

Agenda to the Board Meeting 11 March 2021

Members

Cr B Bourke	Bathurst Regional Council	Cr J Medcalf	Lachlan Shire Council
Cr S Ferguson	Blayney Shire Council	Cr K Sajowitz	Oberon Council
Cr K Beatty	Cabonne Council	Cr R Kidd	Orange City Council
Cr B West	Cowra Shire Council	Cr K Keith	Parkes Shire Council
Cr P Miller	Forbes Shire Council	Cr M Liebich	Weddin Shire Council

Attending

Mr D Sherley	Bathurst Regional Council	Cr D Somerville	CTW
Ms R Ryan	Blayney Shire Council	Mr G Rhodes	CTW
Mr B Byrnes	Cabonne Council	Ms R Fagan	RDACW
Mr P Devery	Cowra Shire Council	Mr S Harma	RDACW
Mr S Loane	Forbes Shire Council	Mr A Albury	DPC
Mr G Tory	Lachlan Shire Council	Mr P Evans	OLG
Mr G Wallace	Oberon Council	Ms J Bennett	CNSWJO
Mr D Waddell	Orange City Council	Ms M Macpherson	CNSWJO
Mr K Boyd	Parkes Shire Council	Ms K Barker	CNSWJO
Mr G Carroll	Weddin Shire Council	Ms C Griffin	CNSWJO

It is advised that the next meeting of the Central NSW Joint Organisation Board will be held Thursday 11 March in Blayney at the Blayney Shire Community Centre, 41 Church Street, beginning at **10.00am**. The meeting will go to 12:30 after which there will be presentations from various telecommunications providers and lunch. The day will finish at 2pm.

Please contact Jenny Bennett on 0428 690 935 with any questions

Reports



Central NSW Joint Organisation

PO Box 333 Forbes NSW 2871

Chair – Cr John Medcalf, Lachlan Shire Council

Executive Officer – Jennifer Bennett

Email: jennifer.bennett@centraljo.nsw.gov.au

Ph: 0428 690 935

Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Acknowledgment to Country
3. Apologies applications for a leave of absence by Joint Voting representatives
4. Speakers
 - 10.00am David Hogan, WaterNSW will provide an update on the Wyangala Dam Project
 - 11.30am NBN Steve Bowman – nbnc update on major recent announcements and opportunities for the region, with LGA specific briefs.
 - From 12:30 which there will be presentations from various telecommunications providers and lunch. The day will finish at 2pm.
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 - g. Regional Activator Alliance 53
 - h. A 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW – Refresh 55
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9. Late reports
10. Matters raised by Members
11. Speakers to the next meeting
12. Next meetings:
 - GMAC – 29 April – Bathurst
 - Board – 27 May – Orange (CSU)

Jennifer Bennett

Jenny Bennett
Executive Officer CNSWJO

Reports

5. Minutes**a. Confirmation of Minutes of the CNSWJO Board Meeting 4 December 2020****Minutes of the CNSWJO meeting held 4 December 2020 in Bathurst**

Cr B Bourke	Bathurst Regional Council	Cr J Medcalf	Lachlan Shire Council
Cr A Ewin	Blayney Shire Council	Cr K Sajowitz	Oberon Council
Cr K Beatty	Cabonne Council	Cr M Kellam	Oberon Council
Cr B West	Cowra Shire Council	Cr R Kidd	Orange City Council
Cr P Miller	Forbes Shire Council	Cr K Keith	Parkes Shire Council

Mr D Sherley	Bathurst Regional Council	Mr S Harma	RDACW
Mr G Baker	Blayney Shire Council	Mr A Albury	DPC
Mr M Christensen	Cabonne Council	Mr P Evans	OLG
Mr P Devery	Cowra Shire Council	Ms J Bennett	CNSWJO
Mr S Loane	Forbes Shire Council	Ms M Macpherson	CNSWJO
Mr G Tory	Lachlan Shire Council	Ms A Thomas	CNSWJO
Mr D Waddell	Orange City Council	Ms C Griffin	CNSWJO
Mr K Boyd	Parkes Shire Council	Ms V Page	CNSWJO

1. **Welcome from the Chair, Cr John Medcalf OAM.**
2. **Acknowledgement to Country by Cr Bobby Bourke, Mayor of Bathurst Regional Council**

3. Speakers

- **The Hon Paul Toole**
Member for Bathurst and Minister for Regional Transport and Roads
- **TfNSW**
Mr Anthony Hayes, Executive Director Community and Place
Mr Alistair Lunn, Director West Region, Community and Place Transport for NSW
Mr Mark Hannan, A/Director Regional Strategy Customer Strategy & Technology
and Mr Lachlan Paull, A/Senior Transport Planner,
- **Orange Rail Action Group (ORAG)**
Peter Bilenkij, Shane Austin and Phil Stevenson.
- **Everengi**
Mr Daniel Hilson Founder and CEO
- **Vital Intermodal Transport Links (VITL)**
Stephen Stead and Tony Shepherd and Marcus Horsfall.

4. Apologies applications for a leave of absence by Joint Voting representatives

Cr S Ferguson, Cr M Liebich, Ms R Ryan, Mr G Carroll, Mr B Byrnes, Mr G Wallace, Cr D Somerville, Mr G Rhodes and Ms C Weston.

Resolved	Cr P Miller/Cr R Kidd
That the apologies for the Central NSW Joint Organisation Board meeting 4 December 2020 listed above be accepted.	

5. Opening of meeting 12.40pm

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Cr B Bourke left the meeting at 12.45pm

6. Minutes

6a. Confirmation of the Minutes of the Central NSW Joint Organisation meeting 3 July 2020 held via zoom

Resolved	Cr P Miller/Cr R Kidd
That the Central NSW Joint Organisation Board confirm the Minutes of the meeting 3 July 2020 held via zoom.	

6b. Confirmation of the Minutes of the Central NSW Joint Organisation meeting 27 August 2020 held in Cowra

Resolved	Cr K Sajowitz/Cr K Beatty
That the Central NSW Joint Organisation Board confirm the Minutes of the meeting 27 August 2020 held in Cowra	

7. Business Arising from the Minutes – Matters in Progress

Resolved	Cr R Kidd/Cr B West
That the Central NSW Joint Organisation Board note the Matters in Progress, making deletions as suggested.	

8. Disclosures of interests – Nil

9. Reports on Statement of Regional Strategic Priority

Priority One: Inter-Council Co-operation

a. Adoption of Audited General-Purpose Financial Statements for 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020

Resolved	Cr K Keith/Cr P Miller
That the Board adopt the CNSWJO Joint Organisation General Purpose Financial Statements for the period 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020.	

b. Financial Report

Resolved	Cr P Miller/ Cr K Keith
That the Board note the Financial Report.	

c. Compliance and CNSWJO meeting dates for 2021

Resolved		Cr P Miller/Cr K Keith		
That the Board note the Compliance report and;				
1. Note the Calendar of Compliance and Reporting-Requirements due by 31 December;				
2. Endorse the 2020 Annual Performance Statement and place it on the website;				
3. Note the advice from the Portfolio Mayors and that this is summarised in the Annual Performance Statement;				
4. Provide a one page summary advice on a per lga basis on the value proposition of the Joint Organisation;				
5. Note the Pecuniary Interest Returns under s450a of the Local Government Act 1993;				
6. Determine the dates for GMAC and Board meetings for 2021 be:				
Board	11 March	27 May	26 August	25 November
Location	Blayney	CSU Orange	State	Federal
GMAC	4 February	29 April	29 July	28 October

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Location	Orange	Bathurst	Orange	Cabonne
7. Advocate to the OLG to have GM's on the Board as part of the JO review.				

d. Policy and Procedure review

Resolved	Cr R Kidd/Cr K Keith
That the Board note the Policy and Procedure report; and	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. note the significant changes to the Procurement Policy, in particular the inclusion of a regional preference policy; 2. adopt the 2020 Joint Organisation Policy and Procedure register; and 3. adopt the CNSWJO Delegations Register. 	

e. Best Practice in Aggregated Procurement

Resolved	Cr B West/Cr K Beatty
That the Board note the report on Best Practice in Aggregated Procurement and note the use of the Inter-Council Cooperation Reserve to fund the additional \$1,400 for BPAP Stages 2 to 6.	

1.00pm Meeting paused

Presentation from University of Newcastle on the Visitor Economy Strategy (the Strategy).

1.09pm Mr David Sherley, left the meeting

1.30pm Meeting resumed

f. Regional Procurement and Contract Management Report

Resolved	Cr P Miller/Cr R Kidd
That the Board note the Regional Procurement and Contract Management Report; and	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. approve a procurement process for a new pre-employment screening contract to commence on 1 July 2021, including a management fee of 5% payable to CNSWJO; 2. approve a procurement process for a new printing and mailing of rates notices contract to commence on 1 July 2021, including a management fee of 5% payable to CNSWJO; 3. approve a procurement process for in-situ bridge testing for interested members, including a management fee of 2% payable to CNSWJO; 4. approve a procurement process for the CBD Consultancy project, including a management fee of 5% payable to CNSWJO; and 5. note the BPAP Project is reviewing the possible options for income streams into the JO for the procurement and contract management function; and 6. continue to maintain the existing policy in relation to management fees as an income stream to the JO for procurement and contract management services until the BPAP Project is completed in 2021, where a report containing recommendations from the Project will be provided to GMAC and the Board. 	

g. DPIE Energy Project

Resolved	Cr P Miller/Cr B West
That the Board note the DPIE Energy Project and write to DPIE thanking them for the funding and support for the Clean Energy Central project, noting the value of the collaborative effort of the pilot which will not only provide value through to JO members, but also to the broader JO network through shared learnings.	

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Priority Two: Regional Prosperity**h. Regional Activators Alliance**

Resolved	Cr K Keith/Cr B West
That the Board note the Report on the Regional Activators Alliance; and	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Endorse the actions of the Chair in engaging with this program including the \$5K expenditure; 2. Thank Central West RDA for their support in engaging with this program; and 3. Commend to members they provide feedback to the case study opportunity due 20 December. 	

i. Building Better Region Fund application for the CBD project

Resolved	Cr B West/Cr P Miller
That the Board note the Report to the Building Better Region Fund application for the CBD project; and	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. commend to members they invest \$2000 in the project; 2. amend reserves from the tourism budget by \$25,000 to progress this project; and 3. delegate to the Executive Officer the lodging of the application in line with advice in this report. 	

j. Visitor Economy Strategy

Resolved	Cr B West/Cr R Kidd
That the Board note the Report on the Visitor Economy Strategy; and seek feedback from Members for a report to be provided to a report to the next meeting in March	

k. Next steps for optimising telecommunications in Central NSW

Resolved	Cr B West/Cr P Miller
That the Board note the Report on next steps for optimising telecommunications in Central NSW and at its next meeting in 2021 have a focus on opportunities in this regard.	

l. Ten4Ten Leadership Dialogue for 2021

Resolved	Cr R Kidd/Cr K Beatty
That the Board note the Report on the TEN4TEN a leadership dialogue for 2021.	

Priority Three: Regional Transport and Infrastructure**m. Western Link**

Resolved	Cr K Keith/ Cr R Kidd
That the Board note the report on the Western Link; and	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Notes that the policy position of this initiative aligns with the CNSWJO policy position of a safe swift link between Sydney and Central NSW; 2. That the CNSWJO is engaging with this initiative; 3. Encourages members to engage and support this group; 4. Central JO Board support in principle engaging an experienced and results driven PR firm to get a campaign underway; 5. Through engagement with Western Sydney councils, form an 'alliance' to elevate the project as one for the two 'wests' and to co-fund the PR campaign; 6. Seek feedback from members and Lithgow City Council on their interest in supporting this approach; 7. Write to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, the Hon Paul Toole, thanking him for attending and giving an activity update; and 8. Work with TfNSW on aligned messages on road safety. 	

1.55pm Peter Evans, OLG and Forbes Shire Council, left the meeting

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Priority Four: Regional Water Security**n. Water update**

Resolved	Cr B West/Cr K Keith
<p>That the Central NSW Joint Organisation Board note the Regional Water Update; and</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adopt the second response to the Marsden Jacob report on Regional water value functions Valuing different hydrological outcomes under Regional Water Strategies developed with consulting support from WRI and Chris Devitt Consulting; 2. Adopt the submission to the Productivity Commission's inquiry into National Water Policy developed through the Executive; 3. Adopt the submission to the NSW Productivity Commission Continuing the Productivity Conversation - GREEN PAPER- Water; 4. Adopt the submission to the Portfolio Committee No. 7 Inquiry into the rationale for, and impacts of, new dams and other water infrastructure in NSW; 5. Adopt the submission to the Draft Lachlan Regional Water Strategy; 6. Adopt the submission to the Draft Macquarie – Castlereagh Regional Water Strategy; 7. Endorse the development of a Case Study with Infrastructure Australia; and 8. Note the Confidential Briefing Note No. 7. 	

10. Report to the Central NSW JO Strategic Plan and Statement of Regional Strategic Priority 2020/2021

Resolved	Cr R Kidd/Cr K Keith
<p>That the Board note the Report to the Central NSW JO Strategic Plan and Statement of Regional Strategic Priority and endorse the joint application between Central West RDA and CNSWJO under the Inland Rail Productivity Enhancement Program for a fully funded business case to enable small to medium enterprise access opportunities afforded by this new infrastructure.</p>	

11. Wastewater Training Contract – CONFIDENTIAL

Resolved	Cr K Sajowitz/Cr B West
<p>That the Board:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. move into closed session to consider business identified; 2. pursuant to section 10A(1)-(3) of the Local Government Act 1993, the media and public be excluded from the meeting on the basis that the business to be considered is classified confidential under the provisions of section 10A(2) as outlined above; and 3. correspondence and reports relevant to the subject business be withheld from access. 	

Resolved	Cr K Sajowitz/Cr B West
<p>That the Board note the confidential report on the contract with TAFE for the delivery of wastewater training; and</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. seek to negotiate with TAFE on the proposed agreement; and 2. delegate the acceptance of the negotiated position to the Sponsoring General Managers for Training and the Inter-Council Cooperation Priority. 	

Resolved	Cr K Sajowitz/Cr B West
<p>That the Board resumes open session.</p>	

A conflict of Interest was declared by Cr K Keith in the Special Activation Precinct matter.

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12. A report on the Parkes Special Activation Precinct

Resolved	Cr B West/Cr R Kidd
That the Board note the update on the Regional Growth NSW Development Corporation (the RGDC) progress at the Parkes Special Activation Precinct (SAP)	

13. General Business**14. Late reports – Nil****15. Matters raised by Members – Nil****16. Speakers to the next meeting**

Telecommunications Presenters - presentations to be arranged with support of RDACW

17. Next meeting date for 2021

GMAC **4 February - Orange**

Board **11 March - Blayney**

Meeting close 2.15pm

Page 6 is the last page of the Central NSW Joint Organisation meeting 4 December 2020

6. Matters in Progress

Action	By	Update
290519-8b-Drought Sub-committee - Progressing the recommendations of the Drought Issues Paper Work with requisite State agencies and other peak regional bodies regarding drought preparedness with a report to be provided to the Board on options for resourcing better drought support and coordination at the local and regional level.	JB and MM	CNSWJO staff attend RLE Central West and Orana Drought Taskforce meetings. The last meeting was 1 December 2020. Please request all paperwork. This Taskforce has now been replaced by the Resilience and Recovery Subcommittee under a new direction the State is taking through Resilience NSW. See the Regional Water Report for the Terms of Reference for this group. Most recently the JO has been asked to engage in a Future Ready Regions to provide advice to a potential document on drought response. Please ask for an update.
281113 - 8b - Water Infrastructure Develop a MoU with NSW Health.	MM	<i>November 2013- ongoing</i> This task has proven difficult to progress and is part of advocacy by the JO network for a collaborative approach to the management of urban water working in partnership with State agencies. The Western Area Public Health Unit working out of Dubbo have now expressed interest in a collaborative exercise with the CNSWJO looking at areas across the health portfolio that could be optimised by working together. To progress matters as at February 2021 the JO is providing an online platform for collaboration.
280219-7b-Board-Water Infrastructure Report Commend to the CWUA that it investigates the potential for a regional application to stream 2 of the revised Safe and Secure program for funding to procure consulting services to update CWUA member Council's Integrated water cycle management (IWCM) strategies.	MM	To recap- Councils and the JO lodged EOIs with DPIE separately and received approvals to progress to the next stage. The JO was advised that it could procure IWCMs for its members through a joint procurement process. This was superseded by an offer from DPIE Water for JOs to develop Regional Town Water Strategies with 75% funding support. These are contingent on completion of the Regional Water Strategies and their fit in the strategic framework is still uncertain. In response to on-going advocacy by the sector, DPIE have included the need to develop mechanisms to better integrate Regional Water Strategies and Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategies focused on town water security and quality risks in their Town Water Risk Reduction Program announced on 4 February. Work is also underway through the JO Chair's network to work collaboratively with DPIE on a better approach to IWCM leveraging JOs. Meanwhile, a number of member Councils are attempting to progress the development of IWCMs separately with multiple challenges. See the Water Report for details on strategic work by the State Government on this front.
271119-6-P3a-Regional Transport Advocacy Policy, Prioritisation and Freight Links Mapping. 1. Provide updated mapping to the Board; and	JB	1. This work is being finalised by DPIE (Planning) and TfNSW at which point outputs will be adapted by the JO. 2. The Chair provided advice via a minute to the Board in February regarding priority where freight links were identified as one of two overall foci for this year's effort. Work is now underway with TfNSW on how this might look. Also

Action	By	Update
2. Provide a review of the Advocacy Plan that identifies one or two priorities for the Board to focus its advocacy efforts.		noteworthy is the work being undertaken as part of the Federal Roads of Strategic Importance program. Please note the December 4 meeting has a transport focus. A revised advocacy plan is underway including feedback from the Board subsequent to the December 4 meeting.
271119-P4-b-Regional Water Report. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree arrangements be developed with the strategic subcommittee and in consultation with member Councils for emergency water management between towns across the region that (based on previous Board policy) address the following heads of consideration: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Arrangements for the sharing of water for emergency water needs between towns across the region so that the burden of providing infrastructure for critical urban water transfers is borne equitably by the region (for example through the development of instruments and agreements not structures); b. Ownership and management by LG of any such infrastructure built to transfer emergency water between towns across the region for critical human needs; c. On-going operational costs for emergency water infrastructure; d. A multi-source approach to the supply of emergency water that enables options to be switched on or off as needed with these to be linked to State and local based triggers; and; 2. Undertake advocacy seeking early engagement in the Wyangala Dam wall raising and Lake Rowlands 	MM	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a.to d. A Strategic Regional Water Committee comprising Mayors and GMs met on 1 April 2020. The ToR were endorsed by the Board at its May meeting and includes these heads of consideration. Work on these is on-going. See various submissions developed under Board policy advocating on these issues. 2. Every opportunity is being sought to engage early with WaterNSW on the Wyangala and Lake Rowlands to Carcoar Pipeline Projects. Unfortunately, our offers have not been taken up to date and there continues to be challenges in ensuring linkages between work by CTW on the Lake Rowlands dam wall and the pipeline project being managed by WaterNSW. Work is ongoing. See Agenda and Regional Water Report to this meeting. 3. See Regional Water Report. Advocacy on-going.

