



# **Agenda for the Northern Rivers**

## **Joint Organisation**

### **Ordinary Board Meeting**

**Date:** 12 February 2021

**Location:** via Zoom  
<https://zoom.us/j/95728604861>

**Time:** 11am

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# AGENDA

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## **1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

We acknowledge that this meeting is held upon the land of the Bundjalung people who are the Traditional Custodians of this Land. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.

## **2 APOLOGIES**

Apologies have been received from Troy Green, Tweed Shire Council

## **3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

## **4 ADDRESS BY OFFICIAL VISITOR(S)**

## **5 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES AND BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

## 5.1 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE NORTHERN RIVERS JOINT ORGANISATION HELD 20 NOVEMBER 2020

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The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation Friday 20 November 2020 are included for information and adoption by the Board.

### **MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE NORTHERN RIVERS JOINT ORGANISATION HELD AT RICHMOND VALLEY COUNCIL ON FRIDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2020**

#### **ATTENDANCE**

Crs Danielle Mulholland (Chair), Isaac Smith, David Wright, Simon Richardson, Robert Mustow, Chris Cherry

General Managers Graham Kennett, Mark Arnold, Paul Hickey, Vaughan Macdonald,

Cr Derek Swanborough (Scenic Rim Regional Council, Michael Thurston (Destination North Coast), Tim Williamson (RDA Northern Rivers), Anita Gambhir (via telephone)

Nicole Reeve Donna McIntyre (minute taker)

#### **1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

In opening the meeting, the Chair provided an Acknowledgement of Country.

#### **2. APOLOGIES**

Apologies have been received from Cr Virginia West (Scenic Rim Regional Council), Cr Jim Simmons and Ashley Lindsay (Clarence Valley Council); Louise McMeeking (Dept of Regional NSW); Shelley Oldham (Lismore City Council), Troy Green (Tweed Shire Council)

#### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

NIL

#### **4. ADDRESS BY OFFICIAL VISITORS**

**5. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES and BUSINESS ARISING**

**5.1 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE NORTHERN RIVERS  
JOINT ORGANISATION HELD 25 SEPTEMBER 2020**

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**201120/01 RESOLVED**

**MOVED: I Smith/D Wright**

*THAT the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation held Friday 29 September 2020 be adopted as a true and accurate record of proceedings of that meeting.*

**CARRIED**

**FOR VOTE** - All Councillors voted unanimously.

**6. NOTICES OF MOTION**

**NIL received**

**7. REPORTS**

**7.1 ASSOCIATE MEMBER REPORT - DESTINATION NORTH COAST**

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**20112020/2 RESOLVED**

**MOVED: S Richardson/D Wright**

*THAT the report from Destination North Coast be received and noted.*

**CARRIED**

**FOR VOTE** – All Councillors voted unanimously.

**7.2 ASSOCIATE MEMBER REPORT – RDA NORTHERN RIVERS**

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**20112020/3 RESOLVED**

**MOVED: I Smith/ C Cherry**

*THAT the report from RDA Northern Rivers be received and noted.*

**CARRIED**

**FOR VOTE** – All Councillors voted unanimously.

**5.7 ASSOCIATE MEMBER REPORT – SCENIC RIM REGIONAL COUNCIL**

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**20112020/4 RESOLVED**

**MOVED: C Cherry/I Smith**

*THAT the report from Scenic Rim Regional Council be received and noted.*

**CARRIED**

FOR VOTE - All Councillors voted unanimously.

## 5.8 EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

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### **20112020/5 RESOLVED**

MOVED: D Wright/R Mustow

*THAT the Executive Officer's report be received and noted.*

CARRIED

FOR VOTE - All Councillors voted unanimously

## 5.9 FINANCIAL REPORTS

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### **20112020/6 RESOLVED**

MOVED: R Mustow/C Cherry

*THAT THE Board accept the financial reports for period ending 31 October 2020*

CARRIED

FOR VOTE - All Councillors voted unanimously.

## 5.10 AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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### **20112020/7 RESOLVED**

MOVED: R Mustow/I Smith

*THAT the 2019-2020 general purpose financial statements presented to members be accepted and the Chair and nominated voting representative sign the statement as attached*

CARRIED

FOR VOTE - All Councillors voted unanimously.

## 5.11 PROPOSED MEETING DATES 2021

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### **20112020/8 RESOLVED**

Cr Mulholland moved an amendment:

*THAT Board meetings be held via Zoom every three months and a face-to-face workshop relevant to the Strategic Regional Priorities be held in the alternate months.*

MOVED: D Mulholland/C Cherry

Date	Venue
Friday 12 February	Board meeting via Zoom

Friday 26 March	Workshop - Lismore City Council
Friday 7 May	Board meeting via Zoom
Friday 18 June	Workshop – Tweed Shire Council
Friday 30 July	Board meeting via Zoom
Friday 24 September	Workshop – Kyogle Council
Friday 12 November	Board meeting via Zoom
Friday 10 December	Workshop – Ballina Shire Council

**CARRIED**

**FOR VOTE - All Councillors voted unanimously.**

#### **8. URGENT BUSINESS**

**NIL RECEIVED**

#### **9. CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS**

Disclosure of Interest forms were circulated to the Board via confidential email. Cr Mulholland noted an amendment required to her tabled documentation to include the stipend received as Chair of NRJO

**20112020/9 RESOLVED**

**MOVED: C Cherry/D Wright**

*THAT the Board agree to publish the Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest forms*

**CARRIED**

**FOR VOTE - All Councillors voted unanimously.**

#### **10. CORRESPONDENCE**

**20112020/10 RESOLVED**

**MOVED : I Smith/R Mustow**

*THAT the correspondence report be received and noted*

**CARRIED**

**FOR VOTE - All Councillors voted unanimously.**

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**MEETING CLOSED 12.23pm**

**Next meeting**

**12 February 2021**

**Via ZOOM**

MINUTES APPROVED

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Cr Danielle Mulholland

Chair

**RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation held Friday 20 November 2020 be adopted as a true and accurate record of proceedings of that meeting.



## 6 NOTICES OF MOTION

## 7 REPORTS



### **Summer Holiday Season**

Based on personal experience and anecdotal feedback the region has experienced very high levels of visitation throughout the months of December and January thus far. The Sydney Covid-19 outbreak prior to Christmas resulted in many bookings having to be cancelled but feedback indicates that they were swiftly replaced with new bookings. The high levels of visitation, need to cancel existing and process new bookings, combined with the staffing shortages across the region have led to increased stress levels and operational challenges for businesses.

As of 1 January 2021, hospitality venues are required to use the NSW Government QR code system to assist with NSW Health contact tracing. This move ensures all venues are using the same platform improving data capture whilst simplifying the process for consumers.

Staffing shortages of operational staff in a tight/reluctant labour market continue to be the primary issue that we are hearing from operators and LGA's throughout region. The shortage of operational staff is adding additional pressure to operators who have existing high levels of stress due to the constantly changing trading environment and the extended period of high visitation.

### **Business Events**

Following on from the positive results achieved in November the DNC B.E. program secured a conference with Air Liquide that will deliver an economic impact in excess of \$100K. The conference will be held at Peppers Salt Resort & Spa in April 2021.

As the program continues to secure incremental business for the region during these challenging times whilst also assisting in capacity building for the sector, we are confident that we will be able to continue the growth of this award-winning program over the coming year. The prospectus and invoices for participation in the program for 2021 were distributed in December.

### **Food & Beverage Trail**

Following negotiations with Destination NSW the trail will now use the Alpaca platform that DNSW use for all the trails featured on the Visit NSW website. The platform will sit on the Visit NSW website platform but will have differentiated North Coast branding. We are currently working with DNSW to finalise the process for the build and launch of the platform.

### **Recovery for Regional Tourism Grant**

The survey issued by DNC to the North Coast LGA's to provide feedback on their preference for how the \$1.25M in funding is allocated has closed. Feedback was received from the majority of LGA's and regional Business NSW representatives with results showing a diverse range of preferences for how the funding is allocated. The top-ranking themes and projects selected tended to be for product development over marketing and visitor information options. The top-

ranking projects in order were for Aboriginal product development, accommodation reinvestment support and packaging initiatives.

Following further consultation with Destination NSW and Austrade a final submission will be developed outlining how it is proposed that the funds allocated to the North Coast will be spent. Following the completion of this process which is likely to take up to two months DNC will then release the plans for the allocation of the funding.

**RECOMMENDATION**

THAT the report from Destination North Coast be noted



### **OVERVIEW**

RDANR will be developing a Northern Rivers Regional Plan as required under the newly revised Charter. Where relevant regional planning already exists, eg REDS these plans will be adapted for regional relevance.

The Local Jobs Program, Employment Taskforce has engaged an Employment Facilitator to take overall management of the Regional Jobs Program. Aged Care, Tourism, displaced COVID workers, and indigenous job seekers will be priority areas of concern.

NSW Treasury has reviewed the processing of 491 Visas and RDAs have received their allocations for this year. A new process has been instituted by Treasury on behalf of Dept of Home Affairs and the RDANR application process will be aligned within these guidelines.

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### **STRATEGIC PLANNING**

The Regional Development Australia network has regularly developed Regional Plans which act as the key economic planning document for their respective regions. Late 2020, Assistant Minister Nola Marino directed RDAs to once again prioritise this work but use existing plans where appropriate. RDANR will begin this activity and ensure that all local, state and JO plans are reflected in the 'Regional Plan'.

### **INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT**

A nascent Hydrogen Cluster has been identified and work will begin to establish an industry development plan around this new enabling technology. Application to NERA to fund a cluster Facilitator was not successful and regional businesses will also have the opportunity to be networked into other clusters where feasible.

### **EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES**

#### **DESE North Coast tourism, hospitality and aged care skills and jobs information session**

Presented at the Department of Employment's North Coast tourism, hospitality and aged care skills and jobs information session, highlighting the My Future Workforce platform to businesses, industry and job seekers. A number of job seekers signed onto the platform immediately.

## **COMMITTEES**

Committee	Comment
COVID-19 Safe Compliance (Dept Health)	Provide advice and assistance to Dept of Health unit which undertakes promotion and compliance activities for local businesses
Youth Employment Networks	Networks developing pathways for students to industry. Online meetings held. RDA provides industry linkages and input
RLE Economic Sub Committee	Sub Committee reports to the Regional Leadership Executive, wide-ranging issues with COVID focus.
NR Branding Committee	At the establishment phase but a next phase could see it evolve to a Committee for NR. The focus of the brand aligns with RDA Charter.
Cross Border Tourism Committee	Tourism specific, focus for the group for 2020: Skills and training workshops, a regional networking event, taking a lead advocacy role.
Clarence Valley Waste to Work Committee	Project specific around skills and employment in the marine industry based at Clarence Marine Precinct
NRJO Committee	Assoc Membership
NRJO GM Advisory Committee	Projects and issues can get raised here prior to NRJO meeting

## **EVENTS**

### **Future Agro-Challenge: Australia**

The organisation of this national event has picked up pace with applications now open. Communications will be directed through the start up and entrepreneurship networks.

