

Mid North Coast
Joint Organisation

mncjo



Agenda for the MNJCO Meeting

Date: 12 August 2024
Location: Kempsey Shire Council
Time: 10:00 AM



- 1 ATTENDANCE**
- 2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**
- 3 APOLOGIES**
- 4 DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY AND NON PECUNIARY INTEREST**
- 5 SPEAKERS - NIL**
- 6 MINUTES - MNCJO BOARD**
 - 6.1. MNCJO BOARD MINUTES - 24 MAY 2024
- 7 BUSINESS ARISING**
- 8 MNCJO PROJECT UPDATES**
 - 8.1. JONZA - Joint Organisation Net Zero Acceleration Program
 - 8.2. DISASTER RISK REDUCTION PROJECT – FINAL PROJECT REPORT
- 9 STANDING UPDATES**
 - 9.1. PREMIERS DEPARTMENT - CASS WILSON
 - 9.2. DESTINATION NORTH COAST - MICHAEL THURSTON
 - 9.3. REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA MNC
 - 9.4. OFFICE LOCAL GOVERNMENT – ANITA GAMBHIR
- 10 REPORTS FOR THIS MEETING**
 - 10.1. END OF TERM REPORT
 - 10.2. STATEMENT OF REVENUE POLICY
 - 10.3. JONZA ROUND 2
 - 10.4. CARETAKER DELEGATIONS
- 11 CONFIDENTIAL**
 - 11.1. AUDIT, RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
 - 11.2. RISK REGISTER
 - 11.3. MNCJO EXECUTIVE OFFICER



6 MINUTES - MNCJO BOARD

Item	6.1
Subject	MNCJO BOARD MINUTES - 24 May 2024
Presented by	Chair

RECOMMENDATION

That the MNCJO Board Minutes - 24 May 2024 be adopted.

ATTACHMENTS

1. MINUTES - MNCJO BOARD - 24 MAY 2024

Mid North Coast
Joint Organisation

mncjo



Minutes for the MNJCO Meeting

Date: 24 May 2024
Location: MS Teams only
Time: 9:00 AM





1 ATTENDANCE

Voting Members:

Mayor Peta Pinson, Port Macquarie Hastings Council - Chair

Mayor Steve Allan, Bellingen Shire Council – Deputy Chair

Mayor Leo Hauville, Mayor Kempsey Shire Council,

Non-Voting Members:

Mark Griffioen, General Manager, Bellingen Shire Council

Craig Milburn, General Manager, Kempsey Shire Council

Dr Clare Allen, Chief Executive Officer, Port Macquarie Hastings Council

Elizabeth Fairweather, Executive Officer, MNCJO

Cass Wilson, Director North Coast, NSW Regional

In attendance

Nil

2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Mid North Coast Joint Organisation acknowledges the various peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live, work and learn. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

3 APOLOGIES

Michael Thurston, Anita Gambhir and Dianne Wall

That the MNCJO Board accept the apologies received.

Resolved: Cr Pinson/Cr Hauville/Cr Allan

4 DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY AND NON PECUNIARY INTEREST

Nil

5 MINUTES - MNCJO BOARD

Item 5.1



Subject MNCJO - Minutes - 1 March 2024

The MNCJO Board adopt the attached Minutes - MNCJO Board 1 March 2024

Resolved: Cr Pinson/Cr Hauville/Cr Allan

6 SPEAKERS - NIL

7 OTHER JO FORUMS

Item 7.1

Subject Joint Organisation Chairs Forum

Presented by Liz Fairweather, Executive Officer - Mid North Coast Joint Organisation

That the Board receive and note the minutes from the NSW Joint Organisation Chairs Forum held 21 March 2024

Resolved: Cr Pinson/Cr Hauville/Cr Allan

Item 7.2

Subject LLS Pest and Weed Advisory Committee Minutes

Presented by Liz Fairweather, Executive Officer - Mid North Coast Joint Organisation

That the Board receive and note the minutes from the North Coast LLS Pest and Weed Advisory Committee held 10 April 2024.

Resolved: Cr Pinson/Cr Hauville/Cr Allan

8 STANDING UPDATES

Item 8.1

Subject Regional NSW - Cass Wilson

Presented by Regional NSW - Cass Wilson

Regional Development Trust

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/media-releases/nsw-government-invests-35-million-regional-development>



First \$35 million funding allocation announced, from the \$350 million Regional Development Trust which will support a package of initiatives to boost the long-term resilience of regional NSW, with a focus on job creation and primary industry expansion.

The \$35 million package includes: \$15 million to improve rural and remote airstrips, \$10 million Western NSW Workforce Activation Package to establish, expand or upgrade Western NSW childcare, \$5 million to empower Aboriginal businesses and \$5 million to encourage economic growth and employment in regional NSW.

Machinery Of Government

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/media-releases/fresh-focus-for-our-regions>

From 1 July 2024, the Department of Regional NSW will be re-named the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development. This reflects the twin objectives of growing our primary industries through greater focus on extension services, research and development and supporting regional economic development.

The return of Regional Coordination to the Premier's Department emphasises the Premier and the Minister's commitment to whole-of-government coordination for regional communities. While Regional Coordination will sit centrally within government it will report jointly to the Premier and Minister for Regional NSW.

Regional Coordination teams will remain based in their current six regions ensuring the voices and needs of regional communities are at the centre of both government and the NSW public service. These teams will continue to work with all government agencies, local councils, community and industry partners to coordinate and drive major projects and to address some of the longer-term, complex issues affecting regional communities.

The MNCJO Board receive an update from Regional NSW - Cass Wilson

Resolved: Cr Pinson/Cr Hauville/Cr Allan

Item 8.2

Subject Regional Development Australia MNC - Diane Wall

Presented by Regional Development Australia MNC - Diane Wall

The MNCJO Board accept an apology and await an update from RDA MNC

Resolved: Cr Pinson/Cr Hauville/Cr Allan

Note – an update was provided 27/05/24 and included in these minutes.

Regional Development Australia Mid North Coast (RDAMNC) is continuing with its previously advised body of work with our focus on:



Workforce development – our skills audit is still being conducted and we have our industry focus group sessions scheduled for June. We are also still promoting the skills audit survey.

Manufacturing capacity and capability – we are continuing to source data for the capability and capacity mapping for the manufacturing industry on the MNC.

We were fortunate to work with Industry Mid North Coast and AusIndustry to bring the Western Parkland City Authority and the New England Training Model (NETM) to Port Macquarie to deliver a workshop on NETM and the micro-credentials that are on offer. A pilot program for the MNC is being looked at further.

We are continuing to advocate for change in Early Childhood Education and Care and will be providing a report to Government later in the year.

We are now entering into our planning phase for project delivery for the upcoming financial year and will be able to advise on what our 2024-2025 program will include at the next meeting.

Item 8.3

Subject Destination North Coast - Michael Thurston

Presented by Destination North Coast - Michael Thurston

Discussion on changes in accommodation bookings - Reduced demand for higher quality and increase in utilisation of lower cost accommodation.

The MNCJO Board:

1. Receive the attached update from Destination North Coast, and
2. Request future reports include insights on restrictions on short term rental accommodation in Byron Bay and the effectiveness on Policy on longer term rental accommodation.

Resolved: Cr Pinson/Cr Hauville/Cr Allan

Item 8.4

Subject Office of Local Government - Anita Gambhir

Presented by Office of Local Government - Anita Gambhir

Ministers' Awards for Women in Local Government

Awards open on Friday, 3 May 2024, for six weeks to recognise the outstanding achievements and contribution of female councillors and council staff.

Nominations are closing on 14 June 2024.



There are seven award categories. For each award category there are separate award for metro and regional/rural councils (including county council and joint organisations). The Champion of Change award category, it is open to both male and female general managers or senior staff members, where there is evidence that the nominee has excelled in supporting and encouraging women's participation at their council. More details about the Awards can be found at <https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/our-minister/ministers-awards-for-women-in-local-government>

Information about rating 2024/2025 – Circular 24-05

OLG recently released a circular providing information about rating for 2024/2025. The following is new or changing:

Maximum boarding house tariffs for 2024/25 have been determined.

Maximum interest rate payable on overdue rates and charges for 2024/25 has been determined.

Section 603 Certificate fee for 2024/25 has been determined.

Statutory limit on the maximum amount of minimum rates for 2025/25 has been determined.

Council should incorporate these determinations into their 2024/25 rating structures, operational plan and revenue policy.

New local government elections webpage

OLG has launched a dedicated webpage to provide information and resources for candidates, councils, and councillors in the lead up to the September 2024 local government elections.

As a first step, a Pre-Election Guide for councils has been published on the webpage outlining key tasks that need to be completed prior to the elections, and rules, restrictions and other considerations that apply to the way councils exercise their functions in the lead-up to the elections.

New information and resources will be progressively published on the website over the coming months.

Register now to learn about the new Pet Registry

The first stage of the long-awaited digital upgrade of the NSW Pet Registry is launching in July 2024. The easy-to-use platform will help cat and dog owners and breeders manage important tasks online, such as instant pet ownership transfers and registration payment. Council staff are invited to join the NSW Pet Registry upgrade team for a webinar at 2pm on Wednesday, 5 June to unpack the changes that will impact councils and explore how the Office of Local Government can provide support through the transition.

New TAFE planning course

Future planners looking to gain skills in paraplanning can now complete a new Diploma of Local Government (Planning) course launched through TAFE NSW. The course can be completed online on a part-time basis. Councils participating in the Strong Start Cadetship can use grant funding for cadets to do the Diploma course, when enrolled by 30 June. For more information go to Strong Start | Planning (nsw.gov.au)

SafeWork NSW provides guidance for local councillors



In consultation with the OLG, Safework NSW has developed and released a new online resource for councils highlighting a local councillor's duties and behaviours in relation to the Work Health & Safety Act as well as the corresponding requirement in the Local Government Act. Councils are encouraged to add the slideshow to their councillor portals and include it in councillor induction training programs.

Public Interest Disclosures

The Public Interest Disclosures Act 2022 (PID Act) commenced on 1 October 2023, replacing the Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994.

The PID Act 2022 creates several obligations for councils, including:

All NSW councils must have a public interest disclosure policy.

Councils must provide appropriate training to disclosure officers for the council, including the general manager and managers of public officials associated with the council.

Councils must provide an annual return to the NSW Ombudsman on any voluntary PIDs they receive.

Councils must also notify the Ombudsman when they receive an allegation of detrimental action or when they decide not to investigate, or cease investigating, a PID.

More information is available in the NSW Ombudsman guideline "What is a public interest disclosure?" at www.ombo.nsw.gov.au

Deadline extended for EV Destination Charging Grants

The NSW government is investing \$20m to assist eligible regional NSW councils and businesses by co-funding up to 75% of the cost to purchase and install EV chargers.

The MNCJO Board accept an apology and receive the update from Office of Local Government.

Resolved: Cr Pinson/Cr Hauville/Cr Allan

9 PROJECT UPDATES

Item 9.1

Subject Joint Organisation Net Zero Acceleration

Presented by Liz Fairweather, Executive Officer - Mid North Coast Joint Organisation

That the MNCJO Board note the update provided on the Joint Organisation Net Zero Acceleration Program.

Resolved: Cr Pinson/Cr Hauville/Cr Allan

Item 9.2

Subject DRRF - Simtable



Presented by Liz Fairweather, Executive Officer - Mid North Coast Joint Organisation

That the MNCJO Board note the update on the DRRF Simtable Community Workshops project.

Resolved: Cr Pinson/Cr Hauville/Cr Allan

Item 9.3

Subject Disaster Risk Reduction Fund

Presented by Liz Fairweather, Executive Officer - Mid North Coast Joint Organisation

That the MNCJO Board note the update provided on the Disaster Risk Reduction Fund project

Resolved: Cr Pinson/Cr Hauville/Cr Allan

10 CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS

Item 10.1

Subject Executive Officer Performance Review

Presented by Chair, Cr Peta Pinson

That the MNCJO Board note the outcome of the Executive Officer Performance Review held May 2024.

Resolved: Cr Pinson/Cr Hauville/Cr Allan

Item 10.2

Subject Audit Risk and Improvement Committee

Presented by Liz Fairweather, Executive Officer - Mid North Coast Joint Organisation

That the MNCJO Board:

1. Receive and note the minutes of the MNCJO ARIC held 8 May 2024
2. Note the information provided regarding regulatory compliance resourcing and costs; and
3. Acknowledge the MNCJO compliance obligation.

Resolved: Cr Pinson/Cr Hauville/Cr Allan

Minutes

MNCJO BOARD
24 May 2024



11 GENERAL BUSINESS

Nil

9:46 meeting closed.



8 MNCJO PROJECT UPDATES

Item	8.1
Subject	JONZA - Joint Organisation Net Zero Acceleration Program
Presented by	Liz Fairweather, Executive Officer - Mid North Coast Joint Organisation

RECOMMENDATION

That the MNCJO Board note the update provided on the Joint Organisation Net Zero Acceleration Program.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The MNCJO successfully gained funding from NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water (DCCEEW) for the delivery of the Joint Organisation Net Zero Acceleration (JONZA) program Round 2.

This report provides an update on the Joint Organisation Net Zero (JONZA) program.

REPORT DETAIL

JONZA project updates include:

Power Purchase Agreements (PPA)

The Powering Tomorrow: Regional Councils NSW PPA (includes a group of 13 councils from 3 Joint Organisations across NSW). Bellingen Shire Council and Port Macquarie Hastings Councils participate in this PPA. The MNCJO Project Officer (NZA) is Chair of this group and manages all communications. The market is currently being monitored to determine the timing to complete the tender process. There is optimism the market may provide favourable conditions to complete the tender process before the start of the caretaker period in mid-August.

Emissions Data Tracking

MNCJO member councils have access to the Carbon Compass emissions tracking tool provided by DCCEEW. The tool allows councils to track all scope 1 and 2 emissions from council operations in a consistent format. The Project Officer (NZA) will work closely with member councils to help gather the necessary data and input this data into the Carbon Compass Tool.

EV Charging Network

The MNCJO and Northern Rivers JO have produced a guide for councils around supporting the installation of EV charging infrastructure within their LGAs. The document will assist councils to navigate the wide range of options available around the installation of charging infrastructure on council land.

NRMA EV Drive Days and Information Sessions

Events will be held in Port Macquarie to provide information to council stakeholders from across the region about EV fleet grants and transition. EV drive days will held at Port Macquarie Raceway to allow council staff, local business owners and members of the local community to drive a range of EV models.

The Joint Organisation Net Zero Acceleration program is on track and operating within budget allocations.

ATTACHMENTS

None



8 MNCJO PROJECT UPDATES

Item	8.2
Subject	Disaster Risk Reduction Project – Final Project Report
Presented by	Liz Fairweather, Executive Officer - Mid North Coast Joint Organisation

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board receive and note the final report attached of the Disaster Risk Reduction project.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Disaster Risk Reduction Project – Final Project Report
2. 08.2_UTS CLG RRP Evaluation Summary Report_Attachment



Report

Subject

Disaster Risk Reduction Project – Final Project Report

Presented by

Liz Fairweather

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board receive and note the final report of the Disaster Risk Reduction project.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In January 2023, the MNCJO was successful in receiving \$770,690.00 from the NSW Disaster Risk Reduction Fund (DRRF) Round 1 - Local & Regional Risk Reduction Stream which is funded under the joint Australian Government – NSW Government National Partnership Agreement on Disaster Risk Reduction.

Established by the Commonwealth Government, the Disaster Ready Fund (DRF) has been developed to help communities protect themselves against the impacts of natural hazards across Australia.

The Disaster Ready Fund provides investment in disaster mitigation infrastructure and systemic disaster risk reduction projects, to address any, or multiple, natural hazards including extreme weather events and geological hazards.

The primary objectives of the DRF are to:

- increase the understanding of natural hazard disaster impacts, as a first step towards reducing disaster impacts in the future;
- increase the resilience, adaptive capacity and/or preparedness of governments, community service organisations and affected communities to minimise the potential impact of natural hazards and avert disasters; and
- reduce the exposure to risk, harm and/or severity of a natural hazard's impacts, including reducing the recovery burden for governments and vulnerable and/or affected communities.

The MNCJO project was delivered from January 2023 to June 2024.

The project was delivered by Skye Frost (Project Officer DRR) and Raymond Chapman (Regional Capability Officer). It was overseen by a Project Control Group, which comprised of representatives from each member council and NSW Reconstruction Authority.

This report provides an overview of the projects and what has been achieved during Round 1 of the Disaster Risk Reduction program.

REPORT DETAIL

The NSW Disaster Risk Reduction Fund (DRRF) was established under the National Partnership Agreement on Disaster Risk Reduction to support each state's progress against the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework (NDRRF) priorities. The Local and Regional Risk Reduction stream is aimed at direct risk reduction and risk mitigation solutions, building capabilities in disaster risk reduction, and promoting collaboration between local communities, Councils, and other stakeholders.

In recognition of the need to collaborate, a consortium of NSW Joint Organisations (JOs) and Regional Organisations of Councils have initiated the project to identify opportunities where NSW communities can implement place-based, pragmatic solutions to reduce local and regional risks and improve their disaster resilience.

The MNCJO Resilience Blueprint project purpose was to build capacity, share resources and develop leading practice in Disaster Risk Reduction across 8 JOs and some neighbouring councils. It included a systematic collaboration with key State agencies and embedment in Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R).

The objectives of the MNCJO Blueprint Resilience project were to:

- Effectively identify the gaps and needs in the region to reduce and mitigate vulnerabilities across the built, social, natural and economic environments.
- Build the capacity and share resources for evidence-based decision making and enable locally led and owned place-based disaster risk reduction efforts at both local and regional levels.
- Build networks leading to a systems approach to disaster preparedness enabling greater consistency, efficiency, leading practice and lessons learned.
- Provide improved capacity for Councils to deliver strategic disaster risk reduction outcomes for their communities with inputs to their IP&R structures through a regional framework, collaborative workshops and supporting tools.
- Develop systems, processes, and tools to enable Councils and TfNSW to use digital twins for key transport assets to manage and improve resilience.

To implement these objectives the MNCJO undertook six key initiatives:

1. Undertake a **Needs and Opportunities Analysis** to identify priority areas for improving corporate and community risk reduction including a Regional Opportunities Report that identifies opportunities for programmatic response.
2. Undertake a **Regional Climate Change Risk Assessment Report**
3. Develop an action focused report enabling councils to embed risk reduction into decision making through an **IP & R Regional Framework**. This can be utilised by councils to guide disaster risk reduction embedment in IP&R, including delivery of workshops and staff training to enable this.
4. Explore **Transport Connectivity** and digital twins with TfNSW
5. Establish a **Disaster Risk Reduction Network** and look at setting up a Local Government Alumni
6. Utilise the **Simtable** at community workshops to simulate multiple types of disasters. This will identify opportunities to pilot risk reduction systems, innovations and tools that can be used across the region.

A summary of the project components and outs are listed below.

1. Needs and Opportunities Analysis.

A comprehensive review of all available data related to natural disasters within the member councils, JO and NSW was conducted by consultants GHD. A detailed data and gap analysis was provided for each member council together with a regional report for the MNCJO. A state-wide report was also produced.

The scope of Needs and Opportunities Analysis was to:

- Identify available data and information that could be used to identify Councils' resilience needs
- Synthesise the data collected to identify the resilience gaps and needs by Council area
- Develop opportunities to improve disaster resilience at a regional level

The Needs and Analysis was compromised of the following deliverables: (See Figure 1)

1.1 LGA Data Reports (per LGA)

Data was collected from councils through an online survey and individual LGA interviews.

Individual LGA reports include:

- LGA overview and 2021 Census statistics
- Historic climate and impacts
- Recent disaster declarations
- Relevant council-provided and publicly available disaster risk reduction plans and reports
- Relevant state / federal government plans and resources
- Spatial data sources
- Recent resilience funding granted

1.2 Regional Literature Review Report

Overall review of national and international frameworks for disaster risk reduction, including:

- Australian Natural Disaster Resilience Index (ANDRI)
- Key findings and recommendations from the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements Report 2020, NSW Independent Flood Inquiry July 2022, and NSW Bushfire Inquiry July 2020
- Canberra Region JO Resilience Blueprint
- Hunter JO Resilience IP&R Support Package and disaster resilience resource library

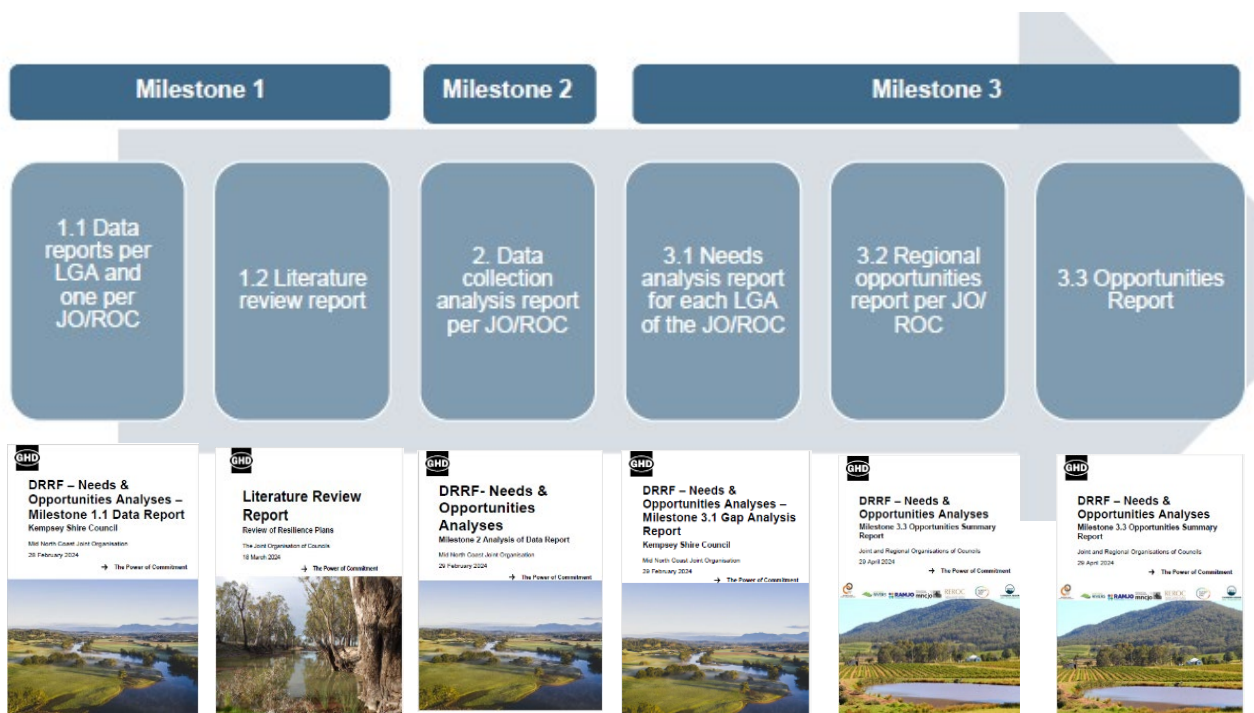


Figure 1: Summary of Needs and Analysis project components

2. Analysis of Data Reports

Consolidation of all data assessed, including publicly available information, council-provided reports, documents and data. This report also provides background on the natural disasters affecting the region, references the Regional Literature Review Report and addresses best practice in emergency management.

