



## **AGENDA FOR THE NORTHERN RIVERS JOINT ORGANISATION (NRJO) ORDINARY BOARD MEETING**

**Date:** Friday, 16 August 2024

**Time:** 9.30am to 1.00pm (10am start)

**Venue:** Clarence Valley Council

(50 River Street, Maclean NSW)

### **Statement of Ethical Obligations:**

In accordance with clause 3.23 of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation's Code of Meeting Practice, voting members are reminded of their oath or affirmation of office made under section 233A of the Local Government Act 1993 and their obligations under the NRJO's Code of Conduct to disclose and appropriately manage conflicts of interest.

# Agenda

## Northern Rivers Joint Organisation Board Meeting

**Friday, 16 August 2024**

**10.00 am | Clarence Valley Council - 50 River Street, Maclean**

Meeting also available via 'Teams' ([Click here to join the meeting](#))

- 
- 1. Opening of the meeting**
  - 2. Acknowledgement of Country**
  - 3. Apologies**
  - 4. Disclosure of Interest**
  - 5. Address by official visitor(s)**
  - 6. Confirmation of minutes of previous meeting**  
Meeting held 17 May 2024..... 1 - 5
  - 7. Urgent business**
  - 8. Notice of motion**
  - 9. Reports for discussion**
    - 9.1 Executive Officer report ..... 6 - 36
    - 9.2 LGNSW Annual Conference - Motion - Urban Drainage Systems ..... 37 - 40
    - 9.3 Financial Report ..... 41 - 45
    - 9.4 Appointment of Alternative Voting Representatives ..... 46 - 47
  - 10. Information reports - cover report..... 48**
    - 10.1 Renewable Energy Projects ..... 49 - 53
    - 10.2 Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee - update ..... 54 - 57
    - 10.3 Associate member - Office of Local Government  
*verbal and attached* ..... 58 - 59
    - 10.4 Associate member - Regional Development Australia  
*Verbal introduction - Mr Anthony Schreenan, Director*
    - 10.5 Associate member - Destination North Coast ..... 60 - 61
    - 10.6 Associate member - Premiers Department ..... 62 - 63

10.7	Associate member - Scenic Rim Regional Council .....	64 - 68
10.8	Correspondence - Incoming and Outgoing .....	69
<b>11.</b>	<b>Confidential reports</b>	
<b>12.</b>	<b>Close of business</b>	



**MINUTES OF NORTHERN RIVERS JOINT ORGANISATION BOARD MEETING HELD  
FRIDAY, 17 MAY 2024 AT KYOGLE COUNCIL - 1 STRATHEDEN STREET, KYOGLE  
NSW 2474**

---

Meeting commenced at 10:00am

In attendance:

Voting Committee:

- Cr Michael Lyon, Byron Shire Council (Chair)
- Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Ballina Shire Council (Deputy Chair)
- Cr Chris Cherry, Tweed Shire Council
- Cr Peter Johnstone, Clarence Valley Council
- Cr Steve Krieg, Lismore City Council
- Cr Robert Mustow, Richmond Valley Council

General Managers

- Laura Black, Clarence Valley Council
- Mark Arnold, Byron Shire Council
- Troy Green, Tweed Shire Council
- Jon Gibbons, Lismore City Council
- Paul Hickey, Ballina Shire Council

Other attendees:

- Phillip Rudd, Executive Officer NRJO
- Cr Tom Cooper, on behalf of Cr Webster, Kyogle Council
- Lauren Edwards, NRJO
- Anita Gambhir, Office of Local Government
- Jane Lavery, Northern Rivers Business NSW
- Cr Stephen Moriarty, Scenic Rim Regional Council
- Marcus Schintler, on behalf of Chris White, Kyogle Council
- Karina Striegner, Disaster Relief Australia
- Cass Wilson, Regional NSW

---

**1 OPENING OF THE MEETING**

---

The Chair opened the meeting and invited Cr Tom Cooper, Deputy Mayor Kyogle Council to welcome everyone to the meeting.

---

**2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

---

*Cr Cooper provided the 'acknowledgement of country' and showed respect and acknowledged the Traditional Custodians of the Land, of Elders past and present, on which this meeting took place.*

---

**3 APOLOGIES**

---

- Cr Kylie Webster, Kyogle Council
- Vaughan MacDonald, Richmond Valley Council
- Chris White, Kyogle Council
- Alex Smith, Regional Development Australia

---

**4 DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

---

Nil.

---

**5 ADDRESS BY OFFICIAL VISITOR(S)**

---

5.1 NSW Northern Rivers Brand

Presented by Jane Lavery – Regional Director Northern Rivers Business NSW

5.2 Disaster Relief Australia

Presented by Karina Striegher, Northern Manager Disaster Relief Australia

*Cr Sharon Cadwallader joined the meeting 10.50am*

*Cr Robert Mustow joined the meeting 11.01am via 'Teams' platform.*

---

**6 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

---

**RESOLVED** (Cadwallader/Lyon) that the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation receive and note the minutes from the previous meeting held 16 February 2024.

---

**7 URGENT BUSINESS**

---

Nil.

---

**8 NOTICE OF MOTION**

---

8.1 Funding of urban drainage

**RESOLVED** (Cadwallader/Krieg) That the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation Board advocate on behalf of its Member Councils for Commonwealth and State Government funding for the rebuilding of urban drainage assets and for an increase to the stormwater management service charge by:

1. Writing to the relevant State and Commonwealth Government Ministers, and
2. Preparing a submission for the 2024 LGNSW Annual Conference.

<b>Funding of urban drainage (Resolution)</b>		
For	Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Chris Cherry, Cr Peter Johnstone, Cr Steve Krieg, Cr Michael Lyon and Cr Robert Mustow	6
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent		0
<b>Carried</b>		

*Cr. Stephen Moriarty left the meeting at 11.25am*

## 9 REPORTS FOR DISCUSSION

### 9.1 Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee meeting update.

**RESOLVED** (Johnstone/Lyon) That the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation Board:

1. Receive and note the attached minutes from the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee meeting of 30 April 2024,
2. Approve the revised Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee Charter at Attachment 2 adopted by Rous County Council on 21 February 2024,
3. Nominate Councillor Johnstone as the non-voting councillor for appointment to the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee when meeting on behalf of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation for a 2-year term or until a casual vacancy occurs, whichever is the earlier,
4. Approve the delegation at Attachment 4 to Rous County Council, as part of the fee-for-service arrangement for corporate services, of its functions under the:
  - a. *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2022* (PID Act), and
  - b. Part 6A of the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* (PPIP Act).

<b>Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee meeting update (Resolution)</b>		
For	Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Chris Cherry, Cr Peter Johnstone, Cr Steve Krieg, Cr Michael Lyon and Cr Robert Mustow	6
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent		0
<b>Carried</b>		

### 9.2 Executive Officer report

**RESOLVED** (Lyon/Cherry) That the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation Board:

1. Receive and note the Executive Officer's report as presented, and
2. Expresses its frustration and dismay at the latest street count in the Northern Rivers highlighting the ongoing increase in rough sleeping which is already the highest in the state in the last count and lack of action to address this, and
3. Writes to the relevant Commonwealth and State Government Ministers for a

response to the results of the recent Department of Communities and Justice Street Count results and calls for an immediate funded plan that will see the delivery of a tangible increase to social housing in the Northern Rivers.

4. Invite the Minister for Homelessness and her Head of Department to the next meeting of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation meeting to outline her plans in response to this crisis.

<b>Executive Officer report (Resolution)</b>		
For	Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Chris Cherry, Cr Peter Johnstone, Cr Steve Krieg and Cr Michael Lyon	5
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent		0
<b>Carried</b>		

*Cr Robert Mustow left the meeting at 11.55am*

### 9.3 Northern Rivers Compact 2024-2026

**RESOLVED** (Krieg/Cadwallader) That the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation Board:

1. Receive this draft report.
2. Support the proposed Northern Rivers Compact 2024–2026 attached to this report with the addition of Northern Rivers Joint Organisation as a partner; and
3. Endorse the Chair to duly execute the compact on behalf of the NRJO, after receiving feedback from all the Councils.

<b>Northern Rivers Compact 2024-2026 (Resolution)</b>		
For	Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Chris Cherry, Cr Peter Johnstone, Cr Steve Krieg and Cr Michael Lyon	5
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	Cr Robert Mustow	1
<b>Carried</b>		

### 9.4 Financial Report - 30 April 2024

**RESOLVED** (Cadwallader/Krieg) that the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation Board receive and note the financial report ending 30 April 2024 as presented.

<b>Financial Report - 30 April 2024 (Resolution)</b>		
For	Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Chris Cherry, Cr Peter Johnstone, Cr Steve Krieg and Cr Michael Lyon	5
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	Cr Robert Mustow	1
<b>Carried</b>		

---

**10 INFORMATION REPORTS - COVER SHEET**


---

**MOTION** (Johnstone/Cherry) that the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation Board discuss 10.1 Electric Vehicle Event – report separately to the other reports.

*CARRIED*

**RESOLVED** (Johnstone/Cherry) That the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation Board receive and note the information reports as presented.

<b>Information Reports (Resolution)</b>		
For	Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Chris Cherry, Cr Peter Johnstone, Cr Steve Krieg and Cr Michael Lyon	5
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	Cr Robert Mustow	1
<b>Carried</b>		

10.1 Electric Vehicle Event - report

**RESOLVED** (Johnstone/Cherry) that the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation Board:-

1. Receive and note the report on the Electric Vehicle Event held at the Cavanbah Centre, Byron Bay, NSW on Wednesday 10 April 2024; and
2. Thank the staff members involved in coordinating the day.

<b>NRJO Electric Vehicle Day (Resolution)</b>		
For	Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Chris Cherry, Cr Peter Johnstone, Cr Steve Krieg and Cr Michael Lyon	5
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	Cr Robert Mustow	1
<b>Carried</b>		

---

**11 CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS**


---

Nil

---

**12 CLOSE OF MEETING**


---

There being no further business the meeting closed at 12:37pm



## Executive Officer Report

### RECOMMENDATION:

That the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation Board receive and note the Executive Officer's report as presented.

### Purpose

To provide an update on activities undertaken in delivering against the principal functions of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation (NRJO) during the quarter ended 30 June 2024.

### Background

The principal functions of the NRJO, as set out in the *Local Government Act 1993*, are to:

- (1) Establish **strategic regional priorities** and develop strategies and plans for delivering those priorities.
- (2) Provide **regional leadership** and advocate for strategic regional priorities.
- (3) Identify and take up opportunities for **inter-governmental co-operation** on regional matters<sup>1</sup>.

Principal function (1) is captured within the Statement of Regional Priorities 2022 – 2024<sup>2</sup> adopted by the NRJO which sets out 13 strategic goals and related strategic actions within five (5) key regional priority areas.

This report provides a summary of activities undertaken during the quarter grouped by principal functions (items (1) – (3) above).

---

<sup>1</sup> [Section 400R](#) *Local Government Act 1993*.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.northernriversjo.nsw.gov.au/priorities-and-projects>

## 1. Strategic Regional Priorities

Table 1: Strategic Regional Priorities 2022 – 2024: Status Update<sup>3</sup>

PRIORITY 2 – Improved community wellbeing now and into the future	
Strategic Goal & Action/s	Status Update
<p><b>4. Increased availability, affordability and choice of housing to meet the needs of current and projected Northern Rivers population.</b></p> <p>4.4 Partner with relevant government and non-government organisations to support increased access to social housing and homeless and crisis accommodation services across the region.</p>	<p>An invitation was extended to the NSW Minister for Homelessness, and their Head of Department, to attend the next Board meeting of the NRJO to outline the NSW Government's plan for addressing the housing and homelessness crisis as highlighted in the results of the 2024 Street Count report.</p> <p>The Minister has advised they are unable to attend the next NRJO Board meeting.</p> <p>Councillor Lyon, in their Mayoral capacity for Byron Shire Council, has a scheduled meeting in Sydney in July with the Minister and will take the opportunity to discuss the above matters on behalf of the NRJO at that time.</p> <p>A media release (<a href="#">Attachment 1</a>) in relation to the results of the 2024 Street Count report was also circulated by the NRJO and broadcast by several media outlets.</p> <p><b>Update [260724]: Correspondence in response to the above, and following Cr Lyon's meeting, was received from the NSW Minister for Homelessness, the Hon. Rose Jackson MLC, on 26 July 2024 – A copy is provided at <a href="#">Attachment 1a</a>.</b></p>
PRIORITY 3 – A physically and digitally connected region	
Strategic Goal & Action/s	Status Update
<p><b>6. An efficient, safe and sustainable regional transport system that enables improved productivity, connectivity and social inclusion for businesses, residents and visitors.</b></p>	<p>In June, an NRJO submission was made on the Gold Coast Airport 2024 Preliminary Draft Master Plan, at the request of Tweed Shire Council.</p> <p>The NRJO submission acknowledged the need for the Gold Coast Airport to strategically plan initiatives to meet growing demand and noted that this must be balanced with any</p>

<sup>3</sup> Numbering and descriptions reflect the strategic priorities, goals, and actions contained in the Statement of Regional Priorities 2022 – 2024. Numbering in Table 1 reflects only those items with updates to be reported and, therefore, may not appear sequentially.

