



Hunter Joint Organisation  
**Advocacy Priorities 2026**

### 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.



Port Stephens

Contact us at [admin@hunterjo.nsw.gov.au](mailto:admin@hunterjo.nsw.gov.au) or [www.hunterjo.nsw.gov.au](http://www.hunterjo.nsw.gov.au)

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Front cover image Singleton Council

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# 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 Hunter JO is funded by the 10 member councils.

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.

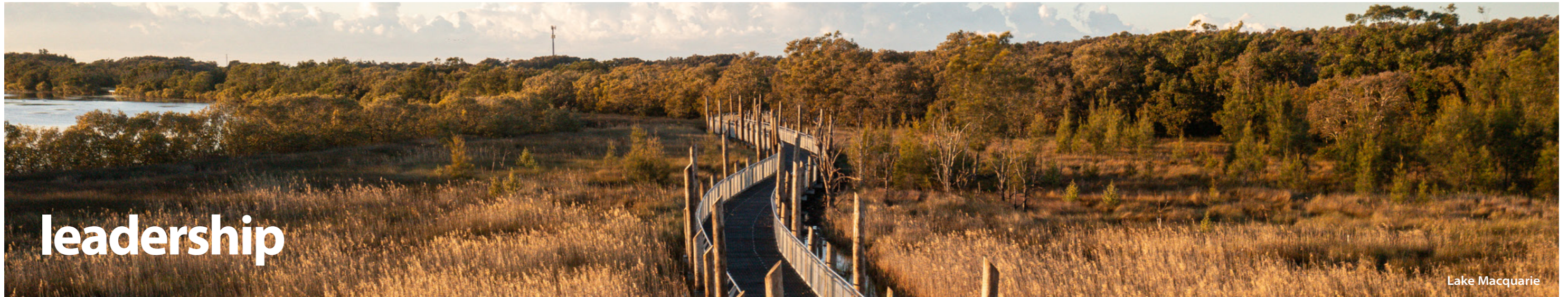


### our councils

- 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

Maitland





## 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 Gavin Morris**  
City of Newcastle



**Mayor Leah Anderson**  
Port Stephens Council  
(Deputy Chair)



**Mayor Sue Moore**  
Singleton Council  
(Chair)



**Mayor Maurice Collison**  
Upper Hunter Shire Council

## our general managers advisory committee



**Peter Chrystal**  
Interim GM Cessnock City Council



**Gareth Curtis**  
GM Dungog Shire Council



**Tony Farrell**  
CEO Lake Macquarie City Council



**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  
(GMAC Chair)



**Justin Fitzpatrick-Barr**  
GM Singleton Council



**Greg McDonald**  
GM Upper Hunter Shire Council



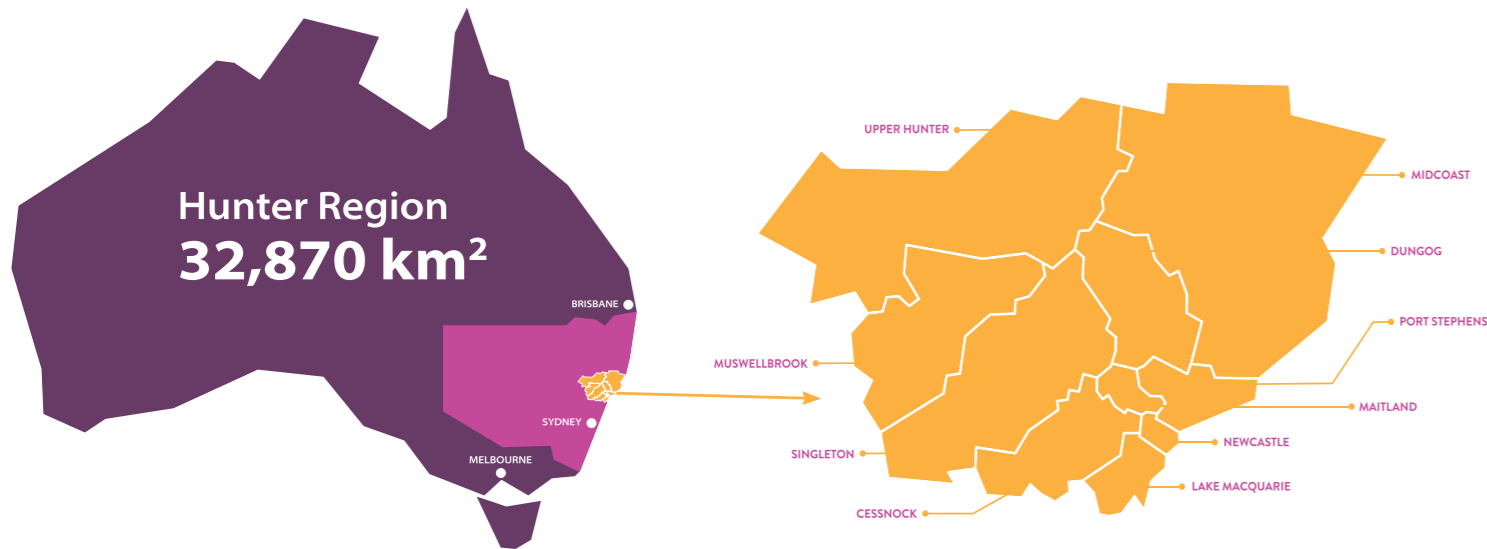
**Shaun O'Sullivan**  
Director North  
Regional Coordination  
Premiers Department NSW