## **MINISTERIAL MEETINGS**

I will continue to attend fortnightly teleconference meetings with Assistant Minister Nola Marino and other RDA Directors across Australia which provides local intelligence on the impact of COVID-19 restrictions.

Nola Marino has arranged for "Town Hall" meetings with Ministers who have regionally focussed portfolios.

Should any NRJO members have regional issues they want raised at these teleconferences please advise me directly.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

THAT the report from RDA Northern Rivers be noted

### UPDATE AND STATUS OF ACTIONS REGARDING NATURE BASED FLOOD MITIGATION IN THE RICHMOND, TWEED, BRUNSWICK AND EVANS RIVER CATCHMENTS

#### **Background**

The Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Program promotes national and international research partnerships between researchers and business, industry, community organisations and other publicly funded research agencies. By supporting the development of partnerships, the ARC encourages the transfer of skills, knowledge and ideas as a basis for securing commercial and other benefits of research.

Dr Caroline A Sullivan (Professor Emeritus, Environmental Economics and Policy, School of Environment, Science and Engineering, Southern Cross University) is assembling a research team to address the theme “Can natural flood management options increase resilience in a subtropical catchment?”. This project is aimed at evaluating the extent to which ‘ecosystem functions’ can alleviate pressure on conventional infrastructure arising from floods and droughts (including the increased incidence that will inevitably come as a result of climate change).

Natural flood management (NFM) embodies a broad range of efforts and has been pursued in a number of countries over several decades to attenuate flood flows by restoring the natural hydraulic function of the floodplain, using a catchment-wide approach to flood control. A key aspect of the NFM approach is that whilst actively seeking to manage flood risks by undertaking action in catchment areas, these same measures will address river health issues, allowing multiple objectives to be met with the same investment.

This grant project links in well as an early activity to support the objectives of the *Northern Rivers Watershed Initiative* (adopted by the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation in 2019).

#### **Overview**

Land use changes within the Northern Rivers catchments have placed significant pressures on natural values, leading to the compromised Ecohealth condition that has been reported. Major landscape-scale intervention is required to prevent further decline.

The proposed ARC Linkage research program will involve the systematic and strategic evaluation and review of three main/broad NFM mechanisms/strategies to manage flood risk in rural catchments:

- increasing infiltration (changing agricultural practices to reduce soil compaction, improve soil quality and promote absorption of water);
- storing water (restoring functioning floodplains and wetlands); and
- slowing flows (restoring natural processes and landforms to the river corridor, riparian buffer strips, coarse woody debris).

#### **Current status**

##### *ARC Linkage Program*

The ARC Linkage program is an effective way of leveraging research funds for partnerships between industry bodies and publicly funded research agencies. The program does require industry input to allow for the leveraging offered through the Linkage program.

Submission of the funding application has been delayed pending confirmation of industry support for the research project. Whilst there is now support at a local government level from Rous County Council, Lismore City Council and Kyogle Council, Local Land Services has been unable to confirm any financial support to date due to budget uncertainty. It is currently planned to lodge the application for funding for this 3-year research program early in 2021.

The closure of SCU's National Centre for Flood Research in December 2020 is not expected to affect the likelihood of success for the grant or its execution. Dr Caroline A Sullivan (Professor Emeritus, Southern Cross University) will continue to lead the ARC grant submission and if successful, will maintain a significant involvement in its execution, in collaboration with SCU and UNSW researchers.

#### *Nature Based Solutions for Flood Mitigation \ Natural Flood Mitigation Activities*

Initiated following the release of the *Northern Rivers Watershed Initiative*, Whian Whian Landcare, SCU and Rous County Council have collaborated to undertake a joint project to update natural flood mitigation materials and references. The work, which has commenced, is expected to be completed within 6 months, and will provide a current picture of knowledge and understanding of natural flood mitigation, within Australia and the world. The work will be an input into the *ARC Linkage Program*. It is also hoped that the small project can provide some direction to enable future targeted computer based flood modelling of catchments to assess and quantify the effectiveness of the approaches.

#### *Northern Rivers Watershed Initiative*

In November 2020, the Rous County Council General Manager wrote to the Member for Lismore, Janelle Saffin MP, following the member's raising of the Watershed Initiative in the NSW Parliament. The correspondence included several high priority and shovel ready projects to the value of \$5M, as listed below:

- (i) Soil health improvement/soil conservation on macadamia farms (\$0.5M)
- (ii) Riparian restoration and catchment revegetation (\$2.5M)
- (ii) Redesigned floodplain drainage to meet contemporary standards (\$1.5M)
- (iv) Natural flood mitigation (landscape hydration) (\$0.5M)

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

THAT the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation note the update and status of actions related to nature based flood mitigation in the Richmond and Tweed River catchments.

#### **ATTACHMENT 1**

*Community information sheet : Nature-based solutions for flood risk management.* Dr Mitchell Kirby, SCU





Below is an update of key initiatives, projects and successful grant funding announcements for the Scenic Rim.

### **Ecotourism Destination certification**

Scenic Rim Regional Council has been selected as one of eight councils in Australia to pursue ECO Destination Certification with Ecotourism Australia through their new partnership with WWF-Australia. Ecotourism Australia is the body that certifies Australian ecotourism products and destinations through an internationally-recognised process. They have partnered with WWF-Australia to develop a long-term approach to assist Australia's bushfire-affected communities to rebuild as vibrant, resilient and sustainable tourism destinations and create a business environment where ecotourism thrives.

The ECO Destination certification assures travellers that certified destinations are backed by a strong, well managed commitment to sustainable practices and that high-quality nature-based tourism experiences are available within the region. It also has the potential to embed tangible and long-lasting environmental, social and economic sustainability practices within the local community.

Visitors to the Scenic Rim region already benefit from the services of ten tourism operators who's businesses are Ecotourism certified, along with a number of others who demonstrate a strong commitment to ecotourism values and to the operating standards of sustainable tourism management.

Council's new Tourism Recovery Officer has commenced working closely with Ecotourism Australia and local Scenic Rim tourism operators to pursue ECO Destination Certification by 30 June 2022. This will be achieved through a process of assessment, industry engagement and delivery of the actions required to meet all the criteria required for destination certification. It will include a series of workshops to engage local tourism operators and a Rewards and Incentives Program to assist them to also become Eco-certified.

### **Regional Events stimulate Scenic Rim Economy**

Regional events are tipped to bring a combined economic impact of at least \$5.5 million to the Scenic Rim in 2021, as bushfire recovery funding enables the region to bump up its calendar of events.

Signature regional events in 2021 will include the Great Gondwana Festival, co-hosted by ecotourism icons Binna Burra Lodge, O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat and Mt Barney Lodge, a gala concert in collaboration with Queensland Music Festival and the 10th anniversary of Scenic Rim Eat Local Week.

Those three events alone are expected to bring an estimated combined return of \$5.5 million.

Planning for the 10th anniversary of Scenic Rim Eat Local Week, featuring special anniversary celebrations from 26 June to 4 July 2021, is well underway, with expression of interest distributed this week to local businesses and producers wishing to conduct events for Scenic Rim Eat Local Week 2021. Eat Local Week will once again conclude with Council's signature event - Winter Harvest Festival, being held at Aratula on Saturday 3 July 2021. As Council secured grant funding for this event, local producers and businesses will not be charged to be involved in Eat Local Week and Winter Harvest Festival this year.

### **Scenic Rim to host Farm2Plate**

Regionality, in partnership with Scenic Rim Regional Council, will hold Farm2Plate Exchange 2021 in the region on 18 and 19 May. The conference will explore the theme 'RENEWAL', and brings together leaders involved in the producer to consumer value chain and attracts an audience drawn from across Australia, working in fields of agriculture, food and beverage manufacturing, regional food distribution, regional food networks, agri and culinary tourism, hospital, economic development and policy making.

This year's theme is aligned with ideas of adaptation and resilience.

Farm2Plate Exchange 2021 will provide opportunities to network and experience hands on learning through workshops lead by industry masters, off site farm tours, panel discussions and dinners showcasing food produced in the region.

Farm2Plate Exchange 2021 will highlight the Scenic Rim's growing reputation as a clean and sustainable food producer and a fascinating agritourism destination.

### **Agritourism / Agribusiness Program**

On Thursday 4 February Scenic Rim farmers, food producers and rural landowners attended a field day, facilitated by Regionality, which provided them an to learn about innovating their business.

Industry will be able to expression interest in participating in a business development program. The mentoring and practical approach to agritourism and agribusiness provides participants with the support they need to diversify, create alternative or additional income streams, and in some cases, allow for succession planning to keep family members on the land.

Involvement in the program will allow industry to innovate, by understanding the options available and unlocking opportunities to support a consistent income stream during challenging times.

### **Water for Warrill Project**

After years of ongoing drought, a group of local farmers, growers and producers looking to expand the region's \$263 million agriculture industry have sought Council's support to secure its water supply.

Warrill Valley Irrigators approached Council seeking financial support for a feasibility study on potential new water supply opportunities and projects for the Warrill and Fassifern Valleys.

his project is about future proofing our region, creating jobs and growing the economy, which is core to Council's Regional Prosperity Strategy 2020-2025.

The study will engage industry experts, Jacobs, to map where the investment should logically be, assess demand for additional water and conduct a full economic impact analysis.

Industry is supportive of this project, as the study will provide an opportunity to have another water source to help increase production. The feasibility study will provide a pivotal platform to advocate to both the Australian and Queensland Governments for future funding. Having a properly assessed and designed water project enables Council to make a strong case across all level of government about the importance of this project, not only to the region's economy, but also to the Queensland and Australian economies.

### **World of Work – Scenic Rim Business and Careers Expo**

On Thursday 18 March 2021, the World of Work will connect Scenic Rim businesses with local community members and job seekers.

Jobseekers will have access to local employers, employment opportunities and some of the support services in the Scenic Rim.

There will also be opportunities to find out more about career and training pathways, as well as apprenticeship and traineeship information.

Scenic Rim business, will be able to promote their business through interactive displays, meet prospective employees, advertise current job vacancies, and network with other Scenic Rim businesses.

A business breakfast will be held at The Centre Beaudesert from 7.00am to 8.30am

Following the breakfast, the World of Work Expo opens at 10.00am at the Beaudesert Showgrounds and runs until 2.30pm.

### **Council Adopts Communication Strategy**

On 23 November, Council adopted its first ever Communication Strategy to help guide its conversations with Scenic Rim communities over the next three years.

With more than 43,000 people calling the Scenic Rim home, as well as 4,500 businesses, it is important for Council to communicate effectively about the programs and services provided, which are also are building community wellbeing and prosperity.

A key part of the strategy will be to improve Council's internal processes and increase information flows within the organisation, which over time will have a positive domino effect in the Scenic Rim community.

The *Scenic Rim Regional Council Communication Strategy 2020-23* is available on Council's [website](#).

### ***Draft Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy 2021-2026***

Scenic Rim Regional Council is calling for community feedback on how waste and resource recovery is managed in the future. The *Draft Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy 2021-2026* includes clear targets, actions and priorities.

