



Agenda for the Northern Rivers

Joint Organisation

Ordinary Board Meeting

Date: 12 November 2021

Location: via Zoom

Time: 11am

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

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 30 JULY 2021

The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation Friday 30 July 2021 are included for information and adoption by the Board.

**MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF
THE NORTHERN RIVERS JOINT ORGANISATION
HELD VIA ZOOM
FRIDAY 30 JULY 2021**

ATTENDANCE

Crs Danielle Mulholland (Chair), Chris Cherry (Deputy Chair), David Wright, Michael Lyon, Robert Mustow

Cr Vanessa Ekins joined the meeting at 12.05pm

General Managers Graham Kennett, Mark Arnold, Paul Hickey, Vaughan Macdonald, Troy Green, Kate Webber (representing Lismore City Council)

Tim Williamson (RDA Northern Rivers), Anita Gambhir (OLG), Jillian Fryer (Dept of Regional NSW); Cr Jeff McCullen (Scenic Rim Regional Council)

Nicole Reeve (Executive Officer)

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 Michael Donnelly, Lismore City 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 7 MAY 2021

30072021/1 RESOLVED

MOVED: C Cherry/ D Wright

THAT the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation held Friday 7 May 2021 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

30072021/2 RESOLVED

MOVED: M Lyon/ 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

30072021/3 RESOLVED

MOVED: R Mustow/C Cherry

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

CARRIED

FOR VOTE – All Councillors voted unanimously

7.3 ASSOCIATE MEMBER REPORT – SCENIC RIM REGIONAL COUNCIL

30072021/4 RESOLVED

MOVED: C Cherry/ D Wright

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

CARRIED

FOR VOTE - All Councillors voted unanimously.

Cr Mulholland suggested joint workshop with SRRC on potential opportunities to work together once border restrictions are lifted.

THERE WAS NO ITEM 7.4 DUE TO TYPOGRAPHICAL ERROR

7.5 LGNSW ELECTIONS

30072021/5 RESOLVED

MOVED: C Cherry/D Mulholland

THAT the Board discuss a potential nomination from the NRJO for the LGNSW Board.

Cr Cherry nominated Cr Mulholland to nominate for a position on the Board of LGNSW.

Cr Mulholland withdrew herself as seconding the motion and was replaced by Cr Lyon.

An amended motion was then tabled:

30072021/6 RESOLVED

THAT the Board discuss a potential nomination from the NRJO and support the nomination of Cr Mulholland as potential delegate for LGNSW Board election

MOVED: C Cherry/ M Lyon

CARRIED

FOR VOTE - All Councillors voted unanimously.

The amendment became the motion

MOVED: C Cherry/M Lyon

CARRIED

FOR VOTE - All Councillors voted unanimously.

7.6 EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

30072021/7 RESOLVED

MOVED: M Lyon/D Wright

THAT the Board receive and note the Executive Officer's report

CARRIED

FOR VOTE - All Councillors voted unanimously

7.7 REGIONAL ISSUES

Compliance Levies and Funding Review

30072021/8 RESOLVED

MOVED: D Mulholland/ M Lyon

THAT the NRJO continue to work with Member Councils to provide a collective response in relation to the State Government regulation on Compliance Levies.

CARRIED

FOR VOTE - All Councillors voted unanimously.

ACTION:

- Letters be sent to the Planning Minister requesting delay in implementation in order for councils to investigate alternative ways to fund compliance
- Issue to be raised at JO Chair's Forum for discussion and encourage other JOs to write to the Minister on this matter

Housing Taskforce

30072021/9 RESOLVED

MOVED: M Lyon/C Cherry

THAT the NRJO continue to work with Member Councils to draft a regional submission to the Regional Housing Taskforce.

Cr Lyon moved an amendment

THAT the NRJO

- continue to work with Member Councils to draft a regional submission to the Regional Housing Taskforce.*
- Declares we are currently experiencing a crisis situation with respect to housing availability and affordability in our community.*
- Invites other JOs experiencing similar challenges to make the same declaration.*

30072021/10 RESOLVED

MOVED: M Lyon/C Cherry

CARRIED

FOR VOTE - All Councillors voted unanimously.

The amendment became the motion

MOVED: M Lyon/C Cherry

CARRIED

FOR VOTE - All Councillors voted unanimously.

The Briefing Paper provided by the NRJO Planners Group was discussed and a draft regional submission to the Regional Housing Taskforce will be circulated to the Board

Regional Olympics Strategy

30072021/11 RESOLVED

MOVED: C Cherry/ D Mulholland

THAT the NRJO develop a strategy aimed at maximising the benefits to the region from the hosting of the 2032 Olympic Games for the Board consideration.

CARRIED

FOR VOTE - All Councillors voted unanimously.

7.8 JO CORRESPONDENCE

30072021/12 RESOLVED

MOVED: C Cherry/ M Lyon

THAT the minutes of the JO Chairs meeting and related correspondence be noted

CARRIED

FOR VOTE - All Councillors voted unanimously.

7.9 STATEMENT OF REVENUE POLICY

30072021/13 RESOLVED

MOVED C Cherry/ D Wright

THAT the Board adopt the Statement of Revenue Policy for 2021-22

CARRIED

FOR VOTE - All Councillors voted unanimously.

7.10 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

30072021/14 RESOLVED

MOVED C Cherry/ M Lyon

THAT the financial reports for period ending 30 June 2021 be accepted.

CARRIED

FOR VOTE - All Councillors voted unanimously.

8. URGENT BUSINESS

30072021/15 RESOLVED

MOVED : C Cherry/ D Mulholland

THAT the Board discuss additional items of business

CARRIED

FOR VOTE - All Councillors voted unanimously.

Cr Cherry queried the conditions imposed on multiple occupancies (MO's) across all councils.

Cr Wright suggested this is best dealt with via the GMAC and Cr Mustow suggested she talk with the Planning group. Cr Ekins advised she would contact Cr Cherry offline

Cr Cherry then raised the matter of postal or online voting in the upcoming elections.

Cr Mulholland advised that many of her constituents don't have access to internet for online voting and that questions had been raised with OLG but no response received yet.

Cr McCullen from Scenic Rim provided his experience from recent elections – major issue was the lack of engagement opportunities for candidates due to COVID restrictions.

9. CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS

10. CORRESPONDENCE

30072021/16 RESOLVED

MOVED : C Cherry/ M Lyon

THAT the correspondence report be received and noted

CARRIED

FOR VOTE - All Councillors voted unanimously.

MEETING CLOSED 12.55pm

Next meeting - workshop

Friday 24 September

Kyogle Council

Cr Danielle Mulholland

Chair

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation held Friday 30 July 2021 be adopted as a true and accurate record of proceedings of that meeting.

6 NOTICES OF MOTION

7 REPORTS



Reopening of Inter Regional Travel

As the vaccination rates for NSW steadily climb, we are rapidly hitting milestones for the reopening of travel throughout NSW. It is inevitable that the North Coast will experience significant volumes of visitors from Greater Sydney and the rest of NSW when restrictions are relaxed. We anticipate that many operators will continue to have challenges in securing the critical mass of operational staff that they require. This challenge will be exacerbated by vaccine mandates for workers particular until the state moves to the final round of restrictions which are currently due to be implemented on the 15th December when it is projected the state will hit a combined vaccination rate of 95%.

Business Events

The DNC Business Events program which most Northern Rivers LGA's are partners of, was awarded the state and national awards in the Meetings & Events Australia awards, for Best Marketing Organisation for the second year in a row. During the July quarter the program secured 16 events that will deliver 1,697 delegates and generate an economic impact of \$1.5M. These impressive results demonstrate the demand that exists for business events once Covid restrictions abate.

Aboriginal Product Development Mentoring program

DNC in partnership with the NSW Aboriginal Tourism Operators Council (NATOC) will deliver an Aboriginal Tourism Product Development program. The program will launch with an industry engagement webinar outlining best practices in this sector on the 16th of November, an EOI process for prospective participants from 16-29 November, leading into the mentoring component commencing from the 6th December.

DNC Business Accelerator & Mentoring Program

DNC are currently in the second phase of the recruitment process that will see participating businesses receive seven hours of business mentoring from industry experts. Applications close 12th November.

Website Refresh Program

DNC conducted a grant program that saw successful North Coast tourism businesses provided with \$2.5k or \$5k in funding to build new or refresh existing commercial websites. The \$100k in available funding was distributed to 24 tourism businesses across 11 North Coast LGA's.

Rail Trail Product Development

DNC in partnership with Wray Sustainable Tourism Research and Planning, VIP Adventures and Tourism Strategic Planning & Research are delivering a Northern Rivers Rail Trail Product and Experience Development Project. The project focuses exclusively on working with existing or prospective tourism operators to leverage the Northern Rivers Rail Trail in view of generating a robust range of product and services for when the trail launches.

Accommodation Reinvestment

DNC will launch their Accommodation Investment Prospectus in the w/c 8th November. The prospectus contains existing opportunities in multiple Northern Rivers LGA's and we believe will be the catalyst for securing new investment into existing facilities. In addition, we are in the process of developing a best practice investment guide aimed at owners and property managers in view of assisting them to achieve the highest return on investment. Consulting support to help guide this investment through Stafford Strategy will also be made available for up to 40 property owners or managers.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report from Destination North Coast be noted

7.2 ASSOCIATE MEMBER REPORT – RDA NORTHERN RIVERS



Regional Strategic Plan: The Northern Rivers Strategic Regional Plan has been drafted and distributed to key stakeholders for comment. After feedback has been received, a final draft will be prepared for Board approval in late November. A formal launch is planned for January 2022.

The Seven Priority areas are:

Connected, safe and healthy communities: Increasing and improving connectivity across all infrastructure classes and assets in particular; digital connection, mobility and transport infrastructure. Promoting health, sport and recreation facilities.

A skilled and job-ready region: Growing a skilled and capable workforce by building closer linkages between school leavers, job seekers and businesses universities, training organisations and schools.

World class competitive businesses: Using the industries which have been identified as 'engines of growth' with a focus on building business competitiveness based on the region's comparative advantage. Supporting resilient, sustainable, and future focussed businesses.

Creating a highly collaborative region: Developing regional leadership and increasing collaboration by working with local indigenous communities and organisations, local governments and joint organisation, and a broad range of regional leaders and organisations

Improve and promote liveability: Address regional housing issues and advocate for longer term strategic policy change and seek innovative regionally driven solutions. Improve community services and facilities to provide quality amenity, liveability, and healthy outcomes. Promote a regional identity through a branding initiative.

Sustainable physical infrastructure: Address priority infrastructure needs including water security, water quality and flood mitigation. Improving digital infrastructure, road and transport links, freight and supply chain infrastructure and community and recreational linkages. Investigate employment lands and industry precincts to promote industry agglomeration, clusters, and networks.

Sustainable community infrastructure: Promote and foster the unique natural environment and community infrastructure such as national events and festivals. A focus will be on Circular Economy jobs for the future, business and community preparedness in the face of natural disasters.

COVID-19: RDANR continues to be involved in many COVID-19 related meetings and cross border committees. The key issues revolve around ensuring businesses have easy access to up to date information and that new funding programs are better targeted to solve regional issues.

RDA Annual Business Plan: The 2021-22 Annual Business Plan and budget was approved by the Department of Infrastructure. Formal approval of the Business Plan triggers the annual funding.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Business and Employee Vaccination Project: RDANR is assisting Healthy North Coast to link to businesses to increase staff vaccination rates. This program is due to the increase in Pfizer vaccinations recently received into the region. Businesses have generally received this connection positively.

Waste to Wages Project Update: The Clarence Valley skills and jobs project aims to skill and reskill indigenous, youth, ex-prisoners and difficult to employ persons via marine vessel recycling operation. A recent business case suggested that the high number of fibreglass vessels and the difficulty and expense in disposing of this type of craft would make it a marginal loss operation. UNSW has connected with RDANR and TAFE as lead partners as part of research project seeking to turn used fibreglass products into an agricultural application. A solution such as this could reshape the business case. SERCO and other stakeholders are still keen to move the project forward, but Regional NSW has stepped down as project lead.

Circular Economy (SCU): RDA NR supported Southern Cross University's successful application for its proposed Northern Rivers Regional Circular Economy Accelerator (ReCirculator). SCU received \$2 million from the federal government's Strategic University Reform Fund (SURF). It is one of 10 projects approved and one of two in regional Australia.

COVID-19 Issues: RDANR continues to promote state and federal information to business and industry to provide a point of authority.

Regional Promotion: Under the NR NSW brand, we are exploring the creation of a regional video to use for promotional purposes. This will be a high-end video production using local professionals who have committed to a cost-effective creative campaign. The objective is for internal use to re-establish a sense of pride and community, engage with new visitors and investors and re-engage with people and businesses who will be able to visit the region again. The video will be long-lived and can be repurposed for use in the future during times of recovery, etc. The brand would like to see a partnership with LGs to refine the message and contribute financially.

Tweed Tourism Co. RDA-NR is also assisting the Tweed Tourism Co with a local social media and marketing campaign which will leverage off a highly funded Qld campaign specifically targeted at the southern end of the Gold Coast.

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

Creative Industry Economic Impact Study: RDANR has been separately approached by NORPA and Screenworks to undertake economic research into the creative/performing arts industry in the Northern Rivers. A study was completed by Deloitte for the South Australian Film industry and is considered an excellent template for a similar regional study.

Northern Rivers Hydrogen Cluster has joined NewH2, NSW's only funded Hydrogen Cluster. New H2 held an introductory webinar specifically for the Northern Rivers cluster which was well received.

Local Jobs Program Employment Taskforce: The taskforce agreed that the Employment Facilitator should focus on three projects:

1. Develop a program aimed at Indigenous and Youth job seekers with a new concept that involves creative technologies linking to employment opportunities
2. Work with the Career Transition Provider (ETC) to explore structured work experience "Taster" program that includes 3 different industries with participating employers eg. Food Manufacturing, Hospitality and Retail.
3. Develop a mentoring and support program for employers to build the skills required to recruit, on-board and foster an upskilling and supportive culture and workplace. This is aimed at employers with vacancies and those wanting to grow their business and workforce.

Skills and Training: RDANR's My Future Workforce Platform will be the key technology used for Training service's NSW Summer of Jobs and Summer Skills programs. Both these programs are targeted at assisting businesses easily connect with school leavers and workforce entry aged people and will begin during the summer holidays.

COMMITTEES

Committee	Comment
LJP Employment Taskforce	DESE initiative to lead employment projects
COVID Health Business Committee	Provide advice and assistance to Dept of Health unit which undertakes promotion and compliance activities for local businesses
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.
NRJO Committee	Assoc Membership and continues to work closely with EO on relevant projects
NRJO GM Advisory Committee	Operational NRJO matters, projects and issues are raised in this forum prior to NRJO meeting.
RDACC	Meeting of NSW RDA Chairs and DRDs

EVENTS

Events/Workshops/Forums

- Economic Development Australia national conference 13-15th October
- RVC Business Leaders' Lunch, to be held November 19th

MINISTERIAL MEETINGS

RDANR continues to attend teleconference meetings with Assistant Minister Nola Marino and other RDA CEOs/Directors across Australia which provides local intelligence on the impact of COVID-19, housing and workforce development, regional investment etc.

Attended Town Hall meeting with Bruce Billson, Aust Small Business and Family Enterprises Ombudsman. This office provides small business advocacy and is a valuable resource of information for SMEs. Upcoming meeting with Sen Bridget McKenzie.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report from RDA Northern Rivers be noted

7.3 ASSOCIATE MEMBER REPORT – SCENIC RIM REGIONAL COUNCIL



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

Scenic Rim named one of the Top 10 'must-visit' regions in the entire world!

On 28 October 2021, Global travel authority Lonely Planet announced their Best in Travel 2022, three lists encompassing the world's hottest countries, cities and regions, and have included the Scenic Rim as number eight in the top regions to visit in 2022.

Scenic Rim was the only Australian region included in the three Best in Travel categories and puts the region in great company, alongside top-placed Westfjords in Iceland, West Virginia in the USA, Shikoku in Japan, Vancouver Island in Canada and Burgundy in France.

This announcement is an incredible achievement for the region with enormous benefits to be reaped for years to come. With the world overcoming lockdowns and restrictions, we know this announcement will put Scenic Rim on the map for domestic and international travellers already planning their next adventure and itching to explore, so this achievement couldn't have come at a better time.

Working closely with the local tourism industry, Council has proudly led the charge over the last decade and beyond, investing in a local food strategy, fostering local agritourism experiences, supporting regional events including the expansion of Scenic Rim Eat Local Week, and building a strong destination brand as the 'Richest Place on Earth, in Australia'.

The region has been recognised for reasons that matter most — unique experiences, spectacular landscapes, award-winning produce, commitment to low-impact and sustainable travel, and authentic customer service.

2021 Scenic Rim Business Excellence Awards

200 attendees from local businesses, community groups, members of the public, visitors, and family and friends celebrated local business achievements at the official 2021 Awards Ceremony, held on Friday 5 November 2021 at the Boonah Cultural Centre.

The awards were not run last year due to COVID-19 so this was an overdue celebratory and networking event that was been strongly supported with nominations from businesses across all corners of the Scenic Rim.

A total of 65 nominations were received from 49 businesses across 11 nomination categories and the calibre of these submissions certainly made it tough for the judges ahead of the Awards Ceremony.

The Awards Ceremony was a spectacular night hosted by media personality Sofie Formica, best known for hosting travel and lifestyle programs such as The Great Outdoors and currently hosting Afternoons on Brisbane radio station 4BC, with entertainment from local musicians The Inadequates and beautiful trophies produced by local artist Faerie Fluer from Tamborine Glass Blowing.

The 2021 Scenic Rim Business Excellence Awards Ceremony was proudly sponsored by Destination Scenic Rim, State Member for Scenic Rim Jon Krause, Tamborine Mountain Chamber of Commerce, Beaudesert and District Chamber of Commerce, Boonah District Chamber of Commerce, Total First Home Solutions, Scenic Realty, Federal Member for Wright the Hon Scott Buchholz MP, Canungra Chamber of Commerce, and DGT Employment and Training.

The full list of nominations in each of the awards categories can be found online at <https://www.scenicrim.qld.gov.au/news/article/607/come-celebrate-scenic-rim-s-best-and-brightest-business-champions>

Funding reallocated to support Scenic Rim Farmers

Local farmers, producers, tourism operators, and entertainers impacted by the COVID-19 Greater Brisbane lockdown in July have received a boost thanks to Scenic Rim Regional Council.