**Virginia Errington**  
Council Engagement Manager  
NSW Office of Local  
Government

# the hunter region

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



The Hunter region is navigating a period of profound transformation. With population growth accelerating towards 1 million and global shifts in energy and industry impacting our region more than most, we recognise the need for coordinated leadership among all levels of government and industry, strategic advocacy, and meaningful partnerships.

The Hunter's economy has traditionally relied on coal exports, however as global demand for coal declines we need more investment in renewable energy, manufacturing, and agribusiness, along with our strengths in tourism and defence. Our region hosts a newly opened international airport, deep seaport and skilled labour with a growing focus on clean energy and technology. 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.

Extreme weather events are becoming more frequent, with above-average rainfall damaging roads and community assets. The resulting strain on council services is placing continued pressure on the financial sustainability of local government.

With a gross regional product of \$99B, the decline in coal demand valued at \$44B annually (REMPAN 2026), this will have enormous social and economic ramifications for the Hunter region and the NSW economy more broadly, including a decline in coal royalties currently contributing over \$3 billion annually to the NSW budget.

Without urgent intervention, the scale of disruption to communities and the regional economy will be profound.

**822,102**  
2025  
Population

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

<b>32,748km<sup>2</sup></b> Hunter Region	<b>41yrs</b> Median age	<b>40%</b> of residents leave their LGA to go to work
<b>69%</b> Population who own their home or have a mortgage	<b>26%</b> Population who rent	
<b>2.5</b> Average people per household	<b>\$1.95b</b> Value of tourism industry	<b>12,993k</b> Annual tourist visitors
<b>283.5km</b> Coastline	<b>162,233ha</b> Rainforest	<b>12,664km</b> Roads
<b>37,938ha</b> Wetlands	<b>3,581</b> Native plant species	<b>803</b> Native mammal, bird, reptile & amphibian species

**Jobs in the Hunter**

- 18% Health Care & Social Assistance
- 10% Construction
- 10% Retail Trade
- 9% Education & Training
- 8% Accommodation & Food Service
- 45% Other

**Hunter Regional Exports**

- 55% Mining
- 18% Manufacturing
- 6% Construction
- 22% Other

# alignment to the hunter jo strategic plan

The Hunter JO Strategic Plan 2035 is an aspirational 10-year plan reflecting the shared vision of our ten Councils for the Hunter Region.

The Strategic Plan has been developed through extensive engagement in 2024-25 with our Board of ten Mayors and General Managers, a review of councils' Community Strategic Plans, and alignment with key regional and state plans. It also builds on the priorities, challenges and opportunities identified through our ongoing program and advocacy work.

The Hunter JO, in collaboration with Member Councils and key stakeholders, will lead implementation of the Strategic Plan based on our funding, resources and grants available each year.



