



# **Agenda for the Northern Rivers**

## **Joint Organisation**

### **Ordinary Board Meeting**

**Date:** 7 May 2021

**Location:** via Zoom

**Time:** 11am

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# AGENDA

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## **1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

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

## **2 APOLOGIES**

## **3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

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

## 5.1 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE NORTHERN RIVERS JOINT ORGANISATION HELD 12 FEBRUARY 2021

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The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation Friday 12 February 2021 are included for information and adoption by the Board.

### **MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE NORTHERN RIVERS JOINT ORGANISATION**

**HELD VIA ZOOM**

**FRIDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2021**

#### **ATTENDANCE**

Crs Danielle Mulholland (Chair), Vanessa Ekins, David Wright, Simon Richardson, Robert Mustow, Chris Cherry

General Managers Graham Kennett, Mark Arnold, Paul Hickey, Vaughan Macdonald, Troy Green, Michael Donnelly

Tim Williamson (RDA Northern Rivers), Anita Gambhir (OLG) Louise McMeeking (Dept of Regional NSW); Ashley Lindsay (CVC), Cr Derek Swanborough (Scenic Rim Regional Council) joined the meeting at 11.45am

Nicole Reeve Donna McIntyre (minute taker)

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

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

#### **2. APOLOGIES**

Apologies have been received from Cr Jim Simmons (Clarence Valley Council); Michael Thurston (Destination North Coast)

**12022021/1 RESOLVED**

**MOVED: S Richardson/D Wright**

*THAT the apologies for the 12 February 2021 Board meeting be noted*

**CARRIED**

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

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

NIL

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

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

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

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**12022021/2 RESOLVED**

**MOVED: D Wright/R Mustow**

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

**CARRIED**

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

**6. NOTICES OF MOTION**

**NIL received**

**7. REPORTS**

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

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**12022021/3 RESOLVED**

**MOVED: S Richardson/R Mustow**

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

**CARRIED**

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

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

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**12022021/4 RESOLVED**

**MOVED: S Richardson/D Mulholland**

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

Cr Cherry moved an amendment:

**Amendment:**

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

*THAT the Executive Officer circulate potential topics for advocacy at RDA Ministerial teleconferences*

**12022021/4 RESOLVED**

**MOVED: C Cherry/D Mulholland**

**1. CARRIED**

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

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**7.3 ASSOCIATE MEMBER REPORT – ROUS COUNTY COUNCIL**

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**12022021/5 RESOLVED**

**MOVED: V Ekins/C Cherry**

*THAT the report from Rous County Council be received and noted.*

Cr Ekins moved an amendment

**Amendment**

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

*THAT the NRJO provide a letter of support for Rous County Council's funding application*

**12022021/6 RESOLVED**

**MOVED: V Ekins/C Cherry**

**CARRIED**

**FOR VOTE** – All Councillors voted unanimously

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

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**12022021/7**

**MOVED: D Mulholland/C Cherry**

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

**CARRIED**

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

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**7.5 ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIR**

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**12022021/8**

**MOVED: D Mulholland/S Richardson**

*THAT Executive Officer Nicole Reeve, as Returning Officer conduct the election of a Deputy Chair for the NRJO.*

**CARRIED**

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

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

These are:

- Cr Danielle Mulholland Mayor Kyogle Council
- Cr Robert Mustow Mayor Richmond Valley Council
- Cr Vanessa Ekins Interim Mayor Lismore City Council
- Cr Simon Richardson Mayor Byron Shire Council
- Cr David Wright Mayor Ballina Shire Council
- Cr Chris Cherry Mayor Tweed Shire Council

Only one nomination for the position of Deputy Chair was received. A further call for nominations was made by the Returning Officer and no additional nominations were received. There being only one nomination, the Returning Officer declared Cr Chris Cherry, Mayor of Tweed Shire Council to be elected to the role of Deputy Chair of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation

**CARRIED**

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

Cr Mulholland resumed the role of Chair

## **7.6 EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT**

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**12022021/9 RESOLVED**

**MOVED: C Cherry/R Mustow**

*THAT the Board ratify the acceptance of the RDA Northern Rivers Service Agreement to 30 June 2021*

**CARRIED**

**FOR VOTE** - All Councillors voted unanimously

**12022021/10**

**MOVED: S Richardson/C Cherry**

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

**CARRIED**

**FOR VOTE** - All Councillors voted unanimously

## **7.7 JO CAPCITY BUILDING PROJECT**

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**12022021/10 RESOLVED**

**MOVED: D Mulholland/C Cherry**

*THAT the Board recommend the following alternative Capacity Building Projects be pursued:  
Investigation into the development of a Biosphere for Northern NSW and development of a  
Renewable Energy Prospectus*

**CARRIED**

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

## **7.8 JOINT ORGANISATION MONITORING AND EVALUATION PROJECT**

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**12022021/11**

**MOVED: C Cherry/D Mulholland**

*THAT the Board note the Terms of Reference and provide input into the review via a workshop on  
26 March 2021*

**CARRIED**

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

## **7.9 FINANCIAL REPORTS**

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**12022021/12**

**MOVED: S Richardson/C Cherry**

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

**CARRIED**

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

## **8. URGENT BUSINESS**

NIL RECEIVED

## **9. CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS**

## **10. CORRESPONDENCE**

**12022021/13**

**MOVED : D Wright/R Mustow**

*THAT the correspondence report be received and noted*

**CARRIED**

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



MEETING CLOSED 12.06pm

**Next meeting - workshop**  
**26 March 2021**  
**Lismore City Council**

MINUTES APPROVED

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Cr Danielle Mulholland

Chair

**RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation held Friday 12 February 2021 be adopted as a true and accurate record of proceedings of that meeting.

## 6 NOTICES OF MOTION

## 7 REPORTS



### **Market Conditions & Easter Break**

There was a mix of results over the Easter break and school holiday period. Feedback received indicates that most destinations regained the lost bookings due to flooding and event cancellations in time for the Easter break, but this provides another example of business having to execute multiple transactions on singular bookings. DNC GM was asked to join and accepted the invitation to participate in a flood recovery committee. The committee mirrors those set up for bushfires and Covid and they now have an established method of operation.

From Monday 19<sup>th</sup> April Australia and New Zealand will enter into a travel bubble whereby residents are not required to quarantine upon arrival. This development will provide new source markets for North Coast destinations but will also increase competition. Additional services have been launched from Auckland to the Gold Coast by both Qantas and Air New Zealand which present a strong opportunity for Northern Rivers locations to target the NZ market.

### **Recovery for Regional Tourism Funds**

DNC have submitted multiple applications that would see a significant component of the \$1.25M allocated to the North Coast released. Applications have been submitted for a Business Accelerator and Mentoring program, Business Events (2 x roadshow, 2 x famils and subvention fund), funding to support two DNC Tourism Symposiums and for staffing assistance. The first of these programs will launch within FY20/21.

### **Business Events**

Reporting for the program for the first quarter of 20221 will be released imminently. Over the quarter the team secured one event for 700 delegates that will deliver an economic impact of \$25k. They are continuing to chase 14 existing leads that have the potential to deliver over 3k delegates and an economic impact of \$98k.

The team attended Event Organiser Summit events in Sydney and Brisbane during the quarter. The events collectively generated 13 leads that have the potential to deliver an economic impact of \$1.7M in economic impact. Additionally, over this period the team assisted seven Northern Rivers stakeholders in developing and submitting funding applications through the NSW Regional Business Development Fund.

The DNC BE program has been selected as a state finalist for the best Destination Marketing Organisation or Bureau in the Meetings and Events Australia (MEA) annual awards.

### **DNC Tourism Symposium**

Urunga has been selected as the host venue for this year's event. DNC are in the process of lodging a funding application through the Recovery for Regional Tourism Fund that would enable the booking of higher profile speakers and the expansion of the event to be over two days

including workshops and site visits on the day preceding the Symposium. The events are currently scheduled to happen on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> and Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> June.

**RECOMMENDATION**

THAT the report from Destination North Coast be noted

## 7.2 ASSOCIATE MEMBER REPORT – RDA NORTHERN RIVERS

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### **SUMMARY**

RDA successfully hosted the Future Agro Challenge – Australia 21 (AusFAC21) with events held at Byron and Newrybar. The event brings some of Australia’s best agri-tech start-ups together in a pitch competition with a difference. The high level of competition was recognised with Sydney based InvertiGro taking out the final. Winners will go on to compete against international competition at the Global Future Agro Challenge event. Next years’ event will be hosted by RDA Darling Downs South West QLD.

RDANR is assisting NRJO Executive Officer to deliver regional projects including Renewable Energy Prospectus and Local Government Procurement projects. Local Procurement will continue to be a focus given the importance it has now taken in the revised RDA Charter.

Business Leaders Forums and industry events will be rolled out across a number of LGAs into the early part of the new financial year.

A number of industry and business granting programs have been launched through Federal and State government agencies. RDA continues to be a major communication channel and source of referrals for local businesses, organisations and local governments. New IT platforms and processes continue to be investigated to better target the information to businesses and stakeholders.

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### **DETAILED REPORT**

#### **Strategic Planning**

NSW Regional Economic Development Strategies, LG Community and Economic Development plans and other relevant plans are undergoing research and analysis to bring alignment at a regional level. Business leaders and key stakeholders will be consulted to complete the RDA Regional Plan 2021.

Infrastructure Australia is in the process of consultation for its Australian Infrastructure Plan and councils will soon be contacted to participate in its “Regional Strengths and Gaps” consultations.

#### **Industry Development**

RDA is hosting IT industry groups in Lismore and Byron (focussing on the virtual reality/digital media industries). These emerging industries will feed into the Regional Planning consultation process in particular identifying future skills, infrastructure, investment needs.

Larger Businesses will also be brought together across the region using established mechanisms in their local areas where they exist. In the LGs where no relevant forums are held, RDA will host these meetings with a view to regular meaningful events.

#### **Employment Initiatives**

##### **Employment Taskforce**

RDA continues to support the major Co-operatives and stakeholders to establish a shared labour pool. This project will be an important one for the region and possibly a model for other regions.

RDA will be assisting a Kyogle-based network of agencies and local businesses to establish an employment program aimed at developing indigenous youth employment pathways and improved business opportunities. This program is in the very early stages and more detail will be provided at future meetings.

### **COMMITTEES**

Committee	Comment
Employment Taskforce	DESE initiative to lead employment projects
COVID Health Business Committee	Provide advice and assistance to Dept of Health unit which undertakes promotion and compliance activities for local businesses
NR Branding Committee	RDA auspices this group as a sub-committee and provides back end support.
Clarence Valley Wages to Work Committee	A skills and employment project based on opportunities for marine waste and recycling
NRJO Committee	Assoc Membership and continues to work with EO on relevant projects
NRJO GM Advisory Committee	Operational NRJO matters, projects and issues are raised in this forum prior to NRJO meeting.