<p>6.2 Adopt an integrated approach to progressing the regional transport – related actions in the Northern Rivers and Tweed Transport Plans and corresponding Regional Economic Development Strategies.</p>	<p>negative social, economic and environmental impacts that may be felt within the operational footprint of an expanded airport operation.</p> <p>A copy of the NRJO submission is provided at <u>Attachment 2</u>.</p> <p>Further information on the Draft Master Plan is available on the Gold Coast Airport website: <a href="https://www.goldcoastairport.com.au/latest-news/new-master-plan-unveils-airport-of-the-future">https://www.goldcoastairport.com.au/latest-news/new-master-plan-unveils-airport-of-the-future</a></p>
<p><b>PRIORITY 4 – Innovative, sustainable energy, water and waste management</b></p>	
<p>Strategic Goal &amp; Action/s</p>	<p>Status Update</p>
<p><b>8. To strengthen our region’s emerging position as a NSW leader in renewable energy generation, storage &amp; use, in accordance with widespread community support for reduced emissions &amp; action on climate change.</b></p> <p>8.1 Champion &amp; promote the increased use of renewable energy for residential, public &amp; commercial purposes.</p> <p>8.4 Review energy use &amp; provision &amp; opportunities for member councils to collaborate.</p>	<p>Refer to the NRJO Net Zero Project update contained in Table (b) of <u>Attachment 3</u>.</p> <p>At the request of Byron Shire Council, the NRJO provided written support to the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) to the application made by Byron Shire Council for a grant under the Community Energy Upgrades Fund to enable the delivery of their Community Energy Flexibility and Resilience Project.</p> <p>A copy of the NRJO letter of support to DCCEEW is provided at <u>Attachment 4</u>.</p>
<p><b>11. Improved preparedness for and ability to respond to and recover from flooding events.</b></p> <p>11.1 Work with the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation to ensure that projects and programs to rebuild our flood impacted communities are implemented quickly and are sustainable in the long term.</p>	<p>Feedback from elected officials of NRJO Member Councils was invited on the draft Northern Rivers Compact 2024 – 2026 prepared by the NSW Reconstruction Authority.</p> <p>The Compact outlines principles and opportunities for collaboration and coordination between key stakeholders in preparing, responding, and recovering from flood events.</p> <p>During the 30-day feedback window, no submissions were received from councils.</p>

<b>PRIORITY 5 – A diversified, prosperous and sustainable regional economy.</b>	
Goals & Strategic Action	Status Update
<p><b>12. A strong, diverse regional economy which provides local employment by attracting new enterprises, enabling existing enterprises to innovate &amp; expand, &amp; offering the conditions required for emerging industries to flourish.</b></p> <p>12.3 Collaborate with Regional Development NSW to encourage a diversification of employment in the Northern Rivers</p>	<p>HillPDA was reengaged to provide a response to the matters raised by Tweed Shire Council in relation to the Employment Lands Study. The HillPDA response has been provided to Tweed Shire Council who will now take the matter forward for resolution internally.</p>

## 2. Regional Leadership

Reporting Tables 2 and 3 below provide an update on the:

- New/active advocacy or operational activities undertaken since the last meeting of the General Managers Advisory Committee (GMAC) and Board in relation to issues of regional significance (other than those reported as part of a strategic regional priorities update or via a stakeholder engagement/collaboration forum update)
- status of regional funding applications and related opportunities.

Updates on continuing or outstanding advocacy or operational activities reported previously are contained in the NRJO Activities Tracker at [Attachment 5](#).

Table 2: Regional Advocacy Update

Advocacy / Operational / Project Activity	Description/Update of activity
<b>Biosecurity Update – Fire Ants</b>	<p>An update on the NSW Fire Ant Program was received from the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) – <a href="#">Attachment 6</a> – and disseminated to Member Councils.</p> <p>This update confirmed the fire ant populations in Murwillumbah and Wardell have been contained. No new sites have been identified by the program within the Northern Rivers region. However, the presence of fire ant nests at Currumbin Waters, QLD (approx. 500m from the NSW border) was notified on 22 May 2024.</p>
<b>Disaster Risk Reduction Project</b>	Refer to the Disaster Risk Reduction Project update contained in Table (a) of <a href="#">Attachment 3</a> .
<b>2024/25 Insurance Renewals</b>	<p>The insurance renewal process for the NRJO was completed and the following policies secured for 2024/25:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional Indemnity - Public Liability</li> <li>• Crime</li> <li>• Councillors and Officers Liability</li> </ul>

Table 3: Status of Regional Funding Applications and Opportunities

Funding Program	Initiative	Funding Sought	Status
Joint Organisation Net Zero Acceleration (JONZA) Grant Round 2 – 2024/25	NRJO Net Zero Project <i>Refer to <a href="#">Attachment 3</a></i>	\$161,200 (excl. GST)	<b>Successful</b>
JONZA Grant Round 2 – Variation Funding	NRJO Net Zero Project	\$53,700 (excl. GST)	<b>Successful</b>

### 3. Inter-governmental Co-operation

Reporting Table 4 below provides an update on inter-government collaboration and engagement forums and other opportunities the NRJO has participated in since the Board's last meeting.

Table 4: Collaboration and Engagement Update

Collaboration & Engagement Activities	Purpose / Outcomes (where relevant)
Community Leaders Forum – Chaired by Janelle Saffin MP	<p>The Executive Officer attended the Community Leaders Forum facilitated by the Reconstruction Authority (RA) and chaired by Janelle Saffin MP on 17 June 2024.</p> <p>The purpose of the forum is to bring together elected and appointed government officials to ensure future decisions about recovery and reconstruction following the 2022 flood events are informed by community needs.</p> <p>The agenda for the meeting included the updates on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CSIRO NRRI</li> <li>• Regional Vision and Masterplan</li> <li>• Resilient Homes Program – Raising and Retrofit Streams</li> <li>• Community Outreach Schedule</li> </ul>

#### Report Attachments:

1. NRJO Media Release dated 23 May 2024 – Homelessness Crisis
- 1a. Letter from NSW Minister for Homelessness dated 25 July 2024.
2. NRJO Submission on Gold Coast Airport 2024 Preliminary Draft Master Plan
3. NRJO Project Updates
4. NRJO letter of support to DCCEEW dated 23 April 2024
5. NRJO Activities Tracker
6. NSW DPI – Fire Ant Program Update 12 June 2024



## Media Release

### **Housing and homelessness crisis gripping the Northern Rivers ‘totally unacceptable’**

The Northern Rivers’ peak local government organisation is urging both the NSW and Commonwealth Governments to do more to tackle the housing and homelessness crisis gripping the region.

Chair of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation (NRJO) Michael Lyon said he was especially devastated by the recent news that Byron Shire had again topped the annual NSW Street Count for rough sleepers.

“Secure, affordable housing is a basic human need that is fundamental to the liveability of the Northern Rivers region and wellbeing of its communities,” Chair Lyon said.

“It is totally unacceptable for our region to be experiencing the current level of homelessness.

“Funding for homelessness services and vital social housing is relatively high in Sydney, while regional funding is manifestly inadequate to meet our needs.

“We need a significant funding commitment from both levels of government as we clearly have the most need and the regional inequity is beyond comprehension,” Chair Lyon said.

The NRJO’s submission last year on the Australian Government’s proposed National Housing and Homelessness Plan highlighted how the region’s crisis had been severely exacerbated by extraordinary population growth through the COVID-19 pandemic and devastation wreaked during the 2022 flood disaster.

“We’ve stressed to both the NSW and Commonwealth Governments that social housing levels are significantly low in the Northern Rivers, with it only making up between one and four percent of all housing stock in our member councils’ local government areas,” Chair Lyon added.

“Adequate social and affordable housing is vital in supporting our most vulnerable people to exit homelessness.

“All our region’s community members deserve to be housed, with the support they need to live with dignity,” Chair Lyon said.

One of five strategic regional priorities established by the NRJO is to improve community wellbeing now and into the future. A key goal in delivering on this priority is increased availability, affordability and choice of housing to meet the needs of the current and projected Northern Rivers population.

To achieve this, the NRJO and its member councils have committed to partner with relevant government and non-government organisations to support increased access to social housing and homeless and crisis accommodation services across the region.

--ENDS--



**NORTHERN RIVERS JOINT ORGANISATION**

Phone 0266 233 800

Email [admin@northernriversjo.nsw.gov.au](mailto:admin@northernriversjo.nsw.gov.au)

Web [www.northernriversjo.nsw.gov.au](http://www.northernriversjo.nsw.gov.au)

Post PO Box 239, Lismore, NSW 2480

ABN 68 587 813 167



**The Hon Rose Jackson MLC**

Minister for Water, Minister for Housing,  
Minister for Homelessness  
Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Youth,  
Minister for the North Coast



Ref: EAP24/9314

Cr Michael Lyon  
Chairperson  
Northern Rivers Joint Organisation  
PO Box 239  
LISMORE NSW 2480

By email: [admin@northernriversjo.nsw.gov.au](mailto:admin@northernriversjo.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Councillor Lyon *Michael*

Thank you for your letter of 4 June 2024 on behalf of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation about the recent street count results and our response to people experiencing homelessness in the Northern Rivers. I appreciate you taking the time to write and welcome ideas on how we can improve our response to people experiencing homelessness.

The NSW Government is committed to making NSW a place where experiences of homelessness are rare, brief and not repeated because people have a safe home and the support to keep it. I recognise there is a lot of work to do to make this happen.

The number of people sleeping rough in NSW has continued to rise with regional areas experiencing the biggest surge in homelessness in the 2024 street count. Rising interest rates, cost of living pressures and a shortage of rental homes are some of the factors that are contributing to the increase of people experiencing homelessness. As you know, we are working to better support people experiencing homelessness in the Northern Rivers.

Assertive Outreach is delivered across NSW to engage people sleeping rough and support them into long term, stable accommodation with support to stay housed. We have recently extended the Tweed Assertive Outreach pilot for an additional two years to 2026. Since March 2024, we have also invested in a 12-month Assertive Outreach response to support people sleeping rough in the Byron Shire.

Additionally, we are taking action to address rising homelessness across NSW by extending Specialist Homelessness Services contracts from 2024 to 2026 and moving to five-year contracts. This creates more certainty for the services and the people they support and applies to services operating in the region.

OFFICIAL

Homes NSW brings together the housing and homelessness services of the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) with NSW Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC), the NSW Aboriginal Housing Office (AHO) and key worker housing all under one roof – making the system more efficient and accessible.



Specialist Homelessness Services are a key NSW Government response to support people most at risk of homelessness. A full list of services in the Northern Rivers is available at <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/housing/help/ways/services>.

I know more needs to be done, so we are working to improve the current system and find new, creative ways to support individuals and communities. The 2024/25 NSW budget includes an additional \$527.6 million investment for homelessness, including the establishment of a Homelessness Innovation Fund, as part of a record \$6.6 billion investment to reduce homelessness and improve social housing. Homes NSW is working with the homelessness peak organisations to design how this funding is targeted, so it can have the biggest impact.

The NSW Government is working with the Federal Government to deliver NSW's share of the 50,000 social and affordable dwellings that are to be built over five years under the Housing Australia Future Fund and the National Housing Accord. We have been using NSW's share of the \$2 billion Social Housing Accelerator to increase social housing in NSW.

I look forward to working in collaboration with Northern Rivers' local councils as we continue to explore ways to better support people experiencing homelessness.

If you would like more information, please contact Les Grainger, A/Director, Homelessness Strategy and Innovation at [Les.Grainger@homes.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Les.Grainger@homes.nsw.gov.au).

Yours sincerely



**Rose Jackson MLC**

Minister for Water, Minister for Housing, Minister for Homelessness  
Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Youth, Minister for the North Coast

*we have not directly  
about this issue - but here  
is a formal response to  
your letter and I remain  
committed to  
working together.  
R.*

Date: 25.7.24

**For more information about Homes NSW:**

Scan the QR code or visit the website at [nsw.gov.au/homes-nsw](https://nsw.gov.au/homes-nsw)





Our ref: D24/10865

4 June 2024

Amelia Evans  
Chief Executive Officer – Queensland Airports Limited  
[masterplan@gcal.com.au](mailto:masterplan@gcal.com.au)

Dear Ms Evans,

### **Gold Coast Airport 2024 Preliminary Draft Master Plan**

---

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the Gold Coast Airport 2024 Preliminary Draft Master Plan.

This submission is made by the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation (NRJO) on behalf of its seven (7) member councils in relation to the NSW Northern Rivers region. In particular, the purpose of this submission is to support feedback provided by our member Tweed Shire Council.

As the draft master plan rightly recognises, the Gold Coast Airport is a key gateway to the NSW Northern Rivers region – contributing significantly to its accessibility, connectedness, visitor and tourism industries, and broader regional economy.

While the NRJO supports the airport's need to strategically plan initiatives that enable it to meet growing demand, this must be balanced with protecting the communities, residents, businesses, economies and the environment of the Northern Rivers against the harmful impacts of expanding airport operations.

### **About the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation**

Formed in June 2018, the NRJO is one of a network of 13 joint organisations established for regional areas by the NSW Government.

Joint organisations are local government entities with legal powers that enable its member councils to work together at a regional level – as well as with government agencies and other organisations – to achieve better planning, economic, infrastructure and service delivery outcomes for their communities.

Like all joint organisations, the NRJO has 3 principal functions enshrined in the *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW):

- establish strategic regional priorities and develop strategies and plans for delivering those priorities
- provide regional leadership and advocate for strategic regional priorities
- identify and take up opportunities for inter-governmental co-operation on regional matters.