Council had been able to reallocate some of the unspent Queensland Government grant funds, which were to be specifically directed towards the Scenic Rim Eat Local Week 10th birthday celebrations at the Winter Harvest Festival.

Following the cancellation of a number of Scenic Rim Eat Local Week events in July, including the Winter Harvest Festival, Council had only expended a third of the \$150,000 funding for this signature event. Council officers acted quickly to seek approval from the Queensland Government Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport to repurpose the remaining \$99,256.68 to help those impacted from the economic losses

Under a funding agreement, Council provided \$40,000 to local tourism organisation Destination Scenic Rim to support planning and delivery of two Scenic Rim Farm Gate Trails on 28 August and 23 October, and the remaining balance of \$59,256.68 is being allocated to support other regional events.

The additional funding also meant Destination Scenic Rim was able to dedicate some funds to assist with promoting the Farm Gate Trail to a wider audience and engage professional photographers and a videographer. This funding boosted the Farm Gate Trails held on 28 August and October 23.

Saturday 28 August saw 22 Farm Gates open to the public while the Farm Gate Trail on Saturday 23 October saw 24 farms and businesses open as part of the event. Destination Scenic Rim reported that 5,000 attended each Farm Gate Trail with most being visitors to the Scenic Rim.

ESCAPE in the Scenic Rim (29 April - 29 May 2022)

ESCAPE in the Scenic Rim Festival is a month-long celebration to be held in May 2022 that will showcase and celebrate a diverse range of adventures delivered through a collaboration of local

tourism operators in the Scenic Rim, a region of spectacular natural beauty, diverse landscapes, abundant wildlife and incredible produce.

The original event, Gondwana Festival, which was held in the Scenic Rim in March 2021, was based in some of the most precious and spectacular areas of the Queensland section of the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Gondwana Rainforests of Australia. The original festival framework, which included walks, talks and wild adventures from the base camps (and luxury lodges) of Binna Burra Lodge and Park Tours, O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat and Mt Barney Lodge, will be expanded to also include many more of the region's unique tourism nature and adventure-based activities.

festival will offer adventure and nature-based tourism experiences such as trekking and climbing in the spectacular rainforests of the Lamington National Park and Mt Barney National Park, hang gliding and para soaring at Boyland, ziplining and sky walking at Tamborine Mountain, kayaking and canoeing at Lake Moogerah, mountain bike riding at Kooralbyn Mountain Bike Park, hot air ballooning and helicopter adventures and much more.

The Long Sunset (12 February 2022)

In partnership with Queensland Music Festival, Scenic Rim Regional Council will deliver *The Long Sunset* - a camping and music festival to be delivered at Elysian Fields Canungra on February 12 2022. The event will feature acts Angus and Julia Stone, Ball Park Music, Babe Rainbow and Hatchie. Camping and glamping will be offered onsite along with a fully licensed bar, retail stalls and food and beverage on offer showcasing the best that Scenic Rim can offer. In support of the guest artists, a program of local (Scenic Rim) and emerging performers will be presented on the main stage. An Artisan Alley of locally designed and produced visual art will be displayed and on sale.

The Long Sunset is expected to entice up to 8,000 visitors from Brisbane, Gold Coast, Southern Downs, Northern Rivers New South Wales, Sunshine Coast and beyond. It will not only bring positive economic return to nearby towns of Beaudesert, Canungra and Tamborine Mountain through visitor spend, but also the entire Scenic Rim region through "stay and play" offerings for the audience as well as an event legacy in return visitation by friends and family. This event is planned to be an annual activation on the Scenic Rim and Queensland Music Festival calendar and will cement our region as a venue for nationally recognised major events.

The event is aligned to Council strategies for the creation of local employment and projects celebrating the heritage, culture and uniqueness of Scenic Rim towns and villages.

<https://qldmusictrails.com/events/the-long-sunset>

Annual Report showcases Council's responsiveness to COVID-19 challenges

Scenic Rim Regional Council's Annual Report 2020-2021 brings together 12 months of performance and financial data, showcasing when and how it responded to the challenges of a global pandemic and the changing needs of industry and community.

Unprecedented success with grant funding meant Council was given unique opportunities to deliver projects from future years' plans to kickstart projects that matched funding requirements.

Council been open about the flow-on effect of leveraging this grant funding — while these are positive financially, some other projects marked for completion last financial year were delayed due to resourcing constraints, supply chain issues and competing priorities.

Highlights last financial year included the opening of the \$3.2 million revitalised Boonah Town Centre in December, followed by preparation for the Beaudesert Town Centre Revitalisation with the 'The Beauty Hub' bringing community and businesses together to talk with engineers, architects and Council officers over a number of months.

Some of the key deliverables for the year included the adoption of the first Customer Experience Strategy that will guide tangible improvements to the communities' experience with Council, and the updated Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy to support the Scenic Rim's progression towards 'zero avoidable waste to landfill'.

Importantly, Council sought direct input from the community several times across a range of strategies last financial year including the Growth Management Strategy, Smart Region Strategy, Adventure and Nature-based Tourism Strategy, and the Sporting, Camping and Community Facilities strategies.

The Annual Report shows the breadth of Council's responsibilities from handling a COVID-19 related spike in building and plumbing approvals to the delivery of a comprehensive arts program in and around lockdowns.

The report includes several examples of Council working in partnership with industry on projects of regional significance, one being the Water for the Warrill Irrigation Project with seed funding for a game-changing feasibility study, and another being Council's Agribusiness and Agritourism Industry Development Program.

Small businesses make up more than 98.5 per cent of the region's businesses, so Council was proud to be the second local government area in Queensland to sign a Small Business Friendly Council Charter and to continue targeted activities like the 'World of Work' business and career expo, and a full program of activities during Small Business Month

Officers have also worked hard to ensure the Scenic Rim is well represented across Queensland and Australian Government funding programs, with an increase by 32 per cent of recurrent grants to the value of \$1.91 million and a strong level of capital grants and contributions of \$15.56 million, reducing the financial burden on general revenue and ratepayers.

The 2020-2021 Annual Report is available at www.scenicrim.qld.gov.au/corporate-publications

Council's third economic stimulus package delivers financial relief and in-kind support for community groups

On 21 September 2021, Council adopted **its third economic stimulus package, designed to benefit Scenic Rim businesses and community groups that have been impacted by the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.** This package includes a range of measures including financial relief via a reduction in specific licence fees, deferred infrastructure charges, discounted development applications, and a reaffirmation of Council's commitment to buy local.

This package has specifically recognised how COVID-19 has affected the region's more than 300 community organisations and their ability to operate, restrictions and lockdowns have reduced their fundraising opportunities and impacted their delivery of services to the community.

From 22 September until 20 October, community organisations were able to apply via Council's SmartyGrants portal for up to a maximum of \$1,500 in funding to offset some of the financial loss and hardship experienced due to COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions.

Council is funding this third economic stimulus package with proposed amendments and allocations from the 2021-2022 Budget.

Key initiatives of the Scenic Rim Economic Stimulus Package 3: COVID-19 are available online at <https://www.scenicrim.qld.gov.au/news/article/593/council-s-third-economic-stimulus-package-delivers-financial-relief-and-in-kind-support-for-community-groups>

Council's grant program to make a positive difference to local community groups

Twenty-nine community groups from across the Scenic Rim will share in more than \$176,000 after receiving funding under Round 1 of Council's Community Grants Program 2021-2022.

By supporting groups through financial assistance, Council can help them deliver and develop a wide variety of projects, activities and programs that provide cultural, recreational and community development opportunities in the region.

These groups, many of whom rely heavily on volunteers, are the backbone of the region's towns and villages, and play an important role in helping Council achieve the goals in its Community Plan which was shaped by residents and designed to build healthy, engaged and resourceful communities."

Community groups will use their funding to update their facilities, purchase new equipment and host community events.

The maximum amount of funding for Minor Grants is \$5,000 and the maximum amount for Major Grants is \$20,000.

A list of successful grant applicant can be found online at <https://www.scenicrim.qld.gov.au/news/article/595/council-s-grants-program-to-make-a-positive-difference-to-local-community-groups->

Water for the Warrill Irrigation Project Gains Momentum

The Water for the Warrill Irrigation Project, which has the potential to be a game changer by delivering water reliability and certainty for the region's agricultural producers, is gathering momentum, and the new Board is working with Queensland Government on a funding application to the Australian Government

Improved water security and reliability would provide the region with an opportunity to become an expanded powerhouse of primary production and a national hub for value-adding processing, with flow-on economic benefits for the wider community.

Findings from the Phase 1 initial feasibility study indicate significant local demand from irrigators, primary producers and processors, and a willingness to pay to secure a reliable water source for irrigated agriculture in the Warrill and Fassifern Valleys.

Industry specialists, Jacobs Group Australia, completed investment logic mapping and demand assessments with 73 interested parties, representing approximately 144 properties in the Warrill and Fassifern Valleys, and reported a likely aggregated demand for 21,541 megalitres at \$1,000 per ML.

The economic benefit analysis for the Scenic Rim based on the potential of 21,541 megalitres of water at this price for the Warrill and Fassifern Valleys could translate to an additional \$150 million in new agricultural revenue, \$305 million in direct economic benefit and 1,342 full-time jobs in agriculture each year, should this project receive government funding.

Phase Two of the project saw the formalisation of local company, Water for Warrill Ltd in August.

Water for Warrill Ltd has appointed Board members and is proactively progressing a funding application with the Queensland Government's Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water for submission to the Australian Government's National Water Grid Infrastructure Development Fund, with Council to provide a letter of support.

Council's direct involvement in Phase 1 and 2 of the project takes a line straight out of the *Scenic Rim Regional Prosperity Strategy 2020-2025*, about opportunities for the region to take charge of the future and make things happen rather than waiting for things to happen. Council will continue to advocate strongly for this regionally significant industry-led project as it progresses through the next steps, gaining momentum through all tiers of government.

More information and a copy of the Water for the Warrill Irrigation Project Feasibility Study Report is available at www.waterforwarrill.com.au

Council responds to industry request for long-term strategy

Council is working in partnership with industry to deliver a 10-year road map and a three-year strategic plan for the Scenic Rim's agribusiness and agritourism operators.

This project is funded by the Queensland Government's Bushfire Recovery Fund and is designed to guide and drive economic growth, jobs, innovation and resilience for industries hard hit by natural disasters. The grant of \$200,000, administered by the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training, was awarded to Council to deliver a 'Go Local, Grow Local' program and the agribusiness and agritourism road map and strategy. The project is part of phase two of Council's Agribusiness and Agritourism Industry Development Program. Targeted engagement has been undertaken across a broad spectrum of stakeholders and the strategy is expected to be adopted and made public in early 2022.

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Community shares their thoughts and ideas on region's future growth

Hundreds of residents have shared their thoughts and opinions on what the future of the Scenic Rim should look like after completing Council's initial survey for the region's first Growth Management Strategy.

A total of 348 people had their say in the survey, which was available on Council's website earlier this year.

The purpose of the survey was to gain an understanding of the community's vision and priorities for the future growth of the region, including preferred housing types, residential lot sizes, jobs, infrastructure, facilities and services, to inform the Strategy.

The Scenic Rim Growth Management Strategy will ensure we have a planning framework to guide and responsibly manage this growth until 2041 and help inform existing strategies and policies such as the Shaping SEQ Regional Plan and Scenic Rim Planning Scheme 2020.

With help from the local community through consultation like this survey, Council can maximise the benefits of this growth by ensuring it is well-planned and underpinned by appropriate infrastructure, services and facilities that will last well into the future.

The draft Growth Management Strategy is planned to progress to public consultation in November this year and will offer the community another chance to provide feedback on the proposed strategy.

More information on the Growth Management Strategy, including the development phases and delivery timelines, can be found on Council's website: <https://www.scenicrim.qld.gov.au/gms>

Draft Major Amendment to Planning Scheme progresses to State Interest Review

The first draft Major Amendment for the *Scenic Rim Planning Scheme 2020* was endorsed by Council on 21 September 2021 and has progressed to a State Interest Review, with community consultation also planned.

This amendment addresses new matters that have been raised with Council since the Planning Scheme has been adopted, as well as matters from previous community consultations.

Key items in the draft Major Amendment include:

- Facilitating craft brewing and distilleries in commercial zones;
- Enabling subdivision in the rural zone where land is severed by a State-controlled road under limited circumstances,
- Facilitating groundwater extraction for domestic water supply on Tamborine Mountain; and
- Amendments to Dual occupancy provisions in the Low Density and Low-medium Density Zones and the Dual Occupancy Code to enhance amenity and streetscape outcomes.

The *Scenic Rim Planning Scheme 2020* is available online at www.scenicrim.qld.gov.au/planning-and-permits/planning-schemes/scenic-rim-planning-scheme

Council to resurface 10% sealed roads before Christmas

This Spring, Council is bitumen resurfacing (resealing) sections of various sealed Council roads across the region.

Council is responsible for approximately 962 kilometres of sealed roads and in the next three months will resurface the bitumen (reseal) of approximately 90 kilometres of those roads to ensure the Scenic Rim has a well-maintained, safe and interconnected transport network.

This is a great result for residents and visitors and part of Council's ongoing commitment to an accessible and serviced region as set out in its Corporate Plan to provide and maintain critical Council-owned infrastructure.

The road sections are selected as part of a prioritisation process which is largely based on the seal condition. A condition assessment of local roads is undertaken by industry experts every three years, with annual reviews by Council's own staff with the data gained from both used in this process.

This year's program of work is estimated to use more than 960,000 litres of bitumen to resurface what is approximately 10 per cent of Council's sealed road network

Council looking for next 'big idea' for reducing waste to landfill

In the lead up to National Recycling Week (8-14 November) Council launched its inaugural *Reimagine Waste* Poster Competition, as part of its Waste Education Program.

It's open to children of all ages from the Scenic Rim to share their out-of-the-box ideas for rescuing waste destined for landfill.

the Scenic Rim roughly 20,000 tonnes of waste goes to landfill every year, so Council is looking for its youth to show the community different ways to reuse, recycle or repurpose that waste.

This fun and educational initiative supports Council's *Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy 2021-2026* and Queensland's vision to progress towards a zero-waste society where waste is avoided, reused and recycled to the greatest possible extent.

Further information is available at www.scenicrim.qld.gov.au/waste-services

Head Road, Carneys Creek closure delayed until further notice

Council delayed the closure of Head Road, near Brett's Road, Carneys Creek due to the impact of the border closure between Queensland and New South Wales on alternative routes.

The proposed works on a very windy and steep section of Head Road near the boundary of Scenic Rim and the Southern Downs were due to begin on Monday 23 August to replace guard rails damaged by bush fires.

Head Road will remain open until further notice because residents and businesses travelling between the two local government areas are no longer able to use a shorter alternative route via White Swamp Road. The southern detour via White Swamp Road crosses the state border and is unavailable for the foreseeable short-term, so we are investigating the timing of the proposed work on Head Road to minimise further impacts to the community.

Council successful in bid for Black Spot funding

Five busy thoroughfares and intersections across the Scenic Rim are set to receive safety upgrades to better protect the lives of motorists and pedestrians with Council receiving funding from the Australian Government's Black Spot Program.

At the Ordinary Meeting held on 16 August 2021, Councillors acknowledged the \$1.745 million 2021-2022 Black Spot Program funding and five approved projects across the region.

While works vary depending on the individual project, motorists can expect to see new audio line markings, guideposts with reflectors, more guardrails, the installation of alignment markers, the installation of a single lane roundabout, warning signs and pedestrian refuges.

Assistant Minister for Road Safety and Freight Transport and Federal Member for Wright, Scott Buchholz, said the latest round of Black Spot Program funding would inject \$1.745 million to make Scenic Rim roads safer.

This is a significant investment in making our local road network better, to get you home sooner and safer and it is part of the Australian Government's commitment to building safer roads right across the nation.

This funding allocation is great news for our community, as this allows Council to get started on a number of projects that may have otherwise been years away.

Details on the five project fully funded under the Black Spots Program are available online at <https://www.scenicrim.qld.gov.au/news/article/572/council-successful-in-bid-for-black-spot-funding>

7.4 EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT

1. STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

CAPACITY BUILDING FUND I

In March 2021 the NRJO applied to the OLG to redirect resources from the Capacity Building Fund to focus on two new studies: The Assessment of a UNESCO Biosphere Application; and the development of a Renewable Energy Prospectus which are strategic priorities for the NRJO.

GOAL # 8.3 RENEWABLE ENERGY PROSPECTUS

Consultants 100% Renewables were appointed to the project and a steering committee comprising representatives from Kyogle, Richmond Valley and Byron Councils have overseen the process with regular project meetings.

The steering committee will receive a final draft of the prospectus the week of 8 November 2021.

GOAL #13 ASSESSMENT OF UNESCO BIOSPHERE APPLICATION

Consultants NGH were appointed in August 2021 to undertake this project and a steering committee comprising of representatives from Ballina, Richmond Valley and Tweed Heads Councils have overseen the progress of the project.

The Steering Committee will receive a final draft report the week of 8 November 2021.

CAPACITY BUILDING FUND II

On June 24 2021 Cr Mulholland received a letter from the Minister for the Office of Local Government outlining that Round II of the Capacity Building Fund for JOs with each organisation receiving an additional \$150,000 in funding.

The outcome of the funding is to assist JO's to further build capacity and demonstrate capability to work with State agencies, while delivering their strategic plans and improve each JOs sustainability. Four projects were proposed and approved for this funding:

- **Business Case into Shared Services**
- **Audit of available industrial and employment land (Goal 12, Strategic Action 12.2)**
- **Energy and Waste Related Projects (Goal 10)**
- **Mobile Phone Black spots (Goal 7)**

(I) BUSINESS CASE – ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATION OF SPECIALIST EMPLOYEE POOL WITHIN THE NORTHERN RIVERS COUNCILS.

A scope for the study has been finalised and will be sent for quotes the week of 11 November 2021. A steering committee of representatives from NRJO member councils will be formed to oversee the project. Assistance has been received from the Dept Planning, Industry and Environment and Office of Local Government.

(II) AUDIT OF AVAILABLE INDUSTRIAL AND EMPLOYMENT LAND

Goal 12: A strong, diverse regional economy which provides local employment by attracting new enterprises, enabling existing enterprises to innovate and expand, and offering the conditions required for emerging industries to flourish

Strategic actions 12.2 Partner with the Department of Industry as it delivers key actions in the Making it Happen in the Regions: Regional Development Framework including working with local bodies to develop and publish Regional Investment Prospectuses

The development of a data base of available industrial and employment land in the region for prospective businesses and industry looking to move to the area, as well as detailed forward projections of industrial or employment zoned but not yet developed, including infrastructure or other constraints stifling the land being developed and brought to market, and an analysis of suitable land for consideration of employment lands in the Future North Coast Regional Plan, detailing its strategic merits.