Action	By	Update
<p>to Carcoar Dam projects with a view to being able to influence outcomes;</p> <p>3. Seek to work through the Minister's office on developing a collaborative approach to water security in Central New South Wales within existing policy.</p>		
<p>271119-Supplementary motion on water policy</p> <p>That the Board seek advice on the correlation between surface and bore water and meet with the Minister as required.</p>	MM	This has been raised consistently at every consultation on water, particularly the Regional Water Strategies for the Lachlan and Macquarie. The matter was included in submissions to the public consultation on the Draft Lachlan and Macquarie Regional Water Strategies endorsed by the Board at the December 2020 meeting.
<p>271119-15a-Confidential Reports Regional Bridge Assessment Report</p> <p>1. receive a report on options for a collaborative approach within three months to the repair and replacement of identified bridges; and</p> <p>2. members give consideration to their participation in a collaborative approach and advise CNSWJO accordingly.</p>	JB	<p>1. A meeting was held in Bathurst on 13 February 2020 with Public Works Advisory, Transport for NSW and other JOs to discuss options for collaboration. This is moving slowly as TfNSW personnel are going through a restructure. Most recently the report was provided to Mr A Lunn as he seeks to find collaborative opportunities with the JO. The broader JO network has also been progressing conversations around aggregation working collaboratively with TfNSW.</p> <p>2. Members of the transport technical committee are also looking at options to progress the findings of the report.</p>
<p>270220 – 7-Chairman's Minute</p> <p>1. Adopt the overall focus for the years to align with the Federal vision to grow the agricultural sector to \$100bn by 2030;</p> <p>2. Note that this includes two priority areas of activity – these being:</p> <p>1. Watering the West</p> <p>a. leveraging raising the wall at Wyangala and</p> <p>b. assuring urban water security in the CNSW region; and</p> <p>2. Freight links</p> <p>3. Adopt the priorities for inter-council cooperation as:</p> <p>a. Reporting value to members of the operational support program; and</p> <p>b. Supporting the sustainability of the broader JO network;</p>	JB	<p>1 and 2 Where this is being implemented the Covid 19 situation is limiting the amount of face to face advocacy and events that can be undertaken.</p> <p>3 and 4 and 7 The Mayoral Board reports from February included resolve in this regard. Regarding 4b and 7, please note reporting elsewhere in this agenda on the substantial activity being undertaken as part of the Energy Central Program.</p> <p>5 Covid has significantly impacted this year's calendar. A Summit and Parliamentary visits are not proposed until restrictions ease sufficiently.</p> <p>Suggest deletion</p> <p>6 and 7 Follow up has been undertaken. Re 7 Policy work will form part of the work being done in collaboration with the DPIE Sustainable Councils and Communities Program.</p> <p>Suggest deletion of item 7.</p> <p>This focus remains and will be reviewed as part of the overall review of the CNSWJO Strategy after the Local Govt election in September.</p>

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Action	By	Update
<p>4. Adopt the priorities for regional prosperity as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Progressing support for the visitor economy; and b. Developing and monitoring the progress of the Regional Prosperity Subcommittee noting the agricultural focus; <p>5. Adopt the changes to the Board calendar as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. June Board meeting in Penrith and 4 June meeting with State representatives at Macquarie Street, Sydney including launch of the Central West NSW Food and Fibre Strategy; b. August Board meetings in Canberra at a venue TBA; and c. The November meeting be part of a Summit, again retaining the agricultural focus; <p>6. Encourage members to form or activate friendship agreements with Councils in Western Sydney; and</p> <p>7. Seek feedback from members to inform policy with regard to a regional response to Climate Change.</p>		
<p>270220-P4a-Regional Water Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Seek advice from DPIE Water on project status and what the issues are holding up emergency water projects; b. Develop advocacy material identifying the problems and solutions in assuring urban water supply during the unprecedented drought; c. Advocate to the Premier, Deputy Premier, Minister for Water and respective agencies providing advice on the challenges and 	MM	<p>Items a to c were discussed at the Regional Water Committee meeting (1 April 2020) and informed a Briefing Note for Minister Pavey and advocacy through the JO Chairs Forum (6 August). Work is on-going and challenging. See Regional Water Report and Advocacy Plan Update.</p>

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Action	By	Update
solutions for this region in securing water.		
040620 – 5-Speakers – Penrith City Council To follow up for a future meeting at Penrith and approach the Parkland Councils Group.	JB	Preliminary meeting was held 18 August 2020. The focus was around tourism. Further meetings are anticipated. When Covid restrictions ease a meeting with Parklands is anticipated. Please see a report in this regard to this meeting. Suggest deletion
040620-14-Tourism Matters Note the Tourism Matters report and 1. Use surplus funds in the JO tourism budget to procure external support to refresh strategy for regional tourism leveraging the JO model; 2. Include in the heads of consideration for the strategic refresh; a. The current framework for tourism in regional NSW from the LTO through to Federal support for tourism. This to include funding, strategic and structural arrangements; b. Opportunities and challenges for tourism in regional NSW; and c. The value to member Councils and through them to their communities of the JO taking a role in tourism; and 3. Commends to the Central NSW Regional Tourism Group it undertake minor structural change to enable a more nimble tactical response from the region while the broader strategic refresh is being undertaken; 4. Advocate to LGNSW to coordinate a Regional Tourism Awards seeking support from Destination Network Country and Outback.	JB	1-3 Report provided to the Board on this matter Suggest deletion 4. DNCO have offered to progress this. A first meeting has been held. Follow up is being undertaken.
040620-15-JO Sustainability Report 1. remain alert to the challenges for sustainability of the broader network;	JB	Ongoing see updated advice from recent Chair's meeting attached to the Report the JO Strategic Plan and Statement of Strategic Priority. Suggest deletion

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Action	By	Update
2. continue to support the broader JO network in its activities in sustainability; 3. monitor differing approaches to models for intergovernmental collaboration being considered by other regions.		
040620-18-COVID-19 Response in region 1. Support ongoing changes to the Board calendar including but not limited to: 2. A special meeting with State Parliamentarians supported by Steph Cooke MP later this calendar year; 3. Note that scoping work on lessons learned from this region's response to Covid 19 has commenced through the Regional Leadership Executive; and 4. Through the Chair monitor Covid19 and alter programming as needs.	JB	Changes to the agenda are being made as the Covid19 pandemic continues. Suggest deletion
270820 – 7c-Report from the NSW JO Chairs' Forum 1. seek a report from GMAC on the potential for the Joint Organisation to leverage its role to deliver value to members on waste; 2. regarding the above ensure consultation is undertaken with key stakeholders including Netwaste; 3. advocate to the Deputy Premier, the Hon John Barilaro and others for the Regional Development portfolio to have a formal policy role in the oversight and engagement of Joint Organisations.	JB	1 and 2 A stakeholder meeting is being coordinated and will include the findings of the work being undertaken through the Clean Energy Central Project with DPIE. Interest has been expressed from WRI, Netwaste, DPIE and RDA Central West. 3 Correspondence sent to the Deputy Premier. The JO Executive Officer Network has met with Ms Fiona Dewar and a workshop in Sydney is being progressed to enable better integration with Regional NSW. Please request a verbal update.
270820-7d - Codesigned Regional Leadership Executive and Central NSW Joint Organisation Consultation Policy adopt the codesigned Regional Leadership Executive and Central	JB	Logos have been provided and the document is now up on the CNSWJO website at https://www.centraljo.nsw.gov.au/content/uploads/210217_Con sultation-Policy_CNSWJO_RLE_Final.pdf Suggest deletion

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Action	By	Update
NSW Joint Organisation Consultation Policy;		
270820-7h- Scoping Report of a regional promotion campaign Provide a report to the Board that includes the following option: 1. a significant promotion campaign over 5 years similar to that of Evocities; 2. tailored approach working with the Regional Australia Institute or other similar entities; and 3. a rework of the Beyond the Range site with associated marketing.	JB	The Board has resolved to progress leveraging the Regional Activators Alliance program through the Regional Australia Institute. Advice on progress of this initiative is provided elsewhere in MIP. This is the focus of the current effort. Further advice will be provided in due course.
270820-7i-Health – Central NSW Joint Organisation medical scholarships. Hold an event at CSU Orange to meet the students in due course.	JB	The Board resolved at its December meeting to progress this at its May 2021 meeting. Discussion with CSU is underway. Suggest deletion
270820-7j-Water 1. through the Regional Water Committee, receive scoping advice on the development of a Productive Water Position Paper and that this take into consideration specific feedback from members on water security issues impacting on their towns; and 2. seek feedback from member's Local Water Utilities on the State Water Strategy within existing policy, particularly on the need for ongoing governance and structural arrangements to ensure Local Government is included and remain at the table during implementation. 3. recognise the water security challenges for Oberon and seek to support them as a Board priority.	MM	1. Underway. Meeting was held with the Executive Officer, RAMJO on 5 February to discuss their approach to work on Productive Water. Scoping is in progress with a further report to be provided to the Board in due course. 2. On-going. See Regional Water Report. The State Water Strategy was released for public consultation on 15 February with submissions due 28 March. See Regional Water Report. 3. Discussions are on-going with advocacy undertaken through the response to the Macquarie- Castlereagh Regional Water Strategy and other strategic work by the State Government.
270820- Supplementary Motion write to LGNSW seeking their policy position on universal postal voting and pre-poll and 1. provide this to members; and	JB	1. Letter sent and a response was received and provided to members. 2. Members have been providing feedback. To date there is no support for Universal Postal Voting and support for restricting pre-poll to one week or abolishing it all together. Advice from LGNSW is that this matter is settled.

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Action	By	Update
2. Seek advice from members on their position on universal postal voting and pre-poll matters.		Suggest deletion
41220-9c-Compliance and CNSWJO meeting dates for 2021 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide a one page summary advice on a per lga basis on the value proposition of the Joint Organisation; 2. Advocate to the OLG to have GM's on the Board as part of the JO review. 	JB	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Underway – Meetings with each LGA have been arranged. 2. Correspondence sent Suggest deletion
41220-9f -Regional Procurement and Contract Management Report <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. approve a procurement process for a new pre-employment screening contract to commence on 1 July 2021, including a management fee of 5% payable to CNSWJO; 2. approve a procurement process for a new printing and mailing of rates notices contract to commence on 1 July 2021, including a management fee of 5% payable to CNSWJO; 3. approve a procurement process for in-situ bridge testing for interested members, including a management fee of 2% payable to CNSWJO; 4. approve a procurement process for the CBD Consultancy project, including a management fee of 5% payable to CNSWJO; and 5. continue to maintain the existing policy in relation to management fees as an income stream to the JO for procurement and contract management services until the BPAP Project is 	KB	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to 2. Procurement processes have commenced. 3. and 4. Will be progressed in due course. 5. Noted. Suggest deletion.

Action	By	Update
completed in 2021, where a report containing recommendations from the Project will be provided to GMAC and the Board.		
41220-9g-DPIE Energy Project write to DPIE thanking them for the funding and support for the Clean Energy Central project, noting the value of the collaborative effort of the pilot which will not only provide value through to JO members, but also to the broader JO network through shared learnings.	KB	Correspondence has been sent. Suggest deletion.
41220-9h- Regional Activators Alliance 1. Endorse the actions of the Chair in engaging with this program including the \$5K expenditure; 2. Thank Central West RDA for their support in engaging with this program; and 3. Commend to members they provide feedback to the case study opportunity due 20 December	JB	1 and 2 complete 2 Case studies provided have been sent to the RAI and follow-up is being undertaken. A report on progress is provided elsewhere in this agenda. Suggest deletion
41220-9i- Building Better Region Fund application for the CBD project 1. commend to members they invest \$2000 in the project; 2. amend reserves from the tourism budget by \$25,000 to progress this project; and 3. delegate to the Executive Officer the lodging of the application in line with advice in this report	JB	Round five closed 5 March and a funding submission was lodged. Thanks to all GMs for their engagement and supporting.
41220-9j- Visitor Economy Strategy seek feedback from Members for a report to be provided to a report to the next meeting in March	JB	Feedback was sought through the Mayoral Board Report. A report is being drafted.
41220-9m-Western Link 1. Encourages members to engage and support this group;	JB	1-4 Please see report to the meeting. Suggest deletion 5. Complete. Suggest deletion 6. Correspondence has been sent and follow-up through the Regional Integrated Transport Plan is anticipated.

Reports

Action	By	Update
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Central JO Board support in principle engaging an experienced and results driven PR firm to get a campaign underway; 3. Through engagement with Western Sydney councils, form an 'alliance' to elevate the project as one for the two 'wests' and to co-fund the PR campaign; 4. Seek feedback from members and Lithgow City Council on their interest in supporting this approach; 5. Write to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, the Hon Paul Toole, thanking him for attending and giving an activity update; and 6. Work with TfNSW on aligned messages on road safety. 		
41220 – 9n-Water update <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adopt the second response to the Marsden Jacob report on Regional water value functions Valuing different hydrological outcomes under Regional Water Strategies developed with consulting support from WRI and Chris Devitt Consulting; 2. Adopt the submission to the Productivity Commission's inquiry into National Water Policy developed through the Executive; 3. Adopt the submission to the NSW Productivity Commission Continuing the Productivity Conversation - GREEN PAPER- Water; 4. Adopt the submission to the Portfolio Committee No. 7 Inquiry into the rationale for, and impacts of, new dams and other water infrastructure in NSW; 	MM	<p>Items 1 to 6 & 8 suggest deletion</p> <p>7. Meeting held with IA on 20 January to discuss business case development. Work underway for completion by June.</p>

Action	By	Update
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Adopt the submission to the Draft Lachlan Regional Water Strategy; 6. Adopt the submission to the Draft Macquarie – Castlereagh Regional Water Strategy; 7. Endorse the development of a Case Study with Infrastructure Australia; and 8. Note the Confidential Briefing Note No. 7. 		
41220-11-Wastewater Training Contract <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. seek to negotiate with TAFE on the proposed agreement; and 2. delegate the acceptance of the negotiated position to the Sponsoring General Managers for Training and the Inter-Council Cooperation Priority. 	KB	TAFE has advised that the contract was not required in order to progress the enrolments. No further negotiation has taken place.

7. Reports on Statement of Regional Strategic Priority

Priority One: Inter-Council Co-operation

a. Financial Report

Regional Strategic Priorities	1.1 Governance arrangements enable inter-council co-operation.
Portfolio Mayor	Cr John Medcalf, OAM
Sponsoring General Manager/s	Mr B Byrnes and Mr G Tory

Report by Ann Thomas and Jenny Bennett, 1 March 2021

Recommendation/s
That the Board note the Financial Report.

This report presents the financial accounts at 1 March 2021. This report anticipates a full year loss of \$249,212 at 30 June 2021 against a budgeted loss of \$234,076. Taking into account prior year surpluses carried over it is anticipated that the surplus at 30 June 2021 will be \$325,875.

Two grant projects have been completed with small amounts of funding remaining unspent. These included \$1,770 from the Office of Environment and Heritage for Energy Workshops and \$300 from the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment for the Orange 360 Business Case. Both funding bodies have granted permission for CNSWJO to allocate these funds internally to similar projects.

An internal reserve of \$47,930 still remains for the CWUA Developer Services Plan Project. As this project is no longer active a review will be conducted of this reserve and the final wrap-up of the project. A report will be provided once completed.

As we are half way through the current financial year a detailed review has been conducted of all anticipated income and expenditure with small adjustments being made. All staff wages and oncosts for the first six months of the financial year are included in this report with costs tracking well to budget.

A report was presented to the 18 February meeting of Forbes Shire Council regarding the dissolution of the S355 Committee of Forbes Shire Council that Centroc previously operated under. A report was also presented to the meeting regarding the continued hosting of the two Forbes based staff and the continuation of the current support of the administration of the CNSWJO finances. The following resolve has been reported to the JO.

RESOLVED That Council:

- 1. dissolve the Central NSW Regional Organisation of Councils, Centroc, as a Committee of Forbes Shire Council, pursuant to section 355(d) of the Local Government Act, 1993;*
- 2. Council negotiate a Service Level Agreement for the hosting of staff with the CNSWJO under delegation of the General Manager;*
- 3. Council continue support for the administration of the Joint Organisation finances similar to the arrangements with Centroc subject to the negotiation in point (2) above; and*
- 4. Council seek an update presentation from the Executive Officer of CNSWJO.*

The Executive officer and the Forbes staff will continue negotiations regarding staff hosting with Forbes Shire Council and the signing of new Service Level Agreements to ensure a smooth transition.