**NORTHERN RIVERS JOINT ORGANISATION**

Phone 0266 233 800

Email [admin@northernriversjo.nsw.gov.au](mailto:admin@northernriversjo.nsw.gov.au)

Web [www.northernriversjo.nsw.gov.au](http://www.northernriversjo.nsw.gov.au)

Post PO Box 239, Lismore, NSW 2480

ABN 68 587 813 167

Seven (7) member councils make up the NRJO – Ballina Shire, Byron Shire, Clarence Valley, Kyogle, Lismore City, Richmond Valley and Tweed Shire councils.

As the peak body for local government in the NSW Northern Rivers, the NRJO is the recognised voice for a region spanning more than 20,000 square kilometres from Tweed Heads in the north to well beyond Grafton in the south and to Woodenbong, Tabulam and Newton Boyd in the west.

### Strategic context

The visitor economy remains one of the Northern Rivers' major exports, with the presence of visitors contributing considerably to the region's prosperity. Ensuring our region is known to the nation and world for its openness to visitors is a key pillar of the NRJO's vision.

The Northern Rivers region boasts:

- easy accessibility for NSW, national and international visitors – especially given the upgraded Pacific Motorway, major regional Ballina-Byron Gateway Airport and nearby Gold Coast Airport
- strong, well-established visitor economy supported by plentiful accommodation options and vast array of tourism, hospitality and other related experiences and services
- renowned natural environment – from idyllic beaches through to picturesque hinterland and unique rainforest areas
- strong connections with and easy access to the large markets of South East Queensland and beyond.

One of five (5) strategic regional priorities established by the NRJO has set the goal of increasing the contribution of tourism to the regional economy and dispersal of visitors across the region, while protecting the Northern Rivers' unique character, environment and quality of life.

Another strategic priority of the NRJO is to continue improving the region's connectedness. Transport plays a key role in this and (as referred to above) the region has some important links in place, including several regional airports, upgraded sections of the Pacific Motorway and access to external markets through the Gold Coast Airport and port of Brisbane.

This all must of course however not come at the expense of the Northern Rivers community's wellbeing now or in the future, which also forms a strategic priority of the NRJO.

Airport operators are among the key stakeholders the NRJO must engage and partner with to deliver on its strategic regional priorities.

### Aircraft noise issues

Aircraft noise remains a major concern for Northern Rivers residents, especially those living in the Tweed Shire. These concerns are only heightened by the draft master plan's focus on accommodating increased aircraft movements to and from the Gold Coast Airport.

The more than 400 percent increase in Regular Public Transport flight movements identified by the draft master plan is particularly alarming given it will result in a considerable increase to aircraft noise each day. This substantial change will detrimentally impact the Tweed Shire community and its residents, both in terms of amenity and wellbeing.



The NRJO reiterates Tweed Shire Council's calls for the master plan to:

- clarify the impacts to affected communities and the actual noise to be experienced
- identify noise amelioration measures to be implemented to minimise and mitigate these impacts on affected communities
- include a commitment to developing a noise abatement procedure in consultation with the community, local government and other relevant stakeholders to manage increasing flight movements into the future.

Furthermore, the master plan requires work to address the following aircraft noise related issues:

- **Noise exposure forecasting**  
The preferred noise exposure forecasting method should prioritise protection of existing and future residents and businesses in the Tweed Shire. Consideration should also be given to how the preferred method supports Tweed Shire Council's local planning controls, which aim to prevent certain noise sensitive developments being located near the airport and its flight paths as well as minimise the impact of aircraft noise by requiring noise attenuation measures in noise sensitive buildings identified via exposure forecasting.
- **Noise monitors**  
The NRJO supports the reinstallation of a permanent noise monitor in Tweed Heads West (in conjunction with any roaming noise monitors around the airport) as committed to in the 2017 master plan.
- **Alternative noise metrics**  
Given the substantial adverse impacts a significant increase in aircraft traffic volume will generate, as much information as possible needs to be made publicly available to help the community understand how noise pollution and nuisance from aircraft will likely affect it. This should include interactive maps that display flight paths and their noise impacts as well as information for potential property purchasers.

### Environment issues

The detection of Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) within ground and surface water across the majority of the airport site – as well as offsite locations in various concentrations – is of significant concern to the NRJO given the potential impacts to the safety and health of Northern Rivers' residents, visitors and its environment. Working with all relevant state and federal government departments to identify the extent of PFAS contamination and undertake required remediation works should remain a critical priority for the airport and Airservices Australia.

Local government does not regulate air pollution caused by aircraft. Nevertheless, it is often the first point of contact for community members wanting to report related air quality issues. Given air quality is a key environmental health issue in NSW, the NRJO echoes Tweed Shire Council's request for routine air quality monitoring to be undertaken by the airport and Airservices Australia for all ground-and-air-based activities related to aircraft operations.



In relation to conservation, any areas of high ecological value on land owned or operated by the airport must continue to be identified and protected (in partnership with local government wherever possible).

### Related transport infrastructure issues

The draft master plan's commitment to develop additional transport infrastructure is welcomed by the NRJO. In particular, the proposed Southern Entryway Project presents the opportunity to finally improve the state of the Gold Coast Highway for southbound traffic leaving the airport and provide a much better first impression for visitors to NSW and the Northern Rivers region. Improved signage, landscaping and other features as part of the project would better present the NSW entry.

Tweed Shire Council's work to date with transport agencies both sides of the border to try and plan for a future extension of light rail beyond the airport into Coolangatta and Tweed Heads is something the NRJO is excited by. Incorporating light rail into the airport's master plan is a critical step in demonstrating the feasibility of this future project and another transport mode to the south.

### Strategic planning issues

Planning priority 4 regarding mixed use diversification in the draft master plan is equally supported by the NRJO.

An adequate supply of suitably located and zoned industrial and employment land is considered vital to ensuring and promoting the Northern Rivers region's economic growth and sustainability. To this end, the NRJO (in collaboration with its associate member Regional Development Australia – Northern Rivers) recently completed a comprehensive audit of available industrial and employment land in the region.

There is a likely synergy between this work and the site of the Western Enterprise Precinct earmarked in the draft master plan that the NRJO would be keen to pursue, especially as the site provides a potential link to the Pacific Motorway and may be attractive to a range of employment/industrial uses that require such convenience and are less likely to be impacted by the airport's operations.

Potential opportunities presented by the Western Enterprise Precinct might also benefit from considering alternate uses to that proposed in the draft master plan – such as using the site to develop advanced air mobility capabilities or a smaller east/west runway for light aircraft movements.

Should you need to discuss any of the above further, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Michael Lyon  
**Chairperson – Northern Rivers Joint Organisation**






**NRJO – Project Updates**

- (A) Disaster Risk Reduction
- (B) Net Zero

As at 30 June 2024

**Table A: Disaster Risk Reduction Project: Status Update**

Project Details			
Contract Name:	Building knowledge and improving practice in disaster risk reduction in Northern Rivers – a systemic approach	Author:	Phil Courtney
Report Name:	Quarterly Report	Report No.:	9
Date Range:	April - July 2024	Reported:	04/07/2024
Item	Project update		
1	Quarterly Progress		
	<p>Six workshops were delivered to community groups throughout the region. Utilising Council's Community Resilience Networks (CRN) and hiring a Simtable from MNCJO; a workshop was conducted in each LG area. These workshops were a great success with some great community participation. Many requests for additional workshops have been received including from local RFS brigades to show different scenarios to participants.</p>		
	<p>Gap/Needs analysis reports were distributed to every Council. Due to the delayed delivery these reports, conducting a comprehensive assessment was challenging. Additionally, since the same questions were used across all JOs in the program, some of the information in the reports maybe less relevant to this region. A follow up assessment should occur for Northern Rivers Councils to ensure relevancy of the report information for local Councils.</p>		
	<p>Regional Opportunities Report for Northern Rivers was delivered by Consultants – GHD. The report highlights gaps/opportunities in the region. The regional Reconstruction Authority have indicated that they will work with Councils on embedding highlighted opportunities into the regional DAPs being developed. This is a good outcome and should ensure continuity with this project into the future.</p>		
	<p>A Framework for how Councils can embed Disaster Risk Reduction into IP&amp;R was created. This included tools for Councils to use to assist with embedding opportunities into Council IP&amp;R documents. A workshop was delivered to Councils and a final Framework with feedback from Councils was developed.</p>		
	<p>Overall, this project was significantly impacted by the lateness of Consultant Reports. As a result, there was insufficient time for thorough feedback and corrections. These reports should be discussed with Councils and amended as required. There was a significant underspend with the project of approx. \$280k. This is mainly due to Consultant's fees not being as high as expected in the initial application.</p>		

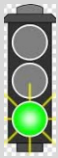

Project Details	
2	Forecast For Next Month
	This project is now completed as at 01/07/2024. Final financial acquittals due 07/07/24.
3	Key Milestones & Deliverables
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 x Workshops using Simtable technology</li> <li>• LGA Gap/Needs analysis reports completed</li> <li>• Regional Opportunities Report completed</li> <li>• DRR into IP&amp;R Framework developed and workshop delivered to Councils</li> <li>• Final Report submitted to DRRF</li> </ul>





Table B: Net Zero Project: Status Update

Project Details			
Contract Name:	NRJO Net Zero Project	Author:	Phil Ridler
Report Name:	Monthly update	Report No.:	12
Date Range:	1 April to 1 May, 2024	Reported:	27-5-2024

Item	Project update
1	<p><b>Monthly Progress</b></p> <p>The Northern Rivers Joint Organisation Electric Vehicle Day took place on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> April, at the Cavanbah Centre, Byron Bay.</p> <p>The Electric Vehicle Day was arranged to give staff from the NRJO Councils an introduction to the transition of Council vehicle fleets, from internal combustion vehicles to battery electric. 19 electric vehicles were available to test drive, which included passenger vehicles, vans, and a larger flatbed truck.</p> <p>A number of key speakers were invited to the event to present on the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need for Councils to transition to a low carbon fleet.</li> <li>• Key steps of transitioning fleets.</li> <li>• Infrastructure requirements for EV fleets.</li> <li>• Public and Council charging.</li> <li>• Financing and cost savings.</li> <li>• Grants, programs, and other forms of funding.</li> <li>• Demonstrations and opportunities to drive 19 different electric vehicles.</li> <li>• In addition, an exhibition of electric tools for Councils outdoor teams as well as an opportunity to test drive a selection of electric ride on mowers.</li> </ul> <p><b>Attendees</b></p> <p>A total of 60 attendees attended the presentations. It is estimated a further 20-30 people attended the exhibition and test drove cars that didn't attend the presentations.</p> <p>A separate report was produced for the EV day titled NRJO Report_EV Day 10-4-24.</p> <p>NORJO supported Lismore City Council on the 24<sup>th</sup> April at their Climate Conversation – Energy, Community engagement.</p> <p>Had various calls to each of the Council Sustainability teams on the topic of Sustainability and general mentorship.</p>

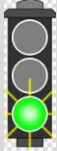
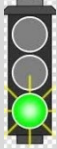


Item	Project update
	Continued the work on the Draft <i>Regional EV charge station opportunities report: Analysis and stakeholder engagement</i>
2	<a href="#">Forecast For Next Month</a>
	<p>Continuation of the draft of Regional EV charge station opportunities report: Analysis and stakeholder engagement and add to the fleet transition plans.</p> <p>The next NRJO Net Zero working group meeting will be arranged for May.</p> <p>Work will start on the cost saving analysis for Councils electricity bills, initially scoping the program with 1 Council and then rolling it out to the other Councils interested in the program.</p> <p>Application for the next set of JONZA 2 funding will need to be completed.</p> <p>Preparation for the end of term JONZA report will need to be started.</p>
3	<a href="#">Key Milestones &amp; Deliverables</a>
	<p>Draft Regional EV charge station opportunities report: Analysis and stakeholder engagement planned to be delivered by June 30.</p> <p>The JONZA 2 funding application will need to be completed by Mid-May and loaded onto the SmartyGrants website..</p>

Project Details			
Contract Name:	NRJO Net Zero Project	Author:	Phil Ridler
Report Name:	Monthly update	Report No.:	13
Date Range:	1 May to 1 June, 2024	Reported:	17-6-2024

Item	Project update
1	<p><b>Monthly Progress</b></p> <p>Started working with the Councils on energy efficiency and tariff reviews using software tools supplied by the NSW Sustainable Councils team. The tariff review project is looking at saving Councils money on their bills by analysing the small and large market bills and understanding if the appropriate distribution tariff has been applied to the metering point. Often this process isn't conducted by the electricity retailer and so savings can be achieved for the Councils. Should the tariffs need to be changed this saving will be on-going, this part of the bill is a component of the distribution charges from Essential Energy.</p> <p>The first analysis was conducted on Richmond Valley Council and potential savings in excess of \$25,000 have been highlighted. The next step will be to document the required tariff changes and approach the retailer to change the tariffs.</p> <p>This process will be rolled out to other Councils in the next couple of months and the savings will be documented.</p> <p>We have continued with the capacity building with the Council Sustainability teams and the general mentorship.</p> <p>The Net Zero working group met on the 15<sup>th</sup> May, this was made up of sustainability representatives from the 7 Councils in NRJO. As part of the meeting the NSW Electric Vehicle team gave a presentation on the latest fast charger EV planning.</p> <p>An application to the Sustainable Council team at the NSW DCCEEW was submitted for another year of the JONZA program.</p> <p>Continued the work on the Draft <i>Regional EV charge station opportunities report: Analysis and stakeholder engagement</i></p>
2	<p><b>Forecast For Next Month</b></p>