### **EVENTS**

#### **Business Events**

An IT Industry meeting was held in Lismore 20 April.

Business Leaders meeting is scheduled for early June, Tweed Shire

VR Digital Media industry workshop 21 May, Byron Shire.

### **INVESTMENT**

RDA continues to receive investment enquiries mainly in agribusiness sector. RDA is keen to establish an agency "Roundtable" process which will effectively bring all the relevant agencies and personnel to a single meeting with the project proponent in order to provide a local concierge service.

### **MINISTERIAL MEETINGS**

DRD attends regular teleconferences with Assistant Minister Nola Marino and other RDA Directors across Australia which provides local intelligence on the impact of COVID-19 restrictions.

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#### **Other activities to note:**

##### **1. SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT**

##### **Northern Rivers, NSW Branding Initiative**

The strategic direction of the NR NSW brand Committee is under discussion and a sustainable business plan will be developed. Marketing and communications continue to be the focus and is continually being improved.

## **2. AUSPICED PROJECTS**

### **Cross Border Tourism Working Group**

Finances and committee role has been ceased. Finance role will be handed over to Destination North Coast.

### **Future Agro Challenge – Australia**

Finance and host role will be handed over to RDA DDSW. RDA NR will continue to sit on the organising committee.

## **3. REGIONAL CERTIFYING BODY**

RDANR continues to process 491 and 49a4 Visa applications on behalf of NSW Treasury and Dept of Home Affairs.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

THAT the report from RDA Northern Rivers be noted





### REVISED FUTURE WATER PROJECT 2060

#### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation ('NRJO') on the revised strategic direction Rous County Council ('Council') is now pursuing as part of the *Future Water Project 2060* ('FWP 2060') to secure its regional water supply.

#### Background

At its meeting on 26 June 2020, the NRJO was provided with an associate member report from Council regarding the initial draft *FWP 2060*.

The NRJO resolved [at 26062020/6] to:

1. *Receive and note the report.*
2. *Recognise the proposed Future Water Project 2060 Integrated Water Cycle Management Plan as a regionally significant initiative to support Rous County Council's efforts to secure State and Federal Government funding assistance.*

Council's initial draft *FWP 2060* was released for public exhibition in July 2020.

In terms of new water sources, it recommended groundwater to secure the short-to-medium-term water supply and the long-proposed Dunoon Dam to secure the long-term water supply.

Following an extended public exhibition period, in December 2020 the Council resolved not to proceed with the new 50 gegalitre Dunoon Dam as its preferred long-term water supply source option.

The Council's decision was mainly in response to the environmental and Indigenous cultural heritage risks posed by the new dam along with the strong community opposition to its construction.

#### Water supply security challenges

Council's regional water supply continues to face several critical water security challenges.

By 2060, an almost 40 percent increase in water demand is forecast due to population growth.

Over the same period, the amount of water Council's existing system can reliably supply is forecast to decline by over 20 percent due to changing climate conditions.

More urgently, the demand for water is forecast to start exceeding reliable supply from at least 2024.

The mission of Council's *FWP 2060* is to deliver the new water sources needed – in conjunction with ongoing water saving measures – to tackle the increasing demands confronting its regional water supply.

#### ***FWP 2060* status**

As a result of the Council's decision not to proceed with further investigations into the Dunoon Dam, a revised draft *FWP 2060* has now been prepared.

It sets out a staged approach that focuses on additional groundwater sources being gradually brought online as primary supplies over the next few decades.

At the same time, Council will continue implementing more innovative water conservation measures and investigate how to overcome the barriers to using purified recycled water for drinking purposes in NSW.

Details of the revised draft *FWP 2060* were released for public exhibition on 1 April 2021. Feedback from the community is being accepted until 28 May 2021.

A copy of the community summary brochure is included as Attachment 1.

#### **Conclusion**

Water supply security challenges are unavoidable in the Northern Rivers given the forecasted population growth and impact of climate change on the existing sources.

Advanced water saving initiatives will always form part of Council's water supply security response, however these initiatives on their own will not be enough to ensure the region's long-term water security.

New water sources are needed to meet the region's future water requirements. Otherwise, the community will eventually be burdened with longer and more severe water restrictions.

Council's revised *FWP 2060* recommends a suitable alternate approach that strives to identify a diverse portfolio of water supply security management options as well as balance social, environmental and economic outcomes.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Northern Rivers Joint Organisation receive and note this report.

#### [Attachment 1](#)

*Future Water Project 2060* Community Summary – Securing water supply for our region.



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

### **Scenic Rim Tourism Update**

- Destination Scenic Rim voted at their AGM to move to one unified Local Tourism Organisation (LTO) and amend their constitution. Utilising bushfire recovery funds, an Executive Officer for the LTO has been appointed to work for that entity and this person will commence in the first week of June.
- Visit Scenic Rim refresh - the destination brand website is being totally refreshed and will be launched before the end of the calendar year.
- Capability project - Council's tourism recovery officer is about to go to market with a project that will offer support to tourism operators in the form of copywriting and professional photography, to enable them to optimise their website and listings on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse platform.
- Collaborative promotion with Destination Gold Coast - Council is developing a joint promotion with Destination Gold Coast that will involve itineraries that cross over both regions.
- Scenic Rim operators to benefit from the 'Tourism Dollars' initiative by Tourism and Events Queensland - 30,000 \$100 vouchers available for consumers to redeem for accommodation or experiences in greater Brisbane (including Scenic Rim).
- Draft of the Scenic Rim Adventure and Nature-Based Tourism Strategy presented to Council on 28 April and then to go to public consultation prior to adoption.

### **Agribusiness and Agritourism Update**

- Eat Local Week - to be launched next Thursday 29 April. Over 125 events to be held in June/July, culminating in the Winter Harvest Festival on 3 July.
- Pre Feasibility study has been concluded for the Water for Warrill project, involving feasibility of irrigation/water supply solutions for the region's irrigators and primary producers in the Warrill and Fassifern Valleys.
- Grant funded agribusiness and agritourism industry development project is progressing well - industry steering group has been formed and is being mentored; Business Development program involving 15 participants is underway (3 sessions held) and development of 10 year roadmap for the sector has commenced development.
- Farm2Plate Exchange, a conference for farmers, food and drink producers, chefs, tourism and hospitality businesses, to be held in the Scenic Rim on 18 and 19 May.

## Scenic Rim Regional Council Commits to Small Business Friendly Councils Initiative

Small businesses in the Scenic Rim will receive added support from a new Small Business Friendly Councils (SBFC) commitment made by Scenic Rim Regional Council today.

On 9 February 2021, Queensland Small Business Commissioner, Maree Adshead co-signed the SBFC Charter with Scenic Rim Regional Council Mayor Greg Christensen with support from the region's five Chambers of Commerce based in Beaudesert, Boonah, Kooralbyn, Tamborine Mountain and Canungra.

Small business is a cornerstone of the Scenic Rim economy and community, making up more than 98.5% of the region's businesses.

Joining the Small Business Friendly Councils initiative reinforces the importance and relevance of the many activities and programs that Council already has underway to support small business.

This is a commitment by Scenic Rim City Council and its partners to be mindful of small businesses, their issues and priorities when making decisions for the local community," she said.

The SBFC charter has been developed in conjunction with Councils and is flexible to their local needs. It includes a commitment to:

- communicate and engage
- raise small businesses profile and capability
- support resilience and recovery
- simplify administration and regulation (red tape reduction)
- ensure fair procurement and prompt payment terms
- promote place-based activities.

Find out more about the Small Business Friendly Councils (SBFC) initiative at [www.business.qld.gov.au/qsbc](http://www.business.qld.gov.au/qsbc)

## Employment Outcomes are a Win for the Region

Community members and school students flocked to the Scenic Rim Business and Careers Expo at the Beaudesert Showgrounds on 18 March to find out more about local jobs and career pathways.

The "World of Work" event was truly fantastic as job seekers, students, local businesses and employment support agencies connected in the one location. With 33 exhibitors in total, there was a range of interactive displays including large equipment such as turf cutters, paragliders and heavy vehicles, as well as virtual reality technology. Through the event, new doors have been unlocked for local young people and there was a number of employment outcomes generated from the day.

Connecting employers with local residents is a win for the local community, local industries and for driving business confidence and employment growth. Importantly it drives economic growth for the Scenic Rim.

Local job seekers and employers can also connect on Scenic Rim Jobs - [www.scenicrimjobs.com.au](http://www.scenicrimjobs.com.au)

## Backyard Explorers Bring Boost to the Scenic Rim

The Scenic Rim region is reaping the rewards of Queenslanders exploring their own backyard according to the most recent Tourism Research Australia data. After a year of international and state border closures, the September 2020 year-end data shows that, while visitor numbers were

down in the Scenic Rim, the region fared much better than in other parts of South East Queensland.

What's reassuring for Scenic Rim is that while our overnight numbers were down 21.7 percent year-on-year, the region was not as severely impacted as some of our neighbours.

Brisbane, was down 38% compared to the same time last year, and the Gold Coast was down 36%. Similarly, the number of visitors taking day-trips in the Scenic Rim only decreased by 3.5%, which is significantly lower than in neighbouring areas, which recorded decreases between 25% and 28%.

### **Support for the Tourism Industry – Growing Tourism Infrastructure Fund**

Two Scenic Rim Operators were successful under the recent round of the Growing Tourism Infrastructure Fund. These being – Picnic Real Food Bar and The Overflow Estate 1895.

\$990,000 in funding was secured for Stage 2 of the North Stores development on Tamborine Mountain, which will include a purpose-built workshop and event space with cooking school facilities, due for completion late 2021. This new venture will provide an authentic experience connecting visitors with fresh seasonal produce, as well as provide jobs for local residents and generate economic returns for the region.

As well as dropping by for a coffee or to pick up a picnic box, visitors will soon be able to attend a workshop or event in the purpose-built space. The new venture aligns perfectly with the aims of the *Scenic Rim Tourism Strategy* and the *Scenic Rim Regional Prosperity Strategy*.

