

## 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



### United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (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.

#### **Policy Context:**

Policy makers need to ensure better integration of diverse community interests, so that understanding and cooperation are encouraged, and mutual interests and objectives are defined and pursued. Communities are often characterised by very diverse and at times conflicting interests. Priorities may differ between industries and small-scale farming; between individual landowners and public land managers; between multiple levels and sectors of government. Policy makers are thus challenged to consider these interests while forging policies that are fair and encourage the community's long-term well-being. This is all the more difficult because many communities are excessively exploiting local natural resources for both local uses and global markets, consequently jeopardising the resource base for future generations – this trend is reflected in the local area and is a significant concern to our communities.

#### **Strategic Context:**

As the operating platform of the NRJO is one of advocacy for communities through collaborative action, the Board members consider it important for a range of measures to be used when assessing funding proposals. One example is *Strategic Merit Test*, where alignment of the proposal with stakeholder directions and strategic context is weighted more highly than pure economic efficiency grounds.

NRJO will partner with the *NSW Department of Planning and Environment* to progress Direction 8 of the *North Coast Regional Plan 2036* to sustainably 'promote the growth of tourism'. (NRJO Strategic Action #13.1)

NRJO will deepen the relationship with *Destination North Coast* to facilitate regional input into:

- Tourism planning and development
- Regional branding and promotion

**Problem:**

In the area, the bulk of tourist activity, together with its benefits and pressures, is centred in a few small areas. The task now is to make the most of our opportunities in the region – to grow tourism sustainably in ways that minimise impact and maximise benefit to our region as a whole.

**Solution and Actions sought:**

Biosphere reserves encourage economies that are based on the sustainable and wise use of regional natural and human resources; they foster a long-term perspective and strive for economic stability based on efficiency, diversity and equity. They promote income and employment opportunities and the balance between consumption and production.

With the benefits of promotion of this international status, the NR could increase high quality tourism product and sustainable tourism growth.

**NRJO seeks \$100,000 to proceed with an application, obtain approval and gain the internationally significant designation.**

