), a conduct reviewer will have a conflict of interest in a matter where a reasonable and informed person would perceive that they could be influenced by a private interest when carrying out their public duty (see clause 5.2 of the Code of Conduct).
- 6.6 For the purposes of clause 6.4(b), a reasonable apprehension of bias arises where a fair-minded observer might reasonably apprehend that the conduct reviewer might not bring an impartial and unprejudiced mind to the matter referred to the conduct reviewer.
- 6.7 Where the complaints coordinator refers a matter to a conduct reviewer, they will provide the conduct reviewer with a copy of the code of conduct complaint and any other information relevant to the matter held by the joint organisation, including any information about previous proven breaches and any information that would indicate that the alleged conduct forms part of an ongoing pattern of behaviour.

- 6.8 The complaints coordinator must notify the complainant in writing that the matter has been referred to a conduct reviewer, and advise which conduct reviewer the matter has been referred to.
- 6.9 Conduct reviewers must comply with these procedures in their consideration of matters that have been referred to them and exercise their functions in a diligent and timely manner.
- 6.10 The complaints coordinator may at any time terminate the referral of a matter to a conduct reviewer and refer the matter to another conduct reviewer where the complaints coordinator is satisfied that the conduct reviewer has failed to:
- a) comply with these procedures in their consideration of the matter, or
  - b) comply with a lawful and reasonable request by the complaints coordinator, or
  - c) exercise their functions in a timely or satisfactory manner.
- 6.11 Where the complaints coordinator terminates a referral to a conduct reviewer under clause 6.10, they must notify the complainant and any other affected person in writing of their decision and the reasons for it and advise them which conduct reviewer the matter has been referred to instead.

#### **Preliminary assessment of code of conduct complaints about voting representatives or the executive officer by a conduct reviewer**

- 6.12 The conduct reviewer is to undertake a preliminary assessment of a complaint referred to them by the complaints coordinator for the purposes of determining how the complaint is to be managed.
- 6.13 The conduct reviewer may determine to do one or more of the following in relation to a complaint referred to them by the complaints coordinator:
- a) to take no action
  - b) to resolve the complaint by alternative and appropriate strategies such as, but not limited to, explanation, counselling, training, mediation, informal discussion, negotiation, a voluntary apology or an undertaking not to repeat the offending behaviour
  - c) to refer the matter back to the executive officer or, in the case of a complaint about the executive officer, the chairperson, for resolution by alternative and appropriate strategies such as, but not limited to, explanation, counselling, training, mediation, informal discussion, negotiation, a voluntary apology or an undertaking not to repeat the offending behaviour
  - d) to refer the matter to an external agency
  - e) to investigate the matter.
- 6.14 In determining how to deal with a matter under clause 6.13, the conduct reviewer must have regard to the complaint assessment criteria prescribed under clause 6.31.
- 6.15 The conduct reviewer may make such enquiries the conduct reviewer considers to be reasonably necessary to determine what options to exercise under clause 6.13.
- 6.16 The conduct reviewer may request the complaints coordinator to provide such additional information the conduct reviewer considers to be reasonably necessary to determine what options to exercise in relation to the matter under clause 6.13. The complaints coordinator will, as far as is reasonably practicable, supply any information requested by the conduct reviewer.

- 6.17 The conduct reviewer must refer to the Office any complaints referred to them that should have been referred to the Office under clauses 5.20 and 5.27.
- 6.18 The conduct reviewer must determine to take no action on a complaint that is not a code of conduct complaint for the purposes of these procedures.
- 6.19 The resolution of a code of conduct complaint under clause 6.13, paragraphs (b) or (c) is not to be taken as a determination that there has been a breach of the joint organisation's code of conduct.
- 6.20 Where the conduct reviewer completes their preliminary assessment of a complaint by determining to exercise an option under clause 6.13, paragraphs (a), (b) or (c), they must provide the complainant with written notice of their determination and provide reasons for it, and this will finalise consideration of the matter under these procedures.
- 6.21 Where the conduct reviewer refers a complaint to an external agency, they must notify the complainant of the referral in writing unless they form the view, on the advice of the relevant agency, that it would not be appropriate for them to do so.
- 6.22 The conduct reviewer may only determine to investigate a matter where they are satisfied as to the following:
- a) that the complaint is a code of conduct complaint for the purposes of these procedures, and
  - b) that the alleged conduct is sufficiently serious to warrant the formal censure of a voting representative under section 440G of the LGA or disciplinary action against the executive officer under their contract of employment if it were to be proven, and
  - c) that the matter is one that could not or should not be resolved by alternative means.
- 6.23 In determining whether a matter is sufficiently serious to warrant formal censure of a voting representative under section 440G of the LGA or disciplinary action against the executive officer under their contract of employment, the conduct reviewer is to consider the following:
- a) the harm or cost that the alleged conduct has caused to any affected individuals and/or the joint organisation
  - b) the likely impact of the alleged conduct on the reputation of the joint organisation and public confidence in it
  - c) whether the alleged conduct was deliberate or undertaken with reckless intent or negligence
  - d) any previous proven breaches by the person whose alleged conduct is the subject of the complaint and/or whether the alleged conduct forms part of an ongoing pattern of behaviour.
- 6.24 The conduct reviewer must complete their preliminary assessment of the complaint within 28 days of referral of the matter to them by the complaints coordinator and notify the complaints coordinator in writing of the outcome of their assessment.
- 6.25 The conduct reviewer is not obliged to give prior notice to or to consult with any person before making a determination in relation to their preliminary assessment of a complaint, except as may be specifically required under these procedures.



## Referral back to the executive officer or chairperson for resolution

- 6.26 Where the conduct reviewer determines to refer a matter back to the executive officer or to the chairperson to be resolved by alternative and appropriate means, they must write to the executive officer or, in the case of a complaint about the executive officer, to the chairperson, recommending the means by which the complaint may be resolved.
- 6.27 The conduct reviewer must consult with the executive officer or chairperson prior to referring a matter back to them under clause 6.13(c).
- 6.28 The executive officer or chairperson may decline to accept the conduct reviewer's recommendation. In such cases, the conduct reviewer may determine to deal with the complaint by other means under clause 6.13.
- 6.29 Where the conduct reviewer refers a matter back to the executive officer or chairperson under clause 6.13(c), the executive officer or, in the case of a complaint about the executive officer, the chairperson, is responsible for implementing or overseeing the implementation of the conduct reviewer's recommendation.
- 6.30 Where the conduct reviewer refers a matter back to the executive officer or chairperson under clause 6.13(c), the executive officer, or, in the case of a complaint about the executive officer, the chairperson, must advise the complainant in writing of the steps taken to implement the conduct reviewer's recommendation once these steps have been completed.

## Complaints assessment criteria

- 6.31 In undertaking the preliminary assessment of a complaint, the conduct reviewer must have regard to the following considerations:
- a) whether the complaint is a code of conduct complaint for the purpose of these procedures
  - b) whether the complaint has been made in a timely manner in accordance with clause 4.4, and if not, whether the allegations are sufficiently serious for compelling grounds to exist for the matter to be dealt with under the joint organisation's code of conduct
  - c) whether the complaint is trivial, frivolous, vexatious or not made in good faith
  - d) whether the complaint discloses prima facie evidence of conduct that, if proven, would constitute a breach of the code of conduct
  - e) whether the complaint raises issues that would be more appropriately dealt with by an external agency
  - f) whether there is or was an alternative and satisfactory means of redress available in relation to the conduct complained of
  - g) whether the complaint is one that can be resolved by alternative and appropriate strategies such as, but not limited to, explanation, counselling, training, informal discussion, negotiation, a voluntary apology or an undertaking not to repeat the offending behaviour
  - h) whether the issue/s giving rise to the complaint have previously been addressed or resolved
  - i) any previous proven breaches of the joint organisation's code of conduct
  - j) whether the conduct complained of forms part of an ongoing pattern of behaviour
  - k) whether there were mitigating circumstances giving rise to the conduct complained of
  - l) the seriousness of the alleged conduct (having regard to the criteria specified in clause 6.23)

- m) the significance of the conduct or the impact of the conduct for the joint organisation
- n) how much time has passed since the alleged conduct occurred
- o) such other considerations that the conduct reviewer considers may be relevant to the assessment of the complaint.

## **PART 7. INVESTIGATIONS OF CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS ABOUT VOTING REPRESENTATIVES OR THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

### **What matters may a conduct reviewer investigate?**

- 7.1 A conduct reviewer (hereafter referred to as an “investigator”) may investigate a code of conduct complaint that has been referred to them by the complaints coordinator and any matters related to or arising from that complaint.
- 7.2 Where an investigator identifies further separate possible breaches of the code of conduct that are not related to or do not arise from the code of conduct complaint that has been referred to them, they are to report the matters separately in writing to the executive officer, or, in the case of alleged conduct on the part of the executive officer, to the chairperson.
- 7.3 The executive officer or the chairperson or their delegate is to deal with a matter reported to them by an investigator under clause 7.2 as if it were a new code of conduct complaint in accordance with these procedures.

### **How are investigations to be commenced?**

- 7.4 The investigator must at the outset of their investigation provide a written notice of investigation to the respondent. The notice of investigation must:
  - a) disclose the substance of the allegations against the respondent, and
  - b) advise of the relevant provisions of the code of conduct that apply to the alleged conduct, and
  - c) advise of the process to be followed in investigating the matter, and
  - d) advise the respondent of the requirement to maintain confidentiality, and
  - e) invite the respondent to make a written submission in relation to the matter within a period of not less than 14 days specified by the investigator in the notice, and
  - f) provide the respondent the opportunity to address the investigator on the matter within such reasonable time specified in the notice.
- 7.5 The respondent may, within 7 days of receipt of the notice of investigation, request in writing that the investigator provide them with such further information they consider necessary to assist them to identify the substance of the allegation against them. An investigator will only be obliged to provide such information that the investigator considers reasonably necessary for the respondent to identify the substance of the allegation against them.
- 7.6 An investigator may at any time prior to issuing a draft report, issue an amended notice of investigation to the respondent in relation to the matter referred to them.
- 7.7 Where an investigator issues an amended notice of investigation, they must provide the respondent with a further opportunity to make a written submission in response to the amended notice of investigation within a period of not less than 14 days specified by the investigator in the amended notice.
- 7.8 The investigator must also, at the outset of their investigation, provide written notice of the investigation to the complainant, the complaints coordinator and the executive officer, or in the case of a complaint about the executive officer, to the complainant, the complaints coordinator and the chairperson. The notice must:
  - a) advise them of the matter the investigator is investigating, and

- b) in the case of the notice to the complainant, advise them of the requirement to maintain confidentiality, and
- c) invite the complainant to make a written submission in relation to the matter within a period of not less than 14 days specified by the investigator in the notice.

### **Written and oral submissions**

- 7.9 Where the respondent or the complainant fails to make a written submission in relation to the matter within the period specified by the investigator in their notice of investigation or amended notice of investigation, the investigator may proceed to prepare their draft report without receiving such submissions.
- 7.10 The investigator may accept written submissions received outside the period specified in the notice of investigation or amended notice of investigation.
- 7.11 Prior to preparing a draft report, the investigator must give the respondent an opportunity to address the investigator on the matter being investigated. The respondent may do so in person or by telephone or other electronic means.
- 7.12 Where the respondent fails to accept the opportunity to address the investigator within the period specified by the investigator in the notice of investigation, the investigator may proceed to prepare a draft report without hearing from the respondent.
- 7.13 Where the respondent accepts the opportunity to address the investigator in person, they may have a support person or legal adviser in attendance. The support person or legal adviser will act in an advisory or support role to the respondent only. They must not speak on behalf of the respondent or otherwise interfere with or disrupt proceedings.
- 7.14 The investigator must consider all written and oral submissions made to them in relation to the matter.

### **How are investigations to be conducted?**

- 7.15 Investigations are to be undertaken without undue delay.
- 7.16 Investigations are to be undertaken in the absence of the public and in confidence.
- 7.17 Investigators must make any such enquiries that may be reasonably necessary to establish the facts of the matter.
- 7.18 Investigators may seek such advice or expert guidance that may be reasonably necessary to assist them with their investigation or the conduct of their investigation.
- 7.19 An investigator may request that the complaints coordinator provide such further information that the investigator considers may be reasonably necessary for them to establish the facts of the matter. The complaints coordinator will, as far as is reasonably practicable, provide the information requested by the investigator.

## **Referral or resolution of a matter after the commencement of an investigation**

- 7.20 At any time after an investigator has issued a notice of investigation and before they have issued their final report, an investigator may determine to:
- a) resolve the matter by alternative and appropriate strategies such as, but not limited to, explanation, counselling, training, mediation, informal discussion, negotiation, a voluntary apology or an undertaking not to repeat the offending behaviour, or
  - b) refer the matter to the executive officer, or, in the case of a complaint about the executive officer, to the chairperson, for resolution by alternative and appropriate strategies such as, but not limited to, explanation, counselling, training, mediation, informal discussion, negotiation, a voluntary apology or an undertaking not to repeat the offending behaviour, or
  - c) refer the matter to an external agency.
- 7.21 Where an investigator determines to exercise any of the options under clause 7.20 after the commencement of an investigation, they must do so in accordance with the requirements of Part 6 of these procedures relating to the exercise of these options at the preliminary assessment stage.
- 7.22 The resolution of a code of conduct complaint under clause 7.20, paragraphs (a) or (b) is not to be taken as a determination that there has been a breach of the joint organisation's code of conduct.
- 7.23 Where an investigator determines to exercise any of the options under clause 7.20 after the commencement of an investigation, they may by written notice to the respondent, the complainant, the complaints coordinator and the executive officer, or in the case of a complaint about the executive officer, to the respondent, the complainant, the complaints coordinator and the chairperson, discontinue their investigation of the matter.
- 7.24 Where the investigator discontinues their investigation of a matter under clause 7.23, this shall finalise the consideration of the matter under these procedures.
- 7.25 An investigator is not obliged to give prior notice to or to consult with any person before making a determination to exercise any of the options under clause 7.20 or to discontinue their investigation except as may be specifically required under these procedures.

## **Draft investigation reports**

- 7.26 When an investigator has completed their enquiries and considered any written or oral submissions made to them in relation to a matter, they must prepare a draft of their proposed report.
- 7.27 The investigator must provide their draft report to the respondent and invite them to make a written submission in relation to it within a period of not less than 14 days specified by the investigator.
- 7.28 Where the investigator proposes to make adverse comment about any other person (an affected person) in their report, they must also provide the affected person with relevant extracts of their draft report containing such comment and invite the affected person to make



a written submission in relation to it within a period of not less than 14 days specified by the investigator.