In 2019-20, Council processed 31,645 tonnes of waste at our landfill including waste from the seven waste facilities, and this strategy aims to increase recycling and resource recovery and reduce the quantity of waste that goes to landfill

Council is driving improvement in waste management and resource recovery, and with the support of our communities, the Scenic Rim has achieved an enviable environmental record in waste management.

The Waste Strategy will set the direction for detailed future plans relating to services, infrastructure and information for our community.

Council is encouraging community members and businesses to read through the draft Strategy on Council's [website](#) and provide feedback to create a cleaner and greener region.

### **Scenic Rim Receives Drought Funding Boost**

Council will build drought resilience in the region thanks to a \$1 million boost from the Australian Government's drought communities program. With agriculture as one of the regions major industries, the many years with limited rain has been a major issue for local farmers and has flow on effects to the rest of our communities.

This funding will help the region strengthen their resilience to the drought by providing a coordinated approach to drought response and resilience. **The projects are listed below:**

- Employ Drought and Resilience Coordinator and deliver Adverse Event Plan.
- Upskill agricultural sector
- Deliver industry cluster program
- Deliver land management workshops
- Target waterway weeds
- Deliver mental health first aid training
- Install or upgrade water tanks at rural community halls
- Upgrade Mount Alford Playground, Bowman Park
- Destination Music Event

### **Fire Trail Funding secured**

An investment of more than \$100,000 in a fire trail construction and maintenance project will increase the region's resilience to bushfire and help protect the lives and properties of Scenic Rim residents at Tamborine Mountain and Gleneagle.

Council's contribution of \$40,000 and the Queensland Government's contribution of \$60,000 from the more than \$59 million 2019-21 Local Government Grants and Subsidies Program had enabled Scenic Rim Regional Council to carry out a wide range of works in reserves, including Guanaba Reserve and Gleneagle Reserve, to reduce bushfire risks in neighbouring residential areas.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

THAT the report from Scenic Rim Regional Council be received and noted.

## 7.5 ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIR

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Following the resignation of Cr Isaac Smith from Lismore City Council in January 2021, a vacancy in the role of Deputy Chair of NRJO was created. An election will be held on 12 February 2021 at the NRJO Board meeting to appoint a new Deputy Chair.

Nominations for Deputy Chair will be received up until and including consideration of this item at the meeting at which the election of the Deputy Chairperson occurs. Appropriate nomination forms for the position of Deputy Chairperson are included in the attachments to this report.

If there is more than one nominee, voting will be required to determine the Deputy Chairperson. Voting for the position of Deputy Chairperson is to be carried out by open voting (i.e. show of hands).

Voting representatives for the election of Deputy Chairperson are the Mayors of the member councils as listed in the Charter. These are:

- |                       |                               |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Cr Robert Mustow    | Mayor Richmond Valley Council |
| • TBC                 | Mayor Lismore City Council    |
| • Cr Simon Richardson | Mayor Byron Shire Council     |
| • Cr David Wright     | Mayor Ballina Shire Council   |
| • Cr Chris Cherry     | Mayor Tweed Shire Council     |

The Returning Officer is Nicole Reeve, Executive Officer of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation.

### **ATTACHMENT 2:**

Nomination forms for Deputy Chair

## 7.6 EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT

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### **RDA NORTHERN RIVERS SERVICE AGREEMENT**

In December 2020 a Service Agreement renewal was received from RDA Northern Rivers. A recommendation was made by the Executive Officer to renew the agreement to 30 June 2021. Following email confirmation from Board members, the agreement was signed and returned to RDA NR.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT the Board ratify the acceptance of the RDA Northern Rivers Service Agreement to 31 June 2021

### **NRJO STRATEGIC REGIONAL PRIOTIES**

- **BIOSPHERE**

*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*

Central to the purpose of the NRJO is the creation of a diversified, prosperous and sustainable regional economy. One of the Advocacy briefs developed to support this was the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Biosphere Reserve

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.

**UPDATE:** In order to progress this strategy, the EO has had the Biosphere listed on the Agenda of the NRJO NRM Managers meeting being held on February 10 where it will be proposed that the NRJO apply for a grant to examine the potential financial, social and logistical aspects of the pursuing an application. A suitable grant has been identified.

- **ROOTS TO ROUTES: AN INNOVATIVE VISION OF FREIGHT FOR THE NORTHERN RIVERS NSW**

*Goal #6: An efficient, safe and sustainable regional transport system that enables improved productivity, connectivity and social inclusion for businesses, residents and visitors.*

The Department of Regional NSW has engaged BDO to prepare a Business Case to government to establish a new regional freight infrastructure grants program. The program aims to support the export of regional NSW products to key domestic and international markets. The objectives of the program are to:

- invest in enabling infrastructure and facilities that will improve supply chains and increase exports
- identify opportunities for industries to recover from the impacts of COVID-19
- establish partnerships between the public and private sector

As a part of this process the NRJO arranged for BDO to receive a copy of the Roots to Routes Strategy. NRJO arranged for the General Managers to brief key members of this study this week.

- **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*

The development of the renewable energy prospectus will deliver sustainable energy, high value jobs in key employment areas, new research and innovation opportunities and capital raising connections where none currently exist.

**UPDATE:** The Renewable Energy Prospectus has been marked as a key priority of Sustain Northern Rivers this year with the NRJO overseeing its direction and funding options.

## **NRJO PROJECTS AND COMMITTEES**

- **NORTHERN RIVERS NSW BRAND**

The Northern Rivers NSW Brand continues to gain traction and as of January 28 had 208 businesses and organisations signed up from 163 on 13 November 2020.

The **Northern Rivers NSW** brand has been focusing over the summer on building up their social media following. The Facebook page has grown from 420 at the end of October to more than 5800 followers. Between 30 December 2020 and 26 January 2021 the NR Brand Facebook page reached an estimated 130,000 people, with 8900 post engagements.

A summary of the media coverage generated by the MOU signing held in November 2020 has been included in the NRJO Board papers.

- **RESILIENCE AND RECOVERY SUB COMMITTEE**

The Resilience and Recovery Sub Committees have replaced the Northern Border Recovery Committee and have a reporting relationship through the Department of Regional NSW.

### **(a) DISCUSSION PAPER – COST OF COVID19 COMPLIANCE IN HIGH TOURISM AREAS**

A common theme for the NRJO at each border recovery meeting is the impost of COVID Education and compliance for Councils in high tourist areas and possible assistance that could be provided by the NSW Government. To create a consolidated approach Ballina, Byron Bay and Tweed Shire Councils provided relevant data.

The paper was submitted to the Cross-Border Commissioner James McTavish and Director North Coast, Regional NSW, Louise McMeeking. It was subsequently deemed a whole of State issue and referred to the Office of Local Government who copied it to SEOC. In January a further request was received from Dept of Regional NSW to be sent the paper for a briefing being prepared for the Deputy Secretary. A copy was also sent to the Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation who were experiencing similar issues on the southern border between NSW and Victoria.

## **ATTACHMENT 3:**

Costs of COVID Compliance paper

- **DISASTER DASHBOARDS**

A grant application for two years of funding was submitted through the **Bushfire Community Recovery and Resilience Fund Stream 2** in December on behalf of Kyogle, Richmond Valley, Lismore City and Ballina Shire Councils. Should the application be successful two different companies would be engaged. The Disaster Dashboard would be anchored off each Council's existing website.

- **ARC LINKAGE PROGRAM**

QUT has chosen to delay the submission for a grant for this project until 2021. They have committed to notify the NRJO when the updated submission is finalised.