The Overflow Estate 1895, in collaboration with Wander Retreats Pty Ltd, will establish the high-end, light footprint accommodation through a \$1.33 million Queensland Government's Growing Tourism Infrastructure Fund grant. The sustainable Wanderpods will complement the Overflow's existing cellar door, dining and event hosting activities and be positioned in a secluded way, to make the most of the natural scenery of Lake Weyaralong and surrounding bushland. The Overflow will lease the pods to Wander, who will manage, market and operate them. The five luxury cabins will be strategically set throughout the property with locations chosen specifically for elevation, views, privacy and accessibility. The cabins will be a mixture of single- and double-bedroom designs to cater for couples, families or groups of friends craving a rural setting for time away to recharge the biological batteries.

Council's Regional Prosperity team worked closely with the Overflow Estate, initially alerting them to the funding opportunity, conducting economic modelling, assisting with the application and providing formal advice of Council's support for the initiative," he said.

This is all part of Council's case management approach to support business and industry development with the aim of creating ongoing jobs for locals. The new cabins will bring much needed visitor accommodation to the region providing an in excess of 2,000 visitor nights per year, contributing to, and growing, the Scenic Rim's \$204 million tourism industry.

The project aligns with the Scenic Rim Tourism Strategy 2017-2021, Tourism Australia's Tourism 2020 targets and the Queensland 2020 vision. Additionally, the development will align with the focus of Tourism and Events Queensland, Brisbane Marketing and Destination Gold Coast on visitor experience and experience development.

### **What's On Scenic Rim – New Website Launched**

Every week the Scenic Rim plays host to an array of colourful community events and vibrant destination events and Council now has built a one-stop catch-all website called *What's On Scenic Rim*.

It is an easy-to-use website for locals and visitors alike and will showcase both Council run events and those run by community groups and businesses. This platform has the technology behind it draws event information from a number of major ticketing and event websites and social media, and automatically updates.

Not only will *What's On Scenic Rim* be a promotional tool for event organisers, it also features handy and important resources like templates for event and risk management, and emergency response plans. This online tool replaces the previously printed Join In booklet at a significant cost-saving to ratepayers, in the order of \$50,000 a year. Council will continue to distribute a monthly event flyer listing Council events and activities and will still promote these via local newspapers.

For more information visit [www.whatsonscenicrim.com](http://www.whatsonscenicrim.com)

### **\$600,000 to Build Capacity, Resilience at Vonda Youngman Hub**

Funding for capacity improvements to the Vonda Youngman centre on Tamborine Mountain will ensure the eastern communities of the Scenic Rim are better prepared for future disasters. Federal Member for Wright, Scott Buchholz announced \$600,000 in joint funding to deliver the necessary infrastructure on Tamborine Mountain, to ensure the community had disaster recovery capacity.

The Local Economic Recovery (LER) program was developed to not just support the local economies hit hard by various disasters, but to support community and regional recovery and build capacity in our communities. The funding will go towards upgrading the Vonda Youngman centre to be developed into a community hub and recovery centre.

Cyclone Debbie, 2019 bushfires and recent flood events have demonstrated the necessity of ensuring the region has adequate infrastructure in place to support local communities.

In times of disaster, it has been challenging to have the time or resources to activate evacuation centres or community hubs. This investment is proactive, it is mutually beneficial for the normal times and times of disaster – however it helps future-proof our position, so we are not scrambling for assets to support those hardest hit.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

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

## 7.5 RDA NORTHERN RIVERS SERVICE AGREEMENT

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In December 2020 a Service Agreement renewal was received from RDA Northern Rivers. A recommendation was made by the Executive Officer to renew the agreement to 30 June 2021 which was ratified at the February 2021 Board meeting.

A further renewal request has been received and is included in the meeting papers.

[Attachment 2:](#)

RDA Northern Rivers Service Agreement

<b>RECOMMENDATION:</b>
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THAT the Board renew the RDA Northern Rivers Service Agreement to 31 December 2021
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### 1. STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

#### CAPACITY BUILDING FUND

A letter was drafted and sent to Office of Local Government requesting the remaining funds from the Capacity Building Fund be reallocated from the Waste Microfactories analysis to two new studies, UNESCO Biosphere and Renewable Energy Prospectus and that the deadline be extended from June 30 to September 30, 2021. Approval has been received from OLG and the consultancy scopes of both studies have now been reviewed by all Councils. Steering Committees comprising members of the NRJO GMAC will be established for both studies.

#### (I) BIOSPHERE

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

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

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

#### (ii) RENEWABLE ENERGY PROSPECTUS

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

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

#### (iii) WASTE MICROFACTORIES - UPDATE

***Goal #10.2: Identify opportunities for implementation of pilot or demonstration projects to establish the Northern Rivers as a 'centre of excellence' for innovative waste processing and/or waste to energy technology***

Whilst the Steering Committee concluded following the results of the due diligence on the Waste Microfactories that it was no longer an appropriate project for the NRJO to pursue under the Capacity Building Fund, the concept itself has generated interest amongst the NRJO Board.

As a consequence, the EO and Rino Santin from LCC met representatives from UNSW Sustainable Material Research and Technology Centre to discuss the results of the NRJO study. The news piece on Professor Veena Sahajwalla on ABC Television program, Australian Story, created



considerable interest in the technology and they have now undertaken small projects with commercial building firms. There is still no further advancement from either the public or private sector on commercialisation of the technology.

UNSW stated they would consider a request to enter into a partnership model.

An example of UNSW partnering was provided:

- a. SMaRT is working with a regional NSW manufacturer based at Cootamundra to set up and operationalise the first Green Ceramics MICROfactorie™ focussed on waste glass outside of UNSW.

Despite the increased public interest in the Microfactorie technology, UNSW SMaRT offered no advancement or changes to the technology that would alter the fundamental viability of any commercially established operation. As such, the findings of the NRJO'S due diligence study remain unaltered.

#### **(iv) WATERSHED INITIATIVE**

***Goal: The NRWI brings a holistic approach to the management of water within the catchments that will utilize modern, best practice approaches to catchment management modelling and natural flood mitigation to target improvements in stream bank condition and river health that also contribute to reduced flood risk within the catchments.***

February 26, 2021: The Member for Lismore, Janelle Saffin MP, convened a meeting of community interest groups and stakeholders "to discuss the best action to gather support from the broader community to realise the Northern Rivers Watershed Initiative (NRWI)". Cr Chris Cherry attended the meeting on behalf of the NRJO Chair and the EO attended by Zoom for the initial section.

Ms Saffin subsequently wrote to the NRJO Chair requesting the NRJO, with the support of by the Member for Lismore, take a leading role to drive the advocacy of the initiative.

In response to this request the EO arranged a briefing with the Project Officer recently appointed by the Dept. Planning, Industry and Environment to the Richmond River Review, Catchment Governance and Waterway Health.

The objective of this role is to respond to the recommendations of the Richmond River Governance and Funding Project report (which was co-funded by local government in 2018/2019) and the collective commitment of Councils in recognising the benefits of a co-ordinated approach to improving the health of the catchment and its waterways.

A brief will be provided to the Board in relation to the Member for Lismore's request once a full assessment of the role of the above Project Officer has been undertaken. Ms Saffin's office has been updated on the progress of our actions.

## 2. RELATIONSHIPS AND NETWORKS

- **JANELLE SAFFIN MP, MEMBER FOR LISMORE**

February 22: An introductory meeting was arranged by the NRJO Chair, Cr Mulholland, for the EO to meet with Janelle Saffin MP and to update her on the activities of the NRJO.

- **GEOFF PROVEST MP, MEMBER FOR TWEED**

March 2: An introductory meeting was held for the EO to meet Geoff Provest MP and to update him on the activities of the NRJO

- **THE HON. BRAD HAZZARD MP, MINISTER HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH**

March 3: The Chair and EO held a briefing with Minister for Health and Medical Research, the Honourable Brad Hazzard MP. A general discussion was held on the vaccine roll out for COVID-19 in the Northern Rivers for both medical staff and general population.

- **NSW JOINT ORGANISATION MINISTER'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE – PARLIAMENT HOUSE, SYDNEY**

March 4: The EO and Chair of the NRJO travelled to Sydney for the NSW Joint Organisation Ministers Advisory Committee and NSW Joint Organisation Chair's Forum. Cr Mulholland Chaired the Minister's Advisory Committee. Key issues raised at the Minister's Advisory Committee meeting were:

- Quarantining of fund for JOs to apply for
- Flexibility of LGAs to move between Joint Organisations
- Terms of Reference for the JO Review.

- **JOINT ORGANISATION CHAIRS FORUM – PARLIAMENT HOUSE, SYDNEY**

March 4: Following the Minister's Advisory Committee, the EO and Chair of the NRJO NSW Joint Organisation Chair's Forum. Minutes for this meeting were distributed with papers from the NRJO Board Workshop.

- **NSW JOINT ORGANISATION – STAKEHOLDERS MEETING**

March 5 the EO attended a workshop with EO's from other Joint Organisations and representatives from the following agencies discussing future collaboration.

- DPIE - Water
- Regional NSW
- Resilience NSW
- Transport for NSW
- Office of Local Government

- **FEMALE LEADERSHIP FORUM – COFFS HARBOUR**

March 9: The EO was invited by Regional NSW to be a Facilitator at the Female Leadership Forum in Coffs Harbour.

- **REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA / BUSINESS NSW**

April 13: An initial meeting was coordinated by the NRJO with RDA and Business NSW to discuss ways to encourage local companies to become involved in council procurement.

- **THE HON. MELINDA PAVEY, MINISTER FOR WATER, PROPERTY AND HOUSING**

April 14: The Chair and EO held a briefing with Minister Pavey at which the Northern Rivers Housing shortage was discussed.

- **MID NORTH COAST JO / RIVERINA JO**

April 20: The EO attended a meeting with MNCJO and Rivera JO to discuss a potential meeting with the Deputy Premier and Minister for Water, Housing and Land regarding the state wide housing shortage and MNCJOs request for funding for a Community Trust Housing Project.

- **OFFICE LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

April 26: The EO met with OLG Council Engagement Officer Anita Gambhir whilst she was recent in the region.

- **GENERAL MANAGER, CLARENCE VALLEY COUNCIL**

April 30: An introductory meeting between the EO and General Manager of Clarence Valley Council was held.

### **3. OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **(I) DISASTER DASHBOARDS**

The NRJO's grant application through the **Bushfire Community Recovery and Resilience Fund Stream 2** for funding for the installation of Disaster Dashboard's for Ballina, Kyogle, Lismore and Richmond Valley Councils was successful. The NRJO is awaiting final paperwork to allow the project to commence.