- 7.29 The investigator must consider written submissions received in relation to the draft report prior to finalising their report in relation to the matter.
- 7.30 The investigator may, after consideration of all written submissions received in relation to their draft report, make further enquiries into the matter. If, as a result of making further enquiries, the investigator makes any material change to their proposed report that makes new adverse comment about the respondent or an affected person, they must provide the respondent or affected person as the case may be with a further opportunity to make a written submission in relation to the new adverse comment.
- 7.31 Where the respondent or an affected person fails to make a written submission in relation to the draft report within the period specified by the investigator, the investigator may proceed to prepare and issue their final report without receiving such submissions.
- 7.32 The investigator may accept written submissions in relation to the draft report received outside the period specified by the investigator at any time prior to issuing their final report.

### **Final investigation reports**

- 7.33 Where an investigator issues a notice of investigation, they must prepare a final report in relation to the matter unless the investigation is discontinued under clause 7.23.
- 7.34 An investigator must not prepare a final report in relation to the matter at any time before they have finalised their consideration of the matter in accordance with the requirements of these procedures.
- 7.35 The investigator's final report must:
- a) make findings of fact in relation to the matter investigated, and,
  - b) make a determination that the conduct investigated either,
    - i. constitutes a breach of the code of conduct, or
    - ii. does not constitute a breach of the code of conduct, and
  - c) provide reasons for the determination.
- 7.36 At a minimum, the investigator's final report must contain the following information:
- a) a description of the allegations against the respondent
  - b) the relevant provisions of the code of conduct that apply to the alleged conduct investigated
  - c) a statement of reasons as to why the matter warranted investigation (having regard to the criteria specified in clause 6.23)
  - d) a statement of reasons as to why the matter was one that could not or should not be resolved by alternative means
  - e) a description of any attempts made to resolve the matter by use of alternative means
  - f) the steps taken to investigate the matter
  - g) the facts of the matter
  - h) the investigator's findings in relation to the facts of the matter and the reasons for those findings
  - i) the investigator's determination and the reasons for that determination
  - j) any recommendations.

- 7.37 Where the investigator determines that the conduct investigated constitutes a breach of the code of conduct, the investigator may recommend:
- a) in the case of a breach by the executive officer, that disciplinary action be taken under the executive officer's contract of employment for the breach, or
  - b) in the case of a breach by a voting representative, that the voting representative be formally censured for the breach under section 440G of the LGA, or
  - c) in the case of a breach by a voting representative, that the joint organisation resolves as follows:
    - i. that the voting representative be formally censured for the breach under section 440G of the LGA, and
    - ii. that the matter be referred to the Office for further action under the misconduct provisions of the LGA.
- 7.38 Where the investigator proposes to make a recommendation under clause 7.37(c), the investigator must first consult with the Office on their proposed findings, determination and recommendation prior to finalising their report, and must take any comments by the Office into consideration when finalising their report.
- 7.39 Where the investigator has determined that there has been a breach of the code of conduct, the investigator may, in addition to making a recommendation under clause 7.37, recommend that the joint organisation revise any of its policies, practices or procedures.
- 7.40 Where the investigator determines that the conduct investigated does not constitute a breach of the code of conduct, the investigator may recommend:
- a) that the joint organisation revise any of its policies, practices or procedures
  - b) that a person or persons undertake any training or other education.
- 7.41 The investigator must provide a copy of their report to the complaints coordinator and the respondent.
- 7.42 At the time the investigator provides a copy of their report to the complaints coordinator and the respondent, the investigator must provide the complainant with a written statement containing the following information:
- a) the investigator's findings in relation to the facts of the matter and the reasons for those findings
  - b) the investigator's determination and the reasons for that determination
  - c) any recommendations, and
  - d) such other additional information that the investigator considers may be relevant.
- 7.43 Where the investigator has determined that there has not been a breach of the code of conduct, the complaints coordinator must provide a copy of the investigator's report to the executive officer or, where the report relates to the executive officer's conduct, to the chairperson, and this will finalise consideration of the matter under these procedures.
- 7.44 Where the investigator has determined that there has been a breach of the code of conduct and makes a recommendation under clause 7.37, the complaints coordinator must, where practicable, arrange for the investigator's report to be reported to the next ordinary joint organisation meeting for the joint organisation's consideration, unless the meeting is to be held within the 4 weeks prior to an ordinary local government election, in which case the report must be reported to the first ordinary joint organisation meeting following the election.

- 7.45 Where it is apparent to the complaints coordinator that the joint organisation will not be able to form a quorum to consider the investigator's report, the complaints coordinator must refer the investigator's report to the Office for its consideration instead of reporting it to the joint organisation under clause 7.44.

### **Consideration of the final investigation report by joint organisation**

- 7.46 The role of the joint organisation in relation to a final investigation report is to impose a sanction if the investigator has determined that there has been a breach of the code of conduct and has made a recommendation in their final report under clause 7.37.
- 7.47 The joint organisation is to close its meeting to the public to consider the final investigation report in cases where it is permitted to do so under section 10A of the LGA.
- 7.48 Where the complainant is a voting representative, they must absent themselves from the meeting and take no part in any discussion or voting on the matter. The complainant voting representative may absent themselves without making any disclosure of interest in relation to the matter unless otherwise required to do so under the code of conduct.
- 7.49 Prior to imposing a sanction, the joint organisation must provide the respondent with an opportunity to make a submission to the joint organisation. A submission may be made orally or in writing. The respondent is to confine their submission to addressing the investigator's recommendation.
- 7.50 Once the respondent has made their submission they must absent themselves from the meeting and, where they are a voting representative, take no part in any discussion or voting on the matter.
- 7.51 The joint organisation must not invite submissions from other persons for the purpose of seeking to rehear evidence previously considered by the investigator.
- 7.52 Prior to imposing a sanction, the joint organisation may by resolution:
- a) request that the investigator make additional enquiries and/or provide additional information to it in a supplementary report, or
  - b) seek an opinion from the Office in relation to the report.
- 7.53 The joint organisation may, by resolution, defer further consideration of the matter pending the receipt of a supplementary report from the investigator or an opinion from the Office.
- 7.54 The investigator may make additional enquiries for the purpose of preparing a supplementary report.
- 7.55 Where the investigator prepares a supplementary report, they must provide copies to the complaints coordinator who shall provide a copy each to the joint organisation and the respondent.
- 7.56 The investigator is not obliged to notify or consult with any person prior to submitting the supplementary report to the complaints coordinator.

- 7.57 The joint organisation is only required to provide the respondent a further opportunity to make an oral or written submission on a supplementary report if the supplementary report contains new information that is adverse to them.
- 7.58 A joint organisation may by resolution impose one of the following sanctions on a respondent:
- a) in the case of a breach by the executive officer, that disciplinary action be taken under the executive officer's contract of employment for the breach, or
  - b) in the case of a breach by a voting representative, that the voting representative be formally censured for the breach under section 440G of the LGA, or
  - c) in the case of a breach by a voting representative:
    - i. that the voting representative be formally censured for the breach under section 440G of the LGA, and
    - ii. that the matter be referred to the Office for further action under the misconduct provisions of the LGA.
- 7.59 Where the joint organisation censures a voting representative under section 440G of the LGA, the joint organisation must specify in the censure resolution the grounds on which it is satisfied that the voting representative should be censured by disclosing in the resolution, the investigator's findings and determination and/or such other grounds that the joint organisation considers may be relevant or appropriate.
- 7.60 The joint organisation is not obliged to adopt the investigator's recommendation. Where the joint organisation proposes not to adopt the investigator's recommendation, the joint organisation must resolve not to adopt the recommendation and state in its resolution the reasons for its decision.
- 7.61 Where the joint organisation resolves not to adopt the investigator's recommendation, the complaints coordinator must notify the Office of the joint organisation's decision and the reasons for it.

## **PART 8. OVERSIGHT AND RIGHTS OF REVIEW**

### **The Office's powers of review**

- 8.1 The Office may, at any time, whether or not in response to a request, review the consideration of a matter under a joint organisation's code of conduct where it is concerned that a person has failed to comply with a requirement prescribed under these procedures or has misinterpreted or misapplied the standards of conduct prescribed under the code of conduct in their consideration of a matter.
- 8.2 The Office may direct any person, including the joint organisation, to defer taking further action in relation to a matter under consideration under the joint organisation's code of conduct pending the completion of its review. Any person the subject of a direction must comply with the direction.
- 8.3 Where the Office undertakes a review of a matter under clause 8.1, it will notify the complaints coordinator and any other affected persons, of the outcome of the review.

## **Complaint about conduct reviewers**

- 8.4 The executive officer or their delegate must refer code of conduct complaints about conduct reviewers to the Office for its consideration.
- 8.5 The executive officer must notify the complainant of the referral of their complaint about the conduct reviewer in writing.
- 8.6 The executive officer must implement any recommendation made by the Office as a result of its consideration of a complaint about a conduct reviewer.

## **Practice rulings**

- 8.7 Where a respondent and an investigator are in dispute over a requirement under these procedures, either person may make a request in writing to the Office to make a ruling on a question of procedure (a practice ruling).
- 8.8 Where the Office receives a request in writing for a practice ruling, the Office may provide notice in writing of its ruling and the reasons for it to the person who requested it and to the investigator, where that person is different.
- 8.9 Where the Office makes a practice ruling, all parties must comply with it.
- 8.10 The Office may decline to make a practice ruling. Where the Office declines to make a practice ruling, it will provide notice in writing of its decision and the reasons for it to the person who requested it and to the investigator, where that person is different.

## **Review of decisions to impose sanctions**

- 8.11 A person who is the subject of a sanction imposed under Part 7 of these procedures other than one imposed under clause 7.58, paragraph (c), may, within 28 days of the sanction being imposed, seek a review of the investigator's determination and recommendation by the Office.
- 8.12 A review under clause 8.11 may be sought on the following grounds:
  - a) that the investigator has failed to comply with a requirement under these procedures, or
  - b) that the investigator has misinterpreted or misapplied the standards of conduct prescribed under the code of conduct, or
  - c) that in imposing its sanction, the joint organisation has failed to comply with a requirement under these procedures.
- 8.13 A request for a review made under clause 8.11 must be made in writing and must specify the grounds upon which the person believes the investigator or the joint organisation has erred.
- 8.14 The Office may decline to conduct a review, in cases where the grounds upon which the review is sought are not sufficiently specified.
- 8.15 The Office may undertake a review of a matter without receiving a request under clause 8.11.
- 8.16 The Office will undertake a review of the matter on the papers. However, the Office may request that the complaints coordinator provide such further information that the Office considers



reasonably necessary for it to review the matter. The complaints coordinator must, as far as is reasonably practicable, provide the information requested by the Office.

- 8.17 Where a person requests a review under clause 8.11, the Office may direct the joint organisation to defer any action to implement a sanction. The joint organisation must comply with a direction to defer action by the Office.
- 8.18 The Office must notify the person who requested the review and the complaints coordinator of the outcome of the Office's review in writing and the reasons for its decision. In doing so, the Office may comment on any other matters the Office considers to be relevant.
- 8.19 Where the Office considers that the investigator or the joint organisation has erred, the Office may recommend that a decision to impose a sanction under these procedures be reviewed. Where the Office recommends that the decision to impose a sanction be reviewed:
- a) the complaints coordinator must, where practicable, arrange for the Office's determination to be tabled at the next ordinary joint organisation meeting unless the meeting is to be held within the 4 weeks prior to an ordinary local government election, in which case it must be tabled at the first ordinary joint organisation meeting following the election, and
  - b) the joint organisation must:
    - i. review its decision to impose the sanction, and
    - ii. consider the Office's recommendation in doing so, and
    - iii. resolve to either rescind or reaffirm its previous resolution in relation to the matter.
- 8.20 Where, having reviewed its previous decision in relation to a matter under clause 8.19(b), the joint organisation resolves to reaffirm its previous decision, the joint organisation must state in its resolution its reasons for doing so.

## **PART 9. PROCEDURAL IRREGULARITIES**

- 9.1 A failure to comply with these procedures does not, on its own, constitute a breach of the code of conduct, except as may be otherwise specifically provided under the code of conduct.
- 9.2 A failure to comply with these procedures will not render a decision made in relation to a matter invalid where:
- a) the non-compliance is isolated and/or minor in nature, or
  - b) reasonable steps are taken to correct the non-compliance, or
  - c) reasonable steps are taken to address the consequences of the non-compliance.

## **PART 10. PRACTICE DIRECTIONS**

- 10.1 The Office may at any time issue a practice direction in relation to the application of these procedures.
- 10.2 The Office will issue practice directions in writing, by circular to all joint organisations.
- 10.3 All persons performing a function prescribed under these procedures must consider the Office's practice directions when performing the function.

## **PART 11. REPORTING STATISTICS ON CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS ABOUT VOTING REPRESENTATIVES AND THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

- 11.12 The complaints coordinator must arrange for the following statistics to be reported to the joint organisation within 3 months of the end of September of each year:
- a) the total number of code of conduct complaints made about voting representatives and the executive officer under the code of conduct in the year to September (the reporting period)
  - b) the number of code of conduct complaints referred to a conduct reviewer during the reporting period
  - c) the number of code of conduct complaints finalised by a conduct reviewer at the preliminary assessment stage during the reporting period and the outcome of those complaints
  - d) the number of code of conduct complaints investigated by a conduct reviewer during the reporting period
  - e) without identifying particular matters, the outcome of investigations completed under these procedures during the reporting period
  - f) the number of matters reviewed by the Office during the reporting period and, without identifying particular matters, the outcome of the reviews, and
  - g) the total cost of dealing with code of conduct complaints made about voting representatives and the executive officer during the reporting period, including staff costs.
- 11.13 The joint organisation is to provide the Office with a report containing the statistics referred to in clause 11.1 within 3 months of the end of September of each year.

