



NORTHERN  
**RIVERS**  
JOINT ORGANISATION

NORTHERN RIVERS JOINT ORGANISATION  
**Annual Performance Statement**  
**2020-21**

**Sustainable. Resilient. Prosperous.**



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## Introduction

The Annual Performance Report provides an account of the Joint Organisation's performance for its six Member Councils and the Northern Rivers community.

The report details progress, achievements and outcomes against commitments identified within the Strategic Regional Priorities 2019 – 2022 and financial management over the 2020-2021 year.

In June 2018, the Northern Rivers Regional Organisation of Councils (NOROC) was formally dissolved and the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation was formed. The Northern Rivers Joint Organisation held its inaugural Board meeting in August 2018 and at this meeting a Chair was elected. An Interim Executive Officer had been appointed with primary responsibilities being to follow the pathway for setting up a joint organisation in accordance with the Joint Organisation Implementation Guide. The recruitment process for an Executive Officer (21 hours/week) concluded in December 2018, with the appointee commencing in January 2019.

The Annual Performance Report is an opportunity to acknowledge the regional initiatives and early progress towards achieving the vision articulated in the Strategic Regional Priorities document. It is also important to promote the outcomes that ultimately lead to a strengthening of the region, building on the demonstrated successes, unique character and diversity of member councils: Byron, Ballina, Kyogle, Lismore, Richmond Valley and Tweed.

This report also meets requirements under the *NSW Local Government Act (1993)* and will be presented to the Minister for Local Government, The Hon Shelley Hancock MP.

The Northern Rivers Joint Organisation acknowledges the Bundjalung People, the traditional owners and custodians of the lands in our Region, and pays respect to the Elders past, present and emerging.

Hard copies of this report will be available upon request, and electronic copies accessible at <http://www.northernriversjo.nsw.gov.au>

## Welcome from NRJO Chair – Cr Danielle Mulholland

I am pleased to be able to present the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation's Annual Performance Statement for 2020 – 2021.

It has been encouraging to see the continued growth in cooperation and partnership amongst the councils, government departments and regional organisations in the Northern Rivers region.

Whilst the year was marked by interruption resulting from the COVID -19 Pandemic, the NRJO was able to play a pivotal role in regional advocacy highlighting the issues associated with the Queensland Border Restrictions and the flow on effect to the six councils of the NRJO. A Position Paper prepared by the NRJO was widely distributed amongst both the New South Wales and Queensland Governments and generated media attention on the issues concerning the region.

The NRJO was also able to take significant steps toward progressing key priorities that had been established by the Board. Studies were launched into a possible UNESCO Biosphere application and assessing the business case for a Waste Microfactory. Work on a Renewable Energy Prospectus for the region also began.

A successful grant application through the Bushfire Community Recovery and Resilience Fund (BCRRF), Stream 2 has provided funding for four of our councils to install Disaster Dashboards. All six NRJO councils now offer this vital service on their websites.

The critical issue of the housing shortage was addressed at a Board Workshop held at the Tweed Shire Council Chambers where the underlying causes and potential solutions were reviewed in detail.

The NRJO continued to represent the Councils on an array of regional committees and working groups. In November 2020 the NRJO signed a MOU supporting the launch of a new regional brand for the area – another exciting step forward.

I would like to publicly acknowledge the commitment and collaborative spirit of Mayors, General Managers and staff from the member councils. The financial investment and time commitment is significant, and reflects the shared values, commitment and generosity evident in the Northern Rivers community.



**Cr Danielle Mulholland**  
Chair



Cr Danielle Mulholland, Chair

## Performance and Value

A key responsibility of the Joint Organisations in meeting their core functions under the Local Government Act 1993 is to identify Strategic Regional Priorities and collaborate on strategies to achieve those identified priorities for the benefit of communities.

At a meeting of the Board of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation at Tweed Shire Council on 8 February 2019, the Strategic Regional Priorities 2019 – 2022 document was formally launched.

A workshop was then held where the five Strategic Regional Priorities were workshopped to identify the highest priority areas to pursue advocacy and project outcomes for the region.

### **1. Thriving, healthy and biodiverse natural environments**

For the biodiversity and health of our waterways, habitats and wildlife to be protected and enhanced to deliver environmental, economic and recreational benefits for current and future generations of residents and visitors.

### **2. Improved community wellbeing now and into the future**

For our region to be able to offer its residents a range of affordable, appropriate housing choices and access to health care, mental health care, aged care and other services that enhance wellbeing

### **3. A physically and digitally connected region**

For our communities, businesses and visitors to be connected through a diverse range of safe, inclusive, low impact private and public transport options and high quality, reliable internet and mobile telecommunication services

### **4. Innovative, sustainable energy, water and waste management**

For our region to establish itself as a leader in renewable energy production; effective, sustainable water management; and innovative approaches to waste management to improve environmental and service delivery outcomes

### **5. A diversified, prosperous and sustainable regional economy**

For our region to have a strong, diversified economy that provides increased employment and business opportunities and financial wellbeing for communities while protecting and maintaining our region's unique character.

## 2020 - 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

### Key Function 1: Planning and Prioritisation

The 2020 – 2021 highlights reflect progress and outcomes of efforts dedicated to promoting and achieving the identified Strategic Regional Priorities, and delivering on the core functions prescribed for Joint Organisations of Councils across NSW.

The ten Advocacy Briefs formed a solid platform for representations to Local, State and Federal members of Parliament and introductory meetings to pave the way for the pursuit of future funding opportunities to support and enable the implementation of key identified projects.

The progress of these priorities was undermined by the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic which saw the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation categorised as being in and, then subsequently, out of regional travel bubbles limiting the ability of the Chair and EO to travel and forcing the cancellation of some meeting and a temporary realignment of priorities.