Attachment/s: Nil

Central NSW Joint Organisation

Financial Position at 1 March 2021

	Budget 2020/2021	Actual 1/03/2021	Anticipated 30/06/2021
Income			
CNSWJO Membership Fees	261,804	261,804	261,804
CWUA Best Practice Program	241,045	241,045	241,045
Regional Tourism Group Membership	137,438	129,354	137,438
CNSWJO Operational Membership	102,600	102,600	102,600
WRAS Contributions	9,267	9,267	9,267
	\$752,154	\$744,070	\$752,154
BPAP contribution from other JOs - Stages 2 to 6	48,750	60,373	60,373
	\$48,750	\$60,373	\$60,373
CWUA - Smart Approved Watermark		38,760	38,760
	\$0	\$38,760	\$38,760
Energy - Mgt Aggregated Electricity Procurement		6,000	6,000
	\$0	\$6,000	\$6,000
HR - Regional Training Service Income	100,000	222,398	230,000
HR - Online Training & Other HR Modules	210,003	178,211	210,003
	\$310,003	\$400,609	\$440,003
Regional Tourism Group - Council Reimbursements		36	36
Regional Tourism Group - ATDW Refund		945	945
	\$0	\$981	\$981
Management Fees from Contracts	103,858	66,940	103,858
Management Fee from LGP	70,000	44,582	44,582
	\$173,858	\$111,522	\$148,440
Copyright Licence	17,700	19,093	19,093
Vehicle Lease Back EO	4,400	2,207	4,400
Vehicle Lease Back CWUA	5,300	2,759	5,300
Vehicle Lease Back Operational Program Mgr	5,000	2,691	5,000
Interest	1,000	400	500
Member Council/Consultant Expenses to be reimbursed		13,350	13,350
	\$33,400	\$40,500	\$47,643
Total Income	\$1,318,165	\$1,402,813	\$1,494,354

Reports

Expenditure

Executive Officer Costs	230,000	109,934	230,000
Executive Officer Vehicle Costs & Depn	13,000	1,199	13,000
Operational Program Manager	120,000	57,689	120,000
Operational Program Manager - Vehicle costs	13,500	6,500	13,500
Finance Manager	65,000	40,705	70,000
Training & Program Support Officer	55,000	28,360	55,000
Executive & Programs Assistant	65,000	37,552	65,000
CWUA Program Manager & Program costs	122,721	45,968	122,721
CWUA Membership & Benchmarking Program	118,324	42,000	118,324
CWUA Smart Approved Watermark		38,760	38,760
Regional Tourism Group	137,438		137,438
BPAP - Stages 2 to 6	65,000	16,064	85,920
Energy - Southern Lights Project	15,000	3,197	15,000
Energy - EV Infrastructure Mapping	40,000	22,044	40,000
Energy - Mgt Aggregated Electricity Procurement		6,000	6,000
HR - Training Service Costs	100,000	71,083	230,000
HR - Online Training & Other HR Modules	196,191	176,752	196,191
CBD Project	50,000		50,000
Regional Medical Student Scholarship	15,000		15,000
WRAS	9,267	9,267	9,267
Advocacy	15,000	15,220	16,000
Accounting/Audit/Payroll	30,000		30,000
Bank Fees and Sundry costs	2,500	507	2,000
Computer Software/Licences	5,000	1,397	3,000
Copyright Licence	17,800	19,195	19,195
Depreciation (excl vehicles)	2,000		2,200
Internet Cloud	10,000	4,515	9,000
Legal	7,500		7,500
Member Council/Consultant Expenses to be reimbursed		13,350	13,350
Printing/Stationery/Postage	2,000	27	1,000
Summit	20,000		0
Supply Management Administration	5,000		5,000
Zoom Conferences	2,000	550	1,200
Website Hosting and costs	3,000	925	3,000
Total Expenditure	\$1,552,241	\$768,760	\$1,743,566
Net Profit/Loss	-\$234,076	\$634,054	-\$249,212

Reports

Non-Budgeted Other Income

Net Assets Transferred from Centroc (final)

\$14,168.06**\$14,168.06****Non-Budgeted Expenditure****CNSWJO Reserves from 2019/20 and previous years**

CWUA Best Practice Program

CWUA - Developer Service Plans

Central NSW Regional Tourism Group

Central NSW Regional Tourism Group - DNCO Grant (external)

Energy - Mgt Aggregated Electricity Procurement

Energy Project

Grant - Energy Workshops -Office of Environment & Energy (external)

Grant - Growing Local Economies (external)

Grant - Regional NSW - Orange 360 Business Case - (external)

Inter-Council Cooperation Reserve - Procurement

Roads and Transport Group

20,502	20,502	20,502
47,930		47,930
105,630	86,446	105,630
5,175	5,175	5,175
6,000	6,000	6,000
43,992	215	45,762
1,770	0	0
40,900	10,300	41,200
23,323	23,023	23,023
46,564	5,757	46,564
27,201		27,201
\$368,987	\$157,417	\$368,987

Net Profit/Loss after Non-Budgeted Income and Expenditure

\$490,804**-\$604,031****CNSWJO/Centroc Accumulated Surplus at 30 June 2020****\$799,389****OLG Capacity Building funding surplus at 30 June 2020****\$130,517****Anticipated Surplus at 30 June 2021****\$325,875**

b. Budget and Statement of Revenue Policy 2021-2022

Regional Strategic Priorities	1.2 Governance arrangements enable inter-council co-operation.
Portfolio Mayor	Cr John Medcalf, OAM
Sponsoring General Manager/s	Mr B Byrnes and Mr G Tory

Report by Jenny Bennett and Ann Thomas dated 2 March 2021

Recommendation/s
<p>That the Board note the Report on the Budget and Statement of Revenue Policy 2021-2022 and</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. note the Draft Budget and Statement of Revenue Policy and Budget options; 2. adopt Option 3 for the budget and fee structure for the 2021/2022 financial year; 3. publish the Draft Budget and Statement of Revenue Policy for 2021-2022 on the website for 28 days; and 4. seek to adopt the approved version at the May Board meeting.

Precis

It is a requirement of the Joint Organisation that it adopt a Statement of Revenue Policy for 2021/2022. It must be provided on the website for comment and adopted before 30 June 2021. GMAC gave consideration to a report in this regard and the following advice is based on GMAC resolve. Please find three options for Board consideration with associated fee structures. Option 3 is recommended.

Reason for this report**2021/2022 Budget considerations**

It is noteworthy that there is a review of Joint Organisations being undertaken by OLG at this time. It is important that advice on the increased costs of running the JOs as well as the reduced income of the model as it currently operates in Central NSW is provided to the State.

Each year CNSWJO has gradually filled this widening gap between income and expenditure. It is suggested that 2021/2022 continues to run at a deficit and that fees be structured and expenditure curtailed to deliver a \$30k loss.

The preferred option is Option 3 which is detailed below. This option delivers the suggested \$30k loss whilst also adopting the following recommendations from GMAC:

- a) The total fees for each Member increase by at least the 2% IPART rate increase. This has been achieved by raising the flat fee component of membership and administration fees to \$10k.
- b) Reduction of the total Tourism fee by \$40k
- c) Inclusion of a small Operational Program component for CTW. This has been calculated at 50% of the flat fee

It is suggested that the Board agree that this be the last year a budgetary loss be entertained as surplus funds available to be carried over each year are being exhausted.

Reports

To achieve a result of a \$30K loss for the coming financial year the following has been adopted:

1. Given the ongoing Covid period, the Summit cost of \$20k has been removed and will be funded from reserves if it eventuates.
2. The CWUA fee structure has been revised up to cover costs where these have been absorbed by previous surpluses in this budget but are now exhausted.
3. \$40K from the Tourism budget has been allocated to CNSWJO staff costs to reflect their resourcing of this project.
4. The fee structure also reflects updates in population and water connections which form the basis for some of the fee calculations. This has led to those Councils with growing communities paying a greater percentage of costs for the membership and administration fee and the CWUA fee. Operational fees remain flat with CTW now contributing a small component, however it should be noted that the operational fees now incorporate the per-Council cost of the WHS online induction program fees, as per a report to the Board in June 2020.

Finally, advice on income may vary dependent on the outcomes of the Best Practice in Procurement Program. However, this advice is not finalised at present and a workshop is being coordinated for General Managers to seek direction on its roll out in this region. Please see more advice in the Best Practice in Aggregated Procurement report.

Please find the suggested fee structures and budgets following.

CNSWJO FEE TOTALS FOR 2021/2022

Option one – Provided to GMAC 4 February 2021

(WRAS figures provided)

Excludes GST

	CNSWJO	OPERATIONAL	CENTROC	Assoc. Memberships	TOURISM	WRAS	Total Fees	Previous Year
	Membership &	Program	WATER UTILITIES	& Benchmarking			2021/2022	Fees
	Administration		ALLIANCE	Programming				
COUNCIL								
Orange	71,006	10,465	39,218	12,114	27,487	2,525	162,815	128,773
Bathurst	72,820	10,465	32,741	12,114	27,487	2,595	158,222	128,114
Parkes	28,070	10,465	17,673	12,114	16,492	882	85,696	76,801
Cabonne	26,199	10,465	7,171	12,114	16,492	811	73,252	71,048
Cowra Shire Council	24,814	10,465	15,589	12,114		758	63,740	57,027
Cowra Tourism Corp					16,492		16,492	16,169
Forbes	20,403	10,465	11,959	12,114	8,247	589	63,777	60,249
Lachlan	14,446	10,465	9,990	12,114	8,247	361	55,623	55,824
Oberon	13,413	10,465	7,581	12,114	8,247	321	52,141	52,798
Blayney	16,473	10,465	2,000	5,834	8,247	439	43,458	42,207
Weddin	10,618	10,465	2,000	5,834	2,749	214	31,880	32,356
Central Tablelands Water	8,778		14,078	12,114			34,970	30,788
TOTAL	307,040	104,650	160,000	120,694	140,187	9,495	842,066	752,154

Changes to base calculations

*2% IPART increase in total fees

*\$40,000 increase in membership & administration fees incorporating a \$5000 base fee + capitation

*Update to 2019 population data

*Update to 2020 water connection data

Option one – Provided to GMAC 4 February 2021

Central NSW Joint Organisation Budget - 2021/2022

	Budget 2021/2022
Income	
CNSWJO Membership Fees	307,040
CWUA Best Practice Program	280,694
CNSWJO Regional Tourism Group	140,187
CNSWJO Operational Membership	104,650
WRAS	9,495
	\$842,066
 CWUA -Smart Approved Watermark	 39,535
	\$39,535
 HR - Regional Training Service Income	 60,000
HR - Online Training & Other HR Modules	280,000
	\$340,000
 Management Fees from Contracts	 120,000
Management Fee from LGP	55,000
	\$175,000
 Copyright Licence	 19,000
Vehicle Lease Back EO	4,500
Vehicle Lease Back CWUA	5,500
Vehicle Lease Back Operational Program Mgr	4,900
Interest	1,000
	\$34,900
 Total Income	 \$1,431,501

Reports

Expenditure

Executive Officer Costs	205,000
Executive Officer Vehicle Costs & Depn	13,500
Operational Program Manager	125,000
Operational Program Manager - Vehicle costs	13,500
Finance Manager	70,000
Training & Program Support Officer	55,000
Executive & Programs Assistant	70,000
CWUA Program Manager & Program costs	160,000
CWUA Membership Program & Benchmarking Program	120,694
CWUA - Smart Approved Watermark	39,535
CNSWJO Regional Tourism Group	140,187
WRAS	9,495
HR - Training Service Costs	58,000
HR - Online Training & Other HR Modules	280,000
Regional Medical Student Scholarship	15,000
Advocacy	10,000
Accounting/Audit/Payroll	30,000
Bank Fees and Sundry costs	2,500
Computer Software/Licences	3,000
Copyright Licence	19,100
Depreciation (excl vehicles)	2,000
Internet Cloud	8,000
Legal	5,000
Printing/Stationery/Postage	1,000
Supply Management Administration	2,500
Zoom Conferences	1,500
Website Hosting and costs	2,200
Total Expenditure	\$1,461,711
Net Profit/Loss	-\$30,210

Reports

CNSWJO FEE TOTALS FOR 2021/2022**Option 2 - Balanced budget**

(WRAS figures provided)

Excludes GST

	CNSWJO	OPERATIONAL	CENTROC	Assoc. Memberships	TOURISM	WRAS	Total Fees	Previous Year
	Membership &	PROGRAM	WATER UTILITIES	& Benchmarking			2021/2022	Fees
	Administration		ALLIANCE	Programming				
COUNCIL								
Orange	68,690	10,465	39,218	12,114	19,645	2,525	152,657	128,773
Bathurst	70,304	10,465	32,741	12,114	19,645	2,595	147,864	128,114
Parkes	30,513	10,465	17,673	12,114	11,787	882	83,434	76,801
Cabonne	30,121	10,465	7,171	12,114	11,787	811	72,469	71,048
Cowra Shire Council	27,618	10,465	15,589	12,114		758	66,544	57,027
Cowra Tourism Corp					11,787		11,787	16,169
Forbes	23,695	10,465	11,959	12,114	5,893	589	64,715	60,249
Lachlan	18,399	10,465	9,990	12,114	5,893	361	57,222	55,824
Oberon	17,481	10,465	7,581	12,114	5,893	321	53,855	52,798
Blayney	20,202	10,465	2,000	5,834	5,893	439	44,833	42,207
Weddin	14,995	10,465	2,000	5,834	1,964	214	35,472	32,356
Central Tablelands Water	10,000	5,232	14,078	12,114			41,424	30,788
TOTAL	332,018	109,882	160,000	120,694	100,187	9,495	832,276	752,154

Changes to base calculations

*Minimum 2% IPART increase on previous year total fees

*\$10,000 flat fee + capitation for membership & administration fees

*CTW - 50% Operational Program fee

*Update to 2019 population data

*Update to 2020 water connection data

Reports

Option 2 - Balanced budget

Central NSW Joint Organisation Budget - 2021/2022

	Budget 2021/2022
Income	
CNSWJO Membership Fees	332,018
CWUA Best Practice Program	280,694
CNSWJO Regional Tourism Group	100,187
CNSWJO Operational Membership	109,882
WRAS	9,495
	\$832,276
 CWUA -Smart Approved Watermark	 39,535
	\$39,535
 HR - Regional Training Service Income	 60,000
HR - Online Training & Other HR Modules	280,000
	\$340,000
 Management Fees from Contracts	 120,000
Management Fee from LGP	55,000
	\$175,000
 Copyright Licence	 19,000
Vehicle Lease Back EO	4,500
Vehicle Lease Back CWUA	5,500
Vehicle Lease Back Operational Program Mgr	4,900
Interest	1,000
	\$34,900
 Total Income	 \$1,421,711

Reports

Expenditure

Executive Officer Costs	205,000
Executive Officer Vehicle Costs & Depn	13,500
Operational Program Manager	125,000
Operational Program Manager - Vehicle costs	13,500
Finance Manager	70,000
Training & Program Support Officer	55,000
Executive & Programs Assistant	70,000
CWUA Program Manager & Program costs	160,000
CWUA Membership Program & Benchmarking Program	120,694
CWUA - Smart Approved Watermark	39,535
CNSWJO Regional Tourism Group	100,187
WRAS	9,495
HR - Training Service Costs	58,000
HR - Online Training & Other HR Modules	280,000
Regional Medical Student Scholarship	15,000
Advocacy	10,000
Accounting/Audit/Payroll	30,000
Bank Fees and Sundry costs	2,500
Computer Software/Licences	3,000
Copyright Licence	19,100
Depreciation (excl vehicles)	2,000
Internet Cloud	8,000
Legal	5,000
Printing/Stationery/Postage	1,000
Supply Management Administration	2,500
Zoom Conferences	1,500
Website Hosting and costs	2,200
Total Expenditure	\$1,421,711
Net Profit/Loss	\$0

Reports

CNSWJO FEE TOTALS FOR 2021/2022

Option 3 - \$30k deficit

(WRAS figures provided)

Excludes GST

	CNSWJO	OPERATIONAL	CENTROC	Assoc. Memberships	TOURISM	WRAS	Total Fees	Previous Year
	Membership &	Program	WATER UTILITIES	& Benchmarking			2021/2022	Fees
	Administration		ALLIANCE	Programming				
COUNCIL								
Orange	59,314	10,465	39,218	12,114	19,645	2,525	143,281	128,773
Bathurst	60,670	10,465	32,741	12,114	19,645	2,595	138,230	128,114
Parkes	27,236	10,465	17,673	12,114	11,787	882	80,157	76,801
Cabonne	30,121	10,465	7,171	12,114	11,787	811	72,469	71,048
Cowra Shire Council	24,803	10,465	15,589	12,114		758	63,729	57,027
Cowra Tourism Corp					11,787		11,787	16,169
Forbes	21,508	10,465	11,959	12,114	5,893	589	62,528	60,249
Lachlan	18,118	10,465	9,990	12,114	5,893	361	56,941	55,824
Oberon	17,479	10,465	7,581	12,114	5,893	321	53,853	52,798
Blayney	18,572	10,465	2,000	5,834	5,893	439	43,203	42,207
Weddin	14,197	10,465	2,000	5,834	1,964	214	34,674	32,356
Central Tablelands Water	10,000	5,232	14,078	12,114	0		41,424	30,788
TOTAL	302,018	109,882	160,000	120,694	100,187	9,495	802,276	752,154

Changes to base calculations

- *Minimum 2% IPART increase on previous year total fees
- *\$10,000 flat fee + capitation for membership & administration fee
- *CTW - 50% Operational Program fee
- *Update to 2019 population data
- *Update to 2020 water connection data

Reports

Option 3 - \$30k deficit

Central NSW Joint Organisation Budget - 2021/2022

**Budget
2021/2022**

Income	
CNSWJO Membership Fees	302,018
CWUA Best Practice Program	280,694
CNSWJO Regional Tourism Group	100,187
CNSWJO Operational Membership	109,882
WRAS	9,495
	\$802,276
CWUA -Smart Approved Watermark	39,535
	\$39,535
HR - Regional Training Service Income	60,000
HR - Online Training & Other HR Modules	280,000
	\$340,000
Management Fees from Contracts	120,000
Management Fee from LGP	55,000
	\$175,000
Copyright Licence	19,000
Vehicle Lease Back EO	4,500
Vehicle Lease Back CWUA	5,500
Vehicle Lease Back Operational Program Mgr	4,900
Interest	1,000
	\$34,900
Total Income	\$1,391,711

Reports

Expenditure	
Executive Officer Costs	205,000
Executive Officer Vehicle Costs & Depn	13,500
Operational Program Manager	125,000
Operational Program Manager - Vehicle costs	13,500
Finance Manager	70,000
Training & Program Support Officer	55,000
Executive & Programs Assistant	70,000
CWUA Program Manager & Program costs	160,000
CWUA Membership Program & Benchmarking Program	120,694
CWUA - Smart Approved Watermark	39,535
CNSWJO Regional Tourism Group	100,187
WRAS	9,495
HR - Training Service Costs	58,000
HR - Online Training & Other HR Modules	280,000
Regional Medical Student Scholarship	15,000
Advocacy	10,000
Accounting/Audit/Payroll	30,000
Bank Fees and Sundry costs	2,500
Computer Software/Licences	3,000
Copyright Licence	19,100
Depreciation (excl vehicles)	2,000
Internet Cloud	8,000
Legal	5,000
Printing/Stationery/Postage	1,000
Supply Management Administration	2,500
Zoom Conferences	1,500
Website Hosting and costs	2,200
Total Expenditure	\$1,421,711
Net Profit/Loss	-\$30,000

Draft Budget and Statement of Revenue Policy 2021- 2022

Under the Local Government Act, the Joint Organisation must adopt a Draft Statement of Revenue and Budget and exhibit it. Once feedback has been taken into consideration, the document must be adopted.

It is noted that the Statement of Revenue and Budget would be adopted at a meeting in May and the Statement of Revenue with the agreed budget from this meeting will be placed on the website, to fit with timeframes.

Draft Budget and Statement of Revenue Policy 2021-2022

The Central NSW Joint Organisation's revenue and accounting policies are kept in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards Board. CNSWJO abides by the:

- *Local Government Act (1993)*
- *Local Government (General Regulation 2005)*
- *Local Government Code of Accounting Practice & Financial Reporting*

1. Financial Contributions by Member Councils

Financial contributions by member Councils fall into two categories. Firstly, membership fees are levied from all member councils in order to perform the principal functions of delivering on strategic regional priorities, regional leadership and intergovernmental cooperation. The second category is for optional contributions from participating councils for a program of other functions enhancing strategic capacity and direct service delivery. Strategic work by the Joint Organisation will determine the nature of this program.