#### **(II) EVALUATION OF THE JOINT ORGANISATIONS FRAMEWORK**

OLG has now appointed public policy consulting firm ARDT to undertake the JO evaluation. The review is due to be completed by June 30.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

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

## 7.7 REGIONAL ISSUES

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### (i) NSW COMPLIANCE LEVIES AND FUNDING REVIEW

Please see the briefing note submitted by the Northern River's Councils Planners Group and correspondence from Mayor of Tweed Shire Council, Cr Cherry, to Chair of the NRJO, Cr Mulholland, in relation to the Compliance Levies and Funding Review.

This issue has been raised with the NRJO General Managers and received their agreement to submit to the NRJO Board for consideration and for representatives of the Planners Group to present to the Board Meeting.

A presentation by representatives from the Planners Group is scheduled as part of the NRJO Board meeting.

[Attachment 3](#): Briefing note – NR Planners Group

[Attachment 4](#): Correspondence from Tweed Shire Council

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation endorse that a submission based on this report be made to the NSW Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, the Hon. Rob Stokes, seeking the deferral of the proposed changes to compliance levies and fees, to allow for more detailed consultation with NSW Councils, in order to provide more time to consider and plan for any resulting impacts on the funding of essential planning, certification and environmental compliance services.

### (ii) HOUSING SHORTAGE

Regions across NSW are facing an unprecedented housing shortage which is currently being addressed in an ad-hoc fashion. As such, the JOs are working to bring some cohesion to the discussions. Information on the actions of various LGA's to address the issues in their own region are being collated to allow discussion. The NRJO EO has also proposed and offered to coordinate a workshop of all JOs and relevant Govt. representatives in Sydney in late May.

Further to this the EO has requested the NRJO join the MNCJO and RJO to be part of a delegation hoping to discuss potential Community Housing Trusts with the Deputy Premier, The Hon. John Barilaro and Minister for Water, Property and Housing The Hon. Melinda Pavey.

At recent NRJO Planners Group Meeting plans were put in place to form a housing affordability group. The purpose of such a group would be to attempt to address the housing issues currently faced in the region through sharing of projects/potential solutions that are being investigated or pursued by each Council and identification of any solutions that could be progressed jointly as a region.

The first workshop of this group is anticipated to be held in May in Ballina. Areas to be considered

- Identification of the housing issues faced in our region;
- Identification of potential housing solutions and ranking of these solutions (most – least feasible);
- Presentation and discussion on Byron’s Community Land Trust project – as an initial solution to workshop.
- Agenda items for next meeting

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Board acknowledge the steps being undertaken and discuss any further initiatives that could be taken to alleviate this issue.

### **(iii) EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY**

The Emergency Services Levy and the impact it was having on Council’s budgets across the State was discussed at the JO Chair’s Forum in Sydney in March. Attached is the brief prepared by CRJO and below is the resolution from the JO Chair’s meeting.

#### **8.2 Fire and Emergency Services Levy Increases**

##### **RESOLVED**

- (i) That, the report from the Canberra Joint Organisation be received and noted; and*
- (ii) Advocacy on the issue is coordinated through the NSW Joint Organisation Network*

**Moved: Mayor Danielle Muholland**

**Carried: Mayor Rick Firman OAM**

Further to this resolution the NRJO has now provided data to enable a state wide picture to be developed by the combined Joint Organisations to support coordinated advocacy on the issue.

[Attachment 5](#): Brief prepared by CRJO

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation begins local advocacy on the ESL issue and bring it to the attention of all local members of parliament. Further that it supports the broader JO network in their attempts to highlight the increases to the NSW State Government.

## 7.8 FINANCIAL REPORTS

### Statement of Comprehensive Income and Statement of Financial Position for NoRJO as at 31 March 2021

**DRAFT ONLY**

	2020/21 Budget	2020/21 Actual	2019/20 Actual
<b><u>Operating Revenues</u></b>			
Membership Fees	160,800	160,800	128,600
Myroadinfo Fees	34,400	33,725	33,725
LG Procurement Rebate	10,600	37,386	37,388
Power Infrastructure Upgrade Project	-	-	-
Capacity Building	-	-	150,000
State Gov't Contribution	-	57,600	-
Sundry Income / Recharge Workshops	-	-	6,276
Interest	5,000	1,741	5,090
<b>Total</b>	<b>210,800</b>	<b>291,252</b>	<b>361,079</b>
<b><u>Operating Expenses</u></b>			
Bank Charges	-	40	-
Conferences, Events, Travel	12,250	792	22,715
Consultants (Economic Report)	-	500	-
Professional Development	5,200	-	-
Exec Officer - Salary/Oncosts/Recruit	96,351	61,665	85,172
Exec Officer - Computer	3,000	-	-
Exec Officer - Vehicle Allowance	8,580	5,363	8,580
Exec Officer - Support (RDA)	54,000	40,500	54,600
Exec Officer - Office (Rous)	-	-	-
Chair Stipend	10,000	7,500	9,167
MyRoadInfo	29,300	11,842	28,031
Professional Fees – Audit	6,500	160	6,500
Media and Communications	5,200	-	-
Regional Projects - Capacity Building	-	49,800	-
Regional Projects - Other	550,537	-	214,895
Vendor Panel Access	77,500	32,713	65,375
Sundry Expenses	3,709	2,634	3,541
<b>Total</b>	<b>862,127</b>	<b>213,509</b>	<b>498,576</b>
		-	
Net Cash Movement	- 651,327	77,743	- 137,497
Retained Earnings - 1 July	996,259	996,259	1,133,756
Retained Earnings - 30 June	344,932	1,074,002	996,259

**Balance Sheet**

As of March 2021

Assets			
Cash			
Summerland Community First		\$2,870.37	
Summerland Saver		\$986,841.01	
Debit Card - Chair		\$1,895.45	
Debit Card - Exec Officer		\$2,823.36	
Total Cash			\$994,430.19
Debtors			
Trade Debtors		\$82,953.75	
Total Debtors			\$82,953.75
Total Assets			\$1,077,383.94
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Creditors			
Trade Creditors	\$4,950.00		
Total Creditors		\$4,950.00	
GST Liability			
GST Collected	\$1,702.63		
GST paid	-\$7,419.53		
Total GST Liability		-\$5,716.90	
Payroll Liabilities			
PAYG	\$2,456.00		
Provision - Staff entitlements	\$1,692.78		
Total Payroll Liabilities		\$4,148.78	
Total Liabilities			\$3,381.88
Net Assets			\$1,074,002.06
Equity			
Retained Earnings		\$996,258.74	
Current Year Earnings		\$77,743.18	
Historical Balancing		\$0.14	
Total Equity			\$1,074,002.06

This report includes Year-End Adjustments.

**Job Profit & Loss Statement**

March 2021

PO Box 146  
LISMORE NSW 2480

ABN: 68 587 813 167

Email: admin@northernriversjo.nsw.gov.au

Account Name	Selected Period	Year To Date
<b>A100</b>	<b>Operational expenses</b>	
<b>Income</b>		
Membership	\$0.00	\$160,800.00
LG Procurement Rebate	\$0.00	\$37,386.00
State Govt Funding	\$0.00	\$57,600.00
Interest Received	\$169.34	\$1,740.72
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$169.34</b>	<b>\$257,526.72</b>
<b>Expense</b>		
Computer ISP and Registrations	\$120.08	\$1,326.54
Consultants	\$0.00	\$500.00
Phone charges	\$99.08	\$980.36
Support services - Admin contr	\$4,500.00	\$40,500.00
Wages	\$8,653.83	\$48,151.05
Allowances	\$2,145.00	\$5,362.50
Superannuation	\$822.11	\$4,574.35
Provision for Staff Entitlemen	\$750.85	\$1,692.78
Recruitment	\$0.00	\$5,707.73
Travel expenses (non payroll)	\$0.00	\$304.81
Workers Comp Insurance	\$0.00	\$1,539.38
Bank charges	\$0.00	\$40.00
Audit Fees	\$0.00	\$160.00
Printing	\$0.00	\$80.00
Event Catering	\$0.00	\$158.40
Meeting Catering	\$0.00	\$142.41
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$17,090.95</b>	<b>\$111,220.31</b>
<b>Net Profit/(Loss)</b>	<b>-\$16,921.61</b>	<b>\$146,306.41</b>
<b>A102</b>	<b>Chair costs</b>	
<b>Expense</b>		
Postage	\$0.00	\$41.64
Stationery	\$0.00	\$205.86
Allowance-Chair Stipend	\$833.33	\$7,499.97
Travel expenses (non payroll)	-\$116.21	\$49.81
Travel - Meals	\$136.70	\$136.70
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$853.82</b>	<b>\$7,933.98</b>
<b>Net Profit/(Loss)</b>	<b>-\$853.82</b>	<b>-\$7,933.98</b>
<b>B105a</b>	<b>Cap Bldg Waste Microindustries</b>	
<b>Expense</b>		
Project Consultants	\$0.00	\$49,800.00
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$49,800.00</b>
<b>Net Profit/(Loss)</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>-\$49,800.00</b>

This report includes Year-End Adjustments.



**Job Profit & Loss Statement**

March 2021

Account Name	Selected Period	Year To Date
<b>C101</b>	<b>Myroadinfo</b>	
<b>Income</b>		
Myroadinfo	\$16,862.50	\$33,725.00
Total Income	\$16,862.50	\$33,725.00
<b>Expense</b>		
Myroadinfo costs	\$0.00	\$11,841.75
Total Expense	\$0.00	\$11,841.75
Net Profit/(Loss)	\$16,862.50	\$21,883.25
<b>C102</b>	<b>Vendor Panel</b>	
<b>Expense</b>		
Vendor Panel Licence Costs	\$0.00	\$32,712.50
Total Expense	\$0.00	\$32,712.50
Net Profit/(Loss)	\$0.00	-\$32,712.50

**RECOMMENDATION:**

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

This report includes Year-End Adjustments.