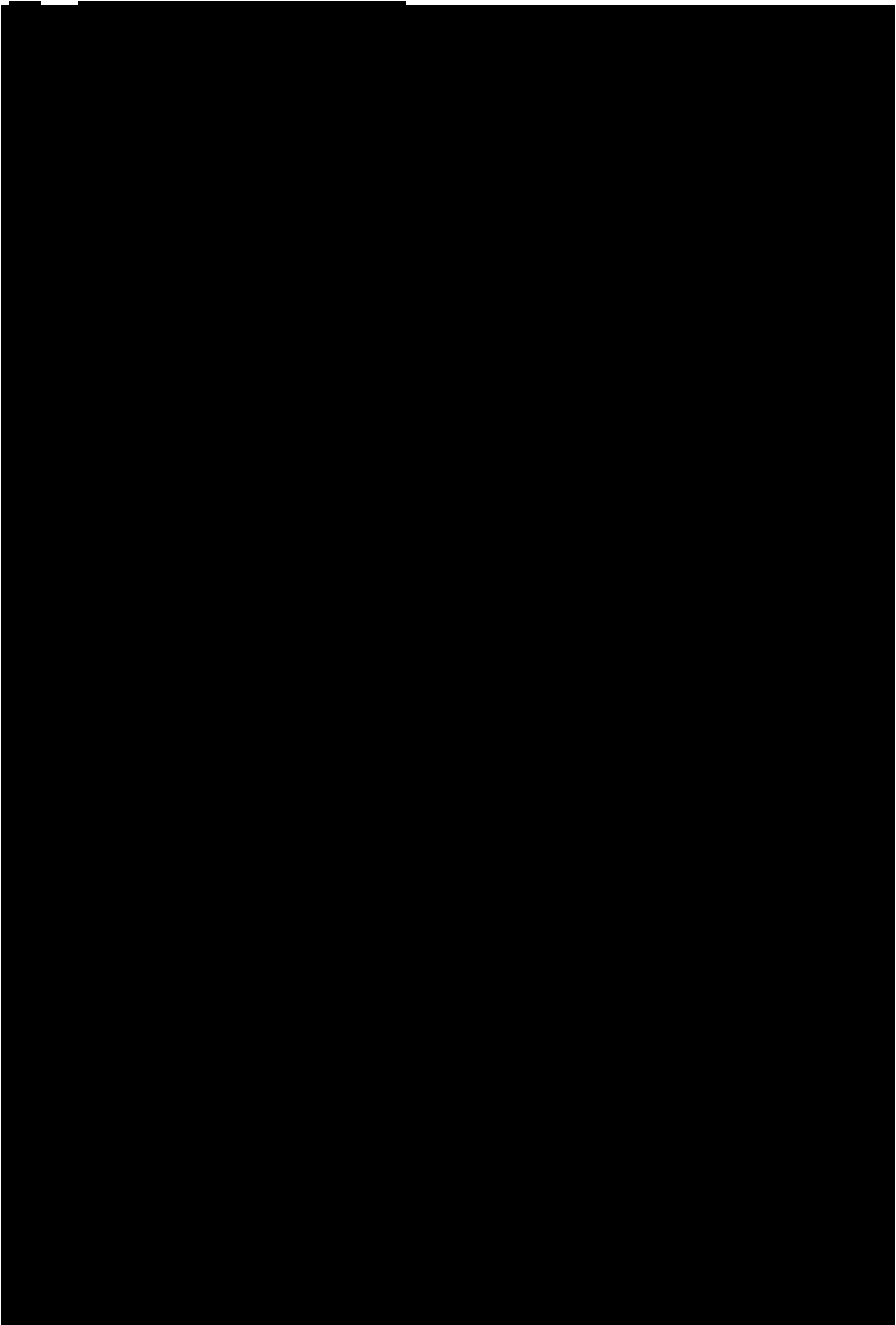
- **MEETINGS**

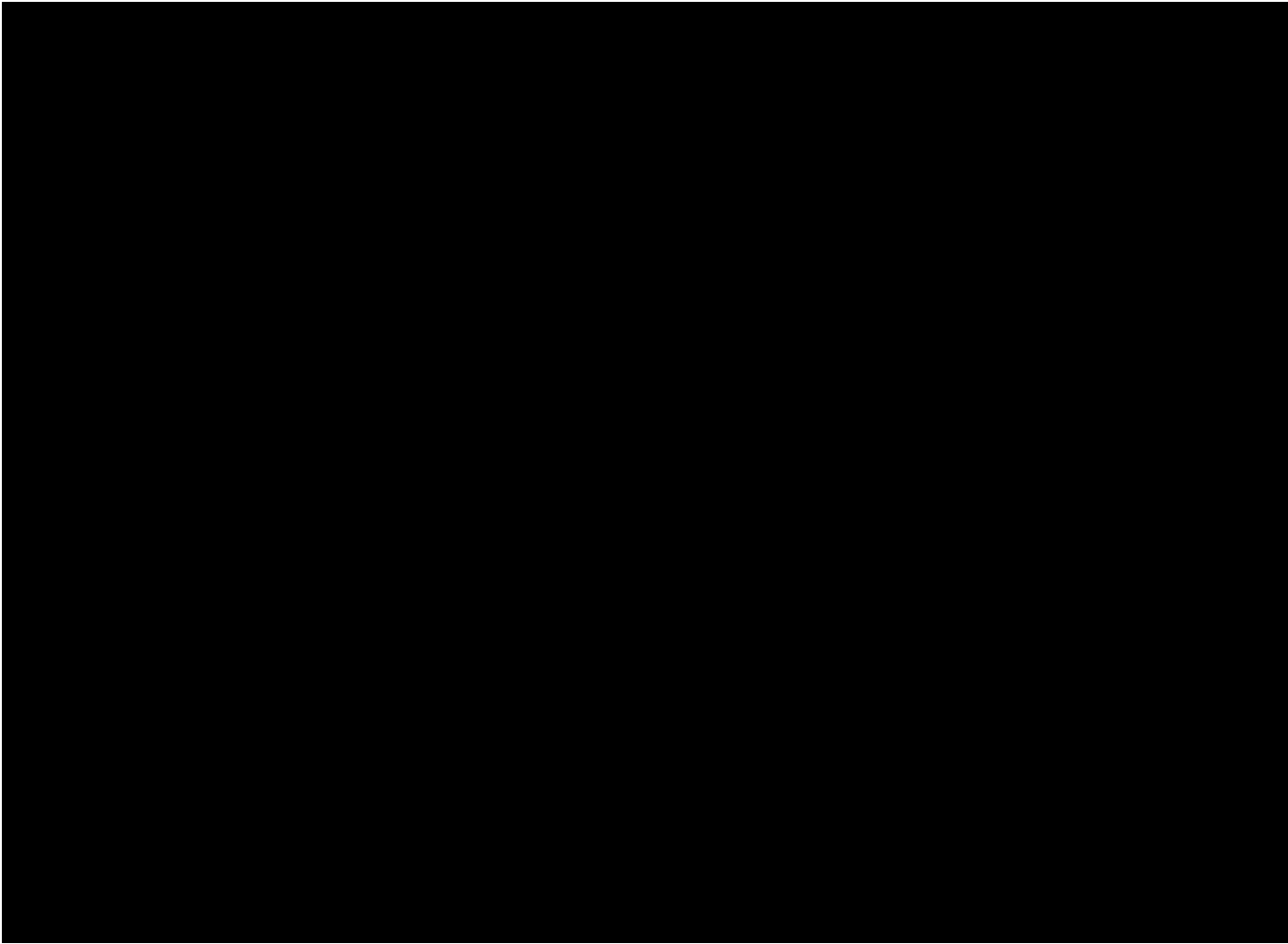
The EO was in attendance when the Deputy Premier, The Honourable John Barilaro MP launched the NSW Government's 20 Year Vision for the Northern Rivers on Wednesday 3 February.

<b>RECOMMENDATION:</b>
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THAT the Board receive and note the Executive Officer's report
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## 7.8 JOINT ORGANISATION MONITORING AND EVALUATION PROJECT.

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In January The Minister for Local Government, The Honourable Shelley Hancock MP, announced the Terms of Reference for the Joint Organisation Monitoring and Evaluation Project. The objective of the project is to ensure the JO framework is effective and that JOs can deliver their core functions of advocacy, strategic leadership and better outcome for regional communities.

The Terms of Reference for the study are:

1. Analysis of what has worked in the establishment of the JOs, and what barriers exist to good governance.
2. How effective the JO model has been in supporting JOs to deliver against the core objectives of advocacy, strategic leadership and better outcomes for regional communities.
3. How the delivery of core objectives can be measured.
4. How other NSW and Commonwealth agencies work with the JO network and value the contribution of the JO network.
5. How the \$150,000 capacity building funding has been used and the value of that funding program to the ongoing sustainability of the JOs.
6. Identification of barriers to success of the JO model
7. What a successful JO network looks like and how it can be realised.

The actual mechanics of the study have not been released; however, it is intended the Project will be completed by mid-2021.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT the Board note the Terms of Reference and provide input to the review

## 7.9 FINANCIAL REPORTS

### Statement of Comprehensive Income and Statement of Financial Position for NoRJO

as at 31 January 2021

**DRAFT ONLY**

	2020/21 Budget	2020/21 Actual	2019/20 Actual
<b><u>Operating Revenues</u></b>			
Membership Fees	160,800	160,800	128,600
Myroadinfo Fees	34,400	16,863	33,725
LG Procurement Rebate	10,600	37,386	37,388
Power Infrastructure Upgrade Project	-	-	-
Capacity Building	-	-	150,000
State Gov't Contribution	-	57,600	-
Sundry Income / Recharge Workshops	-	-	6,276
Interest	5,000	1,412	5,090
<b>Total</b>	<b>210,800</b>	<b>274,061</b>	<b>361,079</b>
<b><u>Operating Expenses</u></b>			
Bank Charges	-	40	-
Conferences, Events, Travel	12,250	301	22,715
Consultants (Economic Report)	-	500	-
Professional Development	5,200	-	-
Exec Officer - Salary/Oncosts/Recruit	96,351	44,621	85,172
Exec Officer - Computer	3,000	-	-
Exec Officer - Vehicle Allowance	8,580	3,218	8,580
Exec Officer - Support (RDA)	54,000	31,500	54,600
Exec Officer - Office (Rous)	-	-	-
Chair Stipend	10,000	5,833	9,167
MyRoadInfo	29,300	-	28,031
Professional Fees – Audit	6,500	160	6,500
Media and Communications	5,200	-	-
Regional Projects - Capacity Building	-	37,350	-
Regional Projects - Other	550,537	-	214,895
Vendor Panel Access	77,500	32,713	65,375
Sundry Expenses	3,709	2,119	3,541
<b>Total</b>	<b>862,127</b>	<b>158,354</b>	<b>498,576</b>
Net Cash Movement	-651,327	115,707	- 137,497
Retained Earnings - 1 July	996,259	996,259	1,133,756
Retained Earnings - 30 June	344,932	1,111,966	996,259

**NOTE: DOES NOT INCLUDE COSTS FOR MYROAD INFO**

**Balance Sheet**

As of January 2021

<b>Assets</b>			
Cash			
Summerland Community First		\$5,246.56	
Summerland Saver		\$1,088,012.36	
Debit Card - Chair		\$2,142.30	
Debit Card - Exec Officer		\$1,158.65	
Total Cash			\$1,096,559.87
Debtors			
Trade Debtors		\$71,720.00	
Total Debtors			\$71,720.00
Total Assets			\$1,168,279.87
<b>Liabilities</b>			
Current Liabilities			
Creditors			
Trade Creditors	\$48,246.00		
Sundry Creditors/Accruals	\$833.33		
Total Creditors		\$49,079.33	
GST Liability			
GST Collected	\$11,187.51		
GST paid	-\$7,518.27		
Total GST Liability		\$3,669.24	
Payroll Liabilities			
PAYG	\$2,850.00		
Superannuation Payable	\$274.04		
Provision - Staff entitlements	\$441.38		
Total Payroll Liabilities		\$3,565.42	
Total Liabilities			\$56,313.99
Net Assets			\$1,111,965.88
<b>Equity</b>			
Retained Earnings		\$996,258.74	
Current Year Earnings		\$115,707.00	
Historical Balancing		\$0.14	
Total Equity			\$1,111,965.88

This report includes Year-End Adjustments.

**Job Profit & Loss Statement**

January 2021

Account Name	Selected Period	Year To Date
<b>A100</b>	<b>Operational expenses</b>	
<b>Income</b>		
Membership	\$0.00	\$160,800.00
LG Procurement Rebate	\$0.00	\$37,386.00
State Govt Funding	\$0.00	\$57,600.00
Interest Received	\$185.07	\$1,412.07
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$185.07</b>	<b>\$257,198.07</b>
<b>Expense</b>		
Computer ISP and Registrations	\$120.08	\$1,086.38
Consultants	\$0.00	\$500.00
Phone charges	\$99.08	\$782.20
Support services - Admin contr	\$4,500.00	\$31,500.00
Wages	\$2,884.61	\$33,727.99
Allowances	\$0.00	\$3,217.50
Superannuation	\$274.04	\$3,204.16
Provision for Staff Entitlemen	\$250.28	\$441.38
Recruitment	\$0.00	\$5,707.73
Workers Comp Insurance	\$0.00	\$1,539.38
Bank charges	\$0.00	\$40.00
Audit Fees	\$0.00	\$160.00
Printing	\$0.00	\$80.00
Event Catering	\$158.40	\$158.40
Meeting Catering	\$0.00	\$142.41
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$8,286.49</b>	<b>\$82,287.53</b>
<b>Net Profit/(Loss)</b>	<b>-\$8,101.42</b>	<b>\$174,910.54</b>
<b>A102</b>	<b>Chair costs</b>	
<b>Expense</b>		
Postage	\$0.00	\$15.64
Stationery	\$0.00	\$154.59
Allowance-Chair Stipend	\$833.33	\$5,833.31
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$833.33</b>	<b>\$6,003.54</b>
<b>Net Profit/(Loss)</b>	<b>-\$833.33</b>	<b>-\$6,003.54</b>
<b>B105a</b>	<b>Cap Bldg Waste Microindustries</b>	
<b>Expense</b>		
Project Consultants	\$34,860.00	\$37,350.00
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$34,860.00</b>	<b>\$37,350.00</b>
<b>Net Profit/(Loss)</b>	<b>-\$34,860.00</b>	<b>-\$37,350.00</b>
<b>C101</b>	<b>Myroadinfo</b>	

This report includes Year-End Adjustments.

**Job Profit & Loss Statement**

January 2021

Account Name	Selected Period	Year To Date
<b>Income</b>		
Myroadinfo	\$0.00	\$16,862.50
Total Income	\$0.00	\$16,862.50
<b>Expense</b>		
Vendor Panel Licence Costs	\$0.00	\$32,712.50
Total Expense	\$0.00	\$32,712.50
Net Profit/(Loss)	\$0.00	-\$32,712.50

**C102 Vendor Panel****RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT the financial reports for period ending 31 January 2021 be accepted.