As outlined in its Charter, the Central NSW Joint Organisation (CNSWJO) member councils must contribute financially based on the following methodology:

- a. The annual financial contribution required to be made by each Member Council is to consist of:
 - i. base fee of the same amount for each Member Council; and
 - ii. a capitation fee [based on the number population drawn from ABS census figures].
- b. The annual financial contribution required to be made by each Associate Member is to be based on a methodology adopted by the Board.
- c. The amount of the base fee, capitation fee and financial contribution by Associate Members for a financial year is to be determined prior to the start of that year by Resolution of the Board.

For 2021-2022, contributions from member councils of the Joint Organisation of **\$802,276** has been determined with the following breakdown:

Reports

Membership & Administration: \$302,018

Membership of various programs: \$500,258

(Operational, CNSWJO Water Utilities' Alliance, Tourism & Western Region Academy of Sport)

2. Fees & Charges

Under the Local Government Act 1993, the CNSWJO may charge and recover an approved fee for its services.

CNSWJO must consider the following when establishing approved fees:

- The cost of provision of the service
- Recommended prices suggested by outside bodies
- The importance of the service
- Legislation that regulates certain fees
- Goods & Services Tax legislation.

3. 2021-2022 Income Statement

Central NSW Joint Organisation Budget - 2021/2022

	Budget 2021/2022
Income	
CNSWJO Membership Fees	302,018
CWUA Best Practice Program	280,694
CNSWJO Regional Tourism Group	100,187
CNSWJO Operational Membership	109,882
WRAS	9,495
	\$802,276
CWUA -Smart Approved Watermark	39,535
	\$39,535
HR - Regional Training Service Income	60,000
HR - Online Training & Other HR Modules	280,000
	\$340,000
Management Fees from Contracts	120,000
Management Fee from LGP	55,000
	\$175,000
Copyright Licence	19,000
Vehicle Lease Back EO	4,500
Vehicle Lease Back CWUA	5,500
Vehicle Lease Back Operational Program Mgr	4,900

Reports

Interest	1,000
	\$34,900
Total Income	\$1,391,711

Expenditure

Executive Officer Costs	205,000
Executive Officer Vehicle Costs & Depn	13,500
Operational Program Manager	125,000
Operational Program Manager - Vehicle costs	13,500
Finance Manager	70,000
Training & Program Support Officer	55,000
Executive & Programs Assistant	70,000
CWUA Program Manager & Program costs	160,000
CWUA Membership Program & Benchmarking Program	120,694
CWUA - Smart Approved Watermark	39,535
CNSWJO Regional Tourism Group	100,187
WRAS	9,495
HR - Training Service Costs	58,000
HR - Online Training & Other HR Modules	280,000
Regional Medical Student Scholarship	15,000
Advocacy	10,000
Accounting/Audit/Payroll	30,000
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c. Advocacy Plans

Regional Strategic Priorities	1.1 Governance arrangements enable inter-council co-operation
Portfolio Mayors	Cr Ken Keith, OAM - Transport Cr Bill West Regional - Prosperity Cr David Somerville - Water

Report by Jenny Bennett dated 2 March 2021

Recommendation/s
That the Board note the Report on the CNSWJO Advocacy Plans and <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. adopt the advocacy plans for water and regional prosperity; and 2. note that a further report on the transport advocacy plan will be provided.

Precis Advocacy plans with key messaging informs various submissions and representations during the year. They are updated annually for Board review.

Reason for Report

The Local Government Act specifies the role of the JO as including leadership and prioritisation.

This report provides advice on Advocacy Plans for Regional Prosperity and Water for General Manager comments to go to the Board meeting March 11. At the time of writing, the Advocacy Plan for Transport is in early days of review with consultation anticipated 24 January with TfNSW. The current Advocacy Plan for Transport is provided as an attachment should members have any direction for its update. As they are reviewed the Plans are provided to the Portfolio Mayors for comment.

These Plans will inform all submission writing and advocacy for the calendar year. The Plans are updated based on policy developed during the past calendar year and an environmental scan of opportunities and barriers.

Legislative Policy and Risk Considerations

Advocacy Plan for Regional Prosperity 2021

Please find attached the Draft Advocacy Plan for Regional Prosperity. This has been provided to the Portfolio Mayor and Mr Sam Harma of RDA Central West for further feedback.

Material differences are the inclusion of the ongoing priority for the region of focussing in agriculture, tourism and embedding the governance arrangements under the Regional Leadership Executive for the Regional Prosperity Subcommittee.

Advice has been sought from members on their top two health priorities and this will inform further updates

Reports

Advocacy Plan for Regional Water

Activity in this complex portfolio hit a critical point in 2020 with many of the region's towns challenged by water shortages and the threat of 'day-zero' scenarios. Our Councils worked collectively and with the NSW Government's Regional Town Water Coordinator and State agencies to develop and implement emergency town water solutions in response.

In line with CNSWJO Board Policy included in the Regional Water Advocacy Plan, JO advocacy in 2020 has focused on:

- Engagement in all State Government water management forums to highlight the importance of town water supplies in planning processes, the maturity of the region in water management and the importance of whole-of-government collaboration.
- Emergency infrastructure solutions identified by members and prioritised by resolution of the Board.
- Funding for long-term regional water security projects seeking all opportunities to engage at decision making level in the planning and business case development for these projects. Highlights included funding for the development of a business case for the Lake Rowlands to Carcoar Pipeline Project, the Lake Rowlands Augmentation project and the potentially game changing Wyangala Dam wall raising project.
- Optimising the role of JOs in the costly and resource intensive development of Integrated Water Cycle Management Plans and related processes, formed the subject of much advocacy together with on-going challenges in the regulatory and funding framework.

Most significant in 2020 was success by the region for its advocacy to have urban water integrated into the State Government's strategic framework for water management in regional NSW.

Throughout 2020 the JO and its member Councils worked with DPIE Water in the development of the Lachlan and Macquarie-Castlereagh Regional Water Strategies. These are the first inland river catchment Strategies to be developed and while there is still work to be done, particularly in the unregulated Macquarie Valley, the integration of urban water into these represents a major step in regional water management across the State.

Water management in NSW and nationally is under-going huge re-evaluation and management change leading to ongoing requests for submissions and consultations. See the Regional Water Report for details.

While there are challenges in fit-for-purpose, whole-of-government consultative processes, the JO continues to advocate for fully collaborative and place-based processes with appropriate Local Government representation at the regional level.

Current strategic work by the State and Federal Governments in water is seeing good use of terms such as "co-design", "collaborative", "partnership" and "place-based", however engagement with the region continues to be missing the local and regional input at decision making levels. Feedback continues to be that it is hard to influence decisions after the fact, particularly once decisions have been made in Sydney and endorsed by cabinet.

The Wyangala Dam project together with the Regional Water Strategies present an opportunity to consider, not just urban water, but water for productive uses including manufacturing and business,

agriculture and mining in a whole of catchment approach. At its November 2020 meeting the CNSWJO Board resolved to receive scoping work on an approach to productive water. This will be progressed in 2021.

Taking into account the above scan of the regional water environment and the subtleties of messaging in response to the numerous submissions completed in 2020 and endorsed by the CNSWJO Board, the Regional Advocacy is being reviewed and updated.

Changes will largely reflect progress made through the development of the Regional Water Strategies and Government commitment to progressing the Wyangala Dam augmentation where it is proposed that the focus of advocacy in 2021 be:

- ***collaboration with all levels of Government on both emergency and long-term town water security planning, management and projects.*** It is critical that relaxing of the urgent crisis as a result of rain does not detract from the need to address challenges in navigating state government regulation and water management identified at the peak of the drought and in infrastructure development. Notably for the unregulated Macquarie system and towns like Oberon that rely on state-owned dams.
- ***optimising the JOs in the governance and implementation of the Regional Water Strategies and development of the planned Regional Town Water and overarching State Water Strategies including work by Regional NSW on Future Ready Regions.***

The Regional Water Strategies represent a major step forward but there is much to be done. Key moving forward will be advocacy on:

- Representation of Local Government in prioritisation and governance and implementation of the strategies;
 - methodologies used to value urban water in regional communities;
 - how the above is used in the funding framework and to prioritise infrastructure;
 - matching regional priorities with the lived-experience;
 - clarity around the fit between the Regional Water Strategies, the proposed Regional Town Water Strategies and their role in the planning framework and Council's individual IWCMs;
 - optimising JOs in developing sensible solutions and next steps in a regional approach to IWCM and the Regional Town Water Strategies where there is potential to avoid duplication, unnecessary costs and achieve better outcomes for Governments and communities. Advice regarding work by the JO Chairs on this front is included in the report to this meeting from the JO Chairs Forum.
- ***Optimising the JO in advocacy on the State Water Strategy.***
The release of the Draft State Water Strategy in February 2021 will see the need for on-going advocacy with DPIE Water throughout 2021 to ensure overarching policy, regulatory and governance issues highlighted through the development of the Regional Water Strategies are captured and addressed through this Strategy. See the Regional Water Report.
 - ***Support of regional representation on the Town Water Risk Reduction Program Stakeholder Advisory Panel.***
Engagement will focus on reform of the regulatory regime for Local Government Local Water Utilities and will draw on the expertise of the Water Utilities Alliance. See Regional Water Report.

It must be noted that CNSWJO Policy is not to step into the regulatory space or to become a fourth tier of Government.

- ***The Board endorsed scoping work on Productive Water.*** This will commence in earnest in early 2021 and will inform messaging for inclusion in the Plan.

Where for the most part messaging has not changed greatly, reworded messaging worthy of note and previously endorsed by the Board in submissions developed through the Executive is detailed below.

Long term Water Security

- The Regional Water Strategies and projects including the Wyangala dam wall augmentation present the opportunity for a review of higher order issues around water management including:
 - High security raw water networking
 - Water sharing and water use productivity
 - Managed Aquifer Recharge
 - Groundwater modelling.
- A key consideration that should inform funding or financing of new water infrastructure is the value that is placed on urban water and the economic effects of water restrictions on the regional, state and national economy.
- The Wyangala Dam wall project together with the Regional Water Strategies presents an opportunity to consider, not just urban water, but water for productive uses including manufacturing and business, agriculture and mining in a whole of catchment approach.
- The Wyangala Dam wall project will develop and grow skills, capacity and supply chains across the region and generate employment opportunities delivering more than long-term water security but a much-needed economic stimulus in the short-to-medium term.
- The development of the Lachlan and Macquarie Regional Water Strategies and the Wyangala Dam project presents an opportunity to work with Councils to ensure policy and water management settings are right.
- There needs to be more storage and a change in how the Murray Darling Basin Plan is administered to sustain growth, particularly in the context of drought for inland communities.
- The region continues to investigate a range of multi-source options including the potential for aquifer recharge, recycled water schemes and more stormwater harvesting all of which may promote enhanced environmental outcomes in urban settlements.
- Local government is the front line of regional communities and a part of the solution for a sustainable region is a safe, secure and reliable water supply that supports population growth in our region and that will sustain business and industry into the future.
- The missing piece is effective inter-governmental collaboration at the regional level in strategic water management.

- It is critical that ongoing collaboration continues between Councils and those State agencies with responsibility in the water space and that any high-level decisions made with respect to strategic water management for regional communities is informed by the expertise, on-the-ground knowledge and lived experience of utilities and the communities' they represent.
- While Councils have a core responsibility for providing town water supplies and have had to fight hard to have urban water integrated into the strategic framework for water management, their areas of operation cover the health and well-being of all members of their community including their Aboriginal population and the region's precious natural resources and its industries. This point must not be lost in any discussion about subjectivity or representation by Local Government in planning and decision-making processes at the regional level.

Local Government Ownership and Management of Local Water Utilities in Regional NSW

- Councils in regional NSW have made significant progress towards achieving the National Water Initiative's objectives of efficient and sustainable urban water services. This is not always reflected in the current reporting.
- Local Water Utilities in regional NSW have a responsibility to cover all costs and provide a positive return on investment to their local Council owner. The CNSWJO Board policy is that Councils can determine their own rates. The bigger problem is pricing and affordability for communities to pay for services.
- The CNSWJO Board maintains that the question that should be asked is not about the institutional or structural arrangements for LG LWUs in regional NSW but rather how water is managed strategically between the State, Federal and Local Government. This is where the greatest gains can be made in the delivery of LWU services.
- The CNSWJO Board supports investigation of a concept of Community Service Obligations that recognise that the "user pays" principle does not work in small rural councils /communities, and that the state economic benefit produced by these areas justifies state subsidisation for infrastructure
- In line with the findings of the Productivity Commission and NSW Auditor General (report Sept 2020) future reform should ensure effective collaboration on water management at the regional level between multiple government agencies, Councils and Joint Organisations, Local Water Utilities and local and regional stakeholders, including in water reliant industries.
- The development of Regional Water Strategies and the State Water Strategy by the NSW Government is the ideal time to seek to have governance arrangements in place for both the implementation of these plans, but to deliver a range significant benefits afforded by intergovernmental collaboration through a new approach leveraging the Joint Organisations.

Water Utilities Alliance

- There are great opportunities for resource and skills sharing amongst geographically closely linked water utilities that are yet to be optimised with the major barrier to this being the

strategic framework and lack of inter-governmental collaboration that includes Local Government as a partner with a seat at the table in the development of strategy and policy in the water space.

- Where this region can continue to deliver incremental value to the smaller LWUs and the communities they serve through the collaborative Water Utilities Alliance, the bigger value to be realised is through inter-governmental collaboration, not between our utilities but further up the Government management chain. This has been demonstrated through work in the Central NSW region to integrate urban water into the Regional Water Strategies.

A Regional Water Committee was formed in April 2020 to guide the region's collaboration at the strategic level. It is anticipated that the newly formed Regional Water Committee will be important in steering and informing this strategic work as well as on-going engagement in the development of the Regional Water Strategies, Wyangala Dam wall project and other regional water solutions.

For more detail please see the Regional Water Advocacy Plan noting that this is a work in progress and will be restructured and rationalised with key messages at the front and detailed background provided as an appendix.

This is a living document and feedback is welcomed.

Attachment/s

1. Draft Revised Regional Water Advocacy Plan – (work in progress)
2. Draft Revised Advocacy Plan for Regional Prosperity (currently with the Portfolio Chair)
3. Advocacy Plan 2020 for Transport

d. Best Practice in Aggregated Procurement

Regional Strategic Priorities	1.2 Deliver cost savings and other value to member councils through aggregated procurement
Portfolio Mayor	Cr John Medcalf, OAM
Sponsoring General Manager/s	Mr B Byrnes and Mr G Tory

Report by Kate Barker, 2 March 2021

Recommendation/s
That the Board notes the report on Best Practice in Aggregated Procurement.

Precis

This report provides the Board with an update on the progress of the Best Practice in Aggregated Procurement Program.

The report is provided for noting.

Reason for the Report

CNSWJO is currently working on a project titled Best Practice in Aggregated Procurement (BPAP), which is in collaboration with three other JOs – Canberra Region JO (CRJO), Riverina and Murray JO (RAMJO) and Riverina JO.

The Program is broken down into 6 components. Stages 1a and 1b have been completed. Stages 2 to 6 are underway with Western Research Institute.

Legislative Policy and Risk Considerations

This region is progressing the BPAP Program collaboratively with neighboring JOs to inform optimal processes that can be leveraged by the changes in legislation enabling the JO.

Related risks from the Strategic Plan include:

- 27 – Procurement charging processes not universally supported
- 28 – ensuring services are relevant to all members, and providing value for money
- 31 – long term viability and financial sustainability
- 36 – managing members' expectations

Discussion**Stages 1a and 1b**

A series of documents and templates were produced from Stages 1a and 1b. A workshop with General Managers is being coordinated for April to review and make recommendation to the Board regarding preferred model/s for the JO and member councils to use for regional procurement.

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The draft letter to the Local Government Minister also forms part of Stage 1b and it is anticipated that the meeting of the General Managers will provide advice and review prior to a recommendation to the Board.

Stages 2-6

The Western Research Institute has been engaged to complete Stages 2 to 6 which include the following:

Stage 2 - Advice on leading practice in aggregated procurement including innovation, panels and supporting regional economies

Stage 3 - Advice on generating income from procurement models to inform advice on best level of aggregation for specific goods and services

Stage 4 - Advice on the value proposition including reporting and methodologies on cost savings

Stage 5 - Inputs to, facilitation of and report from Aggregated Procurement Opportunities Workshop

Stage 6 - Toolkit that pulls together the above and takes into account serendipitous advice and shared learnings

The BPAP steering committee received the draft report for Stage 2 just prior to Christmas and are currently reviewing the documents.

General Managers and other key staff will be invited to a workshop in mid-April to discuss the findings from Stages 2 to 6, as well as develop a 5-year regional procurement plan. Calendar invitations will be sent shortly.

It is anticipated that the project will be complete by June 2021.

Winc Project with LGP

The draft advice on stages 2-4 of the BPAP project suggests exploring optimizing LGP contracts. Through the consultation phase LGP met with the consultant and CNSWJO and it was suggested that CNSWJO pilot the optimisation of an LGP Winc contract. Winc stands for Work Incorporated and is an amalgamation of the old Staples and Corporate Express brands.

Advice will be provided to GMAC in April to progress this project.

Conclusion

The BPAP Program is progressing well Stages 2 to 6 and the draft for Stage 2 has been received and is currently being reviewed by the steering committee. Participation in the BPAP workshop with WRI in April by General Managers and other key staff is strongly encouraged.

A project piloting work optimizing LGP contracts is also recommended for scoping under the auspices of the sponsoring General Managers.

Attachment/s: Nil

Reports

e. Energy Program

Regional Strategic Priorities	1.3 Members are provided with value for money from collaboration on energy related projects
Portfolio Mayor	Cr John Medcalf, OAM
Sponsoring General Manager/s	Mr B Byrnes and Mr G Tory

Report by Kate Barker, 2 March 2021

Recommendation/s
That the Board notes the report on the Energy Program.

Precis

This report provides an update on all energy-related activities, including:

- DPIE energy project
- Southern Lights Project
- Electricity, and
- Electric Vehicles

Information is provided on two upcoming Expression of Interest processes and one Request for Quotation process where the resulting contracts will be between members and the successful provider.

This report is provided for noting.

Reason for the Report

The regional energy group has not had a meeting for some time, due to limited resources and low attendance and engagement from member councils. It is anticipated that the group will reconvene in the coming months; however, in the meantime this report provides an update on all energy-related activities. A similar report was provided to the Energy Group at the end of February.

Legislative Policy and Risk Considerations

Related risks from the Strategic Plan include:

28 – ensuring services are relevant to all members, and providing value for money

31 – long term viability and financial sustainability

36 – managing members' expectations

Regional Projects**DPIE Energy Project**

Members will recall that an MoU was signed with DPIE in September 2020 to undertake a variety of energy projects. The program engaged Simon Wright from Simply Sustainable to provide consulting

Reports

support to the project, including the identification of key priority projects for each member councils, which are fully funded by DPIE.

A number of RFQs have been released to progress the work identified. CNSJWO has taken the lead on the procurement of the activities, however DPIE is the contracting party.