3.1 LGA Gap Analysis Reports (per LGA)

The Australian Natural Disaster Resilience Index was used to measure performance and gaps under the following nine themes: technological, political / governance / leadership, infrastructure, strategy, natural environment, knowledge / capacity, social, communication, economic.

3.2 Regional Gap Analysis Report

Common gaps and opportunities were identified for each of the above themes and a regional scale of needs developed. The MNCJO will utilize this information in planning regional projects.

3.3 NSW JOs Opportunities Summary Report

This report summarises all preceding reports and introduces the NSW State Disaster Mitigation Plan's (SDMP) risk reduction toolkit to reduce exposure and vulnerability. Opportunities from each JO/ROC's Regional Gap Analysis Reports were grouped together based on the SDMP toolkit and prioritised High, Medium or Low and given Advocacy, Collaboration, Delivery/Training, Community or Monitoring action categories.

The overall key opportunities for JO/ROCs to progress as a consortium to build regional risk reduction included;

- Network coordination for NSW JOs
- Continued collaborative commitment to maintain program momentum
- Better access to spatial data for councils and improved data to support the SDMP
- AI applications to further review council progress

The NSW JO Opportunities Report also provided Implementation Plans for each individual JO/ROC region with actions based on impact, effort and delivery timeframe and aligned to the SDMP.

One of the main strengths of the Needs and Opportunities Analysis is its consistency, with the same methodology being used for 61 LGAs across NSW. Many of the opportunities identified have also been recommended at the regional and statewide level, meaning that councils and regions can work together to deliver actions and activities more efficiently on a larger scale. This also provides stronger evidence to state and federal governments and funding bodies of the need for more appropriate resources and support for local councils. Therefore, the Needs and Opportunities Analysis reports can be used as evidence for funding applications, and to support strategic planning including through the IP&R process.

The main limitation of the Needs and Opportunities Analysis is in the initial data collection process. Most of the data that informed the analysis was obtained from councils through an online survey and one-on-one council interviews. This was limited by project deadlines established in funding agreements and availability of council staff time and resources. The timing for this project also overlapped with data collection from the state government which placed further pressure on councils' time. This meant that some councils were unable to provide and review all of the requested data and information which was reflected as a lower score in the LGA Gap Analysis Reports, meaning these Councils may actually be performing better than indicated. As such, the Needs and Opportunities Analysis is a conservative measure of Councils' current resilience gaps.

Each council has been provided with a copy of their individual Data Report and Needs and Gap Analysis. **It should be noted - these documents are intended for operational use and will inform the broader public IP&R reporting.** The Regional Report identifies opportunities for regional engagement and collaboration across the JO Network.

2. Regional Climate Change Risk Assessment

The MNCJO also engaged GHD to undertake a Regional Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA).

The CCRA explores the potential physical impacts of projected changes to climate on assets and services and identifies potential adaptations to help mitigate the risk. The planned controls and adaptation measures will be reviewed and potentially incorporated into the relevant IP&R documents. A copy of this report has been provided to Councils for operational purposes and consideration.

This operational document will be utilised to inform the MNCJO strategic planning.



Figure 2: MNCJO Regional Climate Change Risk Assessment Report

3. IP & R Action Plan – IP & R Regional Framework

The MNCJO developed a *Regional Disaster Risk Reduction Framework for Integrated Planning and Reporting* (Regional Framework) (Figure 3).

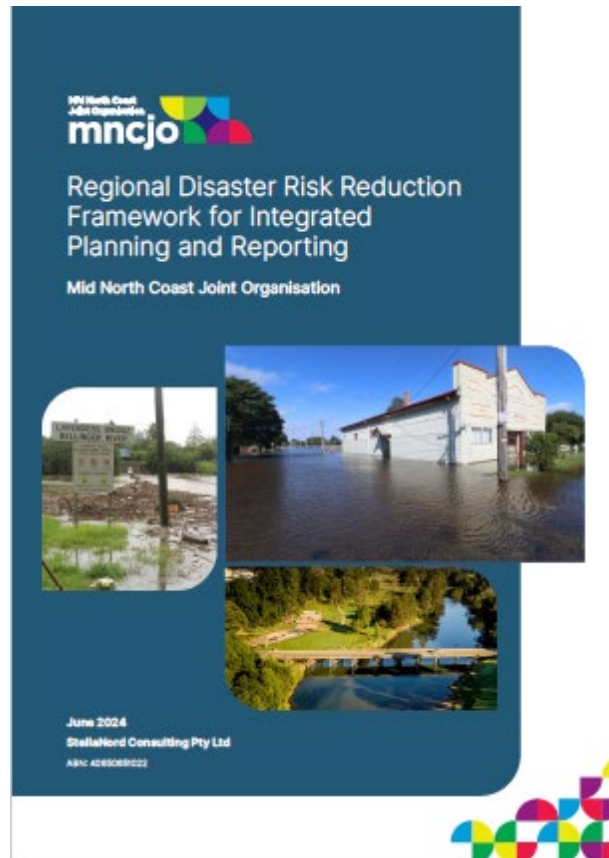


Figure 3: MNCJO Regional Disaster Risk Reduction Framework for Integrated Planning and Reporting

The MNCJO engaged and worked collaboratively with Karen Legge Consulting and Stella Nord Consulting to develop a Regional Framework for the embedment of DRR actions. This document is tailored to each member Council and will provide them with references, tools and sample actions for consideration for inclusion within Councils IP & R documents.

The Regional Framework provides Councils with a tailored tool, highlighting focus areas for councils' shared roles in resilience / disaster risk reduction with references to guidance from an extensive literature review of international and national guidance and regulation. Tools provided to member councils to assist IP&R planning are:

- A “commitment level” framework to support councils establish the vision and identity for their resilience journey, which are based on councils' available resources, risk and opportunity areas, and communities' values. Council can pick and choose where and what level they might like to utilise.
- IP&R templates for some of the key IP&R documents; the Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program and Operational Plan
- Example survey questions and considerations for community engagement as input to the Community Strategic Plan
- Considerations for Local Strategic Planning Statements as a key instrument to disaster risk reduction through land use planning
- Communication and engagement tools councils to use when communicating and embedding the framework.

Workshops were held collectively and one-on-one with each member council. Ongoing support will be provided through an IP&R professionals network group.

Member councils will be able to utilise this document for engagement and consideration in the next iteration of the IP&R 2025 –2029.

4. Transport Connectivity

The MNCJO together with a consortium of JO's have been collaborating with Transport for NSW (TfNSW) to design initiatives which build transport network resilience on network access and connectivity due to increasing and more severe weather events.

The NSW Government is actively delivering programs to improve infrastructure planning, policy and overall network resilience providing benefit to both TfNSW and local Councils. A network resilience initiative focusing on key freight corridors had been scoped. However, through discussions with JO/ROCs it was apparent the scope could be expanded. A partnership was formed to co-design deliverables to meet both local government and State needs.

These deliverables are underpinned by spatial data. TfNSW manages extensive datasets, detailed in various catalogues for multiple uses throughout the agency. These datasets cover everything from alternate route mapping to cell phone tower data for flooded roads, travel tracking and resourcing constraints. Councils also hold data which would support TfNSW in developing a statewide Network Resilience Plan.

The JO Network and TfNSW partners recognised that leveraging and integrating this data would provide insight into potential vulnerabilities beyond either authority's current systems, further strengthening decision-making processes. Importantly from a local Government perspective, such integration would provide Councils with access to data which they currently do not have.

TfNSW also understood this would build on the work being delivered internally through Customer Resilience Journey Plans, expanding focus beyond fire, flood and isolated settlements to encompass diverse routes and communities.

The JO Network facilitated a series of workshops to define Council business and user requirements across functional personas. Supported in-person by TfNSW Executive staff, engagement in January – February 2024 in Wollongong, Grafton, Newcastle and Orange attracted participants from twenty-five LGAs, combat and response agencies and the NSW Government. Staff from the JO, Bellingen Shire Council, Kempsey Shire Council and Port Macquarie Hastings Council attended the workshop held in Grafton.

Planners, engineers, technical hazard specialists, emergency response and recovery officers and IT personnel provided their insights to enable provision of data and analytics for informed strategic asset management planning.

These insights are detailed in Figure 4 and can be broadly summarised as:

- *Councils easily access data for effective land-use planning, including safe housing supply and resilient critical infrastructure*
- *Conducting assessments of network connectivity and vulnerability following natural disaster events, including diversion and alternate route mapping*
- *Understanding freight and heavy vehicle movements and potential impacts of diversion from State to local and regional roads*
- *Monitoring network condition and conducting pre-condition assessments to support post-disaster funding*

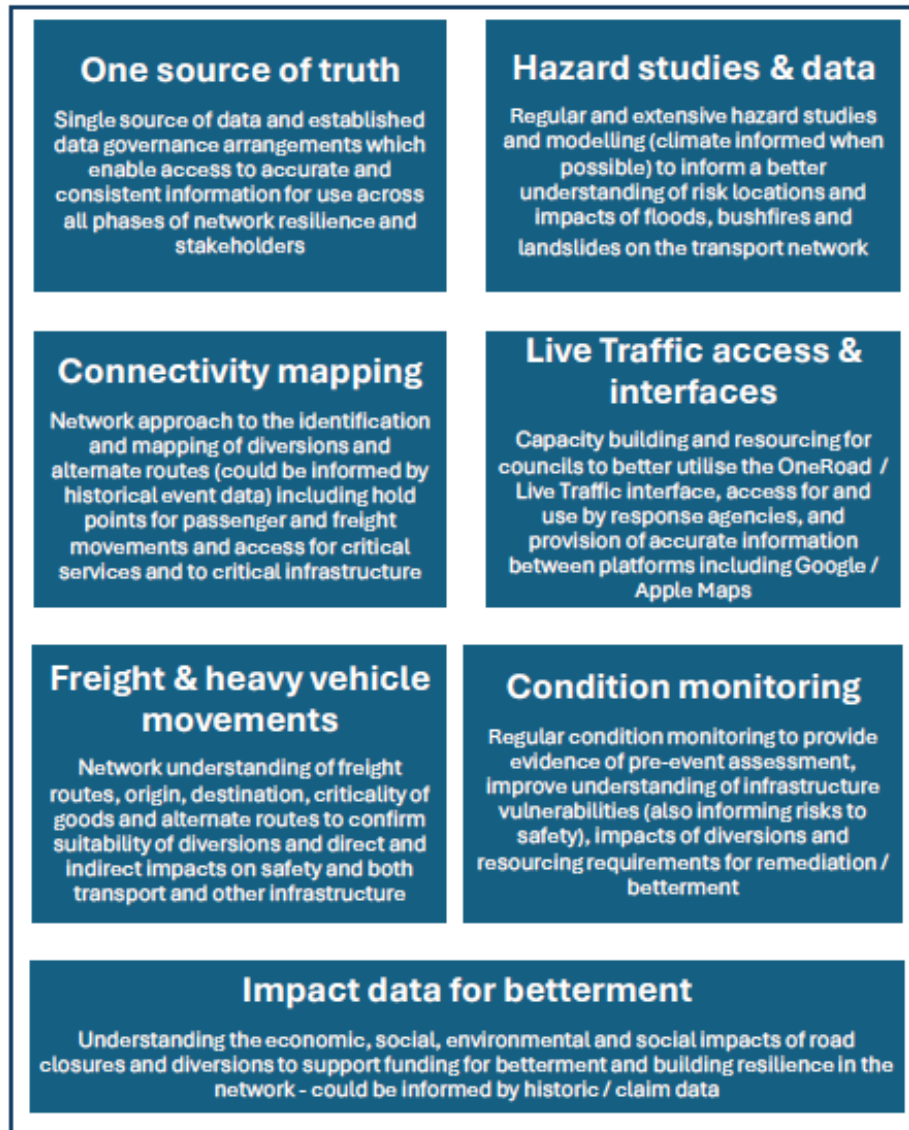


Figure 4: Council User and business requirements for transport network spatial data

To enable Council access to TfNSW datasets, data sharing was facilitated through an online platform – Planwisely (Veitch Lister Consulting). TfNSW utilises this platform for strategic planning and has recently invested additional funding into scenario modelling for walking paths and cycleways. The platform already contains a wide array of TfNSW datasets along with foundational, demographic and movement data and satellite imagery. This JO Network project has identified and will integrate an additional 135 high priority datasets into the platform.

Through the DRRF program, the MNCJO and the JO Network has acquired licences for their member councils which will ensure the following outcomes:

- Planners and engineers have access to and are using the best-available, most up-to-date and consistent information
- Aligned decisions around infrastructure, land-use planning, service provision, and climate adaptation through the provision of consistent resilience information
- Build trust with councils and communities through evidenced based risk decisions
- Robust data-led methodology for equitably and effectively determining the distribution of funding, considering the need to calculate risk differently and consistently based on the local place context, and
- Setup a benefits framework to monitor and evaluate actions in a coherent and evidence-based manner regardless of where and what was implemented.

5. Disaster Reduction Network & Alumni Model

The Mid North Coast Joint Organisation (MNCJO) has successfully conducted research and consultation to establish a Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Network and Alumni for local councils. This initiative has seen the formation of the DRR Network, with two network meetings already held, engaging over 50 participants.

The Network brings together member council staff from a range of related areas of expertise. It enables them to collaborate, share resources and identify hazards associated with disasters and community resilience.

The Network aims to achieve:

- **Collaboration:** Network with colleagues across the Mid North Coast to share knowledge, best practices, and resources.
- **Pre-planning:** Participate in pre-disaster planning for efficient cross-regional resource sharing in response to emergencies.
- **Training & Presentations:** Access relevant training and presentations on disaster preparedness and recovery for council staff and stakeholders.
- **Networking & Solutions:** Network around common challenges and develop strategic solutions as a united region.
- **Joint Procurement:** Benefit from potential joint procurement of training and resources, ensuring cost-effectiveness and efficiency.
- **Hazard Awareness:** Gain a deeper understanding of local hazard exposures, vulnerabilities, and triggers for better informed planning.
- **Community Focus:** Develop effective strategies for community awareness, education, engagement, and information dissemination.

The Network holds meetings once a quarter, with opportunities for training and special guest presenters

Toolkits (Figure 5) have been developed to enable councils across NSW to implement a Network or Alumni. The toolkits provide background information and a list of considerations including highlighting challenges. Better options may exist when considering an Alumni for example spontaneous volunteering programs or alternatively looking at inhouse mentoring and knowledge sharing programs. The toolkit highlights these options.



Figure 5 : Network and Alumni Toolkits developed

The DRR Network has been well received and supported by member council staff and State agencies. It has proven extremely successful in promoting shared learning and provided a platform for connection to the NSW RA regional teams and has significantly increased the understanding of DRR initiatives.

The success of the DRR Network serves as a testament to the potential of such programs in fostering a culture of resilience and preparedness within our councils.

The MNCJO will continue to implement the Disaster Risk Recovery Network across the member Councils and look to provide specialised and targeted network meetings.

6. Simtables

Following the success of the Simtables for Community Empowerment Project which focused on bushfire preparedness, workshops were conducted to broaden the scope to include flood awareness and planning. Collaborating with NSW RFS, NSW Health, local councils, and NSW RA proved highly effective in delivering emergency preparedness workshops to local communities.



Image: Telegraph Point Community Workshops

The Flood Awareness Workshops, organised in partnership with SES, NSW Health, local councils, and NSW RA, featured static layers of flood data displayed on the Simtable. These layers depicted varying flood levels, from minor to maximum.

This initiative exemplified the collaborative efforts of various organisations in enhancing community resilience and preparedness against a variety of natural disasters. There is a strong community desire to continue these workshops working in partnership with councils, state agencies to support the Get Ready preparedness campaigns.

The Simtable is available for use in member council communities.

Summary

The Mid North Coast Resilience Blueprint - Collaborating to build capacity and share knowledge to improve disaster risk reduction has achieved its objectives and delivered significant outcomes.

The project has successfully built capacity, shared resources, and developed leading practices in Disaster Risk Reduction across its three member councils. This included systematic collaboration with key State agencies and pathways to embedment in councils IP&R.

All deliverables of the Funding Agreement were achieved on time and within budget.

The project faced some challenges, including timing of the grant and tenders impacting quality of work, delay from consultants, and changes in staff at the MNCJO and NSW Reconstruction Authority. However, these challenges were effectively managed, and the project has delivered its intended outcomes.

The project has contributed significantly to its identified objectives, including addressing and reducing identified natural hazard risks in the community. It has effectively identified risks and gaps across the

region, built capacity for evidence-based decision-making, built networks for a systematic approach to disaster preparedness, and scoped opportunities to reduce the risk of isolation and supply chain disruption.

A comprehensive evaluation of the NSW Regional Resilience Program (RRP) was undertaken by the University of Technology Sydney. (Attachment 1)

The overall success of the project is rated highly. The project recently won an NSW LG Award. It has not only achieved its objectives but also paved the way for future initiatives which include collaboration across the NSW JO Network. The lessons learned from this project will be invaluable in guiding future projects.

The project's legacy will be sustained through the continuation of the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Network, the use of the Planwisely platform for evidence-based decision-making, and the integration of disaster risk information into council planning processes. The reports also provide a baseline and will be utilised for ongoing measuring of DRR measures within local government reporting, an initiative which will be required as the NSW Government looks to implement Disaster Adaptation plans across the State

The MNCJO has made application through DRF Round 2 to continue this work for our member councils and support the implementation of Disaster Adaptation Plans.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The project had a budget of \$760,690. The project came in underbudget by \$139,530.64. This was due to cost savings on joint procurement through the NSW JO/ROC Network.

VALUE TO MEMBER COUNCILS

This project contributes to assisting all member councils in mitigating existing disaster risks and preventing the emergence of future risks. Its goal is to equip decision-makers with the essential skills and information to effectively reduce disaster risks and manage any remaining risks.

The Resilience Blueprint Program enhances these efforts by promoting collaboration to expand the scope and distribute the advantages of strategic, focused, location-specific risk reduction projects. This collaborative strategy aims for sustainable, enduring outcomes that can lay the groundwork for future programs.

ATTACHMENTS

08.2_UTS CLG RRP Evaluation – Summary Report_Attachment

Regional Resilience Program Evaluation

Summary Report

Prepared by the UTS Centre for Local Government
July 2024

1 Introduction

In mid-2023, the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) Centre for Local Government (CLG) hosted by the Institute for Public Policy and Governance (IPPG) was contracted by the Canberra Region Joint Organisation of Councils (CRJO) to undertake an independent evaluation of the NSW Regional Resilience Program (RRP or Program).

The RRP comprised eight disaster risk reduction (DRR) programs which were delivered by eight respective Joint Organisations (JOs) or Regional Organisations of Councils (ROCs) across NSW between January 2023 and June 2024. The programs were funded under Pathway 2 of the Local and Regional Risk Reduction (LRRR) stream of the NSW Government's Disaster Risk Reduction Fund (DRRF), which was initially established by Resilience NSW and later inherited by the NSW Reconstruction Authority (NSWRA).

UTS:CLG was first tasked with developing a monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) framework to assess the RRP. It was then tasked to evaluate the Program, at both a state-wide and JO and ROC project-level, using the agreed framework approved in late 2023.

The UTS:CLG evaluation produced two companion Reports.

- Part A, which presents the findings and conclusions of the state-wide RRP evaluation
- Part B, which presents the findings and lessons learnt from the seven in-scope JO and ROC projects funded under the RRP.

What follows is a summary of the Part A Report, with lessons also drawn from Part B.

1.1 About the Program

The Disaster Risk Reduction Fund (DRRF), jointly funded by the NSW and Commonwealth Governments, was established in 2020 as NSW's financial mechanism for delivering the nation-wide priorities and goals for DRR set out in the 2018 National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework (NDRRF).

Specifically, the DRRF was established to fund programs which:

- Take action to reduce existing disaster risk
- Minimise the creation of future disaster risk
- Equip decision makers with the capabilities and information they need to reduce disaster risk and manage residual risk.

To meet these objectives, the DRRF provided \$51.8 million in total grant funding across 3 streams: (1) State Risk Reduction which distributed \$17.8 million to projects which address

risks which are systemic or of state significance; (2) Local and Regional Risk Reduction which provided \$30 million in total funding to local and regional risk reduction projects; and (3) Building Disaster Risk Knowledge which distributed \$4 million in funding to projects focused on strengthening knowledge/innovative approaches to disaster risk.

The RRP was funded under the Local and Regional Risk Reduction (LRRR) stream of the DRRF, which specifically aimed to deliver:

- Both direct and strategic risk reduction and risk mitigation solutions
- Build capabilities in disaster risk reduction
- Promote collaboration between local communities, councils, and other stakeholders.

While eight projects were funded under RRP, UTS:CLG was tasked with evaluating seven JO/ROC projects¹ as summarised in Figure 1.

Figure 11: NSW RRP projects subject to this evaluation

Host Organisation	Title	NSWRA Funding
Canberra Region JO	'Learn, Share, Embed: looking back, moving forward through working together to support development of regional and local resilience strategies'	\$971,860
Central NSW JO	'Building knowledge and improving practice in disaster risk reduction in Central NSW – a systemic approach'	\$647,989
Hunter JO	'Reducing regional disaster risk through early action: Place-based collaboration in the Hunter and the Central Coast'	\$1,493,856
Mid-North Coast JO	'Mid-North Coast Resilience Blueprint – Collaborating to build capacity and share knowledge to improve disaster risk reduction'	\$760,690
Northern Rivers JO	'Building knowledge and improving practice in disaster risk reduction in Northern Rivers – a systemic approach'	\$592,550
Riverina Eastern ROC	'Building knowledge and improving practice in disaster risk reduction in the Eastern Riverina'	\$484,750
Riverina & Murray JO	Building knowledge and improving practice in disaster risk reduction in the Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation footprint - a systemic approach'	\$652,966

Source: CRJO, 2023.

¹ Note: The Illawarra Shoalhaven JO RRP was not included in the UTS:CLG evaluation. It is understood that a separate review process was commissioned for this project.

