

Hunter Joint Organisation Board Meeting Minutes

10.02am, Thursday 11 June 2026

Murrook Culture Centre, 2163 Nelson Bay Rd, Williamstown NSW 2318

Voting Members Present

Mayor Daniel Watton	Cessnock City Council (Online)
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 & Acting Chair)

Non-Voting Members Present

Tony Farrell	CEO, Lake Macquarie City Council
Jeff Smith	General Manager, Maitland City Council
Adrian Panuccio	General Manager, MidCoast Council (Online)
Derek Finnigan	General Manager, Muswellbrook Shire Council
Jeremy Bath	CEO, City of Newcastle
Tim Crosdale	General Manager, Port Stephens Council
Mel Curtis	Acting General Manager, Singleton Council
Greg McDonald	General Manager, Upper Hunter Shire Council
Shaun O'Sullivan	Director North - Regional Coordination, Delivery & Engagement Group – Premier's Department NSW

Apologies

Mayor Sue Moore	Singleton Council (Chair)
Mayor Maurice Collison	Upper Hunter Shire Council
Peter Chrystal	Interim General Manager, Cessnock City Council
Gareth Curtis	General Manager, Dungog Shire Council

Staff in Attendance

Steve Wilson	Executive Officer, Hunter JO
Tim Askew	Director of Programs, Hunter JO
Kim Carland	Advocacy & Government Relations Lead, Hunter JO

Bonnie Gradwell	Administration and Events Officer, Hunter JO (Secretariat)
Anja Carlen-Jorgensen	Advocacy and Communications Officer, Hunter JO
Chris Dart	Program Lead, Waste and Circular Economy, Hunter JO

Others in attendance

Mayor Darcy Byrne	President, Local Government NSW
David Reynolds	Chief Executive, Local Government NSW
Sharne Colefax	Manager Council Engagement, Office of Local Government
Alex Hardy	Director of Corporate Assurance, Prosperity (Online)

The meeting opened at 10.31am.

Item 1 Acknowledgment of Country

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

Item 2 Rescission of 2025 Code of Meeting Practice

Resolved: That the Board rescind the Hunter JO Code of Meeting Practice endorsed on 4th December 2025

Moved: Mayor Adam Shultz

Seconded: Mayor Leah Anderson

Carried.

Item 3 Welcome & Apologies

3.1 Apologies

Apologies for the meeting were received.

Moved: Mayor Adam Shultz

Seconded: Mayor Philip Penfold

Carried.

3.2 Conflicts of Interest

Resolved: That any conflicts of interest be declared and noted.

No conflicts of interest were declared.

Moved: Lord Mayor Gavin Morris

Seconded: Mayor Philip Penfold

Carried.

Item 4 Minutes of Previous Meeting

4.1 Minutes of Meeting 19 March 2026

Resolved: That the minutes of the Hunter JO Board Meeting held on 19 March 2026 be received and noted.

Moved: Mayor Claire Pontin

Seconded: Mayor Philip Penfold

Carried.

Item 5 Actions Arising from Minutes

5.1 Hunter JO Board Action Register

Resolved: That the status of actions included in the Register be noted.

Moved: Mayor Philip Penfold

Seconded: Lord Mayor Gavin Morris

Carried.

Item 6 Presentations

Nil.

Item 7 Correspondence

Resolved: That the correspondence be received and noted.

Moved: Lord Mayor Gavin Morris

Seconded: Mayor Philip Penfold

Carried.

Item 8 Items for the Hunter JO Board: For Decision

8.1 Statement of Revenue Policy 2026/27

Resolved: That the Board:

- **Endorse the draft 2026/27 Statement of Revenue Policy for the Hunter Joint Organisation**
- **Endorse retaining the existing methodology for determining annual Member Council contributions and fees for the remainder of the Board's term, unless something materially changes that can support a substantive review for the year in question.**

Moved: Lord Mayor Gavin Morris

Seconded: Mayor Claire Pontin

Carried.

8.2 Budget 2026/27

Resolved: That the Board approve the 2026/27 budget for the Hunter JO.

Moved: Mayor Digby Rayward

Seconded: Mayor Jeffrey Drayton

Carried.

8.3 Hunter JO Delivery Program 2026-2030

Resolved: That the Board endorse the draft Hunter JO Delivery Program 2026-2030

Moved: Mayor Adam Shultz

Seconded: Mayor Digby Rayward

Carried.

8.4 Shared ARIC Endorsement

The Acting Chair Leah Anderson, Mayor Port Stephens Council, invited nominations from the Board for a representative to sit as a non-voting member on the shared ARIC. Mayor Philip Penfold, Maitland City Council nominated Mayor Anderson. Mayor Anderson accepted this nomination.

Resolved: That the Board:

- ***Endorse the selection of three preferred ARIC voting members (including Chair).***
- ***Appoint Mayor Leah Anderson to be the non-voting member for Hunter JO on the shared ARIC.***

Moved: Mayor Philip Penfold

Seconded: Lord Mayor Gavin Morris

Carried.