## our strategic priorities



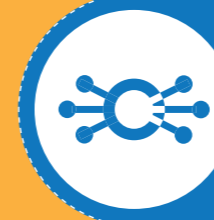
### Housing & Population Growth

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.



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

# advocacy priorities 2026

Each year our Board of ten democratically elected Mayors identify and rank the Hunter regional advocacy priorities for the year.

Tier 1	Post Mining Land Use	Housing	Economic Transformation	
Tier 2	Transport Planning	Financial Sustainability		
Tier 3	Water Infrastructure	Disaster Resilience		Tourism and Freight

The actions below will be undertaken within the capacity of the Hunter JO:

### Mayors

- Advocate to the six (6) Federal Hunter MPs
- Advocate to the eleven (11) NSW Hunter MPs
- Advocate to the NSW Ministers aligned to portfolio
- Advocate to the Federal Ministers aligned to portfolio

### Hunter JO

- Gather information to inform advocacy ask and prepare communications materials
- Prepare correspondence and coordinate meeting logistics with politicians
- Attend meetings with politicians and Mayors
- Implement media and communications campaigns
- Meet with relevant Departments/staff aligned to advocacy focus
- Prepare detailed regional submissions
- Work with other Hunter advocacy organisations to strengthen collective voice eg Committee for Hunter, Hunter Jobs Alliance, Business Hunter
- Attend relevant events, workshops, networking aligned to advocacy focus to build knowledge and stakeholder relationships



# economic transformation

## strategic objective

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.

According to both State and Federal Governments, we are expecting a global decline in coal demand over the next couple of decades, impacts close to 50,000 direct and indirect jobs in the Hunter region (FIJA Issues Paper, 2023 and Commonwealth Treasury, 2025).

We know from international experience that successful transition of mining regions requires all levels of government to effectively collaborate to deliver shared plans and objectives. The ten councils of the Hunter region are firmly committed to partnering with both the Federal and NSW governments to deliver outcomes for our communities, to successfully transition away from coal.

We're advocating for the Federal and NSW Governments to come together with our Member Councils to properly recognise the scale and urgency of the Hunter's transition, to agree on a set of shared commitments, and to work together on their delivery to assist the Hunter region and its people, jobs and businesses.

Similar to the successful Western Sydney Agreement, we're asking for a similar focus for the Hunter, to provide specific economic focus and support to urgently catalyse business investment and jobs to support a transitioning economy. Revenue from mining royalties provides an opportunity to catalyse investment in this approach to support mining impacted communities.

Objectives of this approach for the Hunter would include:

- Creating 50,000 new jobs to offset those expected to be lost from the global decline in coal over the coming years.
- Business incentives and investment attraction.
- Reskilling our mining related industries for future industries.
- Repurposing mining lands to create the new industry and jobs to drive the Hunter's ongoing contribution to the State and National economies.
- Planning partnerships to support housing growth to meet the NSW targets.
- Long-term Federal, State and Local Government agreement, governance and funding.
- Streamlined and clear governance arrangements for delivery of cross government support services to mining impacted communities.

### Challenge

Lack of Coordination Across All Levels of Government

### Advocacy Ask

Long-term plan agreed with Federal, State and Local Governance and funding for economic transformation in the Hunter region.

Lack of Direct Funding Support

Increase the NSW Future Jobs Investment Fund to \$150m per year, or 5% of mining royalties to plan for the economic transformation of mining impacted communities with expected downturn in coal.



Port of Newcastle



Image Credit: Newcastle Airport



Image Credit: High Speed Rail Authority



Singleton



# post mining land use

## strategic objective

**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.**

A key priority for 2026 is planning for post mining land use, where the scale of change facing our region is significant:

- According to coal industry modelling shared with our Member Councils, 12,000 direct and indirect jobs are expected to be impacted by two coal mine closures by 2030.
- Expected global decline in coal demand will impact another 20 further coal mines with no mining approvals currently granted beyond 2048.
- Impacts across the Hunter will be close to 50,000 direct and indirect jobs in the Hunter region (FIJA Issues Paper, 2023).