This report includes Year-End Adjustments.

## 8 URGENT BUSINESS

## 9 CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS

## 10 CORRESPONDENCE

### Correspondence of significance – Incoming

- Shelley Hancock, Minister for Local Government re JO Monitoring and Evaluation Project (Attachment 7)
- James Griffin, Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment and Veterans re Northern Rivers Watershed Initiative (Attachment 8)

### Correspondence of significance - Outgoing

- Letter of support RDA Northern Rivers Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Grant
- Letter of Support Upper Clarence Combined Landcare Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Grant
- Report to Cross Border Commissioner re the costs of COVID compliance
- Letter of support provided for QUT Rise of the Lifestyle Community Grant application

## MOU Signing - Media

Following the signing of the MOU with the Northern Rivers NSW team at the November Board meeting media coverage included two consecutive Northern Rivers Review editions and in The Northern Star. (Attachment 9)

The brand also featured on the front page of the Richmond River Independent

Another piece on the Lismore app included strong endorsement from Lismore Chamber of Commerce EO Emma Wallace:

In addition, Executive Officer Allison Henry did radio interviews on the brand with ABC North Coast and Bay FM, both of which featured discussions of the MOU with Councils.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT the correspondence report be noted



## 11 ATTACHMENTS

1. Community information sheet : Nature-based solutions for flood risk management. Dr Mitchell Kirby, SCU
2. Ballot papers – Election of Deputy Chair
3. Costs of COVID Compliance – submitted to Cross Border Commissioner and Dept of Regional NSW
4. Executive Summary – Microwaste Project
5. Advocacy Brief – UNESCO Biohub
6. Advocacy Brief – Development of a Renewable Energy Prospectus
7. Correspondence from Minister Shelly Hancock Minister for Local Government re JO Monitoring and Evaluation Project (copy attached)
8. Correspondence from James Griffin, Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment and Veterans re Northern Rivers Watershed Initiative
9. Media coverage of NR Brand MOU signing 20 November 2020

# Community information sheet: Nature-based solutions for flood risk management

[<return to meeting papers>](#)

Prepared by Dr Mitchell Kirby

## Quick Summary

The purpose of this document is to provide information about Nature-Based Solutions for flood risk management to the community. The document is in response to the Draft Lismore City Council's floodplain management study and the proposed options to mitigate flood damages in the future. It has been prepared for a general audience as a concise overview of the subject.

### Key points:

- Nature-based solutions provide an integrated way to address multiple issues simultaneously—i.e. their benefits go beyond flood risk management and contribute to things like biodiversity conservation, and climate change mitigation
- These benefits are received all year round and every year, not just in the event of a flood and are distributed more broadly across the catchment
- Nature-based solutions can reduce flood peak height and flood damage
- Reducing flood peak height provides catchment level benefits, as opposed to 'hard' engineering solutions such as levees which protect only a confined area
- Considering co-benefits, nature-based solutions are substantially more cost-effective than 'hard' engineering solutions
- A weakness of Nature-based solutions is that it is hard to determine a definitive protection that they provide (unlike their 'hard' engineering counterparts). This needs to be resolved with further investigation and computer modelling
- Nature-based solutions have been shown to work well alongside current flood mitigation measures and infrastructure
- Nature-based solutions are adaptive, and can be implemented across multiple small-scale investments, and are therefore a less risky capital expenditure
- The adoption of Nature-based solutions can create valuable employment opportunities and reward / incentivise better land management
- Collaborative and cooperative behaviour across the catchment are required to avoid the transfer of problems from one place to another
- More information is needed to determine the effectiveness of NBS across the Richmond River landscape
- Choosing which flood risk management option/s should be adopted needs to be supported by a thorough assessment of cost-effectiveness or cost-benefit analysis including environmental costs and co-benefits i.e. the contribution to environmental health and human well-being

## **Introduction**

Concerned with the risk of future flooding events and the corresponding damages (like that experienced in 2017), the Lismore City Council (LCC) has recently put on exhibition the Draft Lismore Floodplain Risk Management Study. The study presents an assessment of flooding for different rainfall events and promotes solutions that will reduce damages to the Lismore's urban areas caused by future flooding. Most of these solutions involve conventional 'hard engineering' solutions (e.g. the construction of levees, or drainage and earthworks). The study does also suggest the necessity to consider the role of nature-based solutions (NBSs) for flood risk management. However, there is little to no detail provided as to what NBSs are and what the outcome of adopting them could mean for the catchment. Considering the LCC is also asking the community to have their say on the study, and to show preference for the proposed solutions, it is important that the community can be informed about NBSs before offering comment.

## **What are nature-based solutions?**

Nature-based solutions are a collection of actions that utilise or mimic natural processes to solve economic, social, and environmental issues. The most important and distinguishable feature of NBSs is that a single NBS will often provide an extensive range of benefits. For example, a tree planted to provide shade will also remove carbon from the atmosphere, provide habitat and food for animals, clean air to breathe, and visual amenity (i.e. they look good). The provision of co-benefits is a feature that commonly makes NBSs a comparatively more cost-effective solution than socio-economic or 'hard' engineered approaches (Daigneault *et al.*, 2016; Dadson *et al.*, 2017). Further, NBSs are an umbrella concept and include terms that may already be known to the public such as best-management practice, water sensitive urban design and natural sequence farming.

In the context of flood management, NBS are becoming increasingly popular around the world, however it is shown that Australia is lagging behind places like Europe (Jones *et al.*, 2012; Dadson *et al.*, 2017; Ruangpan *et al.*, 2020). Regarding specific interventions a variety of NBSs have been used to mitigate the effects of flooding (a summary of these approaches can be read in Appendix 1—some of which may explicitly interest landowners and farmers in the region). For simplicity, this document highlights three general NBSs for flood risk management and lists their proven flood related benefits as well as some known co-benefits: 1) afforestation and riparian vegetation management, 2) wetland restoration and water retention, and 3) 're-naturing': de-culverting and removal of built infrastructure (Table 1). Additionally, to address community interest—as it is not explicitly mentioned above or in Appendix 1—the role of soil organic matter in flood management may be worth considering as it appears to offer potential to improve water storage and infiltration (Victoria *et al.*, 2012). This is important where afforestation or land-use change is not possible.

## Community information sheet: Nature-based solutions for flood risk management

Table 1: Summary of Nature-based solutions and their contribution to flood mitigation.

NBS	Flood related benefits	Co-benefits
Afforestation and riparian vegetation management	Increase evapotranspiration	Increase habitat and biodiversity in the area
	Improve consistency of meteorological events	Carbon storage
	Improve storage and interception of water into soil profile / root-zone / water table	Increase cultural and recreation value
	Increase catchment roughness	Host beneficial predators for pest species
	Reduce peak flow and flood height	Provide windbreaks
	Erosion control and soil protection	
	Reduce sedimentation of rivers and streams	
	Improve riverbank stability	
	Improve water quality	
Wetland restoration and natural water retention	Improve water flow and storage	Increase habitat and biodiversity in the area
	Improve water quality	Carbon storage
	Capture floodwaters	Increase recreation value (e.g. bird watching)
	Reduce fish-kills caused by acid-sulphate soils	
Re-naturing: de-culverting and removal of built infrastructure (aka room for the river)	Improve water flow	Improve landscape value
	Improve storage and interception of water into soil profile / root-zone / water table	Increase recreational value
	Create room for flooding, reduce damages to buildings	

Based on: Jakeman *et al.* (2005); Wahren *et al.* (2009); Damodaram *et al.* (2010); Hillen *et al.* (2010); Gedan *et al.* (2011); Naumann *et al.* (2011); Jones *et al.* (2012); Huang *et al.* (2014); Zhou *et al.* (2015); Dixon *et al.* (2016); Nijzink *et al.* (2016); Burgess-Gamble *et al.* (2017); Dadson *et al.* (2017); Sheil (2018); Van Coppenolle *et al.* (2018); Evaristo and McDonnell (2019); Roderick *et al.* (2019); Ruangpan *et al.* (2020).

## How these approaches work

Afforestation works to slow and intercept water flows in the upper catchment. By slowing flows at the top end, flood waters in the lower catchment have more chance to drain. Further, slower flows may create bottlenecks which contribute to diverting flood waters onto floodplain storage. The effect of this is a longer but lower flood (Figure 1). Riparian vegetation may also contribute to slowing the flow of flood waters through increasing catchment roughness, especially in smaller streams (Appendix 2). Additionally, riparian vegetation makes an important contribution through maintaining bank stability and reducing sedimentation of riverways. This is essential as shallow rivers full of sediment drain more poorly than deeper rivers. Better defined and deeper rivers can drain more water at slower less turbulent flows.

Other measures used to improve flow, such as de-culverting or creating room for the river, work to reduce flood height by improving drainage and storage across the catchment.

Across the landscape, a combination of NBSs can be used to great effect, i.e. slowing flows, and storing flood waters in the upper catchment, and improving drainage, flows and the room available for flooding in the lower catchments. In the context of the Lismore 2017 flood, a 6 – 11% (approx.) reduction in flood height could have avoided the levee overtopping—this is visualised in Figure 1. NBS offer great potential to contribute marginal effects on flood height, but in combination with existing infrastructure, this will contribute to substantive effects on damage reduction.

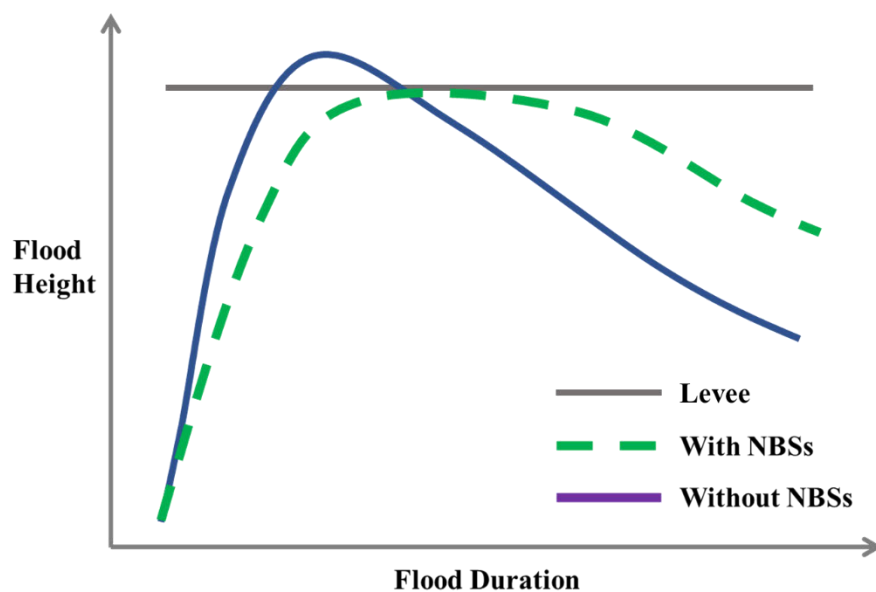


Figure 1: Hypothetical contribution of upper catchment afforestation and water storage Nature-based Solutions (NBSs), based on 2017 Wilson River flood curve.