## 8 URGENT BUSINESS

## 9 CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS

## 10 CORRESPONDENCE

### Correspondence of significance – Incoming

- Shelley Hancock, Minister for Local Government re JO Monitoring and Evaluation Project
- Tweed Shire Council re Compliance Levy
- Janelle Saffin, Member for Lismore re Watershed Initiative

### Correspondence of significance - Outgoing

- Letter of support Rous County Council
- Office of Local Government re Capacity Building Fund
- Letter of congratulations to Cr Ekins
- Letter of congratulations to Cr Cherry
- Letter of thanks to Cr Richardson

[Attachment 6:](#) Letter from Shelley Hancock, Minister for Local Government re JO Monitoring and Evaluation Project

- [Attachment 7:](#) Letter from Janelle Saffin, Member for Lismore re Watershed Initiative

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT the correspondence report be noted

## 11 ATTACHMENTS

1. *Future Water Project 2060* Community Summary – Securing water supply for our region.
2. RDA Northern Rivers Service Agreement
3. Briefing note submitted by the Northern River’s Councils Planners Group and
4. Correspondence from Mayor of Tweed Shire Council re Compliance Levy
5. Brief prepared by CRJO re Emergency Services Levy
6. Shelley Hancock, Minister for Local Government re JO Monitoring and Evaluation Project
7. Janelle Saffin, Member for Lismore re Watershed Initiative

[<back to meeting papers>](#)



# FUTURE WATER PROJECT 2060

**Community Summary**

Securing water supply  
for our region



## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



**From drinking, cooking and washing through to farming or running a business – every day, every member of every local community depends on water. This is why a secure drinking water supply is one of the most precious pieces of community infrastructure.**

Like most water utilities across Australia, our regional supply is facing a number of critical water security challenges. These challenges are inescapable here in the Northern Rivers given it is one of the fastest growing regions in NSW, which is set to become more susceptible to less reliable rainfall and hotter weather.

Additional water conservation efforts will undoubtedly help prolong our existing supplies, but on their own won't be enough to ensure the region's future water security.

We know new water sources are required to meet our long-term water needs. Otherwise, the community will be burdened with longer and more severe water restrictions.

The mission of Rous County Council's Future Water Project 2060 is to deliver the new water sources needed – in conjunction with ongoing water saving measures – to tackle the increasing demands confronting our regional water supply.

In late 2020, after an extended public exhibition period, the Council decided not to proceed with the new Dunoon Dam as its preferred long-term water supply source option.

Ultimately, the environmental and Indigenous cultural heritage risks posed by the new dam along with strong community opposition to its construction could not be ignored.

As a result, our revised Future Water Project 2060 now recommends a more suitable alternate approach under which additional groundwater sources are gradually brought online as primary supplies.

At the same time, we will implement more demanding water saving initiatives and investigate potential purified recycled water schemes.

It takes a strong commitment to innovative, long-term planning to provide a resilient water supply today and well into the future for the many communities across the Ballina Shire, Byron Shire, Lismore City and Richmond Valley areas.

Rous County Council looks forward to working closely with its constituent councils and their residents over the coming decades to establish a water supply security legacy for the region.

**Cr Keith Williams**  
**Chair, Rous County Council**  
**April 2021**

## WHAT IS ROUS COUNTY COUNCIL'S ROLE?

Rous County Council is a multi-purpose county council constituted under the Local Government Act 1993 to deliver bulk water, weed biosecurity and flood mitigation services to its constituent councils.

It is the regional water supply authority, providing water in bulk from its principal supply source at Rocky Creek Dam. RCC provides this bulk water directly to the Ballina Shire, Byron Shire, Lismore City and Richmond Valley councils.

We are responsible for providing safe and secure drinking water to over 110,000 people in an area of 3000 km<sup>2</sup>.

With this important role as the bulk water supplier, RCC must ensure our community has a safe, sustainable and secure the bulk water supply not only now, but also into the future.

A changing climate means less reliable rainfall and hotter weather. At the same time, water use is forecast to increase as the population grows.

**RCC's Future Water Project 2060 delivers water security for our region.**



# FUTURE WATER PROJECT 2060

**Our mission** - to secure our region a high quality drinking water supply for future generations and continue to deliver ongoing water conservation measures.

## The challenges

- Population growth forecasts indicate a 37% increase in drinking water demand by 2060
- Climate forecasts predict a reduction in available surface water of 22% by 2060
- On current growth, water demand will exceed reliable supply by 2024

## Our communities

Byron Shire, Ballina Shire, Lismore City and Richmond Valley. A supply area of over 3,000 km<sup>2</sup>, encompassing growing and diverse communities.

## Acknowledgment of country

Rous County Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which it works and pays respect to Elders past, present and future. We're committed to working in partnership with the traditional custodians of the Bundjalung Nation.



## Our guiding principles

Secure a healthy, reliable, sustainable water supply, compatible with and welcomed by our communities.

Continuously adapt to the challenges of a changing climate and a growing population.

Ensure a decision making process that seeks to balance environmental and cultural imperatives with feasibility costs and ongoing financial viability.



Rocky Creek Dam  
Northern Rivers, NSW

## Existing water sources:



Rocky Creek Dam



Emigrant Creek Dam



Wilsons River

With a capacity of 14,000ML, Rocky Creek Dam has been the primary bulk water source for the region since 1953. Water is also sourced from Emigrant Creek Dam at Newrybar and from the Wilsons River at Howards Grass upstream from Lismore.

When full, Rocky Creek Dam is able to meet a years water needs for our total supply area.

# FORECASTING FUTURE NEEDS AND SUPPLY

**2000** Two decades ago, the Rous regional water supply served **26,000 properties (population of 87,000)** with an average annual water demand of **12,500ML**

**2021** Today, Rous supplies water to **47,000 properties (population of 110,000)** with an average annual water demand of **11,500ML**

**2060** By 2060, Rous is expected to supply water to **67,000 properties (population of 150,000)** with an average annual water demand of **16,000ML**

## Future focus

- 1 Continued water efficiency and conservation measures
- 2 Identifying and preparing new sources of groundwater
- 3 Further investigate recycled water systems and sources
- 4 Further assessment on desalination plant locations

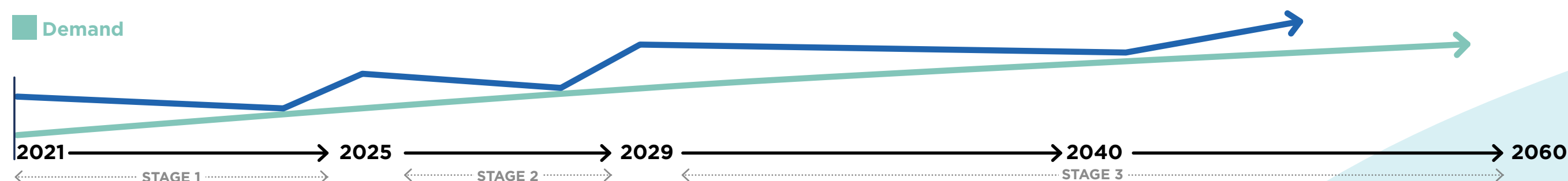
## Investigating additional supply options regionally

Extensive investigations have been completed to evaluate all future options for the region's water supply. On the evidence and community acceptance, the following options present meaningful sources for ongoing and emergency water supply for our region.

- 1 Ground water sources
- 2 Recycled water
- 3 Desalination

**Supply**

**Demand**



# PROJECT STAGES 2021-2060

Over the next 40 years Rous will take a 3 stage approach to investigating, implementing and securing our region's water supply.

## STAGE 1 Key short-term actions

**2021-2025** focuses on maximising the efficiencies of our existing water sources by undertaking innovative water conservation measures programs and upgrading existing community infrastructure, at the Marom Creek Water Treatment Plant and it's existing network of groundwater bores. This stage also commences the planning for a pilot purified recycled water treatment plant to obtain community acceptance of the advance purification technology, as well as complete further investigations into the opportunities of purified recycled water as an indirect water supply option.

## STAGE 3 Delivering long-term water security

**2030 - 2060** focuses on being agile and keeping all appropriate options available to respond to a changing climate and advancements in technology. This stage is critical in determining and implementing the most cost effective and sustainable option to secure the region's long-term water supply to 2060 and beyond.

## Future potential options

- Further groundwater schemes
- Purified recycled water schemes
- Seawater desalination (local and regional)

## STAGE 2 Meeting the short-term growth in our region

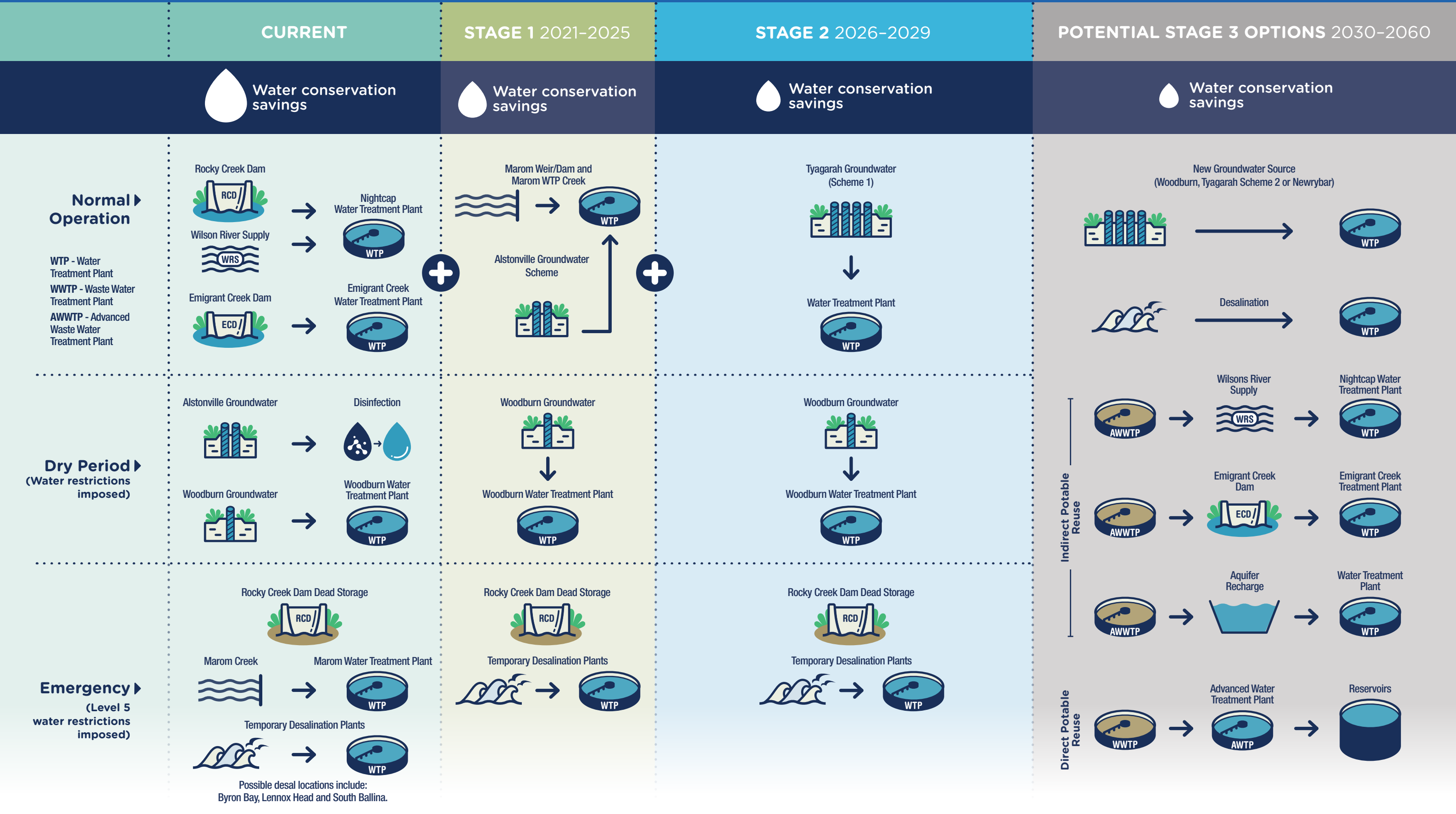
**2026-2029** focuses on the further delivery of contemporary water conservation measures and delivery of a new groundwater scheme in the Byron Shire area. This stage will commence planning for future groundwater sources and the construction and verification process of the pilot purified recycled water treatment plant. This will coincide with a broad community education program about the benefits of purified recycled water.