## **PART 12. CONFIDENTIALITY**

- 12.1 Information about code of conduct complaints and the management and investigation of code of conduct complaints is to be treated as confidential and is not to be publicly disclosed except as may be otherwise specifically required or permitted under these procedures.
- 12.2 Where a complainant publicly discloses information on one or more occasions about a code of conduct complaint they have made or purported to make, the executive officer or their delegate may, with the consent of the Office, determine that the complainant is to receive no further information about their complaint and any future code of conduct complaint they make or purport to make.
- 12.3 Prior to seeking the Office's consent under clause 12.2, the executive officer or their delegate must give the complainant written notice of their intention to seek the Office's consent, invite them to make a written submission within a period of not less than 14 days specified by the executive officer or their delegate, and consider any submission made by them.
- 12.4 In giving its consent under clause 12.2, the Office must consider any submission made by the complainant to the executive officer or their delegate.
- 12.5 The executive officer or their delegate must give written notice of a determination made under clause 12.2 to:
  - a) the complainant
  - b) the complaints coordinator
  - c) the Office, and
  - d) any other person the executive officer or their delegate considers should be notified of the determination.
- 12.6 Any requirement under these procedures that a complainant is to be provided with information about a code of conduct complaint that they have made or purported to make, will not apply to a complainant the subject of a determination made by the executive officer or their delegate under clause 12.2.
- 12.7 Clause 12.6 does not override any entitlement a person may have to access to joint organisation information under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* or to receive information under the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994* in relation to a complaint they have made.



# **Code of Meeting Practice**

**Version 3 – 14 August 2025**

## Controlled Document Information

### Authorisation Details

Policy Name	Code of Meeting Practice
Responsible Officer	Steve Wilson (Executive Officer)
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### Definitions

Term / Abbreviation	Definition

### Consultation

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## Background

Under the *Local Government Act*, joint organisations must adopt a code of meeting practice that incorporates the mandatory provisions of the Model Code of Meeting Practice for Local Councils in NSW (Model Meeting Code) prescribed by the Regulation within 12 months of the elections.

The adopted code of meeting practice must not contain provisions that are inconsistent with the mandatory provisions of the Model Meeting Code. Joint organisations are not required to adopt the non-mandatory provisions of the Model Meeting Code and can adapt them to meet their own needs.

Unlike Councils, there is no requirement for a joint organisation to publicly exhibit its Code of Meeting Practice, however the Regulation prescribes that a joint organisation must consult with its member councils about the content of its proposed Code of Meeting Practice before adopting it.

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## 1 Introduction

This Code of Meeting Practice has been established by the Hunter Joint Organisation pursuant to Section 360(2) of the *Local Government Act 1993* (The Act). The Code is supplementary to the Act and Regulations, which cover most aspects of meeting procedure.

## 2 Meeting Principles

Board and committee meetings should be:

<i>Transparent:</i>	Decisions are made in a way that is open and accountable.
<i>Informed:</i>	Decisions are made based on relevant, quality information
<i>Inclusive:</i>	Decisions respect the diverse needs and interests of the local community.
<i>Principled:</i>	Decisions are informed by the principles prescribed under Chapter 3 of the Act.
<i>Trusted:</i>	The community has confidence that voting representatives and staff act ethically and make decisions in the interests of the whole community.
<i>Respectful:</i>	Voting representatives, staff and meeting attendees treat each other with respect.
<i>Effective:</i>	Meetings are well organised, effectively run and skilfully chaired.
<i>Orderly:</i>	Voting representatives, staff and meeting attendees behave in a way that contributes to the orderly conduct of the meeting.

## 3 Before the Meeting

### Timing of meetings

3.1 Omitted – Clause 3.2 applies

3.2 The Joint Organisation Board shall, by resolution, set the date and place of its ordinary meetings

**Note: Under section 400T of the Act, boards of joint organisations are required to meet at least four (4) times each year, each in a different quarter of the year.**

### Extraordinary meetings

3.3 If the Chairperson receives a request in writing, signed by at least two (2) member voting representatives, the Chairperson must call an extraordinary meeting of the Joint Organisation to be held as soon as practicable, but in any event, no more than fourteen (14) days after receipt of the request. The Chairperson can be one of the two voting representatives requesting the meeting.

### Notice to the Public of Joint Organisation Meetings

3.4 The Joint Organisation must give notice to the public of the time, date and place of each of its meetings, including extraordinary meetings and of each meeting of committees of the Joint Organisation.

3.5 For the purpose of clause 3.4, notice of a meeting of the Joint Organisation and of a committee of the Joint Organisation is to be published before the meeting takes place. The notice must be

published on the Joint Organisation's website, and in such other manner that the Joint Organisation is satisfied is likely to bring notice of the meeting to the attention of as many people as possible.

- 3.6 For the purposes of clause 3.4, notice of more than one (1) meeting may be given in the same notice.

### **Notice to members of Joint Organisation meetings**

- 3.7 The Executive Officer must send to each board member, at least three (3) days before each meeting of the board, a notice specifying the time, date and place at which the meeting is to be held, and the business proposed to be considered at the meeting.
- 3.8 The notice and the agenda for, and the business papers relating to, the meeting may be given to members in electronic form, but only if all voting representatives have facilities to access the notice, agenda and business papers in that form.

### **Notice to members of extraordinary meetings**

- 3.9 Notice of less than three (3) days may be given to voting representatives of an extraordinary meeting of the board in cases of emergency.

### **Giving notice of business to be considered at board meetings**

- 3.10 A voting representative may give notice of any business they wish to be considered by the Joint Organisation at its next ordinary meeting by way of a notice of motion. To be included on the agenda of the meeting, the notice of motion must be in writing and must be submitted **ten (10)** business days before the meeting is to be held.
- 3.11 A voting representative may, in writing to the Executive Officer, request the withdrawal of a notice of motion submitted by them prior to its inclusion in the agenda and business paper for the meeting at which it is to be considered.
- 3.12 Omitted – not applicable to joint organisations
- 3.13 Omitted – not applicable to joint organisations

### **Questions with notice**

- 3.14 A voting representative may, by way of a notice submitted under clause 3.10, ask a question for response by the Executive Officer about the performance or operations of the Joint Organisation.
- 3.15 A voting representative is not permitted to ask a question with notice under clause 3.14 that comprises a complaint against the Executive Officer or a member of staff of the Joint Organisation, or a question that implies wrongdoing by the Executive Officer or a member of staff of the Joint Organisation.
- 3.16 The Executive Officer or their nominee may respond to a question with notice submitted under clause 3.14 by way of a report included in the business papers for the relevant meeting of the Joint Organisation or orally at the meeting.

### **Agenda and business papers for ordinary meetings**

- 3.17 The Executive Officer must cause the agenda for a meeting of the Joint Organisation Board or a committee of the Joint Organisation to be prepared as soon as practicable before the meeting.
- 3.18 The Executive Officer must ensure that the agenda for an ordinary meeting of the board states:
- a) all matters to be dealt with arising out of the proceedings of previous meetings of the Joint Organisation, and

- b) any matter or topic that the chairperson proposes, at the time when the agenda is prepared, to put to the meeting, and
  - c) all matters, including matters that are the subject of staff reports and reports of committees, to be considered at the meeting, and
  - d) any business of which due notice has been given under clause 3.10.
- 3.19 Nothing in clause 3.18 limits the powers of the Chairperson to put a Chairperson's minute to a meeting under clause 9.6.
- 3.20 The Executive Officer must not include in the agenda for a meeting of the Joint Organisation any business of which due notice has been given if, in the opinion of the Executive Officer, the business is, or the implementation of the business would be, unlawful. The Executive Officer must report, without giving details of the item of business, any such exclusion to the next meeting of the Joint Organisation.
- 3.21 Where the agenda includes the receipt of information or discussion of other matters that, in the opinion of the Executive Officer, is likely to take place when the meeting is closed to the public, the Executive Officer must ensure that the agenda of the meeting:
  - a) identifies the relevant item of business and indicates that it is of such a nature (without disclosing details of the information to be considered when the meeting is closed to the public), and
  - b) states the grounds under section 10A(2) of the Act relevant to the item of business.
- 3.22 The Executive Officer must ensure that the details of any item of business which, in the opinion of the Executive Officer, is likely to be considered when the meeting is closed to the public, are included in a business paper provided to voting representatives for the meeting concerned. Such details must not be included in the business papers made available to the public, and must not be disclosed by a voting representative or by any other person to another person who is not authorised to have that information.

### **Statement of ethical obligations**

- 3.23 Business Papers for all ordinary and extraordinary committees of the Joint Organisation and Committees must contain a statement reminding voting representatives of their oath or affirmation of office made under section 233A of the Act and their obligations under the Joint Organisation's code of conduct to disclose and appropriately manage conflicts of interest.

### **Availability of the Agenda and Business Papers to the Public**

- 3.24 Copies of the agenda and the associated business papers, such as correspondence and reports for meetings of the Joint Organisation and committees of the Joint Organisation, are to be published on the Joint Organisation's website, and must be made available to the public for inspection, or for taking away by any person free of charge at the offices of the Joint Organisation, at the relevant meeting and at such other venues determined by the Joint Organisation.
- 3.25 Clause 3.24 does not apply to the business papers for items of business that the Executive Officer has identified under clause 3.21 as being likely to be considered when the meeting is closed to the public.
- 3.26 For the purposes of clause 3.24, copies of agendas and business papers must be published on the Joint Organisation's website and made available to the public at a time that is as close as possible to the time they are available to voting representatives.
- 3.27 A copy of an agenda, or of an associated business paper made available under clause 3.24, may in addition be given or made available in electronic form.



## **Agenda and business papers for extraordinary meetings**

- 3.28 The Executive Officer must ensure that the agenda for an extraordinary meeting of the Joint Organisation deals only with the matters stated in the notice of the meeting.
- 3.29 Despite clause 3.28, business may be considered at an extraordinary meeting of the Joint Organisation, even though due notice of the business has not been given, if:
- a) a motion is passed to have the business considered at the meeting, and
  - b) the business to be considered is ruled by the Chairperson to be of great urgency on the grounds that it requires a decision by the Joint Organisation before the next scheduled ordinary meeting of the Joint Organisation.
- 3.30 A motion moved under clause 3.29(a) can be moved without notice but only after the business notified in the agenda for the extraordinary meeting has been dealt with.
- 3.31 Despite clauses 10.20-10.30, only the mover of a motion moved under clause 3.29(a) can speak to the motion before it is put.
- 3.32 A motion of dissent cannot be moved against a ruling of the chairperson under clause 3.29(b) on whether a matter is of great urgency.

## **Pre-meeting briefing sessions**

- 3.33 Prior to each ordinary meeting of the Joint Organisation, the Executive Officer may arrange a pre-meeting briefing session to brief voting representatives on business to be considered at the meeting. Pre-meeting briefing sessions may also be held for extraordinary meetings of the Joint Organisation and meetings of committees of the Joint Organisation.
- 3.34 Pre-meeting briefing sessions are to be held in the absence of the public.
- 3.35 Omitted - not applicable to joint organisations
- 3.36 The Executive Officer or a member of staff nominated by the Executive Officer is to preside at pre-meeting briefing sessions.
- 3.37 Voting representatives must not use pre-meeting briefing sessions to debate or make preliminary decisions on items of business they are being briefed on, and any debate and decision-making must be left to the formal Joint Organisation or committee meeting at which the item of business is to be considered.
- 3.38 Voting representatives must declare and manage any conflicts of interest they may have in relation to any item of business that is the subject of a briefing at a pre-meeting briefing session, in the same way that they are required to do so at a joint organisation or committee meeting. The Joint Organisation is to maintain a written record of all conflict-of-interest declarations made at pre-meeting briefing sessions and how the conflict of interest was managed by the voting representative who made the declaration.

## 4 Public Forums

Section 4 omitted (not applicable to joint organisations)

## 5 Coming Together

### Attendance by voting representatives at meetings

- 5.1 All voting representatives must make reasonable efforts to attend meetings of the board and of committees of the board of which they are members.
- 5.2 Omitted – covered by clause 5.3
- 5.3 The board of the Joint Organisation may, if it thinks fit, transact any of its business at a meeting at which representatives (or some representatives) participate by telephone or other electronic means, but only if any representative who speaks on a matter before the meeting can be heard by the other representatives. For the purposes of a meeting held in accordance with this clause, the chairperson and each other voting representative on the board have the same voting rights as they have at an ordinary meeting of the board.
- 5.4 Where a voting representative is unable to attend one or more ordinary meetings of the Joint Organisation, the voting representative should request that the board grant them a leave of absence from those meetings. This clause does not prevent a voting representative from making an apology if they are unable to attend a meeting. However, the acceptance of such an apology does not constitute the granting of a leave of absence for the purposes of this code and the Act.
- 5.5 A voting representative's request for leave of absence from Joint Organisation meetings should, if practicable, identify (by date) the meetings from which the voting representative intends to be absent and the grounds upon which the leave of absence is being sought.
- 5.6 The Joint Organisation must act reasonably when considering whether to grant a voting representative's request for a leave of absence.
- 5.7 A voting representative's civic office will become vacant if the voting representative is absent from three (3) consecutive ordinary meetings of the Joint Organisation without prior leave of the Joint Organisation, or leave granted by the Joint Organisation at any of the meetings concerned, unless the holder is absent because they have been suspended from office under the Act, or because the board has been suspended under the Act, or as a consequence of a compliance order under section 438HA.
- 5.8 A voting representative who intends to attend a meeting of the Joint Organisation despite having been granted a leave of absence should, if practicable, give the Executive Officer at least two (2) days' notice of their intention to attend.

### The quorum for a meeting

- 5.9 The quorum for a meeting of the Joint Organisation is a majority of the voting representatives (i.e. 50% plus one additional voting representative) of the Joint Organisation who hold office at that time and are not suspended from office.
- 5.10 Clause 5.9 does not apply if the quorum is required to be determined in accordance with directions of the Minister in a performance improvement order issued in respect of the Joint Organisation.
- 5.11 A meeting of the Joint Organisation must be adjourned if a quorum is not present:
  - a) at the commencement of the meeting where the number of apologies received for the meeting indicates that there will not be a quorum for the meeting, or
  - b) within half an hour after the time designated for the holding of the meeting, or

- c) at any time during the meeting.
- 5.12 In either case, the meeting must be adjourned to a time, date and place fixed:
  - a) by the chairperson, or
  - b) in the chairperson's absence, by the majority of the voting representatives present, or
  - c) failing that, by the Executive Officer.
- 5.13 The Executive Officer must record in the Joint Organisation's minutes the circumstances relating to the absence of a quorum (including the reasons for the absence of a quorum) at or arising during a meeting of the Joint Organisation, together with the names of the voting representatives present.
- 5.14 Where, prior to the commencement of a meeting, it becomes apparent that a quorum may not be present at the meeting, or that the health, safety or welfare of voting members, joint organisation staff and members of the public may be put at risk by attending the meeting because of a natural disaster or a public health emergency, the Chairperson may, in consultation with the Executive Officer and, as far as is practicable, with each voting member, cancel the meeting. Where a meeting is cancelled, notice of the cancellation must be published on the Joint Organisation's website and in such other manner that the Joint Organisation is satisfied is likely to bring notice of the cancellation to the attention of as many people as possible.
- 5.15 Where a meeting is cancelled under clause 5.14, the business to be considered at the meeting may instead be considered, where practicable, at the next ordinary meeting of the Joint Organisation or at an extraordinary meeting called under clause 3.3.