The NRJO and Regional Development Australia – Northern Rivers will partner on this project.

2. REGIONAL PRIORITIES

(i) REGIONAL HOUSING TASK FORCE

As per the resolution below at the NRJO Board meeting on 30 July 2021,

30072021/10 RESOLVED

MOVED: M Lyon/C Cherry

THAT the NRJO

- i. continue to work with Member Councils to draft a regional submission to the Regional Housing Taskforce.*
- ii. Declares we are currently experiencing a crisis situation with respect to housing availability and affordability in our community.*
- iii. Invites other JOs experiencing similar challenges to make the same declaration.*

The EO worked with the NRJO Housing Working Group to draft a submission for the Regional Housing Taskforce. The submission was copied to all State members of parliament in the Northern Rivers. A copy is attached.

(ii) COMPLIANCE LEVY AND FUNDING REVIEW

As per the resolution at the resolution below at the NRJO Board Meeting on July 30 2021.

30072021/8 RESOLVED

MOVED: D Mulholland/ M Lyon

THAT the NRJO continue to work with Member Councils to provide a collective response in relation to the State Government regulation on Compliance Levies.

The NRJO continues to work closely with the NRJO Planners Group and actively advocate for our local councils on this matter. Following is a timeline of actions to date:

April 2021: The EO sent a brief to all other Joint Organisations

May 2021: The NRJO Chair wrote to local parliamentarians on the issue

May 2021: The EO and Chair met with Alexis Yates, Senior Policy Advisor to the Minister of Planning and Public Spaces to discuss concerns.

June 2021: Continued correspondence with Alexis Yates, Senior Policy Advisor to the Minister of Planning and Public Spaces

August 2021: NRJO Chair wrote to Mayor Rowena Abbey, Chair of the JO Chairs, on the issue. Attached

August 2021: Changes to the Compliance Levy were listed as a priority action at the JO Chair's Forum.

September 2021: The NRJO drafted a letter to the Minister on the issue which was reviewed by all JOs and signed and sent by the Chair of the JO Chair's letter attached. The NRJO will now distribute this letter to all parliamentarians in the Northern Rivers.

October 2021: Member for Clarence, Mr Chris Gulaptis MP, sent through correspondence from Minister Stokes office. Letter Attached

November 2021: The EO joined the Namoi Joint Organisation at a meeting with Alexis Yates, Senior Policy Advisor to Minister Stokes to discuss the issue again.

(iii) NORTH COAST REGIONAL LEADERSHIP EXECUTIVE - COVID

In August 2021 the Regional NSWRLLE began convening weekly meetings in-order to implement a regular forum for Agency updates that may need cross government collaboration and to raise issues for escalation.

The forum involves Resilience NSW, NSW Education, Cross Border Commissioner, Mid North Coast Local Health District, Northern NSW Local Health District, Aboriginal Affairs, the NRJO and Police NSW.

The EO has drafted a weekly update following each meeting and distributed it to all Mayors and GMs.

The EO has successfully had eleven issues identified by Northern Rivers Councils elevated to the Minister.

(iv) KOALA SEPP 2021

The NSW State government commenced the NSW Koala State Environmental Planning Policy in March 2021. The NRJO NRM Managers discussed the implications of the NSW Koala SEPP at their meeting in May 2021.

The two most significant issues arising from the SEPP are the: • exclusion of the application of the SEPP in rural zones • proposed removal of council's consent role in relation to forestry.

A letter circulated to the NRJO Board and signed by the Chair outlining the full range of concerns, anticipated implications and proposed solutions was sent to The Premier, Minister for Planning & Public Spaces, Minister for Energy and Environment, Minister for Agriculture. Letter is attached.

RELATIONSHIPS AND NETWORKS

- **JULY 31: EPA BRIEFING - JOs**
- **AUGUST 2: RLE ECONOMIC WORKFORCE AND DEVELOPMENT SUB COMMITTEE**
- **AUGUST 4: REGIONAL LEADERSHIP EXECUTIVE – RESILIENCE AND RECOVERY SUB COMMITTEE**
- **AUGUST 4: INDIGENOUS ROAD USERS ROUNDTABLE WITH HON SCOTT BUCHHOLZ MP, ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR ROAD SAFETY AND FREIGHT TRANSPORT**
- **AUGUST 5: JOINT ORGANISATION CHAIRS FORUM**
- **AUGUST 17: NORTHERN RIVERS NSW STEERING COMMITTEE**
- **AUGUST 19: NORTH COAST REGIONAL LEADERSHIP EXECUTIVE**
- **AUGUST 20: NEW WATER EFFICIENCY PROGRAM WORKSHOP – JO UPDATE**
- **AUGUST 25: CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND HOUSING RDA NORTHERN RIVERS AND MID NORTH COAST**
- **AUGUST 27: TOWN WATER RISK REDUCTION PROGRAM – JO BRIEFING**
- **AUGUST 30: RLE COVID UPDATE**
- **SEPTEMBER 2: RLE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SUB COMMITTEE**
- **SEPTEMBER 6: RLE COVID UPDATE**
- **SEPTEMBER 7: SUSTAIN NORTHERN RIVERS MEETING**
- **SEPTEMBER 8: NORTH EAST WASTE MEETING**
- **SEPTEMBER 8: REGIONAL NSW MEETING**
- **SEPTEMBER 9: RLE COMMUNITIES AND SERVICE DELIVERY SUB COMMITTEE**
- **SEPTEMBER 13: RLE COVID UPDATE**
- **SEPTEMBER 15: RLE RESILIENCE AND RECOVERY SUB COMMITTEE MEETING**
- **SEPTEMBER 16: NCADA MEETING**
- **SEPTEMBER 27: RLE COVID UPDATE**
- **OCTOBER 6: TRANSITION NORTH COAST WORKING GROUP**

- **OCTOBER 11: RLE COVID UPDATE**
- **OCTOBER 11: NORTH COAST REGIONAL PLAN 2036, DELIVERY, COORDINATION AND MONITORING COMMITTEE**
- **OCTOBER 14: NORTH COAST RLE ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**
- **OCTOBER 14: JOS / DPIE BRIEFING WATER EFFICIENCY PROGRAM**
- **OCTOBER 18: RLE COVID UPDATE**
- **OCTOBER 19: NORTHERN RIVERS NSW BRAND STEERING COMMITTEE**
- **OCTOBER 21: COMMUNITIES AND SERVICE DELIVERY SUBCOMMITTEE**
- **OCTOBER 22: LGNSW AND JO LOCAL WATER UTILITY WORKING GROUP**
- **OCTOBER 25: RLE COVID UPDATE**
- **OCTOBER 27: NORTH COAST RLE RESILIENCE AND RECOVERY SUB COMMITTEE**
- **OCTOBER 28: VIRTUAL ROUND TABLE TELSTRA WITH TELSTRA CEO**
- **OCTOBER 29: JO WORKSHOP TRANSPORT NSW**
- **NOVEMBER 1: RLE COVID UPDATE**
- **NOVEMBER 2: MEETING WITH NAMOI JO WITH ALEXIS YATES, SENIOR POLICY ADVISOR TO THE MINISTER OF PLANNING AND PUBLIC SPACES.**
- **NOVEMBER 4: JO CHAIR'S FORUM**

(v) JOINT ORGANISATIONS

(i) REGIONAL HOUSING TASKFORCE

As noted in the Minutes from the JO Chair's Forum held on 5 August 2021 under section 9.7b

recommend to JOs that they put submissions into the Housing Taskforce and lodge a submission on areas of commonality.

The NRJO coordinated and drafted the response from the JO Chairs forum to the Regional Housing Taskforce. The document was submitted by the Canberra Joint Organisation under JO Chair Cr Rowena Abbey's signature. Document attached.

(ii) COMPLIANCE LEVY AND FUNDING REVIEW

As noted in the Minutes from the JO Chair's Forum held on 5 August 2021 under section 9.7a *the JO Chairs' Forum write to the Minister on significant impacts to Councils on the removal of various compliance levies and the Infrastructure Contributions Bill;*

The NRJO coordinated and drafted the response from the JO Chairs Forum to the Minister of Planning and Public Spaces in relation to the changes to the Compliance Levy. The correspondence was distributed to all local State Members of Parliament in the Northern Rivers.

(iii) EVALUATION OF THE JOINT ORGANISATIONS FRAMEWORK

Public policy consulting firm ARDT has now finalised the JO evaluation on behalf of OLG. The review was due to be completed by June 30, however, it is now hoped it will be finalised by November. Please see attached a letter from the JO Chair requesting further information from the Minister.

(vi) MEDIA

(i) LINKEDIN

As a part of the NRJO's communications strategy the EO has established a LinkedIn page for the organisation. The aim of the page is to be a communications tool with key stakeholders. A link was sent to all NRJO Board members and General Managers.

(ii) EMERGENCY DASHBOARDS

A joint press release coordinated by Richmond Valley Council and involving Lismore City Council, Kyogle Council and the NRJO was distributed announcing the dashboards in those LGAs going live. A copy is attached.

(iii) REGIONAL HOUSING TASKFORCE SUBMISSION

A press release providing an overview of the key points from the NRJO submission to the Regional Housing Taskforce was released. A copy is attached.

NRJO Chair, Cr Mulholland undertook an interview with ABC North Coast on August 30 and an article ran in the Richmond River Express.

(iv) MAYOR WELCOME LOCKDOWN LIFTING

Press release was sent out welcoming the lockdown decision and calling for travel exemptions to the tightened. A copy is attached.

An excerpt from all releases has been included on the NRJO LinkedIn page.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Executive Officer's report be noted

7.5 ADOPTION OF FINANCIAL REPORTS

The audit report completed by TNR has been included in the meeting papers (Attachment 18).

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

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

Also included for review are the Engagement Closing Report (attachment 19) and Final Management Letter (attachment 20)

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the 2020-21 general purpose financial statements presented to members be accepted and the Chair and nominated voting representative sign the statement as attached

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

as at 30 September 2021

DRAFT ONLY

	2021/22 Budget	2021/22 Actual	2020/21 Actual	
<u>Operating Revenues</u>				
Membership Fees	201,000	201,100	160,800	
Myroadinfo Fees	33,725	16,863	33,725	
LG Procurement Rebate	30,000	-	37,386	
Power Infrastructure Upgrade Project	-	-	-	
Capacity Building	-	-	150,000	
State Gov't Contribution	-	57,600	-	Nb This is 2021 Revenue
Sundry Income / Recharge Workshops		-	-	
Interest	2,000	520	2,235	
Total	266,725	276,083	384,146	
<u>Operating Expenses</u>				
Bank Charges	-	-	40	
Conferences, Events, Travel	12,250	223	2,089	
Consultants (Economic Report)	-	-	500	
Professional Development	-	-	-	
Prof Dev - Member Council Training	14,250	-	-	
Exec Officer - Salary/Oncosts/Recruit	93,318	22,274	83,823	
Exec Officer - Computer	-	-	-	
Exec Officer - Vehicle Allowance	8,580	2,145	7,508	
Exec Officer - Support (RDA)	54,000	13,500	54,000	
Exec Officer - Office (Rous)	-	-	-	
Chair Stipend	10,000	2,500	10,000	
Committee Support	5,400	-	-	
MyRoadInfo	29,300	-	24,072	
Professional Fees – Audit	10,400	-	10,560	
Media and Communications	5,200	-	-	
Regional Projects - Capacity Building	250,200	22,610	49,800	
Regional Projects - Other	476,537	142,688	32,349	
Vendor Panel Access	63,250	-	58,363	
Sundry Expenses	3,950	1,239	3,335	
Total	1,036,635	207,180	336,439	
	-			
Net Cash Movement	769,910	68,903	47,707	
Retained Earnings - 1 July	1,043,966	1,043,966	996,259	
Retained Earnings - 30 June	274,056	1,112,869	1,043,966	

Balance Sheet

As of September 2021

Assets			
Cash			
Summerland Community First		\$2,931.82	
Summerland Saver		\$1,072,051.89	
Debit Card - Chair		\$1,474.60	
Debit Card - Exec Officer		\$2,110.82	
Total Cash			\$1,078,569.13
Debtors			
Trade Debtors		\$64,383.00	
Total Debtors			\$64,383.00
Total Assets			\$1,142,952.13
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Creditors			
Trade Creditors	\$12,468.50		
Sundry Creditors/Accruals	\$10,400.00		
Total Creditors		\$22,868.50	
GST Liability			
GST Collected	\$21,795.96		
GST paid	-\$22,006.43		
Total GST Liability		-\$210.47	
Payroll Liabilities			
PAYG	\$2,456.00		
Provision - Staff entitlements	\$4,968.92		
Total Payroll Liabilities		\$7,424.92	
Total Liabilities			\$30,082.95
Net Assets			\$1,112,869.18
Equity			
Retained Earnings		\$1,043,966.18	
Current Year Earnings		\$68,902.86	
Historical Balancing		\$0.14	
Total Equity			\$1,112,869.18

This report includes Year-End Adjustments.

Job Profit & Loss Statement

September 2021

Account Name	Selected Period	Year To Date
A100	Operational expenses	
Income		
Membership	\$0.00	\$201,100.00
Interest Received	\$164.93	\$520.22
Total Income	\$164.93	\$201,620.22
Expense		
Computer Maint/Support	\$0.00	\$31.82
Computer ISP and Registrations	\$120.08	\$633.51
Phone charges	\$77.72	\$574.07
Support services - Admin contr	\$4,500.00	\$13,500.00
Wages	\$8,653.83	\$18,749.97
Allowances	\$2,145.00	\$2,145.00
Superannuation	\$865.38	\$1,874.99
Provision for Staff Entitlemen	\$754.26	\$1,649.36
Meeting Catering	\$223.00	\$223.00
Total Expense	\$17,339.27	\$39,381.72
Net Profit/(Loss)	-\$17,174.34	\$162,238.50
A102	Chair costs	
Expense		
Allowance-Chair Stipend	\$833.33	\$2,499.99
Total Expense	\$833.33	\$2,499.99
Net Profit/(Loss)	-\$833.33	-\$2,499.99
B104	Regional Business Power Infrs	
Expense		
Project Contributions	\$0.00	\$137,988.15
Total Expense	\$0.00	\$137,988.15
Net Profit/(Loss)	\$0.00	-\$137,988.15
B105b	Cap Bldg1 Renewable Energy	
Expense		
Project Consultants	\$15,775.00	\$15,775.00
Total Expense	\$15,775.00	\$15,775.00
Net Profit/(Loss)	-\$15,775.00	-\$15,775.00
B105c	Cap Bldg 1 Biosphere	
Expense		

This report includes Year-End Adjustments.

Job Profit & Loss Statement

September 2021

Account Name	Selected Period	Year To Date
Project Contributions	\$6,835.00	\$6,835.00
Total Expense	\$6,835.00	\$6,835.00
Net Profit/(Loss)	-\$6,835.00	-\$6,835.00

B106 Disaster Dashboards**Income**

State Govt Funding	\$0.00	\$57,600.00
Total Income	\$0.00	\$57,600.00

Expense

Project Consultants	\$0.00	\$4,700.00
Total Expense	\$0.00	\$4,700.00
Net Profit/(Loss)	\$0.00	\$52,900.00

C101 Myroadinfo**Income**

Myroadinfo	\$0.00	\$16,862.50
Total Income	\$0.00	\$16,862.50
Net Profit/(Loss)	\$0.00	\$16,862.50

¶

RECOMMENDATION:..¶

THAT the financial reports for period ending 30 September 2021 be accepted.¶

¶

This report includes Year-End Adjustments.

7.7 CHAIR POSITION POST-ELECTION DELEGATION

To accommodate the time between the local government elections being held on December 4, 2021 and the Board of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation being re-convened in January 2022 it is recommended the board consider appointing a delegate to the role of NRJO Chair.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT The Board resolves, as per s377(1) of the Local Government Act, to delegate the role of Chair of the Joint Organisation to the current Chair, Cr Danielle Mulholland from 5 December 2021 until the election of a Chair takes place at the January 2022 Board meeting or such other time as deemed appropriate by the Board. The delegation encompasses all the Chair's roles and responsibilities as per the Northern Rivers JO Charter.

8 URGENT BUSINESS

9 CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS

Board members and the Executive Officer were required to complete Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest forms. Once received, these are to be tabled at a Board meeting. Information contained in returns made and lodged under clause 4.21 of the Model Code of Conduct is to be made publicly available in accordance with the requirements of the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*, the *Government Information (Public Access) Regulation 2009* and any guidelines issued by the Information Commissioner. Copies of the completed documentation was circulated to Board members only via separate email

Personal information such as residential address may be redacted from the forms prior to publishing on the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation's website. Such a request should be made to the Executive Officer in writing by **30 November 2021**.

Returns will be made publicly available on 1 December 2021.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Board agree to publish the Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest Forms

10 CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence of significance – Incoming

- Letter from Byron Shire Council re compliance levy
- Letter from Chris Gulaptis MP re compliance levy
- Email from Deputy Premier Barilaro re relaxing of COVID restrictions
- Letter from LG Procurement re 2021 rebate (attached)

Correspondence of significance - Outgoing

- Letter to Premier and Deputy Premier regarding relaxation of COVID restrictions
- Letters of support provided to Kyogle Council's applications to Bushfire Recovery Fund
- Letter of support provided to RISE grant program for BeWilderness (Byron Shire)
- Letter of support provided to Kyogle Council's applications to Regional Sports Facility Fund
- Letter to Byron Shire Council re compliance levy
- Letter to Premier, Minister for Planning & Public Spaces; Minister for Energy and Environment and Minister for Agriculture
- Email to local State members regarding submission to Regional Housing TaskForce
- Letter to Cr Rowena Abbey, Chair of JO Network re compliance levy

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the correspondence report be noted

11 ATTACHMENTS

1. NRJO Submission to Regional Housing Taskforce
2. Letter to Chair NSW JO Chairs Forum re compliance levies
3. NSW JO Chairs Forum - letter to Minister Stokes re compliance levies
4. Letter from Chris Gulaptis MP re compliance levies
5. Letter to Premier Perrottet re Koala SEPP 2021
6. NSW JO Chairs Forum submission to Regional Housing Taskforce
7. NSW JO Chairs Forum – letter to Minister Hancock re JO review
8. Media Release – disaster dashboards
9. Media Release – submission to Regional Housing Taskforce
10. Media Release – changes to lockdown rules
11. General Purpose Financial Statements
12. Engagement Closing Report – NSW Audit Office
13. Final Management Letter – NSW Audit Office
14. Statement by Members to NSW Audit Office
15. Letter from LG Procurement re 2021 rebate (attached)

Attachment 1

Submission to Regional Housing Taskforce by Northern Rivers Joint Organisation August 2021

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Regional Housing Taskforce Scope:

The Taskforce will investigate planning barriers and develop recommendations to address regional housing issues with a focus on:

- *The planning system and other government levers to stimulate housing supply and address housing needs*
- *Removing impediments within the planning system to the delivery of affordable housing types and housing generally*
- *Identifying mechanisms within the planning system to facilitate and drive the delivery of housing matched to community needs*

The terms of reference: [NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment publication \(amazonaws.com\)](https://www.amazonaws.com)

Who are we?