1.2 About the Evaluation

The agreed terms of reference (ToR) for the UTS:CLG evaluation were:

1. Develop a RRP Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan, including:
 - a) an evaluation approach and methodology
 - b) an overarching RRP Program Logic (PL)
 - c) seven individual PLs for each in scope JO projects.

In October 2023, UTS: CLG prepared and submitted the MEL Plan, including the PL. This Plan provides the foundation for how this evaluation was undertaken.

2. Implement the approved MEL and evaluate the RRP, plus each of the 7 in-scope projects. The brief specified that UTS:CLG:
 - a) undertake data collection in partnership with the in-scope JO/ROCs
 - b) provide brief updates on emerging findings throughout the life of the project, to enable the JOs and ROCs to adapt project delivery as appropriate
 - c) deliver an RRP Evaluation Report which identifies key issues, gaps, and opportunities at both an overarching and individual projects level.
3. Based on the insights gathered through ToR 1 and 2, recommend an approach to measure and track the medium and long-term objectives of the RRP, and the individual JO projects, beyond the end of the present evaluation.

1.2.1 Key Research Questions

In order to structure the evaluation, UTS:CLG developed a set of Key Research Questions (KRQ) related to the DRRF and RRP objectives:

- **Appropriateness** (KRQ1):
How appropriate were the design, planning and implementation processes for meeting program objectives and stakeholder needs?
- **Effectiveness** (KRQ2):
How effective was the program in delivering intended short, intermediate and longer-term outcomes?
- **Efficiency** (KRQ3):
How efficiently was the program delivered and managed?
- **Governance** (KRQ4):
What impacts did the integrated governance structure of the RRP have on project delivery, and the capacities and networks of local and regional institutions?
- **Sustainability** (KRQ5):
What opportunities and lessons can be leveraged to improve the remainder of the program's implementation and inform the design of future programs?
Can or should the model be upscaled or replicated? If so, what should be considered?

These KRQ formed the basis of the data gathering instruments and analysis outlined below, and used to structure the evaluation findings.

1.2.2 Research Methodology

UTS:CLG research team used a mixed methodology to conduct the evaluation comprising:

- **Review of RRP documentation**, provided by the DRRF and participating JO/ROCs. This included three tranches of milestones **RRP reporting**, plus a suite of monthly reports.
- **Light-touch desktop review** of the Australian and NSW resilience policy and funding landscape.
- **Stakeholder engagement** through:
 - Semi-structured interviews and focus groups.
 - Online surveys, with three complementary instruments administered.
 - Co-design planning and feedback workshops with members of the Regional Resilience Program Advisory Committee (RRPAC), with up to 17 members in attendance.

Included at Figure 2 is a summary of the feedback received across these instruments.

Figure 2: RRP feedback instruments and number of respondents

Cohort	Cohort	Response Numbers
Online Surveys*	JO/ ROC and council staff involved in project delivery	32
	Project Partners	11
	Workshop Participants	40
Interviews/ Focus Groups	JO/ ROC Staff	16
	Project Partners	2
	Council staff	8
	NSWRA staff	2
Workshops	DRRF RRP Advisory Committee ²	7 (3 devoted to evaluation)

Source: UTS:CLG, June 2024.

* Note: Due to UTS ethics requirements and privacy provisions, individual JO/ROCs were responsible for the distribution of all survey instruments. As a result, UTS:CLG was not able to calculate response rates as final numbers were not supplied.

² The RRPAC was chaired by CRJO and was comprised of up to 17 members, the majority from the 8 funded JO/ROCs plus NSWRA representation.

Stakeholders included:

- NSWRA staff involved with the Program administration.
- JO/ROC staff involved with the RRP management and delivery.
- Council staff and other project partners involved in the RRP at the local and regional level.
- RRP Workshop participants (many though not all of whom comprised individuals from the above cohorts).

1.2.3 Research Limitations

There were a number of research limitations and qualifiers that should be noted, without suggesting any compromises to the quality and validity of the findings.

- **Lower than expected response rates**, particularly from partner agencies and workshop participants. As a result, there is only limited data on the broader impacts of the Program from the external stakeholder perspective.
- **Incomplete project output/outcome data**: while the majority of JO/ROCs did provide the evaluators with most program data, UTS:CLG there were delays in obtaining some Program output and outcome data. This was despite UTS:CLG's repeated requests for information. Such delays are, however, a noted and expected complication of new project evaluations.
- **Reliance on self-reports**: most of the data collected for the evaluation relied on self-reports, either in the form of project progress reports submitted to NSWRA, or verbal and written feedback gathered through the surveys, focus groups and interviews. No alternative or independent data sources were available at the time of conducting the evaluation. As such, there is a possibility of positive bias some of the qualitative accounts about the impacts and outcomes of the individual projects.

Notwithstanding these research qualifications and limitations, UTS:CLG is confident that the report contains robust, evidence-based findings and a clear set of recommendations for improving future practice.

2 Evaluation Findings

2.1.1 Keys Strengths and Challenges

Across all instruments, stakeholders were asked to share their observations and insights regarding the key strengths and challenges of the RRP and the individual JO/ROC level projects. These are summarised in Figure 3.

It should be noted that although the projects varied across the regions varied, there were nonetheless common features in the majority of cases.

Figure 3: Key Program Strengths and Challenges

Key Strengths	Key Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitated a concentrated focus on resilience and disaster preparedness and ways to embed it at regional and local levels. • Established relationships that can be harnessed for collective action in the future. • Strong commitment to collaborative approaches that build on existing relationships at local, regional, and state-wide levels. • Increased stakeholder awareness of the importance of resilience and disaster preparedness that can be built on in the future. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tight time constraints placed on project design and delivery, leading in some cases to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Incomplete and cancelled project activities. – Missed opportunities to foster buy-in and input from key stakeholders. – Loss of momentum towards embedding sustained outcomes. – Exacerbated “engagement fatigue” amongst member councils, particularly where they needed to be engaged with multiple activities within the short program timeframe. – Staff acquisition and retention issues. • Complexity of the disaster and resilience landscape and the number of players involved, leading to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Missed opportunities to collaborate and some duplication of effort. – Role confusion

2.1.2 Appropriateness

KRQ1: How appropriate were the design, planning and implementation processes for meeting program objectives and stakeholder needs?

The majority of stakeholders considered the JO/ROC Network to be an appropriate mechanism for mobilising local and regional disaster risk reduction. It did this by providing a focal point for collaboration across regions and between different levels of government towards shared goals. However, it was cautioned that the JO/ROC Network could not completely compensate for limited resources within individual councils and may not be the most appropriate delivery arm for specific activities (e.g. the Simtable community workshops). Further, the focus on regional solutions in some cases led project design to be less responsive to the differing needs and capacities of specific regions.

The design of the DRRF funding application process itself reportedly placed limitations on the design of the RRP. In particular, the short response timeframe limited the capacity of the JO/ROCs to effectively scope the appropriateness of their project designs, especially when ensuring that the right stakeholders were involved. This created a cascade of issues, such as:

- Commitment to activities and technologies which were later deemed less effective for some regions or found to duplicate existing resource or activities being undertaken by other agencies.
- Limited buy-in and commitment to the project’s aims among some key stakeholders.
- Broad and inadequately defined aims and deliverables, particularly where elements of project design were dependent on the provision of services by other agencies.

The design of the DRRF grant similarly placed limitations on the RRP’s design and exacerbated issues stemming from the application process. Specifically:

- Activity-specific budget allocation and limited flexibility to retrospectively alter the project’s deliverables made it more difficult for the JO/ROC to adapt to emerging information and changing circumstances.
- The short and strict timeframe placed on the project’s delivery further exacerbated issues stemming from application, and led to a reliance on short-term contracted staff, poorer quality engagement with key stakeholders. This ultimately undermined the capacity of JO/ROCs to complete some elements of project delivery and embed outcomes.

APPROPRIATENESS

LESSONS and OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT:

- ➔ Invest more time to refine approach and deliverables during early inception and project design stages to ensure they are:
 - clear and actionable. appropriate to specific regional and local contexts, needs and capacities.
- ➔ Enable more flexibility in the specific activities, scope and timeframes of project delivery to support:
 - Responsiveness to changing circumstances and new information.
 - Key stakeholder buy-in and the fostering of sustainable inter-organisational relationships.
- ➔ Consider alternate funding models used by other state agencies.

2.1.3 Effectiveness

KRQ 2: How effective was the program in delivering intended short, intermediate and longer-term outcomes?

The collaborative relationships and infrastructure developed and leveraged through the RRP were almost universally identified as both key to the effectiveness of the RRP and as one of its more effective outcomes. These collaborative structures were not only considered essential to embedding the outcomes of the present program, but as a “foundational”

mechanism for delivering future relevant programs and facilitating collaboration across multiple levels of government.

In terms of contributions to the intended outcomes of the DRRF and its LRRR stream, assessments of the effectiveness of the RRP, its individual projects and activities varied by activity and region. Some activities such as the development of IP&R toolkits were considered very effective in building the capacity of councils to embed disaster risk information into their planning; however, other activities such as the delivery of disaster simulation workshops were not considered effective for some regions.

However, multiple JO/ROC Project Leads emphasised that the effectiveness of many of the activities delivered under the RRP is reliant on their being built upon and embedded with ongoing funding and delivery.

EFFECTIVENESS

LESSONS and OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT:

- ➔ Investigate options for providing ongoing resourcing and support to embed outcomes over the long-term, particularly those which require ongoing action from organisations with limited resources.
- ➔ Consider the resourcing and capacity building needs that will be required for councils and JO/ROC to effectively engage with the new datasets, guidelines, and frameworks (such as DAPs) that will be shared by state government.
- ➔ Further work will be needed to:
 - Identify and prioritise community risks and needs at a more detailed level, particularly for vulnerable groups.
 - Identify and take action on opportunities to reduce and manage disaster risk.
 - Engage and equip future community decision-makers with the knowledge and capacity to take actions to reduce disaster risk.
- ➔ Ensure resources developed to support councils to factor disaster risk information into planning continue to be fit-for-purpose and useable by new staff.
- ➔ Build on existing resources to support effective planning related to resource-sharing, integration of new types of data, and the location and protection of critical infrastructure.

2.1.4 Efficiency

KRQ 3: How efficiently was the program delivered and managed?

As with program effectiveness, the JO/ROC Network and other collaborative structures built and leveraged during the RRP were consistently identified as being key to supporting its efficient delivery.

Limited flexibility to adapt funding use and project deliverables was considered by many to undermine the efficient delivery of their project and the use of DRRF funding.

Numerous opportunities to streamline reporting, collaboration and resourcing mechanisms were identified. Perhaps most significantly, many noted that limitations to the size and length of budget allocations specified in the funding agreements had significant impacts to the efficiency of project delivery. These limitations restricted the resourcing choices of the JO/ROCs which in practice meant many relied on short-term, contracted staff and, in some cases, were unable to engage the best available consultants to deliver specific activities. This created various issues such as project delays and, in some instances, poorer quality outputs which undermined the capacity of JO/ROCs to complete project delivery and embed outcomes.

EFFICIENCY

LESSONS and OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT:

- Streamline reporting and collaboration mechanisms to reduce duplication in information provided and demand on limited staff time.
- Embed more time/ resourcing in early design stage to:
 - enable effective resourcing, including staffing.
 - refine project activities and deliverables to ensure they are clear, actionable and appropriate to specific regional/local contexts, needs and capacities.
 - foster clear relationships with partner agencies, including NSWRA.
- Consider the benefits of paying higher up-front costs in procurement, against the potential impacts of delayed or poorer quality outputs.
- Allocate more time to design the scoping for large procurements, creating a clear vision for the expected outcomes and an understanding of appropriate timeframes.

2.1.5 Governance

KRQ 4: What impacts did the integrated governance structure of the RRP have on project delivery, and the capacities and networks of local and regional institutions?

The collaborative governance structures of the RRP – most notably, the JO/ROC Network – provided numerous benefits to the delivery of the RRP and its individual JO/ROC projects, as well as building capacity across the organisations involved.

However, successful collaboration in many cases relied on interpersonal relationships which either leveraged on existing connections or took time and concerted effort to develop. Concern was, therefore, raised that some of the collaborative partnerships fostered through the RRP will be lost with departure of short-term contracted staff.

Missed opportunities to collaborate between NSWRA and the JO/ROC Network were reported, leading many to advocate for a stronger partnership approach in future projects.

Collaboration with various state agencies as project partners delivered numerous unintended benefits: for example, identifying opportunities to collaborate and reduce duplication both within and between different parts of government.

While most emphasised that council engagement and input was integral to the success of the RRP, the quality collaboration between the JO/ROCs and their member councils varied for numerous reasons.

GOVERNANCE

LESSONS and OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT:

- ➔ Ensure councils are supported to effectively engage throughout the course of DRR projects – by being provided opportunities, incentives, and adequate resourcing.
- ➔ Engage council leadership from the priority-setting stages of projects to foster buy-in and commitment to embedding long-term outcomes.
- ➔ Consider a strong partnership approach between funding agencies and their grantees in future to ensure:
 - opportunities for synergizing work toward shared priorities are leveraged.
 - grantees can be responsive to evolving state strategies and programs.

It was recommended that the roles of the Regional NSWRA representatives could be leveraged for this purpose.

- ➔ Explore opportunities to streamline data collection and access across agencies and different levels of government to minimise resource duplication and support a more holistic approach to disaster risk management in future.
- ➔ Consider most effective options for coordinating the JO/ROC network
- ➔ Consider options for using the JO/ROC network as a streamlined channel for collaboration between state and local government.

2.1.6 Sustainability

KRQ 5: What opportunities and lessons can be leveraged to improve the remainder of the program’s implementation and to inform the design of future programs?

Can or should the model be upscaled or replicated? If so, what should be considered?

While many felt substantive progress was made, most JO/ROC Project Leads and staff emphasized that ongoing funding and support was required to embed many of the RRP’s outcomes over the long-term. This was considered to be integral to:

- Sustain the momentum built amongst councils to take action on disaster risk, particularly those who are under-resourced or who do not consider DRR a priority.
- Leverage the collaborative relationships and networks fostered through the project.
- Maximise the impact of various activities delivered through the RRP.

While the JO/ROC Network has already coordinated a submission to the Disaster Ready Fund 2 (DRF2), it is still unclear whether this will be successful and concerns were raised that a gap in funding between the RRP and prospective DRF2 will lead to a loss of staff and momentum.

On this basis, numerous JO/ROC staff recommended alternate options for providing ongoing funding such as resourcing permanent staff or providing non-competitive grant options.

SUSTAINABILITY

LESSONS and OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT:

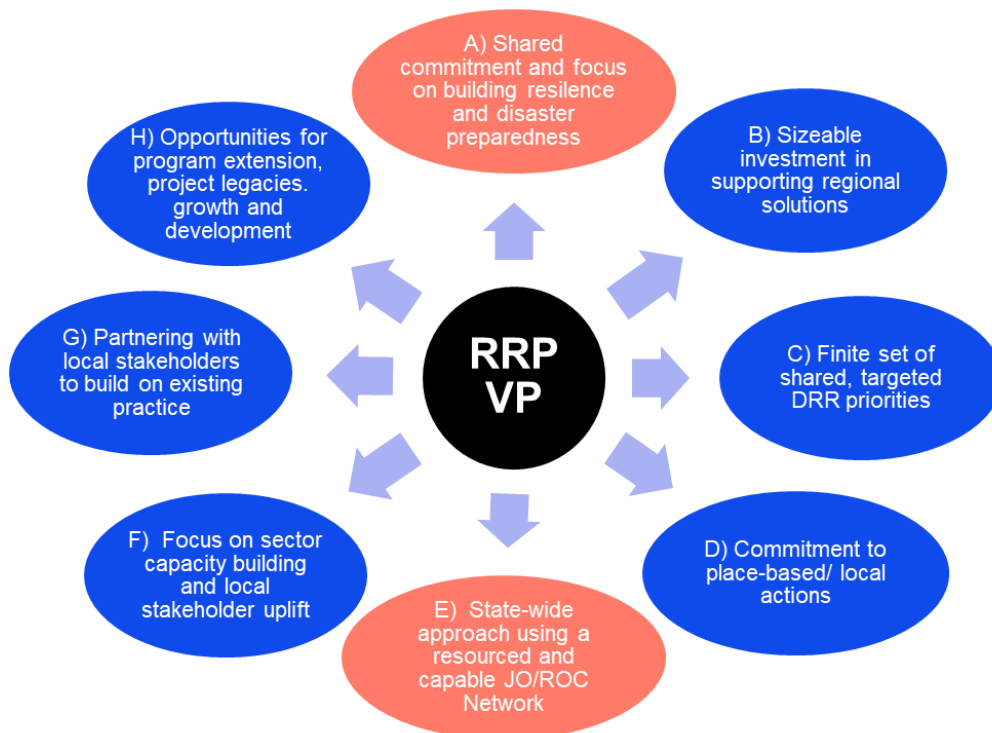
- ➔ Provide options to extend existing programs and funding to ensure progress and resources already expended are effectively leveraged and built upon.
- ➔ Consider other options for providing ongoing resourcing to disaster risk reduction at the local/regional level other than competitive, short-term grants. Options raised included:
 - funding ongoing, permanent staff within regional organisations dedicated to addressing disaster risk reduction and management.
 - distributing funding on an equitable, needs-basis to ensure under resourced areas not disadvantaged.
 - determining funding through a co-design approach involving collaboration between different levels and relevant parts of government to identify and prioritise needs, and to devise a holistic approach.
- ➔ Improve mechanisms for collaboration across different agencies and levels of government which don’t rely on specific individuals and interpersonal relationships.

3 Conclusion and Recommendations

3.1 RRP Value Proposition

This conclusion focuses primarily on the key issues, gaps and opportunities for improving the RRP - at both a Program-wide, and also at the individual JO/ROC level (as per the agreed terms of reference at Section 1.2). However, UTS:CLG also saw value in scoping the value of the Program, in the form of an eight-part value proposition (VP) statement as shown at Figure 3.

Figure 3: RRP Value Statements



Source: UTS:CLG, June 2024.

Each of component of the VP was deemed important to the majority of respondents included in this evaluation of the Program. Many also reflect good practice principles underpinning capacity uplift programs associated with reforms designed to impact at different organisations, and at different levels.

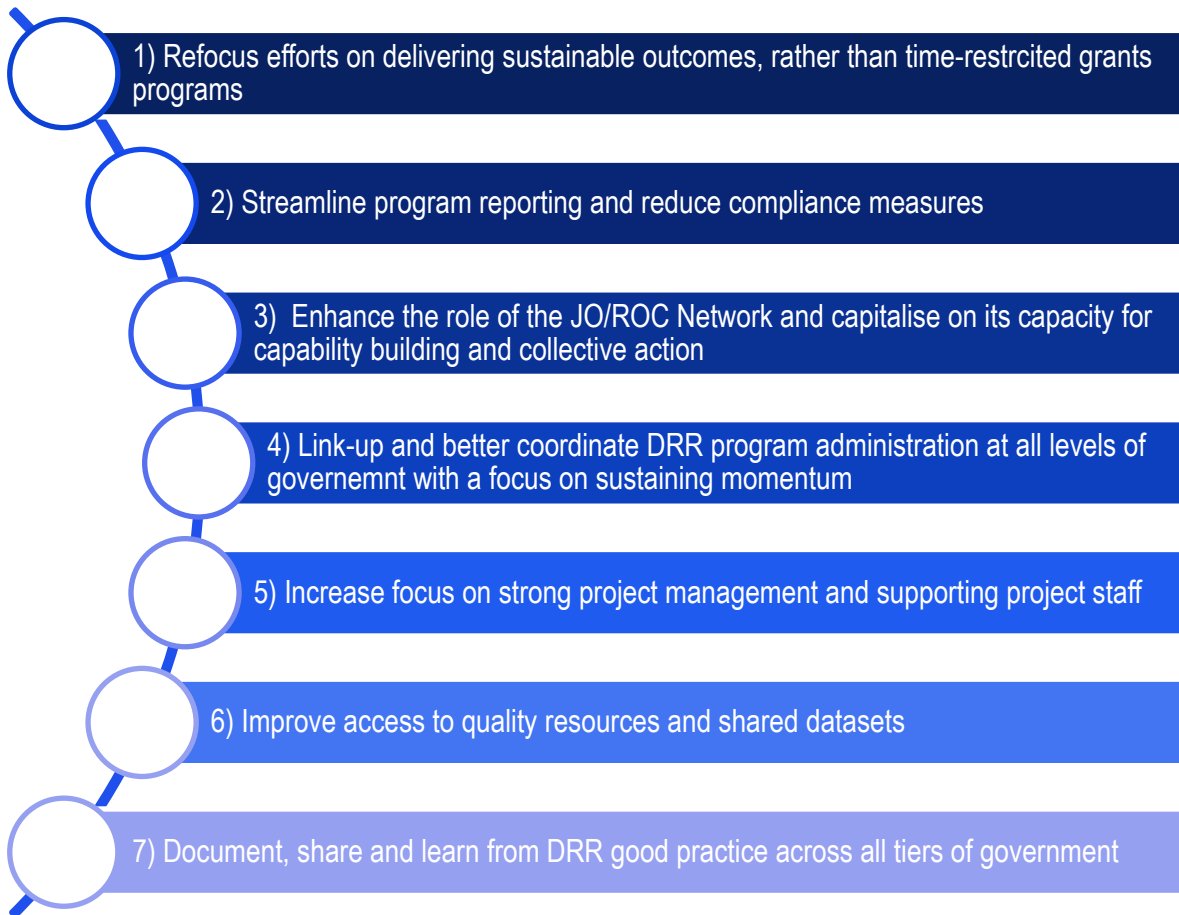
Option and Recommendation

- Build upon the eight RRP value proposition statements in the design and delivery of future DRR programs and grant funding models.**

3.2 Lessons Learnt – Options Arising

To demonstrate how the VP may be capitalized on in the future, the UTS:CLG evaluation highlighted various issues, gaps and opportunities to improve upon the RRP at both a Program-wide and Project level. These have been distilled into seven priority directions as presented at Figure 4. Each priority direction is expanded upon below, with specific options and recommendations arising included in highlight boxes.

Figure 4: RRP priority directions and areas for reform



Source: UTS:CLG, June 2024.

1) Refocus efforts on delivering sustainable outcomes, rather than time-restricted grants programs

The short, strict timeframe of the DRRF grant funding model was repeatedly raised as a key limitation which weakened the capacity of the JO/ROCs to sustainably deliver DRR outcomes for their regions. These time restrictions were associated with various limitations to the appropriateness of project design, undermining the ability of the JO/ROCs to effectively:

- Stagger project activities to maximise their effectiveness and minimise engagement fatigue among member councils.