We're calling for the Federal and NSW Governments to come together with Local Governments to collaborate on delivery, and provide a greater level of investment to support the Hunter region through this transformation and strategically plan for post mining land use opportunities.

Mining royalties account for more than \$3 billion in the NSW Government's 2025/26 budget, but no direct funding is available to mining impacted communities to plan for post mining land use.

We acknowledge and appreciate the NSW Government's full support for all recommendations arising from the "Inquiry into the Beneficial and Productive Post Mining Land Use". The need to implement the recommendations is urgent to accelerate the reuse and redevelopment of mining related lands to create new industry and jobs in the Hunter.

### Challenge

### Advocacy Ask

<b>Complex Governance</b>	One Minister accountable for multi-agency delivery and reporting of Inquiry recommendations.
<b>Under-resourced Councils</b>	Resourcing Councils to deliver planning and actions that directly support local communities transform their economies.
<b>Urgency of Implementation</b>	Urgent delivery of all recommendations from the Post Mining Land Use Inquiry. Accelerating action by the NSW Future Jobs and Investment Authority.
<b>Need for Local Mine Closure and Reuse Plans</b>	Investment in Council led pilots to develop Masterplans for reuse of priority mine sites and to prepare local and regional mine closure strategies.



# housing

## strategic objective

**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.**

We appreciate the priority commitment and focus of the Federal and NSW Government to meet the Housing Accord targets and want to actively partner with the Government to achieve these across the Hunter region.

A variety of barriers are inhibiting delivery which need to be addressed to meet these targets and to create healthy vibrant communities as the Hunter's population grows.

The main issue impacting Councils is the provision of enabling infrastructure. Significant areas of development-ready land exist, but construction cannot proceed due to delays in the provision of core enabling infrastructure such as roads and transport, water and sewer services, and stormwater and flood mitigation.

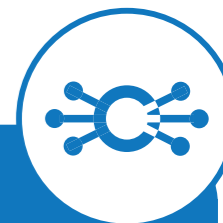
Data from the ten Hunter councils in 2024 indicates that approximately \$938 million in infrastructure investment would unlock 61,000 new homes across the Hunter region.

Challenge	Advocacy Ask
Enabling Infrastructure	Delivery of additional funds directly to councils for enabling infrastructure.
Biodiversity	Strategic Conversation Planning, Regional Bio-certification and streamlined biodiversity offsets processes.
Increasing Density	NSW Government lead the coordination needed to plan and activate Transport Oriented Developments (TODs) and Low-rise Mid-rise areas to increase density.
Integrated Planning	NSW Government lead integrated land use and infrastructure planning across a variety of state agencies for significant growth areas such as Anambah-Branxton.
Cost of Construction	Increase research and development into alternative housing options including modular homes.
Shortage of Skills	Continue to invest and expand in TAFE fee free courses that build skills in the housing construction sector.
Social and Affordable Housing	Explore alternative developer incentives that encourage provision of affordable housing in perpetuity.





Cessnock



# roads & transport planning

## strategic objective

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

While the development of the Hunter Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan (SRITP) is welcomed by the region's councils, it needs to be supported by a clear, annual transparent delivery program to prioritise, drive and monitor its implementation. We look forward to working collaboratively with NSW Government to achieve the outcomes of the SRITP.

One of the biggest challenges for Local Government is funding for roads. Regional communities manage vastly greater road networks compared to capital city counterparts. This is amplified through Federal Financial Assistance Grant (FAG) funding allocations which continue to provide inequities to regional communities.

To put this into perspective, if 5% of the road network were renewed to the same standard each year, the relative cost would be about \$75 per ratepayer in Sydney, compared with over \$250 in Newcastle, \$1800 per ratepayer in Singleton and \$3800 in Dungog per ratepayer. This clearly disadvantages the affordability and capacity of regional and rural councils and their communities to maintain their road networks.

Challenge	Advocacy Ask
Road Funding	Review of regional road funding formulas to better reflect need.
Re-categorisation	Prioritise re-categorisation of Local roads to Regional and State Roads where the road services significant assets to the state.
Regional Transport Plan Delivery	A clear and transparent annual delivery program to prioritise, drive and monitor implementation of the Regional Transport Plan.