#### 1. Thriving, healthy and biodiverse natural environments

*PROJECTS - Advocate for changes to Forestry policy and planning regulations to encourage private native forestation AND the Northern Rivers Watershed Initiative.*

February 26, 2021: The Member for Lismore, Janelle Saffin MP, convened a meeting of community interest groups and stakeholders “to discuss the best action to gather support from the broader community to realise the Northern Rivers Watershed Initiative (NRWI)” which was attended by the NRJO.

The NRJO then coordinated meetings with the Project Officer recently appointed by the Dept. Planning, Industry and Environment to the Richmond River Review, Catchment Governance and Waterway Health and a private group “River Crystal” who are working with local farmers to help them improve their practices. This introduction has led to greater consultation across the region.

The NRJO continues to work with these groups.



## 2. Improved community wellbeing now and into the future

***PROJECT – Increased social housing, including crisis and emergency accommodation, to be on par with the State average of 4% of housing stock, within people’s community of interest.***

The Northern Rivers was at the forefront of the housing shortage facing regional Australia during the 2020-2021 period. The NRJO played an active role working with the NRJO Planners Group to identify appropriate measures to help alleviate the issue and advocate for the region. The Executive Officer attended a number of housing summits as well as staging a comprehensive workshop for the Board.

These included:

- **May 14: HOUSING SUMMIT HOSTED BY JANELLE SAFFIN MP, MEMBER FOR LISMORE**
- **May 24: HOUSING WORKSHOP KYOGLE COUNCIL**

### **June 18 2021 Housing Workshop:**

The housing crisis faced by the Northern Rivers was the focus of a workshop held by the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation on Friday June 18 2021 at the Tweed Shire Council Chambers in Murwillumbah.

The Board of the NRJO heard presentations from both the public and private sector that examined the extent of the issue, the way it affected different segments of society and the potential long and short-term solutions.

The Board heard presentations from the following groups:

- |                                 |                                 |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| • North Coast Community Housing | • Housing industry Australia    |
| • Regional NSW                  | • Queanbeyan / Palerang Council |
| • Business NSW                  | • Landcom                       |



NRJO Housing Workshop Tweed City Council 18.06.2021

## MEDIA COVERAGE

The Northern Rivers Times July 1, 2021

4 NEWS

### HOUSING FOCUS FOR NR JOINT ORGANISATION

THE housing crisis facing the Northern Rivers was the focus of the workshop held by the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation on Friday, June 18 at the Tweed Shire Council Chambers in Murwillumbah.

The Board of the NRJO heard presentations from both the public and private sector that examined the extent of the issue, the way it affected different segments of society and the potential long and short-term solutions.

NRJO Chair Cr Danielle Mulholland said social housing had always been a key priority of the NRJO, but that the lack of availability of housing generally had now reached a crisis level. So much so three of its six councils – Byron, Tweed and Lismore – have declared a


Housing Emergency.

"One of the unforeseen consequences of the pandemic has been the pressure on the housing market created by the return of hundreds of thousands of Australians from overseas and the unprecedented regional migration.

"The communities within the Northern Rivers have borne the brunt of the situation and have been subject to some of the largest increases in both rents and house prices in NSW, which has resulted in many people struggling to keep or find accommodation," Cr Mulholland said.

The workshop heard that amongst the barriers were a lack of diversity in the size and type of housing available, the availability of suitable land and the supply effect of holiday letting on the overall housing stock.

"The NRJO will now look to work with the Regional Housing Taskforce announced by the Minister Stokes last week to fast track both long- and short-term solutions," Cr Mulholland said.



### 3. Innovative, sustainable energy, water and waste management

**PROJECTS** - removal or improved distribution of the waste levy AND develop a Northern Rivers Renewable Energy Prospectus AND study into Microwaste facility

#### (i) SUSTAIN ENERGY - NORTHERN RIVERS RENEWABLE ENERGY WORKING GROUP

The membership of this group and attendance at meetings has proved beneficial for development of collaboration and funding opportunities relevant to project areas. The group is very committed to support NRJO in developing a Northern Rivers Renewable Energy Prospectus which is a key priority for the 2020-2021 financial year.

#### (ii) NRJO LOOKING AT WASTE MICRO INDUSTRIES FOR THE NORTHERN RIVERS

The Northern Rivers Joint Organisation used the Capacity Building funding from the Office of Local Government to develop a business case to establish a 'Centre of Excellence' for waste micro industries in the Northern Rivers. The business case had the SMaRT (Sustainable Materials Research and Technology) vision developed by UNSW Centre for SMaRT as its foundation.

The focus was converting waste materials into value-added recycling and upcycling materials; minimising the energy-intensive transportation of waste; promoting and supporting viable local economies and jobs; and developing a facility that embodies distributed manufacturing.

Consultants were appointed and the final project report was delivered in February 2021.



### **(iii) RENEWABLE ENERGY PROSPECTUS**

**Goal #8.3:** *To strengthen our region's emerging position as a NSW leader in renewable energy generation, storage and use, in accordance with widespread community support for reduced emissions and action on climate change.*

It was agreed by the Board of the NRJO that funding from the Capacity Building grant would be directed toward the development of a Renewable Energy Prospectus. A consultancy scope was developed and sent into the marketplace.