- Scope the appropriateness of some project activities and provide opportunities to facilitate input from key stakeholders which could meaningfully impact project design.
- Foster “genuine buy-in” from member councils and other relevant agencies, whose ongoing commitment will be vital to embedding outcomes over the long-term.
- Recover from unexpected project delays.
- Fully transition their projects to other regional and local sponsors, particularly when there was no Project Lead or funding being offered beyond 30 June 2024 to help facilitate sustainable outcomes.

In addition, while the evaluation found varied experiences in having project variations approved by the NSWRA, the process of attaching funding to specific deliverables posed significant hurdles to individual JO/ROCs wishing to redirect funding from one line item to another. This prevented many from adapting their projects in response to new information, opportunities arising and/or changing needs and circumstances.

Finally, the fact that subsequent NSWRA DRR funding was not available until well after the cessation of the RRP, had many negative impacts including the loss of skilled staff and a hiatus in the DRR momentum created since 2022-23.

Options and Recommendations

2. **Take all steps necessary to ensure DRR funding programs overlap** to maintain regional momentum and allow quality DRR personnel to remain in their roles.
3. **Extend program timelines beyond rigid 1.5-year timeframes** to allow funded projects to be completed, and allocated resources to be fully leveraged.
4. **Introduce greater flexibility in how and when contracted deliverables must be concluded**, without undermining accountabilities for government funding, and thereby enable projects to nimbly adapt to and capitalise on new information and changing circumstances.
5. **Modify future grant parameters, and accompanying resourcing, to accommodate a three-stage approach:**
 - a. Project establishment stage: Minimum of 2-3 months for detailed project design work, staff and consultancy recruitment, stakeholder engagement, plus quality project inception and design work.
 - b. Project delivery stage: Minimum 2 years, preferably 3 or longer.
 - c. Project devolution stage: Minimum of 2-3 months to complete activities and deliverables that over ran due to unforeseen circumstances, and to transition project activities into business-as-usual and ensure outcomes can be embedded longer-term.
6. **Establish a flexible, DRR funding pool** to extend specific, high-impact initiatives beyond the Program timeframes, based on a competitive business case process.
7. **Pursue alternative DRR funding models** that better support sustainable responses focused on embedding regional and local solutions. This might include:
 - a. Reducing reliance on short term competitive grants, and their associated compliance costs (see options at Priority 2 below).

- b. Introducing adjustable funding levels to redress under-resourced regions, and less mature JO/ROCs, who lack established program management models and permanent staff able to support short-term projects.
- c. Providing ongoing or potentially permanent resourcing for JO/ROCs and council personnel dedicated to addressing DRR.
- d. Encouraging pooled funding models that combine different grants and resourcing sources, to support joint initiatives working with other project partners to deliver more holistic approaches to DRR.
- e. Enabling grantees greater flexibility to redirect grant funding to new opportunities or address changed circumstances, so long as the redirection demonstrates full alignment with the existing Program goals.

2) Streamline program reporting and reduce compliance measures

The evaluation identified numerous opportunities for improving the administration and management of grant funding. Key challenges and shortcomings included:

- Frequency, length, and complexity of mandatory NSWRA reporting
- Duplication of content between reports
- “Confusing templates” that were “time-consuming” to complete
- “Wordy content” that “still didn’t tell the full story of what had been delivered”, and what the outcomes were.
- Limited to no use of SMART grant reporting tools and online templates deployed by other NSW Government agencies who administer major grants programs.

Options and Recommendations

8. **Update future NSWRA Program guidelines and funding administration** to include:
 - a. An increased focus on the delivery of short- and medium-term program outcomes, rather than the delivery of rigidly defined project outputs such as specific tasks and fixed deliverables within inflexible timeframes.
 - b. More opportunities to formally adjust or evolve Project Plans in response to new opportunities, changing circumstances, new information or need.
9. **Streamline, modernise and reduce grant reporting** to minimise duplication in information provided and related compliance costs. Options include:
 - a. Introducing simple online dashboards containing core KPI reporting.
 - b. Co-designing new reporting tools to support dual usage/ relevance for the grantee and granter. When done well, the same tools can assist day-to-day project administration, as well as grant accountability and compliance.
 - c. Integrating output, outcome and financial reporting into a single quarterly report.

- d. Introducing a risk management approach to monthly reporting. i.e., unless needed, limit monthly reporting to updated dashboards (see 7a)), plus a verbal report and dialogue with NSWRA.

10. **Expand NSWRA roles and responsibilities in Program delivery**, by:

- a. Increasing its focus as an enabling, partner agency to JO/ROCs, and to delivering support to ensure successful project delivery, over its narrow, administrative compliance functions.
- b. Proactively linking the JO/ROC Network to relevant government contacts, and sharing other information, resources, and advice in a timely manner.

3) **Enhance the role of the JO/ROC Network and capitalise on its capacity for capability building and collective action**

One of the key strengths of the RRP (as per the Value Proposition Statement), was the strong collaborative approach to project delivery adopted by the JO/ROC Network. As outlined in the findings section of the final reports, the labour division, resource and knowledge sharing, and peer support facilitated through the Network substantially improved the effectiveness and efficiency of the program. While also supporting individual and organisational capacity-building.

While some of these roles and functions were separately contracted and resourced by NSWRA, it would appear that the true value and benefits of this kind of open collaboration and joint ways of working could be embedded in the future.

Options and Recommendations

11. **Appropriately resource and partner with individual JO/ROCs to project lead, facilitate and support state-wide DRR initiatives**, based on:

- d. A strengths-based/ capability approach
- e. Joint recognition and agreement between the JO/ROCs.

4) **Link-up and better coordinate DRR program administration at all levels of government with a focus on sustaining momentum.**

During the course of delivering the RRP, numerous areas of “disconnect” between different government agencies and missed opportunities to collaborate were identified. As such, numerous stakeholders called for improved coordination mechanisms to synergise the efforts of different tiers and parts of government working toward shared goals. Such an approach could:

- Facilitate joint action and, in turn, create economies of scale and ensure works are optimised to complement, rather than duplicate or conflict with one another.
- Enable the resources and respective expertise of different parts of government to be pooled to maximise the impact of DRR efforts and effectively build on, consolidate and enhance existing programs.
- Streamline access to relevant data and reduce instances of repeat consultation with key stakeholders (such as local councils) by different state and regional agencies.

To this end, staff within the JO/ROCs and member councils, as well as some government and non-government partners agencies, advocated for the ongoing use of the JO/ROC Network as a channel to streamline communication and coordinate collaboration between state agencies and local government. Some also suggested opportunities to strengthen the coordination roles of regional NSWRA representatives.

However, the evaluation also highlighted instances where there was “disconnect” and duplication of works at the state government level both between different agencies and, in some cases, within larger government agencies, such as TfNSW. This suggests a broader need to dismantle siloes and construct collaboration channels at all levels.

Finally, the fact that subsequent NSWRA DRR funding was not available until well after the cessation of the RRP, had many negative impacts including the loss of skilled staff and a hiatus in the DRR momentum created since 2022-23.

Options and Recommendations

12. Establish a NSW DRR Coordination Group, convened by NSWRA, to foster greater collaboration and remove duplication of effort at all levels of government.

Members might include Regional NSW, TfNSW, Office of Local Government, National Emergency Management Agency, and nominated representatives from select JO/ROCs, local governments, and possibly also Regional and/or Local Emergency Management Committees.

13. Pursue linked-up approaches to DRR funding with the goal of:

- a. Simplifying the currently complex funding, policy and program landscape
- b. Generating greater synergies and efficiencies in the administration of public funds
- c. Taking all other steps to create a responsive, whole-of-government funding culture able to pivot, evolve and capitalise on new or emerging policies, strategies, and funding programs on an ongoing basis.

14. Encourage and support funding applications that openly leverage other program or funding resources, in order to deliver greater synergies, value for money, and expanded project impacts.

5) Increase focus on strong project management and supporting Project Leads and other project staff in their project delivery.

Numerous stakeholders identified issues in the delivery of the RRP which suggest the need to ensure short-term projects of this nature institute strong project management. For example, many JO/ROCs reported difficulties managing contractors, especially when delivery dates were not met, and quality and accuracy were not of acceptable standards. Challenges coordinating timely recruitment and retaining skilled staff in rural areas were also identified.

Variations across the individual projects also suggest merit in investigating the impacts of the different resourcing models employed by the JO/ROCs, noting that many of these resourcing decisions were influenced by the relative maturity and size of the organisations prior to receiving DRRF funding. For example, while some JO/ROCs were able to leverage the skills, experience and networks of their permanent staff, others relied on short-term

contracted staff or consultants to deliver various elements of their project. Further, while some short-term staff were permanently recruited by JO/ROCs during the course of delivering the RRP, others were made aware that their tenure would cease with the project and, therefore, needed to secure future work during the final stages of the project.

Options and Recommendations

15. **Provide JO/ROCs with the resources and decision-making power to determine the optimal staffing, resourcing and governance arrangements** suited to their unique needs and circumstances.
16. **Consider flexible resourcing models that encourage rapid capability uplift and project management support**, particularly for less mature or well-resourced JO/ROCs, including for periods without Project Leads. This might include:
 - a. Funding mature JO/ROCs, with access to experienced Project Leads and Project staff, offering paid professional supervision, coaching and mentoring for less mature JO/ROCs and Project Leads.
 - b. Sharing tasks, pooling resources or adopting a team approach to delivering specific projects across more than one JO/ROC to better facilitate knowledge and skills transfer.
 - c. Incentivising quality staff to take up short-term appointments in rural areas experiencing recruiting challenges.
 - d. Repositioning NSWRA as a project partner which adopts a supportive and problem-solving approach to any resourcing issues and capability challenges that may emerge (see Recommendation 9).
17. Encourage NSWRA or another related body, to **deliver professional project management and risk management training to senior JO/ROC staff**, in collaboration with more mature or better resourced JO/ROCs.
18. **Consider having a state government agency jointly oversee critical contract management responsibilities** for deliverables being concurrently undertaken by multiple JO/ROCs.

6) Improve access to quality resources and shared datasets, including through commissioning more state-wide tools to guide regional and local initiatives.

Many RRP personnel reported frustration at not have timely access to important information, key contacts, and relevant DRR-related resources (such as the State’s spatial mapping resources) and that these key tools were eventually identified through JO/ROC Network activities, rather than formal NSWRA advice and communications.

Further, the evaluation indicated that various RRP deliverables may have been more efficiently undertaken and resourced at a state-wide level (for example, IP&R Guidelines or the Needs and Gap Analysis), and then provided to each JO/ROC to tailor, socialise and update based on their unique place-based needs and circumstances.

These challenges suggest opportunities for greater NSWRA stewardship and support for DRR programs and projects in future. To this end, various respondents queried whether the RRP was overseen by the most appropriate part of the Department, and whether a greater “policy and strategy lens” could have produced better outcomes.

Options and Recommendations

19. Building on Recommendation 9, **expand NSWRA's role in proactive knowledge transfer and JO/ROC capability uplift**, including through:
 - a. Proactively seeking out and making key linkages to other relevant NSW and Commonwealth programs or agencies with roles or information relevant to DRR matters.
 - b. Formally connecting individual JO/ROCs to relevant initiatives or personnel either on a request basis, or through the JO/ROC Network as a whole.
 - c. Being a key point of contact for facilitating formal and informal connections with other government staff and agencies, especially at the NSW and Commonwealth Government levels.
20. **Strategically review what future DRR deliverables might be best driven or co-commissioned at a state level** before they are transferred to individual JO/ROCs and their member councils for consideration, updating and implementation. Should this be agreed to, nominated **JO/ROC personnel should be part of the Project Steering Committee** to ensure it appropriately reflects regional needs, perspectives, and issues.
21. **Consider alternative NSWRA Program governance models** which ensure capability building, resource sharing, and partnering are at the forefront of future DRR initiatives.

7) Document, share and learn from DDR good practice at local, regional, state and national levels.

While the JO/ROC Network played an important role in information sharing and discussion of solutions that could be adopted more widely, for the most part these activities were done on a meeting style or informal basis. As such, there is no lasting repository of good practice that could be built upon or used as reference points in future DRR initiatives.

This person-to-person type approach will present challenges to future DRR initiatives as there is no formal or lasting legacy of much of the RRP good practice and ways of working.

Options and Recommendations

22. **Establish a central repository of all RRP resources, tools and templates produced through the Program**, in collaboration with each JO/ROC to support future DDR initiatives. This could potentially be made accessible on the NSWRA website.
23. **Host a RRP conference or symposium**, potentially attracting DRRF program participants from across Australia, to share good practice and discuss lessons learnt to inform future DDR initiatives.

4 Updated MEL Strategy

The final ToR of the UTS:CLG contract was to draw lessons from the delivery of the evaluation to “*recommend an approach to measure and track the medium and long-term objectives of the RRP, and the individual JO/ROC projects, beyond the end of the present evaluation*”.

Key recommendations include::

- Update the short, medium and long-term outcomes which future projects are evaluated against.
- Retain the KRQ used in the present evaluation to structure and guide future evaluations.
- Discontinue the use of PL and instead adopt an alternative plan-on-a-page model, including key outputs and outcomes, that is familiar to project staff and is aligned to regular reporting.
- Continue to use a mixed methods approach, using the same data collection instruments, where possible, to enable comparison between different locations and programs overtime.
- Ensure the MEL Plan is drafted and finalised during project inception, rather than part way through project delivery.
- Provide improved support to JO/ROC project staff to effectively engage in evaluation activities, including distribution of data collection instruments.
- Enable NSWRA to play a stronger leadership and coordination role in terms of evaluation data collection and report sharing, thereby reducing the burden on the JO/ROCs, as well as the evaluators in terms of gaining access to the data.
- Investigate options for improving stakeholder response rates (particularly among workshop participants) e.g., shortening, simplifying and streamlining survey instruments.



9 STANDING UPDATES

Item	9.1
Subject	Premiers Department - Cass Wilson
Presented by	Cass Wilson

RECOMMENDATION

The MNCJO Board receive and note the update attached from the Premiers Department

ATTACHMENTS

1. Premier's Department - MNCJO Report August 2024

Executive Summary:

To provide an update on the Machinery of Government changes and The NSW State Budget (Regional Development Trust Fund and Performance and Wellbeing Framework)

Recommendation(s):

- **That the Board note the Premier’s Department update.**

Background:

Machinery of Government changes are complete

As of 1 July 2024, the Department of Regional NSW became the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development. This evolution reflects the NSW Government’s strong commitment to supporting the growth of primary industries through enhancing the coordination of frontline services, research and development, and regional economic development.

The department’s focus will be to protect, support and develop our primary industries, mining sector, and regional communities. Regional economic development, focused on supporting regional industries and employment, will remain central to this work.

As part of this renewal, the department’s Regional Development Group and Regional Precincts will form the Regional Development and Delivery Group. The amalgamation will increase focus, collaboration and accountability in delivering projects and services.

The government’s Regional Coordination function will return to the NSW Premier’s Department and report to the Premier and Minister for Regional NSW.

Both teams will remain embedded in the communities they serve, drawing on their local experience and connections. They will continue to work across all levels of government and with local stakeholders to help drive the major projects that can contribute so much to regional economies and address some of the longer-term, complex issues they face.

Key contacts for the Premier’s Department regional coordination team are:

- Shaun O’Sullivan – Director North (incorporating the North Coast, Hunter New England and Central Coast), shaun.osullivan@regional.nsw.gov.au, 0447 295 011
- Cass Wilson – Associate Director North Coast, cass.wilson@regional.nsw.gov.au, 0475 758 702

Key contact in the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development regional economic development team is:

- Jillian Fryer – Deputy Director North Coast Regional Development Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development jillian.fryer@regional.nsw.gov.au, 0412 901 084

NSW Budget 2024-2025 Region NSW

Regional Development Trust

The NSW Government is investing an additional \$50 million into the Regional Development Trust Fund (the Trust), bringing the total commitment to \$400 million.

The Trust provides sustainable and strategic investment, with a focus on priorities that make a real difference to the regions. The Trust will deliver social and economic outcomes for regional NSW, with a focus on:

- Sustainable regional industries
- Aboriginal economic development
- Community connection and capacity building
- Improving regional service delivery

The allocation in the 2024-25 Budget included \$5 million for an Aboriginal Economic Development Package to support First Nations businesses and organisations to identify and execute commercial opportunities, leading to improved economic and employment outcomes. Applications for this funding are now open.

NSW Performance and Wellbeing Framework

The NSW Government will introduce the NSW Performance and Wellbeing Framework in the 2025-26 Budget. It is designed to strengthen the collective understanding of the connection between government policies and programs, and the results and impacts achieved. Key wellbeing themes include health, skills, prosperity, housing, community and sustainability.

Consultation on the [Performance and Wellbeing – Consultation Paper](#) close Wednesday 31 July 2024.

Recent Media Releases

[Summer's shark management approach announced | NSW Government](#)

[NSW and SA Governments to jointly host Social Media Summit | NSW Government](#)

[Portable bonds scheme to deliver cost of living relief | NSW Government](#)

[\\$252 million boost set to deliver 1,300 new apprentices and trainees | NSW Government](#)

More located here: [Ministerial media releases | NSW Government](#)

Grants Opening Soon

[4-Year \(2 + 2\) Multi-year Funding | NSW Government](#)

[Infrastructure Grants: sport and recreation | NSW Government](#)

[Infrastructure Grants: arts and culture | NSW Government](#)

[Infrastructure Grants: disaster readiness | NSW Government](#)

[Infrastructure Grants: community infrastructure | NSW Government](#)



9 STANDING UPDATES

Item 9.2
Subject Destination North Coast - Michael Thurston
Presented by Michael Thurston

RECOMMENDATION

The MNCJO Board receive a verbal update from the General Manager Destination North Coast

ATTACHMENTS

None



9 STANDING UPDATES

Item	9.3
Subject	Regional Development Australia MNC
Presented by	Madeliene Lawler Dianne Wall

RECOMMENDATION

The MNCJO Board receive and note the attached report

ATTACHMENTS

1. 2408-MNCJOUpdate-RDA



MNCJO PROJECT UPDATES

Item

Subject RDA Mid North Coast – Update

Presented by CEO RDA Mid North Coast

RECOMMENDATION

That GMAC note the RDA Mid North Coast update and refer to the Board for consideration.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a brief overview of RDA and RDAMNC activities as it relates to the MNCJO. An overview of the work program to date is provided.

REPORT DETAIL

RDA MNC Update

Key activities of interest for the region:

- Manufacturing in MNC- Capability and Capacity Research
- MNC Skills Audit for 2023-24
- Supporting the delivery of an Accelerator program for small business
- Childcare Unmet Demand Study
- Agriculture in MNC – Capability and Capacity Research (during 2024-2025)
- Housing solutions advocacy

Opportunity/Interest areas for Joint Organisation

1. Renewable Energy
2. Early Childhood Education and Care
3. Workforce Development
4. Manufacturing capability and capacity

ATTACHMENTS - NIL



9 STANDING UPDATES

Item 9.4
Subject Office Local Government – Anita Gambhir
Presented by Anita Gambhir

RECOMMENDATION

The MNCJO Board receive a verbal update from the Office Local Government.

ATTACHMENTS

None



10 REPORTS FOR THIS MEETING

Item	10.1
Subject	End of Term Report
Presented by	Liz Fairweather, Executive Officer - Mid North Coast Joint Organisation

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board receive the MNCJO End Of Term Report 2021-2024.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the MNCJO End Of Term Report 2021-2024 (EOTR).

Joint Organisations are not legislated to develop an End Of Term Report, however, reflecting on one's achievements is good practice. It highlights the progress and achievements made by our small JO in this short period of time.

In addition to projects achieved, the EOTR also presents a table highlighting the dollar value and benefits to our member councils. Member councils received a return on investment of \$4.84 for every \$1 invested.

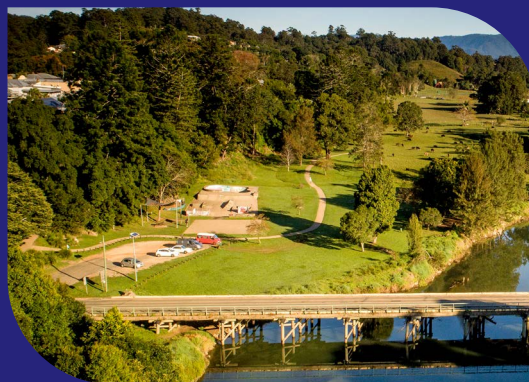
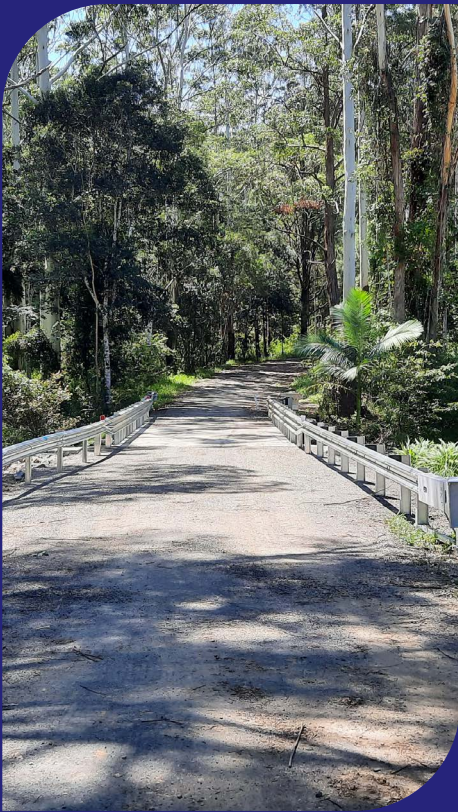
An update on the progress of the Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities is included as an appendix.

ATTACHMENTS

1. MNCJO End of Term Report



Mid North Coast Joint Organisation End of Term Report 2021 -2024



Contact Details:

Mid North Coast Joint Organisation

Executive.Officer@mncjo.nsw.gov.au

PO Box 84, Port Macquarie NSW 2444



A message from the Chair

It is with pleasure that I present the Mid North Coast Joint Organisation's (MNCJO) End of Term Report (EOTR) 2021-2024.

The MNCJO was established in 2018 and comprises three member Councils - Bellingen, Kempsey and Port Macquarie-Hastings and as such, is one of the smaller Joint Organisations in NSW. This does not stop us from achieving results that far outweigh our size.

It seems the collaboration for Joint Organisations across New South Wales has gained momentum through teaming up on state-wide projects and sharing knowledge and resources.

The continued collaboration of the Joint Organisations is key to innovation, creating efficiencies and finding solutions to the challenges faced by local councils. We have and will continue to be strongly focused on achieving this and ensuring the Mid North Coast region benefits.