#### **Meetings held by audio-visual link**

- 5.16 A meeting of the Joint Organisation or committee of the Joint Organisation may be held by audio-visual link where the Chairperson determines that the meeting should be held by audio-visual link because of a natural disaster or a public health emergency. The Chairperson may only make a determination under this clause where they are satisfied that attendance at the meeting may put the health and safety of Board members and staff at risk. The Chairperson must make a determination under this clause in consultation with the Executive Officer and, as far as is practicable, with each voting member.
- 5.17 Where the Chairperson determines under clause 5.16 that a meeting is to be held by audio-visual link, the Executive Officer must:
  - a) give written notice to all voting members that the meeting is to be held by audio-visual link, and
  - b) take all reasonable steps to ensure that all voting members can participate in the meeting by audio-visual link, and
  - c) cause a notice to be published on the Joint Organisation's website and in such other manner the Executive Officer is satisfied will bring it to the attention of as many people as possible, advising that the meeting is to be held by audio-visual link and providing information about where members of the public may view the meeting.
- 5.18 This code applies to a meeting held by audio-visual link under clause 5.16 in the same way it would if the meeting was held in person.

**Note: Where a Joint Organisation holds a meeting by audio-visual link under clause 5.16, it is still required under section 10 of the Act to provide a physical venue for members of the public to attend in person and observe the meeting**

### **Attendance by voting-members at meetings by audio-visual link**

- 5.19 Voting representatives may attend and participate in meetings of the Joint Organisation and committees by audio-visual link with the approval of the Joint Organisation.
- 5.20 A request by a voting representative for approval to attend a meeting by audio-visual link must be made in writing to the Executive Officer prior to the meeting in question.
- 5.21 Omitted – non-mandatory clause not applicable to joint organisations
- 5.22 Omitted – non-mandatory clause not applicable to joint organisations
- 5.23 Omitted – non-mandatory clause not applicable to joint organisations
- 5.24 Omitted – non-mandatory clause not applicable to joint organisations
- 5.25 Omitted – non-mandatory clause not applicable to joint organisations
- 5.26 Omitted – non-mandatory clause not applicable to joint organisations
- 5.27 Omitted – non-mandatory clause not applicable to joint organisations
- 5.28 This code applies to a voting representative attending a meeting by audio-visual link in the same way it would if the voting representative was attending the meeting in person. Where a voting representative is permitted to attend a meeting by audio-visual link under this code, they are to be taken as attending the meeting in person for the purposes of the code and will have the same voting rights as if they were attending the meeting in person.
- 5.29 A voting representative must give their full attention to the business and proceedings of the meeting when attending a meeting by audio-visual link. The voting representative's camera must be on at all times during the meeting except as may be otherwise provided for under this code.
- 5.30 A voting representative must be appropriately dressed when attending a meeting by audio-visual link and must ensure that no items are within sight of the meeting that are inconsistent with the maintenance of order at the meeting or that are likely to bring the Joint Organisation or Committee into disrepute.

### **Entitlement of the public to attend board meetings**

- 5.31 Everyone is entitled to attend a meeting of the Joint Organisation and committees of the Joint Organisation. The Joint Organisation must ensure that all meetings of the board and committees of the Joint Organisation are open to the public.
- 5.32 Clause 5.31 does not apply to parts of meetings that have been closed to the public under section 10A of the Act.
- 5.33 A person (whether a voting representative or another person) is not entitled to be present at a meeting of the Joint Organisation or a committee of the Joint Organisation if expelled from the meeting:
  - a) by a resolution of the meeting, or
  - b) by the person presiding at the meeting if the Joint Organisation has, by resolution, authorised the person presiding to exercise the power of expulsion.

### **Webcasting of meetings**

- 5.34 Omitted – joint organisations not required to webcast meetings
- 5.35 Omitted – joint organisations not required to webcast meetings
- 5.36 Omitted – joint organisations not required to webcast meetings
- 5.37 Omitted – joint organisations not required to webcast meetings
- 5.38 Omitted – joint organisations not required to webcast meetings

5.39 Omitted – joint organisations not required to webcast meeting

### **Attendance of the executive officer and other staff at meetings**

- 5.40 The Executive Officer is entitled to attend, but not to vote at, a meeting of the Joint Organisation or a meeting or a committee of the Joint Organisation of which all of the members are voting representatives.
- 5.41 The Executive Officer is entitled to attend a meeting of any other committee of the Joint Organisation and may, if a member of the committee, exercise a vote.
- 5.42 The Executive Officer may be excluded from a meeting of the Joint Organisation or a committee while the Joint Organisation or committee deals with a matter relating to the standard of performance of the Executive Officer or the terms of employment of the Executive Officer.
- 5.43 The attendance of other Joint Organisation staff at a meeting, (other than as members of the public) shall be with the approval of the Executive Officer.
- 5.44 The Executive Officer and other Joint Organisation staff may attend meetings of the Joint Organisation and committees of the Joint Organisation by audio-visual link. Attendance by Joint Organisation staff at meetings by audio-visual link (other than as members of the public) shall be with the approval of the Executive Officer.

## **6 The Chairperson**

### **The Chairperson at meetings**

- 6.1 The Chairperson, or at the request of or in the absence of the Chairperson, the Deputy Chairperson (if any) presides at meetings of the Joint Organisation.
- 6.2 If the chairperson and the deputy chairperson (if any) are absent, a voting representative elected to chair the meeting by the voting representatives present presides at a meeting of the Joint Organisation.

### **Election of the chairperson in the absence of the chairperson and deputy chairperson**

- 6.3 If no chairperson is present at a meeting of the Joint Organisation at the time designated for the holding of the meeting, the first business of the meeting must be the election of a Chairperson to preside at the meeting.
- 6.4 The election of a chairperson must be conducted:
- a) by the Executive Officer or, in their absence, an employee of the Joint Organisation designated by the Executive Officer to conduct the election, or
  - b) by the person who called the meeting or a person acting on their behalf if neither the Executive Officer nor a designated employee is present at the meeting, or if there is no Executive Officer or designated employee.
- 6.5 If, at an election of a chairperson, two (2) or more candidates receive the same number of votes and no other candidate receives a greater number of votes, the chairperson is to be the candidate whose name is chosen by lot.
- 6.6 For the purposes of clause 6.5, the person conducting the election must:
- a) arrange for the names of the candidates who have equal numbers of votes to be written on similar slips, and
  - b) then fold the slips so as to prevent the names from being seen, mix the slips and draw one of the slips at random.

- 6.7 The candidate whose name is on the drawn slip is the candidate who is to be the chairperson.



- 6.8 Any election conducted under clause 6.3, and the outcome of the vote, are to be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

### **Chairperson to have precedence**

- 6.9 When the chairperson rises or speaks during a meeting of the Joint Organisation:
- a) any voting representative then speaking or seeking to speak must cease speaking and, if standing, immediately resume their seat, and
  - b) every voting representative present must be silent to enable the chairperson to be heard without interruption.

## **7 Modes of Address**

Section 7 omitted – non-mandatory clauses

## **8 Order of business for ordinary Joint Organisation meetings**

- 8.10 At a meeting of the Joint Organisation, the general order of business is fixed by resolution of the Joint Organisation.
- 8.11 Omitted – non-mandatory clause
- 8.12 The order of business as fixed under clause 8.1 may be altered for a particular meeting of the Joint Organisation if a motion to that effect is passed at that meeting. Such a motion can be moved without notice.
- 8.13 Despite clauses 10.20-10.30, only the mover of a motion referred to in clause 8.3 may speak to the motion before it is put.

## **9 Consideration of business at board meetings**

### **Business that can be dealt with at a Joint Organisation meeting**

- 9.1 The Board must not consider business at a meeting of the Joint Organisation:
- a) unless a voting representative has given notice of the business, as required by clause 3.10, and
  - b) unless notice of the business has been sent to the voting representatives in accordance with clause 3.7 in the case of an ordinary meeting or clause 3.9 in the case of an extraordinary meeting called in an emergency.
- 9.2 Clause 9.1 does not apply to the consideration of business at a meeting, if the business:
- a) is already before, or directly relates to, a matter that is already before the Joint Organisation, or
  - b) is the election of a chairperson to preside at the meeting, or
  - c) subject to clause 9.9, is a matter or topic put to the meeting by way of a chairperson's minute, or
  - d) is a motion for the adoption of recommendations of a committee, including, but not limited to, a committee of the Joint Organisation.
- 9.3 Despite clause 9.1, business may be considered at a meeting of the Joint Organisation even though due notice of the business has not been given to the voting representatives if:
- a) a motion is passed to have the business considered at the meeting, and

- b) the business to be considered is ruled by the chairperson to be of great urgency on the grounds that it requires a decision by the Joint Organisation before the next scheduled ordinary meeting of the Joint Organisation.

9.4 A motion moved under clause 9.3(a) can be moved without notice. Despite clauses 10.20 - 10.30, only the mover of a motion referred to in clause 9.3(a) can speak to the motion before it is put.

9.5 A motion of dissent cannot be moved against a ruling by the chairperson under clause 9.3(b).

### **Chairperson's minutes**

9.6 Subject to clause 9.9, if the Chairperson is chairing the meeting of the Joint Organisation, the Chairperson may, by minute signed by the chairperson, put to the meeting without notice any matter or topic that is within the jurisdiction of the Joint Organisation, or of which the Joint Organisation has official knowledge.

9.7 A Chairperson's minute, when put to a meeting, takes precedence over all business on the Joint Organisation's agenda for the meeting. The chairperson (but only if the person chairing the meeting) may move the adoption of a Chairperson's minute without the motion being seconded.

9.8 A recommendation made in a Chairperson's minute put by the Chairperson is, so far as it is adopted by the Board, a resolution of the Joint Organisation.

9.9 A Chairperson's minute must not be used to put without notice matters that are routine and not urgent, or matters for which proper notice should be given because of their complexity. For the purpose of this clause, a matter will be urgent where it requires a decision by the Board before the next scheduled ordinary meeting of the Joint Organisation.

9.10 Where a Chairperson's minute makes a recommendation which, if adopted, would require the expenditure of funds on works and/or services other than those already provided for in the Joint Organisation's Delivery Program and budget, it must identify the source of funding for the expenditure that is the subject of the recommendation. If the Chairperson's minute does not identify a funding source, the Board must defer consideration of the matter, pending a report from the Executive Officer on the availability of funds for implementing the recommendation if adopted.

### **Staff reports**

9.11 A recommendation made in a staff report is, so far as it is adopted by the Board, a resolution of the Joint Organisation.

### **Reports of committees of the Joint Organisation**

9.12 The recommendations of a committee of the Joint Organisation are, so far as they are adopted by the Board, resolutions of the Joint Organisation.

9.13 If in a report of a committee of the board distinct recommendations are made, the board may make separate decisions on each recommendation.

## Questions

- 9.14 A question must not be asked at a meeting of the Joint Organisation unless it concerns a matter on the agenda of the meeting or notice has been given of the question in accordance with clauses 3.10 and 3.14.
- 9.15 A voting representative may, through the chairperson, put a question to another voting representative about a matter on the agenda.
- 9.16 A voting representative may, through the Executive Officer, put a question to a Joint Organisation employee about a matter on the agenda. Joint Organisation employees are only obliged to answer a question put to them through the Executive Officer at the direction of the Executive Officer.
- 9.17 A voting representative or Joint Organisation employee to whom a question is put is entitled to be given reasonable notice of the question and, in particular, sufficient notice to enable reference to be made to other persons or to information. Where a voting representative or Joint organisation employee to whom a question is put is unable to respond to the question at the meeting at which it is put, they may take it on notice and report the response to the next meeting of the Joint Organisation.
- 9.18 Voting representatives must put questions directly, succinctly, respectfully and without argument.
- 9.19 The Chairperson must not permit discussion on any reply to, or refusal to reply to, a question put to a voting representative or board employee.

## 10 Rules of debate

### Motions to be seconded

- 10.1 Unless otherwise specified in this code, a motion or an amendment cannot be debated unless or until it has been seconded.

### Notices of motion

- 10.2 A voting representative who has submitted a notice of motion under clause 3.10 is to move the motion the subject of the notice of motion at the meeting at which it is to be considered.
- 10.3 If a voting representative who has submitted a notice of motion under clause 3.10 wishes to withdraw it after the agenda and business paper for the meeting at which it is to be considered have been sent to voting representatives, the voting representative may request the withdrawal of the motion when it is before the Hunter Joint Organisation.
- 10.4 In the absence of a voting representative who has placed a notice of motion on the agenda for a meeting of the Joint Organisation:
- a) any other voting representative may, with the leave of the Chairperson, move the motion at the meeting, or
  - b) the Chairperson may defer consideration of the motion until the next meeting of the Joint Organisation.

### Chairperson's duties with respect to motions

- 10.5 It is the duty of the Chairperson at a meeting of the Joint Organisation to receive and put to the meeting any lawful motion that is brought before the meeting.
- 10.6 The Chairperson must rule out of order any motion or amendment to a motion that is unlawful or the implementation of which would be unlawful.
- 10.7 Before ruling out of order a motion or an amendment to a motion under clause 10.6, the Chairperson is to give the mover an opportunity to clarify or amend the motion or amendment.

- 10.8 Any motion, amendment or other matter that the Chairperson has ruled out of order is taken to have been lost.

### **Motions requiring the expenditure of funds**

- 10.9 A motion or amendment to a motion which if passed would require the expenditure of funds on works and/or services other than those already provided for in the Joint Organisation's Delivery Program and budget, must identify the source of funding for the expenditure that is the subject of the motion. If the motion does not identify a funding source, the Board must defer consideration of the matter, pending a report from the Executive Officer on the availability of funds for implementing the motion if adopted.