The Northern Rivers Joint Organisation (NRJO) represents the Ballina, Byron, Kyogle, Lismore, Richmond Valley and Tweed NSW local government areas.

With representation by the mayors and general managers of each Council, NRJO's role is to facilitate and lead advocacy, political representation and cooperative action on matters of regional significance.



Map of NRJO local government areas

Acknowledgement

The NRJO acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of these lands. People who have lived in and derived their physical and spiritual needs from the forests, rivers, lakes and streams of this land over many thousands of years.

Northern Rivers Housing Crisis

The trend towards outward migration from cities to regional areas has been steadily rising. Technological advancements allowing for a decentralized workplace were already driving a portion of this migration, however the COVID pandemic has seen this trend rapidly increase.

This region, being an attractive option for metropolitan expatriates, has felt the full effects of this trend, with the resulting supply/demand housing squeeze leading to the displacement of lower paid key workers and other vulnerable demographic groups. Short-term holiday letting in residential areas has compounded the housing supply squeeze, resulting in a perfect storm for Byron Shire and emerging in surrounding local government areas.

In response to the situation, the elected Councils of Ballina, Byron, Lismore and Tweed have declared that their local government areas face an affordable housing crisis.

Appendix A: Background and Context provides further details on the Northern Rivers housing situation.

Ready to assist

To address the crisis, the NRJO promote recommendations to target addressing supply constraints, expanding housing options, and providing affordable housing for key workers and members of the community who are vulnerable to housing stress.

To assist in delivery of regionally appropriate solutions the NRJO is aided by a Housing Working Group (HWG). The group was set up by the Northern Rivers Local Government Planners Group. Formed to support advocacy and collaboration on innovative solutions to housing affordability and working with Department of Planning, Industry and Environment – Local & Regional Planning Northern Region representation.

It is hoped that solutions proposed in this document can activate the timely rollout of housing solutions for our communities.

Key Submission messages

1. The factors contributing to the Northern Rivers, and essentially Australian wide housing crisis extends well outside issues with the planning system and local government. To continue with an approach targeted at peripherally tweaking the planning system will NOT resolve the housing crisis.
2. Despite the common rhetorical explanation of high house prices being a simple function of lack of housing supply, the drivers of the current housing situation are more complex and reach far beyond the sphere of local government.

Taking a deeper view, research undertaken by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) points to changes in the 'institutional framework' for housing in Australia, which has entrenched a policy framework that appears unable to address housing affordability concerns in a significant way.

These 'institutional factors' include:

- Labour market deregulation has resulted in increases in insecure work through casualisation and wage stagnation making home purchase out of reach of some workers
- Increased workforce participation has increased the purchasing power of two income households, thus raising the minimum income required to compete in the housing market
- Financial sector deregulation that has led to housing sector "financialisation" whereby society has increasingly come to see 'housing more as investment vehicle than shelter
- The emergence of a policy environment that is not conducive to broad based home ownership, with the development of powerful lobby groups representing vested interests which work to protect policies that advantage housing investment over home ownership (such as the significant tax advantages provided for housing investors over homeowners).

These institutional factors need to be addressed to realistically respond to the affordable housing crisis. Focusing on planning system changes alone risks further reinforcing the fundamental problems.

3. Importantly, the financialisation of housing markets combined with a social and economic architecture that encourages property speculation as the pathway to personal wealth (supported through taxation settings, bank lending standards and Government programs) is the key driving factor that needs to be redressed by Government.
4. Recent (and foreshadowed) changes to the developer contribution system are exacerbating rather than helping the situation. Whilst these changes support the development sector (which arguably does not need this support given strong profitability), they undermine the financial capacity of local government to delivery necessary infrastructure and thereby run the risk of compromising efficient and timely development.

Arguments that developer contributions somehow push up house prices bare no relationship to reality and need to be strongly repudiated.

5. The current process for enabling an Affordable Housing Contribution Scheme is onerous on local government and lacks a clear commitment to achieving affordable housing outcomes.

A case in example is Byron Shire Council (SC) progression with an AHCS through the state government. Council has pursued its suite of housing initiatives against the backdrop of State planning legislation, the North Coast Regional Plan, and published DPIE AHCS guidelines. In general, the requirements of Council and the corresponding DPIE assessment path are clearly articulated in published documents. Departing from this framework the Northern Regional Office has refused Gateway assessment of the AHCS until after the Byron Residential Strategy has been finalised.

6. The core responsibility for providing affordable and social housing is with the State and Federal governments and not individual local councils. In this regard the NRJO advise that **Ballina and Byron Councils intend to lodge a submission on Crisis Housing Inquiry by the** Committee on Community Services.
7. The Northern Rivers, whilst regional is on the perimeter of SEQ urban area. Brisbane has won hosting rights to the 2032 Olympic Games and the QLD Pacific Motorway is expanding to be 3 lanes all the way to Tweed Heads. This will likely mean increased demand for people to live, work and travel to the Northern Rivers. The Taskforce should meet with the Border Commissioner to better align housing and infrastructure funding and deliver outcomes between states.
8. Noting that the Taskforce is limited to 'planning barriers' the NRJO puts forward key recommendations focusing within the context of the planning system.

The NRJO is encouraged by the NSW Housing Strategy and the 2021-22 Action Plan and commends the commitment to working with local governments and communities to achieve the NSW Government housing objectives, as well as recognising the unique role of local government in the delivery of housing and achieving housing goals for the community.

The housing initiatives being pursued by our member councils are complimentary to the Strategy and action plan. Specific references to relevant actions are provided in the recommendations of this submission as proposed ways to deliver housing initiatives.

Note: Actions referenced below are as identified in the NSW Housing Strategy Action Plan 2021 - 22. [NSW-Housing-2021-22-Action-Plan-mayv2-2021.pdf](#)

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Pause for the Northern Rivers the implementation of STRA SEPP - High priority & immediate

The NSW Government should pause the introduction of the SEPP for the Northern Rivers (NR) until a social impact assessment of Short-Term Rental Accommodation (STRA) has been undertaken, particularly in high tourism coastal regions.

A regional pilot process is recommended to establish a bespoke planning STRA response for the NR prior to the introduction of the SEPP. Government should work with the NRJO – HWG to set a framework that establishes a sustainable and healthy (economic and social) balance between facilitating some NR housing stock to be used for STRA (non- hosted) and ensuring that there is available and secure long term private rental, particularly affordable rental housing.

It is noted that Housing Strategy Action set 2.3 is seeking to review occupancy laws – this information would also be of assistance to this action as it may identify where the occupancy laws could be strengthened to better protect tenants seeking a long-term tenancy.

Recommendation 2: Modernise Government housing stock and utilise Government land and surplus buildings- High Priority over next 6 -12 months

The NSW Government should commit to the delivery of additional affordable housing on State Government and Crown Land. As part of delivery the NSW Housing Strategy Actions 1.3.2, 3.1.1 & 3.13 regarding the Land and Housing Corporation (LHC) portfolio review.

Step 1: Modernise exiting Government housing stock and activate LHC land that could be redeveloped (retained in the ownership of Government, councils or registered CHPs).

Step 2: Prioritise a register of NSW Government land in the NR.

Step 3: Engage with NRJO - HWG to assess this register to determine the best fit housing type and ways to expedited suitable NR Government land into social, affordable or community housing. Ensuring the land is suitable for redevelopment is a crucial step.

Step 4: Ensure if LHC land is suitable for redevelopment that a priority pilot project occurs in the NRs.

Step 5: Support and encourage the Federal Government’s prompt introduction of the CHP funding mechanism for affordable housing projects outlined in the paper titled ‘Delivering More Affordable Housing: An Innovative Solution’ dated May 2021.

Recommendation 3: NR Homelessness and Crisis Housing Action Plan

3 a) Provide NR Councils and CHP with information on NSW homelessness program & how it will be implemented in the NR - High to Medium Priority in next 6 months

A Government-backed state street count in March found more than 40 per cent of the 1,131 people sleeping rough in New South Wales, were on the North Coast.

- Byron Shire, with 198 rough sleepers, is second only to the City of Sydney Council area with 272 in terms of problem areas.
- Other North Coast locations high on the list include Tweed Shire with 58 people sleeping rough. (*Source - ABC News 8 March 2021*).

The NSW Housing Strategy Action Plan 2021-22 Action 2.6.2 is to partner with LGAs to trial way to facilitate temporary supportive accommodation options for people experiencing homelessness. Action 3.3.2 seeks to reduce homelessness in the state by 50% by 2025. The NRJO request Action delivery program details in particular, direct intervention actions for this region.

The NSW Government needs to take the lead to produce a delivery program on this Action and provide funds to implement.

3b) Identify and fund utilisation of other private buildings - High Priority in next 6 months

This could involve tapping into the private market by assisting the NRJO – HWG & NR Community Housing Providers (CHP) in an EOI to identify & register private market land/dwellings/other buildings where NSW Government /CHP could take a head lease to provide temporary & social housing including as a stop gap housing whilst LHC sites are being redeveloped.

As a case in example Tweed Shire Council is considering motels - however the Council would not have the funds to purchase or take a long- term lease on these properties. In this instance the NSW Government could provide a deliver program and funding.

This further aided by a fast-track affordable housing assessment process for councils and community housing providers.

Point of note: anecdotal employers are making their own homes available to workers – need to ensure that this does not culminate in fringe benefit tax issues for such employers/ees.

Recommendation 4: Support current NRJO LGA housing initiatives - High Priority & Immediate

As part of delivery as part of NSW Housing Strategy Action 5.1.3 supporting the use of under-utilised land by assisting in the progression of:

- Byron SC Lot 22 planning proposal – Lot 22 DP1073165 Mullumbimby
- Byron SC Tiny house planning proposal – Lot 22 DP1073165 Mullumbimby
- Tweed SC proposal “Smart and Sustainable Village” - Lot 1 in DP1069561, Wardrop Valley Road, Wardrop Valley with NSW Government funds and management to advance the development.

These projects to be advanced by a fast-track affordable housing assessment process and where appropriate infrastructure funding.

Recommendation 5: Review the AHCS template appropriateness for regions - High to Medium Priority in next 12 months

Undertake a review in consultation with the NRJO - HWG of the appropriateness of the current SEPP 70 AHCS template (including means to seek a contribution) in relation to the NR to support delivery of Action 5.2.2 on AHCSs. Furthermore, support progression:

- Byron SC Affordable Housing Contribution Scheme – (currently constrained in delivering due the DPIE refusal to accept a planning proposal submitted in June 2021) – this planning proposal whilst having the capacity to act as a pilot case for other regional councils, is not progressing for reasons unclear to Council. It does not appear to be based on policy or procedures available for review by Council.
- Tweed SC Affordable Housing Contribution Scheme underway and expected to be completed within 2021/22.

Recommendation 6: A program to deliver the full spectrum of housing in the Northern Rivers as part of NCRP review - High to Medium Priority in next 12 months

The North Coast Regional Plan 2036 is under review. The world has moved on since the adoption of this plan – including growth of STRA, increasing use of homes as investment rather than shelter and covid changing work patterns and access to housing etc. The next NCRP needs to:

- deliver a more detailed analysis, projection, and range of housing target scenarios
- to ensure the review entails funding and work to unify Northern Rivers data and analysis information on housing and infrastructure.

The NSW Government must take the lead on this action, and the NRJO recommends the DPIE research the model successfully implemented by the QLD Government in producing a regional planning framework, where the State is responsible for managing the collection and ongoing updates of housing data.

The work, to be undertaken in unison with the NRJO - HWG and local stakeholders who provide and manage residential land and housing such as CHP, should include the following:

- Quantify the pattern of dwelling use in the NR
- Quantify the profile of current and project housing requirements across the NR using the NSW Housing Strategy spectrum
- Relate these aspects to identify where there are:
 - Shortfalls
 - Oversupply
 - Mismatch of residents to housing types
- Within the subsets of the housing spectrum determine options for a housing mix (detached/multi-dwelling etc) etc to set targets by location – short term – long term
- As housing affordability broadly refers to the cost of housing services and shelter – both for renters and owner occupiers – relative to a given individual's or household's disposable income – investigations should help to better understand the relationship to workforce participation including employment opportunities, initiatives, and incentives
- Based on the issues/drivers/ emerging solutions determine the best mechanism to deliver the NSW Housing Strategy' spectrum of housing'. This not to be limited to planning system solutions and to include infrastructure funding and delivery.

The NSW Housing Strategy spectrum of housing and our understanding of the relationship to the planning system is articulated in Appendix A.

Recommendation 7: Appraise the impact of land banking and identify options to address - High to Medium Priority in next 12 months

Not an action identified in the NSW HS Action plan however a significant issue for private land supply in the NR – particularly Tweed and Ballina Shire.

Preliminary suggested measures to address by the HWG include:

- If development delays are due to lack of infrastructure funding, the NSW Government could provide the upfront capital to deliver the infrastructure with the return on their investment being the provision of affordable housing. HWG suggests (subject to viability) the application of 20% of development yield to be allocated to affordable housing in such circumstances.
- Where land banking is not caused by infrastructure funding or planning delays, Government should enable Councils to apply higher Council rate charges on vacant residential land. This would discourage land banking and the additional funds raised could be directed to helping fund affordable housing projects.
- Alternatively, NSW Government could establish a sunset clause on vacant land requiring development to proceed in a timely manner. Where the land development does not meet the set timeframe; the land would revert to rural zoning. This would encourage developers to bring residential lots to the market. Typically, however, strategic urban development

sites are limited due to environmental and infrastructure constraints. Therefore, where the private sector is inhibiting the timely development of land, Government could strengthen compulsory acquisition powers to enable local government or Landcom to purchase such sites and proceed with development. As the main risks associated with greenfield development are regulatory and finance-related, these could be readily managed by Government. Potential conflict of interest issues could be adequately addressed by the establishment of appropriate governance arrangements.

Currently, market-based incentives are proving counterproductive to delivering affordable housing outcomes in greenfield development areas. These perverse market incentives are further exacerbated as land prices rise. The fact that local housing supply is a functional oligopoly supports the argument for increased government intervention to address such market failure.

Recommendation 8: Local involvement in housing design guides and delivery of case studies - longer term

As part of the delivery of NSW Housing Strategy Action set 2.5. – Adaptable housing and developing a unified housing design guide are to be developed. Action 4.4.1 entails developing & release case studies to promote diverse housing that needs the needs of all cohorts.

Whilst supportive of this action, it is considered that the NSW State Government needs to replace the current BASIX system and objectives-based design criteria, with much clearer, stringent ESD outcomes criteria and controls for new developments.

The NSW Government should also work with HWG to include a subtropical and NR design response and case studies for reasons including:

- Increase the acceptance of medium density development, as some community sectors remain resistant to housing other than the detached house and raising issue with character, density, building height and parking.
- The climate changes in this region may warrant a different design response
- Need to engage with the insurance sector (insurance is a growing housing cost)
- Opportunity to look a new means of infrastructure provision to reduce on-going household costs (such as a program to facilitate roof top solar on rental properties to the benefit of tenants)
- Improve acceptance of medium density development by industry – the local housing development sector tends towards the low-risk approach of providing what the market traditionally has demanded (single detached housing) rather than catering to growing demands for smaller dwelling options. Regionally appropriate exemplars are needed to encourage industry to shift towards providing a more diverse housing stock.

Recommendation 9: Address NSW Government policy uncertainty and enhance councils' capacity to respond

NR councils are pursuing housing initiatives in accordance with NSW Government planning legislation, the North Coast Regional Plan, and published DPIE guidelines. These policies outline directions, limits, principles, and guidance for decision making.

Importantly they provide a means to establish uniformity, consistency, clarity and transparency in the process for those directly involved as well as the broader community.

The NRJO understands that policies and procedures may need to be modified and new ones developed for various reasons:

- Response to perceived issues/problems/external circumstances including formal and informal complaints
- Regular review
- Departmental initiative
- Changes to enabling legislation at a state or federal level.

The NRJO appreciates past practice of the NSW DPIE when seeking to modify or introduce regulations and guidelines to:

- draft a scope regarding the change/updated policy,
- seek stakeholder feedback which often involves local government and to a lesser extent the wider community
- review this feed back
- make the policy changes, and
- then implement.

More recently has been the experience of some of the NR councils:

- an apparent absence of understanding by DPIE of council staff capacity – over the last 2 - 3 years councils have been hit by a barrage of NSW Government regulatory change – local strategic planning statements - housing regulation reforms including the low-rise housing diversity code - and more recently employment zone reforms. Timeframes to make submission and update internal document are short with little or no cognisance of the need to report to council and engage with community.
- an increasing need to operate with a small pool of strategic land use planners, due to limited funds and a growing inability to attract additional staff (partly due to the cost of housing). Reforms such as State Regulation to cease compliance levies by the end of 2021 only compound the issue.
- regulation/policy introduced without adequate research, risk assessment and policy rational such as the:
 - low rise medium density code – intended to expedite and intensity housing delivery, yet failed address syncing with infrastructure

- short term rental accommodation SEPP.
- decision making and assessment framework being applied by the Northern Regional Office inconsistent with published guidelines and established practices of the Department. Consequently, when lodging documentation that accords with the guidelines, councils hit a roadblock due to regional policy positions that are divergent, if not inconsistent with the guidelines.

The result has been a lack of clarity for councils and staff burn out. For the community, this adds up to:

- continued expenditure of council limited funds and staff resources on addressing confused and conflicting policy positions rather than focussing on a program that delivers housing
- significant delays
- a shortage of secure homes
- increasing social disruption
- an emerging polarisation between residents and non-resident landowners
- increased business costs and disruption of the local and regional economy.

Appendix A: Background and Context – Housing in the Northern Rivers

Compiled by: Northern Rivers Planning Group Housing Working Group

A1. Why set up the HWG?

