

# The Hunter Joint Organisation of Councils

## Statement of Regional Strategic Priorities

### Our vision for our region:

#### Who we are

The Hunter Region comprises the local government areas of Dungog, Cessnock, Great Lakes, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, Muswellbrook, Newcastle, Port Stephens, Singleton and the Upper Hunter.

The Hunter Joint Organisation of Councils began life on 27 March 1955 as the Hunter Valley Local Government Reconstruction Association with its stated aim at that time being the “uniting of councils on general matters and in their approach to the State and Federal Governments for positive action and assistance”. Soon renamed the Hunter Valley Local Government Association and subsequently renamed at various intervals, the Association has evolved into one of Australia’s most significant local government regional entities and, in partnership with the Hunter councils owned commercial operation – Strategic Services Australia Ltd – one of its largest and most diverse shared services suppliers.

At the time of its 60<sup>th</sup> birthday, Hunter Councils will be entering a new era as a trial joint organisation under the Fit for the Future umbrella. It will be doing so in accordance with its original reason for existence and from a position of strength as a leader in local government reform.

#### What our communities told us

Our communities have told us that they want their councils individually and collectively to show leadership and that through efficiency, effectiveness, innovation, professionalism and a focus on value for money they will be able to demonstrate that they are building with other levels of government a future for the Hunter that is prosperous, sustainable, healthy and inclusive.

#### What difference we will make

We will demonstrate to the State Government, our communities and ourselves that local government has a viable indeed necessary role in partnering with the State Government in the achievement of the State’s priorities and in the creation of a more viable, better integrated, more effective and efficient Hunter Region.

What are we doing?	Why are we doing it?	How are we doing it?	Who has agreed to work with us on this priority?
<p>Developing and actioning a partnership approach with the State Government through intergovernmental collaboration and Regional Strategic Planning</p>	<p>We wish to partner with the State Government in removing barriers to inter-governmental cooperation, resource sharing, strategy development and review. In doing so it is our intention that local government and local communities will prove the value of a mandated voice for the sector in State Agency planning and resource allocation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formalising, with DPC and relevant other agencies, protocols, frameworks and strategies that will:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ integrate, communicate and correlate local community / local government priorities within future Hunter Regional Plans, agency planning processes and overall reporting mechanisms, and</li> <li>○ facilitate the actioning of State Government priorities through the actions, funding, resourcing and advocacy of local councils in the Hunter</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>The Department of Premier and Cabinet facilitating access and communication through the Regional Leadership Group, Regional Managers Network and any future iteration of those groupings</p>

Developing and actioning a partnership approach with the State Government through a regional approach to growth and land use planning and transport corridor strategies.	so that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>foundational, whole of region frameworks are produced that cut through the existing confusion of multiple planning documents</li> </ul>	Pursuing cooperative strategy with the Department of Planning and Environment and other State Government agencies in regard to the development and implementation of the Hunter Regional Growth Plan and on other approaches such as the Pacific, New England and Golden Highways corridors strategy (Roads and Maritime Services)	As lead agencies: Department of Planning and Environment, Transport for NSW and Roads and Maritime Services
Developing and actioning a partnership approach with the State Government through to ensure the sustainability and prioritisation of key infrastructure projects in the Hunter.	so that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local government can be informed of, can contribute to, help resource and be held accountable for the achievement of an integrated, sustainable and efficient Hunter Region</li> </ul>	Cooperative strategy with the HIIIF, HDC and other relevant agencies and agency documents on the development and costing of a priority listing of regional infrastructure projects including social infrastructure projects	The Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Department of Planning and Environment through the Hunter Infrastructure and Investment Fund, the Hunter Development Corporation and other State Agencies as appropriate
Developing and actioning a partnership approach with the State Government through a place based service delivery in the Hunter	so that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>integrated service delivery methodologies, practices and resourcing structures achieve better and more sustainable outcomes for communities through effective targeting and elimination of waste and duplication</li> </ul>	Cooperative strategy with relevant State Government agencies on a Hunter placed-based service delivery framework including the trialling of that approach in nominated local government areas	The Department of Family and Community Services and other agencies
Developing and actioning a partnership approach with the State Government through a fundamental review and new model building of strategic and regional tourism capacity within the Region.	so that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a critical component of the Hunter's economy is better positioned to seize opportunities and address threats.</li> </ul>	Development, in conjunction with relevant Government Ministers, Destination NSW, Trade and Investment and the industry of a new and sustainable model for the coordination of regional tourism strategy and development	Destination NSW and the Department of Trade and Investment

We will know we have succeeded when we have:	Forums and Documents supporting our planning are:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State Government priority focus area and strategic documents incorporate and / or recognise local government / local community perspectives, strategies and resource allocations</li> <li>Whole of region and sub-regional planning and resource allocation by local councils incorporates, recognises and supports State Government agency perspectives and resource allocations</li> <li>Evidence is available that points to reduction if not elimination of dysfunction, duplication, waste and misdirection in State and local government planning as it pertains to the Hunter Region and the State as a whole</li> <li>The existence, purpose and potential of local government Joint Organisations is mandated through amendment of the Local Government Act and the insertion of enabling provisions</li> <li>A clear hierarchy is established whereby State and regional planning is nested, coherent and comprehensible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional Leadership Group</li> <li>Regional Managers Network</li> <li>The Hunter Council of Mayors</li> <li>Hunter Regional Action Plan</li> <li>State Plan</li> <li>Hunter Strategic Infrastructure Plan</li> </ul>