### **Amendments to motions**

- 10.10 An amendment to a motion must be moved and seconded before it can be debated.
- 10.11 An amendment to a motion must relate to the matter being dealt with in the original motion before the Board and must not be a direct negative of the original motion. An amendment to a motion which does not relate to the matter being dealt with in the original motion, or which is a direct negative of the original motion, must be ruled out of order by the Chairperson.
- 10.12 The mover of an amendment is to be given the opportunity to explain any uncertainties in the proposed amendment before a seconder is called for.
- 10.13 If an amendment has been lost, a further amendment can be moved to the motion to which the lost amendment was moved, and so on, but no more than one (1) motion and one (1) proposed amendment can be before the Board at any one time.
- 10.14 While an amendment is being considered, debate must only occur in relation to the amendment and not the original motion. Debate on the original motion is to be suspended while the amendment to the original motion is being debated.
- 10.15 If the amendment is carried, it becomes the motion and is to be debated. If the amendment is lost, debate is to resume on the original motion.
- 10.16 An amendment may become the motion without debate or a vote where it is accepted by the voting representative who moved the original motion.

### **Foreshadowed motions**

- 10.17 A voting representative may propose a foreshadowed motion in relation to the matter the subject of the original motion before the Board, without a seconder during debate on the original motion. The foreshadowed motion is only to be considered if the original motion is lost or withdrawn and the foreshadowed motion is then moved and seconded. If the original motion is carried, the foreshadowed motion lapses.
- 10.18 Where an amendment has been moved and seconded, a voting representative may, without a seconder, foreshadow a further amendment that they propose to move after the first amendment has been dealt with. There is no limit to the number of foreshadowed amendments that may be put before the Board at any time. However, no discussion can take place on foreshadowed amendments until the previous amendment has been dealt with and the foreshadowed amendment has been moved and seconded.
- 10.19 Foreshadowed motions and foreshadowed amendments are to be considered in the order in which they are proposed. However, foreshadowed motions cannot be considered until all foreshadowed amendments have been dealt with.

### **Limitations on the number and duration of speeches**

- 10.20 A voting representative who, during a debate at a meeting of the Board, moves an original

motion, has the right to speak on each amendment to the motion and a right of general reply to all observations that are made during the debate in relation to the motion, and any amendment to it at the conclusion of the debate before the motion (whether amended or not) is finally put.

- 10.21 A voting representative, other than the mover of an original motion, has the right to speak once on the motion and once on each amendment to it.
- 10.22 A voting representative must not, without the consent of the Board, speak more than once on a motion or an amendment, or for longer than five (5) minutes at any one time.
- 10.23 Despite clause 10.22, the Chairperson may permit a voting representative who claims to have been misrepresented or misunderstood to speak more than once on a motion or an amendment, and for longer than five (5) minutes on that motion or amendment to enable the voting representative to make a statement limited to explaining the misrepresentation or misunderstanding.
- 10.24 Despite clause 10.22, the Board may resolve to shorten the duration of speeches to expedite the consideration of business at a meeting.
- 10.25 Despite clauses 10.20 and 10.21, a voting representative may move that a motion or an amendment be now put:
- a) if the mover of the motion or amendment has spoken in favour of it and no voting representative expresses an intention to speak against it, or
  - b) if at least two (2) voting representatives have spoken in favour of the motion or amendment and at least two (2) voting representatives have spoken against it.
- 10.26 The chairperson must immediately put to the vote, without debate, a motion moved under clause 10.25. A seconder is not required for such a motion.
- 10.27 If a motion that the original motion or an amendment be now put is passed, the Chairperson must, without further debate, put the original motion or amendment to the vote immediately after the mover of the original motion has exercised their right of reply under clause 10.20.
- 10.28 If a motion that the original motion or an amendment be now put is lost, the chairperson must allow the debate on the original motion or the amendment to be resumed.
- 10.29 All voting representatives must be heard without interruption and all other voting representatives must, unless otherwise permitted under this code, remain silent while another voting representative is speaking.
- 10.30 Once the debate on a matter has concluded and a matter has been dealt with, the Chairperson must not allow further debate on the matter.

### **Participation by non-voting representatives in joint organisation board meetings**

- 10.31 Non-voting representatives of joint organisation boards may speak on but must not move, second or vote on any motion or an amendment to a motion.

**Note: Under section 400T(1)(c) of the Act, non-voting representatives of joint organisation boards may attend but are not entitled to vote at a meeting of the board.**



## 11 Voting

### Voting entitlements of voting representatives

11.1 Each voting representative is entitled to one (1) vote.

**Note: Under section 400T(1) of the Act, voting representatives of joint organisation boards are entitled to one (1) vote each at meetings of the board.**

11.2 The person presiding at a meeting of the Joint Organisation has, in the event of an equality of votes, a second or casting vote.

11.3 Where the Chairperson declines to exercise, or fails to exercise, their second or casting vote, in the event of an equality of votes, the motion being voted upon is lost.

11.4 A motion at a meeting of the board of a joint organisation is taken to be lost in the event of an equality of votes.

**Note: Under section 400U(4) of the Act, joint organisations may specify more stringent voting requirements for decisions by the board such as a 75% majority or consensus decision making. Where a joint organisation's charter specifies more stringent voting requirements, clause 11.4 must be adapted to reflect those requirements.**

### Voting at board meetings

11.5 A voting representative who is present at a meeting of the Joint Organisation but who fails to vote on a motion put to the meeting is taken to have voted against the motion.

11.6 If a voting representative who has voted against a motion put at a Joint Organisation meeting so requests, the Executive Officer must ensure that the voting representative's dissenting vote is recorded in the board's minutes.

11.7 The decision of the Chairperson as to the result of a vote is final, unless the decision is immediately challenged and not fewer than two (2) voting representatives rise and call for a division.

11.8 When a division on a motion is called, the Chairperson must ensure that the division takes place immediately. The Executive Officer must ensure that the names of those who vote for the motion and those who vote against it are recorded in the board's minutes for the meeting.

11.9 When a division on a motion is called, any voting representative who fails to vote will be recorded as having voted against the motion in accordance with clause 11.5 of this code.

11.10 Voting at a meeting, including voting in an election at a meeting, is to be by open means (such as on the voices, by show of hands or by a visible electronic voting system). However, the Board may resolve that the voting in any election by voting representatives for Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson is to be by secret ballot.

11.11 Omitted – non-mandatory clause

### Voting on planning decisions

Section omitted – not applicable to joint organisations

## 12 Committee of the whole

- 12.1 The Board may resolve itself into a committee to consider any matter before the Joint Organisation.
- 12.2 All the provisions of this code relating to meetings of the Joint Organisation, so far as they are applicable, extend to and govern the proceedings of the Joint Organisation when in committee of the whole, except the provisions limiting the number and duration of speeches.
- 12.3 The Executive Officer or, in the absence of the Executive Officer, an employee of the Joint Organisation designated by the Executive Officer, is responsible for reporting to the Board the proceedings of the committee of the whole. It is not necessary to report the proceedings in full but any recommendations of the committee must be reported.
- 12.4 The Joint Organisation must ensure that a report of the proceedings (including any recommendations of the committee) is recorded in the Joint Organisation's minutes. However, the Joint Organisation is not taken to have adopted the report until a motion for adoption has been made and passed.

## 13 Dealing with Items by exception

- 13.1 The Joint Organisation or a committee of the Joint Organisation may, at any time, resolve to adopt multiple items of business on the agenda together by way of a single resolution.
- 13.2 Before the Joint Organisation resolves to adopt multiple items of business on the agenda together under clause 13.1, the Chairperson must list the items of business to be adopted and ask voting representatives to identify any individual items of business listed by the Chairperson that they intend to vote against the recommendation made in the business paper or that they wish to speak on.
- 13.3 The Joint Organisation or a committee of the Joint Organisation must not resolve to adopt any item of business under clause 13.1 that a voting member has identified as being one they intend to vote against the recommendation made in the business paper or to speak on.
- 13.4 Where the consideration of multiple items of business together under clause 13.1 involves a variation to the order of business for the meeting, the Joint Organisation or committee of the Joint Organisation must resolve to alter the order of business in accordance with clause 8.3.
- 13.5 A motion to adopt multiple items of business together under clause 13.1 must identify each of the items of business to be adopted and state that they are to be adopted as recommended in the business paper.
- 13.6 Items of business adopted under clause 13.1 are to be taken to have been adopted unanimously.
- 13.7 Voting members must ensure that they declare and manage any conflicts of interest they may have in relation to items of business considered together under clause 13.1 in accordance with the requirements of the Joint Organisation's code of conduct.

## 14 Closure of meetings to the public

### Grounds on which meetings can be closed to the public

- 14.1 The Joint Organisation or a committee of the Joint Organisation may close to the public so much of its meeting as comprises the discussion or the receipt of any of the following types of matters:
  - a) personnel matters concerning individuals (other than voting representatives),
  - b) the personal hardship of any resident or ratepayer,
  - c) information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with

- whom the Joint Organisation is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business,
- d) commercial information of a confidential nature that would, if disclosed:
    - (i) prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied it, or
    - (ii) confer a commercial advantage on a competitor of the board, or
    - (iii) reveal a trade secret,
  - e) information that would, if disclosed, prejudice the maintenance of law,
  - f) matters affecting the security of the Joint Organisation, voting representatives, Joint Organisation staff or Joint Organisation property,
  - g) advice concerning litigation, or advice that would otherwise be privileged from production in legal proceedings on the ground of legal professional privilege,
  - h) information concerning the nature and location of a place or an item of Aboriginal significance on community land,
  - i) alleged contraventions of the Joint Organisation's code of conduct.

14.2 The board or a committee of the board may also close to the public so much of its meeting as comprises a motion to close another part of the meeting to the public.

### **Matters to be considered when closing meetings to the public**

14.3 A meeting is not to remain closed during the discussion of anything referred to in clause 14.1:

- a) except for so much of the discussion as is necessary to preserve the relevant confidentiality, privilege or security, and
- b) if the matter concerned is a matter other than a personnel matter concerning particular individuals, the personal hardship of a resident or ratepayer or a trade secret – unless the Board or committee concerned is satisfied that discussion of the matter in an open meeting would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest.

14.4 A meeting is not to be closed during the receipt and consideration of information or advice referred to in clause 14.1(g) unless the advice concerns legal matters that:

- a) are substantial issues relating to a matter in which the Joint Organisation or committee of the Joint Organisation is involved, and
- b) are clearly identified in the advice, and
- c) are fully discussed in that advice.

14.5 If a meeting is closed during the discussion of a motion to close another part of the meeting to the public (as referred to in clause 14.2), the consideration of the motion must not include any consideration of the matter or information to be discussed in that other part of the meeting other than consideration of whether the matter concerned is a matter referred to in clause 14.1.

14.6 For the purpose of determining whether the discussion of a matter in an open meeting would be contrary to the public interest, it is irrelevant that:

- a) a person may misinterpret or misunderstand the discussion, or
- b) the discussion of the matter may:
  - (i) cause embarrassment to the board or committee concerned, or to voting representatives or to employees of the board, or
  - (ii) cause a loss of confidence in the board or committee.

14.7 In deciding whether part of a meeting is to be closed to the public, the Board or committee concerned must consider any relevant guidelines issued by the Chief Executive of the Office of

Local Government.

### **Notice of likelihood of closure not required in urgent cases**

- 14.8 Part of a meeting of the Joint Organisation, or of a committee of the Joint Organisation, may be closed to the public while the Board or committee considers a matter that has not been identified in the agenda for the meeting under clause 3.21 as a matter that is likely to be considered when the meeting is closed, but only if:
- a) it becomes apparent during the discussion of a particular matter that the matter is a matter referred to in clause 14.1, and
  - b) the Board or committee, after considering any representations made under clause 14.9, resolves that further discussion of the matter:
    - (i) should not be deferred (because of the urgency of the matter), and
    - (ii) should take place in a part of the meeting that is closed to the public.

### **Representations by members of the public**

- 14.9 The Joint Organisation, or a committee of the Joint Organisation, may allow members of the public to make representations to or at a meeting, before any part of the meeting is closed to the public, as to whether that part of the meeting should be closed.
- 14.10 A representation under clause 14.9 is to be made after the motion to close the part of the meeting is moved and seconded.
- 14.11 Where the matter has been identified in the agenda of the meeting under clause 3.21 as a matter that is likely to be considered when the meeting is closed to the public, in order to make representations under clause 14.9, members of the public must first make an application to the Joint Organisation in the approved form. Applications must be received by 10 business days before the meeting at which the matter is to be considered.
- 14.12 The Executive Officer (or their delegate) may refuse an application made under clause 14.11. The Executive Officer or their delegate must give reasons in writing for a decision to refuse an application.
- 14.13 No more than two speakers are to be permitted to make representations under clause 14.9.
- 14.14 If more than the permitted number of speakers apply to make representations under clause 14.9, the Executive Officer or their delegate may request the speakers to nominate from among themselves the persons who are to make representations to the Board. If the speakers are not able to agree on whom to nominate to make representations under clause 14.9, the Executive Officer or their delegate is to determine who will make representations to the board.
- 14.15 The Executive Officer (or their delegate) is to determine the order of speakers.
- 14.16 Where the Joint Organisation or a committee of the Joint Organisation proposes to close a meeting or part of a meeting to the public in circumstances where the matter has not been identified in the agenda for the meeting under clause 3.21 as a matter that is likely to be considered when the meeting is closed to the public, the chairperson is to invite representations from the public under clause 14.9 after the motion to close the part of the meeting is moved and seconded. The chairperson is to permit no more than two (2) speakers to make representations in such order as determined by the chairperson.
- 14.17 Each speaker will be allowed five minutes to make representations, and this time limit is to be strictly enforced by the Chairperson. Speakers must confine their representations to whether the meeting should be closed to the public. If a speaker digresses to irrelevant matters, the Chairperson is to direct the speaker not to do so. If a speaker fails to observe a direction from the Chairperson, the speaker will not be further heard.

### **Expulsion of non-voting representatives from meetings closed to the public**

- 14.18 If a meeting or part of a meeting of the board or a committee of the board is closed to the public in accordance with section 10A of the Act and this code, any person who is not a voting representative and who fails to leave the meeting when requested, may be expelled from the meeting as provided by section 10(2)(a) or (b) of the Act.
- 14.19 If any such person, after being notified of a resolution or direction expelling them from the meeting, fails to leave the place where the meeting is being held, a police officer, or any person authorised for the purpose by the board or person presiding, may, by using only such force as is necessary, remove the first-mentioned person from that place and, if necessary restrain that person from re-entering that place for the remainder of the meeting.