The RFQ for the Renewable Energy Action Plans was awarded to:

- Chargeworks – for Forbes, Orange, and Parkes
- 100% Renewables – for Oberon and Weddin.

Both companies have been used previously by DPIE, as well as other CNSWJO member councils.

The RFQ for the solar and storage assessments is underway where it is anticipated that the successful provider for this work will be engaged in mid-March. Blayney and Central Tablelands Water is participating in these assessments.

Other work funded under the DPIE program include procurement support for solar procure, audits of operational efficiency at aquatic centres, emissions reduction plan, and storage assessment for add-on to solar.

The engagement and support from DPIE staff has been excellent. This region is a pilot for DPIE to engage through JOs more broadly and advice from DPIE is that it is working well, and they plan to consider broadening the project to other JOs due to the success of the pilot.

Southern Lights

The Southern Lights project continues to move forward, albeit slowly.

Essential Energy has provided the following update of the LED rollouts (as at late February 2021):

LGA	No. LEDs	Status of project
Bathurst Regional	5500	Completed - Major Works Complete
Orange	3720	Completed - Major Works Complete
Weddin	442	Completed - Major Works Complete
Cabonne	724	Completed - Works Complete
Cowra	1210	Delivery
Forbes	32	Pre-deployment - Planning
Oberon	79	Pre-deployment - Planning
Blayney	6	Scheduled 21/22
Lachlan	29	Scheduled 21/22
Parkes	104	Scheduled 21/22

A total of 100,000 lights across the entire Essential Energy footprint have now been installed.

Other updates to the program are as follows:

- **Smart controls tender** – this is a long process that commenced in mid-2019. EE has advised that it expects the tender to be awarded in the coming weeks. More information will be provided to members in due course.
- **Zhaga-enabled lights** – a trial of the lights is expected to commence shortly in Bathurst and Orange.

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- **Sensors** – REROc is coordinating an EOI process which closed in January. Assessment of responses is underway. The Southern Lights group will be seeking interest from councils for a group procure.
- **NSW Public Lighting Code Update** – there has been several rounds of comments and revisions. Finalised amendments expected in coming weeks. Southern Lights will pull together a summary of the changes and circulate to members.
- **Energy Savings Certificates (ESCs)** – the price of ESCs has increased significantly in value. Modelling for LED upgrade budgets was based on \$18 per ESC, however they are currently trading at between \$26 and \$31 each, which is great news for councils who are currently in or soon to be deploying their LED updated.

Electricity

Electricity Contract

The existing contracts with Origin Energy and EnergyAustralia are in their second year, due to expire at the end of 2022. A few options have been floated with the evaluation panel/project steering committee which include:

- **Direct Metering Agreements** – councils DMAs have recently expired and CNSWJO is currently working with EMS to seek a short-term agreement with the existing provider prior to conducting an RFQ process in mid-2021. The resulting DMAs from the RFQ will be between the successful provider and individual councils, rather than with the JO. Interest will be sought from members in the coming weeks regarding participation in the RFQ process.
- **Incorporating renewable energy into the existing contracts** – discussions are underway with the retailers to identify any opportunities to vary the existing contracts to include renewable energy. Members will be updated as information becomes available.
- **Small sites PPA** – the existing small sites contract has no exit fees which allows councils to remove sites if needed. Members expressed disappointment with the lack of renewable energy incorporated into the existing electricity contract, so other options are being considered. One of these is to conduct an EOI process to assess the viability of removing a number of sites from the small market contract and entering them into a renewable energy power purchase agreement (PPA). The EOI process will commence in the coming weeks and interest will be sought from members to participate.

Simon Wright from Simply Sustainable and Grant Christopherson from DPIE were also involved in a recent meeting to flesh out these options. It is anticipated that DPIE will be involved in these projects as part of the broader energy project through the Sustainable Councils and Communities Program.

Electricity Procurement

Work is underway to reconvene the evaluation panel to start considering options for the next process. A meeting was held with the previous evaluation panel in late February. A request has been sent to all energy group members to seek interest in participating in the evaluation panel, noting it is a 2-year commitment due to the length and complexity of the process. Should there be no forthcoming interest from Council staff, support from General Managers will be sought to identify individuals to participate.

In preparation of the procurement process for the supply of electricity, an RFx is typically conducted to identify a consultant to provide procurement support to the JO and its members. This third-party support is important due complexity and requirement of intimate knowledge of the electricity market. Due to the rapidly evolving nature of the electricity market, particularly in relation to

Reports

renewable energy, it is proposed that an Expression of Interest process be conducted in the coming months to identify what opportunities exist for members. Upon completion it is anticipated that an RFX process will be conducted, pending approval from GMAC and the Board.

Another aspect that members should start giving consideration to is the option for paying an upfront fee for the procurement consulting support rather than an ongoing commission over the life of the contract.

While it is almost 24 months until the new contract is required, the previous process demonstrated that it is a long, complex process and it is important to leave sufficient time to ensure a good price is obtained, even if this means going out to the market more than once if the price is too high. Leaving insufficient time can mean councils have no choice but to accept the offer they receive.

Electric Vehicles

Everengi was engaged by CNSWJO on behalf of members to complete an Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Mapping project. The regional report is almost complete, with meetings being booked with each member council prior to finalising the council-specific summary reports.

In February 2021, ARENA announced the Future Fuels Fund. Round 1 of the program is aimed at fast charging for EVs in specific geographic locations, in NSW being Sydney, Wollongong, Central Coast and Newcastle. It is anticipated that further rounds will be available later in the year for other regions and for destination chargers. CNSWJO will continue to monitor the status of the program and progress the EV mapping project to ensure grant readiness.

The NSW Government is expected to announce incentives to help organisations transition their fleet to electric vehicles in the coming weeks.

The incentive will:

- a. help to cover the gap in total cost of ownership between BEVs and equivalent diesel/petrol vehicles and will be delivered through a competitive bidding process.*
- b. be open to NSW businesses, not for profit organisations and local councils wanting to buy new passenger and light commercial BEV's for their fleet.*
- c. have regular funding rounds over the next few years to support your future procurement plans.*

Source: NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

Conclusion

While the regional energy group has not had a formal meeting for some time, there is a considerable amount of work going on in the background and CNSWJO staff endeavor to update members accordingly.

In the coming weeks and months work will commence on the next round of electricity procurement starting with an EOI for consulting support as well as an EOI for a renewable energy PPA for a number of small market sites. Interest from members in an RFQ process for DMAs will be sought in the coming weeks.

Attachment/s:

Nil.

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Priority Two: Regional Prosperity**f. Visitor Economy Strategy**

Regional Strategic Priorities	2.1 Initiatives to grow population and increase the visitor economy
Portfolio Mayor	Cr Bill West
Sponsoring General Manager/s	Ms R Ryan, Mr D Waddell, Mr P Devery, Mr G Carroll

Report by Jenny Bennett, 2 March 2021

Recommendation/s
<p>That the Board note the Report on the Visitor Economy Strategy; and</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. use the advice in the Tourism Strategy to inform the next round of strategic work; 2. make changes to the document in line with feedback from members; 3. receive advice from members on priority tourism infrastructure investment; and 4. implement short term programming within existing resource as suggested in the Plan with a report to be provided to the February Board meeting.

Precis

Members will be aware that the region has invested in a refresh of its approach to tourism service delivered regionally. The University of Newcastle was engaged to deliver this work and will be providing a presentation to the Board on the Central NSW Joint Organisation Visitor Economy Strategy (the Strategy.)

Critically, the Strategy seeks to leverage the role of the Joint Organisation, that being:

- Advocacy and leadership
- Intergovernmental cooperation and
- Planning and Prioritisation.

The Strategy identifies a raft of activity at both the tactical and strategic level for the Board to consider in its forward programming.

It may be that to achieve some of the actions and recommendations that changes would be required to resourcing. Board members may have a view in this regard and feedback is welcomed. Options will be provided to the Board as part of its review of strategy subsequent to the next round of Local Government elections and Integrated Planning and Reporting.

Finally, some short term recommendations may be achievable within existing resource and a report on progressing these is recommended for the next Board meeting.

Reason for the Report

This report seeks Board approval to take the next steps in the strategic space for the visitor economy.

Reports

Legislative Policy and Risk Considerations

Over the decades the NSW Government framework for providing support to the visitor economy and local tourism organisations has been evolving. For Central NSW Tourism this has seen a gradual reduction of services in a broader metrocentric funding and services support framework under Destination NSW.

To retain the value realised through decades of Councils working collaboratively in Central NSW, this region resolved to take on as best it could the resourcing of regional tourism. Adapting the Central NSW Tourism model into Centroc has shown continued value for money for members in tourism. One salient number is the \$1.5m ROI on \$50K of spend in public relations last financial year. For more advice on the value proposition of the CNSWJO involvement in the visitor economy please see the Report to the Central NSW JO Strategic Plan and Statement of Regional Strategic Priority 2019/2020.

The Central NSW JO Strategic Plan for this year called for a review of the tourism function. This has been undertaken and found value in continued regional programming to be progressed from a refreshed regional strategy. Please request all past reports in this regard.

The process has been administered by a Steering Committee, as determined by the Board, made up of elected representatives and tourism managers from across the region. An open procurement process with good response from the consulting industry led to the University of Newcastle being selected. Material to their selection was their strength in understanding the potential of leveraging the role of the JO. Please request all procurement documentation.

Stakeholder consultations and a workshop has been held. These have informed the attached Strategy.

The Strategy includes a situational analysis which provides useful data and advice both locally and regionally to inform future action and investment.

Member feedback has been sought regarding the document and this forms an attachment to the report.

Importantly feedback on key messages and an updated version is provided below.

KEY MESSAGES

Key messages for CNSWJO advocacy should include the following:

Key messages

1. Central NSW has a proud history of Local Tourism Organisations working collaboratively to grow the visitor economy. This collaboration respects every destination is at a different place on the journey.
2. People visit a region before they relocate so impressions they experience on a visit or receive by word of mouth or in online forums are important.
3. With international travel unlikely until the end of 2021, the short to medium term following the Covid-19 pandemic is a critical time to invest in tourism in Central NSW.
4. It will be important to align with *Tourism 2030* once it is launched. With its expected focus on regions, the Australian Government may fund regional initiatives and promote the regions for livability.

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5. Given the visitor demographic, the rapid growth in the visitor economy as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic and transport constraints between Sydney and Central NSW, an urgent investment is required to encourage weekend visitors to stay longer in region, especially past Sunday afternoon.
6. The Australian and NSW governments funding to improve road connectivity including:
 - a. Into Western Sydney where the journey east is subject significant delays on a regular basis
 - b. Continued improvements to the Newell Highway
 - c. Connections from Canberra and the South Coast.
7. A growth in the visitor economy will be enabled by the Australian and NSW governments delivering reliable NBN and mobile phone coverage across the whole region.
8. NSW Government departments responsible for Planning, Infrastructure, Heritage and Parks and Wildlife and Crown Lands should collaborate with the key decision makers in Central NSW to enable product development to grow the visitor economy. This includes investment in static infrastructure such as directional and interpretive signage, heritage structures, silos and sculptures as well as dynamic infrastructure, for example, rail trails for walking/cycling and on- and off-road cycle tracks.
9. Federal, State and Local Government owned existing and emerging infrastructure that generates visitor experiences is vital for the economy and require ongoing investment.
10. The NSW Government, Destination NSW and the CNSWJO should collaborate for better funding and governance arrangements to support the visitor economy. This includes:
 - a. Equity of service because DNCO services 61% of the State and is currently under resourced for its task
 - b. Equity of funding across the state due to the sometimes limited budget for regional councils to allocate funding to new products and capacity building
 - c. Leveraging the JO structure to maximise efficiencies and effectiveness
 - d. Supporting all destinations to build the contribution of tourism to their local economy to at least the NSW State average by 2025.
11. Support councils to implement infrastructure, training and planning initiatives to support the visitor economy. Examples include public amenities, unused buildings/rail tracks, CBD upgrades or infrastructure assets, as well as capacity building of existing operators and the development of quality accommodation, food and retail offerings.

Attachments:/

4. CNSWJO Visitor Economy Strategy 2021-2026
5. Member Feedback on Tourism Strategy

g. Regional Activator Alliance

Regional Strategic Priorities	2.1 Initiatives to grow population and increase the visitor economy
Portfolio Mayor	Cr Bill West
Sponsoring General Manager/s	Ms R Ryan, Mr D Waddell, Mr P Devery, Mr G Carroll

Report by Jenny Bennett, 2 March 2021

Recommendation/s
<p>That the Board note the Report on the Regional Activator Alliance and</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. continue to leverage the case study material provided by Councils; and 2. note Weddin Shire was one of the first two to be promoted as part of the soft launch.

Precis

This report provides advice on a Regional Australia Institute (RAI) initiative progressed through the Portfolio Mayor and the Chair between Board meetings.

CNSWJO has made an investment of \$5000 in the Regional Activators' Alliance (RAA) along with 36 other investors across the country. This is being leveraged by successful Federal Government budget bid by the RAI for \$4.6m over two years (\$2.3mpa) to support relocation into regional NSW.

By buying into the program, working with Central West RDA this region seeks to influence outcomes in the interest of members. The first opportunity was to provide information to go into the national campaign. Councils responded well to this opportunity.

Weddin Shire Council Residents were one of two that were first to have their case study shared on the launch date 22 February.

Reason for the report

Members will recall that the Board gave support to the National Promotion in December 2020. A good amount of Case Studies for the Regional Activators' Alliance regional marketing program were provided by Council staff in late December. Thankyou.

Both RDA Central West and CNSWJO are pushing to leverage the great work Councils have done and happily one of our members, Weddin Shire was one of the first to be promoted as part of the soft launch in February.

The first of RAA #madethemove case studies are on our website. Check them out here:

<http://www.regionalaustralia.org.au/home/madethemove/>

Activities timeline:

- Monday Feb 22, was the release date for the research data gathered by Redhanded for the National Awareness Campaign.
- CEO Liz Ritchie spoke at the National Press Club in Canberra on Tuesday, Feb 23 as part of a discussion on the topic, "Regionalisation – the time is now." This is a great

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opportunity to put regionalisation front and centre before the nation's political journalists.

- The National Summit 17/18 March 2021 Canberra – CNSWJO received two complementary Summit tickets, both Executive Officers of the JO and RDACW will attend.

Links to share through social media

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6769388854924464128>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/RegionalAus/status/1363622394510761986>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/RegionalAus/posts/2117596408370946>

Regional Australia Institute media release on the research

<http://www.regionalaustralia.org.au/home/new-research-shows-why-city-dwellers-want-a-life-in-the-country-and-when-they-might-move/>

Legislative Policy and Risk Considerations

The CNSWJO Strategy calls for “*Regional promotion plans for opt in by members developed to advertise regional attributes for business relocation and livability of the Region.*” Members received a report at the recent Board meeting outlining options to be progressed in a further report. As part of the stakeholder consultation for this report, CNSWJO was name aware of the Regional Activators’ Alliance.

Financial Implications

CNSWJO has made an investment of \$5000 in the Regional Activators’ Alliance (RAA) along with 36 other investors across the country. This is being leveraged by successful Federal Government budget bid by the RAI for \$4.6m over two years (\$2.3mpa) to support relocation into regional NSW.

Attachment/s:

6. Weddin Residents case study campaign promotion

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h. A 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW – Refresh

Regional Strategic Priorities	2.2 Regional industry and population sustainability and growth planning across the Region
Portfolio Mayor	Cr Bill West
Sponsoring General Manager/s	Ms R Ryan, Mr D Waddell, Mr P Devery, Mr G Carroll

Report by Jenny Bennett, 23 February 2021

Recommendation/s
That the Board note the Report on a 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW, Refresh and work with RDACW and the Regional Prosperity Committee on ensuring opportunities in the Regional 20-Year Economic Vision are realised in Central NSW.

Precis

Members will be aware that the NSW Government has reviewed and refreshed its 20 Year Economic Vision (REV). The first REV was informed from the Regional Economic Development Strategies based to some extent in this region around Functional Economic Regions.

There is opportunity for alignment and advice to the Board from the Regional Prosperity Subcommittee on opportunities that can be realised by members and/or the region.

Background

The 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW, released in 2018, sets out the Government's priorities and plans to achieve long-term social and economic success for regional communities across the state.

The 2018 Vision has been refreshed in response to the changed economic landscape and opportunities that have emerged in regional NSW following the drought, bushfires, flood and COVID-19 pandemic.

The *Vision Refresh* identifies how regional NSW will continue to be a vibrant and growing part of the NSW economy, solidifying the regions as the perfect place for people to live, work, play and invest.

Guiding principles for the *Vision*

Principle 1

Affordable, reliable and fast mobile and internet connectivity to support people and businesses.

Principle 2

Improved travel between regional centres and from regional centres and international gateways.

Principle 3

Freight networks that will increase the competitiveness of key regional sectors.

Principle 4

Reliable accessible water and energy.

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Principle 5

A skilled labour force for current and future needs of the regions.

Principle 6

Recognising each region's strengths and underlying endowments.

Principle 7

Regulation and planning to promote commercial opportunities.

Principle 8

Sustainable economies and communities are better able to recover from shocks.

Opportunities for accelerated growth are in the following key sectors:

- Advanced manufacturing
- Technology-enabled primary industries
- Renewable energy and gas
- Critical minerals
- Ecotourism
- Recycling and waste management
- High-quality food products
- Visitor economy infrastructure
- Affordable and accessible energy
- Digital infrastructure
- Transport infrastructure
- Freight infrastructure
- Energy infrastructure
- Education and labour force
- Knowledge economy and innovation excellence
- Ecotourism and environmental protection
- Education, training and research strengths
- Attractive business environment
- Vibrant places to live, work and study
- Economic strength and diversity
- Food production and agribusiness

Central West and Orana

Our region is represented with Orana. See below the profile.



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Central West & Orana

Central West & Orana's key engine industries include mining and agriculture. Its regional centres are highly liveable, offering attractive lifestyle options, amenity and employment opportunities across a diverse industry base. While the impacts of recent shocks have been most pronounced in agriculture and tourism, the NSW Government is accelerating recovery through investment in the Parkes Special Activation Precinct, renewable energy priorities, digital connectivity and enhanced water security to support the growth of Central West & Orana's engine and emerging industries.

To view the full document 'A 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW' please click on this link
https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-02/20%20Year%20Vision%20for%20RNSW_0.pdf

Included in the document, are the priority actions for regional economic development and the future commitments under the following headings;

1. Infrastructure
2. Skills
3. Advocacy and Promotion
4. Business Environment
5. Economic Strength and Diversity

Please see attached pages 40-53 which lists all their timelines and activities.