### **(iv) ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICER CONTAMINATED LANDS**

Key achievements included:

- Completed the Underground Petroleum Storage Systems (UPSS) Risk ranking Matrix for all councils with site information to date.
- Developed a procedure outlining how to find the required desktop information to complete the risk ranking.
- Finalised the radiation factsheet for councils and the community.
- Drafted the UPSS Register User Guide to outline the procedure and definitions for the UPSS register.
- Distributed the draft model conditions of consent for contaminated land for review and comment
- Northern Rivers region joined with the Hunter Joint Organisation councils for two online workshops.
- The CRCB officers have formalised an approach to collaborate and develop a coordinated set of resources on agreed key common contaminated land issues.
- Participated in several meetings with other CRCB program officers and the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA).
- Liaised with all councils throughout the quarter and provided specific contaminated land advice on a number sites and issues for all six councils in the region. The range of advice included:

## **4. A diversified, prosperous and sustainable regional economy**

For our region to have a strong, diversified economy that provides increased employment and business opportunities and financial wellbeing for communities while protecting and maintaining our region's unique character.

**PROJECTS** – *Investigate removal of BCR criteria for funding applications AND establish UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.*

**Goal #13:** *Increased contribution to the regional economy from tourism and dispersal of tourists across the region, while protecting the Northern Rivers' unique character, environment and quality of life.*

**(i) UNESCO BIOSPHERE STATUS FOR THE NORTHERN RIVERS**

The NRJO Board agreed to allocate funding from the Capacity Building grant to a study to understand all aspects of applying for a UNESCO Biosphere. A brief was developed and sent to the market. The project was discussed when the NRJO Chair and EO met with representatives of DPIE

**(ii) NORTHERN RIVERS NSW BRAND**

The NRJO was part of a collaborative partnership of regional businesses, industry bodies and government representatives that has developed the Northern Rivers NSW brand, an exciting opportunity for businesses and organisations across the Northern Rivers.

<https://northernriversnsw.com.au/>

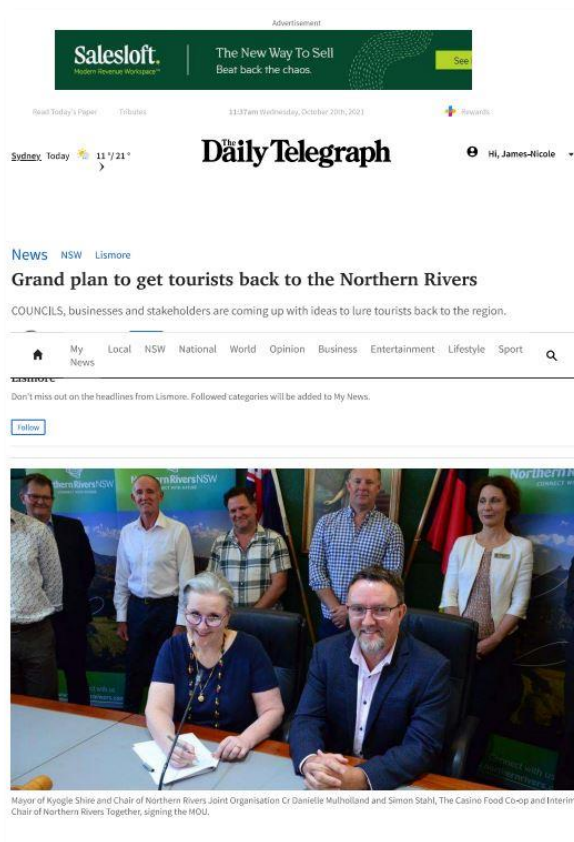
Launched in April 2020, the Northern Rivers NSW Brand is the symbol of a new economic and cultural era for one of New South Wales' oldest, diverse and alluring regions, representing the seven local government areas of the Northern Rivers of NSW, from the Tweed border to the Clarence Valley.

In an ever-competitive world, businesses and their communities need a point of difference and scale. The Northern Rivers NSW Brand ties these communities together, harnessing the power of the region's 250,000+ population in a single voice. Physically connected by the rivers of northern NSW, these communities are now connected by a common brand demonstrating tangible scale. The NRJO continue to play a key role sitting on both the Steering Committee and Finance Sub-Committee.



*On 20 November 2020 the Chair of the NRJO Cr Danielle Mulholland signed a Memorandum of Understanding on behalf of the NRJO underpinning the brand. The ceremony received extensive press coverage.*

## MEDIA COVERAGE



It's been a difficult year in tourism for the region but a group of local councils, businesses and stakeholders have come up with a plan to get people back to the Northern Rivers.

Launched in April, the Northern Rivers NSW Brand will aim to promote everything the region has to offer.

This unifying brand is being driven by "Northern Rivers Together", a collaborative partnership of regional businesses, industry bodies and government representatives.

"The Northern Rivers NSW Brand creates scale, representing some 300,000 residents and businesses located on the Northern Rivers, collectively representing the 12th largest by population in Australia," Simon Stahl, CEO of The Casino Food Co-Op and interim Chair of Northern Rivers Together, said.

"To date more than 160 Northern Rivers businesses and community groups, from across the whole region, have registered to promote and use the new brand.

"We have been particularly encouraged by support from our founding partners, which includes seven of the largest employers in the region and all of the Northern Rivers' local councils."



Northern Rivers mayors and members of the Northern Rivers Together Steering Committee:

The founding partners includes The Casino Food Co-Op, Norco, Richmond Dairies, North Coast Petroleum, Summerland Credit Union, Southern Cross University and Stone & Wood.