8.5 Hunter JO Board Meeting Dates 2026/27

Resolved: That the Board endorse the proposed meeting schedule for the period June 2026 – August 2028.

Moved: Mayor Digby Rayward

Seconded: Mayor Philip Penfold

Carried.

Item 9 Items for the Hunter JO Board: For Noting

9.1 National General Assembly of Local Government 2026

Resolved: That the Board note the update on regional activities being delivered for this year's National General Assembly.

Moved: Lord Mayor Gavin Morris

Seconded: Mayor Jeffrey Drayton

Carried.

9.2 Annual Audit Engagement Plan 2025/26

Resolved: That the Board note the information provided in the Annual Audit Engagement Plan.

Moved: Lord Mayor Gavin Morris

Seconded: Mayor Jeffrey Drayton

Carried.

9.3 Annual Audit 2025/26 – Interim Management Letter

Alex Hardy, Director of Corporate Assurance, Prosperity provided an update on the report.

Resolved: That the Board note the information provided in the Annual Audit Interim Management Letter.

Moved: Lord Mayor Gavin Morris

Seconded: Mayor Jeffrey Drayton

Carried.

9.4 Hunter JO Financial Report

Resolved:

- ***That the YTD Income Statement for the month ending April 2026 be received and noted.***
- ***That the summary of Credit Card expenditure for Hunter JO for YTD April 2026 be received and noted.***

Moved: Lord Mayor Gavin Morris

Seconded: Mayor Jeffrey Drayton

Carried.

9.5 Hunter JO Funding & Grant Opportunities

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

Moved: Lord Mayor Gavin Morris

Seconded: Mayor Jeffrey Drayton

Carried.

9.6 NSW Joint Organisation Chairs Forum

Resolved: That the Board note the information provided.

Moved: Lord Mayor Gavin Morris

Seconded: Mayor Jeffrey Drayton

Carried.

9.7 Outcomes from Regional Committees, Networks & Meetings

Discussion occurred regarding the nature and appropriateness moving forward of the Hunter JO's representation on the Hunter Workforce Transition Advisory Group (HWTAG), and more broadly the focus and nature of HWTAG directions and processes.

Resolved: That the Board

- *That the Board note and/or provide advice on the information provided.*
- *That a report be prepared for the Board regarding future Hunter JO representation on the HWTAG.*

Moved: Lord Mayor Gavin Morris

Seconded: Mayor Jeffrey Drayton

Carried.

9.8 Hunter JO Program Status Report

Resolved: That the report be received and noted.

Moved: Lord Mayor Gavin Morris

Seconded: Mayor Jeffrey Drayton

Carried.

9.9 Premier's Department Update

Resolved: That the Hunter JO Board note the update from the Premier's Department.

Moved: Lord Mayor Gavin Morris

Seconded: Mayor Jeffrey Drayton

Carried.

9.10 Office of Local Government (OLG) Update

Resolved: That the Hunter JO Board note the update from OLG.

Moved: Lord Mayor Gavin Morris

Seconded: Mayor Jeffrey Drayton

Carried.

9.11 Update from Net Zero Economy Authority and the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

Resolved: That the Hunter Joint Organisation Board note the update from the Net Zero Economy Authority and the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations on activities in the Hunter.

Moved: Lord Mayor Gavin Morris

Seconded: Mayor Jeffrey Drayton

Carried.

9.12 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: Lord Mayor Gavin Morris

Seconded: Mayor Jeffrey Drayton

Carried.

9.13 Annual Hunter JO Compliance Calendar Checklist

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

Moved: Lord Mayor Gavin Morris

Seconded: Mayor Jeffrey Drayton

Carried.

Item 10 Confidential Session

10.1 Closure of the Meeting

In accordance with section 14.1 of the Hunter JO Code of Meeting Practice and section 10A(2) of the NSW Local Government Act 1993, it is proposed to close the meeting to the public for discussion of Agenda Item 10.2 (refer Confidential Agenda). This item incorporated discussion of personnel matters (other than voting representatives).

Moved: Mayor Claire Pontin

Seconded: Mayor Digby Rayward

Carried.

10.2 Hunter JO Executive Officer 2025/26 Annual Performance Review

Resolved: That the Board endorse:

- ***The review panel comprising:***
 - ***Mayor Sue Moore, Chair Hunter JO***
 - ***Mayor Leah Anderson, Deputy Chair Hunter JO***
 - ***Mayor Jeffrey Drayton, Muswellbrook Shire Council***
 - ***Tim Crosdale, Chair General Managers Advisory Committee***
- ***The review process and timeframe included in Appendix 10.2-A (Confidential Paper)***

Moved: Mayor Adam Shultz

Seconded: Mayor Digby Rayward

Carried.

10.3 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: Mayor Adam Shultz

Seconded: Mayor Digby Rayward

Carried.

Item 11 Matters Raised by Members

Nil.

Item 12 General Business

Mayor Adam Shultz acknowledged and thanked Tony Farrell for his contribution to the Hunter JO and Region more broadly during his tenure as Acting CEO Lake Macquarie City Council

Formal meeting closed at 11.54am.