# financial sustainability

## strategic objective

**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.**

Local Governments across Australia are facing mounting financial risks that threaten their long-term sustainability.

Recent Federal and NSW Parliamentary Inquiries including the House of Representatives' Inquiry into Local Government Sustainability (2024–26) and the NSW Standing Committee on State Development's Inquiry into the ability of Local Governments to fund

infrastructure and services (2024–25) have demonstrated the constrained financial position of Local Government and reinforced the need for greater State and Federal Government support.

We appreciate the Government's focus and acknowledgment of Local Government's position and hope to work together on solutions.

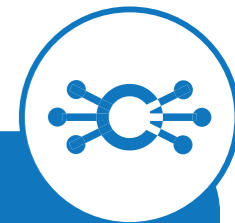
Challenge	Advocacy Ask
Cost Shifting	Practical action to address cost shifting.
Financial Assistance Grants	Review of the NSW distribution methodology to provide greater equity to councils in need. Return to 1% Commonwealth taxation.
Road Funding	Review of funding allocation model to better reflect needs.
IPART Rate-Pegging	Rates aligned to Consumer Price Index (CPI) increases for actual costs drivers for Local Government services.
Disaster Recovery Funding	Streamline disaster funding and ongoing betterment programs to build council and community resilience.
Escalating Audit Fees	Strengthen trust in Local Government with risk-based compliance and earlier release of the Accounting Code.
Waste Levy	Return a greater percentage of the waste levy to support delivery of waste and circular economy initiatives that deliver on NSW waste targets.
Infrastructure Backlog	Non competitive, long term co-investment plans and funding for asset renewal.
Grant Funding	Non competitive, four-year block funding aligned to councils mandated planning cycles.



Dungog



MidCoast



# water infrastructure

## strategic objective

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.

### Development controls and implications

While Hunter Water pays substantial dividends to the NSW Government, Dungog Shire Council and its communities do not receive any share of these returns, despite bearing the impacts of land use restrictions and funding the provision and maintenance of core local infrastructure, such as roads underpinning these water assets and infrastructure of significance to the State.

### Fragmented waterway management leading to water quality and security issues

Water quality continues to be affected by sediment erosion and algal blooms, particularly along the Williams, Hunter, and Paterson Rivers, and at Grahamstown Reservoir. A lack of coordinated investment in catchment protection is contributing to environmental decline, posing risks to the Hunter's drinking water supply and leading to unclear accountability and missed opportunities for joint action.

### Ageing infrastructure and health impacts

Councils managing their own water infrastructure are facing growing challenges due to ageing facilities and networks, increasing regulatory expectations, and reduced Government funding support. The cost of necessary upgrades to treatment facilities, pipes, and distribution networks far exceeds Local Government resourcing capacity. Support is urgently needed from the both the State and Federal Government to work with regional councils on long-term planning, equitable investment, and coordinated water infrastructure solutions.

### Challenge

### Advocacy Ask

Water Supply and Treatment

Commit to a three way funding model for council owned water and sewer infrastructure across Federal, State and Local Government.

Catchment Area Impacts

Ensure fair returns and consistent planning requirements in catchment-impacted Local Government Areas.

Waterway Health

Establish a lead agency to coordinate Hunter waterway health.