Whilst the primary responsibility for housing policy and housing funding (particularly social housing) lies with Federal and State/Territory Governments, local governments are under increasing pressure to play a role in facilitating housing delivery and retaining existing affordable housing.

Recognising this, the Northern Rivers Council Planners Group at its meeting in September 2020 agreed to establish a Housing Working subgroup (HWG) – comprising Ballina, Byron, Lismore, Kyogle, Richmond Valley and Tweed Council planners - to support advocacy and collaboration on innovative solutions to housing affordability.

The HWG came together in May 2021 to share experiences and broadly map out a path for moving forward to facilitate housing for our communities. Communities of over 254,000 people.

A2. Are we taking the necessary steps for us to live, work and play in spectacular and vibrant communities?

The Northern Rivers is part of the North Coast Region, a State Government declared strategic planning region under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (the Act). This region extends along the NSW coastline from Port Macquarie to Tweed Heads.

The NSW Government's *North Coast Regional Plan* (NCRP) vision is to be '*the best region in Australia to live, work and play thanks to its spectacular and vibrant communities*'.

The planning for this region is directly influenced by a combination of environmental attributes, strong and highly valued character, proximity to South-East Queensland (particularly its population catchment, infrastructure, and provision of services) and suite of employment anchors (such as Lismore Base Hospital) and enabling infrastructure (such as the Pacific Highway and Ballina-Byron Airport). The collective of these drivers has resulted in strong and sustained population growth, a thriving tourism economy and a 'clean and green' agricultural market and niche. On the surface presenting an enviable position.

The reality is however that for a growing segment of our community, the NCRP vision is becoming increasingly unattainable.

A Housing Crisis has been declared by Byron, Ballina, Tweed, Lismore and Coffs Harbour LGAs.

Disappointingly, endeavours by local government to be more effective in a local housing response are being directly and indirectly constrained by the Federal and State Government policy, institutional and funding framework.

Table A1 below highlights the issues, drivers, and barriers.

Issues	Drivers & Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inability for employers to attract and retain key worker (nurses, medical support staff, teachers and child carers, hospitality and retail workers, artists, and musicians) due to housing crisis • increasing median property prices • increasing median rents • decreasing private rental vacancies • large deficit in available social housing supply • increasing short term rental accommodation (STRA) use take up by property owners • land supply subject to 'drip release' • land supply subject to land banking • rental supply largely private market driven. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attractive property investment climate with financial incentives and advantages • return of 'ex pats', international and interstate travellers and residents to their homes • tree and sea changers buying up • part time residents aka FIFO city commuters • status quo of State and Commonwealth policy and funding initiatives to incentivise attainable and diverse housing stock • divergent community views on what is, and where affordable housing should be located • local government access to funding to deliver housing and supporting infrastructure.

Leading from this the following looks at issues in the context of the NCRP and the submission recommendations.

Program to deliver a full spectrum of housing appropriate to the NR community with the infrastructure to support. (Recommendation 6)

The NCRP simply allocates minimum numbers of dwellings for each LGA to deliver by 2036 without considering the profile of our communities:

Even though Ballina, Byron, and Kyogle LGAs are on track with delivery targets embodied within the North Coast Regional Plan 2036, Lismore, and Richmond Valley to a lesser degree but not significant, with Tweed LGA the only one below the annual minimum target by around 200 homes:

- Many households are in rental stress
- Very low to low-income households make up a large portion of our households such as:
 - Byron Shire - 40% of households and of these 60% spend more than 50% of gross household income on rent
 - Tweed Shire low-income households increased by 931 between 2011 and 2016 – 24 %.
- Worker housing needs are not being met with business impacted:
 - Byron Shire survey 2021 - 73% of businesses reported currently experiencing a skills shortage – this is far higher than in 2019 (55%) and for Accommodation and Food Services (i.e., Hospitality) this figure rose to 89%.
 - 42% of respondents reported that the shortages were causing significant negative impacts such as losing customers and missing new business opportunities.
 - 35% of respondents reported that it is equally difficult to fill entry-level positions as it is to find experienced staff, a significant issue that needs to be addressed.
 - Up to 23% of the Tweed's working population cross the border for employment in Queensland each day, while 17% of people working in the Tweed live in Queensland.
- Lismore City Council notes that hospital patients are unable to transition to suitable housing.
- This means a high need to provide both social and affordable rental housing – this is explored more in Section A4

Better balance on the quantum of housing used by holiday let (Recommendation 1)

The NCRP in setting dwelling targets does not account for significant increases in dwellings being used as holiday lets, nor did it foresee the significant growth in its use to provide for visitor nights. The future: by 2030 Byron Shire alone can expect 8.5 million visitor nights if trends continue. Consequently, the real dwelling supply is being reduced by a failure to account for STRA in regional housing projections.

- the now paused SEPP - STRA provisions provide no rationale nor analysis on the implications to NCRP minimum house supply numbers
- there has been a growing quantum of permanent housing stock reassigned to STRA - over last three years in the order of:
 - Byron Shire 260% growth (3515 entire homes)
 - Ballina Shire 219% growth (623 entire homes)
- Byron Shire. of total housing stock 25% is now short-term rental accommodation

- There is a pressing need to manage the effects of holiday letting in residential areas as Median weekly rents are in the order of: Lennox Heads & Mullumbimby \$650, Ballina & Evan Heads \$500, Tweed Heads \$525, and Lismore, Kyogle and Casino between \$330 – \$380 ¹.
- Compared to a national average Median weekly rent of \$395
- Byron Shire to support a case for a bespoke planning proposal response to STRA is required to undertake an EIA (at a cost of over \$100,000 - joint funding by NSW Govt & Council) – given this is the first in depth analysis and that Byron Shire is part of a larger North Coast tourism area, it is logical that the pause should apply for the whole of the NR to allow for provisions tailored to the region's economy and overall housing balance sheets.

Modernised and add to Government stock & activate private underutilised stock and help CHP with a supply of land (Recommendations 2 & 5)

- A Government-backed State street count in March found more than 40 per cent of the 1,131 people sleeping rough in New South Wales, were on the North Coast.
- Byron Shire, with 198 rough sleepers, is second only to the City of Sydney Council area with 272 in terms of problem areas.
- Tweed Shire with 58 people sleeping rough ².
- Social housing levels are significantly low - Tweed Shire even with only 3% of housing stock as social rental still managed to drop between 2006 - 2016 to only 2.8%
- Ballina, Lismore, and Richmond Valley stand at < 4%, Byron and Kyogle Shires < 2% of housing.
- Ballina public housing is reaching the later stages of economic life with potential for redevelopment and delivery of more appropriate housing
- NR Community housing providers are finding land is limited in supply - Councils are working to support such as the Lismore City Council partnership with a community housing provider to develop land at 44 Bristol Circuit, Goonellabah and guarantee a fast-track DA approval and contributions discount/waiver.
- The Byron Shire AHCS has capacity to supply land and working with CHP over of 200 affordable rental dwellings – the DPIE refuse to accept the Planning Proposal.

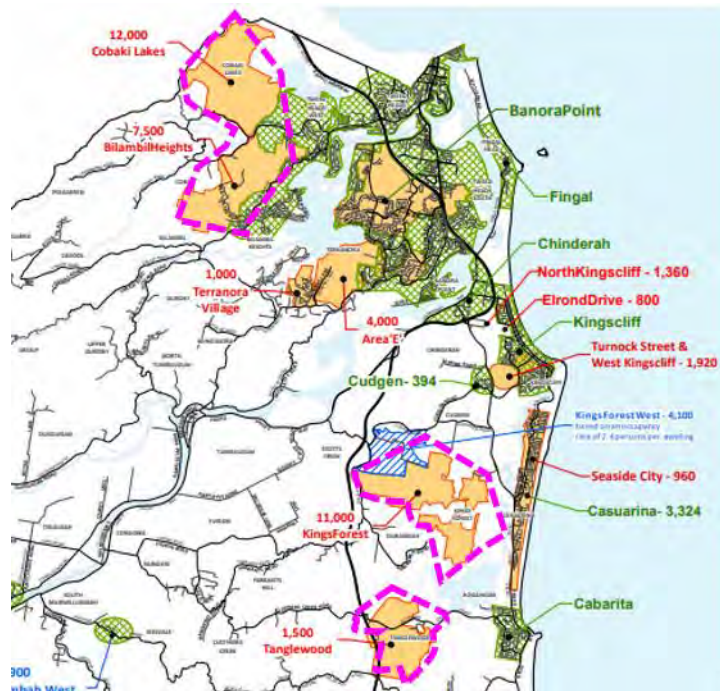
Activate the supply by addressing land banking &/or market hesitancy (Recommendation 7 & 5)

The NCRP Action 22.1 Deliver an appropriate supply of residential land within local growth management strategies and local plans to meet the region's projected housing needs.

According to the DPIE North Coast Land Monitor, as of FY2016-17, the Northern Rivers Region had a supply of vacant residential land in the order of 3,074 Hectares. At an estimated average development yield of 15 dwellings per hectare, this area could yield approximately 46,110 dwelling units.

Presently Ballina Shire alone has 20-30yrs supply of vacant residential land and Tweed is in a similar situation.

Notwithstanding the large supplies of vacant residential land in some parts of the region, land banking by developers has the practical effect of limiting the supply of vacant housing lots to the market particularly in Tweed Shire.



○ Areas with land zoned but not developed in Tweed Shire

Project Viability & Risk Aversion

- Financial feasibility testing undertaken by Ballina Council indicates that project viability for the redevelopment of sites is often compromised by the high residual land price (as a single house site) combined with demolition costs, when considering the degree to which unit prices are discounted in the market compared with detached housing.
- Lismore Council whilst allocated area for medium density housing around the hospital and university it appears there is hesitancy over the financial risk. Single dwellings are seen as the stable and safe “development option”.
- Richmond Valley land is owned by farming families (not developers) high cost of developing the property and the long lead-time and complexities in meeting planning requirements, is a deterrent.

Impact on access to housing

- The latest house price figures from CoreLogic show property values on the Northern Rivers have risen more in the past 12 months than any other regional area in Australia, with median house prices in the Byron LGA now exceeding the median price value of Greater Sydney.
- House values in the Richmond-Tweed climbed 21.9 per cent in the 12 months to April, while unit values increased by 15.5 per cent, according to the data. In comparison, house prices in Sydney rose 11.2 per cent over the same period.³
- Median sale price Mullumbimby \$885,00, Tweed Heads \$842,000, Ballina \$650,00, Lismore, Kyogle and Casino between \$315,00 – \$380,000¹.
- National Median sale price –\$485,000

Support local initiatives (Recommendation 4)

- Council specific Affordable Housing Development Policy accompanied by:
 - Affordable Housing Contribution Scheme (SEPP 70).
 - Planning Agreements (for planning proposal and development application)
- Inclusionary zone provisions (LEP and DCP)
- Land banking sunset clause to activate of land development
- Meanwhile Uses (repurposing vacant buildings, interim use of vacant crown and council lands e.g., road reserves, rail corridors for alternate uses such as short term/transitional residential accommodation)
- Create affordable land holding entities such as the Byron Shire Land Limited to provide a supply of affordable housing in perpetuity.

Embed infrastructure as part of the planning (Recommendation 6)

- State Government limitations on the contribution value local councils can charge developers for the provision of infrastructure, has not resulted in improvements to housing affordability - NSW Government's foreshadowed reforms to the contributions system only further reinforce these problems
- The broader implications of major infrastructure being considered in greater detail and in advance of the infrastructure delivery such as have been the case with Richmond Valley - impacted by major infrastructure projects such as highway upgrades and the Grafton jail construction and operation, which have increased housing demand for construction workers in the locality, particularly rental.

Unpack employment opportunities and the housing affordability equation (Recommendation 6)

There are two sides to the equation, but many conversations are centred around provision of housing only. Housing affordability broadly refers to the cost of housing services and shelter – both for renters and owner occupiers – relative to a given individual's or household's disposable income.⁴

- Parts of the NR have a large cohort of the population live from week-to-week on social security payments, the gap between disposable income and cost of housing will never close unless the root issues affecting below average incomes is addressed
- Need to unpack why parts of northern NSW have high unemployment rates and number of households receiving income support,
- Generate ways to establish employment opportunities and initiatives and incentives to be engaged in the workforce.

Sources:

1. <https://www.propertyvalue.com.au/> Accessed 7 and 8 July 2021 & 11 Aug 2021
2. *ABC News 8 March 2021*
3. *CoreLogic April 2021*
[Housing affordability - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare \(aihw.gov.au\)](https://www.aihw.gov.au/housing-affordability)

A3 Capacity for the Planning System to resolve?

Typically, councils have not been responsible for developing housing but given the current housing crisis many regional councils, are investigating possible options with State Government entities and community housing providers. The types of housing that councils could have a role in facilitating on its own land are types 3, 4 and 6 in the Spectrum identified in Table A2.

Table A2: NSW housing Strategy 2041 – Action Plan 2021 -22 Housing spectrum in relation to the planning system

Housing types by resident need	Explanation	- Relationship to the ‘planning system’
		- Key responsibility to deliver and or support
1. Crisis housing	Emergency temporary accommodation factors such as: * domestic or family violence situation * has custody of children & homeless * natural disasters ¹ .	Delivery largely outside the planning system NSW Government Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ)
2. Social housing	Social housing is secure and affordable rental housing for people on <u>low incomes</u> with housing assistance needs. It includes public, community and Aboriginal housing. ¹ .	Delivery largely outside the planning system Fed: National rental assistance State: NSW Govt FACs
3. Affordable rental housing	Affordable housing is housing that is appropriate for the needs of a range of very low to moderate income households and priced so that these households are also able to meet other basic living costs such as food, clothing, transport, medical care and education. ¹ .	Fed: National rental assistance State: NSW Govt FACs Private rental where the tenant’s rent is subsidised
4. Private rental	Rental accommodation in the private market even if this rent is subsidised or partly refunded.	Delivery effected by planning system – SEPP enabling STRA

Housing types by resident need	Explanation	- Relationship to the 'planning system'
		- Key responsibility to deliver and or support
	Historical role as a transitional housing sector for households moving into home ownership or social housing to a long-term housing sector for a significant number of Australian households	Private rental market - in the NSW, most private sector tenancies are regulated by the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 (NSW).
5. Supported home ownership	A type of home ownership that can take a variety of forms and largely requires innovative financing arrangements to support the buyer to enter the market. Includes (but are not limited to) shared equity arrangements, rent-to-buy models, and co-living arrangements.	Delivery largely outside the planning system The equity partner assists by sharing ownership, usually up to 30% of the property.
6. Homeownership	Households who own the property in which they usually reside and have either: - owner with mortgage - owner without mortgage	Delivery effected by planning system
7. Specialist housing	Accommodation designed for unique needs such as housing for people with - disability (including group homes) - older people (such as residential care units)	Delivery effected by planning system under SEPP
	- Vanlife (emerging new form not listed but suggest could fit this category)	Delivery effected by planning system under SEPP

Notes:

1. [SAHF Frequently Asked Questions | Family & Community Services \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

How is affordable housing different to social housing?

Affordable housing is not the same as social housing. Affordable housing is open to a broader range of household incomes than social housing, Households do not have to be eligible for social housing to apply for affordable housing, though people who are eligible for social housing may also be eligible for affordable housing properties. Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and State Environmental Planning Policy No 70—Affordable Housing (Revised Schemes): sets

- very low – 50% of median income
- low – 50%–80% of median income
- moderate – 80%–120% median income.

[NSW-Housing-2021-22-Action-Plan-mayv2-2021.pdf](#)

A4 Who in our community needs affordable housing?



We are nurses and medical support staff.

We are part of the highest industry category in Ballina, Byron and Lismore and the second highest in Richmond Valley.

We work at medical centres, aged care, allied health, Ballina District Hospital, Byron District Hospital, Lismore Hospital and travel to Tweed Hospital and Gold Coast Hospitals for work.

We earn, on average, \$73,000 per annum or \$1,400 per week for a registered nurse. A full time equivalent registered nurse on this wage can comfortably afford \$420 per week in rent. 49% of us work full time.

We earn, on average, \$55,000 per annum or \$1,057 per week for an orderly. A full time equivalent orderly on this wage can comfortably afford \$320 per week in rent. 60% of us work full time.

We earn, on average, \$42,700 per annum or \$822 per week for an aged care worker. A full time equivalent aged care worker on this wage can comfortably afford \$250 per week in rent. 40% of us work full time.

Because we often work shift work we usually need a car and cannot rely on public transport. We work outside standard working hours and sometimes rely on after hours child care. We often work at multiple worksites to make up F/T work.

As a single person I may be able to afford rent in Richmond Valley, Kyogle or Lismore but I cannot afford Byron or Ballina. I may need to travel to larger hospitals and allied health facilities in northern NSW and the Gold Coast for work.



We are teachers and child carers.

We are part of the third highest industry category in Ballina and Lismore.

We work at child care centres, preschools, long day care centres, public schools, high schools, TAFE and universities throughout the region.

We earn, on average, \$72,500 per annum or \$1,394 per week for a high school teacher. A full time equivalent teacher on this wage can comfortably afford \$418 per week in rent. 76% of us work full time.

We earn, on average, \$70,000 per annum or \$1,346 per week for a primary school teacher. A full time equivalent teacher in this wage can comfortably afford \$403 per week in rent. 65% of us work full time.

We earn, on average, \$58,476 per annum or \$1,124 per week for an early childcare worker. A full time equivalent childcare worker can comfortably afford \$337 per week in rent. 47% of us work full time.

If we work out of our area we are unable to rely on public transport, we usually need a car.



We are the hospitality industry.

We are part of the second highest industry category in Byron.

We work at cafes, restaurants, boutique breweries, hotels, cleaners for house holiday lets and hotels.

We earn, on average, \$21.00 per hour for café staff. Full time equivalent café staff can comfortably afford \$220 per week in rent. 16% of us work full time.

We earn, on average, \$22.80 per hour for a cleaner such as holiday lets or hotel. A full time equivalent cleaner in this wage can comfortably afford \$239 per week in rent. 16% of us work full time.

We earn, on average, \$62,000 per annum or \$1,192 per week for head brewer. A full time equivalent brewer can comfortably afford \$357 per week in rent. 85% of us work full time.

We earn on average \$23.50 per hour for a chef. A full time equivalent chef can comfortably afford \$241 per week in rent. 48% of us work full time.

Because we often work shift work we usually need a car and cannot rely on public transport. We work outside standard working hours and sometimes rely on afterhours child care. We often work at multiple worksites to make up F/T work.



We are retail workers.

We are part of the second highest industry category in Ballina and Lismore and the third highest industry category in Byron and Kyogle.