Following our guiding principles, the MNCJO continues to focus on a whole-of-region approach to decision making and strategic planning. The projects delivered by the MNCJO all provide regional benefits for all of the Mid North Coast Councils, both members and non-members.

I would like to acknowledge the support of the Mayors, General Managers/CEO and our Executive Officer of our Joint Organisation, as well as those in the community who are working with us to deliver the programs that we know will be of significant benefit and of lasting impact to all the Mid North Coast Joint Organisation communities.

Mayor Peta Pinson

Chair

Mid North Coast Joint Organisation



A message from the Executive Officer

In October 2023, I was engaged as a dedicated Executive Officer for the MNCJO. In the immediate past the Executive Officer role was undertaken by one of the member councils General Managers in addition to their substantive position. Although only part time, this change, has made a significant difference to the JOs operations.

Prior to the Executive Officer role, I worked for the JO as Project Manager and was successful in sourcing nearly \$1.2million in grant funding for projects, including: Disaster Risk Reduction Fund, Joint Organisation Net Zero Acceleration Fund and the Business Case Strategy Development Fund.

The State Network of Joint Organisations continues to strengthen. The much larger JOs provide significant opportunity for the MNCJO to benefit from their expertise. In particular, the opportunity to participate in projects that have a state-wide perspective. NSW State Departments are realising the benefits of utilising this collective and increasing their engagement with JOs for collaborative projects.

I'm aware and appreciative of the work that has been achieved before my term at the JO and believe this provided great grounding for the infant organisation. Therefore, it is worth noting the MNCJO and member councils worked together and with TfNSW on the resolution of difficult issues associated with the Deed for projects funded under the Fixing Country Bridges Program. This amounted to the member councils collectively receiving \$50million through this program.

The JO is well positioned to respond to overtures from the State Government to participate in projects that have a regional focus. However, I take seriously my role of providing value for member councils and their communities. I am focusing on building council networks which allow like-minded professionals the opportunity to collaborate and thus find resource savings and knowledge sharing gains for the JOs member councils that align with their strategic priorities.

Elizabeth Fairweather

Executive Officer

Mid North Coast Joint Organisation



Acknowledgement of Country

The Mid North Coast Joint Organisation respectfully acknowledges the traditional owners, the Birpai, Dughutti and Gumbaynggirr people, as the custodians of this land. We pay respect to all Aboriginal community Elders, past and present, who have resided in the area and have been an integral part of the history of the region.



Acknowledgement of member councils



The Port Macquarie–Hastings Council local government area is located on the Mid North Coast of New South Wales, about 420 kilometres north of Sydney, and 510 kilometres south of Brisbane.



Nestled in between the coastal towns of Port Macquarie and Coffs Harbour is the Macleay Valley. The Kempsey Shire covers an area of 337,874 hectares between the Pacific Ocean in the east, Five Day Creek in the west, and from Grassy Head in the north to Kundabung in the south. The Shire-wide population is now nearly 30,000 residents.



**BELLINGEN
SHIRE COUNCIL**

The Bellingen Shire is currently home to 13,197 people (ABS Estimated Resident Population 2021), who come from many different countries and are involved in diverse occupational, cultural, and social activities.

About this report

This report provides member council councillors and staff, and the community with an update on the achievements of the Mid North Coast Joint Organisation from 2021 to 2024. It outlines progress towards achieving the MNCJO Regional Strategic Priorities by showcasing key projects.



The MNCJO Board



Chair

Clr. Peta Pinson

Mayor

Port Macquarie-Hastings Council



Deputy Chair

Clr. Steve Allan

Mayor

Bellingen Shire Council



Board Member

Clr. Leo Hauville

Mayor

Kempsey Shire Council



Board Member

Representative

Regional NSW



Board Member

Elizabeth Fairweather

Executive Officer

MNCJO



Board Member

Dr. Clare Allen

Chief Executive Officer

Port Macquarie-Hastings Council



Board Member

Mark Griffioen

General Manager

Bellingen Shire Council



Board Member

Craig Milburn

General Manager

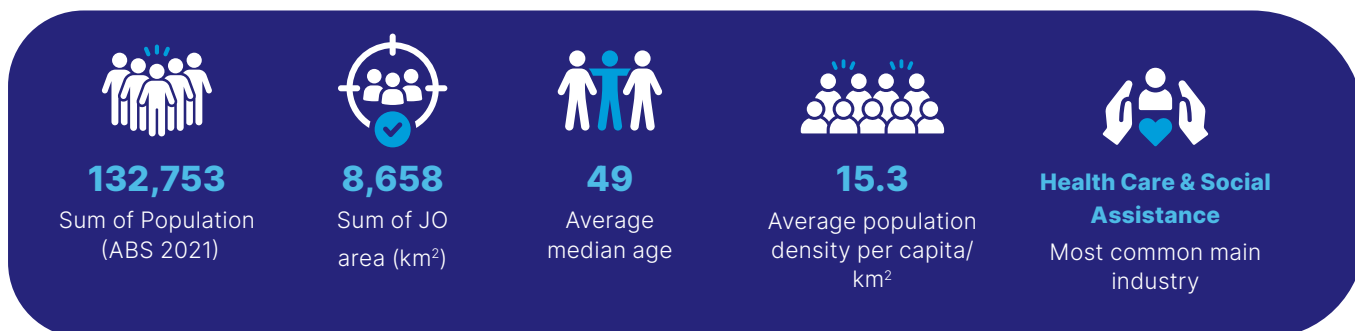
Kempsey Shire Council

About the Mid North Coast Joint Organisation

The Mid North Coast Joint Organisation includes Port Macquarie-Hastings Council, Bellingen Shire Council and Kempsey Shire Council with the purpose of strengthening regional collaboration to work more closely with the NSW Government to deliver important projects on a regional scale.

The core functions of the Mid North Coast Joint Organisation are:

- Strategic Planning and Priority Setting
- Inter-governmental Collaboration
- Regional Leadership and Advocacy
- Building efficient and effective councils.



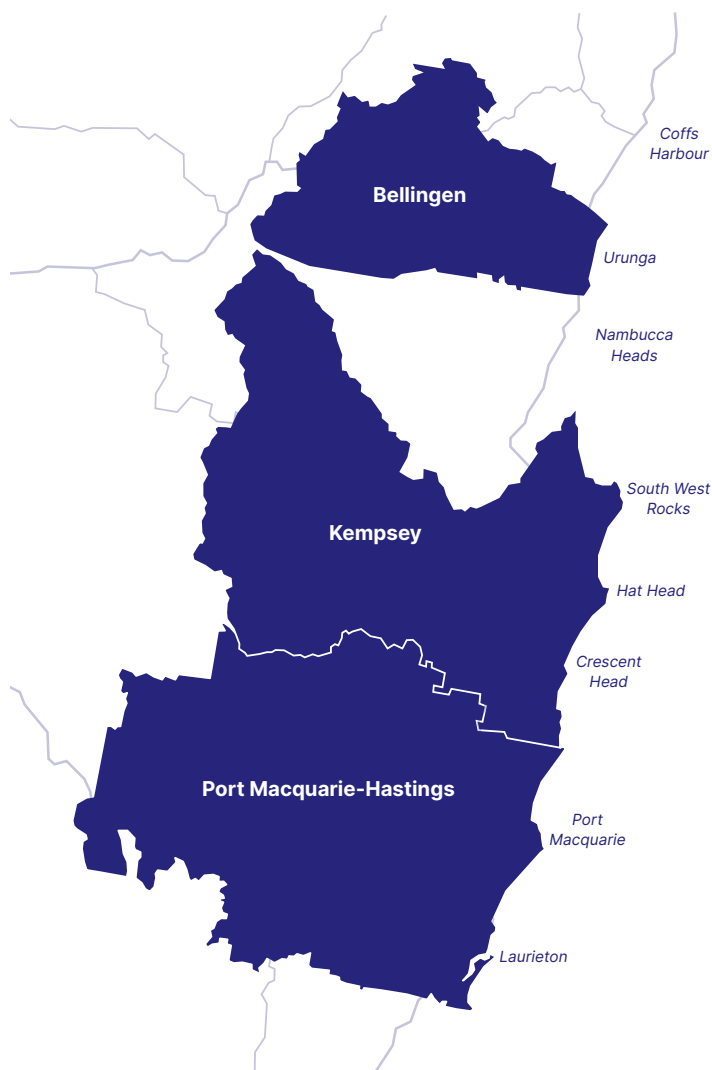
The MNCJO is part of a larger Network of 13 joint organisations to strengthen collaboration and engagement between State and local governments and improve infrastructure and service delivery to regional communities.

Eighty-seven councils in regional NSW are members of the 13 joint organisations: Canberra Region, Central NSW, Far North West, Far South West, Hunter, Illawarra Shoalhaven, Mid North Coast, Namoi, New England, Northern Rivers, Orana, Riverina and Murray, and Riverina.

Each Joint Organisation comprises member councils, State agencies and other key stakeholders as determined by each Joint Organisation board.

Joint organisations have transformed the way the NSW Government and local councils collaborate, plan, set priorities and deliver important projects on a regional scale.

The regional bodies are a key mechanism through which the Government delivers funding and programs to regional NSW.



Vision

The vision of the MNCJO is to help create a vibrant, sustainable region underpinned by economic growth and a commitment to the social and environmental well-being of its communities.

Mission

The mission of the MNCJO is set priorities, lead and advocate for the Mid North Coast region and work collaboratively with the community, government agencies and non-government organisations and businesses to achieve them.

Core Functions

The core functions of the MNCJO are:

- Strategic Planning and Priority Setting
- Based on robust processes for identifying regional goals, with the flexibility to respond to changing priorities and needs of Member Councils as required.
- Intergovernmental collaboration
- Building effective working relationships with other JOs, councils and the NSW and Australian Governments.
- Regional Leadership and Advocacy
- Creating a shared purpose and strategic direction for the region and commitment to constructive and co-operative implementation by all Member Councils.
- Building efficient and effective councils
- By examining opportunities for shared services with capacity building across the region

Guiding Principles

- Decisions are made with a whole of region focus and flexibility to respond to changing priorities and community needs.
- There is accountability to members and their communities of interest.
- There is a commitment to collaboration and good working relationships.
- There is clear communication between members and other stakeholders.
- There is a commitment to make the MNCJO work effectively and efficiently.
- There is a commitment to evaluating and reporting to ensure targeted outputs and outcomes.

Strategic Regional Priorities 2021 - 2024

In June 2021, the MNCJO Board endorsed the revised *Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities 2021-2024* (Appendix 1). The 2021 Statement builds on the Strategic Plan (Plan) which was prepared in 2018. The 2021 Statement contains six strategic goals (which relate to the social, environmental, economic, infrastructure, governance, and advocacy goals for the region), linked to several high-level actions and more specific individual activities under each strategic goal.

Appendix 2 – *Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities 2021 - 2024* progress

Stakeholder Engagement and Collaboration

Regional NSW*, Destination NSW; the NSW Office of Local Government and Regional Development Australia (RDA) attend MNCJO Board Meetings. This provides an excellent opportunity for member councils and the Board to be keep up to date on current issues in the one forum and to take advantage of opportunities for constructive engagement.

Destination NSW and RDA attend as observers at each MNCJO Board meeting and participated in the Strategic Priorities Planning Workshop held in Kempsey in April 2021.

Members of the JO are represented on a number of committees (on behalf of the JO). These include:

- Regional Leadership Executive (RLE) Committee* and RLE Sub-committees
- Mid North Coast Interagency Network (Business NSW, DEWR, Training Services NSW, Regional NSW, DNC)
- North Coast LLS Pests and Weeds Advisory Committee
- Biodiversity Stewardship Committee
- Joint Organisation of Councils Executive Officers Meetings
- Joint Organisation of Councils Chairs' Meetings

*NSW Machinery Of Government change April 2024

Intergovernmental Collaboration

Relationships are an important part of ensuring regional opportunities are leveraged. Collaborating with Government Departments and Agencies ensures we're reducing duplication and maximising outcomes for our member councils. Governmental (and State Agency) collaboration includes:

- Office of Local Government
- NSW Reconstruction Authority
- Department Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW)
- Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
- Transport for NSW
- NSW Rural Fire Service
- NSW State Emergency Service
- NSW Health
- Fire and Rescue NSW
- City of Coffs Harbour
- Nambucca Shire Council
- Clarence Valley Council
- Richmond Valley Council
- Ballina Shire Council
- Regional Development Australia
- Healthy North Coast

Appendix 3 - Project Stakeholders and Consultants

Achievements

Koala Recovery Project (2019 – 2022)

Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities - Action 2.2

Maintain focus on Koala protection and habitat conservation and build on the Koala Recovery Project

The Koala Recovery Project was funded by the NSW Government, Saving Our Species Iconic Koala Program, Koala Conservation Australia (Port Macquarie Koala Hospital) and member councils Port Macquarie-Hastings and Kempsey Shire.

The program was auspiced by the Mid North Coast Joint Organisation (MNCJO) from April 2019 to September 2022. Facilitation of the program was supported by an Advisory Committee comprising of partnership members who assist with technical knowledge, project advice and collaboration.

In 2022, with koalas on the brink of extinction, the NSW Government set an ambitious goal to double koalas in New South Wales by 2050 under the NSW Koala Program. Part of this program includes eight (8) Regional Partnerships, which leverage local expertise to deliver coordinated on-ground actions to protect koalas and their habitat. The Hastings-Macleay region has several critically important 'Koala Strongholds'. With this new government perspective, an evaluation of the program was undertaken, and it was determined the Koala Recovery Partnership be hosted by Koala Conservation Australia (KCA). KCA is a company limited by guarantee since 2021. It is a registered charity with the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission and a Registered Environmental Organisation. KCA manages the Port Macquarie Koala Hospital.

The Koala Recovery Partnership continues to work on conservation actions prioritised under the NSW Koala Strategy to support councils with mapping koala habitat, undertaking habitat restoration, mitigating vehicle strike, and providing technical advice.

Koala Conservation Australia hosts the regional partnership for the Hastings-Macleay region. Collaborating with MNCJO member councils Port Macquarie-Hastings Council and Kempsey Shire Council, local agencies and Birpai and Dunghutti First Nations people to protect koalas.

Mid North Coast Resilience Partnership (2020 to 2022)

Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities - Action 1.1

Build capacity in the regional community to deal with severe weather events and natural disasters

Charles Sturt University Scholarship Program - the MNCJO entered into a partnership with CSU to build leadership and resilience in the local community. The program ties units of study to the development of resilience and leadership projects in local communities.

Neighbourhood Care Network Project – a co-ordination hub was established in Bellingen that focused on the sharing of information and advice aimed at building resilience in local communities.

WeatherWatch - the project established a real time river height monitoring network and a system for compiling and sharing this information. The project reflects learning from the 2022 Northern Rivers flood experience where some river gauges failed and community members didn't know who would listen to their local information.

Satellite Phones – three (3) Satellite phones were purchased for each of the member councils. These phones are utilised by communities during disaster events. Ensuring communications during disaster events is vital to community safety.

The Mid North Coast Resilience Partnership was funded through the LGNSW and NSW Dept Planning, Industry and Environment, Increasing Resilience to Climate Change Fund - \$76,400

Climate Risk Ready (2021)

Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities - Action 2.4

Develop a Plan aligned to the Adapt North Coast to facilitate actions for climate change adaptation at a regional level

In 2021, the MNCJO was invited, and provided with subsidised placements, by the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment to be the first participants in the University of Western Sydney, Climate Risk Ready Course.

Participants from each member Councils took part, acknowledging the benefits of having an aligned understanding of how climate change will impact the region. Whilst several impacts are geographically quite specific, how to include climate as a consideration in local government risk process frameworks was a core component of the course and of benefit to our respective Councils.

The Climate Risk Ready Programs aim is to embed consideration of climate change risk into NSW government decision making and increase NSW government preparedness to respond to the increasing impacts of climate change.

The course is a Risk Management course that addresses the following units of competency:

- Developing Climate Risk Management Strategies
- Identifying and Treating Risks, and
- Managing Risk.

The course provided participants with a broad perspective of the roles and responsibilities of NSW government agencies, including Emergency Services. It commenced with a detailed examination of climate science to ensure an understanding of the scope of the impact of climate change. It also examined the regulatory and legislative requirements of the public sector, agency capacity and stakeholder engagement processes.

The Climate Risk Ready Course was funded by NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment - \$5,685

Fixing Country Bridges (2022)

Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities - Action 4.1

Restore and renew regional roads and bridges

Under Round 1 of the Fixing Country Bridges Program, the three member councils between them received \$50M to replace 101 timber bridges across the region. The MNCJO was strongly involved in the development of the Bridge Prospectus that was used as part of the submission process and provided high level support to member councils as issues relating to the Funding Deed threatened to delay the commencement of work.



Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities - Action 1.2

Develop plan on regional housing supply, demand and housing affordability

In response to a pressing need for an innovative solution to the mounting need for affordable housing, the MNCJO initiated this project to develop a Proof of Concept (PoC) for a Community Land Trust, or CLT, for the Mid-North Coast

A CLT is a not-for-profit entity that provides housing, typically through co-ownership or a 99-year lease model, delivering affordability to participating households by taking land out of the market and holding it in perpetuity through a non-profit entity, thereby removing speculative upward price pressures on the land component.

The focus of a CLT is delivering more affordable housing to local households unable to access home ownership or suitable rental accommodation because of limited availability of affordable housing.

The Mid North Coast Joint Organisation's CLT Proof of Concept is a ground-breaking and innovative piece of work, that is a roadmap for establishing a CLT within an Australian context. The CLT Proof of Concept was produced by consultants Urbanista with the support of a dedicated project team, including the Housing Matters Action Group and subject experts from each member council.

The MNCJO is proud to have taken the first step to realising affordable housing options for the Mid North Coast, but even better is the fact it now has the opportunity for realisation. The Housing Matters Action Group, who advocated for this project, have announced they received funds from the Siddie Family Foundation to fund the Bellingen Shire Community Land Trust Establishment Project.

The MNCJO looks forward to following the Community Land Trust Establishment's progress.

The MNCJO would like to acknowledge the support and thank the members of the CLT Project Control Group: Paul Kock (PMHC), Daniel Bennett (BSC), Kerry Pearse (Housing Matters Action Group), Peter Phelps (EPIC), Rebecca Richardson (Urbanista) and Linda Blinkhorn (Urbanista).

The Community Land Trust was funded through the Office of Local Government Capacity Building fund - \$68,719



Project Manager – Liz Fairweather

Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities - Action 1.1

Build capacity in the regional community to deal with severe weather events and natural disasters

The Simtable for Community Empowerment project provides a state of art tool to engage local communities in localised disaster reduction workshops. The project aims to improve the capacity of communities to plan and respond to disasters, particularly vulnerable communities.

The Simtable is a sophisticated digital sand table that displays high quality models of natural hazards such as bushfires. The technology uses a projector to overlay hazard projections over local mapping and terrain in 3D. The system models fire behaviour based on geophysical and meteorological conditions to demonstrate how fire might move through the landscape, and what impact it may have on the built environment. It provides local communities with a highly realistic demonstration of how their properties and communities may be affected

It has used in 49 place-based community engagement sessions in the local government areas of Port Macquarie Hastings, Kempsey, Nambucca, Bellingen, Coffs Harbour, and Clarence Valley to build resilience and preparedness for extreme weather events. Workshops have provided over 1,200 attendees with a deep understanding of their risks, strengthen community connections, and enable the development of tailored and detailed response plans.

In addition to enabling communities the Simtable has been a valuable resource for driving collaboration with key disaster stakeholders and agencies. Stakeholders who have been involved in the project and participated in workshops include:



BELLINGEN
SHIRE COUNCIL



Reconstruction
Authority



NSW Health

The MNCJO would like to acknowledge the support and thank the members of the Simtable for Community Empowerment Project Control Group: Clare Danby (BSC), Jocelyn Box (BSC), Craig Townsend (KSC), Carl Bennett (PMHC), Linda Villy (MNCJO).

The Simtable for Community Empowerment project is funded through the NSW Bushfire Community Resilience and Recovery Fund - \$225,635.



Project Officer – Linda Villy

Simtable - Controlled Cultural Burns (2024)

Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities - Action 1.1

Build capacity in the regional community to deal with severe weather events and natural disasters

The Jaanyмили Bawrrungga Aboriginal Corporation contracted the MNCJO to provide a Simtable demonstration in connection with a cultural burning program they have been undertaking. In a first of its kind, this demonstration featured a scenario reflecting Controlled Cultural Burns, synchronizing with a film production which documented the Cultural Burns Project in partnership with NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.

This collaboration marks an exciting milestone into partnerships with First Nations peoples, with hopes of nurturing enduring relationships for future endeavours.

Joint Organisation Net Zero Acceleration (2023 – 2024)

Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities - Action 2.4

Develop a plan aligned to Adapt North Coast to facilitate actions for climate change adaptation at a regional level

The Joint Organisation Net Zero Acceleration (JONZA) program employs a staff member who is dedicated to progressing the JO and member councils towards net zero. The JONZA program, delivered by the Department Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW), was established to help regional councils reduce their carbon emissions to achieve their part in the State's Net Zero target of 50 per cent reduction by 2030 and net zero by 2050. Nine (9) Joint Organisations received funding which means sixty-five (65) regional councils are participating in the program.

The JOs member councils are at different stages along the net zero path. This funding allows the project officer to assess individual member councils and provide a truly regional approach to emissions reduction through development of a Regional Energy Strategy.

To date the project has:

- Conducted Net Zero Assessments with all member councils
- Assisted with Revolving Energy Fund information
- Assisted with Community Energy Upgrade Fund applications
- Conducted tariff reviews
- Established a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) buyers group
- Liaised with stakeholders regarding electric vehicle pole charger installation, and
- Researched creation of a benchmarking tool for councils to measure net zero targets.

Dr Simon Wright, funded by NSW Govt, is assisting to model emissions data and advise council on future sustainability initiatives. This will benefit member councils to comply with NSW Net Zero Legislation.

The State JONZA network, comprising all Joint Organisations JONZA Officers and DCCEEW representatives meet weekly to receive NSW Govt updates, discuss projects, share knowledge and collaborate.

The MNCJO has been successful in receiving another round of funding (\$161,200) to continue the JONZA project for 2024/2025.

The MNCJO would like to acknowledge the support and thank the members of the JONZA Project Control Group: Gavin Hughes (PMHC), Lara Cummings (BSC) and Jess Marsh (KSC).

The Joint Organisation Net Zero Acceleration programs is funded by the Department Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water- \$155,000



Project Officer
Noam Bardea

Circular Economy Centre of Excellence (2022 - 2023)

Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities - Action 2.3

Develop improved solutions for waste and water at a regional level

The MNCJO was successful in receiving funding through the NSW Business Case and Strategy Development Fund to investigate the development of a "Circular Economy Centre of Excellence" (CECoE) for the Mid North Coast. Through a competitive RFQ process, Talis Consultants were engaged to develop a feasibility and business case.