# disaster resilience

## strategic objective

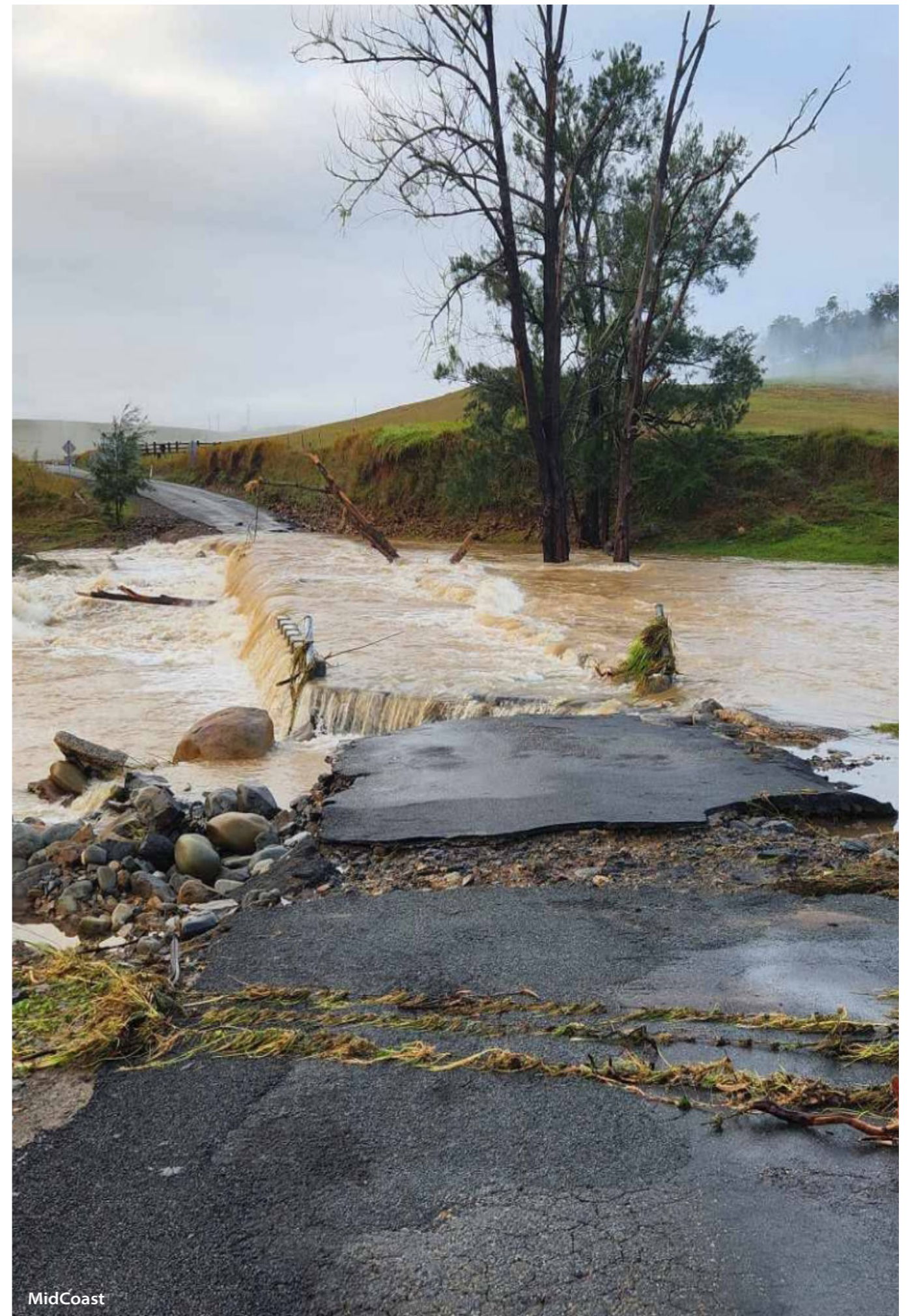
**Develop and implement comprehensive strategies and programs for climate change mitigation, adaptation and disaster resilience, strengthening the long-term resilience and wellbeing of the region.**

The Hunter is predicted to experience more severe weather and natural hazards of increasing frequency and intensity as our climate continues to change. Many of our region's communities are already struggling to recover from the continual and combined impacts of more frequent and severe natural hazards, as demonstrated by the severe weather events that have impacted the NSW East Coast from May 2025 where the Pacific Highway closed due to inundation.

In the face of this change we appreciate the significant ongoing efforts of the NSW and Commonwealth Governments to review and improve disaster management frameworks and responses and to build the resilience capability of local communities.

The involvement of local councils in this work will be critical. This is because councils play a unique and systemic role in addressing climate risks and achieving adaptation objectives. However local councils, especially regional and rural ones, are typically under-resourced to plan and undertake this important work.