### How effective are Nature-based solutions?

Regarding the effectiveness of NBSs, it is important to recognise that every catchment is different and the implementation and success of NBSs may vary accordingly. In the context of their adoption by LCC, it is essential that the effectiveness of NBSs is appropriately modelled for this catchment—which has not been done in the Draft Lismore City Council's floodplain management study. Without this, we need to learn from the literature about the effectiveness of NBSs in flood mitigation.

Figure 2 has been provided as a simple representative summary of the literature on the effectiveness of NBSs on reducing flood peak height. Here the outputs of computer modelling show the theoretical influence of NBSs on flooding in a European catchment. What is shown is that interventions to retain water in the landscape can help to reduce peak flows for frequent low volume flood events, whereas making room for rivers through increased flood plain conveyance and storage helps to reduce peak flows for infrequent high volume flood events (Francés *et al.*, 2008). These findings appear to be common across the literature (Metcalf *et*

*al.*, 2017; Ruangpan *et al.*, 2020). In the context of the Lismore region, a reduction of flood peaks in common low volume (or minor) flooding events may have a substantial influence to reduce damages to properties not protected by current flood mitigation structures, and equally important—albeit poorly recognised—to reduce damages to the environment, especially soil erosion.

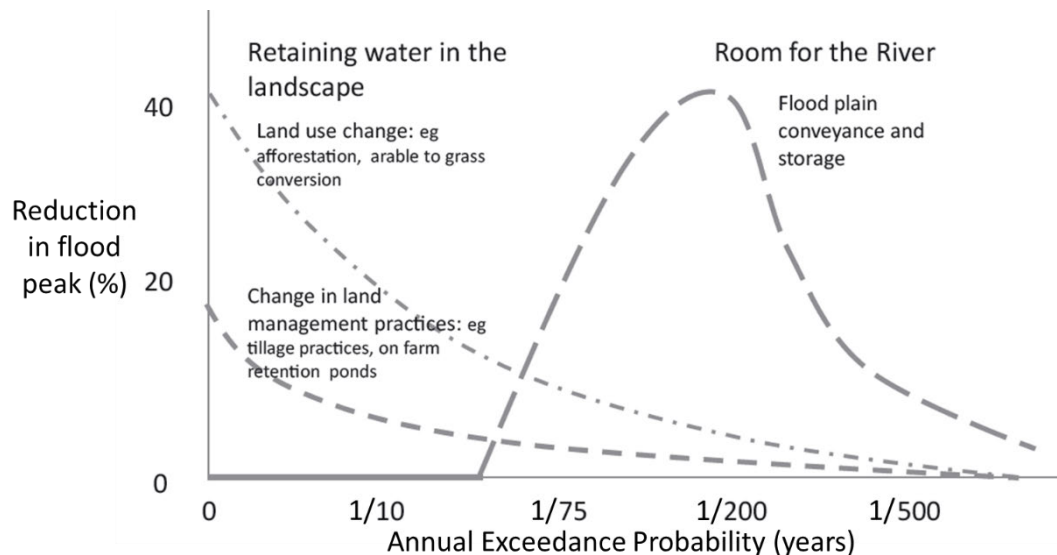


Figure 2: Model estimates for the influence of select nature-based solutions on flood height, across different flooding events in Kamp catchment, Austria, after Francés *et al.* (2008).

### Tackling other issues simultaneously

As much as there is a need to address flood risk, it would be an oversight to not consider how NBSs can address multiple issues simultaneously. This is no more apparent than the potential contribution of NBSs' towards climate change mitigation. Incidentally, climate change is also the primary driver of increasing flood risks. As planting vegetation is a major intervention for NBSs for flood risk management, the contribution to climate change mitigation through carbon sequestration and other effects should be recognised. Additionally, Ellison *et al.* (2017) argue that the hydrologic and climate-cooling effects of trees and forests should be the first order of priority, rather than the current carbon-centric model. This may also play an important role to address the opposite of flooding—droughts—which are likely to become increasingly common as well. Finally, NBSs integrate well with current biodiversity strategies implemented by LCC.

### The case for environmental payment schemes

The implementation of NBSs requires a landscape approach. As most land in the catchment is owned privately, this will require negotiation between landholders and beneficiaries (i.e. local or state government on behalf of the broader public). In certain circumstances, the implementation of some NBSs may require a trade-off with the existing land uses and therefore compensation may be required. In this instance, there is opportunity to create a market for the

## Community information sheet: Nature-based solutions for flood risk management

provision of flood and environmental services—whereby landholders receive payment to maintain or adopt NBSs on their property. This may provide additional income streams for landholders in the region. However, the region has also proven to be full of willing landholders who wish to adopt better management practices and seek financial support. Considering this, flood risk managers need not look much further than engaging established community institutions such as Land Care and Soil Care with financial support to deliver the implementation of NBSs. This may prove the most cost-effective approach.

Additionally, the Lismore City Council already have a system in place to support and enhance biodiversity on private land, the Rural Landholder Initiative. Considering the cross-over between the benefits of NBSs for flood management and the measures required to conserve biodiversity, it may be possible to extend this funding and bundle the landholder grants process together. Thus, addressing both environmental issues simultaneously. There is also the opportunity to bundle in payments for carbon storage.

## Conclusions

In summary, NBSs provide a real opportunity to consolidate our actions and address multiple environmental issues simultaneously. This is inclusive of conserving biodiversity, addressing climate change and flood risk management and mitigation. NBSs have been proven to reduce flood damages, and thusly need to be considered as a real option to be adopted in the Lismore region. The adoption of NBSs need not rival or replace existing flood management approaches but offer a complimentary cost-effective solution to flood management.. So far, not enough recognition of NBSs is present in the Draft Lismore City Council's floodplain management study and so it is in the best interest of the community to seek proper investigation of the implementation of NBS in the region. This investigation should include modelling of the effects of NBS on flood behaviour, as well as an assessment and comparison of the cost-effectiveness of all solutions on option, factoring in all the known costs and benefits.

## Interested in knowing more?

For those who are interested in keeping up to date with discussions on NBSs for flood mitigation in the Richmond River Catchment, please register your contacts at the following linked address: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MVQ638W>

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## Community information sheet: Nature-based solutions for flood risk management

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## Appendices

Appendix 1: Morris et al. (2016) summarise NBSs to fit within four broad themes: retaining water in the landscape through management of infiltration and overland flow, retaining water in the landscape; managing connectivity and conveyance, making space for water: floodplain conveyance and storage, and land management in coastal margins. Specific interventions are provided, as well as examples for each.

FRM theme	Specific interventions	Examples
Retaining water in the landscape: water retention through management of infiltration and overland flow	Land use change	Arable to grassland land conversion, forestry and woodlands plantings, restriction on hill slope cropping (e.g. silage maize)
	Arable land use practices	Spring cropping (versus winter cropping, use of cover crops, extensification, set-aside
	Livestock land practices	Lower stocking rates, reduced ‘poaching’, restriction of the grazing season, covering manure stores
	Tillage practices	Conservation tillage, contour/cross-slope ploughing
	Field drainage (to increase storage)	Deep cultivations and drainage to improve soil permeability
Retaining water in the landscape: managing connectivity	Buffer strips and buffering zones	Contour grass strips, hedges, shelter belts, bunds, riparian buffer strips, controls on bank erosion
	Machinery management	Low ground pressures, avoiding wet conditions
	Management of hillslope connectivity	Blockage of farm ditches and moorland grips
	Buffer strips and buffering zones to reduce connectivity	Contour grass strips, hedges, shelter belts, bunds, field margins, riparian buffer strips
	Channel maintenance	Modifications to maintenance of farm ditches

## Community information sheet: Nature-based solutions for flood risk management

and conveyance	Drainage and pumping operations	Modifications to drainage and pumping regimes
	Field and farm structures	Modifications to gates, yards, tracks and culverts
	On farm retention	Retention ponds and ditches
	Channel realignment	Restoration of river profile and x-sections
	Upland water retention	Farm ponds, ditches, wetlands
Making space for water: floodplain conveyance and storage	Water storage areas	‘On-’/‘off-’ line storage washlands, polders, impoundment reservoirs
	Wetlands	Wetlands creation, engineered storage scrapes, controlled water levels
	River restoration/retraining	River re-profiling and channel works, and riparian works
	River and water course management	Vegetation clearance and channel maintenance and riparian works
	Floodplain restoration	Set-back of embankments, reconnecting rivers and floodplains
Land management in coastal margins	Managed realignment	Removal/set back of existing defence structures: grazing salt marshes
	Regulated tidal exchange	Controlled flow of water behind sea defences, saline marshes
	Natural coastal defence	Saltmarsh creation/reinstatement, dune creation



Appendix 2: Image of riparian vegetation mixed into a productive landscape. Riparian vegetation creates catchment roughness which can contribute to slower flood flows. In smaller streams especially, bottlenecks created by riparian vegetation divert floodwaters onto flood plain storage. Further riparian vegetation also helps define deeper rivers by providing bank stability and erosion and sedimentation controls, this allows for greater volumes of water to flow, with less turbulence. In addition, they provide co-benefits such as habitat for biodiversity, nutrient cycling, and evapotranspiration.

## NOMINATION FOR THE POSITION OF DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON, NORTHERN RIVERS JOINT ORGANISATION

In accordance with Part 1 Schedule 7A of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005:

### 1 **Returning officer**

*Ms Nicole Reeve, Executive Officer is the Returning Officer.*

### 2 **Nomination**

- (1) A voting representative who is the mayor of a member council may be nominated without notice for election as Deputy Chairperson of the joint organisation.*
- (2) The nomination is to be made in writing by two or more mayors of member councils of the joint organisation (one of whom may be the nominee). The nomination is not valid unless the nominee has indicated consent to the nomination in writing.*
- (3) The returning officer is to announce the names of the nominees at the board meeting at which the election is to be held.*

### 3 **Election**

- (1) If only one eligible voting representative of the joint organisation is nominated, that representative is elected.*
- (2) If more than one eligible voting representative is nominated, the board is to resolve whether the election is to proceed by preferential ballot, by ordinary ballot or by open voting.*
- (3) The election is to be held at the board meeting at which the joint organisation resolves on the method of voting.*
- (4) In this clause: "ballot" has its normal meaning of secret ballot. "open voting" means voting by a show of hands or similar means.*

We hereby nominate Mayor .....

Mayor's Name:.....

Signature:.....

Mayor's Name:.....

Signature:.....

I hereby accept nomination for the position of Deputy  
Chairperson

Signature:.....

Please deliver or email to Ms Nicole Reeve (email [execofficer@northernriversjo.nsw.gov.au](mailto:execofficer@northernriversjo.nsw.gov.au)) or Donna McIntyre (email [admin@northernriversjo.nsw.gov.au](mailto:admin@northernriversjo.nsw.gov.au)) by 11am on Friday 12 February 2021.