An Activity Working Group (AWG) of representatives from each Mid North Coast Council (including non-member councils), Regional NSW, Mid North Coast Regional Development Australia and NSW EPA has oversight of the project, ensuring it remains within the scope of works and meets funding objectives.

A feasibility study and business case were developed which presented the issues, challenges and opportunities of waste management with the region. The project provided valuable data and information regarding waste management for the region. It will be utilised to tackle this challenging problem and formulate a step-by-step strategy.



Project Manager – Liz Fairweather

The MNCJO would like to acknowledge the support and contribution of member council staff that provided data and expertise, and thank the members of the Circular Economy Centre of Excellence Project Control Group: Sean McKinnon (PMHC), Lucy Menzies (BSC), Wes Trotter (KSC), Paul Shepherd (CCC), Simon Chapman (NSC), Kerry Grace (RDA), Kim Potter (Regional NSW), Louise McMeeking (Regional NSW) and Marcelle Psaila (EPA).

The Circular Economy Centre of Excellence was funded by the Regional NSW Business Case and Strategy Development Fund - \$240,000

Biodiversity Stewardship and Carbon Market Study (2022)

Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities - Action 2.1

Preserve strategic biodiversity and identify land with high environmental value and biodiversity corridors across the region

The Biodiversity Stewardship project provided a feasibility assessment of ecological values present on selected sites across the MNCJO region. The scope of the project was to investigate opportunities, costs, benefits from member councils to participate in and generate revenue from the biodiversity offset scheme and/or from the carbon market. And to assess the possibility of generating funds to protect and enhance biodiversity throughout the region.

Ecosure Pty Ltd were engaged to investigate opportunities, costs, benefits and barriers for member councils to participate in and generate revenue from the Biodiversity Offset Scheme and the Carbon Market. *Ecosure* sub-contracted Low Carbon Consulting to undertake the carbon market aspects of the work.

Although the opportunities presented in both reports were limited there are opportunities to use the information gathered to undertake further investigations into opportunities under the NSW Biodiversity Offset Scheme and Emissions Reduction Fund. Council officers have advised that some of this information has been utilised for other planning purposes.

To build on the previous outputs of the MNCJO Biodiversity Stewardship Project, Kempsey Shire Council received funding (\$23,695) to develop a real-world case-study of a local site for potential establishment as a Biodiversity Stewardship Site under the NSW BOS. The case-study provided a detailed examination of the Biodiversity Conservation Trust's (BCT) process and requirements to establishing a BSS under the BOS.

Project Manager – John Alexander

The Biodiversity Stewardship and Carbon Market Study was funded by the OLG Capacity Building Fund - \$104,457

Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities - Action 1.1

Build capacity in the regional community to deal with severe weather events and natural disasters

Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities - Action 5.1

Develop consistency across the region with all councils having preparedness/recovery/resilience officers to enable LGA and regional response to disaster and embed the function into the core business of councils.

The development of a Resilience Blueprint for the Mid North Coast was aimed at reducing and limiting the impact of disasters associated with natural hazards, and was the main outcome of funding received by the Mid North Coast Joint Organisation (MNCJO) through the Disaster Risk Reduction Fund (DRRF).

The DRRF is jointly funded by the Australian and NSW governments and is targeted at locally led initiatives to help keep communities safe in the future.

MNCJO Resilience Blueprint builds capacity, shares resources, and has developed leading practice in Disaster Risk Reduction across the Mid North Coast region. The MNCJO worked with a collective of eight (8) Joint Organisations of Council to coordinate on strategic initiatives to strengthen long-term interconnected regional approaches to resilience across NSW.

The DRRF project included:

Needs Analysis and Opportunities Report

An audit of each council's risk and their review of the planning documents was undertaken to identify priority areas for improving corporate (council) and community risk preparedness. These documents provide valuable operational insight and guidance for member councils strategic planning.

Climate Change Impact Assessment

A Climate Change Risk Assessment was developed for the Mid North Coast region to identify climate change vulnerabilities, using predictive modelling and innovation, enabling analysis of the highest risk areas to prioritise the need for risk mitigation measures. It identifies potential adaptations the councils and their partners should consider implementing to help mitigate the risk.

Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Regional Framework and Action Plan

An action-focussed Regional Framework was produced to enable member councils to imbed Climate Change impacts into IP&R and decision-making processes. Through analysing the Risk Analysis and Opportunities Reports, the Climate Change Impact Assessment and conducting workshops with member councils IP&R teams, recommendations for council specific actions were developed for consideration in the 2025-2029 IP&R planning. A Regional Framework was developed together with a suite of templates and tools, for each member councils to support the IP&R process.

Through this project and the development of the tools, a strong collaborative connection was formed across member council IP&R teams. This IP&R network will continue to be facilitated by the JO.



Transport connectivity

The MNCJO together with a consortium of JO's have collaborated with Transport for NSW to design initiatives which build transport network resilience in a changing climate with impacts on network access and connectivity due to increasing and more severe weather events.

The JO/ROC Network facilitated a series of workshops to define Council business and user requirements across functional personas.

To progress Council access to TfNSW datasets which would enable an eventual establishment of digital twins, This data sharing could be facilitated through an online platform - Planwisely.

The platform already contains a wide array of TfNSW datasets along with foundational, demographic and movement data and satellite imagery. This project has identified and integrated an additional 135 high priority datasets with a financial contribution from TfNSW to support the JO/ROC DRRF grant funding.

This data sharing platform allows Councils to access and use data in real world planning, preparation, response and recovery, 'test' the usefulness and serviceability of the data and identify what else would better support them to deliver disaster resilience of their transport networks.

Piloted for the next twelve months by Member Councils, it will establish a program that can be built on for sustaining outcomes and be scaled across other regions and Local Government Areas with the following outcomes:

LG Alumni Network

Local government has a history of long-term employees. These employees have a wealth of knowledge about local government process, council operations, technical information, and geographical data. A Local Government Alumni could activate when council resources are most impacted e.g., disasters. The project officer worked with council staff in Human Resources and Civil Works teams to research governance, operational and workplace procedures as well as consult with former council staff. A tool kit was developed to look at challenges and opportunities and enable LG to consider an Alumni program within their organisation.

Regional Disaster Risk & Recovery Network

A Regional Disaster Risk Recovery Network (RDRRN) for local government staff was established to reduce and mitigate vulnerabilities across the Mid North Coast region. The RDRRN brings together local government staff body from a range of related fields that identify and mitigate hazards associated with disasters and community resilience practices.

The increased collaboration and knowledge sharing realised through this network has provided invaluable. It also provided opportunities for NSW agencies with a useful touchpoint to councils and decimate information collectively. The RDRRN will continue to be facilitated by the JO.



Image: Staff from the member councils discussing embedment of Disaster Risk Reduction initiatives into IP & R planning.

Simtable Multi Hazard Tool

Through the DRRF program the Simtable data was upgraded to be utilised as a multi hazard tool. Flood Awareness and Preparation workshops were conducted throughout the member council local government areas. Collaborating closely with the SES and member Councils, the workshops were tailored to suit the unique needs of its locality.

Jack Frost (SES Unit Commander, Tweed Coast Unit) was a guest speaker for the flood workshops. Jack provided insights into the Northern Rivers communities' experiences. Valuable information was shared by council staff about the member council's role during a major flood event and future flood mapping.

14 in-community workshops held across the three local government areas of the MNCJO hosting over 271 participants.

The MNCJO has facilitated a joint approach to preparedness events, bring together SES, NSW RFS, NSW Health, NSW RA, Community Organisations (Jaanyмили Bawrungga Aboriginal Corporation, Neighbourhood Care Network), NPWS, and Councils.

The Northern Rivers Joint Organisation (NRJO) engaged the MNCJO to present a series of Bushfire Awareness workshops to communities across six of their member councils. NRJO is considering purchasing a Simtable of their own, so the MNCJO Project Officer delivered a training session on the operation and use of the Simtable to NRJO and NSW RA staff.



Image: Flood preparedness workshops being held in Port Macquarie for community members. Run in partnership with SES, Port Macquarie-Hastings Council, NSW Reconstruction Authority and NSW Health.

The MNCJO would like to acknowledge the support and contribution of member council staff that provided data and expertise, and thank the members of the Regional Blueprint Project Control Group: Lucilla Marshal (PMHC), Jocelyn Box (BSC), Caitlyn Beattie (KSC), Matthew Sykes (NSC), Robyn Short (NSW Reconstruction Authority) and Kieran McAndrew (NSW Reconstruction Authority)

The Mid North Coast Regional Blueprint was funded from the Disaster Risk Reduction Fund (DRRF) Stream which is funded under the joint Australian Government - NSW Government National Partnership Agreement on Disaster Risk Reduction - \$760,690.



Regional Capability Officer
Raymond Chapman



Project Officer
Skye Frost

Creating Value

Since its inception, the MNCJO has attracted nearly \$2million in grant funding. This includes funding for projects that would not have received funding if individual Council submissions had been made. This is particularly the case in relation to the *Bushfire Community Recovery and Resilience Program* (\$225,635), the *Increasing Resilience to Climate Change Program* (\$73,000) and Stages 1 and 2 of the *Capacity Building Program* (\$300,000).

In most cases sourcing grant funding has not required any financial input from member councils. However, when council contributions are included, value is attached because they aid the attraction of additional funds (eg Koala Recovery and IRCC Programs). If required, the contributions are found in existing budget commitments (eg staff development costs).

Funding bodies have contributed approximately \$135,000 to the MNCJO for administration costs associated with project delivery.

Member Councils received \$4.84 for every \$1 spent.



Value for Members

Program	BSC	PMHC	KSC	Community	Benefits/Value Add to Member Councils
Increasing Resilience to Climate Change - \$91,000					
Satellite Phones	\$7,044.00	\$7,044.00	\$7,044.00		Member Council communities are now connected during severe weather events
SCU - Scholarship Program	\$10,125.00	\$14,624.00	\$11,250.00		Staff and community are more knowledgeable about severe weather events and disasters
Weather Watch				\$11,740.00	Communities organisations share real-time monitoring of river gauges to BSC
Neighbourhood Care Network				\$10,000.00	Community action plans created. BSC communities more self-reliant and prepared
Member Council contribution	-\$6,000.00	-\$6,000.00	-\$6,000.00		
Climate Risk Ready - \$5,685	\$1,895.00	\$1,895.00	\$1,895.00		Member councils staff have increased understanding of climate risks and impacts. Knowledge utilised in council planning
Community Land Trust - \$68,719				\$68,719.00	A model to implement alternative affordable housing options is available to member councils, developers and community organisations.
Biodiversity Stewardship/Carbon Market Study - \$104,457	\$26,131.00	\$26,131.00	\$26,131.00		Ecological assessment of sites across the MNCJO region. Investigation into generation of revenue opportunities through the NSW Biodiversity Offset Scheme.
KSC Biodiversity Crotty's Lane			\$26,064.00		KSC has a real-world case study for potential establishment of a Biodiversity site
BCRRF - Simtable - \$225,635	\$59,809.00	\$59,891.00	\$50,677.00	\$55,258.00	Relationships with emergency agencies strengthened. 49 workshops conducted with over 1,200 attendees. Increased place based knowledge of disaster impacts and needs within communities. Council resources can be streamlined to provide targeted responses. The impact on council resources is lessened due to communities being more resilient and prepared for bushfires.
JO Net Zero Acceleration - \$155,000	\$51,667.00	\$51,667.00	\$51,667.00		PMHC and BSC purchase clean electricity at a stable and predictable price, helping to budget more effectively and reduce financial risks. Progressing to ensure member councils meet the emissions target reporting (NSW Govt legislation). Exploring emerging technologies that benefit member councils. Intergovernmental collaboration is strengthen. Increased knowledge sharing and capacity building across JO's is benefiting councils through best practice.

Program	BSC	PMHC	KSC	Community	Benefits/Value Add to Member Councils
DRRF - \$760,690					
Simtable multi hazard tool	\$27,000.00	\$27,000.00	\$27,000.00		See Simtable benefits above. Expansion of program to include impact of floods. 14 workshops conducted with over 270 attendees.
TfNSW - PlanWisely licences	\$37,716.00	\$18,858.00	\$25,144.00		Member council staff have access to multiple Transport datasets in one platform. More informed decision making and planning. Planning team now have access to multiple data sources for land use planning. NSW JO collaboration ensured collective procurement and significantly reduced licensing fee. No cost to member councils due to DRRF funding Only became available through DRRF program relationships with NSW agencies, no access otherwise.
Disaster Reduction and LG Alumni	\$68,000.00	\$68,000.00	\$68,000.00		Council officer network established. Improved capacity, knowledge sharing and networking. Synergies identified and therefore reduction in resourcing. Direct access to NSW Agencies and knowledge of their projects and planning. Model for utilising ex-staff knowledge and experience during times when increased resourcing is required
IP&R Action Plan	\$18,000.00	\$18,000.00	\$18,000.00		Member councils received templates and actions for IP&R planning. Regional framework developed with key actions for 2025-2029 planning and reporting. Targeted support for each member council with IP& R Specialist. Specific disaster reduction actions identified and developed for each member council. Network developed for IP&R council officers to ensure shared learnings, collaboration and reduced duplication (minimizing resourcing).
Audit Risk Assessments	\$40,000.00	\$40,000.00	\$40,000.00		Regional risk profile and opportunities identified, increasing opportunity for collaboration and reducing resourcing. Council have a comprehensive strategic planning. Identified gap analysis and opportunities developed for each member council. Member councils have valuable operational insight, which will assist in strategic planning.
Circular Economy Centre of Excellence - \$240,000	\$80,000.00	\$80,000.00	\$80,000.00		Valuable data and information regarding regional waste management received. Step by step strategy to evolve waste management developed.
Member Council Contributions x 3 years	-\$75,000.00	-\$75,000.00	-\$75,000.00		
TOTAL FOR EACH MEMBER COUNCIL	\$346,387.00	\$332,110.00	\$351,872.00	\$145,717.00	Member councils received \$4.84 for every \$1 spent

Mid North Coast Joint Organisation

Statement of Strategic Priorities 2021

What is the Mid North Coast Joint Organisation?

The Mid North Coast Joint Organisation (MNCJO) represents a new way for its member councils to work together for the benefit of the region. Established in 2018, the MNCJO has three members:

- Bellingen Shire Council
- Kempsey Shire Council
- Port Macquarie-Hastings Council.

Together the councils cover an area of 8,658 square kilometres and a population of approximately 125,000 people.

Joint Organisations (JOs) were created in NSW following changes to the *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)* in late 2017 and represent a different approach for councils to work strategically with the NSW Government.

The MNCJO's primary role is to support a shared approach to the vision and long-term development of the Mid North Coast region. It builds on previous work undertaken by the councils as members of the former Mid North Coast Regional Organisation of Councils.

The MNCJO is overseen by a Board comprising the Mayors from each Member Council, supported by the General Managers of each member council. Senior Managers from Regional NSW, Destination NSW and Regional Development Australia (RDA) also attend and provide reports to the Board. The NSW OLG relationship manager also attends.

What is the timing for this plan?

This Statement of Regional Priorities (Statement) is an update to the Statement from September 2018 to September 2021. From September 2021, a new three year term of local government will come into effect, with the MNCJO Chair elected for a two year term.

What was the process for preparing this plan?

This 2021 Statement has been developed through a mix of research and stakeholder consultation. A wide range of relevant documents including regional plans and regional economic development strategies from member councils were reviewed and a workshop of the MNCJO Board was held on April 9 2021. During this workshop, performance against the 2018 Statement was assessed to understand progress to date and to determine appropriate actions and activities for the future to achieve the strategic goals.

The 2021 Statement has been reviewed and updated throughout this process and was approved by the MNCJO Board on June 4, 2021.

When will this plan be reviewed?

This Statement will be reviewed annually and at the commencement of new terms of office for the MNCJO Board.

Vision for the Mid North Coast region

The MNCJO vision is to help create a vibrant, sustainable region underpinned by economic growth and a commitment to the social and environmental wellbeing of its communities.

Mission statement

To set priorities, lead and advocate for the Mid North Coast region and work collaboratively with the community, government and non- government organisations and business to achieve them.

Functions

The core functions of the MNCJO are:

- **Strategic planning and priority setting** – based on robust processes for identifying regional goals, with the flexibility to respond to changing priorities and needs of member councils as required
- **Intergovernmental collaboration** – building effective working relationships with other JOs, councils and the NSW and Australian Governments
- **Regional leadership and advocacy** – creating a shared purpose and strategic direction for the region and a commitment to constructive and cooperative implementation by all member councils
- **Building efficient and effective councils** – by examining opportunities for shared services and capacity building across the region.

Guiding principles

- Decisions are made with a whole of region focus Flexibility to respond to changing priorities and community needs
- Accountability to members and their communities of interest
- Commitment to collaboration and good working relationships
- Clear communication between members and other stakeholders
- Commitment to make MNCJO work effectively and efficiently
- Evaluation and reporting to ensure targeted outputs and outcomes
- Strong governance, with robust processes, accountability and transparent decision-making.

Strategic goals and actions

This 2021 Statement builds on the Strategic Plan (Plan) which was prepared in 2018. This 2021 Statement contains six strategic goals (which relate to the social, environmental, economic, infrastructure, governance and advocacy goals for the region), linked to a number of high level actions and more specific individual activities under each strategic goal.

The key partners and regional documents are also highlighted to ensure strategic alignment. In addition to the regional documents noted, there are also a large number of relevant documents prepared by each member council, including Community Strategic Plans, Local Environmental Plans and a wide range of strategies, plans and policies.

1. Social, health and wellness

Goal: an active, healthy, resilient and safe community

Key partners		Key regional documents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet NSW Department of Education NSW Department of Communities and Justice NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment NSW Health and Mid North Coast Local Health District 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSW Land and Housing Corporation NSW Department of Primary Industries Australian Government Department of Social Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> North Coast Regional Plan 2036 (being reviewed in 2021/22) North Coast Enabling Regional Adaptation (Adapt NSW) *Ageing Well in NSW: Seniors Strategy 2021-2031?? Community Strategic Plans prepared by Member Councils *Local Strategic Planning statements prepared by Member Councils Local Strategic Planning Statements prepared by member Councils NSW Housing Strategy 2041

No.	High level actions	Activities	Functional Area
1.1	Build capacity in the regional community to deal with severe weather events and natural disasters	<p>Strengthen the existing 'Resilience Partnership' with Charles Sturt University and the local community and ensure sustainable community projects are developed in the context of this partnership.</p> <p>Engage with Resilience NSW to embed 'Preparedness Recovery and Resilience Strategies' in the area covered by the MNCJO.</p> <p>Ensure local communities have access to information and technology relative to severe weather events in the region</p>	Leadership
1.2	Develop plan on regional housing supply, demand and housing affordability	MNCJO councils to collaborate around LSPs to influence zoning and unlock land supply	Planning, collaboration
		MNCJO to advocate to NSW government on regional housing issues	Collaboration
		Seek funding to investigate the feasibility of a community land trust in the region	Planning, collaboration
1.3	Collaborate with landholders (property, land and caravan parks) to understand crisis accommodation issues	Collaborate with RDA to finalise evidence base and bring back to the MNCJO	Collaboration

2. Environment

Goal: enhance natural and cultural heritage

Key partners		Key regional documents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Aboriginal Land Councils NSW Department of Primary Industries NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment NSW Environmental Protection Authority NSW Environment, Energy and Science Group North Coast Local Land Services 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> North Coast Regional Plan 2036 (being reviewed in 2021/22) North Coast Enabling Regional Adaptation (Adapt NSW) NSW State Environmental Planning Policy (Koala Habitat Protection) 2021 North Coast Enabling Regional Adaptation report 2019 North Coast Regional Emergency Management Plan 2019 NSW Natural Disaster Resilience Program (Community Resilience Innovation Program) NSW Floodplain Development Manual 2005 Koala SEPP 2021 Community Strategic Plans Local Strategic Planning Statements

No.	High level actions	Activities	Functional Area
2.1	Preserve strategic biodiversity and identify land with high environmental value and biodiversity corridors across the region	Deliver Regional Biodiversity Offsetting and Carbon Project (funded by OLG Financial Sustainability Project) with appointed external consultants	Planning, collaboration
		Build on the success of the Koala Recovery Partnership to improve koala conservation across the MNCJO Region	Leadership, collaboration
2.2	Maintain focus on koala protection and habitat conservation and build on the Koala Recovery Project	Build koala priorities into council plans	Planning, research, collaboration
		Create shared priorities for koala protection with MNCJO, RDA and Local Land Services (LLS)	Collaboration
		Use evidence base established through Great Koala National Park and biodiversity work to advocate to other councils and NSW government	Collaboration, research
		Actively engage the timber industry in a conversation about the future of the region and develop an evidence base with the timber industry to get the best value out of this resource	Collaboration, research

2.3	Develop improved solutions for waste and water at a regional level	MNCJO to form working group with regional waste providers and all councils to develop a strategic waste plan	Leadership, collaboration, planning
		MNCJO build on discussion paper on water and work with other JOs to investigate opportunities for water authorities to link to JOs to collaborate in strategic water planning	Leadership, collaboration, planning
2.4	Develop a plan aligned to <i>Adapt North Coast</i> to facilitate actions for climate change adaptation at a regional level	MNCJO to align with priorities in the regional adaptation plan and source funding to implement initiatives on a regional basis, including microgrids and other adaptation strategies	Planning, collaboration

3. Economy

Goal: a diverse and robust economy which strengthens existing and creates new industries and educational opportunities

Key partners	Key regional documents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Development Australia – Mid North Coast NSW Department of Regional NSW NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet NSW Office of Local Government Property Council Australia Urban Development Institute of Australia North Coast Local Land Services TAFE NSW Schools and Early Education Centres Australian Government Department of Defence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> North Coast Regional Plan 2036 (being reviewed in 2021/22) North Coast Enabling Regional Adaptation (Adapt NSW) A 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW 2021 Hastings Macleay Regional Economic Development Strategy 2018-2022 Coffs Coast Regional Economic Development Strategy 2018-2022 Bellingen Shire Council Economic Development and Tourism Plan 2015-2020 Mid North Coast SMART Region Strategy 2018 RDA Mid North Coast Regional Plan North Coast Employment Strategy and Action Plan 2020-2025 Local Land Services North Coast Local Strategic Plan 2016-2021 Coffs Harbour Regional City Action Plan 2036 Port Macquarie Draft Regional City Action Plan 2036