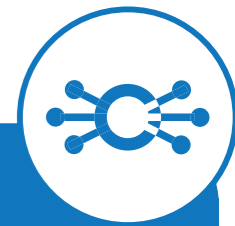
Challenge	Advocacy Ask
Lack of Funding	Commit to more proactive and streamlined resilience funding aligned to councils mandated four year planning cycle.
Water Infrastructure Excluded from Recovery Arrangements	Revise National Emergency Management Agencies (NEMA) criteria to ensure water and sewer assets are included in disaster recovery funding eligibility.
Betterment	Enable betterment funding to strategically improve and upgrade resilience of priority public infrastructure to natural disasters.
Staff Resources	Establish and co-fund permanent local and regional roles for disaster resilience.
Regional, Place-based Approach	Co-design regional disaster adaptation priorities and funding arrangements to reflect shared local priorities.
Spontaneous Volunteers	Allow recovery of costs incurred through ongoing Spontaneous Volunteer management and coordination.



MidCoast



Image Credit: Hunter Valley Wine and Tourism Association



# tourism and airfreight

## strategic objective

Leveraging regional and global industries, enhance business attraction, job creation and future skills development.

As our region undergoes an economic transformation away from a reliance on coal mining, we need support to diversify our economy to remain a strong, resilient region.

Newcastle Airport has undergone a \$250M redevelopment with a new international terminal and runway. This Commonwealth investment will enable international visitors stay longer and spend more in our economy, and have the opportunity to contribute millions to our economy. A Business Case and Strategy were completed to identify the value of the opportunity in 2024, in partnership with the Newcastle Airport and Destination Sydney Surrounds North. We're advocating for investment to implement the Tourism Strategy seeking \$3.85M over three years. We're expected to increase international visitation by at least 1% providing an additional \$268M flowing through the Hunter region in the next three years.

In addition an air-freight precinct is required to attract airlines to the region and catalyse business growth across Hunter region to export air freight products and encourage international tourism.

As demonstrated through the development of the Business Case, nearly \$500M in NSW exports are currently routed through Brisbane and Melbourne, highlighting a lack of sufficient air freight infrastructure in NSW and a direct loss of revenue to the NSW economy.

Upgraded cargo capabilities will also help subsidise and expand international long-haul flights, increasing regional accessibility for both goods and passengers. Without an airfreight precinct, we won't realise the full potential from the investment that has been made in Newcastle Airport.

These are perfect catalytic projects, with a positive return on investment to support that economic transformation.

### Challenge

### Advocacy Ask

Challenge	Advocacy Ask
Tourism Marketing	\$3.85M investment over three years for international tourism attraction with Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR) of 68.
Airfreight Precinct	\$1M for detailed design. \$49M to construct the Airfreight Precinct delivering \$134m in benefits and a Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR) of 1.7.



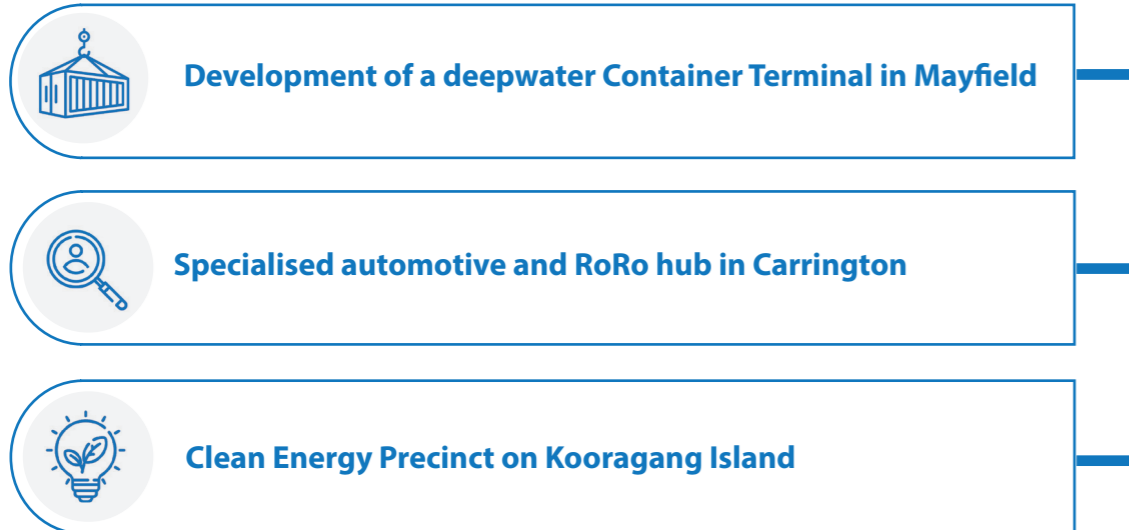
# Port of Newcastle diversification

## strategic objective

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.