We work at shops, grocery stores, chemists, hairdressers, butchers, bakeries, hardware etc.

We earn, on average, \$21.00 per hour for retail staff. Full time equivalent retail staff on this wage can comfortably afford \$220 per week in rent. 50% of us work full time.

We earn, on average, \$24.00 per hour for a hairdresser. A full time equivalent hairdresser on this wage can comfortably afford \$252 per week in rent. 51% of us work full time.

We earn on average \$23.50 per hour for a butcher. A full time equivalent butcher on this wage can comfortably afford \$241 per week in rent. 82% of us work full time.

Because we often work shift work we usually need a car and cannot rely on public transport. We work outside standard working hours and sometimes rely on after hours child care.

Most of us work part time, we are all ages, however, many of us are young, single and often in share housing. As a single person I may be able to afford rent in Richmond Valley, Kyogle or Lismore but I cannot afford Byron or Ballina.



We are artists and musicians

We add to the vibrancy of all communities and are the heart and sole of the creative northern rivers.

We earn, on average, \$30.00 per hour for an artist. A full time equivalent artist on this wage can comfortably afford \$315 per week in rent. 56% of us work full time.

We earn, on average, \$72.00 per hour for a musician. A full time equivalent musician on this wage can comfortably afford \$756 per week in rent. 30% of us work full time.

Because we often work varied hours and locations we usually need a car and cannot rely on public transport. We often work outside standard working hours. Most of us work part time and supplement our income with other work.

As a single person I may be able to afford rent in Richmond Valley, Kyogle or Lismore but I cannot afford Byron or Ballina.

A5 What does this mean for a household?

Household example 1 - Sarah and Geoff

Sarah works part time, up to 24 hours per week at the local pharmacy. Geoff works full time selling solar panels.

Sarah earns on average \$576 per week and Geoff earns a \$65,000 salary. Together they earn \$94,992 per annum or \$1826 per week. They have 1 child at the local public school and live in Kyogle.

They can comfortably afford (30% of income) housing costs of \$547 per week. Current rents for a 3-bedroom house range between \$400 - \$460 per week (2 rentals available).

Repayments of \$547 per week would service a housing loan (at 2.47%) of \$530,000. This level of income can service a loan for any housing in Kyogle where the current lowest 3-bedroom house is for sale at \$365,000.

Household example 2 – Jess and Adam

Jess works full time, as a primary school teacher. Adam works full time as a radiographer.

Jess earns on average \$72,000 per annum and Adam earns a \$75,000 salary. Together they earn \$147,000 per annum. They have 3 children at the local public and high school and live in Byron Bay.

They can comfortably afford (30% of income) housing costs of \$848 per week, however current rents for a 4-bedroom house range between \$850 - \$3,460 per week (5 rentals available).

Repayments of \$848 per week would service a housing loan (at 2.47%) of \$860,000. This level of income cannot service a loan for any housing in Byron Shire where the current lowest 4-bedroom house is for sale at \$1,800,000.

Household example 3 – Susie and Graham

Susie works part time, up to 20 hours per week as a receptionist at the local medical centre. Geoff is a plumber, close to retirement.

Susie earns on average \$520 per week and Geoff earns a \$73,000 salary. Together they earn \$97,960 per annum or \$1,883 per week. They have 3 children and 5 grandchildren and live in Ballina.

They can comfortably afford (30% of income) housing costs of \$564 per week. Current rents for a 3-bedroom house range between \$630- \$700 per week (3 rentals available).

Repayments of \$564 per week would service a housing loan (at 2.47%) of \$555,000. This level of income can service a loan for any housing in Kyogle and Richmond Valley. They could extend themselves to a higher level of debt servicing (35%) for an average housing cost in Ballina of \$645,000. However, access to a 30-year housing loan may be difficult, given their limited remaining working period.

Sources:

NR Planners HWG Draft Scoping Plan by Planit Consulting Pty Ltd June 2021

Income information for this section <https://www.nationalskillscommission.gov.au/>; <https://www.employmentinnovations.com/>; <https://www.payscale.com/research/AU/Job/>; <https://joboutlook.gov.au/> Accessed 7 and 8 June 2021

A6 What does this mean for our communities and good governance?

Under the *Local Government Act 1993* Section 8 - included in the *Object of principles* is helping enable *'councils to carry out their functions in a way that facilitates local communities that are strong, healthy and prosperous'*.

In the opening message of the Housing Strategy 2041 the Minister for Water, Property and Housing - The Hon, Minister Pavey, recognises that: *'a place to call home is central to our lives. Living in a secure, comfortable and affordable home is important to our wellbeing.'*

By supporting the recommendations outlined in this submission the NSW Government will be working with councils to support, promote and improve communities throughout our state.

Attachment 2

6 August 2021

Mayor Rowena Abbey
Chair – NSW Joint Organisation Chairs Forum

Dear Cr Abbey

On behalf of the Councils of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation (NRJO) I am writing to raise an important matter for your consideration.

In recent years, most Northern Rivers Councils, like LGAs across the State, have experienced a major increase in the demands and expectations of its communities to carry out comprehensive compliance and enforcement services among its diverse planning, construction and environmental regulatory functions. The demand for such services is likely to increase further as a result of the State Government's new emerging planning legislation and policy.

On 29 March 2021 the NSW Department of Planning, Industry & Environment updated their website with a notice that the NSW Government was undertaking a review of compliance levies. The notice and subsequent discussion with the Department has revealed 3 main effects of the review:

1. From 1 July 2021 Council's will not be able to charge compliance levies;
2. From 1 July 2021 the EP&A Regulation will include a new levy structure to recoup some costs of Councils having to undertake compliance investigation on Complying Development breaches where Council was not the certifying authority; and
3. The Department will review compliance cost notices which are currently set at \$1000 for any costs and expenses relating to investigating an Order and \$500 for preparing and serving the notice to give an Order.

This timeline was subsequently amended to the following:

"As at 1 July 2021

- Regulation changes to prohibit compliance levies on DAs for all councils.
- A six-month transition period will be provided to allow councils that already charge compliance levies on DAs to continue doing so until 31 December 2021.

As at 1 September 2021

- The new compliance cost notice provisions come into effect for all councils.
- The new complying development levy will come into effect for all councils.



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As at 1 January 2022

- Compliance levies on DAs are no longer able to be charged by any council.

This means that as a council that has been charging a compliance levy on DAs, your council can continue to charge a levy on DAs until the end of 2021.”

Whilst the six-month extension for Councils to retain existing compliance levies is of some benefit, it does not address the broader resourcing gap of Councils undertaking significant compliance investigations of unauthorized development, building and land use activities outside of the very narrow band of activities of the Department’s new compliance cost notice and complying development levy applies to.

Given the longstanding, historical State Government policies of not indexing statutory DA fees and charges, coupled with rate capping, I call upon your support to seek an urgent review by IPART of the real costs recovery mechanisms that should be made available to NSW Councils to continue their important roles in development assessment and compliance in an effective, and financially responsible manner. To accommodate this review, we would further request an additional 12-month extension to retain existing compliance levies through the 2022 calendar year and an immediate indexing in line with CPI of statutory fees and charges from the 2022/2023 financial year.

Sincerely



Cr Danielle Mulholland
Chair

NSW JOINT ORGANISATION CHAIRS' FORUM

Attachment 3

<return to meeting papers>

15 October 2021

The Hon. Rob Stokes MP
Minister for Planning and Public Spaces
GPO Box 5341
SYDNEY NSW 2001
e: pittwater@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Minister Stokes,

I am writing on behalf of the New South Wales Joint Organisations in relation the removal of council's ability to charge compliance levies on Development Applications.

Councils across the State use compliance levies to fund officers to ensure environmental obligations and building standards are being met in order to protect public health and safety.

Under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 there is an expectation that councils will examine and, if relevant, take action on a wide range of land use planning compliance matters. The removal of this charge will lead to the loss of key jobs and subsequently reduce council's ability to operate in a timely and effective fashion.

It is important to acknowledge that the timing of this change comes when the regions are experiencing the greatest domestic migration potentially in the nation's history. Such is the population shift, that a housing crisis is being experienced in most regions and the demand for new housing development of all types is at unprecedented levels. Now more than ever councils need the capacity to thoroughly review applications and respond to potential infringements.

Additionally, councils are now also finding themselves responsible for the enforcement responsibilities that relate to new industries such short term rental accommodation, agritourism and increased exempt and complying development provisions for commercial and industrial development.



NSW JOINT ORGANISATION CHAIRS' FORUM

Given the far-reaching effect of this change it appears extraordinary that the decision was made without any prior consultation, which would have given councils the opportunity to justify its usage or engage in discussion about the creation of an alternate mechanism.

Whilst a delay has been granted, we would request a moratorium be applied for two years to allow proper discussion to be held and find a mechanism suitable to all.



Mayor Rowena Abbey
Chair – NSW Joint Organisation Chairs Forum





Attachment 4

MDPE21/2075

Mr Christopher Gulaptis MP
Member for Clarence
11 Prince Street
GRAFTON NSW 2460

Via email: clarence@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr Gulaptis

Thank you for your correspondence on behalf of the councils of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation (NRJO) regarding compliance levies charged by councils in NSW.

I note the NRJO's Chair, Danielle Mulholland and Executive Officer Nicole Reeves raised this issue with my office directly at the end of May 2021.

With respect to the request for an urgent review by Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART), I do not believe that such a review is necessary. This is because IPART has already undertaken a series of broad ranging reviews of Local Government including compliance and enforcement in recent years. I note that IPART's Compliance and Enforcement Report was released in 2019.

This report highlighted that councils have extensive and diverse compliance and enforcement responsibilities under a range of legislation, in addition to planning. For the majority of these functions, councils fund their compliance activities from rates, not from legislative specific fee provisions because compliance is considered a core function of Local Government. Consistent with this, most council compliance officers undertake compliance work in relation to all of councils' responsibilities, not just for one area.

In terms of the prohibition on councils charging a compliance levy for development applications, I note that this needs to be seen as part of a package of changes I am introducing later this year. This includes a levy for complying development and reforms to the compliance costs notice (CCN) framework. The *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation* is also being reviewed and proposed changes to planning-related fees are currently on exhibition. These changes have arisen in the context of steps I have been making to modernise the planning system to ensure it is faster and simpler. This has included significantly expanding the complying development framework to make it easier for mums and dads to build or renovate.

While these changes have been great for homeowners, it has placed additional pressure on councils to ensure these home improvements are compliant. The new levy and the changes to the CCN framework will support councils in doing this by giving them additional funding for compliance while enabling them to recover their reasonable costs of investigations when breaches occur.

I am advised the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (the Department) has undertaken targeted consultation on the proposed reforms, including with NRJO member councils, Lismore, Ballina, and Tweed, and I understand that they provided constructive input, which I am grateful for.

While I recognise that some councils will be financially impacted by the prohibition, overall, the proposed changes will result in a better outcome for most councils by providing them with additional funding for compliance, as well as giving more compliance tools for their toolkits.

Should the NRJO have any questions, they are welcome to contact Ms Teresa Hislop, Acting Director, State and Regional Economy, at the Department on: 9274 6210.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rob Stokes', is positioned above the printed name.

The Hon. Rob Stokes MP

Minister for Planning and Public Spaces



The Hon Dominic Perrottet
Premier of NSW

1 November 2021

Dear Premier,

I am writing to request your assistance to work with the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation in seeking to ensure the protection, conservation and recovery of koalas in the Northern Rivers.

The NSW state government implemented NSW Koala SEPP 2021 in March 2021. The new Koala SEPP brings some welcome improvements including the more relevant and accurate list of koala food tree species and the improved definitions of koala habitat.

Approval of the Tweed Coast and Byron Coast Koala Plans of Management in association with the commencement of the Koala SEPP are welcomed and will be beneficial for council in its ongoing work to recover the endangered Tweed-Brunswick koala population.

However, there are a number of key limitations with the new Koala SEPP that require amendment. The primary issue is that councils of the NRJO contend can be simply rectified is ensuring the application of the NSW Koala SEPP 2021 in all zones. The key elements of this issue for the Northern Rivers are as follows:

- The Tweed Coast and Byron Coast Koala Plans of Management were prepared in accordance with departmental guidelines of the time resulting in a focus on the contemporary area of development pressure. This represents only 5.5% of the Northern Rivers.
- Significant and critical areas of koala habitat occur in the remaining 94.5% of the Northern Rivers. This has been recently assessed and mapped (Figure 1) through a joint project with University of Queensland, Southern Cross University, University of Sydney, Friends of the Koala and 4 of the Northern Rivers councils.
- The rural hinterland of the Northern Rivers in which these areas of important koala habitat are located are experiencing substantial development pressure
- The previous Koala SEPP 2019 (and the previous SEPP 44) only applied to new development and did not otherwise affect day to day management activities of rural or other landholders.
- Under the Koala SEPP 2021, day to day management of koala habitat in rural zones will be subject to clearing in accordance with self-assessable codes, but new development in rural areas will not be subject to the Koala SEPP
- The absence of the Koala SEPP or effective zoning controls to manage development impacts in the rural hinterland is likely to result in a similar decline in koalas as has been witnessed in the coastal regions.
- The exclusion of rural areas from Koala SEPP 2021 effectively prevents councils from preparing a koala plan of management for the remainder of the shire. This is despite known populations of koalas, extensive areas of primary and secondary koala habitat, increasing development pressure and extensive community concern regarding the fate of this (and other) species.



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- Excluding rural land from the SEPP also creates a perverse incentive to clear land identified for potential future urban purposes in regional plans such as the North Coast Regional Plan. This is because these plans commonly identify rural land for future urban growth many years or decades before those areas are actually rezoned for urban development. The SEPP will not capture these areas and leave them vulnerable the numerous clearing exemptions available to developers who hold rural land. This is likely to be a problem along most of the NSW coast.

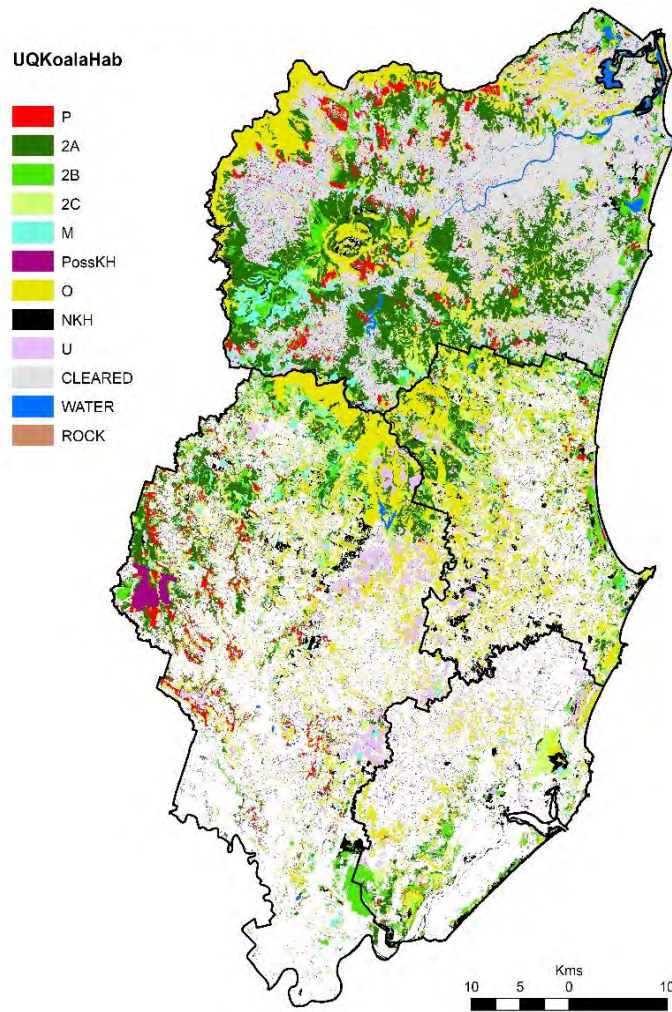


Figure 1: Regional koala habitat model for Tweed, Lismore, Byron and Ballina shires based on analysis of tree use data from the 2018 koala activity assessment and consolidated regional vegetation mapping

The key legend codes are:

- P:** primary koala habitat
- 2A:** secondary A koala habitat
- 2B:** secondary B koala habitat
- 2C:** secondary C koala habitat

The NRJO requests that Schedule 1 of the NSW Koala SEPP 2021 be amended through the addition of an asterisk (*) against Tweed Shire, Lismore City Council, Byron Shire, Ballina Shire, Richmond Valley Shire and Kyogle Council, thereby ensuring the application of the Koala SEPP in all zones as per Clause 6 of the SEPP. This approach is as per the precedent already established in the SEPP for the Central Coast and 8 Greater Sydney local government areas.

It is contended that this is a suitable and appropriate measure to address this issue based on:

- The opportunity to make a simple amendment that is consistent with existing precedents that will provide fair and reasonable protection for the extensive areas of koala habitat on private land

- The similarities between the Northern Rivers councils and the Central Coast with regard to the presence of an endangered population, current and extensive conservation and recovery actions and landscape scale development pressure
- The existence of contemporary data that identifies the significant areas of koala habitat at risk in the rural hinterland
- The Koala SEPP only applies to new development and does not otherwise affect day to day management activities of rural or other landholders.

I wish to also identify the following concerns and recommended changes in relation to the proposed introduction of forestry provisions to the Koala SEPP:

- Private Native Forestry areas are proposed to be excluded from the operation of the Koala SEPP. This will allow clearing of highly significant koala habitat, based on self-assessable codes.
- In the Tweed and many other areas of the State, the target tree species and size class for forestry operations are those same trees most critical to koala habitat conservation (See Figure 2)
- Significant and critical areas of koala habitat occur throughout the Tweed Shire. This has been recently assessed and mapped (Figure 1) through a joint project with University of Queensland, Southern Cross University, University of Sydney, Friends of the Koala and the 4 northern rivers councils. Under the proposed provisions, these areas will be able to be logged without assessment, consent or controls.
- It is also proposed to remove forestry as requiring consent in local environmental plans. In addition to removing council's role in land use decision making in relation to environmental impacts, this also excludes council from being able to assess broader impacts including noise, threatened species (including koalas) dust, traffic, amenity (particularly in more closely settled areas such as the Tweed) and local infrastructure impacts. It is also noted that this aspect of the proposed changes goes well beyond the management of koalas and affects all forestry operations.