Item	Project update
	<p>A regular NRJO Net Zero working group meeting has been arranged and this will continue in June and on a monthly basis.</p> <p>Work will continue on the cost saving analysis for Councils electricity bills and the tariff review program.</p> <p>Work will also be started in looking at some Councils emissions boundaries, focusing on scopes 1 &amp; 2. Currently not all Councils are reporting on their emissions and the work will help the Councils gather the relevant information and work with selected reporting tools.</p> <p>Continuation of the draft of Regional EV charge station opportunities report: Analysis and stakeholder engagement and add to the fleet transition plans.</p>
3	Key Milestones & Deliverables
	<p>The results of the JONZA 2 funding application will be communicated in June.</p> <p>The end of term report to the Sustainable Councils team is required in the first week of June.</p>

Project Details			
Contract Name:	NRJO Net Zero Project	Author:	Phil Ridler
Report Name:	Monthly update	Report No.:	14
Date Range:	1 June to 1 July, 2024	Reported:	2-7-2024

Item	Project update
1	<p><b>Monthly Progress</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Phase 2 Funding Grant:</u></li> </ul> <p>It has been announced that the application to the Sustainable Council team at NSW DCCEE, for a second year of funding for a NRJO Net Zero Project Manager, was successful.</p> <p>The new funding is for 1 year and will start on July 1, 2024. As part of the award for the Joint Organisations Net Zero Acceleration program (JONZA 2), a second portion of funding was given as a variation. This funding is explained as “The funding under this Variation must be used to progress Electric Vehicle (EV) uptake and EV charging infrastructure”.</p> <p>The total contract, excluding GST, is for \$214,900. Deeds have been signed and initial milestones invoiced for the JONZA funding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>End of Term Report:</u></li> </ul> <p>The end of term report to the Sustainable Councils team was delivered in June, this outlined the NRJO Project Officer activity for the year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Emissions tracking:</u></li> </ul> <p>Work was undertaken with the sustainability contact at Clarence Valley Council on the new NSW Government emission tracking tool, called carbon Zero Accelerator (cZA). It is under trial, and Clarence Valley Council is one of the 5 Councils in NSW working with the State team on the pilot. It is understood that this tool will be used by Councils for emission reporting in the future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Tariff reviews:</u></li> </ul> <p>Continuation on working with the Councils on tariff reviews using software tools supplied by the NSW Sustainable Councils team. The tariff review project is looking at saving Councils money on their bills by analysing the small and large market bills and understanding if the appropriate distribution tariff has been applied to the metering point. Data is being prepared for Rous County Council and Lismore City Council, with other NRJO Councils undertaking reviews soon.</p>



Project Details	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Net Zero working group:</u></li> </ul> <p>The Net Zero working group met on Wednesday 16 May, this was made up of sustainability representatives from the 7 Councils in NRJO. As part of the meeting, members of the EV solutions team at Addelec, an electrical solutions team, gave a presentation on EV charger installation, maintenance and monitoring to reduce the down time of Council chargers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Other:</u></li> </ul> <p>Continued the work on the Draft <i>Regional EV charge station opportunities report: Analysis and stakeholder engagement</i></p>
2	Forecast For Next Month
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A Project Management Plan (PMP) will be developed in July to satisfy the new funding for JONZA 2.</li> <li>A plan needs to be developed to allocate funding from the EV variation from DCCEEW, this cannot be used for physical charging infrastructure and most likely used for Council fleet electric transition plans and other associated activities. The Councils will be consulted on the activities that the funding will cover.</li> <li>A regular NRJO Net Zero working group meeting has been arranged and this will continue in July and on a monthly basis.</li> <li>Work will continue on the cost saving analysis for Councils electricity bills and the tariff review program.</li> <li>Continued work with Councils emissions boundaries, focusing on scopes 1 &amp; 2. The cZA tool pilot will continue and another emissions tool developed by 100% Renewables will be presented to the Councils to start to help Councils report their Scope 1 &amp; 2 emissions.</li> </ul>
3	Key Milestones & Deliverables
	<p>PMP Plan will be delivered at the end of July / beginning of August.</p>



23 April 2024

Department of Climate Change,  
Energy, the Environment and Water,

Dear Sir/Madam

**Re: Support for the Byron Shire Council application for Community Energy Upgrades Fund Program**

Northern Rivers Joint Organisation of Councils (NRJO) is pleased to support the application made by Byron Shire Council for a grant under the Community Energy Upgrades Fund to enable the delivery of their Community Energy Flexibility and Resilience Project.

The *Northern Rivers Joint Organisation* (NRJO) represents the Ballina, Byron, Clarence Valley, 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.

NRJO has a long and strong working relationship with Byron Shire Council demonstrated by recent successful collaboration on the delivery of a highly successful NRJO Electric Vehicle Event hosted within the Byron Shire.

NRJO believes the Byron Community Energy Flexibility and Resilience Project will be well aligned with the objectives of the funding program and will deliver significant value to the Byron community in terms of reducing energy costs, building energy resilience and accelerating the uptake of electric vehicles. It will also demonstrate innovative solutions that can be replicated throughout the Northern Rivers region which is aligned with our active efforts in driving Net Zero actions across the region.

NRJO also confirms that it will work collaboratively with Byron Shire Council to maximise the knowledge sharing benefits project during the installation and operation of the project by sharing their knowledge sharing documents throughout our extensive network and promoting their knowledge proposed sharing and capacity building activities.

Should you require any further information in relation to this matter, please contact Phil Ridler on 02 6623 3872 or via email: [phil.ridler@northernriversjo.nsw.gov.au](mailto:phil.ridler@northernriversjo.nsw.gov.au)

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phillip Rudd".

**Phillip Rudd**  
Executive Officer  
Northern Rivers Joint Organisation

# NRJO - Activity Tracker

As at 30 June 2024



Regionally Significant Activity/Issue	Description	Status Update
<b>Compliance Levy and Funding Review</b>	The NRJO continues to work closely with the NRJO Planners Group and actively advocate for its local councils on this matter.	<p><b>ON HOLD</b> – Central Joint Organisation was acting as lead on this issue; however, advocacy/progress appears to have stalled.</p> <p><b>UPDATE [150724] – The General Managers Advisory Committee (GMAC) at its meeting on 15 July 2024 noted:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the General Manager of Tweed Shire Council spoke to this matter at the sustainability inquiry held in Lismore, and</li> <li>2. its preference to wait for the outcome of the above inquiry before actively pursuing advocacy on this matter further.</li> </ol>
<b>Proposed MoU with the Council of Mayors Southeast Queensland (CoMSEQ)</b>	Correspondence with CoMSEQ commenced in June 2022 regarding the NRJO's possible involvement with the 2032 Regional Working Group for the Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games. In December 2022 the Executive Officer met with CoMSEQ's Chief Executive Officer, where potential options for the two organisations to partner and work together beyond just the 2032 Regional Working Group were canvassed.	<b>OPEN</b> - No further updates since following up in November 2023 and February 2024.

	<p>As a result, development of a potential Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was proposed to provide a framework for ongoing collaboration and cooperation that recognises the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• similar functions of the NRJO and CoMSEQ as the peak local government advocacy organisations for their member councils</li> <li>• close proximity of the Southeast Queensland and Northern Rivers regions as well as their interconnectedness and common interests despite the NSW-QLD border</li> <li>• mutual benefits and other opportunities available to both organisations – along with their regions and communities – from a partnership model that fosters sharing of information, resources, services, experience, and expertise.</li> </ul> <p>At this stage, it is anticipated a draft MoU will be developed through the General Managers' Advisory Committee for the Board to consider at its next ordinary meeting. Draft MOU is due to go to the CoMSEQ Board for consideration in June.</p>	
<b>Policies – Public Interest Disclosures and Data Breach</b>	<p>The <i>Public Interest Disclosures Act 2022</i> (PID Act) and the Mandatory Notification of Data Breach (MNDB) Scheme of the <i>Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998</i> (PPIP Act) require an agency to develop and adopt a policy outlining the approach to be taken to the handling of a Public Interest Disclosure (PID) and an eligible data breach, respectively.</p>	<p><b>OPEN</b> – The NSW Ombudsman and IPC have been contacted for guidance via email.</p> <p>The NSW Ombudsman has been in telephone contact to confirm the nature/purpose of a Joint Organisation and will send through further guidance shortly.</p> <p><b>UPDATE [060824] – Notification of the outsourced arrangement has been made to the NSW</b></p>

	<p>The NRJO resolved to outsource its above functions under the above PID Act and MNDB Scheme to Rous County Council (Rous) at its 17 May 2024 meeting.</p> <p>Rous has policies in place and published on its website that meet these policy requirements as they apply to the exercise of its own functions.</p> <p>Confirmation will be sought from the NSW Ombudsman and NSW Information and Privacy Commission (IPC) as to whether, under an outsourced arrangement such as this, these documents will also be taken as satisfying these requirements on behalf of the NRJO.</p> <p>Should the advice received above indicate the NRJO must develop and implement its own policies (rather than relying on the application of the Rous policies), these will be developed by Rous as part of the fee-for-service arrangement currently in place and submitted to the NRJO Board for approval in due course.</p>	<p><b>Ombudsman in its preferred format. Advice in relation to the PID policy has been referred to another internal work group within the NSW Ombudsman's office and is still outstanding (as is the advice from the IPC) as at the date of preparing this report.</b></p>
--	--	--



# NSW Fire Ant Program

Emergency Response



## NSW Fire Ant Update – Northern Rivers Joint Organisation

12 June 2024

### The fire ant response in NSW

On 24 November 2023, fire ants (*Solenopsis invicta*), a prohibited matter under the NSW *Biosecurity Act 2015*, was first detected in Murwillumbah. A second detection was confirmed on 19 January 2024 in Wardell.

Swift response measures have contained the detected fire ant populations in NSW, with no new infested sites identified.

At Murwillumbah, the National Fire Ant Eradication Program (NFAEP) team, in collaboration with NSW DPI, completed initial stages of treatment within the within 5km fire ant movement control area.

On 9 May 2024 a new, immature fire ant nest was located at the original Murwillumbah infested premises. The nest was assessed as low-risk, and swiftly destroyed by the NFAEP. No new infested premises have been identified following extensive surveillance.

It is important to note that treatment of an infested area is a multi-stage process. Further detections surrounding infested sites are to be expected, highlighting the importance of multiple stages of treatment and surveillance over several years.

At Wardell, the NFAEP is currently completing the first round of broadcast treatment to 5km. No further nests or infested premises have been found.

Genetic analysis has confirmed that both NSW infestations are linked to Southeast Queensland. Work is being undertaken by the NSW DPI Compliance team to determine if the movement of suspect materials to both sites was compliant with interstate requirements. The result of this investigation remains confidential and may result in prosecution if movement conditions have been breached.

The Northern Rivers community has shown overwhelming support, with engaged residents and landholders providing valuable assistance. Vigilance among the NSW community, particularly in the north, is now crucial as human activity remains the primary driver of fire ant spread.

**Seen fire ants? Call 1800 680 244**

Protect our lifestyle, environment and industries  
[www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fire-ants](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fire-ants)





A new [Biosecurity \(fire ants\) Emergency Order \(No. 7\) 2024](#) was published on 31 May 2024, incorporating the new detection at Nirimba, Queensland.

The Biosecurity Emergency Order is in place to restrict movement of high-risk fire ant carrier material (including soil, turf, hay, mulch, pot plants, machinery) out of the 5km *fire ant movement control area* around each site in NSW. There are also restrictions on the movement of fire ant carrier materials from the *QLD* and *NSW fire ant infested areas* into NSW.

Materials have different requirements. If moving materials, you may need to complete a [Record of Movement Declaration](#), obtain a [Biosecurity Certificate](#), or treat materials. There are strengthened treatment requirements for particularly high-risk materials such as turf.

Since 1 December 2023: more than 4800 Record of Movement declarations have been received for materials, including approximately 350,000m<sup>2</sup> of turf and 500,000 tonnes of soil, sand and gravel.

Residents are reminded to report potential sightings promptly to the NSW Biosecurity Hotline 1800 680 244 or on the website [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fire-ants](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fire-ants). Avoid disturbing or attempting to treat nests themselves to prevent injury and further spread.

## Current challenges - Recent fire ant detections in QLD

NSW DPI has been notified by the National Fire Ant Eradication Program (NFAEP) of outlying fire ant nests at:

- Meringandan West, QLD (Toowoomba region) on 17 May 2024
- Currumbin Waters, QLD (approx. 500m from the NSW border) on 22 May 2024
- Nirimba, QLD (Sunshine Coast) on 29 May 2024

All the above detections extend the QLD fire ant infested area. Due to its proximity to the border, the Currumbin Waters nest affects areas of NSW within 5km of the nest site. For more information check the current Order.

## How can councils stay updated?

We send regular email updates to our mailing list, including Northern Rivers Councils. If Councils would like to add more contacts to the list, please enter details [here](#).

**Seen fire ants? Call 1800 680 244**

Protect our lifestyle, environment and industries  
[www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fire-ants](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fire-ants)





## Current arrangements and partnerships with councils

NSW DPI and the NFAEP are working closely with the affected Councils, Tweed Valley Council and Ballina Shire Council. Please contact our Communications and Engagement Officer, Tommy Wainwright on 0484 575 604 or email [tommy.wainwright@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:tommy.wainwright@dpi.nsw.gov.au) to discuss how we can help keep you better informed or customise materials for your location or individual needs.

## How can Councils assist?

It is critical that we remain vigilant for fire ants, especially in the north of the state. Councils not only play a significant role in spreading awareness through front line staff, but also lead the way when purchasing and moving carrier materials.