The Port of Newcastle is a critical regional asset for the Hunter, serving as a major gateway for trade, supporting local industries, and driving economic growth and jobs across the region.

We support the Port in advocating for their diversification in the following areas:



Newcastle

# delivery program for all advocacy priorities

The full list of shared advocacy priorities where an opportunity may arise to advocate are listed below categorised under our Strategic Themes.

Hunter JO Delivery Program 2026-2030

Strategic Objective	Advocacy Priority	Advocacy Objective	State or Federal
<b>HOUSING &amp; POPULATION GROWTH</b>			
1.1 Housing affordability, density, diversity and availability	Housing	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
1.2 Integrated planning and enabling infrastructure to support housing development in priority growth areas		Funding for enabling infrastructure, State Government integrated planning, and improved biodiversity mapping.	State
1.3 Supporting population growth and demographic shifts	Regional population projections	An agreed population vision as a foundation to support advocacy for State and Federal Government service planning.	State
<b>ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION &amp; JOBS</b>			
2.1 Activate the reuse of mining related lands	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.	State & Federal
2.2 Leveraging regional and global industries	Airfreight precinct	Investment of \$1m for Detailed Design for the Newcastle Airport air freight precinct to grow high value export products from the Hunter and MidCoast.	State & Federal
	Hunter Global Tourism Marketing Strategy	Investment of \$3.85m over three years to increase international tourism through the implementation of Business Case findings.	State & Federal
	Port of Newcastle	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
2.3 Evolution towards renewable energy, circular economy and future industries	Circular Economy Futures Hub	Alignment and commitment across all levels of government on a Circular Economy Futures Hub to accelerate the region towards a circular economy.	State & Federal
	Energy transformation	Federal and NSW Governments work with Local Government on a clear plan and place-based governance to coordinate and collaboratively drive the Hunter's economic transformation and provide a greater level of investment (including from NSW mining royalties) to directly support this.	State & Federal
<b>INFRASTRUCTURE &amp; CONNECTIVITY</b>			
3.1 Integrated cross-agency infrastructure planning	Transport planning	Planning a more equitable, future-focused transport system (e.g. public transport based on projected demand, active transport, road funding, freight, high-speed rail integration).	State
	Water infrastructure	Commitment from Federal and State Government to an equal three way funding model for infrastructure to ensure a reliable, safe and secure water supply for the Hunter and MidCoast Region.	State
3.2 Safe and efficient road networks	Road funding reform	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
3.3 Multimodal, low-emission transport connectivity	Transport improvement	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
	Shiraz to Shore	Delivery of the Shiraz to Shore cycle trail from the Hunter Valley to Newcastle and Lake Macquarie.	State & Federal
3.4 Digital connectivity improvements	Digital connectivity	Investment in infrastructure to improve digital connectivity.	State & Federal
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY &amp; RESILIENCE</b>			
4.1 Climate change mitigation, adaptation and disaster resilience	Disaster resilience	Sustainable and strategic place-based planning and resourcing of local and regional disaster resilience and recovery activities.	State & Federal
4.2 Circular materials and waste management	Waste levy	Return of waste levy funds to implement local and regional circular economy and waste management initiatives.	State
4.3 Water security and waterway health	Regional waterway management	Establish a regional waterway management authority with responsibility for waterway and catchment health.	State
<b>FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY &amp; FUNDING REFORM</b>			
5.1 Ensuring the long-term financial sustainability of Local Government	Financial sustainability of Local Government	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
5.2 Reforming grant funding processes to secure sustainable funding models	Grant funding reform	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
<b>COMMUNITY LIVEABILITY &amp; WELLBEING</b>			