## Key Function 2: Inter-Governmental Relations

One of the key functions of Joint Organisations is identifying and taking up opportunities for inter-governmental relations. The information provided under Key Function 1 section of this Annual Performance Statement also highlights the strong relationships that have been built. The Northern Rivers Joint Organisation has been proactive in this area and built on existing well-established networks and participated in a broad range of key Government stakeholder groups:

- As part of the contract for provision of support services by Regional Development Australia Northern Rivers, close collaboration occurs with involvement in shared projects.
- Valuable relationships have developed with all agency leads who attend the Regional Leadership Executive meetings and the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation takes an active role in the sub-committees convened by Regional NSW these include: Community and Service Delivery; Economic and Workforce Development; Resilience and Recovery; COVID Update.
- Regional NSW and the Office of Local Government both provide updates to the General Managers Advisory Committee meetings

## Key Function 3: Advocacy and Leadership

Members established the framework, policy and procedures for advocacy and leadership from the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation. As a group of Councils, the opportunity to advocate as a group that represents a larger population and geography is a powerful mechanism for promoting community needs.

Representations on behalf of members on positions of advocacy and leadership to the NSW Government and Australian Government representatives were made and have been acknowledged by the Board as very worthwhile.

It is considered good practice to ensure that Local Members of Parliament be apprised of the advocacy positions, so regular updates are provided. Meetings also occur with members of the opposition, with the view of establishing these networks and relationships for the long-term future.

The following issues and areas were also highlighted as part of these discussions:

- Compliance Levy and Funding Review
- Housing Crisis
- COVID -19 Vaccination rollout

### Queensland Border Closure

The NRJO was particularly active in relation to the closure of the Queensland border, drafting a position paper representing the issues faced by all six councils by the restricted movement between states. The Position Paper was sent to the Premiers and Deputy Premiers of both the New South Wales and Queensland State Governments as well as the Cross Border Commissioner and Local Members of Parliament. The paper created significant interest within the regional media.




## Media Coverage

**COVID BLOG** Follow our live coverage for the latest news on the coronavirus pandemic

# NSW Northern Rivers councils unite to demand resolution for hardships created by Queensland-NSW border closure

ABC North Coast / By Hannah Ross  
Posted Fri 4 Sep 2020 at 2:10pm




News > NSW > Lismore

## How much did 'border bubble' impact Northern Rivers?

QUEENSLAND shut its border to areas of the Northern Rivers for several months.

The Lions Road in Kyogle Shire has been closed to z

Aisling Brennan Follow  
@AislingBrennan9 less than 2 min read November 20, 2020 - 9:00AM Northern Star



NORTHERN Rivers councils impacted by the Queensland border closures have come up with a plan to advocate for fairer border control measures.

The Northern Rivers Joint Organisation has finalised its Position Paper on the impacts of the Queensland border restrictions.

The paper addresses the issues caused by the "border bubble", which had excluded councils other than the Tweed Shire from entering Queensland during the height of the lockdown.

The Northern Star Newspaper 20.11.2020



# Northern Rivers Joint Organisation

## GENERAL PURPOSE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 30 June 2021

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# Northern Rivers Joint Organisation General Purpose Financial Statements

For the year ended 30 June 2021

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Northern Rivers Joint Organisation is constituted under the *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW) and has its principal place of business at:

PO Box 146  
Lismore  
NSW 2480

Through the use of the internet, we have ensured that our reporting is timely, complete and available at minimum cost. All press releases, financial statements and other information are publicly available on our website: [www.northernriversjo.nsw.gov.au](http://www.northernriversjo.nsw.gov.au)

## Northern Rivers Joint Organisation

### Statement by Members of the Board and Management made pursuant to Section 413 (2c) of the *Local Government Act* *1993 (NSW)* (as amended)

The attached general purpose financial statements have been prepared in accordance with:

- the *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)* (as amended) and the regulations made thereunder
- the Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements and other pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board
- the Joint Organisations Supplement to the Local Government Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting.

To the best of our knowledge and belief, these statements:

- present fairly NRJO's operating result and financial position for the period
- accord with JO NSW's accounting and other records.

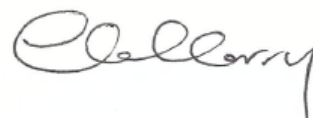
We are not aware of any matter that would render this report false or misleading in any way.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Northern Rivers Joint Organisation made on Friday 12 November 2021



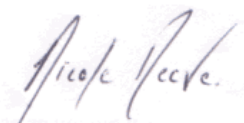
Cr Danielle Mulholland  
**Chairperson**

12 /11 / 21



Cr Chris Cherry (Deputy Chair)  
**Voting Representative Board Member**

12 /11 /2021



Nicole Reeve  
**Executive Officer**

12 /11/2021

## Northern Rivers Joint Organisation

### Statement of Income and Accumulated Surplus for the year ended 30 June 2021

		<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
	<b>Notes</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Member council contributions	B1-1	160,800	128,600
User charges and fees	B1-2	33,725	33,725
Interest and investment revenue	B1-3	2,235	5,090
Grants and contributions provided for operating purposes	B1-4	150,000	150,000
Other Income	B1-5	37,386	43,664
<b>Total income</b>		<b>384,146</b>	<b>361,079</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Employee benefits and on-costs	B2-1	92,240	104,541
Project Expenses	B2-3	140,512	280,088
Administrative Expenses	B2-2	103,687	113,947
<b>Total expenses</b>		<b>336,439</b>	<b>498,576</b>
<b>Net operating result for the year</b>		<b>47,707</b>	<b>(137,497)</b>
<b>Net result for the year</b>		<b>47,707</b>	<b>(137,497)</b>
<b>Accumulated surplus at 1 July</b>		<b>996,259</b>	<b>1,133,756</b>
<b>Accumulated surplus at 30 June</b>		<b>1,043,966</b>	<b>996,259</b>

The above Statement of Income and Accumulated Surplus should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

# Northern Rivers Joint Organisation

## Statement of financial position as at 30 June 2021

	Notes	2021 \$	2020 \$
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>Current assets</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	C1-1	1,161,879	1,021,504
Receivables	C1-2	23,279	6,777
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>1,185,158</b>	<b>1,028,281</b>
<b>Non-current assets</b>			
<b>Total non-current assets</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total assets</b>		<b>1,185,158</b>	<b>1,028,281</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Payables	C2-1	93,520	32,022
Contract Liabilities	C2-2	44,352	-
Provisions	C2-2	3,320	-
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<b>141,192</b>	<b>32,022</b>
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>			
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>		<b>141,192</b>	<b>32,022</b>
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>1,043,966</b>	<b>996,260</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>			
Accumulated Surplus		1,043,966	996,259
<b>Total equity</b>		<b>1,043,966</b>	<b>996,259</b>

The above Statement of financial position should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.