No.	High level actions	Activities	Functional Area
3.1	Actively position the Mid North Coast as a great place to live, work, invest and play.	MNCJO in association with Destination NSW to lead Mid North Coast regional brand strategy across all councils	Planning, collaboration
		Identify opportunities for nature-based and indigenous tourism	Research, planning, collaboration
3.2	Support research to better understand responses to regional skills shortage	MNCJO to support the RDA work and its advocacy in this area	Research, collaboration
3.3	Support research for development and manufacture of assistive technologies, especially for aged care	MNCJO to support the RDA work and its advocacy in this area	Research, collaboration

4. Infrastructure

Goal: vibrant, connected cities and centres

Key partners	Key regional documents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Development Australia – Mid North Coast NSW Department of Regional NSW NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment Infrastructure NSW Transport for NSW Property Council Australia Urban Development Institute of Australia North Coast Local Land Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> North Coast Regional Plan 2036 (being reviewed in 2021/22) North Coast Enabling Regional Adaptation (Adapt NSW) A 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW 2021 Hastings Macleay Regional Economic Development Strategy 2018-2022 Coffs Coast Regional Economic Development Strategy 2018-2022 Bellingen Shire Council Economic Development and Tourism Plan 2015-2020 Mid North Coast SMART Region Strategy 2018 Local Land Services North Coast Local Strategic Plan 2016-2021 Coffs Harbour Regional City Action Plan 2036 Port Macquarie Draft Regional City Action Plan 2036 Community Strategic Plans Local Strategic Planning Statements

No.	High level actions	Activities	Functional Area
4.1	Restore and renew regional roads and bridges	Continue to support member councils with roll out of MNCJO bridges project	Planning, collaboration
		Continue joint discussions regarding a regional approach other transport infrastructure.	Planning, collaboration
4.2	Design and create safe public places and preserve the unique regional/local character of cities, towns and villages	MNCJO councils to continue to actively seek grant funding to upgrade tourism infrastructure through funds such as Stronger Country Communities, BLERF, Regional Tourism Fund etc.	Planning, collaboration

5. Regional leadership

Goal: effective and efficient governance and regional leadership

Key partners	Key regional documents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Leadership Executive Regional Development Australia – Mid North Coast NSW Department of Regional NSW NSW Office of Local Government NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet Other Joint Organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Government NSW & Local Government Procurement NSW Local Government Professionals NSW Resilience NSW
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> North Coast Regional Plan 2036 (being reviewed in 2021/22) North Coast Enabling Regional Adaptation (Adapt NSW) Community Strategic Plans prepared by Member Councils Local Strategic Planning Statements RDA Mid North Coast Regional Plan

No.	High level actions	Activities	Functional Area
5.1	Develop consistency across the region with all councils having preparedness/recovery/resilience officers to enable LGA and regional response to disaster and embed the function into the core business of councils.	MNCJO to identify needs for each council and engage directly with Resilience NSW to obtain funding for these resources	Planning, collaboration
5.2	Improve financial sustainability of local governments in the MNCJO	MNCJO to undertake research to develop an evidence base to evaluate how much % increase in FAGs would lead to increased skills/jobs etc.	Leadership, research, collaboration
		MNCJO to advocate to LG NSW and federal government on FAGs	Leadership, collaboration
		Identify opportunities for shared procurement to improve efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery	Planning, collaboration
5.3		Continue to engage with neighbouring Local Government Areas about possible membership/associate membership of the MNCJO	

6. Advocacy

Goal: effective relationships with NSW and federal governments to ensure the long term sustainability of local government in the region

Key partners	Key regional documents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Leadership Executive NSW Department of Regional NSW NSW Office of Local Government NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet Other Joint Organisations Local Government NSW & Local Government Procurement NSW Local Government Professionals NSW NSW Department of Housing Transport for NSW 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australian Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications Department of Agriculture, Water and Australian Department of Environment and Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources Australian Government Department of Social Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> North Coast Regional Plan 2036 (being reviewed in 2021/22) Community Strategic Plans prepared by Member Councils Local Strategic Planning Statements prepared by Member Councils RDA Mid North Coast Regional Plan Funding agreements MNCJO Communications Plan

No.	High level actions	Activities	Functional Area
6.1	Improve coverage, speed and connectivity issues in the region	MNCJO to advocate to NBN and phone companies to improve bandwidth, availability and consistency, generally and during natural disasters	Leadership, collaboration

6.2	Develop consistency across the region with all councils having recovery officer to lead planning and implementation of recovery	MNCJO to identify needs for each council and engage directly with Resilience NSW to obtain funding for these resources	Planning, collaboration
6.3	Improve coordination and understanding of which body/agencies/department is doing to ensure efficiency of solution development and delivery	MNCJO to engage (potentially via Regional Leadership Executive) to understand existing and future initiatives in the region	Leadership, collaboration
		Schedule regular catch ups with Chairs of MNCJO and Chairs of RDA to plan each quarter	Planning, collaboration
		Develop communications plan around joint mayoral statements following meetings or initiative funding or implementation	Planning, collaboration

1. Social health and wellness

Goal: an active, healthy, resilient and safe community

High Level Actions	Activities	Progress	Comments
1.1 Build capacity in the regional community to deal with severe weather events and natural disasters	1.1.1 Strengthen the existing 'Resilience Partnership' with Charles Sturt University and the local community and ensure sustainable community projects are developed in the context of this partnership.	Completed	<p>The MNCJO entered into a partnership with CSU to build leadership and resilience in the local community. The program ties units of study to the development of resilience and leadership projects in local communities.</p> <p>Additionally, funding was provided to support three key community driven initiatives including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Neighbourhood Care Network Project – a co-ordination hub was established in Bellingen that focused on the sharing of information and advice aimed at building resilience in local communities. - WeatherWatch - the project established a real time river height monitoring network and a system for compiling and sharing this information. The project reflects learning from the 2022 Northern Rivers flood experience where some river gauges failed, and community members didn't know who would listen to their local information. - Satellite Phones – three (3) Satellite phones were purchased for each of the member councils. These phones are utilised by communities during disaster events. Ensuring communications during disaster events is vital to community safety. <p>The Mid North Coast Resilience Partnership was funded through the LGNSW and NSW Dept Planning, Industry and Environment, Increasing Resilience to Climate Change Fund - \$76,400.</p>
	1.1.2 Engage with Resilience NSW to embed 'Preparedness Recovery and Resilience Strategies' in the area covered by the MNCJO.	Completed	<p>Following the March 2021 Mid North Coast Flood event the Mid North Coast Joint Organisation of Councils requested that a review be conducted. The purpose of the report was to capture, present and share the learning opportunities identified by member councils of the Mid North Joint Organisation of Councils following the March 2021 floods.</p> <p>The report was prepared and written by the Regional Disaster Preparedness Officer - Office of Emergency Management. The review identified 79 individual observations which resulted in 8 insights for further validation and consideration. In terms of a lesson's management process the report also makes three recommendations for the JO to consider.</p>
	1.1.3 Ensure local communities have access to information and technology relative to severe weather events in the region	Completed	<p>The MNCJO was successful in receiving funding under Stream 2 of the Bushfire Community Recovery and Resilience Fund (BCRRF) which was established to assist Local Government Areas that were disaster-declared during the devastating 2019-20 bushfires. The BCRRF aims were to provide funding for medium and long-term projects that support community recovery thus helping build resilience and hope for the future.</p> <p>The purpose of the Simtable Project was to support fire affected communities in the Mid North Coast Region by assisting them in preparing for future disaster events through planning, developing, and implementing informed household emergency plans, thereby building back lost confidence and feelings of helplessness reported by community members following the 2019-2020 fires. The project was delivered between May 2021 and December 2023 across six Local Government Areas (LGAs) that were fire affected by the 2019-2020 bushfires. The six council areas were: Bellingen Shire Council, Clarence Valley Council, Coffs Harbour City Council, Kempsey Shire Council, Nambucca Shire Council, and Port-Macquarie Hastings Council. The aim was to have emphasis on at risk localities.</p> <p>The Simtable for Community empowerment Project partnered with agencies including Reconstruction Authority NSW, Rural Fire Service (RFS), NSW Health and various community groups who contribute to building disaster response across the community. The Simtable for Community empowerment Project delivered 49 workshops to over 1200 participants, with demand for further workshops.</p> <p>Due to its success, the Simtable program has been utilised in the DRRF Round 1 Project to provide Multihazard tool, and has worked</p>

			with SES to partner of their flood preparedness workshops. The Simtable continues to be requested for community engagement activities across the region.
1.2 Develop plan on regional housing supply, demand and housing affordability	1.2.1 MNCJO councils to collaborate around LSPSs to influence zoning and unlock land supply	Not yet started	
	1.2.2 MNCJO to advocate to NSW government on regional housing issues	In progress	<p>The MNCJO has submitted a joint grant application to The Australian Government's Housing Support Program is one of a range of programs designed to help achieve the National Housing Accord target of building 1.2 million new, well-located homes over 5 years from 1 July 2024.</p> <p>The Housing Support Program (HSP) will support the delivery of increased housing supply by funding projects that seek to deliver enabling infrastructure, provide amenities to support new housing development or improve building planning capability.</p> <p>Working with the 5 other Joint Organisations, the MNCJO has submitted a joint application to support 40 NSW Councils to leverage existing collaborative governance to target high-impact improvements in the development assessment process, delivering time and cost savings to the public and private sectors.</p> <p>The project will take place across forty (40) NSW Local Government Areas (LGAs) across five (5) regions. Further, existing collaborative networks will be leveraged across an additional four (4) Joint Organisation regions who support twenty-eight (28) Member Councils: Canberra Region, Far North West, Northern Rivers and Riverina Eastern.</p> <p>Should the application be successful, the project will be administered and managed by the Illawarra Shoalhaven Joint Organisation on behalf of the partner Joint Organisations, with support from MNCJO staff.</p>
	1.2.3 Seek funding to Investigate the feasibility of a community land trust in the region	Completed	<p>The MNCJO initiated the project to develop a Proof of Concept (PoC) for a Community Land Trust, or CLT, for the Mid-North Coast. The focus of a CLT is delivering more affordable housing to local households unable to access home ownership or suitable rental accommodation because of limited availability of affordable housing.</p> <p>The Mid North Coast Joint Organisation's CLT Proof of report is a ground-breaking and innovative piece of work, that is a roadmap for establishing a CLT within an Australian context.</p> <p>The CLT Proof of Concept was produced by consultants Urbanista with the support of a dedicated project team, including the Housing Matters Action Group and subject experts from each member council.</p> <p>The Housing Matters Action Group, who advocated for this project, have announced they received funds from the Siddle Family Foundation to fund the Bellingen Shire Community Land Trust Establishment Project.</p>
1.3 Collaborate with landholders (property, land and caravan parks) to understand crisis accommodation issues	1.3.1 Collaborate with RDA to finalise evidence base and bring back to the MNCJO	Completed	<p>RDAMNC produced a film and associated campaign on share housing: https://youtu.be/jtU_qwXul6s?feature=shared</p> <p>The project identified 81,000 empty bedrooms across the mid North Coast, an opportunity for key workers to live with local residents with many associated benefits including alleviation of the health system (loneliness is the cause of many underpinning illnesses).</p> <p>RDA presented a report to MNCJO Board.</p>

2. Environment

Goal: enhance natural and cultural heritage

High Level Actions	Activities	Progress	Comments
2.1 Preserve strategic biodiversity and identify land with high environmental value and biodiversity corridors across the region	2.1.1 Deliver Regional Biodiversity Offsetting and Carbon Project (funded by OLG Financial Sustainability Project) with appointed external consultants	Completed	<p>The MNCJO received a grant of \$150,000 from the NSW Office of Local Government to assess the viability of establishing a Biodiversity Offset project in the MNCJO area. Funding was received under a Capacity Building Fund. The Biodiversity Stewardship project provided a feasibility assessment of ecological values present on selected sites across the MNCJO region. The scope of the project was to investigate opportunities, costs, benefits from member councils to participate in and generate revenue from the biodiversity offset scheme and/or from the carbon market. And to access the possibility of generating funds to protect and enhance biodiversity throughout the region.</p> <p>Ecosure Pty Ltd were engaged to Investigate opportunities, costs, benefits and barriers for member councils to participate in and generate revenue from the Biodiversity Offset Scheme and the Carbon Market. Ecosure sub-contracted Low Carbon Consulting to undertake the carbon market aspects of the work.</p> <p>Although the opportunities presented in both reports were limited there are opportunities to use the information gathered to undertake further investigations into opportunities under the NSW Biodiversity Offset Scheme and Emissions Reduction Fund, however, some of this information has been utilised for other planning purposes.</p> <p>To build on the previous outputs of the MNCJO Biodiversity Stewardship Project, Kempsey Shire Council received funding (\$23,695) to develop a real-world case-study of a local site for potential establishment as a Biodiversity Stewardship Site under the NSW BOS. The case-study provided a detailed examination of the Biodiversity Conservation Trust's (BCT) process and requirements to establishing a BSS under the BOS.</p>
	2.1.2 Build on the success of the Koala Recovery Partnership to improve koala conservation across the MNCJO Region	Ongoing	<p>The Koala Recovery Partnership continues to work on conservation actions prioritised under the NSW Koala Strategy to support councils with mapping koala habitat, undertaking habitat restoration, mitigating vehicle strike, and providing technical advice.</p> <p>Koala Conservation Australia hosts the regional partnership for the Hastings-Macleay region. Collaborating with MNCJO member councils Port Macquarie-Hastings Council and Kempsey Shire Council, local agencies and Birpai and Dunghutti First Nations people to protect koalas.</p>
2.2 Maintain focus on koala protection and habitat conservation and build on the Koala Recovery Project	2.2.1 Build koala priorities into council plans	Completed	<p>The Koala Recovery Project was funded by the NSW Government, Saving Our Species Iconic Koala Program, Koala Conservation Australia (Port Macquarie Koala Hospital) and member councils Port Macquarie-Hastings and Kempsey Shire.</p> <p>As part of the second year of the Koala Recovery partnership, the project delivered a large-scale habitat study of koalas in the Hastings-Macleay. This program generated information about koala distribution and habitat associations at 209 sites spanning 41 Plant Community Types. This dataset will help guide investment for koala conservation in the region and provides information to assist Local Councils develop Comprehensive Koala Plans of Management. The data has been analysed and the results presented in two reports to date. The results have also been presented to key stakeholders (including Ministers, DPIE & Kempsey, Port Macquarie-Hastings and Bellingen Councils). The data has also been provided to DPIE for inclusion in BioNet and to the NSW Vegetation Classification and Mapping team.</p>
	2.2.2 Create shared priorities for koala protection with MNCJO, RDA and Local Land Services (LLS)	Completed	<p>Through the Koala Recovery Partnership project, Designing and delivering the "Koala Karaoke Regional Koala Monitoring Program". This program uses acoustic recording devices to inform about long-term koala occupancy in a Region with sites selected in a stratified framework to better enable understanding of processes impacting koala distribution. This Program is now being advocated by the NSW Koala Monitoring Panel as is now being delivered in other Regions.</p>

	2.2.3 Use evidence base established through Great Koala National Park and biodiversity work to advocate to other councils and NSW government	Completed	<p>In 2022, with koalas on the brink of extinction, the NSW Government set an ambitious goal to double koalas in New South Wales by 2050 under the NSW Koala Program. Part of this program includes eight (8) Regional Partnerships, which leverage local expertise to deliver coordinated on-ground actions to protect koalas and their habitat. The Hastings-Macleay region has several critically important 'Koala Strongholds'. With this new government perspective, an evaluation of the program was undertaken, and it was determined the Koala Recovery Partnership be hosted by Koala Conservation Australia (KCA). KCA is a company limited by guarantee since 2021. It is a registered charity with the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission and a Registered Environmental Organisation. KCA manages the Port Macquarie Koala Hospital.</p> <p>The Koala Recovery Partnership continues to work on conservation actions prioritised under the NSW Koala Strategy to support councils with mapping koala habitat, undertaking habitat restoration, mitigating vehicle strike, and providing technical advice.</p> <p>Koala Conservation Australia hosts the regional partnership for the Hastings-Macleay region. Collaborating with MNCJO member councils Port Macquarie-Hastings Council and Kempsey Shire Council, local agencies and Birpai and Dunghutti First Nations people to protect koalas.</p>
	2.2.4 Actively engage the timber industry in a conversation about the future of the region and develop an evidence base with the timber industry to get the best value out of this resource	Not yet commenced	
2.3 Develop improved solutions for waste and water at a regional level	2.3.1 MNCJO to form working group with regional waste providers and all councils to develop a strategic waste plan	Completed	The MNCJO was successful in receiving \$240,000 in funding through the NSW Business Case and Strategy Development Fund to investigate the development of a "Circular Economy Centre of Excellence" (CECoE) for the Mid North Coast. Through a competitive RFQ process, Talis Consultants were engaged to develop a feasibility and business case.
	2.3.2 MNCJO build on discussion paper on water and work with other JOs to investigate opportunities for water authorities to link to JOs to collaborate in strategic water planning	In progress	The MNCJO is actively exploring opportunities to participate in a state wide collaborative Joint Organisation project to develop a region support program for Water Loss Management.
2.4 Develop a plan aligned to Adapt North Coast to facilitate actions for climate change adaptation at a regional level	2.4.1 MNCJO to align with priorities in the regional adaptation plan and source funding to implement initiatives on a regional basis, including microgrids and other adaption strategies	In progress	A regional Climate Change Risk Assessment was undertaken through the Disaster Risk Reduction program. This report will be utilised to plan and implement regional strategies.

3. Economy

Goal: a diverse and robust economy which strengthens existing and creates new industries and educational opportunities

High Level Actions	Activities	Progress	Comments
3.1 Actively position the Mid North Coast as a great place to live, work, invest and play.	3.1.1 MNCJO in association with Destination NSW to lead Mid North Coast regional brand strategy across all councils	Ongoing	Destination North Coast is an associate member of the MNCJO. The information shared through these joint meetings has been relayed to Destination NSW and relevant state government agencies. Similarly, information from the regional and state body is disseminated through the MNCJO and member councils.
	3.1.2 Identify opportunities for nature-based and indigenous tourism	Ongoing	These elements have all been captured in the North Coast DMP in various forms. The North Coast DMP has informed a variety of LGA DMPs as they look to leverage and capitalise on regional goals and opportunities that arise as funding becomes available. In turn, the inclusion of these themes at LGA level has informed the planning process for the execution of funding provided such as the \$1.25M Recovery for Regional Tourism grant allocated to the North Coast.

3.2 Support research to better understand responses to regional skills shortage	3.2.1 MNCJO to support the RDA work and its advocacy in this area	Ongoing	The MNCJO continues to support the RDA. The RDA has partnered with Charles Sturt University to undertake a research project and skills shortage audit for the Mid North Coast. This project will assist in gathering the necessary information to establish projects that will assist in the areas prioritise by our stakeholders across the region. A preliminary report on findings will be available after September 2024 with the final reports planned to be available in 2025.
3.3 Support research for development and manufacture of assistive technologies, especially for aged care	3.3.1 MNCJO to support the RDA work and its advocacy in this area	Ongoing	MNCJO participated in Healthy Ageing workshops held in Coffs Harbour and run by the SaxInstitute and 'Healthy North Coast' in June 2021. The MNCJO continues to support the RDA.

4. Infrastructure

Goal: vibrant, connected cities and centres

High Level Actions	Activities	Progress	Comments
4.1 Restore and renew regional roads and bridges	4.1.1 Continue to support member councils with roll out of MNCJO bridges project	Completed	Under Round 1 of the Fixing Country Bridges Program, the three Member Councils between them received \$50M to replace 101 timber bridges across the region. The MNCJO was strongly involved in the development of the Bridge Prospectus that was used as part of the submission process and provided high level support to Member Councils as issues relating to the Funding Deed threatened to delay the commencement of work.
	4.1.2 Continue joint discussions regarding a regional approach other transport infrastructure.	Ongoing	As part of the DRRF Round 1 project funding the MNCJO together with a consortium of JO's have collaborated with Transport for NSW to design initiatives which build transport network resilience in a changing climate with impacts on network access and connectivity due to increasing and more severe weather events. To progress Council access to TfNSW datasets which would enable an eventual establishment of digital twins, the JO Network facilitated a series of workshops to define Council business requirements within spatial data. The JO looked at a range of spatial data services, where the data could be aggregated to provide a "One source of truth", and identified that this data sharing could be utilised through the Planwisley platform, of which TfNSW had recently made significant investment in. The platform already contained a wide array of TfNSW datasets along with foundational, demographic and movement data and satellite imagery. This project has identified and integrated an additional 135 high priority datasets with a financial contribution from TfNSW to support the JO DRRF grant funding. This data sharing platform allows our member Councils to access and use data in real world planning, preparation, response and recovery, 'test' the usefulness and serviceability of the data and identify what else would better support them to deliver disaster resilience of their transport networks. A limited number of licenses has been provided to each member Council, so that the data can be utilised to assist with business cases and evidential reporting and planning and assist in strengthening their transport network resilience.
4.2 Design and create safe public places and preserve the unique regional/local character of cities, towns and villages	4.2.1 MNCJO councils to continue to actively seek grant funding to upgrade tourism infrastructure through funds such as Stronger Country Communities, BLERF, Regional Tourism Fund etc.	Ongoing	MNCJO member councils continue to deliver projects identified through CSP consultation and actions are included in Delivery/Operational Plans

5. Regional Leadership

Goal: effective and efficient governance and regional leadership

High Level Actions	Activities	Progress	Comments
5.1 Develop consistency across the region with all councils having preparedness/recovery/resilience officers to enable LGA and regional response to disaster and embed the function into the core business of councils.	5.1.1 MNCJO to identify needs for each council and engage directly with Resilience NSW to obtain funding for these resources	Ongoing	<p>In January 2023, the MNCJO was successful in receiving \$770,690.00 of funding from the NSW Disaster Risk Reduction Fund (DRRF) Round 1 - Local & Regional Risk Reduction Stream which is funded under the joint Australian Government – NSW Government National Partnership Agreement on Disaster Risk Reduction.</p> <p>The MNCJO developed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertook risk assessments/needs analyses to identify priority areas for improving corporate and community risk reduction within each Council. -- developed a Regional Opportunities Report - a regional report identifying opportunities for programmatic response. - Undertook a Climate Change Risk Assessment Report Developed an IP&R Action Plan – develop an action focused report enabling councils to embed risk reduction into decision making. -Develop a Regional Framework to guide disaster risk reduction embedment in IP&R, including delivery of workshops and staff training to enable this. - Explored Transport Connectivity in partnership with TfNSW and provided a geo spatial data platform with access to TfNSW datasets to make better informed decisions. - Establish a Disaster Risk Reduction Network and looked at setting up a Local Government Alumni and delivered in community workshops to communities across the LGA in partnership with SES, NSW Health and NSW Reconstruction Authority. <p>The MNCJO has applied for Round 2 funding to continue to implement these initiatives together with assisting NSW reconstruction on the implementation of Disaster Adaptation Plans of the region.</p>
5.2 Improve financial sustainability of local governments in the MNCJO	5.2.1 MNCJO to undertake research to develop an evidence base to evaluate how much % increase in FAGs would lead to increased skills/jobs etc.	Not progressed	
	5.2.2 MNCJO to advocate to LG NSW and federal government on FAGs	Not progressed	
	5.2.3 Identify opportunities for shared procurement to improve efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery	Ongoing	<p>The MNCJO is part of a wider Network of Joint Organisations across NSW and a number of shared procurements have resulted in costs savings.</p> <p>A number of strategies are in place to ensure this is captured for member councils</p>
	5.2.4 Continue to engage with neighbouring Local Government Areas about possible membership/associate membership of the MNCJO	Ongoing	<p>The MNCJO guiding principles ensure decisions are made with a whole of region focus and flexibility to respond to changing priorities and community needs planning and decision making. The MNCJO Chair wrote the GM's of Nambucca Council and Coffs Harbour Councils in 2022 .</p> <p>As part of the Simtable for Community Empowerment Project, the MNCJO delivered in partnership with State Government agencies bushfire preparedness workshops to Nambucca Council, Coffs Harbour Council and Clarence Valley Council regions.</p>