A forecast  
**16,000 ML p.a.**  
required by 2060



# STAGES OF PREFERRED WATER PLAN

## Water sources, treatments & activities





# PLANNED NEW SOURCES OF WATER SUPPLY

## Marom Creek / Alstonville Plateau groundwater

Rous are working with Ballina Shire Council to implement an extensive upgrade of the existing **‘Marom Creek Water Treatment Plant’** to treat additional future volumes of **Alstonville Plateau** groundwater through stage 1 of the Future Water Project.



## Woodburn groundwater

Rous’ preliminary modelling indicates the **‘Woodburn Groundwater Scheme’** could provide an additional 700ML of water per annum to our region’s water supply. Enough to supply the projected 2060 annual **daily demand of the lower Richmond Valley** supply area.

## Tyagarah groundwater

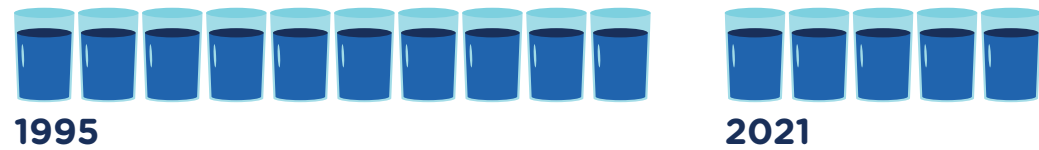
**Two Tyagarah groundwater schemes** have been identified as regional supplies that can commence operation by 2029 and implemented in planned stages. This source can meet the bulk of **Byron Shire’s water demands until 2040.**





# WATER CONSERVATION

Since 1995 our region has reduced individual water consumption by 50%. Our plan incorporates a continuation of that reduction via a suite of measures. Moving forward these ongoing efficiency measures can go on to secure a further 15% reduction across our communities in the long-term.



## Partnership activities with local councils

- Monitoring and reporting
- Water loss management
- The Sustainable Water Partner Program
- Smart metering
- Recycled water
- Rainwater tank rebates
- Community education

## Smart metering

Over a 2 year period starting from mid 2021, Rous will commence the rollout of smart metering to all 2,000 direct customers.

Benefits of smart metering include better monitoring of daily water use to help customers find new ways to reduce consumption, and early notification of leaks.

It also provides Rous with accurate real time data for better planning.

## Technology for water loss management

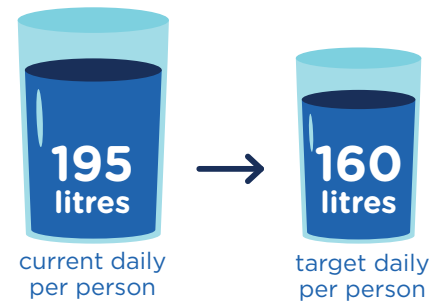
Rous will invest in technologies for better pressure management and active leak detection, significantly reducing water loss within the bulk supply network.

## Reducing household water use

In 1991 the average water use was **484 KL** per connection per annum.

By 2019 usage was reduced to **247 KL** per connection per annum.

Current 2021 use is **195 ltr** per person per day. Usage reduction target is **160 ltr** per person per day.



further  
reduction  
target approx  
**18%**  
per person  
per day







## PIONEERING PURIFIED RECYCLED WATER

It is estimated a region wide water recycling scheme once fully implemented can provide significant additional purified water to bulk water supplies.

Rous County Council's **2060 Future Water Project** has **Purified Recycled Water** firmly positioned as an ongoing part of the region's bulk water supply.

To ensure we meet our objectives, we will need to meet universal challenges such as public health regulatory approvals, costly approval and planning processes and community acceptance first.

To meet these challenges and bring the community onboard, Rous is proposing to implement **Pilot Water Scheme** to supply purified recycled water to the existing Perradenya residential estate.





Rous County Council  
218-232 Molesworth Street  
Lismore NSW 2480  
Tel: (02) 6623 3800  
[council@rous.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@rous.nsw.gov.au)



[facebook.com/RousCountyCouncil](https://facebook.com/RousCountyCouncil)



Rous County Council

Published April 2021

## **GENERAL SERVICE AGREEMENT**

**THIS GENERAL SERVICE AGREEMENT (the "Agreement") dated this**

**\_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_**

### **BETWEEN:**

Northern Rivers Joint Organisation A.B.N. 68 587 813 167 ("NRJO") (the "Client")

**- AND -**

Regional Development Australia - Northern Rivers Inc A.B.N. 19 029 547 565  
(the "Contractor") ("RDA -NR").

### **BACKGROUND:**

- A. The Client is of the opinion that the Contractor has the necessary qualifications, experience and abilities to provide services to the Client.
- B. The Contractor is agreeable to providing such services to the Client on the terms and conditions set out in this Agreement.

**IN CONSIDERATION OF** the matters described above and of the mutual benefits and obligations set forth in this Agreement, the receipt and sufficiency of which consideration is hereby acknowledged, the Client and the Contractor (individually the "Party" and collectively the "Parties" to this Agreement) agree as follows:

#### **Services Provided**

- 1. The Client hereby agrees to engage the Contractor to provide the Client with the services outlined in Schedule A and Schedule B (the "Services"):
- 2. The Services will also include any other tasks which the Parties may mutually agree on. The Contractor hereby agrees to provide such Services to the Client.

#### **Term of Agreement.**

- 3. The term of this Agreement (the "Term") will begin on the first day of **June, 2021** and will remain in full force and effect **6 months**, subject to earlier termination as provided in this Agreement. The Term of this Agreement may

be extended with the written consent of the Parties. The Term of Extension will be 6 months from the anniversary date of this agreement.

4. In the event that either Party wishes to terminate this Agreement prior to the **6 month** period, that Party will be required to provide 30 days' written notice to the other Party.

### **Performance**

5. The Parties agree to do everything necessary to ensure that the terms of this Agreement take effect.

### **Currency**

6. Except as otherwise provided in this Agreement, all monetary amounts referred to in this Agreement are in AUD (Australian Dollars).

### **Payment**

7. The Contractor will charge the Client a fee of **\$4590.00** (plus GST) (the "Payment") per month in advance which includes administrative and financial services.
8. The term of extension will be subject to an increase of 3% to the Payment, or equivalent to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) increase whichever is the higher value.
9. Invoices submitted by the Contractor to the Client are due within 30 days of receipt.

### **Payment of Client Expenses**

10. The Contractor will be authorised to pay all necessary expenses incurred by the client when they fall due on the client's behalf as part of the services provision. Examples of Client expense items are outlined in Schedule A.
11. The Client authorises from time to time for any other reasonable and necessary expenses incurred by the Contractor in connection with providing the Services.
12. All expenses must be pre-approved by the Client and duly authorised.

### **Confidentiality**

13. Confidential information (the "Confidential Information") refers to any data or information relating to the business of the Client which would reasonably be considered to be proprietary to the Client including, but not limited to, accounting records, business processes, and client records and that is not generally known in the industry of the Client and where the release of that Confidential Information could reasonably be expected to cause harm to the Client.
14. The Contractor agrees that they will not disclose, divulge, reveal, report or use, for any purpose, any confidential information which the Contractor has obtained, except as authorised by the Client or as required by law. The obligations of confidentiality will apply during the term of this Agreement and will survive indefinitely upon termination of this Agreement.
15. All written and oral information and material disclosed or provided by the Client to the Contractor under this Agreement is Confidential Information regardless of whether it was provided before or after the date of this Agreement or how it was provided to the Contractor.

### **Ownership of Intellectual Property**

16. All intellectual property and related material, including any trade secrets, moral rights, goodwill, relevant registrations or applications for registration, and rights in any patent, copyright, trademark, trade dress, industrial design and trade name (the "Intellectual Property") that is developed or produced under this Agreement, will be the sole property of the Client. The use of the Intellectual Property by the Client will not be restricted in any manner.
17. The Contractor may not use the Intellectual Property for any purpose other than that contracted for in this Agreement except with the written consent of the Client. The Contractor will be responsible for any and all damages resulting from the unauthorised use of the Intellectual Property.
18. The Client agrees that any Intellectual Property owned or created by the Contractor in the normal course of its own business separate from any services provided to the client, shall be owned by the Contractor and the Client shall have no claim.

### **Return of Property**

19. Upon the expiry or termination of this Agreement, the Contractor will return to the Client any property, documentation, records, or Confidential Information which is the property of the Client.
20. Upon the expiry or termination of this Agreement, the Client will return to the Contractor any property, which is the property of the Contractor.

### **Capacity/Independent Contractor**

21. In providing the Services under this Agreement it is expressly agreed that the Contractor is acting as an independent contractor and not as an employee. The Contractor and the Client acknowledge that this Agreement does not create a partnership or joint venture between them, and is exclusively a contract for service.

### **Notice**

22. All notices, requests, demands or other communications required or permitted by the terms of this Agreement will be given in writing and delivered to the Parties at the following addresses:

- a. Northern Rivers Joint Organisation  
PO Box 146, Lismore, New South Wales, 2480
- b. Regional Development Australia - Northern Rivers Inc  
PO Box 146, Lismore, New South Wales, 2480

or to such other address as either Party may from time to time notify the other.