# Northern Rivers Joint Organisation

## Statement of cash flows

For the year ended 30 June 2021

	Notes	2021 \$	2020 \$
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
<b>Receipts:</b>			
Contributions from member councils		160,800	128,600
User charges and fees		24,463	35,815
Investment revenue and interest		2,235	5,673
Grants		194,350	150,000
Other (GST, Procurement rebate)		30,144	-
<b>Payments:</b>			
Employees and suppliers		(271,618)	(488,240)
Borrowing costs		-	-
Other (GST)		-	(6,098)
<b>Net cash provided from / (used in) operating activities</b>		<b>140,374</b>	<b>(174,250)</b>
<b>Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents</b>		140,374	(174,250)
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of reporting period</b>		1,021,504	1,195,754
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at end of reporting period</b>	C1-1	<b>1,161,878</b>	<b>1,021,504</b>

The above Statement of cash flows should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

# Northern Rivers Joint Organisation

## Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 30 June 2021

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## A1 Basis of preparation

These financial statements were authorised for issue by the Board of the Joint Organisation on 12 November 2021. The Board has the power to amend and reissue these financial statements.

The principal accounting policies adopted in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below:

These general purpose financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosure, the *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)* and Regulations, and the Joint Organisation Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting. The Northern Rivers Joint Organisation is a not-for-profit entity. The financial statements are presented in Australian dollars and are rounded to the nearest dollar.

### (a) *New and amended standards adopted by Northern Rivers Joint Organisation*

The Northern Rivers Joint Organisation has early adopted AASB 1060 General Purpose Financial Statements – Simplified Disclosures for For-Profit and Not-for-Profit Tier 2 Entities, the adoption of this standard has not affected the reported financial position or performance of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation, however certain disclosures have been added, amended or omitted.

### (b) *Historical cost convention*

These financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

### (c) *Significant accounting estimates and judgements*

The preparation of financial statements requires the use of certain critical accounting estimates. It also requires management to exercise its judgement in the process of applying the Joint Organisation's accounting policies. Estimates and judgements are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that may have a financial impact on the Joint Organisation and that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

#### *Critical accounting estimates and assumptions*

The Northern Rivers Joint Organisation makes estimates and assumptions concerning the future. The resulting accounting estimates will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results. The estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year include:

- (1) employee leave provisions - refer Note C2-3

#### *Significant judgements in applying the Joint Organisation accounting policies*

- (1) None are applicable at this stage.

## **Goods and Services Tax (GST)**

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of associated GST, unless the GST incurred is not recoverable from the taxation authority. In this case it is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of the asset or as part of the expense.

Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the taxation authority is included with other receivables or payables in the Statement of Financial Position.

Cash flows are presented on a gross basis. The GST components of cash flows arising from investing or financing activities that are recoverable from, or payable to, the taxation authority are presented as operating cash flows.

**B1 Sources of Income**

	2021 \$	2020 \$
<b>B1-1 Member Council contributions</b>		
Ballina Shire Council	27,400	21,900
Byron Shire Council	24,100	19,300
Kyogle Council	16,400	13,100
Lismore City Council	27,700	22,200
Richmond Valley Council	20,800	16,700
Tweed Shire Council	44,400	35,400
<b>Total member council contributions</b>	<b>160,800</b>	<b>128,600</b>
<b>B1-2 User charges and fees</b>		
MyRoadInfo	33,725	33,725
<b>Total user charges and fees</b>	<b>33,725</b>	<b>33,725</b>
<b>B1-3 Interest and Investment revenue</b>		
Interest in financial assets measured at amortised cost	2,235	5,090
<b>Total interest and investment revenue</b>	<b>2,235</b>	<b>5,090</b>
<b>B1-4 Grants</b>		
	2021 \$	2020 \$
Office of Local Government (OLG) joint organisation capacity building funding	150,000	150,000
<b>Total grants</b>	<b>150,000</b>	<b>150,000</b>
<b>Comprising:</b>		
- Commonwealth funding	-	-
- State funding	150,000	150,000
- Other funding	-	-
	<b>150,000</b>	<b>150,000</b>

## B1 Sources of Income continued

	2021	2020
	\$	\$
<b>B1-5 Other income</b>		
Procurement Rebate	37,386	37,388
Sundry Income (recharges)	-	6,276
<b>Total other income</b>	<b>37,386</b>	<b>43,664</b>

**Accounting policy**

**Contributions by member councils** are accounted for when the amount to be paid for the period has been determined and communicated to councils. The contribution may be in the form of a cash payment or non-monetary contribution (which is recorded as its fair value).

The methodology for determining the contributions is:

- equal contributions by all member councils in order to perform the principal functions of delivering on strategic regional priorities, regional leadership and intergovernmental cooperation.

- contributions by participating member councils for the functions of enhancing strategic capacity and direct service delivery.

**User charges and fees** Revenue arising from user charges and fees is recognised when or as the performance obligation is completed and the customer receives the benefit of the goods / services being provided.