### **Obligations of board members attending by audio-visual link**

- 14.20 Joint Organisation Board Members attending a meeting by audio-visual link must ensure that no other person is within sight or hearing of the meeting at any time that the meeting is closed to the public under section 10A of the Act.

### **Information to be disclosed in resolutions closing meetings to the public**

- 14.21 The grounds on which part of a meeting is closed must be stated in the decision to close that part of the meeting and must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. The grounds must specify the following:
- a) the relevant provision of section 10A(2) of the Act,
  - b) the matter that is to be discussed during the closed part of the meeting,
  - c) the reasons why the part of the meeting is being closed, including (if the matter concerned is a matter other than a personnel matter concerning particular individuals, the personal hardship of a resident or ratepayer or a trade secret) an explanation of the way in which discussion of the matter in an open meeting would be, on balance, contrary to the public interest.

### **Resolutions passed at closed meetings to be made public**

- 14.22 If the Joint Organisation passes a resolution during a meeting, or a part of a meeting, that is closed to the public, the Chairperson must make the resolution public as soon as practicable after the meeting, or the relevant part of the meeting, has ended, and the resolution must be recorded in the publicly available minutes of the meeting.
- 14.23 Resolutions passed during a meeting, or a part of a meeting, that is closed to the public must be made public by the Chairperson under clause 14.21 during a part of the meeting that is webcast.



## 15 Keeping order at meetings

### Points of order

- 15.1 A voting representative may draw the attention of the Chairperson to an alleged breach of this code by raising a point of order. A point of order does not require a seconder.
- 15.2 A point of order cannot be made with respect to adherence to the principles contained in clause 2.1.
- 15.3 A point of order must be taken immediately it is raised. The Chairperson must suspend the business before the meeting and permit the voting representative raising the point of order to state the provision of this code they believe has been breached. The Chairperson must then rule on the point of order – either by upholding it or by overruling it.

### Questions of order

- 15.4 The Chairperson, without the intervention of any other voting representative, may call any voting representative to order whenever, in the opinion of the chairperson, it is necessary to do so.
- 15.5 A voting representative who claims that another voting representative has committed an act of disorder, or is out of order, may call the attention of the Chairperson to the matter.
- 15.6 The Chairperson must rule on a question of order immediately after it is raised but, before doing so, may invite the opinion of the Board.
- 15.7 The Chairperson's ruling must be obeyed unless a motion dissenting from the ruling is passed.

### Motions of dissent

- 15.8 A voting representative can, without notice, move to dissent from a ruling of the Chairperson on a point of order or a question of order. If that happens, the Chairperson must suspend the business before the meeting until a decision is made on the motion of dissent.
- 15.9 If a motion of dissent is passed, the Chairperson must proceed with the suspended business as though the ruling dissented from had not been given. If, as a result of the ruling, any motion or business has been rejected as out of order, the Chairperson must restore the motion or business to the agenda and proceed with it in due course.
- 15.10 Despite any other provision of this code, only the mover of a motion of dissent and the Chairperson can speak to the motion before it is put. The mover of the motion does not have a right of general reply.

### Acts of disorder

- 15.11 A voting representative commits an act of disorder if the voting representative, at a meeting of the Joint Organisation or a committee of the Joint Organisation:
  - a) contravenes the Act or any regulation in force under the Act or this code, or
  - b) assaults or threatens to assault another voting representative or person present at the meeting, or
  - c) moves or attempts to move a motion or an amendment that has an unlawful purpose or that deals with a matter that is outside the jurisdiction of the Joint Organisation or the committee, or addresses or attempts to address the Board or the committee on such a motion, amendment or matter, or
  - d) insults or makes personal reflections on or imputes improper motives to any other Joint Organisation official, or alleges a breach of the Joint Organisation's code of conduct, or

- e) says or does anything that is inconsistent with maintaining order at the meeting or is likely to bring the Joint Organisation or the committee into disrepute.

15.12 The chairperson may require a voting representative:

- a) to apologise without reservation for an act of disorder referred to in clauses 15.11(a) (b), or (e), or
- b) to withdraw a motion or an amendment referred to in clause 15.11(c) and, where appropriate, to apologise without reservation, or
- c) to retract and apologise without reservation for an act of disorder referred to in clauses 15.11(d) and (e).

### How disorder at a meeting may be dealt with

15.13 If disorder occurs at a meeting of the board, the Chairperson may adjourn the meeting for a period of not more than fifteen (15) minutes and leave the chair. The Joint Organisation Board, on reassembling, must, on a question put from the Chairperson, decide without debate whether the business is to be proceeded with or not. This clause applies to disorder arising from the conduct of members of the public as well as disorder arising from the conduct of voting representatives.

### Expulsion from meetings

15.14 All Chairpersons of meetings of the Joint Organisation and committees of the Joint Organisation are authorised under this code to expel any person, including any voting representative, from a Joint Organisation Board or committee meeting, for the purposes of section 10(2)(b) of the Act.

15.15 Omitted – covered by Clause 15.14

15.16 Clause 15.14 does not limit the ability of the Joint Organisation and committees of the Joint Organisation to resolve to expel a person, including a voting representative, from a Joint Organisation Board or committee meeting, under section 10(2)(a) of the Act.

15.17 A voting representative may, as provided by section 10(2)(a) or (b) of the Act, be expelled from a meeting of the board for having failed to comply with a requirement under clause 15.12. The expulsion of a voting representative from the meeting for that reason does not prevent any other action from being taken against the voting representative for the act of disorder concerned.

15.18 A member of the public may, as provided by section 10(2)(a) or (b) of the Act, be expelled from a meeting of the Joint Organisation for engaging in or having engaged in disorderly conduct at the meeting.

15.19 Where a voting representative or a member of the public is expelled from a meeting, the expulsion and the name of the person expelled, if known, are to be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

15.20 If a voting representative or a member of the public fails to leave the place where a meeting of the board is being held immediately after they have been expelled, a police officer, or any person authorised for the purpose by the board or person presiding, may, by using only such force as is necessary, remove the voting representative or member of the public from that place and, if necessary, restrain the voting representative or member of the public from re-entering that place for the remainder of the meeting.

## **How disorder by Board members attending meetings by audio-visual link may be dealt with**

- 15.21 Where a Joint Organisation Board member is attending a meeting by audio-visual link, the Chairperson or a person authorised by the chairperson may mute the Board members audio link to the meeting for the purposes of enforcing compliance with this code.
- 15.22 If a Joint Organisation Board member attending a meeting by by audio-visual link is expelled from a meeting for an act of disorder, the Chairperson of the meeting or a person authorised by the Chairperson, may terminate the Board members audio-visual link to the meeting.

## **Use of mobile phones and the unauthorised recording of meetings**

- 15.23 Voting representatives, Joint Organisation staff and members of the public must ensure that mobile phones are turned to silent during meetings of the Joint Organisation and committees of the Joint Organisation.
- 15.24 A person must not live stream or use an audio recorder, video camera, mobile phone or any other device to make a recording of the proceedings of a meeting of the Joint Organisation or a committee of the Joint Organisation without the prior authorisation of the Joint Organisation Board or the committee.
- 15.25 Without limiting clause 15.18, a contravention of clause 15.24 or an attempt to contravene that clause, constitutes disorderly conduct for the purposes of clause 15.18. Any person who contravenes or attempts to contravene clause 12.19, may be expelled from the meeting as provided for under section 10(2) of the Act.
- 15.26 If any such person, after being notified of a resolution or direction expelling them from the meeting, fails to leave the place where the meeting is being held, a police officer, or any person authorised for the purpose by the board or person presiding, may, by using only such force as is necessary, remove the first-mentioned person from that place and, if necessary, restrain that person from re-entering that place for the remainder of the meeting.

## **16 Conflicts of Interest**

- 16.1 All voting representatives and, where applicable, all other persons, must declare and manage any conflicts of interest they may have in matters being considered at meetings of the Joint Organisation and committees of the Joint Organisation in accordance with the Joint Organisation's code of conduct. All declarations of conflicts of interest and how the conflict of interest was managed by the person who made the declaration must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting at which the declaration was made.
- 16.2 Voting representatives attending a meeting by audio-visual link must declare and manage any conflicts of interest they may have in matters being considered at the meeting in accordance with the Joint Organisation's code of conduct. Where a voting representative has declared a pecuniary or significant non-pecuniary conflict of interest in a matter being discussed at the meeting, the voting members audio-visual link to the meeting must be suspended or terminated and the voting representative must not be in sight or hearing of the meeting at any time during which the matter is being considered or discussed by the Joint Organisation Board or committee, or at any time during which the Joint Organisation Board or committee is voting on the matter.

## 17 Decisions of the Joint Organisation

### Board decisions

- 17.1 A decision supported by a majority of the votes at a meeting of the Joint Organisation Board at which a quorum is present is a decision of the Joint Organisation.

**Note: Clause 14.1 reflects section 400T(8) of the Act in the case of joint organisations.**

**Note: Under section 400U(4) of the Act, joint organisations may specify more stringent voting requirements for decisions by the board such as a 75% majority or consensus decision making. Where a joint organisation's charter specifies more stringent voting requirements, clause 14.1 must be adapted to reflect those requirements.**

- 17.2 Decisions made by the Joint Organisation Board must be accurately recorded in the minutes of the meeting at which the decision is made.

### Rescinding or altering Board decisions

- 17.3 A resolution passed by the Joint Organisation Board may not be altered or rescinded except by a motion to that effect of which notice has been given under clause 3.10.
- 17.4 If a notice of motion to rescind a resolution is given at the meeting at which the resolution is carried, the resolution must not be carried into effect until the motion of rescission has been dealt with.
- 17.5 If a motion has been lost, a motion having the same effect must not be considered unless notice of it has been duly given in accordance with clause 3.10.
- 17.6 A notice of motion to alter or rescind a resolution, and a notice of motion which has the same effect as a motion which has been lost, must be signed by three (3) voting representatives if less than three (3) months has elapsed since the resolution was passed, or the motion was lost.
- 17.7 If a motion to alter or rescind a resolution has been lost, or if a motion which has the same effect as a previously lost motion is lost, no similar motion may be brought forward within three (3) months of the meeting at which it was lost. This clause may not be evaded by substituting a motion differently worded, but in principle the same.
- 17.8 The provisions of clauses 17.5–17.7 concerning lost motions do not apply to motions of adjournment.
- 17.9 A notice of motion submitted in accordance with clause 17.6 may only be withdrawn under clause 3.11 with the consent of all signatories to the notice of motion.
- 17.10 Omitted – optional clause not applicable to joint organisations
- 17.11 A motion to alter or rescind a resolution of the Joint Organisation may be moved on the report of a committee of the Joint Organisation and any such report must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Organisation.
- 17.12 Subject to clause 17.7, in cases of urgency a motion to alter or rescind a resolution of the Joint Organisation may be moved at the same meeting at which the resolution was adopted, where:
- a) a notice of motion signed by three voting representatives is submitted to the Chairperson, and
  - b) a motion to have the motion considered at the meeting is passed, and
  - c) the Chairperson rules the business that is the subject of the motion is of great urgency on the grounds that it requires a decision by the Joint Organisation before the next scheduled ordinary meeting of the Joint Organisation.
- 17.13 A motion moved under clause 17.12(b) can be moved without notice. Despite clauses 10.20–

10.30, only the mover of a motion referred to in clause 17.12(b) can speak to the motion before it is put.

17.14 A motion of dissent cannot be moved against a ruling by the Chairperson under clause 17.12(c).

### **Recommitting resolutions to correct an error**

17.15 Despite the provisions of this Part, voting representatives may, with the leave of the Chairperson, move to recommit a resolution adopted at the same meeting:

- a) to correct any error, ambiguity or imprecision in the Joint Organisation's resolution, or
- b) to confirm the voting on the resolution.

17.16 In seeking the leave of the Chairperson to move to recommit a resolution for the purposes of clause 17.15(a), the voting representative is to propose alternative wording for the resolution.

17.17 The Chairperson must not grant leave to recommit a resolution for the purposes of clause 17.15(a), unless they are satisfied that the proposed alternative wording of the resolution would not alter the substance of the resolution previously adopted at the meeting.

17.18 A motion moved under clause 17.15 can be moved without notice. Despite clauses 10.20–10.30, only the mover of a motion referred to in clause 17.15 can speak to the motion before it is put.

17.19 A motion of dissent cannot be moved against a ruling by the Chairperson under clause 17.15.

17.20 A motion moved under clause 17.15 with the leave of the Chairperson cannot be voted on unless or until it has been seconded.

## **18 Time limits on Joint Organisation meetings**

Omitted - Optional clauses not applicable to Joint Organisation meetings

## **19 After the meeting**

### **Minutes of meetings**

19.1 The Joint Organisation is to keep full and accurate minutes of the proceedings of meetings of the Joint Organisation.

19.2 At a minimum, the Executive Officer must ensure that the following matters are recorded in the Joint Organisation minutes:

- a) The names of Board members attending a Joint Organisation meeting and whether they attended the meeting in person or by audio-visual link
- b) details of each motion moved at a Joint Organisation meeting and of any amendments moved to it,
- c) the names of the mover and seconder of the motion or amendment,
- d) whether the motion or amendment was passed or lost, and
- e) such other matters specifically required under this code.

19.3 The minutes of a Joint Organisation meeting must be confirmed at a subsequent meeting of the Joint Organisation.

19.4 Any debate on the confirmation of the minutes is to be confined to whether the minutes are a full and accurate record of the meeting they relate to.

19.5 When the minutes have been confirmed, they are to be signed by the person presiding at the



subsequent meeting.

- 19.6 The confirmed minutes of a meeting may be amended to correct typographical or administrative errors after they have been confirmed. Any amendment made under this clause must not alter the substance of any decision made at the meeting.
- 19.7 The confirmed minutes of a Joint Organisation meeting must be published on the Joint Organisation's website. This clause does not prevent the Joint Organisation from also publishing unconfirmed minutes of its meetings on its website prior to their confirmation.

#### **Access to correspondence and reports laid on the table at, or submitted to, a meeting**

- 19.8 The Joint Organisation and committees of the Joint Organisation must, during or at the close of a meeting, or during the business day following the meeting, give reasonable access to any person to inspect correspondence and reports laid on the table at, or submitted to, the meeting.
- 19.9 Clause 15.8 does not apply if the correspondence or reports relate to a matter that was received or discussed or laid on the table at, or submitted to, the meeting when the meeting was closed to the public.
- 19.10 Clause 15.8 does not apply if the Joint Organisation or the committee resolves at the meeting, when open to the public, that the correspondence or reports are to be treated as confidential because they relate to a matter specified in section 10A(2) of the Act.
- 19.11 Correspondence or reports to which clauses 15.9 and 15.10 apply are to be marked with the relevant provision of section 10A(2) of the Act that applies to the correspondence or report.