Our door is open for if you would like to discuss individual needs further. Please contact our Communications and Engagement Officer, Tommy Wainwright on 0484 575 604 or email [tommy.wainwright@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:tommy.wainwright@dpi.nsw.gov.au). We are only too happy to provide resources, customise printed materials and presentations, or answer any questions you may have.

## The key messages are:

Red Imported Fire Ants are one of the world's worst invasive species. Up to 97% of Australia is suitable for fire ants and large-scale infestation could cost \$1.65b per year, more than feral cats, wild dogs, foxes, camels, rabbits and cane toads combined.

If you suspect fire ants:

- **LEAVE IT:** Do not destroy or treat the nest. Fire ants are prohibited matter in NSW. Avoid disturbing or attempting to treat nests themselves to prevent injury and further spread.
- **SNAP IT:** Safely take a clear photo or video for identification.
- **CALL IT:** Call us on 1800 680 244, submit an online form. Residents and staff are reminded to report potential sightings promptly to the **NSW Biosecurity Hotline 1800 680 244** or on the website [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fire-ants](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fire-ants).

**Fire ants are not marching; they are being carried.** The spread of fire ants is driven primarily by human activity, predominantly the movement of materials used for landscaping, building, and agriculture, such as soil, turf, mulch, hay, potted plants, growing media and machinery.

Seen fire ants? Call **1800 680 244**

Protect our lifestyle, environment and industries  
[www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fire-ants](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fire-ants)





Stay up to date with the latest [Biosecurity \(fire ant\) Emergency Order](#) and be aware of your obligations when moving fire ant carrier materials from *fire ant infested areas* in southeast Queensland and northern NSW, and the *fire ant movement control areas* at South Murwillumbah and Wardell.

Let's keep working together to keep this pest out of NSW. For more information visit: [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fire-ants](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fire-ants) or call 1800 680 244.

**Resources:** [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rifa-resources](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/rifa-resources)

**Seen fire ants? Call 1800 680 244**

Protect our lifestyle, environment and industries  
[www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fire-ants](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fire-ants)



## 2024 Local Government NSW Annual Conference motion

### RECOMMENDATION:

That the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation Board approve one of the below options for pursuing its resolution to submit a motion to the 2024 LGNSW Annual Conference in relation to funding arrangements for urban drainage systems post 2022 floods and the effectiveness of the Stormwater Management Service Charge:

- (a) The Board nominate and support a Member Council to submit the motion contained in this report to the 2024 LGNSW Annual Conference on behalf of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation (NRJO); or
- (b) The NRJO apply for Associate Membership of LGNSW and submit the motion contained in this report to the 2025 LGNSW Annual Conference, or
- (c) The Board revokes item (2) of resolution 8.1 made at its ordinary meeting on 17 May 2024.

### Background

Local Government NSW ('LGNSW') accepts motions each year from Member Organisations (NSW local councils) and Associate Members (NSW county councils and joint organisations) to be considered at its annual conference.

Where motions are endorsed, they become resolutions and amend the LGNSW Policy Platform. The LGNSW Policy Platform is the document on which the organisation lobbies the NSW State Government for changes to legislation and policy as it impacts the local government sector in NSW.

The recommendation to make the below proposed motion was made by the Board at its meeting on 17 May 2024:

#### 8 NOTICE OF MOTION

##### 8.1 Funding of urban drainage

**RESOLVED** (Cadwallader/Krieg) That the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation Board advocate on behalf of its Member Councils for Commonwealth and State Government funding for the rebuilding of urban drainage assets and for an increase to the stormwater management service charge by:

1. Writing to the relevant State and Commonwealth Government Ministers, and
2. Preparing a submission for the 2024 LGNSW Annual Conference.

Upon making enquiries with LGNSW, it became apparent that the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation (NRJO) is not a member of LGNSW, although Associate Membership is available should it choose to apply and is unable to submit a motion in its own capacity to the 2024 Annual Conference.

The options available to the Board to pursue the submission of the below motion to LGNSW are, therefore, to:



- (a) Nominate and support a Member Council to submit the proposed motion to the 2024 Annual Conference on behalf of the NRJO, or
- (b) Apply for Associate Membership of LGNSW for the NRJO and submit the proposed motion to the 2025 Annual Conference in its own capacity.

### **Proposed Motion**

That Local Government NSW lobby the NSW Government to secure additional Government funding for the reinstatement of urban drainage systems across the Northern Rivers impacted by the 2022 catastrophic flood events and to seek a review of the effectiveness of the Stormwater Management Service Charge as a mechanism for funding stormwater management systems.

### **Rationale for proposed motion**

The rationale for the proposed motion is contained in the letter sent to the NSW Premier and other relevant State and Federal Government Ministers dated 18 June 2024 provided at [Attachment 1](#).

No response has been received to this correspondence as at the date of preparing this report.

### **Finance**

The cost of LGNSW Associate Membership for a joint organisation for 2024/25 would be \$4,310 plus GST.

### **Conclusion**

Should the Board endorse the proposed motion outlined above and wish to proceed with its submission to LGNSW, it will need to determine whether this is to occur by applying for Associate Membership of LGNSW and submitting the proposed motion itself in 2025 or by securing the support of a Member Council to submit it in 2024 on behalf of the NRJO.

Should the Board determine not to pursue the proposed LGNSW Annual Conference motion, it is recommended the relevant component of the 17 May 2024 Board resolution be revoked for completeness.

### **Attachment:**

1. Letter to State and Federal Ministers dated 18 June 2024 – Funding of urban drainage systems



PO Box 239, Lismore, NSW 2480  
T: (02) 6623 3800  
E: [admin@northernriversjo.nsw.gov.au](mailto:admin@northernriversjo.nsw.gov.au)  
[www.northernriversjo.nsw.gov.au](http://www.northernriversjo.nsw.gov.au)  
ABN: 68 587 813 167

Our Ref: D24/10961

18 June 2024

The Hon. Chris Minns, MP  
Premier of NSW  
Parliament House  
6 Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

**BY EMAIL:**

[kogarah@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:kogarah@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

The Hon. Kristy McBain, MP  
Minister for Regional Development, Local  
Government and Territories  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

**BY EMAIL:**

[Minister.Mcbain@MO.regional.gov.au](mailto:Minister.Mcbain@MO.regional.gov.au)

The Hon. Ron Hoenig MP  
Minister for Local Government  
Parliament House  
6 Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

**BY EMAIL:**

[office@hoenig.minister.nsw.gov.au](mailto:office@hoenig.minister.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Premier and Ministers,

## **2022 FLOOD RECOVERY – FUNDING OF URBAN DRAINAGE SYSTEMS**

I write to you on behalf of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation (NRJO) to highlight continuing recovery challenges, and barriers within the existing legislative regime, in relation to the capacity of councils to reinstate and fund urban drainage systems following the catastrophic flood events of February/March 2022 across the Northern Rivers.

Additional funding is sought from the Federal and NSW State Governments to assist councils within the Northern Rivers reinstate urban drainage systems to pre-flood conditions.

Review of the effectiveness of the existing legislative regime for the funding of urban drainage systems introduced in 2005<sup>1</sup> is also sought from the NSW State Government noting the Stormwater Management Service Charge has not been indexed in this time to keep pace with changing economic conditions.

In 2022, an independent review of agricultural drainage across the Northern Rivers was commissioned by the NSW Department of Regional New South Wales following the 2022 flood events: [Northern Rivers agricultural drainage report \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au/northern-rivers-agricultural-drainage-report) (the 'Culleton Report').

In response to the eleven (11) findings and recommendations made in the Culleton Report, \$5 million was secured for the Northern Rivers Drainage reset program delivered through the NSW Reconstruction Authority.

---

<sup>1</sup> Under the *Local Government Amendment (Stormwater) Act 2005*.

The condition and function of urban drainage assets and systems across the Northern Rivers following the 2022 flood events were excluded from the scope of the Culleton Report and reset program funding. However, they were similarly placed under significant duress during these flood events and played a significant role in the patterns of flooding and flood damage experienced across urban areas within the Northern Rivers.

The findings and recommendations, in relation to the degraded condition, complexity of the regulatory framework, capacity of rate payers to financially contribute, and the need for significantly increased funding from the NSW Government of drainage assets and systems, made in the Culleton Report are equally applicable to the urban context:

*“It is not a lack of understanding of what constitutes best practice that is impacting the management of agricultural drainage across the Northern Rivers – it is a lack of resources and the complex and costly regulatory arrangement that are limiting, and in some cases precluding, the application of best practice”*

(Culleton Report, Finding No. 10)

Under the legislative and regulatory stormwater management framework in NSW, councils are permitted to raise revenue via a Stormwater Management Service Charge levied against private property and capped at \$25 (per residential lot or per 350m<sup>2</sup> floorspace of commercial/business lots) to fund works outlined in the council's Stormwater Management Plan; any additional funds must be provided by the council.

This \$25 charge has not been indexed since it was introduced almost 20 years ago.

With construction costs exponentially increasing and the associated workforce challenges experienced over recent years, it is a challenge for councils across the Northern Rivers to adequately fund and deliver against planned works programs for urban drainage systems, let alone the unplanned, restoration works required post 2022 flood events.

The maximum leviable Stormwater Management Service Charge is no longer sufficient to meet the current day costs of managing urban drainage systems. Councils are increasingly in need of greater flexibility in determining, in consultation with its community, a maximum Stormwater Management Service Charge that is appropriate and reflective of the geographical, environmental, social, and economic profile of its Local Government Area.

For these reasons, the NRJO is seeking additional Government funding as part of the 2022 flood recovery in the short-term, and a review of the effectiveness of the overarching legislative framework for stormwater management in NSW in the long-term.

Yours faithfully,



Councillor Michael Lyon  
**Chairperson – Northern Rivers Joint Organisation**



## Financial Report

### RECOMMENDATION

That the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation receive and note the financial report ending 31 July 2024 as presented.

### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide financial results for the year to date (July 2024) for the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation.

### Background

A full copy of the Profit and Loss and Balance Sheet as of July 2024 is included below.

The key items in these financial papers to note are:

- 1) An operating surplus of \$69 has been recorded for the period of July.
- 2) Expenses include general operating expenses.
- 3) A grants summary has been included with the financial papers at [Attachment 1](#).
- 4) Grants:
  - a. A new grant 'Net Zero 2.0' was awarded in June 2024.
  - b. Disaster Risk Reduction Fund (DRRF) unspent grant funds of \$155,810 are being returned in August 2024.
- 5) A summary of the NRJO's equity position, which takes into consideration unspent grant expenditure and grant income not yet received, is provided below. Excluding current grants NRJO's total operating surplus is currently \$905K

Total Equity @ 31.07.2024	\$ 1,206,129.67
Less Grant Expenditure (unspent)	\$ 370,710
Plus Grant Income to be received	\$ 70,192
Total equity (less grant commitments)	<u>\$ 905,612</u>
<b>Grant Expenditure (unspent)</b>	
Rail Trail	-
Disaster Risk Reduction Fund (DRRF)	155,810
Net Zero	-
Net Zero 2.0	214,900
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 370,710</b>
<b>Grant Income (to be received)</b>	
Rail Trail	-
Net Zero	13,772
Disaster Risk Reduction Fund (DRRF)	-
Net Zero 2.0	56,420
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 70,192</b>

## **Audit Office NSW Annual Audit 2024**

The finance team have prepared the financial statements and accompanying accounting notes for the 2024 end of financial year audit. A full set of financial statements will be presented for endorsement in October 2024.

This year's audit of the NRJO Financial Statements has been booked to be conducted from 19<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> August. Thomas Noble & Russell ('TNR') will be conducting the Audit Engagement on behalf of the NSWAO.

NRJO has been recently notified that for the 2025FY the annual audit will be conducted by the NSW Audit Office directly.