Attachment/s:

7. Priority actions for regional economic development Pages 40-53

Priority Three: Regional Transport and Infrastructure

i. Progressing a Western Link Event

Regional Strategic Priorities	1.1 Transport connectivity planning 1.2 Infrastructure planning
Portfolio Mayor	Cr Ken Keith
Sponsoring General Manager/s	Mr K Boyd, Mr S Loane and Mr G Wallace

Report by Jenny Bennett, 2 March 2021

Recommendation/s
That the Board note the report on progressing the resolve of the Board regarding connecting the two Wests.

Precis

Follow-up has been undertaken subsequent to the resolve of the Board in December. At the time of writing an event is being organized in Penrith hosted by Penrith bringing together key stakeholders and being facilitated by The Western Sydney Dialogue – a Western Sydney thinktank.

Reason for the Report

Members will recall the Western Link Group, an initiative of the Vital Infrastructure and Transport Links group (VITL) gave a presentation to the Board in December 2020.

Subsequently the Board resolved inter alia

That the Board note the report on the Western Link; and

- 1. Notes that the policy position of this initiative aligns with the CNSWJO policy position of a safe swift link between Sydney and Central NSW;*
- 2. That the CNSWJO is engaging with this initiative;*
- 3. Encourages members to engage and support this group;*
- 4. Central JO Board support in principle engaging an experienced and results driven PR firm to get a campaign underway;*
- 5. Through engagement with Western Sydney councils, form an 'alliance' to elevate the project as one for the two 'wests' and to co-fund the PR campaign;*
- 6. Seek feedback from members and Lithgow City Council on their interest in supporting this approach;*

This report provides advice on the suggested next steps and seeks feedback from General Managers for a report to the Board.

Legislative Policy and Risk Considerations

Subsequent to the resolve of the Board in its meeting December 4 2020 consultation has been undertaken with various Portfolio Mayors, Central West RDA, the sponsoring General Manager for Transport, the Chair, the VITL group and Taylor Street Advisory.

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This consultation informs the following advice:

- Given that the Federal election is likely to be called early and that the funding for a safe swift link between Central NSW and Western Sydney is likely to primarily use Federal funds; any campaign should be short and sharp, target the Federal election and be procured as swiftly as possible.
- Taylor Street Advisory, as part of the their role in the Western Sydney Dialogue <https://westernsydney.org.au/> has offered to provide support to a meeting at Penrith City Council with key stakeholders including Councils (Western Sydney and Central NSW), VITL, NSW Farmers, the Deputy Prime Minister, The Hon Paul Toole NRMA and RDA Central West;
- TfNSW are providing feedback to a meeting 27 January; and
- Penrith City Council has been contacted to see if it is in support of this approach.

Penrith have agreed in principle to provide hosting for such an event. Western Sydney Dialogue have agreed to MC and CNSWJO is arranging a meeting between the three parties at the time of writing, to progress this initiative.

Financial implications

Nil at this time

Attachment/s: Ni

j. Inland Rail Productivity Enhancement Program

Regional Strategic Priorities	1.1 Transport connectivity planning 1.2 Infrastructure planning
Portfolio Mayor	Cr Ken Keith
Sponsoring General Manager/s	Mr K Boyd, Mr S Loane and Mr G Wallace

Report by Jenny Bennett, 3 March 2021

Recommendation/s
That the Board note the successful EOI application for the Inland Rail Interface Improvement Program (II Program) – Productivity Enhancement Program (PEP) joint with RDACW and accept the offer.

Precis

This report provides advice on the success of a collaborative grant application with Central West RDA and seeks to progress the project. The project is fully funded by the Federal Government as part of their gateway process under the Inland Rail Productivity Enhancement Program and will develop a business for enabling Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

Background

There was a joint application made between the Central NSW Joint Organisation and Regional Development Australia Central West for the Inland Rail Interface Improvement Program (II Program) – Productivity Enhancement Program (PEP) lodged 18 September 2020.

Advice received 2 March 2021 was that the project was assessed by the Department and NineSquared (the Department's Independent Assurance and Technical Advisor) to determine whether it met the eligibility requirements for the II Program, including alignment with the Productivity Enhancement Program (PEP) principles. It has been deemed eligible for the II Program. An official announcement is expected mid March. This will enable a fully funded business case to be developed as part of the program's gateway methodology. This may enable further funding opportunities through this program or elsewhere.

CNSWJO must accept this offer by 12 March 2020.

About the project

Central West RDA and Central NSW JO seek to collaborate with the Federal Government on Better Access for Small to Medium Enterprise in the Central West leveraging Inland Rail.

At consultations with customers on Inland Rail in Forbes, small to medium producers have raised questions around access to the benefits of this transformational infrastructure. This proposal seeks to identify barriers, enablers and ultimately solutions for SME local Producers to benefit from access to markets as a result from Inland Rail.

This will include work with the CSIRO SME Mission where in NSW this Mission is focussing its efforts through SAPs.

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Outputs will be a business case that identifies the current barriers and enablers, prioritising potential infrastructure and other improvements to deliver access by SME to markets using Inland Rail.

It is anticipated that the advice from this project can be shared more widely along the route outside this region and enable SMEs from Victoria to Queensland to better understand the problems and identify solutions.

Feedback to this application was sought from both the Regional Strategic Transport Group and Transport Technical Committee and advice has been provided to previous Board meetings. Please request.

Attachment/s:

8. Correspondence from Inland Rail 2 March 2021

Priority Four: Regional Water Security**k. Water Update**

Regional Strategic Priorities	4.1 Regional water network planning and best practice skills development
Portfolio Chairman	Cr David Somerville
Sponsoring General Manager/s	Gavin Rhodes, Kent Boyd, David Sherley

Report by Meredith Macpherson, 1 March 2021

Recommendation/s
<p>That the Board note the Water Update report; and</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. approve for CNSWJO to become a member of the Central West Orana Regional Recovery and Resilience Sub-committee; 2. approve for the CNSWJO to be a proxy on the Town Water Risk Reduction Program Stakeholder Advisory Panel; 3. endorse submissions be made through the Executive and in line with Board policy in response to requests for feedback on the State Water Strategy and Productivity Commission's Report on National Water Reform.

Precis

This report provides advice on:

- engagement with Infrastructure Australia on the development of the Water Chapter for the Australian Infrastructure Plan due for release in April 2021.
- a meeting with the Murray Darling Basin Authority on the MDB Plan on 19 February.
- a meeting with Dr Jim Bentley, CEO NSW Water Sector, DPIE Water and Amanda Chadwick, Executive Director Reform Implementation, DPIE Water on 4 February
- the DPIE Water's, Town Water Risk Reduction Program and Stakeholder Advisory Panel;
- the Draft State Water Strategy;
- the Productivity Commission's Draft Report on National Water Reform;
- the newly formed Central West Orana Regional Recovery and Resilience Subcommittee; and
- the Regional NSW Future Ready Region's Strategy.

Reason for the Report

This report is to brief the Board on the huge amount of complex, strategic work underway at the State and Federal level that has implications for the management of water by Local Government in regional NSW and of efforts by the CNSWJO to partner in what needs to be a whole-of-government approach. It is informed by and informs the Advocacy Plan. See report to this meeting.

It commends to the Board that the CNSWJO is a member of the Central West Orana Regional Recovery and Resilience Subcommittee and a proxy member of the Town Water Risk Reduction Program Stakeholder Advisory Panel. It also commends that submissions be made through the Executive and in line with Board policy in response to requests for feedback on the State Water Strategy and Productivity Commission's Report on National Water Reform.

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Legislative Policy and Risk Considerations

Commonwealth Government Engagement

Infrastructure Australia Case Study for the Water Chapter for the Australian Infrastructure Plan

Infrastructure Australia (IA) has reached out to the CNSWJO to provide input to the development of the Water Chapter for the Australian Infrastructure Plan, due to be published in April 2021.

A virtual meeting was held with members of the Regional Water Committee on 3 November 2020 with a follow up meeting held with a targeted group on 20 January. The meetings have included discussion and feedback on draft themes covered in the Water Chapter and a presentation on the Infrastructure Priority List 2020.

Draft themes covered in the Water Chapter are as follows:

Theme 1 - Water security: Improving water security in our cities, towns, and regions, for the benefit of multiple stakeholders, including urban communities, business, and agriculture.

Theme 2 – Healthy safe water for all: Improving the health of urban waterways and ensuring essential water and wastewater services to regional and remote communities.

A good open discussion was had with additional follow up material provided by the CNSWJO including:

- Case study on Wyangala and the opportunity to potentially address long-term water needs for Lachlan Valley towns and communities while delivering an economic driver through increased high security water.
- Copy of the Final Report: Independent assessment of social and economic conditions in the Basin by the Independent Panel led by Robbie Sefton
- Contact details for the CSIRO team working on ground water and water banking opportunities.
- Copies of power point presentations on the Alliance's benchmarking program and the water infrastructure matrix and prioritisation process given to LGNSW Water Management Conferences.

IA have approached Parkes, Orange and the CNSWJO for Case Studies on recycled water, stormwater harvesting, water efficiencies and on how the Alliance works collaboratively to support members with a particular emphasis on asset management. Follow up is underway.

Meeting with Murray Darling Basin Authority

On request from the Murray Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) a meeting was held in Orange on 19 February with the MDBA Chair, Air Chief Marshal Sir Angus Houston AK, AFC (Ret'd) and CEO, Philip Glyde. The meeting was part of a Listening Tour held across basin communities and included the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder and senior Departmental Officials from the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment with responsibility for policy regarding water management.

For details on the MDBA <https://www.mdba.gov.au/>

Reports

Thank you to Cowra, Orange, Parkes, Lachlan and Central Tablelands Water for attending and contributing to an open and frank discussion on the challenges the region has confronted through the recent drought, the implications of these for future growth and prosperity, the need for a whole of government approach and the opportunity to work collaboratively with the region on productive water.

The Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder, in particular, has expressed interest in follow up with the CNSWJO as part of our work on productive water currently being scoped.



Productivity Commission Draft Report on National Water Reform

The Productivity Commission released its Draft Report on National Water Reform on 11 February.

In summary the Report calls for the current National Water Initiative to be updated and modernised and the section on urban water to be expanded. Importantly the Report emphasises that utilities are already responding to the impacts of climate change, population growth and changing community expectations.

The Report does not criticise water utilities but looks at institutional settings that could support utilities in meeting long term customer needs. This includes the planning framework, economic regulation and pricing.

The Report seeks agreement from Governments to the following principles and seeks to apply them across all key areas of water resource management and water service provision:

1. Capacity to contend with droughts, floods and shocks, and to adapt to a changing climate, is strong.
2. Management effort and regulation are fit for purpose.
3. Decisions are based on the best available information.
4. Innovation and continuous improvement are encouraged and adaptive management is required.
5. Communities are engaged effectively in all aspects of water resource management and water service provision.
6. Communities have sufficient water literacy to engage effectively.

Reports

The Draft Report provides a comprehensive assessment of the progress of water reform and the challenges facing the urban water industry. It also recognises the industry will need to continue to make significant investments in infrastructure to meet customer and community expectations for safe, reliable and affordable water and wastewater services as well as contributing to liveable communities and protecting the environment.

Findings and recommendations across key themes of note for Local Government are as follows:

Water Planning

The Report calls for processes to better account for climate change, including that:

- water plans include priorities, actions and rules that cover drought conditions, as well as mechanisms for dealing with more extreme scenarios, including clear triggers, roles and responsibilities for actions and a hierarchy of uses.
- a process for rebalancing between environmental and consumptive uses as a result of climate change is developed.
- Rebalancing due to climate change should occur when there is sufficient evidence that the expected benefits will outweigh the likely costs.

Urban Water

Best Practice Urban Water System Planning

A renewed National Water Initiative should include the following principles:

- Integrated management of water supply, wastewater and stormwater is embedded in urban water planning and management systems.
- Planning decisions align with system objectives for levels of water security, service quality, the environment and urban amenity.
- System objectives are discovered through a transparent and consultative approach and approved by governments in line with customer and community preferences.
- Urban water planning connects water planning across different scales and with land-use planning.
- All supply options are considered and their relative merits subject to a rigorous, consistent and transparent assessment of costs and benefits.
- Roles and responsibilities in the planning and management process are clearly assigned between relevant governments, utilities and other planning entities.
- Utilities, governments, regulators, developers and land-use planners collaborate effectively in planning.

To support efficient service delivery by smaller providers, jurisdictions should consider developing national guidelines for both long-term system planning and contingency planning for regional and remote water systems.

Improving Pricing And Service Outcomes

All urban water service providers, including those with fewer than 10 000 connections, should be subject to jurisdictional monitoring and public reporting. Through the National Water Initiative, jurisdictions should recommit to independent, public and annual reporting of key pricing and service quality indicators at a national level for all major urban water service providers.

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Ensuring Access To A Basic Level Of Service

A renewed National Water Initiative should include a commitment to ensure access to at least a basic level of safe and reliable drinking water to all Australians. State and Territory Governments could each develop a definition of, and commit to ensure access to, a basic level of service for each community in their jurisdiction.

Cost-reflective user charges should remain the default arrangement, but some regional and remote services in high-cost areas will require operational subsidies to maintain a basic level of service to all customers.

Any subsidies to those areas should be provided as transparent community service obligation payments.

Payments to local government-owned providers should be:

- designed to ensure access to a basic level of service in those communities where such service provision would otherwise be unviable
- adequate to ensure a basic level of service is considered affordable
- based on credible data on efficient service costs, subject to a degree of independent oversight, following State or Territory government involvement in system planning
- calculated in a predictable fashion to provide a reliable source of funding
- conditional on ongoing operational improvements, such as improvements to utility governance, better service outcomes (based on performance benchmarking), compliance with guidelines for system and contingency planning, or for pursuing collaboration.

Governance Of Regional And Remote Services

A renewed National Water Initiative should contain agreed principles for governance of regional and remote water services where local governments retain ownership of utilities. Financial separation should be maintained, with utility finances ring-fenced from local government finances. Clear roles for State and Local Governments during extreme events should be defined.

Helping Communities Deal With Adjustment Pressures

Inclusion of guiding principles in a renewed National Water Initiative would clarify how governments can respond to any significant community adjustment pressures resulting from policy-induced reductions in water availability.

Government Investment in Major Infrastructure**A New Water Infrastructure Element**

In renegotiating the National Water Initiative, jurisdictions should develop an element to guide investment in water infrastructure. The new element should restate the high-level principle that all infrastructure is to be assessed as economically viable and environmentally sustainable prior to the commitment of funding, with cost recovery from users as the norm. Jurisdictions should agree to criteria on how adherence with the principle can be demonstrated. The new element should also include an agreed framework to guide government investment in major water infrastructure.

Community Engagement

Australian governments should recommit to best practice, cost-effective engagement with their communities on all water matters. To achieve this, a renewed National Water Initiative should develop a community engagement framework focused on:

- continuously improving and sustaining government engagement effort across all aspects of water resource management and water service provision
- ensuring that engagement effort and its resourcing are fit-for-purpose taking into account the scale of proposed change or reform, its sensitivities and its impacts, and that governments are clear about the purpose of their engagement and the role of communities in decision-making
- improving the effectiveness of community engagement through enhancing:
 - water information accessibility and comprehensibility
 - community water literacy.

The characteristics of inclusiveness, timeliness, partnership, respect, access to information, transparency, responsiveness and continuous improvement represent a best practice foundation for guidance on effective community engagement and information provision practice in water resource management and water service provision.

Submissions for the draft NWI report are due by **Wednesday 24 March 2021**. After this a Public Hearing will start on **29 March 2021** with the final report submitted to Government in **June 2021**.

It is commended to the Board that a submission be made through the Executive and in line with Board policy in response to the request for feedback on the Productivity Commission's Report on National Water Reform. Please note that feedback is also being provided to LGNSW for their submission.

State Government Engagement

Meeting with Jim Bentley, CEO NSW Water Sector & Amanda Chadwick, Executive Director Reform Implementation, DPIE Water

Members will recall that the CNSWJO has been advocating for more than 12 months for an opportunity to meet with the CEO, NSW Water Sector, DPIE Water, Jim Bentley, to discuss opportunities to progress next steps for the Regional Water Strategies in this region and to optimise the good work already done with an approach to individual Council's Integrated Water Cycle Management (IWCM) Plans and the proposed Regional Town Water Strategy that will avoid duplication and costs and deliver a better result for Councils, communities and the Government.

A meeting attended by members of the Regional Water Executive including portfolio chairs, sponsoring GMs and the Alliance Executive was held in Orange on 4 February.

A Briefing Note for the meeting is provided as an attachment. Discussion points included:

- a regional approach to IWCMs and the RTWS;
- the current status of Wyangala Dam following media reports of a cost blow out; and
- issues associated with training for water operators.

Jim Bentley and Amanda Chadwick took the opportunity to launch the Town Water Risk Reduction Program (TWRRP). Taking onboard key messages that have been the subject of long-term advocacy by the region, Dr Bentley committed to return in 6 months to review progress to addressing some of these which it is anticipated will be dealt with through the TWRRP, see details below.

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Actions from the meeting are as follows:

1. DPIE Water will report back to CW JO on the progress of the Town Water Risk Reduction Program and all other meeting actions in person in 6 months
2. DPIE Water to consider how the prioritisation of long list of options for Lachlan and Macquarie Regional Water Strategies could include JO member councils and advise the JO
3. DPIE Water to consider how the governance of implementation of the Lachlan and Macquarie Regional Water Strategies could include JO member councils and advise the JO
4. DPIE Water is looking at better and clearer regional representation contact issues raised by JO member councils and advise the JO
5. JO and member councils will come back with feedback on the program and the fact sheet that was distributed at meeting
6. Amanda Chadwick to call Lachlan GM on Monday 8 Feb to better understand why implementation of best practice guidelines shifted councils categorisation under Safe and Secure
7. With Ash Albury Regional NSW and, Amanda Chadwick to meet with Skills NSW to find ways to address the highest priority short-term capabilities issue is the availability of accredited operator training to enable staff to complete the remaining modules where they are part way through the JO training pipeline and advise JO
8. Town Water Risk Reduction Program, Amanda Chadwick, to look for address a wider range of capabilities issues experienced by JO members including accredited training of operators, locums, professional staff attraction to regional and remote areas and advise the JO

Town Water Risk Reduction Program

In December 2020, DPIE Water wrote to all Councils announcing the establishment of a two-year Town Water Risk Reduction Program (TWRRP). According to the Fact Sheet on the Program webpage:

The focus of this program is to work with the sector to identify the most fundamental barriers to effective and strategic risk management by Local Water Utilities, and to develop and implement long-term solutions to these barriers.

A central element of this program is its new partnership approach, which recognises and leverages the wealth of expertise within Councils and Local Water Utilities and provides opportunities for these stakeholders to design and refine better solutions in collaboration with the Department.

This program supports a broader set of changes being progressed by the department that are aimed at enhancing the capacity of the NSW water sector to manage this critical resource in a strategic and coordinated manner.

The department has established a dedicated TWRRP team which has commenced scoping the program, including identifying proposed focus areas and approaches to engaging with the wider sector.