#### **Implementation of decisions of the board**

- 19.12 The Executive Officer is to implement, without undue delay, lawful decisions of the board.

## **20 Joint Organisation Committees**

### **Application of this Part**

- 20.1 This Part only applies to committees of the Joint Organisation whose members are all voting representatives.

### **Joint Organisation committees whose members are all voting representatives**

- 20.2 The Joint Organisation may, by resolution, establish such committees as it considers necessary.
- 20.3 A committee of the Joint Organisation is to consist of the Chairperson and such other voting representatives as are elected by the voting representatives or appointed by the Joint Organisation Board.
- 20.4 The quorum for a meeting of a committee of the Joint Organisation is to be:
- a) such number of members as the Joint Organisation Board decides, or
  - b) if the Joint Organisation Board has not decided a number – a majority of the members of the committee.

### **Functions of committees**

- 20.5 The Joint Organisation must specify the functions of each of its committees when the committee is established, but may from time to time amend those functions.

### **Notice of committee meetings**

- 20.6 The Executive Officer must send to each voting representative, regardless of whether they are a

committee member, at least three (3) days before each meeting of the committee, a notice specifying:

- a) the time, date and place of the meeting, and
- b) the business proposed to be considered at the meeting.

20.7 Notice of less than three (3) days may be given of a committee meeting called in an emergency.

### **Attendance at committee meetings**

20.8 A committee member (other than the Chairperson) ceases to be a member of a committee if the committee member:

- a) has been absent from three (3) consecutive meetings of the committee without having given reasons acceptable to the committee for the member's absences, or
- b) has been absent from at least half of the meetings of the committee held during the immediately preceding year without having given to the committee acceptable reasons for the member's absences.

20.9 Clause 20.8 does not apply if all of the members of the Joint Organisation are members of the committee.

### **Non-members entitled to attend committee meetings**

20.10 A voting representative who is not a member of a committee of the Joint Organisation is entitled to attend, and to speak at a meeting of the committee. However, the voting representative is not entitled:

- a) to give notice of business for inclusion in the agenda for the meeting, or
- b) to move or second a motion at the meeting, or
- c) to vote at the meeting.

### **Chairperson and deputy chairperson of board committees**

20.11 The Chairperson of each committee of the Joint Organisation must be:

- a) the Chairperson, or
- b) if the Chairperson does not wish to be the Chairperson of a committee, a member of the committee elected by the Joint Organisation Board, or
- c) if the Joint Organisation Board does not elect such a member, a member of the committee elected by the committee.

20.12 The Joint Organisation Board may elect a member of a committee of the Joint Organisation as Deputy Chairperson of the committee. If the Board does not elect a deputy chairperson of such a committee, the committee may elect a Deputy Chairperson.

20.13 If neither the Chairperson nor the Deputy Chairperson of a committee of the Joint Organisation is able or willing to preside at a meeting of the committee, the committee must elect a member of the committee to be Acting Chairperson of the committee.

20.14 The Chairperson is to preside at a meeting of a committee of the Joint Organisation. If the Chairperson is unable or unwilling to preside, the Deputy Chairperson (if any) is to preside at the meeting, but if neither the Chairperson nor the Deputy Chairperson is able or willing to preside, the Acting Chairperson is to preside at the meeting.

### **Procedure in committee meetings**

20.15 Subject to any specific requirements of this code, each committee of the Joint Organisation may

regulate its own procedure. The provisions of this code are to be taken to apply to all committees of the Joint Organisation unless the Joint Organisation Board or the committee determines otherwise in accordance with this clause.

20.16 Omitted – not applicable to joint organisations

20.17 A motion at a committee of a joint organisation is taken to be lost in the event of an equality of votes.

20.18 Voting at a Joint Organisation committee meeting is to be by open means (such as on the voices, by show of hands or by a visible electronic voting system).

### **Closure of committee meetings to the public**

20.19 The provisions of the Act and Part 14 of this code apply to the closure of meetings of committees of the Joint Organisation to the public in the same way they apply to the closure of meetings of the Joint Organisation to the public.

20.20 If a committee of the Joint Organisation passes a resolution, or makes a recommendation, during a meeting, or a part of a meeting that is closed to the public, the Chairperson must make the resolution or recommendation public as soon as practicable after the meeting or part of the meeting has ended, and report the resolution or recommendation to the next meeting of the board. The resolution or recommendation must also be recorded in the publicly available minutes of the meeting.

20.21 Resolutions passed during a meeting, or a part of a meeting that is closed to the public must be made public by the Chairperson under clause 20.20 during a part of the meeting that is webcast.

### **Disorder in committee meetings**

20.22 The provisions of the Act and this code relating to the maintenance of order in Joint Organisation meetings apply to meetings of committees of the Joint Organisation in the same way as they apply to meetings of the Joint Organisation.

### **Minutes of Joint Organisation committee meetings**

20.23 Each committee of the board is to keep full and accurate minutes of the proceedings of its meetings. At a minimum, a committee must ensure that the following matters are recorded in the committee's minutes:

- a) the names of voting members attending a meeting and whether they attended the meeting in person or by audio-visual link,
- b) details of each motion moved at a meeting and of any amendments moved to it,
- c) the names of the mover and seconder of the motion or amendment,
- d) whether the motion or amendment was passed or lost, and
- e) such other matters specifically required under this code.

20.24 All voting at meetings of committees of the Joint Organisation (including meetings that are closed to the public), must be recorded in the minutes of meetings with the names of voting representatives who voted for and against each motion or amendment, (including the use of the casting vote), being recorded.

20.25 The minutes of meetings of each committee of the Joint Organisation must be confirmed at a subsequent meeting of the committee.

20.26 Any debate on the confirmation of the minutes is to be confined to whether the minutes are a full and accurate record of the meeting they relate to.

20.27 When the minutes have been confirmed, they are to be signed by the person presiding at that

subsequent meeting.

20.28 The confirmed minutes of a meeting may be amended to correct typographical or administrative errors after they have been confirmed. Any amendment made under this clause must not alter the substance of any decision made at the meeting.

20.29 The confirmed minutes of a meeting of a committee of the Joint Organisation must be published on the Joint Organisation's website. This clause does not prevent the Joint Organisation from also publishing unconfirmed minutes of meetings of committees of the board on its website prior to their confirmation.

## 21 Irregularities

21.1 Proceedings at a meeting of a Joint Organisation or a Joint Organisation committee are not invalidated because of:

- a) a vacancy in a civic office, or
- b) a failure to give notice of the meeting to any voting representative or committee member, or
- c) any defect in the election or appointment of a voting representative or committee member, or
- d) a failure of a voting representative or a committee member to declare a conflict of interest, or to refrain from the consideration or discussion of, or vote on, the relevant matter, at a Joint Organisation or committee meeting in accordance with the Joint Organisation's code of conduct, or
- e) a failure to comply with this code.

## 22 Definitions

the Act	means the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i>
act of disorder	means an act of disorder as defined in clause 15.11 of this code
amendment	in relation to an original motion, means a motion moving an amendment to that motion
audio recorder	any device capable of recording speech
Audio-visual link	means a facility that enables audio and visual communication between persons at different places
business day	means any day except Saturday or Sunday or any other day the whole or part of which is observed as a public holiday throughout New South Wales
chairperson	in relation to a meeting of the Joint Organisation – means the person presiding at the meeting as provided by section 369 of the Act and clauses 6.1 and 6.2 of this code, and in relation to a meeting of a committee – means the person presiding at the meeting as provided by clause 20.11 of this code
this code	means the board’s adopted code of meeting practice
committee of the board	means a committee established by the Joint Organisation in accordance with clause 20.2 of this code (being a committee consisting only of voting representatives) or the board when it has resolved itself into committee of the whole under clause 12.1
joint organisation official	Has the same meaning it has in the Model Code of Conduct for Local Councils in NSW
day	means calendar day
division	means a request by two voting representatives under clause 11.7 of this code requiring the recording of the names of the voting representatives who voted both for and against a motion
foreshadowed amendment	means a proposed amendment foreshadowed by a voting representative under clause 10.18 of this code during debate on the first amendment
foreshadowed motion	means a motion foreshadowed by a voting representative under clause 10.17 of this code during debate on an original motion



open voting	means voting on the voices or by a show of hands or by a visible electronic voting system or similar means
planning decision	means a decision made in the exercise of a function of a board under the <i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979</i> including any decision relating to a development application, an environmental planning instrument, a development control plan or a development contribution plan under that Act, but not including the making of an order under Division 9.3 of Part 9 of that Act
performance improvement order	means an order issued under section 438A of the Act
quorum	means the minimum number of voting representatives or committee members necessary to conduct a meeting
the Regulation	means the <i>Local Government (General) Regulation 2021</i>
webcast	a video or audio broadcast of a meeting transmitted across the internet either concurrently with the meeting or at a later time
year	means the period beginning 1 July and ending the following 30 June

HUNTER JOINT ORGANISATION



JUNE 25		CURRENT MONTH		YEAR TO DATE				APPROVED	FORECAST		
HJO P&L		ACTUAL	BUDGET	ACTUAL	BUDGET	VARIANCE		ANNUAL BUDGET	ANNUAL BUDGET	VARIANCE	
						%	PY			%	ANNUAL BUDGET VARIANCE COMMENTARY
REVENUE											
Membership Subscriptions		54,190	79,189	925,275	950,271	-3%	304,549	950,271	950,271	0%	The additional grant revenue is due to timing differences across several grants
Grant Funding		134,992	184,806	2,356,235	2,217,674	6%	4,673,970	2,217,674	2,635,766	19%	
Management Fees		-	-	-	-	-	21,141	-	-	-	
Training Revenue		-	-	-	-	-	30,863	-	-	-	
Consultancy Fees		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Rent & Overheads		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Miscellaneous	-	165	-	18,800	24,000	-22%	218	24,000	18,253	-24%	
Legal Fees		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Client Fees		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Arrow Contribution		-	-	58,463	-	-	97,540	-	-	-	
Revenue - Total		189,016	263,995	3,358,773	3,191,945	5%	5,128,280	3,191,945	3,604,290	13%	
COST OF SALES											
Cost of Sales		8,754	120,459	1,127,495	861,970	31%	2,566,217	861,970	1,335,706	55%	
Direct Labour		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
GROSS PROFIT / (LOSS)		180,262	143,536	2,231,278	2,329,975	-4%	2,562,063	2,329,975	2,268,584	-3%	
Gross Margin		95%	54%	66%	73%		50%	73%	63%		
EXPENSES											
General & Administration		52,925	50,526	515,568	558,706	-8%	349,352	558,706	559,811	0%	Savings in audit fees - provision for ARIC not required this year
Occupancy Costs		2,313	2,313	27,755	27,755	0%	76,563	27,755	27,755	0%	
Depreciation		3,226	4,718	47,957	61,612	-22%	51,358	61,612	52,354	-15%	Savings in MV depreciation due to switch to subscription model for E.vehicles
Information Technology		3,054	3,318	37,692	35,813	5%	38,627	35,813	38,043	6%	
Overhead Labour		181,687	118,999	1,488,923	1,543,067	-4%	1,741,904	1,543,067	1,487,319	-4%	
Employee Costs		2,278	2,118	11,378	28,810	-61%	40,996	28,810	26,242	-9%	Savings in underutilised training provision
Travel & Accommodation		2,497	1,554	17,098	18,645	-8%	15,451	18,645	19,561	5%	
Motor Vehicle		4,878	3,607	46,930	54,087	-13%	44,847	54,087	50,746	-6%	Includes EV Subscription and savings in operating costs for vehicles
Overhead Expenses - Total		252,858	187,152	2,193,300	2,328,497	-6%	2,359,098	2,328,497	2,261,831	-3%	
NET PROFIT / (LOSS) - OPERATIONS		(72,595)	(43,616)	37,978	1,479	2468%	202,965	1,479	6,753	357%	
Net Profit Margin		-38%	-17%	1%	0%		4%	0%	0%		
OTHER INCOME / (EXPENSES)											
OTHER INCOME											
Profit / Loss on sale of asset		-	-	12,635	52,049	-76%	672	52,049	56,635	9%	
Interest		-	-	-	-	-	42	-	-	-	
OTHER EXPENSES											
HJO Contributions		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Other		-	-	-	-	-	184,032	-	-	-	
EXTRAORDINARY EXPENSESS											
Other - Extraordinary		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Redundancy		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Other Income / (Expenses) - Total		-	-	12,635	52,049	-76%	(184,662)	52,049	56,635	9%	
NET PROFIT / (LOSS) BEFORE TAX		(72,595)	(43,616)	50,613	53,528	-5%	18,303	53,528	63,388	18%	
EBITDA - NET PROFIT		(69,369)	(38,897)	98,570	115,140	-14%	69,661	115,140	115,742	1%	
EBITDA Margin		-37%	-15%	3%	4%		1%	4%	3%		