## **Attachments**

1. Profit & Loss for Financial report
2. Balance Sheet for Financial report
3. Grants Register

**Northern Rivers Joint Organisation**  
**Profit and Loss Statement**  
**as at 31 July 2024**

ACTUAL FY 2023/24 \$		BUDGET FY 2024/25 \$	ACTUAL YTD 2024/25 \$	VARIANCE \$	VARIANCE (F/U)	COMMENT
<b>Operating Revenue</b>						
266,627	Membership Fees	273,100	0	(273,100)	U	Membership Fees to be invoiced in August 2024
27,917	Interest	25,000	1,805	(23,195)	U	Year to date position, pro-rated tracking (-\$278)
<b>Grants</b>						
(101,396)	Northern NSW Flood Events	0	0	0	F	Aquittal completed Feb 2024
96,223	Dept. of Regional NSW (Rail Trial)	0	0	0	F	Aquittal completed June 2024
118,510	Dept. of Communities and Justice (Disaster Risk Reduction)	0	0	0	F	Aquittal completed July 2024
84,679	Office of Energy & Climate Change (Net Zero)	0	0	0	F	Aquittal completed June 2024
158,480	Office of Energy & Climate Change (Net Zero 2.0)	0	0	0	F	New grant 2024FY
<b>NRJO Projects/Licences</b>						
67,874	LG Procurement Rebate	45,000	0	(45,000)	U	Rebate received in October 2023
(1,908)	Funding Contributions	0	0	0	F	RDA Northern NSW (2022FY)
<b>717,006</b>	<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>343,100</b>	<b>1,805</b>	<b>(341,295)</b>		
<b>Operating Expenses</b>						
5,699	Conferences, Events, Travel	12,900	0	12,900	F	Year to date position, pro-rated tracking (+\$1,075)
182	Prof Dev - Member Council Training	14,600	0	14,600	F	Year to date position, pro-rated tracking (+1,217)
8,865	Exec Officer - Support (RDA)	0	0	0	F	Year to date position, pro-rated tracking (+\$0)
499	Exec Officer - Financial Management (Rous)	0	0	0	F	Finance Mgt, changed to service agreement 1.1.2023
135,000	Service Fees - Rous County Council	138,400	0	138,400	F	As per Service Agreement \$135K per annum (1.1.2023)
10,000	Chair Stipend	10,000	0	10,000	F	Year to date position - paid monthly in arrears
418	Committee Support	5,535	0	5,535	F	Year to date position, pro rated tracking (+\$461)
0	Professional Fees – Audit	20,500	0	20,500	F	Audit Services - fees (reversal of accrual)
3,890	Professional Fees – ARIC	10,000	1,494	8,507	F	ARIC fees and super paid Qtrly
0	Media and Communications	5,400	0	5,400	F	Year to date position, pro-rated tracking (+\$450)
3,940	Sundry Expenses	5,400	243	5,157	F	Mobile phone and MYOB monthly charges
<b>168,498</b>	<b>Sub-Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>224,035</b>	<b>1,737</b>	<b>222,199</b>		
<b>NRJO Strategic Projects/Licences</b>						
0	Strategic Projects	110,000	0	110,000	F	
<b>0</b>	<b>Sub-Total NRJO Project/Licenes expenses</b>	<b>110,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>110,000</b>		
<b>Regional Projects - Capacity Building II (OLG)</b>						
20,683	Audit of Available Industrial and Empl Land	0	0			* Grant Completed Oct 2023
1,150	Regional Priorities	0	0			* Grant Completed Oct 2023
		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>			
<b>Regional Projects - Other</b>						
206,174	Disaster Risk Reduction Fund	0	0			* 2023-24 Spent grant funding to date
399,577	Northern Rivers Rail Trail	0	0			* 2023-24 Spent grant funding to date
140,881	Net Zero Acceleration	0	0			* 2023-24 Spent grant funding to date
0	NRCC (Welding Training )	0	0			* Welding Training paid for on behalf of DET
(31,567)	Northern NSW Flood Commemorative Events	0	0			* 2023-24 Part return of unspent funding, spending in 23FY
		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>			
<b>905,396</b>	<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>334,035</b>	<b>1,737</b>	<b>332,199</b>		
<b>(188,389)</b>	<b>TOTAL OPERATING RESULT (SURPLUS/(DEFICIT))</b>	<b>9,065</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>(8,996)</b>		

**Northern Rivers Joint Organisation**  
**Balance Sheet**  
**as at 31 July 2024**

	31 July 2024 TOTAL \$	30 June 2024 TOTAL \$
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Cash	1,177,271	970,675
Trade Debtors	59,658	275,983
Contract Assets	0	0
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>1,236,929</b>	<b>1,246,658</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Trade Creditors	2,232	932
Sundry Creditors	0	0
Contract Liabilities	15,551	15,551
GST Liability	(425)	7,859
Payroll Liabilities	0	0
Total Current Liabilities	17,359	24,343
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>17,359</b>	<b>24,343</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>1,219,570</b>	<b>1,222,315</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>		
Retained Earnings	1,206,061	1,410,703
Current Year Earnings	69	(188,389)
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>1,206,130</b>	<b>1,222,314</b>

2025FY NORTHERN RIVERS JOIN ORGANISATION GRANT SUMMARY

31/07/2024										Balance Transferred / Returned
Grant Name	Synopsis	Funding Body	Program	Project Length	Grant Funding (excl GST)	NRJO Funding	Total Income to Date (excl GST)	Total Expenditure to Date (excl GST)	Balance of Approved Funds to Spend	
DRRF - Learning Sharing Embedding (LSE): Building Knowledge and Improving practice in a disaster risk reduction in Northern Rivers - a systemic approach (Project ID: PJ-0000961)	Delivery of direct risk reduction and risk mitigation solutions, build capabilities in disaster risk reduction, and promote collaboration between local communities, councils and other stakeholders	Dept. Communities & Justice, Resilience NSW	Local & Regional Risk Reduction Stream of the Disaster Risk Reduction Fund (DRRF)	20/11/2022 to 30/06/2024	414,785.00	-	414,785.00	258,975.26	155,809.74	Returned unspent \$155,809.74 in August
NRRC (Welding Training)	As previously discussed, the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation (NRRC) has agreed to contribute funding in the amount of \$69,311 (inclusive of GST) for Partee to deliver Plastic Pipeline Welding training as per their proposal dated 22 March 2023.	Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation	Polyethylene Plastic pipeline welding training'	01/03/2023 to 30/09/2023	63,010.00	-	26,664.00	47,459.00	15,551.00	New deed to be drawn up and RRC to provide
Joint Organisation Net Zero Acceleration Grant 2.0 2024-2025	To progress Electric Vehicle (EV) uptake and EV charging infrastructure.	The Office of Energy and Climate Change (OECC)	Sustainable Councils Program	1/07/2024 to 30/07/2025	214,900.00	-	158,480.00	-	214,900.00	New Grant



## Appointment of Alternative Voting Representatives

### RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board approve the method for the appointment of alternative voting representatives by Member Councils outlined in this report.

### Background

The *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021*<sup>1</sup> ('LG Regulation') and the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation Charter<sup>2</sup> (the 'Charter') permit Member Councils to appoint an alternative voting representative to the Board of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation (NRJO) to act in place of the primary voting representative when they are not available.

The LG Regulation provides that the term of appointment of the alternate voting representative is 2 years unless another term is specified by the Member Council. The Charter provides that the Member Council must notify the NRJO of the name and position of its alternative voting representative.

### Method of appointing an alternative voting representative

The LG Regulation and the Charter are silent on the method by which an alternative voting representative may be appointed by a Member Council, however it can be inferred it is not the intention of these instruments to leave this to the discretion of staff or the primary voting representative on an ad hoc basis.

To maintain transparency, good governance and administrative efficiency it is recommended Member Council be advised that the method for appointing an alternative voting representative to the NRJO Board should occur by resolution of the Member Council's governing body including confirmation of the term of appointment.

To align with the provisions of the *Local Government Act 1993* relating to the term of office of a mayor and/or deputy mayor, it is recommended that Member Councils be invited to determine a term of appointment of either two (2) or four (4) years for their alternative voting representative.

### Finance

Voting representatives of the NRJO, excluding the Chairperson, are not paid a stipend or sitting fee and this will similarly apply to their alternative voting representative.

The annual stipend of \$10,000 will continue to be paid monthly to the primary voting representative of the Member Council occupying the position of the Chairperson and will not be apportioned, or an additional payment made, to the alternative voting representative of that Member Council if required to act.

### Governance

A Member Council's alternative voting representative has all the same functions as its primary voting representative while acting in their place on the NRJO.<sup>3</sup> However, the alternative voting representative will not assume the duties of Chairperson of the NRJO should the incumbent primary voting representative be unavailable. In these circumstances, the primary voting representative elected as the Deputy Chairperson of the NRJO will fulfill the duties of the Chairperson.

<sup>1</sup> [Section 397F](#) *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021* (NSW)

<sup>2</sup> Clause 4.3 of the [Northern Rivers Joint Organisation Charter](#) dated 2 December 2023.

<sup>3</sup> [Section 397F\(4\)](#) *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021* (NSW)

## **Conclusion**

Should the Board support the approach to the appointment of alternative voting representatives to the NRJO by Member Councils outlined above, these details will be communicated to staff at the respective Member Councils prior to the Local Government elections in September 2024 and captured in the next revision of the NRJO Charter.

## Information Report – cover sheet

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation receive and note the following information reports :-

1. Renewable Energy Projects
2. Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee - update
3. Associate member – Office of Local Government – verbal and attached
4. Associate member – Regional Development Australia – verbal introduction
5. Associate member – Destination North Coast
6. Associate member – Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
7. Associate member – Scenic Rim Regional Council
8. Correspondence – Incoming and Outgoing

## Renewable Energy Projects

### RECOMMENDATION

That the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation Board receive and note the information contained in this report.

### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to keep the Board informed of the resources being applied and activities being undertaken in relation to regional renewable energy opportunities in addition to those already planned and/or underway.

### Background

Tweed Shire Council (Tweed) received a Notice of Motion from Councillor Cherry seeking an options report on facilitating a Community Energy Network within the Tweed Local Government Area (LGA) – see Attachment 1.

The below alternate recommendation was proposed by Tweed staff having formed the view that there may be benefits in evaluating renewable energy opportunities, such as a Virtual Power Plant, on a regional scale by the NRJO:

Officers therefore suggest an alternate recommendation:

**That Council, through the General Manager, requests the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation to consider expanding on the work completed in the *Renewable Energy Blueprint for the Northern Rivers (January 2022)* to investigate what role local government can play to make renewable energy more accessible and affordable in the Northern Rivers including investigations into community energy partnerships and virtual power plants.**

A copy of the [Renewable Energy Blueprint for the Northern Rivers](#) ('NR Blueprint') can be accessed via the NRJO website:

<https://www.northernriversjo.nsw.gov.au/priorities-and-projects/sustainable>

The General Managers Advisory Committee (GMAC) had an appetite to pursue the Tweed recommendation and subsequently endorsed the below at its 15 July 2024 meeting:

- (a) An external consultant be engaged by the NRJO to undertake a review and scoping exercise in relation to the role Local Government can play in renewable energy projects, and
- (b) Allocation of a budget of \$27,000 (inclusive of a contingency amount) to facilitate this body of work.

## Review of the Local Government can play in renewable energy projects

An external consultant will be engaged to prepare a plan, or scope, for undertaking this body of work. Internal capacity over the next twelve (12) months is limited due to, among others, being committed to the delivery of planned activities under the State Government funded Net Zero program.

The scope of work for reviewing the role of Local Government in regional renewable energy opportunities, such as energy partnerships (incl. virtual power plants ranging from simple neighbourhood batteries to full powerplants utilising generation, storage and monitoring technology), is expected to include (but is not limited to):

- A summary of the solutions available in relation to community batteries / Virtual Power Plants (VPP) / microgrids and the barriers to these projects.
- Overview of case studies and resources.
- Gauging industry conditions and funding models/opportunities available.
- Engagement with Member Council to ascertain expectations and views on roles and responsibilities in this area.
- Development of actionable recommendations and next steps for NRJO and its Member Councils to consider which will best enable projects in the Northern Rivers to get off the ground.

## Strategic Priorities

This body of work connects to Goal 3 – Innovative, sustainable energy, water and waste management – within the NRJO [2022- 24 Strategic Regional Priorities](#) and its associated strategic actions extracted below:

GOALS	STRATEGIC ACTIONS
8. To strengthen our region's emerging position as a NSW leader in renewable energy generation, storage and use, in accordance with widespread community support for reduced emissions and action on climate change.	8.1 Champion and promote the increased use of renewable energy for residential, public and commercial purposes.
	8.2 Advocate for changes to energy generation, purchasing, pricing and retailing regulations with a focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased use of renewable energy</li> <li>• Reduced energy costs</li> <li>• Reliable supply.</li> </ul>
	8.3 Pursue opportunities to implement the strategies identified in the Northern NSW Renewable Energy Blueprint for Local Governments (DPIE – 2019) to increase the availability of renewable energy in the region.
	8.4 Review energy use and provision and opportunities for member councils to collaborate.

### **Finance**

The funds required to facilitate this activity will be sourced from 2024/25 Strategic Projects budget allocation of \$110,000.

### **Conclusion**

The above information is provided to the Board for information. Provided the Board has no significant concerns, the body of work outlined above will be commenced and relevant staff of Member Councils will be notified.

### **Attachments:**

1. Tweed Shire Council Notice of Motion – Councillor Cherry – Renewable Energy Projects

**TITLE: NoM - Cr Cherry - Renewable Energy Projects Proposal**

**Submitted By:** Councillor Chris Cherry

---

**LINKAGE TO INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING FRAMEWORK:****Protecting – We want a healthy natural environment**

**Work together to reduce our impact on the natural environment and adapt to climate change for a sustainable future**

1.2.1 Environmental Sustainability – To support Council, businesses and the community to reduce environmental impacts and respond to climate change in an economically and socially responsible way.

**ROLE:**

**LEADER** - Council grows strong, transparent and visionary leadership promoting unity to make our Tweed community even better tomorrow than it is today.

---

**COUNCILLOR BACKGROUND NOTES:****Recommended Priority:**

Nil.

**Description of Project:**

Tweed Shire has recently become the largest uptaker of solar power in the NSW North Coast. 53% of homes in the Tweed have solar arrays installed as compared to a national average of 35%. This indicates our community's willingness to reduce both electricity costs and the carbon emissions associated with fossil fuel energy production. Our community is looking for ways to integrate the use of solar power at all times of day but many have not got the resources to buy a battery at this point. Currently most people have a peak in energy usage in the morning and evening periods when solar power is not available, it is these peaks that can be managed by battery usage.

In Mitchum City in South Australia, the Council has facilitated a residential bulk buy program for solar power that facilitates a Community Energy Plan that allows independent houses to power each other. They have 3 large community batteries installed and the residents, businesses and council feed their excess solar power into it and use it from the battery when the sun goes down. Between 2016 and 2019, 1500 homes signed up for bulk buys and this network is then also able to provide solar power for those who cannot install it in their home, such as apartment residents. Mitchum City Council has released a toolkit for Councils of how to navigate the legals and process involved in order to help other Councils through the process, which is attached.