6. Advocacy

Goal: effective relationships with NSW and federal governments to ensure the long term sustainability of local government in the region

High Level Actions	Activities	Progress	Comments
6.1 Improve coverage, speed and connectivity issues in the region	6.1.1 MNCJO to advocate to NBN and phone companies to improve bandwidth, availability and consistency, generally and during natural disasters	Ongoing	NSW Telco Authority presented to the Board in November 2023 on the improved coverage for Public Safety Network. Simtable project advocated for NBN Muster Truck and utilised it to conduct workshops in communities where coverage was poor or unavailable. This raised awareness of community need.
6.2 Develop consistency across the region with all councils having recovery officer to lead planning and implementation of recovery	6.2.1 MNCJO to identify needs for each council and engage directly with Resilience NSW to obtain funding for these resources	In progress	<p>The Regional Disaster Preparedness Program (RDPO) was developed and put in place by Resilience NSW to work with local governments to build their capability and capacity in emergency management and to assist in building local community resilience. The Program engaged an Emergency Recovery Officer to work across the region. This was for a period of two years.</p> <p>Following this, all three member councils were successful in receiving Community Recovery Officers within each LGA. The Recovery Officers (facilitated by Resilience NSW) worked with Councils and their communities to produce Pre Event Recovery Plans.</p> <p>In January 2023, the MNCJO was successful in receiving \$770,690.00 of funding from the NSW Disaster Risk Reduction Fund (DRRF) Round 1 - Local & Regional Risk Reduction Stream which is funded under the joint Australian Government – NSW Government National Partnership Agreement on Disaster Risk Reduction.</p> <p>The MNCJO developed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertook risk assessments/needs analyses to identify priority areas for improving corporate and community risk reduction within each Council. -- developed a Regional Opportunities Report - a regional report identifying opportunities for programmatic response. - Undertook a Climate Change Risk Assessment Report - Developed an IP&R Action Plan – develop an action focused report enabling councils to embed risk reduction into decision making. - Develop a Regional Framework to guide disaster risk reduction embedment in IP&R, including delivery of workshops and staff training to enable this. - Explored Transport Connectivity in partnership with TfNSW and provided a geo spatial data platform with access to TfNSW datasets to make better informed decisions. - Establish a Disaster Risk Reduction Network and looked at setting up a Local Government Alumni and delivered in community workshops to communities across the LGA in partnership with SES, NSW Health and NSW Reconstruction Authority. <p>MNCJO continues to engage with NSW Reconstruction Authority, and has applied for funding to assist with the implementation of Regional Disaster Adaptation Plans, a key action from the NSW State Disaster Mitigation Plan 2024 - 2026.</p>
6.3 Improve coordination and understanding of which body/agencies/department is doing to ensure efficiency of solution development and delivery	6.3.1 MNCJO to engage (potentially via Regional Leadership Executive) to understand existing and future initiatives in the region	Ongoing	Executive Officer attended Regional Leadership Executive meetings on behalf of the MNCJO. A MOG has changed this structure. The Executive Officer continues to engage with Premiers Dept which will manage this engagement moving forward.
	6.3.2 Schedule regular catch ups with Chairs of MNCJO and Chairs of RDA to plan each quarter	Ongoing	Executive Officer attends the JO Chairs meeting quarterly and Executive Officers meetings monthly.
	6.3.3 Develop communications plan around joint mayoral statements following meetings or initiative funding or implementation	Ongoing	Communications Plan developed. Monthly newsletters distributed to member council councillors and staff.

Appendix 3 – Project Partners and Consultants

- Central NSW Joint Organisation
- Illawarra Shoalhaven Joint Organisation
- Hunter Joint Organisation
- Canberra Joint Organisation
- Northern Rivers Joint Organisation
- Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation
- Far Northwest Joint Organisation
- Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils
- Destination North Coast
- Local Government NSW
- Koala Conservation Australia
- Charles Sturt University
- University of Technology Sydney
- Neighbourhood Care Network
- WeatherWatch
- Housing Matters Action Group
- Pappinbarra Emergency Services Committee
- Jaanyмили Bawrrungga Inc
- Nambucca Community Resilience Network
- Clarence Wellbeing Collective
- Stuarts Point and District Association
- Kalang Progress Association
- Simtable National User Group
- Simtable USA
- Veitch Lister (PlanWisely)
- Urbanista
- Talis Consulting
- GHD
- StellaNord Consulting
- Anna Legge Consulting
- Margaret Harley Consulting



10 REPORTS FOR THIS MEETING

Item	10.2
Subject	Statement of Revenue Policy
Presented by	Liz Fairweather, Executive Officer - Mid North Coast Joint Organisation

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board adopt the Statement of Revenue Policy 2024/25 Financial Year and place on public exhibition for a 28-day period.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In accordance with the section 405 of the NSW Local Government Act 1993 (“the Act”), a Statement of Revenue Policy must be prepared. The Statement of Revenue Policy must include the following statements for the year 2024/2025 financial year:

- a. an estimate of the MNCJOs income and expenditure;
- b. a schedule of membership contributions to be levied on member Councils;
- c. types of fees to be charged by the MNCJO and the amounts of any such fee;
- d. any amounts of external borrowings, the sources from where these are to be borrowed, and the means by
- e. which these are to be secured, and
- f. any other such matters as may be prescribed by the regulations.

The Statement for the 2024/25 financial year has been presented to and approved by the MNCJO GMAC for ratification prior to being presented at this meeting of the Board.

ATTACHMENTS

1. 10.2_DRAFT Statement of Revenue Policy 2024-2025_Attachment

MID NORTH COAST JOINT ORGANISATION OF COUNCILS STATEMENT OF REVENUE POLICY - 2024/2025

Introduction

This document constitutes the Mid North Coast Joint Organisation (MNCJO) Statement of Revenue Policy and is prepared in accordance with section 405 of the Local Government Act 1993 (“the Act”), and the Local Government General Regulation 2005 (3971).

The Revenue Policy includes the following statements for the year 2024/2025 financial year:

- a) an estimate of the MNCJO income and expenditure (refer to attachment);
- b) a schedule of membership contributions to be levied on member Councils;
- c) types of fees to be charged by the MNCJO and the amounts of any such fee;
- d) any amounts of external borrowings, the sources from where these are to be borrowed, and the means by which these are to be secured, and
- e) any other such matters as may be prescribed by the regulations.

The statements in the Revenue Policy with respect to income for the year include:

- Provision of unspent funds associated with the establishment and on-going operation of the MNCJO;
- Provision of unspent funds associated with the Capacity Building Fund Rounds 1 and 2 - \$91,820.
- Exclusion of unspent funds (\$139,000) from NSW Government Disaster Risk Reduction Fund. The grant approved was \$760,690. (Acquittal 30/06/2024 Final payment of \$76,000 not received and \$63,500 to be returned)
- Provision for grant funds from Joint Organisation Net Zero Round 2 (\$161,200)
- Provision for grant funds from Electric Vehicle program (\$32,000)
- Provision for grant funds Disaster Risk Reduction Fund Round 2 (\$440,997) pending advice on success.

Financial Contributions by Member Councils

Financial contributions by member councils fall into two categories:

1. Annual contributions from Member Councils in order to perform the principal functions of delivering on strategic priorities, regional leadership and inter-governmental co-operation; and
2. Optional additional contributions from Member Councils for specific functions.

Member Councils will each contribute \$25,000 (\$75,000) toward the operational costs of the MNCJO for the financial year 2024/2025.

Significant contributions in kind are also made by each Member Council toward the operational costs of the JO. These contributions relate to administration (including management of the JO website), IT support, attendance at meetings and Financial Management.

As outlined in the MNCJO Charter, the MNCJO member financial contributions are to be set in consultation with Member Councils and in doing this, consideration is given to:

- an annual base fee of the same amount for each Member Council;

- fees associated with the programs of works and activities; and
- the annual financial contribution required to be made by Associate Members, if fees are to be charged.

Borrowings

The MNCJO does not propose any borrowings for the 2024/2025 financial year. In the event of any future borrowings, the Revenue Policy Statement will include an amount of proposed borrowing, the sources from which they are proposed to be borrowed and the means by which they are proposed to be secured.

Factors influencing the MNCJO Statement of Revenue Policy

The following factors have influenced the MNCJO Statement of Revenue Policy:

Community Service Obligations:

A community service obligation arises where a council provides a function or service that has general community benefits beyond those received by direct users. Councils mainly exist to provide services that are considered to have community importance but are not viable or practical to be provided on a commercial basis.

Councils review their level of Community Service Obligations as they relate to fees and charges. Where such a community service obligation may exist across the membership of the Councils, the Councils may consider the community service obligations as a group.

Cost Recovery:

The MNCJO applies the principle of full cost recovery to determine the total cost of services.

The User-Pays Principle:

The User-Pays Principle involves pricing for the provision of goods, projects, services and facilities that require the user or consumer to pay the actual cost of the service provided. The MNCJO may apply this pricing policy for the provision of project works and activities to businesses or members of the community.

Corporate Overheads:

The MNCJO corporate overheads are for governance, employment, administration functions and compliance required to deliver on the Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities (SSRP).

Competitive Neutrality:

Competitive Neutrality is one of the principles of National Competition Policy applied throughout Australia at all levels of Government, including Local Government. Competitive Neutrality is based on the concept of a 'level playing field' for competitors in a market, be they public or private sector competitors. All Government business organisations should operate without competitive advantages over businesses as a result of their public ownership.

When and if the MNCJO competes in the market place with other private businesses, the MNCJO will do so on the basis that it does not utilise its public position to gain an unfair advantage over private businesses that may be in competition with the MNCJO or its member Councils.

Goods and Services Tax:

The Federal Government's Goods and Services Tax (GST) must be applied to non-exempt fees and charges. The current rate of GST is 10% and is included in the price paid by the recipient of the service. The GST indicators (GST exempt or not) in the list of fees and charges are subject to change at any time from changes that occur in the GST Act and/or regulations.

Ordinary Membership Policy:

Each member Council of the MNCJO is to contribute a monetary payment or equivalent contribution based on the following methodology:

- fixed administration and membership contribution or fee, and any
- variable project and service or delivery fees.

Member Councils will be consulted about proposed contributions by:

- undertaking and participating in annual planning, and
- an annual written proposal based on the activity determined in the business planning process

Fees for Service

Approved fees for service:

Section 608 of the Local Government Act 1993 provides that the MNCJO may charge and recover an approved fee for any service it provides.

Section 609 of the Act provides that when determining the approved fee, the MNCJO must take into account the following factors:

- the cost to the Council of providing the service;
- the prices suggested for that service by any relevant industry body or in any schedule of charges published, from time to time, by the Office of Local Government;
- the importance of the service to the community; and
- any factors specified in the regulations under the Act.

Credit Charge Surcharge:

The MNCJO imposes a Credit Charge Surcharge on all payments made via credit card in accordance with Reform of Credit Card Schemes in Australia (iv) and the Final Reforms and Regulation Impact Statement (August 2002).

Private Works:

The MNCJO may carry out any kind of work that may lawfully be carried out. Private work will be carried out on the basis of a charge representing full cost recovery of the work carried out plus a margin for profit. The profit margin is dependent on and subject to market forces.

Budget Estimate 24/25

	Carry Forward 01/07/2024	Income	Expenditu re	Balance
MNCJO operations	\$352,992.00			
Audit and Insurance			\$12,722.00	
ARIC			\$10,000.00	
Governance				
NSWJO Chairs Forum			\$2,500.00	
Accounting			\$13,000.00	
Board Meeting Costs			\$500.00	
Sitting Fees			\$9,000.00	
Hosted Forums			\$500.00	
			\$120,000.0	
Salary and Overheads			0	
Office Expenses			\$5,000.00	
Internal Audit			\$6,600.00	
Administration fees				
Bank Interest		\$800.00		
Member Council contributions		\$75,000.00		
Capacity Building - Stage 1	\$46,613.00			
Capacity Building - Stage 2	\$49,208.00			
JONZA Round 2 - Confirmed		\$161,200.0	\$161,200.0	
		0	0	
JONZA EV - Confirmed		\$32,000.00	\$32,000.00	
DRRF Round 1 - Refund			\$63,462.00	
DRRF Round 2 - Advice pending		\$440,997.0	\$203,000.0	
		0	0	
		\$709,997.0	\$639,484.0	\$519,326.0
TOTAL	\$448,813.00	0	0	0



10 REPORTS FOR THIS MEETING

Item	10.3
Subject	JONZA Round 2
Presented by	Liz Fairweather, Executive Officer - Mid North Coast Joint Organisation

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board:

1. Ratify the Flying Minute distributed on 18 June to accept funding of \$161,200 from Department Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water for delivery of the Joint Organisation Net Zero Acceleration program Round 2, and
2. Accept a further \$32,000 for delivery of Electric Vehicle program

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Round 1 of the Joint Organisation Net Zero Acceleration (JONZA) program has implemented many projects that have assisted councils with emissions reduction and cost savings initiatives.

MNCJO has received notification from the Department Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) that it has been successful in its Round 2 application to the JONZA program with funding of \$161,200 being awarded.

The Round 2 funding will support member councils to collect the data required to accurately report on Scope 1 and 2 emissions as required by the NSW Government.

This report outlines some of the achievements of JONZA Round 1 and plans for round 2 of the program.

Attachment - A Flying Minute was distributed on Tuesday 18 June 2024 regarding acceptance of this funding proposal. All voting Board members consented to this.

Subsequently, DCCEEW have amended the funding deed to include an additional \$32,000 for Electric Vehicle program. This report seeks acceptance of these funds also.

REPORT DETAIL

BackgroundThe past 12 months of the JONZA Round 1 program has helped member councils reduce their energy

costs and greenhouse gas emissions as well as plan for the transitions to a low emissions future.

Some of the key outcomes of the JONZA pilot program are:

- In collaboration with Hunter JO, facilitated a PPA buyers' group for regional councils in NSW to help secure stable, fixed electricity pricing on a long-term contract that will insulate councils from the risks associated with short term contracts in a volatile electricity market. Member councils Port Macquarie Hastings and Bellingen Shire are both members of the PPA buyers' group.
- Tariff reviews were completed for 2 member councils with the third council advised to wait until the following year to complete tariff reviews.
- In collaboration with Revolving Energy Fund (REF) action group provided guidance and support and helped to create a resource to assist councils in setting up REFs. Port Macquarie Hastings Council has used the resource to establish an REF and are exploring options for seed funding.
- Member councils were assisted with Community Energy Upgrade Fund (CEU) grant applications and completing feasibility assessments. Port Macquarie Hastings Council applied in Round 1 of the CEU fund. Bellingen Shire and Kempsey Shire councils have completed feasibility works so that they are prepared to apply in round 2 of the program.
- Facilitated and attended EVX kerbside charger feasibility assessments and proposed installations throughout the region. EVX pole chargers are expected to be installed in Bellingen and Kempsey.

This is a snapshot of the diverse range of outcomes from the JONZA pilot program.

Round 2 program

It is envisaged that delivery of the Round 2 JONZA will be closely aligned with member councils' operational plans and strategies whilst considering the NSW Government desired outcomes.

As a first step in Round 2, an initial workshop will be held with member councils' teams to develop actions that need to be achieved and a project plan formulated. It is important that the outcome of this program aligns with member councils' plans and implementing their actions.

Some projects for consideration could include:

- Support councils with collecting the data required to accurately report on Scope 1 and 2 emissions.
- Assist with Emissions Reduction Strategies
- Fleet Transition Plans for all member councils.
- Complete annual tariff reviews on behalf of the member councils.

Electric Vehicle program

A further \$32,000 was offered to MNCJO for delivery of the Electric Vehicle program. The Electric Vehicle (EV) funding can be utilised to develop a public EV charging policy and a resource to support councils across NSW in progressing EV uptake.

Examples of other deliverables the EV program could include are:

- Developing and delivering communications for councils, the community, or businesses for installing charging infrastructure
- Delivering EV information and test drive days for local councils and businesses

- Developing communication strategies for EV charging in partnership with local tourism Destination Networks
- Developing a plan for your LGA to become “EV Friendly”
- Developing EV charging case studies for councils and businesses
- Conducting studies to identify network energy constraints
- Procure EV subscription services for council fleets
- Other initiatives that develop EV readiness in regional LGAs

As with Round 2, the proposed workshop will determine the use of these funds ensuring they align with member councils’ plans. A project plan will then be developed and submitted to DCCEEW.

ATTACHMENTS

1. 10.3_JONZA Flying Minute_Attachment

From: Mayor Cr Steve Allan <mayor@bellingen.nsw.gov.au>

Sent: Tuesday, 18 June 2024 2:06 PM

To: Liz Fairweather <liz.fairweather@mncjo.nsw.gov.au>; Mayor Peta Pinson <Cr.PPinson@pmhc.nsw.gov.au>; leo.hauville@kempsey.nsw.gov.au <leo.hauville@kempsey.nsw.gov.au>

Cc: Dr Clare Allen <clare.allen@pmhc.nsw.gov.au>; Craig Milburn <craig.milburn@kempsey.nsw.gov.au>; Mark Griffioen <mgriffioen@bellingen.nsw.gov.au>

Subject: RE: JONZA Round 2

Dear Liz, Peta and Leo,

I support the recommendation in the Flying Minute and am happy to move it :

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board accept \$161,200 Department Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water for delivery of the Joint Organisation Net Zero Acceleration program Round 2.

Best regards,

Cr Steve Allan
Mayor



**BELLINGEN
SHIRE COUNCIL**

E: mayor@bellingen.nsw.gov.au

P: 0407081768

W: www.bellingen.nsw.gov.au

From: Mayor Peta Pinson <Cr.PPinson@pmhc.nsw.gov.au>

Sent: Tuesday, 18 June 2024 2:23 PM

To: Liz Fairweather <liz.fairweather@mncjo.nsw.gov.au>

Cc: Dr Clare Allen <clare.allen@pmhc.nsw.gov.au>; Craig Milburn <craig.milburn@kempsey.nsw.gov.au>; Mark Griffioen <mgriffioen@bellingen.nsw.gov.au>; leo.hauville@kempsey.nsw.gov.au <leo.hauville@kempsey.nsw.gov.au>; mayor@bellingen.nsw.gov.au <mayor@bellingen.nsw.gov.au>; Linda Kocis <Linda.Kocis@pmhc.nsw.gov.au>

Subject: RE: JONZA Round 2

Good Afternoon Liz,

I acknowledge the flying minute and like Mayor Steve Allan, agree to the recommendation.

Many thanks,

Peta Pinson
Mayor



**PORT MACQUARIE
HASTINGS COUNCIL**



From: leo.hauville@kempsey.nsw.gov.au <leo.hauville@kempsey.nsw.gov.au>

Sent: Tuesday, 18 June 2024 4:05 PM

To: Mayor Peta Pinson <Cr.PPinson@pmhc.nsw.gov.au>; Liz Fairweather <liz.fairweather@mncjo.nsw.gov.au>; mayor@bellingen.nsw.gov.au <mayor@bellingen.nsw.gov.au>

Cc: Dr Clare Allen <clare.allen@pmhc.nsw.gov.au>; Craig Milburn <craig.milburn@kempsey.nsw.gov.au>; Mark Griffioen <mgriffioen@bellingen.nsw.gov.au>; Linda Kocis <Linda.Kocis@pmhc.nsw.gov.au>

Subject: RE: JONZA Round 2

Dear Liz, Peta and Steve,

I support the recommendation in the Flying Minute:

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board accept \$161,200 Department Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water for delivery of the Joint Organisation Net Zero Acceleration program Round 2.

Regards,
Leo

Leo Hauville

Mayor | Kempsey Shire Council

22 Tozer Street | West Kempsey | 2440

M [0419323769](tel:0419323769)

E leo.hauville@kempsey.nsw.gov.au



BE GREEN - READ IT ON SCREEN!



BE GREEN - READ IT ON SCREEN!

Kempsey Shire Council acknowledges the land of the Thunggutti/Dunghutti Nation. We pay respect to Elders past and present. We acknowledge the role of emerging leaders to continue to guide us in the future. We acknowledge the Stolen Generations and the need to change practices to be inclusive. This land always was and always will be Thunggutti/Dunghutti land.



10 REPORTS FOR THIS MEETING

Item	10.4
Subject	Caretaker Delegations
Presented by	Liz Fairweather, Executive Officer - Mid North Coast Joint Organisation

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board authorise the MNCJO Executive Officer to address the functions of Chair from the commencement of the Caretaker on 16 August 2024 until the new Board meets and formally elects a Chair.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The MNCJO Chair Cr Pinson, is not seeking re-elected and therefore there is a need to address the functions of Chair during the caretaker period and that timeframe until the new Board meets and elects a Chair.

Options:

1. The outgoing Deputy Chair – if re-elected – exercising the functions of Chair until the new Board meets and elects a Chair
2. The outgoing Deputy Chair – if not re-elected – exercising the functions of Chair until the new Board meets and elects a Chair
3. The (nominate a GM/CEO) of a member council exercising the functions of Chair until the new Board meets and elects a Chair.
4. The Executive Officer exercising the functions of Chair until the new Board meets and elects a Chair.

The matter was discussed at the General Managers meeting held 2 August 2024 and it was recommended, due to the uncertainty of elections and the workload on GMs/CEO, that the Executive Officer assume the duties of Chair until the new Board meets.

ATTACHMENTS

None