A stakeholder advisory panel (SAP) bringing together key sector stakeholders and ‘trusted experts’, has been formed to assist in shaping the program’s design, engagement approach and strategic direction from an early stage.

The panel met for the first time on 24 February in Sydney and includes Local Government NSW, the NSW Water Directorate, Joint Organisations represented by the Namoi JO, local water utilities, co-

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regulators (NSW Health, Office of Local Government and the Environment Protection Authority) and DPIE Water's Water Utilities team.

Mayor, Bill West, was successful in his response to an EOI from LGNSW for elected representatives to sit on the SAP and while the JO network is represented by Ms Rebel Thomson, Executive Officer, Namoi Unlimited, Jenny Bennett will support Namoi as a proxy.

The department has proposed five high-level focus areas that they intend to refine based on input from the water sector, and then establish a process for ongoing collaboration to design more detailed solutions.

The proposed focus areas for the program are:

1. Improve the regulatory framework

We will partner with the sector to develop and implement an improved regulatory framework for Local Water Utility strategic planning, pricing and major asset approvals.

2. Encourage greater collaboration

We will ensure better linkages between strategic water management planning layers (e.g. Integrated Water Cycle Management, Regional Water Strategies etc).

3. Facilitate greater state government support

We will explore how the capabilities and scale of State-Owned Corporations (SOCs) and the Department could be better leveraged to address Local Water Utility challenges.

4. Review of skills shortages

We will partner with key stakeholders and co-regulators to design and conduct a review to identify any critical skills shortages in the sector and develop options to address these.

5. Investigate alternative funding models

We will work with the sector to explore the pros and cons of alternative funding models, including a needs-based Community Service Obligation (CSO) funding model.

The Department is currently seeking feedback on the preliminary program elements outlined in the fact sheet, and in particular the proposed high-level focus areas for the program.

Preliminary feedback from the CNSWJO is that the proposed focus areas:

- a. Is missing the structural/governance issues that includes having people in the region who can work in partnership with Local Government to optimise the implementation of the Regional Water Strategies and manage the drought response.

Where advice from the State Government is that the Regional Water Strategies are place-based, this needs to be enabled in the region. Where there are 5 focus areas, we suggest the need for a 6th focussing on the structural/governance issues.

- b. Need to address not just inefficiently targeted funding but also inadequate funding to deliver on Community Service Obligations.
- c. Problem identification that has informed the proposed focus areas needs to recognise the failure of the Water Act to deliver on its mandate of human consumption being the number 1 priority. The recent drought really showed this. This needs to be recognised in the focus areas.

For more details a program [webpage](#) is now live, which includes a [fact sheet](#) and details on how to provide feedback.

A verbal update can be provided.

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It is commended to the Board that it approves the CNSWJO Executive Officer be a proxy on the Town Water Risk Reduction Program Stakeholder Advisory Panel.

State Water Strategy

The long awaited Draft NSW Water Strategy was released on 15 February. This 20-year, state-wide Strategy aims to improve resilience of the state's water resources over the coming decades. It aims to address key challenges and opportunities for water management and service delivery across the state and set the strategic direction for the NSW water sector over the long-term.

The strategy will:

- guide water service delivery and resource management across NSW
- build on the progress made from previous reforms and set the direction to keep improving
- identify key challenges, opportunities, strategic priorities and actions for the whole of NSW
- clearly articulate the water resource management and service delivery framework and policy context for NSW, including how the Murray-Darling Basin Plan and state-wide, regional, metropolitan and local strategic water policy and planning frameworks work together.

The NSW Water Strategy is part of a suite of long-term water strategies including 12 regional and two metropolitan water strategies which set out the approach to maintaining and building the resilience of the state's water resources, including in response to climate variability and change.

The NSW Water Strategy provides the 'top down', high level direction and objectives for the water sector, while the regional and metropolitan strategies are being developed 'bottom up' to identify place-based packages of policy, operational and infrastructure solutions.

The draft NSW Water Strategy identifies seven strategic priorities focussed on meeting core objectives based on the NSW Water Management Act 2000. Under each priority the draft strategy identifies key challenges and opportunities and a total of 41 proposed actions to improve water management and service delivery across the state. These can be seen in Figure 15 on the following pages.

The draft NSW Water Strategy is currently on public exhibition. Submissions close on 28 March. For more detail including the opportunity to participate in a webinar on 15 March go to the DPIE website here: [our website](#).

Core objectives	Protecting public health and safety	Liveable and vibrant towns and cities	Water sources, floodplains and ecosystems protected	Cultural values respected and protected	Orderly fair and equitable sharing of water	Contribute to a strong economy	
Priorities and actions (continued)	Priority 4 Increase resilience to changes in water availability (variability and climate change)	4.1 New actions to improve and apply our understanding of climate variability and change 4.2 Review water allocation and water sharing in response to new climate information 4.3 Improve drought planning, preparation and resilience 4.4 Better integrate land use planning, development approvals and water management					
	Priority 5 Support economic growth and resilient industries within a capped system	5.1 Provide greater certainty to regional businesses that rely on secure access to water 5.2 Invest in R&D and new technologies to lift water productivity in NSW industries 5.3 Improve the operation and transparency of water trade in NSW 5.4 Identify infrastructure and operational options for each region of NSW					
	Priority 6 Support resilient, prosperous and liveable cities and towns	6.1 Increase resilience to changes in climate and water availability in Greater Sydney and the Lower Hunter 6.2 Work collaboratively with local water utilities to reduce risks to town water supplies 6.3 A new Town Water Risk Reduction Program 6.4 Continue to deliver the Safe and Secure Water Program 6.5 A new state-wide Water Efficiency Framework and Program 6.6 Proactive support for water utilities to diversify sources of water 6.7 Investigate and enable managed aquifer recharge 6.8 Promote and improve Integrated Water Cycle Management 6.9 Enable private sector involvement in the NSW water sector 6.10 Foster the circular economy in our cities and towns					
	Priority 7 Enable a future focused, capable and innovative water sector	7.1 Pilot new technologies to increase our water options 7.2 Collaborate to harness new research, innovation and technology 7.3 Invest in water sector workforce and capability					
Guiding principles							
	Healthy environments sustain social and economic outcomes	Water is a limited (although recyclable) resource	Systems thinking to optimise outcomes	Data-enabled planning and decision-making	Transparency and accountability to engender community trust	Forward thinking to build preparedness and resilience	Giving effect to Aboriginal rights and access to water

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Regional Recovery and Resilience Subcommittee

The Central West Orana Regional Recovery and Resilience Subcommittee (the Subcommittee) has been established to bring together key regional stakeholders to oversee disaster recovery activities and improve the community's disaster preparedness and resilience across the Central West Orana. The initial focus of the Subcommittee will be Bushfire, Drought and COVID-19 community recovery, with future priorities to be determined by the State Recovery Committee and RLE.

The Subcommittee will undertake work with local councils and communities to enhance their capability and capacity to recover from disasters. The Subcommittee is a joint initiative of Resilience NSW and Regional NSW and sits under both the State Recovery Committee and the Central West Orana Regional Leadership Executive Committee (CWO RLE). Advice is that the Subcommittee will not duplicate any of the work led by the Regional Emergency Management Committee as outlined in the State Emergency Rescue and Management Act 1989.

This committee takes on the role previously served by the Central West and Orana Drought Taskforce. A copy of the Terms of reference and Minutes of the meeting on 9 February are provided as attachments.

It is commended to the Board that it approves the CNSWJO become a member of the Central West Orana Regional Recovery and Resilience Sub-committee.

Regional NSW Future Ready Regions Strategy

The CNSWJO Executive Officer was invited to participate in a virtual briefing on 18 February on the NSW Government's drought work and priorities. The briefing facilitated by the Department of Regional NSW provided an opportunity to hear about and discuss current work, including the development of a new whole of government approach to building community and economic resilience to the impacts of drought.

A confidential draft of the Future Ready Regions strategy has been provided to the CNSWJO for preliminary feedback prior to further distribution.

Concerns are that in its current state the strategy is very high level and missing much of the lived-experience of our communities in managing drought. Advice has also been sought about the fit of this strategy with the rollout of the Regional and State Water Strategies. We experienced challenges through the drought from a lack of co-ordination of activity and are keen to ensure that the strategic framework for regional water management doesn't let us down again.

The point has been made that this region has been heavily engaged in the development of the Regional Water Strategies and see the Governance and Implementation of options included in these as critical to ensuring quality secure water supplies to sustain and grow communities in regional NSW. Where the Regional Water Strategies are reportedly place-based strategies advocacy needs to focus on 'place-based' being just that and not Sydney based.

Feedback was provided on 26 February in line with the Board policy (see the Advocacy Plan Report). A follow up discussion is scheduled for 8 March.

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Financial implications

Nil

Attachment/s:

9. Brief for meeting with Jim Bentley and Amanda Chadwick
10. DRAFT – Terms of Reference Regional Recovery and Resilience Subcommittee- Central West Orana
11. 9 February 2021 Minutes from Central West Orana Resilience and Recovery Subcommittee

8. Report to the Central NSW JO Strategic Plan and Statement of Regional Strategic Priority 2019/2020

Regional Strategic Priorities	1.1 Governance arrangements enable inter-council co-operation
Portfolio Mayor	Cr John Medcalf, OAM
Sponsoring General Manager/s	Mr B Byrnes and Mr G Tory

Report by Jenny Bennett, 27 February 2021

Recommendation/s
<p>That the Board note the Report to the Central NSW JO Strategic Plan and Statement of Regional Strategic Priority and</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. endorse the following submissions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Inquiry into health outcomes and access to health and hospital services in rural, regional and remote New South Wales in line with advocacy policy be endorsed; b. The Inland Rail project and regional NSW, c. Release of Exposure Draft Bill on local government rating reform, d. Rapid Assessment Framework (Planning); and e. An NSW Agricultural Land Use Strategy (Planning) 2. note the possibility of an Extraordinary Board meeting being called in April to accept a tender in between the regular meeting cycle.

Reason for this report

The Central NSW JO approved its Strategic Plan (the Plan) and Statement of Regional Strategic Priority on 2 May 2019. Four priorities were identified for action. This report provides advice on progress on the Plan. Reports requiring more detailed advice to inform decision making are provided separately. These reports would include those reporting on challenges and opportunities identified as the Plan is delivered. Advice on progress of past resolve can be found in Matters in Progress.

This report provides separate advice on:

- the progress of the JOs more broadly including advice on the review of JOs being undertaken by the OLG; and
- submissions requested by members.

Legislative Policy and Risk Considerations

Regarding risk, where risks are reviewed each quarter please request the risk register, where following there are six Very High Risks identified of 37 risks overall. These six Very High Risks follow where it is suggested that the risk to the JO from network sustainability as outlined in Risks 17 and 18 is now happening and will have greater impact despite the mitigations in place. Arguably there is not much more this JO can do to mitigate the risk and it is noteworthy that the Chairs of JOs Forum is tackling the issue.

Verbal advice can be provided from the recent meetings of JO EOs and Chairs where it is clear that a number of JOs are experiencing significant financial hardship and this is only exacerbated by COVID-19. Please find attached associated minutes and agendas from recent meetings.

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On the positive side, Joint Organisations are increasingly recognised as a useful tool particularly to support State and Federal consultations. A recent example is the work being progressed in Central NSW with the DPIE on the Net Zero program. Please see a report elsewhere in this agenda in this regard.

However, the growing regulatory burden, patchiness of JO capacity and lack of State funding for core business is likely to significantly impact the sustainability of the broader network. Central NSW continues to put up business cases for funding, provide advice on the value proposition of JOs to State entities and work with other JOs to provide support for their sustainability.

Notably the review of JOs to be undertaken by Local Government NSW has begun, please find correspondence attached. While not the same terms of reference as requested by the JO network, advice from the OLG is as follows:

Specifically, the objectives of the Project include to:

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

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

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

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

It is understood that consultation will commence in February/March.

Regarding 34, the risk perceived by members of an asset strip of water utilities is exacerbated by the drought as the State steps in to try and support Councils. Every effort is being undertaken to work with the State in a positive manner reflecting the capacity and capability of members working collaboratively in the Water Utilities' Alliance. Please find advice on water provided separately.

Regarding risk 35 relating to member management, the policy of the Joint Organisation is that it is a creature of its members. Where the Communication Plan identifies a series of tactics including holding a Summit in the near future, members are welcome to seek presentations or other engagement with the JO Executive Officer.

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Regional Submissions

Members have forwarded requests for the JO to lodge submissions as follows where all advice provided is within existing policy.

1. Inquiry into health outcomes and access to health and hospital services in rural, regional and remote New South Wales – Lodged 15 January 2021. Please find attached.
2. Inland Rail project and regional NSW- this submission is being co-authored with Central West RDA. – Lodged 5 February 2021. Please see attached
3. Release of Exposure Draft Bill on local government rating reform. The response focused on the mining rate where the advice to the Draft Bill shows a much better result than that anticipated from earlier advice from the OLG. – Lodged 5 February 2021. See attached
4. Rapid Assessment Framework – Lodged 12 February 2021, see attached.
5. An Agricultural Land Use Strategy – Lodged 28 February 2021. See attached.

Please see the JO website for all submissions lodged to date.

Procurement

Two Requests for Tender closed on 3 March 2021, both of which the contract will be between the JO and the successful providers. As per the Procurement Policy, the acceptance of a tender must be by resolution of the Board. The next meeting of the Board is at the end of May 2021 and as such an extraordinary meeting may need to be called to accept the tenders where the valuation of water and sewer assets is a complex project with schedules commencing on 1 May 2021. If needed the timeframe for commencement could be pushed back however the risk is that the project reports may be provided to councils later than requested.

The tender for safety compliance training is less urgent and can wait until the May Board meeting.

A date for a virtual meeting will be circulated as soon as the timing of acceptance is known, however it is likely to be mid-late April.

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Risk #	Risk category	Risk	Risk Owner	Consequence	Inherent risks			Controls	Residual risks		
					Likelihood	Consequence	Rating		Likelihood	Consequence	Rating
17	Political	NSW Government underfunding JOs, heavy requirements for JO to deliver	Board	Unable to continue to operate JO	Likely	Severe	Very High	Early engagement with NSW Government about funding needs. Business case approach to determining funding level.	Likely	Severe	Very High
18	Political	Miss opportunity to see how collaborations could work effectively	Board	Opportunity to engage differently with the NSW and Federal Government on how they want to engage may compromise the effectiveness of the JO. Use the process as a means to refresh engagement and understand stakeholder business better.	Likely	Major	Very High	Communications Plan in place. Specific program to determine how stakeholder WANT to be engaged and to learn about their strategies in order to see how they align with the JO's objectives.	Likely	Severe	Very High
31	Performance	Long term viability and financial sustainability	Board	JO can't get sufficient funding to be able to meet liabilities.	Possible	Severe	Very High	Work with other JOs and relevant State agencies on a sustainable funding framework for the JO network and advocate as necessary.	Possible	Major	Very High
33	Performance	Allowing more cost shifting	Board	JO becomes a vehicle for the NSW Government to dictate via legislation more duties	Possible	Severe	Very High	Board considers all requests to undertake additional tasks and assesses against a business case that shows costs and value for money considerations before agreeing to take on extra duties/responsibilities	Possible	Severe	Very High
34	Performance	Privatisation of Water utilities – is it just another step on that process?	Board	Water Utilities Alliance is used by NSW Government to take over or to privatised water services compromising skills in member councils and revenue streams.	Possible	Severe	Very High	Board ensures relationships with NSW Government is developed to enable frank conversations on the transfer of any assets.	Possible	Severe	Very High
35	Member management	Managing members expectations, remember is a "child" of the members	Board	Members become dissatisfied with services or the role being taken by the JO.	Possible	Major	Very High	Board ensures it is aware of the members' satisfaction levels. Member involvement in development of the Strategic Plan and the services and projects approval processes for JO to deliver.	Possible	Major	Very High

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Spend, Cost Savings and Funding

The following tables have been updated to reflect the spend, cost savings and grant funding through the Joint Organisation between 1 July 2020 and 31 December 2020. The statistics are updated on a quarterly basis and are reported for the current financial year. Cumulative spend and cost savings are available on request.

It should be noted that the spend and cost savings tables are current as at 3 March 2021, populated with as much information as was available at the time. There are 3 councils where the electricity consumption is yet to be input. The table will continue to be updated in the coming weeks when more information of the spend by councils come to hand.

Spend

The following table reflects the spend by each member council under the various JO contracts for the 20/21 financial year up to 31 December 2020.

SPEND	Water Utilities Alliance Contracts	HR Contracts	WHS contracts	IT contracts	Supply contracts	Roads/ Transport contracts	Energy contracts	RDOCS contracts	Other contracts	Training	Total
Bathurst	\$0	\$54,465	\$1,986	\$0	\$448,604	\$0	\$1,298,391	\$13,613	\$0	\$26,640	\$1,843,699
Blayney	\$0	\$1,186	\$0	\$0	\$267,167	\$0	\$138,609	\$3,296	\$0	\$10,530	\$420,788
Cabonne	\$0	\$19,155	\$17,013	\$0	\$644,469	\$0	\$228,190	\$611	\$0	\$33,170	\$942,609
Central Tablelands Water	\$0	\$583	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$159,939	\$72	\$0	\$0	\$160,595
Cowra	\$576,954	\$19,991	\$3,720	\$0	\$348,099	\$0	\$229,715	\$637	\$0	\$31,198	\$1,210,314
Forbes	\$448,564	\$20,887	\$7,400	\$0	\$342,816	\$0	\$358,064	\$3,851	\$0	\$25,350	\$1,206,932
Lachlan	\$228,419	\$16,675	\$0	\$0	\$431,535	\$0	\$384,794	\$439	\$0	\$29,020	\$1,090,882
Oberon	\$0	\$9,985	\$0	\$0	\$284,612	\$0	\$88,023	\$8,437	\$0	\$6,320	\$397,377
Orange	\$543,051	\$86,034	\$8,043	\$0	\$347,006	\$0	\$1,705,474	\$7,645	\$0	\$22,920	\$2,720,174
Parkes	\$0	\$8,555	\$0	\$0	\$371,847	\$0	\$732,194	\$694	\$0	\$19,250	\$1,132,540
Weddin	\$22,661	\$583	\$1,020	\$0	\$171,979	\$0	\$57,441	\$203	\$0	\$0	\$253,886
Total	\$1,819,649	\$238,100	\$39,182	\$0	\$3,658,135	\$0	\$5,380,835	\$39,499	\$0	\$204,398	\$11,379,796

Savings

The following table shows the savings achieved by member councils through aggregated procurement and programming. An explanation of the meaning of each column has been reported previously and is available on request. The table reflects savings in the 20/21 financial year up to 31 December.

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The cost to members is calculated on a percentage of each CNSWJO staff member and their corresponding workload on procurement and contract management. This figure is updated quarterly in line with the cost savings.