The urgency of helping the community to reduce their carbon emissions is based on the fact that currently, according to the latest IPCC reports the rate of global warming is currently tracking at worst case scenarios and urgent action is needed at all levels of government to avoid this. The adopted Renewable Energy Action Plan and Climate Change Risk assessment indicates the need for community emissions to be addressed and a community energy network is a cost efficient and participatory way of progressing to NetZero by 2030 as is Councils adopted goal. Other Councils around Australia are also facilitating community energy projects. Sunshine Coast Council has completed a community energy project where community are participants in the energy delivery. Power Melbourne is a network of community batteries and renewable energy that is currently being built for a 1MWh demonstration network.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**Councillor Cherry moves that Council requests a report on options to facilitate a Community Energy Network, allowing the Tweed residents and businesses to connect to a network of community batteries with power supplied by community solar installations.**

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Council Toolkit for Community Solar Programs

**MANAGEMENT COMMENTS:**

Council's Education Officer - Sustainability and Environment's role is split into three areas; Zero Waste Strategy, Climate Change, and Cool Towns. In terms of Climate Change, the current priority areas include the development of the Climate Change Adaptation Plan, the establishment of a Climate Change Working Group and the facilitation of the Community Action Network. The investigation into a community energy network has not been identified as a priority area. However, the development of a Community Emissions Reduction Strategy is proposed following the completion of the Climate Change Adaptation Plan. The Strategy will evaluate a range of community emissions reduction options and their associated costs, benefits and community support. Evaluating the potential for a Virtual Power Plant could be considered as part of that project.

If investigating a Virtual Power Plant is deemed more urgent, officers are of the view that there may be benefits in evaluating the opportunities regionally. The Northern Rivers Joint Organisation may be interested in expanding on the work completed in the [Renewable Energy Blueprint](#) to investigate what is technically feasible and what role local councils can play to make renewable energy more accessible and affordable, particularly for those who can't afford to themselves. This work could be co-funded by member councils, and led by the Net Zero Officer depending on their current project demands. The Central NSW Joint Organisation is investigating something similar. It may therefore be best to combine forces in shared areas of interest and emerging opportunities like these.

Officers therefore suggest an alternate recommendation:

**That Council, through the General Manager, requests the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation to consider expanding on the work completed in the *Renewable Energy Blueprint for the Northern Rivers (January 2022)* to investigate what role local government can play to make renewable energy more accessible and affordable in the Northern Rivers including investigations into community energy partnerships and virtual power plants.**

**Budget/Long Term Financial Plan:**

Investment would be required to investigate how to establish a community energy network and virtual power plant in the Tweed. In terms of staff resources, as this project has not been identified in the Delivery Program, other priority projects would need to be postponed to enable this work to be delivered. Budget would need to be re-allocated from other priority projects to outsource the analysis of options.

**Legal Implications:**

There would be legal considerations associated with undertaking a community energy renewable project, the extent of which would need to be investigated. Council led a community solar bulk buy in 2010 involving a rigorous tender process. The winning tenderer was also the supplier of the inverters. The supplier went out of business, and as inverters failed, Council faced significant criticism when warranties weren't able to be honoured in a program led, promoted and supported by Council. Local solar installers also criticised Council for not supporting local suppliers through the program.

**Policy Implications:**

The reduction of community greenhouse gas emissions by switching to renewable electricity sources is aligned with Council's Climate Change Management Policy.



## Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee – meeting update

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation Board receive and note the attached minutes from the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee meeting of 22 July 2024.

**Background**

The Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee ('Committee') met on 22 July 2024. A copy of the minutes of the meeting is attached (Attachment 1).

**Key Messages****1. Financial Management**

The Committee received and noted the information presented on the financial performance of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation ('NRJO') to 30 June 2024, contained in the:

- Profit and Loss Statement;
- Balance Sheet; and
- Grant Summary.

**2. Governance and Risk Management**

The Committee received and noted information in relation to the placement of the following insurance policies for the 2024/25 financial year:

- Professional Indemnity – Public Liability
- Crime
- Councillors and Officers Liability

**Comment**

The Committee welcomed Councillor Johnstone to the meeting as the Board nominated non-voting councillor member.

**Conclusion**

This report provides a summary of the key messages from the 22 July 2024 Committee meeting.

**Attachments**

1. Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee meeting minutes 22 July 2024.

---

**MINUTES OF NRJO AUDIT, RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE HELD MONDAY,  
22 JULY 2024 AT 218-232 MOLESWORTH STREET, LSIMORE NSW 2480**

---

---

**1 OPENING OF THE MEETING**

---

The Chair opened the meeting at 11.52 am.

In attendance:

Voting Committee

- Laurie Lefcourt, Audit Risk and Improvement Committee - Chair (via 'Teams')
- Andrew MacLeod, Independent member
- Raymond Wong, Audit Risk and Improvement Committee (via 'Teams')

Non-Voting Member

- Cr Peter Johnstone, Northern Rivers Joint Organisation (via 'Teams')

Rous County Council

- Lauren Edwards, Governance and Risk Manager
- Vicky Scott, Financial Accountant
- Robyn Waldron, Secretary

---

**2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

---

*NRJO ARIC acknowledged the Traditional Custodians of the land upon which we work and live. We pay our respects to the Elders of the past, present and emerging and acknowledge their continuing connection to Country who will guide us on our shared journey to the future.*

---

**3 DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

---

Nil.

---

**4 APOLOGIES / LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

---

- Phillip Rudd, General Manager - NRJO Executive Officer
- Quentin Wong, Audit Office NSW
- Adam Bradfield, Thomas Noble & Russell

---

**5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

---

Copy of 30 April 2024 minutes were provided for information.

---

**6 REPORTS**


---

**6.1 Governance and Risk Management**

**RESOLVED** (Wong/MacLeod) that the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee receive and note the information provided in this report in relation to insurance renewals.

<b>Governance and Risk Management (Resolution)</b>		
For	Laurie Lefcourt, Andrew MacLeod and Raymond Wong	3
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

**6.2 Financial Management**

**RESOLVED** (MacLeod/Wong) that the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee receive and note the information presented in this report regarding the financial performance of the NRJO for the period ending 30 June 2024.

<b>Financial Management (Resolution)</b>		
For	Laurie Lefcourt, Andrew MacLeod and Raymond Wong	3
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

---

**7 OTHER BUSINESS ARISING**


---

**7.1 ARIC meetings for NRJO**

**RESOLVED** (MacLeod/Wong) that the ARIC Chair will discuss with the Executive Officer, Mr Phillip Rudd, potential of seeking an exemption in convening ARIC meetings for the NRJO.

<b>ARIC meetings for NRJO (Resolution)</b>		
For	Laurie Lefcourt, Andrew MacLeod and Raymond Wong	3
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

---

**8 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**


---

**Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee meeting minutes 22 July 2024**

**REVOLVED**(Wong/MacLeod) that the Minutes of the meeting be confirmed as presented.

Confirmation of Minutes - 22 July 2024 (Resolution)		
For	Laurie Lefcourt, Andrew MacLeod and Raymond Wong	3
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

---

## 9 NEXT MEETING

---

14 October 2024

---

## 10 CLOSE OF BUSINESS

---

There being no further business the meeting closed at 12.10 pm.

## Associate member - Office of Local Government

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation receive and note the Office of Local Government update.

**Election webinars**

NSWEC is holding webinars for councils and candidates and other political participants.

Next webinar is on 25 July at 11am on election operations.

Listen to previous webinars and to register go to electoral commission's website

<https://elections.nsw.gov.au/council-information/webinars>

**Anti-slavery reporting**

Guidance on Reasonable Steps to Manage Modern Slavery Risks in Operations and Supply-Chains took effect from 1 January 2024. since then the Commissioner has extensively consulted covered entities. Based on these discussions, the Commissioner has decided to:

1. Develop a Shared Implementation Plan with and for NSW Government agencies by June 2025
2. Postpone detailed transactional reporting for Heightened Modern Slavery Due Diligence procurements to an indicative date of 1 July 2025, and
3. Publish additional GRS Resources in 2024-25

For more details, check announcement on the Commissioner's webpage.

**Manage compliance on Crown Land**

All local councils have powers under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 to give development control orders over Crown land.

A new [factsheet](#) is prepared regarding compliance on Crown land sets out the process for giving orders over Crown land or waterways.

For more information or support email [cl.compliance@crownland.nsw.gov.au](mailto:cl.compliance@crownland.nsw.gov.au) or phone 1300 886 235.

Please distribute to relevant staff.

**New coastal wellbeing reports released**

The Department of Primary Industries has recently published a series of community wellbeing survey reports and a Connections to Sea Country – Aboriginal people of Coastal NSW report.

The reports include insights into the way communities use the NSW coast and the findings could be used as an evidence base to support the development of council Coastal Management Programs.

Summary reports and supporting resources are available on their website at [NSW Marine Estate Community Wellbeing Surveys](#) and [Connections to Sea Country – Aboriginal Peoples of Coastal NSW Survey](#).

**The Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) has issued Guidance for councillors on corruption risks associated with overseas travel.**

ICAC's Operation Galley demonstrated that overseas travel poses corruption risks for councillors.

ICAC's Guidance has been adopted by the Office of Local Government as a guideline under section 23A of the *Local Government Act 1993* (the Act).

Councils are required to consider ICAC's Guidance when exercising their functions.

**IPR Peer Review feedback**

we will provide individual and sector feedback. At this stage it is planned for Sept.

**Ministers Awards for Women in Local Government**

Selection Panel met on 26 June. Award ceremony on 20 August.



## Associate member - Destination North Coast

### RECOMMENDATION:

That the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation receive and note Destination North Coast update.

### Market Conditions

Anecdotal feedback from LGA stakeholders was that the July school holidays produced a healthy number of visitors matching previous years. The cost-of-living pressures continue to be impactful on spend though as multiple reports that whilst visitor numbers were healthy spend was down. Conversely NPWS advised that visitation to key sites over this period were down over the holidays but are up overall for the year.

LGAs with events being staged over the holidays relayed more positive results. Multiple LGAs are reviewing their funding models for events and due to this it will be the strategic item for our next LGA meeting in view of sharing operating models and what has proven successful.

### Accommodation Revenue and Yield Management Training Program

DNC will be delivering an Accommodation Revenue and Yield Management Training Program for North Coast operators. The program will incorporate five workshops across the region including the following in the Northern Rivers;

9.00am - 11.30am, 29 August 2024 - Byron Bay

3.00pm - 5.30pm, 29 August 2024 - The Tweed

Content covered will include:

- Understanding the Guest's Pathway to Booking
- Advanced Market Segmentation & Distribution Strategies
- Revenue Strategy and Profit Optimisation
- Forecasting, Inventory Management, and Performance Monitoring

### Destination North Coast Tourism Symposium and North Coast Tourism Awards

The 2024 North Coast Tourism Symposium and North Coast Tourism Awards were just successfully delivered in Port Macquarie on the 1<sup>st</sup> August. Both events achieved record attendance and coverage in the media with the theme of the Symposium being 'Creating World-Class Experiences'. The program replicated the theme kicking off with the co-founder and Chair of Intrepid Travel one of the worlds leading touring companies and the world's largest travel B-Corp.

DNC are seeking a host destination for 2025 to continue the success.

Northern Rivers winning businesses from the North Coast Tourism Awards have been listed below.

**Tourism Business of the Year**

Potager

**Excellence in Cultural Tourism**

Explore Byron Bay

**Outstanding Tourism Business Leader**

Yen Trihn - Pipit Restaurant

**Excellence in Tourism Services**

Ballina Visitor Information Centre

**Business Event Venue of the Year**

Lennox Head Cultural Centre

**Festival/Event of the Year**

Byron Bay Bluesfest 2024

**Excellence in Food Tourism**

Potager, Carool

**Outstanding Tourism Start-up**

North Coast Rail Trail - Tweed Section



## Associate member - Premiers Department, Delivery and Engagement, Standing

### RECOMMENDATION:

That the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation receive and note the Premier's Department update.

### Executive Summary:

To provide an update on the Machinery of Government changes and The NSW State Budget (Regional Development Trust Fund and Performance and Wellbeing Framework)

### Background:

#### Machinery of Government changes are complete

As of 1 July 2024, the Department of Regional NSW became the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development. This evolution reflects the NSW Government's strong commitment to supporting the growth of primary industries through enhancing the coordination of frontline services, research and development, and regional economic development.

The department's focus will be to protect, support and develop our primary industries, mining sector, and regional communities. Regional economic development, focused on supporting regional industries and employment, will remain central to this work.

As part of this renewal, the department's Regional Development Group and Regional Precincts will form the Regional Development and Delivery Group. The amalgamation will increase focus, collaboration and accountability in delivering projects and services.

The government's Regional Coordination function will return to the NSW Premier's Department and report to the Premier and Minister for Regional NSW.

Both teams will remain embedded in the communities they serve, drawing on their local experience and connections. They will continue to work across all levels of government and with local stakeholders to help drive the major projects that can contribute so much to regional economies and address some of the longer-term, complex issues they face.