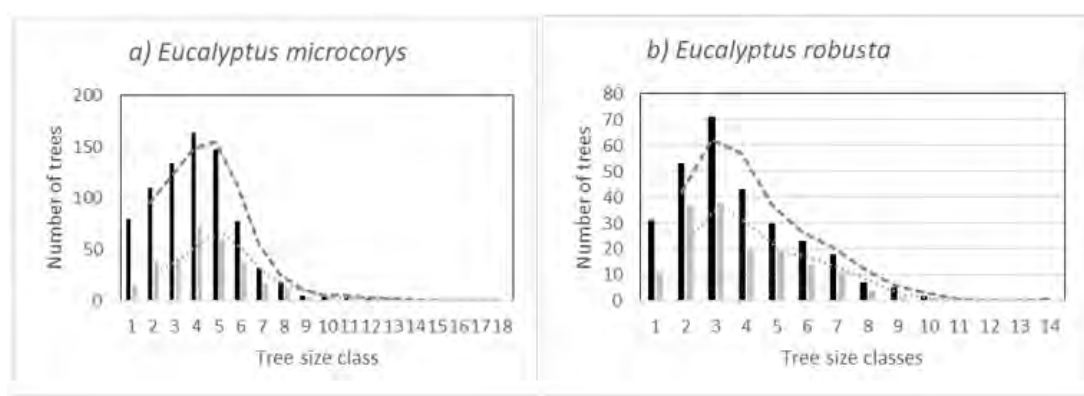


Figure 2: These data¹ from the Australian Research Council Linkage Project, *Conserving and Recovering Koala Populations in the NSW Far North Coast*, demonstrate that koalas in the region preferentially use trees of these species in larger size classes. This is demonstrated through the higher use (grey bars) in size classes 3 (300 – 400mm diameter at breast height) and above. These data also confirm that the proportion of use of available trees increases in these size classes to the extent that nearly all available large trees (black bars) of these species are used by koalas.

¹ McAlpine, CA., Callaghan, J., Rhodes, J., Goldingay, R., Lunney, D., Goulding, W., Hosking, C., Hetherington, S., Brace, A., Hopkins, M., Caddick, L., Taylor, E., Vass, L., Swankie, L. and Fielding, K. (2021) *What constitutes suitable koala habitat? A case study on the far north coast of New South Wales*. Manuscript in preparation.

NRJO request that the current proposed measures in relation to forestry are urgently reconsidered. The proposed measures:

- increase the likelihood of the extinction of koalas in New South Wales by not adequately protecting their essential habitat;
- create an untenable situation for councils in relation to forestry as a land use throughout NSW; and
- are inconsistent with the NSW Upper House Inquiry into koalas and koala habitat, the 2019 findings of the NSW Audit Office and the independent review of the land management framework conducted by the Natural Resources Commission in 2019.

We contend that further planning, investment and reliance on plantation hardwood forestry is a significantly more viable, responsible and appropriate way to secure the timber resources required.

Representatives of the NRJO would be pleased to meet and discuss these matters further at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Danielle Mulholland', with a stylized, cursive script.

Cr Danielle Mulholland
Chair
Northern Rivers Joint Organisation

NSW JOINT ORGANISATION CHAIRS' FORUM

3rd September 2021

Mr Gary Fielding

Chair

NSW Regional Housing Taskforce

Via NSW planning portal

Dear Mr Fielding,

The NSW Joint Organisation Chairs Forum welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the NSW Regional Housing Taskforce. This issue is of significant interest to the regional and rural communities represented by the Forum. Supply of diverse housing is posing an increasingly complex challenge for land managers balancing the needs for growth within our communities while providing quality services and the amenity that is so highly valued.

We look forward to the future opportunities to collaborate afforded through the work of the Taskforce and provide the below insights as a first step to what we are sure will be a productive working relationship.

Regional Housing Taskforce Scope:

The Taskforce will investigate planning barriers and develop recommendations to address regional housing issues with a focus on:

- *The planning system and other government levers to stimulate housing supply and address housing needs*
- *Removing impediments within the planning system to the delivery of affordable housing types and housing generally*
- *Identifying mechanisms within the planning system to facilitate and drive the delivery of housing matched to community needs*



NSW JOINT ORGANISATION CHAIRS' FORUM

Overview

NSW'S Regions have never been under such pressure to provide housing at all levels for their communities. The COVID pandemic has resulted in one of the greatest domestic migrations from cities to regional areas in Australia's history.

With technical advancements allowing for a decentralization of the workforce people have moved to regional areas while in many cases, retaining their city-based employment. This is leading to increasingly stratified communities with higher income earners consuming local housing and forcing prices up while people employed in the local economy are finding themselves pushed out of the market. In addition to these pressures, it is estimated that 500,000 ex pat Australians have moved back to Australia over the last 12 months.

This impact comes as many regional areas continue to struggle to recover from the devastating impact of bushfires and floods in 2019 and 2020.

Residential vacancy rates for regions outside of metropolitan Sydney in July 2021 sat at 1.06% *REINSW and the value of the average dwelling in regional NSW has increased by 22.9% in the last 12 months. * Corelogic

According to CoreLogic, the number of homes listed for sale nationally is 24% below the five-year average. The current imbalance between supply and demand for housing is exacerbated by the extended run of historically low interest rates.

Scope

A successful, vibrant and viable housing sector depends on far more than just a functioning and efficient planning system. The planning system needs to be supported by sound housing policy and solid financial and investment strategies with each element working together to support land availability, development and investment to provide a diverse and robust housing stock to meet the needs of rural and regional NSW. Drivers of the current housing situation are more complex and reach far beyond the sphere of local government

Research undertaken by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) points to changes in the 'institutional framework' for housing in Australia, which has entrenched a policy framework that appears unable to address housing affordability concerns in a significant way.



NSW JOINT ORGANISATION CHAIRS' FORUM

These 'institutional factors' include:

- The Labour market deregulation which has resulted in an increase in the casualisation of a proportion of the workforce making a home purchase out of reach of some workers
- Increased workforce participation has increased the purchasing power of two income households, thus raising the minimum income required to compete in the housing market
- Financial sector deregulation that has led to housing sector "financialisation" whereby society has increasingly come to see housing more as an investment vehicle.

Key Actions

The following recommendations include both practical and regulatory suggestions aimed at alleviating the current housing crisis both in the immediate and long term.

I. UTILISE GOVERNMENT LAND

Maximise the use of State-Government Owned Land to increase land availability – through releasing Crown Land that has been identified as surplus to needs and resolving outstanding Native Title issues on the land.

A register of NSW Government land be prioritised and assessed to determine the best fit housing type and ways to expedite suitable Government land into social, affordable or community housing. Ensuring the land is suitable for redevelopment is a crucial step

Additionally, a license scheme for Crown Land could be initiated which would enable its use for temporary housing – many of the large infrastructure projects like Inland Rail or Snowy Hydro will have a high demand for housing. This housing could then be repurposed for affordable housing. The license could expire at the time estimated by Crowns that the land will be needed for use



NSW JOINT ORGANISATION CHAIRS' FORUM

II. APPRAISE THE IMPACT OF LAND BANKING AND IDENTIFY OPTIONS TO ADDRESS

Land banking is proving to be a significant issue within areas of regional NSW with developers withholding swathes of undeveloped land from the commercial market.

We would recommend the impact of land banking be appraised and options identified to address the issues. Options to be considered include sunset clauses on zoning changes or assistance with infrastructure funding for sewer and water to ensure land is developed in a timely fashion. This may include low costs loans or voluntary agreements to mitigate the up front costs and stimulate quality development.

III. SHORT TERM HOLIDAY LETTING

Across the NSW short term holiday letting is having a detrimental effect on the supply of housing available for long-term rentals for locals. In tourist destinations this effect is amplified.

By way of example, the Byron Shire has 4,230 residential properties listed online as holiday lets. A 260% increase over the previous three and a half years – this equates to 25% of the shire's total dwellings.

We would request the NSW Government pause the introduction of the SEPP until a social impact assessment of Short-Term Rental Accommodation (STRA) has been undertaken.

IV. SKILLED LABOUR DEFICIT

One of the significant barriers to the creation of new housing stock is sufficient skilled labour to meet demand. Skills shortages in the regions are at a critical level, with unemployment running at below the national average. The consolidation of TAFE training into regional cities has impacted on the accessibility of trades training in rural and regional areas creating barriers to the employment of apprentices and trainees.

The social impact of mobile workforces also needs to be better considered in the wake of disaster recovery. A solution to this may be that developers moving into the region must first build housing for their workforce, which will remain as a legacy asset upon completion of the development.



NSW JOINT ORGANISATION CHAIRS' FORUM

V. PROMOTION OF INVESTMENT IN RURAL AND REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

Rural and remote regions of NSW are also affected by the housing crisis with keys jobs now going unfilled as applicants are not able to find suitable accommodation. The opportunities to overcome the shortage appear to be limited by the apparent lack of investor interest.

The forecasts for negative population growth in rural and remote areas does not engender a sense of confidence with persons looking at building and reselling at the end of their tenure in these communities. Many of these projections are historically based and don't account for contemporary factors such as mining development or major capital works projects. Development decisions would be aided by evidenced based decision making which can only be achieved if population projects accurately reflect growth trends. We would recommend a strategy is developed to market the benefits of investing in regional and rural communities.

VI. CONSIDERATION TO ALTERNATE OWNERSHIP STRATEGIES

Consideration be given to facilitating alternate strategies which would open property ownership up to a broader section of the community. Concepts to be considered include:

- Community Land Trusts to increase the pool of developers – the shared ownership of the land through a Trust increases affordability.
- Land rental schemes – rent is paid on the land until the owner can afford to purchase
- Build to rent programs

VII. IDENTIFY AND FUND UTILISATION OF SURPLUS AND UNUSED PRIVATE BUILDINGS

Identify & register private dwellings and other buildings where NSW Government or community housing groups could take a head lease to provide temporary & social housing as a stop gap housing whilst LHC sites are being redeveloped.

This would include unused hotels and hospitals for affordable rental accommodation and would require the development of a compliance regime that supports the conversion of older buildings into multi-residential developments.



NSW JOINT ORGANISATION CHAIRS' FORUM

Conclusion

The Joint Organisations are encouraged by the NSW Housing Strategy and the 2021-22 Action Plan and commends the commitment to working with local governments and communities to achieve the NSW Government housing objectives, as well as recognising the unique role of local government in the delivery of housing and achieving housing goals for the community. The housing initiatives being pursued by our member councils are complimentary to the Strategy and action plan.

Yours Sincerely



Mayor Rowena Abbey

Chair – NSW Joint Organisation Chairs Forum



NSW JOINT ORGANISATION CHAIRS' FORUM

6 October 2021

The Hon. Shelley Hancock, MP
Minister for Local Government
52 Martin Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Minister Hancock,

On behalf of the Forum of Joint Organisation Chairs (the Forum) I refer to your correspondence of 2nd February (Ref: A744711) regarding the Joint Organisation Monitoring and Evaluation Project. We understand that this project was due to be completed by mid-2021.

I am writing in anticipation that the report has been finalised and seeking an opportunity for the results to be shared with the current members of the Forum before the NSW Local Government elections in December.

As you are aware the Executive Officers of the Joint Organisation network meet quarterly. Where needed OLG Engagement Officers have joined the group to update on various matters.

At the meeting last week, Ms Karen Purser, Manager Council Engagement, Policy and Sector Development Group and Virginia Errington, Council Engagement Manager Central Coast, Hunter and Western Sydney joined to update Executive Officers on changes to the IP & R framework for Joint Organisations. It was relayed at the meeting that it was the intention of the OLG to share the findings of the review with the current Joint Organisation network in the near future. This was pleasing to hear, as you can imagine as Chairs and participants in the review we have significant interest in the outcomes and insights this project will provide.

Minister, the next meeting of JO Chairs will be held 4 November, 1pm-3pm in an online format. We invite you and your key staff to attend this meeting and personally deliver the findings of the review.



NSW JOINT ORGANISATION CHAIRS' FORUM

The Central NSW Joint Organisation will provide secretariat services for the meeting. Please contact the CNSWJO Executive Officer Jenny Bennett to discuss on 0428 690 935.

Kind regards,



Rowena Abbey

Chair

NSW JO Forum.





New disaster dashboards help manage disaster risk

The NRJO has successfully secured funding through Stream 2 of the Bushfire Community Recovery and Resilience fund to allow Kyogle, Lismore, Ballina and Richmond Valley Councils implement Emergency Dashboards.

The Bushfire Community Recovery and Resilience Fund project has been facilitated through the joint Commonwealth/State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements. The grant means all six councils within the NRJO will now feature an emergency dashboard on their website.

NRJO Chair, Cr Danielle Mullholand said the Emergency dashboards will provide real-time information to help those living in the Northern Rivers be aware of, prepare for and respond to local emergencies.

“Localised emergency updates, preparedness advice and seasonal awareness of potential risks is more important than ever.

“The residents of the Northern Rivers are acutely aware of the impact emergencies can have on communities following the past bushfire season, extended drought and other severe hazard events,” Cr Mullholand said.

The Emergency Dashboard is an online warehouse of real-time, local emergency information and on each dashboard you’ll find:

- real-time information related to live emergencies
- information to help you prepare for an emergency
- guidance on the assistance you can access to recover from a recent emergency

The local dashboards will deliver information specific to the disaster risks and mitigations of localities.



Australian Government



NORTHERN RIVERS JOINT ORGANISATION

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Post PO Box 146, Lismore, NSW 2480
ABN 68 587 813 167



27 August 2021

NRJO MAKES SUBMISSION TO HOUSING TASKFORCE

The Northern Rivers Joint Organisation (NRJO) has identified a range of measures to be considered by the Regional Housing Taskforce in order to alleviate the current housing crisis both in the immediate and long term.

The actions outlined include both practical and regulatory suggestions aimed at tackling the many aspects of the issue.

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

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

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

The NRJO Submission’s proposed recommendations include:

- A pause on the implementation of the short-term rental accommodation regulatory framework to allow for a social impact assessment on the community.
- Modernise Government housing stock and utilise Government land and surplus buildings
- Northern Rivers Homeless and Action plan
- Support for current LGA housing initiatives
- A review of the AHCS template appropriateness for regions
- Develop a program to deliver full spectrum of housing as part of North Coast Regional Plan Review
- Appraise the impact of land banking and identify options to address it
- Local involvement in housing design guides and delivery of case studies.

Cr Mulholland said the NRJO recognised that factors influencing the current housing crisis extended beyond the reach of this Taskforce.

“Unfortunately, there is no one size fits all solution to this issue, the problems range from the influx to the regions to the type of housing available, the availability of suitable land and the supply effect of holiday letting on the overall housing stock.

“The submission to the Taskforce is the first of many steps we at the NRJO intend to take as a region to make headway on this issue,” Cr Mulholland said.

Further Information: Cr Danielle Mulholland Ph 0438 931 425



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Attachment 10

9 SEPTEMBER 2021

MAYORS WELCOME LOCKDOWN NEWS

The Northern Rivers Joint Organisation (NRJO) has welcomed the news that the regional lockdown is to be eased, but has also restated its call for tighter guidelines on NSW intrastate travel exemptions to ensure the area remains free of COVID 19.

Sections of the region have endured almost five weeks of lockdown which was initially started by three travellers from Sydney who tested positive to COVID while visiting the region.

NRJO Chair, Cr Danielle Mulholland, said businesses and the communities across the Northern Rivers had suffered under the weight of the closures and, with no community transmission, it was appropriate the restrictions to be eased.

“The Northern Rivers is a highly interconnected area with people travelling between towns for work, education, medical appointments and more. Each time there has been an imported COVID scare the region has responded with increased testing and the subsequent lack of community transmission is testimony to the COVID safe procedures in place.

“There does, however, need to be more rigor around the public health exemptions process to ensure those coming to the Northern Rivers from other parts of the State are doing so for the right reasons and are adhering to the guidelines.

“Whilst this lockdown has been eased, COVID is with us for some time so it is important that we continue to adhere to the public health advice such as handwashing, signing in with QR codes, social distancing and getting tested if people have any symptoms,” Cr Mulholland said.

The Statewide lockdown is due to end on midnight on Friday September 10.

Cr Mulholland said the end of the stay-at-home order for the Northern Rivers Region would assist negotiations for a more proportionate border arrangement with the Queensland Government.

“We again find ourselves with students, staff and business owners locked out of their normal day to day activities in Queensland, as well as those needing medical help or to connect with families.

“The Northern Rivers needs a road map from the Queensland Government outlining the necessary steps to begin relaxing border restrictions. Now that the COVID free status of our region has been acknowledged by the NSW Government with eased restrictions we hope QLD will reassess their regulations,” Cr Mulholland said.



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For media interviews:

- *Kyogle: Mayor Danielle Mulholland 0438 931 425*
- *Lismore: Mayor Vanessa Ekins 0417 245 502*
- *Tweed: Mayor Chris Cherry 0437 400 174*
- *Ballina: Mayor David Wright 0415 965 403*
- *Richmond Valley: Mayor Robert Mustow 0407 624 224*
- *Byron: Mayor Michael Lyon 0435 646 365*



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Northern Rivers Joint Organisation

GENERAL PURPOSE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 30 June 2021

Northern Rivers Joint Organisation General Purpose Financial Statements

For the year ended 30 June 2021

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

PO Box 146
Lismore
NSW 2480

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

Northern Rivers Joint Organisation

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

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

- * the *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW) and the regulations made thereunder.
- * the Australian Accounting Standards and other pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board-Simplified Disclosures
- * the Joint Organisations Supplement to the Local Government Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting

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

- * present fairly Northern Rivers Joint Organisation's operating result and financial position for the period, and
- * accord with Northern Rivers Joint Organisation's accounting and other records.

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

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Board of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation made on 1 November 2021

Danielle Mulholland
Chairperson

____/____/____

Voting Representative Board Member

____/____/____

Nicole Reeve
Executive Officer

____/____/____

Northern Rivers Joint Organisation

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

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

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

Northern Rivers Joint Organisation

Statement of financial position as at 30 June 2021

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

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

Northern Rivers Joint Organisation

Statement of cash flows

For the year ended 30 June 2021

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

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

Northern Rivers Joint Organisation

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 30 June 2021

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A1 Basis of preparation

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

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

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

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

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

(b) *Historical cost convention*

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

(c) *Significant accounting estimates and judgements*

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

Critical accounting estimates and assumptions

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

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

Significant judgements in applying the Joint Organisation accounting policies

- (1) None are applicable at this stage.

Goods and Services Tax (GST)

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

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

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

B1 Sources of Income

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

B1 Sources of Income continued

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

Accounting policy

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

The methodology for determining the contributions is:

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

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

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

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

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

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

The performance obligations vary according to the agreement.