**Interest and investment income** is recognised using the effective interest rate at the date that interest is earned.

**Grant revenue****Grants - enforceable agreement with sufficiently specific performance obligations**

Grant revenue arising from an agreement which is enforceable and contains sufficiently specific performance obligations is recognised as or when control of each performance obligations is transferred.

The performance obligations vary according to the agreement.

**Other grant revenue**

Assets (e.g. cash) received from other grants are recognised at fair value when the asset is received. The JO considers whether there are any related liability or equity items associated with the asset which are recognised in accordance with the relevant accounting standard.

Once the assets and liabilities have been recognised then income is recognised for any remaining asset value at the time that the asset is received.



## B2 Cost of providing services

	2021 \$	2020 \$
<b>B2-1 Employee benefits and on costs</b>		
Salaries and wages	74,409	82,955
Travelling	909	3,981
Employee leave entitlements	3,320	(2,596)
Superannuation	6,355	6,590
Workers' compensation insurance	1,539	1,891
Other	5,708	11,720
<b>Total employee costs expended</b>	<b>92,240</b>	<b>104,541</b>

**Accounting policy for employee benefits and on-costs**

Employee benefit expenses are recorded when the service has been provided by the employee.

Contributions to defined contribution plans are recognised as an expense as they become payable. Prepaid contributions are recognised as an asset to the extent that a cash refund or a reduction in the future payments is available.

**B2-2 Administrative expenses**

Contractor and consultancy costs	78,572	82,631
Audit	10,560	6,500
Board Costs	10,567	18,888
Catering	733	1,988
Office Expenses	3,255	3,326
Other	-	614
<b>Total administrative expenses</b>	<b>103,687</b>	<b>113,947</b>

**B2-3 Project expenses**

Contractor and Project Contributions	140,512	279,838
Catering	-	250
<b>Total project expenses</b>	<b>140,512</b>	<b>280,088</b>

**Accounting policy for expenses**

**Other Expenses** are recorded on an accruals basis as the JO receives the goods or services.

## C1 Assets we manage

## C1-1 Cash and cash equivalents

	2021 \$	2020 \$
Cash at bank and on hand	122,044	6,904
Deposits at call	1,039,836	1,014,600
	<b>1,161,879</b>	<b>1,021,504</b>
<b>Restricted cash and cash equivalents</b>		
External restrictions	556,057	415,537
Unrestricted	605,822	605,967
	<b>1,161,879</b>	<b>1,021,504</b>

**Accounting policy for cash and cash equivalents**

For Statement of Cash Flow presentation purposes, cash and cash equivalents include: cash on hand; deposits held at call with financial institutions; other short-term, highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and which are subject to an insignificant risk of changes in value; and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities on the Statement of Financial Position.

## C1-2 Receivables

	2021 \$	2020 \$
Trade Debtors	10,189	-
GST receivable	13,090	6,777
<b>Net Receivables</b>	<b>23,279</b>	<b>6,777</b>

**Accounting policy for receivables**

Receivables are recognised initially at fair value and subsequently measures at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less provision for impairment. Receivables are generally due for settlement within 30 days.

Impairment of financial assets measured at amortised cost is recognised on an expected credit loss (ECL) basis.

The Joint Organisation applies the simplified approach for receivables in providing for expected credit losses prescribed by AASB9, which permits the use of the lifetime expected loss provision. To measure the expected credit losses receivables have been grouped based on shared credit risk characteristics and the days past due.

## C2 Liabilities of the Joint Organisation

## C2-1 Payables

	2021	2020
	\$	\$
<b>Payables</b>		
Trade payables	68,749	19,195
Accrued expenses	22,630	9,335
Other payables (GST)	-	2
Other payables (PAYG)	2,141	3,490
<b>Total payables</b>	<b>93,520</b>	<b>32,022</b>

**Accounting policy**

The Northern Rivers Joint Organisation measures all financial liabilities initially at fair value less transactions costs, subsequent financial liabilities are measured at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method.

The financial liabilities of the Joint Organisation comprise trade and other payables.

Trade payables represent liabilities for goods and services provided to the JO prior to the end of financial period that are unpaid. The amounts are unsecured and are usually paid within 30 days of recognition.

## C2-2 Contract liabilities

	2021	2020
	\$	\$
Funds received prior to performance obligation being satisfied (upfront payments) - AASB 15(i)	44,352	-
<b>Total contract liabilities</b>	<b>44,352</b>	<b>-</b>

**Accounting policy**

When an amount of consideration is received from a customer / fund provider prior to the JO transferring a good or service to the customer, the JO presents the funds which exceed revenue recognised as a contract liability.

## C2-3 Provisions

	2021	2020
	Current	Current
	\$	\$
<b>Employee benefits provisions</b>		
Annual leave	3,320	-
<b>Total provisions</b>	<b>3,320</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Current provisions not expected to be settled within the next 12 months</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

**Accounting policy for provisions**

Provisions are recognised when: the JO has a present legal or constructive obligation as a result of past events, it is probable that an outflow of resources will be required to settle the obligation, and the amount has been reliably estimated.

Provisions are measured at the present value of management's best estimate of the expenditure required to settle the present obligation at the reporting date. The discount rate used to determine the present value reflects current market assessments of the time value of money and the risks specific to the liability. The increase in the provision due to the passage of time is recognised as interest expense.

**Employee benefits****Short-term obligations**

Liabilities for wages and salaries, (including non-monetary benefits and annual leave expected to be wholly settled within 12 months after the end of the period in which the employees render the related service) are recognised in respect of employees' services up to the end of the reporting period and are measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liabilities are settled. The liability for annual leave is recognised in the provision for employee benefits. All other short-term employee benefit obligations are presented as payables.