**ORDINARY BALLOT PAPER**

**FOR THE ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON**

**FOR ORDINARY BALLOT**

Mayors, mark your vote by placing the numbers "1", "2" and so on to indicate the order of preference for all the candidates.

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Ballot papers must be returned to Nicole Reeve as Returning Officer

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (GENERAL) REGULATION 2005 - SCHEDULE 7A**  
**SCHEDULE 7A – Election of Chairperson**

**Part 2 – Ordinary ballot or open voting**

**6 Application of Part**

*This Part applies if the election proceeds by ordinary ballot or by open voting.*

**7 Marking of ballot-papers**

- (1) If the election proceeds by ordinary ballot, the returning officer is to decide the manner in which votes are to be marked on the ballot-papers.*
- (2) The formality of a ballot-paper under this Part must be determined in accordance with clause 345 (1) (b) and (c) and (5) of this Regulation as if it were a ballot-paper referred to in that clause.*
- (3) An informal ballot-paper must be rejected at the count.*

**8 Count--2 candidates**

- (1) If there are only 2 candidates, the candidate with the higher number of votes is elected.*
- (2) If there are only 2 candidates and they are tied, the one elected is to be chosen by lot.*

**9 Count--3 or more candidates**

- (1) If there are 3 or more candidates, the one with the lowest number of votes is to be excluded.*
  - (2) If 3 or more candidates then remain, a further vote is to be taken of those candidates and the one with the lowest number of votes from that further vote is to be excluded.*
  - (3) If, after that, 3 or more candidates still remain, the procedure set out in subclause (2) is to be repeated until only 2 candidates remain.*
  - (4) A further vote is to be taken of the 2 remaining candidates.*
  - (5) Clause 8 of this Schedule then applies to the determination of the election as if the 2 remaining candidates had been the only candidates.*
  - (6) If at any stage during a count under subclause (1) or (2), 2 or more candidates are tied on the lowest number of votes, the one excluded is to be chosen by lot.*
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**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (GENERAL) REGULATION 2005 - REG 345**

**Informal ballot-papers**

**345 Informal ballot-papers**

- (1) A ballot-paper of an elector at an election is informal if:*
  - (b) it has not been initialled on the front by an election official, or*
  - (c) it contains a mark or writing that, in the returning officer's opinion, would enable the elector to be identified.*
- (5) Despite subclause (1), a ballot-paper of an elector at an election is not informal merely because it has not been initialled on the front by an election official, so long as it bears the mark referred to in clause 305 (2).*

**PREFERENTIAL BALLOT PAPER**  
**FOR THE ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON**

**FOR PREFERENTIAL BALLOT**

Councillors, mark your vote by placing the numbers "1", "2" and so on to indicate the order of preference for all the candidates.

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Ballot papers must be returned to Nicole Reeve as Returning Officer



**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (GENERAL) REGULATION 2005 - SCHEDULE 7A**  
**SCHEDULE 7A – Election of Chairperson**

**Part 3 – Preferential ballot**

**10 Application of Part**

*This Part applies if the election proceeds by preferential ballot.*

**11 Ballot-papers and voting**

- (1) The ballot-papers are to contain the names of all the candidates. The voting representatives on the board are to mark their votes by placing the numbers "1", "2" and so on against the various names so as to indicate the order of their preference for all the candidates.*
- (2) The formality of a ballot-paper under this Part is to be determined in accordance with clause 345 (1) (b) and (c) and (5) of this Regulation as if it were a ballot-paper referred to in that clause.*
- (3) An informal ballot-paper must be rejected at the count.*

**12 Count**

- (1) If a candidate has an absolute majority of first preference votes, that candidate is elected.*
- (2) If not, the candidate with the lowest number of first preference votes is excluded and the votes on the unexhausted ballot-papers counted to him or her are transferred to the candidates with second preferences on those ballot-papers.*
- (3) A candidate who then has an absolute majority of votes is elected, but, if no candidate then has an absolute majority of votes, the process of excluding the candidate who has the lowest number of votes and counting each of his or her unexhausted ballot-papers to the candidates remaining in the election next in order of the voter's preference is repeated until one candidate has received an absolute majority of votes. That candidate is elected.*
- (4) In this clause, "**absolute majority**", in relation to votes, means a number that is more than one-half of the number of unexhausted formal ballot-papers.*

**13 Tied candidates**

- (1) If, on any count of votes, there are 2 candidates in, or remaining in, the election and the numbers of votes cast for the 2 candidates are equal--the candidate whose name is first chosen by lot is taken to have received an absolute majority of votes and is therefore taken to be elected.*
  - (2) If, on any count of votes, there are 3 or more candidates in, or remaining in, the election and the numbers of votes cast for 2 or more candidates are equal and those candidates are the ones with the lowest number of votes on the count of the votes--the candidate whose name is first chosen by lot is taken to have the lowest number of votes and is therefore excluded.*
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**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (GENERAL) REGULATION 2005 - REG 345**

**Informal ballot-papers**

**345 Informal ballot-papers**

- (1) A ballot-paper of an elector at an election is informal if:*
  - (b) it has not been initialled on the front by an election official, or*
  - (c) it contains a mark or writing that, in the returning officer's opinion, would enable the elector to be identified.*
- (5) Despite subclause (1), a ballot-paper of an elector at an election is not informal merely because it has not been initialled on the front by an election official, so long as it bears the mark referred to in clause 305 (2).*

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## COST OF COVID COMPLIANCE IN HIGH TOURISM AREAS

Local Governments are at the forefront of the battle against COVID 19. A complex businesses themselves, they are facing many of the same challenges as other businesses, however, they are also the first point of contact for their communities and have become an increasingly important conduit with local businesses in this challenging time. Whilst all Councils within the NRJO have put additional safety measures in place, this task is intensified for those Councils in high tourism areas where they are experiencing an influx of domestic visitors.

In order to oversee the safety of their region since the onset of COVID 19 in 2020 the LGAs of Tweed, Byron and Ballina Shires have taken on additional responsibilities to ensure the safety of their constituents. Whilst councils are not responsible for enforcement activities, they have regularly undertaken the following activities as a part of keeping their regions COVID compliant and their constituents safe:

- COVID awareness to local food businesses via food inspections.
- COVID awareness to skin penetration businesses via inspections.
- Multiples emails to update businesses in relations to new COVID Safe requirement.
- Assistance to businesses to complete COVID safety plans.
- Work in collaboration with the local community markets to ensure that COVID safety plans are used for each market.
- Compliance investigations and follow ups.
- Use of media to raise awareness to the community in general.
- Public space liaison officers
- Overseeing State initiated outdoor dining trials
- Holiday letting

In addition, each Council undertakes

- Research/reading/assessing order updates
- Writing / amending COVID plans
- Assisting with staff enquiries
- Assisted with phone enquiries about COVID matters
- Work in Collaboration with the Public Health Unit.

## TOURISM IN THE NORTHERN RIVERS

The Northern Rivers is the third most visited region in New South Wales.

In 2018 / 19 the Tweed, Byron and Ballina Shires accounted for over **6,633,466** domestic visitor nights and **2,804,333** day-trips.

Tourism accounts for **9.5%** of the region's employment including **24,632 persons** who are directly employed and a further **9,905** who are indirectly employed.

Tourism businesses directly deliver \$1.7 billion (6.8%) of the region's Gross Value Add – over 80% of which is delivered by the accommodation, food service, retail, transport and education establishments.

The reputational damage to these areas should a COVID19 infection be recorded would be devastating to the region and more broadly to NSW's tourism reputation







## 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.

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## 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



### Develop a Northern Rivers 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.

#### **Background:**

Along with the rest of the world, our community is in the midst of a major energy sector transition. NRJO is committed to the development of a Northern Rivers Renewable Energy Investment Prospectus that identifies opportunities for public, private and community investment in renewable energy projects.

Success in this area has been identified through NRJO strategic planning exercise as having the following characteristics:

- Increased energy supply from renewable sources, including waste to energy
- Reduced emissions
- All council buildings and infrastructure powered by renewable energy
- Renewable energy considered as part of new developments
- Power purchase agreements and tariffs in place to enable greater use of renewable energy
- Lower energy costs for residents

#### **Policy Context:**

In September 2013, the NSW Government released the [NSW Renewable Energy Action Plan](#).

NSW Government aims to attain 20% renewable energy by 2020 and this proposal aligns with key goals of the Renewable Energy Action Plan:

- Attract renewable energy investment
- Build community support
- Attract and grow renewable energy expertise

The Plan has 24 actions under 3 goals that detail the Government's intention to work closely with NSW communities and the renewable energy industry to increase renewable energy generation in the state at the least cost to the consumer. It would be the related NRJO goal to have interested businesses encouraged and supported by the government's renewable energy and energy efficiency policies and programs.

#### Achievements:

The region is philosophically well aligned with renewable energy initiatives, leading examples include:

- In January 2018, Lismore City Council and Farming the Sun officially launched the Lismore Community Solar initiative – the first Council/community owned solar farm in the country including Australia's largest floating solar farm. A solar farm is also installed and generating energy on the roof of the Goonellabah Sports and Aquatic Centre. After several years of hard work between Farming the Sun, Lismore City Council, and a community committed to renewable energy, it is incredibly exciting to see these projects coming to fruition.
- Lismore Community Solar is at the forefront of Australia's nascent community energy movement and sector. It has created Australia's first ever Council operated and community funded solar farms. The purpose of Lismore Community Solar was to create two 99kW solar farms through a partnership between local community members and Lismore City Council ~ with funding provided by local community 'impact' investors and operation of the solar farms by Lismore City Council. The two solar farms are flagship projects for Lismore City Council's 2023 Renewable Energy Master Plan addressing objectives outlined in the Imagine Lismore 10 Year Plan 2013-2023.

#### Problem:

Providing renewable energy solutions across the Northern Rivers region has become a priority focus for communities, local governments and State and Federal Governments. Regional commitment in the NR has been demonstrated through the establishment of Australia's First Community Owned Electricity Retailer – ENOVA Energy, a leadership working group Sustain Energy Northern Rivers, and community groups such as Zero-Emission Byron Bay and Mullumbimby's COREM, among others.

There is a high degree of interest across the region to invest in renewable energies or partner with relevant investors/stakeholders to bring forward renewable energy projects. However, a number of barriers exist, including the inadequate servicing by the network distributor Essential Energy, as well as issues working with the Environmental Protection Agency (NSW).

The ability to develop projects can require a lot of patience and have taken years to establish. However, as new operating models for Community Energy (CE) projects develop and toolkits/resources are produced, it will aid in the efficiency of the development of these projects. This will assist CE project





developers, especially in terms of enhancing financial literacy and reducing the volunteer load of organisations.

#### **Support and Partnerships**

The development of the renewable energy prospectus will deliver sustainable energy, high value jobs in key employment areas, new research and innovation opportunities and capital raising connections where none currently exist. The project is supported by Regional Development Australia NR.

The region has a strong community affinity with establishing a renewable energy industry; energy drives our lifestyle, our industries, cultural activities and economy. It's important to the community to seek appropriate solutions to energy needs and maintain Northern Rivers as an exemplar region for New South Wales and Australia.