SAVINGS	Water Utilities Alliance Contracts	HR Contracts	WHS contracts	IT contracts	Supply contracts	Roads/ Transport contracts	Energy contracts	RDOCS contracts	Other contracts	Training	Legal advice re Procurement	Participation in regional procurement	Total	
Bathurst	\$0	\$2,533	\$350	\$0	\$14,688	\$0	\$132,351	\$523	\$0	\$9,606	\$0	\$5,000	\$165,050	
Blayney	\$0	\$394	\$0	\$0	\$20,891	\$0	\$16,045	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,000	\$42,329	
Cabonne	\$0	\$699	\$20	\$0	\$30,297	\$0	\$16,647	\$322	\$0	\$6,726	\$0	\$1,000	\$55,711	
Central Tablelands Water	\$0	\$103	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$6,087	\$486	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$6,676	
Cowra	\$0	\$623	\$656	\$0	\$24,913	\$0	\$36,034	\$297	\$0	\$12,577	\$0	\$5,000	\$80,100	
Forbes	\$0	\$620	\$0	\$0	\$18,936	\$0	\$33,131	\$404	\$0	\$1,821	\$0	\$5,000	\$59,912	
Lachlan	\$0	\$1,157	\$0	\$0	\$29,328	\$0	\$27,332	\$494	\$0	\$3,977	\$0	\$5,000	\$67,289	
Oberon	\$0	\$411	\$0	\$0	\$8,706	\$0	\$9,400	\$673	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,000	\$24,190	
Orange	\$0	\$5,499	\$1,419	\$0	\$24,191	\$0	\$172,025	\$506	\$0	\$23	\$0	\$1,000	\$204,663	
Parkes	\$0	\$846	\$0	\$0	\$22,437	\$0	\$67,407	\$239	\$0	\$4,059	\$0	\$1,000	\$95,988	
Weddin	\$0	\$103	\$0	\$0	\$8,708	\$0	\$8,900	\$545	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,000	\$23,257	
Sub Total	\$0	\$12,988	\$2,446	\$0	\$203,095	\$0	\$525,358	\$4,490	\$0	\$38,788	\$0	\$38,000	\$825,165	
													Cost to members	\$61,400
													Total	\$763,765

Funding

The funding table shown below shows the grant or other funding received by councils where a regional approach has been taken to the application or program for the 20/21 FY to date. The breakdown of categories has been reported previously and is available upon request.

GRANT FUNDING - 20/21 FY	Water Utilities Alliance	HR	WHS/HR Training	IT	Supply	Roads/ Transport	Energy	RDOCS	Tourism	Other	Total
Bathurst	\$0	\$4,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$9,500
Blayney	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,000
Cabonne	\$0	\$3,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$8,000
Central Tablelands Water	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Cowra	\$0	\$4,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$9,500
Forbes	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,000
Lachlan	\$0	\$1,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$6,500
Oberon	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,000
Orange	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,000
Parkes	\$0	\$3,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$8,000
Weddin	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,000
Total	\$0	\$16,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$50,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$66,500

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Value for members

Please see below the Value to members for this financial year. Starting in April Member Councils will be receiving a briefing in person from Executive Officer Jenny Bennett.

VALUE FOR MEMBERS 2020/2021	FY 2019/2020	FYTD	ACTIVITY THIS QUARTER
SUBMISSIONS	20	20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Macquarie-Castlereagh Regional Water Strategy Consultation- September 2020- Supplementary Submission – Dec 2020 2. Inquiry into health outcomes and access to health and hospital services in rural, regional, and remote New South Wales – Jan 2021 3. Inland Rail project and regional NSW- Feb 2021 4. Release of Exposure Draft Bill on local government rating reform- Feb 2021 5. Submission on the Rapid Assessment Framework -Feb 21 6. Submission on An Agricultural Land Use Strategy -Feb 21
PLANS, STRATEGIES AND COLLATERAL	26	9	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CNSWJO online WHS induction – online induction module launched, and as at 25 February 2021 1950 contractors have been inducted – this includes historical data uploaded on 24 February 2021 to capture all contractors inducted across the region since September 2017 and all new contractors inducted since the online inductions commenced. 2. Training, Learning & Development (TLD) Group held their third meeting on 3 February 2021 and will continue to hold regular meetings, the next one scheduled for 21 April 2021. 3. Consultation Policy and Procedure co-designed by CNSWJO and NSW Regional Leadership Executive – Official release with logos 17 Feb.
GRANTS	3	3	<p>Co-ordination of two grants with RDACW</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. BBRF grant on CBDs 2. Productivity Enhancement Program (PEP) (EOI) to the Inland Rail Interface Improvement Program (II Program) – Lodged 18 September 3. Coordination of the DPIE 100% funded Sustainable Councils and Communities' Net Zero program.
COMPLIANCE	13	9	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Audited Financial Statement to OLG – 30/11 2. Central NSW Annual Performance Statement 2020 /7/12 3. Milestone 2 Capacity Building Program -11/12 4. CNSWJO Annual COC Complaint Statistics Return – 16/12 5. Report to NSW Ombudsman Public Interest Disclosures July -Dec 5/2/2021
DATA	6	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial discussions have commenced with Peter Valerio – tourism data assembled from TRA datasets, Peter presented at the CNSWJO Tourism Group in Forbes on 25 February 2021. Updated CG 25/2/21 • Completion of the WRI tourism data project TMs have reviewed their data. • Pilot Map cite project with Bathurst Regional Council
MEDIA INCLUDING SOCIAL MEDIA	13	14	<p>Social Media Followers</p> <p>Facebook – 502</p> <p>Twitter – 935</p> <p>Instagram (CNSWT) – 5,456</p>

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			CNSWT Facebook – 14,705 090221 - Leaders in Central NSW positive about a new way of doing business with the State Government on Water Security 260221-Telecommunications event in Blayney
COST SAVINGS	\$1.8m	\$763,765	Net quarterly figures to 31 December 2020
REPRESENTATION	147	127	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 081220 – JO Steering Committee Meeting 101220 -Wyangala Dam Community info webinar 101220- DCMC CWORP 080121- Catch up for 2021 with RDACW 110121- meeting with Finance NSW 140121 – Catch up with Vitl 140121-Catch up with Lithgow and RDACW 010221-JO EOP Catch up 30221 - TLD Working Group Meeting 40221 – GMAC 40221 - Meeting with Jim Bentley & Amanda Chadwick 090221 – HR Manager’s Group Meeting 090221- Central West Orana Resilience & Recovery Subcommittee 100221 – Planners Meeting 120221-Regional Prosperity Sub Committee 120221-Southern Lights EE Meeting 120221 - MIPPS Project Steering Committee 150221- JO EO catch up 180221- CWUA meeting 180221 - LGNSW -JO LWU Committee 220221 - MDA Board Meeting 406 240221-Town Water Risk Reduction Program - Stakeholder Advisory Panel Meeting 250221- Tourism Managers meeting 010321 – Transport Technical Meeting 010321 – JO EO fortnight catch up. 020321 – WHS/Risk Group Meeting 040321 – NSW JO Chairs Forum 050321 – NSW JO EOs Workshop with State Agencies 090321 – Regional Waste Forum 100321-CNSWJO and TAFE Catch up 100321-Town Water Risk Reduction Program Stakeholder Advisory Panel 100321_MIPPS project steering committee
OPPORTUNITIES COUNCILS HAVE BEEN AFFORDED INCLUDING PR	35	37	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The story in “Explore” has run across the ACM media group in NSW in 14 media outlets with print papers running a double page story with images (attached examples in Canberra Times and Newcastle Herald) and digital picture stories – <i>see images below</i> – this has a print and online audience of nearly 5 million. The food travel events story with news from our PR media content includes Orange FOOD Week, Oberon’s F2F Festival, Orange Country Food Trails, Indigenous Cultural Adventures in Orange, Parkes’ The Dish and Outback Lamb, Orange WILD Weekends, Bathurst wineries, Railway Museum, Abercrombie House high teas, Conmurra eco-experience, Canowindra’s Blind Freddy’s Tours, Rosnay Organic, Captain Barnacle’s Tours, Gum Swamp at Forbes, Grenfell Picnics and Wilga Station. Opportunity to be featured in a limited edition publication about to be launched by Australian Geographic called “Australia in 100

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			<p>Quiet Places” – each LGA to contact Australian Geographic Holdings direct if they wish to participate.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. A \$5k Central NSW Australian Traveler campaign – a digital promotion in February 2021 under the story “The Big Outdoors – A celebration of Central NSW’s open spaces, the outdoor way of life and fantastic night skies” 4. Better Homes and Gardens (Channel 7 nationally) – road trip through Bathurst inc Hillandale Gardens & Wilga Station – 19 February 2021 5. Better Homes and Gardens (Channel 7 nationally) – focus on Cowra and Canowindra – 26 February 2021 (including Grenfell Silos, Cowra Japanese Garden, the Canowindra Balloon Challenge & Montrose House) 6. Advertising/Editorial Opportunity with Out and About with Kids – a family focused magazine, digital and social media platform. The Editor will be based in Cowra over the next few weeks (staying with friends, not requiring accommodation) but wanting interested in reviews, articles & touring around Cowra and neighbouring regions. 7. A writer for The Weekend undertook a 6 x day trip of Central NSW in January 2021 – visiting Oberon, Orange, Cowra & Canowindra, article has not yet been published. 8. A \$10k campaign with Australian Geographic in (proposed) March/April 2021 9. Media release for members to use to support the next round of <i>We Want You Back</i> grassroots video 10. TV promotional/advertising opportunity for any accommodation/ticket events for 2021 on Channel 7’s Sydney Weekender 11. Prime 7 TV Campaign being \$5k for the second phase of the <i>We Want You Back</i> campaign to promote Central NSW on Prime 7 12. MIPPS 2021 CNSWJO Student Placement 13. RAA Case Studies for National promotion 14. Copyright License renew 15. Meeting with the Murray Darling Basin Authority and the Environmental Water Holder 16. Major telecommunications forum (11 March) 17. Meeting with the electoral commission (25 March)
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Reporting to the Strategic Business Plan

Please find attached an update on progress on the Strategic Business Plan adopted 22 May.

Attachment/s:

12. 5 Year Procurement Plan
13. Strategic Business Plan – Priority updates
14. Inquiry into health outcomes and access to health and hospital services in rural, regional and remote New South Wales - Jan 2021
15. Joint Submission with RDACW on the Inland Rail project and regional NSW – Feb 2021
16. Submission on the Release of Exposure Draft Bill local government rating reform - Feb 2021
17. Submission on the Rapid Assessment Framework – Feb 2021
18. Submission on An Agricultural Land Use Strategy – Feb 2021

Reports

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explore | Saturday 27 February 2021

CENTRAL NSW

Autumn leaves its mark on Central New South Wales, as thousands of trees burst with bright colours in the vineyards, on the farms, in the vineyards and gardens. The season's quirky calendar of events brings a fresh energy to the region, which stretches from beyond the Blue Mountains, near Oberon and Bathurst, out to the country towns of Cows, Parkes and Forbes.

ORANGE
Orange lives up to its name, turning all shades of citrus, with golden fallow spreading across leafy vineyards and terraces in the foothills of Mount Canobates. **Country Food Trails** is a new company that runs private tours with a focus on food, drinks and history. Choose from the three-hour Ale Trail, Wine Trail or Heritage Trail with local host Nicole Farrell, or book a pop-up picnic in an orchard.
[Visit: countryfoodtrails.com.au](http://www.countryfoodtrails.com.au)

Australia's longest-running regional food festival is celebrating its 30th year. From 9-18 April, **Orange F.O.O.D. Week** will see six signature events and more than 90 satellite events held at local restaurants and cellar doors across a COVID-safe format. Among the highlights are the Sangreem Street Lunch, Meet the Producer workshops and a Producer Market and Brunch.
[Visit: orangefoodweek.com.au](http://www.orangefoodweek.com.au)

Indigenous Cultural Adventures, guided by local Wiradjuri elders, takes guests to sacred traditional sites in the countryside. The overnight camp trip explores the land and food that sustained Aboriginal people for 30,000 years. A traditional dinner is cooked over a fire, while sharing stories, before sleeping under the stars.
[Visit: To book, phone Gerald on 0434 961 427 or email indigenousculturaladventures@gmail.com](mailto:indigenousculturaladventures@gmail.com)

The **Orange Wild Weekend** is a relaxing immersion in epicurean delights held over three days. Wander the cobblestoned streets of Mudgee, meet the chef at famed restaurant Tonic and enjoy a seasonal degustation. Take a bushwalk with a localist and conservationist, learn to make a 'bushscape' at brunch, and have a high-altitude wine-tasting at the Strathbouse. Hosted by local writer and designer Ali Shillingford, there are two weekends of events scheduled, 19-21 March and 16-18 April.
[Visit: kissabush.com.au/the-orange-wild-weekend](http://www.kissabush.com.au/the-orange-wild-weekend)

The cooler months see an array of events, especially in Central NSW, writes Louise Goldsbury.

AUTUMN GLORY

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CENTRAL NSW

BATHURST
Bathurst has cool-climate wineries, too. Newly opened is **Rock Forest Vineyard**, where a huge, flat rock surface below the cellar door collects water as it did for thousands of years for the Wiradjuri people. Grapes are hand-picked by the owners' friends to produce wines with minimal intervention. **Vale Creek, Winesapashale Wines** and the refurbished **Bennagalla Wines** are also open for tastings. Or have high tea at **Abercrombie House**.
[Visit: bathurstregion.com.au](http://www.bathurstregion.com.au)

About 20 minutes' drive east of Bathurst, **Communa** is a new eco-tourism experience on 67 hectares in Walang. Unlike other wildlife parks and zoos, it's not open to the general public, it's just for guests staying in the on-site accommodation. Walking trails can be explored independently by day, while guided tours are offered at night to spot endangered animals, such as betongos, potorinos, bandicoots and tiny parma wallabies, that have been released into the protected woodland enclosure. Wombats, kangaroos, possums, gliders, graminas, lookaburras and muskies are everywhere, as well as a few resident dingoes.
[Visit: communa.com.au/wildlife-sanctuary](http://www.communa.com.au/wildlife-sanctuary)

The **National Motor Racing Museum**, at Murray's Corner, Mount Panorama, has expanded to cover all types of motorsport from the 1920s to the present. See the iconic vehicles of rally, open wheel, motorcycle and speedway races. Fans of famous driver Peter Brock will appreciate the tribute section, which includes his 1984 Holden Commodore VK. View displays of trophies, clothing, footage and photographs, before entering the Immersion Room to experience the speed, sound and excitement of racing.
[Visit: museumbathurst.com.au](http://www.museumbathurst.com.au)

A STAY AT WILGA STATION
Wilga Station is a family-owned, 200-hectare sheep farm which offers luxury accommodation built from repurposed material found on the property. The Farmers Hut is a self-contained, off-the-grid retreat for couples. It has unique features, such as a grass roof and a daybed nestled in a window with stunning views. Opening soon, the five-bedroom Showers Hall will sleep up to 20 people in a former shearing shed. The sheep shutes have been retained under glass and the old wool table is the centrepiece of the entertaining area. The station is just 12 minutes' drive from Bathurst and 40 minutes from Orange.
[Visit: wilgaquarter.com.au](http://www.wilgaquarter.com.au)

OBERON
The **Field to Forest Festival** runs throughout April, providing a whole month of special events. Forage, collect and taste mushrooms in the wild, while enjoying the pine aroma and serenity of the sunrises. Join a DVD trout fishing tour in the Duckmool River, or visit boutique distillers. At the amazing garden of Mayfield, the full 45-hectare Haselden family private estate will be open from 2-25 April, get lost in its hedge box maze, take a rowboat out on the lake and check out the aviary, temple and 80-metre cascade.
[Visit: visitoberon.com.au/events](http://www.visitoberon.com.au/events)

CANOWINDRA
Blind Freddy's Bushranger Tours trace the famous 1860s when hundreds of robberies were committed by the likes of Johnny Gilbert, Ben Hall, Frank Gardiner and Sir Frederick Pottinger. Hear those robbing stories on a walking tour of the 'Wild Central West' with Craig Lawler, who

This page from top: Visit Heffer Station wines for Orange F.O.O.D. Week; Blind Freddy's Bushranger Tours; The Parkes Telescope; Infield-hunting at Borefield Estate; Orange sausage maker Chris Tabor (left); a Captain Barneades vicar tour

is also available as an in-vehicle guide for families or small groups.
[Visit: blindfreddys.com.au](http://www.blindfreddys.com.au)

Rosney Organic Cellar Door is serving Bush Goodies Grazing Plates of its own offers, figs, stone fruit, edible flowers and other seasonal goodies, matched with local wines. The feast is curated by Penne Scott, a regenerative farmer who created the Paddock-to-Picket business model for farmers to take control of pricing their produce. The vineyard also has a cow 1910 farmhouse that accommodates up to six people.
[Visit: rosney.com.au](http://www.rosney.com.au)

COWRA
Strap in for an exciting open-road thrill in a Harley-Davidson vicar with **Captain Barneades Tours**. Bundle along scenic routes to historic villages and attractions such as Excelsior Rock and Cowra Inquest Gardens or do the shorter Pike Around Town ride.
[Visit: captainbarneades.com.au](http://www.captainbarneades.com.au)

FORBES
Gum Swamp is an ephemeral wetland providing a rich habitat for native fauna including 150 bird species. Currently underway, a redevelopment is adding three two-storey bird hides on the water's edge and 1.5 kilometres of accessible pathways and boardwalks. Various, a 20-metre steel gazebo installed last year, will be joined by four smaller sculptures. Always open, the sanctuary is four kilometres south of Forbes, off the Newell Highway, turning right down a well-signposted gravel road.

PARKES
Fans of astronomy or the movie *The Dish* won't want to miss a trip to see the massive radio telescope at **Parkes Observatory**. Entry is free to the visitor's centre, viewing area and space science exhibition. A theatre shows short 3D films about the vast complexity of the universe. Tickets cost \$7.50 for adults, \$6 for students and concession, or \$25 for families.
[Visit: parkes.com.au/parkes](http://www.parkes.com.au/parkes)

Outback Lamb's new three-hour agricultural tour explores Weepoot, a 5000-hectare farm that supplies boutique butchers in Sydney. Before a homegrown lunch, learn about Fiona and Bill's sustainable farming philosophy and approaches to the environment. Watch, help participate in a sheep dog trial and horses in a campdrafting exhibition, and see Aboriginal art, cartwheels and tools at a local site known as the Rocks.
[Visit: outbacklamb.com.au](http://www.outbacklamb.com.au)

GRENELL
Port Henry Lawson, born on the Grenfell goldfields in 1867, is honoured with several statues around this historic town. Take a stroll along Main Street, head to O'Brien's Mine or hike in Wreckin Mountains National Park. **Grenfell Picnic Race Day** is held on April 21 featuring six horse races, children's rides, live music and fashions in the field. [Visit: grenfellpicnics.org.au](http://www.grenfellpicnics.org.au)