### **Australian Business Number (ABN)**

23. The Australian Business Numbers (ABN's) for the Parties to this Agreement are as follows:
  - a. Northern Rivers Joint Organisation: ABN: 68 587 813 167
  - b. Regional Development Australia - Northern Rivers Inc: ABN 19 029 547 565



### **Indemnification**

24. Except to the extent paid in settlement from any applicable insurance policies, and to the extent permitted by applicable law, each Party agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the other Party, and its respective directors, shareholders, affiliates, officers, agents, employees, and permitted successors and assigns against any and all claims, losses, damages, liabilities, penalties, punitive damages, expenses, reasonable legal fees and costs of any kind or amount whatsoever, which result from or arise out of any act or omission of the indemnifying party, its respective directors, shareholders, affiliates, officers, agents, employees, and permitted successors and assigns that occurs in connection with this Agreement. This indemnification will survive the termination of this Agreement.

### **Insurances**

25. The Client will ensure that both Public Liability, Directors and Officers and any other relevant insurance coverage up to an adequate level are in place during the term of this agreement.

### **Modification of Agreement**

26. Any amendment or modification of this Agreement or additional obligation assumed by either Party in connection with this Agreement will only be binding if evidenced in writing signed by each Party or an authorised representative of each Party.

### **Time of the Essence**

27. Time is of the essence in this Agreement. No extension or variation of this Agreement will operate as a waiver of this provision.

### **Assignment**

28. The Contractor will not voluntarily, or by operation of law, assign or otherwise transfer its obligations under this Agreement without the prior written consent of the Client.

### **Entire Agreement**

29. It is agreed that there is no representation, warranty, collateral agreement or condition affecting this Agreement except as expressly provided in this Agreement.

### **Governing Law**

30. This Agreement will be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of New South Wales.

### **Severability**

31. In the event that any of the provisions of this Agreement are held to be invalid or unenforceable in whole or in part, all other provisions will nevertheless continue to be valid and enforceable with the invalid or unenforceable parts severed from the remainder of this Agreement.

### **Waiver**

32. The waiver by either Party of a breach, default, delay or omission of any of the provisions of this Agreement by the other Party will not be construed as a waiver of any subsequent breach of the same or other provisions.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF** the Parties have duly affixed their signatures under hand and seal on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
WITNESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Northern Rivers Joint Organisation

Per: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
WITNESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Regional Development Australia-  
Northern Rivers Inc

Per: \_\_\_\_\_

## **SCHEDULE A**

### **Scope of Services**

A total of **25 hours per week** will be allocated for combined administrative and financial service provision to the NRJO. Payment for these services are \$4590.00 per month (plus GST) in advance. Administrative services will be allocated at a maximum of 20 hours and the Financial services will be a maximum of 5 hours and billed in 30 minute increments.

#### **Administrative Services**

The contracted Administrative services will be related to general administrative services which allow the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation to function effectively as outlined in Schedule B. Specialised legal, human resource and other Corporate advice will be an additional cost or provided by a member council.

Key administrative duties include in the preparation and management of meetings (agendas, minutes and governance) plus event management, issues management, basic media and communication assistance including website content updates and other reasonable administrative duties as required.

#### **Inclusions**

RDA -NR will provide office space via a hot desk, computing equipment, printers, office software licencing, and office consumables.

A dedicated mobile phone number will be maintained as primary point of contact for NRJO. Data charges will be included in the monthly service fee.

The costs of travel by RDA NR staff will be included in the monthly service fee for the in-region travel to NRJO Board Meetings only. For travel outside of the NRJO geographic footprint, or for other activities not including NRJO Board meetings the NRJO will be billed at the standard relevant ATO rate.

It is anticipated that additional hours will be required for the preparation of budgets and coordination of annual audit and invoicing. Extra costs involved in the preparation of the Annual Report following receipt of audited financial reports and coordination of regional submissions will be negotiated with the Executive Officer.

#### **Financial Services**

Financial services will be provided to the Joint Organisation using an electronic bookkeeping system (MYOB). Services include general bookkeeping, monthly reporting, BAS, payroll and FBT services. Annual MYOB licence fees will be charged to NRJO.

#### **Budget**

Costs for services as described above are as proposed in Schedule B. The scope of the activities is negotiable.

## Schedule B: Scope of Services Breakdown

Service	Breakdown	Inclusions	Additional Cost or Out of Scope	Monthly Total
Admin Services	20 hours per week	General administrative services including secretariat function Basic website content updates and media and communication assistance office space, computer equipment, printers, office consumables, IT data plan. In region travel only for Committee Meetings	Website development design and maintenance Preparation of reports IT platforms as required by State Law or Department	\$3876.00 plus GST (per month)
Financial Services	4 hours per week	General bookkeeping services including preparation of monthly and annual reports, Payroll BAS returns (electronic only) office consumables	Preparation of financial reports other than Monthly and Annual Profit and Loss and Balance Sheet reports.  1x MYOB licence annual subscription	\$714.00 plus GST (per month)
Other	1 hour per week	Basic in-house IT help and troubleshooting, provision of hot desk		nil

## Briefing Note Northern Rivers Joint Organisation

### NSW Compliance Levies & Funding Review

This submission has been prepared with the joint input of the Northern Rivers Council's Planners Group.

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

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

The website and the associated frequently asked questions paper intertwine references to Development Applications, Complying Development Certificates and a new Compliance Cost Notice. To further clarify the intent of the notice, Tweed Shire Council staff contacted the NSW Department of Planning, Industry & Environment and obtained the following additional verbal information:

- Q. What are you proposing to end on 1 July 2021 and why? And what changes will that mean for the Local Government Act, especially section 608?
- A. *The Minister is proposing to stop any ability that Councils have to impose compliance levies on DA's. This will be achieved by the Minister setting a \$0 fee for DA Compliance under the EP&A Act 1979 and therefore s608 of the Local Government Act can only be used if no other fee exists in another Act. There will be a new \$0 fee under EP&A Regulation and therefore Council's **may** no longer be able to attach an environmental enforcement levy to DA's and **possibly** no longer able to attach an Information and Technology State Portal Service Charge Service to DA's .*
- Q. How do you propose to levy CDC Compliance? For example charging the complainant or the landowner? Who gets charged when?
- A. *For CDC's there will be a new compliance levy under the EP&A Regulation. How this is intended to be charged is yet to be determined.*

*In addition for legitimate DA complaints that result in a Notice there will be a Compliance Cost Regime where Councils can try to recoup some of the costs associated with the issuing of the Notice. Who gets charged when has yet to be worked out and the Departments Team will be looking at that in the coming weeks. It will never be full cost recovery and that is not the intent.*

# Briefing Note Northern Rivers Joint Organisation

## NSW Compliance Levies & Funding Review

*For compliance matters that don't result in a Notice there is no cost recovery option.*

Following historical legal advice, Tweed Shire Council introduced a miscellaneous fee called the Environmental Enforcement Levy (EEL) under Section 608 of the Local Government Act 1993. The charge has consistently been set at 0.1% of the total cost of a DA. This has generated sufficient income to permanently fund two of the current 4 Compliance officers for over 10 years.

Name	Year 19/20	Year 20/21	
	Fee (incl. GST)	Fee (excl. GST)	Fee (incl. GST)

### Planning & Regulation Services

#### Development Application Fees

Environmental Enforcement Levy	0.1% of the contract price of a development up to \$2M. The charge does not increase for development over \$2M. i.e. Maximum charge \$2,000 (s608 LGA 1993)
--------------------------------	---

If the Minister introduces a \$0 fee for DA Compliance under the EP&A Regulation this may switch off the ability to use Section 608 of the Local Government Act and could affect Council's ability to handle the large volume of compliance matters if Tweed Shire Council cannot find funding for two existing permanent employees.

[With an inability to increase ordinary rates or levy a charge, it is probable that those two positions will be made redundant and Council will need to scale back its response to compliance by up to 50%. This in turn is likely to result in more referrals of matters to State Agencies such as DPIE, EPA, Crown Land, DPI \(Ag\), Fisheries, LLS, or the local State Members of Parliament.](#)

Through consultation with colleagues, it is evident that various Northern Rivers Councils, and other Councils throughout the State, also rely on a similar levy or charge to assist the funding of their compliance services.

The Northern Rivers Council's Planners Group are extremely disappointed that such an announcement has been made with only targeted consultation and little notice, with limited rationale as evidence for the changes.

For such changes to have effect from 1 July 2021 it has major implications for Council draft budgets and fees and charges which are currently being advanced for public exhibition prior to adoption to commence for the 2021/2022 financial year.

In recent years, most Northern Rivers Councils have experienced a major increase in the demands and expectations of its communities to carry out comprehensive compliance and enforcement services among its diverse planning, construction and environmental regulatory functions.

## **Briefing Note Northern Rivers Joint Organisation**

### **NSW Compliance Levies & Funding Review**

The demand for such services is likely to increase further as a result of the State Government's new emerging planning legislation and policy, relating to Short Term Rental Accommodation, Agritourism and increased Exempt and Complying Development provisions for Commercial and Industrial Development. New building certification legislation will also generate increased community expectations for Council oversight.

The Northern Rivers Council's Planners Group therefore seeks the support of the General Managers Group and the Board of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation to advocate to the NSW State Government to withdraw the proposed changes until proper consultation and sufficient notice is given to enable Councils to be better fund essential environmental compliance matters.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation endorse that a submission based on this report be made to the NSW Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, the Hon. Rob Stokes, seeking the deferral of the proposed changes to compliance levies and fees, to allow for more detailed consultation with NSW Councils, in order to provide more time to consider and plan for any resulting impacts on the funding of essential planning, certification and environmental compliance services.



Council Reference:  
Your Reference:



Customer Service | 1300 292 872 | (02) 6670 2400

16 April 2021

[tsc@tweed.nsw.gov.au](mailto:tsc@tweed.nsw.gov.au)  
[www.tweed.nsw.gov.au](http://www.tweed.nsw.gov.au)



PO Box 816  
Murwillumbah NSW 2484

Please address all communications  
to the General Manager

ABN 90 178 732 496

Cr Danielle Mulholland  
Chair Northern Rivers Joint Organisation  
PO Box 146  
**LISMORE NSW 2480**

[admin@northernriversjo.nsw.gov.au](mailto:admin@northernriversjo.nsw.gov.au)  
[danielle.mulholland@kyogle.nsw.gov.au](mailto:danielle.mulholland@kyogle.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Cr Mulholland

### **Compliance Levy Framework**

I would like to bring your urgent attention to an important matter for Tweed Shire Council.