##### **Innovation capacity**

Created Australia's first community owned energy retailer

- A community focussed University, TAFE and Community College sector
- Highly successful creative and innovative industries
- Creative and Innovative individual human resources

##### **Partnerships**

Sustain Energy Northern Rivers provides a ready-made reference group comprising Government Agencies, LG's, community groups, business and industry focussed on renewable energy solutions for the region

Within the NSW JO network and specifically the NRJO, there is significant interest in *The Southern Lights Project* – proposing to deliver over 80,000 smart, connected LED street lights and a low to medium bandwidth Internet-of-Things communications network to communities encompassing over 1.1 million people living in country NSW. This enabling infrastructure will provide better, safer, cheaper lighting and connectivity that will act as a catalyst for participating councils and others to invest in smart community technologies that will increase efficiencies and improve service delivery. (REROC, RAMJO, Central NSW JO, CBRJO, Far West JO make up this group of councils involved in progressing this key project)

#### **Solution and Actions sought:**

To realise the benefits and positive impact on the region and our residents, NRJO is seeking \$15,000 co-contribution for the development of a professional Renewable Energy Prospectus.

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**The Hon. Shelley Hancock MP**  
Minister for Local Government

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Ref: A754063

Clr Danielle Mullholland  
Chair, Northern Rivers Joint Organisation  
PO Box 146  
LISMORE NSW 2480

Dear Mayor Mulholland

I am very pleased to be writing to you to provide details of the upcoming Joint Organisation Monitoring and Evaluation Project and to provide you with proposed Terms of Reference (TOR) for the project.

The overall objective of the Project is to ensure that the JO framework is effective and that JOs can deliver their core functions of advocacy, strategic leadership and better outcomes for regional communities:

Specifically, the objectives of the Project include to:

- Assess the effectiveness of the JO operational model in facilitating the delivery of core functions and statutory obligations and increasing collaboration with external partners.
- Assess the outcomes of the JO's in delivering their core functions —advocacy, strategic leadership, delivery of regional priorities and better outcomes for regional communities.

It is not the purpose of the Project to audit individual JOs, rather to ensure that the framework is effective and delivering its intended outcomes.

I thank JOs for providing suggestions for the TOR and assure you that those suggestions have informed the proposed TOR. The proposed TOR for this study are:

- Analysis of what has worked in the establishment of the JOs, and what barriers exist to good governance.
- How effective the JO model has been in supporting JOs to deliver against the core objectives of advocacy, strategic leadership and better outcomes for regional communities.
- How the delivery of core objectives can be measured.
- How other NSW and Commonwealth agencies work with the JO network and value the contribution of the JO network.
- How the \$150,000 capacity building funding has been used and the value of that funding program to the ongoing sustainability of JOs.
- Identification of barriers to success of the JO model.
- What a successful JO network looks like and how it can be realised.

JOs and other key stakeholders will have the opportunity to participate in the Project and share their views and experiences. I know JOs have been seeking clarity on the TOR for the review, and I am pleased to be able to share this information with you.

It is intended that the Project will be completed by mid-2021, with engagement activities likely to commence in February/March.

If you have any concerns or questions about the Project, I would encourage you to contact your Council Engagement Manager.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Shelley Hancock". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Shelley" and the last name "Hancock" clearly distinguishable.

**The Hon. Shelley Hancock MP**  
Minister for Local Government





**James Griffin MP**


Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment and Veterans

MD20/7928

Ms Janelle Saffin MP  
Member for Lismore  
PO Box 52  
LISMORE NSW 2480

By email: [lismore@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:lismore@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Ms Saffin

I refer to your letter to the Minister for Water, Property and Housing, the Hon Melinda Pavey MP, about the Northern Rivers Watershed Initiative developed by Rous County Council on behalf of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation. Your correspondence was referred to the Minister for Energy and Environment, the Hon Matt Kean MP and I have been asked to reply.

The NSW Government takes the issues of poor water quality and flood risk management in coastal catchments seriously and continues to support investment through state and local government led funding and delivery programs.

Funding for catchment health and flood risk improvement initiatives in NSW is prioritised and delivered through established funding delivery programs, including the Coastal and Estuary Grants Program, NSW Floodplain Management Program, and NSW Environmental Trust.

The Coastal and Estuary Grants Program provides technical and financial assistance to local government to support coastal and estuary planning projects and implementation of works identified in certified coastal zone management plans (CZMP) or coastal management programs (CMP). The program funds CZMP implementation on a 1:1 ratio, and CMP implementation and development on a 2:1 ratio.

Some of the actions proposed in the Northern Rivers Watershed Initiative may be eligible for funding in the Richmond River catchment under the certified CZMP for the Richmond River Estuary. Noting that in accordance with Schedule 3 of the *Coastal Management Act 2016*, the CZMP will cease to take effect on 31 December 2021. The 2021-22 Coastal and Estuary Grants Program 'Implementation' stream is expected to open around August 2021.

The NSW Floodplain Management Program may also be a possible future funding source for implementation of the Northern Rivers Watershed Initiative. To be eligible for funding through the Floodplain Management Program, the flood risk management strategies proposed in the Northern Rivers Watershed Initiative would need to be identified in an adopted Floodplain Risk Management Plan prepared by any of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation councils. Funding through the Plan is offered to local councils on a 2:1 basis.

There are CMPs being prepared or about to commence across the Northern Rivers Watershed Initiative area, including the Richmond River catchment and the Tweed Shire. Development of a CMP will provide councils with the opportunity to re-examine a comprehensive range of issues affecting the catchment, and to assess viable management options.

Councils may include relevant Northern Rivers Watershed Initiative strategies in their CMP's under development, thereby securing a possible future funding pathway.



The north coast catchments have been the subject of increased investment through the Marine Estate Management Strategy, which commenced in 2018. Through initiative 1 of the Strategy, funding has been committed to North Coast catchments through the 'Clean Coastal Catchments Program' and an on-ground works program, with Richmond River being a priority catchment for action under this initiative.

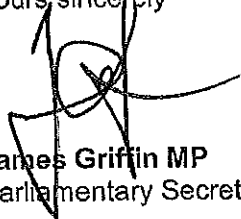
Marine Estate Management Strategy funding for on-ground works is directed towards riparian management, bank stabilisation and activities to address runoff. The Clean Coastal Catchments Program is focussed on agricultural related activities such as improving blueberry, vegetable, and macadamia farming practices.

We encourage the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation councils to consider existing state and federal funding programs for implementation of eligible Northern Rivers Watershed Initiative strategies while working towards completion of CMPs, and Floodplain Risk Management Plans for their catchment areas.

If your constituents have any further questions about this matter, they can contact Russell Madeley, Director North East, Biodiversity and Conservation Division on 6561 6701 or at [russell.madeley@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:russell.madeley@environment.nsw.gov.au).

Thank you for taking the time to bring this matter to the NSW Government's attention.

Yours sincerely



**James Griffin MP**

Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment and Veterans

# BRAND OF NORTH

BY SOPHIE MOELLER

**S** EVEN of the largest employers in the region have joined forces to spearhead a brand that will represent The Northern Rivers.

The Northern Rivers NSW Brand is now made up of 160 businesses and community groups to enhance the capacity of the region to compete in markets across Australia.

Chair of Northern Rivers Together, the regional steering committee behind the Northern Rivers NSW Brand, Simon Stahl, said the aim of the brand was to help drive investment and grant ready opportunities from the Federal and State Governments.

Launched in April, The Northern Rivers NSW Brand has received strong support from local councils and a Memorandum of Understanding with local councils is to be signed tomorrow at Richmond Valley Council's Chambers in Casino.

"This new brand creates scale, collectively representing some 300,000 residents and businesses located in the Northern Rivers and reflects the connected unified identity of our communities," said Mr Stahl.

"Together we constitute the twelfth largest region by population in Australia. It is a shared vision for sustainable and innovative economic growth. It is the symbol of a new



**WHO WE ARE:** The Northern Rivers brand aims to drive investment in the region.

economic and cultural era for one of NSW's oldest, most diverse and alluring regions."

Northern Rivers Together have been busy creating marketing collateral and videos showcasing the region and are investing in marketing including a dedicated social media team and Northern Rivers NSW Brand TV ads screening on Prime.

Mr Stahl is also CEO of the Northern Cooperative Meat Company (NCMC), which

is one of the founding partners of the brand.

The other partners include: Norco, Richmond Dairies, North Coast Petroleum, Summerland Credit Union, Southern Cross University and Stone & Wood.

"We intend using the brand to anchor our products to the region, famous for natural beauty and loving, caring, innovative people," said Mr Stahl.

Director of North Coast Petroleum, Mick

McKinlay, said: "the brand will encourage increased recognition of... our enviable lifestyle, supporting healthy lives, helping to create sustainable growth and employment opportunities for the future of our children."

Casino-based Richmond Dairies Managing Director Chris Sharpe said the brand provided a "focal point for promotion of our products into international and domestic markets to reflect our ongoing commitment to the region."

General Manager, Stone & Wood, Nick Boots said: "Understanding the depth of community and connection in the many diverse towns that make up the region have helped define our very ethos."

Summerland Credit Union CEO, John Williams said the brand offered an exciting opportunity for local businesses, both large and small, to unite behind a collective vision for the region.

Chief Marketing Officer, Southern Cross University, Dean Gould said: "harnessing... the messaging to prospective students and academic staff will make the university's proposition even more powerful."

Northern Rivers Together encourages all businesses, not-for-profit and sporting organisations, community groups and individuals in the Northern Rivers to sign up at [www.northernriversnsw.com.au](http://www.northernriversnsw.com.au)





Danielle and Simon in front and then L-R John Williams (Summerland Credit Union), Cr Robert Mustow (Mayor of Richmond Valley Council), Cr Simon Richardson (Mayor of Byron Shire), Nick Boots (General Manager, Stone & Wood), Cr Chris Cherry (Mayor of Tweed Shire Council).

# Northern Rivers brand signs MOU

THE Northern Rivers' local councils, leading businesses and regional stakeholders came together on Friday to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) underpinning the new Northern Rivers NSW Brand.

This uniting brand is driven by "Northern Rivers Together" and represents some 300,000 residents and businesses located in the region.

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.

The founding partners include seven of the largest employers in the region (The Casino Food Co-Op, Norco, Richmond Dairies, North Coast Petroleum, Summerland Credit Union, Southern Cross University (SCU) and Stone & Wood), and all of the Northern Rivers' local councils.

"The Northern Rivers NSW Brand will put our beautiful region in the forefront of people's minds and show off the unique range destinations and experiences on offer in all areas," said Mayor Robert Mustow.

The MOU signing ceremony will be held at Richmond Valley Council's Chambers in Casino. For further information go to: [www.northernriversnsw.com.au](http://www.northernriversnsw.com.au)



Australian Government



# THE ECONOMIC



NEWS

# Grand plan to get tourists back to the Northern Rivers



Mayor of Kyogle Shire and Chair of Northern Rivers Joint Organisation Cr Danielle Mulholland and Simon Stahl, The Casino Food Co-op and Interim Chair of Northern Rivers Together, signing the MOU.



**AISLING BRENNAN**

23rd Nov 2020 11:00 PM

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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 uniting 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."