**Other long-term employee benefit obligations**

The liability for long service leave and annual leave that is not expected to be wholly settled within 12 months after the end of the period in which the employees render the related service is recognised in the provision for employee benefits and measured as the present value of expected future payments to be made in respect of services provided by employees up to the end of the reporting period using the projected unit credit method.

Consideration is given to expected future wage and salary levels, experience of employee departures, and periods of service. Expected future payments are discounted using market yields at the end of the reporting period on national government bonds with terms to maturity and currency that match, as closely as possible, the estimated future cash outflows.

**On-costs**

The employee benefit provisions include the aggregate on-cost liabilities that will arise when payment of current employee benefits is made in future periods.

These amounts include superannuation, payroll tax and workers compensation expenses which will be payable upon the future payment of certain leave liabilities which employees are entitled to at the reporting period.

The obligations are presented as current liabilities in the Statement of Financial Position if the JO does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement for at least 12 months after the reporting date, regardless of when the actual settlement is expected to occur.

## D Risks and accounting uncertainties

### D1-1 Financial risk management

#### Risk management

The Northern Rivers Joint Organisation's activities expose it to a variety of financial risks, including credit risk, liquidity risk, and interest rate risk.

Financial risk management is carried out by the finance team under policies approved by the Board of the Joint Organisation.

The fair value of receivables, investments and financial liabilities approximates the carrying amount.

### D2-1 Contingencies

The JO is a member of Statewide Mutual, a mutual pool scheme providing liability insurance to local government.

Membership includes the potential to share in either the net assets or liabilities of the fund depending on its past performance. The JO's share of the net assets or liabilities reflects the JO's contributions to the pool and the result of insurance claims within each of the fund years.

The future realisation and finalisation of claims incurred but not reported to 30 June 2021 may result in future liabilities or benefits as a result of past events that the JO will be required to fund or share respectively.

**E People and relationships****E1 Related Party Disclosures****E1-1 Key management personnel**

Key management personnel (KMP) of the Joint Organisation are those persons having the authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the Joint Organisation, directly or indirectly.

The aggregate amount of KMP compensation included in the Income Statement and Other Comprehensive Income is \$94,084 (2020: \$101,308)

**Other transactions with KMP and their related parties**

There were no other transactions between the JO and the KMP and their related parties (2020: nil).

**E1-2 Other related parties**

There were no transactions between the JO and other related parties (2020: nil).

**E2 Other Relationships****E2-1 Audit Fees**

Auditors of the Joint Organisation - NSW Auditor-General:

Audit and review of financial statements

**Total fees paid or payable to the Auditor-General**

**Total remuneration of auditors**

	2021	2020
	\$	\$
	10,560	6,500
	10,560	6,500
	<b>10,560</b>	<b>6,500</b>



**F Other matters**

**F1 Events occurring after reporting date**

Events that occur after the reporting date of 30 June 2021, and up to and including the date when the financial report is “authorised for issue” have been taken into account in preparing this financial report. The Joint Organisation has determined the date of the Auditors’ Report as the appropriate “authorised for issue” date relating to this General Purpose Financial Report.

No matters or circumstances have arisen since the end of the financial year which significantly affected or may significantly affect the operations of the Joint Organisation or the results of those operations.



## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

### Report on the general purpose financial statements

#### Northern Rivers Joint Organisation

To the Board of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation

### Opinion

I have audited the accompanying financial statements of Northern Rivers Joint Organisation (the Joint Organisation), which comprise the Statement by Members of the Board and Management, the Statement of Income and Accumulated Surplus for the year ended 30 June 2021, the Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2021, and Statement of Cash Flows for the year ended 30 June 2021 and notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

In my opinion:

- the Joint Organisation's accounting records have been kept in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1993*, Chapter 13, Part 3, Division 2 (the Division)
- the financial statements:
  - have been prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with the requirements of this Division
  - are consistent with the Joint Organisation's accounting records
  - present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Joint Organisation as at 30 June 2021, and of its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards–Simplified Disclosures
- all information relevant to the conduct of the audit has been obtained
- no material deficiencies in the accounting records or financial statements have come to light during the audit.

My opinion should be read in conjunction with the rest of this report.

### Basis for Opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under the standards are described in the 'Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements' section of my report.

I am independent of the Joint Organisation in accordance with the requirements of the:

- Australian Auditing Standards
- Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 'Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)' (APES 110).

I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with APES 110.

Parliament promotes independence by ensuring the Auditor-General and the Audit Office of New South Wales are not compromised in their roles by:

- providing that only Parliament, and not the executive government, can remove an Auditor-General
- mandating the Auditor-General as auditor of joint organisations
- precluding the Auditor-General from providing non-audit services.

I believe the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my audit opinion.

## **The Board's Responsibilities for the Financial Statements**

The Board is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards—Simplified Disclosures and the *Local Government Act 1993*, and for such internal control as the Board determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Board is responsible for assessing the Joint Organisation's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting.

## **Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements**

My objectives are to:


- obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error
- issue an Independent Auditor's Report including my opinion.

Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but does not guarantee an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect material misstatements. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error. Misstatements are considered material if, individually or in aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions users take based on the financial statements.

A description of my responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located at the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board website at: [www.auasb.gov.au/auditors\\_responsibilities/ar4.pdf](http://www.auasb.gov.au/auditors_responsibilities/ar4.pdf). The description forms part of my auditor's report.

The scope of my audit does not include, nor provide assurance:

- that the Joint Organisation carried out its activities effectively, efficiently and economically
- about the security and controls over the electronic publication of the audited financial statements on any website where they may be presented
- about any other information which may have been hyperlinked to/from the financial statements.