HUNTER COUNCILS INCORPORATED

JUNE 25											
CURRENT MONTH			YEAR TO DATE				APPROVED		FORECAST		
HCI P&L							ANNUAL		Q3		VARIANCE COMMENTARY
	ACTUAL	FORECAST	ACTUAL	FORECAST	VARIANCE %	PY	BUDGET	FORECAST	VARIANCE %		
REVENUE											
Membership Subscriptions	-	-	-	-	-	-		-	-		
Grant Funding	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Management Fees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Training Revenue	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Consultancy Fees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Rent & Overheads	7,179	5,119	68,441	61,425	11%	189,224	193,230	61,425	215%		
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Legal Fees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Client Fees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Arrow Contribution	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Revenue - Total	7,179	5,119	68,441	61,425	11%	189,224	193,230	61,425			
COST OF SALES											
Cost of Sales	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-		
Direct Labour	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-		
GROSS PROFIT / (LOSS)	7,179	5,119	68,441	61,425	11%	189,224	193,230	61,425			
Gross Margin	100%	100%	100%	100%		100%	100%	100%			
EXPENSES											
General & Administration	5,460	5,104	65,507	63,242		60,654	62,717	63,242	-1%		Corp O/H higher, due to including OneCloud storage fees.
Occupancy Costs	3,682	9,448	101,672	90,733		86,039	89,138	90,733	-2%		
Depreciation	4,037	3,840	45,847	46,081		45,625	45,001	46,081	-2%		
Information Technology	-	-	37	-		-	-	-	-		
Overhead Labour	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-		
Employee Costs	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-		
Travel & Accommodation	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-		
Motor Vehicle	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-		
Overhead Expenses - Total	13,179	18,391	213,063	200,056		192,318	196,856	200,056			
NET PROFIT / (LOSS) - OPERATIONS	(6,000)	(13,272)	(144,622)	(138,631)	4%	(3,094)	(3,626)	(138,631)			
Net Profit Margin	-84%	-259%	-211%	-226%		-2%	-2%	-226%			
OTHER INCOME / (EXPENSES)											
OTHER INCOME											
Profit / Loss on sale of asset	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-		
Interest	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-		
OTHER EXPENSES											
HJO Contributions	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-		
Other	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-		
EXTRAORDINARY EXPENSESS											
Other - Extraordinary	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-		
Redundancy	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-		
Other Income / (Expenses) - Total	-	-	-	-		-	-	-			
NET PROFIT / (LOSS) BEFORE TAX	(6,000)	(13,272)	(144,622)	(138,631)	4%	(3,094)	(3,626)	(138,631)			
EBITDA - NET PROFIT	(1,963)	(9,432)	(98,775)	(92,550)		42,531	41,375	(92,550)			
EBITDA Margin	-27%	-184%	-144%	-151%		22%	21%	-151%			

HUNTER JOINT ORGANISATION



HJO BS	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
CURRENT ASSETS												
Cash & Cash Equivalents	882,646	1,456,515	1,841,929	1,579,781	1,513,443	1,465,020	1,137,848	1,097,450	1,155,445	1,169,528	1,129,694	936,945
Receivables	626,997	1,099,925	500,579	407,174	104,297	101,297	194,283	102,400	278,868	178,860	131,134	211,543
Prepayments	8,980	28,707	25,759	22,811	19,863	16,915	13,967	11,019	8,265	5,510	2,755	
Other Receivables	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2,001
	1,518,624	2,585,148	2,368,268	2,009,767	1,637,604	1,583,233	1,346,099	1,210,870	1,442,579	1,353,899	1,263,584	1,150,489
NON CURRENT ASSETS												
Buildings												
Land												
Computers	628	584	541	497	453	409	366	322	278	4,154	6,042	6,218
Fixtures and Fittings	16,689	15,792	14,991	13,999	13,102	12,206	11,309	10,413	9,516	8,620	7,723	6,827
Building Improvements												
Motor Vehicles	17,560	16,828	16,096							36,766	36,143	35,520
ROU												
Other Non Current Asset												
Intercompany Loans - Asset	44,140	44,140	44,140	44,140	43,445	43,445	43,445	68,220	91,762	91,762	91,762	56,401
	79,017	77,344	75,768	58,636	57,000	56,060	55,120	78,955	101,556	141,302	141,670	104,966
TOTAL ASSETS	1,597,641	2,662,492	2,444,036	2,068,403	1,694,604	1,639,293	1,401,219	1,289,825	1,544,135	1,495,201	1,405,254	1,255,455
CURRENT LIABILITIES												
Payables	272,484	85,845	197,602	113,405	66,310	225,150	64,575	62,502	77,636	42,446	142,724	49,701
Accruals	6,665	600	1,100	4,535	4,105	7,540	10,975	14,410	17,845	7,880	11,315	3,510
Intercompany Loans - Liability												
Loans												
Employee Payables	59,232	57,186	75,023	66,903	62,759	98,677	53,186	66,001	83,108	83,646	74,289	80,847
Other Payables	1,218	5,700	3,836	4,077	4,567	2,354	830	4,783	2,542	4,856	9,992	4,494
GST	104,180	67,311	57,990	47,468	(30,565)	(51,476)	(7,617)	(15,445)	(6,464)	(17,631)	(20,728)	(9,056)
Employee Entitlements	200,467	207,599	212,859	207,696	214,915	220,277	208,652	202,020	205,105	209,946	213,758	221,532
Unearned Income	889,836	810,646	731,457	652,266	573,077	493,888	414,698	335,508	256,319	177,129	97,940	18,750
Unspent Grant Funding	273,707	1,630,313	1,360,148	1,138,532	934,006	816,075	788,747	697,905	929,124	1,009,658	916,394	998,702
	1,807,789	2,865,200	2,640,015	2,234,882	1,829,174	1,812,485	1,534,046	1,367,684	1,565,215	1,517,930	1,445,684	1,368,480
NON CURRENT LIABILITIES												
Term Debt												
Employee Entitlements - non current												
Lease Liability												
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL LIABILITIES	1,807,789	2,865,200	2,640,015	2,234,882	1,829,174	1,812,485	1,534,046	1,367,684	1,565,215	1,517,930	1,445,684	1,368,480
NET ASSETS	(210,148)	(202,708)	(195,979)	(166,479)	(134,570)	(173,192)	(132,827)	(77,859)	(21,080)	(22,729)	(40,430)	(113,025)
EQUITY												
Retained Earnings	(163,639)	(163,639)	(163,639)	(163,639)	(163,639)	(163,639)	(163,639)	(163,639)	(163,639)	(163,639)	(163,639)	(163,639)
Current Year Earnings	(46,509)	(39,069)	(32,340)	(2,840)	29,069	(9,553)	30,812	85,780	142,561	140,910	123,209	50,614
TOTAL EQUITY	(210,148)	(202,708)	(195,979)	(166,479)	(134,570)	(173,192)	(132,827)	(77,859)	(21,078)	(22,729)	(40,430)	(113,025)

HUNTER COUNCILS INCORPORATED

HCI BS	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
CURRENT ASSETS												
Cash & Cash Equivalents	24,088	27,301	21,313	8,528	7,870	7,188	503	569	24,024	1,053	3,580	68
Receivables	33,736	5,631	5,631	6,659	5,631	5,632	5,631	5,631	5,631	8,828	7,884	7,897
Prepayments	18,565	16,877	15,189	13,502	11,814	10,126	8,438	6,750	5,063	3,375	1,688	
Other Receivables									(17,666)	(17,666)	(17,666)	(17,666)
	76,389	49,809	42,133	28,689	25,315	22,946	14,572	12,950	17,052	(4,410)	(4,514)	(9,701)
NON CURRENT ASSETS												
Buildings	820,341	817,399	814,457	811,514	801,820	814,984	812,022	809,062	806,100	803,139	800,178	797,217
Land	351,302	351,302	351,302	351,302	351,302	351,302	351,302	351,302	351,302	351,302	351,302	351,302
Computers											-	
Fixtures and Fittings	8,319	8,258	8,198	8,137	8,076	8,470	11,038	10,951	10,865	10,779	12,025	11,927
Building Improvements	367,088	366,288	365,489	364,689	363,889	363,089	362,290	361,490	360,690	359,890	359,091	358,291
Motor Vehicles												
ROU												
Other Non Current Asset												
Intercompany Loans - Asset	(609,675)	(609,675)	(609,675)	(609,675)	(609,675)	(627,412)	(629,412)	(630,412)	(630,412)	(645,412)	(645,412)	(645,412)
	937,375	933,572	929,771	925,967	915,412	910,433	907,240	902,393	898,545	879,698	877,184	873,325
TOTAL ASSETS	1,013,764	983,381	971,904	954,656	940,727	933,379	921,812	915,343	915,597	875,288	872,670	863,624
CURRENT LIABILITIES												
Payables	30,479	10,376	14,663	6,643	9,426	21,190	17,042	21,154	17,161	12,200	20,341	16,555
Accruals	7,459	7,459	7,459	7,459	7,459	7,459	7,459	7,459	7,459	7,459	7,459	7,459
Intercompany Loans - Liability	226,000	226,000	226,000	226,000	226,000	226,000	226,000	226,000	226,000	226,000	226,000	226,000
Loans												
Employee Payables												
Other Payables	508	1,179	1,850	2,521	3,192	(4,209)	(3,538)	(2,867)	26,954	(1,525)	(854)	(183)
GST	810	(1,068)	(1,903)	(2,072)	(474)	(3,193)	(663)	(866)	(999)	(976)	(290)	(222)
Employee Entitlements												
Unearned Income												
Unspent Grant Funding												
	265,256	243,946	248,069	240,551	245,603	247,247	246,300	250,880	276,575	243,158	252,656	249,609
NON CURRENT LIABILITIES												
Term Debt												
Employee Entitlements - non current												
Lease Liability												
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL LIABILITIES	265,256	243,946	248,069	240,551	245,603	247,247	246,300	250,880	276,575	243,158	252,656	249,609
NET ASSETS	748,508	739,435	723,835	714,105	695,124	686,132	675,512	664,463	639,022	632,130	620,014	614,015
EQUITY												
Retained Earnings	765,462	765,462	765,462	765,462	758,637	758,637	758,637	758,637	758,637	758,637	758,637	758,637
Current Year Earnings	(16,954)	(26,027)	(41,627)	(51,357)	(63,513)	(72,505)	(83,125)	(94,174)	(119,615)	(126,507)	(138,623)	(144,622)
TOTAL EQUITY	748,508	739,435	723,835	714,105	695,124	686,132	675,512	664,463	639,022	632,130	620,014	614,015





HJO CASHFLOW	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	TOTAL
CASH FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES													
Cash inflows from													
Trade debtors	1,011,553	227,675	608,361	96,566	302,877	153,000	39,418	132,314	249,198	279,339	190,975	130,952	3,422,228
Other receivables	-	810,918	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	810,918
Other Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	1,011,553	1,038,593	608,361	96,566	302,877	153,000	39,418	132,314	249,198	279,339	190,975	130,952	4,233,146
Cash outflows to													
Trade Creditors	(79,668)	(333,181)	(137,832)	(272,961)	(199,163)	(78,374)	(262,794)	(88,226)	(106,778)	(112,302)	(124,525)	(195,077)	(1,990,881)
Employee Expenses	(102,192)	(63,371)	(64,338)	(113,754)	(67,401)	(100,541)	(118,147)	(61,472)	(64,370)	(106,417)	(66,710)	(108,278)	(1,036,991)
Funding Disbursements													-
Other													-
Taxes		(68,171)	(20,776)		(102,651)	(22,508)	14,351	(23,014)	(20,054)		(39,574)	(20,346)	(302,743)
	(181,860)	(464,723)	(222,946)	(386,715)	(369,215)	(201,423)	(366,590)	(172,712)	(191,202)	(218,719)	(230,809)	(323,701)	(3,330,615)
Net cash from/(used)	829,693	573,870	385,415	(290,149)	(66,338)	(48,423)	(327,172)	(40,398)	57,996	60,620	(39,834)	(192,749)	902,531
CASH FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES													
Cash inflows from													
Proceeds from sale of P&E	-			28,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	28,000
Other	-				-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	28,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	28,000
Cash outflows to													
Purchase of CAPEX	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(46,537)	-	-	(46,537)
Repay / (new loans) - Premium Funding	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(46,537)	-	-	(46,537)
Net cash from/(used)	-	-	-	28,000	-	-	-	-	-	(46,537)	-	-	(18,537)
CASH FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES													
Cash inflows from													
Intercompany (incoming)	25,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	25,000
Other - Financing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	25,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	25,000
Cash outflows to													
Intercompany (outgoing)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other - Financing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Net cash from/(used)	25,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	25,000
Movement in cash													
Cash at the beginning of the period	27,953	882,646	1,456,516	1,841,931	1,579,781	1,513,443	1,465,020	1,137,848	1,097,450	1,155,446	1,169,529	1,129,695	27,953
Net increase/(decrease) in cash	854,693	573,870	385,415	(262,149)	(66,338)	(48,423)	(327,172)	(40,398)	57,996	14,083	(39,834)	(192,749)	908,994
CASH AT THE END OF THE PERIOD	882,646	1,456,516	1,841,931	1,579,782	1,513,443	1,465,020	1,137,848	1,097,450	1,155,446	1,169,529	1,129,695	936,946	936,947

HUNTER COUNCILS INCORPORATED

HCI CASHFLOW	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	TOTAL
CASH FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES													
Cash inflows from													
Trade debtors	9,458	33,736	5,631	4,603	2,145	5,631	5,631	5,631	5,631	5,631	8,828	7,884	100,440
Other receivables	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,441	-	-	-	5,441
	9,458	33,736	5,631	4,603	2,145	5,631	5,631	5,631	11,072	5,631	8,828	7,884	105,881
Cash outflows to													
Trade Creditors	(9,229)	(28,887)	(11,619)	(17,388)	(4,706)	(6,313)	(17,509)	(6,565)	(16,766)	(14,452)	(7,299)	(11,397)	(152,130)
Employee Expenses													-
Funding Disbursements													-
Other													-
Taxes		(1,636)			1,903		3,193				998		4,458
	(9,229)	(30,523)	(11,619)	(17,388)	(2,803)	(6,313)	(14,316)	(6,565)	(16,766)	(14,452)	(6,301)	(11,397)	(147,672)
Net cash from/(used)	229	3,213	(5,988)	(12,785)	(658)	(682)	(8,685)	(934)	(5,694)	(8,821)	2,527	(3,513)	253,553
CASH FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES													
Cash Inflows from													
Proceeds from sale of P&E	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	29,150	(29,150)	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	29,150	(29,150)	-	-	-
Cash outflows to													
Purchase of CAPEX	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Repay / (new loans) - Premium Funding	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Net cash from/(used)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	29,150	(29,150)	-	-	-
CASH FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES													
Cash inflows from													
Intercompany (incoming)	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,000	1,000	-	15,000	-	-	18,000
Other - Financing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,000	1,000	-	15,000	-	-	18,000
Cash outflows to													
Intercompany (outgoing)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other - Financing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Net cash from/(used)	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,000	1,000	-	15,000	-	-	18,000
Movement in cash													
Cash at the beginning of the period	23,859	24,088	27,301	21,313	8,528	7,870	7,188	503	569	24,025	1,054	3,581	23,859
Net increase/(decrease) in cash	229	3,213	(5,988)	(12,785)	(658)	(682)	(6,685)	66	23,456	(22,971)	2,527	(3,513)	(23,791)
CASH AT THE END OF THE PERIOD	24,088	27,301	21,313	8,528	7,870	7,188	503	569	24,025	1,054	3,581	68	68