At its meeting of 15 April 2021, Council unanimously resolved the following:

***"RESOLVED** that the Mayor writes to the NSW Department of Planning, Industry & Environment and the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation and Local Members to express dissatisfaction with the 29 March 2021 notice concerning NSW Compliance Levies and Funding Review and seek support by requesting that the NSW State Government withdraw the proposed changes until proper consultation and sufficient notice is given to enable Council's to be better fund essential development and environmental compliance matters."*

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

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

The website and the associated frequently asked questions paper intertwine references to Development Applications, Complying Development Certificates and a new Compliance Cost Notice. To further clarify the intent of the notice Tweed Shire Council staff contacted the NSW Department of Planning, Industry & Environment and obtained the following additional verbal information:

- Q. What are you proposing to end on 1 July 2021 and why? And what changes will that mean for the Local Government Act specially section 608?
- A. The Minister is proposing to stop any ability that Councils have to impose compliance levies on DA's. This will be achieved by the Minister setting a \$0 fee for DA Compliance

under the EP&A Act 1979 and therefore s608 of the Local Government Act can only be used if no other fee exists in another Act. There will be a new \$0 fee under EP&A Regulation and therefore Council's may no longer be able to attach an environmental enforcement levy to DA's and possibly no longer able to attach an Information and Technology State Portal Service Charge Service to DA's.

- Q. How do you propose to levy CDC Compliance? For example charging the complainant or the landowner? Who gets charged when?
- A. For CDC's there will be a new compliance levy under the EP&A Regulation. How this is intended to be charged is yet to be determined.

In addition for legitimate DA complaints that result in a Notice there will be a Compliance Cost Regime where Councils can try to recoup some of the costs associated with the issuing of the Notice. Who gets charged when has yet to be worked out and the Departments Team will be looking at that in the coming weeks. It will never be full cost recovery and that is not the intent.

For compliance matters that don't result in a Notice there is no cost recovery option.

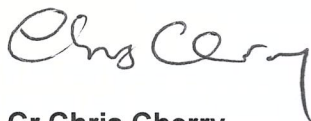
Following historical legal advice Tweed Shire Council has charged a miscellaneous fee called the Environmental Enforcement Levy (EEL) under Section 608 of the Local Government Act 1993. The charge has consistently been set at 0.1% of the total cost of a DA. This has generated sufficient income to permanently fund two of the current 4 compliance officers for over 10 years.

If the Minister introduces a \$0 fee for DA Compliance under the EP&A Regulation this may switch off the ability to use Section 608 of the Local Government Act and could affect Council's ability to handle the large volume of compliance matters if Tweed Shire Council cannot find funding for two existing permanent employees.

It is disappointing that such an announcement has been made with only targeted consultation and little notice. For such changes to have effect from 1 July 2021 it has major implications for Council budgets and fees and charges which are all being finalised now for the 2021/2022 financial year.

Tweed Shire Council therefore calls upon your support to request the NSW State Government to withdraw the proposed changes until proper consultation and sufficient notice is given to enable all NSW Councils to be in a better position to fund essential environmental compliance matters.

Yours faithfully



**Cr Chris Cherry**  
**MAYOR**



---

crjo.nsw.gov.au • PO Box 66 QUEANBEYAN NSW 2620

14 February 2021

The Hon. David Elliott MP

Minister for Police and Emergency Services

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

Dear Minister

As you would be aware the cost of funding the State's Emergency Services has increased substantially over the past few years. We understand that funds are required for additional safety equipment and employment costs among other things and the local government sector is supportive of these cost initiatives. This is an important issue.

However, the substantial additional costs reflected in the Emergency Services Levy (ESL) are now a direct impost on local Councils. We estimate that Member Councils of the Canberra Region Joint Organisation<sup>1</sup> (CRJO) are expending between 75% and 200% of their capped annual increases from rate peg revenue to fund the ESL. Whilst we acknowledge the generosity of your Government over the past two years to fund the additional ESL it is now a direct cost to ratepayers and the increased costs are clearly unsustainable.

#### Case Studies

- In Goulburn Mulwaree their addition ESL contribution is \$320,000 per annum or \$1,300,000 over the next four year financial planning cycle. The current revenue increase allowable under the rate cap is 2% or \$420,000 per annum. The ESL contribution would consume over 75% of the potential increase. With wage costs rising and expected revenue from investments falling there will be a shortfall.
- In smaller rural Councils the gap is even more stark. For example, in the Upper Lachlan Shire the annual ESL increase in contributions is \$333,000 per annum. The total revenue increase under their 2% rate cap is only \$153,000 per annum. There will simply not be enough funds to cover the ESL even before other necessary costs are covered. The call for ESL funds will likely have devastating consequences for Councils essential operations and services.
- In the Bega Valley Shire which has been severely impacted by fires and floods in recent times with seven emergency declarations made in the previous year alone, the ESL increase is \$292,000 per annum or \$1.2M over next four years. The expected revenue increase under the rate cap is \$609,000 however wage increases of \$370,000 and insurance expenses increasing by greater than 10% to over \$1.1M per annum will expend most of this available revenue.

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<sup>1</sup> Member Councils: Wingecarribee Shire, Goulburn Mulwaree, Upper Lachlan Shire, Hilltops, Queanbeyan-Palerang, Eurobodalla Shire, Bega Valley Shire, Snowy Monaro and Snowy Valleys. Associate Member Councils: Wagga Wagga and East Gippsland.





Councils and our communities of ratepayers in this region have been doing it really tough. In the last twelve months we have had devastating fires, suffered the effects of long term droughts with years of negative economic impact expected, floods which decimated significant infrastructure and assets and of course COVID 19.

All the Councils are expecting that they will need to fund necessary increases to services and staff as well as offset the loss of interest revenue from term investments. Rates revenue is the major source of income to fund the critical operational needs of the organisation. The additional ESL costs imposed by State Government will likely result in a reduction of services or fewer projects at a time when local stimulus and investment is required for recovery and renewal.

We strongly urge the NSW State Government continue to fund the ESL increases until we can find a better solution for raising the necessary revenue for our Emergency Services. Requiring ratepayers to meet these increased costs imposes an excessive burden on local government. Any reduction of the capacity of local Councils to deliver the services required to support their communities will inevitably lead to more financial hardship and community stress.

I would welcome the opportunity to speak with you further about this important issue and to showcase in detail the impacts of the ESL on the Member Councils of the CRJO.

Yours sincerely

**Ms Kalina Koloff**

Chief Executive Officer | Canberra Region Joint Organisation

E: [kalina.koloff@crjo.nsw.gov.au](mailto:kalina.koloff@crjo.nsw.gov.au)

M: 0413 926 688

Cc: The Hon. Shelley Hancock, Minister for Local Government

The Hon. Dominic Perrottet, Treasurer



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

Ref: A765194

Clr Danielle Mulholland  
Chairperson  
Northern Rivers Joint Organisation  
PO Box 146  
LISMORE NSW 2480

By email: [danielle.mulholland@kyogle.nsw.gov.au](mailto:danielle.mulholland@kyogle.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Clr Mulholland

As you are aware the Office of Local Government (OLG) is undertaking an evaluation of the joint organisations (JOs) framework.

I am pleased to inform you that ARTD has been appointed to undertake the evaluation. ARTD is a leading public policy consulting firm, with significant experience and expertise in undertaking reviews and evaluation.

Given the importance of the initiative, I have requested significant engagement and consultation be undertaken with JOs and key stakeholders, as part of this process.

Over the next couple of weeks, representatives from ARTD and the Office of Local Government (OLG) will contact you and your JO Executive Officer to arrange a suitable interview time. You will also be invited to nominate two stakeholders with direct relationships with your JO, to participate in a survey as part of the evaluation process. I encourage you to take this opportunity to nominate stakeholders who can offer useful insights into your JO's operation in your region. A wide range of local government and other stakeholders will also have the opportunity to provide input.

As you know, the NSW Government is committed to the ongoing success of the JOs. Your input into the evaluation process will be vital to ensure an appropriate framework to support JOs into the future. I would like to thank you in advance for your interest and important contribution.

Yours sincerely

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

CC: [execofficer@northernriversjo.nsw.gov.au](mailto:execofficer@northernriversjo.nsw.gov.au)

26 APR 2021



*Janelle Saffin* MP  
STATE MEMBER FOR LISMORE



Wednesday, 17 March 2021

Cr Danielle Mulholland  
Mayor, Kyogle Shire Council  
Chair, Northern Rivers Joint Organisation (NRJO)  
PO BOX 146  
Lismore NSW 2480

Sent via email to [admin@northernriversjo.nsw.gov.au](mailto:admin@northernriversjo.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Cr Mulholland,

**Re: Northern Rivers Watershed Initiative community support and action.**

On Friday, 26 February 2021, I hosted a small gathering of local community members and stakeholders to discuss the best action to gather support from the broader community to realise the Northern Rivers Watershed Initiative (NRWI). Thank you for sending the Deputy Chair of the NRJO, Cr Chris Cherry, and the Executive Officer, Ms Nicole Reeve, to attend.

The group supports the NRWI and agrees that it is a good initiative to address the important issues of poor water quality in our rivers and flood risk management in coastal catchments.

To ensure support from the wider community, the group identified the need to have the NSW Government recognise it as a priority, as have the NRJO and our community, and secure resources from the NSW Government. Further to this, the group also recognised the NRJO as a suitable organisation to drive the advocacy, along with and backed by me.

On behalf of the group, I am writing to you as the Chair of the NRJO and ask whether the NRJO is in a position to explore the above-mentioned proposals put forward by the group.

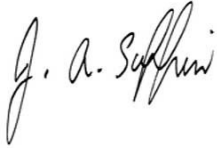
I have enclosed the list of those who attended the gathering for your reference.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss this further.

55 Carrington Street (PO BOX 52), Lismore NSW 2480  
T 02 6621 3624 E [lismore@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:lismore@parliament.nsw.gov.au)  
[www.janellesaffin.com.au](http://www.janellesaffin.com.au)  
f [janelle.saffin](#) i [janelle.saffin.mp](#)

Thank you for your consideration on this matter, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. A. Saffin'.

Janelle Saffin MP  
Member for Lismore

The list of attendees:

1. Janelle Saffin MP – Member for Lismore.
2. Mr Steve Roberts – Bundjalung Elder.
3. Cr Chris Cherry – Mayor Tweed Shire Council and Deputy Chair NRJO.
4. Ms Nicole Reeve, Executive Officer via ZOOM.
5. Dr Nathan Kesteven – Whian Whian Landcare group.
6. Professor Caroline Sullivan – Professor Emeritus, Southern Cross University.
7. Mr Jeremy Stewart – Whian Whian Landcare group.
8. Mr Jim Richardson.
9. Mr John Larsson – Chair, OZ Fish Richmond River Chapter.
10. Mr Warren and Mrs Pauline Elvery – Lismore/Alstonville Branch Chairman.
11. Mr Ronny Susanto – Senior Electorate Officer, Office of Janelle Saffin MP.