Gearoid Fitzgerald

Delegate of the Auditor-General for New South Wales

12 November 2021  
SYDNEY

## Northern Rivers Joint Organisation Profile

The Northern Rivers Joint Organisation was formed in June 2018 and is a partnership between six Local Government Areas in the Northern Rivers Region of NSW.

As the peak body for local government in the Northern Rivers, the organisation is the recognised voice for our region's Councils. In addition, there is significant collaboration through resource sharing and procurement of materials, services and professional development. Not only do these endeavours bring Councils together in a spirit of cooperation but they save money for Councils and communities.

The Northern Rivers Joint Organisation covers an area of more than 10,000 square kilometres extending from Tweed Heads in the North to just beyond Evans Head in the south, and to Woodenbong and Tabulam in the west.

Member councils are the six Local Government Areas of Ballina, Byron, Lismore, Richmond Valley, Kyogle and Tweed Northern Rivers region of Northern NSW.

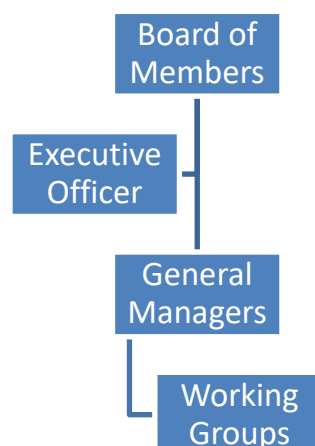
## Member Representatives

The Board of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation includes the Mayors of member Councils.

- Councillor Danielle Mulholland, Chair and Mayor Kyogle Council
- Councillor Chris Cherry, Mayor Tweed Shire Council
- Councillor Michael Lyon, Mayor Byron Shire Council
- Councillor David Wright, Mayor Ballina Shire Council
- Councillor Vanessa Ekin, Mayor Lismore City Council
- Councillor Robert Mustow, Mayor Richmond Valley Council

The NSW Government is a non-voting Member and is represented by the Director – Regional NSW for the Northern region.

The organisational structure is as follows:



The Mayors receive advice and information about strategic and operational opportunities from the General Managers of member Councils. Working Groups are established with key experienced personnel from within each member Council. The Board, the General Managers Group and various working groups meet regularly throughout the Northern Rivers region. The organisation employs an Executive Officer to guide the organisations activities. The administration of the organisation is reliant on the support of the staff of RDA Northern Rivers.

## Associate Members

Associate members of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation are

- the NSW Government, as represented by a nominee of the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, currently Director, North Coast, Regional NSW
- Rous County Council,
- Regional Development Australia – Northern Rivers,
- Destination North Coast,
- Scenic Rim Regional Council,
- Tenterfield Shire Council,
- Clarence Valley Council,
- Combined North Coast Rural Industry Consultative Committee and North Coast Agriculture Natural Disaster Advisory Group

## Working Groups

Group	Meeting Frequency
NSW Water Directorate Executive Committee	Quarterly
North Coast Regional Leadership Executive	Quarterly
Water NSW Customer Advisory Group for the Coastal Valleys	Twice yearly
Procurement Committee	Quarterly
Northern Rivers Human Resources Interest Group	Quarterly
Risk Committee	Quarterly
Northern Safety Management Group	Quarterly
Northern Rivers IT Group	Quarterly
Northern Rivers IT Systems Admin Group	Yearly
Northern Rivers Water Managers Group	Twice yearly
Northern Rivers Development and Construction Manuals Group	Quarterly
Natural Resource Management Group	Quarterly
North East Weight of Loads Group	Annually
Northern Rivers Local Emergency Management Committee	Quarterly
Northern Rivers Bush Fire Risk Management Committee	Quarterly
Regional GIS Users Group	Ad Hoc
Supervisors Group	Ad Hoc
Drinking Water Management System Implementation Group	Twice a year
Planners Group	Every two months

North East Waste Group	Quarterly
Northern Rivers Public and Environmental Health Forum	Quarterly
North East Region Discussion Group for Building Surveyors	Quarterly
OSMS Officer Forum	Yearly

## Member Conduct

Members are Councillors and are elected by the residents and ratepayers to act in the best interests of the community.

To guide the conduct of elected members, Council Code of Conduct and standards of conduct, behaviour, accountability and responsibilities apply to ensure public confidence is maintained.

The community expects the business of Local Government is to be conducted with efficiency, transparency and impartiality.

To mitigate any personal or private interests that may compromise the conduct and decisions of a Member, declaration of conflicts of interest is a standing agenda item for all Board meetings.

## Member Allowances

The Chair is paid a stipend of \$10,00 per annum. Members are not paid an annual fee. Members expenses incurred by representing their Council discharging their functions and responsibilities may be paid.



## Statutory Information

### Contracts Awarded

May 2021 The NRJO received \$56,760 through the Bushfire Resilience and Recovery Fund to enable four of the NRJO Councils to install Disaster Dashboards.

June 2020 the NRJO received \$150,000 from the NSW Government through the Joint Organisation Capacity Building Fund Round II.

### Government Information Public Access (GIPA)

The Northern Rivers Joint Organisation received zero formal access and zero informal applications for the reporting year under *Government Information (Public Access) Act, 2009 (GIPA)*.

### Public Interest Disclosures

Northern Rivers Joint Organisation is required to have a Public Interest Disclosures Policy under section 6D of the Public Interest Disclosures Act, 1994 (the PID Act).

There have been no known Public Interest Disclosures on any activities.

### Overseas Travel

Northern Rivers Joint Organisation representatives made no overseas trips during the 2020-2021 financial year.

### Remuneration Executive Officer

The total remuneration package of the Executive Officer for the 2020-21 financial year was \$80,764

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