Key contacts for the Premier's Department regional coordination team are:

- Shaun O'Sullivan – Director North (incorporating the North Coast, Hunter New England and Central Coast), [shaun.osullivan@regional.nsw.gov.au](mailto:shaun.osullivan@regional.nsw.gov.au), 0447 295 011
- Cass Wilson – Associate Director North Coast, [cass.wilson@regional.nsw.gov.au](mailto:cass.wilson@regional.nsw.gov.au), 0475 758 702

Key contact in the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development regional economic development team is:

- Jillian Fryer – Deputy Director North Coast Regional Development Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development [jillian.fryer@regional.nsw.gov.au](mailto:jillian.fryer@regional.nsw.gov.au), 0412 901 084

## NSW Budget 2024-2025 Region NSW

### **Regional Development Trust**

The NSW Government is investing an additional \$50 million into the Regional Development Trust Fund (the Trust), bringing the total commitment to \$400 million.

The Trust provides sustainable and strategic investment, with a focus on priorities that make a real difference to the regions. The Trust will deliver social and economic outcomes for regional NSW, with a focus on:

- Sustainable regional industries
- Aboriginal economic development
- Community connection and capacity building
- Improving regional service delivery

The allocation in the 2024-25 Budget included \$5 million for an Aboriginal Economic Development Package to support First Nations businesses and organisations to identify and execute commercial opportunities, leading to improved economic and employment outcomes. Applications for this funding are now open.

### **NSW Performance and Wellbeing Framework**

The NSW Government will introduce the NSW Performance and Wellbeing Framework in the 2025-26 Budget. It is designed to strengthen the collective understanding of the connection between government policies and programs, and the results and impacts achieved. Key wellbeing themes include health, skills, prosperity, housing, community and sustainability.

Consultation on the [Performance and Wellbeing – Consultation Paper](#) close Wednesday 31 July 2024.

### **Recent Media Releases**

[Summer's shark management approach announced | NSW Government](#)

[NSW and SA Governments to jointly host Social Media Summit | NSW Government](#)

[Portable bonds scheme to deliver cost of living relief | NSW Government](#)

[\\$252 million boost set to deliver 1,300 new apprentices and trainees | NSW Government](#)

More located here: [Ministerial media releases | NSW Government](#)

### **Grants Opening Soon**

[4-Year \(2 + 2\) Multi-year Funding | NSW Government](#)

[Infrastructure Grants: sport and recreation | NSW Government](#)

[Infrastructure Grants: arts and culture | NSW Government](#)

[Infrastructure Grants: disaster readiness | NSW Government](#)

[Infrastructure Grants: community infrastructure | NSW Government](#)



## Associate Member - Scenic Rim Regional Council

### RECOMMENDATION:

That the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation receive and note Scenic Rim Regional Council update.

### Council's \$119 million budget takes account of cost of living pressures

Adopted at the 28 June 2024 Special Meeting, the budget takes account of current cost of living pressures on ratepayers, with an overall increase in revenue of 2.76 per cent in the minimum general rate and community infrastructure charge. For principal place of residence properties on the minimum general rate, the increase equates to just \$45 a year.

Representing 62 per cent of Scenic Rim ratepayers, principal place of residence properties saw an average increase of 2.94 per cent. Rates for rural principal place of residence properties, representing seven per cent of Scenic Rim ratepayers, saw an average increase of 2.95 per cent.

The 2024-2025 Budget provides for total capital spending of \$37.1 million, with a focus on roadworks which have been allocated \$17.88 million.

Key infrastructure works are also supported in Council's budget by the provision of \$6.8 million for its Fleet Replacement Program which includes big-ticket heavy machinery needed for capital projects.

Council's investment in community infrastructure continues in 2024-2025 with the allocation of \$4.2 million for the first stage of the Gallery Walk car park at Tamborine Mountain.

The maintenance and upgrade of community facilities across the region are also supported with more than \$1.88 million in the 2024-2025 Budget.

Council's commitment to achieving greater efficiencies and increasing productivity, as well as delivering vital capital works is reflected in the 2024-2025 Budget.

### Key community infrastructure features in Scenic Rim's 2024-2025 Budget

The \$119 million budget provides \$37.1 million for capital works, highlighting Council's commitment to the delivery of infrastructure to meet both community needs and the region's continuing growth.

Major projects planned for the 2024-2025 year include:

- the continuation of the Kerry Road upgrade, with a focus on improving driver safety (\$8.3 million)
- the reseal and rehabilitation of Council's sealed road network (\$5.5 million)
- works to improve driver safety along Beechmont Road (\$2.16 million)
- improvements to increase the safety and serviceability of more than 130 bridges (\$1.15 million)
- the upgrade and replacement of sections of the region's drainage network (\$796,000), and
- improvements to more than 500 major culverts and floodways (\$656,000).

Council's 2024-2025 Budget also provides more than \$930,000 for new and upgraded footpaths across the region, including \$520,000 for general rehabilitation and minor works.

### **Community feedback valuable in framing Council's budget**

A report on the budget community consultation, which was conducted in face-to-face sessions and online via the *Let's Talk Scenic Rim* platform in May, was tabled at the Special Meeting held 28 June 2024 and attended by nine community members who accepted Council's invitation to present their submissions.

Council asked participants in the community consultation to rate its services, with the survey results showing the community's priorities in order of importance as:

- Transport Infrastructure Network
- Council and Public Facilities Maintenance
- Parks, Recreational Spaces and Cemeteries
- Disaster Management
- Planning and Development
- Regulatory and Environmental Services
- Community Development and Cultural Services
- Economic Development and Regional Events, and
- Library Services.

Other key service priorities identified during the community consultation were Council and public facilities maintenance as well as parks, recreational spaces and cemeteries.

### **Scenic Rim's challenges highlighted in submission to federal government inquiry**

Limited funding opportunities and increasing demands for services and infrastructure are among key issues raised by Scenic Rim Regional Council in its submission to the Australian Government's inquiry into local government sustainability.

The submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport's inquiry, which was endorsed at the 26 June 2024 Ordinary Meeting, outlines Council's growing challenges in meeting increased community needs for services and infrastructure in one of the fastest growing states in Australia.

A large and diverse region that includes 98 localities, the Scenic Rim is bordered by three of Queensland's largest growing local government areas in Queensland and its population of some 44,000 residents is expected to increase by more than 25 per cent by 2041.

Balancing population growth and preserving high-quality agricultural land while creating employment opportunities in small, medium and large businesses will be priorities for Council in the next 10 years.

Council will prioritise attracting investment in compatible industries such as food processing, tourism, defence, aeronautical, environmental science, technology, and education sectors, which will further support the Scenic Rim's major economic driver, agriculture.

Securing this investment would require support from other levels of government to recognise and fulfil their obligations of providing the necessary infrastructure of roads, energy and water, so Council can attract these types of industries to the region.

Scenic Rim Regional Council's vast network of community infrastructure includes more than 1,750 kilometres of local roads and 130 bridges, of which more than half are traditional timber structures that require ongoing maintenance or replacement to meet the needs of industry as well as residents and the increasing number of visitors to the region.

The Council road network stretches from Cunningham's Gap and the Great Dividing Range in the west to Numinbah Gap and the Gold Coast hinterland in the east, south to the New South Wales border and north to neighbouring council areas of Logan and Ipswich.

### **Housing crisis prompts Council's action plan**

Supported by the Queensland Government, in partnership with the Local Government Association of Queensland, the Scenic Rim Local Housing Action Plan was endorsed at the 26 June 2024 Ordinary Meeting to help address the region's immediate, emerging and longer-term housing issues.

The Local Housing Action Plan's key focus will be to address the lack of housing supply for smaller households, improved housing choices for an ageing population, opportunities for social and affordable housing and community and government partnerships to provide housing support for people in crisis or First Nations people.

Council has a clear understanding of the region's housing needs following a Housing Needs Assessment completed as part of the Scenic Rim Growth Management Strategy 2041.

Planning to meet the region's housing needs is already underway, with Council preparing a major amendment to the Scenic Rim Planning Scheme that will encourage greater housing diversity and zoning for medium density development.

Council is investigating opportunities to play a key role in delivering well designed social and affordable housing on surplus Council land.

### **Community input will help drive region's transport plan**

In response to the projected increase in the Scenic Rim's population to 67,000 by 2041, which will place additional pressure on local transport networks and connections, Council is developing an Integrated Transport Plan to ensure infrastructure meets the demands of the region's growth.

The community consultation on [Let's Talk Scenic Rim](#) and in-person sessions will run until Monday 2 September 2024 and will be the first stage in developing an Integrated Transport Plan.

Once completed, the draft plan will be made available for review during a second round of community consultation.

### **Biosecurity plan targets spread of invasive species**

A plan detailing the management of biosecurity threats in the Scenic Rim and how Council will meet its biosecurity obligations was adopted at the 24 July 2024 Ordinary Meeting.

Community and stakeholder feedback has contributed to the amended *Scenic Rim Biosecurity Plan* for managing invasive plants and animals and Council's biosecurity obligations in line with Queensland Government legislation.

The biosecurity plan details the Scenic Rim's invasive plant and animal species which have been categorised as prohibited or restricted under the *Biosecurity Act 2014* and their priority for management based on a risk assessment. It also provides practical guidance for the community on minimising the spread of invasive species on private and public land.

A working group of key stakeholders will be formed to review the plan annually and to monitor and evaluate its effectiveness and potentially update the plan.

On 1 July 2024, Council became responsible for managing fire ants on Council-controlled land and the costs of this are still being assessed.

### **Council launches biodiversity initiative for local koalas**

In response to the growing threats faced by endangered koala populations, Scenic Rim Regional Council has launched the *Saving koalas through community action in the Scenic Rim* project. The project will inform future conservation efforts by generating needed information about koalas, their genetics and diseases they suffer from.

As part of the project, Council has engaged trained community volunteers to find, identify, and collect wild koala scat (poo) samples from across the Scenic Rim.

Ecologists OWAD Environment have been helping by using specially trained koala scat detection dogs in natural areas around the region. And environmental conservation organisation Watergum are also supporting Council by collecting scat samples from public lands, road reserves, and private properties. Even the Department of Defence are helping! .

Community members not involved in scat collection can participate in the 'Great Koala Patrol' by reporting koala sightings to Council, thereby contributing valuable information about koalas in the region and aiding Council's Biodiversity officers in their conservation efforts.

The scat samples collected during this project will be analysed at a laboratory and tested for diseases like chlamydia and koala retrovirus which will provide important information about the health of the region's koala population.

### **The number's up for feral animals as Council's 1080 baiting program rolls out**

Scenic Rim property owners on larger land holdings are urged to join the fight against the spread of invasive animals which not only pose a threat to livestock but also native wildlife and pets.

Scenic Rim Regional Council will roll out its feral animal baiting program in mid-September 2024.

The program uses sodium fluoroacetate baits, more commonly known as 1080. 1080 is registered for the control of wild dogs, feral pigs, feral cats, foxes and wild rabbits in Queensland. A baiting program can be undertaken in conjunction with other forms of control such as trapping, shooting and exclusion fencing.

These are all animals that cannot be moved, kept (if a dingo or fox), fed, given away, sold or released into the environment without a permit.

Coordination with neighbouring properties to ensure the maximum number of feral animals in an area are exposed to the baiting program will help to increase effectiveness.

### **Council renews representation on Rivers Improvement Trust**

Scenic Rim Deputy Mayor Duncan McInnes and Councillor Marshall Chalk have been reappointed to a statutory body committed to working with landholders to improve the health of the region's waterways and their river and creek banks.

At the 24 July 2024 Ordinary Meeting, Council's representatives were appointed for the next four years to the five-member Scenic Rim Rivers Improvement Trust, which is supported by a \$90,000 contribution from Scenic Rim Regional Council.

### **SES secures major funding for equipment and facility upgrades**

The Scenic Rim State Emergency Service (SES) Unit will benefit from upgraded facilities and a new vehicle following the approval of more than \$100,000 in state funding.

Scenic Rim Regional Council has secured \$117,119.70 under the Queensland Government's 2024-2025 SES Support Grant Program to upgrade the facilities at the Beaudesert SES Shed site and purchase a new vehicle for the Beaudesert SES Unit.

This funding, which forms part of \$3.7 million in Queensland Fire and Emergency Service (QFES) grants awarded across 60 local governments, will cover the entire cost of the SES facility upgrades and 75 per cent of the vehicle purchase cost.

### **Council kicks goals with funding for field lighting upgrade**

Scenic Rim Regional Council is set to kick off works to upgrade lighting on two fields at Tamborine Mountain's Long Road Sports and Recreation Complex to boost safety and increase community participation in sporting events.

Funding from the Queensland Government will enable the upgrade of existing lighting and associated electrical infrastructure from halogen to LED on one field while, on the other, two new poles with LED lights will be installed to provide lighting suitable for community-level football matches.



## Correspondence

### RECOMMENDATION

That the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation receive and note correspondence incoming and outgoing.

### INCOMING

- The Hon. Rose Jackson MLC – (email)  
*Response to invitation to meet re; 2024 Street Count results. Minister Jackson could not visit in person to meet with NRJO, however Cr Michael Lyon met with her in Sydney to discuss the issue.*
- The Hon. Rose Jackson MLC  
*Formal response to 2024 Street County results.*

### OUTGOING

- Amelia Evans, Chief Executive Officer – Queensland Airports Limited  
*Gold Coast Airport 2024 Preliminary Draft Master Plan.*
- Widjabul Wia-bal Gurrumbil Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC  
*Local Event Day Proposal – Widjabul Wia-bul Day.*
- To Member Councils  
*Requesting feedback on the Northern Rivers Compact 2024-2026.*
- The Hon. Chris Minns, The Premier NSW,  
The Hon. Kristy McBain, Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories, and  
The Hon. Ron Hoenig, Minister for Local Government.  
*2022 Flood Recovery – Funding of urban drainage systems.*