Other grant revenue

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

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

B2 Cost of providing services

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

Accounting policy for employee benefits and on-costs

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

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

B2-2 Administrative expenses

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

B2-3 Project expenses

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

Accounting policy for expenses

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

C1 Assets we manage

C1-1 Cash and cash equivalents

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

Accounting policy for cash and cash equivalents

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

C1-2 Receivables

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

Accounting policy for receivables

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

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

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

C2 Liabilities of the Joint Organisation

C2-1 Payables

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

Accounting policy

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

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

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

C2-2 Contract liabilities

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

Accounting policy

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

C2-3 Provisions

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

Accounting policy for provisions

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

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

Employee benefits**Short-term obligations**

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

Other long-term employee benefit obligations

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

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

On-costs

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

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

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

D Risks and accounting uncertainties

D1-1 Financial risk management

Risk management

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

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

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

D2-1 Contingencies

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

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

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

E People and relationships

E1 Related Party Disclosures

E1-1 Key management personnel

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

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

Other transactions with KMP and their related parties

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

E1-2 Other related parties

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

E2 Other Relationships

E2-1 Audit Fees

Auditors of the Joint Organisation - NSW Auditor-General:

Audit and review of financial statements

Total fees paid or payable to the Auditor-General

Total remuneration of auditors

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

F Other matters

F1 Events occurring after reporting date

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

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

Ms Nicole Reeve
Executive Officer
Northern Rivers Joint Organisation
PO BOX 146
LISMORE NSW 2480

Contact: Gearoid Fitzgerald
Phone no: 02 9275 7392
Our ref: D2124729/1862

8 November 2021

Dear Ms Reeve

**Engagement Closing Report
for the year ended 30 June 2021
Northern Rivers Joint Organisation**

We have audited the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation (the Joint Organisation) general purpose financial statements (GPFS).

Attached is the Engagement Closing Report, which details findings relevant to you in your role as one of those charged with governance. This report gives the Executive Officer and the Chairperson the opportunity to assess the audit findings, before the representation letter and the Statements by Members of the Board and Management, required for the GPFS under section 413(2)(c) of the *Local Government Act 1993* (the LG Act), are signed.

This report is not intended for publication or distribution to persons other than those described above.

If you need more information about the audit, please contact me on 02 9275 7392 or Adam Bradfield on 02 6626 3000.

Yours sincerely



Gearoid Fitzgerald
Delegate of the Auditor-General for New South Wales

cc: Danielle Mulholland, Chairperson

Engagement Closing Report

for the year ended 30 June 2021

Northern Rivers Joint Organisation



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1. INTRODUCTION

We have audited the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation (the Joint Organisation):




- general purpose financial statements (GPFS)





This report informs the Executive Officer and Chairperson of audit findings relevant to their responsibilities and oversight of the Joint Organisation's financial statements. We will inform you if significant new matters are found while finalising the audit.

An audit is designed to obtain reasonable assurance the financial statements are free from material misstatement. It is not designed to identify all matters of governance interest, nor is it conducted to express an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control. Matters of governance interest identified during the audit are included in this report.

2. AUDIT OVERVIEW

The table below provides an overview of findings identified during the audit of the Joint Organisation.

Impact assessment		
	High	Matters identified which had a high impact on the financial statements and/or audit.
	Moderate	Matters identified which had a moderate impact on the financial statements and/or audit.
	Low	No matters or matters identified which had a low impact on the financial statements and/or audit.

Section	Outcome		Reference
Audit outcome:			
GPFS	Unqualified opinion		3.1
Response to key issues and audit risks	Matters partially addressed		4.1
Misstatements	Misstatements noted		4.2
Compliance with legislative requirements	No matters noted		4.3

3. AUDIT OUTCOME AND REPORTS

3.1 Audit outcome

We are likely to express an unmodified opinion on the GPFS.

The Independent Auditor's Report will be signed after the outstanding matters listed below are completed and the signed financial statements and management representation letter is received.

The following matters are outstanding at the date of this report:

- Review of subsequent events up to the date of issuing the Independent Auditor's Report
- Receipt of the signed letter of representation (to be signed and dated the same day as the GPFS).

Promptly resolving these matters will avoid delays in issuing the Independent Auditor's Report.

‘Other Information’ section

The Joint Organisation’s annual performance statement will include information in addition to the financial statements and Independent Auditor’s Report. For the purposes of our audit this is considered ‘other information’. Auditing Standards require us to consider whether the other information is materially consistent with the financial statements and the knowledge we obtained during the audit. Where matters are identified, we are required to disclose them in the Independent Auditor’s Report.

3.2 Report on the Conduct of the Audit

We will issue the Report on the Conduct of the Audit required by section 417(3) of the *Local Government Act 1993* at the same time as the Independent Auditor’s Report. The Report on the Conduct of the Audit will incorporate comments we consider appropriate, based on the audit of the Joint Organisation’s financial statements.

3.3 Management Letter

We issue Management Letters detailing matters of governance interest identified during the audit. Our current audit identified:

- 1 prior year matters not resolved by management
- 1 current year matter

Enclosed is our final Management letter which includes our observations from the audit.

4. AUDIT FINDINGS

4.1 Response to key issues and audit risks

The Annual Engagement Plan sent on 12 April 2021, identified key issues affecting the Joint Organisation and how the audit team planned to respond to them. The results of the audit work are detailed below.

Issue or risk	Audit outcome
Impact of COVID-19 pandemic	
The COVID-19 pandemic and its consequential impact has affected the way the Joint Organisation delivers its services.	The impact of COVID-19 on the financial statements as at 30 June 2021 were discussed with management. Management’s assessment highlighted that the pandemic has had no material impact to the financial statements as at 30 June 2021
This will have a flow on impact to the way the audit is conducted.	We did not identify any material issues with management’s assessment. The 30 June 2021 financial statements appropriately reflect management’s consideration of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
A documented assessment of the continuing impact and the response to the COVID-19 pandemic by the Joint Organisation will be required.	
Quality and timeliness of financial reporting	
Quality and timeliness of financial reporting is key for sound financial management, public accountability and effective decision making. Absence of an effective project plan for year-end financial reporting can result in delays, errors, poor quality and increased audit costs.	The draft financial statements were not available for audit until three weeks after the audit commenced.
Quality and timeliness can improve by:	Major disclosure deficiencies were noted where the draft financial statements were updated for the changes per the OLG Code of Accounting Practice - Joint Organisations Supplement.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• preparing proforma financial statements before 30 June 2021• assessing the impact of material, complex and one-off significant transactions	As noted in Table 1 of Appendix 1, the audit identified monetary misstatements that have been corrected in the financial statements.
	These matters contributed to delays in the audit process.

Issue or risk	Audit outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> documenting significant judgements and assumptions used to prepare financial statements assessing the impact of new and revised accounting standards effective in the current and future years regularly reconciling key accounts and clearing reconciling items. 	

4.2 Misstatements

Auditing Standards require matters of governance interest and significant misstatements identified during the audit to be communicated to those charged with governance.

Misstatements (both monetary and disclosure deficiencies) are differences between what has been reported in the financial statements and what is required in accordance with the Joint Organisation's financial reporting framework. Misstatements can arise from error or fraud. Misstatements that resulted from failures in internal controls and / or systemic deficiencies will be reported in the Management Letter.

General Purpose Financial Statements (GPFS)

Appendix 1 lists and explains the nature and impact of the misstatements contained in the GPFS.

- Table one reports significant corrected misstatements and disclosure deficiencies.

4.3 Compliance with legislative requirements

The Annual Engagement Plan and Terms of Engagement explain that audit procedures are targeted specifically towards forming an opinion on the Joint Organisation's financial statements. This includes testing whether the Joint Organisation has complied with legislative requirements that may materially impact the financial statements.

Our audit procedures did not identify reportable findings on compliance with legislative requirements.

5. THE AUDIT PROCESS

5.1 Management co-operation

We appreciated the co-operation and help received from the Joint Organisation's staff, in particular the finance team.

5.2 Next year's audit

An efficient audit relies on:

- regular and open communications between the audit team and management
- management responding promptly to the audit team's questions and documentation requests
- timely preparation of the financial statements and resolution of financial reporting issues
- management implementing appropriate quality controls over financial statement preparation

Your comments about the audit process are welcomed.

APPENDIX ONE – GENERAL PURPOSE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Table one: Uncorrected monetary misstatements and disclosure deficiencies

Uncorrected monetary misstatements

We did not detect any reportable monetary misstatements that remain uncorrected in the GPFS.

Table two: Corrected monetary misstatements and disclosure deficiencies

Corrected monetary misstatements

Management corrected the following monetary misstatements in the current year's GPFS. We agree with management's determination and confirm this treatment complies with Australian Accounting Standards.

Description	Assets	Liabilities	Net operating result	Other comprehensive income
Effect of correction	Increase/ (decrease) \$	(Increase)/ decrease \$	(Increase)/ decrease \$	(Increase)/ decrease \$
Factual misstatements				
Accrue unrecorded liabilities	2,755	(30,304)	27,549	--
Reallocated grant revenue recognised to contract liability as performance obligations per AASB15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers has not been met	(13,248)	(44,352)	57,600	--
Total impact of corrected misstatements	(10,493)	(74,656)	85,149	--

Corrected disclosure deficiencies

Management corrected the following disclosure deficiencies in the current year's GPFS. We agree with management's determination and confirm this treatment complies with Australian Accounting Standards.

AASB reference	Disclosure title	Description of disclosure deficiency
N/A	Joint Organisations Supplement to Local Government Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting	There were major changes to the GPFS introduced by the OLG for the 2021 financial year that hadn't been updated in the draft GPFS. These changes included early adoption of <i>AASB 1060 General Purpose Financial Statements – Simplified Disclosures for For-Profit and Not-for-Profit Tier 2 Entities</i> and restructuring and re-ordering of notes.

* Misstatement identified by management.

OUR VISION

Our insights inform and challenge government to improve outcomes for citizens.

OUR PURPOSE

To help parliament hold government accountable for its use of public resources.

Ms Danielle Mulholland
Chairperson
c/o Northern Rivers Joint Organisation
PO Box 146
LISMORE NSW 2480

Contact: Gearoid Fitzgerald
Phone no: 02 9275 7392
Our ref: D2124659/1862

5 November 2021

Dear Ms Mulholland

**Management Letter on the Final Phase of the Audit
for the Year Ended 30 June 2021**

The final phase of our audit for the year ended 30 June 2021 is complete. This letter outlines:

- matters of governance interest we identified during the current audit
- unresolved matters identified during previous audits
- matters we are required to communicate under Australian Auditing Standards.

We planned and carried out our audit to obtain reasonable assurance the financial statements are free from material misstatement. Because our audit is not designed to identify all matters that may be of governance interest to you, there may be other matters that did not come to our attention.

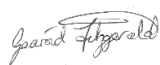
For each matter in this letter, we have included our observations, risk assessment and recommendations. The risk assessment is based on our understanding of your business. Management should make its own assessment of the risks to the organisation.

We have kept management informed of the issues included in this letter as they have arisen. A formal draft of this letter was provided on 4 November 2021. This letter includes management's formal responses, the person responsible for addressing the matter and the date by which this should be actioned.

The Auditor-General may include items listed in this letter in the Report to Parliament. We will send you a draft of this report and ask for your comments before it is tabled in Parliament.

If you would like to discuss any of the matters raised in this letter, please contact me on 9275 7392 or Adam Bradfield on 6626 3000.

Yours sincerely



Gearoid Fitzgerald

Delegate of the Auditor-General for New South Wales

Final management letter

for the year ended 30 June 2021

Northern Rivers Joint Organisation



We have rated the risk of each issue as 'Extreme', 'High', 'Moderate' or 'Low' based on the likelihood of the risk occurring and the consequences if the risk does occur.

The risk assessment matrix used is broadly consistent with the risk management framework in [TPP12-03](#) 'Risk Management Toolkit for the NSW Public Sector'.

		CONSEQUENCE			
		Low	Medium	High	Very high
LIKELIHOOD	Almost certain	M	M	H	E
	Likely	L	M	H	H
	Possible	L	M	M	H
	Rare	L	L	M	M

The risk level is a combination of the consequences and likelihood. The position within the matrix corresponds to the risk levels below.

RISK LEVELS	MATRIX REFERENCE
⊗ Extreme:	E
! High:	H
— Moderate:	M
✓ Low:	L

For each issue identified, we have used the consequence and likelihood tables from [TPP12-03](#) to guide our assessment.



Consequence levels and descriptors

Consequence level	Consequence level description
Very high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affects the ability of your entire entity to achieve its objectives and may require third party intervention; Arises from a fundamental systemic failure of governance practices and/or internal controls across the entity; or May result in an inability for the auditor to issue an audit opinion or issue an unqualified audit opinion.
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affects the ability of your entire entity to achieve its objectives and requires significant coordinated management effort at the executive level; Arises from a widespread failure of governance practices and/or internal controls affecting most parts of the entity; or May result in an inability for the auditor to issue an unqualified audit opinion.
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affects the ability of a single business unit in your entity to achieve its objectives but requires management effort from areas outside the business unit; or Arises from ineffective governance practices and/or internal controls affecting several parts of the entity.
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affects the ability of a single business unit in your entity to achieve its objectives and can be managed within normal management practices; or Arises from isolated ineffective governance practices and/or internal controls affecting a small part of the entity.

Likelihood levels and descriptors


Likelihood level	Frequency	Probability
Almost certain	The event is expected to occur in most circumstances, and frequently during the year	More than 99 per cent
Likely	The event will probably occur once during the year	More than 20 per cent and up to 99 per cent
Possible	The event might occur at some time in the next five years	More than 1 per cent and up to 20 per cent
Rare	The event could occur in exceptional circumstances	Less than 1 per cent

Summary of issues

Issue	Detail	Likelihood	Consequence	Risk assessment
Prior year matters not resolved by management				
1	No agreement with councils for My Road Info membership	Likely	Low	 Low
Current year matters				
1	Quality and timeliness of financial reporting	Likely	Medium	 Moderate

Prior year matters not resolved by management

Issue 1: No agreement with councils for My Road Info membership

Likelihood	Consequence	Systemic issue	Category	Risk assessment
Likely	Low	No	Operational	 Low

Observation

There is no formal agreement in place between the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation (the joint Organisation) and member Councils that supports the "My Road Info" membership.

Implications

Lack of a formal agreement between the Joint Organisation and constituent Council's means there is no clear definition of each party's responsibilities in relation to the funding and other services to be provided.

Recommendation

A formal agreement should be drafted for each Constituent Council to ensure each party is aware of their responsibilities.

Management response

Agree

The MyRoad service is currently being wound up and is expected to cease operation in the immediate future and, as such, last year's recommendation has not been actioned. The NRJO is working to finalise this situation.

Person responsible:


Nicole Reeve

Date (to be) actioned:

30/12/2021

Current year matters

Issue 1: Quality and timeliness of financial reporting

Likelihood	Consequence	Systemic issue	Category	Risk assessment
Likely	Medium	No	Reporting	 Moderate

Observation

The financial statements were submitted by the Joint Organisation to the audit team three weeks after the commencement of the audit.

Major disclosure deficiencies were noted as the financial statements had not been updated for the changes per the OLG Code of Accounting Practice - Joint Organisations Supplement.

This resulted in multiple versions of the financial statements.

Implications

The above matters contributed to delays in the audit process.

Recommendation

The Joint Organisation should improve its year-end financial statement preparation process to facilitate an efficient and effective audit. Quality and timeliness can improve by:

- preparing proforma financial statements before 30 June 2022 that are in accordance with the OLG Code of Accounting Practice - Joint Organisations Supplement
- lodging completed financial statements to the audit team within agreed timeframes
- providing high quality and complete working papers to the audit team by the agreed dates.

Management response

Agree

A review of internal financial procedures will be conducted to ensure timeliness and accuracy of all future reporting.

Person responsible:	Date (to be) actioned:
Nicole Reeve	30/1/2022

Northern Rivers Joint Organisation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Cr Danielle Mulholland
Chairperson

/ /

Voting Representative Board Member

/ /

Nicole Reeve
Executive Officer

/ /

29 October 2021

Ms Nicole Reeve
Executive Officer
NRJO
PO Box 146
LISMORE NSW 2480

Dear Nicole,

LGP Rebate Sharing under the ROC/JO Agreement

Local Government Procurement is pleased to be able to continue its rebate scheme for financial year 2021 (FY21). Under the MOU arrangement your rebate calculation has been completed for the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021.

As per the MOU we apply the Baseline Calculation rebate payment method. We are very pleased to see spend under LGP contracts by NRJO councils increase by 26% between FY20 and FY21, from \$35.6m in FY20 to \$44.9m in FY21. Your FY21 rebate payment will be \$47,182 plus GST.

LGP's primary value is delivered through our contracts, on a spend of \$709m in FY21, using our savings calculator we saved NSW councils \$69m. Taking into consideration price savings, tendering and contract management cost avoidance by using LGP contracts, our calculations show LGP saved NRJO councils over \$4m in the last financial year.

We remain focused on initiatives that continuously improve the quality of procurement practice in local government. Some examples include:

- In the last 2 years LGP Training has supported over 1,500 people advance their skills and knowledge.
- We are now a Registered Training Organisation (RTO), which means your learning qualifications can now be delivered by LGP.
- There is a growing trend for LGP Consulting to be engaged for council procurement reviews and procurement probity services.
- We are leading all aspects of social procurement, with 68 councils enjoying their Sustainable Choice membership.
- **Shortly you will see LGP Consulting's new outsourced contract management solution, and our new business intelligence offering.**



Another exciting new initiative from LGP is the Procurement Capability Grant Program. This is the first of its kind in Australian local government circles, it will be launched at the re-scheduled 2021 LGP Annual Conference on the 17th & 18th of February next year.

LGP will be inviting NSW councils, ROCs and JOs to lodge requests for funding that supports a new procurement capability initiative they are keen to see come to life. We are keen to work with those organisations who do want to make change in their procurement practice and would happily make a time to discuss any of the above listed initiatives.

We note NRJO signed their FY21 MOU committing to a 1 year term. This means we do not have an arrangement for with you for FY22 and beyond. Shortly I will provide a copy of a new MOU which allows NRJO to consider and advise if they would like to continue in the scheme for FY22.

Your rebate payment will be transacted shortly. If we can have advice, or a signed MOU to remain in the scheme for FY22, by Tuesday 30th November 2021, that would be appreciated. If we do not hear from you by then, we will assume you wish to no longer participate in the scheme.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at lkenny@lgp.org.au.

Kind regards,

Luke Kenny
Chief Executive Officer